

# *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)

*We Take Care of Our Own*

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