

## **The Battle**

By Cpl B. Collins, REME, of 75 Ac Wksp. REME

Rank upon rank on the high ground they stood  
itching for action and thirsting for blood.  
Scarlet and gold of his majesties guard,  
men of 'the north, incredibly hard.  
Glistening helmets of silver they wore,  
breast plates of bronze, 'gainst the weapons of war,  
thigh shields and groin, shoulder and fist.  
Place not their lives on the strength of one wrist  
which soon would be swinging the sabre on high  
to slash and to stab at the throat and the eye.  
One man, one charger, both bred for war,  
to sneer at the risks, to laugh at the gore.  
While down on the plain, in ragged array.  
hordes of the heathen awaiting the fray.  
And joy for the battle was clear in the eye  
and willing, each man, to fight and to die.  
But the heathens were many and victory assured,  
to fight was to live, death but a word.  
Then suddenly came from away to the right  
as clear as the torch bearers wand in the night; ,  
the calling to action and all, to a man,  
surged forward in mass, the battle began.  
Thundering down in a frenzy of flight  
His Majesty's Guard, wonderous sight.  
Onward and downward they charged to the plain  
sabres unsheathed, steeds at full rein.  
The earth screamed in torment beneath the assault  
as head on they met and ground to a halt.  
And steel met with steel and death sang aloud  
and many a proud head in agony bowed,  
and true tempered steel was swung with a will  
to maim and to ravage, to rip and to kill.  
The glistening silver and dull glowing bronze  
gave little protection to flesh and to bones.

The terrible screams like pain maddened bulls,  
the axes that sliced through armour and skulls.  
And the carnage was fearful and blood flowed like wine  
for silver and bronze and uniform fine  
have never made victors on dark battlefield  
and what souls remained were ready to yield.  
But now they were lost in the blood lusting horde.  
Just seven brave men prepared for the sword.  
And two there were privates, not given to care  
and gave not a damn for the happenings there,  
for they were engrossed in watching the hill  
ignoring the fate that awaited them still  
For up on the hill stood a horse and a cart  
and a comely young wench with a badge at her heart.  
And embossed on the badge was a wonderous device  
which she called o'er the valley, repeating it thrice:  
'N.A.A.F.I. UP.'  
And visions of cool salad rolls by the heap  
and pasties and tea, wonderously cheap,  
flashed through the heads of the war weary pair  
(who, as we have said, were not given to care).  
So throwing their swords to the ground with a cry,  
they flew past the hordes who, amazed, let them by.  
A sergeant left standing roared out staunch and true:  
'Consider yourselves on a 252.'  
To which they replied, 'We'll be back in a mo,  
but everything stops for N.A.A.F.I, you know.'  
So saying they ran up the hillock, and we  
can only assume they drank all the tea,  
for squaddies being squaddies it's a pretty safe bet  
that were there some left they'd be sitting there yet.