

Unfolding His Service

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(Inspired By True Events)

Rustle, rustle, went the stack of papers as I was looking around an old drawer, but this wasn't any drawer; it was a drawer full of memories. I picked up a couple of the old, dusty-smelling papers, feeling roughness through my fingers as I flipped the papers. There were some baby pictures, some wedding photos, memorable moments and some stained envelopes. I was curious; what was in these ancient looking envelopes? There was only one with writing. It had my grandmother's name, "To my love, Irene." on the front of the envelope. I wanted to open it, and felt a cold shiver down my spine.

I opened the envelope to a fully written letter. It was from my grandfather. I don't know much about my grandfather, he died before I was born. I never knew how... but maybe I could learn more about him! I sat on the red carpet with cold hands, nervous for what was about to come. What if this is telling me things I didn't know, and shouldn't know? Hesitantly, I put the letter back in the envelope... but I opened it again, determined to find out more information about my grandfather.

The letter read:

Dear Irene,

I got your letter, and I love to know that you're thinking of me. We aren't going through the best time right now. Japan's army has trapped a lot of Canadian and British soldiers. Being a prisoner of war is torturous, hurtful, and cruel. I wouldn't even wish it on my enemies. If I ever get out of here, I would have your famous chicken pot pie, with a slice of cheesecake every day. We are being fed only a cup of rice, and if we are lucky, some soup. It makes me miss your cooking so much. Speaking of cooking, I heard you enlisted to be a cook!! That's fantastic!! These soldiers will have their bellies full and a happy heart!! What are you going to make for them? I bet whatever it is, it will be delicious!! It's really cold here, it feels like December, but I cannot tell in this windowless, tiny box. I am uncomfortable, my buddies are uncomfortable, but we push through to protect our country, and we will stop at nothing to make it back home, and don't worry, I guarantee we will! They don't give us blankets or clothes, or even a toilet. We get to wear a diaper, and we don't get a new one until the next day. They gave us some shoes called 'Come Alongs' - sandals that can't even hold my feet. I have these extremely painful moments in my feet, like I got stabbed multiple times, I am not able to stand. Even if I can't stand, I will stand up for anything to come back home to you, even if I feel dizzy and constipated. I can see my bones, I feel like a skeleton, and it's scary. Please don't be scared of me when you see me, my love. I am so excited to get out of this and see you again! I am hoping that you are just as excited.

Love you always

Gordon

That letter struck me like lightning. He had to go through all of that to keep us safe? All of that torture? All of the inhumane, cruel war that they had to go through. I sank to the floor in sadness, I don't think he ever made it back home like he promised, and the reasons he died hurt me more. I've learned about the World Wars in class, but not so much in depth to the point where I am crying, but to my own family? I didn't understand - why were they treated like this? Why was this acceptable? I go to grandma with red, puffy eyes. Her reaction told me everything I needed to know. He died in World War 2, and sacrificed his life for the safety and well-being of our country. It is important to always remember the ones who fought, reflect, and appreciate the safety we have today, and hope we never have to go through something like that again. As I folded the letter back, I truly understood the cost of his service.