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## Viewing marks Christmas Truce centenary

*Veterans for Peace to host showing of "Joyeux Noel" with a renewed call for peace*

BY EMILY GREEN  
STAFF WRITER

This holiday season marks the 100-year anniversary of one of the most remarkable moments in history: The 1914 Christmas Truce – when World War I soldiers battling on the Western Front laid down arms during the days leading up to Christmas. Gifts and cigarettes were exchanged across enemy lines, friendly soccer matches were played, and the dead who lay in the battlefield – irretrievable during combat – were laid to rest. It was an event championed by soldiers and opposed by generals that has since served as a symbol of how it's possible, even during the most hostile of conflicts, for humanity to trump war.

To commemorate the famous Christmas Truce on its centennial, the Portland chapter of Veterans for Peace (VFP), a national organization of veterans-turned-peace activists, will host three showings of a 2005 French film about the truce, "Joyeux Noël," at Cinema 21 the first weekend in December.

Directed by Christian Carion, whose films include "The Girl from Paris" (2001) and "Farewell" (2009), "Joyeux Noël" chronicles the experiences of French, British and Scottish soldiers fighting along a small stretch of trench on the Western Front. From their life prior to enlistment

### Showtimes for "Joyeux Noel"

Cinema 21  
616 NW 21st Ave.  
Thursday, Dec. 4  
7 p.m. (\$9.50 Adults/\$8.50 Students/\$7.00 Seniors & Children)

Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 6, 7  
4 p.m. (\$7.50 Adults/\$6.50 Seniors & Children)

to the horrors of trench warfare, Clarion follows them into the war, through the famous ceasefire and beyond, when many truce participants faced harsh consequences for fraternizing with the enemy.

According to late film critic Roger Ebert, who gave the film three out of four stars, "[Joyeux Noel's] sentimentality is muted by the thought that this moment of peace actually did take place, among men who were punished for it, and who mostly died soon enough afterward. But on one Christmas, they were able to express what has been called, perhaps too optimistically, the brotherhood of man."

VFP member Dan Shea says, "This is an extraordinary movie. Bright with colors, even in the dire of winter, there are many nuances that left me craving for more information."

It is estimated that about 100,000 troops participated in the unofficial truce, which broke out spontaneously in many different areas of the front that stretched across France and into Germany. During a war that claimed the lives of 37 million soldiers and civilians, the truce bears the message, says VFP organizer Becky Luening, that "laying down arms and recognizing common humanity is possible." She says, "It's a choice we have every moment of every day – it's powerful when soldiers make that choice during war."

Veterans for Peace chapters worldwide plan to commemorate the historic truce in a variety of ways. The British chapter plans to stage a soccer match with German veterans, and the Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York is sponsoring a folk concert.

The commemoration of the truce has been the focus of a year-long campaign by VFP to call for an international New Year's ceasefire and peace to end all wars. Leading up to the anniversary of the truth, organizers have held events centered on spreading awareness of Agent Orange's lasting effects and most recently, Armistice Day, which celebrates the signing of the armistice to end World War I on Nov. 11, 1918.

## Heart Beat

By Dennis

For one spoke! One heart!  
Never Bring together the notion  
For one word torn apart at the seems!  
I'm missing You.  
One spoke the word at the message  
I'm leaving You  
So give your heart a break let  
Your Heart break  
Open Your eyes and relate on a  
moment in time  
like a Diamond will shine  
a pearl will shine like  
an emerald deep within the sea.  
For the suns rays are immediately  
For what keeps on growing!  
For the lion is tame and noble  
For the king of the jungle!

## Observations

by Kenneth Nickell

Blue and white haze carries across  
the morning sky,  
As night gives way to light...  
Evergreen strong and reaching,  
Breezy sway, softly preaching.  
Everything's alright.



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