

I AM A VETERAN

By Chaplain (COL) Paul Swerdlow
(USA Retired)

I shivered that cold winter in Valley Forge
And rejoiced at the glorious surrender at Yorktown.
I wept as the flames engulfed Washington
And said "Never again."
I wore blue and I bled red.
I wore gray and I bled red.
The blood I spilled was to reunite a nation
Of the people, by the people and for the people.
I am a veteran.

I was at Little Big Horn and I prayed;
I was at Wounded Knee and I prayed.
I prayed that one-day the old Americans
And the new Americans would be one people.
I was there to charge up the hill at San Juan;
Knowing that my country was emerging beyond its borders.
I was prepared to make the world safe for democracy.
Young and idealistic, I came to France
To turn back the hordes in this war to end all wars.
I am a veteran.

It was with disbelief that I became
A part of the day that will live in infamy.
Once more I said goodbye to those I loved to protect my country.
Across the vast desert I met the enemy.
I met him on island after island.
I kept my promise to return.
I met him on the beaches of Normandy.
I repelled him from the gates of Bastogne.
I freed thousands from the shadow of death.
I am a veteran.

A small nation cried out for help
And I came because others had been there for me.
A nation was saved.
Ask not what your country can do for you.
Ask what you can do for your country.
Inspired by these words, I responded with courage and bravery
In a war that was hot and a war that was cold.
I am a veteran.

From Ground Zero to the Pentagon to the fields of Pennsylvania,
I saw the carnage and heard the cries. At that moment,
I pledged my life, my property and my sacred honor
Until there will be peace and freedom on earth
For everyone, everywhere.
I am a veteran.

