

EDITH CAVELL

NURSING HERO

Edith Cavell was a nurse – a really good one. But that's not all. During the First World War, she was also involved with a spy network that as well as helping wounded soldiers to escape wartime Belgium, also sent back secret intelligence to the Allies. It was a risky thing to do. And she paid a very heavy price for her bravery...

NAME: *Edith Louisa Cavell*

BORN: 4 December 1865 DIED: 12 October 1915

NATIONALITY: British

PROFESSION: Nurse

Edith Cavell had an unremarkable childhood. She grew up in a pretty English village where her father was the vicar. She went to school and then boarding school. And then she worked as a governess in Brussels, Belgium. But when Cavell's father fell ill, she returned home to look after him. He recovered - yay! - and she decided that nursing was the career for her. She trained hard and must have been a pretty fabulous nurse because in 1907, she was chosen to head up a brand-new nursing school back in Brussels. And off she went.

By 1914, war was looming. Keen to avoid fighting on the Russian and French borders at the same time, the Germans decided to follow the fiendishly clever (so they thought) Schlieffen Plan. Part of this plan involved storming through Belgium and surprising the French army from the north.

When the First World War broke out, Cavell was visiting her mother in England. She was nowhere near the fighting. But when she heard about the invasion of Belgium, she whizzed back to Brussels at once. That was where she was needed. Cavell's nursing school was turned into a Red Cross hospital. And it didn't matter which side they were on - all were treated there.

Belgium was now under enemy occupation. But even though Allies sent to defend the country had now been forced back, an awful lot of soldiers had been left behind. How were they supposed to escape?

Slowly, an underground network of safe houses was created. Soldiers and fugitives were secretly passed from one place to another until they could reach freedom. When two wounded British soldiers were sent to Cavell, she gave them beds at the hospital before sending them towards the Netherlands. This was a risky thing to do. The punishment was death. Nevertheless, Cavell ignored the danger and went on to help as many as 200 people escape... until she was arrested, imprisoned and found guilty of treason. She was executed by firing squad.

A century later, it's suspected that Cavell was actually working for the British intelligence services. As well as smuggling people, the network was also a way of communicating top-secret information about the enemy. But whether she was an actual spy or not makes little difference. Cavell stood up to the enemy and she saved an awful lot of people on the way.

STAND OUT, LIKE EDITH CAVELL!

Your best friends have fallen out, BIG TIME. You don't know what to do. If you speak to either one of them, the other is going to be mad. But one has invited you to a birthday sleepover, while the other wants you to go shopping. How do you stand up, like Edith Cavell?

It's tricky when you're stuck in the middle of fighting friends. But Edith Cavell treated all soldiers during the First World War, regardless of which side they were on. So, like her, try to treat your friends the same and see both of them. Don't keep it a secret though. Let each of them know that you're not letting a silly bust up get in the way of a perfectly fab friendship, and perhaps they'll soon sort out their differences.

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**PATRIOTISM IS NOT ENOUGH.
IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO LOVE
ONE'S OWN PEOPLE,
ONE MUST LOVE ALL
MEN AND HATE NONE.** ”

EDITH CAVELL

The Holocaust was the worst genocide in history. Six million Jews were systematically murdered by Hitler and the Nazis, just for being Jewish. There were many, many people who risked their lives to save the Jews. Perhaps this is the first you've heard of Irena Sendler, but for a Jewish child in Poland during the Second World War, she might well have been the most important person in their life...

NAME: **Irena Sendler**
BORN: 15 February 1910 DIED: 12 May 2008
NATIONALITY: Polish
PROFESSION: Social worker

At the beginning of the war, Sendler was living in Warsaw, where she was employed as a social worker. She was in charge of canteens in the Polish capital - these provided food and aid for those in need. When Poland was invaded in 1939 and war began, Sendler made sure that the canteens helped the country's Jews.

To say that the Nazis didn't like the Jews is a massive understatement. They thought Jews were inferior - along with many other groups of people. Horrifyingly, they tried to get rid of them all. Over 3 million Jews lived in Poland at the time and the Nazis decided to move them all to areas called ghettos. These weren't nice places to live; they were actually prisons, surrounded by brick walls and barbed wire. Anyone who tried to escape risked being shot by armed guards.

The Warsaw Ghetto was the biggest of them all. Over a third of a million Jews were forced to live in an area the size of Central Park in New York City, USA. From here, Jewish people were sent to Nazi concentration camps... and almost certain death. Conditions in the ghetto were terrible. It was crowded and dirty. There was little food and not enough medical supplies. Many people became ill and died.

And that's where Sendler came in. Her job as a social worker meant that she was one of the few

non-Jewish people able to get into the ghetto. She sorted out a permit to enter the ghetto so that she could inspect the conditions there. But once she was inside, she made contact with the Jews instead. She told them that she wanted to help them escape.

Sendler became a member of a group called Żegota, which was formed to help Jews. She was in charge of smuggling children out of the ghetto. This wasn't easy. Sendler had to use increasingly ingenious ways to help them escape. Sometimes, children hid inside the ambulances that were allowed inside the ghetto or they pretended to be so ill that they needed to go to hospital. They crawled along sewer pipes and underground passages. They hid in sacks, trunks and suitcases. Sendler did whatever she could to get them out. Then she found families and convents where the children could hide until the war was over.

In 1943, disaster struck when Sendler was arrested by the Nazis. They tortured her so that she would tell them who she was working with. When she refused, they sentenced her to death, but Żegota members bribed the prison guards and she was freed! She went straight back to leading children to safety. And she lived until the ripe old age of 98.

By the end of the war, Sendler had saved 400 children's lives.

Fear makes you weak;
anger makes you strong.

IRENA SENDLER

STAND OUT, LIKE IRENA SENDLER!

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You've seen some terrible stories on the news about children suffering in a war zone far away. You want to help, but you don't know how. How do you stand up, like Irena Sendler?

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If Irena Sendler wasn't old enough to go and help in person, she would probably have tried to help from home. She might begin by raising awareness for the children's plight. Or she might find out which charities were involved and raise money to help *them* to help the children.

