

OLD SAM'S CHRISTMAS PUDDING

by Marriott Edgar

It was Christmas Day in the trenches
In Spain in Peninsula War,
And Sam Small were cleaning his musket
A thing as he'd ne'er done before.

They'd had 'em inspected that morning,
And Sam had got into disgrace
For when Sergeant had looked down the barrel
A sparrow flew out in his face.

The Sergeant reported the matter
To Lieutenant Bird then and there.
Said Lieutenant 'How very disgusting
The Duke must be told of this 'ere.'

The Duke were upset when he heard.
He said 'I'm astonished, I am.
I must make a most drastic example
There'll be no Christmas pudding for Sam.'

When Sam were informed of his sentence
Surprise rooted him to the spot –
'Twere much worse than he had expected,
He thought as he'd only be shot.

And so he sat cleaning his musket,
And polishing barrel and butt,
Whilst the pudding his mother had sent him
Lay there in the mud at his foot.

Now the centre that Sam's lot were holding
Ran around a place called Badajoz
Where the Spaniards had put up a bastion
And ooh what a bastion it was!

They pounded away all the morning
With canister, grape shot and ball,
But the face of the bastion defied them.
They made no impression at all.

They started again after dinner
Bombarding as hard as they could;
And the Duke brought his own private cannon
But that weren't a ha'pence o' good.

The Duke said 'Sam, put down thy musket
And help me to lay this gun true'.
Sam answered 'You'd best ask your favours
From them as you give pudding to.'

The Duke looked at Sam so reproachful
And 'Don't take it that way', said he,
'Us Generals have got to be ruthless.
It hurts me more than it did thee.'

Sam sniffed at these words kind of sceptic,
Then looked down the Duke's private gun
And said, 'We'd best put in two charges.
We'll never bust bastion with one.'

He tipped cannon ball out of muzzle,
He took out the wadding and all,
He filled barrel chock full of powder,
Then picked up and replaced the ball.

He took a good aim at the bastion,
Then said, 'Right-o, Duke, let her fly'.
The cannon nigh jumped off her trunnions
And up went the bastion, sky high.

The Duke he weren't 'alf elated,
He danced round the trench full of glee
And said, 'Sam, for this gallant action
You can hot up your pudding for tea'.

Sam looked round to pick up his pudding,
But it wasn't there, nowhere about.
In the place where he thought he had left it
Lay the cannon ball he'd just tipped out.

Sam saw in a flash what 'ad happened:
By an unprecedented mishap
The pudding his mother had sent him
Had blown Badajoz off the map.

That's why Fusiliers wear to this moment
A badge which they think's a grenade,
But they're wrong – it's a brass reproduction
Of the pudding Sam's mother once made.