

**Hope Everyone Had A Great Holiday**

By: Skypilot

Well here it is December 7 and the holidays are upon us, of course by the time you read this the holidays will be gone. From Santa and Mrs. Claus we hope everyone had a great time and I didn't have to leave COAL at to many reader's home. We must remember this day always because it was the start of World War Two with Japan. There was a lot of good men and women and children lost on this day 66 years ago. My father was a young seamen that reported for duty just days before the attack, he was one of the lucky survivors.



Me and Mrs. Claus are playing it smart and heading for Jamaica on the 12th of this month. That way during the off season we get a lot more perks for less bucks. I can't wait to get away from this Pennsylvania winter. We had are first snow three days ago, then ice now the freezing temps.

Those of you lucky enough to be riding this time of year, I pray the Great Spirit ride by your side.

This month hit our state hard we lost two Brothers and a retired Brother from the big C (cancer), which by the way in November when Preacher ask you all to pray for me I beat thyroid cancer, it was a little shaky there for awhile. Half my family died of cancer the other half heart attacks. I thank those of you who said a pray for me, I'm not a church going every Sunday person, but all I've been through in fifty seven years, I'll be the first to say there is a Great Spirit and if you want he will look after you.

I hope I get my article out for February before I leave, but if I don't I'm sorry ahead of time, but I'll do my darn est to get it out, because you the readers deserve the articles. As for myself (and I'm sure Preacher) appreciate you picking up the paper and reading it.

Still fighting the Veterans Hospital over surgery, I told them when it come to Veterans needing surgery the deciding factor should be from a board made up of Veterans from all Wars/Conflicts. Makes since to me. I've even seen them screw over former POW and one who received the Congressional Medal Of Honor.

Well until next month please be careful, may the Great Spirit be with in your homes. Please say a pray for our Troops deployed throughout the world and those who are still missing, our POW~MIA and their families who wait and hope for their return to American Soil. " Keep On Triken' ". Thank you.

Skypilot

**THE SANDS OF CHRISTMAS**

I had no Christmas spirit when I breathed a weary sigh,  
and looked across the table where the bills were piled too high.  
The laundry wasn't finished and the car I had to fix,  
My stocks were down another point, the Dolphins lost by six.

And so with only minutes till my son got home from school  
I gave up on the drudgery and grabbed a wooden stool.  
The burdens that I carried were about all I could take,  
and so I flipped the TV on to catch a little break.

I came upon a desert scene in shades of tan and rust,  
No snowflakes hung upon the wind, just clouds of swirling dust.  
And where the reindeer should have stood before a laden sleigh,  
eight hummers ran a column right behind an M1A.

A group of boys walked past the tank, not one was past his teens,  
Their eyes were hard as polished flint, their faces drawn and lean.

They walked the street in armor with their rifles shouldered tight,  
their dearest wish for Christmas, just to have a silent night.

Other soldiers gathered, hunkered down against the wind,  
To share a scrap of mail and dreams of going home again.  
There wasn't much at all to put their lonely hearts at ease,  
They had no Christmas turkey, just a pack of MREs.

They didn't have a garland or a stocking I could see,  
They didn't need an ornament-- they lacked a Christmas Tree.  
They didn't have a present even though it was tradition,  
the only boxes I could see were labeled "ammunition."

I felt a little tug and found my son now by my side,  
He asked me what it was I feared, and why it was I cried.  
I swept him up into my arms and held him oh so near  
and kissed him on the forehead as I whispered in his ear.

There's nothing wrong my little son, for safe we sleep tonight,  
our heroes stand on foreign land to give us all the right,  
to worry on the things in life that mean nothing at all,  
instead of wondering if we will be the next to fall.

He looked at me as children do and said its always right,  
to thank the ones who help us and perhaps that we should write.

And so we pushed aside the bills and sat to draft a note,  
to thank the many far from home, and this is what we wrote:  
God Bless You all and keep you safe, and speed your way  
back home.

Remember that we love you so, and that you're not alone.  
The gift you give you share with all, a present every day,  
You give the gift of liberty and that we can't repay.

"...this is an open and grateful tribute to the men and  
women who serve every day to keep our nation safe."

Written by Michael Marks

December 2003

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