

## My Grandpa was Santa

November 10th, 2022

Happy November! These are my two favorite months of the year. We've had some crazy busyness over this past month, but one of the joyful things that happened is - We got a dog! Her name is Pumpkin, and she's been an absolute sweetheart. And as you can tell by the picture, she is going to fit in around here...



I want to continue talking about my grandparents as they have had an incredible impact on me and the way we celebrate Christmas. Last time I wrote mostly about my Grandma and now it's Grandpa's turn.



He looked like Santa Claus. All the time! He smelled of Old Spice and holiday spirit. He was tall, a right jolly old elf. He had a round belly that shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly. (And I was lucky enough to have inherited it!) He had a beard that was snowy white.

He not only looked like Santa, he would often dress up as Santa. They had some good friends who owned a local bookstore, and he would go there dressed as Santa to meet the kids. Occasionally the local schools would bring him in to meet the kids, but he said he finally gave it up because the kids became too rowdy and undisciplined and they thought it was more fun to

kick Santa in the shins. (Undoubtedly, they were placed on the naughty list!).

My favorite memory of Santa Grandpa is one year we were at their house a few days before Christmas, when suddenly down the hallway I heard the sound of jingle bells and a merry HO HO HO! I must have been about 5 at the time, and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. My cousins and I ran to look and we saw Santa coming down the hallway. Santa! HERE! AT GRANDMA AND GRANDPA'S HOUSE! If the movie "Elf" had been around at that time, undoubtedly we



would have all screamed SANTA! I KNOW HIM!!!



Well Santa comes in and sits in Grandpa's chair and he wants us to sit on his lap and tell him what we want for Christmas. We gathered around him and felt much love and excitement. Pictures were taken, memories were created. Most of the details of that experience are foggy and forgotten. But I don't think I'll ever forget that little bit of kindness he showed to us that day. After we were finished, Santa walked back down the hallway and disappeared into Grandpa's bedroom... a few minutes later Grandpa awoke from his afternoon nap! He couldn't believe what he missed. It's so funny that a

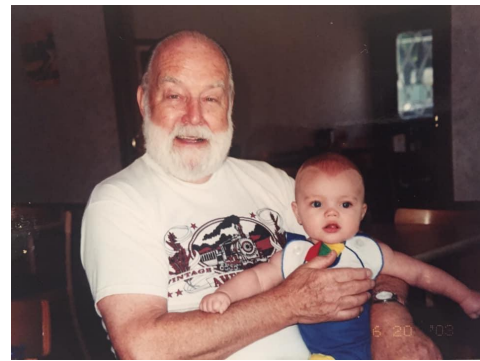
simple memory could be such a powerful one.

Eventually Grandpa became too old to carry on the tradition and we all moved farther away, so our times together became more limited. I am happy to say that my oldest son got to meet him, even if he was too young ever to remember. The tradition of sitting on his lap continued! But that's not the only tradition that

continued... because my dad inherited the suit, and he too became Santa Claus.



And so now I await my turn to inherit the suit, and take on the mantle of Santa. Thanks to the miracle of technology, I can get a sneak peak of what that might look like...



Time is a cruel enemy, and the day came when my grandfather passed away peacefully, a few months shy of his 90th birthday. It truly felt like what the little Victorian girl said when she heard that Charles Dickens had passed away - "does that mean that Father Christmas has died too?" No indeed - for the tradition of Santa Claus continues on not just in my family but in many families around the globe.

So what made my Grandpa special? Simply put, he was just a nice, kind man. No wonder Santa called on him to be his helper!

Until next time, have a very merry Christmas my friends!

Art Kilmer

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