

## 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