



## **My Grandpa**

by Hannah Veaudry

Not - How did he die?  
But - How did he live?  
Not - What did he gain?  
But - What did he give?

These are the things that measure the worth,  
Of a man as a man, regardless of birth.

To say my great grandpa is a hero, would be lying.

He is so much more than that.

Born in 1921 to immigrant parents, he was always lively and loving to his siblings. Life was harder in those times, and he always kept a smile on his face.

His life changed forever in 1941 when Japan declared war on British Hong Kong and the United States of America. Called to help his country, my great grandpa went overseas to fight in the war. He was a Private in the Royal Canadian Ordinance Corps in the Brigade Group.

Around Christmas time, his group was forced to surrender to the Japanese soldiers, except when the soldiers arrived to take them away, they opened fire with machine guns killing many in the house they were taking cover in. The Japanese soldiers then went up the stairs shooting and wounding many.

They then tossed grenades in the room hoping it would finish the job. My Grandpa managed to help save some soldiers lives by throwing grenades out of the window before they exploded. His luck ran out when one of the grenades bounced back in and exploded, leaving pieces of the grenade in his jaw.

Some of his army friends managed to get guns from the enemy soldiers and helped to fight back. It was too late. The Japanese soldiers lit the house on fire where he was upstairs hurt, forcing him and 7 others to jump out of the windows, leaving some of their other friends behind that were too wounded to leave. Sadly those friends died in the fire.

My grandpa and his 7 friends had to make a quick escape and ran down the nearest road to a cliff. Their only chance to survive was to jump into the sea below and swim 2 miles across the bay.

When they reached the other side, there were only 4 of them left.

The sergeant looked back at the remaining comrades and yelled for someone to throw him a medic bag because one guy was missing half his face. My grandpa threw it to him, and the Sergeant went to my grandpa and bandaged him up!

My grandpa and the other 3 tried to make their way to the town Stanley. Two days into their walk to Stanley they ran into enemy soldiers. They were captured and marched back to the bay they swam from 2 days before.

Once at the bay, the patrol lined them up for a firing squad my Grandpa took 6 shots before falling to the ground. A few hours later, when Grandpa woke up he was weak from blood loss but managed to pull himself up and begin walking. If this isn't a testament to his will for life nothing ever would be!

He wandered for days lost in the jungle, when he stopped for a rest he fell asleep against a tree, surrounded by bodies of fallen soldiers. As he slept, locals came in and began to steal from the soldiers whatever they could that was of value. They came up on my Grandpa and when they started to rummage through his clothes he woke up.

Panicked, the locals wanted to kill my Grandpa, but one stepped up and said, "No, this is Mr. Les, he's a good guy". You see before he went to the battlefield he treated everyone as equals, the locals that were servants, he treated them like friends, which is how he was lucky to have his life spared.

He lived through all that, and still ended up in a Prisoner of War camp. He lived there for close to 5 years before being released.

He was declared Missing In Action and presumed dead by the Canadian government, even after he was brought home.

Once he was cleared and declared alive after his release, he was considered 110% disabled, but still he worked for many years.

Today, as we gather here to celebrate the life he lived, this little bit of information only begins to shape the character that was my Grandpa as an entire person. He never let what happened to him in the war dictate how he lived his life, and he always let that show in the love he showed towards his family, friends, and even strangers, he would meet on whatever adventures he would find himself in. The world lost a true hero in my Grandpa, one that can never be replaced.