

“DIG IN”

Often when soldiers climbed a god forsaken hill  
Soaking with summer sweat or shivering with winter chill  
Even before the heavy loads were off their backs  
The sergeant would yell “dig in, no time to be slack”

First it was just a shell scrape to provide some cover  
Then it would be dug deeper by two military brothers  
The walls and floor took shape with much toil  
Then came a roof of logs, sandbags and more soil

They cut niches in the earthen walls for handy little things  
Like spare ammo and grenades the boss made them bring  
Camouflaged so the home could not be seen  
So well hidden behind twigs and hessian screen

That cramped hole was kitchen, dining and bedroom complete  
A toilet far away on a reverse slope with wooden seat  
The good news was no rates, power bills or rent  
Thus on R&R more money on women and grog to be spent

Then when the Diggers finally finished their home  
The cry was “pack up and get ready to roam”  
Once more they would march by day and night  
Until again would come an order to dig in to fight

They were the days of soldiering on so many unnamed hills  
Where now no one now lives and perhaps never will  
Once a home of stale air and smothering darkness underground  
Waiting, sharing, enduring; wishing to be homeward bound

Today most old soldiers enjoy the pleasures of civilian life  
A quiet peaceful home, a comfortable bed and a devoted wife  
Instant lights, hot and cold water and secure from strife  
And no bloody Sergeant bellowing “dig in by last light”

George Mansford © February 2011