

# [PDF] Silent Night: The Story Of The World War I Christmas Truce

Stanley Weintraub - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

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Author: Stanley Weintraub  
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**Description:**

History is peppered with oddments and ironies, and one of the strangest is this. A few days before the first Christmas of that long bloodletting then called the Great War, hundreds of thousands of cold, trench-bound combatants put aside their arms and, in defiance of their orders, tacitly agreed to stop the killing in honor of the holiday.

That informal truce began with small acts: here opposing Scottish and German troops would toss

newspapers, ration tins, and friendly remarks across the lines; there ambulance parties, clearing the dead from the barbed wire hell of no man's land, would stop to share cigarettes and handshakes. Soon it spread, so that by Christmas Eve the armies of France, England, and Germany were serenading each other with Christmas carols and sentimental ballads and denouncing the conflict with cries of "*À bas la guerre!*" and "*Nie wieder Krieg!*" The truce was, writes Stanley Weintraub, a remarkable episode, and, though "dismissed in official histories as an aberration of no consequence," it was so compelling that many who observed it wrote in near-disbelief to their families and hometown newspapers to report the extraordinary event.

In the end, writes Weintraub, the truce ended with a few stray bullets that escalated into total war, and that would fill the air for just shy of four more Christmases to come; further, isolated attempts at informal peacemaking would fail. But what, Weintraub wonders at the close of this inspired study, would have happened if the soldiers on both sides had refused to take up arms again? His counterfactual scenarios are intriguing, and well worth pondering. -- *Gregory McNamee* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From Publishers Weekly** Popular historian Weintraub (MacArthur's War, etc.), emeritus professor of arts and humanities at Penn State, tackles a sober subject from WWI, when amid the millions of casualties in the obscene carnage of trench war, a mutual agreement arose for a cease-fire at Christmastime of the first year of conflict. Drawing from secondary sources as well as much archival research in a variety of languages, Weintraub has compiled a brief, anecdotal account that reveals his skill as a researcher and deftness as a narrator in chapters like "An Outbreak of Peace," "Our Friends, the Enemy" and "How It Ended." There are lively anecdotes, contemporary doggerel and some extraneous asides such as that "a Chinese fourth century B.C. military text mentions a primitive form of football." While succinctly conveying the mood and stakes of this unprecedented display of mutual trust during war, Weintraub's short book could help draw Malcolm Brown and Shirley Seaton's magisterial Christmas Truce back into print. In the meantime, and just in time for the holidays, we have this offering from one of our most patient chroniclers.  
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