

# *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

*Apologies to Clement Moore who first wrote the story for his children in 1822; also credit given to MSgt Noah Brazos Ross, (RA18033195) US Army 18th Field Artillery, survivor of Utah Beach, France; Battle for the Ardennes: Luxembourg, Belgium, and Deutschland, who wrote, "Daddy's Christmas" (Soldier's Christmas), " at a Bonita, Montague County, Texas, High School exercise, in 1937.*



## *The Night Before Christmas*

'Twas use 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

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*We Take Care of Our Own*