Leon Weinstein
Holocaust Survivor

Leon Weinstein recently passed away at the age of 101. He was a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943, and a hero.



In 1941, when his daughter Natalie was only 18 months old, Leon and his wife realized that they may not survive the war, but were determined to ensure that their daughter would. In order to give her a chance, they fixed a metal crucifix to a necklace and hung it on their daughter. On a piece of paper, they wrote some fiction: "I am a war widow, and I have no way of taking care of my daughter. I beg of you good people, please take care of her. In the name of Jesus Christ, he will take care of you for this."

They bundled up Natalie and dropped her off on the front step of a lawyer's home. Walking away, he could hear her whimper, but forced himself not to look back until he crossed the street. At that time he saw a man step out of the apartment building and read the note. Cradling Natalie in his arms, the man walked half a block to a police station and disappeared inside. Leon and his wife expected they would never see their daughter again.

Leon speaks of this, among other Nazi horrors, so they are never forgotten. He spent the years following this horrendous day in the Warsaw Ghetto resistance. Leon said, "If we were going to die, we would do it standing proud, on our feet, making a statement to the world. We would take as many of those bastards as we could kill."

After the war, Leon found out that his wife and all extended family had been murdered; his only hope was to find his small daughter. After six months of searching, Weinstein passed a convent, catching a glimpse of a bony four-year-old being carried by a nun, and recognized the child as his own. Ultimately, Leon achieved what tragically so few managed: to be reunited with his child. Natalie had survived against all odds, and so did Leon Weinstein.

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