



## **Silent Night and Peace**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

### **Published**

December 6th, 2016

Silent Night. Holy Night. All is calm. All is bright.

The First World War lasted from 1914 to 1919. A very strange situation was witnessed in the early months - one had never occurred before or since.

On Christmas Eve British, Belgian and French soldiers as well as enemy German troops were in cold, wet trenches on the western front where they had been fighting each other. Suddenly, someone began to sing! And within minutes the voices multiplied each in their own native language. The singing continued and soon soldiers put down their rifles, came out of the trenches and began mingling with each other. Some exchanged seasonal greetings and small gifts. Approximately 100,000 were reported to have participated in this Christmas truce that lasted until after New Year's Day.

Analysts later claimed that this unusual situation was the result of men on the ground who believed they were fighting a different war than their superiors. Their close proximity to each other had allowed them to smell each other's food that was cooking and hear sounds from the others' camps. Psychologically, they understood the "humanness" of the ones they were fighting.

In 2014 Naina Bajekal wrote an article about the Christmas Truce in TIME. She quoted Murdoch M. Wood, a British Soldier who in 1930 stated: "I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired."

Sometimes we go into our Christmas family gatherings holding grudges or fighting wars that are not ours. We carry the hurts of others that began years or even generations ago but were never resolved.

Sometimes, we focus on personal relationship issues of our own or harbour resentments that others do not even know about. We might decline invitations or attend with a bad attitude. Unfortunately, we may influence others with tales of our concerns rather than leaving them on their own to enjoy the celebrations.

Perhaps we are so fixed on our personal hurts that we cannot recall any good memories or positive attributes of those who are around us during the holidays.

Many times we walk into wars that are not ours to fight. Others may try to drag us into their army and lay snares to trap us. You don't have to go there and can, in fact, bring peace to the battlefield.

Think about the Christmas truce and follow the example of the World War I soldiers. Lay down your rifles. Greet each other kindly. Give gifts. Enjoy the outdoors. Lead with a kind heart. Stay in the moment.

My prayer is that this Christmas you will be able to sing with those who you perceived were your enemies and enjoy the peace that this will bring to all of you.

Merry Christmas, everyone!