

Three Wayward Colonels By Reg Urschler

One time Warren Aylsworth ('Snog,' for the Jimmy Durante nose) came to Okinawa from SAC as a Bird Colonel to visit the 82nd on a 'staff assistance' visit (ahem) and he, Frank Hicks and I went to Koza for an evening's visit to the Empire Bar which he may have frequented when PCS in the 82nd as Operations Officer. (Warren was from Empire, Michigan.) With Frank Hicks we went there at Warren's request, he providing 'progressive taxi instructions' as neither Frank nor I knew the location. Remember, he had known us since we were brand new 2nd Lt 'Butter Bars' way back in 1955 and had wonderful flying experiences (such as being lost in an RB-47 over Cleveland, Ohio, he recalled laughingly as he shared the story about this then Lt) and many, many social occasions.

On arrival at the Empire Bar we – Frank and I – discovered the bar was in a basement. I believe you have an idea of the 'atmosphere.' Music, dancing and verbal – of course – intercourse as we improved our proficiency in the 'Native' tongue. 😊

Anyway, there was a 2200 curfew at the time and pretty well enforced, which we had forgotten whilst enjoying the company of the indigenous personnel and adult beverages. When we finally decided it was time to RTB we came up the steps realizing we had violated curfew and, as we approached our vehicle, we noted a military MP/SP/AP jeep headed in our direction. Too late to try and avoid contact, too late to call 'Break-way' three times, we just stood there and waited for the consequences, each of us approached by a uniformed individual from a different service requesting our ID's. A very pregnant silence followed after viewing the three ID's during which the three enforcement gendarmes started looking at each other and shaking their heads in apparent disbelief. I was 82nd CC and Frank Chief of Standboard.

The following exchange took place among the three while we stood in silence. The first service guy to his comrades after viewing my Lt Col ID card: "You ain't gonna believe this." The second: "Well you just ain't gonna believe *THIS*," after viewing the second LT Col ID card. The third 'arresting' officer: "That ain't nothing. You should see what I have. You *REALLY* ain't gonna believe this!" Of course, it was Warren's O-6 ID card.

The senior of the three addressed Colonel Aylsworth and very politely inquired, "Sir, you are aware of the curfew." (I see this in my mind and can't stop laughing – now.) "Yes", replied the Colonel. "Unfortunately, we were distracted and failed to check our chronometers and return to the base on time and realizing we were in violation hurried to resolve it". I'm not really sure who was shocked, amused or embarrassed more, the gendarmes wearing the armband of an MP, SP or AP or the miscreants about to be apprehended wondering how they possibly could explain violating the curfew.

After a consultation between those in authority at the moment, the senior of the enforcers advised the Colonel, "Well sir, we're quite confident you gentleman had no purposeful intention to violate the curfew and as such have decided it's best to consider this never happened. We 'suggest' you return to base". Somewhat chastened and

thankful this 'odds-against-chance-encounter' with the law was resolved we Haiyokodes (hurried) back to base. May even have gone to the Officer's Club for a 'snort' to debrief the 'Empire Mission.' I doubt if anyone has ever heard of this misadventure(!) and the appropriate courts martial statute of limitations is no longer applicable, I'm pretty sure.