SUPPLY
LINE

Elizabeth "Betty" Butcher
High School Student

Like many young women, Betty lost loved ones during the war. In her case, both a brother and her sweetheart.

Studio portrait of Betty Butcher as a teenager.
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A Military Family

Betty was 13 when the Second World War began. She lived in the small town of Carman, Manitoba, and was the youngest of five children.

Both of Betty's brothers joined the military. Reg enlisted in the navy, and Joe joined the air force.

A Story of Loss

As a high school student, Betty saw many boys in her class leave for military service or war work. Her brother Joe, a law student at the University of Manitoba, had been rejected by the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1939, but was accepted the next year.

In February 1941, while training in Manitoba, Joe's plane crashed during a snowstorm onto a frozen lake, killing everyone aboard. Betty and her family were devastated.

The following year, Betty graduated from high school. She went to Winnipeg, Manitoba to complete a stenographer's course, as she was planning to work in her father's law office.

She returned to Carman just as her high school sweetheart, Russel Lyle Porter, was about to join the air force. Lyle was determined to become a pilot, even taking special scientific and mathematical courses. Betty and Lyle were engaged in April 1943, one month before he went overseas.

In June 1944, just over a week after D-Day, Lyle's plane took off on a mission over enemy territory. It did not return. Lyle and his crew were reported missing.

For months, Betty did not know if Lyle was dead, or alive but a prisoner of war. In November, five months after the disappearance, word came that the plane had been shot down over northern France.

Lyle was presumed dead.

Life After the War

One year after Lyle was killed, Betty met Jack Evans, a serviceman on leave in Carman. Jack was also with the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the two began writing to one another. They were married in 1946, and were together for 58 years.

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