

A TRUCE BETWEEN THE TRENCHES

This story has been told in a variety of ways, but this is the researched version that appeared in newspapers nationwide on Dec. 25, 1994, from the Associated Press:

Dateline London: Eighty years ago, on the first Christmas Day of World War I, British and German troops put down their guns and celebrated peacefully together in the no-man's land between the trenches. The war, briefly, came to a halt. In some places, festivities began when German troops lit candles on Christmas trees on their parapets so the British sentries a few hundred yards away could see them. Elsewhere, the British acted first, starting bonfires and setting off rockets.

Pvt. Oswald Tilley of the London Rifle Brigade wrote to his parents, "Just you think that while you were eating your turkey, etc., I was out talking and shaking hands with the very men I had been trying to kill a few hours before! It was astounding."

Both armies had received lots of comforts from home and felt generous and well-disposed toward their enemies in the first winter of the war, before the vast battles of attrition began in 1915, eventually claiming 10 million lives. All along the line that Christmas Day, soldiers found their enemies were much like them and began asking why they should be trying to kill each other. The generals were shocked. High Command diaries and statements express anxiety that if that sort of thing spread, it could sap the troops' will to fight.



*The soldiers in khaki and gray sang carols to each other, exchanged gifts of tobacco, jam, sausage, chocolate, and liquor, traded names and addresses and played soccer between the shell holes and barbed wire. They even paid mutual trench visits. This day is called "the most famous truce in military history" by British television producer Malcolm Brown and researcher Shirley Seaton in their book *Christmas Truce*, published in 1984.*

This "most famous truce in military history" took place on Christmas Day in 1914. The most famous truce in the history of mankind took place on the first Christmas Day.

That's when God took on flesh, entering "the no-man's land between the trenches," bearing gifts. Jesus sought to bridge the gap between God and man by giving His life as a peace offering for our sins. His sacrifice makes possible for you a personal relationship with Him and eternal life in heaven.

For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! (Romans 5:10 NIV).