

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 781

Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the World War I Christmas Truce
of 1914.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 11, 2014

Mr. CROWLEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the World War
I Christmas Truce of 1914.

Whereas by December 1914, World War I had left about 90 percent of the highly trained members of the British Expeditionary Force in France with casualties, and about 30 percent dead;

Whereas the cries and moans of the injured and dying in no man's land could be heard throughout the Western Front, and many of the dead had been lying unburied;

Whereas, on December 7, 1914, Pope Benedict XV suggested a temporary hiatus of the war for the celebration of Christmas;

Whereas despite this proposal, the warring countries refused to create any official cease-fire;

Whereas, on Christmas Eve, which under German tradition has more celebrations than the day itself, German soldiers began to sing carols and place lantern-lit Christmas trees above their trenches;

Whereas much of December had been wet, but on this night the temperature dropped and a sharp frost settled over the landscape, making both trench conditions more bearable and the air clear and still;

Whereas Rifleman C H Brazier, Queen's Westminsters of Bishop's Stortford, claimed in his letters that the German soldiers said they would not shoot on Christmas Day if his fellows did not;

Whereas another letter from Private Cunningham, of the 5th Scottish Rifles, to his friend Mr. James D Gray, in Carluke, Scotland, also reveals in more detail how such truces came about: "On Christmas Eve the firing practically ceased. . . .";

Whereas, on Christmas Day, the soldiers of opposing forces emerged from their trenches and declared their own unofficial truce, and shook hands with their enemies;

Whereas according to many letters, a good-spirited, impromptu football match between German and Allied soldiers took place in no man's land on this day and is commemorated annually by English football teams;

Whereas in recognition of the 100th anniversary this year, special Christmas Truce candles will be lit around the world, including by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Cape Town, South Africa, and Pelé in Santos, Brazil;

Whereas worldwide celebrations are expected to take place, including the unveiling of a sculpture by Andy Edwards

in Liverpool capturing the 1914 Christmas Day football match; and

Whereas the lessons of this event are that the light of human empathy can dispel the darkness of despair, the possibility for future peace can still exist when at war with other nations, and that behind the clashing of weapons and trenches of indifference humanity essentially endures: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives —

2 (1) honors the 100th Anniversary of the World
3 War I Christmas Truce of 1914;

4 (2) recognizes the Christmas Truce’s symbol of
5 the triumph of the human spirit over adversity; and

6 (3) commemorates the World War I Christmas
7 Truce of 1914 and its legacy as a message of future
8 peace and unity between all nations.

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