



Joe Fowler, Gravina, Italy, Christmas, 1943

**Joe Fowler & Fergy Flesch were bartenders
at Cave Inn**

THE CAVE ON THE HILL

NEAR GRAVINA, ITALY,
CHRISTMAS 1943

When a battery's on the move it parks in queerest places,
Some OCs favour barn-yards, others wide open spaces
And so the 47th on their way up to the "mill"
Decided on a new spot on top of a windy hill.

As they prowled around the place, their faces lit up with grins
They discovered a cave on the hillside, there my story begins.
Not merely a hole-in-the-ground, it could shelter maybe 200
You see with curfew in effect no one could leave the lines
If they'd a place to kill three hours, things'd be just fine.

Major Builder was deep in thought as he paced about the floor,
Suddenly a thought hit home, and he let out-a roar.
Said he, "I've figured out a move, you'll agree I'm right,
We'll turn the cavern into a tavern where the boys come at night."

They went into the nearest town and purchased little kegs
That re-acted on all of the boys, especially in the legs.

It really was a clever move, everyone had real fun
All hands would quit workin', slip on the jerkin
And down to the cave for a "quick—one."

They had a lighting-system, which was a piece of luck,
Consisting of a headlight, they'd salvaged from a truck.

Fergy and Joe were bar-tenders, and kept the boys in line,
When they came far and near, with a handful of lire,
Which they handed across for wine.

They didn't draw it out of taps, but with no regrets
The tins they drank the stuff out of, once held cigarettes.

And when a happy gunner had a few over the limit
His "boozin'" pals would find his tent, "Gently" lay him in it.

Just the same the "Old Cave Inn" was a grand meeting-place,
Whether you'd had mud on your boots, or old fatigue-suits
Or three days' beard on your face.

A place where pals could gather, amid a friendly throng
To have a quiet discussion or indulge in Lively song.
And when this party is over and Adolph has had his fill
When you're guzzling a bottle of Bingo
Just remember "The Cave-on-the-Hill."

T. McMahon