

ONE

A Dream Come True

As the US Army truck careened around the sharp curve at the top of the mountain, Philip Greco lurched forward, grabbing the arm of the soldier next to him. The truck shook and rattled even though the road was smooth. Philip thought, *Forget about the enemy. I'm going to have to be careful the army doesn't kill me with this lousy equipment.*

The post he was headed for was Hardt Kaserne, the former Nazi barracks that had been called the "Adolf Hitler Kaserne," in Schwäbisch Gmünd, a little town fifty kilometers from Stuttgart. Philip had been sitting in the back of the bouncing truck for two hours. The hard wooden bench pressed into his aching rear end. He looked past the canvas back flap beating up and down in the wind to the town below, and his thoughts began to wander. Tiny lights dotted the countryside and sparkled like diamonds. It looked as if the world had turned upside down and the sky, with its twinkling stars, was below the mountain.

His fear made him want to bury his head in the arm of the soldier he had just grabbed. He was alone and didn't know what the future held. He didn't even know where he was going to sleep that night. It could be a barracks with twenty guys, as it had been at Fort Dix in basic training. He knew he had to get the top bunk so it would be more difficult for a bully to pull him out. He also knew he wouldn't be able to

escape the sight of guys around him exposing their penises as they masturbated during the night.

Philip remembered the words of the priest at Saint Malachy's Actors' Chapel in Manhattan. "You should tell the army psychiatrist that you're a homosexual, and then they won't take you. It will be very difficult to be with all those men in the showers and sleeping in the barracks," he had warned.

But Philip didn't want the stigma of having been rejected for homosexuality following him for the rest of his life. "I can take whatever they give me. I can do it as well as a heterosexual," he had promised the priest.

This is a far cry from my life as an actor in New York City, he thought. Living with a bunch of soldiers had been unimaginable.

With a final lurch, the truck came to a violent stop. They were finally at Hardt Kaserne. Again, Philip grabbed the arm of the soldier next to him to keep from falling off the bench.

The soldier asked, "Hey, you want to marry me?"

"I'm sorry," answered Philip.

The soldier laughed. "That's okay. I'm going to get me some fräuleins tomorrow. German girls love American cock."

Trying to fit in, Philip countered, "And I bet you have a lot of cock ... and bull for them."

"You bet I have. Here—you want to feel it?" He grabbed his crotch to show the outline of his cock.

Philip murmured, "No, thanks." He did want to touch it,

Next, he was sent to the supply clerk. Philip told the man his size, but it didn't really matter. Shirts, pants, underwear, socks, and boots were randomly thrown at him. None were his size. He had to join the other recruits who were trying to exchange clothes to get approximately their correct sizes. He was assigned to a platoon and specific barracks without any obvious method to the madness. He had nothing in common with any of the men in his platoon. They mainly talked about having no sex drive because of the saltpeter that was put in their food. This didn't seem accurate to Philip; every night he heard squeaking noises from the springs of bunks while soldiers masturbated. But he was afraid to touch himself after the sergeant's lecture threatening to cane any hand that touched any penis.

Although Fort Dix, New Jersey, wasn't far from New York, Philip might as well have been in Siberia when he had to march through snowstorms carrying twenty-five pounds of gear. The army's concern for the recruits' well-being was brought to light when one of them died of a heart attack on the march—after telling his superior officer he had heart trouble.

Philip received some support from another gay soldier, Jack. They helped each other endure their shared revulsion to the cursing, farting, vomiting, drunken straight recruits. However, no one could help on the night Philip had to stand in formation in the cold winter rain. The recruits had been "asked" to buy government bonds, and the money would be deducted from their meager soldiers' pay. One of them had refused, so the captain called out all the troops in the bar-

racks and had them stand in the freezing rain until the lone holdout agreed to buy bonds. After four hours, at midnight, the soldier “agreed.”

Philip and his bunk mate, Frankie, who was also from New York, had the same sarcastic sense of humor, and at first, they also enjoyed wrestling together. When “Fuck-Your-Buddy Week” was announced, Frankie, who claimed to be straight, pulled Philip under his blanket to wrestle and simulate intercourse to entertain the troops in their barracks. With the others unable to see, Frankie grabbed Philip’s cock. Afraid to breathe, Philip didn’t say a word and sometimes ventured to touch Frankie’s cock. Frankie got on top of Philip and grinded his crotch into Philip’s hard erection until Philip had an orgasm and came in his regulation shorts. Philip worried he could get a dishonorable discharge—or, worse, go to prison—for homosexual activity, but at twenty-three, his sex drive was stronger than his fears.

However, Philip’s friendship with Frankie ended abruptly when they were on maneuvers. To escape bullets from the hypothetical enemy, they had to crawl under barbed wire via a single hole in the wire. Philip hesitated in consideration of Frankie, who then dived right through the hole without any regard whatsoever for Philip’s safety, theoretically leaving Philip to be shot.

Next came advanced training. Philip was assigned to the unit making dog tags. It was easy to operate the machine punching out the metal dog tags. However, he had to be precise in entering the correct information: the soldier’s name, serial number, religion, and blood type. This was a soldier’s

identity card if he died in battle.

The first time he entered the dog tag shop, he was greeted by the officer in charge. Captain Brock was a round black man with a twinkle in his eye. He welcomed Philip and introduced him to the five good-looking white soldiers who were already working there. They all had blond or light hair, muscular physiques, and sparkling eyes that laughed at secret jokes. Philip felt out of place with his black curly hair, slight build, and frightened brown eyes. They seemed unusually friendly with one another and with Captain Brock. Philip was determined to be as professional as possible so as not to draw unwanted attention.

Captain Brock was friendly toward him, which was unusual in the army. A few weeks into Philip's assignment in the shop, the captain asked Philip, "Would you like to come to my home for a party with the other guys?"

Philip didn't know how to behave with his new acquaintances, so he answered, "I have to clean my M-1." He knew not to call it a "gun" for fear of being punished.

"You're going to miss a good time. But we'll make it up next time."

"Thank you, sir."

A few weeks later, while Philip actually was cleaning his rifle at night in his barracks, he was called to the orderly room. *Oh God*, he thought, *what have I done now?* He raced to the orderly office. When he arrived, he was surprised to find Captain Brock there. The captain said there was an emergency job to make dog tags. Philip was relieved and followed him to his car.

As the captain pulled the car away, he said, "You couldn't make the party last time, so I brought the party to you." He laughed as he pulled a pint of whiskey from his jacket and turned his car in the direction of the shooting range.

"Aren't we going to the shop, sir?"

"I just said that to get you out of the barracks. We're going to the range, where we won't be disturbed." He took a swig of whiskey. "I thought you could use some relaxation. I know how hard it is to live with all those assholes in the barracks. You have to listen to all their made-up stories about getting laid." Captain Brock handed Philip the whiskey.

Philip thought he had better not insult him, so he took a little swallow. Meanwhile, Captain Brock parked the car in the dark, deserted firing range. He shifted around and put his hand on Philip's knee. Philip froze.

"You missed a good party the other night. The guys got a little tipsy, and we played strip poker. You can imagine how it ended up. In fact, our dicks all ended up."

"I'm glad you had a good time, sir."

"You don't have to call me 'sir' here."

"Okay," muttered Philip.

"Why don't you move over here, and I'll help you relax?" said Captain Brock.

"I'm fine here, sir ... I mean Brock."

"You know, I can really make you feel good. Have another drink."

Nervously, Philip put the bottle to his lips again. "You don't need me when you have all those good-looking guys

in the shop. I'm really not into that, and you'd be disappointed," he said, wishing it were one of the guys from the shop coming on to him in the car.

"Well, at least let me give you a back rub."

"Okay." Philip turned around and moved closer to Captain Brock.

"Take off your shirt so I can feel your skin."

Philip didn't know what to do, so he removed his shirt and began to pray. Captain Brock's hands were smooth, and the back rub did feel good. It had been months since anyone had touched Philip's bare skin.

Captain Brock said, "You are so tense. You needed this."

After a few minutes Philip said, "Thank you. That was so good." He pulled his shirt on and moved over to the passenger side again.

Captain Brock said, "I could get you stationed here permanently for your two years. Then you could go into New York for auditions."

Immediately, Philip regretted having told the captain that he had been an actor in New York before he was drafted. He thought it wouldn't be possible to act in a play in New York while in the army in Fort Dix. Wrestling with these thoughts, he told Captain Brock, "I was hoping to be stationed in Germany. I studied German in high school and would love to see the country. They've been sending a lot of guys there."

"They're also sending them to Korea. I could get you shipped there."

Philip gasped. "You're a nice guy. You wouldn't do some-

thing terrible like that. Please.”

Captain Brock laughed. “No, I wouldn’t torture you with Korea. Well, I think I’d better take you back to the barracks. You won’t tell anyone about this.”

Philip knew that was his trump card. Captain Brock also could be court-martialed and sent to Leavenworth prison. “No, of course not,” Philip reassured him.