

Impact Statement

Ava Freeman, Grade 8.

An Underground Secret, 2017.

Mixed media on paper, 14 x 11 Inches.

Milken Community Schools, Los Angeles, CA

Unsung Hero: Shlomo Hillel

I chose to display Shlomo Hillel as my Unsung Hero. In the 1930's, it was apparent that the Zionists would need weapons to defend themselves against the Arabs and to fight for their independence. Shlomo was the founder of the Ayalon Institute which was created to disguise the bullet factory from the British. Shlomo and the other members told the British that they had a laundry service on their kibbutz. The British bought into their secret, but if any mistakes were made during the bullet making process, their whole plan would be uncovered. In order to mask the loud noises from the factory, the openings were covered by a 10-ton oven and a large washing machine which led to the staircase underground. The members were keeping a secret right under the nose of the British while also facing risky measures to complete their work. The factory was extremely claustrophobic and poorly ventilated. Workers also ran the risk of the bullets exploding and killing them. In total they manufactured more than 2 million bullets. Shlomo put his life and others at risk for a secret that would save and shape the State of Israel for the rest of history.

To depict this incredible man and his story, I chose to draw half the drawing in color and half in black and white. I wanted to portray the secrecy of the underground factory and a vibrant kibbutz by using the different colors. There are also hands holding gears and bullets to depict the 45 people who helped manufacture the bullets. I wanted to display the laundry service on the institute by cutting felt clothing on. On the top, I chose use vibrant colors to give definition between above ground and below. I created the underground with multiple lead pencils and a little charcoal. As for the top of Shlomo's face, I used a range of different skin tones to give him a realistic look. His hair and eyebrows were made from ripped cotton balls, to add a more realistic look. I wanted Shlomo to look as though he could climb out of the photo and contribute to anyone at any location. To create this effect I used silhouettes, textures, and lines to show the different medias and artistic creativity.

To ensure I completed Shlomo's story, I did not make his features happy but rather serious. Due to him being a diligent man who focused on wanting to make a difference to help his country gain independence. His work ethic and approach to helping his community, has inspired me to become a better person in my personal community. Without his efforts our homeland, Israel would not be what it is today. The Ayalon Institute saved Israel from the British and gave us a safe Jewish homeland! This project is a tribute to an Unsung Hero that I believe should get the notoriety he deserves.