

Victoria Lettink, Year 8, Selwyn House

To remember is to never forget

Barbed wires stained with blood. Guard towers, waiting to pounce. Cabins filled with tears and worries, compacting down onto the piled-up pressure. Thoughts of families and life, thoughts of freedom, thoughts to be over with. Gunpowder swirled along the grass, cut short, similar to the shaved bodies of the ones who used to be free. Scratches along the walls, grey skies towering above. The rain wept in sorrow as screams and cries ran out, people being tortured. Pained grazes and forced labour, forgotten wishes of freedom filling the air. The Star of David, once sacred and beautiful, now a curse of separation, all coated in yellow. Jewish children, not understanding the cruelty and wishing to play on the playground once more, have now fallen to the ground, among the 1.5 million.

The barbed wire traced along the camps, grim and coated in misery—memories of those who were lost and memories of those who stayed strong. The faint smell of the trauma the Jews had to face, made my eyes sting with tears. I think of the buttons, all clean as a memory of the youth who passed to the camps. I have read books of stories, stories of past experiences, stories of connections and stories of a Refugee's journey. Last year, I went to see Mydank, a Holocaust Camp in Poland. This year, I went to Germany and I learnt about Adolf Hitler and more of what happened. How the salute was banned, similar to Swastika's, and statements of support in Hitler's name. But denial still lingered, and the truth of History started to fade away.

80 years from now, History is slipping away, drifting off to the past. But actions can only be forgiven but never, ever forgotten. Concentration camps photographed, experiences and stories written down, with tears soaked onto parchment. Paintings with strokes and details of emotion, Holocaust days for remembrance. Survivors' stories must be passed through generations, as future citizens wouldn't understand. It's difficult to grasp such a situation, but understanding other's views leads as a guide. Witnesses in many ways, through eyes or ears, flowing words like a chain. But although we won't experience it, commemoration is the key. Witnesses on words, remembrance as an act, landmarks as knowledge.