

A Veteran's **Merry Christmas**

Guardian of Honor

**"THE SOLDIERS
NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS"**

(this version)

By Major Bruce W. Lovely

Christmas Eve 1993, US Forces Korea

(With apologies to Clement Moore who first wrote this story for his children in 1822)



The Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone
In a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
I had come down the chimney with presents to give
And to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight did I see.
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stockings by the mantle, just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.
With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
A sober thought came through my mind.
For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,
I found the house of a soldier, once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled upon the floor in this one bedroom home.
The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,
Not what I pictured of a United States Soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I just read,
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?
I realized the families I saw on this night,
owed their lives to these soldiers,
Who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world the children would play,
and the grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas Day.
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
Because of the soldiers, like the one lying there.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve, in a land far from home.
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice;
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
My life is my God, my country, my Corps."

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I started to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still
and we both shivered from the cold night's chill.

**I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark night
This Guardian of Honor so willing to fight.**

**The soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "Carry on, Santa,
It's Christmas Day... All is secure."**

**One look at my watch and I knew he was right
Merry Christmas, my friend,
... and to all a Good Night!**

By Major Bruce W. Lovely

I wrote this poem for Christmas Eve 1993 while assigned to US Forces Korea
Lt Col Bruce Lovely, USAF (printed in the Fort Leavenworth Lamp, 1995)

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