

# A Gift of Friendship

By Lucy Stevenson

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(Based on a true story)

*This story took place in England shortly after World War II.*

Hermann Mössner was nervous as he walked into the chapel. He and his friends from camp were still in their uniforms, marked with the letters “P.O.W.” Everyone knew those letters stood for “prisoner of war.” What would the members of the branch think? Would they see him as their enemy?

The chapel was near Leeds, England. But Hermann wasn’t from England. He was from Germany. After being forced to fight in World War II, Hermann had been captured by British soldiers and sent to an English prison camp. This was his first time at church in a long time.

Hermann took a deep breath as he sat down on one of the benches. He could see the branch president, George Camm, sitting at the front. President Camm was Hermann’s friend. Seeing him smile made Hermann feel better.

Several months ago, President Camm came to visit Hermann at camp after hearing that he was the only member of the Church there. At first Hermann was a little worried. Would President Camm hate him? Their countries had fought against each other in the war, after all.

But when Hermann and President Camm met, they smiled and shook hands. Then they prayed together. They sang songs and talked about the gospel. They even took the sacrament together.



“I love you, my brother,” Hermann said when President Camm had to leave. He saw tears in President Camm’s eyes as he waved goodbye.

After that, President Camm visited Hermann every Saturday. During the rest of the week, Hermann did his best to live the gospel. He shared his testimony with the other prisoners while they worked in the fields. He answered their questions while they carved wood after a long day’s work. Sometimes he prayed with them.

“Hey, Hermann,” one of the prisoners had said one night. “Could I join in with you and Mr. Camm on Saturday?”

Hermann looked up from the block of wood he was carving. He smiled. “Of course!”

“May I too?” another prisoner asked.

Hermann and President Camm were very excited to teach more of the prisoners. Soon some of them even wanted to be baptized!

And now, as Hermann looked around the chapel at the families waiting for church to start, he felt peace. Some members were nervous around Hermann at first. But soon everyone came to trust him. The other prisoners who wanted to learn about the gospel got permission to leave camp to go to church with Hermann on Sundays. Later, Hermann was even called to be the branch Sunday School president.

Time passed, and Christmas got closer. Hermann wanted to do something to thank the members who had been so kind to him. Then he had an idea! It was almost

time for the branch Christmas party. Hermann gathered more blocks of wood and started carving. One by one, he turned the blocks into little cars, elephants, planes, trains, and horses.

Finally the day of the party arrived. Everyone ate food and sang Christmas songs together. Hermann and his friends from camp sang Christmas songs in German.

Then Hermann pulled out a big bag. Inside were 40 wooden toys! Hermann gave one to each Primary child. It was a Christmas they would never forget. ●



After three years in camp, Hermann returned to his family in Germany. Years later, Hermann visited the same chapel he attended as a prisoner of war. Some of the grown-ups there told him they still had the wooden toys he had carved for them when they were children!



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