

The Importance of Remembrance Day

On June 6, 1944, Canadian soldiers landed on the beaches at D-Day. Hundreds of soldiers died and were injured. The landing crafts carried the soldiers onto the beaches as the Germans attacked them. Paratroopers dropped into France to help with the attack. Soldiers pushed tanks off the ships and brought them to shore to clear the barbed wire that the Germans had set up to defend the beaches. It was early in the morning, the water was freezing, and many soldiers had to swim to shore while the Germans attacked from the cliffs. My grandmother was a year old and she lived in a town near Prague. Her mother prayed that the Nazi soldiers would not come for her daughter. Her father had been deported to the concentration camp in Terezin two years earlier.

In August 1942, the Canadians tried to invade France but were unsuccessful. They ran into a German convoy of ships and the Germans now knew they were attacking. Many soldiers lost their lives and many were captured by the Nazi soldiers. My grandmother wouldn't be born until November, but her parents worried about what might happen to their family. Their family had to wear yellow stars sewn onto their clothing when they went out. Her cousins were not allowed to go to school, to the park, to the movies or see their friends that weren't Jewish. Jews lost their jobs and were forbidden from going into stores to buy food. Even though the Canadians were unsuccessful during the Dieppe raid, my great-grandparents knew that help was coming, and they now had hope.

On May 7th, 1945, the Germans surrendered. It was too late for my great uncles, my great-great grandmother and my grandmother's cousins. They died in Auschwitz. But my great-grandfather was able to return home. And my two year old grandmother was now safe from the Nazis. On November 11th of each year, I attend a Remembrance Day ceremony and think about all the sacrifices the Canadians soldiers and Allies made, so my family and other families could be free.

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