

# A soldier's Christmas Poem

**The following was written by a U.S. Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan**

'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 I did see,  
no tinsel, no presents,  
not even a tree.

No stocking 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 home of a soldier,  
Once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,  
silent, alone,  
curled up on the floor  
in this one-bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,  
the room in such disorder,  
not how I pictured  
a United States soldier.

Was this the hero  
of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho,  
The floor for a bed?

I realized the families  
who I saw this night,  
owed their lives to these soldiers  
who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world,  
the children would play,  
and grownups would celebrate  
a bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom  
each month of the year,  
because of the soldiers,  
like the one lying here.

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 continued 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.

Then 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."