

Ex-GIs Vote 100 Per Cent For Fraternities

But Object To Horseplay

By MERVIN WILF

"Do you believe in the ideas and purposes of fraternities?"

One hundred per cent of the ex-servicemen interviewed at the College answered "yes" to this question in a recent poll.

The result of this poll clearly refutes the claim made by the authors of recent articles that a discharge will be antagonistic to the established Greek letter societies. Ex-GI's have no grievance against fraternities as such, but they do feel that changes must be made in these organizations to meet the demands of changing conditions in College life.

With the same breath that ex-servicemen nodded their heads in firm approval of fraternities, all of them agreed that there is too much horseplay and childish attitudes prevailing in the societies. They maintain that such foolishness as "hellweeks," scavenger hunts, and certain pledge duties may be suitable for students just out of high school who would care for them, but it has little justification in the pledgship of ex-GI's.

Katz Gives Typical View

Typical reaction that veterans have in this matter is expressed by Milton Katz. Katz says, "After being in service and living in an atmosphere of uncertainty, I wouldn't like to take any part in such frivolous activities. In the Army they call it 'chicken' and I think that I speak for most of the fellows in saying that they had enough of it in their service days and don't want to take any more."

As opposed as veterans are to unnecessary horseplay, they also realize that if they would go fraternity, a definite form of pledgship has to be maintained. According to their sentiments, fraternities should adopt a pledgship that will be constructive to both parties involved.

Constructive Pledgship Suggested

Among the suggestions offered for conducting a pledgship for ex-servicemen are the elimination of hazing and pledge duties that are entirely personal in nature, and substituting in their place duties that entail work constructive for the house, and a required knowledge of the history and traditions of the fraternity. A novel proposal was that vets should be made to write to a brother in service whom they don't know. This would serve the dual purpose of providing a duty to an otherwise almost duty-free pledge and to cement the feeling of friendship and fraternalism between total strangers.

Another big reason why many ex-servicemen do not join fraternities cannot be helped by either group-finances.

The majority of the veterans interviewed, both independents



Released by U. S. War Department, Bureau of Public Relations.

HONORABLE SERVICE PATCH—This design of the Honorable Service Button is worn on service uniforms above the pocket on the right hand side of the blouse. The dexter eagle in the circle is in gold on a diamond of khaki or olive drab cloth. The picture above is slightly larger than the official patch.

and affiliated men, stated that the money that they do receive from the government is not sufficient to meet expenses, and that they do depend on another source of income, slight as it may be. Thirty-one per cent declared that unless their allotment is increased, fraternity life is impossible.

Burnham Dissents

Dissenting from this opinion, Harry Burnham says that one of the things that influenced him to go fraternity was to save money. According to Burnham, he discovered from his own experience that he saved a few dollars monthly living in a fraternity house.

Age differences alone are the cause of 22 per cent of veterans remaining independent. This seems to be one factor that will not vary as ex-servicemen feel that their late years preclude their fraternity life. Presently, the average age of members of the Greek letter organizations hovers about 18. With more members being discharged from the armed forces this average will be boosted. But if conditions remain static, the change will not be appreciable.

This problem, by its nature, is difficult to alleviate. The interests of older ex-GI's and recent high school graduates do not lie in the same paths. This ties in with the horseplay that is so opposed by the veteran group. Younger men like it; older men have no time for it.

Yurkanin Urges Understanding

Another aspect of the age difference is expressed by Robert Yurkanin. "Realizing that such a situation exists and will continue to exist, both groups should strive to obtain a better understanding. The older GI's should make allowances for actions taken by 18-year-olds knowing that they most likely did the same things and acted the same way themselves at that age. The younger boys should realize that if veterans make suggestions concerning fraternity or other matters, they are not trying to run the show but just do it to improve conditions that experience has taught them."

There are among ex-servicemen

attending the College some who would never join fraternities, being "born independents" like Elmer McSurdy, and others, like Dick Berge and William Deutsch, who feel that the only way to go to college is to go fraternity regardless of being an ex-GI.

Some veterans feel that fraternity life necessitates certain bonds and ties that may restrict their personal liberty, but only five per cent feel that this is sufficient reason to be un-affiliated.

Lander Relates Problems

Married couples are in a group of their own. If perhaps they would receive more money from the government, they would ally themselves with fraternities. Harry Lander would join a fraternity if only the social fee would be required. With him too, the balance in the Lander family's bank account is all-important.

Wesley Turek, newly elected commander of X-G-I Club, advises fraternities to handle each veteran it considers pledging individually. Being a member of a local fraternity at Monmouth College, Ill., before entering the service, Commander Turek feels that a bit of foolishness now and then enriches fraternity life, but it should be kept to a minimum and be optional with each man.

Brennan Discusses Pledgship

Talking from his experience gained by joining a fraternity after being discharged and as past-commander of X-G-I Club, Patrick Brennan sees in fraternities a way to adapt veterans more quickly and more easily to college life.

"I know that when I first came to Penn State that I didn't know enough about the school to fill the proverbial peanut shell. But by pledging a fraternity I was able to get the counsel of fellows who had spent a few years here and they set me straight on quite a few things."

"College life wasn't such a mystery to me after I completed my pledgship. Through the fraternity I became more interested in campus affairs than I think I would have been otherwise. Another thing I liked about being with a fraternity was I got rid of the idea that I was separate and distinct from other students because I was once in the service. I became just another one of the fellows."

Explain Fraternities To GI's

Brennan commented favorably on a proposed idea to fully inform incoming ex-servicemen on the advantages and drawbacks of fraternity life as a group during their first few days as undergraduates. Because he feels that a large number of veterans come to the College without a clear idea about fraternities this would be a good chance to set them straight.

"If the whys and wherefores of fraternities are presented to them without drawing your punches, it would benefit both groups. The new men would derive a better understanding of an institution that is accepted as an integral part of the College life and it would help them to decide if they wanted to be a part of it. Fraternities would make a better impression on the veterans by putting down the straight facts instead of using the usual superficial rushing line. It's a good idea and should be put into practice as soon as possible," concluded Brennan.

Ex-GI Is New IFC President

Having assumed the job of IFC



PATRICK BRENNAN, former commander of the X-G-I Club, who airs his views on fraternities in this article.

president just four days ago, Frank Schneider is already busy himself with plans to bring the ex-GI and fraternity groups closer together. The former Air Corps officer makes the observation that ex-servicemen have the best qualifications for becoming fraternity men than any other group. This is because the veteran knows how to get along with other people because he has lived in close contact with large groups of all kinds of persons. And, according to Schneider, that's one of the main purposes of fraternities, the ability to make friends and to live with people with a minimum amount of friction.

"A fraternity is like a company in the Army," said the IFC president. "Every member of that company will try to make it the best in the regiment. It's the same way with fraternities. The members and pledges will strive to make theirs better than the rest. Not better in a snobbish sense, but

better in the sense that one team is better than another.

"By joining a fraternity I feel that ex-GI's will help themselves to get properly oriented to college life. With fellows in a house that know the score and who will inform them, the vets will get a truer and more correct picture of the College."

"Fraternities will have to change their set policies and treat the ex-servicemen with a little more decorum than a high school graduate. I think that most fraternities realize this and will act accordingly if they already haven't done so."

Steel Cites Fraternity Advantages

Sharing the burden of running IFC for the coming two semesters, Joseph Steel, vice-president elect, is another veteran of Army service. He too talks from the experience of being a fraternity man and an ex-GI who knows both sides of the picture.

One point that Steel emphasizes is that fraternities are not only a social institution. Besides providing an excellent social outlet, fraternities help men with their studies as there are usually brothers in the house who have had the courses newcomers are now taking and they can aid them in preparing their work. Most fraternities have a file system that proves invaluable in studying.

He goes on to point out that the contacts and friends made in fraternity and inter-fraternity relations are life-long. But a fraternity gives more than just material gains; it gives a person something to take pride in and builds an esprit de corps among its members.

Fraternities Are Homes

"Perhaps the greatest advantage that a fraternity has to offer is that it is a home to its members," declares Steel. "This is especially important to veterans because after being away from their homes for quite some time and then attending an out-of-town school, it gives them a sense of security."

"It's nice to walk into a house and know that you have good living accommodations plus being with fellows who are like you and who do the things you like to do. And remember too, that this tie doesn't terminate with graduation. Alumni are welcome in fraternities at all times; they can walk into their house, or go to another chapter, and there is always a place for them to stay. They will always get a cordial greeting."

Engaged Coeds Write Morale-Building Letters

Engaged coeds at the College did their share of morale-building during the war by writing their servicemen from three times a week to twice a day, a survey made by Dr. Clifford R. Adams shows.

Letter-writing, the women told the education and psychology professor, was their chief means of "keeping themselves in love." Other ways included sending gifts and pictures, making plans for the future, re-reading "his" letters, and listening to "their" music.

The number of letters the coeds wrote usually varied with the number they received from their fiancés, the survey revealed. "No matter how busy he may be," Dr. Adams said, "if he doesn't write often, the girls grow discouraged."

To most of the girls, letter-writing was their favorite way of relieving the tension of waiting. Next popular choice was going to a movie with girl friends.

Hassler Talks On Carbon Before Chemical Society

John W. Hasler will speak on "The Nature of Active Carbon" in 119 New Physics at 7:30 p. m. Tuesday. This lecture is sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Section of the American Chemical Society.

Mr. Hassler is a graduate of Pratt Institute and the University of Maine. Since 1915 he has been employed by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company and now holds the position of director of research of the industrial chemical division. He will discuss the nature of active carbon, and theories of activation.

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