

Four Years:
A Tribute to the "Old Soldier"
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It's not about your HC career
The four years that I mention.
It's about a mission clear
Amidst global apprehension.

It's World War II of which I speak,
A time of toil and tears,
A time our fathers tried to seek
Peace for all our years.

It began for us one Sunday morn;
At Pearl our men would die.
It ended with our lives reborn –
Two mushrooms in the sky.

And in between that frame of time –
To the rescue – the call was heeded
In honor of a task subline –
To deliver help where needed.

Little time is left for you to know
Those of that four-year span.
To the Old Soldier you must go
And learn how to be a man.

Little time is left for you to know
Those who chose to give.
To the Old Soldier you must go
And discover how to live.

Little time is left for you to know
About Hitler and his henchmen,
To the Old Soldier you must go

And learn about redemption.

Little time is left for you to know
About the Empire of the Sun.
To the Old Soldier you must go
And learn how to get it done.

Little time is left for you to taste
The flavor of that age.
Let him, with haste, set the pace
And, for you, turn history's page.

Little time is left for you to sense
The flash of womb to tomb.
Let him provide the recompense
For our growing up too soon.

He joined up when just a boy
In December of '41.
His destiny was to destroy
The kamikaze and the Hun.

On a foreign shore, so very far away
He was hit and suffered trauma.
On that day, to his Lord he prayed
And called out for his mama.

To his loved one, he did write
And said that all was well.
He lied about his desperate plight
And about his private hell.

Then he was a psyched-up kid;
Now he's old and gray.
In homage for the things he did,
A visit you must pay.

Go to him and pick his brain
And touch his heart and soul.
For when God made him -- that old refrain --
He threw away the mold.

To the Old Soldier you must go
And have dinner at his table.
While he tells you -- his eyes aglow --
About the legs of Betty Grable.

Of Churchill he loves to talk
About a certain speech uncluttered.
Sir Winston made just one remark:
“Never give up!” is what he uttered.

About Claudette – he loves her yet –
His Parisian paramour,
He says with longing and regret:
“Don’t get around much anymore.”

A special treasure makes him wistful;
It’s wrapped in silk and satin –
An ivory-handled, silver pistol,
A gift from General Patton.

With the Old Soldier, you must interact
And listen to his story
While he relates dramatic facts
Of gall and guts and glory.

Ask him please to impart
Before his blood runs cold
How a miracle can start
When there is a common goal.

To the Old Soldier you should confide
Your dreams and aspirations.
He’ll tell you how to take that ride;
It’s about resilience and perspiration.

Ask him please to teach
About the greatest school,
About that ideal to reach –
It is the Golden Rule.

The Old Soldier’s wisdom you must seek
And discover how to cope.
From his harvest you will reap
The love, the faith, the hope.

Glean from him the prescription,
The medicine for success.
He’ll say with staunch conviction:
“It’s pounding in your chest.”

With the Old Soldier you must sit
As his voice fills up the room
About Glenn Miller's respite
From impending doom.

That's "Moonlight Serenade,"
The melody we now hear –
An anthem that Mr. Miller played
To mitigate the fear.

For '41 to '45
The Old Soldier saved the world.
And now with true American pride,
We watch our flag unfurl.

For Armageddon he was bred;
He is our eldest brother.
As Antony, about Caesar, said:
"When comes such another?"

When he's gone, the free will cry;
But we can still hear MacArthur say:
"Old soldiers never die;
They just fade away."

Old Soldier, we salute your generation
For its tenacity and its will.
You deserve our veneration,
For your legacy lingers still.

We thank you for your presence
And for your pain endured.
We thank you for our deliverance,
Which your sacrifice assured.

Today, as you navigate
From this hour and place,
The Old Soldier you must emulate;
For he has amazing grace.

As you envision tomorrow
And challenges yet unknown,
His lessons you must borrow;
And you'll never walk alone.

As you commence from here to eternity,

Stand tall and straight and true,
Then drop in reverence to your knees
Because he did it all for you.