

German occupiers of the French town of Dieppe were waiting for the Allies as they came ashore on the 19th of August, 1942. Sixty percent of the invaders became casualties, forcing an Allied retreat.

Many of the casualties, including 1,946 Canadians, were prisoners. Jack Poolton - who later wrote of his experiences in *Destined to Survive: A Dieppe Veteran's Story* - was one of those prisoners. A private in "D" Company of the Royal Regiment, Canadian Second Division, he (with the help of his daughter) tells us what it was like when he and his fellow soldiers realized Operation Jubilee (the code name of the Dieppe mission) would end in disaster:

There was no way to escape the inevitable. The Germans were on three sides, the English Channel on the other. If the men continued to resist, it would only mean more bloodshed. The Royals' medical officer, Captain Laird, was seriously wounded. The tide had begun to come in and the wounded lying on the beach were drowning. These brave men now knew that victory was impossible. In all the noise and confusion, Jack heard a voice yell, "Sir, they're demanding that we surrender." The answer was, "Tell them to go to h__."

*Finally, it was realized that it was futile to resist any longer. The white flag had been hoisted. Reluctantly, the Royals had begun to surrender. Slowly the murderers who had not yet been seen emerged from everywhere. They yelled orders of "hande hock!" (hands up). Then they ordered the prisoners to throw all their weapons and helmets into a pile. If only they'd been given the chance to fight! (Jack A. Poolton and Jayne Poolton-Turvey, *Destined to Survive: A Dieppe Veteran's Story*, page 41.)*

What did it feel like, for the soldiers who were forced to surrender?

Captain Housser, myself, and another man were the last to drop our weapons and surrender on Blue Beach. A tremendous feeling of humiliation set in. With everything we had against us and even though we felt as if we had been wasted, the men continued to act as soldiers. I was proud of the conduct of our men, both Canadian and British. You can train a soldier to fight and you can train a soldier to accept death, but there is no way to prepare a soldier to be taken prisoner. (Poolton, page 41.)

Not surprisingly, when Dieppe prisoners returned to their homes and families, many had difficulty adjusting to civilian life.

See, also:

[Dieppe - Operation Jubilee](#)

Credits:

Clip from *History's Raiders*, incorporating newsreels from various national archives.

Quoted passages from *Destined to Survive: A Dieppe Veteran's Story* by Jack A. Poolton and Jayne Poolton-Turvey, [page 41](#).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Dieppe-Prisoners-of-War>

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