



Collin County Republican Review December 2007

**December Meeting:
Thursday, December 20, 2007**

6:30 PM Social; 7:00 PM Meeting

Location: New Republican HQs (Directions below)

Salute to Collin County Republican Women's Clubs

We have all heard the cliché, behind every successful man is an outstanding woman. I know we can say "Behind the Collin County Republican Party is an array of outstanding and devoted women". In fact we have seven Republican Women's Clubs which continually provide support and leadership to the Republican Party. These seven clubs are:

Ann Armstrong Republican Women
Allen Area Republican Women
Conner Harrington Republican Women
Golden Corridor Republican Women
McKinney Republican Women
North Collin County Republican Women
Plano Republican Women

At our December 20 meeting we wish to acknowledge these clubs who will share their histories and present day strategies. It should be an informative evening.

The second part of our program will be inspirational holiday music medleys performed by Juliette Rutledge, Principal Harpist for the Plano Symphony Orchestra. Juliette is a recognized artist who has performed in venues at the Myerson, Carnegie Hall and at the White House for President George H. W. Bush. Come and hear the traditional music to set the theme for this Christmas Season..

The final part of the program will be the Installation of Officers 2008 officiated by Judge Charles Sandoval which is promised to be brief.

Directions to 8416 Stacy Road, McKinney

From SH 121 -- go north on CUSTER RD to the second stop light -- Custer & Stacy Rd (aka FM720). There's a CVS Pharmacy on the SE corner of Custer & Stacy/FM720. Turn east (right) onto STACY RD (aka FM720). The shopping center where the office is located is approx. 1/2 mile on the left. (You will pass the ASPCA on the right then cross a bridge. The shopping center immediately following is on the left. It's comprised of 5 buildings. The HQ office is in the building on the left closest to Stacy Rd). You may also get there from Alma Road too by going N from 121 and zigzagging around the ball fields to Stacy.

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Membership Join Now For 2008

Annual dues paid after October 1 will pay the remainder of 2007 and all of 2008.

The CCRMC has two levels of new membership. Renewals are \$25 for members and \$10 for an associate spouse. New membership is \$30 and \$15

Business card ads are available for the entire year for \$35 including one free advertorial.

Send to: **CCRMC, P.O. Box 868014, Plano, TX 75086-8014**



A Message From Newsletter



**VP Newsletter
Jim Bortzfield**

Peace On Earth Christmas Celebrated

I found a heartwarming piece of history that helps give hope that the citizens of the world might one day end senseless wars. I hope you enjoy this Christmas story.

After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, the world was plunged into war. Germany, realizing they were likely to face a two-front war, attempted to defeat the western foes before the Russians were able to mobilize their forces in the East.

Though the Germans had made a strong offensive into France, French, Belgian, and British forces were able to halt them. However, since they were not able to push the Germans out of France, there was a stalemate and both sides dug into the earth creating a large network of trenches.

Once the trenches were built, winter rains tried to obliterate them. The rains not only flooded the dug-outs, they turned the trenches into mud holes - a terrible enemy in and of itself.

The trenches of both sides were only a few hundred feet apart, buffered by a relatively flat area known as "No Man's Land." The stalemate had halted all but a scattered number of small attacks; thus, soldiers on each side spent a large amount of time dealing with the mud, keeping their heads down in order to avoid sniper fire, and watching carefully for any surprise enemy raids on their trench.

Restless in their trenches, covered in mud, and eating the same rations every day, some soldiers began to wonder about the un-seen enemy, men declared monsters by propagandists.

The uncomfortableness of living in trenches coupled with the closeness of the enemy who lived in similar conditions contributed to a growing "live and let live" policy. Andrew Todd, a telegraphist of the Royal Engineers, wrote of an example in a letter:

"Perhaps it will surprise you to learn that the soldiers in both lines of trenches have become very 'pally' with each other. The trenches are only 60 yards apart at one place, and every morning about breakfast time one of the soldiers sticks a board in the air. As soon as this board goes up all firing ceases, and men from either side draw their water and rations. All through the breakfast hour, and so long as this board is up, silence reigns supreme, but whenever the board comes down the first unlucky devil who shows even so much as a hand gets a bullet through it."

Sometimes the two enemies would yell at each other. Some of the German soldiers had worked in Britain before the war and asked about a store or area in

England that an English soldier also knew well. Sometimes they would shout rude remarks to each other as a way of entertainment. Singing was also a common way of communication.

During the winter it was not unusual for little groups of men to gather in the front trench, and there hold impromptu concerts, singing patriotic and sentimental songs. The Germans did much the same, and on calm evenings the songs from one line floated to the trenches on the other side, and were there received with applause and sometimes calls for an encore.

After hearing of such fraternization, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commander of the British II Corps, ordered:

"The Corps Commander, therefore, directs Divisional Commanders to impress on all subordinate commanders the absolute necessity of encouraging the offensive spirit of the troops, while on the defensive, by every means in their power.

Friendly intercourse with the enemy, unofficial armistices (e.g. 'we won't fire if you don't' etc.) and the exchange of tobacco and other comforts, however tempting and occasionally amusing they may be, are absolutely prohibited."

Christmas at the Front

On December 7, 1914, Pope Benedict XV suggested a temporary hiatus of the war for the celebration of Christmas. Though Germany readily agreed, the other powers refused.

Even without a cessation of war for Christmas, family and friends of the soldiers wanted to make their loved ones' Christmas special. They sent packages filled with letters, warm clothing, food, cigarettes, and medications. Yet what especially made Christmas at the front seem like Christmas were the troves of small Christmas trees.

On Christmas Eve, many German soldiers put up their Christmas trees, decorated with candles, on the parapets of their trenches. Hundreds of Christmas trees lighted the German trenches. The British soldiers could see the lights but it took them a few minutes to figure out what they were from. British lookouts reported the anomalies to their superiors. Could this be a trick? British soldiers were ordered not to fire but to watch them closely. Instead of trickery, the British soldiers heard many of the Germans celebrating.

"Time and again during the course of that day, the Eve of Christmas, there were wafted towards us from the trenches opposite the sounds of singing and merry-making, and occasionally the guttural tones of a German were to be heard shouting out lustily, 'A happy Christmas to you Englishmen!' Only too glad to show that the sentiments were reciprocated, back would go the response from a thick-set Clydesider, 'Same to you, Fritz, but dinna o'er eat yourself wi' they sausages!'"

In other areas, the two sides exchanged Christmas carols.

The Germans finished their carol and the British sang 'The first Noël', and when finished, the Germans all began clapping. The Germans struck up another favorite of theirs, 'O Tannenbaum'. And so it went on. First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then the Brits would sing one, until when the Brits started up 'O Come All Ye Faithful' the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the Latin words 'Adeste Fideles'. A most extraordinary thing - two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.

The Christmas Truce

This fraternization on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas was in no way officially sanctified nor organized. Yet, in numerous separate instances down the front line, German soldiers began yelling over to their enemy, "Tommy, you come over and see us!"⁸ Still cautious, the British soldiers would rally back, "No, you come here!"

In some parts of the line, representatives of each side would meet in the middle, in No Man's Land.

As written later by a British soldier, "We shook hands, wished each other a Merry Xmas, and were soon conversing as if we had known each other for years. We were in front of their wire entanglements and surrounded by Germans - Fritz and I in the centre talking, and Fritz occasionally translating to his friends what I was saying. We stood inside the circle like street corner orators."

"Soon most of our company ('A' Company), hearing that I and some others had gone out, followed us . . . What a sight - little groups of Germans and British extending almost the length of our front! Out of the darkness we could hear laughter and see lighted matches, a German lighting a Scotchman's cigarette and vice versa, exchanging cigarettes and souvenirs. Where they couldn't talk the language they were making themselves understood by signs, and everyone seemed to be getting on nicely. Here we were laughing and chatting to men whom only a few hours before we were trying to kill!"

"Some of those who went out to meet the enemy in the middle of No Man's Land on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day negotiated a truce: we won't fire if you won't fire. Some ended the truce at midnight on Christmas night, some extended it until New Year's Day."

One of the main reasons Christmas truces were negotiated was in order to bury the dead. Though some had died recently, there were corpses out in No Man's Land that had been there for several months. Along with the revelry that celebrated Christmas was the sad and somber job of burying their fallen comrades. On Christmas day, British and German soldiers appeared on No Man's Land and sorted through the bodies. In just a few rare instances, joint services were held for both the British and German dead.

Yet many soldiers enjoyed meeting the un-seen enemy and were surprised to discover that they were more alike than he had thought. They talked, shared pictures, exchanged items such as buttons for food stuffs. An extreme example of the fraternization was a soccer game played in the middle of No Man's Land between the Bedfordshire Regiment and the Germans. A member of the Bedfordshire Regiment produced a ball and the large group of soldiers played until the ball was deflated when it hit a barbed wire entanglement.

This strange and unofficial truce lasted for several days, much to the dismay of the commanding officers. This amazing showing of Christmas cheer was never again repeated and as World War I progressed, the story of Christmas 1914 at the front became something of a legend.

This experience has been the most practical demonstration of "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men."

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