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Rhymes of the Rookies

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E-text prepared by Al Haines

RHYMES OF THE ROOKIES

Sunny Side of Soldier Service

by

W. E. CHRISTIAN

1917

To the Colors

𠄎 Here's to the Red of the Firing Line;
𠄎 Here's to a World White-Free;
𠄎 Here's to the Blue of the Yankee Sign;
𠄎 Here's to Liberty!

—W. E. C

To

𠄎 THEODORE ROOSEVELT
𠄎 Colonel of the Rough Riders

賤 Who, more than any other one man
賤 gives out
賤 The Spirit and the Meaning
賤 of the
賤 AMERICAN SOLDIER

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MY BUNKIE

賤 He's mostly gnarls and freckles and tan,
賤 He'd surely come under society's ban,
賤 He's a swearin', fightin' cavalryman,
賤賤 But— he's my bunkie.

賤 He's weathered the winds of the Western waste.
賤 (You, gentle Christian, would call him debased)
賤 And he's loved at his ease and married in haste,
賤賤 Has my bunkie.

賤 In a Philippine paddy he's slept in the rain,
賤 When he's drunk rotten booze that drives you insane,
賤 And he's often court-martialed— yes, over again,
賤賤 Is my bunkie.

賤 He's been on the booze the whole blooming night,
賤 To mount guard next morning most awfully tight,
賤 Though he's "dressed" like a soldier when given "Guide Right,"
賤賤 He's my bunkie.

賤 He doesn't know Browning or Ibsen or Keats,
賤 But he knows mighty well when the other man cheats
賤 And he licks him and makes him the laugh of the streets,
賤賤 Does my bunkie.

賤 He stands by and cheers when I'm having fun,
賤 And when it is over says, "Pretty well done,"
賤 But he takes a large hand if they rush two to one,
賤賤 For— he's my bunkie.

賤 When Taps has blown and all the troop is asleep,
 賤 We nudge each other and gingerly creep,
 賤 To where the shadows hang heavy and deep,
 賤賤 I and my bunkie.

 賤 And then when the fire-flies flittering roam,
 賤 We sit close together out there in the gloam,
 賤 And talk about things appertaining to home,
 賤賤 I and my bunkie.

 賤 If the slow tropic fever is a-shaking my spine,
 賤 And they blow "boots and saddles" to chase the brown swine,
 賤 He'll give me a leg-up and ride me in line,
 賤賤 Will my bunkie.

 賤 And if I get hit – his arm goes around,
 賤 And raises me tenderly off of the ground,
 賤 And the words on his lips are a comforting sound,
 賤賤 The words of my bunkie.

OUR OFFICERS

 賤 I'm goin' to be discharged, sir;
 賤 My time is near its close,
 賤 I want to tell you, cap'en,
 賤 You're the best the country grows.
 賤 They ain't no man in all the world
 賤 Can beat the army man,
 賤 That wears the shiny leggins and
 賤 That does the best he can.

 賤賤 I've seen them, sir, in battle
 賤賤 With the bullets flyin' round,
 賤賤 I've seen them lying wounded
 賤賤 With the blood-stains on the ground.

賤賤 I've watched them when the fever
賤賤 Was a-ragin' in the camp,
賤賤 I've seen them nurse the cholera—
賤賤 A-wrestling with the cramp.

賤 I've seen them pin to that ol' flag
賤 Another glory more,
賤 That made the stripes look brighter
賤 Than they ever did before.
賤 They weren't winning V.C.'s, either,
賤 But because the country said
賤 For them to go, they went.
賤 They done it or they're dead.

賤賤 We've lots of men of this kind an'
賤賤 Of course, we've some that ain't,
賤賤 We'll cover up their faces
賤賤 In the picture that we paint.
賤賤 I'll follow men like you, sir;
賤賤 You can't go too fast an' far,
賤賤 You're officers and gentlemen
賤賤 Like Congress says you are.

賤 I wish I could re-up, sir,
賤 Till you get your silver stars,
賤 I'm sure you'll do them credit, sir,
賤 As you have done the bars.
賤 I know I shouldn't talk so much,
賤 But somehow I'm inclined,
賤 On leavin' the old outfit
賤 Just to speak the company's mind.

PAY DAY

賤 Oh, it's early in the morning,
賤 The mules begin to squeal,
賤 You hear the cooks a'bangin' pans
賤 To get the mornin' meal;
賤 The Bugler, sort o' toodlin,
賤 Outside the Colonel's tent,
賤 And you kind o' feel downhearted,
賤 'Cause your last two bits is spent.

賤 With a leggin-string you're fussin'
賤 When the band begins to play,
賤 And you listen, and stop cussin',—
賤 What is that the bugles say?
賤 Oh, it's pay-day, pay-day, pay-day,
賤 And the drums begin to roll,
賤 And they sure do carry music
賤 To the busted Johnnie's soul.

賤 Some think about the girls they'll get,
賤 And some, about the beer;
賤 Some say they'll send their money home,
賤 And all begin to cheer.
賤 The games will soon be goin'
賤 Snap your fingers at the dice;
賤 With the canteen spigots flowin'
賤 'Til the Barkeep's out of ice.

賤 For it's pay-day, pay-day, pay-day;
賤 Can't you hear the bugles call?
賤 The privates and the Non-Coms,
賤 The officers and all
賤 Have been waitin', waitin', waiting
賤 'Til they're broke or badly bent
賤 For the coins stacked up on blankets
賤 And table in a tent.

賤 Fifteen dollars in the mornin'
賤 By the evenin' in the hole;
賤 And "Private Jones is absent, Sir."
賤 When the Sergeant calls the roll.
賤 The officers are lookin' up
賤 The "Articles of War";
賤 There's sixteen in the guard-house,
賤 And the Provost has some more.

THE ARMY GROUCH

賤 When the Grouch gets up at reveille,
賤 He puts his elbow on his knee;
賤 His head upon his hand;
賤 And tho' he's slept ten hours or more,
賤 His back is weak, his feet are sore,
賤 And he can hardly stand.
賤 And, as he goes to get his chow,
賤 He says, "By Gosh! — I don't see how
賤 A soldier lives so long.
賤 The spuds is rotten and the slum
賤 Is always worse than on the bum.
賤 The coffee is too strong.
賤 That cow was killed ten years before
賤 They organized this bloomin' war;
賤 These flapjacks taste like wood."
賤 And so he growls through all the day,
賤 And fills his comrades with dismay;
賤 They'd kill him if they could.
賤 When "First Call" wakes up Billy Lott,
賤 He sits upon his Army cot,
賤 And whistles "Casey Jones,"
賤 And as he jumps into his shoes,
賤 He says, "By Jinks I've had a snooze
賤 That's good for skin and bones."

賤 And Billy always has a smile
賤 That you can see for half a mile,
賤 And when he stops to say, 'How Do!'
賤 He chases dimples to your cheeks
賤 That stay there for a couple of weeks,
賤 And he makes you happy too.

WEANING TIME

(To A. W. D.)

賤 Mothers, O, ye mothers of the land!
賤 With broods of sisters, brothers — hand in hand —
賤 'Tis weaning time. Clip ye the thread
賤 That apron-strings the lad! Give him his head!
賤 Pluck from your teat the clinging lip
賤 That should be tight with valor's grip!
賤 "You were my child-in-arms," she said;
賤 "Suckled I you, and gave you bed;
賤 But now you are my man, my son.
賤 For battle lost or battle won,
賤 Go, find your captain; take your gun,
賤 To stand with France against the Hun!
賤 Reck not that tears might wet your crib;
賤 Nor fear my fondling of the bib
賤 You wore — when you are gone.
賤 Your mother will not be alone;
賤 Her love-mate will be Duty Done:
賤 Her nights will kiss that midnight sun.
賤 If tears? They will be tears of Joy,
賤 For having milked a man, my boy.
賤 Farewell and live, heart of my heart.
賤 God steel my soul! I bid you start!
賤 賤 He goes!
賤 賤 God knows

I idol him. And may no backward glance
 Unheart me now. To France! To France!
 Fair France of La Fayette's romance.
 My man-in-arms advance, advance!
 Take down your grand-sire's crimsoned lance!
 For man-wide Freedom and for France!"

"HANDS ACROSS THE SEA"

 We're off for France to make "Fritz" dance
 To the tune of shot and shell.
 We'll march right in to old Berlin,
 And give the Kaiser hell.

 The French are right — they'll hold the fight,
 And British "drives" are fine;
 But Pershing's boys will find but toys
 In the "Hindenberg" Line.

 We leave hearts dear — the coast we clear
 For the ocean's wide expanse.
 A submarine on the ocean seen
 Will have but little chance.

 The cause is just — yet more we trust —
 For the Honor debt we owe
 Can ne'er be paid. 'Twas the timely aid
 Of the Frenchman long ago.

 For Lafayette is with us yet,
 Still held in memory dear.
 Our hearts now burn to give return,
 While his name we all revere.

賤 Oh! we're off to France — we want a chance
賤 賤 At the ecstatic thrill
賤 Of being there to have a share
賤 賤 In the funeral of "Kaiser Bill."

THE HIKE

賤 The orders are, "Prepare to hike!"
賤 So pack your war bag. Hit the pike.
賤 Throw back your shoulders — keep the step,
賤 For this is where we get the pep.

賤 "Prepare to hike," the orders are.
賤 And don't you dare to ask how far.
賤 We'll get what's coming, don't you see?
賤 So what's the odds to you and me?

賤 Prepare to hike! Roll up your kit.
賤 Strap on equipment. Hit the Grit
賤 Your corns will ripen on the road, —
賤 Just pare them down when taps are "blowed."

賤 We're billed to hike — the bugles blow.
賤 "'Tis column right" and off you go.
賤 Civilians watch as we pass by —
賤 We watch the girlies wink the eye.

賤 Preparedness is the slogan now,
賤 And rumor says there'll be a row —
賤 A real one on the Western Front.
賤 We're drilling for this special stunt.

賤 Prepare to hike! Get in the game.
賤 Your feet get sore, but don't go lame,
賤 Just set your jaws, with stiffened lip,

賤 And hold the lines with sand and "zip."

賤 War may be "Hell." So let it be.

賤 Yet, must be fought, if liberty

賤 Is still to reign upon her throne,—

賤 Else all is lost. The best is gone.

賤 Prepare to hike! Once more I say.

賤 Round out your muscles for the fray.

賤 Life's not worth living any more,

賤 Should Teuton force invade our shore.

A-B-C-OF ARMY LIFE

賤 A is the ARMY,

賤賤 With its shot, and its shell,

賤 B is the BATTLE

賤賤 That makes the War, Hell.

賤 C is the CAVALRY,

賤賤 Dashing and Bold,

賤 D is the "DOUGHBOY,"

賤賤 Whom the trenches must hold;

賤 E, ENGINEER,

賤賤 Who lays out the plot,

賤 F the "FIRST AID,"

賤賤 With stretcher and cot;

賤 G is the "GUARD,"

賤賤 Our "Border-Patrol"—

賤 H is HEADQUARTERS,

賤賤 The high-ranking role.

賤 I is the INFANTRY,

賤賤 That's hot on the Hike,

賤 J is JAW-BONE,

賤賤 Oh, "Pay-as-you-like";

賤 K is the KITCHEN,

賤賤 Where they turn out the "stew,"
賤 L is LANCE-CORPORAL.
賤賤 Who ranks just a few;
賤 M is the MESS,
賤賤 Where the rations are served,
賤 N is "NON-COM,"
賤賤 Whose "Stripes" are deserved;
賤 O is the OFFICER,
賤賤 "Spick and so span,"
賤 P is the PRISONER,
賤賤 Who's "under the ban,"
賤 Q is the QUARTERS,
賤賤 With "lights out at Taps,"
賤 R is the ROOKIE,
賤賤 Whom everyone raps,
賤 S is the SERGEANT,
賤賤 Who keeps 'em in line,
賤 T is TATTOO,
賤賤 Three-quarters past nine,
賤 U is the UNIFORM,
賤賤 Buttons so bright,
賤 V is the VOLLEY,
賤賤 That settles the Fight;
賤 W the WAGON,
賤賤 With "four Army mules,"
賤 X the eX-soldier,
賤 Whose ardor now cools,
賤 Y is the YOUNGSTER,
賤 Just out of the "Point,"
賤 Z—can't you tell
賤 This line's out-of-joint?

A SOLDIERS PRIMER

賤 A man, a hat, a blouse, a gun,
賤 Call this a soldier just for fun.
賤 A dog tent, blanket, candle, match,
賤 His home is built with rare dispatch;
賤 With hard tack, bacon, army beans,
賤 Army life is not what it seems.
賤 A damp cold night, aching head,
賤 The next day fever-soldier dead.
賤 The story is brief (we know it well),
賤 And plain is moral – "War is Hell."

THE TALE AND WAIL OF A ROOKIE

賤 When I was young I said to myself,
賤 Choose a career and start after the pelf,
賤 Early to bed and early to rise,
賤 You're sure to get wealthy and awfully wise,
賤 So I started out to look around,
賤 But nice fat jobs weren't easily found.

賤 However, while taking a walk down the street,
賤 A bright colored poster my eyes did greet,
賤 "Young Men Wanted." I said, "That's me,"
賤 And stepped up closer so I could see.
賤 "Join the Army and see the World,"
賤 My fingers around my last dollar were curled.

賤 So I went around where they hung out the flag.
賤 But that 7-year hitch made my interest lag.
賤 They explained it, however, and made it quite plain
賤 That to join the Army would be my gain.
賤 So here I am in the damn Philippines,
賤 They feed me nothing but bacon and beans.

賤 The land of the goo-goo is no place for me,
賤 The reason porque is easy to see.
賤 I never was strong for bugs and lizards,
賤 Or the amoebic bug that tickles your gizzards.
賤 I have a reverse on fleas and snakes,
賤 And I hate the noise the Gekko makes.

賤 I have three square feet of prickly heat,
賤 And some dhobie itch that can't be beat,
賤 I've had the dengue and also the fever,
賤 Of all diseases I've been the receiver.
賤 I'm bitten by all that's invented to bite us,
賤 At the end of the year I'll have Philippinitis.

賤 A long centipede just crawled in my bunk,
賤 This tropical service is certainly punk,
賤 Not a chance in the world to go over the hill,
賤 And half my time is spent in the mill.
賤 But why should I worry, I'll soon be free.
賤 A "G. C. M." does the trick for me.

A MARINE'S HYMN

賤 From the Halls of Montezuma,
賤 賤 To the shores of Tripoli,
賤 We fight our country's battles
賤 賤 On the land as on the sea.
賤 First to fight for right and freedom
賤 賤 And to keep our honor clean,
賤 We are proud to claim the title
賤 賤 Of United States Marine.

賤 From the Pest Hole of Cavite
賤 賤 To the ditch at Panama,
賤 You will find them very needy