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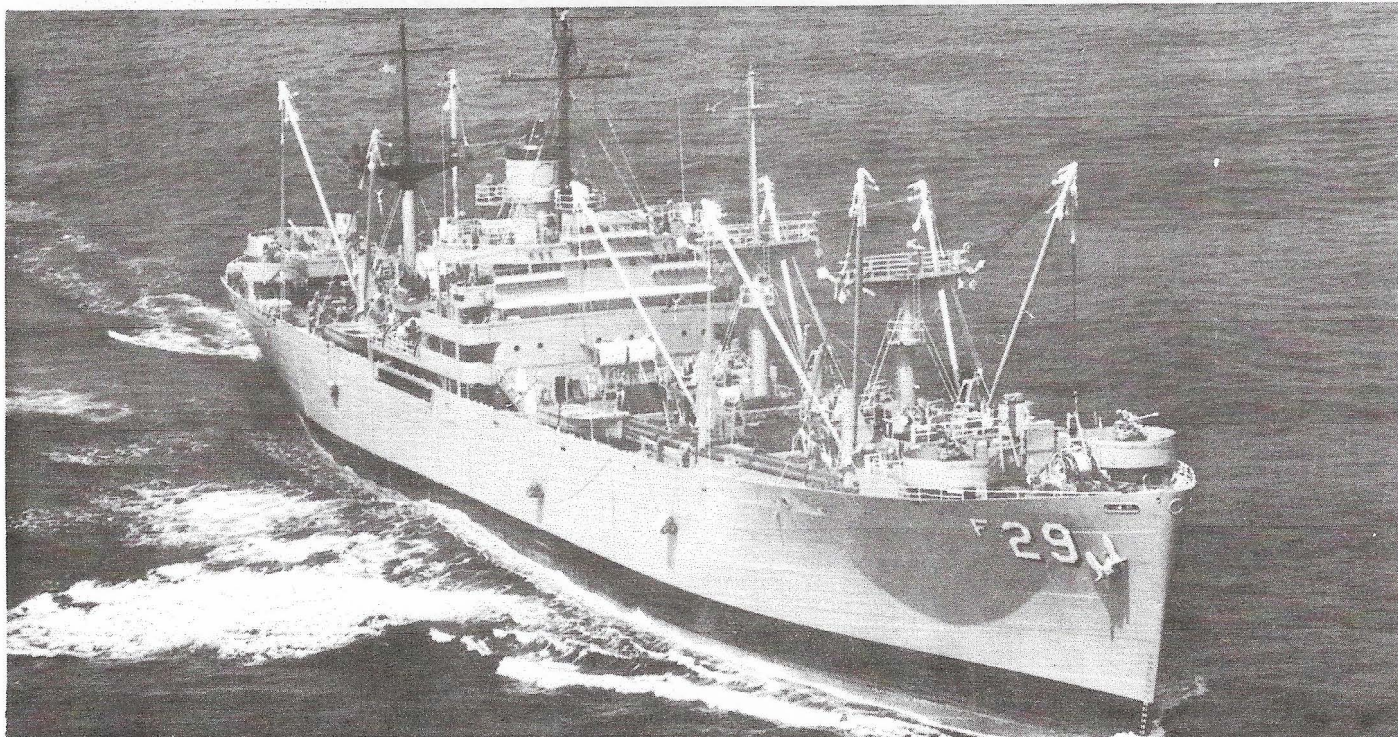
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USS Graffias Continues To Serve

The paradox of the aging yet provocative woman was well phrased by Shakespeare in the following.

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale Her infinite variety..."

No one has ever accused Cleopatra, the subject of the above lines, of senility, and the officers and men of USS Graffias (AF-29) feel that the comparison holds true for their fine ship. Although the senior of the refrigerated stores ships in the Pacific, her continuous reliable service invites comparison with the best of the Navy's hard-working auxiliaries.

Originally built as a C-2 merchant hull and christened the SS Topa Topa, Graffias was commissioned as a naval vessel in October, 1944. The urgency of the war effort allowed only five days for inspection, trials, and shakedown and on 25 November 1944, Graffias sailed south from New York City with a full cargo of refrigerated and dry stores. She transited the Panama Canal and steamed immediately for Eniwetok in what was to be the first of three deployments to the Caroline and Marshall Islands during the closing months of

World War II. In July of 1945, Graffias sailed from Pearl Harbor to Adak, Alaska, and then westward to join the Naval Occupation Forces in Japan. Three weeks after VJ Day, Graffias arrived off Ominato, Honshu, and in the next month visited Wakayama, Bungo Suido, and in a prophetic visit, Sasebo, on the southern island of Kyushu.

The years prior to the outbreak of the Korean Conflict found Graffias replenishing naval units throughout the western Pacific. With the outbreak of hostilities in 1950, Graffias initiated a forty-two month effort which saw her replenish 720 ships with 15,500 tons of provisions, and on 1 January 1956 her homeport was changed from San Francisco to Sasebo, perhaps a signal tribute to her dependability in the Far East. Thus began a WestPac deployment which has had few equals among the Fleet. For eight and one-half years Graffias was actively engaged in Fleet operations to a point where the phrase "continuously on the line" became the ship's motto - much more than an idle boast. Replenishment records were broken with increasing rapid-

ity and once earned, jealously guarded. The AF/Carrier record was the joint property of Graffias and USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) for more than five years and during one five month period in 1963, Graffias reset her own AF/Destroyer transfer record three times.

In March 1964, Graffias' home port was changed to San Francisco and this respected reefer made her first visit to American waters in nearly a decade to become a working member of Service Squadron Seven. The results of her return to the Far East last summer as a "rotater" would indicate that there has been no loss of finesse. Graffias was active in support of the operations surrounding the Gulf of Tonkin crisis from the very first days. By the end of the deployment Graffias held the AF/CVA-CVS replenishment record for a single deployment and had been awarded the American Expeditionary Medal (Viet Nam).

Graffias' mission, of course, is one of supply. Since three of her holds are refrigerated, it is possible to keep meats, fruits, and vegetables fresh and palata-

ble, even in the hottest of latitudes. The underway replenishment operation, during which these provisions are normally transferred, is called an UnRep and calls for seamanship of the highest order. Provisions are often transferred while in port as well. The photos accompanying this story illustrate one of these InRep operations.

As a refrigerated stores ship (AF), Graffias generally operates as part of a replenishment squadron with ammunition ships (AE's), fleet oilers (AO's), and general stores ships (AKS's). Working together, these ships maintain a virtual "supermarket at sea" for the combatant ships requiring their services.

It would be facetious to press the comparison mentioned at the outset, between Cleopatra and this venerable reefer. But as Graffias enters her twentieth year of continuous service with the U. S. Pacific Fleet she can, indeed, reflect upon a life of "infinite variety" and there is every indication that, among ships of the Service Force, she will be setting the standard for several years to come.