

**EG Lambert School
Churchill Falls
presents**

“The Memory Box”

Cast of Characters:

Samantha Kent.....Veteran
Elizabeth Noonan.....Newspaper Boy, Mailman
Heidi Kent.....Newscaster #1, Jewish girl Hannah
Cara Diamond.....Newscaster #2, Jewish girl Annalise
Krista Collins.....Newscaster #2, Mother
Gillian Dawe.....Newscaster #4, Father
Ryan Acreman.....Soldier Edward
Charli Phillpot.....Soldier Chesley
Alexandria Sheppard.....Wife Elizabeth
Laura Bonnell.....American soldier
Nanako Matsuoka.....Japanese soldier

In 2005 Honor of “The Year of the Veteran”

2005 marks ‘The Year of the Veteran’. Each year, we see fewer and fewer “living” veterans – those who endured the horrors of the wars. It become more and more important that their story lives on. Today’s generation, all the generations to come, must be told the story so that memory of those who served for our freedom will not be forgotten. Our play is dedicated to their memory and courage.

In our story, a veteran sifts through his cherished “memory box” as he reflects back on his life. This play follows a young Newfoundlander, Edward Martin, as he enlists and sets off for war. He faces an unknown world – one that will change his life forever.

Scene 1

*Dim spot on singer, others in background. Song :” Where Have All The Flowers Gone”.
Blackout.*

Newsboy: Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Britain declares war on Germany. Get your copy here today. Read all about it.

Blackout. Regular stage lights. Newscasters begin to read individually, then their voices gradually begin to overlap, while war sounds grow in volume in background.

Newscaster 1: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Breaking news has just reached us. Hitler invades the Sudetenland, breaking the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

Newscaster 2: Hitler has now been appointed Chancellor of Germany.

Newscaster 3: War has just erupted between China and Japan.

Newscaster 4: Germany invades Poland.

Newscaster 1: Nazis take Paris.

Newscaster 2: Luftwaffe begins air raids on British airfields and aircraft factories.

Newscaster 3: Triple Alliance is formed between Germany, Italy and Japan.

Newscaster 4: The allies suffer a crippling defeat at the battle of the Somme.

Newscaster 1: German army invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

Newscaster 2: Canadians enjoy victory at Vimy Ridge.

Newscaster 3: Hitler launches Operation Barbarossa, invasion of the Soviet Union.

Newscaster 4: Assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand sparks the great war.

Newscaster 1: Japanese attack Pearl Harbour.

Newscaster 2: Germans introduce poison gas at Ypres.

Newscaster 3: Battle of Britain commences.

Newscaster 4: The allies take Sicily and Italy.

Newscaster 1: Russians suffer crippling defeat at Tannenberg.

Newscaster 2: D-Day!!! The Allies land in Normandy.

Newscaster 3: U S troops win battle at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Newscaster 4: Atomic bomb is used in Japan.

Newscaster 1: Hitler commits suicide.

Newscaster 2: Japanese surrender. War is over! *(Last phrase yelled together)*

Blackout. Purple follow spot on right side wall as WAR veteran walks towards stage.

Scene 2

Summary: the veteran is walking down the aisle and talking to himself. The setting is a cemetery.

Veteran: We were so innocent, naive almost. It's hard to believe how much war changed us all. Uniforms. Machine guns. Submarines. Bomber planes. Army tanks. It all sounded so exciting. All of my friends were going off to war so I decided I'd join up too - see the world, travel, have myself some adventure. I was bursting with pride that first day after I signed up. There I was, wearing my stiffly starched shirt and my well pressed pants. I had shined my new black boots till I could see my face in them. With my cap set at a jaunty angle - my, wasn't I the proud young man. My heart swelled with pride as I joined the ranks of young men marching down the streets of my hometown. Family, friends and neighbours waved and clapped as we set off. What a sight it was! That's how I felt in the beginning. How was I to know that there was so much more to war? I was only nineteen years old and so happy and proud to be able to defend my country. My regiment arrived in England after a two week crossing over war torn Atlantic. The time I had spent out on the water in our little skiff, hauling traps with my dear old dad did not prepare me for this rugged journey. Our man-of-war was tossed and torn as we dodged submarines and torpedoes. No one told me that my regiment would walk for miles day after day - over soggy, mud soaked land, with our feet and fingers so cold that we couldn't feel them. No one told me that days would pass without a hot meal. No one told me about the hours we would spend digging trenches, digging until our hands bled and our fingers were dumb with pain. No one told me how the rattling of machine guns and the blast of grenades would make my ears ring, long after the guns fell silent. No one told me what it would be like when I saw the fellow beside me leap into the air as a string of a dozen bullets tore into his chest. No one told me how it would feel to see my best friend beside me scream in pain as he drew his last breath. No one told me of the terror of the eerie silence that would fall across the smoking battle field as I stumbled over my comrades who lay dead in pools of crimson blood. No one told me what it would be like when my turn came. No one told me how my screams would fill the air as I looked down and saw the empty space where my arm had once been. *(Spot follows Vet as he moves over to headstone.)* Chesley's grave. Hard to believe my best friend is dead. Sure it's been sixty years, but it only seems like yesterday when we enlisted together. Couldn't wait to serve our country. I can still remember that day so clearly. *(Blackout)*

Scene 3

(Marching music as two young men march across stage. Summary: Edward and Chesley have been to the recruitment center to enlist. They have a little conversation about what they're going to tell their families and friends.)

Edward: Well, we did it! I never thought I'd sign my name on that paper.

Chesley: Yeah. We ship out in a week. Oh my..... I don't know what I'm gonna tell my girlfriend.

Edward: I know. Elizabeth's gonna be upset with me. But in the end we're gonna be heroes.

Chesley: Well, I guess it's time to face the music and tell the folks. If I don't make it, you can have my gramophone.

Edward: Ha ha, very funny. Your parents are gonna be so proud. Well I guess I'll talk to you later.

Chesley: See ya buddy.

Blackout

Scene 4

(Edward is walking down the road, thinking out loud to himself.)

Edward: I need to defend my country, but I have so many other things going on in my life. And, what about Elizabeth, what will she say? I know she'll be upset, but she'll wait. I'm sure it'll only be a few months or so. And then there are my parents. At my age, my folks should respect all of my decisions. But even so, it's a big one that will change our lives forever.

Blackout.

Scene 5

Scene opens with Elizabeth, Mom, Dad at the table.

Elizabeth: I know that he'll be excited.

Mom: Yes, and I know that I'm excited as well.

(Enter Edward through wings)

Edward: Hey everybody. Lizzy, what are you doing here?

Elizabeth: *(jumps up and runs over to Edward, giving him a hug and a peck on the cheek)*
I've got some amazing news to tell you.

Edward: So do I, but..... ladies first.

Elizabeth: I know we've only been married a short while, and we haven't even moved into our house yet, but everything can happen in nine months.

Edward: Nine months?

Elizabeth: Yes honey, I'm pregnant.

Edward: *(Looks happy, spins Liz around, and his expression turns to sadness)* That's wonderful news. But what I'm gonna tell you is going to hurt. You might want to sit down.

Elizabeth: Okay. *(sits down)*

Edward: I just got back from the recruitment center. I did it! I ship out in a week.

Elizabeth and Mom: *(Look at each other puzzled)* You did what?

Edward: It's only for a few months - well maybe a year, but I'll be home before you know it. And now that there's a baby on the way, this will be good for all three of us.

Dad: *(Limps over to Edward)* I'm so proud of you son. If only I could defend my country like you're going to do.

Mom: But Ron, how could you even remotely support this foolish idea of his?

Ron: May, I would have done the same thing if I didn't have this bum leg.

Elizabeth: *(Looks astonished and looks up with a sad look on her face)* But Edward, how could you do this without consulting me?

Edward: It was something I had to do.

Elizabeth: But we have a baby on the way, and a future to plan. How could you up and leave like this? We don't even know if you'll even come back.

Edward: Don't think that way. I'll be fine, you'll see.

(Ron and May are having an argument on the side of the stage)

Elizabeth: But why the military? There are plenty of other jobs out there to support us.

Edward: I know, but this way I'll be supporting you and defending my country.

Mom: Your father has convinced me to let you go. But don't think for one second that I won't worry about you every minute of the day. *(Ed and Mom hug)*

Elizabeth: And you won't be gone long?

Edward: Yes. I'm sure I'll be back before the baby comes. Surely this war can't last forever.

Elizabeth: Okay, if you say so. I guess it will be all right. *(She and Ed embrace and share a kiss)*

Blackout. Follow spotlight on veteran.

Scene 6

Veteran: How long ago it all seems now. We only thought we'd be gone for a few weeks, a couple of months tops. None of us could have predicted the years we spent overseas. Years and years away from home. All that kept me going were the letters I received. I loved getting them from my wife and parents. Just hearing about how the garden was growing or what new rules the government was coming up with. Even the little things seemed to comfort me. *(Takes out letters)* What memories these letters hold.

Blackout. In this part of the scene. Elizabeth and Ed alternate reading. She is pregnant.

Mailman: Hello, Mrs. Martin. I have another packet of letters for you from your husband.

Elizabeth: Thank you very much, John. It's been so long since I last got a letter.

John: I know. The post is all jammed up with so many people writing back and forth. I'll be on my way so you can read them in peace.

Elizabeth: Thank you very much. "My beloved wife. I've missed you very much. How have you been since I left?"

Spot off Elizabeth and goes on Edward, who is writing the letter and speaking the words.)

Edward: Things over here are much worse than we ever imagined. I miss you and love you. Hopefully this will be all over soon so I can come home to you and the baby. Love your beloved husband, Edward. (*Enter soldier with mail.*)

Chesley: Bys, there's another batch of letters. It's the biggest batch yet. Johnny, here's one from your mom. Jack, this one's from your girl. And eddy, looks like this bunch is from Lizzy.

(Ed takes the letters and goes to a private spot to read. He opens the letter as the lights dim on him and return to Liz who is writing the letter and reading it out loud.)

Elizabeth: Hello honey. I have a lot of news to tell you. Betty's youngest son, Tommy, got married yesterday. He gets shipped out next week. So many of the young men around here are enlisting, getting married, and shipping off to war. Pretty soon it's only going to be us women in the community. Hopefully it'll be all over before it comes to that. There are so many things that people are doing to try and help the war effort. First of all: sugar, butter, tea and coffee are being rationed because of the limited supplies that we have. However, my friends and I have come up with some very tasty recipes to accommodate our limited ingredients. Also, they've encouraged us to start a victory garden and we've been working very hard on ours, so I think that we'll have quite a crop of vegetables for winter. I don't believe I told you about the women's service group that I've joined. We're making plans to have British children come here to Canada until the war ends. I'm sure that before long we'll be able to send them back to their parents. Oh my, I almost forgot to tell you that we've set up groups to collect tin cans, newspapers and tin foil for something we like to call a scrap drive. The ammunition factories need everything that we can give them. I only wish we could do more. Please keep writing. We (baby and I) are counting down the weeks until you return. She is quite a kicker Love your darling wife, Elizabeth.

Scene 7

Follow spot on veteran.

Veteran: I met a lot of different people during the war. Before I even enlisted, I was at the American base in my home town and I became friends with an American soldier. He knew that he had little time to live, so he gave me one of his most prized possessions, an origami bird, and he told me the story of how he came to have it. Ah..... I'll never forget that story. A story that changed my entire outlook on the war and our so-called "enemies".

Two soldiers, American and Japanese, creep onstage holding guns, alone. Seeing each other, both are afraid. Hold guns in silence, both want to shoot but know they can't. They lay down their guns one at a time. Go to center stage and talk.

Japanese: Why didn't you shoot me?

American: I know that was what I was trained to do, but somehow - seeing you standing there - I just can't.

Japanese: I am scared. I do not like war.

American: Neither do I, but I will fight for my country because I must protect them.

Japanese: I miss Japan and my family.

American: My family is across the sea. If I don't make it back home, I don't know what they will do. I must survive for my family.

Japanese: Do not tell of this. I will be in trouble if they find out.

American: I know. I would be in trouble if my soldiers found out I let you live. I will not tell them.

Japanese: Thank you. You are kind. I must go now. Wait - here - take this to remember me.

American: What is it?

Japanese: It is an origami bird.

American: What does it mean?

Japanese: It is a sign of hope.

American: HOPE - we need hope. Thank you for letting me go. I won't forget you. Good-bye.

(Handshake . Blackout)

Scene 8

Follow spot on veteran

Veteran: Ah, the star of David. Now this brings back memories. Those poor Jewish people. How they suffered, forced out of their home, separated from their family, brutally murdered in Hitler's concentration camps. Millions of Jewish people unjustly killed. The Holocaust was one of the most horrible events of the war. What I saw there shook me to the core. Horrifying. The mass graves and all of the malnourished people ravaged by disease and lice. They had been forced to live like rats and work like dogs. But, I'll never forget my encounter with Hannah and Annalise, the young Jewish girls whom I met so many years ago.

Blackout. The Jewish girls sneak onto stage. Regular stage lights - dim then brighter.

Hannah: Where are we going to go?

Annalise: I don't know. Did they see us?

Hannah: Shhh, look over there. Annalise, hide!

Edward: Did you see that?

Chesley: What?

Edward: Over there. I'll go check it out. *(Walks over to the side where the girls are)*
Who's you?

Annalise: Wait, are you not a Nazi soldier? Your uniform, it confuses me.

Edward: No by, we'se 'ere fightin' the German soldiers.

Annalise: Oh Hannah come. He's a good soldier.

Hannah: *(Walks up behind Annalise)* Annalise, are you sure?

Edward: What are you doing here?

Hannah: My sister and I are in hiding. We're running from the Nazis.

Annalise: I am Annalise Farfigneugen, and this is my sister, Hannah. We've been in hiding ever since the beginning of the war.

Hannah: One of our friends was in the German army. He warned us of Hitler's plan to "purify" the country.

Edward: So where have you been these past years?

Annalise: Well, not long after we heard the news we fled to Holland to escape, but the Nazis found our secret apartment and we just narrowly escaped capture.

Hannah: We've been living outside for the past three weeks. No food. No water. No warm bed to sleep in at night. It's a wonder we've survived this long.

Edward: Come with me. Our camp's not far from here. We've got some grub there and after what you've been through I think you could use some food.

Annalise: Thank you very much for your help. We are so hungry.

The three begin walking over to the side of the stage where there will be a camp.

Edward: Hey Ches, have they started servin' dinner yet?

Chesley: Yep, and it's delicious.

Edward: Alright. We're gonna go get some.

Chesley: Wait, hold up. You said "we". Who's we?

Edward: Annalise, Hannah and me.

Chesley: What do you think you're doing? Bringin' runaways to camp. You should be thankful dat it was me who caught you and not the captain.

Edward: Well, they've been on the run and haven't had a decent meal in weeks. Show some compassion, by.

Chesley: Why should I? We've barely got enough food for the regiment, let alone two others.

Edward: Come on. They'd do the same thing for you if you were in their shoes. And besides, what do you think your mudder would say? Sure, she'd smack you right upside da head if you didn't help 'em.

Chesley: Alright then. But don't rat me out if the captain catches you. And besides, I've saved you a seat.

Edward: Right, thanks by. (*Edward and girls go get some food and return to join Chesley to eat*) Sorry bys, I know it's not dat good, but it's all we've got. Corned beef and potatoes, not much of a meal. But I suppose it's better than nothing.

Hannah: After weeks of nothing to eat besides berries and grubs, this tastes delicious. It reminds of better times. *(The girls have a hushed chat and then take something from their bag).*

Annalise: As a symbol of our *(searches for the right word)* th.....

Hannah: Gratitude.

Annalise: Yes, gratitude. Please accept this star of David. For us it is special. Please remember us. But now we must go. Thanks again, and good-bye.

Blackout. Spot on veteran.

Veteran: They tell me that I'm a hero. They tell me that I'm one of the lucky ones. Lucky because I survived. Lucky because I came home, missing a part of me, but alive. A veteran, they call me. You don't see too many of us anymore. It's been a long time. Sometimes I almost forget. And when my sleep is haunted by dreams, I want to forget, I need to forget. But on Remembrance Day, I want to remember. I need to remember. I need to think about what it was like. I need to think about why we fought to defend our country, our freedom. I need to remember that I did it for Canada. That I did it for you. Will all of you please remember too.

Blackout. Dim light on singer - start singing alone and is joined by others. Song "Remember When"

Remember When by Alan Jackson

Remember when I was young and so were you
And time stood still and love was all we knew
You were the first, so was I

We made love and then you cried
Remember when
(Enter all cast members and join in)
Remember when we vowed the vows and walked the walk
Gave our hearts, made a start, it was hard
We lived and learned, life threw curves
There was joy, there was hurt
Remember when
Remember when old ones died and new were born
And life was changed, disassembled, rearranged
We came together, fell apart
And broke each other's hearts
Remember when
Remember when the sound of little feet was the music
We danced week to week
Brought back the love, we found trust
Vowed we'd never give up
Remember when
Remember when thirty something seemed old
Now lookin' back, it's just a steppin' stone
To where we are, where we've been
Said we'd do it all again
Remember when
Remember when we said when we turned gray
When the children grow up and move away
We won't be sad, we'll be glad for all the life we had
And we'll remember when
Remember when
Remember when