

Cody and Grandpa's Christmas Tradition

Gary Metivier • Illustrated by Traci Van Wagoner



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“Those who survived Vietnam came home with a wisdom that only war can teach but a wisdom whose truth must be shared and passed on to our children and their children. Unfortunately, many of us returned from war unable to find the way or the words to share what we had learned. Gary Metivier has found a way . . . has found the words to share some of those lessons about life.”

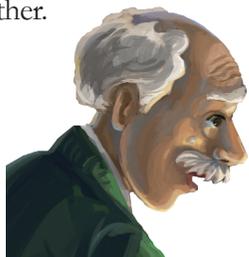
—Sgt. Gary Beikirch (Ret.), Medal of Honor Recipient, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces

“Christmas in a combat zone is a time to reflect and look back. It was a pause in the chaos . . . a time of peace. After reading ***Cody and Grandpa's Christmas Tradition***, I was filled with the memories of my brothers.”

—Capt. William “Hawk” Albracht (Ret.), US Army Special Forces, Recipient of 3 Silver Stars, 5 Bronze Stars, and 3 Purple Hearts

Christmas Eve at Cody's house is filled with traditions, and everyone has gathered to celebrate the love of family—everyone except Grandpa. Determined to get the family together before midnight, Cody goes upstairs expecting to fetch his grandfather, but instead he finds an inspiring tale of honor, unity, and brotherhood.

Grandpa tells Cody about his time in Vietnam, where the only family he had on Christmas Eve were his fellow soldiers. In the chaos of wartime, their only source of hope was the brightest star in the sky, and Grandpa made a promise with those men to find their star every Christmas. Cody decides to make a new tradition. Everyone will help Grandpa find the star, and they will all remember the brave men who fought to keep so many families together.



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*To those who can't be there to celebrate traditions
but are certainly there in spirit in our hearts. —G. M.
Thanks for your service, Dad. And thanks, Mom
and Dad, for all the family traditions. —T. V.*





Ding Dong.

Cody and his Chihuahua, Charlie, spring off the couch. They are the official greeters.

Mom and Dad are getting food ready, and Grandpa is still upstairs in his room. Cody straightens his new bow tie and pulls the front door open.

Brrrrr. The cold air grabs at his face like a monster claw.





Shuffle, shuffle. Step, step. Squeak, squeak.

One by one, the Christmas Eve party guests scurry in.

Swish. Uncle Bob slides past with a pat on the tippy top of Cody's head and a platter full of meat and cheese.