

How To Spread Christmas Cheer During Wartime

Soon we will mark the 68th anniversary of December 7, 1941 — the day the nation of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and brought the United States into war with Japan and the wider conflict of World War II. As the nation reminisces on those events we *must* not forget the soldiers, sailors, and airmen who are sacrificing for this great country of ours. Soon it will be Christmas — not a holiday, but a holy day.

We also must not forget the events of September 11, 2001, another day of infamy for the United States that most of us should remember. We are a nation at war. Some children will not celebrate Christmas with their father; some children will not celebrate Christmas with their mother. Many fathers and mothers, sons, and daughters will be on the front line protecting another country struggling from the effects of an evil tyrant. More and more we are hearing encouraging words of progress. As for a free and democratic Iraq, time will tell if the sacrifices that were endured made a difference. At present, and all around us what we are seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan is humanity at its best — feeding and helping the needy children and distributing toys to young children. It is not easy to explain why God permits evil but in it all we see a lot of good being done to the neediest of the needy in the Middle East. The United Service Organization (USO) and Gary Sinise's Operation Iraqi Children are two examples of humanity and hope at its best.

So, how can we help a soldier this Christmas? How can we employ our talents and say: "Thank You" for a job well done?

Don't forget the soldiers. The best way to help a soldier, sailor, or airmen is to support your local [United Service Organization](#) (USO).

Helping Children Cope With Parents Overseas

For children, the producers of Sesame Street have produced free videos to help children cope with a parent who has been called to go overseas. Sesame Workshop has videos, pamphlets, and learning materials on the topic of deployment. Their video on "deployment" is a good one to watch. You can either play or download the video. These videos and pamphlets can also be ordered and delivered through the mail.

Care packages are always welcomed by soldiers. Sometimes I have received a letter or e-mail from a soldier in Iraq for special items. If I could not meet the need immediately, my local [American Legion](#) Council in my neighborhood has a board for just that purpose.

As we move into the New Year, let us pray that all our young men and women come home safely. Sharing the Christmas joy is what this article is about. A simple note of thanks can mean so much to a soldier. So let's not forget them, their sacrifice, their commitment, and patriotism this Christmas season. If we do our part we can be assured that our soldiers will do theirs. May God bless them and may God bless America!

by John F. Kennedy (c) 2008
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