

Sailors Excel as Envoys

Officer Tells Of Latin Tour

NORFOLK — "We didn't buy them. We earned them with sweat, work and the ability of the American blue-jacket as an ambassador."

That's the way Cmdr. Harvey Shaw summed up four months of work with Latin American navies and visits to South American ports.

Shaw, skipper of the destroyer Mullinix, told a MACE (Military and Civilian Employees) Club luncheon in the Lafayette Yacht Club Monday how his 300-man crew won the affection of Latin Americans during the Hemisphere operation called "Unitas III."

ANTISUB TECHNIQUES

Like Unitas cruises in 1961, the objective was out, antisubmarine warfare techniques with Latin American navies, using three U.S. ships and a squadron of patrol planes.

The real work at hemisphere understanding was done in port, however. The weapons were music and sports.

In one Brazilian city, the Mullinix sailors were challenged to a basketball game. The Brazilians fielded their Olympic team. The score was 112 to 12.

"We might have lost on the score, but we won otherwise," Shaw said, when 10,000 spectators swamped the Mullinix team and carried it from the stadium on their shoulders.

In Chile the ship's "rifle" team, using military issue guns, placed 1st. It competed against the No. 1 rifle team in the country.

In Uruguay, a young Mullinix sailor with only high school track experience placed third in a tough race and made the front page of the local newspaper.

In another town, 15,000 Chileans wept while a U.S. band played their national anthem.

"In our country," the commander said, "we are ashamed to wave the flag, but in their country we waved our flag and it was a wonderful thing."

TOUR OF SLUMS

On a number of occasions, Mullinix sailors were put to the test by Communist sympathizers. A Recife, Brazil, Communist newsman asked Shaw to send a sailor on a tour of the slums. The sailor, a first-class petty officer, was then interviewed. Apparently he gave the right answers because the ship got a fair writeup, Shaw said.

In Santiago, the capital of Chile, another Communist sympathizer asked the leader of the Mullinix band, a chief musician, if the band would play for a Mississippi Negro audience if asked.

"I'm a musician, not a politician. What would you like to hear?" the chief replied.