

A Child's Christmas on Base

Over 300 children enjoyed several helpings of turkey with pumpkin pie and all the trimmings. The Red Cross made special packages containing cookies and candies donated by the GIs from their Red Cross packages and rations. After the party, over 800 packages of cookies remained to be distributed to kids who were unable to attend. Most of the food was gone by the time the returning crews arrived.

Although saddened by the loss of his barracks mates on a mission three days earlier, Sgt. Bottoms took part in the festivities including dinner, goodies and a tour of a B-24. "I stood in the rear camera hatch and helped the little ones into the rear of the plane where they walked through and out the bomb bay"

"At noon a whole slough of British kids arrived and we all trooped into a delicious turkey dinner featuring as the surprise of the day - apple pie and Cheese! We had more fun watching those kids eat and stare at oranges and candy and sweets! One little tot was so little he had to sit on a high pillow to reach the table and I only wish I had a picture of him to let you see the happy grin on the stuffed greasy puss! After dinner they were entertained in our makeshift theatre and I guess they really had a wonderful time for a change." - Lt Richard Brady - Dec 1943

Sgt George DuPont took two kids to dinner. Their eyes brightened at the sight of oranges, but they politely said "No thank you" when they were offered. DuPont stuck an orange in each of their side pockets "Just in case you change your minds". He whispered. Their smiles made him feel so good.



"We were taken to the airfield in a 6x6 truck.... Arriving at the airfield we were met by our American hosts for the day. My younger sister and myself were taken together with our officer guide, and my oldest sister went off with someone else.....We were sat down to a meal of the festive season, which was really special, even though we wondered why we needed jam on the side of our plate... I remember a small band playing music while we ate, and the decorated Christmas tree. We were taken to the cinema to see a cartoon film..... A B-24 flying over shooting out yellow flares and I remember asking our guide what they were for. "It's mechanical trouble.".... Most of the time my sister's face was covered with chocolate, and her hand clutched a bag full of candy. I was hoping for a much sought after pack of chewing gum, but it did not appear....

Jim Turner

"On Christmas Day 1944 I chose one boy as he got off the 6x6 truck and a close friend of mine took his brother. These were the Saunders boys - Teddy and Jimmy.

Most of us had saved our candy and chewing gum which we had received in packages from home. Sweets of any kind were most difficult to get here but our folks back home always managed to include some in the packages we received.

We had a feast fit for a King - roast turkey with all of the trimmings. The tables in our Officers' Mess were festooned with all sorts of good things to eat.

We also had entertainment that day which included a moving picture and later a visit from Santa Claus. The children enjoyed this immensely. The theatre was so crowded that most of us held our little guests on our laps - I certainly did."

- Lt Col Frank Pechin Law

