

A boy the war watching

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We slept under iron tables
Or in those shelters cold and damp
We heard tales of our fathers
Off in some distant camp
Above us, we watched the 'dog fight'
Followed the searchlights beam at nights
Saw the loom of London burning
These our earliest sights

Our houses filled with 'Townies'
Children grim and full of guile
Their parents visit on weekends
Evacuees had no cause to smile
Moved from their crowded terraced houses
And narrow cobbled streets
To the safety of the country
And ways they could not meet

The roaring of the convoy
Soldiers waving as they go
Early memories of a small boy
Who saw but didn't really know
They waved and smiled so bravely
As to the coast they made their way
Packed then onto landing craft
Some didn't make it through the fray

Tight smiles on their faces
Masked the fear they must have felt
To the invasion and the landings
Where the bravest heart could melt
The build-up went on all that summer
From the footpaths we cheered and waved
Fleeting contacts, eyes meeting
Fine young men, how many would be saved?

Rows of tents sprung up in farm fields
Strange speaking soldiers in our midst
Excitement, children chattering
Not an occasion to be missed
From far distant places
These smiling strangers to us had come
Diggers, Kiwis, Kanucks and Yanks
Last post, it would be for some

These 'Coloniels' joined in with our lads
Said goodbye to their folks at home
Time to help out their 'pommie' cousins
And also a chance to roam
Sometimes when old soldiers gather
In 'British Legions' or Regimental Bar
Their faces glow with pride of actions
With their partners from afar

Food and clothing all on ration
What we didn't know we didn't miss
From such were we fashioned
Strangely, it seemed a life of bliss
Our mothers had to scrimp and save
To provide some little treats
Looking back, it must have been a nightmare
Just keeping shoes on our busy feet

Other memories are of singing
Of soldiers as they went to war
Of wives, sweethearts and children
Brave voices to the fore
They sang in pubs, they sang in clubs
In homes and workplace too
The servicemen singing in their camps and ships
It helped to get us through

"V.E Day!!" it was shouted
From each and every throat
Celebrations, drink and extra rations
It was such a time of note
Flags and bunting flying
Parties enjoyed in every street
Adults happy, laughing, crying
Our boys, soon we could greet

They were singing of the old songs
'Lily Marlene' and 'Never more to roam'
Sentimental jurnies, of lovers and of home
Of 'White cliffs of Dover' and 'Berkeley Square'
Bawling a lusty chorus of a favourite, 'Over there'
But the song deepest in my memory
Was the song most needed then
It united us all together, as we sang 'We'll meet again'