

USS OUELLET (DE 1077)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
96601

8 April 1971

FAMILYGRAM #1

Dear Members of the OUELLET Family,

OUELLET has been in commission now since December 12, 1970, and she is well on her way to becoming an active fighting unit of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. This is the first in a series of letters to the dependents and families of the men serving aboard the OUELLET. OUELLET has a growing list of firsts to her credit and it is my wish that the families of the men responsible for her success be informed of her accomplishments. An unavoidable problem that faces men in uniform and especially men in a Naval uniform is that of long separation from their families. We will try through periodic "Familygrams" to keep you advised as to where the ship is going, where she has been and what she has done and will do along the way.

MISSION & BACKGROUND

The USS OUELLET is one of a new class of ocean escorts specifically designed to locate and destroy enemy submarines. She can effectively operate as a unit of a hunter/killer group, screen amphibious, underway replenishment and strike task forces or convoys, patrol coastal waters for missile firing submarines and conduct naval gunfire support missions. In addition, OUELLET is capable of assuming various other missions and tasks assigned to the modern Naval escort such as search and rescue, evacuation, blockade, visit and search, and surveillance.

OUELLET WAS NAMED FOR Medal of Honor winner Seaman David George OUELLET, who was killed in Viet-Nam while on patrol as forward gunner of his River Patrol Boat. The lives of his shipmates were saved because of his courageous action when an incoming enemy grenade exploded on board.

OUELLET is equipped with the Navy's newest and longest range underwater sound detector equipment (SONAR), and the most advanced anti-submarine fire control system. Principal armament is the anti-submarine homing torpedo which can be delivered by the anti-submarine rocket (ASROC) weapons system or launched from torpedo tubes. The 5 inch 54 caliber rapid fire gunmount and associated fire control system can deliver accurate fire against surface, air and land based targets at long range. She is 438 feet long, has a beam of 46 feet 9 inches and a displacement of 4100 tons. Propulsion is by a single screw, steam turbine delivering 35,000 shaft horsepower for speeds in excess of 27 knots.

HISTORY AND PAST OPERATIONS

USS OUELLET was built at Avondale Shipyards, Westwego, Louisiana. Her keel was laid January 15, 1969, and she was christened and launched January 17, 1970...

In March the nucleus crew (about 50 officers and high ranking enlisted personnel) started reporting to New Orleans to oversee construction, receive on-the-job training on the new engineering, weapons, and electronic systems being installed and take care of the many administrative tasks associated with the building, inspection and accepting of a new ship. Due to the fine efforts on the part of this group, we ended up with a quality product; the best of this class ship that has been produced at Avondale Shipyards to date.

During the construction period another important group was assembling in Newport, Rhode Island under the direction of the Executive Officer and including approximately 200 prospective crew members who, after a thorough screening, made up the balance crew. These men underwent extensive precommissioning training in addition to their duties of information gathering, typing, editing and assembling the various procedure and regulation manuals which have to be made up for each individual ship.

On November 30th 1970, construction was finished and the OUELLET got underway down the Mississippi with the nucleus crew on board. After transitting the Gulf of Mexico and the southern tip of Florida, the OUELLET steamed into Charleston, South Carolina where the balance crew was waiting. Commissioning took place December 12, 1970, with ceremonies held at Charleston Naval Shipyard. Fitting out availability began immediately afterward at the shipyard. During this period the ship was outfitted for sea and last minute modifications to various spaces were accomplished. OUELLET completed Fitting-out availability on February 22, 1971.

USS OUELLET conducted independent ship exercises in local operation areas near Charleston from February 22-March 14, 1971. The purpose of the exercises was to train personnel for their duties in the team effort necessary for the ship's missions to be carried out. March 15th the ship got underway for San Diego, California via the Panama Canal. For many aboard this was their first extended period at sea. Much of the training received over the past year was put to use during this time. The ship arrived in San Diego on March 28th for a 12 day period of assistance inspections and crew training. On April 9th, OUELLET will get underway for her homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, with an expected arrival date of 15 April 1971.

FUTURE OPERATIONS

The following is a tentative schedule of operations for OUELLET during the months of April, May and June 1971:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 15-26 April | Inport Pearl Harbor, preparation for Final Contract Trials |
| 27-30 April | Final Contract Trials |
| 1 May-30 June | Inport Pearl Harbor/Type Training in Hawaiian Operating Areas/and Preparation for Post Shakedown Availability at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard |

NEW ADVANCEMENTS IN RATING

In February OUELLET recommended 99 personnel for the advancement in rating examinations. Of these, 78 personnel passed the examination and 60 of the 78 will be advanced to the new rate on the effective dates as indicated below. Congratulations to all hands to be advanced:

Advancement Date of 1 June 1971

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ANEZ, J. F. | RD3 | RD2 |
| BUGENHAGEN, A. R. | BTFN | BT3 |
| CANITE, M. | SN | EM3 |
| DINAN, J. A. | RD3 | RD2 |
| ETHRIDGE, J. E. | ICFN | IC3 |
| FEDORCHAK, T. | RDSN | RD3 |
| FONG, W. Y. | SKSN | SK3 |
| HALL, T. F. | RM3 | RM2 |
| HAMPTON, J. | QM3 | QM2 |

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 Advancement Date of 1 June 1971 (Cont'd)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| HAMREN, C. J. | STG3 | STG2 |
| HENDRICKSON, C. | GMGSN | GMG3 |
| INGRAM, J. F. | RM3 | RM2 |
| KEMMER, K. | MMFN | MM3 |
| KONNYU, W. L. | STG3 | STG2 |
| MCCOSKEY, J. | RDSN | RD3 |
| MONTAGUE, E. | FTGSN | FTG3 |
| MORGAN, R. S. | MM3 | MM2 |
| MULLEN, G. M. | STG3 | STG2 |
| NOVAK, F. D. | BM3 | BM2 |
| QUALKENBUSH, E. | RDSN | RD3 |
| ROGERS, J. W. | STG3 | STG2 |
| SEDGWICK, P. | STG3 | STG2 |
| SHEA, D. W. | BM3 | BM2 |
| SMALLWOOD, L. | IC3 | IC2 |
| SMITH, J. L. | RD3 | RD2 |
| TACKETT, R. | STG3 | STG2 |
| THIDE, C. J. | BT3 | BT2 |
| VALENTINO, A. | STG3 | STG2 |
| WELLE, R. R. | SM3 | SM2 |
| WILSON, T. R. | STG3 | STG2 |

Advancement Date of 1 July 1971

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| FIELDS, R. | STG3 | STG2 |
| GILLES, C. | SN | BM3 |
| GREENWELL, D. | STG3 | STG2 |
| HALE, N. D. | SN | BM3 |
| HOWARD, S. | STG3 | STG2 |
| McABEE | BM2 | BM1 |
| McCANLESS, A. | QMSN | QM3 |
| NELSON, T. L. | SFFN | SF3 |
| SIMS, C. J. | MM3 | MM2 |
| TUCKER, C. | STGSN | STG3 |
| TUTORNE, J. | STGSN | STG3 |

Advancement Date of 1 August 1971

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| AYRES, K. E. | ICFN | IC3 |
| BALTRUSAITIS, A. | RDSN | RD3 |
| BLAIR, J. D. | SK3 | SK2 |
| BROWN, L. M. | RDSN | RD3 |
| CONNELL, J. L. | STGSN | STG3 |
| WILSON, G. R. | EMFN | EM3 |

Advancement Date of 1 September 1971

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ESCH, T. L. | RDSN | RD3 |
| FISH, R. R. | SN | GMG3 |

Advancement Date of 1 September 1971 (Cont'd)

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| GARDNER, G. R. | EM3 | EM2 |
| GREENWOOD, E. | SF2 | SF1 |
| KEYES, J. C. | RDSN | RD3 |
| MACOMBER, P. | SN | RM3 |
| McVAY, E. L. | SN | BM3 |
| SMITH, E. R. | RDSN | RD3 |
| TUSCANO, A. | FN | MR3 |

Advancement Date of 1 October 1971

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>PRESENT RATE</u> | <u>NEW RATE</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| MARSHALL, D. | MM1 | MMC |
| TETLOW, D. A. | SN | YN3 |

SAILOR OF THE MONTH

In the month of March OUELLET instituted her "Sailor of the Month" program. To be selected as "Sailor of the Month", a person must exhibit to his superiors and contemporaries alike, that he possesses the highest standards of leadership, professional knowledge, military appearance and behavior. After much deliberation, the selection board chose Machinist Mate Fireman Kenneth K. TETLOW from "M" Division, as OUELLET's first Sailor of the Month.

With best wishes to each of you,

A. L. Henry
A. L. HENRY
Commanding Officer