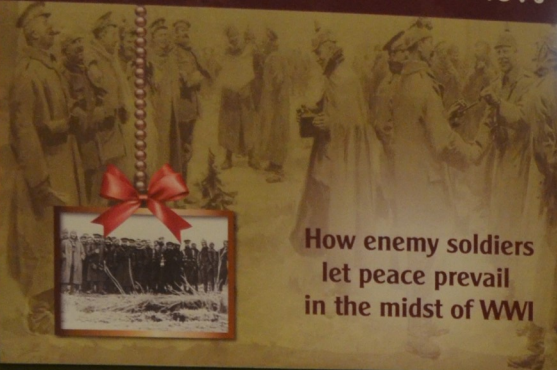


The Christmas Truce of 1914



How enemy soldiers let peace prevail in the midst of WWI

THIS

In the winter of 1914, as soldiers on opposing sides were beginning to realize the horrors of World War I, Allied and German troops came together, defying their commanding officers' orders, and celebrated familiar Christmas traditions to both sides, resulting in a remarkable unification of soldiers, and creating an unbelievable truce in the middle of war's tragedy.

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE TRIUMPH ON DECEMBER 25, 1914

Christmas eve, Allied and German soldiers on the western front began meeting in no man's land for small truces, despite some initial officers' orders to stay in their trenches. The soldiers celebrated Christmas together as friends. They exchanged wine, cigars, food, pictures, addresses, and even played football matches. Most gunfire ceased and peace **TRUMPHE**D over violence that day. The soldiers even helped bury each others' dead.

YOU NOT SHOOT WE NOT SHOOT



AFTERMATH

Fighting resumed again the next day, but some British soldiers' officers were so impressed with the truce that they ordered them to be allowed to return to the front to help with the wounded. Despite this, the stories of the truce have been passed down through the years, and have made it a symbol of peace and hope. The truce was a small respite for soldiers, allowing them to breathe for the brutality of war.

A TRUCE NOT FORGOTTEN LONG TERM IMPACT

The Christmas Truce of 1914 is a testament to the power of humanity in the face of war. It is a story of peace and hope in the midst of conflict, and a reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is always a glimmer of light. The truce has inspired many people to work for peace and understanding, and it remains a powerful symbol of the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity.

AN ASSASSINATION THAT SPARKED WWI
A NEW KIND OF WARFARE
TRUCKY WARFARE
PEACE AT WORK



15102

AN ASSASSINATION THAT SPARKED WWI



Depiction of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Christmas Truce of 1914.

On June 28, 1914, the **TRAGEDY** of WWI began after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Austria claimed Serbia responsible, leading to countries from around the world to become involved in a conflict that lasted longer than anyone had expected and that caused tremendous suffering and death.



Map of European countries involved in the war. *Walt Whitman*

With tensions already running high among Europe's powers, the assassination precipitated a rapid descent into World War I. First, Austria-Hungary gained German support for punitive action against Serbia. It then sent Serbia an ultimatum, worded in a way that made acceptance unlikely. Serbia proposed arbitration to resolve the dispute, but Austria-Hungary instead declared war on July 28, 1914, exactly a month after Ferdinand's death. By the following week, Germany, Russia, France, Belgium, Montenegro and Great Britain had all been drawn into the conflict, and other countries like the United States would enter later. Overall, more than 9 million soldiers and nearly that many civilians would die in fighting that lasted until 1918." Christmas Truce of 1914.



The arrest of Gavrilo Princip, the Bosnian Serb who assassinated Franz Ferdinand, the start of World War I.

A NEW KIND OF WARFARE TRAGEDY LIKE THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN

"They were direct from the line and their faces were white and drawn and their eyes glassy from lack of sleep. There were great husky men, crying with the pain of gaping wounds and dreadfully discolored trench feet. There were strings of from eight to twenty blind boys filing up the road, their hands on each other's shoulders and their leader some bedraggled, bandaged, limping youngster." Sister Helen Dore, a nurse. *Good Hope*

WWI saw some of the most brutal warfare yet. Machine guns, long range artillery, and new types of rifles were used on the battlefield. Gas warfare was first seen. This weapon could burn skin, blind, and choke opponents.



Soldiers using gas masks on the battlefield. *Walt Whitman*

"The horrible part of it is the slow lingering death of those who are gassed. I saw some hundred poor fellows laid out in the open slowly drowning with water in their lungs" General Charteris. *Walt Whitman*

TRENCH WARFARE

Conditions in the trenches were horrific. Soldiers were exposed to lice, rats, flooding, freezing temperatures, human waste, disease, and corpses of the dead.

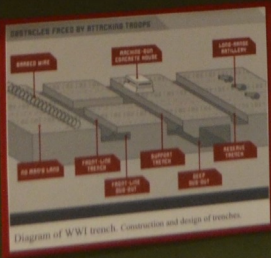
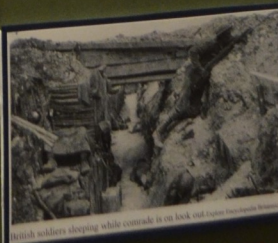


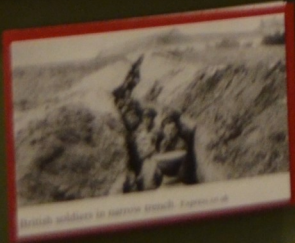
Diagram of WWI trench. Construction and design of trenches.



British soldiers sleeping while cowhide is on back and water from nearby trenches.

"A penetrating and filthy stench, a combination of mildew, rotting vegetation and the stink which rises from the decomposing bodies of men and animals. This smell seems a permanent feature of the firing line" British soldier. *Edith Johns*

"The trenches are no more than cess-pools filled with a mixture of water and urine. The trench is nothing more than a strip of water. The sodas cave in behind you, as you pass, with a soft sither. We ourselves are transformed into statues of clay, with mud even in one's very mouth." French soldier. *Edith Johns*



British soldiers in trench. *Walt Whitman*

"The banks on each side were full of buried and half-buried corpses and the stench was appalling. You put out a hand to steady yourself, the earth gave way and you found that you were clutching the blackened face of a half-buried German." British soldier. *Edith Johns*

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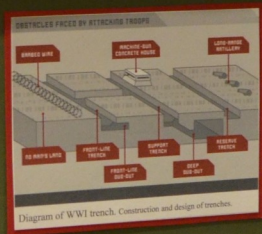


Soldiers using gas masks on the battlefield. Express.co.uk

"The horrible part of it is the slow lingering death of those who are gassed. I saw some hundred poor fellows laid out in the open slowly drowning with water in their lungs" General Charteris. Vincent H.P.

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Conditions in the trenches were horrific. Soldiers were exposed to lice, rats, flooding, freezing temperatures, human waste, disease, and corpses of the dead.



British soldiers sleeping, white controls in no-look-out. Express.co.uk



British soldiers in narrow trench. Express.co.uk

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PEACE AT WORK EVENTS LEADING UP TO CHRISTMAS DAY



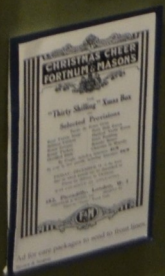
According to a November 1914 in the trenches. Express.co.uk

Soldiers thought the war would be over by Christmas, but it dragged on. The Allied and German forces tried to improve the spirits of their soldiers with the upcoming holiday. Families could send parcels to their loved ones on the front lines. Germany sent Christmas trees to their troops. Despite this, soldiers were becoming frustrated.



British soldier with a telescope. Express.co.uk

"In early December an attempt was made to secure an official truce for the holidays. Pope Benedict XV had ascended to the papacy just a month after the outbreak of war, and on December 7 he issued an appeal to the leaders of Europe, that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang. Benedict's hope was that a truce would allow the warring powers to negotiate a fair and lasting peace, but there was little interest from leaders on either side." Christmas Truce of 1914.

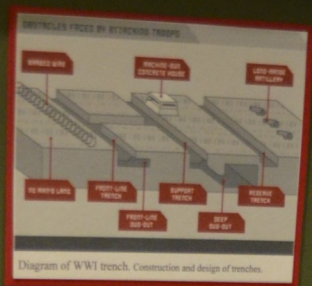


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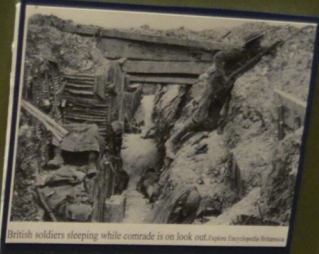
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British soldiers in narrow trench. *Imperial War Museum*



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British soldiers sleeping while comrade is on look out. *Imperial War Museum*

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German soldiers during Christmas time in the trench. *Imperial War Museum*

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German soldier with Christmas tree. *Imperial War Museum*

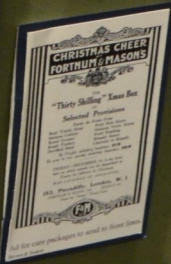


Soldier in trench with parcels for his comrades. *Imperial War Museum*



Soldiers exchanging parcels for Christmas. *Imperial War Museum*

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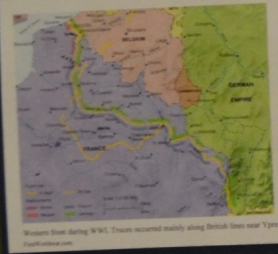
We had an interesting afternoon in our trenches. For the first time in the last year we had a Christmas Truce. *Imperial War Museum*



THESIS

In the winter of 1914, as soldiers on opposing sides were beginning to realize the horrors of World War I, Allied and German troops came together, defying their commanding officers orders, and celebrated familiar Christmas traditions to both sides, resulting in a remarkable unification of soldiers, and creating an unbelievable truce in the middle of wartime tragedy.

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE TRIUMPH ON DECEMBER 25, 1914



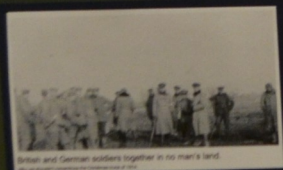
Western Front during WWI. Troops remained stably along British lines near Ypres. www.history.com

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British and German soldiers posing for a photo during the Christmas truce. Imperial War Museum

"We heard a German singing Holy Night of course in German, naturally. Then after he'd finished singing there were all sorts of Christmas greetings being shouted across no man's land at us. These Germans shouted out, 'What about you singing Holy Night?' Well we had a go but of course we weren't very good at that. Anyway they said, 'Meet us and come over in no man's land.' Well after a time we were allowed - a limited number of us - our officers allowed a limited number of us to go into no man's land."
- Colin Wilson from Grenadier Guards, Imperial War Museum



British and German soldiers together in no man's land. www.imperialwar.com

"The silence seemed extraordinary after the usual din. From all sides birds seemed to arrive, and we hardly ever see a bird generally. Later in the day I felt about the sparrows outside my dugout, which shows you how complete the silence and quiet was."
- British soldier, diary entry

"YOU NOT SHOOT, WE NOT SHOOT"



German and British soldiers pose together in no man's land. The Real Story of The Christmas Truce

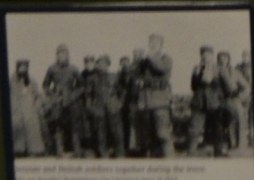
"Just about the time when Christmas eve was merging into Christmas morn, the sound of voices singing was heard, apparently coming from the Germans trenches opposite, some 400 yards away." Private P K King, National WW Museum and Memorial



March of weary soldiers talking with each other. www.history.com

"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!"
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"I got one of them to write his name and address on a postcard as a souvenir."
- Herman C.H. Brauer, diary entry



British and German soldiers together during the truce. www.imperialwar.com



British and German soldiers using the truce to bury the dead in no man's land. www.imperialwar.com

"It's been the strangest Christmas I ever had. Last night about 8, the guns went quiet. That's when we heard the singing. At first, it was just one voice singing in German. We didn't understand the words, but we all knew the tune. It was Silent Night. They had the same carol as us. Next voices singing it all down the line. More Germans joined in. And we was all singing it together. Then with their words and us with ours. And the next thing I knew, there were hundreds climbing out of the trenches." British soldier.
- Richard Harte, November 1914, Christmas Truce 1914

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- Lance Corporal J.S. Gaskell, National WW Museum and Memorial

"I allowed to our enemies that we didn't wish to shoot and that we make a Christmas truce. I said I would come from my side and we could speak with each other. First there was silence, then I shouted once more, invited them, and the British shouted, 'No shooting!' Then a man came out of the trenches and I on my side did the same and so we came together and we shook hands - a bit awkwardly." Captain Josef Bowler of Germany's 17th Bavarian Regiment, memoirs 1914

"I remember very well Christmas. I remember the Christmas Day when the German and the French soldiers left their trenches, went to the barbed wire between them with champagne and cigarettes in their hands and had feelings of affection and showed they wanted to be friends."
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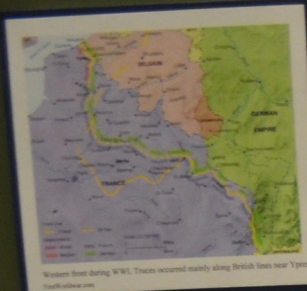


"We know this of daily sent over to them in the form of letters and the British flag hand."



THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

TRIUMPH ON DECEMBER 25, 1914



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Riflesman C.H. Brazier. Great War.

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British soldier. School Radio - Assemblies KS2 - Christmas Truce 1914.



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Lance Corporal J.S. Calder. National WWI Museum and Memorial.

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Mr. Haskner German's artillery. Imperial War Museum.



"We threw bits of bully beef over to them or jam or biscuits and they threw things back. It wasn't done regularly, just an occasional sort of thing."

Albert Moran, British soldier. Murray Jim.

"On Christmas Eve we were surprised to see Christmas trees slight on the tops of the enemy's trenches!"

Private Farverton, Rifle Brigade. National WWI Museum and Memorial.



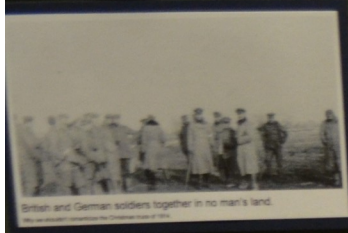
"There was no firing, so by degrees each side began gradually showing faces of themselves, and two of their men came halfway and called for an officer."

Wilbert Spencer British Soldier. Murray Jim.

"We had an inter-trench game of football in the afternoon. A cap (numbered) was used for the ball, made in the enemy's environment."

Unknown British Officer. Imperial War Museum.

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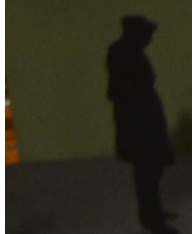
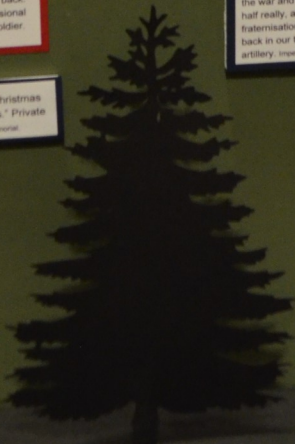


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"There was no firing, so by degrees each side began gradually showing more of themselves, and two of their men came halfway and called for an officer."

"We had an inter-platoon game of football in the afternoon; a cap (handkerchief) stuffed with straw did for the ball, much to the Spanier's amusement."



AFTERMATH



Fighting began again the next day, but some truces lasted longer. Officers were worried word of the truces would cause soldiers to lose the drive to fight, or they might suffer punishment for allowing the truces to occur. Despite this, the stories of truces made it back to home countries and provided inspiration and hope. The truces were a brief miracle for soldiers, allowing a break from the brutality of war.

"Nevertheless, some two-thirds of troops — about 100,000 people — are believed to have participated in the legendary truce." World War I Christmas Truce of 1914. What Really Happened.

"I issued immediate orders to prevent any recurrence of such conduct." Sir John French, Freedman, Russell.

"Such things should not happen in wartime. Have you Germans no sense of honour left at all?" Corporal Adolf Hitler of the 16th Bavarians. Weintraub, Stanley.

"The truth was that something deeper was at work on the men. The more friendly contact they had with the enemy, the less anger they felt toward them." Murphy, Jim.

"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.'" World War I Christmas Truce of 1914. What Really Happened.

"I remember very well Christmas. I remember the Christmas Day when the German and the French soldiers left their trenches, went to the barbed wire between them with champagne and cigarettes in their hands, and had feelings of fraternisation and shouted they wanted to finish the war and that lasted only two days, one and a half really, and then strict order came that no fraternisation was allowed and we had to stay back in our trenches." German Artillery Officer Mr. Rickner. Imperial War Museum.

"Truly there is no longer any sense in this business." German captain Rudolf Binding. Murphy, Jim.

"At 6 p.m. we were again in our quarter at the old farm, and were snoring in peace up till 11:30 when all of the sudden we heard the sound of our artillery very near us, and they were spitting away at the Germans for all they were worth." Lance Corporal Henderson. National WWI Museum and Memorial.

"Despite hate propaganda spewing from headquarters on both sides, a fearsome diet of daily casualties from artillery, machine guns and small-arms fire, and trench life in disgusting filth and sludge, the ordinary soldier had no strong desire to kill or maim the enemy—who on the end of the rifle was his unanticipated counterpart—a farmer, factory worker, barber, cabbie, milkman, salesman." Weintraub, Stanley.

Christmas Day
I am writing this in the trenches in my dugout with a wood fire going and plenty of hot food. It is really very strange that in England we are celebrating Christmas - see the -
I think I had been one of the most celebrated people here that morning. I was preparing over the trenches when I saw a German soldier coming towards me, and I was told to go to the trench where they had no rifles so one of our men went out to meet them and in about two minutes the front between the two lines of trenches was opening up and men and officers of both sides were talking and smoking and other things. I think I should like to have seen most of the men who were in the trenches.

Yesterday and we had another party with the Germans in the middle we exchanged cigarettes and autographs and some were people took photos. I don't know how long it will go on for - I believe it won't suppose being yesterday but we can hear no firing going along the front today except a little distant shelling. We are at very high barbed wire trenches. But on Christmas Day the Germans would have been the first to come out! Yesterday was lovely in the morning and I went for a short walk but I don't think about the time. It is difficult to remember what that means but of course in the ordinary way there is not a sign of life about ground and everyone else just has heard of it that is all.

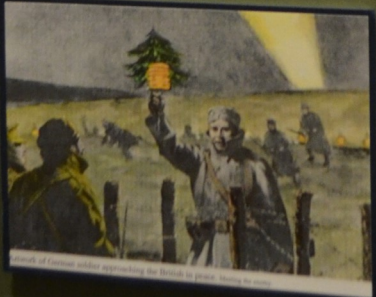
Parts of a letter from an allied soldier describing what he experienced during the Christmas truce. Letter Describing the Christmas Truce of 1914 Released for the First Time.



British and German soldiers together in a trench during the Christmas truce of 1914.



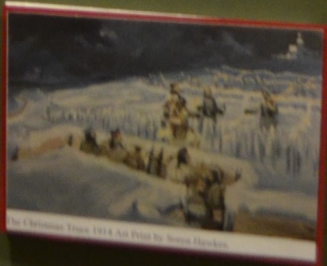
British soldiers in a trench during the Christmas truce of 1914.



Portrait of German soldier approaching the British in peace. Being no soldier.



Artist depiction of Christmas Truce. Martin Luther King Peace Commission.



The Christmas Truce 1914. Art Piece by Steve Harkins.

A TRUCE NOT FORGOTTEN LONG TERM IMPACT

"These days I often see an Irish man who just doesn't like the same food we do, or like a different language from a different religion." Earl Owen Crocker. Imperial War Museum.

The Christmas truce is a TRIUMPH over the TRAGEDY of war. It is a TRIUMPH of humans' desire for peace. It is a TRIUMPH of seeing the "enemy" as similar to yourself, with similar values and needs. It is a TRIUMPH of the Christmas message of goodwill toward...

"I think about how wonderful it was that the men going to fight for their country is right, and I mean I have to think that the other side was..."

A TRUCE NOT FORGOTTEN LONG TERM IMPACT

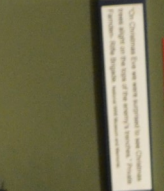
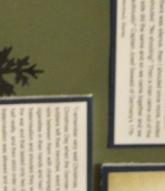
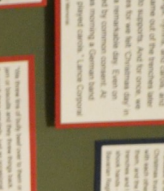
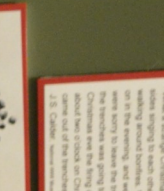
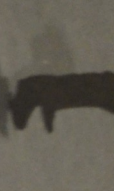
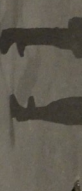
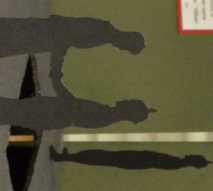
The Christmas truce is a TRU MPH over the TRAGEDY of war. It is a TRU MPH of humans' desire for peace. It is a TRU MPH of seeing the "enemy" as similar to yourself, with similar values and needs. It is a TRU MPH of the Christmas message, goodwill toward all people. The truce is honored still today, and is an important part of history for it's promise that humanity can still TRU MPH despite the darkest of times.

There are about 100,000 World War I veterans still alive today. Many of them are over 100 years old. They have seen the most horrific battles of the war. Some of them are still in poor health. They have seen the most horrific battles of the war. Some of them are still in poor health.



December 26, 1914 (Living Day) - Many British soldiers' families. The Christmas and an armistice were announced. The British and German soldiers were ordered to stop fighting. They were told they had to try to get through the war and go home. The British soldiers were ordered to stop fighting.

The truce was a moment of peace during the Christmas season. It was a moment of peace during the Christmas season. It was a moment of peace during the Christmas season.



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