Intriguing 'Soldier's Story' explores blacks' changing roles

By Chris Welsch Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

than that. It's a murder mystery, an insightful exploration of changing values at the end of signment in the European Thea-World War II and of the complex ter. effects of those changes on blacks. It's a damn good story.

Dear Lincoln,

der of Master Sgt. Vernon C. Waters, a hard-ass who is hated by "A Soldier's Story" is much more his troops. Waters, played well by Adolph Caesar, leads a troop of all-black soldiers waiting for as-

> Howard E. Rollins Jr. plays Richard Davenpart, a sharp-look-

'World Famous'

Le Metro Food Court

gate the murder. The white offic- troops is revealed. ers at Fort Neal in Louisiana resbecause of his race.

the killer - his thorough investigation makes a fascinating mur- story too.

der mystery. cause he thinks this war will He humiliates and abuses his eliminate "geechies" and "yassus."

Davenport has the formidable task of finding the killers in hostile territory. The white officers are covering up for two of their men who were the last to see Waters alive. Davenport is told he probably won't be able to arrest any whites for the crime - be they Klansmen or officers.

But what begins as a cut and dry case of racial killing becomes more and more complex as Wat-

The movie starts with the muring black captain sent to investiers relationship with the black

Rollins is magnificent as Davenent Davenport and fear he won't port. He handles the prejudice of be successful in the investigation the white soldiers and the admiration of the black ones with the same cool demeanor. "Soldier's Davenport is determined to find Story" revolves around Waters, but Rollins makes it Davenport's

Caesar also excells in his role. He interviews all the men of Although Waters in hateable, Cae-Waters' troop. An intriguing por- sar makes the character more trait of Waters emerges in their than just a knee-jerk bad guy. recollections. The sergeant is ob- Waters wants to be part of the sessed with imitating whites be- white world, but as the movie progresses, he becomes horrified bring blacks into the mainstream. at the hypocrisy of his actions. In his efforts to further the race, troops in his overzealous quest to Waters actually steps backward with his viciousness. Caesar portrays that struggle so well, one becomes sympathetic to the misled sergeant.

> The role of blacks in society was changing rapidly at the end of WWII. Waters represented one extreme - a man proud of his black heritage, not cowed by prejudice. He was a success - with a captain in a white army.

C.J. Memphis, a dumb, friendly

"Uncle Tom" was scorned by Waters. Memphis was Waters' exact opposite. Played by Larry Riley, Memphis suffers Waters' abuse until it drives him to the edge essentially taking Waters with him.

Technically, "A Soldier's Story" is straightforward. Everything is real. The camera work is smooth with some fine subtle touches. During one scene the camera takes in Waters as he talks about a "geechie" like Memphis he knew in WWI. In the background Memphis sings a blues tune. The camera closes in on the mirror until all that is seen is Waters lined face, his thin-lipped mouth; the focus, grinding insult after insult, showing his hate - then panning back to see the friendly innocent Memphis, smiling and singing.

The blues music in the bar scene is as good as anything you'll hear at the Zoo, and Herbie Hancock's funky, '40s soundtrack completes the movie.

The acting is fine-tuned, the law degree and the stripes of a timing is right-on. It's a slick job. A story well told.

"A Soldier's Story" should be at



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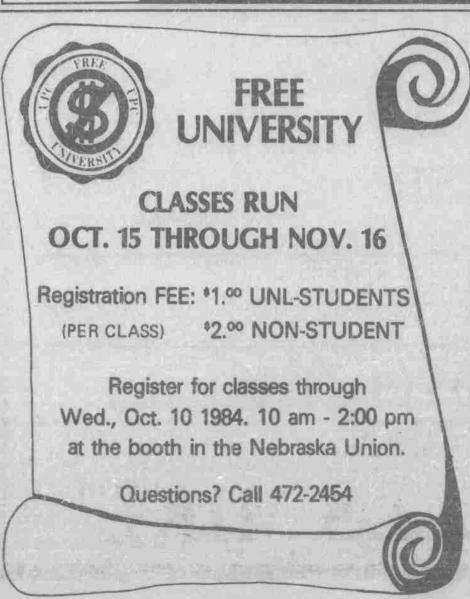




Photo Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Sgt. Waters (Adolph Caesar, right) holds the smoking gun and accuses C. J. (Larry Riley) of pulling the trigger.

Bay Area exhibit

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art, like the East Coast, but with a ments in modern American art. West Coast flavor representing One of the strongest pieces in individual freedom. The stress on the show (also the largest), is a

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of styles with no central focus titled "Agent Orange." The use of except the power of the artist's folk icons and found objects depersonal approaches to their rived from the "Funk" art of Caliwork. This factor also seems to fornia, which tends to demystify glue the exhibition together, art. The multimedia collage,

Otherwise, it looks like an abridged painting, print and assemblage is These artists have helped make edition of contemporary painting reminiscent of Robert Rauschen-San Francisco more in tune with in the United States, with works berg's "Monogram" and the value the mainstream of contemporary representing most major move-placed on the found objects leans into the realm of the metaphy-

Another interesting piece is a the individual produces a variety 1983 work by William T. Wiley large mixed-media work on canvas titled "I Used to Draw in Church on Sunday" by Raymond Saunders. The black-textured painting is accented with "patches" and "zips" of brilliant color, and feels like it belongs among Abstract Expressionist work because many techniques are borrowed from that movement.

> In contrast to the Abstract Expressionist works is the photorealism of Richard McLean. His painting "Satin Doll" looks like a snapshot blown up about 100 times and must be an airbrush painting since no brushstrokesare visible. Representative of another brand of realism is a small oil painting by Wayne Thiebaud titled, "Holy Park Ridge." Although the work is not a stilllife (his usual subject matter), the approach to the landscape is similar - bright colors and thick textures reflecting the vulgar commercialism of pop art from a California point of view.

There are several other works in the exhibition - landscapes, geometric abstractions, figurative paintings and painted sculptures. One by Manueal Neri looks much like Edgar Degas' "Dressed Bal-

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