

Christmas in the Trenches

(John McCutcheon, 1984) – [Christmas in the Trenches](#) by John McCutcheon

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
My name is Francis Toliver, I come from Liverpool.

G7 **F** **C**
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
To Belgium and to Flanders, Germany to here.

G7 **C**
I fought for King and country I love dear.

G7 **F** **C**
'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung.

Am
The frozen fields of France were still,

F **G7**
No Christmas song was sung.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
Our families back in England were toasting us that day,

G7 **C**
Their brave and glorious lads so far away.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
I was lying with my mess mates on the cold and rocky ground.

G7 **F** **C**
When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
Says I, "now listen up me boys." Each soldier strained to hear

G7 **C**
As one young German voice sang out so clear.

G7 **F** **C**
"He's singing bloody well y'know," my partner says to me.

Am **F** **G7**
Soon one by one each German voice joined in in harmony.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
The cannons rested silent, and the gas clouds rolled no more.

G7 **C**
As Christmas brought us respite from the war.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
As soon as they were finished, and a reverent pause was spent,

G7 **F** **C**
"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Kent.

C **Am** **F**
Dm
Oh the next they sang was "Stille Nacht", 'tis Silent Night says I.

G7 **C**
And in two tongues one song filled up that sky.

G7 **F** **C**
"There's someone coming towards us", the front line sentry cried.

Am **F** **Am** **G7**
All sights were fixed on one lone figure trudging from their side.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
His truce flag like a Christmas star shone on that plain so bright

G7 **C**
As he bravely strolled unarmed into the night.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
Then one by one on either side walked into No-Man's Land.

G7 **F** **C**
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
We shared some secret brandy and we wished each other well.

G7 **C**
And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell.

G7 **F** **C**
We traded chocolates, cigarettes and photographs from home.

Am **F** **G7**
These sons and fathers far away from families of their own.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
Young Sanders played the squeezebox and they had a violin.

G7 **C**
This curious and unlikely band of men.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more.

G7 **F** **C**
With sad farewells we each began to settle back to war.

C **Am**
But the question haunted every heart that

F **Dm**
lived that wondrous night.

G7 **C**
"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"

G7 **F** **C**
'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung.

Am
The frozen fields of France were warmed

F **G7**
As songs of peace were sung.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
For the walls they kept between us to exact the work of war

G7 **C**
Had been crumbled and were gone forever more.

C **Am** **F** **Dm**
My name is Francis Toliver, in Liverpool I dwell.

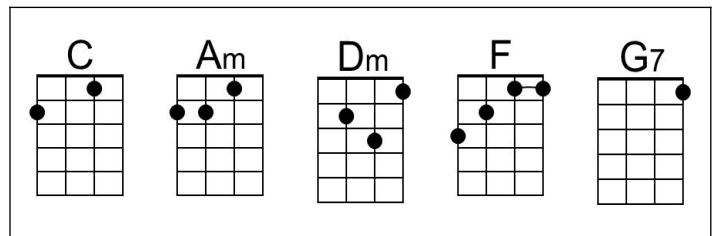
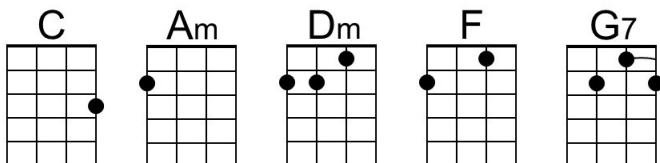
G7
Each Christmas comes since World War I,

F **C**
I've learned its lessons well.

C **Am**
For the ones who call the shots won't be

F **Dm**
among the dead and lame,

G7 **C**
And on each end of the rifle we're the same.





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