



TEAM VOICE

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Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce of 1914
German and British troops celebrating Christmas together
during a temporary cessation of WWI hostilities known as the Christmas Truce.

BY NAINA BAJEKAL DECEMBER 24, 2014

On a crisp, clear morning 100 years ago, thousands of British, Belgian and French soldiers put down their rifles, stepped out of their trenches and spent Christmas mingling with their German enemies along the Western front. In the hundred years since, the event has been seen as a kind of miracle, a rare moment of peace just a few months into a war that would eventually claim over 15 million lives. But what actually happened on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of 1914 — and did they really play soccer on the battlefield?

Pope Benedict XV, who took office that September, had originally called for a Christmas truce, an idea that was officially rejected. Yet it seems the sheer misery of daily life in the cold, wet, dull trenches was enough to motivate troops to initiate the truce on their own — which means that it's hard to pin down exactly what happened. A huge range of differing oral accounts, diary entries and letters home from those who took part make it virtually impossible to speak of a “typical” Christmas truce as it took place across the Western front. To this day historians continue to disagree over the specifics: no one knows where it began or how it spread,

or if, by some curious festive magic, it broke out simultaneously across the trenches. Nevertheless, some two-thirds of troops — about 100,000 people — are believed to have participated in the legendary truce.

“First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until when we started up ‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’ the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the Latin words *Adeste Fideles*. And I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing -- two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.”

The next morning, in some places, German soldiers emerged from their trenches, calling out “Merry Christmas” in English. Allied soldiers came out warily to greet them. In others, Germans held up signs reading “You no shoot, we no shoot.” Over the course of the day, troops exchanged gifts of cigarettes, food, buttons and hats. The Christmas truce also allowed both sides to finally bury their dead comrades, whose bodies had lain for weeks on “no man’s land,” the ground between opposing trenches.

The phenomenon took different forms across the Western front. One account mentions a British soldier having his hair cut by his pre-war German barber; another talks of a pig-roast. Several mention impromptu kick-about with makeshift soccer balls, although, contrary to popular legend, it seems unlikely that there were any organized matches.

The truce was widespread but not universal. Evidence suggests that in many places firing continued — and in at least two a truce was attempted but soldiers attempting to fraternize were shot by opposing forces.

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And of course, it was only ever a truce, not peace. Hostilities returned, in some places later that day and in others not until after New Year’s Day. “I remember the silence, the eerie sound of silence,” one veteran from the Fifth Battalion the Black Watch, Alfred Anderson, later recalled to *The Observer*. “It was a short peace in a terrible war.” As the Great War resumed, it wreaked such destruction and devastation that soldiers became hardened to the brutality of the war. While there were occasional moments of peace throughout the rest of World War I, they never again came on the scale of the Christmas truce in 1914.

Yet for many at the time, the story of the Christmas truce was not an example of chivalry in the depths of war, but rather a tale of subversion: when the men on the ground decided they were not fighting the same war as their superiors. With no man’s land sometimes spanning just 100 feet, enemy troops were so close that they could hear each other and even smell their cooking. The commander of the British Second Corps, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, believed this proximity posed “the greatest danger” to the morale of soldiers and told Divisional Commanders to explicitly prohibit any “friendly intercourse with the enemy.” In a memo issued on Dec. 5, he warned that: “troops in trenches in close proximity to the enemy slide very easily, if permitted to do so, into a ‘live and let live’ theory of life.”

Indeed, one British soldier, Murdoch M. Wood, speaking in 1930, said: “I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired.” Adolf Hitler, then a Corporal of the 16th Bavarians, saw it differently: “Such a thing should not happen in wartime,” he is said to have remarked. “Have you no German sense of honor?”

Still, a century later, the truce has been remembered as a testament to the power of hope and humanity in a truly dark hour of history. It has been immortalized and fictionalized in children’s novels like Michael Foreman’s *War Game*, in films such as *Joyeux Noel* and *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and even in a controversial Christmas ad this year from Sainsbury’s, a British supermarket chain. To mark the centenary this year, Prince

William unveiled a memorial on Dec. 12: a metal frame representing a soccer ball, with two hands clasped inside it, and a week later, inspired by the events of the truce, the British and German army soccer teams played a friendly match. And though the Christmas Truce may have been a one-off in the conflict, the fact that it remains so widely commemorated speaks to the fact that at its heart it symbolizes a very human desire for peace, no matter how fleeting.

WRITE TO NAINA BAJEKAL AT NAINA.BAJEKAL@TIME.COM.

Matthew 2 New International Version (NIV)

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."



Luke 2 New International Version (NIV) The Birth of Jesus 8-14

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."



MJM OPERATING ACCOUNT – SEPTEMBER ENDING BALANCE \$
9,887.08

SEPTEMBER DEPOSITS

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| DUES (ELECTRONIC TRANSFER) | \$185.00 | |
| BANK TRANSFER FEE | (.50) | \$ 184.50 |

NO OCTOBER EXPENSES

OCTOBER ENDING BALANCE ***
\$10,071.58

***** 2,484.68 GOODIES *****
7,586.90 MJM OPERATING

MJM LIFETIME SAVINGS ACCOUNT - SEPTEMBER ENDING BALANCE
\$6,955.81

OCTOBER INTEREST \$.12

OCTOBER ENDING BALANCE
\$6,955.93

**Please let me know if you would like me to send you copies of the excel
check journals**

Thanks and I hope you have a great day!
Linda Hawkins

Years of Service

Kenny Mazac 1
Shanda Mazac 1
Tamara Minnock 1
John Sanchez 1
Ziggy Jorgensen 1
Amber Jorgensen 1
Tyler Naylor 1
Amber Carver 1
Jeremy Yarrington 1
Patricia Yarrington 1

Birthdays

Steve McMahill 12/1
Mary Lynn Yanni 12/1
Louis "Bones" Yanni 12/3
Randy C. Ream 12/4
Barbara Bainbridge 12/5
Peggy L. Forney 12/5
Gary Decker 12/8
Charles E. Moore Jr. 12/8
Eric Gilbert 12/11
Robin Stauffer 12/15
Kathleen Cobb 12/16
Tamara Minnock 12/18
Elaine Walde 12/20
Theresa Bankert 12/28
Gary Cobb 12/31

God Bless

Respectfully Submitted By:

Michael Fields

National Membership Secretary

Anniversaries

Gary and Kathleen Matson 12/7
George and Janis Partridge 12/12
Nathan Brubaker 12/14
Gary and Charlene Decker 12/18
George and Robin Tamburino 12/24
Amber Carver 12/29
Tyler Naylor 12/29

Prayer Requests

Pray for "Ken and Geri Hedden", recovering from a motorcycle accident July 27th, both have had several surgeries. Comfort and God's abundant LOVE, GRACE on the passing of their son, Ken "Scooter" Hedden Jr. and his family his wife Erica, his children, Violet and Kenneth III (Bruiser). Kenneth Allen Hedden II, 35 went home to his Lord and Savior November 4, 2019. "Scooter" was also a former member of MJM.

Ralph & Barbara Bainbridge's Grandson "Reese", healing for his hearing, and Cochlear Implants

Santo's daughter "Sally" healing

Isaiah 9 New International Version (NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,



2020 MJM National Spring Kick-Off

Save the Date:
29-31 May 2020

MJM SKO Hosted by the
Living Water Riders T.E.A.M.
Portland, MI.

POC: Billy Rose – BRUSN121@GMAIL.COM- 517-802-7454

Hotel: American Heritage Inn – 517-647-2200

MJM will be attending the 2021 Daytona Beach Bike Week; we are looking at stay in the Opus, if you are interested in attending please:

Contact Fred McClincy mjm@pagospelriders.com

<https://www.vrbo.com/search/keywords:Opus%20Condominium%2C%20Daytona%20Beach%20Shores%2C%20FL%2C%20USA/arrival:2021-03-06/departure:2021-03-13?adultsCount=6&petIncluded=false>

Also, if you purchase items from Amazon you can log into <https://smile.amazon.com/> You can select Motorcyclists for Jesus Ministries as a Charity that you want Amazon to donate too, and MJM will receive a donation from Amazon.

Positions open for MJM Members;

**MJM Historian - position is open for candidate to maintain up to date record of MJM Officers, Events, to record MJM's history for future Members, etc...

**MJM National Newsletter Editor – position is open for a candidate to produce a Monthly Newsletter to be posted on the MJM Web Site and sent out to the MJM Membership via e-mail

For additional information / requirements on each position please contact Fred McClincy at 215-234-8611, or e-mail bikerfredz@gmail.com

**MJM Goodie Director

The Goodies Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the inventory and sale of the items that are sold as official items associated with the ministry of MJM. This includes Back Patches, apparel and MJM logoed merchandise. This does not include pins or patches for the membership secretary or Bibles and Tracts for the Ministry.

The Goodies Administrator will keep the Board of Directors updated on all financial records for Board meetings and send notice to the newsletter monthly.

The Goodies are financially self-supporting. All money goes back into replenishing stock and purchasing new items for the Goodies Ministry of MJM.

Thanks,
Fred McClincy
Chairman of the MJM Board of Directors

1 Peter 4:10 NIV

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

LIST OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

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Steve McMahill

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