

# Christmas in the Trenches

John McCutcheon

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
My name is Francis Toliver, I come from Liverpool.

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
To Belgium and to Flanders, Germany to here.

**A7 (2)** **D (2)**  
I fought for King and country, I love dear.

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung.

**Bm** **Bm/A** **G** **A7**  
The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
Our families back in England were toasting us that day,

**A7 (2)** **D (2)**  
Their brave and glorious lads so far away.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
I was lying with my mess mate on the cold and rocky ground.

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
When across the lines of battle, came a most peculiar sound.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
Says I, "now listen up me boys." Each soldier strained to hear

**A7 (2)** **D (2)**  
As one young German voice sang out so clear.

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
"He's singing bloody well y'know," my partner says to me.

**Bm** **Bm/A** **G** **A7**  
Soon one by one each German voice joined in harmony.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
The cannons rested silent, and the gas clouds rolled no more.

**A7 (2)** **D (2)**  
As Christmas brought us respite from the war.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
**A7 (2)** **G** **D**

**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 As soon as they were finished, and a reverent pause was spent,  
**A7 (2)**                      **G**                      **D**  
 "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Ghent.  
**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 Oh the next they sang was "Stille Nacht", 'tis Silent Night says I.  
**A7 (2)**                      **D (2)**  
 And in two tongues one song filled up that sky.  
**A7 (2)**                      **G**                      **D**  
 "There's someone coming towards us", the front line sentry cried.  
**Bm**                      **Bm/A**                      **G**                      **A7**  
 All sights were fixed on one lone figure trudging from their side.  
**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 His truce flag like a Christmas star shone on that plain so bright  
**A7 (2)**                      **D (2)**  
 As he bravely strolled unarmed into the night.

**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 Then one by one on either side walked into no-man's land.  
**A7 (2)**                      **G**                      **D**  
 With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand.  
**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 We shared some secret brandy and we wished each other well.  
**A7 (2)**                      **D (2)**  
 And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell.  
**A7 (2)**                      **G**                      **D**  
 We traded chocolates, cigarettes and photographs from home.  
**Bm**                      **Bm/A**                      **G**                      **A7**  
 These sons and fathers far away from families of their own.  
**D**                      **Bm**                      **G**                      **Em**  
 Young Sanders played the squeezebox and they had a violin.  
**A7 (2)**                      **D (2)**  
 This curious and unlikely band of men.

**D Bm D G**  
**G D A7 D**

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
Soon daylight stole upon us, and France was France once more.  
**A7 (2)** **G** **D**

With sad farewells we each began to settle back to war.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
But the question haunted every heart that lived that wondrous night.  
**A7 (2)** **D (2)**

"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung.

**Bm** **Bm/A** **G** **A7**  
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
For the walls they kept between us, to exact the work of war  
**A7 (2)** **D (2)**

Had been crumbled, and were gone forever more.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
**A7 (2)** **G** **D**

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
My name is Francis Toliver, in Liverpool I dwell.

**A7 (2)** **G** **D**  
Each Christmas comes since World War I, I've learned its lessons well.

**D** **Bm** **G** **Em**  
For the ones who call the shots, won't be among the dead and lame,  
**A7 (2)** **D (2)**

And on each end, of the rifle, we're the same.

**D** **Bm** **D** **G**  
**G** **D** **A7** **D (hold)**