

## **A Veteran Died Today**

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the VFW, telling stories of the past.  
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,  
All his VFW buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.  
But we'll hear his tales no longer for he has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer, for a veteran died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his family and his wife,  
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.  
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,  
And the world won't note his passing, though a veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.  
Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,  
But the passing of a veteran goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land  
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?  
Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives  
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.  
While the ordinary veteran, who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension, if at all.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,  
That the old veterans of our Country went to battle, but we know  
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,  
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?  
Or would you prefer a veteran, who has sworn to defend  
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a common veteran and his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.  
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.  
Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,  
Our Country is in mourning, for a veteran died today.

**References:**

***This was written several years ago by the grandchild of a veteran who had just passed away. It was originally published in the Dodgeville, Wisconsin Chronicle.***

***Provided by HLHG Member Mike Janto who has the original print (slightly modified to fit the circumstances).***