

THE FINAL ROLL CALL

***They hear the bugle call: Assembly,
And they gather 'round, as in times before.
Most days they're at least a thousand strong,
At times there are many hundreds more.***

***They come from each and every walk of life:
The rich, the poor, the homeless too.
But they all share one great and common trait:
They fought for Freedom..... for me and you.***

***Most of them are up in years,
For they date way back to World War II.
Many served in Korea, many more in Vietnam
And from the Gulf War, maybe just a few.***

***Their artificial limbs are left behind,
Their wheelchairs, canes and crutches too.
They'll not be needed where they go,
For there... all are well and whole, as good as new.***

***"Attention! Answer when your name is called!"
They hear the Sergeants' loud and urgent cry.
And they quietly move to form rank and file,
At that long last Roll Call in the sky.***

***"Washington, Inouye, Gomez, Smith!"
"Here, Sarge", they answer, one by one.
They salute, then turn to start their final march,
And slowly fade away into the setting sun.***

***The American Veteran population decreased by 560,000 in FY 2001.
Veterans under 45 years of age constituted 21 percent of the total veteran population;
veterans 45 to 64 years old, 41 percent, and veterans 65 or older, 38 percent.
(Dept of Veterans Affairs Statistical Data)***