

Cognac

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Flying back from Renner, France, I was holding a new package I had not taken over with me the week before. This package, unlike those I had carried many times before, was anything else but official classified documents, and I was quite pleased with the fact that it was. The Army frowns on special messengers, carrying code and cipher material, who carry anything else but specified items. However, I felt sure there would be little said if I were caught with my new addition to the books and papers I had with me.

When I boarded the plane the pilot looked at me questioningly for a moment, smiled, and went forward to the controls; and we were off leaving the ground below us. At first I thought he might tell me I could not bring my little package with me. I knew the regulations forbid it, and he would have the right to make me leave it behind; but I was willing to take that chance. He certainly understood for he said nothing.

As we rolled to the edge of the apron, nearing a stop, I was thinking how good I felt about everything going so smoothly. Getting out of the plane, we noticed a jeep speeding toward us. This wasn't unusual so I pushed my package a little further up under my arm and waited for what seemed a ride back to the control tower. The jeep pulled up; and as the Major got out, we all stood at attention and passed him a half-dozen salutes or more. He walked up to the pilot of the plane and began talking to him. Looking back toward the package I was holding he must have felt sure a few words with me were necessary.

"You should know better," he said.

I wasn't quite sure whether I should

or not, but agreeing with him seemed to me, would ease the situation, so I did. After relating to me a few of the other things he thought I should know, I was also obliged to listen to a five-minute discourse on Army regulations. However he said nothing about the package so I felt free in keeping it.

When I was at last under the roof, that did little more than shelter us from the wind and rain, I set my package on the floor. The feeling of triumph surged through me at a job well done, and I admired my friend more with every look. Then as if to show his approval my package jumped up into my lap and made a series of tail wagging gestures.

At this point some of my friends walked in and joined in the admiration of my bright new bundle. The problem of what to call it came up for discussion. You cannot go around calling a cocker spaniel a "package," for the rest of his life, so we began to give it serious thought. Here before us sat a golden chestnut bundle of fur, who wished to join our "little family," but not without a name. After a long period of silence one of the boys who had been in the Control Tower when we came in spoke, "Why don't you call him 'Cognac?'"

"Why?" I asked.

Then he told us about being in the tower when the Major came back from the plane and told the Colonel they could have their party tonight. Our pilot had brought back a whole case of Cognac. So we called him "Cognac," and he approved. For like that rich fine brandy he warmed us many times over the loyalty and companionship.