



Some stories remotely true

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Kazz Crofts

Pen & Bones

Ellen Shelley

Ross Gillet

Rosemary Bunker

The HWC 2nd Wednesday of the month writer's group

*You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.*

*Siegfried Sassoon
Suicide in the trenches*

And what are they marching for?



*Eric Bogle
And the band played Waltzing Matilda*

Dedication

*The Class of the Royal Military
College Duntroon, December
1988*

*The Last of the Old, the Best of
the New*



Pen&Bones

Always Carry A Spoon

Always Carry a Spoon

A spoon abraded with years of service.
My spoon of 35 years,
twice as long as my marriage.

Reminding me of those years,
echoing my gaudy ribbon and tin;
the thanks of a grateful nation.

The trinity of cutlery divided years ago;
knife and the fork, missing in action
Just an orphaned spoon.



Lived in my army webbing,
worn comfortable with time,
travelling the world with its mate, the Cup
Canteen.

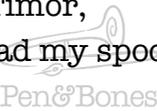
Ration packs Type A, B, C, D, and E
cheese in a can, Corned Beef Hash, Instant
Potato with Onion,
and biscuits, always smashed; never whole.

Always Carry A Spoon

Water flavoured scrambled egg,
tinned mushrooms and baked beans.
Eaten cold and congealed in tropical rain

Spoons are essential in the dirt.
No spoon, no deployment
Twice we beat the Germans with spoons

Kit checks ticking off our spoons.
Extras from the Adjutant,
Whose kit we never saw checked

My spoon went to Timor,
No one checked I had my spoon
I deployed anyway  Pen & Bones

Nine months enforcing the peace.
Burnt brutality of death
Spoons don't march on ANZAC Day

Philippine Army kitchen,
Fitting food into pots
Turning it to shit

Always Carry A Spoon

Weetbix for breakfast.

Bob's e coli with salmonella burger for lunch.

Farmer's Union ice coffee instead of an after
work beer.

Dining each night.

Smashed lamb, deep fried rubber fish,

Sara Lee butter cake for desert.

Murray is desperate,

"Can we get some cheese cake?"

Scrawled in the mess suggestion book each
night.



Pen&Bones

"Of course."

Another week passes.

The anticipation of children at Christmas

The menu announces;

"Cheesecake!"

much to our delight.

There it is,

in the bain marie

at 70 degrees C.

Always Carry A Spoon

Sara Lee Butter Cake.
Sprinkled with cheese
placed under the grill.

I had my spoon.
A sumptuous a feast, never forgotten;
better than memories of BBQ'd flesh

Now I am retired with
tales louder and larger,
distant and vague.

“Stay low, move fast,
don't eat anything bigger than your head ...
and always carry a spoon!”

Always Carry A Spoon

Duntroon 1988

Back from leave

“Staff Cadet Casey Do they have barbers where you live?”

“Yes Sergeant”

“Check parade Haircut 0615 Drillies dungeon”

“Ya still fat from Christmas leave

Where are those abs?

Down and give me 50!”

Coz push-ups give you abs

“Half of yas here

half of yas here, and

half of yas here”

???



“Form up

in half a semi-circle”

“Would that be a quadrant?”

the Maths student boggles

Parade ground simmers

“The higher the arm swing

The better the day”

Sweat trickles on our spines

Always Carry A Spoon

“Sweat marks on your shirt”

Parade ground unrepentant

Trickle turned to flood

“Show parade Drill Order 0615 Drillies
dungeon” Again.....

“Lean into the hill

let the hill do the work”

Dull black boots crunch

The hill’s on strike

“Lunch truck”

Cold meat salad and cordial

It’s five degrees C

Lucky I have my spoon



“On the beam - Up! Pen&Bones

Raise lower

Raise lower

Raise ...

Always Carry A Spoon



No one said lower!”

Always Carry A Spoon

“With a jump Left Turn!
Touch all four walls
Go!”
Confused collisions abound

On the Parade ground for the last time
Sun reflects off our boots
Sweat trickles once again
Should old acquaintance be forgot

A brisk salute
An outstretched hand
“Congratulations Lieutenant Casey
Ya did good!”



Dili Under 10s

1

Laughter pierces the flurry of dust
A football bounces
“Kick it Mistah”
Straight into the razor wire
Meant to keep up safe
From footballs it would seem

2

Squeaks and giggles
Football amongst the ruins
Dirt and rock their pitch
Unconstrained by adult gloom

3

Children squealing with delight
In dust and grass and water too
No umpire and vague rules

Adults argue yell and kill
About whose god is best
Trapped in iron age rules

Who are the grown ups now?

Always Carry A Spoon

Moral Crime

Flies swarm at his head
One round was all it took

It'll be self defence
A legal vindication

He died, trying to kill
Trying to live, I killed

A bloody end
Never ending in my sleep



Always Carry A Spoon

Juliet

Death had left me isolated
Inflicted an invisible injury that left me angry
Alone with my fears
Miranda's lack of love
Left me lonely
My life was fucked

There is nothing worse than being fucked
Miranda left me isolated
I couldn't tell her, scared of being lonely
Not telling would make me angry
It hurts that thing called love
My injury made me fear

Fear driving away my lovers
Fucked over yet again
Love is such a hurtful thing
Isolated when it doesn't exist
Angry when it fails
Lonely the result

Lonely in the nut farm
Fear of telling Juliet
Angry at what I had become
Fucked, the door wide open so I'll do no harm
Isolated from my kids
Loved by Juliet after telling of my terror and
dreams

Always Carry A Spoon

It is good to be in love
I don't often feel so lonely
The distance means we are isolated
Yet there is no longer fear
Even if my dreams are fucked
I am not as often angry

Death has made me angry
My injury killed off love
Leaving my head quite a bit fucked
Yet Juliet's tenderness is not lonely
It drives away my fear
I no longer feel isolated

I was angry in my isolation
Yet no longer fucked with fear
Because Juliet's love means I am no longer
lonely

Pen&Bones

Silent Pain

I live a life of pain
Living in darkness and grief
Fearing a life alone again
Has my life been misbelief?

A commitment needing space
Locked in a mortgage trap
The wage slave rat race
Life's rope ready to snap

The wrong sliding door
Harry and Sally just fiction
The pain too hard to ignore
Love an ever-hurtful emotion

Love causing too much pain
A life of silent pain

Always Carry A Spoon

Choices v1

Death is better than life
Repeats in my head

A lethal car, or
Pickled by scotch

Painless at peace
Dreamless infinite sleep



Always Carry A Spoon

Drugs

I get worried about all of these drugs

Drugs that can addict

Drugs that put me to sleep

So I take some of the drugs

No more worries for me



Always Carry A Spoon

Stroke

I suffered from a stroke the other day
That is until it wasn't
A stroke, that is
The other day was real
But surreal
A day without recollection
I sort of remember getting scanned by a cat
Who knew cats could scan
I struggle with double sided duplex feed
But cats can scan - WOW
Apparently it was frightening
For some of those around me
I would ordinarily say
You should see the view from this side
I won't though the power was off
I don't think the ambo went eeee aawww
Which is disappointing
A DVA Gold card should get better
Either that or I want ??????
A new knife and fork for my spoon
I have gone off track

Always Carry A Spoon

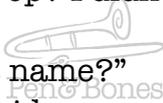
I must be insane
Blathered like Balderic at the Hospital
What would I have known about my PTSD
How about those scanning cats though
60 months of treatment
Yet is it just this malfic curse
No dark or light or guides
Just cats that can scan



What Did You Do in the War?

It's that day of the year
Thank some made up deity its over again
If someone else thanks me for my service
I'll piss in their beer, I just want to be alone with
my spoon
And a piss would be good right now

A sprig of rosemary on his chest
Medals on his right.
Metal and ribbon miniatures of mine
"Your medals are just like my Pop's
Did you know my Pop? I didn't."


"What's your Pop's name?"
Can't turn away a kid
"Pop!" He says, as if I should have known
"Yes, I know your Pop, he was a good man"
Gap toothed he grins at my lie

"What did you do in the war?"
"I did shit" my truthful reply
"Mum says that's a naughty word"
I bet my new mate Pop said shit
Sometimes even the Padre did

Always Carry A Spoon

When they blew the sewers
Shit went everywhere
10000 soldiers have to go
So I got the job
To manage number twos

300 portaloos, blue, green and white
Gunfighters trudged with their rifles
Cavalry pranced in gun cars
I deployed a legion
Of toilets to clean up their shit

That was my first war
The other wars were worsens `
“Thank you for your service”
Can't piss in that kids beer

Pen&Bones

War is shit

Always Carry A Spoon

Night

Zephyrs ghost through my window
gentle cooling

in night's absence of noise
elusiveness of sleep

no gentle night
I cannot rage

As dying night
turns into day

With apologies to Dylan Thomas



Always Carry A Spoon

Choices v2

Can' t drive

Don't drink

