

These are some of the things that really stand out during my “People to People” time on the Solant Amity III CRUISE.

OFFICERS AND SENIOR NCO’s ASSIGNED:

Commanding Office Company “F”	= Captain Jack w. Davis	
Executive Officer Company F	= W.V.BUNKER JR.	
Headquarters Company F	= 1 st Sgt H.W. Craven	& Gy/Sgt J. Cody
2nd Platoon Company F	= 2 nd Lt. A. L. Vallese	& S/Sgt D. Garner
3rd Platoon Company F	= 2 nd Lt W. M. Anderson	& S/Sgt J. R. Pitcher
Weapons platoon Company F	= 2 ND Lt J.B. Williamson	& Gy/Sgt R.A. Gattis
81MM Mortar Platoon	= 1 st Lt. E. E. Finlay	& Gy/Sgt W. Hubert
Landing Force Headquarters	= Staff NCO’S	
CHAPLAIN	= Lt. P.F. Brudzynski	
Anglico Officer	= Lt. D. Bergbauer	
Solant Supply Officer	=Capt. T.S. Coates	
Docto	= Lt. T.H. Baird	
Dentist	= Lt. Zehyer	

SHIPBOARD ENTERTAINMENT:

Such as “shellback” ceremonies when we were approaching the Cape Peninsula, South Africa called (Cape of Good Hope). Initiation for all Marines and Navy who were not shellbacks where considered pollywogs are must be "cleansed" from the ship before King Neptune allows it to continue. Consequently, the pollywogs do not become shellbacks. Once you are granted status as a shellback, it's assumed you've always been a shellback. Spending the morning crawling around on their hands and knees, wogs appear before King Neptune's court where they answer charges for their wogness, always found guilty then led off to be "executed" in the stockade and "buried" in a wooden coffin filled with water. After a few moments in the watery grave, the executioner reopens the coffin and asks, "Who goes there?!"

"An honorable shellback!" would come the response, whereupon the “executioner” would help the newest shellback out of the coffin saying something along the lines of, "Well, what the Hell are you doing in there?!?"... as the wog is presumed dead and a *Shellback* has magically replaced him.

It's a Navy/Marine Corps thing. If you cross the:

- **Equator on a ship you are a Shellback. The passage and a record of your initiation ceremony would be logged in the ships log and perhaps your personnel folder. You would receive anything from a wallet-sized card to an 8x10 certificate to indicate the crossing.**
- **Equator at the 0⁰ Greenwich Date Line you are a Golden Shellback.**



- **180⁰ International Date Line on a ship you are a Golden Dragon.**
- **Arctic Circle you are a Blue Nose.**
- **If you are the first crew of a ship or unit you are a Plank Owner.**

I was given my “proof of certification” bearing a picture of Neptune and my name on a card little bigger than a business card.

There were, of course, boxing matches AND entertainment between same provided by the son of comedian Crazy Guggenheim (Frank Fontaine), who imitated he’s father’s act most commonly appearing on the Jackie Gleason, Dean Martin and Ed Sullivan TV shows.

Then, too, there were movies on deck in the evening hours.

APARTHIED:

also known as Afrikaan "separateness", was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa between 1948 and 1994.

The warnings provided to sailors and Marines alike prior to debarking were something we had to quickly get an understanding of. It was a law, the violation of which was heavy-handedly administrated. And, it required that no social contact was to occur ashore between Caucasian and non-Caucasians...even among our own...personnel. Each of us were classified as either Caucasian or non-Caucasian and ordered to stay in areas associated with only those classified such as ourselves. There was to be no exceptions.

As an American Indian, I was considered non-Caucasian. Allegedly, there was an American Indian already serving 10 years for being with a black woman or being on the wrong side of the street from what I remember 55 plus years later.

PORT EVENTS:

Within all the ports we visited, we found the populations, in general, very welcoming and anytime we had an open ship day there was always a large number of visitors.

While in at least one port, some Marines had taken jeep loads of gifts inland and that the natives had no idea what they were or what many were used for. Indeed, the native women were so unfamiliar with the products that more than one proceeded to taste, perhaps even eat, the gifts of lipstick.

Then, with much time on our hands and borne of curiosity, we asked the natives to teach us how to climb the trees so we might retrieve fruit.

In Cape Town, even though I was in the non-Caucasian area it was OK for the native Caucasians to talk with me. In fact, and peculiarly, they invited me into their area! Something, to this day, that I’ve never gotten my mind around.



ALL ASHORE WAS NOT ALWAYS LIBERTY:

At one point, a 1st Lieutenant not familiar to me selected four non-NCO Marines, including myself, and explained that we were going into the jungle about 3 miles from port to learn if an unaccounted for missionary required help.

Shortly thereafter, we were joined by a military uniformed African guide.

When reaching the edge of the remote village, we Marines were told to standby as the Lieutenant and the guide entered the village. They called out to what appeared to be an empty community. At which point, two villagers came out of the surrounding bushes and talked with the guide for a few minutes. Then, the villagers, Lieutenant and guide went into one of the huts, looked around, exited same and talked about their next move...leaving As the Lieutenant, guide and we Marines proceeded to return to the port, more and more women and children left their hiding places in the bushes and clustered amidst the huts.

None of this was ever explained and, to this day, I still wonder what purpose the effort served.

THEREAFTER:

And upon returning to CONUS.

5/16/62 <=> 11/2/62: Departed CONUS aboard U.S.S YORK COUNTY 1175 on Mediterranean cruise.

October '62: Ordered to the Cuban Blockade for the then pending Missile Crisis. On 10/27/62 we were called on deck and made aware of conflict prospects, ammunition and more. Nothing more occurred at that time, returned to Morehead City, NC. CONUS.

11/2/62<=> 12/3/62: Ordered aboard USS Cambria for return to Cuban blockade. THEN, returned again to CONUS. It was time for me to exit the Fleet Marine Force

9/1/63 <=> 6/28/64 Transferred to Brooklyn Navy Yard, Guard Duty and dress blue assignment with Drum & Bugle Corps.

END OF ACTIVE DUTY. And the beginning a life after the Big Green Machine.