

U.S.S. BENNINGTON CVS-20

NAVAL POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

IN REPLY REFER TO  
CVS-20:VJM:git  
Ser: 034  
13 January 1967

Mr. Paul A. Duggan  
3951 Lyndora Street  
Lynwood, Calif. 90262

Dear Mr. Duggan:

Please allow me this opportunity to express my condolences on the recent death of your son on duty with the USS GRIDLEY in the South China Sea.

The USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20), an aircraft carrier, is the ship to which I am actually assigned. On the day of the fateful incident, as Catholic Chaplain, I was called as soon as your son was brought aboard our ship. I immediately administered last rites since he was Roman Catholic.

On Monday, 9 January 1967, I publicized and celebrated a Memorial Mass for the repose of his soul. I was indeed most edified to see a substantial gathering of men at the Memorial Service, especially since they did not serve aboard GRIDLEY.

I know full well at a time like this how inadequate words are, and that the heart and human sympathy speak more eloquently. Yet, I feel by conveying some little details of those last trying moments, you might derive some lasting comfort to sustain you.

Hoping and praying that Almighty God will give you all the necessary grace and help in this hour of need, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

*Victor J. Maritato*  
Victor J. Maritato  
LCDR, CHC, USN

Copy to: Commanding Officer  
USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)