



Lest we Forget

My Grandad's battered leather jacket
Bears a couple of badges without regret.
One from the Regiment he served in,
The other with the words "**Lest We Forget**".

Now Grandad pretends he's hard and crusty
But is really a big softie within.
He has rules which you have to follow,
And if you break them he gets pretty grim.

If you stay inside the rules, he is funny,
charismatic, and pretty forgiving.
At times he can be rather annoying,
but he's my Grandad so I just forgive him.

I said, "Grandad, what does '**Lest We Forget**' mean?"
He looked down at me, smiled and said,
"There's a verse from many years back pet,
that's ingrained in Serving Folks' heads."

He bowed his head as if praying
And spoke from the depth of his heart.
"This verse I will never forget,
Until the day from this earth, do I part.

**They shall not grow old,
As we, that are left, grow old,
Nor the years condemn,
For at the going down of the Sun,
And in the morning,
We will Remember them.**

"Now let me explain that to you pet,"
and in a far-off soft voice he told,
"They shall not grow old," in our minds
Means they died and cannot grow old.

They died for you to enjoy freedoms
that you enjoy every day without fuss.
And they died serving their country,
believing their cause to be right and just.

The next is the line for the lucky ones
Those that survived and live on with pride
"As we, that are left, grow old"
With only memories of those that died.

The line "**Nor the years condemn**" means
As their orders completed right through,
They did their duty and paid the price:
That cause must always remain true.

**"At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
we will remember them"**
should always be said, that
it wasn't politicians on the front line:

It was Tommy, and Billy, and Fred.

It was everyday folk that won you the right
for everyday life, enjoyed without fear,
Because of the ultimate price paid by many
For all of those things you hold so dear.

That is why I wear my badge with pride,
With the words 'Lest we Forget' inscribed,
To enjoy the freedom we all have today,
And remember, for this, those that died."

I remember those words that he said to me;
I thought about its meaning in many ways.
I know that our freedom came at a cost:
They gave their tomorrows for our todays.

I hope my dear Grandad don't mind,
But I stole his badge to wear with pride,
To show the world that I remember them –
He'll be proud to see that I care deep inside.

I am proud that he served our Country
In his battered old leather jacket too,
I am so proud to call him my Grandad,
As I know now what he's been through.

*Poem written by my nephew, Mick Heywood,
former Warrant Officer, British Army.
He wrote this poem to a man whose granddaughter
asked about the badges and the "Lest We Forget"
motto on his old leather jacket.
He says, "All of which are absolutely true".*

Philip Tory, Gloucester, Nov 2015