



## Impact Statement

Liam Schell Arias, Grade 6

***Where Are the Candy Bombers Today?***, 2026

Marker, pen, acrylic on canvas, 23.5 x 20 inches

Hausburgschule, Berlin, Germany

Unsung Hero: Gail Halvorsen

My Unsung Hero is Colonel Gail Halvorsen. He was a pilot for the US Airforce and flew the Berlin Airlift during 1948 and 1949. During that time the city was locked, and people had very little food.

One day he saw children at a fence at the airport Tempelhof and felt sorry for them, so he shared some chewing gum with them. The next day he started to throw candy with self-made parachutes (out of handkerchiefs) out of his plane before landing. The children recognized his plane because he wiggled with his wings before throwing the candy out. He then did that every day and became known as the “candy bomber”.

I liked his story because I also like candy :-). I also live in Berlin and sometimes go to the Tempelhofer Feld, where the airport used to be (it is a big park now). The candy bombers-story is well known here but I didn't know that it started with the idea of one man (Halvorsen) and all the details about the story.

I think he was very kind and wanted to make children happy, and also creative because of his idea with the parachutes. I also admire him because he was very brave. He had no permission to do that and could have lost his job, but he did it anyway. He inspired other pilots and because he made a small gesture, he made many children happy and gave them candy as well as hope. During that time everything was destroyed so they needed hope.

During the Berlin Airlift, Gail Halvorsen brought goods and food to Berlin, when people there didn't have anything. But he did even more; his little gesture became a big operation. First, he threw candy out of his plane, then other pilots followed doing the same and then people in the USA and a candy company donated candy for the mission. They called it “Operation Little Vittles”. So, from a small gesture you can make something big.

He made some children happy in the beginning (and then thousands) with the candy, but also showed kindness and gave them hope. In the war, Germany and the USA were enemies before, but he showed that you can be kind to your enemies and forgive them.

After the Airlift, Gail Halvorsen also did this action in other wars, like in Bosnia; and in the USA he did a candy-bomber show, making children happy, until he was very old. He was a very good man.

My painting is called "Where are the candy bombers today?" and this is the most important message. In my painting I want to show two sides: On the right there is the story of Halvorsen and the candy bombers and on the left side there are ruins of the wars of today. There are still many wars in the world today, and I wonder where the people are giving hope and happiness to the children today?

On the right side There you can see the face of Gail Halvorsen and in the center his plane with the red lightning throwing candy. And below the children on the ruins are looking up and waiting for the candy. This shows the candy-bombers story from the past.

On the left side There are the ruins of the wars today and under the rubble a peace-sign with blood stains, because peace is broken. On the top left side, I wrote words like Peace, Hope, Kindness, Solidarity, Love, ... in many languages, also in languages where there is war today (Ukrainian, Sudanese, Lingala, Persian, Arabic, etc.).

In the beginning my art teacher Mr. Mesones, showed me artworks and different styles of different painters. Some of them have inspired me.

I then started with the background and used colors like orange, red, white and brown. Then I painted the plane, then the ruins and the children, the face of Halvorsen and the parachutes; and at the end the peace sign and the words in different languages.

For most things, I used brush and acrylic paint. For the face of Halvorsen I made a stencil out of paper and painted the face black. For the parachutes, I cut newspapers and glued them, so it looks like 3D. For the parachutes and the children, I also used a fine liner and for the ruins I used a palette knife, and the words I wrote with a copper marker. For the bloodstains I used a toothbrush.

My art teacher gave me tips, and I showed him the progress of my painting. He helped me a lot; and the impact statement I wrote it in German and then translated it into English.

The story of the candy bombers has shown me that you can do big things starting with small gestures and that we should be more kind and try to make other people who have a difficult life happy. Even children can do that and be nice to others and help; like people in the street or refugees.

I will show my painting and tell the story of Gail Halvorsen to my friends and my class. In my Art class and English class. I also want to send an email with my painting to the Gail Halvorsen school in Berlin and my friend will write an article in the school newspaper about it. We will also hang the painting in the school corridor.

I hope that there will be no more wars and people suffering from it. I hope that there are more kind and brave people like Halvorsen who help people and give them hope; in war or even outside of war, like here in Germany where we live.