

FOR PRESS

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PRIME MINISTER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIAN FORCES

The Prime Minister, Mr. Holt has sent the following message to Australian servicemen and women at home and overseas:-

"To all Australian servicemen and women I convey, as Prime Minister, the thanks and appreciation of the Australian people, and their warmest good wishes for your well-being and happiness through the time of Christmas and throughout the coming year. Australia is grateful to you for the personal contribution you are making to the security of the nation. Behind the shield of protection which members of our fighting services and our allies provide, this nation is able to advance steadily in strength and prosperity.

"Some of you are actively engaged in operations of war. We have followed with pride the story of your exploits, a story brightened by the gallantry and devotion to duty you have demonstrated. Those of you who are absent from Australia, whether on military operations, on other active duty or joining in the tasks that enable us to honour our international obligations, all have a special place in our regard. This is true at all times, but you are much in our thoughts at that time of year when most of your fellow-Australians can happily enjoy the love and companionship of their families. We hope this deprivation will be softened in some degree for you by the knowledge that you have our heartfelt gratitude.

"May the coming year bring a just, honourable and enduring peace enabling many of you to be united with your families again in 1967."

HAROLD HOLT,
PRIME MINISTER.

Canberra,
23rd December, 1966.