

# **Rhyme and Reason**

A Souvenir Volume of Verse  
by Canadian Soldier - Poets

With the Compliments of  
The Maple Leaf, Italy

## REMEMBER PONTECORVO

On the road from Pontecorvo,  
As you move down from the line,  
There are rows of wooden crosses  
All painted white, and fine.  
They're the headstones for the fallen,  
Who underneath do lie;  
They're the men who came from Canada,  
To fight for Peace—and die.  
They're the stalwart sons of Freedom  
That came from farm and mine;  
They're the stalwart sons of Canada  
Who broke the Hitler Line.

As you walk through rows of crosses,  
As quiet as the spring,  
The wanton breezes murmur  
« The Torch to you, we fling ».  
They've caught the Torch, and held it,  
And kept it bright aflame,  
And dying, throw the challenge—  
« We expect of you, the same ».  
When history is written  
And we all in Peace abide,  
Remember Pontecorvo,  
And the men who fought and died.

P. J. POWER

## SICK OF IT

So you're sick of the way the country's run,  
And you're sick of the way the rationing's done,  
And you're sick of standing around in line.  
You're sick, you say. Well, ain't that fine?  
For I am sick of the sun and the heat,  
And I'm sick of the feel of my aching feet,  
And sick of the siren's wailing shriek,  
And I'm sick of the groans of the wounded and  
weak.

I'm sick of the slaughter, I'm sick to my soul,  
I'm sick of playing the killer's role,  
And I'm sick of the groans of death and the smell,  
And I'm sick, damned sick, of myself as well.  
But I'm sicker still of the tyrant's rule,  
And conquered lands where the wild beasts drool,  
And I'm cured damned quick when I think of  
the day  
When all this hell will be out of the way;  
When none of this mess will have been in vain,  
And the lights of the world will blaze again,  
And the Axis flags will be dipped and furled,  
And God looks down on a perfect world.

CRAIG HEATH

## ABOUT P.O.W.'S

I wonder what they think and dream  
Inside that Compound wire,  
For they are human with their love,  
And hate, and heart's desire.

These men have steered a lurching tank;  
Dropped bombs on London town,  
And from the lurking submarine  
Have sent our convoys down.

Wearing that alien uniform  
That we were taught to dread,  
They do not look so fearsome now,  
And somehow hate lies dead.

I understand that far-off look—  
I know their anxious yearning;  
My loved ones, too, are far away  
And my heart, too, is burning.

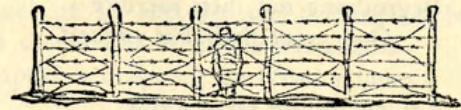
But as I sit and ponder  
Upon their dastard feats,  
Pity dies within me.  
And red-hot anger beats.

They bombed our open cities—  
(My kindred lived in one),  
And shot at helpless refugees  
Where war-torn roadways run.

They sank the lone tramp steamer,  
And as she settled down,  
Turned loose their fire on open boats  
To watch our seamen drown.

So as I watch the prisoners  
Inside the Compound gate,  
And know their deeds to me and mine—  
Have I not cause to hate?

E. A. DOWSON



## « FIRST »

First in training for battle,  
First in tactics of war;  
First in sounding the rattle  
Of Death, at Germany's door.  
First and foremost in struggle,  
First to settle the score—  
First Canadian Army  
And First Canadian Corps.

J. L. W.

## PRAYER BEFORE BATTLE

*(Major Campbell was killed in Italy, Christmas Day, 1943, fighting with his regiment. His father was killed Christmas Day, 1916, fighting with the Royal Canadian Regiment in the other war. When they searched the body of Major Campbell where he fell, they found a slip of paper on which this poem was written).*

When, 'neath the rumble of the guns,  
I lead my men against the Huns;  
It's then I feel so all alone; and weak and scared.  
And oft I wonder how I dared  
Accept the task of leading men.

I wonder, worry, fret, and then... I pray;  
Oh God; Who promised oft  
To humble man, to lend an ear;  
Now, in my troubled state of mind,  
Draw near, oh God; Draw near... draw near.

Make me more willing to obey  
Help me to merit my command.  
And, if this be my fatal day  
Reach out, oh God, Thy helping hand  
And lead me down that deep, dark vale.

These men of mine must never know  
How much afraid I really am!  
Help me to lead them, in the fight,  
So they will say... « He was a man! ».

MAJ. ALEX. R. CAMPBELL