

## THE COLUMN WILL MARCH AGAIN

*I didn't know the old soldier farewelled today  
Many of his comrades were there to bid a fond hooray  
No Ministers of the Crown or other big wigs did attend  
He was just another statistic for Canberra to amend  
During the service there were no VIP photo shoots  
Just an old bloke being buried who had worn military boots*

*Once a young fellow who stepped forward to be enlisted  
Or was he one of those the government conscripted?  
He was the blank file, the marker and in the rear rank  
Perhaps a rifleman, gunner, sig or in a tank  
He was one of many who soldiered in thick and thin  
Stepping into the unknown to face war and its terrible din  
Like his mates, he laughed and joked when things were tough  
Was there a time in the field when it wasn't rough?  
When danger threatened he always stood fast  
Vowing to remain with his mates to the very last*

*He was the young bloke from next door  
The butcher, baker or the kid from the grocery store  
The bank teller or the quiet one who came from the farm  
Or the nomad from the outback always ready with a yarn  
The salesman knocking on the door to tempt you to buy more  
He was the hero on final leave before sailing from our shores  
He became the old bloke who never missed an ANZAC Day  
The lone pensioner known for a smile and a warm giddy  
And in the end, a joke to share while waiting for God's bus  
He was a proud old soldier and a treasure to all of us*

*I reckon as he was bid that fond hooray  
Those who went before him were already saying giddy  
So as sure as day follows night  
Soon or late, Father Time will win this fight  
Then their proud column will once more be complete  
As they march along some far distant street*

*George Mansford © July 2011*