

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS



The Boys in Blue or Heroes of the *Rank and File* ^(a)

To the Returned, Triumphant Soldiers of The Grand Army of the Republic, and to the Memory of the Honored Dead whose precious dust lies scattered from Maine to Texas, the Work is Dedicated.

[The Little Drummer: a Soldier's Story](#)

[A National Hymn](#)

[The Dying Soldier](#)

The Little Drummer: a Soldier's Story ^(b)

Tis of a little drummer,
The story I shall tell;
Of how he marched to battle,
And all that there befell.
Out in the West with Lyon,
(For once the name was true,)
For whom the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

Our army rose at midnight,
Ten thousand men as one,
Each slinging on his knapsack,
And snatching up his gun:
Forward! and of they started,
As all good soldiers do,
When the little drummer beats for them
The rat-tat-too.

Across a rolling country,
Where the most began to rise;
Past many a blackened far-house,
Till the sun was in the skies:
Then we met the Rebel pickets,

Who skirmished and withdrew,
While the little drummer beat and beat
The rat-tat-too.

Along the wooden hollows
The line of battle ran,
Our centre poured a volley,
And the fight at once began;
For the Rebels answered shouting,
And a shower of bullets flew;
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

He stood among his comrades,
As they quickly formed the line,
And when they raised their muskets
He watched the barrels shine!
When the volley rang, he started!
For war to him was new;
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

It was a sight to see them,
That early autumn day,
Our soldiers in their blue coats,
And the Rebel ranks in gray:
The smoke that rolled between them,
The balls that whistled through,
And the little drummer as he beat
His rat-tat-too!

His comrades dropped around him-
By five and ten they fell,
Some pierced by Minnie bullets,
Some torn by shot and shell;
They played against our cannon,
And a caisson's splinters flew;
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too!

The right, the left, the centre-
The fight was everywhere:
They pushed us here, and wavered,-
We drove and broke them there.
The graybacks fixed their bayonets,
And charged the coats of blue,
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too!

Where is our little drummer?
His nearest comrades say,
When the dreadful fight is over,
And the smoke has cleared away.
As the Rebel corps was scattering

He urged them to pursue,
So furiously he beat and beat
The rat-tat-too!

He stood no more among them,
For a bullet as it sped
Had glanced and struck his ankle,
And stretched him with the dead!
He crawled behind a cannon,
And pale and paler grew:
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too!

They bore him to the surgeon,
A busy man was he:
A drummer boy-what ails him?
His comrades answered, *See!*
As they took him from the stretcher,
A heavy breath he drew,
And his little fingers stove to beat
The rat-tat-too!

The ball had spent its fury:
A scratch, the surgeon said,
As he wound the snowy bandage
Which the lint was staining red!
I must leave you now, old fellow.
Oh! take me back with you,
For I know the men are missing me, And the rat-tat-too!

Upon his comrade's shoulder
They lifted him so grand,
With his dusty drum before him,
And his drum-sticks in his hand!
To the fiery front of battle,
That nearer and near drew-
And evermore he beat and beat
His rat-tat-too.

The wounded as he passed them
Looked up and gave a cheer:
And one in dying blessed him,
Between a smile and tear!
And the graybacks-they are flying
Before the coats of blue,
For whom the little drummer beats,
His rat-tat-too.

When the west was red with sunset,
The last pursuit was o'er:
Brave Lyon rode the foremost,
And looked the name he bore:
And before him on his saddle,
As a weary child would do,

Sat the little drummer fast asleep,
With his rat-tat-too

[{Return to Top of List}](#)

A National Hymn^(c)

Great God! to Whom our nation's woes,
Our dire distress, our angry foes,
In all their awful gloom are known,
We bow to thee, and thee alone.

We pray thee, mitigate this strife,
Attended by such waste of life,
Such wounds and anguish, groans and tears,
That fill our inmost hearts fear.

Oh! darkly now the tempest rolls,
Wide o'er our desolate souls;
Yet, beaten downward to the dust,
In thy forgiveness still we trust.

We trust to thy protecting power
In this, our country's saddest hour.
And pray that thou wilt spread thy shield
Above us, in the camp and field.

O God of battles! let thy might
Protect our armies in they fight-
Till they shall win the victory,
And set the hapless bondmen free.

Till, guided by they glorious hand,
Those armies reunited the land,
And North and South alike shall raise
To God their peaceful Hymns of Praise.

[{Return to Top of List}](#)

The Dying Soldier^(d)

The Dying Soldier was written on the death of Colonel Christie, who fell mortally wounded at the battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and died at Winchester, Virginia. He longed to see his young wife, *his darling Lizzie*, but before she reached Winchester he was dead.

I am dying-is she coming? throw the window open wide.
Is she coming? Oh! I love her more than all the world besides.
In her young and tender beauty, must, oh! must she feel this loss?
Savior, her my poor petition; teach her how to bear this cross.

Help her to be calm and patient, when I moulder in the dust;
Let her say and fell, my Father, that they ways are true and just.
Is she coming? go and listen; I would see her face once more,

I would hear her speaking on me, ere life's fevered dream is o'er.

I would hold her to my bosom, look into her soft, bright eye;
I would tell her how I love her, kiss once before I die.
Is she coming? Oh! 'tis evening, and my darling comes not still;
Life the curtain-it grows darker; it is sunset on the hill.

All the evening dews are falling; I am cold-the light is gone.
Is she coming? Softly, softly come the silent footsteps on.
I am going; come and kiss me-kiss me for my darling wife;
Take for her my parting blessing-take the last warm kiss of life.

Tell her I will wait to greet her where the good and lovely are;
In that home untouched by sorrow, tell her she must meet me there.
Is she coming? Lift the curtain-let me see the failing light;
Oh! I want to live to see her-surely she will come tonight.

Surely ere the daylight dieth, I will fold her to my breast:
With her head upon my bosom, calmly I could sink to rest.
It is hard to die without her. Look! I think she's coming now;
I can almost feel her kisses on my faded cheek and brow.

I can almost hear her whisper, feel her breath upon my cheek.
Hark! I hear the front door open-is she coming? did she speak?
No! Well, drop the curtain softly, I will see her face no more,
Till I see it smiling on me, on the bright and better shore.

Tell her she must come and meet me in the Eden-land of light,
Tell her I'll be waiting for her where there is no death, no night;
Tell her that I called her darling, blessed her with my dying breath: Come
and kiss me for my Lizzie-tell her love outlived my death.

[{Return to Top of List}](#)

(a) Hoge, A.H. 1867. *The Boys in Blue or Heroes of the Rank and File*. North-western Branch, U.S. Sanitary Commission, Chicago. Printed by E.B. Treat and Co., New York, New York.

(b) Stoddard, R.H. 1867. The little drummer: a soldier's story, pp. 463-468. *IN Hoge, A.H. The Boys in Blue or Heroes of the Rank and File*. North-western Branch, U.S. Sanitary Commission, Chicago. Printed by E.B. Treat and Co., New York, New York.

(c) Benjamin, P. 1867. A national hymn, pp. 476-477. *IN Hoge, A.H. The Boys in Blue or Heroes of the Rank and File*. North-western Branch, U.S. Sanitary Commission, Chicago. Printed by E.B. Treat and Co., New York, New York.

(d) -----. 1867. The dying soldier, pp. 475-476. *IN Hoge, A.H. The Boys in Blue or Heroes of the Rank and File*. North-western Branch, U.S. Sanitary Commission, Chicago. Printed by E.B. Treat and Co., New York, New York.

Submitted by:
Jerome Orton, PDC
New York Department
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
March 2001