

Adventure Cabaret

No, that's not it.

[1:55]

Offstage is heard "Hut!...Hut!...Hut!...Hut!" The entire cast minus the MC appear in Army uniforms, marching together.

There is a leader, and four soldiers. The leader stands to the side as the soldiers march and call. Each of the four soldiers has a crumpled piece of paper hidden in their left hand. At a key point later, they will all drop the pieces of paper on the stage.

Leader: You had a good job and you left!

Soldiers: You're right!

They all swivel to the right.

Leader: You had a good girl and you left!

Soldiers: You're right!

They all swivel to the right.

Leader: Sound off!

Soldiers: One, two! *Called out individually, while turning toward the audience.*

Leader: Sound off!

Soldiers: Three, four! *Called out individually, while turning toward the audience.*

They begin to sing.

All: You're in the Army now! *(saluting)*

You're not behind the plough (*miming*)
You'll never get rich (*miming*)
While digging a ditch (*miming*)
You're in the Army now! (*do si do, then salute on last word*)

All are in a line facing the audience, saluting.

Leader: At ease, men.

They drop to at ease, and disperse casually on stage, interacting easily with each other, and casually dropping the pieces of paper that had been hidden in their left hands. A kidding shoulder push or two. One of them is off by himself, not mingling at all with the others, staring down.

The storyteller enters.

Storyteller: When my father was drafted into the Army, there was a guy in his platoon, a smart guy, who was very unhappy. Every day, he was obviously miserable. Then he stopped talking to everyone, just kept to himself, and one day he just snapped—lost it completely.

Actor 1 begins walking around, and slowly bends down to pick up one of the pieces of paper. He looks at it closely. He examines both sides meticulously, looking for something.

Storyteller: He began walking around slowly, picking up every piece of paper he found. Each piece of paper he would examine closely on both sides, then sadly shake his head and say...

Troubled Soldier: No, that's not it.

The other soldiers begin staring at the troubled soldier, then mocking him. One of them points a thumb at him over his shoulder and circles his index finger next to his temple. They laugh together. The leader observes the troubled soldier from a distance, his arms folded.

Storyteller: All day long he would just walk around, picking up pieces of paper, studying them closely and then just shaking his head sadly and saying...

Troubled Soldier: No, that's not it.

Two soldiers move a small table onto the stage, with two chairs behind it. Another chair is placed on the opposite side of the table, so that the person seated there will have their back to the audience. The commander and a soldier enter, the commander holding a document. They sit down at the two chairs on one side of the table, facing the audience, looking stern.

Storyteller: This went on for several painful weeks. It was a damn sorry sight. Finally a hearing was held, and it was decided that this troubled soldier should leave the Army.

The troubled soldier enters, sees a piece of paper on the ground and moves to pick it up.

Officer at table: (sternly) Leave that be, private. That's an order.

The troubled soldier struggles to resist picking up the piece of paper, his hand shaking. He finally has to use his other arm to force himself not to pick up the piece of paper. The officer gestures him into the opposing chair.

Storyteller: He was handed a document, studied it closely, and then he suddenly smiled for the first time in months, stood up and said...

Screen: [Army discharge document]

The troubled soldier is handed the document, and studies it for a moment. He stands, turns around toward the audience, a radiant smile on his face.

Troubled Soldier: That's it!

All the actors other than the "troubled soldier" disperse off stage, and the table and chairs are removed. During this time a trumpet is heard playing "You're In The Army Now." The "troubled soldier" strides around the stage, lovingly holding his discharge document in front of him. On the final note of the trumpet, he kisses the document extravagantly, and exits.