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Ode to the Service Man

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The following was written by Eddie R. Clark while serving as an aircraft mechanic and part-time aircrew member on board the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Benington in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam. They had just launched about 30 aircraft at night in operation "Rolling Thunder" which was constant bombing 24 hours a day, seven days a week for many months. After the aircraft was launched, Clark wrote the following poem. 1968. (c) E.R.C.

Ode to the Service Man

One dark and gloomy night,
On a rough and violent sea,
Every member of the ship's crew
Worked hard and efficiently.

And as the pilots man their planes
Preparing for their flight,
They say a silent prayer to God
That He'll dride with them that night.

As they fly into the darkness of the night
They pray for strength and faith,
To fly their mission and return
To the ship and all be safe.

What kind of breed are the men who fly?
The world's most dangerous craft?
They live with death from day to day,
And at death they only laugh.

This kind of man is very rare,
We thank God for them all.
To leave his home and go to war
So our country will not fall.

Let us not forget the men
Who keep the big birds flying.
For they do a job and do it well
And are not afraid of dying.

So let's give praise, honor and glory
To every service man.
Let's pray that God will spare his life
To return to his loved ones again.