

The Christmas Truce

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Warm Up

- ★ Name one festival which you like the most.
- ★ How do you celebrate that festival?
- ★ Narrate a memorable incident which happened during that celebration.

This piece, set during World War I, highlights the beauty of unlikely friendships and fellowship. It is a British soldier's letter to his sister on how all enmity was forgotten as British and German soldiers celebrated Christmas together.

Christmas Day, 1914

My dear sister Janet,

It is 2:00 in the morning and most of our men are asleep in their **dugouts** – yet I could not sleep before writing to you about what happened here on Christmas Eve. In truth, what happened seems almost like a fairy tale, and if I had not been through it myself, I would scarce believe it. While you and the family sang **carols** before the fire there in London, I did the same with enemy soldiers here on the battlefields of France!

As I wrote before, there has been little serious fighting of late. The first battles of the war left so many dead that both sides have held back until replacements could come from home. So, we have mostly stayed in our **trenches** and waited.

But what a terrible waiting it has been! Knowing that any moment an artillery shell might land and explode beside us in the trench, killing or **maiming** several men. And in daylight not daring to lift our heads above ground, for fear of a sniper's bullet.

And the rain – it has fallen almost daily. Of course, it collects right in our trenches, where we must bail it out with pots and pans. And with the rain has come mud – a good foot or deeper. It **splatters** and cakes everything, and constantly sucks at our boots. One new recruit got his feet stuck in it, and then his hands too when he tried to get out.