



UNITED STATES SHIP THOMAS C. HART (FF 1092) FAMILYGRAM

19 August 1981

Dear members of the HART Family,

Greetings from the sunny Caribbean! Most folks traveling down this way normally pay lots of vacation money to do it but, in our case, the trip was free! Unfortunately, however, our current port of call is Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for three agonizing, but very much needed, weeks of "refresher training" - more on that later.

As HART's new skipper, I want to take this early opportunity to say "hi" and to let you know that I consider myself extremely fortunate to be commanding the top frigate in the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. While it's just been since June 20th that I relieved Captain John Pearson, HART's CO for the past two years, it is readily apparent to me that this ship is blessed with a superb crew - the finest I've encountered in my 18 - plus years in the Navy. Although the last few months have left us dog tired and despite the fact that lots of new folks have reported onboard replacing seasoned hands, nevertheless HART is most properly classified by her many bosses as being the "best of the best".

I mentioned that Captain Pearson had moved on several weeks ago. Specifically, he was selected for the rank of Captain and is now enroute to his second sequential command in USS TRUXTUN, a nuclear powered cruiser out of San Diego. He was a most effective skipper, leading the ship through two turbulent years, including a long shipyard overhaul and extended operations in the Persian Gulf. I hope to carry on where he left off in following HART's outstanding performance record.

To give you a feel of my own upbringing, I'm from a Navy family and my Dad skippered destroyers through WW II. I spent most of my growing up years on the road with the family, ultimately graduating from high school in Norfolk, and from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1963. I've been at sea for about eleven of my years in the Navy, primarily in destroyers and cruisers out of east coast ports. My two shore tours were the Naval Academy instructing midshipmen and, most recently, in Washington, D. C. in the manpower distribution business within the Naval Military Personnel Command. My wife, Marti, is a native of Chesapeake, Virginia and, with our three sons, we make our home in Virginia Beach. On the personal side, I dabble in art, photography and enjoy working with kids - in particular, coaching little ones in youth soccer, a favorite pastime. I like to think of myself as a "people oriented" individual and will be seeking during my tour to make our very demanding business as personally rewarding and exciting as I can for each HART sailor. I also hope to meet each of you in the months ahead, including those out-of-towners who might be able to plan a swing through Norfolk. The welcome mat will be out and just let me know via your son or husband if you can come aboard for a visit.

Turning to recent shipboard activities, HART endured an arduous shipyard period from April - June in Portsmouth, Virginia undergoing extensive repairs and maintenance to keep the ship going until her next big overhaul 3 years hence. In addition to the Change of Command in June, HART also received several major inspections, highlighted by the comprehensive "Defense Nuclear Surety Inspection" in April, wherein she scored a perfect 100, a singular achievement in the entire Atlantic Fleet. The month of July was given to providing summer training to several groups of midshipmen hailing from all around the country and we all had lots of fun showing them the ropes and helping them get their "sea legs". July 29th saw us charting our course towards the south and Guantanamo. Realizing the strenuous effort awaiting us in Cuba, we fortified ourselves with brief stops in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Nassau, in the Bahamas. A good time was had by all, including the many dignitaries and couple of thousand sightseers who visited the ship during these port visits. "Showing off" is one of the things we like to do - and the crew does well at it, as our bosses know and as evidenced by our Fall schedule, discussed below.

For the present, enjoyable liberty ports are a distant memory as we are now sweating it out in the Navy's version of Death Valley, here in Guantanamo (GITMO). REFTRA is a bit hard to describe but is akin to the feelings Custer must have experienced making his last stand. Days begin about 4:30 - 5 AM and end well after dark, with every day being crammed full of intensive training exercises off the South Coast of Cuba. Myriads of highly skilled instructors from GITMO's Fleet Training Group are aboard each day helping us to sharpen our skills in keeping the ship combat ready. There's no rest for the weary as most evenings are spent rehearsing for the next day, which always arrives too early. Despite the intensified pressure, the crew is geared up to do their utmost in completing training on time and with results of which we may be proud. I'll fill you in on the results in the next familygram.

Turning next to recent personnel arrivals to the ship, the following HART men have reported during the last few months:

ENS Wayne L. Aiken from Jefferson, Ga.
ENS Lawrence E. Gordon from Lynchburg, Va.
ENS Michael D. Ahern from Syracuse, NY.
ENS Timothy M. Hayden from Norristown, Pa.
OSC Peter Munsell from Virginia Beach, Va.
ET1 Charles Putnam from Cheetowaga, NY
MM1 Paul Coeyman from Waynesboro, Va.
BT1 Arthur Davis from Virginia Beach, Va.
NC1 Bruce Bentley from Lansing, Mi.
MM3 William Cox from Baltimore, Md.
SN Dale Routh from Winston-Salem, N.C.
SN William Harris from Roseville, Oh.
SA Michael Oliver from Greenville, S.C.
BTFR Andre Ennis from Camden, N.J.
BTFR Albert McClain from Chesilhurst, N.J.
MMFR Richard Bagwell from Laurens, S.C.
FR Roger Prather from LaJunta, Co.

Recent months have also seen several HART sailors furthering their careers through reenlistment in the Navy:

RM1 David Putnam for 6 years on 22 July 1981
RM1 Michael Murphy for 4 years on 17 July 1981 under the
GUARD III Program for orders to Sicily.

BM1 Steven Buchanan for 6 years on 2 June 1981.
MA1 Richard Thompson for 4 years on 3 June 1981.
EM2 William Tylock for 5 years on 25 June 1981.
BT3 Blaine Pottle for 6 years on 3 June 1981 under the STAR Program.
BT3 Randy Birkhimer for 4 years on 3 June 1981 under the STAR Program.
SN James Bailey for 4 years on 3 June 1981.
SA Robert Malesinski for 4 years on 9 June 1981
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Sailor of the Quarter:

Congratulations are in order to BT1 Douglass Bergsnev, HART's newest Sailor of the Quarter. Petty Officer Bergsnev was chosen from among some stiff competition. His dedication to duty while serving as the ship's Oil King and Fireroom Supervisor were truly exemplary. The citation awarded to Petty Officer Bergsnev reads as follows:

~~"It is with great pleasure that I name you Sailor of the Quarter in~~
recognition of the professionalism, dedication to duty, and significant contributions to B Division and HART that you have consistently demonstrated since reporting aboard 22 months ago, and most recently during HART's Selected Restricted Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

During your tour in HART you have established a standard of excellence for yourself and your subordinates that fully supports the goals of pride and professionalism in the Navy. Your quiet but firm leadership style consistently results in prompt, effective task accomplishment and admired and respected throughout the ship. Your devotion to duty and the positive, enthusiastic attitude that you display even during the most demanding of circumstances make you an inspiration to all and contribute significantly to shipboard morale.

It is my pleasure to commend you for a job well done."

In addition to the citation, Petty Officer Bergsnev will receive a ship's plaque and a gift certificate to the ship's store, Petty Officer Bergsnev and his wife will be treated to a dinner out in a local restaurant on return from GITMO.

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Sports:

On the sports side of the house, HART's softball team was doing exceptionally well in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard league and was on their way to the playoffs when they were interrupted by the current underway period. They will get another chance to display their skill in the DESRON TEN Tourney being held in October.

Having acquired an experienced soccer coach, HART has put together a team to make the best use of this valuable asset. It will take time for some of the team members to get over the two left-foot problem, but the coach figures he has two years to develop a champion semi-pro-category team.

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I'd like to take just a minute to discuss with the HART wives our ship's ombudsman program and wives club activities.

Judy Lawlor is the ship's OMBUDSMAN and serves as a source of information and assistance for HART families. Judy is the wife of a crewmember who serves as Ombudsman on a volunteer basis, in addition to her normal job. Judy operates a tape recorded message service, the "HARTLINE" which you may call

at 804-499-4845 for up-to-the-minute information on the ship's location and schedule and other valuable information for families. Judy can also assist families with problems they encounter while the ship is at sea or in homeport. Primarily, she can direct you to the right place to call to resolve whatever problem you have that you've been unable to resolve yourself. She also serves as the families point of contact with me and keeps me advised of problems the families have encountered. Judy may be reached at 804-497-4151.

Judy is planning a meeting of all HART wives in the near future. A notice will be sent out with the time and location. We hope to revitalize the HART wives club and get some of you ladies who are new to the HART family involved.

On wrapping up this edition, I want to review for you our coming schedule as we know it to date. I remind you that, as usual, it's a paper schedule only and subject to change based on Atlantic Fleet requirement and ship material readiness. We should see most of the evolutions transpire, although the dates may fluctuate a few days either way... We hope to leave Guantanamo on August 31 and will run home as fast as we're allowed, arriving on September 3rd. We'll be inport through September 20th when we receive the toughest of all Navy equipment inspections - the "INSURV" - which lasts a full week and involves a stem to stern, top to bottom check of HART to evaluate her equipment readiness condition. After INSURV, we'll hopefully be able to catch our breath pierside in Norfolk for several weeks. Our next major underway period looks to begin on October 19th and will involve gunnery and carrier escort operations in the Caribbean as follows:

OCT 19	Depart Norfolk
22	Inport Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico
23-26	Gunnery shore bombardment exercise, Vieques Island, Puerto Rico
27	Visit Antigua Island as U.S. Representative to Antigua's Independence celebration
NOV 2-8	Operations as carrier escort
9-10	Enroute next port
11-12	Visit Savannah, Georgia in support of Navy Recruiting
13-14	Enroute next port
15	Visit Fort Lauderdale, Florida
16-17	Serve as Anti-submarine school ship in the Bahamas area
18-19	Enroute Norfolk
20	Arrive home

After this operating period, which includes two prestigious port calls where we can really "show off" the ship, we expect to remain inport through the Christmas holidays save for perhaps a couple of days underway in early December just to keep the cobwebs off the propellers and combat systems. Way downstream, it looks like a month underway in January and inport in February prior to deployment mid March - early August to the Mediterranean with the United States SIXTH Fleet. Remember, this is still crystal-balling it and I'll keep you advised of any significant changes.

That wraps it up for now. Once again, let me say that I'm delighted to command the HART and am looking forward to sailing with your husbands and sons during the next two years, for they're an absolutely superb group of men.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dick Whalen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

F. R. WHALEN

CDR, USN

Commanding Officer

USS THOMAS C. HART (FF 1092)

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912-238-0568

In Bureau