



*A SOLDIER'S CHRISTMAS – James M. Schmidt, Lance
Corporal (1986)*

*'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 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
That 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."*