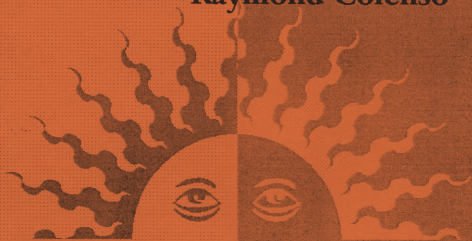


POETRY

Poems From The Frontline.

*A Collection of
Verse*
by
Raymond Colenso



DEDICATED

TO

MY MOTHER AND FATHER

(William and Winifred Colenso)

*Shakespeare was a man of verse
A noble man was he
Although my poems are much worse
Don't be harsh on me*

RJ Colenso

FOREWORD

The poems in this book were written by Raymond John Colenso, born in Sydney on 10 June 1920. Raymond was one of seven children born to Winifred and William Colenso. He was the youngest of the four Colenso brothers, Bill, Frank, Ted and Raymond, who enlisted in the AIF, 18th Battalion, 8th Division and served in Malaya. Raymond was killed in action in February 1942.

Raymond arrived in Malaya in February 1941 and these poems were written prior to him being killed in action in 1942.

The foreword has been written by his youngest brother, Leslie Colenso, for whom the poem LJ was written.

*Leslie J Colenso
(born 10 July 1925)*



RAYMOND J. COLENZO
N.X. 55834 2/18th Batt., 8th Division A.I.F

INDEX

<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>	
4	Dad	40	Youthful Folly
5	My Pal Dad	41	Duties
6	Dear Mother	42	Lionel Lyons
7	Winnie	43	When
8	LJ	44	Dreams
9	Greetings From Your Soldier	45	CB
	Brother	46	The Idol
10	Late Greetings	47	If
11	Musso Junior	48	Thoughts
12	To Mais	49	Good Luck
13	Our Parting	50	Strategic
15	Our Contingent	51	Homecoming
16	Waiting	52	AIF
17	Leave in Malaya	53	ASS
19	Mother's Day	54	Consider
20	Fe	55	Pals
21	Sportsmen	56	Alibi
22	Let's Pretend	57	Diggers
23	On Guard	58	My Plea
24	The Second Anzacs	59	Mortar Men
25	Army Pay	60	War
26	Sacrifice	61	Fate
27	My Lonely Wife		
28	Mail		
29	Glamour Boys		
30	May 11th		
31	The Has Been		
32	Ghandi's Double		
33	Our Picnic		
34	Tram Travel		
35	Anniversary		
36	Our Hospital		
37	My Girl		
38	Promotion		
39	Exit Sergeant's Shed		

DAD

*There's a father waits at Kingsford,
And his heart does ever yearn,
For the day, week, month or year,
When he'll see his sons return.
Though his eyes are dim and misty,
With a font of unshed tears,
His head is held up proudly,
While he waits on through the years.*

*His spirit has gone with them,
For he did go before,
The dangers they'll encounter,
He faced in days of yore.
Then it was not Hitler,
But the Kaiser was to blame,
So his sons have followed where he led,
Their purpose is the same.*

*Many men have seen their sons join up,
To take part in the fray,
But he has had to grin and watch
Four sons go away.
This may sound sentimental,
And make you feel quite ill,
But the reason I am writing,
Is because he's my Dad - Bill.*

(Dedicated to William Colenso, Snr.)

MY PAL DAD

*It seems like ancient history
When I last shook your hand,
Prior to my departure
To some far distant land.
I told you not to worry,
That I would take good care,
Although I knew 'twas useless,
You only thought of my welfare.*

*We weren't cut out for actors,
Each face betrayed our fears,
We laughed to hide our feelings
And restrain unhappy tears.
When a loved one is departing,
Even the strong are weak,
Emotion gains the upper hand,
And tongues refuse to speak.*

*We said farewell, not knowing
When we would meet again,
Your eyes and mine were wistful,
As I stepped aboard the train
That carried me from Sydney,
And also from your side,
We couldn't be quite cheerful,
No matter how we tried.*

*But forget about sad moments,
And news of which you dread,
This war will soon be over,
Just laugh, and look ahead
To the days we'll be together,
For years and years on end,
The heart that broke on parting,
Will well and truly mend.*

*So cheer up Dad, don't worry,
Be gay, and don't be blue,
No Hun or Jap will stop me,
From going home to you.
You'll be there to greet me,
Of that I am quite sure,
And once I get to Sydney,
I will roam no more.*

DEAR MOTHER

*Weep not Mother darling,
Drive away those tears,
You think I'm still a baby,
But I'm older than my years.*

*Now that I've joined the colours,
I must go away,
To help my fellow countrymen
In the coming fray.*

*For many years you nursed me,
And kept me fit and well,
If I thought it would help you,
I'd gladly go through Hell.*

*Do not be despondent,
For I hate to see you blue,
No matter where I travel,
I will always think of you.*

*As the person who has loved me,
And reared me with fond care,
Your son can't be a shirker,
He too, must do his share.*

*As much as this does grieve me,
To go away from you,
I must do my duty,
As you would wish me to.*

*Although I know it hurts you,
To see your son depart,
I can but assure you,
That you'll always own my heart.*

(Dedicated to my mother, Winifred Colenso)

WINNIE

*When the Nazis started marching,
 Leaving wreckage in their wake,
 It was their fond ambition,
 To make old England break.
 A married girl in Sydney,
 Faced the future months with dread,
 She knew that her four brothers,
 Were all Australian bred.*

*She knew they'd hear when England called,
 As their father did before,
 She never had a sadder day,
 Than when they left the shore.
 Her noble heart was breaking,
 And her eyes were wet with tears,
 She never will be happy,
 'Till their return does quell her fears.*

*Only one of them's her junior,
 It's he who I know best,
 He always loved to taunt her,
 But she knows it was in jest.
 Any man is lucky,
 To have a sister such as she,
 They don't come any better,
 She is perfect, can't you see.*

*She has a bonny baby boy,
 He's full of fun and life,
 She is the perfect mother,
 As well as the model wife.
 Her husband is a decent chap,
 They make a happy pair,
 Their's is the perfect marriage,
 Because they always share.*

*Long before they married,
 He didn't have a chance,
 But he carried on undaunted,
 Such is true romance.
 As much as he does love her,
 He can't love her more than me,
 I have known her all my life,
 She's my elder sister - see.*

(Dedicated to my sister, Winifred Colenso Jnr (Akhurst)

LJ

*When I was but an infant,
A baby five years old,
(Truthfully I can't remember,
I go on what I'm told) -
I was the family's idol,
The favourite of the lot;
They kept me warm when it was cold,
And cool when it was hot.*

*July the tenth, the fatal day,
When I was at a loss,
A little stranger came along
And took my job as boss.
Leslie John they called him,
I used another name,
Don't forget I was the pet,
Until the day he came.*

*That was many years ago,
Now I love him more
Than any girl I left behind,
Upon Australia's shore.
Now the war has started,
He is the only son,
His brothers have departed,
And four from five leaves one.*

*Age must be forgotten,
For he quells his parents fears,
As a man he carries on,
Although a lad in years.
I know he's very lonely,
He doesn't care for gals,
He's waiting for his brothers,
They and he were pals.*

*He smiles to shield a broken heart,
His eyes hold hidden tears,
This young lad is now a man
While still a youth in years.
There are no decorations,
For the man who carries on,
He is the true war hero,
I salute you, Leslie John.*

(Dedicated to my younger brother, Leslie J Colenso)

GREETINGS FROM YOUR SOLDIER BROTHER

*Better late than never,
Or so they always say,
That's why I now am wishing you
Good Luck for your birthday.
These greetings are long overdue,
And should have gone before,
My confidence is excellent -
You'll forgive me, I am sure.*

*I send these cheery greetings,
To my young sister small,
You are the family's mascot,
The baby of us all.
On the twenty-sixth of June
You came to give us joy,
We were so glad you were a girl,
And not a baby boy.*

*June the twenty-sixth this year,
Was a most important day,
For it was the anniversary,
Of your twelfth birthday.
That is why I'm writing,
From a far and distant land,
Much rather would I wish you luck,
As I shook you by the hand.*

*For then I would be near you,
Without a wish to roam,
Instead we're separated,
By miles and miles of foam.
Perhaps this war will finish,
Before next June draws near,
If so, I will be present,
To give you my greetings dear.*

(Dedicated to my sister, Dorothy Colenso/Reynolds)

LATE GREETINGS

*You asked an awkward question,
And I truthfully must state,
It's not that I'd forgotten,
I didn't know the date.
They say thirteen's unlucky,
This proves it can't be true,
The world became acquainted
Upon that date with you.*

*This year you're twenty-seven,
Oh! Forgive me please I say,
In later years this poem,
Will give your age away.
But jokes aside, the only thing
For which I hope and pray,
Is that your husband's presence,
Will cheer your next birthday.*

*Time must drag on leaden feet,
Each minute like a week,
As I am with your husband,
I must write, not speak.
The only thing I wish you,
Is all the best of luck,
You've fully earned a happy life,
For your display of pluck.*

*Every war has finished,
This one will be the same,
The man you love will then return,
To the girl he gave his name.
So even when you're lonely,
Keep thinking all the while,
Of the day when you will greet him,
With your natural happy smile.*

(Dedicated to my sister-in-law Eileen Colenso)

MUSO JUNIOR

*When the dreary clouds of winter
Had turned a lighter grey,
In the final week of August,
You observed the light of day.
But you were so weak and tiny
That your parents knew despair,
Your chance of life depended
On the skill of nursing care.*

*Day by day your parents
Watched your weight decrease
To their terror stricken minds
It seemed that life would cease.
Ounce by ounce you dropped below
The weight you were at birth;
It seemed that you were fated
To leave this war torn earth.*

*For two long weeks the battle raged,
The flame of life grew weak,
We feared 'twould be extinguished
Before we heard you speak.
Now we know the answer,
The flame did not go out,
Death has been defeated
In yet another bout.*

*I hope I'll have the pleasure
To take you out quite soon
But the way things are at present
I'm wishing for the moon.*

*If the war lasts very long
I know you're sure to say
Who the hecks this fellow
That I call Uncle Ray.*

(Dedicated to Thomas Akhurst Junior)

TO MAIS

*Two days after Christmas Day,
The wedding bells will ring,
I'm sorry I shan't have the chance,
To hear the choir sing.
I wish you all the best of luck,
On this your wedding day,
Despite the war clouds rolling,
Make this occasion gay.*

*I know you'll look a picture,
In your uncommon role as bride,
Many whispered comments,
Will make your husband glow with pride
I'll ask of you a favour,
On you it will be hard,
But, unless you grant it,
Your wedding will be marred.*

*When you arise from slumber,
On the twenty-seventh day,
Forget your absent brothers,
Fighting far away.
We'll be there in spirit,
So forget us for a while,
Unless you grant this favour,
You'll never raise a smile.*

*This day is most important,
The great day of your life,
When you cease to be a spinster,
And adopt the role of wife.
So with my Christmas Greetings,
And best wishes for next year,
I'll wish you all that's possible,
Now, you're a Bride, my dear.*

(Dedicated to my cousin, Mais Simpson)

OUR PARTING

*In this land so hot and sultry,
With rain and heavy dew,
With it's tin and rice and rubber
Here I sit and dream of you.*

*I often see you as we parted,
How you smiled to hide the tear,
How you played your part with courage,
How I loved you then, my dear.*

*I tried to hide my feelings
With a carefree, jovial air,
You must have thought me heartless
And that I had ceased to care.*

*But just behind my reckless smile,
I fought a bitter fight,
I felt the pangs of parting,
As you did, Dear, that night.*

*I felt the tempter at my side,
To me, he spoke quite clear,
He said, "The price you're asked to pay
Is costing you too dear".*

*But if I had but turned my head,
And "Yes" to him had said,
Unworthy of your love I'd been,
'Twere better I were dead.*

*I know you miss me every hour,
For me each night you pray,
I know you long for my return,
Though long and rough the way.*

*But if to you I cannot come,
With honour, head held high,
I know you will remember me,
Our love could never die.*

*So as I think of you each night,
I pray with all my heart,
That we will re-united be,
When we have played our part.*

OUR CONTINGENT

*You have heard of expeditions,
Under all types of conditions,
And tales of men who wander far away.
You have surely heard a story
About some greater glory,
Discovered by a man before today.*

*I'll inform you of a joke,
Unknown to many folk,
When our contingent sailed away;
There was Frank and Ted and Bill,
And nary one was ill,
Together with their younger brother
Ray.*

*We will take them in succession,
Let them pass in procession,
From the eldest to the youngest we will
move.
I'll not charge for admission,
And with your kind permission,
I'll proceed in my customary groove.*

*Bill, who's rather fat,
Always wears a hat;
He's the leader of the push I must
admit.
When he joined the army,
He drove the QM barmy,
As he couldn't get a uniform to fit.*

*I'm not telling any lies,
When I say he's outsize,
And his brain is in proportion too.
He didn't take to walking,
Now his hardest job is talking,
As a storeman 'tis his job to ration stew.*

*No further will I go,
Before I mention "Snow",
He is better known as Frank to you.
His hair it isn't white,
It reminds me of the night,
But fair or dark, the name of "Snow"
will do.*

*No matter what you think,
When I say he doesn't drink,
That he will never fall I know for sure.
I know he'll never stray,
For he writes home each day
To a wife who waits at home by
Sydney's shore.*

*He really is a wizard,
Flat out like a lizard,
As he wields his might pen with grim
delight.
He puts the rest to shame,
And they're really not to blame,
For he does a fortnight's writing in a
night.*

*And now there is another,
Known as our step-brother,
They have called him by our surname
quite a lot.
He cannot be excluded,
And thus he is included,
Although he'll want to fight me sure as
not.*

*If he should lose his unit,
I'm sure that it would ruin it,
He'd never be returned to Aussie's
shore.
No one would hear his tale,
As his skin isn't pale,
They'd make him gather rubber here for
sure.*

*There's yet another chappie,
Who never seems quite happy,
He has never been the same since we
left home.
He thinks he'll not return,
To the place for which all yearn,
So many thousand miles across the
foam.*

*We tell him he is mad,
It's no use being sad,
Everything that starts will always end.
Someday we shall go back,
To mansion, or to shack,
And meet again our each and every
friend.*

*And now we come to Ted,
He is sure to get ahead;
As a mortar man no better could you
find.
His job is number one,
And when he's on the gun,
He leaves all would be corporals far
behind.*

*You're sure to hit the bell,
If you tell him he looks well,
He loves to think he's dying on his feet.
He claims despite his wealth,
That he's never in good health,
And declares his many ailments have
him beat.*

*But the one who saves his pay,
Is the youngest brother Ray,
There are dollars in his book he hasn't
spent.
He likes his cigarette,
He also drinks, and yet -
You'll never find him broke without a
cent.*

*If you really wish to know,
I'll tell you, he's got dough,
He can live on next to nothing for a
year.
Perhaps you'll think I ramble,
When I say he doesn't gamble,
But that is how he saves and still buys
beer.*

*As last we come to Mark,
Someday his luck will spark,
He'll make the well known "Old Firm"
shake with fright.
His pocket's very low,
He never has got dough,
He does it all at Crown and Anchor
every night.*

*No longer will I bet,
You'll hear him say, and yet -
He does the lot on payday every time.
Now you know our expedition,
With nary an omission,
So no further will I struggle with this
rhyme.*

WAITING

*I have often stood and waited
On the corner of a street,
And kicked my heels for hours,
When my girl I have to meet.*

*While waiting there with patience,
I pray with all my might,
That I will not be stranded,
On that corner for the night.*

*Have I been dumped?
Did she miss her train?
Have I been forgotten?
Does her love remain?*

*These are the questions,
That flash through my mind.
But I shouldn't worry,
She's always behind.*

*My anger evaporates,
When I see her pretty face;
If ever she should leave me,
No one could take her place.*

*Though I know that she has never
Been early in her life,
If it's ever in my power,
I'll take her for my wife.*

LEAVE IN MALAYA

*You've heard of scrumptious parties
And tiffin feasts galore
That the AIF are having
At Kuala Lumpa and Singapore,
And tales of taxi dancers
So soothing on the eyes,
I'll stage for you the dinkum facts
Without such varnished lies.*

*To make it more authentic
I'll tell you what I've seen,
Perhaps your views will alter
When you find out what I mean.
The first Australian convey
To land troops in the East
Had no honoured welcome party
Or celebration feast.*

*They whipped us straight up country
Two hundred miles or more,
I cannot quote the figures,
The censor would be sore.
We landed in the jungle,
And settled down to work,
We never had the chance to rest,
Let alone to shirk.*

*It appears some high official
Thought it would be good
To make us work four times as hard
As any white man should.
They had to prove our toughness,
To them it seemed great fun,
To show the seasoned Tommies
Just how the job is done.*

*No man can beat the tropics
Be he white or brown,
Yet we worked for nine long weeks
And never saw a town.
If you stop and think a moment
You'll know what happened next,
I'm afraid I cannot tell you,
Our friend the censor would be vexed.*

*And then without a warning
They shocked us to the core
With a very generous offer
Of leave in Singapore.
Like everything that's pleasant,
This scheme had a catch,
Twice a week leave parties left
With fifteen in each batch.*

*So even if the planters,
All the Englishmen from here,
Escorted us to parties
And filled us up with beer,
We wouldn't be on velvet
As many seem to think;
Every man would wait a year
Before he got free drink.*

*Like the Easter glamour
These parties are a myth,
So also was the woman
Whose husband's name was Smith.
She wrote about our parties,
And how we liked the clime,
Although she never saw us,
She didn't have the time.*

*I visited the island
On my three days' leave,
The way I found the English
It really makes me grieve.
Perhaps they'll love their prestige
And say, "How do you do",
If the Japs move southward
And we stop them getting through.*

*The way they act at present
If they owned a jeweller's shop,
And an Aussie was to ask the time
They wouldn't even stop.
I am not vindictive,
They don't have to talk,
I'd forgive most anything,
But at rudeness I will baulk.*

*We may be only privates
On a lousy army pay,
But even if they're millionaires
We're better men than they.
This poem is not libel,
There's truth in all I say,
I hope I'll never have to work
If this is a holiday.*

MOTHER'S DAY

*Australians are in action,
In Libya and in Greece,
While some are in Malaya,
As yet - they're still at peace.
Again the name of Anzac,
Is known throughout the world,
It's these sons of heroes,
Who keep our flag unfurled.*

*To Hitler they're a menace -
These lads so brown and tall,
The way they wield their bayonets,
Forms a solid human wall.
But to mothers in Australia,
These men are only boys -
They remember them as babies,
Playing with their toys.*

*Men or boys it matters not,
Whichever they may be,
Their mothers will be waiting
And watching at the Quay.
The sons they nursed for many years,
Are fighting far away,
They who kept them fit and well,
Now - can only pray.*

*Mother's Day comes once a year,
This time it brings regret,
Many children's photos,
Are ribboned, "Lest we Forget".
But others bring back memories,
Of men who strive and fight,
To protect their mother's safety,
This will, shall conquer might.*

FE

*Let's discuss the difference,
Between the woman and this male,
The subject is an old one,
In fact it's rather stale.
But never will it cease to be,
A source of many views,
When debating with a woman,
The male will always lose.*

*His points perhaps are perfect,
His case should win the day,
Until she turns without a word,
And quickly walks away.
He will deal in logic,
The men they always do,
She will play on sympathy,
This weapon isn't new.*

*The female is so confident,
In her stuck-up prudish way,
The poor old male must listen,
To whatever she does say.
The thing that makes me angry,
It makes me simply boil,
The male must make advances,
While she can mar or spoil.*

*"May I take you out tonight?"
He asks with fervent hope.
With cruel delight she answers, "No"
And makes him feel a dope.
Such is a woman's privilege,
They use it one and all,
And perhaps we like it,
That's why we always fall.*

SPORTSMEN

*The ancient game of cricket,
That men and children play,
Is also very welcome,
To men on army pay.
The way 'tis played in England,
Gives rise to much comment,
On every ground there are two gates,
For the Player and Gent.*

*Australian sportsmen differ,
They love to play the game,
The millionaire and worker
Have equal chance of fame.
On the cricket ground they're equal,
The richman and the poor,
How the millionaire applauds
When the pauper gets a score.*

*Although we're in Malaya,
Where Australian men are few,
Why must the narrow minded
Adopt the English view.
They forget their distant homeland,
Where all men are the same,
If a man plays for the sport,
He'll never get a game.*

*If he is high and mighty,
With his nose stuck in the air,
He'll displace the first class player
Although he's only fair.
I feel I must inform you
Of our Battalion team,
The way the choose the players,
Tends to make me scream.*

*We have a first class bowler,
Who plays without a shirt,
The selectors do not like it,
Their snobbish minds are hurt.
He plays for pure enjoyment,
And tries to win the game,
His average is nigh perfect,
It puts the toffs to shame.*

*He doesn't watch his average,
Like many others do,
His victims aren't all bunnies,
He bowls at batsmen too.
He may be rough and ready,
An Aussie through and through,
He stands out like a beacon,
In a team where sports are few.*

LET'S PRETEND

*Let's pretend there are two men,
Like Superman and Speed,
To help us fight the Nazis,
In this, our hour of need.*

*We shouldn't want our army,
To keep us safe and sound,
For these two men would batter,
Our enemy to the ground.*

*They'd throw the tanks right back
Across their sweeping lines,
And catch the bullets in their teeth
And spit them at the swines.*

*The Nazis would drop their bombs,
On our civilian population,
But our two heroes would catch them
And throw back with mild elation.*

ON GUARD

*A soldier has a carefree life,
Until the day comes round,
When he must take his turn on guard,
To keep his mates in pound.*

*After all it's only training,
And he is used to that,
If he doesn't do it properly,
He'll soon be on the mat.*

*But when early in the morning,
With two hours still to go,
Any man who keeps alert,
Should be kept and used for show.*

*For when on duty at that hour,
It's silent as the plain,
And the only thing that's needed,
Is some steady, soaking rain.*

*And if that patient soldier,
Can take it all and grin,
He's a better man than I am, Gunga Din.*

THE SECOND ANZACS

*Once more the world is plunged,
Into war of the grimmest kind,
Not only the boys who go,
But the folks they leave behind.*

*Will suffer the pangs of vain regret
Of a thing that should not be;
Every man who goes abroad,
Will fight for you and me.*

*Everyone will do his bit,
Of that we can be sure,
He'll fight to hold the Nazis back,
To keep International law.*

*They'll fight when needed and not before,
When their King and Country call;
And on the foreign battle fields,
Many brave lads will fall.*

*They shall not be forgotten,
For we will remember each one,
They'll rest with good company,
The Anzacs, Father and Son.*

ARMY PAY

*I'm but a bloomin' private,
One of the simple kind;
It's not that I'm a moaner,
But there's something on my mind.
Even if you think me thankless,
I still must have my say,
I find that I am always broke,
With a dollar for my pay.*

*It's not that I am sorry,
That I joined to win this war;
My pocket is always empty,
I'd like a little more.
Nearly all Australian soldiers
Have their pint of beer each day,
I find I can't afford it,
On my paltry army pay.*

*Perhaps you'll say I knew it,
When I volunteered to join,
And I only have myself to blame
For any lack of coin.
And to be quite truthful,
I don't regret the day
That I signed on the dotted line,
To work for army pay.*

*The way I use the rifle,
Causes quite a fuss,
They say I must be cross-eyed,
And I couldn't hit a bus.
My shots all miss the target,
From the bull they're far away,
But I line up with the marksmen,
For my paltry army pay.*

*When we have a route march,
My feet both ache and pain,
To make conditions perfect,
It always starts to rain.
The pack gets very heavy,
And makes my shoulders sway,
I stagger back exhausted,
To get my paltry pay.*

*I look back with amusement,
When I, a raw recruit,
Marched around in circles
In a brand new khaki suit.
Although those days are distant,
And I have sailed away,
My income hasn't altered,
I'm on the same old pay.*

SACRIFICE

*Why can't the world remember,
The lessons of the years;
The horrors of each conflict,
Bringing many bitter tears
To wives and daughters left behind,
Who pray for peace to reign,
So they may see their husbands
And their fathers once again.*

*A chap I know from Moree,
With a bonny child and wife,
He considered them worth fighting for,
And so he risked his life,
To resist the German madman,
Who wants to rule the world,
He's the type of Aussie soldier,
Who keeps our flag unfurled.*

*A daughter nick-named "Whiskers",
By a fond and loving Dad,
Her little heart is breaking,
And her eyes are ever sad.
She is old enough to reason,
Just why he went away,
And nightly with her mother,
For his safe return they pray.*

*I know he'll never weaken,
When the battle's at its height,
It's his family he's protecting,
That's why he's in the fight.
Someday the war will finish,
And he'll put away the sword,
That family's reunion,
Will be his just reward.*

MY LONELY WIFE

*When I awake from slumber,
In the silence of the night,
I wonder where my wife is,
Perhaps she's getting tight.
She's no homely maiden,
To sit and wait at home,
Because her husband's absent
Far across the foam.*

*"I will not be idle",
I can almost hear her say,
"While the cat is absent,
The mice will always play".
She likes her pint of whisky,
Beer is much too tame,
When her minds gets dizzy,
All males look the same.*

*She flirts with all and sundry,
Be they big or small,
If they have a cheque book,
She likes them ten feet tall.
She goes to all night parties,
And every time gets blind,
She'll have any escort,
And never seem to mind.*

*I, her lonely husband,
Five thousand miles away,
Am building into fighting trim,
For I'll return some day.
Her nose is much too pointed,
I'll have to knock it flat,
I'll decorate her scenery,
You can be sure of that.*

MAIL

*This may sound quite fantastic,
The story I'll relate,
But everything I say is true
I here and now will state.
Morale is most important,
In an army it must prevail,
To us it's greatest colleague,
Is a good supply of mail.*

*When an Aussie lad refuses
To let you buy him beer,
It is enough to make you faint,
This kind of thing is queer.
If the canteen's almost empty,
And the beer is getting stale,
There's only one conclusion,
The reasons must be mail.*

*If an AIF man's missing,
When his name is called for pay,
It isn't hard to realise,
Just why he stopped away.
He'd rather be completely broke
And go without his ale,
Than delay by half an hour,
The delivery for his mail.*

*We'll struggle on without a drink,
And go without a smoke,
We'll laugh if we cannot get paid,
Although we may be broke.
While ever we can rest assured
That one thing will not fail,
We don't mind the hardships,
As long as we get mail.*

*For a breach of army discipline,
A soldier may be fined.
he pays the cash without complaint,
And never seems to mind.
His spirit is not broken,
By a week or two in gaol,
But, he'd soon mend his erring ways,
If once they stopped his mail.*

*When we joined the army,
We knew we'd have to go,
Far from our native homeland,
And all the friends we know.
Although our hearts are lonely,
Our spirits will not fail,
We have the prefect tonic,
Not alcohol - just mail.*

*If you people in Australia,
Could see a man's face fall,
When his mates are getting letters,
And he gets none at all.
You wouldn't waste a moment,
He'd have no cause to wail,
Your pen would keep on writing,
A steady stream of mail.*

GLAMOUR BOYS

*Early in the second month,
Of nineteen forty-one,
The Eighth Division sailed away
To fight perhaps the Hun.
The citizens of Sydney,
All cheered and watched them go,
To a distant destination,
Where - they did not know.*

*The Japs were getting cheeky,
All Australians were afraid,
That they would join the Germans,
And disrupt our English trade.
They boasted their New Order,
As an outlet for the wrath,
So eggs are cooked were landed,
To plant a thorny path.*

*The folks who stood and cheered them off,
Now sneer and often say,
Those Eighth Division glamour boys
Are on a holiday.
But if the Japs extended,
And the Eighth stopped their push,
The mob would say with envy,
They're twigs from the Anzac Bush.*

*The story I'm explaining,
Should now be showing clear,
These men left their loved ones,
And sacrificed everything dear.
It's not their fault their garrison,
They were not in the know,
The critics should try to remember,
That orders say where to go.*

MAY 11TH

*A certain Sunday every year,
The second one in May,
Brings back vivid memories,
For it is Mother's Day.
This year it is a failure,
As mothers young and old,
Cannot enjoy their privilege,
When their menfolk have been sold.*

*How can they feel happy?
When all they do is wait,
For the world to realise,
The futility of hate.
Their minds imagine dangers,
That their menfolk have to face;
But battles aren't incessant,
Troops move from place to place.*

*Although their hearts are lonely,
And thoughts near drive them mad,
And yet perhaps they're glad,
That their sons and husbands,
Have sailed so far away,
To fight against the Nazis,
The human birds of prey.*

*"No person yet", said science,
"Of broken heart has died",
I deign to treat this with contempt,
And say that science lied.
For a broken hearted widow,
Life is no longer sweet,
War claims another victim,
In another life they'll meet.*

THE HAS BEEN

*It's five to a room in our barracks,
With plenty of space to be sure,
There's only one fault with the system,
It's the lack of order and law.
Before you jump to conclusions,
Wait a moment for me to explain,
The infantry's in with the mortars,
It's like mixing beer with the rain.*

*Now take our room for example,
With the mortars in front, four to one,
The solitary infantry soldier,
Is beaten before he's begun.
When an argument starts after lights
out,
He's cut off from the front and the
rear,
He is only convincing,
When backed by a gut full of beer.*

*He loves to sling off at the mortars,
And believes that he's speaking his
mind,
But the poor old chap is so feeble,
They are sure to leave him behind.
When the Battalion moves into battle,
He may land a job at the base,
His legs can't stand up to marching,
And a youth will go in his place.*

*I'm sure he will be contented,
For he had a good time on the ship;
But none of us dare to tell him,
That we think he is losing his grip.
After all he is an old soldier,
And may have been good in his time,
But now he is a back number,
Twenty years beyond his prime.*

*He's not such a bad old fellow,
Although his temper isn't the best,
Perhaps a good dose of Kruschen
Would set his liver at rest.
But you can't give advice to old soldiers,
They know all the tricks of the trade,
No matter how long you argue,
They still say a club is a spade.*

*I know we will never forget him,
When we leave him behind the lines,
We'll just battle a little bit harder,
For what he should be giving the
swines.
He'd like to take a few prisoners,
We'll send him some for sure,
He'll march them in with graceful
stride,
And think he's winning the war.*

GHANDI'S DOUBLE

*In the days when Adolf Hitler,
Was a quiet and peaceful chap;
I mean before he altered
Poor old Europe's map.
A mate of mine like Ghandi,
Could make a fair display,
But now he works - well maybe,
For a dollar every day.*

*Like many of his countrymen,
He thought that might was wrong,
He left his Potts Point villa,
In order to tag along.
He might have been a good tradesman,
I'm not in the position to say,
But he left his wife and kiddie,
To get his five bob a day.*

*I said before he's like Ghandi,
But I know it isn't his name,
It's his only characteristic,
And sure to bring him fame.
Three times the picquets chased him,
Their job's to keep natives away,
Of course he gets this abuse extra,
As well as his five bob a day.*

*He was taken for a native of Java,
It couldn't have happened at night,
Although he may be an Aussie,
His wife couldn't call him white.
He is the dead spit of the natives,
I've often heard the troops say,
But he is as good as the next man,
When he gets his five bob a day.*

*Now he is in the mortars,
But he couldn't get on the gun,
They gave him a job with the sergeant,
They say he knows how to run.
When at last the war is over,
He will be able to say,
I mightn't have done any fighting,
But I earned my dollar a day.*

OUR PICNIC

*The Sixth are getting battered,
The Seventh copping Hell,
The Ninth are on no picnic,
They're getting their's as well.
While in the distant jungle,
Many thousand miles away,
The Eighth are on a rest cure,
All we do is play.*

*Because there are no shells here,
No bullets flying thick,
We have the name of glamour boys,
And it will always stick.
Every time we take a step,
The sweat falls from our brow,
If they only knew it
We have BO - and how!*

*Ploughing through the jungle,
With mud up round our waist,
When every slips a mouthful,
It has a lovely taste.
Fighting mossies by the score,
And cobras by the ton,
It's no use denying,
We're having lots of fun.*

*If you don't believe me,
When I say it's pretty hot,
I'll state a native custom
To show just what is what.
Every man is buried,
With his overcoat as well,
That's because he'll need it,
In case he goes to Hell.*

*Give the Japs Malaya,
It isn't worth a zack,
They shan't keep it very long,
Before they give it back.
Although we need the rubber,
And find use for the tin,
If we stay much longer,
We'll soon be mighty thin.*

*Take us to the Middle East,
Where it is cold at night,
So we can join the others
And help to win this fight.
If they grant this favour,
The critics then may say,
The Eighth Division glamour boys
Are on a "Holiday".*

TRAM TRAVEL

*Have you every sat and wondered
While travelling in a tram,
If the woman sitting opposite,
Prefers a stroller or a pram.
Or if the baldy headed chap,
Without a single har,
Has honestly forgotten
That he hasn't paid his fare.*

*If you've never tried it,
Just take a tip from me,
It's a source of wonder,
Some of the things you see.
The common daily ride to work,
Becomes a pleasure trip,
With even more enjoyment
Than a voyage on a ship.*

*Some have faces that are round,
And others have them square;
Not a small percent are dark,
While quite a few are fair.
I wonder what goes on behind,
Their set impassive mask,
I know that I would be surprised,
That's why I never ask.*

*The man, sitting in the corner,
Is a miner, that I'll swear;
I'll tell you how I worked it out,
There's coaldust in his hair.
His hands are hard and blistered,
From the swinging of the pick,
Don't think I'm a marvel,
Observation does the trick.*

*The chap in the other corner,
Is very hard to place;
He might easy be a tradesman,
If it wasn't for his face.
It shows he has known trouble,
But his smile keeps coming through,
He has fought and conquered,
Perhaps the hungry Jew.*

*If you follow my example,
You may someday notice me,
Gazing all around the tram,
To see what I can see.
I guarantee you pleasure,
On your daily ride to work
If you sort the worker,
From the snobbish minded clerk.*

ANNIVERSARY

*On the twenty-sixth of August,
 It was many years ago,
 For good or bad we married,
 Which, we did not know.
 Now the questions answered,
 The result, is as I knew,
 There was bound to be improvement
 With such a wife as you.*

*I'll admit I was no angel,
 I was very fond of drink,
 But when a man is absent,
 It gives him to time to think,
 Of the wrongs he could have righted,
 Of the things he should have done,
 Thus a character is bettered,
 By the cruelty of the Hun.*

*Drink is an obsession,
 Which a man must beat alone,
 If in the past I grieved you,
 In the future I'll atone.
 This war can't last forever,
 Some day I shall go home,
 To the wife I think of always,
 No matter where I roam.*

*We have always been together,
 On our Anniversary,
 This time we're separated,
 By a wide expanse of sea.
 But the Nazi must be conquered,
 For us to live in peace,
 We cannot be together,
 Until all battles cease.*

*To guarantee our freedom,
 I departed from your side,
 Our son must have a father,
 He can look upon with pride.
 Every time I close my eyes,
 I vision in my mind,
 The faces of my wife and son,
 The two I left behind.*

OUR HOSPITAL

*A bussing sound, what does it mean?
The boys all shake with fright,
Even though we're patients,
Cards are barred at night.
Then the "Spitfire" hoves in sight,
And swiftly comes around,
The boys all break for cover,
And quickly go to ground.*

*Of course it is a nickname,
For our dynamic nurse,
Anyone who comes in here,
Very soon gets worse.
Don't think I'm a cynic,
She is not to blame,
It's just they like our company,
New patients aren't the same.*

*I'm a quiet and peaceful chap,
And I don't mean no harm,
But every time they take my pulse,
They nearly break my arm.
The way they grab my dainty wrist,
And squeeze with all their might,
Three times it's reached a hundred,
I think it's caused by fright.*

*One night while deep in slumber,
I had a little walk,
And every time I took a step,
The fellows heard me talk.
Of course when I got tired,
I went back to bed,
Jane came rushing over,
She thought that I was dead.*

*There I lay in sweet repose,
Without a single care,
Very soon she woke me,
No - I didn't swear.
Even though perhaps I should have,
You don't know our Jane,
When she gets her temper up,
I'd rather stop a train.*

*There are many others,
Who ease our pains and aches,
The rotten way they treat us,
You'd think that we are snakes.
But after all they're nurses,
And have a job to do,
If ever they should go away,
It's God help me and you.*

MY GIRL

*Every child in tender years,
Its taught each day at school,
That certain things are all alike,
Exceptions prove the rule.
Proverbs are derived from fact,
Not all of them agree,
There always are exceptions,
For example - me.*

*"Absence", it is stated,
"Makes the hear grow fonder".
I have found it is a lie,
Since I commenced to wander.
perhaps it is her memory,
Not her heart that is to blame,
I can't guess the reason,
But the verdict is the same.*

*Perhaps her arm is broken,
Or her pen has gone astray,
She mightn't have a penny,
They all could cause delay.
I once received a letter,
Eight weeks ago it's true,
I've drawn my own conclusions,
And stopped writing - wouldn't you?*

*On final leave she promised,
To wait at home for me,
And perhaps she meant it,
While sitting on my knee.
Another provider comes to mind,
About the cat and mice,
Now that I'm so far away,
I mightn't look so nice.*

*On well! I can take it,
Whatever comes or goes,
The minute I get home,
I'll plant one on her nose.
When I return to civil life,
I shan't go wrong again,
The girl I pick to be my wife,
Will have a face that's plain.*

PROMOTION

*Quite an amount of excitement,
Has been going on here for days;
A number of privates promoted,
Has put quite a few in a daze.
As usual, not all have been noticed,
Many who though themselves right,
Lie awake with rage on their stretchers,
Instead of sleeping at night.*

*I have one in mind at the moment,
Who crawls like his forbear, the snake,
His ways are many and varied,
He's busy whenever awake.
By trying to force his promotion,
He belittles the men who are smart,
It seems that his life long ambition,
Met with a check from the start.*

*When in a training Battalion,
The rank of corporal he held,
he sounded more like a major,
The way he screamed and yelled.
His type would do well to remember,
That pride proceedith a fall,
His swift descent to a private,
Was a joy and a pleasure to all.*

*It's not that I am vindictive,
The perfect soldier am I,
But I hate to see anything shady,
And a private get stripes on the sly.
Today I feel quite happy,
The reason I want you to know,
I saw a crawler forgotten,
I mean private - so and so.*

EXIT SERGEANT'S SHED

*We Aussies in Malaya,
Are a happy carefree mob,
We don't like the place a bit,
But have to do our job.
After months of weary training,
They told us to dig in,
Although the going's pretty tough,
We did it with a grin.*

*With every day's work over,
When we came home to rest,
We had to don our respirators,
The smell was not the best.
For ten yards from our quarters,
Was a sergeant's little shed;
The breeze would drive the rotten stink,
To where we lay in bed.*

*Then without a second thought,
One fatal pay day night,
(They say we are undisciplined,
I think they may be right).
When the boys were full of Anchor,
And other brands of beer,
They tried to burn that little shed,
While the sergeants quaked with fear.*

*Three times a flame was started,
Three times a flame went out,
The rotten stuff it wouldn't burn,
The shed had won the bout.
The defeat was uncompleted,
'Til the next day on parade,
When the RSM announced the job,
That put others in the shade.*

*"Each night a corporal and four OR's,
Will mount picquet in the shed,
Their job will last from seven,
'Til every man's in bed.
A private on each corner",
And he told us, "Woe betide
Any man who enters,
For the corporal goes inside".*

*Twice this picquet mounted,
It may have lasted for all time,
Only in the early hours,
Occurred an awful crime.
The men were deep in slumber,
And the time was almost three,
When the little shed just disappeared,
As all can plainly see.*

*For a match alone it wouldn't burn,
It went out with kerosene,
So perhaps the flames started,
With the army's best benzine.
No child on any Guy Fawk's Day,
Could have a better blaze,
But to them it's only pleasure,
When piles of stuff they raze.*

*The OC was quite hostile,
No one would take the blame,
So the Company took the punishment,
For the man they couldn't name.
The little shed has left us,
Only embers now remain,
And the sergeants wait, all double up,
For the shed to be built again.*

YOUTHFUL FOLLY

*Between sixteen and twenty,
 Area a man's most dangerous years,
 His many acts of folly,
 Are the cause of needless tears.
 I was no exception,
 I failed to pass the test,
 And every man must qualify,
 Before he's at his best.*

*I thought it would be clever,
 To have a drink each night,
 But one was insufficient,
 I'd stop when I was tight.
 I thought I had reached manhood,
 When my schooldays were behind,
 My many stupid actions,
 Are preying on my mind.*

*I insulted, by a stupid deed,
 The girl I love so dear,
 Many times I called on her,
 When I was dazed by beer.
 Many times we quarrelled,
 Oh! Stupid pride of youth,
 She a queen of women,
 And I, a drunk uncouth.*

*At last I've passed this era,
 And stopped my erring way,
 Now a common soldier,
 From this lass I'm far away.
 I pray for her forgiveness,
 From far across the sea,
 Oh! Golden girl of all my dreams,
 Please wait at home for me.*

*On foreign lands I wander,
 Beneath a cloudless sky,
 If I know she's waiting,
 I have no wish to die.
 Her image always haunts me,
 For her tender kiss I yearn,
 If she shan't be waiting,
 I've no wish to return.*

DUTIES

*There are many minor ailments,
That plague a man through life,
To some it is their station,
And others 'tis their wife.
And even carefree soldiers,
Have a reason to complain,
I mean the many duties,
That follow in a chain.*

*Some of them are easy,
But most of them are bad,
They must think I like them,
I find it very sad.
If they're ever under strength,
And need a couple more,
They pounce with pure enjoyment,
On five five eight three four.*

*It may be company runner,
Or picquet in the town,
They may need a glamour guard,
So my name goes down.
Now I've touched a tender spot,
It always makes me swear,
And even baldy headed chaps,
Try to tear their hair.*

*When they post the duties,
I'm always on the list,
Even though my turn is past,
My name is never missed.
I soldier on without complaint,
But inwardly I moan,
Of the many duties,
It's guard that makes me groan.*

*The hours aren't excessive,
Just eight in twenty-four,
But when the ordeal's over,
In health I feel quite poor.
I'm always so tired,
That I can't even speak,
If they wouldn't wake me,
I'd slumber for a week.*

*But when they blow reveille,
I must rise and shine,
And prepare for daily training,
For we parade at nine.
I can go no further,
For "Ghandi" seems quite gone,
He reckons I'm a liar,
And never soldier on.*

LIONEL LYONS

*In my usual verses,
Sarcasm always shines,
This time I shall be different,
As I dedicate these lines.
To a friend who has departed,
Into the great beyond,
And jointed the wife who left him
Thus tying the severed bond.*

*On every second Sunday morn,
For seventeen long years,
While placing flowers on her grave,
He shed bitter tears.
He never missed attending,
In sunshine or in rain,
Although his every visit,
Only added to the pain.*

*Time, the greatest healer,
Couldn't mend his broken heart,
But now I know he's happy,
They no longer are apart.
He was always at our meetings,
He attended every night,
To see him playing poker,
Was but a common sight.*

*He was in fact an addict,
To this game of luck and skill,
But, no longer will he deal the cards,
Or ask, "How many Bill?"
No one can tell by watching,
If his luck was good or bad,
He wore the same expression,
Whatever cards he had.*

*Now the Lodge has lost this Brother,
And we have lost our friend,
Because his life was finished,
And Fate had written end.
He's rejoined the wife he loved,
And side by side they lie,
By his sudden death is shown,
All that lives must die.*

*Brothers, be upstanding,
And toast to one we love,
Although we'll always miss him,
He was needed up above.
I'll ask you all to join me,
Repeat with me these lines,
"You'll never be forgotten,
Farewell - Lionel Lyons".*

WHEN

*Many of the wealthy men,
In business all their lives,
Often have to travel
Overseas without their wives.
They know upon departure,
The date when they'll return,
To their families in the country,
Of the waratah and fern.*

*But men who join the AIF,
Know not when and where,
They'll see the faces,
Of their loved ones free from care.
They're fighting for a right to live,
For peace from racial hate,
But for many of the heroes,
Peace will reign too late.*

*I left my wife and baby
By Sydney Harbour's shore,
To go and join my comrades,
And put an end to war.
My curly headed baby boy
Is much too young to know,
That his father couldn't stay behind,
I simply had to go.*

*If the war lasts many years,
There will be the danger,
That David will not know me,
He'll consider me a stranger.
Pearl, my wife, will teach him,
To hope and pray for peace,
She knows that I cannot return,
Until this war does cease.*

DREAMS

*When I left Sydney Harbour,
It's calm blue waters deep,
Became a graven image,
To haunt me while I sleep.
And remind me of my homeland,
Many thousand miles away,
Of the womenfolk I left behind,
Oh! How I rue that day.*

*When I left my Mother,
And sailed across the blue,
I also left three sisters,
There was a girl friend too.
Every night in slumber,
I meet them all again,
How I curse when 'wakened,
By steady pouring rain.*

*In the early hours,
When my eyes are closed in sleep,
I hear their voices speaking,
From across the ocean deep.
In my mind we're happy,
Our hearts are free from pain,
There is no room for Hitler,
For it is peace again.*

*Each day I long for nightfall,
When I will dream once more,
Of my friends and family,
Whom we are fighting for.
If my life was halted,
Then turned back a year or more,
My choice would not be altered
I'd still be here I'm sure.*

CB

*The clock was showing ten sixteen,
His eyes were shining bright,
The tattoo roll was incomplete,
He'd got a haul tonight,
Stripes were in the offing,
His two would soon be three,
He'll climb up to a sergeant,
On the backs of you and me.*

*Chaps not in the mortars,
Say that he's alright,
That's because they're absent,
When he patrols at night.
He hangs around for hours,
To see what he can see,
How he smirks with triumph
When a private gets CB.*

*He has his own Gestapo,
He works it on his own,
Since his blitzkrieg started,
How the crime street's grown.
When he starts his nightly purge,
The Nazis hide in shame,
He's improved their methods,
But the system is the same.*

*Before he is much older,
In some dark and shady place,
He'll cop a proper hiding,
It might improve his face.
How we'd like to bash him,
But he has two stripes you see,
He'd have us where he wants us,
We'd finish on CB.*

THE IDOL

*Kingsford's star lodge member,
The AIF did join,
If it would have held him
They'd have paid good coin.
When on the coir matting,
The bowls he used to spin,
Kingsford Lodge was past the post,
They couldn't help but win.*

*The way he tossed the pills around,
It gave his rivals pain -
They'd try every trick they knew,
But all of them in vain.
Do not be mistaken,
There's six men in a team,
The other five were skim milk
Of course he was the cream.*

*He was not the captain,
He was much too young for that,
Although he broke all records,
He takes the same size hat.
His team won the silver cup,
Of course he was to blame;
Since he joined the AIF,
They haven't won a game.*

*He didn't rise to stardom,
On his bowling feats alone,
When they held their picnic,
He made his rivals groan.
His Lodge won the point score,
And thus they got the prize,
He done all the winning,
He's a hero in their eyes.*

*In fact he's pretty clever,
He shines in every way -
But alas! He's still a private
On a dollar every day.
This year they lost the sports cup,
For he's across the sea,
I know all about him,
Because this fellow's me.*

IF

*If I really thought my actions,
Would cause you needless pain,
Perhaps I'd do just what you want,
And not return again.*

*If I thought you really meant
The words I heard you say,
I'd go hunt up a tiger,
And throw my life away.*

*I hate to think your actions,
Are shackled by the chain
Of our love, which might have ripened,
But only embers now remain.
It seems to me you're sorry,
That I ever took you out,
I think you're playing cautious,
As I may get knocked out.*

*Your extremely generous offer
Of two months to decide,
Almost healed my broken heart,
In fact, I nearly cried.
But a soldier's life is dangerous,
So take my good advice,
Get dressed up in fancy clothes
And make yourself look nice.*

*I'm no ruddy hero,
But I couldn't stay at home,
I had to sail for Singapore,
Or Montreal, or Rome.
I know you must be lonely,
With me so far away,
So get a rope and go and hunt
A new friend, now, today.*

*I'm sorry there's not half the world,
Only just five thousand miles,
But I think I'm far enough away,
For you to use your wiles.
You're sure to find a scrupless man,
With any conscience he'd be here,
So he should suit you perfect,
You'll get on well, my dear.*

THOUGHTS

*When the still of night is creeping,
My thoughts return to home;
To far and distant Sydney,
Whose streets I once did roam.
The loved ones I have left behind
Are brought quite near to me,
The sacred gift of thinking,
Forms a bridge across the sea.*

*Visions of the future,
Help to aid my lonely heart,
And the noble art of writing
Plays a most important part.
To make a life like image,
Of the ones I left behind,
It prevents the threat of boredom
From preying on my mind.*

*Discomforts are forgotten,
When my thoughts commence to stray,
To the many happy moments,
Before I sailed away.
My lonely heart is sated
By the thoughts of friends who wait,
For the deliverance of mankind
From these days of strife and hate.*

GOOD LUCK

*I'm writing dear sister
With greetings to you,
I send you my love,
What more can I do.
I can't shake your hand
From so far away,
The best of good luck,
Is all I can say.*

*Your husband is absent,
He sailed with the tide
To guarantee freedom,
And peace for his bride.
Your birthday is empty,
For this man you love best,
Dressed in khaki,
And sailed with the rest.*

*When he departed,
Your eyes filled with tears,
The tune of the organ
Was still in your ears.
From your recent wedding
A few days before,
The bridegroom was sailing,
To some distant shore.*

*I send you no presents,
But I hope and pray
That he'll soon return,
To his heart far a way,
Which he left behind,
With his newly wed wife,
I pray you'll be happy,
For the rest of your life.*

STRATEGIC

*A handy word Strategic,
Explains away a lot;
But coupled with withdrawal,
I'm afraid it's not so hot.
They tell us in our army,
There is no word retreat,
But tell it to the Aussies,
Who evacuated Crete.*

*I doubt if they'll believe you,
They fail to see the fun,
In leaving their equipment,
For the fast approaching Hun.
The name they made as fighters,
Was won by weeks of pain,
They never had a chance to win,
'Twas rifles versus plane.*

*The war lords used Strategic,
To explain away the rout,
But what about the fellows,
Who were badly knocked about.
It couldn't find their missing limbs,
Or give the dead new lives,
It couldn't cheer their grieving friend,
Or sooth the widowed wives.*

*But cheer up friend, the day is near,
When we will laugh and say -
We have the Germans beaten,
They us Strategic every day.
But I said before it's needed,
We couldn't use retreat,
'Twould make the pessimistic say,
Give in, we're getting beat.*

*I think it's use is finished,
It will be used no more,
We're sick of leaving wounded men,
On someone else's shore.
And very soon the push will start,
The one for which you've waited,
'Twill mean the end of Strategy,
The word that always grated.*

*I hope I find old Adolf first,
And find him on his own,
I'll drag him from his lofty perch,
Upon his self made throne.
I'll let him see the bayonet,
For he'll not see the dawn,
The bayonet will be rusty,
As it's Strategically withdrawn.*

HOMECOMING

*The chaps all line the forward deck,
Their eyes are shining bright,
Hearts are light and happy
For we'll be home tonight.
We've sighted Sydney Harbour,
And the beaches and the shore,
The troops are all returning
From victory and from war.*

*Once more we'll be united
With the folks we left behind,
The faces they remember
With heavy marks are lined.
No longer are we carefree,
We're not the lads they knew,
We changed from youth to manhood,
Our minds have altered too.*

*Sights we shall remember,
Until our dying day,
Have made us sober-minded,
And taught us how to pray.
Perhaps our loved one's welcome,
Will help us to regain
The carefree hearts we left behind,
Before the Nazi reign.*

*The ship is in the Harbour,
The wharves are now in view,
Despite their smiling faces,
Tears keep coming through;
For now they're very happy,
From far across the foam,
The men they love so dearly,
From war are coming home.*

*The ship has dropped the anchor,
We'll now be getting off,
And mingling with our kinsfolk
Waiting on the wharf.
The faces I have treasured,
I now can plainly see,
Uplifted hands are waving,
For they have sighted me.*

*Now stop your shoving, Digger,
There's no need for a crush,
Many times we hurried,
But now you needn't rush.
What is that you're saying?
Oh, yes! I can hear,
I was merely absent
With those whom I love dear.*

*In dreams I often travel,
To the land I know so well,
In sleep I find much comfort,
Despite the shot and shell.
Pleasant dreams, old cobber,
On watch I'll take my turn,
'Though while awake we quell it,
Our hearts for home do yearn.*

AIF

*Yer King and Country needs, yer, they said in thirty-nine,
 Let the army clothe and feed yer, and I answered, yairs, that's fine;
 But did I hear yer mentioning a bomb or shell or two
 Or bloomin' dum dum bullets that near cut a man in two.
 But I let 'em talk me in it an' 'ere I am ter stay,
 Till I've been and saved Democracy on just five bob a day.*

*The landlord used ter come around an' snarl when rent day came,
 And the missus used ter nag a bit but paid 'im just the same,
 And kept the 'ome tergether though work was scarce as 'ell,
 And the wages was so lousy that she used to swear; ah, well,
 What she used to say don't matter now, nor what she'd like ter say,
 For she gets three and I get two from just five bob a day.*

*The kids 'ad many poor 'ouse feeds when things were going crook,
 They'd eat the stuff yer served em up without a second look,
 For yer cannot pick and choose when yer've been lite on fer feeds,
 An' yer wouldn't ask for cavey air ter meet yer stomick's needs,
 But it's three square meals an' all the best now that the wife can pay.
 Fer the Gov'ment adds a bob a head ter just five bob a day.*

*The friends I had when times were bad, it does me good ter think,
 That I can say the same as they, "Come on an' 'ave a drink",
 An' stand me shout when my turn comes, like any mother's son,
 An' took me hand an' say, "Come on, who'll have another one?"
 Fer I've bed an' board an' uniform, an' every fortnight pay,
 Fer I'm working fer the Guvenment fer just five bob a day.*

*The wife an' kids an' friends are there when I come 'ome on leave,
 The thought they're going' ter miss me makes me 'heart an' bosom 'eave;
 All the cryin' and the weepin's still got ter come, I s'pose
 When the time fer sailing comes around an' off ter war I goes,
 But they'll all be proud and 'aughty an' the kids'll cheer an' say,
 "Our Dad's a bloody 'ero now, on just five bob a day".*

ASS

*In a certain women's paper
That is published once a week
There are many lying statements
About which I must speak.
They use a National crisis,
As a purpose for this end,
Then send a woman writer
And say that we're her friends.*

*She said: We like the country,
The climate suits us swell,
She forgot it's only training,
For when we go to hell.
Long after our arrival
The mail plan brought her in,
If only she'd stayed longer,
Her waist would soon get thin.*

*She mentioned leave in Singapore,
Although she failed to say
That once a year we get this leave,
We have to train each day.
She may have liked the country,
Perhaps we would like it too,
If we travelled round in cars
With nothing else to do.*

*Because of women waiting
For news of men abroad,
They paint a perfect picture,
The truth, it is ignored.
They create a wrong impression,
It's sure to boost their sales,
Though truth may be stranger
Lies make the better tales.*

*Our unit never saw her,
Our camp was far from town,
Think of the discomfort
In a weary travel down.
Now she's back in Aussie,
We'd like to be there, too.
She goes on writing falsehoods,
There's nothing we can do.*

CONSIDER

*While we live here in comfort,
 Drinking whisky, wine and beer,
 The folks in distant England
 Have their pleasures ruined by fear,
 They do not ask for comfort,
 They only hope and pray
 That Hitler will forget them
 If only for a day.*

*I say, do not be casual,
 This war is really true,
 To them it is a nightmare,
 A dream to me and you.
 It's all right to be happy,
 To laugh, and to be gay,
 But forget about the comedy,
 Life is not all play.*

*I am not a moaner,
 Although I seldom smile,
 I keep thinking of my cobbers
 Dying, near the Nile.
 They joined the same as we did
 To see the job is done,
 While we are simply idle,
 They are fighting against the Hun.*

*So even when you're laughing,
 At some witty joke or prank,
 Think of people facing fire
 From aeroplane and tank.
 I've no wish to mar your joy,
 But consider all the time,
 Peace is made for pleasure -
 In war, it is a crime.*

PALS

*Money is quite useful,
It can purchase many things -
Limousines, the best of clothes
And most expensive rings.
It can even buy the friendship
Of a certain type of gal,
But nowhere on the market
Is an item labelled pal.*

*Friends, a man has many
While he can hold his own,
But when he gets in bother
He finds himself alone.
A man with money troubles
Finds he fights uphill,
His would be friends all leave him,
But a pal, he hangs on still.*

*He gives until he's stony broke,
And doesn't count the cost,
He'd rather be a pauper
With the friend he may have lost.
This type of friend is treasured
When a man is far away,
"Everything's all right at home",
He, with confidence, can say.*

*He knows his loved ones
Will have the best of care,
They could be no better off
If he, himself was there.
Of course, he's always worried
In case they may be sick,
Although he is quite certain
That his pal will stick.*

*Every man has critics,
Who talk behind his back,
But if a pal is present
he is sure to have a crack.
He considers it his duty
To preserve a friend's good name
Even when outnumbered
He speaks up just the same.*

*A millionaire has many friends,
Upon him they all poll,
But a man is almost friendless
If he is on the dole.
Although his friends are scanty,
He knows that they shall
Be there to help when needed,
Such is the dinkum pal.*

ALIBI

*In the centre of the city,
In a street named Martin Place,
Is a little wooden building,
Which the single man can't face.
With averted eyes he passes by,
It mocks him every day,
For in that little building,
Men sign their lives away.*

*"Your country needs you, join up now",
Is painted on the wall,
But they hurry past, quite deaf to sound,
And fail to hear the call.
They tell their friends they cannot go,
They're needed in their job,
But so was every other man,
Who joined in "Blamey's Mob".*

*They hide behind an occupation,
And claim their's is reserved,
But when you get to bedrock,
You'll find they are unnerved.
Outwardly they're self-contained,
As if they're doing right,
But in their heart of hearts they know,
They should be in the fight.*

*While their fellow men are dying
'Neath the everlasting stars,
Their time is spent at parties
And travelling 'round in cars.
They enjoy the many luxuries,
Of a man in civil life,
They can't waste time on fighting,
They're searching for a wife.*

DIGGERS

*There are many kinds of Diggers,
In varied types of jobs
Perhaps the best known specimen
Is the one that trades on knobs.
But their's is not a manual task,
They live on wits and looks,
Although their trade is easy,
It can't be learned from books.*

*Gold Digger is their common name,
But they don't dig the soil,
They turn on all their glamour,
In the hope that they may spoil
Some poor squatter's bankroll,
He doesn't stand a chance,
They let him think they're smitten
With the true love of romance.*

*And there is the grave digger,
Who excavates the clay;
His job isn't pleasant,
He digs two graves a day.
Everywhere throughout the world
Are men who ply the spade,
Although they're all on different jobs,
Digging is their trade.*

*And now we have the Diggers
Who are very poorly paid,
Of course I mean the personnel
Of which the AIF is made.
Although they're known as fighters,
They have to dig as well,
And digging in Malaya,
Is simply earthly hell.*

*Although we're far from fighting,
Some day it may commence,
This country will see action
If the Japs get off the fence,
And join their Axis allies,
To help them win this war,
Although the chance is quite remote,
We are only making sure.*

*They say to dig for victory,
Perhaps that is our game,
Even if we never fight,
We'll surely earn our name.
Over miles and miles of country
There are weapon pits galore,
And every time we finish one,
They add a couple more.*

*Thus men who joined as soldiers
Have to swing the pick and spade,
And unlike other diggers,
It's really not their trade.
But nothing breaks monotony
Like good hard solid toil,
This place must be defended
To protect the Indies oil.*

*So we don't mind the labour,
We know it must be done,
Although each man would volunteer
To go and fight the Hun.
But when we left Australia,
We got our job to do,
And as much as we dislike it,
I guess we'll see it through.*

MY PLEA

*I'm asking your forgiveness,
 For my lapse so clearly shown,
 And if you grant this favour,
 I swear that I'll atone.
 I've written very seldom,
 And my conscience bothers me,
 Your lonely weeks of waiting,
 Soon will cease to be.*

*My hand has lost it's power,
 Now that I live abroad,
 The pen perhaps is mighty,
 But here we use the sword.
 We're taught to use the bayonet,
 For in war a man must kill,
 So now perhaps you'll realise
 Why I've lost my usual skill.*

*The mail I should have written
 Compared with that I've sent,
 Reminds one of a cruiser,
 With just a tiny dent.
 For days I've worked with pleasure
 To free my pen from rust,
 If I'm to keep your friendship,
 I know that write, I must.*

*I would like to write quite often,
 Even once each day,
 But news is not abundant,
 And there isn't much to say.
 But with grim determination,
 I'll write, at least I'll try,
 If you can't forgive me,
 I'll just lie down and die.*

*Put some blame on the army,
 Then blame me for the rest,
 I'll take no mean advantage
 To help me pass this test.
 Again I ask forgiveness,
 And please, don't pass me by,
 Although I joke, I'm desperate,
 If spurned, I'll surely die.*

MORTAR MEN

*The mortar men mount their gun
 In a well concealed position
 The shots are fired overhead
 It's been an old tradition.
 The gun it draws artillery fire
 But they don't stay and wait
 It's the poor old common solder
 Who cops all Fritz's hate.*

*For years untold in the years to come
 'Twill always be the same
 They'll stir up hornet's nests
 Then beat it without shame.
 The infantry must stay and wait
 They cannot leave the lines
 When the fireworks commence
 The mortars aren't called swines.*

*It's not that they are cowards
 Because they dodge a blue
 They're the same as every soldier
 They have a job to do.
 When orders come not to retreat
 "You cannot yield an inch"
 The mortars move from place to place
 Wherever there's a pinch.*

*When in the heat of battle
 The infantry will say
 "The mortars are behind us
 We're sure to win the day".
 All of them are cobbers
 Their colours are the same
 And every man is pleased to bear
 The Second Eighteenth's name.*

WAR

*The Germans again are marching
 These words were heard with dread
 Their war machine is rumbling
 Over ground that holds the dead
 Of the war of fourteen-eighteen
 When many heroes fell
 In the stand that stopped the Kaiser
 From making life a living hell.*

*Hitler has taken up the cudgel
 That his predecessor bore
 Again a mans ambition
 Has caused a world wide war.
 Although Australians far from Europe
 From the war across the sea
 England's fate is our fate
 If she falls so must we.*

*Australians from all stations
 Have volunteered their life
 In a great and glorious effort
 To free the world from strife.
 Though in politics they differ
 And their religion aren't the same
 They join in all together
 As though it's just a game.*

*The will to win is in them
 That they had in all their sports
 They'll play the game in Khaki
 As they did in football shorts.
 Australians are known sportsmen
 And rank among the best
 If they maintain the Anzacs standard
 They are sure to stand the test.*

*When their ranks have been depleted
 The job will still be done
 To protect their helpless loved ones
 From their enemy the Hun.
 Many of the heroes
 Will pay the price in blood
 In their splendid gallant effort
 To stem the Nazi flood.*

FATE

*In the dim and distant past
Stands a day I'll ne'er forget
Although 'twas many years ago
The job still lingers yet.
It stands out like a beacon
The day when I met you
The girlfriend of my cobber
Your noble heart so true.*

*I liked you in an instant
Your smile and pleasing voice
In fact you were my dream girl
My ideal and my choice
But such is manhood friendship
I retired from the scene
For I knew you loved my cobber
And to him, you were a Queen.*

*I met you fairly often
As a friend and nothing more
Perhaps to hide my feelings
I may have seemed a bore.
But the bond of human friendship
Kept me from your side
For I wished to see my cobber
As a groom with you his bride.*

*But every life is charted
On each is written end
Fate had written finish
And thus we lost our friend.
He is ever in our memory
Our eyes are not quite dry
But, we must remember
All that lives must die.*

*It was years ago he left us
And we must carry on
He'd wish us to be happy
Even though he's gone.
I write to you quite often
Now that I've left home
As with the Anzac Forces
Across the world I roam.*

*Now that I have sailed away
Far across the sea
I hope that your affections
Will keep a place for me.
I only ask for friendship
While the world remains at war
But I hope you will be waiting
On Sydney Harbour's shore.*

*To greet a lonely soldier
Returning home again
From years of grim adventures
And days of endless pain
My lonely heart is aching
With the pain of true romance
For if you will be waiting
I know I stand a chance.*



MALAYA, 1941

Last photo of the 4 Colenso brothers

L to R:

Bill - K.I.A. - NX55833

Frank - P.O.W. - NX55835

Ted - P.O.W. - NX55832

Ray - K.I.A. - NX55834

2/18th Battalion, 8th Division, A.I.F.

