

Impact Statement

Alla Ivantsov, Grade 7.

An Unfamed Spy, 2022.

Acrylic on tag board, 18 x 24 inches.

LaVilla School of the Arts, Jacksonville, FL

Unsung Hero: Eileen Nearne

After she was caught and captured by German soldiers during her time as a spy, Eileen Nearne was taken to gestapo headquarters to be interrogated on her work. She was cruelly tortured by being forced to submerge face first in water countless times until she passed out. Even being treated this way, Eileen stayed with her words and revealed little to absolutely no information on who she was working for to spy on German forces and didn't reveal any information on what messages she was sending. Eileen was still taken to concentration camps and threatened with torture and death, but she never gave up, and kept on fighting to escape the camps. Now I'm a very young girl who usually gives in if someone were to put pressure on me or to threaten me, but seeing this amazing story on how Eileen was so strong makes me think that people can stand their ground and persist no matter what comes up. She could've lost her life with the insane amount of torture in the camps, and I can't image how horrible and scary it must've been, yet she still wouldn't reveal anything. Something that I lack is saying no to something and sticking to my words, but Eileen greatly inspired me, and I'm sure many other people, with her amazing persistence. I can say that I'm able to stand up for myself, even if I'm also threatened or tortured. The world needs more people like Eileen who are so devoted to what they work for, that they will still continue to stand up and battle their needs no matter how cruel someone treats them.

My vision behind my painting is representing how scary the Nazi soldiers where. The shadows that reach all across the floor show that they're watching you, or that they're ready to come and take you away. I believe that the main story of Eileen isn't truly about her spy network and messages, it's about her surviving this terrifying time, and still managing to continue her job as a spy despite being tracked down, threatened, beaten, and fearing for her life. In 1944 Eileen was discovered by Nazi-German forces, she was seized and arrested. Imagining how much fear Eileen had experienced at the time would make anyone think, "Wow, I'm so glad I've never experienced that, and I'm incredibly sorry for the people that have." I decided to paint that exact scene, to show people how scary it must've been. It shows a young woman running from a door, as Nazi forces are covering the floor space with their ominous shadows, while her work is still lying on a table. I painted the chair being pushed from the desk to represent someone leaving a room very quickly, and more gray toned colors to represent the scary, depressing times during World War 2. Eileen lived in an apartment where she would continue to hide from Nazi's, so I represented that by painting my background as a room with a coat rack, umbrella, plenty of desks, and a window with the soldiers searching for her. If it were me in that situation, I'm not sure what I would do at all, and it's incredible how Eileen managed to get rid of all her work evidence, despite probably being in incredible fear. The reason why Eileen is such a hero is how she still managed to persist and protect her spy messages no matter what had happened to her. Eileen had multiple interviews where I'd gotten information from, but mainly resources such as articles telling her story, so I thought about what I could do to represent it in my piece.

Originally, I'd planned to design a type of 3d model but I decided it wouldn't be an entirely good plan for me since I don't have much experience in 3d project, so I designed many thumbnail ideas and asked for help from my teachers and peers on ways I could improve my idea, i moved on to designing the actual main idea in different ways to find an outcome where my idea fit the best. I mapped out my final idea on a piece of paper to get an image of how the final product would look like, and then moved on to the tagboard where I would be able to paint it. there, I experimented with different paint, different colors, and found the ones that would suit my project the best. I looked for ideas on google, and colored accordingly that would be fitting towards the "gloominess" I ran into a few problems with color wise, and i talked to my teacher and my peers on what would be the best ways to fix my project, or what I should do to sharpen some of the edges. It ended up with my having to fix the floor color, the lady running from out the door, and sharpening some smaller details, like the radio on the counter and the umbrella, etc. I asked people for help while finishing my work, and I ended up having only minor details to fix, but eventually it came to a close. I used many information on google, and from interviews to get to the point where I am now.

Eileen was an intelligent woman, who decided to stand up to protect her work even if she had to go through much suffering, she was brave because she lived no matter what, she was strong to herself, and I definitely believe that Eileen deserves important recognition as a courageous spy. She is a hero who shouldn't be unsung.