

Let's just take a short walk in our minds through an ancient Veterans Cemetery and listen for a moment to warrior voices from both past and present in a scene where they all join together to cover centuries of time. Join me then for a short visit to both past and present.

Sgt Pops, Vietnam, Class of '67

IN CEMETERIES OLD

At dusk I walk along the paths,
Of cemeteries old.
The sky begins to darken,
Glorious colors, dark and bold.

Above the stones and trails I see,
Old tents with campfires lit.
And warriors in their uniforms,
Come out to speak a bit.

Old Romans and Crusaders there,
With those from ancient days.
And even those from modern wars,
With different battle ways.

Tribal warriors fit in too,
With feathers in their hair.
War paint marks their bodies,
Stone tipped arrows were their fare.

Some sit beside the glowing coals,
Their swords across their knees.
And listen to the tales of those,
Who fought upon the seas.

They hear the tales of modern days,
Of battles in the skies.
And wonder what their gods would think,
When such a warrior dies.

The modern warrior hears the tales,
Of sword and lance and shield.
Of marching for unending days,
To engage upon the field.

New chariots all have engines,
And now we call them tanks.
Still they charge like chariots did,
On deserts and river banks.

Old sailors sit and ponder,
Iron ships when theirs were wood?
How could you sink your enemy?
Ram spars would do no good.

Young sailors need no sails or oars,
Guns fire from miles away.
Yet fear of sinking in the waves,
Is still with them today

All speak of battles won and lost,
Of tactics that they knew.
They claim of course, that battles lost,
Were very, very few.

I walk among these warriors and,
I hear their tales of war.
I feel a kinship with them all,
And sense their pride yet more.

I see the polished helmets and,
I see the modern gear.
I feel the pride each soldier has,
They hold this pride so dear.

The fires die down a little,
Yet their wineskins still remain.
They pass around a bottle from,
Young warriors recent slain.

They're just as welcome here as they,
Who passed so long ago.
They treat them all like brothers but,
Mistreat them? Never! No!

And as I walk, I hear the talk,
From ancients 'til today.
There's little difference, then to now,
What can a warrior say?

Arms have changed along the years,
But honor's still a part,
Of every warrior on the field,
It's deep within his heart.

Times have changed the uniforms,
No more the leather caps.
No formal speech at funeral pyre,
The sound has changed to Taps.

Weapons changed from swords and bows,
But valor must remain.
It keeps the warrior on the path,
His honor not to stain.

Warriors always honor those who,
Heard the battle call.
Some are wounded, some are not,
Some warriors give their all.

These who rest in hallowed ground,
Know honor is not free.
It takes a daily effort that,
Most people never see.

And as I walk away near dawn,
I hear formation's call.
They stand and slowly turn to me,
I salute them, one and all.