



Carla Peperzak | Survivor and Member of the
Resistance | Amsterdam, Holland

Carla was born in Holland in 1923. She grew up in Amsterdam with her family, which was close-knit and fairly well-to-do. Her father was Jewish, and her mother was born Catholic, but raised in a Jewish family when her parents died. Carla's comfortable, normal childhood included vacations on the coast, field-hockey, rowing, ice-skating and sailing. She loved school and dreamed of one day becoming a doctor. Carla's family also lived near Anne Frank and her family, and attended the same Reform temple.



When the Nazis invaded Holland in 1940, everything changed. The following year, Jews had to register with the German authorities. Carla was required to have an ID card with a large "J" on it. In 1942 the Nazis went a step further and forced all Dutch Jews to wear the Star of David on their clothes. Carla's father, however, acquired papers from a lawyer that identified Carla, her sister, and her mother all as non-Jewish, allowing them greater freedom.

Carla was able to enroll in a medical technology program, and while working in a hospital she stole a German ID and bought a German nurse's uniform. With this disguise, she became active in the Resistance. Her first job, in 1942, was to find a place for her uncle and his family to hide in the countryside. She was able to do the same for about forty other people, and helped them obtain food, medical supplies, and fake IDs. Carla often biked for hours to visit those in hiding outside the city.

Although her immediate family survived, about seventy-five percent of Carla's extended family was killed in the Holocaust. After the war, Carla married her husband Paul, who was Catholic. In 1948 they left Holland, and they and their four children lived on four different continents because of Paul's work with the United Nations and the World Bank. She and Paul eventually settled in the U.S. and became citizens in 1958.

Carla has been sharing her story with students since 1992, and in 2014 became part of the Holocaust Center's Speakers Bureau.