

A Trooper's Decision

By Charles Smith

We reported that day, recruits; brash and raw,
With eyes agog at what we saw.
Lofty towers, nightmares of webbing and steel,
Ranks of instructors, who's wrath we would feel.
But we learned, slow and sure,
That for every mistake, there was a cure.
We were treated worse than dogs, and then
We were told to brace up, to act like men.
PT and drill, sweating under the hot summer sun
Little did we know, our torture had just begun.
Day after day, we swore we'd quit, we'd drop, we'd die,
But something gave us the strength for just one more try.
Push ups we mastered, with vigor and vim,
We did a thousand at an instructors whim.
We'd try on our chutes for a practice rig
Then came, "drop soldier, that's a gig."
Finally one day, with breaths abated,
We heard the news, long awaited.
Remember what you were taught, without it your'e sunk.
Monday morning you're going to jump.
Somehow our new found courage faded away
When we awakend that fatal day.
No one was boisterous or jolly as before,
Countenances were grim and sour.
We arrived at the flight line, timid and shy,
Feeling we might not make it, but we surely would try.
Then before we had a chance to lose our nerve,
We were strapped into a T-ten and reserve.
Then toward the plane, we filed down the ramp
Walking with leaden feet and foreheads damp.
Before a few more minutes went by,
We were strapped in and ready to fly.
The engines began to rev, the wheels began to roll
And wo devoted our thoughts to the status of our souls.
We started remembering every tiny sin.
Feeling glum, but still trying to grin.
Then we were off, the terrain grew small
And we devoted our thoughts to he status of our souls.
Would it open? We really didn't know.
And if it didn't, where would we go?
The command "get ready" we heard loud and clear,
Stand up and hook up, tight and secure.
Check your equipment and let it be known,
That you've checked your buddy's as well as your own.
The check points we've passed, the DZs below,
The green light is on and out we go.
We try to count, but only a gasp
Was torn from our throats, in a tortured rasp.
Soon a sharp tug and then a soft plop
Told all was well on our first drop.
We had lost our fear which was all about,
We'd do it again without a doubt.
For we were Airborne, we'd live up to the name,
Bringing it glory, honor, and fame.
And now it's over, we're proud of our decision,
To become troopers of the 11th Airborne Division.