

OXEN,

As we prepare for Christmas and New Years and the closing of the main campus, please remember our men and women who served and are serving honorably and faithfully. We wish you a safe, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The following items for your consideration are from a subscription to a newsletter, America in Uniform.

Fraternally,  
Your Sister, Frances

### **A PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS**

FATHER, GIVE THEM YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO FACE ANOTHER DAY.  
THEIR FUTURE LOOKS GLOOMY AND DARK, LEST THEY STUMBLE AND FALL.

PLEASE GO WITH THEM ALL THE WAY.

FATHER GIVE THEM YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO WALK ANOTHER MILE.

THEIR BURDENS ARE MANY AND TOO CUMBERSOME TO BEAR THOUGH  
THEY INFLICT THEM WITH GRIEF AND PAIN.

MAY YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE BE SUFFICIENT ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN.  
IN YOUR HOLY NAME WE PRAY. AMEN

America in Uniform: A Prayer for Our Troops, Fri 3/20/2009 11:03 AM

### **God Bless America**

God bless America  
God bless our flag  
With those stars and stripes  
It is much more than a rag

Yes God bless America  
May the wars all soon end  
And no matter where we're from  
We can still greet each other as friends

God bless the soldiers  
Who fight for his land  
Protecting others rights  
He needs your helping hand

written 2/2/2009 by **Norman Hale Jr.**

America in Uniform: God Bless America, Fri  
3/27/2009 11:27 AM

God bless the children  
All across this land  
They need our protection  
Until they can understand

God bless the Angels  
That show at our darkest hours  
May they help many more  
With Your guidance and Your power

God bless the wildlife  
That roam this land so free  
For no matter what they are  
They are still a sight to see

## A Sea Duty Story

*You asked about sea duty stories...here's mine. Went to P.I. December 1959, most memorable Christmas I ever had to say the least. Out of P.I. on to I.T.R. then Sea School. Out of Sea School assigned to the U.S.S. Little Rock CLG 4. After many shake down cruises due to the fact the missile house was a little heavy for this light cruiser, adjustments were made and we had a ship we could be proud of. In 1961 we made our Med Cruise and became part of the Sixth Fleet. Now you know the background here's the story...*

The Commanding Officer of our Marine Detachment heard the Fleet Marine Force was having landing exercises and thought that his Marines should be part of the action. We got the word that we would be included with the real Marines in this mock invasion somewhere off the coast of Greece. I think we were suppose to be about the hundredth wave in. I guess they didn't want us screwing up the real Marines.

The big day arrives and we are all psyched up. Down to the mess decks to pick up our C-rations, what C-rations none on board what have you got cookie how about some peanut butter, jelly and crackers? Well ok but don't tell the real Marines. So we pack up our backpacks hoping our jelly cans don't show and careful not to crush our crackers. General Quarters sound and we head topside to meet our landing craft. We are set to go with our starched utilities, lumpy backpacks, spit shined boots and Gong Ho attitude. What's the ships band doing topside? Over the side men onto the cargo net hit the landing when it's coming up, hang on to your rifle, don't crowd the net finally all on board. Coxswain cast off and please stop laughing. What's that music from the Halls of...

Now men when we hit the beach don't forget come out screaming and set up a perimeter. Out we go screaming and yelling perimeter set, why is everybody looking at us? Maybe because we are in the center of Headquarters and this area has been secure for three days. Anyway we get shipped off to some remote location that few if any Greeks knew about. In this Theater of Operations we are in the upper balcony behind a big pillar. Well a least we have our peanut butter and jelly. Our area was so secure the only noise we heard at night was the cracking of our starched utilities.

War games are over and as much as we hate to leave we have to get back to our ship. Our landing craft is waiting at beach some real Marines waiting to wish us well, who said bellhop? As we head back to the ship my thoughts of the last few days go through my mind and I'm wondering how the h&ll am I going to get the jelly stains out of my utilities. Then I hear the ships band playing from the Hall of... and I know I'm home. If that Coxswain would just stop laughing

Fast forward 1962 now with Second Mar Div. Eighth Marines that's right I'm now part of the real Marines. We are now on the U.S.S. Boxer off the coast of Cuba, something about missiles. I'm a fire team leader just waiting for the word to join this Theater of Operation. Only this time we are center stage opening act. No cargo nets this time, we have choppers up deck ready to take us in something about vertical envelopment. This show never opened I heard we lost our Russian sponsor. I thought I would never say it but I was happy to see Jacksonville again.

I finished my tour at Cherry Point. I guess the Air Wing needed us real Marines to keep the rats from taking over the empty hangers we were guarding.

The bottom line is being part of the Marine Corps was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. I wouldn't change it for the world.

**Cpl. Bill Finkel 1883821 Sir.**

Compliments of [Sgt. Grit Marine Specialties Newsletter](http://www.grunt.com/scuttlebutt)  
(<http://www.grunt.com/scuttlebutt>)

America in Uniform: A Sea Duty Story, Wed 5/6/2009 11:06 AM

*From a Dedicated Subscriber:*

*This is a little over 5 minutes long ... so I didn't think I'd take the time needed to watch it. I did. I'm so glad. Hope you have the time to do the same.*

*America in Uniform has featured this poem in the past but not this video. The poem was originally published as **A Soldier's Christmas** and was actually written by Michael Marks. Please see Mr. Marks note at the end of the poem.*

### [YouTube - A Different Christmas Poem](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_P6yU_ymFM)

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_P6yU\\_ymFM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_P6yU_ymFM))

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light, I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight. My wife was asleep, her head on my chest, My daughter beside me, angelic in rest. Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white, Transforming the yard to a winter delight. The sparkling lights in the tree I believe, Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve. My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep, Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep. In perfect contentment, or so it would seem, So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near, But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear. Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow. My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, And I crept to the door just to see who was near. Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night, A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old, Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold. Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child. "What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "Come in this moment, it's freezing out here! Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve, You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.. To the window that danced with a warm fire's light Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right, I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night." "It's my duty to stand at the front of the line, That separates you from the darkest of times. No one had to ask or beg or implore me, I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me. My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December," Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers." My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam', And now it is my turn and so, here I am. I've not seen my own son in more than a while, But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag, The red, white, and blue... an American flag. I can live through the cold and the being alone, Away from my family, my house and my home. I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat. I can carry the weight of killing another, Or lay down my life with my sister and brother.. Who stand at the front against any and all, To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright, Your family is waiting and I'll be all right." "But isn't there something I can do, at the least, "Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast? It seems all too little for all that you've done, For being away from your wife and your son." Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "Just tell us you love us, and never forget. To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone, To stand your own watch, no matter how long. For when we come home, either standing or dead, To know you remember we fought and we bled. Is payment enough, and with that we will trust, That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

PLEASE, Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S.service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop

and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN  
30th Naval Construction Regiment  
OIC, Logistics Cell One  
Al Taqqadum, Iraq.

*This nifty piece of OfficeSpam was submitted by JPAC:*

*Jeff Giles has been incorrectly cited as the author of "A Different Christmas Poem". The poem is actually entitled "A Soldier's Christmas" and was written by **Michael Marks** on December 7th, 2000. The works of Mr. Marks have been featured in the Washington Times, hang in the Titan Missile Museum, and are featured on the [International War Veteran's Poetry Archive](http://www.iwvpa.net/marksm) (<http://www.iwvpa.net/marksm>).*

*I know, because I am Michael Marks. LCDR Giles simply forwarded my poem long ago and had his email signature appended at the bottom.*

*Warmest regards,*  
**Michael Marks**