

SERVING AT CHRISTMAS



*The Minute Man stood guard at his lonely post,
His trusty musket by his side.
There would be no holiday at home this year;
No time to spend with his loving bride.
The Redcoats were rapidly closing in,
Rifle shots could be heard not far away.
The troops were hungry, tired and clothed in rags,
But they knew that victory would be theirs... someday.
Valley Forge (December, 1777)*



*The battle had stalled, he had time to rest,
The Autumn sun peeking through the quiet haze.
There was talk of peace, but the Doughboy knew,
He would not be home for the Holidays.*

*He longed to leave his muddy trench,
But gas fumes lingered in the morning air.
He had barely survived that last attack,
When Christmas came, would he still be there?
France (October, 1918)*

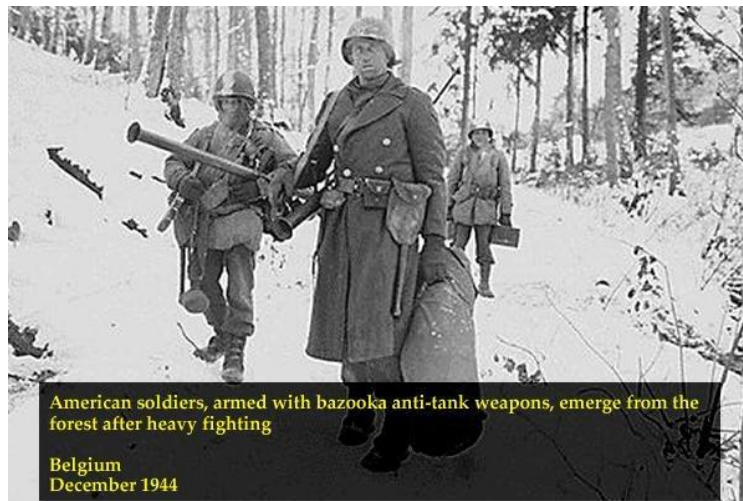
Photo # NH 72273-KN Poster by Allen Sandburg, 1942



*It was a quiet Sunday on that peaceful Isle.
As Diplomats talked in Washington, far away.
Not warned, not prepared, for a sneak attack,
The faithful soon would go to church, to pray.
But the calm was shattered by the blast of bombs,
And thousands died on land or in ships that day,
Christmas would be sad and somber for years to come,
As war reared its ugly head and came our way.
Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941)*



*It was Christmas Eve, the tree was glowing bright,
 But it quickly dimmed when the sad news came.
 Their son had given his life to liberate
 A small Pacific Island that had no name.
 Micronesia (December, 1944)*



*They strained to hear the drone of planes,
 But the sky above was a storm-filled gray.
 Short on food and ammo, they could but hope and pray,
 Trapped in Bastogne... on Christmas Day.
 Belgium (December, 1944)*



*“This is “Frozen Chosen”, that’s for sure”,
Said the youthful Sergeant of Marines.
His troops were huddled ‘round a wispy fire,
Eating Christmas meal: Combat Ration Beans.
A Corporal spoke: “I’ll soon be going home.”
“My tour is up next month”, a Private said.
How could they know or even guess...
That by New Year’s Day they would all be dead.
Korea (December, 1952)*



*They patrolled the jungles to seek the foe.
Snipers and land mines would kill and maim.
Young men fighting for a doubtful cause,
But serving bravely and proudly, just the same.*



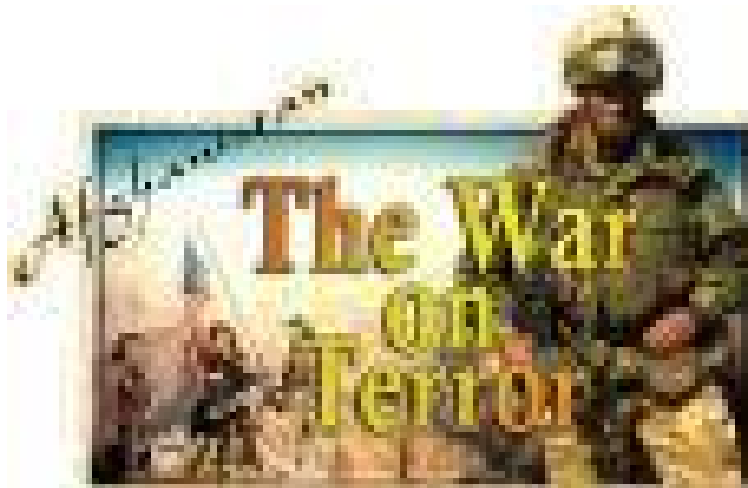
*Choppers brought them in until darkness fell.
The wounded, the dying.... all passed this way.
The doctors and nurses worked through the night,
Hoping some would survive through Christmas Day.
Vietnam (December, 1967)*

*And it is sad that even in times of peace,
Service to Country calls for sacrifice:
More than two hundred and forty brave Marines
By a terrorists' bomb... were made to pay the price.
Beirut (October, 1983)*

*But we must not forget that Freedom is not free,
And that Love of Liberty will take its toll:
Seventeen young sailors gave up their lives,
When cowards attacked the Destroyer Cole.
Yemen (October, 2000)*



*Today our hearts still ache from shock and pain,
Caused by the vicious attacks upon our shore;
By those that would destroy our way of life,
Yet who were warmly welcomed at our door.
(America, September 11, 2001)*



*We have met the challenge, we must go the course,
And now many homes will be missing the eldest son,
Or the father or daughter who has gone to serve,
To perform a solemn duty that must be done.*



*Americans are stationed throughout the world,
On ships at sea and on foreign land.
Their mission: to rid mankind of the terrorists,
Such as those in Iraq and in Afghanistan.
Christmas will be lonely away from home,
But their cause is just, and they understand.*

