



Soldier's poem to his daughter

Written Nov. 10, 1916 by Pte. William J. Skilliter who enlisted 1915 -Weyburn, Saskatchewan (later Acting Sergeant in Army of Occupation 1918-19) to his daughter Alice. He returned in 1919 too late for 20 year old Alice's funeral.

Submitted by Olive (Skilliter) Henderson.

There's an isolated, desolated spot I'd like to mention

Where all you hear is Stand at Ease -Slope Arms -Quick March -Attention.

It's miles away from anywhere, by gad, it's a rum 'un,

A chap lived here for fifty years and never saw a woman.

There's lots of little huts, all dotted here and there

For those who have to live inside, I've offered many a prayer.

Inside the huts there's rats as big as any nanny goat

Last night a soldier saw one trying on his overcoat.

It's sludge right up to the eyebrows, you get it in your ears

But into it, you've got to go, without a sign of fear.

And when you've had a bath of sludge, you just set out to groom

And get cleaned up for next parade, or else it's Orderly Room.

Week in, week out, from morn till night, with full pack and a rifle

Like Jack and Jill, you climb hills, of course, that's just a trifle

Slope arms -fix bayonets -then present -they fairly put you through it

And as you stagger to your hut, the Sergeant shouts "Jump to it".

With tunic, boots and putties on, you quickly get the habit

You gallop up and down the hills, just like a blooming rabbit.

Heads backward bend -arms upward stretch, heels raise, then ranks change places

And later on, they make you put your kneecaps where your face is.

When this war is over, and we've captured 'Kaiser Billy'

To shoot him would be merciful, and absolutely silly,

Just send him down to Shoreham Camp, there among the dirt and clay

And it won't be long before he droops and fades away

And I'll bet.

But we're not downhearted yet.