

A Soldier's Silent Night

Courtesy of [KBAY 94.5 FM, San Jose, CA](#) The Non-Stop Christmas Station

The poem was recorded by Father Ted Berndt of Wisconsin as a tribute. Berndt is also a former Marine and World War II Veteran and is a recipient of the Purple Heart. The original poem was actually written by a former Marine Corporal James M. Schmidt. Schmidt was stationed in Washington, D.C. in 1987 when he wrote the poem originally titled "Merry Christmas, My Friend."

Transcription of "A Soldier's Silent Night":

'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 dwelling did live.
As I looked all around, a strange sight to see,
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stocking on the mantle, just boots filled with sand.
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.
Medals and badges, awards of every kind,
a sobering thought came alive in my mind.
This house was different, it was dark, it was dreary.
I had found the home of a soldier, I could see that most clearly.
The soldier lay sleeping silent, alone.
Curled up on the floor in his one-bedroom home.
His face was so gentle, room in such disorder,
Not at all how I pictured a U.S. soldier.
Was this the hero, of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho, a floor for a bed?
Then I realized the other families that I saw this night
Out there lies the soldiers who are willing to fight.
In the morning around the world, children would play
Grown-ups would celebrate a bright Christmas day
But they all enjoyed freedom, each month through the year,
because of soldiers like the one lying here.

I couldn't help but wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve, in lands far from home.
The very thought brought a tear to my eye.
and I dropped to my knees and I started to cry.
The soldier awakened, I heard his 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, and I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still.
as both of us shivered from the cold night's chill.
I didn't want to leave him on that cold, dark night.
This guardian of honor, so willing to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over with a voice soft and pure.
He whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all secure."
One look at my watch and I knew he was right,
Merry Christmas my friend,
May God bless you this night.

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