



UNDER THE OAK TREE



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SEASON OF THE WARRIOR

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As the holidays approach, along come the stresses of holiday planning and preparation. We, as a military force, work especially hard when it comes to these festivities. Wherever we are in the world we try to make it feel like home. However like all operations the planning is half the fun; done right it will make for a safe and enjoyable experience. It does not matter if it's just you and the kids or if the whole Family is coming over.

The right preparation is a must. This is where you become the logistical expert, from getting to your home, to the food you are eating and the drinks you are serving; then getting everyone home safely. Send strip maps out with your phone numbers included. Have a plan for weather, because extra Family members are nice to have around, but not for a week at a time. Ensure you have as much non-alcoholic drinks as you have alcoholic beverages and plenty of drinks for the kids.

You might want to do a dry run to the hospital or clinic that will be open on the day of your holiday party, because for some unknown reason Family likes to get hurt at the wrong time. And ensure everyone is safe to drive home or better still have a taxi company on speed dial.

For our single Soldiers you must be just as prepared. Many of you will travel great distances to either get home or visit friends. Again planning is the key. Just like any military mission, a good plan with PCC/PCI and rehearsals will be the key to a successful holiday.

I ask you all to be alert to changes in your battle buddies and Family members during the holiday season. For the holiday season can be a stressful time, especially if this is their first time away from home for the holidays.

I ask leaders to pay particular attention to what and where your Soldiers are.

We have had a successful year. However to continue to be successful we must continue to be vigilant both on and off duty. Take extra time with your Soldiers during "under the oak tree counseling," and stay in touch with battle buddies who are on leave.

Get out of the barracks, take advantage of the BOSS trips, go skiing, ice skating and the discount at the Dragon Hill Lodge. Get out and enjoy this wonderful culture. And lastly, have a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year.

Second to None!