

# CALLING ALL VIKINGS

## Trigger Warning

**This story contains war-related themes, reference to injuries and conflict. This may be triggering or upsetting to some individuals.**

29 August 1940, 1700 hours, Copenhagen, Denmark

There was the loud clink of glasses and hearty cheering as the young men toasted Lindberg Eriksen's twentieth birthday. It seemed strange to feel happy when his beloved Denmark was under German occupation. "I have something for you to see," said Carl, Lindberg's childhood friend. Carl led Lindberg out of the lively little dining room packed with family and friends. They walked down the dark hallway and into the guest room. "Aksel, Sven, Chistian and I have decided to join the resistance" said Carl cautiously eyeing Lindberg's expression. He pulled a shoe box from under the bed and handed it to Lindberg. Inside was a stolen Luger pistol. The proud Viking who had been sleeping inside Lindberg's chest woke up and found its voice... he roared in approval.

The Germans had sealed the fate of Denmark, and the young friends knew that cutting telephone wires and turning around road signs would not be enough. When Lindberg's father found out he had said, "I support your opinion Lindberg, but for the safety of the family you will have to leave. If the Germans come knocking, we will be in serious trouble." That afternoon Lindberg Eriksen disappeared while trout fishing at a local stream...

That night, under the cover of darkness, when all lights were out due to the German curfew, Carl, Aksel, Sven, Christian and Lindberg crept quietly towards a red brick, five story apartment building on the corner of Edisonsvej and Hollaendervej in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen. In the attic of apartment six, the resistance group known as Ringen discussed the sabotage of German equipment and the safety of Jews in the city. "We are sending you on a mission to sabotage some German vehicles at the Hotel d'Angleterre.

VRRRMMMM! The young friends watched as an armoured side car motorcycle and two gestapo staff cars screeched to a halt. Lindberg's finger tightened around the trigger as they sprang forward out of the dark alley and opened fire. One of the soldiers shouted in alarm then crumpled onto the pavement bleeding from a wound in his leg. The tyres on the first car popped with a bang as they were ripped apart by flying bullets. All seemed to be going to plan until the other soldiers overcame their shock and returned fire.

Bullets flew in every direction and ricocheted off concrete, one embedded itself in Christian's shoulder and he let out a startled cry as he slumped against the wall. This is when Lindberg did something very brave and very stupid; he shouted defiantly and charged out of his hiding place, barrelling straight towards the armoured motorcycle. He jumped clean over the head of a crouching soldier and landed in the side car.

Before the guards could react, he spun the Spandau machine gun around and sprayed bullets every which way destroying the first staff car. "Come on, get in the car!", he shouted as he revved the motorcycle and sped away with the second staff car right behind him, with Aksel at the wheel. On the front seat, secured in a brown leather briefcase, sat some very important documents.

The young men had found out that the Germans were planning to capture all the Danish Jews and send them to concentration camps. They vowed this would never happen in Denmark. Members of the resistance were assigned to different Jewish families, and the task was to get them to the coast so they could be transported to safety in neutral Sweden across the Oresund straight.

Ring! Ring! Lindberg and Sven stepped into the house where the star of David sat above the door. "We are ready to leave," said the father fearfully. Behind him stood two young children, a boy and a girl, looking quite startled and sleepy to be woken in the dead of night. After a quick discussion they set off in a small car towards the coast. An hour later they were waved down at a German roadblock, but Lindberg swerved off the road and raced away just as bullets started pinging off the boot of the car. Soon the wind-swept North Sea was in sight.

They frantically unloaded the car and hurried towards a small fishing boat that was to take the family to Sweden. The acquaintances embraced with no need for words. Once safely onboard they waved, and the young men waved back.

\*In total, Denmark saved 7200 of the 8000 Danish Jews, and Lindberg Eriksen was my great grandfather.