

## The Lifer

A citizen soldier's what I was, like many another man.  
We serve for whatever the country's cause, and we do the best we can.  
When our duty's done we're welcomed home to stow our uniform.  
After all the fear and cold we've known, we stay where it's safe and warm.

Every year or so we're on parade to receive the country's praise.  
They recall how willingly we gave and relive our glory days.  
They say we saved our way of life and kept the homeland free.  
They thank us for our sacrifice, and who could disagree?

There's a place in the ranks for the likes of me whenever the storm clouds roil.  
When the sun breaks through they cut us free, with a medal for our toil.  
We rejoin the happy millions, far away from the strain and strife.  
We're content to be back as civilians, and abandon the soldier's life.

Aye, we've earned our share of the credit, and there's plenty of credit due.  
But when you weigh and balance the debit, most is owed to a precious few.  
Sure, the citizen soldier meets the need when our back's against the wall,  
But The Lifer, that uncommon breed, holds firm throughout it all.

The Lifer doesn't sit and wait 'til it's time for the big show.  
The Lifer's standing at the gate, saddled up and primed to go.  
He signed for the duration, and the duration never ends.  
The protector of the nation, The Lifer never bends.

The Lifer's in the unsung fight, where there's more of guts than glory.  
The Lifer guards us in the night, that's always been his story.  
The Lifer knows few holidays, instead he's at his station  
Away in some far outpost, not in blissful celebration.

The Lifer didn't jump on board for booty or for riches.  
No fame or fortune his reward for adding on more hitches.  
The challenges to overcome and the chance for contribution,  
Start him marching to that different drum, not spoils or restitution.

A citizen soldier's what I was, like many another man.  
But The Lifer deserves the real applause, as much as any can.  
So raise your glass to The Lifer, boys, and thank the gods that sent 'im.  
And when the final bugle sounds he'll take his post in heaven.