

Topic: My grandmother's fight to survive through WWII.

Abstract: WWII affected my grandmother's life in so many ways. This story of her life shows examples of struggle versus survival, from the childhood years to being an adult with children. Her story shows our basic need to survive when there is nothing offered to us, and how important it is not to give in and give up. It shows the strong woman she was and her determination to raise her children to appreciate what life has to offer and the privilege to go far in life and be able to provide for their families.

Key words: WWII, Grandmother, Suffrage, Great Depression, Holocaust, War, Fight for survival, Poor, Accomplishment.

Not everyone has an inspiration in life, some live life day by day and some have goals for each day that passes. But there is that one individual in your life that inspires you in so many ways and you can't imagine what it was like to be in their shoes. This can be in any situation they had encountered as far as WWI, suffrage, being poor, living in bad conditions, WWII. These are past events in life that we all fear and couldn't dare to imagine what it would be like to experience them or what it was like.

But I am here to tell you my story and explain to you who exactly is the person I know, that went through many tough situations in WWII, and this person would be my grandmother. Someone who I will never forget, that inspired many and who accomplished the impossible. I just recently learned about the amazing woman she was and the sacrifices and struggles she had to go through, seems as though a grandparent we are close to are the ones we always want to look up to. She passed away early September of this year 2011, and was born in the month of March in 1922. When the time comes that someone passes away is when you start to really learn every detail about them and you become even more amazed. She was a mother of 6 children, and had her oldest child at the age of 25. She was a huge individual and hated asking for help for

anyone, she always wanted that “accomplished” feeling. Not only will I be explaining her early childhood life, but as well as her life after she had children.

When my grandmother was around the age of 17/18, was when WWII started. She always told me how horrible it was and how old it became. Her father took part in the war, and she moved around place to place, something I would absolutely hate. She was never fully settled down, and couldn't live your average teenage life. I myself couldn't imagine what it was like to experience that, I don't know what it would be like if my life suddenly changed because a war occurred and its outcomes caused many other events to occur around that era. See, we've learned in history class since 6th grade to college how WWI, WWII, The Great Depression, The Holocaust, etc., was like for all those individuals who had to fight to survive and what an impact it made on society and businesses. And I couldn't begin to wonder what it was like, could you? I have never really sat down and thought this and that about “back in the days”. That is how we refer to those type of events don't we? Because now it's old to us and is just “history”, what else would it be?

All these questions have crossed my mind while figuring out how to set up this essay, and I've realized I wouldn't have been able to survive through what most had to, especially my grandmother. How do you know what choices to make? How could I have survived without food or water sometimes? How would I manage my money? Now a day's it's not as hard to get a job, countries don't want to begin wars just because, we have food and water, and banks help us out with managing money. Society has indeed come a long way and I hope all of us can appreciate it as much as we should. I ask myself how could my grandma not give up? But giving up was never an option from her, and that's where I get motivation from. Many times her and her family did not even have a home to live in, let alone have food. Later she ended up being a welder in

shipyards during WWII, where she had that job for awhile. Having worked in the shipyards she knew a lot and accomplished a lot, let alone experiencing the ideal of “war” around her. She had 4 sisters and 2 brothers, in which they all weren’t always together. Keep in mind that during the WWII, also occurred the holocaust and great depression. As we learn in school those events were terrible and nothing can explain or change the meaning behind them. Many people died and many fought for their lives or for others if that meant putting theirs in jeopardy. About 2 months ago my grandma and I had started a conversation about the holocaust and great depression. She had told me she remembers many walking around with guns and threatening people. Some men would come and take over the house her and her family had lived in at the time, therefore they would be poor. Just because her father had served in the war doesn’t mean that he was some top notch hero because he wasn’t, he was viewed as any other person. Until the day they moved away, she said it was the happiest day of her life, in which many of the problems that occurred were no longer a big issue. But the good ol great depression was around, as it occurred everywhere. They had no money what so ever, and jobs weren’t easy to maintain. Jobs would begin and things would seem somewhat ok to them but then things would take a bad turn. Many women didn’t have the rights that started to improve society yet, could you imagine being a woman and having men over power you? She still yet never decided it would just be easier to give up and give in.

Finally years past and she met her first husband and they got married and had a daughter who now is 63 years old, which would put my grandma around the age of 25 when she had her. She experienced many financial problems because she had to fight to survive for her daughter, husband and herself at the time. Her husband got sick and ended up dying a couple years later.

My grandmother was left on her own and had to conquer many jobs and manage to keep them with times still had around society. Where she then met my grandfather and got married. My grandfathers background was a lot easier than my grandmothers, as she actually experienced events during the WWII era, unlike my grandpa who's life occurred during that time, not exactly experiencing anything except the great depression. They then had a total of 5 more children. My grandfather ended up leaving his children and wife and started a life elsewhere. This left my grandma once again alone, poor and with 6 children. She had to work her butt off every day and couldn't miss a day because she'd lose her job. She ended up getting a big enough car for all her kids and eventually a house. This was all in the process of years. It wasn't easy and she had no time to just sit around, she would only get a few hours of sleep. She made most of the drapes, bedding and clothes in the household. She was an incredible painter and painted most of the things around the house. Having paying all the bills left no money to go out and buy things. If having clothes with just a few holes in them were ok, when she wasn't busy working all day long she helped around the house during the other time. Sometimes dinner wasn't even provided because there was no money. This led to my dad and uncles to steal things because they didn't have much. It's a matter of surviving, they weren't always good kids because they had to be men and not be boys they had a mother to help and sisters to look out for. So stealing things was the answer to some problems. I didn't always have to talk to just my grandma about this to understand how many people struggled back in the day to survive, I could always talk to my dad, uncles and even aunts. Mainly my dad and uncles will talk about everything and the hard times they went through and even the trouble they had gotten into. They have so many stories to tell and share with all of us kids, and explain how their lives weren't easy. But I must say what doesn't kill you makes you a hell of lot stronger because my dad and uncles and aunt have very

good jobs and provide for their families like no other. That was their goal and they have by far accomplished it. But the woman who taught them all the good they know would be my grandmother and she was who she was because of all the things she had to go through in her teenage years, to early life, to motherhood years. She had so many talents, and most of us truly don't. I will never forget her and she was one of the strongest women I know.

As humans we know everything and anything as we think, but survival we wouldn't completely know unless we were at rock bottom. Survival is going through all the bad and coming out good, even if it doesn't mean coming out on top. This is reality and when our generation dies down and the newer one takes over, they will have to experience things to. I consider our generation to be lucky not as much of commotion goes on. Besides the war we are currently in which is due to what we all know of the terrorist attack 9/11. So having shared this historical essay with you about my grandmother, I hope we all appreciate what we have now in life and how all the historic events that had happened is what has outlined our society today. Many don't appreciate or fully understand how lucky we just are.