S6440  A SOLDIER’S SWEETHEART  (USA, 1998)

Credits: director/writer, Thomas Michael Donnelly; story (Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong), Tim O’Brien.

Cast: Kiefer Sutherland, Georgina Cates, Skeet Ulrich, Daniel London.

Summary: War film set in South Vietnam in the 1960s. Narrated by a soldier called Rat (Sutherland), this is the story of a motley crew of Army medics stationed on a verdant hillside in war-torn Vietnam. With all their officers killed or occupied with more pressing matters, the enlisted men of Song Tra Bong live a loose MASH-like existence with long periods of peaceful freedom broken by grisly work on mangled GIs helicoptered in from the battlefield. Rat’s pal Fossie (Ulrich) has heard of a similarly isolated unit that pooled its resources to import a prostitute. He sets black-market wheels in motion, but instead of a Saigon hooker, the eventual arrival is Fossie’s hometown girlfriend, the teenage Marianne (Cates). The other GIs are shocked to have this milk-fed innocent exploring their compound, but instead of their Shangri-La degenerating into a “Lord of the flies” situation, the group finds its humanity refreshed by its unexpected visitor from home. But Marianne herself begins to undergo a transformation. She is drawn to the carnality of it all. She wanders into the country and befriends a unit of fearsome Green Berets. After Marianne joins the Green Berets on an all-night patrol, Fossie and Marianne reverse roles, with the sensitive soldier wondering if his increasingly hardened mate will come back alive.

Adilman, Sid. “A second Sutherland goes to war” Toronto star (Sep 11, 1998), p. ?
Shoemaker, Anthony. “Showtime’s ‘Sweetheart’ gets personal” Dayton daily news (Nov 8, 1998), p. 5C.

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