



F Troop and Other Citadel Stories

Tom Worley

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From its founding in 1842 the Citadel has been steeped in tradition. There have been changes through the years, but the basics of the military code and the plebe system have remained constant. Citadel graduate Tom Worley has crafted this collection of short stories about life at the South Carolina military academy during the 1960s. While the stories are fictional, they are inspired in part by his days as a student on the college campus. With humor and dramatic clarity, Worley reveals the harshness of the plebe system, how success is achieved through perseverance, and the character-building benefits of a Citadel education.

The seventeen stories included in the volume are told from the perspective of two main characters—cadets Pete Creger and Sammy Graham—who are members of F Company. By turns surprising and entertaining, the collected stories range from the emotional and physical trials of being a knob in the plebe system, the brutality of hazing, and the fear and fun of company pranks, to the friendship and camaraderie the system fosters and the tremendous pride shared by those who wear the coveted Citadel ring.

Best known for its Corps of Cadets, the Citadel attracts students who desire a college education in a classical military system in which leadership and character training are essential parts of the overall experience. Any romanticized notion of military bravado is quickly shattered the moment students set foot on campus and their parents drive away. Many cadets are left wondering, “What have I signed up for?” Worley’s stories shed light on the pain and the pride, explaining why, he says, “most cadets at the Citadel hated the place while they were there and loved everything about it once they’d graduated. They were bonded together for life. Perhaps that’s the greatest thing the Citadel did for them.”

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