

## JOINING UP – JULY 1940

When war broke out in '39,  
I did my level best  
To join the bloomin' Army,  
But I couldn't pass the test!  
Every time I fronted up  
To answer my country's call,  
The Recruiting Officer would look down & say,  
"Sorry lad, you're just too small!"

In height at 4 feet 10 and a half,  
And weighing in at 7 stone two,  
They seemed to think there was too little of me  
To be caught up in this blue.  
At last – compulsory military training  
Seemed the answer to my plight.  
*But* they classed me "exempt from military training"  
With the notation "under height."

I even tried the Air Force,  
They weren't interested at all  
Except to reply by letter -  
"Sorry you're just too small."  
It seemed like I was destined to be  
In "Civvy Street" for the war.  
When suddenly – the fall of France,  
The Huns were knocking at England's door.

So now I thought, "I'll try again,  
Things really do look bad,"  
This time they said, "We'll take you son,  
Although you're a bit small lad!"  
I rushed out to a telephone,  
Oh! I was so excited,  
I phoned up Mum, told her the news,  
My inadequacies had been blighted.

Poor Mum; the news gave her a shock,  
Although, deep down, I'm sure  
That she was just as pleased as I,  
That at last "The Shrimp" would be off to war,  
I then phoned my old boss at Mentone,  
His missus answered my call,  
And when I told her my good news  
She fainted crash – against the wall!

I galloped through my medical,  
Boy! I felt like a Spartan!  
But when I fronted for the dental  
The C.O. said, "What are you doing here son,  
This ain't a Kindergarten!"

Next stop the official photograph,  
Yeah – you've guessed it – another joke,  
The recruit that I was following  
Was a 6 foot 4 tall bloke!

When I fronted up to the camera  
It had to happen I'll be damned,  
When they moved the gauge from 6 feet 4,  
The bloomin' thing got jammed!  
After screwing this and pushing that  
And cursing with a hiss  
The cameraman grabbed a block of wood  
And said, "For Gawd's sake – stand on this!"

So there was I – a raw recruit,  
Under height and underweight,  
Being photographed on a block of wood,  
Which took my height to 5 feet 8!  
And so on to the Q in store, to get my uniform  
No hope of getting a thing to fit,  
I was too far from the norm!

The smallest boots they had in stock  
Size 6 – I took Size 4,  
And as for the rest of the uniform,  
I got the smallest they had in store.  
The trousers were a mile too long,  
With the oversize tunic I looked like a clown,  
The shirts and socks were far too big,  
To reach my great coat pockets I had to bend  
down,

On parade next morning with others,  
In my oversize uniform trying to look smart,  
Along came the Sar-Major –big bellowing bloke,  
And boy – did he look the part!  
He eyed us all off and then roared at me,  
"How tall are you – come on – don't bleat!"  
I stammered out, Oh I-I-I th-think I'm about f-f-f-  
five feet sir,"

He roared, "Yes! But whose bloody feet!"  
And so at last I was one of the mob  
In training to take part in the strife,  
We can only stand up and do our share,  
To save our Australian way of life.