

A TRIBUTE

BY BRIAN WALRATH

On an eve not long ago,
As I settled in the glow
Of my home fire's soothing warmth upon my skin,
I drifted backward to the days
When our lives were simply crazed
For we were captives in a frenzied loony bin.

We faced a trial called OCS
Where the ambiance was stress
And all the cards were clearly stacked against us.
With the goal to make us break,
To see just how much we could take,
Stood a crew of dreadful creatures quite contentious.

Chief among these beasties mean
Always set to vent their spleen
With sneering looks and heads of shiny black,
Were those ever-present ghouls,
Who aimed to make us feel like fools,
The lurking ogres known to us as Tacs.

It was Tacs, Tacs, Tacs,
They were always on our backs,
Pouncing on us for the slightest violation.
We were bound by rules galore
Like the polish on our floor,
Or our military bearing in formation.

They harassed us while we ate,
Cold food wasted on our plate,
And made sure our shaves and haircuts were permitted.
They meted out our marching tours
And other tortures we endured
For any small misdeeds we had committed.

Oh those Tacs, Tacs, Tacs,
“Clear the way you lowly Smacks.”
We jumped to make a path for scowling brutes.
Our spines flat against the wall,
When a Tac strode down the hall,
For his power over us seemed absolute.

They screamed hard into our faces
Tried to get in our headspaces,
So we’d crumble in our goal to graduate.
They told us we would quit
And we might as well admit
T’was time to give up hope and capitulate.

Those evil Tacs, Tacs, Tacs
They never cut us any slack.
And they made us shout commands into the air.
They said we must speak very loud
To be heard above a crowd
So we should sound off like at last we’d grown a pair.

There was the checking of our gig line
And whether our boots would shine
And a hundred other things that really mattered.
After hearing how we’d failed
Often in greatest detail
It’s no wonder that our confidence was tattered.

The blasted Tacs, Tacs, Tacs

Our rooms and bedding they ransacked
And scuffed their bloomin' boots all down the hallway.
When we returned we found a mess,
Leaving us in great distress
For we knew we'd face the same thing the next day.

When they inspected our clean rifles,
They decried the slightest trifles
And sent us back to scrub the guns a-gain.
We struggled to appease them,
But never could we please them.
Our efforts they were always all in vain.

The fiendish Tacs, Tacs, Tacs

Twice around the airborne track
Where we ran and stumbled gasping hard for air.
It should come as no surprise,
The nasty cold look in our eyes
That longed to kick some Tac-ish derriere.

So every now and then
We gained a measure of revenge
That made the monsters seem not so titanic.
We knew that we must pay
And the Tacs would have their way
For the stunts we pulled would cause them to be frantic.

Get those Tacs, Tacs, Tacs

We found methods to attack
To demonstrate that we were more than sheep.
Ways to get right back at them,
To show that we would not cave in
And to make us feel our lives were not so bleak.

We trounced them at athletic games,
Which put the egotists to shame,
And gave us hope that we would persevere.
The Rock heaved into Ranger Creek
Caused a seething Tac to nearly weep
But we survived his punishment still in good cheer.

A rifle muzzle to the chin,
Ways to hide our inner grins,
Or a clever ploy to not fetch cherry pie.
A mini roundball court
For a tiny Tac so short
He could hardly look most of us in the eye.

A drenching in a puddle
Left a spitting Tac befuddled
And creative parodies gave us a smile.
But t'was not all games and fun
Since the Tacs 'most always won
So our victories lived only a short while.

Back then there was no way to know
How this was causing us to grow
And much of it was due to those darned Tacs.
Whatever lessons thusly learned
Were most certainly hard-earned
From those creatures with their heads of shiny black.

We each must look deep down inside
For those strengths that give us pride
And help to keep our course on the right track.
Some of these were forged and honed
In that never-land war zone
Peopled by the mean-faced creatures we called Tacs.

So here's to Tacs, Tacs, Tacs

To them we have to doff our caps.

Though we cussed them and we pranked them,

Heaven knows we need to thank them,

For they helped us be much better men, those unloved Tacs.