



# Christmas 1945: The Greatest Celebration in American History

*Matthew Litt*

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## **Christmas 1945: The Greatest Celebration in American History** Matthew Litt

The American spirit and the role of Christmas is examined when President Truman declares a four day Christmas weekend for federal employees, a hiatus unique to American culture. The U.S. Military launches *Operation Magic Carpet* to get tens of thousands of GI's in Europe and Asia home for Christmas, and at home, the U.S. Army and Navy launches *Operation Santa Claus*, to process those thousands of GI's for discharge in time for Christmas.

With happy spirits, the veterans set out for home, clogging rail depots, bus stations and airports creating, at that time, the greatest traffic jam in the nation's history. Some of the more fortunate are driven thousands of miles home by grateful citizens demonstrating the Christmas spirit in their own unique way.

Across the nation, people crowd churches praying with gratitude for the peace in place, and reach out to wounded veterans, children who lost fathers, and neighbors who lost sons. Americans in big cities and small, participate in displays of the intrinsic love so indicative of the American spirit.

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