

In the shadow of the ‘Horsemen’

We were young when we went to war but even now as old men we have not forgotten the dread and anticipation of the first engagement and thereafter the fear of the next.

How well we remember the misery of being constantly tired, hot, cold, wet or covered in dust and living in the ever present shadow of Death.

The fear, the misery and the tide of emotions that washes over all warriors from time to time can never be forgotten, just as we will never forget our mates, those who lived with us until Death called their name.

Time has taken away our youth but nothing can ever take away the fact that we were soldiers, and even more importantly that we were soldiers together.

Together we lived, laughed, cried, were wounded, died or survived to fight another day. Together we were touched by the hand of War and were, as all warriors are, changed forever but we were young and thought we were invincible.

We knew then as we do now, that trust, absolute trust, was the glue that bound us together and how that bond strengthens the lifelong friendships formed by those who survive the touch of War; the friendships we built as young men have become the brotherhood we share as old soldiers.

We went through much together and often when death was nearby, all that sustained our efforts was the knowledge that we could rely on our mates. It was that which kept our bodies going, often long after our minds had screamed it was time to quit, time to give in.

We are older now and many, far too many, of our mates are gone. We were never invincible a fact that becomes clearer every day as each of us experiences the physical and psychological pains that all old soldiers accept and learn to live with.

To those who have gone before us we say, “Thanks cobber you did your duty, you were there and you made a difference.” We who are left behind will ensure that while we live, so do you; your names and faces are forever etched into our minds.