Orphaned Filly

Italy is a beautiful country in Europe, but during the Second World War, it was not like that for the Canadian soldiers who were there. They were involved in a battle called the Italian Campaign. Canadians fought there in the heat of summer and the cold of winter for almost two years.

One night in the hills of Italy, some Canadian soldiers heard the cry of a hurt animal.

They investigated and came upon a one-month-old filly (which is a baby girl horse) that had been struck by a bullet. She was shaking in fear and bleeding from her leg and belly wounds. Sadly, her mother had died.

The soldier's could tell that the little filly was hungry, thirsty and scared. The Canadian soldiers gathered the baby and took her for medical attention.

Fighting in the war in Italy was difficult for Canadians. It was a dangerous place and they were far from home. However, this little baby horse gave them a new special purpose. The animal needed humans to help to clean her wounds so she would survive.

"Princess Louise," the mascot of the 8th Princess Louise's (New Brunswick) Hussars. Credit: Canada. Dept. of National Defence / Library and Archives Canada / PA-173657

The troop decided to adopt her, and they provided her with plenty of tender loving care. It wasn't long before she was given the special name of "Princess Louise" by her human protectors.

Princess Louise (named after the regiment The Princess Louise Fusiliers) became a celebrated mascot. She was saluted by soldiers and she travelled safely in a horse stall that had been built in a big truck as the regiment made its way through the countries of Europe during the war.

At the end of the war, she was shipped back to Canada with her troop. Princess Louise received a 'royal welcome,' marching in a parade with the returning soldiers.

The soldiers really helped the orphaned filly but she also helped make life on the front lines a little more bearable for these fighting men.

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