

An ANZAC Reflection

I looked down from above to see the grave they made for me,
The place my mortal bits would rest for all eternity.
I saw the stark white cross and lawn, and rows and rows like mine,
Our numbers, ranks and names were etched on each for all to find.
And lots of visitors walked past on most days of the year.
They didn't know our names, of course, yet many shed a tear.

But what is this? I looked and saw another place of rest.
A place with names I recognised – the biggest and the best.
Folks whose names and deeds were known much more than yours or mine.
Their monuments stood tall and proud, immaculate and fine.
But no one walked past there most days despite no entry cost,
And those who did were family – or maybe they were lost?

I looked around my place above to see if I could learn,
What on earth they'd done in life, their monuments to earn.
I couldn't find them where I was, tho' one would think one should.
Surely most of them would be at least thought of as 'good'.
They couldn't all be locked up in that 'basement' under ground.
So I went to ask Saint Peter why those names were not around.

Well, Peter took the question he'd been often asked before:
"Heaven's got two storeys – there's a floor below your floor.
"The top floor's just for soldiers, Sir, and those for whom they care,
"Service personnel who died on land or sea or air.
"Downstairs is for others who, tho' they got to heaven, still,
"Took what the soldiers bought them, but refused to pay the bill."

Time means nothing here above, so I looked again one day
About a hundred years had past and, oh, how things had changed.
The monuments were crumbling, forgotten and defaced,
But War Graves were refurbished, with flowers daily placed.
The nation's pride and thanks and praise were there for all to see.
The resting place of 'Bills Unpaid' was just a memory.

Can better thing be said of you when you are dead and gone
Than "You paid the price of liberty for those who followed on"?
And what of those who cashed the cheque the soldiers died to give
And refused to pay the debt incurred that enabled them to live?
There's a second way in heaven to reach the top floor too:
You must care for your ex-soldiers like your soldiers cared for you.

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