ForeWord Reviews
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BIOGRAPHY

A Soldier's Letters
Russell A. Working
978-1-4259-4598-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

An interesting consistency in memoirs and or autobiographies written by soldiers especially in epistle form is their tracking of the growth from na&239;ve arrogant youths to men of tempered maturity. Russell A. Working's book *A Soldier's Letters* is a perfect example of this development. Written as a sequel to his 2005 autobiography *One of Four A Soldier's Letters* is the retelling of Working's experiences during the Korean War through the use of correspondence; the majority of which was written to his wife Violet or as he addressed her in his letters "Vi."

The writing style is full of humor easily accessible almost conversational and Working provides periodical narration where either a letter has been lost radical change occurred or he thought further explanation had become necessary. "I am perched by my tent amidst the dense vegetation of a Kansas ravine" Working writes of army war games during basic training. "This is our second day out and already I've counted thousands of those crawling tickling biting creatures of the wild: bugs! It took about two hours to get the chill-that made us shiver all night-from my joints this morning. Besides the dampness the cold (Jolly old England sort of thing you know) and the grass bed I was forever rolling onto remnants of a stump."

Often the writing is deeply insightful and his descriptions are poetic. Observe the lyricism in the following passage of Working's memories while stationed in Japan: "The shore is woven into an intricate lacy pattern of glittering bays inlets and surrounded by craggy pine-draped hills. Waves lapping the time-chewed shores sucking at the soft rock bouncing into white misty foam or rolling in long parallel white-tipped waves against golden stretches of sandy shores."

Well-rounded and well written Working may have added a dynamic to his story if he also included the letters that were written to him by friends family and his beloved "Vi" for the reader would have been able to see Working from the perspective of those closest to the truth in his heart.

A Soldier's Letters is an excellent book for readers of all ages who enjoy learning about

the human encounter with war. An arrogant boy blossoming into a literate man and finding his way through death life and love Russell A. Working's experiences in the military have influenced him as a writer educator husband father and human being. One of the many cogs in the giant machine of the United States Armed Forces his contribution to the wartime record is as valuable now as it was then.

Lee Gooden