

25 July 1960

Notice to ALL HANDS

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI---Information and Description---NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE SHIP

1. Historical Information

Port-au-Prince is situated on the Gulf of Gonaves, about 1,400 miles south of New York City. The Southwestern part of Port-au-Prince is built on the foot slopes of Morne l'Hospital, a mountain which rises precipitously to a height of 3,400 feet. The eastern and south eastern parts of Port-au-Prince are built on low hills which rise gradually to Gros Morne, a mountain of 1,400 feet altitude directly east of the city. The northern edge of the city extends into the Cul-de-Sac, a low fertile plain extending ten miles to the north and 18 miles to the east. The Cul-de Sac valley is situated between two mountain ranges, one on the north and one on the south, which average 4,000 feet in altitude. The valley itself is very low and flat; it is only a few feet above sea level the whole distance to the Dominican border.

The Island of Hispaniola was discovered by Columbus on his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere in 1492. The Spanish who settled the island found it unprofitable and largely abandoned it for the mainland. They were followed by French and English buccaners who used the western portion of the island as a base until, by treaty in 1697, it was ceded to France. The colony has had a varied political history with its own revolution and several different types of government in the last hundred and fifty years. Now it is fully independent and has a President and elected representatives.

Port-au-Prince is the capital and largest city of Haiti, and the largest commercial center. The population is over 145,000. English is compulsory in the elementary schools, and all cab drivers, shopkeepers, hotel and restaurant personnel, etc., speak it fluently. The principal industries include sugar plantations, sugar refineries, lard manufacturing, cotton ginning, textile mills, production of aerated waters, bay rum, edible oil, ice, sisal, shoes, handbags and handicrafts. The climate is relatively warm and humid. At this time of year little rain can be expected.

2. Medical Situation

Health conditions in Port-au-Prince are about average for Caribbean ports. Prevalent diseases are dengue fever, dysentery, yaws, and syphilis. Prostitution is recognized and efforts are made to control disease by medical examination of prostitutes but it is not known how effective are measures taken to stop infected prostitutes from plying their trade. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 60 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION SUFFERS FROM EITHER SYPHILIS OR YAWS. SYPHILIS IS PREDOMINANT IN THE CITIES WHILE YAWS PREVAIL IN THE RURAL AREAS. Efforts to combat malaria and typhoid fever have been quite successful, and these diseases have become much less prevalent than heretofore. Other diseases encountered are tuberculosis, nephritis, and elephantiasis. Water is supplied to the city from a reservoir. The water mains are in somewhat poor condition and it is believed that although the water is chlorinated, it becomes contaminated in its passage through the mains. Therefore only boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking purposes ashore. Personnel should be cautioned to avoid ice in drinks due to its formation from contaminated water. NOTE: Fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Haiti are contaminated and

should not be consumed until peeled and thoroughly cooked. There is, in effect, no proper inspection of fresh meats and poultry and such foodstuffs should only be purchased from establishments recommended by the American Embassy. Meals ashore should be taken in the recommended establishments. Bottled water is available and fresh water from the city supply should not be used. Milk is pasteurized, but for safety's sake, it is suggested that local milk not be consumed in Port-au-Prince. Proper sewage disposal facilities are lacking in Port-au-Prince in most areas.

3. Currency

The basic monetary unit of Haiti is the "gourde", and the principal fractional unit is the "centime" (one gourde equals 100 centimes). Haitian paper currency circulates in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 gourdes and coins in denominations of 5, 10, 20, and 50 centimes. The gourde is, by law, exchangeable on demand without expense for American dollars at five gourdes to one dollar. American money circulates freely in Haiti but legal tender is limited to \$20 or less.

4. Restaurants

Sanitary conditions in Port-au-Prince and all of Haiti are not up to standards of the United States. Great care should be exercised in the selection of eating places and the selection of food. Fresh vegetables and fruits should not be eaten; only bottled or boiled water should be consumed; and even "pasteurized" milk must be avoided. It is also recommended that one check prices before ordering. The following restaurants are recommended:

Auberge Au Clous d'Or Rotisserie
Aux Chantecler (24-hour service)
Aux Cosaque
Buteaus, Avenue Cossacks
Buteau at Round Point
Capru
La Belle Creole
La Rowd Point
Le Perchoir (excellent view from 3300 feet up on mountain peak)
Le Picardie (Petionville)
Vincent Savoy, Champ de Mars
The International Country Club: for men from visiting vessels (2 miles from the city)

There are also several hotels with good facilities. Night clubs near the city include the Caban Choucoun, Casino, and Rendez-Vous. The majority of the small night clubs and cabarets in the downtown area are not too attractive and are located amid undesirable surroundings. There are two small motion picture theaters which show old French and American films. There is also a new open-air theater.

5. Churches

There is a Roman Catholic cathedral and smaller churches in the city, with the best known being the Church of Sacre Coeur near the main residential section of the city. Although the clergy is French, a British priest, Father Henninger, conducts one mass for resident Americans at 6830 on Sundays in the chapel of the General Hospital. He will also hold mass on board if this is desired. Services are held in English at the Episcopal Cathedral each Sunday by a resident

American Bishop. Wesleyan Methodist services are held at 0700 and 0900 on Sundays. In addition, there is a Seventh Day Adventist Church in Port-au-Prince.

NOTE: TOURS AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED PERSONNEL

A reputable firm, Caribtours, has offered to conduct one or more tours of the city and surrounding countryside on Saturday, 30 July 1960. These tours will probably commence at 0930 and last until 2200. Below is listed the tours together with information about each one to help those of you who wish to participate decide.

a. Tour No. 1-- Includes a shopping and sight seeing tour of the City and Mountains with the Iron market (Marche en fer) and the Open market (Marche a ciel ouvert), the business section, the Exposition ground, Churches, parks, Petionville, the town of the elite; Kenscoff, in the high mountains; Boutilliers, with its view of the city; the restaurant Le Perchoir, the Rum factory, with free samples; the International Country Club, Riviera, and other hotels, with swimming in fresh water available; dinner at a good restaurant; shopping and entertainment; cock fights and voodoo rites (at \$.50 each per person).
The tour is all day. This tour with dinner.....\$5.50
This tour without dinner.....\$4.00

b. Tour No. 2-- Similar to the above, but one half a day.....\$3.00

c. Tour No. 3-- Night tour of the Exposition grounds, the interesting places in Port-au-Prince, and a Voodoo show (by reservation).....\$4.00

d. Tour No. 4-- A rural tour.....\$4.00

Those who are interested in signing up for a tour, please contact their division officers by 1800 Friday evening, 29 July 1960.

ATHLETICS: ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE, IF POSSIBLE, TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE INTERESTED IN ANY OF THE SEVERAL FORMS OF ATHLETIC RECREATION AVAILABLE IN PORT-AU-PRINCE. PLEASE CONTACT ENS MAXIM BEFORE 1800 FRIDAY EVENING, 29 JULY 1960, FOR INFORMATION NOT GIVEN IN THIS HANDOUT.

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