**Brothers and families of the Second Military District,**

 **In this season of peace and joy, I am strengthened by the many acts of love and charity which are carried out without fanfare or notoriety. Christmas is about our collective ability to share, to love, and to be loved. In the story of the Grinch who stole Christmas; the Hoo’s welcome Christmas morning, in spite of having lost all the material goods they coveted, with the following tune Fah who for-aze! Fah who for-aze! Dah who dor-aze! Dah who dor-aze! Welcome Christmas, Welcome Christmas, Come this way! Come this way! Fah who for-aze! Fah who for-aze! Dah who dor-aze! Dah who dor-aze! Welcome Christmas, Welcome Christmas, Christmas Day. These somewhat nonsensical words are the perfect expression of the true sense Christmas has in our lives throughout the years. Christmas is the song we annually raise up and sing in an effort to renew our spirits and pronounce our faith in humanity. In the celebration of Christmas we are reminded that there is a redemptive power, which can heal and renew our spirits as we watch Christmas stories such as “The Christmas Carol” or The Bells of St. Mary’s. Christmas reminds us of our commitment to our fellow man and our challenge to eliminate ignorance and want.**

 **Our Civil War ancestors understood the true meaning of Christmas. Soldiers far from home and hearth celebrated four Christmas Days in the far flung outpost and encampments of the Union Army. I often am overcome by the strength they possessed and the dedication it took. For the soldiers Christmas would have been bereft of the material things that many hold dear today. My own experiences with Christmas in the service, during the 1st Persian Gulf War, are still a powerful reminder of how simple things like a box of cookies or that stale but wonderful apple sauce cake; were the perfect gift because they were filled with the love of family.**

 **The second stanza of the Hoo’s Christmas song says, “Welcome, Welcome, Welcome, Welcome Fah who rah-moose Fah who rah-moose Welcome, Welcome, Welcome, Welcome Dah who dah-moose Dah who dah-moose Christmas day is in our grasp Christmas day is in our grasp So long as we have hands to clasp So long as we have hands to clasp” It is my sincere hope that, in this joyous Christmas season, each of you will be clasped in the arms of your friends and family and that, you may find the opportunity to clasp your fellow man in your own.**

**May this be the year we truly realize peace on Earth and good Will to man.**

**In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty**

**Mark R. Day, Lt. Colonel**

**Commander 2nd Military District**