The year was 1914.
The place, Flanders.
The day, December 24th.

Allied and German armies faced each other
across a hostile 'no man's land'
that reeked of death.

Standing guard duty at midnight in the
British sector was Pvt. Peter Goudge, age 23.
Alert to every sound, he was startled to hear
the strains of "Silent Night" drifting
across the lines. He started to sing himself.
Others softly joined in. Then the whole
British line took up a carol of their own.
The Germans cheered and responded with a
joyous Saxon hymn. The singing continued.

Before dawn, Goudge was startled again, this
time by a glimmer of light moving out of the
German lines toward his. A German soldier was
picking his way across 'no man's land' holding
aloft a small tree with flickering candles.
Leaning over the barbed wire, he shouted in
English, "Merry Christmas!"
As dawn broke, men on both sides of the lines
emerged, shook hands, embraced and exchanged
cigarettes and chocolate.

Upon learning of the unauthorized "truce,"
the generals on both sides transferred their
troops. On December 26th the killing resumed.

Nevertheless, on Christmas Day, in 1914, at
'no man's land', in Flanders, there was,
for one, brief, shining moment, "peace on earth".

And there will be once again!
May the Prince of Peace bless you
with joy this Christmas and always!