

HOLIDAYS SPENT AT WAR

Canadian Soldiers

Christmas was a very hard time for soldiers who served in the war. They were away from home, in a foreign country, having no choice but to spend the holidays apart from their families.

There was a great deal of boredom during the winter as there was a lack of combat. Therefore, this time

was spent as a break/rest for the soldiers. On Christmas morning of 1914, the Germans stopped shooting their guns and to their surprise, they began playing instruments and singing Christmas songs. They also chanted "Merry Christmas" in both the English and French languages. The Canadians originally thought that it was a just a ploy, but shortly after became aware that what they had thought was false. They all danced, feasted,



played games, and celebrated the joyous holiday as a whole. This was called the "Christmas Truce of 1914," that lasted for a couple of days. In 1944, the troops took whatever

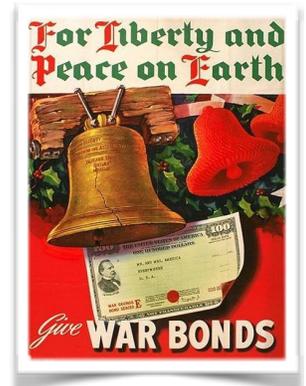


resources they could obtain and gathered together to enjoy a celebration meal. They all enjoyed themselves and appreciated what they had, even if they were eating

canned turkey rather than home-cooked turkey. They turned the rooms into a massive dining room, using anything they could find to make it work. It was not anything fancy, but that didn't bother them. Due to the fact that the holidays were very difficult for everyone, to experience Christmas without their wives and children, they attempted as hard as they could to make the festivities as comfortable as they could and to make it feel like Christmas at home. During the celebration, everyone gathered around and told stories, danced, sang, ate, and overall tried to make everyone feel at home while being so far away from it. In terms of gifts, the soldiers merely asked their families to send them whatever food that they didn't eat, clothes (preferably socks), or perhaps books to pass the spare time.

American Soldiers

For American soldiers, there were posters all around the war bases offering them to spend the holidays with a British family. Many soldiers took the invitation as it provided them with food (rations) and gave them a family environment rather than spending the holidays alone at the war base.



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