

Honouring The Soldiers

On June 10, 1942 my grandmother's friend Eva was four and lived with her family in a small town near Prague called Lidice. After Reinhard Heydrich, a Nazi German official was killed, the Nazis took revenge on the people of Lidice. The Nazis forced Eva's dad along with three hundred other men into the village center and killed them.

Eva's mother was taken by the Nazis to the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in Germany. Seven Lidice children with blond hair and blue eyes were adopted by German families and the other eighty-two were put on trucks without their mothers and sent to Chelmno, Poland where they all were killed. Eva had brown hair and brown eyes but her aunt was German so the Nazis allowed her to go live with her.

In June 1944, the brave Canadian soldiers, sailors, and aviators started the liberation of Europe. It took many months after D-Day for the Canadians to free Europe from the Germans. First, they freed France. Then in September of 1944, they freed Belgium. The Battle of Scheldt, which was fought between the Canadians and the Germans was one of the hardest battles in World War II. The Allies needed to bring supplies from England to Europe through the Port of Antwerp. The water pooled underneath the soldiers in the trenches, so they couldn't stay dry for weeks at a time. The Canadian soldiers marched through the thick, muddy water. Bullets from the machine guns flew as the tanks rolled across the mud and the small boats moved across the canal to overtake the Germans. It took a month, but finally the Canadians pushed the German soldiers out of Belgium and freed the Port.

It took five more months for the Canadians to liberate the Netherlands and for the Germans to surrender. Forty-five Canadian soldiers had been killed and fifty-five thousand had been wounded. In May 1945 Eva's mother was forced on a Death March that killed many of the women including some from Lidice. However, Eva's mother survived, and she was able to return home and reunite with her daughter.

The efforts of the Canadian soldiers who served in World War II helped to bring Eva's mother home. It is important to honour the sacrifices that the Canadian soldiers made so people who were captured by the Nazis could be freed.

Katie Davies

West Hants Middle School