Ines
1st Place
6th Grade, Almond School

Feeling History

I have always liked stories, but I didn't know that much about my own family. One day I asked my grandparents what the Spanish Civil War was. The only thing I knew was that my great-great grandfather died in the war in 1937, when my great-grandfather was only 7 years old.

While my grandparents were talking I heard a word that caught my attention: Belchite. Then I remembered that some time ago I visited a place called Old Bellchite. Suddenly, many thoughts came to my mind.

I closed my eyes and I started to imagine what it would be like to live in that war. I imagined a normal day. I was sitting outside my house reading a book. Everything was calm and peaceful. Suddenly, everything became really loud. There were explosions, people screaming and others running.

I felt very scared and dropped my book and ran into a nearby house to hide. Inside, there was a father dressed up in a military uniform. He was hugging his baby while his family was crying. Then he left very quickly. I did not understand what was happening, but I knew something terrible was going on.

I went back outside. I knew I should run, but instead I looked around. I saw groups of people fighting. Then I recognized someone. They were my friend's older brothers. They were about 17 years old. When I looked closely, I saw that they were crying. It looked like they were being forced to fight.

At that moment I thought: "It's only me who doesn't understand?" I had heard the word "war" before, but I really didn't understand what it meant.

Then I understood something important, in wars, nobody really wins. Everyone loses something – their families, their job or even their lives (as my great-great grandfather Miguel). I asked myself: "Why do people fight? Why do they think that war is a good solution? Don't they see it only brings pain?"

I opened my eyes.

I understood that remembering and imagining this is not to make us afraid. It's to learn. It's to remember that all wars bring sadness, and we should solve problems in a better way.

Nowadays Old Belchite is not only a historical place. Many people call it "Ghost Town" because the village was destroyed in the war and never rebuilt. A new town was created next to it and the old one stayed in ruins.

Some visitors say that at night they can hear strange voices of kids playing or maybe war planes or bombs. While some others say it might just be wind in old buildings. Whatever reason, Belchite is a place that makes you think.

When you walk through its quiet streets, you don't just see broken buildings … you feel History.