

and women and their families for their sacrifice, devotion to duty, and patriotism.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas. May you be surrounded by loved ones and blessed by the

Author of Life during this joyous holiday and throughout the New Year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message Sending Holiday Greetings to Members of the Armed Forces *December 23, 2008*

To the Men and Women of the United States Armed Forces

Laura and I send season's greetings to you and your families during the holidays.

America is blessed to have brave citizens willing to step forward to defend our freedoms and keep us safe from our enemies. For many of you, this holiday season will be spent far from home, and our Nation honors your sacrifice. We remain mindful of your courage, ask God to watch over you, and pray for your safe return.

Your family members serve our country as well. During this time of year, they are a special source of hope and strength to you, and they both deserve and have the thanks and support of our whole Nation. Their selfless dedication sets an example of patriotism for all Americans to follow.

May God bless you and keep you safe, and may God bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's Radio Address *December 23, 2008*

Good morning. This week millions of Americans gather with loved ones for Christmas. This is a season of hope and joy. And it is an occasion to remember a humble birth that has helped shape the world for more than 2000 years.

One of the things that makes Christmas special is that it allows us to step back and take stock of what is truly meaningful in our lives. As years pass by, we often forget about the gifts and the parties, but we remember special moments with families and friends.

This year, as you spend time with those you love, I hope you'll also take time to remember the men and women of our

Armed Forces. Every one of them has volunteered to serve our Nation. And with their incredible sacrifices, they preserve the peace and freedom that we celebrate during this season.

This tradition of service is as old as our Nation itself. In 1776, it looked as if America's first Christmas as an independent nation might also be its last. After a series of crippling defeats by the British, George Washington's army was exhausted and disheartened. With their terms of service expiring in just a few weeks, many soldiers were planning on leaving the army. And it seemed that without a miracle, America's fight for freedom would be doomed.