**THIS ODE**

This ode awoke this morning from the darkness of a dream

This ode absorbed adversity and rose up to redeem

This ode stood tall with honour when its sentiment was penned

This ode begins with courage… and, with courage, it will end

This ode decrees to never let their valour go unchecked

This ode would ask for nothing… but an ear of due respect

This ode defended freedom in its time of greatest tussle

This ode was there the day they fell… this ode is Andrew Russell!

For ‘Poppy’ Pearce’s legacy, this ode lays down a rock

In all its guts and gallantry, this ode is Matty Locke

This ode reveres Luke Worsley when the bugler embarks

This ode upholds the image of Lance Corporal Jason Marks

This ode is Sean McCarthy and I pledge to not forget

This ode is Michael Fussell for, to him, we owe a debt

Private Greg Sher’s quality defines the tears that spill

This ode lauds Mathew Hopkins and personifies Brett Till

This ode hails Ben Renaudo for his fortitude forthwith

Jacob ‘Snowy’ Moerland stands with Darren ‘Smithy’ Smith

With Herbie by their side tonight, this ode is in their veins

Their company departed… but their memory remains

This ode is built with something that will never pierce their armour

This ode is Timmy Aplin, young Ben Chuck and Scotty Palmer

This ode declares their mateship and their brotherhood as well

The tale of Nathan Bewes is now a tale we have to tell

And the name of Jason Brown will undeniably prevail

And the truth will echo stoically alongside Tomas Dale

This ode portrays Grant Kirby as a son of parents proud

This ode is Jared McKinney - and it resonates aloud!

This ode cites Richard Atkinson – his service rich and rare

This ode lifts Jamie Larcombe from a place of great despair

And it sings his name eternally the same way as Brett Wood

For Andrew Jones, his duty is forever understood

Flying free with dignity, this ode is Marcus Case

For Sapper Rohan Robinson, it fortifies his place

This ode unites Todd Langley with his comrades in the sky

And it welcomes Matthew Lambert when you look it in the eye

Bryce Duffy was a man of pride – this ode will reassert

When you frame the face of bravery, this ode is Ashley Birt

This ode unveils Luke Gavin and the beauty he possessed

For the life of Blaine ‘Didds’ Diddham, we are absolutely blessed

This ode belongs to ‘Marto’ – from his passion, it will quote

This ode gives thanks to ‘Milo’ and it treasures Robbie Poate

Take it easy ‘Poatey’ - mate, we’ve got your back from here

Vale Nathaniel Gallaher whose strength is always near

This ode is Merv McDonald who so gamely played his part

And it holds Scott Smith securely in the contour of its heart

With selfless inspiration in the final act he shared

Integrity uncompromised - this ode is Cameron Baird

Their commitment is colossal and their dedication true

This ode respects Todd Chidgey - it’s for Mason Edwards too

And decent men like David Wood returned from days of war

Who struggled to make peace with what they did and what they saw

This ode will stand beside them in the dust of *every* fight

In the demon of the darkest night, it hopes to shine a light

For the soldiers of this free land – for the gratitude that runs

This ode preserves the honour of Australia’s fallen sons

They will never be forgotten – not today nor ever after

This ode recalls their character, their loyalty, their laughter

Their ever-present spirit drives us onward down the road

And their flame will burn immortal… with the reading of this ode

**Rupert McCall 2015**