

5 June 1986

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USNMR

Dear Dr. Hester,

I'm hoping this letter finds you in good spirits and that all is well with you and your family. I'm alive and well but still missing you, family and Corpus Christi. Hopefully, if my present problem is resolved, I could ^{feel} better, but I feel I am getting a runaround which requires your personal touch.

The facts are pretty clear cut. To date, the Commanding Officer of my ship, USS VANCOUVER, has not helped my navel career at all. A junior officer, such as I, has to pass usually three oral boards - one as Combat Information Center Watch Officer (CICWO), Officer of the Deck (Underway) OOD (U), and finally, an assessment board of knowledge for Surface Warfare Officer (SWO). While I attempted to get past the CICWO boards (there were five in all) I thought I had finally passed the fifth one. Usually, under this captain, one to four boards may be in order if he doesn't feel like you know all the answers. For me, due to bad timing and personal matters, I required five and in December 1985 was told I could not qualify as CICWO, thus effectively preventing me from achieving OOD (U) or the SWO designator pin. Hence, my ship was scheduled for a 6 month trip Overseas but I couldn't achieve any qualifications at all.

Facts are already in your possession. Congressman Ortiz's shop assigned Mr. Jerry Sawyer to take my case. To date, we have different stories from him. Before my departure on 16 January, 1986, he told me that he was told by the Navy Congressional Liaison Office that my

non-SWO attainment letter was in the works and that I should receive it soon. If I didn't get it by my arrival in the Philippines, then a Congressional inquiry would request it. Your copy, I sent you, showed a letter dated 9 FEB answering the inquiry, however, I never received it. Instead on 6 March, the C.O. told the ship's secretary to destroy the 9 FEB letter and reissue it as 6 March date since he (CO) had waited so long to give it to me. I received it on 7 March but lost a month on the time for my comment. Mr. Sawyer said two months max from time I commented to time received in Washington, D.C. for action by the Personnel Bureau.

Well, 6 months later, I'm still stuck here. Due to serious flaws in C.O.'s second endorsement which you have copies sent earlier (Teresa has some too), the C.O.'s comments caused the commander of my squadron to TAD^{me} to his flagship where I've done very well onboard the ^{USS} New Orleans. Only problems were the problems on ^{USS} Vancouver's crew's goals were completed onboard New Orleans but no document of completion could be awarded due to my TAD status.

I will return to Vancouver on the 13th^{June}, the day after the C.O. leaves and new one takes command. My non-SWO attainment letter has been at squadron level for over 2 months and there are 2 more offices which have to review it for my split tour prior to being received in Washington. Washington says it can't move without the letter which is now over 5 months overdue from when Rep. Ortiz's office (Jerry Sawyer) and I spoke. The runaround is fast becoming a deterrent to my removal from the ship. What's said is sad is

that I have only received one letter (28 Apr 86) from Rep. Ortiz on the whole incident and they have not commented on any of the various documents I have mailed them. The letter of 28 Apr said merely that no written notice had been received from the Navy. They would get a hold of me if anything new transpired.

I have kept the Congressman's office abreast of all changes but at considerable expense and time. I am not getting any answers and I need to know if additional time will be incurred past my June 3, 1987 departure date. Washington can't move without the letter and, to be truthful, I see that no one is doing anything on this simple yet disastrous affair.

I believe the Congressional inquiry may have started the ball rolling and then stopped. ^{my wife} Kim is tired of calling and is very upset with the way things have developed.

You know, I've always trusted your judgement and advice. I feel, however, something wrong is developing and it could be a quiet form of "hidden" discrimination. I strongly urge you to have your friend, Senator Lloyd Bentsen, investigate this matter. My friend at Kika de la Garza's office is also aware and has forwarded documents ^{to} ~~action~~ ^{to} Ortiz's office. ^{He has} Six months is a long time to wait and I need to make plans for law school, moving back to Corpus, etc. with less than a year on my contract. Time is of the essence and I can't find out if I will get a new ship to qualify on for my Surface Warfare Officer Pin, something I promised Dad I'd get before he died.

on 16 July.

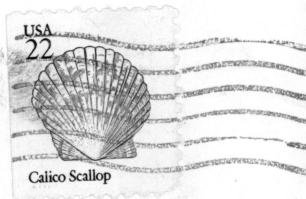
Today is the 5 June and my ship will arrive in San Diego and have sent ^{Jim} 17 important questions to ask Jerry Sawyer and she should have her answers by mid-June. Time is of the essence, and the politics against me have culminated. Washington knows of other problems on the ship but has refused to take action oddly enough.

Please Dr. Hester, for me, please have Sen. Benton expedite my split tour. If Washington waits for the chair to forward it, it could be past September and I'll have 9 months left on contract. Not enough time to get the pin unless specific steps are taken early.

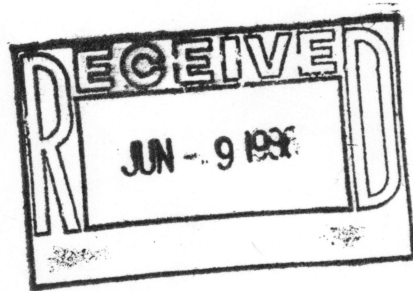
I thank you for your assistance and Herman Ortiz of the Albuquerque branch of the American L.D. Forum sends his best. I hope to see you very shortly in July.

Love & admiration,
Eddie

LTj.g. Eddie V. MARTINEZ
USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CA
96682-1706



DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA
1315 BRIGHT STREET
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78405



Addressee Only!