



## CHRISTMAS WISHES - 2012

Guardsmen everywhere, of all ages, persuasions, and states of mind.



Do take a moment to reflect on just what Christmas has been over the years for Guardsmen.

### "Memories"

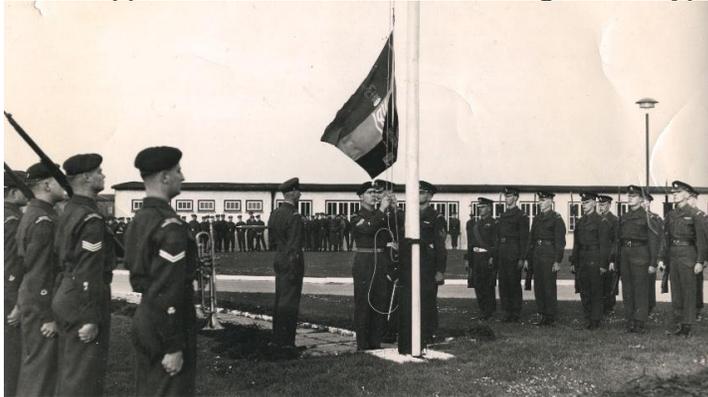
Some may insist our experience as Guardsmen was more a nightmare than a fond memory. Nevertheless, here we are still obeying orders, only one change our good wives are in command; "take out the garbage, clean up that mess behind you," on and on it goes. If it is not one thing it is another, nothing is right ... in a raspy whisper "leave me be," gets us nowhere!

Rolling out the camps, we called home while proud Guardsmen:,



Petawawa

Picton, Ipperwash, Valcartier, Borden, Gagetown, Cyprus, Korea,



Fort York, Germany.

Weihnachten is a quiet time in Germany, especially when compared to the more strident exuberance seen in Canada. There aren't as many screaming neon decorations or an endless blaring of overplayed carols. Town streets and business offices, if they are decorated at all, are draped in Christmas lights and branches of pine and fir. The houses too are restrained in their decorations, perhaps with a few lit candles or electric lights strung along the porch. The sombre appearance is misleading however for behind the walls, the German family prepares for Christmas with much excitement. While Guardsmen huddled in the huts out on the barren landscape away from everyone and populated areas called Fort York, no decorations, fifty or sixty to a building. Did anyone invite us join them, over five years, "perhaps a few." At the time the majority of the Battalion were mostly single soldiers spending the festive season wandering over to WRVS, Mess Hall, and return to the shack and sit on the side of your paillasse, alone with Elvis singing Blue Christmas over the Canadian Army Europe Radio while reading a Christmas card from home, that was it!

Other all- important locations for Guardsmen who spent Christmas away from home: In 1964, a British General drew a cease-fire line on a Cyprus map with a dark green crayon which was to become known as the "Green Line". Then he departed leaving the mission to the United Nations, Canada providing one of the largest contingents ... up and down around we go over and through, while on duty with the

Canadian Contingent, both the 1st and 2nd Battalions Canadian Guards committed to Peace Keeping duties created an exciting time for Guardsmen.



In those days most Cypriots celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at home with the family. Usually a turkey was roasted stuffed with rice, raisins and chicken giblets and serve it with cranberry sauce, vegetables and potatoes. Then comes the Christmas Cake, Melomakarona, Kourabiedes, and coffee with brandy or liqueur if desired. Ask me if we were ever invited. Fruit Cake came in cans this was the extent of it between shifts at the out post.



Then it was back to the Hill, Parliament that is!

Due to extreme heat under the hide of a black bear, steam baths or saunas were not necessary to keep the battle of the bulge in check. Rarely if ever did one see an overweight Guardsman.

Long since has the Canadian military shed the British look with the funny looking flat helmet, gaiters/putties, now we witness our soldiers all done up in American kit. Oh well, no one talks about the Boer War either, go figure! Time takes care of the details and we are told if history is forgotten we will have to repeat it again.

These days we can only reflect on the past of a once-proud Regiment , as they let us go. Together we that are left sit about with a pint, polishing up old tales of woe. Trying to impress, only to discover most see us as a bunch of old guys telling boring stories about the good old days. Got me thinking our period of service, the Cold War, and Peace Keeping we are told to let it go, it's over. Time will takes care of the details, also informed if history is forgotten we will have to repeat it over and over until we get it right. Although, there is an Archives next to the Hill where we once stood proudly, there to maintain the record of our honourable past, hopefully future scholars will rediscover, "what it took to be a Guardsman ." Then on 11 November someone will ask what war did we fight in.

Nevertheless still obeying orders. Now it is our good wives commanding, "take out the garbage, clean up that mess behind you." On and on it goes: if it is not one thing it is another, nothing is right ... in a raspy whisper "leave me be," gets us nowhere!

So I'll leave you with this thought, "add one more day to the 12 days of Christmas."

1 partridge in a pair tree  
2 turtle doves  
3 French hens  
4 calling birds  
5 golden rings  
6 geese a laying  
7 swans a swimming  
8 maids a milking  
9 Lady's dancing  
10 lords a leaping  
11 pipers piping  
12 drummers drumming

Insert - 13 Guardsmen .."let it be known the respect we hold for those who kept the homefires burning"

On Christmas Eve, pull your love ones in close ... tell them you love them, explain how much you sincerely respect what they have done over the years for your well being. Bonding the family while you were away on a mission or just banging boots into the pavement or cobblestones. Always being the glue that held the family together. In retrospect their loyalty and time honoured faith in our choice to become soldiers, and never failing us. Because their gift, the faith they showed in us over the period of our life in the military made it more rewarding. Without families and friends showing gratitude patting us on the back, waving good bye as we head out, and being there when we came home, did make our commitment to Canada a family matter. Never will we forget our dependants; our families played a very important part in the success of the mission. It would seem they were the only ones that really knew how much we sacrificed.

Time waits for no one Guardsmen everywhere from all walks of life can emphatically claim happiness as time wears us down, some have lost loved ones, our buddies, our families, having only the memories of the Christmas past to draw from, keeps us going. It is at this time we recall brotherhood of Guardsmen.



These memories are in our thoughts, always there.

As we grow old some are blessed having our families and friends close; we are aware our numbers are disappearing with great frequency. Many can see old buddies up behind the clouds waiting for us to, "fall-in" ... reinforcing the famous adage, "old soldiers never die, they just fade away".

Belonging to a fraternity of Canadian Guardsmen from sea to shiny sea, up and over the snow banks onto the frosty tundra, across the waves and beyond ... into foreign countries, we planted base-plates, tripods, and boots; don't be modest .. take credit; our Regiment did make a difference, keeping our enemies at bay, protecting and defending the peace. Second to none!

The manner in which we supported each other ... through charity, respect, and with compassion the kind that gives off a warm comforting feeling of fellowship, we will survive in our Association for many more years to come, because we are Guardsmen! Good night and God be with you Guardsmen, throughout the Christmas gatherings with family and friends, enjoy good health, and most importantly, tell your loved ones of their importance.

In the greater scheme of life here on earth be at peace with yourself... most importantly do remember to keep breathing.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night, Christmas 2012.



Peace be with you, "Brother".  
Howie Pierce, Gdsm

PS: Sorry got to quit, I'm told there is a driveway to shovel! I was once told if the troops are not bitching, they are not happy!