

SCIMITAR



FALL, 1965

Rossi, R.

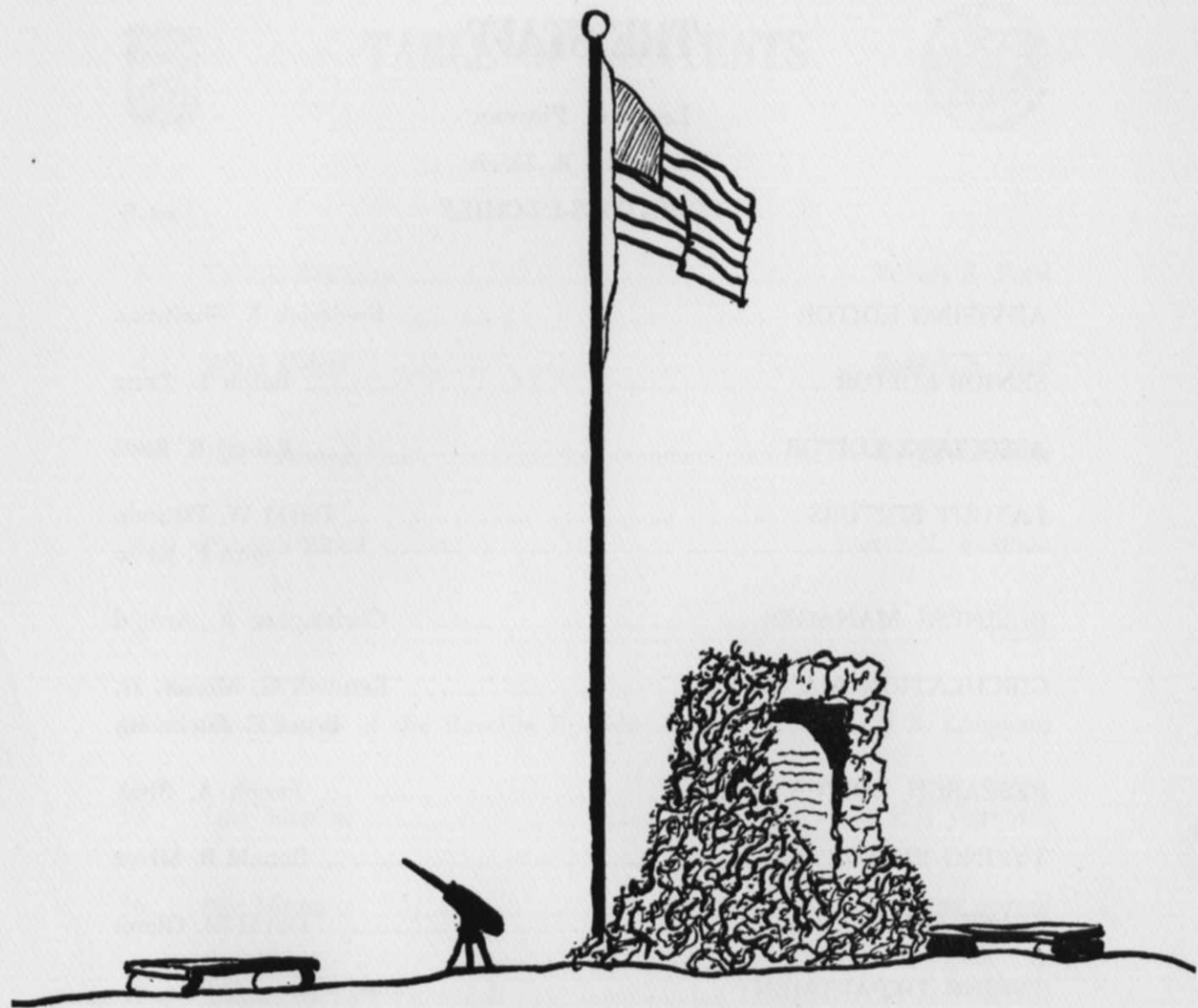


WINTER EDITION

A TRI-YEARLY MAGAZINE BY THE CADETS
OF THE STAUNTON MILITARY ACADEMY
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

SCOUTS

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SCIMITAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



PAGE		
6	To His Memory	Robert R. Rossi
6	What Color?	Robert R. Rossi
7	The Runaway	C. Drumheller
8	Patriots Blood	Lester G. Pittman
9	" "	Gates
10	The Charge of the Reveille Brigade	Barry B. Longyear
12	Last Mission	Bill Gemmill
16	My Home	Jim Sproul
17	Dedicated To Stuart Hall	Jeff Belkov
18	Birth of a Theme: Worrying	David H. Lacy

TO HIS MEMORY

ROBERT R. ROSSI

'Twas not quite two full years ago
That those fatal shots rang true
On a sunny day in Dallas
On a flowered Avenue.

His large white car was open,
The wind blew through his hair,
And he waved to all his people,
In a sweet and trusting air.

But the shadows harbored darkness,
And the fatal shots rang out.
The bullets pierced his open skull,
And he died without a shout.

The streets were lined with mourning,
And the people shed their tears,
And the whole of the nation trembled,
Under weights of mounting fears.

But the men behind them followed,
And took his vacant place,
But I think no man will ever,
Fill his vacant space.

For there is no man beloved,
In shape or mental scope
Who can fill our hearts with sorrow,
Or fill them up with hope.

This valiant man who led us,
Fearless through good and bad,
Left in our hearts a chasm,
Which makes us ever sad.

Let us build a statue to him,
A monument large and tall,
For as we truly loved him,
He loved us one and all.

And let this shrine remind us,
Of his good and kindly ways,
And his firmness, strong and tactful,
And his peaceful thousand days.

WHAT COLOR?

ROBERT R. ROSSI

Did you ever see a picture,
of God upon his throne?
Did you ever note the color,
the hue, the subtle tone?

His skin is always fairest,
as the flowers in the spring,
But was the artist black or white,
I keep wondering?

Could it be this view is tainted,
that God is really black,
Could it be His beard's a contrast,
to his face and back?

I often wonder why our Saviour's
color's not exposed,
Could it be that He is not so fair,
not fair, but it's opposed?

This really is a lesson,
to men right here on earth,
From men of little stature,
to men of mighty girth.

If it really made a difference,
the color of one's skin,
Why hasn't our savior told us,
just what race he's in?

THE RUNAWAY

C. DRUMHELLER

THE TALL GRASS was swaying in the soft breeze that bathed everything within its grasping reach. The sky was clear and blue except for an occasional puff of a cotton-like cloud. Standing alone in the large field was a huge old oak which spread its limbs and thoroughly protected anything or anyone who sought its refuge from the scorching sun.

Beneath the tree lay a lad who appeared no older than thirteen years. His long red hair partly hid his school-boyish face, and a pair of dark blue eyes, which had a look of a lost puppy, peered out from his unkempt hair. His ruddy complexion revealed the out-of-doors life he had become accustomed to. A squashed nose and a small, drawn mouth perfectly complimented his face. The shirt-tail of his favorite plaid shirt hung out over his padded jeans. The weather was warm. So, there was no need for the cumbersome shoes.

He watched a lone buzzard glide with such ease, waving only occasionally his long outspread wings to gain

height. How he wished to be as free as that buzzard! But now he knew that it was impossible. He had believed that he could live apart from that unknowing, uncaring world. He could have cared for himself; after all he was thirteen years old. He didn't need them, and he was convinced his parents didn't want him.

By now, a small, yet obvious pain was tearing away at his belly. It had been seven hours since he had run away from home. He was traveling light, however, for his wrinkled brown paper bag revealed only a rumpled pair of pants, a clean shirt, and his battered harmonica. He thought, as he lay there, of the mouth-watering, fried chicken being set on the supper table right now. The hot brown rolls with butter oozing out from the centers made his stomach roll. Although he hadn't brought anything with him to eat, he couldn't go back to his home. He had said he wasn't ever going back. But he made up his mind to go back for supper; then he was going to leave again . . . maybe.

PATRIOTS BLOOD

LESTER G. PITTMAN

There is a liquid pure and dear
Which can flow from rich or poor;
A nectar more precious than human life,
This sacred elixir is Patriot's Blood.

Spilled in battles for a nation,
Lost in vain for a beaten cause;
It stays in the minds of men— A Glory!
They ne'er forget their Patriot's Blood.

It will flow on through a conquered people,
Churn in their minds from day to day.
Their ancient heritage will ne'er be forgotten
As long as 'twas stained by a Patriot's Blood.

Then there will dawn a day of rebellion,
Valor will throw off the conquerer's yoke,
More blood will spill for precious freedom
Which is always bought with Patriot's Blood.

Now the fighting has long since ended.
The blood has dried in the pages of history,
To glisten the freshness in retold legends
Of how 'twas spilt a Patriot's Blood.

I hear the cries in the distance;
the cries of men and their resistance.
From this mountain I see the fire,
and in my mind the funeral pyre.

Oh! Those beautiful little creatures,
who with knowledge became teachers,
Crying out before they died,
"Do not do what we have tried!"

And yet they for no reason
have died by committing treason.
For they betrayed all the earth,
when they found their true worth.

And as I now turn my face
toward the building of a better race.
I become one of the teachers
of those deadly little creatures.

GATES



THE CHARGE OF THE REVEILLE BRIGADE

BARRY B. LONGYEAR

In reading through old SCIMITARs, the staff came across this very amusing poem about life at Staunton Military Academy.

Six more steps, twelve more steps,
Sixteen flights onward,
Onto the Asphalt
Came the Six-Hundred.
"Forward, the Reveille Brigade!"
"Fall in you scum!" they said:
Onto the Asphalt
Came the Six-Hundred.

"Forward, the Reveille Brigade!"
And while the thin-blooded prayed,
Knowing their days were few,
First sergeants thunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to cringe and die,
On came the Six-Hundred.

Sergeants to the right of them,
Lieutenants to the left of them,
nodding heads in front of them,
Worried and wonder'd:
Who would be the next clod
to find himself on beat squad.
With trembling hearts into the cold air,
Came the Six-Hundred.

South to the right of them,
North to the left of them,
The Staff in front of them.
Each cold wind piercing like knives,
Each cadet wishing he had worn a shirt.
Then one by one they fell,
Each one a frozen shell,
years of life, and then farewell.
Ordered by a long dead "tack",
Carried to the letter in full.
And now the dead lie on their backs,
And all for what? The school?
The brave Six-Hundred.

As soon as progress sweeps the land,
Forgotten will be this battlefield grand.
Where men, brave, stalwart, good, and true,
Stood their ground and soon turned blue.
The judgment used to make them form
Had best be used to keep them warm,
Or the ghosts will come, swarm after swarm,
of the brave Six-Hundred.

LAST MISSION

BILL GEMMILL

IT WAS A typical monsoon-season day in Saigon, South Vietnam. The sky was overcast and rain threatened as I walked into the American Mission Headquarters near the U. S. Embassy. General Chambers, the deputy Commander of U. S. troops in Vietnam, had asked to see me.

I knocked modestly on the General's door, and entered without waiting for his answer.

"Lieutenant, what I have to ask of you is something which I expect you to think about, and I will not be disappointed if you decline," said General Chambers slowly.

Curiously I asked, "Yes Sir, what is it?"

"In a few days, Lieutenant, the Viet Cong plan to stage a mass attack on three Vietnamese villages northwest of Danang. They will be crossing the Yan Chin River over a covered bridge that is so well camouflaged our planes can't find it. That bridge *must* be destroyed."

"I think I understand, Sir. How may I help?"

"You are one of two men I have asked to go on a very dangerous mission, Lieutenant. Mind that you do not

have to accept the task, but I feel you are one of the most qualified men I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. I think you can do the job well."

Although the General said he would not be disappointed if I declined, I knew he would lose faith in me; and I knew that I would be disappointed in myself, too.

Immediately I answered, "You have my services, Sir."

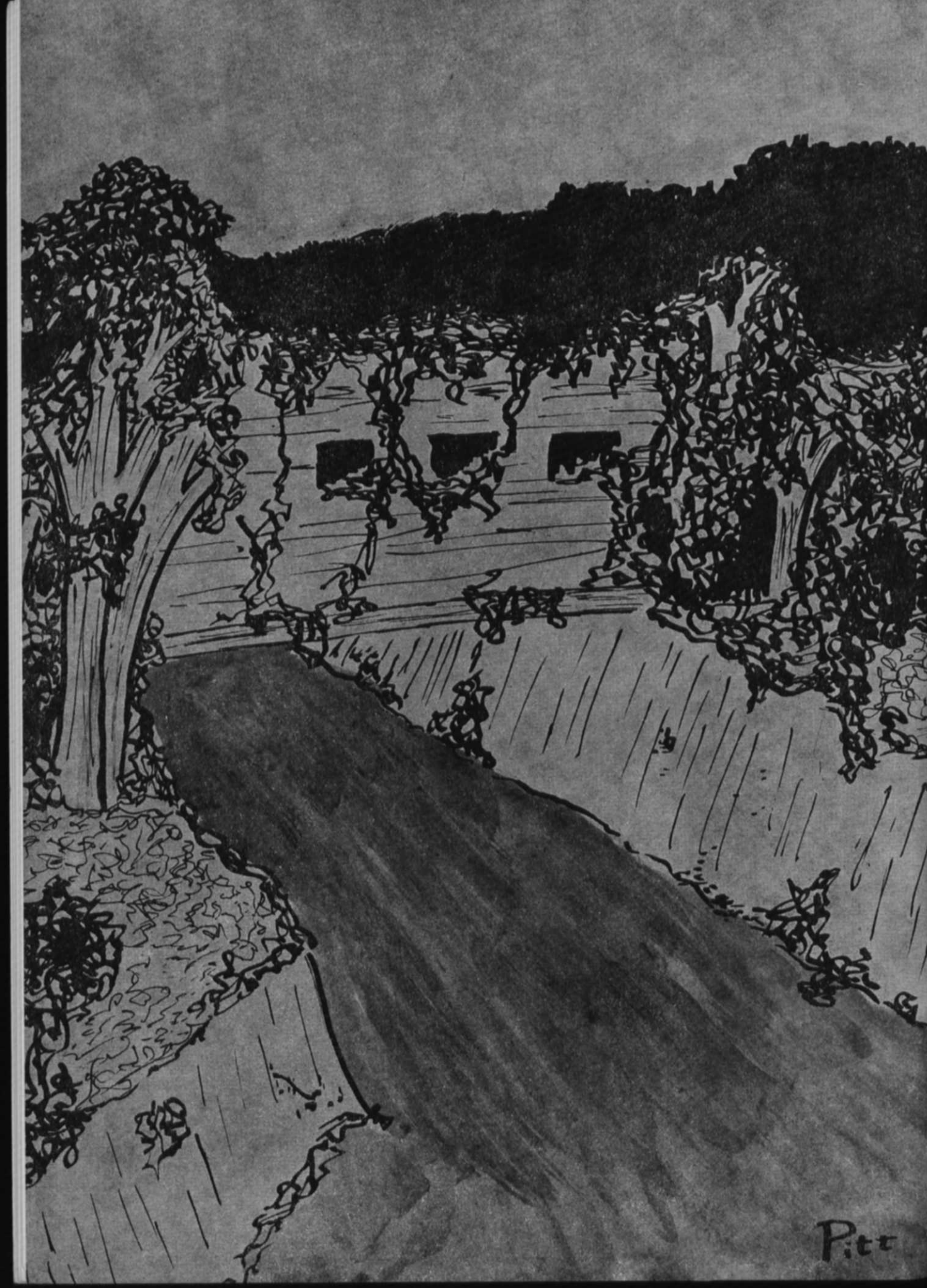
He was surprised that I answered so quickly.

"Fine, Lieutenant, fine. I've already spoken to your partner, Master Sergeant Haig. He has also accepted the task. You'll find he is a very good man. You are to meet him at the M. P. Station on Friday at 0600 hours. He will tell you all the details then. Good luck, Lieutenant. God bless you."

"Thank you, Sir. Thank you very much."

I walked out of the office and headed back to the B.O.Q.

The next morning, Friday, I got up at 0500 hours. I left for the M. P. Station to meet Sgt. Haig as soon as I finished breakfast. I met Sgt. Haig inside the Station at 0600 sharp. He



was sitting in a chair next to the Sergeant-of-the-Guard's desk. I went up to him, as he was the only other person in the office, and introduced myself. He immediately stood up and shook hands with me.

"Should we be on our way, Sir?", he asked politely.

"Why not? We've got a lot to talk about," I replied with a yawn.

We got to know quite a bit about each other while we were on the helicopter heading towards Danang. I found out what General Chambers had meant when he said Haig was a good man. Haig was a demolition expert, and had destroyed several Communist bridges during the Korean War. The fact that he had been in combat in Korea was a big help too, because the terrain of Korea is similar to that of Vietnam.

We arrived in Danang at 0915 hours, and stepped out of the chopper while the deadly propeller blades were still moving over our heads. By 1000 hours we were ready to leave Danang. No one knew of our arrival or departure save the security guards. They wished us good luck, and we were on our way with plenty of rations and ammunition.

At 1145 hours we were five miles outside of Danang. Haig suggested we take a break and I agreed. We sat down on a tree stump and drank from our canteens. Just as I took the canteen away from my mouth, there was

a crack from a rifle, and a bullet came so close to my head that it actually singed my hair. Haig had seen the smoke from where the shot came a tree about fifty feet away from where we were sitting. He immediately pointed his submachine gun at the tree and sprayed it with bullets for about fifteen seconds. Eventually there came a scream, the sound of breaking branches, and finally a body falling out of the tree. Haig and I went over to the body of the Viet Cong sniper. He was young too young about fourteen years old. His sieve-like body was caked with drying blood. We left the sickening scene and continued towards the bridge as soon as we heard the voices of other Viet Cong rushing to find out what all the shooting was about.

At 1400 hours we reached the river. Five miles downstream was the bridge we were sent out to destroy. At 1600 hours, after dodging water moccasins and crocodiles, we saw the bridge. It was well camouflaged, just as General Chambers had said. Haig, since he had had this experience before, suggested we climb into the water and float downstream until we could reach one of the bridge supports protruding out of the water. I decided that the best place to put the charge would be under the center portion of the bridge. This way the explosion would spread and collapse the entire bridge, rather than just portions of it. All went well. The charge was placed, the bridge sentinels hadn't

seen us, and we were back on shore just a few yards from the bridge. I connected the wires leading from the charge to the ignition box. However, our luck didn't hold out for long. Haig stepped on a water snake just as I lifted the handle of the ignition box. The sergeant let out a gasp so loud that it startled me and I accidentally pulled the wires loose from the ignition box. The sentinel on our side of the bridge had heard all the ruckus, and began firing his rifle. As if it were a signal, hundreds of Viet Cong appeared. They came out of nowhere. The windows on the bridge flew open and rifle bores pointed down at us. Across the river hundreds of rifles were aimed at us. For several seconds everything was quiet. Then there was a loud order given, and all the rifles opened up on Haig and myself. We instinctly fired back, and dozens of Communists fell to the ground and into the water. Haig turned to fire at the bridge. At that instant, a Viet Cong bullet snuffed out his life by striking him in the back of the head. I gradually got farther and farther away from the

ignition box. It didn't make much difference now because I didn't have time to rewire it anyway. I started thinking about the villages and the success of my mission. I couldn't rewire the ignition box, so I sprayed the area where the satchel charge was, hoping to hit it. Just after I started firing, a bullet hit me in the left kidney. The pain was unbearable. I felt for the ground, hoping to live long enough to put an end to that bridge. I laid in a reclining position, covered with blood, and continued firing at the bridge. One of my shots found its mark. The bridge went up and hundreds of men went up with it. I tried to get up and hide myself, but it was to no avail. A second bullet struck my right forearm, smashing the bone. I knew it was all over. I knew there was nothing I could do now except take a few of the enemy with me. I kept firing my sub-machine gun, then a third, smashing blow hit me in front of the right ear. All became quiet. A wave from the sea of death picked me up and carried me off a mere shrug of eternity.

MY HOME

JIM SPROUL

THE VAST stillness of the forest seemed like paradise to my agitated mind after living with the hustle and the clamor of the crowded city for the preceding weeks. A slight breeze stirred the tops of the towering pine trees and oaks as I steadily plodded up the mountain trail. As I walked, the musty odor of Autumn's dry leaves swirled into my senses mixed with that unmistakable smell of the air on a clear full day. Here and there a chipmunk darted from the fallen leaves from tree to tree in search of provisions for the winter, but other than this, there was no sound at all.

My pace quickened as the angle of the almost invisible path ahead of me became more gradual, winding far up ahead until it disappeared into the trees. The longer I walked the more appealing the world around me became, for there is nothing more beau-

tiful than the solitude of the mountains when one is deprived of it for any length of time.

Up ahead I could see an opening in the trees as I neared the top of the mountain, and the morning sun pouring through it bathed the multicolored forest in a golden wash. As I came closer to the top, a large mass of rock came into view through the clearing, and beyond it the vast clear sky stretched out endlessly in an ever increasing breadth. My tiny trail came to an end at the top of an enormous cliff which pushed upward one hundred and fifty feet from the tree tops below. Here, on the sun-warmed rocks far above the rest of the world, I sat down and surveyed the rolling mountains that stretched in all directions as far as the eye could see. Here, I could be comfortable. Here, I was at ease and happy. For here is my home.

DEDICATED TO STUART HALL

JEFF BELKOV

Many a beau have trodden there,
And joys were for most a part,
But in the end the truth came out,
And results the broken heart.

Surely they must have a few,
Whose mogul cher will not allow,
But in due time it comes about,
And on their minds they plow.

We cannot attribute all this fault
On students with mindless years;
For without the leaders to obey
There would have been no fears.

What future lies within this place?
What can the populous do?
The answer to this question friend,
Is they'll make a fool of you.

BIRTH OF A THEME: WORRYING

DAVID H. LACY

HERE I AM sitting. I can not think of a topic for my theme. I have exactly thirty minutes to think of a subject and then write on it. I have paused. My roommate has just started talking about his furlough. Only twenty-five minutes left. No, only twenty minutes; where is all the time going? It seems to be fleeting into history, pulling me along with it. What am I going to do? I must have a theme, and it must be good, extremely good. I will probably be called on in class to read mine. I can't make a fool of myself. Somebody help me! Please, somebody try to think of a suitable topic!

My parents, what would they think if I ruined my English grade because I could not think of a topic for one simple, lousy theme?

People, I am beginning to hate them. Another one of those despicable time-wasters has just come into the room trying to borrow a magazine. Thank Goodness, he's gone. I feel slightly guilty because I had to

throw him out, but . . . Here is another; this one wants to borrow a cigarette. Now, he and my roommate have started talking about the furlough. He left, whoopeeee! Oh, my God, only ten minutes to write. I feel like a person in one of those headache commercials, you know, tension — tension — tension! But, there is not a pill or cureall in the world that would solve my problem. Just how many people are there in this world? Another one has come in!

There must be something I can do. Maybe I could get sick and go to the infirmary. Yes, that's a good idea. No, I can't do that; I will have to be a man and face the world. I did not create this problem, but it certainly is mine to solve.

Only three minutes left. If I could just think of a topic, I could write the theme during my first period Math IV class. I've got it! I know a topic! I can do it. I can do it. I can do it! I got so excited I forgot it. Oh, now I remember! I can write about worrying!

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A NOTE FROM THE STAFF

THE SCIMITAR is a unique publication in that it is written by the Cadet Corps and not a select staff. The contributions for this issue were very few. The staff of the SCIMITAR requests that each cadet prepare some form of literary work such as a short story, an essay, or a poem and submit it to a member of the publication's staff prior to February 20, 1966 for the Spring Issue.

REMEMBER

THIS IS A PUBLICATION BY
THE CORPS OF CADETS OF
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