

First Last

English 8 Hour 2

Mrs. Weaver

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When Heroes Stand Strong

Between 1914 – 1918, Germany suffered a humiliating defeat after launching war against most of Europe. In the years that followed, scapegoats were blamed for the huge loss. One of those scapegoats was the Jewish people. In 1933, a man by the name of Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany. He hated the Jews. Once he made himself leader, he began rebuilding Germany and the pride of its people. However, in this rebuilding, he targeted the Jews as the reason Germany had lost the war.

His first retaliation was to close businesses owned by Jews, or just limit who could shop or do business with them. In 1938, during what is known as The Night of the Broken Glass, many Jewish synagogues were burned, businesses looted and destroyed, and homes broken into and also destroyed. By 1939, Germany began WWII when they invaded Poland. The situation for the Jews would only get worse as Hitler forced them into ghettos, shut down their businesses, denied them the rights of other citizens, and eventually implemented the “Final Solution” by sending Jewish families into forced labor and concentration camps. In these camps, they were worked to death, starved, beaten, tortured, and some were sent to gas chambers, where they were killed. By the end of the war six million Jews would be dead. Most Germans of that time looked the other way. They did not want to be singled out, punished, or killed for speaking up. However, there were some brave individuals who did find the courage to speak up, or at least offer enough resistance to help as many Jews as they could.

One of those heroes was the British government. Before the war broke out, the citizens of Britain formed a group of families that would take in Jewish children from Nazi-occupied regions. This group created what was known as the Kindertransport. They hoped to help as many children as possible. By the end of the war, they would have saved 10,000.

Lore Sulzbacher was one of those children. In early 1939, she was 12 years old. Her foster family took her in, helped get her into school, learn English, and paid her to work in their dress shop. While they thought this would be a temporary situation, six years later, when Lore turned 18, she joined the war effort as a means of saying “Thank You” to the British government.

Another wartime hero was a young man by the name of Ben Kamm. He was a blue-eyed, blonde-haired teenager when the war broke out. His family was also Jewish, including his parents and four younger brothers. Ben chose to fight against the Germans after his family was forced into the neighborhood ghetto, a section of town in which the Jewish people were forced to live. It was dirty, food was scarce, disease was rampant, and families were crowded into small rooms to live. Ben would sneak out to find food. Once, when he went to his aunt’s house (she was also Jewish but able to hide that fact) Ben heard about a group of dissenters, known as partisans, hiding in the nearby woods and fighting the Germans.

Ben tried to get his family out of the ghetto to join the partisans. However, his parents thought the war would end soon and they would be saved. He left, with their blessing, and joined the resistance. Sadly, his family would be sent to concentration camps after he left. He would never see his family again.

Another hero, but sadly also a Nazi victim, was Anne Frank. When she was 13 years old, while living in Amsterdam, her family, which included her parents and sister, Margot, went into

hiding in a secret annex attached to Otto Frank's business. On a hot summer day, the family layered on as many clothes as they could and walked to the building where they planned to hide and wait for the war to end, along with four other Jewish friends.

For the next two years Anne and the others would plan their day around the workers in the factory below. Not a sound could be made. Their meals were eaten before the workers arrived, after they went home for lunch, and later at night when the building was empty. During this time, Anne kept a detailed diary about life in hiding. Her biggest dream was to be famous one day. She wanted to be a writer. Her dream would come true, but sadly, not until after her death.

The families in hiding were discovered, arrested and sent to concentration camps. In 1945, just months before liberation, Anne and her sister died of typhus. After the war, Otto Frank returned to Amsterdam; he was the only one to survive. One of the people who had helped the families gave him Anne's diary, which had been left behind when they were arrested. Year later, Otto Frank would publish Anne's diary. It was not only a success, but was translated into over 70 other languages.

Anne's diary would prove the horrors of living during the Nazi invasion and help teach the world about the bravery of those who had to choose between hiding, fighting, or giving up to the atrocities of war.

World War I was "the war to end all wars." World War II followed within 25 years. Heroes are created when brave people step up to help others without thinking of themselves. While an estimated six million Jewish people died during WWII, one can only imagine how high that number would have been without the heroes like the British citizens, Lore, Ben, and Anne.