

POST OFLAG ITEM

CHICAGO IS "OUR KIND OF TOWN!" WINDY CITY BASH A SUCCESS!

CHAIRMAN WARREN "CURLY" CURTIS CONGRATULATED FOR GREAT JOB BY MORE THAN 45 EX - OFLAG 64 MEN WHO GATHERED AT THE EDGEWATER BEACH HOTEL ON OCTOBER 14, 15 and 16.

FLASH: - - WASHINGTON, D. C. IN 1968!

Plans for the 1968 Reunion were discussed with two sites nominated - Louisville and Washington, D.C. A vote was taken and our nation's capital won over Bill Cory's Bourbonville.

Al Casner volunteered to take on the assignment of '68 Chairman with General John Waters and Col. Lou Gershenow offering to lend a hand. Our thanks to all three! (Now listen, Al...there must be 10 kriegies in the D.C. area who'll help you set up our next together... elsewhere in this edition, we'll give you a few names.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF "A WEEKEND IN THE WINDY CITY" (OR, WISH YOU WERE THERE!)

First of all - who was there: Curly Curtis, John Slack, Frank Maxwell, John Glendinning, Joe Friedman, Larry Phelan, Henry Soderberg, John Waters, Paul Carnes, Len Feldman, Lou Gershenow, Bob Milligan, Verris Hubbell, Lu Wilcox, Jim Bickers, John Scully, Russ Ford, Sol Levy, Bill Cory, Al Casner, Bob Aschim, Bob (Cheerful Charlie) Cheatham, Joe Seringer, Ray Marnien, Tony Cipriani, Joe Barrett, Ted Ellsworth, Bob Bonomi, Ed (Watchmaker) Hirt, Roy Ihrle, Dan Lewandowski, Steve Barkovic, Ted Pawloski, Bob Thompson, Ray Klinkenberg, Tom Johnson, Don Waful, "Doc" Burgeson, "Doc" Boggess, Irving Yarock, Gardner Simes, Ed Moschel.

'Twas a fine body of men!!

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Paul Carnes, who is Pastor of the First Unitarian Church in Buffalo, New York, conducted a brief, pre-breakfast Thanksgiving service on Sunday morning. His sermon was, as always, right on the beam... beautiful....inspiring.

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Here's a play-back on Der Grosse Weekend: Many kriegies arrived at the Hotel Friday afternoon (about 20 had supper together on Friday), with the majority coming in Saturday morning. Good 'ol Joe (Twinkle-toes) Friedman worked all day Saturday in New Jersey, hopped a plane at Newark and reached Chicago before our banquet Saturday night (that's spirit!...but he forgot his violin!).

The Registration Desk opened at 9:00 A.M. Saturday in the Hotel's East Lounge, the focal point until Bill Cory's Cocktail Party in his suite at Noon (nice time for a Cocktail Party, eh? Holy Schnapps!). Instead of ending after an hour or so, the Old Fitzgerald flowed until 6:00 P.M. 'midst reminiscences, laughter, shouting, hand pumping. It was just great!!!

From Cory's Cocktail Hours, we adjourned to the Reunion Cocktail Hour (Whew!) which was held in the room where we had our banquet. (You won't believe this, but nobody got pie-eyed...just friendly - "Old Fitzgerald" makes you think young!).

The banquet followed, and it was excellent...both food and entertainment. On the dais sat Curly Curtis, John Slack, Frank Maxwell (the three committeemen), General Waters, Paul Carnes, Henry Soderberg, and John Glendinning, who did a bang-up job as MC. (John's Irish dialect stories received lusty laughs from all).

During dinner, Bob Bonomi kept busy shooting candid and group shots of the gang. Thanks Bob. We'll have more information about Bob's pix in the next edition of the "ITEM".

John Waters' brief after dinner speech was the right touch, with the theme built around "Friendship through adversity." We're grateful you were able to come, General John...our warmest good wishes on your retirement. See you in Washington.

Henry Soderberg told us about changing jobs effective January '67, but he said he'll continue to attend our reunions (he mentioned that it was nice of us to hold reunions "just the same time that he makes plans to visit the United States.") He joins Scandinavian Airlines System soon and (here comes the N-E-W-S we've been waiting to spring on you!):

SODERBERG VOLUNTEERED TO BRING COMPLETE DETAILS TO OUR NEXT REUNION IN WASHINGTON ABOUT AN OFLAG 64 REUNION IN 1970 IN EUROPE!!!

YEP...AS AN EXECUTIVE WITH SAS, HE'LL TRY TO GET A SPECIAL RATE FOR ABOUT A TWO WEEK SOJOURN TO SWEDEN AND DENMARK...CHARTER BUS TO SZUEIN, POLAND, RETURN TO SWEDEN...THEN HOME. HENRY BELIEVES SUCH A TRIP, WITH HIS HELP, COULD BE MADE FOR UNDER \$500. PER PERSON.

The foregoing NEWS was greeted with much enthusiasm at Chicago... in fact many kriegies said "let's do it in 1968." Sounds good, eh? Think about it now - and talk it over mit der frau...and bring your decision to Washington.

Getting back to the Chicago Reunion: After eating, Sol Levy put on a masterful display of legerdemain that baffled and pleased everybody. Sol is a fantastic magician...if he weren't such a successful businessman (owns a Jewelry Shop on East 59th Street in New York City - with 5 or 6 clerks), he could make a living in Night Clubs. Speaking of Sol's jewelry business - during the reunion, at Cory's Party, Ed Hirt walked up to Sol and said: "Remember me, Levy, I'm the guy who showed you how to fix watches." Of course, Sol remembered and he told Hirt how effective Hirt's lessons had been...When Sol got out of the Army, he began repairing watches and little by little (with a lot of sweat) he became a success.

After banqueting, the whole gang returned to the Committee Hospitality Suite for a little old-fashioned PARTY (sponsored by a Non-Kriegie, but great guy, Bill Isbell, one of the Hotel "directors" - who wanted to show his appreciation to "a bunch of swell gents from World War II who still get together after over 20 years"...those are Bill's words). From all of us, Bill, thanks very much for your kindness and generosity. Your part was the perfect end to a perfect day.

Curly Curtis sprung a surprise on the whole company Saturday night, by bringing in a marvelous three-piece German Band complete with World War I uniforms.

Sunday came too quickly...and as already reported, Paul Carnes started the day off with a non-denominational service (what a pity we didn't tape his sermon).

Kriegies started leaving the Edgewater Beach Hotel in the morning for the airport, railroad terminal and highway but there were still some around through Sunday afternoon still talking and laughing over the events of the weekend.

Boy...it was somethin'!

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RANDOM NOTES ON THISA AND THATA:

Henry Soderberg had a pleasant surprise for us Sunday morning, after Paul's service. He produced octogenarian Tracy Strong who spoke a few words. Does the name ring a bell? Mr. Strong was head of prisoner of War activities for the International YMCA, with offices at Geneva during World War II. A fine, tough old gent who was indirectly responsible for many, many items we enjoyed at Oflag 64...books, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc. Thanks Henry, for giving us the opportunity to meet one of our "guardian angels."

One of the interesting pieces of literature brought to the reunion (in addition to War Logs, "Items", pictures, theater programs, etc.) was a copy of the December 1962 Argosy magazine. Bob Milligan of Jefferson, Iowa, was thoughtful enough to put it in his suitcase and lug it to Chicago. Argosy featured a first-person account of the visit to the Katyn Forest by Col. Jack Van Vliet (3rd Bn. C.O.-168th). In 1943, when many of us were held at Rotenburg on the Fulda (IX A/Z), the Germans took Van Vliet, Capt. Stewart and a British Officer from the camp to Katyn to inspect the bodies of the murdered Polish Officers, so they could determine for themselves who was responsible. Jack Van Vliet reports it was the Russians, without a doubt. An interesting, informative story.

Remember the talented Don Waful (played trombone in Bob Rankin's Swing Band and sang in the band's trio)? Don's from Syracuse, N.Y., where he's a successful vice-president of an insurance company and still plays the trombone...but now with a Syracuse symphony orchestra.

Jim Bickers was on hand and hasn't changed a bit! His sense of humor was in evidence many times over the weekend. And Jim came up with a great idea: If he gets enough definite orders from his old kriegie friends, he will arrange to have bound a complete set of the famous "OFLAG ITEM" (not this ITEM - the 15 issues that were published in Poland)! He's certain he can have the work done for less than \$5.00 if he gets a substantial number of orders. Well, how about it? A volume of the original OFLAG ITEMS would be nice to have. If you're interested, DON'T SEND ANY MONEY, but drop a note to Ye Olde Editor, John Slack, and we'll contact Jim. More about this project in our next edition.

Special to Al Casner: Now about those names of kriegies from "64" who are living in the District of Columbia area (if you haven't got their addresses, let us know and we'll furnish them): Ready?

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Wilbur Sharpe, Frank Diggs, Seymour Bolten, Ken Goddard, Bob Rankin, George Juskalian, Leo Farber (he was there!), Clyde Herring, Don May, Marcellus Hughes, Jerr Long. Al: that list should make you very happy...you've got built-in publicity chairmen, public relations chairmen, entertainment chairmen, even a lawyer (Clyde Herring). Speaking of Clyde, does everybody know he ran for Governor of Iowa after he was separated from service? Unfortunately, he was defeated, but it was a good fight.

To give you an idea of the preparation a Reunion Chairman must go through..Al Casner has already started his search for an appropriate site for our 1968 Reunion! Welcome to the group, Al (but it's all worthwhile when you see the joy on the Kriegie's faces at reunion time).

Believing there'll be a 'volunteer' or two among the Kriegies from the Washington area, here's Al's home address: 400 Slade Run Drive, Falls Church, Virginia.

This issue of the Item is running along-but we want to mention some of the Kriegies who contacted us by telegram and phone during the reunion. Jack Rathbone (Denver), Manny Robertson (near Salt Lake City), and Larry Higgins (Clarinda, Iowa) telephoned their regards...and telegrams came in to the Hotel from Col. Drake, Gen. Alger, Tony Lumpkin, Dick Rossbach, Al Ross and Bert Goldman.

Many of you wrote notes on the post cards you returned explaining why you had to decline and we appreciated having these messages. There were others who wrote letters and we passed them around so that your friends could read for themselves how life is treating you. Among the interesting letters received were ones from Clyde Herring, Manny Robertson (he also telephoned), Jim Fraser and Fred Livingstone (his nicknames at Szubin were "The Crane" and "Stone") who recently visited Hammelburg, Germany, where he met the citizen who happened to be the Mayor of Hammelburg during the war and who remembered all the American POW's very well. He also told "Stone" that he was always "pro-American!" Jawohl!! Dick Englehart penned a special note explaining why he couldn't attend..he happened to be in Munich while we were in Chicago!

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So - to those of you who were in Chicago...It was great seeing you!! To those who couldn't make it:

SEE YOU IN WASHINGTON IN '68

Auf weidersehen,

Frank Maxwell
Guest Columnist

John Slack
Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is so long that we have used up our five (5) cents for mailing. On the next mailing therefore each will receive a copy of Omaha re-union supplied by Bob Bonomi.

New address lists are available if you want one - just drop a line and include \$2.50.

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