

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

(to be taped for broadcast)

My fellow Americans in the Armed Forces --

Christmas is unsurpassed as a time for reverence, rejoicing and reflection.

It is also a time for a renewal of our faith and of our fondest hope that Peace on Earth and Good Will shall touch the hearts of all men, and become a reality.

Yet we are mindful that until this peace can be guaranteed, our nation is dependent upon your contribution to our security.

Wherever you now serve, yours is the strength and determination that maintains this security.

You are carrying on a long and proud tradition of courage and devotion to duty in the defense of freedom. Many of you today face hardships akin to those faced by other brave Americans at Christmas from Valley Forge to the Battle of the Bulge.

From their sacrifices in the past, as well as from yours in the present, the American people can draw inspiration.

Particularly at Christmas, we are reminded of fundamental values -- especially our deep personal attachment to home and family, and our dedication to preserve and protect them in peace and freedom.

*A special word - to many far away from home
27 years ago - 1953 - I spent 2 months
on an island in the South Pacific - I know
the Turkey dinner - the letter at home was great
- but I know how you miss your mother & father & home
I know that many of you are far from home.*

To you and your families, who may bear a lonely vigil during this holiday season, our nation owes heartfelt gratitude.

As your Commander in Chief, I join your loved ones in sending my warmest wishes and greetings at this Christmas and New Year's. May God watch over you and protect you always.

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