

Col. Pritchard Feted On Eve of Retirement As Journal Editor

Col. Frank S. Pritchard, state editor of The State Journal before and after his World War II days, is retiring Saturday after 40 years of newspapering—not counting government service.

Marking the event, 75 State Journal employes and friends held a "Ditch Pritch" party



COL. FRANK S. PRITCHARD

Thursday night at the Eagle Cafe, during which fellow newsmen portrayed events in his career—especially those on the lighter side, complete with accoutrements of both World Wars.

It was recalled that the retiring state editor enlisted in the Army in January, 1918, when barely old enough to serve. He was first sergeant of an ammunition unit on the European front when Armistice arrived.

Pritchard's interest and devotion in the service never waned. After his return to Lansing, he continued in the reserves.

In 1924 Pritchard joined the news staff of The State Journal.

"COVERED" BATH DISASTER

Every newsman has his "big story." Pritchard's came in May 1927, when a maniac blew up the Bath Consolidated School, with a resultant loss of 44 lives. Rushing to the scene, he phoned in the first words on the disaster. Typically, his first words to a waiting rewriter didn't deal with the story itself, but, rather, with his feelings about the people around him.

"It's terrible," he said.

In 1937 he was assigned to the state capitol beat. Later in the year he was given leave in order to take charge of two Civilian Conservation Corps camps near Gaylord. On a day in December, 1940, he returned to the Journal newsroom. And on the same day he received orders from the Army to report to Ft. Custer, Battle Creek, as provost marshal, as America began to build her military forces. He was pro-

moted to major immediately upon reporting.

After a year at Ft. Custer, Pritchard was promoted to lieutenant colonel and assigned to the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion of the 7th Army.

PLENTY OF ACTION

Eventually promoted to full colonel, the sometime newspaperman took his regiment to the European theater of action—plenty of action. It was a Negro regiment and a good one. The colonel liked his men and they reciprocated. It gave him a quiet chuckle to note that on those occasions which took him deep into the combat zone, there invariably was a heavily-armed patrol of "his boys" lurking nearby, ready to protect him with their lives.

His outfit fought its way from Normandy into Germany.

The colonel wound up with a Bronze Star and a Commendation Medal, among other decorations.

In 1946 he returned to The State Journal, where he took over his old duties as state editor. During the ensuing 18 years he streamlined this desk, added to the list of outstate news correspondents and helped boost the newspaper's outstate circulation.

HEADED CIVIL DEFENSE

But Col. Pritchard wasn't quite through with the military aspect of things yet. In June, 1950, North Korean Communists thrust south across the border of that divided country. We were at war again.

Mayor Ralph W. Crego named Pritchard Lansing civil defense director. Pritchard at the time was commander of the 309th Armored Cavalry Reserve here.

Pritchard resigned this post two years later.

And so, Thursday night, his friends and fellow workers gathered around to say so long.

Mrs. Florence Pritchard shared the guest-of-honor rostrum with her husband.

Cap Pistol Will Aid Astronauts

Even the lowly cap pistol has entered the space age.

But the so-called cap pistol of the space age is considerably different from the model of the old-fashioned "equalizer" that hangs from the hip.

The delicate instrument, which is actually a small rocket motor, gets its name from the capsules of solid fuel fed into the firing chamber on a tape resembling a roll of caps.

It has the job of making flight adjustments in space vehicles and satellites.