

## **Soldier Boys**

We are going on a journey, we are travelling to war  
Going so much farther than we ever have before  
And all for king and country, to stand for what is right  
We are ready for adventure, we are ready for a fight.

They came and took the horses, they'll have to take their chance  
They'll be dragging guns and wagons to the battlefields of France  
No more for them the farmyard and ploughing English soil  
But heavy loads and little rest and hard relentless toil

The young ones in our village stepped forward to a man  
We'll stand or fall together, doing everything we can  
We've had some basic training in a camp along the coast  
We can load and aim and fire a gun – they know what matters most

The town band played and flags were waved as we marched to the train  
And friends and families stood and cheered in the pouring rain  
Tears were shed 'midst struggling smiles as we pulled away  
But we knew we'd be the victors and come back again one day

On the Somme our hopes were crushed by loss and pain and fear  
As boyhood friends fell one by one and death seemed very near  
The bitter cold, the rats, the mud where men could not survive  
But friendship warmed our shattered souls and kept our hopes alive

Day and night the noise went on, we longed for it to end  
Every kind of devilment the enemy could send  
The tremors underneath our feet at each exploding shell  
The deadly crack of sniper fire whose target none could tell

And through it all we battled on and dreamed of that fine day  
When guns would stop and birds would sing and we'd go home to stay  
And men would see the madness of the hell that we have known  
And set aside their dreams of power to work for peace alone

In tribute to my great uncle – Arthur Beer – who was wounded at the  
Battle of Vimy Ridge and died a few days later in April 1917.

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