

U.S.S. FRANK KNOX (DDR 742)
FLEET POST OFFICE
San Francisco, California

Ship's History
1965

January first, 1965 found U.S.S. FRANK KNOX (DDR 742) in Long Beach, California, winding up a three and one-half month regular yard overhaul period, during which, in addition to normal machinery, equipment, and hull overhaul, extensive modernizations were made to her communications and sonar systems. On 15 January, several days after her return to her homeport of San Diego, Commander Orlin Putman, USN, was relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander Nicholas Grkovic, USN.

After a period of local operations and in-port time, FRANK KNOX departed San Diego on 8 February and steamed to Pearl Harbor for refresher training. She spent two rugged months undergoing extensive exercises, including the real experience of recovering a downed pilot from the USS MIDWAY (CVA-41).

Returning to San Diego on 1 April, the ship discovered it would deploy to WestPac several months earlier than anticipated, and preparations began immediately to depart the States on 4 June.

That day, in company with the cruiser GALVESTON, an oiler, and eleven other destroyers, FRANK KNOX sailed for duty to Southeast Asia waters and the most eventful cruise of her long career.

After a five day stay in Subic Bay, P.I., KNOX departed and joined Market Time operations off the Republic of Vietnam. She participated in this coastal surveillance work for 2½ weeks, interrupted for one day on 3 July for a gunfire support mission against Viet Cong targets. Her six five-inch guns sent some 249 shells into several junks, supply buildings, and a concentration of Viet Cong personnel. The comment from the forward air controller was "Great Job!"

Enroute to an R and R visit to Keelung, Taiwan, at 0230, 28 July, FRANK KNOX ran aground on Fratas Reef, located some 180 miles south-east of Hong Kong. Initial damage was not great: the sonar dome was sheared off and one small compartment flooded. Fortunately there were no injuries. Assistance was rendered from salvage ships and other units of the Seventh Fleet. In all, some 20 ships participated in direct effort or in logistic support of the salvage operations. For 37 days efforts were made to free the ship. Finally, on 24 August she was pulled off the reef. During all this time considerable damage to the ship was incurred as a result of its working from surf action on the reef, consequent flooding of many spaces, and damage from explosives used to blast away coral.

She was towed to Kaohsiung, Republic of China, for temporary repairs to the hull and restoration of habitability conditions for the crew.

On 20 September KNOX sailed (under her own power with one screw, but with a tow assist from a fleet tug) for Yokosuka, Japan, arriving there 27 September (after a two day stopover in Sasebo, Japan for typhoon evasion).

Immediately drydocked, interior work was begun until a decision was reached in Washington, D.C., several weeks later, to restore KNOX to her pre-grounding condition.

On 5 October, Commander Grkovic was relieved as Commanding Officer by Lieutenant Commander William L. Reger, USN.

Although FRANK KNOX was not able to continue her duties for the remainder of 1965, she still gathered many awards. Among them were a third consecutive Supply "E", third consecutive Communications "C", and her second consecutive Battle Efficiency "E". The latter was awarded to KNOX in August while still on Pratas Reef.

The majority of 1966 will be spent in restoration work. The 110 volunteers who remain aboard FRANK KNOX look forward to her return to sea as one of the best destroyers in the Pacific Fleet.