

Impact Statement

Charles Rounds III, Grade 12.

Saved by Science, 2020.

Mixed media on paper, 24 x 18 Inches.

Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex, Jackson, MS

Unsung Hero: Eugene Lazowski

"I was not able to fight with a gun or a sword, but I found a way to scare the Germans."

~ Dr. Eugene Lazowski

The Unsung Heroes competition was introduced to me by my art teacher, Ms. Moore, in November 2019. When she provided me the list of heroes from the Lowell Milken Center website that were considered as options, I swiftly and anxiously flipped through the printed pages with several names listed on both sides. Reading through many of the small bios provided by the pioneers of this extraordinary competition, my attention was captured by one hero with a fascinating story to tell: Dr. Eugene Lazowski. Eugene was truly an unrecognized hero of his time; a savior of thousands of people, young and old, during the insanity of World War II.

Being a senior in high school, I have had my fair share of watching documentaries based off of the Holocaust and World War II. In World History class, I've learned about the history of the Nazi movement and the atrocities committed like their controlled isolation and murder of Jews and the harsh living conditions of concentration camps, but never have I been introduced to a man who successfully combated their cruel actions while in the shadows. Eugene Lazowski was born in 1913 in the city of Czestochowa, Poland. Eugene graduated from the University of Warsaw when the Nazi invaded Poland in 1939. In attempts to help protect his country, he served in the Polish Army as a military doctor. After arriving back in town, Eugene reunited with his family and began practicing medicine with a medical school friend, Dr. Stanislaw Matulewicz. Utilizing a medical discovery made by Matulewicz, he realized that healthy people could be injected with a strain of Proteus that could test them positive for Typhus without having any of the actual symptoms. In efforts of revolting against the Nazi, Eugene injected Jews with this strain of Proteus which influenced many of Nazi soldiers to believe they were infected with Typhus. This fake Typhus epidemic, led by Eugene Lazowski, saved an estimated number of 8,000 Jews from being sent to concentration camps and certain death.

In my artistic interpretation, *Saved by Science*, I emphasize the effect of science and how Eugene utilized his knowledge of medicine to rescue Jews who were subjugated. My artwork is arranged as if Eugene Lazowski, the unsung hero himself, reflects upon his past and tells a story of his actions during World War II. With that being said, I painted him older as the main subject of the composition to give off the effect of the viewer engaging in a one-on one conversation with him personally. In this conversation, he talks about his commitment to being a doctor and wanting to help people in any way necessary. At the bottom right of the paper, where his story starts, we are met with Eugene's younger self wearing a white lab coat which is a representation of his sophistication, professionalism, and his caring personality. Upon research, I found that Eugene affirmed to a Chicago film maker that he took an oath as a doctor and the

oath did not differentiate among people whom he came in contact with. This particular quote is the reason why I included a drawing of a doctor tending to a patient in the bed who is on the verge of succumbing to a fatal disease. In response to the unlawful and abominable actions of the Nazi party, Eugene Lazowski searched for ways of rescuing Jews who were suffering. This is why I incorporate test tubes in my artwork as symbolism of Eugene making the discovery of the strain of Proteus that could be used to deceive Nazi officials into believing that the Jews were infected with Typhus. Using images that were taken of concentration camp survivors in the striped clothes they were forced to wear, I wanted to show the horrors that had awaited the people he saved. The burning Nazi swastika flag and the typhus caution sign symbolizes the overcoming of obstacles and the rejection and hatred of the Nazi's rule over Germany and Poland. Eugene Lazowski worked against the Nazi Movement because he noticed how their corruption made their countries full of darkness and hatred.

In my opinion, Eugene's actions were actions of heroism. I have learned through researching his history that he did what was morally correct and through his actions strives to be a better person than the people opposing him. Knowing that his actions were not recognized or acknowledged, when they took place, shows that his concern was not of receiving accolades but that he did this because it was the right thing to do. Like Eugene Lazowski, I want to liberate people through my art. I want them to be at peace with all of the chaotic things that surround them in this world. Similar to the way Eugene used his knowledge of chemicals and medicines to heal the suffering of the Jewish people, I use my art as refuge for those who seek happiness in times of adversity.

To share my historical research and artwork with the community, my art teachers and I created a virtual classroom where I was able to vividly explain the meaning behind my work, answer questions about my *Unsung Hero*, and talk about the Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes to students across my district. In addition, I placed this artwork and story on my personal art work website, <https://www.cr3art.com/artcompetitionsentered> so that people outside of my community would be able to see the heroic and honorable acts of Dr. Eugene Lazowski.