

Unknown

"Christmas In The Trenches"

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Christmas in the Trenches

(John McCutcheon)

My name is Francis Tolliver, I come from Liverpool.

Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.

To Belgium and to Flanders, to Germany to here

I fought for King and country I love dear.

'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so
bitter hung,

The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas
song was sung

Our families back in England were toasting us that day

Their brave and glorious lads so far away.

I was lying with my messmate on the cold and rocky
ground

When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar
sound

Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" each soldier strained
to hear

As one young German voice sang out so clear.

"He's singing bloody well, you know!" my partner says
to me

Soon, one by one, each German voice joined in
harmony

The cannons rested silent, the gas clouds rolled no
more

As Christmas brought us respite from the war

As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause
was spent

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" struck up some lads
from Kent

The next they sang was "Stille Nacht." "Tis 'Silent
Night'," says I

And in two tongues one song filled up that sky

"There's someone coming toward us!" the front line
sentry cried

All sights were fixed on one long figure trudging from
their side

His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shown on that
plain so bright

As he, bravely, strode unarmed into the night

Soon one by one on either side walked into No Man's
Land
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to
hand
We shared some secret brandy and we wished each
other well
And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell
We traded chocolates, cigarettes, and photographs
from home
These sons and fathers far away from families of their
own
Young Sanders played his squeezebox and they had a
violin
This curious and unlikely band of men

Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France
once more
With sad farewells we each prepared to settle back to
war
But the question haunted every heart that lived that
wonderous night
"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"
'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost, so
bitter hung
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of
peace were sung
For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work
of war
Had been crumbled and were gone forevermore

My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell
Each Christmas come since World War I, I've learned
its lessons well
That the ones who call the shots won't be among the
dead and lame
And on each end of the rifle we're the same

@war @Xmas @seasonal
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