



POST SOLANT AMITY

With the Members of "G" Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment



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Shipboard impacts of Guinean troops evacuation from the Congo

On 30Jun60, the Congo declared its independence from Belgium. But national celebration was short-lived. On 4Jul60, troops of the Congolese Army mutinied and chaos spread throughout the country.

By late summer of that year plans emerged and by fall implemented to cobble together elements of SoLant Amity. By 1Jan61, we'd been outfitted, extensively live-fire trained in Viegues and were heading to Monrovia, Liberia on the USS Graham County. By 12Jan61, things were once again heating up in the Congo and as "we band of brothers" arrived in Bathurst, Gambia it was announced that some of our numbers were to be transferred to other ships of the developing Task Force 88.

The Commanding Officer of the destroyer USS Gearing, Commander J. E. Tingle, wrote in a notice to the families of the ship's company:

On 14Jan61, the HERMITAGE and the GRAHAM COUNTY received orders to proceed to the Congo and report to the United Nations Command. The mission of the two ships was to provide transportation from the Congo for the troops of one African republic which de-

cided to withdraw its forces from the present United Nations Operation. Prior to sailing U.S. Marines were transferred to the destroyers GEARING and VOGELGESANG and the fuel tanker NESPELEN in order to have more space available for the "troop lift." GEARING received a Lieutenant and 42 enlisted Marines of the 3rd Platoon-G-2-6.

The former 2nd Platoon Commander Lieutenant Douglas Carver, recently had the following to say:

...The Nespelen, which I moved to with 2/3 of my platoon to make room on the Graham County for the Guinean troops, stayed with the destroyers.

My guess is that it was the first and last time in the history of the Navy and the Marine Corps that a fuel tanker traveled with a Marine detachment. And we integrated well, standing our share of the watches and even going on liberty without having a fight with the swabs.

Though unsure of the exact date of transfer, then Corporal and now long retired SSgt Ed Hart explained

Trivia Question 1: From what, when and where was the term Halls of Montezuma derived? (See answer 1 on page 4.)

in an email what happened to the 1st Platoon:

The 1st and 2nd Squads from the First Platoon were taken off the Graham County and put on the Vogie, while the 3rd stayed on the Graham County to go into the Congo.

At this point, the attention of all turned to the acquisition of aide materials, the Guinean troops and the safe delivery of same in coastal and inland waters not commonly traveled by U.S. ships, something any sailor will tell you is fraught with danger. But, life on board the Graham County and the Hermitage was not without its own problems.

Consider the following experience of Tom Poole, the dentist aboard the Hermitage:

It just so happens that I did have contact with the troops from Guinea. I received a message that one of the Guineans had a toothache, was in terrible pain, and that he was going to be transported over to the Hermitage in a breeches buoy for treatment. It seemed as though everyone was on the deck to watch this spectacle and betting whether the unlucky soldier would be dropped into the ocean before he reached the Hermitage. The ship steamed alongside of

Trivia Question 2: Well known is the founding date of the USMC, 10 Nov 1775. In what year thereafter was the Corps disbanded, only to be reestablished on 11 Jul 1798? (See answer 2 on page 4.)

us, and a line was shot over. It was quite a distance between the two ships, and it took a while to rig the lines and the "seating arrangements." Finally, the unfortunate patient was loaded into the seat and out he swung, high up and over the ocean, since the main deck of the Hermitage was a considerable distance above the waterline.

I'm sure the man was terrified to look down at all that water below him. I suspect he had never held on so tightly to ANYTHING as he did that day. The sea was not calm, either, and I know the captains of the two ships were having difficulty keeping them abreast of each other. After what seemed like hours, and without incident, the patient reached the deck of the Hermitage and was taken aboard. We escorted him to the sick bay, where I had a room with a field dental unit.

I speak French, so it was not difficult for us to understand one another. He told me about his tooth, and my examination revealed that he had a molar (Continued page 2, column 1).

You'd think, "What more could be written about it?" And then along comes *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima*

With the passing of Joe Rosenthal, the opening of a National Museum of the Marine Corps and the movie *Flags of our Fathers*, the long ago fought battle for Iwo Jima has found a new generation of interested historians.

Author Captain Robert S. Burrell, USMC, focuses not on tactics, procedures and statistics of battle but on neglected dynamics, complex considerations and impacts of inter-service competition that led to the *taking* of Iwo Jima .

He scrutinizes explanations, rationalizations and presumptions

offered in response to the horrific losses sustained by attacking forces.

The Ghosts of Iwo Jima is first and foremost a superb book providing fresh insights into the studied battle. Yet, it is more. Burrell's describes the strategic *intrigue*, the compromises and deal-making associated with the operation. It's neither pretty or appealing.

He points out the Joint Chiefs failure to overcome service rivalries...at the highest levels...to designate a unified theater commander caused strategic paralysis. That Admiral Nimitz and Army Air Corps Gen-

eral "Hap" Arnold conspired to seize Okinawa rather than *go along* with Macarthur's doctrine but that Arnold's support would have a price — taking Iwo Jima before Okinawa.

The seizure of Iwo Jima cost nearly 26,000 US casualties, killed and wounded, with another 2,600 incapacitated due to combat fatigue. Yet, Burrell's well documented research has also unearthed misrepresentations, inaccuracies and outright fallacies long associated with the battle that paint a rather sobering picture.

However, at the end of the day,

these decisions and their outcomes are reflective of the tough challenges by leaders, then and now. He illuminates the human dimension of strategic leadership and exposes the challenges associated with performing in an environment characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

And while he research and presentation reveals unflattering aspects associated with the battle for Iwo Jima, Burrell does not denigrate or diminish the personal courage, sacrifice and valor demonstrated by so many who participated, and rightfully so.

Congo Evacuation (from page 1)

which was too badly decayed to restore, so out came the forceps. The extraction proceeded without complications, fortunately.

Throughout the procedure, however, I was concerned about his return trip, because some patients become sick or faint after any dental surgery. I kept imagining him falling out of the seat into the deep blue. For that reason, I delayed his return as long as I could to be sure the bleeding had stopped and that he was lucid. But, understandably, the crew was getting stressed out having to keep the ships alongside each other, so they were glad to put the patient back in the chair and, with no apparent problems, whisk him back from whence he'd come.

That was my contribution to international relations on the Amity cruise.

George Astorga of Weapons Platoon remained aboard the Graham County during the UN evacuation:

The ship went up the Congo River quite a ways.

In preparation for the evacuation we gave up our racks, our weapons and sea bags were locked away, we took what was left and were reassigned to an area in the tank deck. The deck had to remain clear for landing craft, so, like monkeys, we climbed atop ration boxes and other gear that had been stacked against the bulkhead reaching up close to the overhead. These were our VERY warm quarters till the end of operations.

We proceeded to evacuate the UN troops in Brazzaville. They came aboard with all of their gear, AK47 type weapons, grease guns, ammo, assorted trinkets and small

animals. Some people were assigned to escort them below to their new home.

Our chow time and topside time was changed so we wouldn't interfere with them. Thus, we had little interaction. When we did meet, they spoke no English, were not very friendly, and still smelled, although our former quarters and head was to be all theirs.

Somewhere along the trip I marked on my laundry bag that we stopped at Matadi, Congo. It may have been here that we were volunteered to manually unload heavy sacks of grain for a day or so, in the African heat.

When the Graham County finally docked at their home port in Conakry, Guinea and the UN troops left ship, we were denied liberty because the country had turned communist and we were not welcome.

We had one hell of a field day before reclaiming our area.

The timing is sketchy here, but we were not happy campers.

That's about all I can recall. If anyone can add to this, or clear it up, I'd appreciate it.

Fortunately, due to the capacities of both the USS Hermitage and Graham County well over 500 apparently ungrateful troops of a still more ungrateful nation were evacuated from harm's way.

And, once more, until George Astorga's testimony indicated that all Marine weapons were secured, that the Guinean troops were permitted to keep theirs and our manual labor was required to unload the cargo, it might have been thought those Marines not leaving the Graham County would have been used for guard duty. How wrong could one be?

As for Conakry, the USS Gearing



Guinean troop evacuation

had made it a "port of call" on 30Dec60. Commander Tingle said at the time that "Many citizens of iron curtain countries were visible in the streets, hotels and clubs. [If not openly hostile, circumstances were stressful.] The Gearing left...after an arranged basketball game... within a day of its arrival." Six weeks later, the Graham County arriving on 8Feb61 to deliver safely its nations troops(!!!) encountered anti-western political disorders and left Conakry the next day. Little, over fifty years, has changed.

For further reading of events surrounding our evacuation of Guinean troops from the Congo read the Gearing's *Family-grams* 4 and 5 published on the SoLantAmity website as well as the ships logs for both the Graham County and the Hermitage. You should also read the article containing the lengthy, informative and sometimes funny experiences of Graham County's Engineman Frank Fredericks in the March 2008 issue of the *Post Solant Amity*.



Trivia Question 4: Marine Corps casualties amongst their NCOs and Officers at Chapultepec Castle [aka: Halls of Montezuma] reached 90%. What on their dress uniforms reflects those losses? (Answer 4 on Page 4)

"Who was that Marine?"

Chicago born (1919) as Jacques O'Mahoney he was raised inavenport Iowa and attended the University of Iowa but left in 1941 to join the Marines as a pilot and flying instructor. Following WWII he moved to LA and eventually became a stuntman, doubling for top stars such as Gregory Peck, Errol Flynn and John Wayne.

Switching to acting, he starred in 79 episodes of *The Range Rider* from 1951 to 1953. Like *The Lone Ranger*, the character was known by no other moniker than Range Rider. He later starred in another popular cult western: *The Yancy Derringer* series.

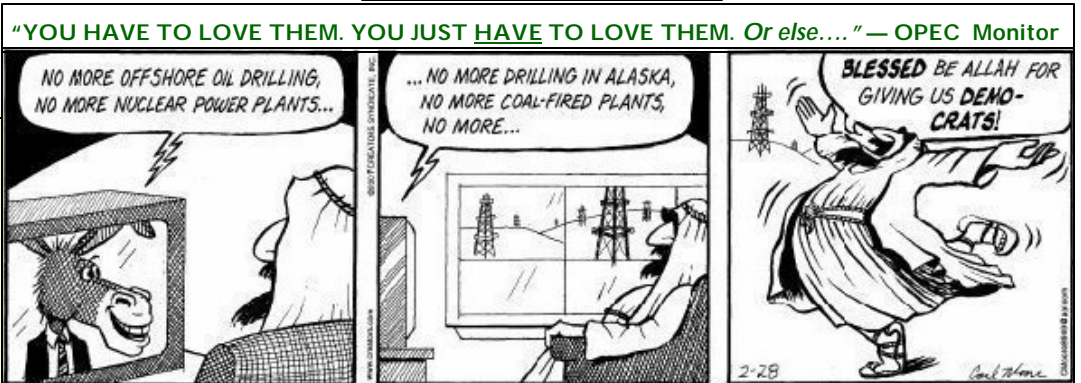
His strong presence and lean (6 foot 4 inch, 220 pound) frame led, in 1962, to his being chosen to play the thirteenth actor to portray Tarzan. However, after two films and at age of 44, he fell victim to Dysentery and dengue fever, lost 45 pounds and opted out of any future Tarzan ventures.

Married thrice he was, during his second marriage, stepfather to Oscar winner Sally Field with whom he appeared in the 1978 film *The End*. And in that same year, in *Hooper*, the character of Jocko (played by Brian Keith, another Marine) is a tribute to our guy.

During the final years of his life he was a popular guest at film conventions and autograph shows. On 12/14/89, he was involved in an automobile accident in Bremerton, Washington. Though surviving his injuries, he died of a stroke two days later. Should you not already know who our man is, see page four for photo and ID.

Trivia Question 3: True or False: The Fourragère was awarded to the Corps' 5th and 6th Regiments and 6th Machine Gun Battalion., by the French government, solely because of their gallantry during the WWI battle for Belleau Wood?

(See answer 3 on page 4.)



Funny, sad and true

While suturing a cut on the hand of a 75 year old Texas rancher, whose hand had been caught in a gate while working, the doctor struck up a conversation with the old man. Eventually the topic got around to Obama and his bid for the Presidency.

The old rancher said, "Well, ya know, Obama is a *post turtle*." Not being familiar with the term, the doctor asked him what a *post turtle* was.

The old rancher said, "When you're driving down a country road and you come across a fence post with a turtle balanced on top, that's a post turtle."

The old rancher saw a puzzled look on the doctor's face, so he continued to explain. "Well, you know he didn't get up there by himself, he doesn't belong up there, he doesn't know what to do while he's up there, and you HAVE to wonder what kind of a dumb ass put him up there to begin with."



"Hey, Ed! DON'T look up!!!"

Men vs. depression: WHY?

Your last name need never change. The garage is ALL yours. You know stuff about engines. Car mechanics tell you the truth. Restrooms are never "just TOO icky to use."

You know what "rightee-tightee, leftee-loossie" means. Wrinkles...DO add character and are never seen in your own clothes.

Trivia Question 5: How would the following be best described?



(See answer 5 on page 4)

People never stare at your chest You've one mood ALL the time. Conversations can last 30 seconds. Ten-day vacations require one bag. You can open your own jars. Your loved for the slightest act of thoughtfulness. A 3 pack of underwear costs \$8.95. Three pairs of shoes are enough. The same hairstyle lasts for decades. One wallet and one pair of shoes for all seasons. Shoes don't blister your feet. You wear shorts despite your legs. You can "do" your nails with a pocket knife. A mustache is optional. You shave only your face and neck. You can play with toys all your life. Christmas Eve shopping for twelve takes 25 minutes.

History 101

For those of you who slept through World History 101 here is a condensed version. Humans originally existed as members of small bands of nomadic hunters/gatherers. They lived on deer in the mountains during the summer and would go to the coast and live on fish and lobster in the winter.

Thus, the two most important events in all of history were: First, the invention of beer and, then, the wheel. The latter being invented to get man to the beer, and the beer to the man.

These two events provided the very foundation of modern civilization and together were the catalyst for the splitting of humanity into two distinct subgroups:

1. Conservatives
2. Liberals.

Once beer was discovered, it required grain and that was the beginning of agriculture. Neither the glass bottle nor aluminum can were invented yet, so while our early humans were sitting around waiting for them to be invented, they just stayed close to the brewery. That's how villages were formed.

Some men spent their days tracking and killing animals to BBQ at night while they were drinking beer. This was the beginning of what is known as the Conservative movement.

Other men who were weaker and less skilled at hunting learned to live off the conservatives by showing up for the nightly BBQ's to

provide needle-work, fetching, and entertainment. This was the beginning of the Liberal movement.

Some of these liberal men eventually evolved into women. The rest became known as girlie-men.

Some noteworthy liberal achievements include the domestication of cats, the invention of group therapy and group hugs, the evolution of the Hollywood actor, and the concept of Democratic voting to decide how to divide all the meat and beer that conservatives provided.

Over the years, Conservatives came to be symbolized by the largest, most powerful land animal on earth, the elephant. Liberals are symbolized by the jackass.

Modern liberals like imported beer with lime but most prefer white wine or imported bottled water. They eat raw fish but like their beef well done. Sushi, tofu, and French foods are standard liberal fare. Another interesting evolutionary side note: most liberal women have much higher testosterone levels than their men. Most social workers, personal injury attorneys, journalists, Hollywood dreamers and group therapists are liberals.

Conservatives drink domestic beer. They eat red meat and still provide for their women. Conservatives are big-game hunters, rodeo cowboys, fireMEN, lumberjacks, construction workers, medical doctors, police officers, corporate executives, athletes, Marines, and generally anyone who works productively. Conservatives who own companies hire other conservatives

Trivia Question 6 Hillary answering Bill's first question upon their meeting long ago.



What was the question?
(See answer 6 on page 4.)

who want to work for a living. Liberals produce little or nothing. They like to govern the producers and decide what to do with the production. Liberals believe Europeans are more enlightened than Americans. That is why most of the liberals remained in Europe when conservatives were coming to America. They crept in after the Wild West was tamed and created a business of trying to get more for nothing.

Thus ends today's lesson in world history.

It should be noted that a liberal (you know who you are) may have a momentary urge to angrily respond to the above; to defend their untenable position.

A conservative will simply laugh and be so convinced of the absolute truth of this history that it will be forwarded immediately to other true believers, and to more liberals.... just to piss them off.

If you had to guess, which contestant is from Canada?



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See the whole story at
SolantAmity.com

The First Marines to Land in Monrovia

Some thoughts from our members and enlightening odds and ends for your reading pleasure:

Douglas Carver—2nd Platoon

While corresponding about the Congo Evacuation, I asked the former platoon commander if he had what he thought would make for an interesting anecdote about his stay on the Nespelen.

Well, yes, there was one.

While docked in Pointe Noire (Republic of the Congo) next to a wine tanker from France, my sergeant and one of my squad leaders...knowing I spoke some French...came to me and asked whether I could get us invited aboard. "No problem," said I.

We started with the crew, who broke out something to welcome us aboard. An officer who heard we were there came down and invited my sergeant and me to the wardroom with the other officers for something a little better. The Captain heard we were there and invited me to lunch in his cabin for something even better. My first taste of Pernod.

By the end of the meal, I had invited the Captain back to the Nespelen to meet our Captain (the youngest in the Navy at that moment. And a great guy).

My new French friend brought a bottle of whiskey to share. I warned this might not be possible for reasons of American naval tradition. He assured me he would convince the Nespelen's captain otherwise.

When we arrived, though well received, the Captain's understandable response to the offer of whiskey was "Sorry, not allowed aboard" politely followed by "and considering the state you two are in, I think coffee might be more appropriate."

It was all such great fun. So much so, that I think this was the experience that triggered my decision to come to France and to learn the

language fluently. I've never regretted it.

I just love it. A small event affecting what might be an entire life...Ed



Trevor Davies—3rd Platoon is now receiving his veteran's disability. You may recall that he and K.O. Brinlee [among others] were injured by a C-4 detonation on Viegues.

As his eardrums function not at all, he is now equipped with two especially designed hearing aids that electronically do what his ears no longer can.

He spoke of an experience he had shortly after he started wearing them that says volumes about both his disability and of just how much he's missed over the years.

"Ed, I was sitting at the kitchen table reading when I was startled by a strange sound. I turned to Ruth and asked if she'd heard it. She laughed and said it was the beer can she had just opened! Can you imagine that? I couldn't remember when

Trivia Question 7: First called *Satellite*, what was the name of the first offensive military action in the Vietnam War?
(See Trivia answer 7 to the right.)

I had last heard something so common as a beer can opening!!!" I congratulated him on his required talent but said I couldn't shake the image of him with two gadgets growing out of his ears. And, that I would hence forth refer to him as the 3rd Platoon's *stereophonic-bionic-man*.

Good luck Trevor and, I'm whispering now, *stay safe*.

Have you been losing sleep over those Shellback Certifications?

Well, here's a primer on their meaning:

A **Shellback** is one who has crossed by sea the equator at any Longitude.

A **Special Emerald Shellback** is one who has crossed the equator by sea at the Greenwich Meridian, 000° 00' 00" Longitude.

A **Golden Shellback** is one who has crossed the equator by sea at the 180th meridian, the Pacific's International dateline at 180° 00' 00" Longitude.

The **Order of Magellan** commemorates an individual's circumnavigation of the globe.

While every sailor and Marine on the Graham County warrants the first two, the only person to warrant all four is Ed Hart, who spent nearly three years in the 90's on a 29 foot sailboat going east-to-west around the world...alone.

Ron "Bird" Parrott—Weapons Platoon, our lifelong and real life missionary, is doing his ministerial best in Japan for a while. Ron does one heck of a job seeing to it that the word of God is heard "round the world" by our men-in-arms.



God's speed and stay well, Ron.

Charlie Wilson—2nd Platoon had been battling royally through most of last year with Stage Four cancer. Only recently dhe received a medical reprieve. All follow-up tests now and miraculously indicate the disease is in complete remission. God bless and stay safe, Charlie.

So many of you have contributed to this issue. At times it has been a brief something you have included in an email. At others, like this time, many have written detailed emails or spoken with me at length on the phone about their experiences "up the Congo." Thanks.

It has made for a more interesting newsletter.



Trivia Answers:

1. The Battle for Chapultepec Castle during the Mexican-American War on 13 April 1847.

2. Shortly after the 15 April 1783 signing of the *Treaty of Paris*, ending Revolutionary War hostilities, the Marine Corps was disbanded.

3. FALSE: The award was issued because the units had received THREE [Croix de Guerre] citations for gallantry at Belleau Wood, Soissons and Mont Blanc and not for their efforts at any one battle.

4. The Blood Stripe on their trouser legs.

5. A "Gaggle" of Ospreys

6. The nation's *First Black President* had asked: "So, how thick be your thighs, babe?"

7. *Starlite* which was to be a preemptive combined ground, air and navel assault utilizing no less than 5,500 men of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade under the Command of Lieutenant Lewis Walt. Its purpose was to nullify the threat presented by the presence of a Viet Cong regiment in the vicinity of the Chu Lai Naval base.

It was launched on 17 August and ended on 24 August 1965, resulting in estimated 614 Viet Cong killed, 51 captured. The were 45 Marines killed and 203 wounded.

The Range Rider



Jock Mahoney

A fully colorized version of all back issues of Post Solant Amity can be found at our website. On page one you'll find a link to the newsletter listing.

I hope you've enjoyed this latest effort. Send in your stories by e-or-snail mail to make for an even better next issue.

Semper Fi; *Ed Shea*