Haiku

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Abstract

I stood up to speak. The crowd’s hearing stuttered, so I sat down again...
“What am I worrying about these damn gooks for?” he thought. “Twenty more days and I go home.” He reached for a cigarette.

A quick blur near the hangar door!

“Halt!” and he tried to rise but his legs wouldn’t lift him.

“Halt!” and he rolled on his side, his helmet rolling off, his tongue stuck to the sides of his mouth.

“Halt!” and his voice rose and cracked as he fumbled for the carbine’s safety and stared over the barrel at the running figure.

He was conscious of the gun kicking and trembling, but it was not until the bolt closed on an empty chamber that he heard the roar as it echoed from the hangar.

He turned the crank on the guard phone and told the voice in the receiver, “Post fifteen; I think I’ve killed a gook.”

He walked to the limp figure and saw the torn, and now blood soaked trousers, made from black market army blankets; he saw the gray hair, done up identically to that on any other Korean Mama-san; and he saw the five radio tubes which had spilled from her hands and broken on the concrete.

“I told you to halt. — Damn it! — I told you.”

When the ambulance arrived, they found him sobbing and being sick on the ground.

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*by George Hopkins*

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The crowd’s hearing stuttered, so  
I sat down again.