

A U.S. MARINE'S CHRISTMAS

T`was 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 whom in this house did live.

As I looked all around, a strange sight did I see;
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stockings by the fire, just boots full of sand,
On the wall hung pictures of a faraway land.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
A sobering thought soon came to my mind.
For this house was different, unlike any I'd seen.
This was the home of a U.S. Marine.

I'd heard stories about them, so I had to see more.
I walked down the hallway and pushed open the door.
And there he lay sleeping. Silent. Alone.
Curled up on the floor of his one-bedroom home.

He seemed so gentle, his face so serene,
Not how I pictured a U.S. Marine.
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on his poncho, a floor for his bed?

His head was clean shaven, his face weathered tan.
I soon understood this was more than a man.
For I realized the families that I saw that night,
Owed their lives to these men who were willing to fight.

Soon around the nation the children would play,
And gown-ups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.
They enjoyed freedom each day and all year
Because of Marines 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.
Just the very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and I started to cry.

He must have awoken for I heard a rough voice:
"Santa, don't cry. This is my choice.
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more.
My life is my God, my country, my Corps."

With that he rolled over, drifted off into sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
I watched him for hours. So silent and still.
I noticed he shivered from the cold night's chill.

So I took off my jacket, the one made of red,
To cover this Marine from his toes to his head.
Then I put on his T-shirt of scarlet and gold.
With an eagle, globe and anchor emblazoned so bold.

Although it barely fit me, I began to swell with pride.
For one shining moment I was the Marine Corps deep inside.
I didn't want to leave him, so quiet in the night;
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.

But half asleep he rolled over and in a voice clean and pure said,
"Carry on Santa. It's Christmas Day, all's secure."
One look at my watch and I knew he was right.
Merry Christmas my friend, Semper Fi and good night.

Author Unknown