



POST SOLANT AMITY

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



Volume 7, Issue 3

September 2009

Sailor's Unfaded Memories of Solant Amity I

(Editor's note: The PSA newsletter is now in its seventh year of publication. Before that only emails flashed back and forth among our lot. A few months back, Tom DeLange reached out to our website and when asked to provide thoughts of our distant yesteryear connection he responded with a flood of "stuff" both interesting and instructional of those six months we all shared so VERY long ago. Enjoy!)

During the Santa Maria incident I was an RM3 and, if I recall correctly, had a confidential security clearance. I remember our receiving some encrypted traffic that the OPs officer decoded and took to the Captain, but I was never privy to what it was about. Although I do recall that we made a sudden turn east and headed for Brazil.

I was a radioman aboard the Gear- ing's sister ship, the USS Vogel- gesang DD-862 which, for a time, billeted the 1st Platoon of G-2-6 as we steamed "all ahead full" to intercept the Santa Maria. Ship- board scuttlebutt had it that our orders were to intercept, fire a warning shot across her bow and, if she failed to heave-to, sink the ship(!) and pick up the surviving passengers and crew. However accurate the speculations were, I'm sure glad we didn't have to do that.

As a side note, it was my under- standing that the submerged nu-

clear submarine, USS Nautilus, had been tailing the Santa Maria at the time.

We at first and unexpectedly en- countered Vera Cruz, the Santa Maria's sister ship. The result: a full and resounding "General Quar- ters! General Quarters! All hands man your battle stations. This is not a drill." From my station as star- board lookout I watched the pas- sengers of the Vera Cruz happily wave at our approaching ship. Then, and just as clearly, as the Vogelgesang made a sharp turn to port and our guns came to bear for what appeared to be a likely broad- side, their waving hands dropped into a terrified, white-knuckled rail grasping mode.

Confirming the ID of Vera Cruz, we continued our pursuit of the Santa Maria, then reported to be just offshore of the Recife, Brazil harbor and more than just a few miles away.

Eventually the Santa Maria was docked in Recife and we dropped

Trivia Question 1: Years long "constant to intermittent pain and swelling of the genital organs and inguinal lymph nodes" was a condition experienced by some Pacific theater veterans of WWII including Chesty Puller. What was the cause and identity of the disease? (See answer 1, page 4.)

anchor at the mouth to the harbor, effectively blocking her escape, should she try.

The next day we docked and stayed there for four days, where a drink cost 100 cruzeiros...a DIME?



The Belgian Congo was where I got to go ashore and play Marine. It seems that the Corps' radio equip- ment could not contact the naval radio equipment aboard the ship. I was issued a portable radio, M1 and .45 cal pistol. A grunt was as- signed to me to turn the hand cranked generator for the radio when I needed to contact the ship and relay the Marine's traffic. Shortly after landing on the beach there was a virtual snowfall of para- troopers (well over a hundred) dropped to the west of our location. It was only shortly thereafter that we withdrew back to the ship.

I know that it was the Congo, as we stood off the African coast for roughly thirty days, and the landing was done in this time period. I was never made privy to who the troops were or why they were dropping in for a visit. During the time that we were on the beachhead, several Marines moved inland, but the group I was with stayed at the land- ing site and waited for their return.

Trivia Question 2: Uh, on a lighter note: Did Chesty Puller have a tattoo? (Answer 2, page 4)

The only radio traffic that I passed was a request for the whale boat to come back and pick us up. Again, no answers were provided and questions were discouraged. The upside? Well, I didn't have to dig a foxhole. :-)

Speaking of jogging memories, wasn't it in Dakar, Senegal that a certain group of Marines dropped by the Soviet embassy and re- moved the USSR's flag, taking it to their ship, and hanging it in their quarters? As a result it nearly caused an international incident. I think at that time everyone was back on the LST. Of course, we solid, upstanding sailors would never have done such a thing. Had ya'll invited us, now that might have been a different matter. :-)

The more I think back on some of these things the more I start re- membering. In our visit to Cape Town, South Africa the one thing that really stands out in my mind is like so many others, the indoctrina- tion (think orientation or extremely strong warnings) that we were given before going ashore. One of the things that were stressed was that we were not to speak to a black woman under any conditions, not even just to ask directions. If seen talking to a black woman we would automatically be arrested for solici- tation. And of course, we were completely subject to the local laws. Should we be incarcerated in the local jail when the ship sailed we would be left behind and noted as AWOL.

On the brighter side, the people in Cape Town were fantastic. A local couple met George Lander and I on the dock, just as we came off the ship for liberty. We were invited to their home for dinner and they took us sight-seeing around Cape Town, including a visit to the Indian Ocean side to see it. They kept apologizing because their daughter wasn't present to meet us. When we saw a photograph of their daughter, we were sorry that she wasn't there as well. The one really(Continued on pg 2, Col 2)

WWII's Pacific Theater: Will Spielberg fare any better than Eastwood?

A few years back, I sent a copy of Eugene Sledge's "With the Old Breed" to one of our mem- bers and asked that it be passed from member to member, each of whom was to write something within it's jacket expressing their reaction to the book. It was to be given to one of our lot on the following year's Marine Corps birthday, as a gift.

Well, as is the case with so many of the "best laid plans of mice and men," the tome disappeared before reaching even the fifth of our lot. Frustrated, I contacted Steven Spielberg and Tom

Hanks and arranged for the text to be turned into a screenplay, then, not surprisingly into next year's HBO hit: "The Pacific." ☺

Eugene Bondurant Sledge (4Nov23-3Mar01) was born in Mo- bile, the grandson of Confederate officers. As a 1942 Marion Military Institute freshman studying to be- come an officer, he decided instead to sign on as a private in the Ma- rines Corps. His rationale stemming from a concern that if he waited for graduation he might not get a crack at experiencing combat.

He was assigned to the 1st Marine Division as a replacement mortar-

man in K Company, 3-5 and fought on Peleliu in September '44, and Okinawa in the spring of '45.

Throughout the many brutal months he spent overseas, Sledge kept an unauthorized journal, jotting down his impressions of the fighting and slip- ping his notes between the pages of his bible. He later turned those notes into what has become recognized as a classic memoir: *With the Old Breed, At Peleliu and Okinawa*.

After the war he returned to Alabama, married Jeanne Arceneaux, had two sons, acquired a few college degrees and by 1970 was a full professor(Continued on pg 2, Col 1)

The Pacific (Cont. from page 1)

of Biology at the University of Montavalle in Alabama. Until retiring in 1990, he taught zoology, ornithology and comparative vertebrate anatomy.



Impressed with the amount of interest (and money) stirred up by the success of *Band of Brothers*, HBO decided to provide a comparably dramatic multi-part ministry about the nation's war efforts in the Pacific. So, in April 2007, they announced that Sledge's *With the Old Breed*, along with Robert Leckie's *Helmet for My Pillow*, would form the basis for an HBO series from the same producers as *Band of Brothers*: Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, to air March 2010.

I've not yet read Leckie's *Helmet for My Pillow* but will before seeing the HBO presentation. As for Sledge's writing, it provided a measure of clarity uncommon to the genre. One senses Sledge's humility, his humanity and sensitivity to the absolutely horrific circumstances encountered. However callous you think you are to depravity, if read, Sledge's descriptions will leave you gasping for air.

The battles for Peleliu and Okinawa...along with Tarawa, Cape Gloucester, Saipan and Iwo Jima...rate among the most costly and fearsome of the Pacific theater.

Eastwood's truly pathetic 2006 offering of *Flags of our Fathers* and the battle for Iwo didn't cut it. I pray to God that Hanks/Spielberg and the Marine Corps fare better with *The Pacific*.

Trivia Question 3: What were the most likely words to come from a DI's mouth, after you'd just beaten the timber from his hatchway frame? (See answer 3, page 4.)

A sailor reminisces (Cont. from pg 1)

outstanding memory of Cape Town was the day that we sailed. There was a jetty that extended into the harbor for some distance. Not only was the dock inundated with people seeing us off, but along the rocky jetty people were lined up waving goodbye with hands, white shirts or blouses or just a piece of clothe. There were more people seeing us off at Cape Town than there had been at our home port at the beginning of the cruise. It is my understanding that several men kept in contact with some of the women they met there and later married them. The fact that the mini-skirt was already in vogue there at the time had some bearing, I am sure, and the fact that the available women out-numbered the available men something like three to one also influenced the situation.

Thinking back to Recife reminds me of the one quasi-confrontation between myself and two Marines at the Moulin Rouge night club. Of course, everyone had been partaking of the refreshments. I was just finishing up in the head when two gentlemen of the Corps entered. I squared away my uniform and headed for the exit about the same time they began utilizing the plumbing. One of the Marines called out to me, "Swab, in the Marine Corps they taught us to wash our hands afterwards."

Not thinking, which I had a knack for; I called back over my shoulder, "In the Navy they taught us not to piss on our hands". The words had barely left my lips when I had second thoughts about having voiced them. Feeling that a decidedly different approach was appropriate in view of the fact that no one was really in the kind of shape one needed to be to tactfully apologize. Thus, retreat WAS the better part of valor in this particular case. I immediately moved to the street rather than my table, hoping to be out-of-sight before they exited the head.

Apparently my decision and actions thereafter proved successful as I was able to enjoy the rest of my liberty without pain or having to accept the limited view furnished from a hospital window. Guys, if you should happen to read this and recall me... I do apologize and use the excuse of being temporarily out of my mind. I had to be insane to have said what I did. :-)

For some reason I have not been

able to recall which port it was that we put into that had all the problems with rebels. We posted extra guards on the bow and fantail with 45's and M1's. The government there provided extra security in the form of additional jeep patrol with machine guns mounted in the back of the jeep. When we went on liberty there were troops all over town. Machine gun carrying jeeps patrolling the streets, armed military stationed outside the entrance to stores and other business establishments. I recall walking into what appeared to be a department store where two soldiers stood, one with a rifle, the other a machine gun, weapons held butt against hip with muzzles at forty-five degrees. My smiling and trying to say hello to them was a waste of time. They simply stared at you like they were upset because they weren't off enjoying themselves. We got too close to the governor's residence and suddenly had a few troops pop out of nowhere with their weapons across their chests and indicating that we needed to turn around and go back the way we came. It wasn't until this happened that we realized there were troops dug in all around the grounds. In strolling down the road the jeeps would drive slowly past and every now and then one of them would swing their machine gun to bear down on us as we walked along. Despite the fact that I refused to show concern as a member of the US Navy, it all was getting to me until I headed back to the ship and didn't bother with liberty the rest of the time that we were there.

Yep, lots of memories rolling over me.

And thank you for the website that's made it all possible.

Tom DeLange

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Trivia Question 4: Payment made mostly to married Marines for not eating in a mess hall was called what? (Answer 4, Page 4)

While Woodstock Rocked

Newsweek described them as "a youthful, long-haired army...of hippies." An army of 400,000, mostly white affluent youth, attending an "electric pot dream."

Time gushed over the tribal gathering, declaring: "It ranks as one of the significant political and sociological events of the age" while deploring the deaths of three, one from a heroin overdose.

Meanwhile and elsewhere, a half-million Americans acknowledged societal values over self. Their 109 casualties were genuine, while the media elites mostly ignored such selflessness back "in the day:" Vietnam, 15-18 August 1969.

THEY mirrored the population of the time. A full 92% were white, seven with Spanish surnames. And 8% black. Some 67% were Protestants; 28% Catholic. A third from the South and married. 90% under 30, with 78% between 18 and 22.

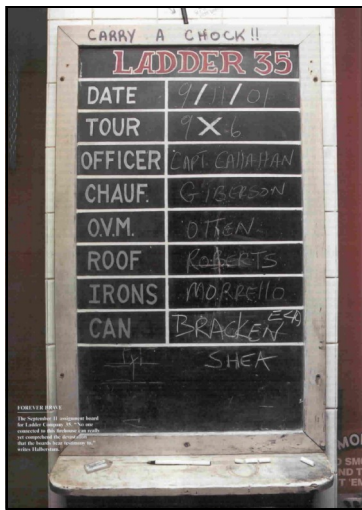
Overwhelmingly Army losses, Marines and Airmen accounted for 8% and 4% respectively. Sailors 1%. Two-thirds were enlisted infantrymen. More than half had volunteered, 43% had been drafted. One was in the National Guard.

On the last day of the Catskill's "peace and love" fest when 50,000 diehards left Woodstock for their homes, thirty-five American heroes died in Vietnam

So, when you hear of Woodstock being the "defining event of a generation," keep in mind the 109 who served nobly, did not get to "go home" and were never lauded by the "illustrious" press of the 60's.

Excerpts and editing of a piece by author-columnist Richard K. Kolb





Ladder 35-FDNY roster on 9/11. All but one died. Please: REMEMBER.

USMC Hygienic Imperatives

Some years ago, a question arose at a convention of the World Health Organization (WHO) about hygiene practices in the United States Marine Corps. It had been rumored that Marines do not wash their hands after urinating. A former USMC Drill Instructor and, at that time, representative of the United States, stood to deny the accusation and to elaborate.

"This suggestion has been around for some time and I would like to correct the misunderstanding;" he announced "Marines DO wash their hands BUT really don't have to...."

As his message was translated through the many earpieces in the room, faces grimaced and the delegate from France, of all places, exclaimed in less than polite Anglo-Fraaaanch "Zat eez disgustING!"

"Let me explain. It's not as terrible as you think;" responded the American.

"I repeat, Marines DO wash their hands but don't HAVE to."

"What eez ziss you say" asked the astonished French delegate, Pepe LaPieuPieu.

"Well," continued the smiling former-active-duty, drill-instructing Staff Sergeant, "Both Harvard and Parris Island graduates are taught to use urinals with almost divine digital deftness, without benefit of their hands. At Haaarvard it's done only to be different from Yale graduates. At Parris Island, recruits are taught to keep their hands off their genitals lest they contaminate and endanger the

Trivia Question 5: When first introduced, the jeep's odometer made a sound every so often, which came to mean a mile or kilometer. What sound was it? (Answer 5 on page 4.)

most important thing in their lives: their rifles." ☺

"I do not believe dis story," chortled the Frenchman.

"That is your prerogative," said the smiling American. "That is your pompous Fraaaanch prerogative."

CLICK....

(Houston Herald – Texas) Last Thursday a woman was arrested, jailed, and charged with manslaughter for shooting a man six times in the back.

Monday she appeared before an arraignment judge and was asked to explain her actions.

"Well, your honor," the woman replied, "I was standing at the corner for about fifteen minutes waiting for a bus to take me home

Acquitted of all charges, she was released and back to work at the café the next day.

Those "Dirty Magazines"

Soon after being transferred to a new duty station, my Marine husband called home to tell me he would be late...again. He went on to say that dirty magazines had been discovered in the platoon's quarters and they had to discipline the whole squad.

Incensed, I launched into a tirade, arguing that many men had pictures hanging in their quarters at our previous post, so why was his new platoon to be penalized for something I thought was so trivial. Was it one of those "marine things" I was not to understand?

Bill calmly listened to my near

Trivia Question 6: The protective fluid used on weaponry which hardens and must be removed before the item can be used was known as what? (Answer 6, page 4.)

RADAR Alert

The Highway Patrol was conducting speed enforcement on I-15, North of Miramar near the crest of a hill.

Suddenly the radar gun got a reading of 300 miles per hour and a deafening roar over the treetops revealed that the radar had in fact locked onto a USMC F/A-18 Hornet engaged in a low flying exercise near the location.

The Patrol Captain fired off a complaint to the USMC Base Commander. To which came a reply in true USMC style:

Thank you for the message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident. You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Hornet had detected the presence of, and subsequently locked onto your hostile radar equipment and automatically sent a jamming signal back to it. Furthermore, an air-to-ground missile aboard the fully armed aircraft had also automatically locked onto your equipment. Fortunately the Marine pilot flying the Hornet recognized the situation for what it was, quickly responded to the missile system alert status and was able to override the automated defense system before the missile was launched and your hostile radar was destroyed.

Thank you for your concerns;

General Never Mind, USMC
Base Commander
Miramar Air Station



Don't you love Labrador retrievers? Gawd, there so cute.

after work. I'm a waitress at a local café. I was alone, so I had my right hand on a pistol within my purse I had slung over my left shoulder. Suddenly I was pulled around hard to my left and, just as I caught my balance, I saw a man running away from me with my purse.

"It was then that I looked down and saw my fingers tightly wrapped around the pistol still in my hand.

"The next thing I remember, your honor," she continued, "I was pointing the pistol at the man running away with my purse, screaming 'No you don't punk! You're not going to steal MY paycheck and tips' and squeezed the trigger of my pistol six times!"

"Why did you shoot the man six times," asked the judge.

"Well," she said, "when I pulled the trigger the seventh time, it just went..."CLICK."

relentless griping and then explained, "Honey, the *dirty magazines* are the ammunition clips from their rifles. They had not been cleaned properly."

Oooooops. There you go, just another of life's little communication problems.

Kennedy-Dike Memorial Bridge— Chappaquiddick, MA.



SKIPPER'S PUB FOOD & SPIRITS

Enlightening Odds and Ends for your Reading Pleasure:

Delwin "Bill" Bailey will be heading north to Ohio, for a bit more than a month, to visit with family. Accept for the need of a cornea transplant in November Bill is otherwise doing well and remains our ever charming optimist.

Ken Brinlee is well despite Oklahoma City's recent high temperatures and humidity. He's enjoying the hell out of his really GREAT great-grand-children, is still working and sends a big "Semper fi!! to ya'll."

Trevor Davies and Ruth are well, enjoying short auto trips and barbecue's with their many friends. And, Trevor assures me, he's pretty well wiped out all of our nation's political enemies...foreign AND domestic...via "Cheney's Revenge" a new computer *hunting* game. ☺

"Billy" Driggins and Elaine have been enjoying the summer and company of their new dog "Lexie." You may recall, from our last newsletter, that they were both devastated at the loss of their last long time canine companion. Bill sends a big "Howdy and Semper fi."

Ed Shea: On a recent Southwest flight an attendant asked all who had served in the military to "light up" their attendant call buttons,

Trivia Question 7: The sailor steering those well known to us Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVP)s was known as a what? (Answer to the right.)

personally thanked them and then asked others onboard to provide a round of applause. Wow!

From the pen of the recently "discovered" **Merrill A. Sweitzer, Jr.** Lieutenant Colonel, USMC, Retired, the former Executive Officer of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, during the Solant Amity I Cruise comes the following:

Solant Amity I truly made for an exciting six (6) months. There was never a dull moment.

From the equator crossing at sea initiation to the "recapture" by a USN destroyer with a platoon of Company G Marines embarked of a high seas "piracy" of the SANTA MARIA, a sleek Portuguese liner; to crossing the equator eight (8) times to include zero-zero latitude- longitude making the crossers royal shellbacks; to an amphibious landing from the sea over the beach utilizing Navy amphibious ships with embarked Marine helicopters, Marine surface amphibious landing craft and Marines at Monrovia, Liberia to another like landing at Cape Town, South Africa witnessed by some 30,000 spectators; to navigating an LSD and LST up the Congo River over 50 miles to the port of Matadi conducting a UN troop evacuation of Guinean military troops from the Congo and returning them to their home country at Conakry, Guinea; to a Company G honor guard in Monrovia, Liberia for the President of Liberia.

Solant Amity I — G-2 6 Association

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See the whole story at
SolantAmity.com

The First of the Corps to Land in Monrovia

What was particularly noteworthy was the conduct and performance of the embarked Marines. At no time in the six (6) month deployment did we have an embarrassing situation ashore, thus fulfilling our people to people mission of spreading good will and friendship with each Marine being an ambassador for his country in the African countries bordering the west coast of Africa when old colonial powers were being replaced with new nations with a choice between communism and the democratic way of life.

In a unique Navy Marine Corps team assignment, the individual Marines distinguished performance upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Semper fi to all.
(msweitzer@webtv.net)

Jim McCarthy and Ann our Philadelphia "correspondents" are

Trivia Answers:

- 1) Called filariasis, it resulted from by the transmission of parasitic round worms via insect bites.
- 2) Yes. It was a blue "eagle, globe and anchor" on his right upper arm.
- 3) .A lyrical "I CAN'T HEAR YOU!!!"
- 4) Commuted Rations, commonly known as ComRats
- 5) Your going to hate yourself: The CLICK.
- 6) If you don't remember its name, perhaps you remember the time spent removing Cosmolene
- 7) Coxswain, pronounced COX-sun.
- 8) The world's premier toy manufacturer: Mattel Inc.

Trivia Question 8: What company was, with tongue in cheek, erroneously attributed to be the manufacturer of the M-16 rifle? (See answer below.)

well. Jim was out enjoying a movie with his son when I called but Ann filled in the blanks since last we talked.

Charlie Wilson is still hanging in there, in his southwest Florida home. Upbeat as always, he reminds us to enjoy our every day...despite the many things troubling our nation. One must find time for family and self amidst the chaos. "Semper fi and be well," he tells us.

A special—in alphabetical order—thanks to the following contributors for providing cartoons, anecdotes, political insights and military history: *George Bitsoli, Trevor Davies, Tom DeLange, Charlie LaMarr, Tom Poole, Merrill Sweitzer, Joe Teklits and Charlie Wilson.*

A number of our lot could use a few, or more, of our prayers. *Maturing* all too swiftly, those brothers suffer from a variety of conditions and discomforts not treatable by medicines alone. Give them all a thought and prayer daily. Thanks.

For more on the upcoming HBO series, check out it's website at <http://www.hbo.com/events/pacific>

Mailed as a black on white copy, a fully colorized version can be found at our website, where on page one you'll find a link to a downloadable version.

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*

