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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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# **Children of the Good War**

05/28, 05/31 & 06/02/12

So the story goes,

For January fourth forty four.  
Best man practically shanghaied.  
All Dad's pals gone to war.

Married on leave,  
Then back to Florida base.  
Mom followed in April,  
And my birth took place

On Milwaukee's north side  
Nine months later.  
Of the tribal horde to come,  
An early precursor.

Kids filled the homes,  
Then churches and schools.  
Boys overran our block  
And mostly ruled the roosts.

Old helmets, toy guns,  
To the neighborhood's hills.  
First, Clay Hill on Deer Place  
For imagined Nazi kills.

The to the sled hill  
At Humboldt Park  
As we got older; still,  
Home long 'fore dark.

Korean conflict ongoing then,  
But distant to us.

Our fathers' war  
More real to us.

Or rather Hollywood's version...  
John Wayne on Iwo's sands,  
Victory at Sea scored by Rodger's themes,  
Ticker tape parades with big brass bands.

Those dads we knew  
Who were shot at;  
We didn't think to ask  
Why they kept quiet.

To Nam land we went  
In the course of time.  
Belatedly we learned  
Battle's not sublime.

The hurt of us couldn't  
Talk more than those fathers.  
As for welcomes, many wished us  
Outfits of tar and feathers.

Times have changed.  
You're thanked, not harried.  
Just wish it wasn't all missed  
By those already buried.

*~Gerald A. Ney~*