

YORK TOWN CRIER

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Historic memories live within crew

The memories of these last few weeks, especially the climactic last 29 hours of the Apollo recovery--will live on in literally thousands of snapshots and movie reels, and in years of story telling.

"This is something to tell your grandchildren about," as one officer put it.

Even the space agency doctors with their slide cameras--one might think they find all this old-hat by now--were caught up in it all.

Adding to the sheer spectacle of the voyage to the moon was the overpowering warmth of these astronauts. Aboard the YORKTOWN they were never puffed up or egotistical or withdrawn heroes.

They were heroes who belonged as much as possible to the ship's men who worked so hard for their recovery. The astronauts appeared before groups of officers, chief petty officers and enlisted men, and whenever possible they broke free from their Marine escorts and just mingled with the troops, to make small talk with wide-eyed sailors.

They repeatedly de-emphasized themselves, and gave the idea they truly believe that all who participated, right down to the seaman who helped fire the boilers on this recovery ship, are all an important part of every space mission.

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Christmas Show

Despite a driving rain the Christmas Talent Show on December 25 moved to Hangar Bay 3 and went on smoothly. Master of ceremonies LCdr Slack's "a funny thing happened on the way to the Stage" opened the afternoon.

Dallas Townsena of CBS and Ron Nessen of NBC gave the latest "news" from a special David and Walter broadcast that never could be. Syd Andrews, Apollo TV technician, added an "expert's" dialogue on Show Biz.

Almost all popular types of music were there:

--Two rock bands provided electric sounds the Concrete Marshmallows and the Gossamer Elephant.

--Soul sounds of the Darnells

--Country western music by AS1 Woodrow Hurt reminded the men of the "Green, Green Grass, of Home"

--Folk music with Tamerland, Wallace and Silver

--Folk rock by ship's favorite Bill Bennett filled the Hangar Bay

--And the Chaplain's Choir harmonized on the Navy Hymn and Silent Night with solo by SN Winberg.

The swift-moving show closed with the annual Christmas Message by Capt. Fifield and all hands joining in to sing Jingle Bells.

front page story

This front page story was the hottest for the YORKTOWN CRIER this year, without a doubt. Apollo Eight lands only two miles from the Yorktown...everything AOK.

Underwater Demolition team swimmers wait for the helicopter to pluck three astronauts out of a bobbing space capsule 1000 miles from the Hawaiian Islands.

Not far away in the background is the Yorktown.

The three astronauts, two bearded, one shaven speak with the President shortly after their recovery.

The upper photo was by UDT swimmer Ltjg R. G. Flanagan.

Lunar orbiting ends on Fighting Lady

by JOSN Ken Seaton

The recovery portion of the Apollo 8 mission moved as smoothly as the entire manned lunar orbit.

With astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell, Jr., and William Anders piloting their spacecraft through the final re-entry phase, the command module splashed down in the Pacific, 1,000 miles southwest of Hawaii, at 4:52 am (Yorktown time) only 2½ miles from this 25-year-old carrier.

The Apollo 8 predecessor to a planned 1969 landing on the moon, made the first landing in darkness since the space program began.

An Air Force rescue plane from Hickam AFB, Hawaii, made the first contact minutes after the astronauts plummeted thru the re-entry zone at seven miles a second. Hundreds of the 1650-man crew saw the re-entry of the space craft from the flight deck and island structure.

First to reach the capsule were three members of the Underwater Demolition Team Twelve from Coronado, California.



HELO WORLD--Astronauts James Lovell (L), Frank Borman (waving), and William Anders (R) step from the HS-4 helicopter onto the flight deck of the Yorktown.

STG3 Bob Coggin was the first in the 78-degree water to attach a sea anchor. Ltjg R. J. Flanagan and SFC Don Schwab followed soon after. Ltjg Flanagan attached another sea anchor and then the three began to put the flotation collar in place.

"After checking with the astronauts to make sure everything was allright, we just took our time and did the job right", stated Ltjg Flanagan. The Astronauts told the frogmen over their intercom to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. They expanded on their joke about the moon, saying, "It's not make of limburger cheese--it's made of American cheese."

The astronauts were brought aboard the Fighting Lady by a helicopter piloted by Cdr Don Jones, Commanding Officer of HS-4. Crewmembers on the helo were: Lcdr Carl Frank, co-pilot; AWC Norvel L. Wood and AW2 James B. Dorsey, crewmen. Chief Wood was first to visually spot the spacecraft in the water. After being greeted at the helicopter by John Stonesifer, senior member of the NASA recovery team, the first men ever to travel around the moon were welcomed aboard the Yorktown by Capt Fifield.

The astronauts looked rit and trim as they bounced out of the helicopter and strode down the red carpet on the flight deck. After a few brief words by Borman, thanking the crew for giving up their Christmas at home to wait for their splashdown, the astronauts were taken down one of the ship's airplane elevators to the hangar deck, to go immediately below into sickbay.

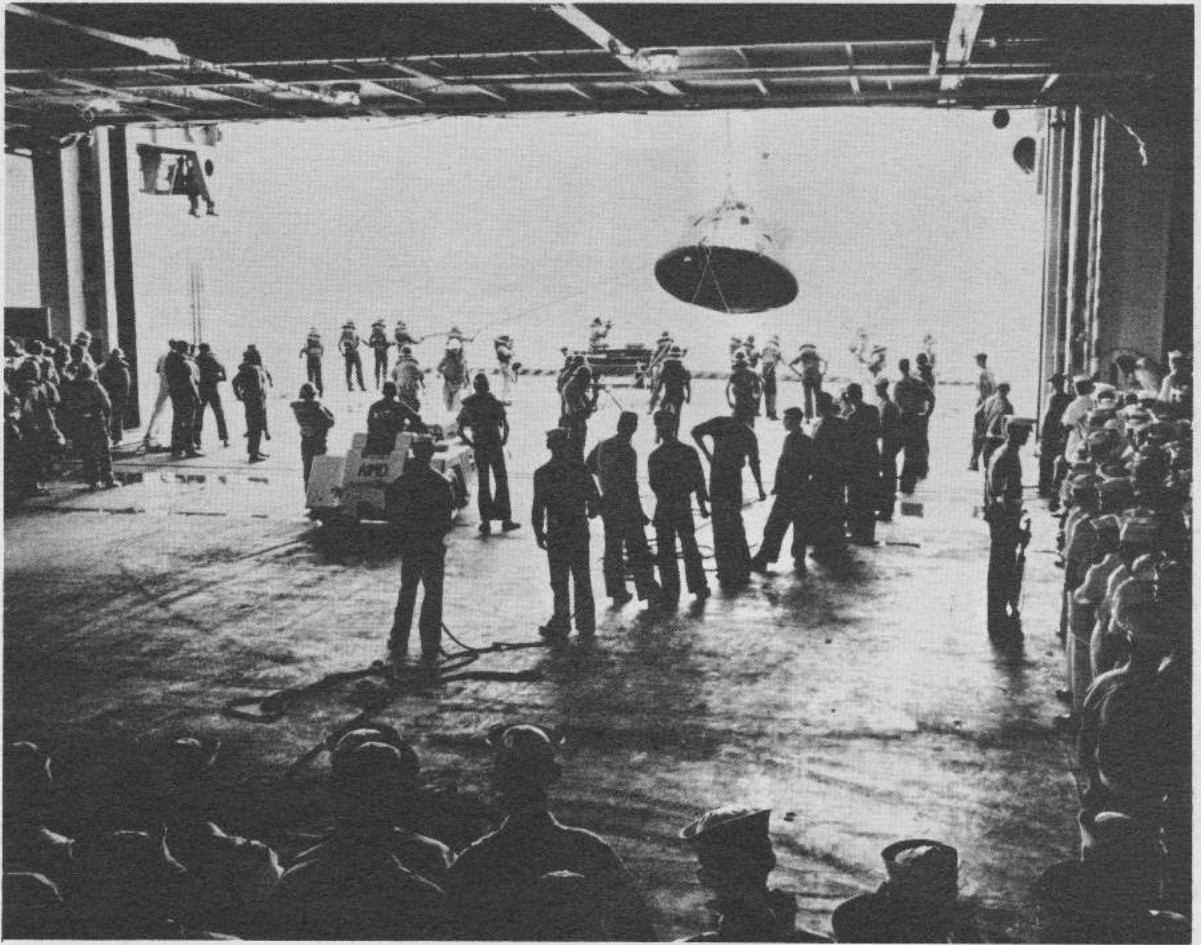
Various tests by the 17-man NASA medical team, under the direction of Dr. Clarence A. Jernigan, took over four hours. Twice the tests were stopped...Once while the astronauts got cleaned up and ate breakfast and again when they left sickbay to view their charred spacecraft. While in sickbay the astronauts talked with President Johnson, who congratulated them on their successful ten-orbit mission. (cont. page 6)



RED CARPET STROLL--
Minutes after landing on the flight deck, NASA official John Stonesifer escorts (l to r) Frank Borman, Bill Anders, and James Lovell with Capt Fife to the elevator.



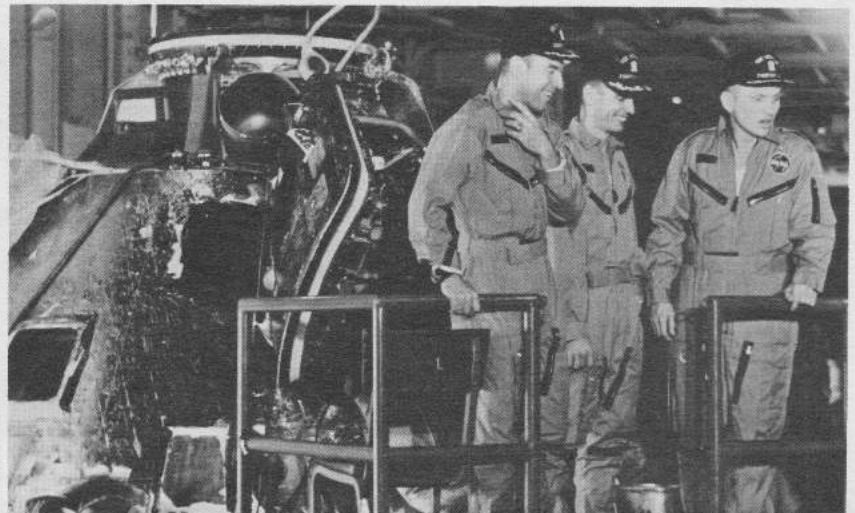
“It sure is nice to be back home...”



TENDER TREATMENT--The Apollo 8 capsule is lifted aboard to elevator number 3.

SMILE, PLEASE--The three moon orbiters return to their capsule Friday afternoon to recall their historic ride and pose for photographers.

PRESIDENTIAL CALL--Astronauts Anders, Borman and Lovell talk to President Johnson on the phone near the medical spaces.





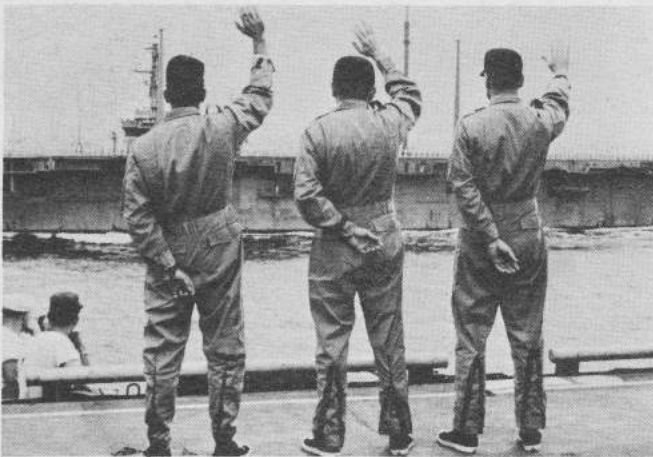
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While aboard, the astronauts slept in flag quarters. They shared lunch with Capt Fifield in his inport cabin. The rest of the afternoon was spent in debriefing. After a formal dinner with the CO and officers of the Fighting Lady, the world's latest heroes met the crew on the hangar deck for a re-enlistment ceremony and cake cutting party.

The cake was seven feet long, three feet wide, 14 layers high and weighed 540 pounds.

Saturday morning the three astros ate in the chief's mess, then waved Good-bye to the communications ship Arlington and the Yorktown before boarding a plane that flew them 300 miles back to Hawaii. The Yorktown brought the silver-gold colored space capsule back to Hawaii December 29.

The recovery operations were broadcast live in color throughout the world by the American Broadcasting Company.



SPACE-AGE RE-UP--
Astronaut Navy Capt James Lovell re-enlists BMCS Ed Corrie, BTCS Bob Groves, EN1 William Oslund, RN2 Bob Hyde, AE2 Raymond Scott and ATN3 Wayne Spicier. The cake in the foreground was cut and passed out shortly after the re-enlistments.



Yorktown Stewards worked overtime to feed press, astros

Not many people can brag that they prepared the first earth-side supper for the Apollo 8 astronauts. But it's strictly in the line of duty for Yorktown's Stewards.

Christmas holiday routine? It never happened for the wardroom stewards. Instead of preparing 110 officer plates of food, the same nine-man crew had to prepare 230 plates for all the extra NASA, ABC, and civilian newsmen aboard. Most of the stewards averaged almost 18 hours a day while the guests were onboard.

For the astronaut dinner, five forty-pound rounds of roast beef were served. And that's a lot of meat (Ask a wife or girl friend to serve one sometime.)

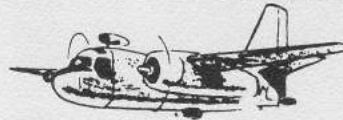
There are 37 Stewards in the ship's company with several more TAD from the Kearsarge and HS-4. These men are responsible for cleaning and making-up all the officer's staterooms, and last week all the civilian rooms as well. Each man is responsible for approximately 9 rooms.



SHORTENED SWIM CALL--Two swim calls were cut short last week 1000 miles from Hawaii while waiting for the Apollo 8. The first was due to rough water and the second because of a shark's appearance.



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