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BRIEFLY A SOLDIER

by Wilson Edward Speer

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CENTRAL COMMAND	
General Rodney Ramsay	Brigadier General, Central Command, Tokyo
Lieutenant Colonel Corbin	Chief chaplain of Central Command
DEPOT COMMAND	
Colonel Earnest Tischnor	Commanding officer, Tokyo Quartermaster Depot
Lieutenant Melvin Traylor	Adjutant to Colonel Tischnor
Major Peter Gates	Depot personnel officer
Major Arthur Grimshaw	Depot security officer
Captain Rubin Stamper	Supervisor of warehouse inventory
Captain Kingsley Nye	Depot chaplain
Warrant Officer Harry Grayson	Court martial defense counsel
Master Sergeant Lester Luter	Manager of warehouse operations

COMPANY “A” PERSONNEL	
Captain Francis Morton	First Company A commander
Captain George Bifudlio	Second Company A commander
Lieutenant Lloyd Auldrich	Third Company A commander
Master Sergeant Dominic Battaglia	Company A master sergeant
Corporal Dennis Sofleski	Company A cook
Corporal Brett Quarles	Company A barracks bully
Private First Class Anthony Crisp	One of two Negros assigned to Company “A”
Private John Gauntley	Suitor of Yumiko
Private Gilbert Gerber	Recent Depot arrival; teaser of Kikuyo

THE “CAMERA CREW” OF COMPANY “A”	
Private Milton Selkirk	Chaplain’s assistant
Private Gary Gossett, “Buzz”	Camera crew gossip
Private Robert Parker	Wardrobe non-conformist
Private Delbert Brighton	Negro accountant also assigned as courier for headquarters offices
Private Charles Sonnenschein	Legal officer’s assistant
Private Howard Scoville	Legal officer’s assistant
Private Carlton Sanders	Accountant from the deep South
Private Christopher Baflin	Accountant; motherly hen of camera crew
Private Aaron Zymdars	Accountant; reformed slouch
THE LEGAL OFFICE	
Captain Martin Stanley	Original depot legal officer
Sergeant First Class Yasuo Nagai	Hawaiian legal office manager
Noburu Sumita	Interpreter, translator; former importer/exporter
Hideo Takeda	Investigator, translator, former World War II news reporter
Rika Nomo	Legal Office secretary

Lieutenant Thurmond Bullock	Replacement Legal Officer
(Private Howard Scoville)	(Legal Officer's Assistant; camera crew)
(Private Charles Sonnenschein)	(Legal Officer's Assistant; camera crew)
CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE	
(Captain Kingsley Nye)	(Depot chaplain)
(Private Milton Selkirk)	(Chaplain's assistant)
Aiko Kurita (Helen)	Chaplain's secretary
Corporal Barton Waverly	Volunteer chapel choir director and accompanist
OTHER CHARACTERS	
Kikuyo (Ruth)	Japanese Depot secretary and choir member
Yumiko	Japanese Depot secretary eventually married to Private Gauntley

group of soldiers beyond the traditionally sacrificial military standards applicable to every other enlisted man."

Major Gates, never one to subdue an amusing observation, restated the issue. "That's right, Company A has a majority of draftees. Is it a breach of military tradition for a munificent officer to coddle the conscripts?"

The issue was defined by Colonel Tischnor's consternation. He was not now characteristically feigning preoccupation by looking at his desk. Instead, his arched eyebrows were genuinely expressive of fear of discord. He was desperate to conceive some conciliatory tactic to avoid decisive intervention that might offend either antagonist. The best he could come up with was, pleadingly, "Now, gentlemen...."

This time Major Gates, sensing Colonel Tischnor's incapacity for decisive intervention, leaned forward to specifically address Major Grimshaw, and in a contrastingly calm voice inquired, "Art, why don't you outline for us your philosophy about what standard should be applied to limiting enlisted men's peacetime accommodations and how it differs from officers' quarters and clubs."

Fully aware of the group's focus upon him and the connotation of the loaded question he was compelled to answer, Grimshaw hesitantly composed his argument. "Well, you all know military tradition as well as I do, and there's a reason for it. Soldiers have to be prepared for combat at all times, whether it comes or not. We don't have to always demand foxhole standards or other hardships, but on the other hand you can't maintain the discipline of combat readiness with the luxury of air-conditioned fraternity house bedrooms and dining halls."

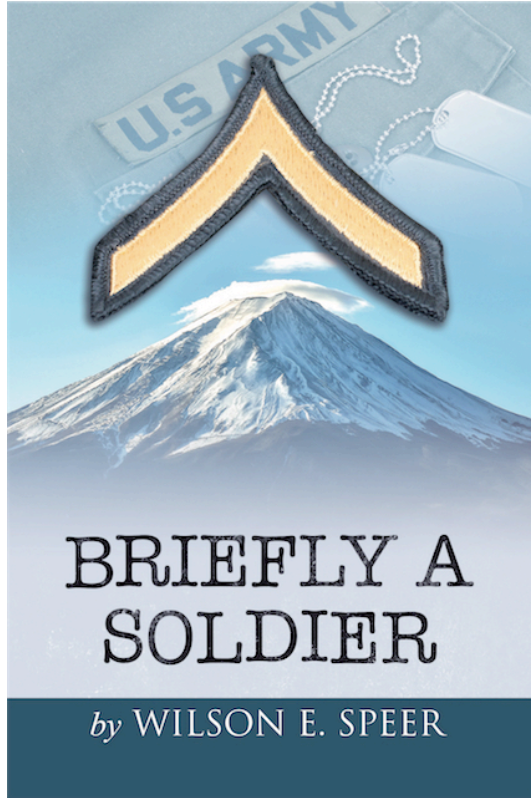
Gates turned to Auldrich. "O.K., Lloyd, now how do you look at it?"

"Oh, I understand the need for infantry training and maintaining combat readiness, but there is an inconsistency when some of our married enlisted men with wives here in Tokyo are allowed to go home at night and enjoy all of the domestic amenities. Sure, most of them are sergeants, but there are a few privates too. And what about the officer's mess with silverware, china, and Japanese waiters? Are we any less combat ready? I know my privates and I firmly believe they would know how to effectively defend the Depot against any invading Communist mob regardless of mess hall enhancements."

Lloyd Auldrich was getting warmed up, and before he yielded the floor he grasped another argument. "Look, most of the privates in Company A are college graduates who used up their educational draft deferments. They brought their educations with them so that they could fill the slots of a bunch of homebound officers and sergeants, all to the financial advantage of the Army. These educated privates work at buck privates' pay with their rank frozen well beyond their scheduled promotions to privates first class. By being drafted they devote two years of their young lives to military service when they would otherwise be establishing careers and families. This miniscule reward of the donation of a slightly decorated mess hall is not detrimental to their service or the country's defense."

Eager to assert control of the proceedings, Colonel Tischnor managed a feeble question, "Well, what do you say to that, Art?"

Arthur Grimshaw was not about to concede to the courtly eloquence of a younger officer of lower rank purporting to champion the inexperienced academics barely beyond their basic



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