

# First Day on the Somme

The Irish Rovers

Weren't they the fine boys  
You never seen the beat of them  
They went singing out to battle  
With their throats bronze bare  
They were fighting fit and mirth mad  
There was music in the steppin'  
Singing down a long white road all the afternoon  
And it only seems like yesterday  
That great glad sight o'them  
Singing on to the battle as the sky grew black and black  
Strangers in a strange land  
Miles and miles and miles of them  
Now, you just whistle Tipperary  
And it all comes back

If you ever dirve the motorway  
From Paris to Calais  
And you're not in any rush to move along  
Just take a little side trip through the green & the rolling hills  
Out by Vimy, Pachendale and through the Somme  
Stop your care and stand a while  
And listen to the wind  
And you just might hear it sing the soldier's song  
Or the muffled marching feet  
And a ghostly army singing this old song

Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag  
And smile, smile, smile  
While you've a Lucifer to light your fag  
Smile, boys, that's the style  
What's the use of worrying, it never was worthwhile  
Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag  
And smile, smile, smile

All the hills are peaceful now, but the graveyards tell the tale  
And they stretch their silent crosses far and wide  
It was 1916 in July when madness walked the land  
Both friend and foe had God upon their side  
And the young me of the Kaiser's, they were dug in well and deep  
And the write that lay around them never fell  
Silently they waited for the waves of men to come  
That contemptible little army bound for hell

The "Old Contemptibles", the British expeditionary force  
Along 18 lines of trenches, waited for the word  
And all week their own big guns roared above their heads  
This will be a cakewalk boys, the German wire is down  
We'll walk across the mud and count the Kaiser's dead

It's a long way to Tipperary  
It's a long way to go  
It's a long way to Tipperary  
To the sweetest girl I know  
Goodbye, Picadilly  
Farewell Leicester Square  
It's a long, long way to Tipperary  
But my heart lies here

It was sever in the morning & the whistles sounded shrill  
Fix bayonets and take her nice and slow  
There was silence for a moment as they started their advance  
Two hundred thousand dead mean row on row  
Then the chatter of machine guns and the screams of dying men  
Will always linger there behind the Somme  
Now a few old men remember and they gather once a year  
To drink their health and sing as these old songs