

Enrichetta Comincioli (Cevo 28 February 1923 – Melegnano 2 May 2016)
Survivor of Ravensbrück concentration camp
An invisible great woman





*The story of Enrichetta,
survivor of concentration
camps*
*"Remarkable Women"
Etwinning Project*

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“A remarkable woman, Enrichetta Comincioli”

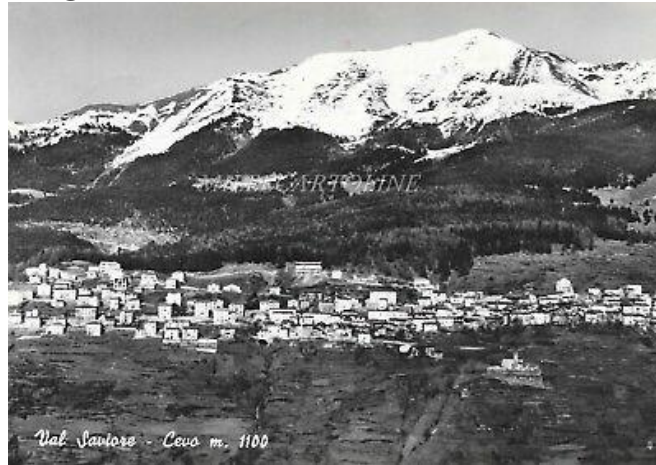
Enrichetta Comincioli is the daughter of Andrea and Bortola Monella, born in Cevo (Italy, BS) on **28 February 1923** and died in Melegnano (MI) on **2 May 2016**. Enrichetta is one of the Brescian political deportees who ended up in Nazi concentration camps. The story of this girl is very sad because she lived in the time of Fascism where there was no freedom. At that time in Italy there were also the Nazis. Partisans fought against them. Generally local people supported the Partisans secretly at the risk of their life, especially women who passed unnoticed. Partisans were hidden on the mountains of Cevo and as all **great women did**, Enrichetta didn't betray them. **Silence was an heroic deed at that time, it was common among women who helped Resistance... and women helped in many different unknown ways.** One day a partisan she knew was killed and she went to church to see him. The day after, she was arrested and after many tortures she was sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp. But let's start from the beginning to understand better.



"Millions of people like me were silent victims that no one has defended. Why did anyone stop those trains?"

Enrichetta 's biography

Enrichetta was born on 28th February 1923 in Cevo, a small village in the alpine area in the province of Brescia Her parents were Catholic. They were very religious and strict and knew that Partisans who fought against the Nazis



were hidden on the mountains. Enrichetta knew some Partisans too and one of them was her cousin. One day she heard that one of the Partisans had been killed by the Fascists.

So without considering the danger she went to church to give him her last farewell.

Someone reported the fact to Fascists who arrested her. Anyone who supported or knew Partisans without denouncing them, was against the regime. She was caught, tortured and taken to the concentration camp.

This was what happened to Enrichetta, one of the **invisible, humble great women who contributed to make our world better**. She was taken to prison in Brescia and tortured in an isolated villa by Erich Priebke to make her confess where the shelter of the Partisans was. But she remained silent. **The power of silence was a means to resist**. Therefore she was sent to the camp of Fossoli a transit camp in Emilia Romagna which was considered the anteroom of big Nazi concentration camps.



After about a month, she was taken to **Ravensbrück concentration camp** in Germany on a cattle wagon. Here the prisoners were selected: the healthy ones for hard labor while children, old people and the weakest were sent to death in gas chambers. It was the end of **July 1944** when they arrived, and they were locked up for days in a room, with heating on and without food or water, for what they called a period of "quarantine". Enrichetta, was selected for **hard labor in sand caves , in forests** to cut trees and carry heavy trunks.





Prisoners got up at three a.m and at four a.m they had to be ready for the roll call. They were obliged to stand for hours without moving and after that they began to work. The prisoners had very little food and water. **Life conditions were more than terrible.** Enrichetta managed to survive till the Nazi escaped because of the Russians arrival. It was 30th April 1945. The Russians brought the survivors in one of their military camps where she stayed for six months. She received food and cures and an Italian doctor, a prisoner, saved her treating her **serious infection** with a military injection. In **October 1945**, Americans arrived and brought the Italian survivors back to Italy. The volunteers of the International Red Cross, who were waiting for them at the Brenner Pass, couldn't believe their eyes , they were astonished at their **miserable conditions.**

She came back to Cevo, she **worked** in Switzerland and then in **Milan**, in silence and dignity she grew up her daughter Rita working hard in a period in which people didn't believe the horrors of concentration camps . But at the end she spoke, she wrote a diary and she was interviewed .Thanks to the **power of words , now we know**.

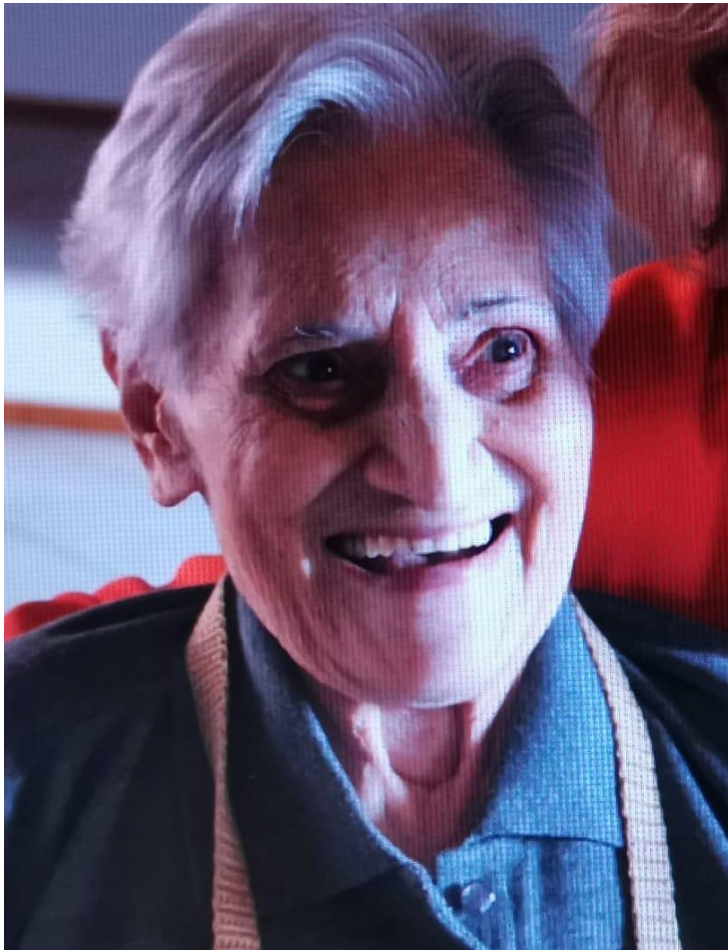
She died in Melegnano on 2 May 2016 appreciated for her hard and humble work. When celebrating her 90 birthday she said to her daughter **“Who would have thought I could do it after all I've been through?”**

Her daughter says “I am really proud of my Mum” and Enrichetta's words still come to our minds.



Enrichetta Comincioli
is **looking thoughtfully at the medal**
she received by the Prefecture of Monza .
Her daughter Rita is behind her .
A hero to whom we are grateful.

When celebrating her 90 birthday she said to her daughter “**Who would have thought I could do it after all I’ve been through?**”



**Happy Women's Day, Enrichetta, Remarkable Woman!
We won't forget you**

IIS F. Meneghini, Edolo Italy (Class 2C- 3C- 3G)

Our considerations about the past ...and the present

The story of Enrichetta was very painful, but she was a very **strong woman**. She managed to resist all torture, hunger, and she didn't give up. We are sure many others were as brave as she was, even if a lot of people didn't make it. **Too many people didn't make it.**

We have no idea how she managed to survive in those camps, without food and water, and we can't even imagine how she, and all the people sent to those scary places, felt physically and psychologically.

Our deep respect and gratitude goes to Enrichetta and to those who shared the same experiences.

We want to shout to the world:

No more wars ! No more atrocities . Only Peace !



The past..... and the present

“If I think about the 18 months spent there, it seems impossible to me I survived hell. The hell of concentration camps has deprived me of a peaceful life. Talking about it, is very painful:

They are memories stuck like rusty nails in a wound. My body reminds me about tortures, humiliations and abuse. Even sleep isn't a friend to me, I still have nightmares which take me back to hell.”



The past..... and the present

After the liberation many survivors didn't find peace. They often suffered from anxiety and flashback of what had happened and it was difficult for them to readapt to society. Nightmares of what they experienced came at night leaving them in distress. They tried to tell their grief to the world , but

they weren't believed.

So they experienced further humiliations,

but at the end they won.

They were

no more invisible

thanks to the power of "words"



They began writing diaries and books . They accepted to

speak to younger generations in schools . They were convinced that if people knew about what had happened,

there was still **hope** for a better future .

They didn't lose hope, **they thought and they think** ,

as the still alive survivor **Italian Senator Liliana Segre** does, that

young generations have the power to improve the world if they aren't

INDIFFERENT.



We always have to be alert. Let's avoid and stop extremisms, psychological and physical violence towards those who are considered different . Let's enhance in all individuals their UNIQUENESS !



We students and our teacher of English Ms Deanna Ghisla, the headmaster prof.ssa Raffaella Zanardini the teacher Ms Daniela Vitale **want to thank , Enrichetta's daughter Rita Comincioli**, the mayor of Cevo Silvio Marcello Citroni and Ms, Katia Eufemia Bresadola vice-president of the Museum of Resistenza di Valsaviore who accepted to give us information and suggestions. Everyone has shared our **project which will be uploaded on the didactic European platform Etwinning.**

We all **strongly wish** that the facts narrated may **raise awareness among the new generations** that no one will have to say one day what Enrichetta said: **"Millions of people like me were silent victims that no one has defended". "Why did anyone stop those trains?"**

The book: Il racconto di Enrichetta

This book comes from the collaboration of three important local associations **Il Museo della Resistenza di Valsaviore, l'Anpi di Valle Camonica and Il Circolo Culturale Ghislandi**. The text of this book was curated by Valerio Moncini, collaborator and historical expert of the School and Culture Commission "Ermes Gatti". The Museum of Resistance of Valsaviore strongly wanted a collection of **significant stories of remarkable people**. Interviews given by the witnesses of the twentieth century were transformed into "stories" and this book was enriched with the illustrations of Sabrina Valentini whose drawings we used. We thank all people mentioned here.

This booklet, meant to **broaden the horizons of young generations**, is full of drawings so as to be better impressed in our hearts and minds. It tells the story of Enrichetta and her horrible experiences in the concentration camps. Her suffering can't be forgotten. "The story of Enrichetta" has **didactic purposes**, and **about her there is also the book "Ravensbruck and return"** published in 2005 by the Cultural Circle Ghislandi, and also what is faithfully told in "La Baraonda" by the historian Mimmo Franzinelli .

