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USS ESTEEM (MSO-438)  
CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96001

MSO438/MGA:ma  
5750  
Ser: 04  
30 January 1967

From: Commanding Officer, USS ESTEEM (MSO-438)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: OPNAV Report 5750-1; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5710.12 of 8 November 1966  
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5750.2 of 22 December 1966

Encl: (1) Chronology of Highlights  
(2) Basic Narrative  
(3) Lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendations  
(4) MSO438 ltr of 13 February 1966 Ser: 03 Post-1 JAN 46 REPORTS  
(5) MSO438 ltr of 30 March 1966 Ser: 08 Post-1 JAN 46 REPORTS  
(6) MSO438 ltr of 23 May 1966 Ser 010  
(7) Copy of USS ESTEEM (MSO-438) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet  
(8) Current Photograph of Commanding Officer, H.L. HORNE, Jr., USN

1. As directed by references (a) and (b) Enclosures (1) through (8) are forwarded as Report symbol 5750-1.

  
H.L. HORNE, Jr.

Copy to:  
Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet

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CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 January 1966: ESTEEM was assigned to patrol duty off the coast of South Vietnam under the operational command of CTF 115.
- 2 January 1966: Relieved by USS PLEDGE (MSO-492) as CTF 115.1.6.
- 7 January 1966: Enroute to area nine in the Gulf of Thailand.
- 9 January 1966: Arrived on station in area nine.
- 18 January 1966: ESTEEM enroute to Bangkok, Thailand for a port visit. Rendezvoused with USS GALLANT (MSO-489) for the transit up river.
- 25 January 1966: Departed Bangkok, Thailand, steaming independently enroute to Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.
- 31 January 1966: Arrived at Subic Bay, Philippine Islands and entered dry dock for emergency repairs to the rudder bearings. Commenced preparations for the next patrol.
- 10 February, 1966: Commenced Third and final patrol. Underway for area seven off the coast of South Vietnam.
- 13 February, 1966: Arrived on station. Assumed the duties of CTF 115.1.7.
- 28 February, 1966: CDR M.R. FLEMING, COMDTM 73 ended a 10 day visit on board ESTEEM, departing by way of a high-line transfer to USS KAWISSETWI (AO-346). The Commodore had come aboard to observe junk boarding operations. Unfortunately, the hunting was bad that month.
- 8 March, 1966: ESTEEM received authorization to wear the Vietnam Service Medal.
- 9 March, 1966: ENSIGN J.L. SCOWILL reported on board for duty.
- 10 March, 1966: After twenty-six days of continuous "Market Time" operations, ESTEEM was relieved as area commander by USS CONFLICT (MSO-426). This concluded the third patrol.

Enclosure (1)

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14 March, 1966: ESTREM entered Subic Bay, Philippine Islands where she rejoined Mine Division 73. After three days of preparations MINDIV 73 departed Subic on 17 March enroute to Guam Island, the first stop on the long transit home.

23 March, 1966: MINDIV 73 arrived at Guam and commenced a badly needed eight-day up-keep period.

31 March, 1966: Underway with MINDIV 73 for Kwajalein and a short fuel stop.

13 April, 1966: MINDIV 73 made a short fuel stop at Johnson Island and hurried on toward home.

16 April, 1966: MINDIV 73 arrived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The division enjoyed a long-awaited liberty call in the U.S.A.

18 April, 1966: Underway in company with MINDIV 73 for Long Beach, California. Encountered rough seas and cold weather -- our first in nine months.

28 April, 1966: Arrived at Pier NINE Long Beach, California thus completing a nine-month deployment to the Western Pacific. The ships received a warm welcome from families and friends. Commenced a 30-day leave and upkeep period.

8-9 June, 1966: Conducted two-day Management and Maintenance Inspection.

13 June, 1966: ESTREM commenced a three-day Operational Readiness Inspection.

11 July, 1966: ESTREM received a regular pre-overhaul TJSURV inspector.

19 July, 1966: ESTREM departed Long Beach with other units of MINDIV 73 on a Minex. After participating in the first three days of "Operation Grunion Hunt" ESTREM returned to Long Beach to make preparations for the up-coming Seattle Sea Fair visit scheduled for 4-7 August.

27 July, 1966: ESTEEM conducted a burial at sea for a retired U.S. Naval Officer. It was a moving experience for all hands.

29 July, 1966: Underway for Seattle, Washington to participate in the Annual Seattle Sea Fair. ESTEEM acting as O.T.C. for three accompanying ships: USS ILLUSIVE (MSO-448), USS COVE (MSI-1) and USS CAPE (MST-2). USS CAPE returned to Long Beach after an engineering casualty and USS COVE escorted her into safe water. ESTEEM and ILLUSIVE proceeded on to Seattle. The Sea Fair was highlighted by the ship's entry into Lake Washington by way of the Government Locks at Ballard for the hydroplane races. ESTEEM departed Seattle with ILLUSIVE on 8 August and was rejoined by USS COVE at Port Angeles for the return trip to Long Beach.

2 August, 1966: ENSIGN R.W. MULHALL reported on board for duty.

27 August, 1966: ESTEEM participated in a divisional dependents cruise in the operating area off Santa Catalina Island. The ships conducted tactical maneuvers in formation and held various seamanship drills. A "Market Time" cook-out was held on the fantail.

22 September, 1966: ESTEEM visited Avalon, Santa Catalina Island for an evening of rest and recreation.

1 October, 1966: ESTEEM departed Pier NINE for Harbor Boat Building Company to begin her yard overhaul.

31 December, 1966: At the close of the year the ship was still undergoing yard overhaul which included a major conversion to enhance watertight integrity, installation of a new degaussing system and the installation of air conditioning equipment.

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NARRATIVE

The New Year found USS ESTEEM (MSO-438) off the coast of South Vietnam patrolling the waters of area six as a MARKET TIME unit. The ship was under the operational command of CTF 115 and was assigned as Unit Commander, CTU 115.1.6. On 2 January was relieved as area commander by USS PLEDGE (MSO-492).

On 7 January ESTEEM was ordered to area FIVE in the Gulf of Thailand. She arrived on station on 9 January and resumed patrol duties. The ship departed the area on 18 January to make a port visit to Bangkok, Thailand. The ship also took the crew of a Coast Guard WPC in order that they might share the rest and recreation period in Bangkok. On 21 January ESTEEM met with USS GALLAT (MSO-489) at the Bangkok Bar. At first light the ships proceeded up river in company.

The two ships departed Bangkok on the morning of 25 January and began the long transit to Subic Bay in the Philippine Islands. Both ships steamed independently at best speed. ESTEEM arrived in Subic on 31 January and immediately went into drydock in APPL-11 for repairs to the Port rudder bearings. After four days in drydock, the work was completed. On 10 February ESTEEM got underway for her third and final patrol in Vietnamese waters. She arrived on station on 13 February and was assigned duties as CTU 115.1.7. On 18 February Commander M.R. FLEMING, COMINFANT 73 came aboard for a 10-day visit. The commodore observed ESTEEM's technique in boarding junks and other day to day evolutions peculiar to MARKET TIME operations. On 28 February the commodore was transferred to USS KAWISIWAI (AO-126) by high-line.

On 9 March Ensign J.L. SCOVILL reported aboard for duty. The following Enclosure (2)

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day, March 10, ESTEEM was relieved or station by USS CAP FLITT (MSC-426). Thus after concluding 25 continuous days of patrol duties ESTEEM terminated her third and final patrol and departed South Vietnamese waters for the last time.

Four days later the ship arrived at Subic Bay, Philippine Islands to rejoin the other units of Mine Division 73. After three days of rest and recreation mixed with a good deal of last minute repairs and loading of stores the ships were ready for the long voyage home. On the morning of 17 March Mine Division 73 got underway for Guam Island. At Guam the ship took full advantage of an eight-day availability to get repair work accomplished by the SIP. The woodwork was particularly well done and all five ships in the division profited from the availability. On 31 March Mine Division 73 departed Guam on her next leg of the long trip home.

The following two stops were at Kwajalein Island and Johnson Island where the division made brief stops for fuel and visits to the exchanges for some last minute shopping.

The division arrived at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 16 April. Two days were spent on voyage repairs, unloading of fuel and supplies and a long-awaited liberty call in the states. On 18 April the ships departed Hawaii headed for Long Beach. For the first time in nine months the crew experienced cold weather.

Things warmed up a little when the division arrived at Long Beach on 28 April. Friends and loved ones were waiting on the pier. With a nine month deployment behind them the crew commenced a well earned leave and upkeep period.

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ESTEEM received a two day annual Management and Maintenance Inspection on 8 and 9 June. This was the first of a seemingly endless line of inspections and exercises that made the WESTPAC deployment seem like a pleasure cruise. On 13 June the ship commenced a three day Operational Readiness Inspection which included inport drills and climaxed in a battle problem. With this barely under her belt ESTEEM started preparations for a pre-overhaul INSURV inspection on 11 July.

On 19 July ESTEEM departed Long Beach with other units of Mine Division 73 for operation Grunion Hunt, a mine exercise off Santa Rosa Island. As it turned out the grunion were running for ESTEEM. She swept more mines than all other ships combined in the moored phase of the exercise. ESTEEM received a big assist from an uncharted undersea mount that took a heavy toll of the other ship's sweep gear. After three days of the mine exercise ESTEEM returned to Long Beach along with USS ILLUSTIVE, USS CAPE and USS ZONE to make preparations for a visit to Seattle, Washington and the Seattle Sea Fair.

On 27 July ESTEEM conducted a burial at sea for the remains of a retired U.S. Naval Officer. It was a moving experience for all hands. The service was led by the Mine Force Chaplain with representatives of ship's company participating in the ceremony. Graveside honors were rendered by an honor guard from the U.S. Naval Station at Long Beach, California.

On 29 July ESTEEM got underway from Long Beach in company with USS ILLUSIVE (MSO-448), USS CAPE (MSI-20) and USS ZONE (MST-1). As OTC she was to lead her flock to the Puget Sound where the MSI's would break off for a visit to Powell River, British Columbia and the remaining two MSO's would proceed to Seattle, Washington and the Sea Fair. Enroute the CAPE developed an engineering casualty which

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dictated her return to Long Beach. USS COVE escorted her to safe waters and continued on to Powell River independently. ESTEM and ILLUSIVE joined the Seattle Sea Fair Fleet for the grand entry into Seattle on 4 August. After holding open house for thousands of visitors on the first two days of the visit the MSOs entered Lake Washington by way of the Government Locks at Ballard to get a ringside seat for the hydroplane races. Enroute through the locks the ships were boarded by mock Vikings (local businessmen). Convention dictated that the ships should lose the battle and in due time the hearty crew of the ESTEM was subdued. Tokens gifts were exchanged and the Vikings were given a free ride or into Lake Union. On Sunday, 7 August, guests of the Thirteenth Naval District and families and friends of the crew rode the ship into Lake Washington to watch the hydroplane races. After an enjoyable day on the lake the ships returned to Lake Union on Sunday evening and the following day began the long transit home. The MSOs were joined by USS COVE at Port Angeles and the remainder of the trip was made in company.

During the month of August ESTEM received two officers for duty. Ensign R.B. MULHALL reported on board from Mine Warfare School in Charleston on 22 August and Ensign M.W. WHEELER reported aboard on 31 August having completed the Engineering Officer course at Charleston.

On 27 August ESTEM participated in a divisional dependent's cruise. This Saturday outing at sea was highlighted by division tactics formation, independent seamanship evolutions and a cook-out on the fantail -- "MARKET TIME STYLE".

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After many months of preparation ESTEEM departed pier FIVE on 3 October for Harbor Boat Building Company to begin her yard overhaul. During the overhaul the crew was messed and berthed by the Naval Station at Long Beach while a major water-tight integrity conversion and a new refrigerated air conditioning system were installed. The ship also received a new degaussing system and miles of associated cable. A major effort was made to increase the habitability of the ship in view of repeated deployments to WESTPAC as a MARKET TIME unit. A complete messdecks conversion was installed along with a refrigerated salad bar, new drapes, new tile decks and panelling. On 31 December the ship was still undergoing her yard overhaul.

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LESSONS LEARNED, CONCLUSIONS

Lessons learned and conclusions are included as Enclosures (4) and (5) of the documentary annexes. Both were written when the events were fresh in our minds and more accurately represent our appraisal of situations at the time. Enclosure (6) reflects general ideas developed after viewing our MARKET TIME experience in retrospect.

Enclosure (3)