Indian Army is the world’s largest voluntary army. This poem is dedicated to all our soldiers.

**POEM**

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 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 DISORDER,

NOT HOW I PICTURED,

A TRUE SOLDIER.

WAS THIS THE HERO,

OF WHOM I'D JUST READ?

CURLED UP ON A PONCHO,

THE FLOOR FOR A BED?

I REALISED 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 DID NOT 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,

A ND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."

This poem was written by a Peacekeeping soldier stationed overseas.