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GUINEA CACKLE II

Dear Friends and Members of the 339th and 1179th,

As the New Year begins, we resurrect that literary masterpiece of World War II "The Guinea Cackle". Conceived, born and cranked out on the shores of Milne Bay, the Cackle, through Frank Edwards and his staff, made sure we were the best damned informed GI's in the South Pacific. The popularity of this wartime chronicle was second only to YANK Magazine for two reasons ... 1) It did not feature the humorous events in the life of Sad Sack and 2) it did not carry those luscious, sexy pinup pictures.

Guinea Cackle II will not reflect the editorial skills of Frank Edwards nor will it carry a Sad Sack cartoon. A contemporary centerfold similar to those found in Playboy and Penthouse Magazines was contemplated. However, discretion ruled and the idea was scrapped when Charlotte said "over my dead body ... at your advanced age, what useful purpose could such pictures possibly serve". Score one for Charlotte!

The Guinea Cackle II will attempt to keep you updated on the health and welfare of all our people. Since creative writing is not one of my strong points, I must rely upon your help. Beyond a mini report of the past and upcoming Reunions, I can give you little. The news must come from you for publication here. Please write about the things going on in your life or that of your family ... good, bad or indifferent.

No doubt we will have more than our share of death and sick notices. To balance the scales, don't forget to send us positive or humorous stories related to you or the members of your family. A new birth - a retirement - a trip - a promotion - whatever ... let us hear from you.

Ladies, if your guy won't write, and the odds are that he won't, do everyone a big favor and write for him. As an incentive, we will offer three awards to the gal who - 1) writes to us most often between now and November 1st; 2) submits the most unusual story; and 3) forwards us the most amusing anecdote. Good luck and now on with the show!

Few remember a finer reunion than that in Hampton, Va. last July. The Chamberlin Hotel, smack on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, provided all the ambience, amenities and service which are so necessary for a great reunion. Our seafood dinners (all you could eat) were a gourmet delight. Dick Steiner, that connoisseur of spam and you-know-what-on-a-shingle, was seen consuming four huge bowls of She Crab Soup in the course of one evening.

The hotel property merges with Old Fort Monroe. As a result we enjoyed two fine concerts - one given by the Fort Monroe Army Band - the other by the Norfolk Naval Base Band.

Our tours of the Norfolk Naval Base and the MacArthur Memorial were most unusual and interesting. Within the Norfolk Naval Base Museum, we found a series of pictures taken at Red Beach, Leyte, during the landing. One picture is that of a D-8 bearing the familiar white shovel found on all 339th equipment. A close look reveals the operator to be Larry Morrison of H & S! As I recall, Larry came from the area of Parkersburg, W.Va. and did some boxing prior to the service. The MacArthur Memorial is something else! The display of personal effects, memorabilia, and decorations earned during the span of his military career is overwhelming. This is a must for all who visit Norfolk.

Our most enjoyable moments were spent in our hospitality suite. The close comraderie that exists among us always seems to peak when we are gathered closely to the point where we are able to rub elbows with each other. A little "toddy" helps warm the atmosphere and even the shy and inhibited begin to open up. A case in point ... Ed Kaczorek. After one or two "soda pops" there ain't no telling what that wild Pollak will say or do (don't worry, Ed ... I'll not reveal what you told me. But don't think I'm just another pretty face).

Lovable Maude and Charlie Simpson showed up with their usual basket of peaches. Ben Wyche claims Charlie has become a fruit huckster since retirement. Whatever ... the peaches were excellent and we all appreciate Charlie and Maude's thoughtfulness.

Speaking of Wyche, you ain't tasted nothing so good as Uncle Ben's Green Pepper jelly. Sure beats anything I ever tasted under the Smucker label and you know what the ad says - "with a name like that, it's got to be good". You and Charlie should get your act together, Ben. His peaches and your culinary talents could be the start of something big.

Getting back to the Reunion, everyone agreed that the added extra day gave us more leisure time to visit and talk with each other and gave greater value to the basic costs of our transportation to get to and from the Reunion. We are happy it worked out as we had hoped.

1981 REUNION

Reunion attendance last year was down by 33% over the 1979 Reunion. In evaluating this situation, we were able to determine that many were unable to attend due to health and other personal reasons. However, for others it was a problem of economics. To deal effectively with the latter, it was recommended and voted that all future reunions be held after Labor Day when most hotels lower their rates. We believe this is a wise and prudent decision. The weather will still be excellent, the busy tourist season will be over and few, if any of us, will be affected by having children in school.

While Hershey, Pa. was voted the 1981 Reunion site, hotel rates were found exorbitant and totally unacceptable. Therefore, by the authority vested in me by the membership, an alternate reunion site has been chosen.

THE 1981 REUNION SITE WILL BE HARRISBURG, PA. (in close proximity to Hershey) and our HOST HOTEL WILL BE THE MARRIOTT. Circle these dates on your calendar and schedule your vacations to coincide - THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17 TO SUNDAY THE 20th. Peter Crombie, we would appreciate it if you would forward this information to all major service magazines.

At this early date, we can provide no cost figures or schedule of planned activities. We can only assure you of excellent accommodations, another relaxed and fun-filled Reunion, great Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine and an opportunity for the women to go bananas shopping for loads of unusual bargains in the mill outlet stores nearby.

We already had a call from Bil-Bo Morrison who said he, Joe Manton, Jim Lovett and their wives will be arriving from Mississippi. That's great news! Sure hope you can get someone to mind the store, Leon Sorensen, so you and Bonnie can be with us. All "first timers" in 1979 - I can't tell you how great it was to see all you guys after all these years and to meet your lovely wives.

MAIL CALL

During the course of 1980, correspondence came from many members and friends who could not make the Reunion. In most cases all enclosed a personal check to help keep the Reunions going. Others gave of their own accord at the Reunion. You guys are super and I want you all to know how very much the entire membership values and appreciates such thoughtfulness, care, and financial support. It says so very much about you.

LOST AND FOUND

Alex Puzo (14240 Newell Dr., Brookfield, Wisc. 53995) is trying to locate Anthony Califano. If anyone knows his whereabouts - please communicate with Puzo.

MAN OF THE YEAR

Each year the title of MAN OF THE YEAR will go to some member who in some unusual way gives us cause to pay special tribute. This year that honor goes to Charles Verona.

Charlie has been unable to attend a Reunion for many years. Yet, if he were given the same opportunity as you and I, he would never miss one. Unfortunately, Charlie will never be able to attend a reunion because for many years he has been confined with multiple sclerosis .. first to his home, then his bed, and now the Wisconsin Veterans Hospital.

Although bedridden, Charlie wrote to us twice last year. A quick glance at the handwriting and you know how much he is hurting. You know immediately how difficult, tiresome, and laborious it must be for him to write. Though he has every right, there is no trace of bitterness, despair or complaint in his messages. He willingly accepts the tragic and difficult road God asks him to follow and as incredible as it may sound, he writes about his concern and the misfortune of others, rather than his own.

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May 19th he wrote "I am enclosing a small sum to help you to send me future news letters. I also enclose a check for your boy Mike in the Philippines. I am so sad to learn how he has had to struggle to feed his nine children, and to learn of the great poverty that exists in Leyte". And from a recent letter "It tears my heart out when I see on TV and read accounts like those you wrote about, that makes me want to do more for people more in need than I. On TV last night they spoke of how victims of Italy's earthquake were losing what little they have to looters. Seeing all the old, the destitute and those being rescued after being buried alive under tons of debris, just made me cry". What a super human being you are, Charlie. God made you a very special person and those of us whose lives have been touched by you are immensely richer for that great privilege. Your great courage, together with your great compassion and love for others is so uncommon today. What a great example you set for us to follow!

The men and women of the 339th and the 1179th salute you as our MAN OF THE YEAR. Let's show our appreciation to Charlie by writing to him, care of the Wisconsin Veterans Hospital, King, Wisc. 54946.

RETIREMENT

Some of you may already be aware of it, but for those who do not know, Donald Winston Franks (Junior to me) my partner in crime and Trust Officer for the Central Trust Bank, decided to hang up his spikes after 37 years. Between his pension from the Bank, and his National Guard Reserve retirement pay (you and I give him as tax payers each month) the guy can live like a king and rightfully so. Few men would make the sacrifices and take on the awesome responsibility of caring for an invalid friend. Junior has done this for the past five years for his buddy, Ed Bolmer. One of the greatest happenings in my life was Junior Franks. Carrying him through the war as I did was worth it. As my closest friend, I'd be willing to do it again.

DECEASED

We were saddened to learn of the death of Malcolm Swartz this past year. Malcolm and his wife Patsy rarely missed a reunion. We shall miss Malcolm greatly for he did much to make our reunions a success.

While in Hampton, we received a wire from Virginia Wenneman advising us that Lou passed away on July 23rd. Lou and Virginia were faithful followers and supporters of the Reunions. Lou's warm personality will be missed by those of us who were privileged to know him well.

Word was received from a niece of Adam Barborich that Adam passed away February 19, 1979. His last address 463 E. Bishop St., Bellefonte, PA 16823.

Recently we were notified that Bob Dornon, former adjutant to Colonel Cox passed away. Bob's first reunion was three years ago at the Lake Geneva, Wisc. Playboy Club. He was greatly impressed with the warm reception given him and looked forward to attending again in Hampton. His long history of heart disease forced him to cancel at the last minute. Instead he mailed me a scrap book of his photos from the war and numerous original orders cut for both the 339th and the 1179th. For this generosity, we are most grateful.

Death touched our own family. Two months after attending the Reunion, Charlotte's Uncle Larry passed away prematurely and suddenly. A look alike for Jimmy Durante, many of you came to know him from the Reunions he and his wife Marie attended the past 5 or 6 years. Both were with me to the Philippines in 1978. A Seabee in World War II, he loved to attend our reunions and made many friends among you.

Our sympathy and condolences go to the families of all our deceased. Per our custom, all shall be remembered in our memorial service in Harrisburg.

SPECIAL OFFERING

For those who ordered and paid for copies of the 339th History and the 339th and 1179th orders donated by Bob Dornon, the same are enclosed. Sorry we are so late but it has been a most hectic year.

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I use this space to express my appreciation to those who wrote, called or wired to express concern over my injury as a result of the bombing in Manila, October 19. Charlotte said the phone did not stop ringing for two days.

We were deeply touched that so many of you showed such concern over my safety and the welfare of our family. Sheer numbers makes it impossible for me to send a personal note of thanks to each of you. So, until I see you, please accpet for now my warmest thanks to each of you, for your care, consideration and kindness. For the record, I was actually struck in the middle of the back approximately two inches from my spine. I was extremely fortunate. Two inches to the left and I could have been paralyzed. 1980 gave me much to be thankful for. With you, I look forward to a happy and prosperous New Year and the pleasure of seeing you September 17 in Harrisburg, Pa. More on that come June. Please stay in touch.

Always,

Joe

339th & 1179th

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