Youth Remember the Dieppe Raid
A Deadly Day

Dieppe, France is a beautiful seaside resort town. It has always been a popular travel destination for those looking for a place to go in the hot summer months.

However, on August 19, 1942, Dieppe was a very different scene! On that day, almost 5,000 Canadians came ashore with British and American soldiers for an early morning raid against the strong German forces occupying the coastal town in the Second World War.

Oil painting, "Dieppe Raid" by Dr. Charles Fraser Comfort, 1946. Image: 19710261-2183 © Canadian War Museum. This painting shows the bravery of the Canadian soldiers and the heavy defences they faced at Dieppe.

The attack on Dieppe (codenamed Operation "Jubilee") was supposed to be a quick raid on the Germans. On August 19, 237 ships carrying Canadian and other allied soldiers who were specially trained to carry out raids, set sail for the overnight crossing of the English Channel. They were hoping to surprise the Germans with their attack, but unfortunately, it did not go as planned.

When the soldiers came ashore that morning on the beaches of Dieppe, the Germans were ready. When the ships' ramps dropped, the Canadians jumped off the boats and ran up the stony beach toward the steep cliffs. Bullets flew everywhere and the cliffs, seawall and barbed wire made advancing forward very difficult. Tanks were supposed to provide cover to the soldiers, but they were late arriving, and some of them broke down because stones got stuck in their tracks. Within minutes, the beach was covered with dead and wounded men. Sadly, more than 900 Canadians were killed and almost 2,000 were taken as prisoners of war. It was one of the bloodiest days in Canadian military history. However, the Canadians were very courageous and the hard-earned lessons that day helped make future victories possible like Juno Beach on D-Day.

The people of Dieppe have never forgotten the Canadians and their sacrifice that day. Every August 19, Dieppe's streets are lined with Canadian flags and memorial services are held on the beaches and at the Canadian War Cemetery. Across Canada, many roads are named in honour of the battle and the town of Dieppe, New Brunswick is named in memory of the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the raid.

Let's remember the brave Canadian soldiers who landed at Dieppe to fight to help liberate the people of France from German occupation.