

## A MAN CALLED NONAME

I met Alfred Noname on January 30, 1989. Alfred lived in a quiet crescent in the West end of Regina. Outside, the temperature hovered at minus thirty degrees Celsius, and the snowbanks were piled up the window sills of his well-kept three bedroom bungalow. Inside, several youngsters played happily, running around, laughing and chatting with each other. When I entered the curtailed their activities, out of politeness, and after a shy appraisal of the stranger in their midsts they retired to the basement to resume their activities, though in a more subdued manner.

Alfred was a heavy-set man with a gently though resolute manner. At sixty-eight years of age, Alfred was retired and was finally taking life easy. He had large brown eyes that retained a touch of sadness throughout our discussion of his war and peace time experiences. Alfred's wife, Sheila died four years ago, and tragedy struck again a year later when his oldest daughter was taken as well. The children playing downstairs were two of Alfred's granddaughters. He has a son and daughter living in Edmonton, and has four grandchildren there, as well as a daughter and granddaughter in Winnipeg.

Alfred was born in 1921 on the Piapot Indian Reserve. He spent his childhood on this beautiful reserve consisting of rolling prairie country and a section of the southside of the Qu'Appelle Valley, about thirty five miles north of Regina.

The reserve people were not wealthy by "white standards," but life was, in the main, pleasant and secure. In 1921, everyone on the reserve spoke Cree, and people lived the traditional lifestyle. His family consisted of his grandparents, parents, many uncles and aunts and, in many ways, the "family" seemed to extent to include everyone on the reserve. But the reserve had its draw backs as well. People were often on the edge of hunger, and there was no work to be had unless one left the reserve. As well, there were no schools on the reserve. Children who were to be educated had to attend the Indian residential school run by the Catholic missionaries at Lebret, a village some 60 kilometres, thirty six miles southeast of the Piapot Reserve.

When Alfred became of school age his parents dutifully delivered him to the residential school at Lebret. This institution, a carbon copy of many other such educational facilities across the West, struck terror into the hearts of the young Natives who entered it's gates. Once delivered here, the boy or girl would not enter their parent's home again as a child, except for a very rare visit during school holidays. The children were not allowed to speak their own language. They spoke french, or in some cases English, and they were at times beaten if they were caught Cree. Childhood ended the day they entered the residential school. The

easy-going playful days among beloved family and relatives was instantly replaced with a rigorous discipline, delivered by strangers who spoke a foreign language. Time was no longer their own. Strange schedules controlled their every move "I hate to say to much" about the residential school] Alfred said in a hesitate voice," but I know what we went through. We were not given much chance of getting an education. After we got a little older, they use to put us on work parties three times a week."

"Did you get paid?" I inquired.

"Noo," Alfred replied, as though the mere question of pay would have been deemed absurd by the school's authorities. "We had a school farm and we had a dairy with quite a few milk cows on it. We were not given a chance to learn anything. We just worked." Alfred chuckled, and continued, "I finished grade five, and that was it. I was sixteen, and said no more school for me I guess. When you were sixteen, or seventeen, they let you out of school."

"As soon as you were legally old enough?" I queried.

"Right. I don't think that was fair at all. Yes, I am still bitter. I do feel sorry for myself that I did not have enough education. Now it is different. These kids are growing up and getting a good education."

Alfred was sixteen when his term in the residential school ended. During his brief span in school - some seven years in all - he had been transformed, even though he had not been well educated in the formal sense. Alfred had acquired a new set of values and a new language. He had been taught that time was money, and he had been taught that he must work, often for no wages at all. Alfred had been taught to respond, with out any visible sign of resistance, to authority. At age sixteen he returned to his parents place on the Piapot Reserve.

Back on the reserve not much had changed since the halcyon days of his childhood. But Alfred's perception of life on the reserve had been irrevocably transformed. Gone was the charm of his tolerance, at times irascible parents and Alberts. Yes, Alfred still had a deep and abiding respect for them, and yes, he still loved them. But now he was dissatisfied. He wanted to earn money, and he wanted to see the world. Further more, he had forgotten some of the skills that made life on the reserve viable - skills such as tracking and hunting. Nor did he derive the same pleasure from fishing, or picking the wild berries, the Saskatoons that grew in abundance in the valley of the Qu'Appelle River. For two years after his school days ended Alfred just hung around on the reserve with other dissatisfied youth, not knowing whether they should leave the reserve or not. If they did leave, where would they go? What would they do?

It was the middle of the 1930's and the land was in the grip of the great depression. As well, a sever drought had descended

upon the prairies. Year after year the stunted crops shrivelled and died in the withering heat. The land itself turned into dust and was blown into drifts several feet high along the abandoned, weed-strewn fences. Life was as hard and unrelenting for the "white" prairie farmers as it was for the Native people imprisoned on the baron reserves.

In 1938 Alfred and a friend named Robert King, from the Grenfell Reserve, left, looking for work. They simply climbed onto a freight train and, perched on top of a box car with dozens of other hobos from all over the West, they watched the beautiful fall-coloured of the valley disappear giving weigh to the parch, burned-red crops of the flat prairie. They got off in a small town named Raymore, about 72 miles straight north of Regina.

They eventually found a few days work on a threading crew, but when that ended, so did their prospects of gainful employment. They searched through a number of prairie communities, "riding the rods" with countless others who wandered about aimlessly from town to town atop the boxcars of the CPR. Their money soon ran out, and they had nothing to eat at days at a time.

For the brief period that they were able to work they were paid "two dollars a day, till sun up till sun down." When the money was gone they starved - for a lived off handouts from other hobos who had something to eat and, at times, from sympathetic farmers or townspeople. But hunger was nearly a constant companion, and they suffered from the cold and the heat of the changeable prairie weather, as did the thousands of other Canadians who were riding the rods, going from no where to no where.

The white hobos often shared their meager supplies with Robert and Alfred, who of course shared whatever fortune had given them with one-and-all, since this had always been the Indian way. Thus, the great depression and drought served to bring Indian and white man together. It took decades of prosperity to drive them apart again after the war was over. Indeed, many of the men that later teamed up with Alfred Noname in the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) had been hobos during this period as well.

Alfred returned to the reserve in the winter of 1938. He hung around the reserve for two more years staying with his parents, and doing what little work that he could find. Then war broke out and Canada began to mobilize it's armed forces in September of 1939. Alfred watched as other men from the reserve and the surrounding countryside went to enlist - to "join up." Alfred was eager to go but his father flatly refused to let him. Alfred went to talk to the three world war one veterans living on the reserve, but none of them would talk about their experience over seas.

In 1940, Alfred again asked his father, and again he said "no." "I will just go for three months," Alfred told him, but again his father said no. "Why?" pleaded Alfred.

"Well, look," said his father, "if you join the army and go to war....what if you get killed?"

"Well, that's the chance I will have to take," Alfred replied quietly. Alfred's father was loosing his battle to keep his son out of the war and safe at home. A week later Alfred and another buddy from the reserve went south to Estevan, looking for work. They found none, and started back north again. Alfred turned to his friend in the boxcar - they always hitched a ride on the train everywhere they went - "when I hit Regina, I'm going to join up," he told him, "what about you?"

"I don't know," his buddy responded thoughtfully, "I would like to see you in uniform first, before I join up."

"O.K."

The next day the train pulled into Regina, and Alfred and four others (all white) struck off to find the recruiting station. They came back the next day to the old Pasqua Hospital for a medical examination. They were all sent to a barracks in Regina following the examination. The five new buddies stuck together but they were not sure they had been excepted until a sergeant told them, "o.k. head on over to the Quarter Master's (QM) stores and pick up your uniforms. Alfred chuckled, "looks like we're in." At 4:30 that afternoon they broke off for the day. Alfred put on his uniform and went downtown to look up his more bashful Native buddy. "Here I am. I have got my uniform. What about you?" Alfred greeted him with a laugh.

"Well I guess I will have to join up know," his buddy laughed. "but first I'm going back to the reserve, and then I'll come back and join up." And that is what he did, but Alfred Noname was the first man from his reserve to enlist in the army. After being accepted into the army, Alfred was given two options. He could join either the Regina Rifle Regiment (SSR) or the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) "well," Alfred thought, "I don't come from Regina, or know anyone here, but I know a bunch from around Estevan, so I will join the SSR's."

Alfred took four months of basic training in Regina. Like the Indian residential school at Lebret, everything ran like clockwork, and the discipline imposed upon a man was so thorough that it ruled nearly every aspect of it's time work and thoughts. Uniforms had to be pressed every night webbing had to be cleaned with blanco, a khaki powder that you mixed with water and scrubbed into the webbing brass buttons and catches had to be meticulously cleaned and shown with strong smelling brasso, and the spare pair of army boots had to be shown even on the soles. Ones rifle was treated like a mute god. Cleaned outside as well as out, a speck of dust inside the shiny rifle bore who would be enough to warrant severe punishment. The cleaning and polishing chores took most of the evening to complete so there was little

spare time for the soldier, either day or night. The days were long and hard. At 6:00 a.m. (0600) hours the "hut NCO" (barracks non-commissioned officer, usually a lance-corporal) would shout and rage, getting everyone out of bed.

A man showered, and then lined up at the line of sinks, awaiting his turn to get at one so that he could shave. After the hurried morning ablutions, there was a rush to roll up the bedding, by folding all the blankets into a neat rectangular shape at the head of the bed a spare pair of boots were turned upside down at the foot of the bed, ready for inspection by the orderly officer (officer of the day). The large pack and the small pack, squared off, brass shown and webbing blanketed, were placed on a shelf above the cot ready for inspection.

Then the men set off for the parade square. There they were shouted at and hurled into three ranks. As their numbers were called out in alphabetical order, they snapped to attention and screamed out in response "SIR!" The idea was to sound as aggressive as possible, so some men hollered "SAHH," others began to innovate - any guttural sound would do; "BRAAGHH" one would shout when his name was called. Another would respond SAHH, and occasionally a less forward type would respond with a simple "sir."

Then, as the drill sergeants screamed insults and curses at the men, they learned their drill. It started with their learning to "stand at attention" and then "stand at ease." Standing at attention meant standing with your heels touching, toes out at an angle of thirty degrees. Hands straight by the sides, thumbs in line with the seams of the trousers. Some men had a natural slant when they tried this, so that one hand would be perhaps six inches lower along the trousers seam than the other. Thus, his shoulder would droop by six inches. This had to be corrected. Another would stand perfectly straight but his head would be at an angle. This had to be corrected.

On the "STAND AT EASE" command, the left foot was to be lifted six inches from the ground, move smartly twelve inches away from the right foot, and slammed down smartly again at an angle of thirty degrees, onto the surface of the parade square.

"ATTEND...WAIT FOR IT, YOU MEAT HEADS...SHAA," screamed the drill sergeant. (This was army lingo for the command "attention!") The work was always broken up into two parts when the "ATTEN" portion of the command was barked, the troops prepared themselves. (Some always were over-anxious and started to shuffle before the "SHUN" portion of the command was given). Thus, during most training episodes, the command always came ATTEM...WAIT FOR IT...SHUN. When the SHUN command was barked, the left foot was lifted and banged down twelve inches away from the right foot. At first, this spread range from four inches to perhaps thirty six inches among the recruits, instead of the

desired twelve inches. The angle ranged from nearly a hundred and eighty degrees in some case to no angle at all.

In a matter of hours, however the men were standing correctly and instead of the original mass shuffle when the commands "ATTEN...CHA," and "STND ATHEES," were given, there was a sharp CRACK as their collective steel-shoed heels hit the hard top in unison. When this occurred, the men began to feel like soldiers.

Days passed. They continued to drill together, responding to commands as they marched around the parade square in three ranks. "BY THE RIGHT, QUICK MARCH". The three columns marched off in unison, and the sound of their heels hitting the hard surface of the square in perfect rhythm began a transformation of the consciousness. They were not longer a bunch of individuals: they were a unit. "ABOUT TURN TOWARDS," the command was given as the left foot hit the pavement, another step forward was taken with the right foot, then the left foot was placed across the right on the line of advance at a ninety degree angle. The right foot again was brought down as the column turned to the right and then it moved off in the opposite direction. CHECK ONE - TWO - THREE - AWAY, the recruits called out at the top of their lungs as they made their collective about turn. "COLUMN WILL ADVANCE....RIGHT TURN came the command. as the left foot hit the ground, CHECK - ONE - TWO - AWAY, shouted the recruits, turning to the right in two stages, then stepping off smartly with the left foot. They marched stiffly away arms swinging at shoulder height. "GET THOSE ARMS UP. LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT --- LEFT,---LEFT---LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT.

There was a collective rhythm to the marching feet during the drill. When the command "ABOUT...TURN" came, the even crunch crunch changed rhythm "ABOUT...TURN CRACK CRACK CRACK CRACK, CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH...." SQUAD WILL ADVANCE...RIGHT TURN, crunch, CRACK CRACK CRACK, crunch crunch crunch.

Parade square drill was interspersed with weapons' training. The rifle sten gun and bren gun were the tools of the trade. There were mortars to learn about (weapons that looked like thick stove pipes that you drop the small bomb into, which fired with a roar and a flash, sending the deadly projectile at a very high trajectory into the target some hundred yards or so away). The sten gun looked like a small barrel (it fired nine mm. ammo) surrounded by a perforated heat cylinder. It was equipped with a thin metal but at one end that fitted into the shoulder. It had a clip that held twenty eight to thirty bullets which it would fire with incredible rapidity. The sten gun often went off unexpectedly, or stubbornly jammed and refused to fire at all. It was reported to have cost a measly \$6.00 to produce, and it acted like it.

The bren was a beautiful weapon. It looked like a rifle with a bipod on the front. It had a clip holding twenty eight point three to three caliber bullets. It could be fired either with

single shots, or one automatic. It was very accurate and very reliable, three to three Enfield single shot, bolt action weapon was, according to the instructor the equivalent to the soldiers wife. "LOVE YOUR RIFLE AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT", the men were told.

There were many inspections. If you failed to pass an inspection you were put on charge and marched up before the commanding officer (CO) escorted by two privates, and commanded by a screaming NCO. You removed your hat when you were marched up in front of the CO or "the Old Man" as he was commonly called, though not to his face. You were a disgrace and you could not wear your beret with its regimental hat badge on such an occasion. For punishment you would be confined to barracks given extra duties and extra parade square drill. For a serious offense, you were sent to detention - the military prison - where life was made unimaginably rough for you.

When you left the hut in the morning, it was inspected, your shoes, blankets, webbing, large and small packs etc. If the brass or the webbing was not shone to a high standard and cleaned meticulously, you were placed on charge. On parade, you were inspected. Beret worn correctly...hat badge shown, face cleanly shaved, hair cut so that no hair showed below the beret. Tie on properly, shirt pressed, tunic pressed, web belt clean, brass shown, trousers pressed, putties or gaiters on properly, shoes shown brightly. Rifle clean outside, bore spotlessly clean and shown inside. And of course you had to be on time for everything, or you were placed on charge, as you would be if you failed any aspect of the daily inspections.

So, for Alfred and his new comrades, four months passed and basic training was completed in Regina. At the end of the four months the civilians had been transformed into soldiers, a select brotherhood of fighting men.

Alfred was then transferred to Winnipeg where he spent another four months on weapons training. The routine of the barracks and parade square ended when they received news early in April of 1942 that they were scheduled for over seas duty. A very short embarkation leave towards was given, just time enough time for a day at home and a final farewell to the reserve, and they were back in camp ready to entrain for the east coast of Canada.

Alfred and his comrades in the SSR entrained in Winnipeg, and got off at the port of Halifax. They marched onto the troop ship and crossed the dark Atlantic to England. England was exciting. Again, barracks life dominated everything. Training began all over again. But now it was supplemented with mock combat maneuvers called "scheams." These scheams pitted regiments against each other in rehearsals for battles. There was night marches, attacks against objectives ranging from villages to airbases. They learned defense strategies as well, and always there was the parade square, the discipline and the drill.

Alfred and his companions joined the Second Canadian Division at Camp Whitley, near Gilford, as reinforcements for the SSR's. By July, 1942, the new reinforcements were taking special training in assault landing craft. They had to scale sheer cliffs, hundreds of feet high. In early July, the second division began to divest itself of the older and weaker personnel. Men who could not keep up with the rigorous physical requirements of the cliff scaling, and intensive training were sent back to Canada. Even the new reinforcements from Canada, Alfred Noname among them, were having some difficulty meeting the physical challenges of the second divisions exhausting training program.

Among the hardened troops of the SSR's, Alfred came into contact with old friends from Fort Qu'Appelle, both Native and white. They were in magnificent physical shape. Alfred soon found out why. They began scaling cliffs along the coast of Southern England, Alfred explained, "the sergeants went ahead up this great, sheer cliff. They put pegs in a tied ropes to them, then hurled the ropes down to us. We had all our gear on our backs, and we carried our rifles slung over our shoulders. The cliffs were made of shale and as you hung onto the rope and climbed the cliff, the shale would break loose and you would lose your footing. The first time I went half way. I couldn't make it and I came down. My arms felt like they were broken. But the third time I tried, I made it. I just barely made it to the top and a sergeant pulled me up. It's funny, it was hard, dangerous work, but no one got killed on that training. Some of the older guys just couldn't do it."

For three more weeks, Alfred continued this type of almost super human training. He toughed up very quickly as did most of the other men in his contingent of reinforcements.

By now Alfred had teamed up with a small non-Native man who came originally from Willowbunch, Saskatchewan. As as often the case with army buddies, these two became inseparable friends. Alfred Rainvell was a short, slim man with a prominent nose and a head of rich, wavy brown hair. He was quiet, like Alfred Noname, and, like Noname, he was in good physical shape. These two, as was the custom of army buddies shared their smokes and money with each other. They went only leave and on passes together, womanizing and seeing the sights of war-time England.

In late July, the SSR's were given a bit of a break from their constant training in assault landing of the beaches. Instead, the battalion was sent on an eight and a half foot march on July the 20. On July 21, Major H.T. Kempton was posted out of the regiment to an unknown destination. (This posting probably saved the major's life, although the men of the battalion were not yet aware of what exercise ford 1 held in store for them. Major J.E. McRae replaced him. Lieutenant Colonel C.C. Merritt toasted Major Kempton in the Officers' Mess, saying "it was men such as

Major Kempton whose Esprit-De-Corpes kept regiments of the Canadian army in such top shape."

On July 22, they practiced grenade throwing, using the "36" grenade - a pineapple like bomb containing 36 pieces of shrapnel. It was to be used for close quarter fighting. Then they practices snipers stalking and defense patrols. In the afternoon they went on sports parade." This was a day away from uniforms and drill. The men could go swimming or play ball, as they chose.

July passed quietly until the 29, when they moved out on another scheme. The first week of August again consisted of routine training - "training as per syllabus," as the army generally termed it. On August 7, the battalion was lectured on "the role of the assault battalion." At 17:15 hours (5:15 p.m.) they were treated to a movie in barracks. It was a Hollywood movie called "Ziegfield Girl." And in the evening the men were treated to a dance at the Pullborough Village hall, where they had a chance to mingle with the civilians and danced with the English girls. For a very large number of young Canadian troops, this would be the last time in their short lives that they would hold a women in their arms or dance with her. The next day, being Sunday, the men went to "church parade."

On August 13, during a demonstration of firing the two inch mortar from the hip. Private P. Kirkpatrick was seriously wounded by shrapnel. For many young men, this was the first Canadian bloodshed they had seen. Perhaps it was an omen. On August 14, the CO., the two IC, the adjutant and all company commanders were called away to I group (a meeting where plans were divulged and discussed among all the ranking officers) at Divisional Head Quarters (HQ). Something big was up.

In mid August, warning orders came through to the SSR's for another exercise, "Ford I," it was labelled. The troops new nothing about Ford I, but Alfred Noname recalled: "I had only been in this unit for three weeks. The sergeant tried to explain the exercise, but he really didn't know where we were going either. We thought it was another training exercise. It was being kept secret, but the boys had kind of an idea because we were issued live ammunition. everything. But still, we didn't know where we were going or even if this was the real thing or not."

"The next day we spent cleaning and preparing our weapons. Then a officer came in and gave the order. We were loaded on to trucks; nobody said where we were going to. We thought it was another scheme. We were joined by the Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, and the Fusiliers Mount-Royal. This made up the sixth Brigade. We headed South on a large convoy. As we passed through the small towns along the route I noticed a lot of people standing out on the streets, waving at us. They seemed to have an idea something was up."

"We hit the port of Southampton, where we seen all the ships in the bay. Everybody got off. Each company had to stick by itself, and we were not allowed to talk to anybody. Then we boarded the ships."

"I remember the name INVICTA, that was our ship. We boarded and were put on an upper level below decks, and D Company was below us. We still didn't know, but we were excited to be on the ship. We stayed below deck until after dark. We weren't even allowed to look out the portholes."

"Just before midnight an officer came in and showed us a map, a map of Dieppe. He explained where we were going to land and what, and what we were going to do."

"The officer had aerial maps of target, but the maps had failed to detect a number of gun emplacements." Alfred explained, "the pictures taken by the KAF didn't quite get the gun emplacements. They were hidden inside the cliffs. When there was trouble the guns would come out to fire than go in again."

### THE BLOODING OF THE CANADIANS

"The British sent in two companies of commandoes (elite attack troops especially trained for virtual suicide missions), Number 3, and 4. Number 4 was on our side, the west side. They went in ahead of us to take out the guns they knew about. But the Germans were on twenty four hours alert so the commandoes ran into alot of trouble."

In fact, Number 3 commando, which consisted of seven landing craft, holding twenty to twenty five men each, had set out to destroy enemy gun implacements on the extreme left of the assault beaches near Dieppe. Near the village of Petit Bereneval. Six of the craft landed late and the Nazi defenders were waiting for them. The enemy, well entrenched, and with the entire beach ranged in, out numbered three commando by at least five to one. After bitter fighting that lasted from early dawn until 10:00 a.m., the British commandoes were overwhelmed and destroyed. The seventh landing craft of Number 3 commando having gone astray, went inland up a narrow channel. Major Peter Young, with twenty men advanced with magnificent effrontery against an entire battery of German artillery that held command of the beach. Capture of the battery was of course impossible, but the commandoes engaged the battery from a distance of only two hundred yards, preventing the guns from firing at the advancing landing craft of the SSR's.

Three commando then withdrew to the beach without lots, where the pilot of there landing craft had waited loyally for them, and know removed them swiftly to the safety of the destroyer. Number 4 commando, under the command of Lord Lovat, went in on the extreme right of the assault beaches. The assault went precisely as planned and enemy batteries were knocked out with only light casualties among the commandoes, having two officers and ten men killed, and thirty three wounded.

As the Canadians approached the beach at the first light of dawn, the sea was moderately rup. When sixth Brigade left the ship in their landing barges 04:15 hours (4:15 a.m.), August 19, 1942. They were still several miles off the coast of France, and it was 04:50 hours before the first wave of troops hit the beaches of Dieppe and Pourville.

The royal regiment of Canada, containing nearly seven hundred men, landed at Puys, close to where Number 3 commando had parished hours before. Their landing craft touched down twenty minutes late. The well entrenched and well prepared enemy was waiting for them as the men left the shore and rushed towards the sea wall, they were cut down by intense machine gun fire. Murderous fire poured from pill boxes, and those who survived the initial charge took shelter behind the sea wall. The sea wall gave them virtually no protection, however. They were enfiladed

by a hidden machine gun positions on the left, and many more died here. Then mortars swept the beach, killing or wounding those few who had survived.

\*Bangalore torpedoes were used by the Royals to cut the wire on top of the seawall so that they might resume the attack up the beach. But an artillery troop of four howtzers located only a few hundred yards away opened up, dropping 550 rounds on the Royals. The enemy later counted a 150 dead on this beach. Only 20 officers and men from the Royals got off the beach.

Despite the impossibility of the attack on this beach, the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) was sent in after the Royals, landing under a cliff to the west of the seawall that was now covered with Canadian dead. They too walked into a solid wall of fire and this regiment was also destroyed before 08:30 hours.

The SSR's had better luck. Their landing craft went all the way into the beach before the enemy was aware of their presence. It was just breaking daylight as the first wave of SSR's touched down on the beach at Pourville.

Alfred Noname continued with his account of the battle of Dieppe: "It was just daybreak when we landed in Pourville. Everybody was kind of jittery. I looked up (over the steel gate of the landing craft) because I wanted to see where we were going. I could see - kind of rolling hills, the same white hills as in England....and sheer cliffs. The sailor said at the back 'keep your heads down.' We would glide in for awhile, then they start the motor for a minute then it would shut off and we would glide again. They started up the motor one final time real fast. There was still no fire coming at us, but we were expecting it at any time. Finally, we glided in to the sandy beach in front of Pourville."

"There was a big cement wall about eight feet high. We landed on the sandy beach. There was a great big hotel ahead, passed the seawall. We were all the way up the beach, leaning against the seawall when all hell broke loose. But they were not firing at us. They were firing at the landing craft that were pulling back out to sea. The fire was coming from the hotel. We could see the hundreds of flashes."

"An officer gave the order to fire and everybody opened up, rifles and bren guns, and that [enemy] fire soon died down. But from the hills, where we didn't expect, machine guns were going, firing at the landing craft."

Some commandoes arrived from Number 4 and told us about the guns they had cleaned out. We had a specific objective. A pill box on the hill. We met some Camerons [Cameron Highland of Winnipeg] and went up. There was no pill box there, just a few Germans and a machine gun and they firing upon us to. But on the street

going up the hill. it was quiet. The machine guns on the hill weren't firing at us."

"But what we found funny as were going up the hill: there was a dairy farm on one side of the street, and the farmer was just sitting outside milking his cow." Alfred stopped his narrative and chuckled out loud at the memory of this incongruous sight. He continued: "his women was looking down at us from the house, but he never even glanced up. We had a few Metis who spoke french and they tried to converse with him but he wouldn't even look. See what happened, Alfred continued," the RAF had dropped some leaflets to the french people, that we would be there but they were not to get in touch with us or anything, for their own safety."

"We went on up the street and everyone had to take a turn kicking the door in to see if there anybody inside. On my turn, I cocked my rifle. I was nervous. Anyway, I opened the door and walked in. I couldn't see anybody; empty room, so I came out. On the next house it was my buddies turn. The door opened and a German officer came out. He had a red cross band on. We were warned we were not to fire at a first aid man with a red cross arm band. Well, this German came out - everyone had his rifle cocked - and he reached into his tunic and took out a loucher (a .9 mm hand gun issued to all German officers). I don't know who he was aiming at. There were eleven of us, and I froze. My buddy from Estevan took a shot, and nearly took his arm off. The German was in shock. He didn't even feel it. He did not fall down, but he dropped his loucher. The officer called for a volunteer to take him back to the beach as a prisoner."

"A friend of mine name Raimboux, a Metis from Willowbunch, said, 'I'll take him.' 'Well, hurry up' the officer told him. 'We are behind time.' He took the German away and came back in a very short while."

"In the meantime the snipers were well hidden, firing at us. We would run, duck, then run again. One of the boys got hit in the thigh but it didn't hit the bone. He stayed with us. He had a bullet hole right through. We fixed him up with our first aid kit. He wasn't bleeding much, but later on he had a lot of pain. We had forgotten our fear by this time. Being fired upon, well, you kind of get used of it."

"All at once the Camerons came along, the Cameron Highlanders. They had been pretty well beaten up on the beach because it was already daylight when they landed. They took off for an objective two miles further up. They were suppose to meet the tanks, from the Calgary Tank Regiment, but the tanks never made it. They never got passed the shore. They couldn't go up the shale on the beach. They were slipping and sliding, and they just got picked off [by German artillery]. Alot of tanks were hit before they got onto the beach. So we had no tank support, no artillery. We did have some air support, but they were busy

up there themselves. They were taking on the German planes in dog fights. We were watching them now and again, when we had the chance. Fighter planes were coming down. We could see the smoke."

"Late in the day a big plane: I think it was a Boston bomber, came straight at us flying low. We thought it was an enemy but it was ours, and we had fired some shots at it before we discovered it was ours. It lay the smoke screen for us. It really helped us to make a retreat to the beach. Orders to make the retreat came right after the bomber laid it's smoke. We had our own two inch mortars for smoke but they were no good. They made just little puffs of smoke...everything we had was outdated by the German equipment."

"I have no idea how long we were there, but the officer gave the order to head back to the beach. We started for the beach but held up in a town square [that came under heavily mortar fire]. The square had big walls all around. We were tired, and just sat down. German mortars were falling in the square, and they were very effective to. The Germans had the area ranged in. There was no cover and alot of men got hit. We were just sitting with our rifles at the ready for anything. I was sitting there drinking from my water bottle - I was so thirsty. It was hot, and we were waiting for the Camerons to return."

"Well this old fellow came along. Tom Ashton, from the Pasqua Reserve. 'By God, am I glad to see you,' he said. Another guy from the same reserve as me came along. 'I'm glad you guys are still alive,' he said; 'I thought you guys would be killed long ago.'

"Noo, I said, "there were alot of [German] prisoners of war (POWs) in the square with us. Provosts (our military police) were guarding them and searching them. We had to do something with them. You couldn't let them walk around, so we had to tie their hands behind their backs so they wouldn't go anywhere. A German mortar fell amongst them and they got killed. We got the blame for it, and later, the Germans took revenge on the Canadians who were taken prisoner during the raid. That is why the Germans later shackled the Canadian prisoners."

"We were sitting there waiting for orders to go down to the beach. When we left for the beach, I noticed a lot of boys laying there....I thought they were dead. Some were dead, a lot were wounded, but they never made any noise like you hear in the movies, they were quiet. The tide was out now."

"I saw these two in the beach and I stepped over them. I thought they were dead. I looked down the beach and there was a little pier, and a bunch of boats. Then I saw one of the guys on the beach move. They were not dead after all. I said, 'heh Duncan, are you going to stay here or are you going to make a run for it.' He was an older guy, a lot older than me. He seemed to be

in shock. He said, 'if I run for it I'm going to get killed for sure' and then."

"Well," I told him: "do you want to be a prisoner of war?"

"No," he said.

"Well get up and run," I said. I pushed him and he came back with me.

"So, what could I do now." I started with my buddy from Weyburn, Joe Nagadome. We walked up and down the beach. We were drawing fire from machine guns, mortars and shore batteries. They were all giving it to us. You could see the water just like it was bubbling. I saw two landing craft overloaded with men get direct hits. Everybody gone! My buddy and I looked back at the hills. 'That's where they are coming from,' I told him, 'and look at this little rifle I have here. What can that thing do?' 'I just dropped it in the water.' 'Lets head for the water. There is nothing we can do here.' We tried to pick up one of our wounded buddies. He was hit in both legs. He said 'no, leave me boys. Save yourself.' So we inflated our May Wests (life jackets) and started swimming, two of us together - brothers going out. He was a white man from Estevan. It was the last landing craft waiting there."

"We were just about to it when the water shot up in front of us, between us and the landing craft. A shore battery had just missed us. Then the sailors pulled us up. We got in. I was soaking wet. I sat down. I couldn't move. Guys were on top of me. Some were - you know - bloody. It was badly over loaded. You could feel the force from the shore batteries' explosions - coming that close to us. So we backed away slowly. And we headed for the destroyer."

"In the meantime the Germans were firing, machine guns, everything. Steady, steady all the time and the smell of the cordite (high explosive) became unbearable. They destroyers tried to return the fire but they didn't do any damage. They didn't know where the targets were. So we got in. I was nearly the last off the landing craft. We laid on top of the deck. I noticed there was a great big hole on the side of the destroyer. It had been hit. We were the last ones to pull out of there. This destroyer could hardly move because we were over loaded. As we came away, the German dive bombers came out of the clouds, straight down on us, and the little ship zig zagged. You could see the huge spouts of water all around us."

"The destroyer fired back with it's *Bofors* (.20 mm a.a. guns with four barrels). I was laying beside one. What a noise it made as it hammered away at the planes. I covered my ears with my hands. The *stukas* (enemy dive bombers) were coming so fast that they were very hard to hit. We didn't get any, but they did not score a hit on us either. But some were sure close."

"It was dark when we landed at New Haven. I had been soaking wet when I got on the destroyer but I was dry when I got into New Haven and I didn't even notice the difference. Nothing to eat. I was hungry. There was an officer going around taking all our names, and what regiment we were in. I noticed two Canadian sailors. One said he came from Regina, but I forgot to ask him his name. There were men from all the units there, Camerons, Commandoes, sailors, British soldiers who were to be reinforcements but they were never sent in, they never landed...."

"It was all senseless, anyway. It's too bad you know...."

"We were all standing on the pier when an officer said 'all SSRs follow us.' We went to a little house. They told us to stay there; they would pick us up in the morning. They gave us a cup of rum, and that knocked me out. The next morning we were loaded up in trucks and taken back to camp and, oh, what a pitiful sight. We were in shock. We were in shock. The only ones we left behind in England were the transport drivers and the cooks. Every day we were taken to a big tent and officers and sergeants questioned us, 'did you see this guy get killed? Was this one taken prisoner?' We didn't know. How could we tell. There were so many bodies laying all around."

"About four days later we went to the hospital and there were the men I left laying on the beach. I don't know how they got back but there they were."

"I will never forget that day in August, 1942."

If the experience of the SSR's pushed men to the very edge of human endurance, they were nevertheless fortunate compared to other units engaged in the Dieppe raid.

For the Hamilton Light Infantry (HLI) and Essex Scottish regiments it was total disaster. They had landed on the main beach in front of Dieppe at 5:20 a.m. - long after daylight. Five squadrons of canon-firing Hurricane fighters shelled the beaches as the landing craft came in. Their attack ended just as the Essex Scottish and HLI leaped from their landing craft and began to cut through the barbed wire and entanglement that the Germans had placed along the beach.

The tanks of the Calgary tank regiment did not land as planned, due to a navigational error, and came in fifteen minutes later. During these fifteen minutes the two infantry units caught in the barbed wire on the open beach were at the mercy of enemy machine guns, artillery and mortars. The beach was swept with merciless fire, taking a terrible toll of Canadians. Nevertheless a handful of HLI men, boldly led by Captain A.C. Hill actually made into the centre of the city and engaged the enemy in a furious struggle in the streets near the church of St. Remy. On a side

street near this church a small unostentatious monument stands today. It was erected by some french civilians who saw two Canadian soldiers get cut down on the street by German machine gun fire. The monument is inscribed simply *two Canadian soldiers died here.*

When the Calgary Tank Regiment did make its landing on the beach, it was incinerated by a terrible inferno of fire from enemy batteries and mortars. Yet, before they were destroyed they bravely brought their guns into action against an entrenched, invisible enemy. Miraculously, some tanks survived the slaughter of the beach and crossed the seawall. However, none made it all the way into the town of Dieppe. But some of the tanks immobilized by enemy fire still continued to fire their guns in a gallant but vein attempt to support the hard-pressed infantry.

Of all the tank crews landed at Dieppe that morning, only one man was known to have returned to England. The Fusiliers Mont-royal and the Royal Regiment who were sent into to support the HLI and the Essex Scottish were destroyed on the same beach. Fire was so intense by this time on the beach that the landing craft were unable to get back to take the survivors off. Consequently they had all to be abandoned. Of the eight landing craft that did get to the beach, six were destroyed and lost. Of the five hundred eighty two men who had embarked with the HLI, only two seventeen returned to England. Of the five fifty three men of the Essex Scottish who stormed the beach that morning, only fifty two returned to England that night, and twenty eight of these were wounded.

Over all, the Canadian casualties were stunning. Of the four thousand nine hundred and sixty three Canadian soldiers of all ranks who left England, only two two one one returned. And of these survivors, five eighty nine were wounded. Twenty eight of these men died later of their wounds.

The Dieppe raid lasted for only nine hours. Of all the Canadian units engaged, only one unit - the Les Fusiliers Mount-Royal - brought its commanding officer back to England. Little remained of the Canadian fourth brigade, not much more remained of the sixth. In fact, the Canadian second division, among the toughest, best trained divisions in England prior to the Dieppe raid, took months of hard work and thousands of replacements before it again became a fighting unit.

The incredible bravery shown by the Canadian troops did not receive due recognition in Canada or elsewhere. American radios blared, and newspaper headlines proclaimed, Americans invade Dieppe. The British media praised the commandoes' courage and audacity. Canadians at home did not realize the magnitude of the disaster until the telegrams began to arrive by the thousands in the cities towns villages and farms across the nation. The unfortunate recipient of the telegram, opening it with shaky hands, was hit with these words "we sincerely regret to inform

you that your son...was killed (wounded, missing), in action August 19, 1942."

Alfred Noname, a survivor, must surely stand as a symbol for all the brave, innocent Canadian youth who died, were wounded, or miraculously survived that day. For those young Canadians whose bodies were destroyed beyond recognition, the gravestone is marked "an *unknown soldier*". These unknown soldiers, unknown though their names be, rest as great Canadian heroes in their foreign graves. One thinks of the marker on the street in Dieppe, "two Canadian soldiers died here." These grave stones have no name. Like Alfred, however, they represent - no the ignominious loss of unimportant people as the anonymous markers sadly suggest - but on the contrary, they represent the highest standards of human shivalry and courage.

Alfred Noname came back to Canada in May of 1944. It did not make any difference to potential employers that he was a hero. They wanted to earn a profit from his labour and, to them, what mattered that he only had grade 5. Faced with this kind of apathy, Alfred eventually went back to the Piapot Reserve and settled down, attempting to rest a living from the soil.

He married, raised his family and watched them move away as the years passed. Over the years, he continued to meet with his brothers who survived the Dieppe raid. In this close, select group of heroes there are no race or colour lines. They know who they are, and they know what they survive together, and they will always be brothers.