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An Eagle Roast

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1939. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was president. The United States had a population of approximately 130.9 million. Frank Sinatra, Billy Holliday, and Judy Garland could be heard on the radio. A gallon of gas would cost you \$0.10, and catching the latest movie at the theater would set you back \$0.23. Perhaps this is what they mean when older people say "the good ol' days".

1939 was also the year my dad was born into this world in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. From the stories he tells, he was born during a snowstorm, and the doctor was unable to make a house call due to the weather when his mother went into labor. He was born in the very house he would grow up in.



I couldn't imagine growing up in the 1940's as a kid, not having the "luxuries" we have now. Then again, growing up in that era was the time when many scientific and technological breakthroughs would boggle the mind, and ignite the imaginations of a child.... like television. :)

We've all heard stories from our parents/grandparents, and how they grew up in "their time". Woke up before dawn, did chores or worked a job (in his case, paperboy) before breakfast. Walked to school in rain and snow (and probably uphill both ways right?).



In any case, his list of accomplishments academically, militarily, and family-y (what's the correct word for that?) is extensive (he is super old after all). There was a slideshow to chronicle his childhood through his military career that played during the party. To read about his extensive military career, read one of my earlier posts about halfway down [here](#). This isn't a post about his life story. It would be a novel.

This post is to write about his turning 80 (yep, that's right... E-I-G-H-T-Y) years old. He looks good for 80. Still active. Still volunteering his time to the military several days a week on Fort Lee. Still chewing out the new recruits and spitting them out.

My family started planning a surprise birthday party for him at the beginning of the year. They wanted a big celebration because, well, you only turn 80 once. They also agreed it should be a roast where everyone could poke fun at him.

Different parts of the party were broken up among us. I was responsible for invitations and mailing them out. I also took it upon myself to make some sort of funny picture for the party. My brother ended up getting it printed as large posters to hang in the room. :)



"well done"

We were sure he knew about the surprise party. My mom has an iPhone, and he has an iPad, and they both share the same email account, so we were sure he would have seen an email or two over the course of the months to alert him to the surprise. He truly did look surprised when he walked in. Side note, there was a bit of a struggle with the date and time. Unfortunately (or maybe it was a blessing), that the Oktober Fest on Fort Lee was scheduled for the same day after a scheduling conflict (it was supposed to be a week later). It worked out for the best as he thought he was going to the Oktober Fest at the club, and not to his own surprise party.

All of his children came to attend, with some flying out from as far West as Seattle, Washington, and as far North as New York. About half the grandkids attended (there's 15 in all).



The "SURPRISE!"



Crap... don't have a heart attack...



Some of the grandkids stampeding towards the "Pop Pop".



Some emotional moments.



Clint in his element.



Lots of people...



Even more people...



Some roasting.



Some honoring.



Hamming it up at the photo booth with the grand kids.



The birthday boy's cake.



The Fam.

It was a pretty good turnout. Many of Clint's friends, both personal and military attended to show their appreciation and love for this guy. Everyone had a good time (open bar and all).

Even though he's not our biological dad (he's got a son and daughter, and then there's my 2 sisters, 1 brother, and myself), he's never treated us any differently, always pushing us to do our best. He's been in my life since I was 8, and for all intents and purposes, he is my dad, and I talk about him and introduce him as such. He's also the only "Pop Pop" and "Grandpa" the grand kids have ever known, and we all love him.

Happy Birthday dad.