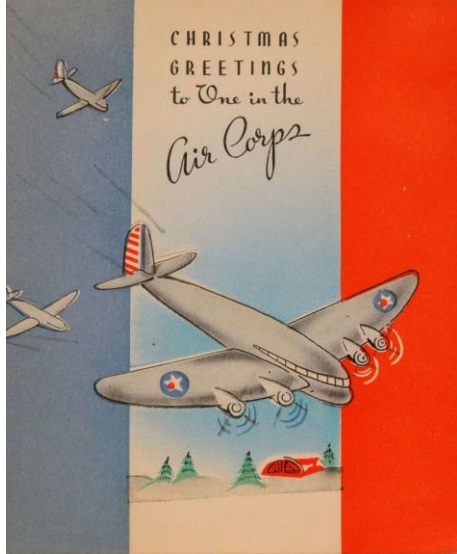


#26 Carol Singing Christmas Eve

Five hundred thousand fully equipped United States soldiers would spend Christmas in Europe in 1917. One of them was Harvey Lancaster who had enlisted with Lawrence Crabtree in the Army Aeronautic Corps at Hutchinson and were sent to the training camp at Fort Logan Colorado in April and then on to France where he was stationed until March, 1919. The Christmas of 1917, he wrote the following from "somewhere in France" to his friend W. D. West:

"We are having nice weather here at present, only a little muddy, but as long as the sun shines and is warm we can get along very nice. Everyone is writing Christmas cards at present. The army Y.M.C.A. had some Christmas cards printed for us." (January 3, 1918 Kinsley, Graphic)



Maybe Harvey was writing on cards like these.

Back home loved ones were sending letters and packages to the men. The whole community also planned a big event for Christmas Eve to remember all the boys that were away from home.

KINSLEY, EDWARDS COUNTY, KANSAS, DECEMBER 20, 1917

✚ Carol Singing Christmas Eve ✚

The Red Cross campaign that is now on will close next Monday (Christmas Eve). As Christmas Eve this year will have a double significance, plans have been made for a unique observance of that occasion. At 6.30 Christmas Eve bands of school children and high-school students will start out in the different parts of town to sing Christmas carols in front of every home that has a Red Cross flag displayed in the front window. Every home enrolled in the Red Cross is requested to place the Red Cross flag in a prominent place in the front window and put a lighted candle behind the flag, so it may be easily seen. It is planned to reach every Red Cross home if possible. Ten separate groups of

singers are preparing to canvass the city next Monday evening, beginning at 6.30. Have your flag and candle in the window.

The Christmas programs at the Christian Church and at the Methodist Church will not begin until 8 o'clock Christmas Eve. This will give the bands of singers time to cover the entire city before the Christmas Eve programs at the churches begin.

Parents are urged to co-operate in this carol service as much as possible. There is nothing that could usher in the sacred Christmas hour in a manner more fitting than that of sweet music sung in the quiet evening hour by boys and girls imbued with the love of country and the true Christmas spirit.

100 years later, as we sing carols and enjoy our families, let us not forget all of our service men and women who will not be home for this Christmas.