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Age: 16

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Survival

... D-Day, I can't believe it, it's finally arrived... Here we are, on transports slowly making our way to Juno Beach, the beach that we (Canadians & Natives) are to invade while the Americans and British handle the other beaches. Shells are landing all around us explosions everywhere, we already lost 2 transports! I don't know how but I can tell that today will be a terrible day. No doubt this war is terrible; the worst the world has ever seen, and they said that WWI would end all wars. What a bunch of white rubbish. But if I want to survive today, I must work with my unit and its leader regardless of the way I feel about them, hell regardless about how I feel about all white men, Canadians, Americans. They're all the same to me. But this is war, and now our enemy is Nazi Germany, and if I want to survive this war I would do well to put aside the past and accept the present. Yes, now we are all like brothers whether we're Native or Canadian, it doesn't matter; we're all in this together. And I bet that...

"John!!! Did you hear what I said?" said our unit leader: Sgt. Hawkins

"Sir yes sir! As soon as we land DO NOT STOP MOVING, keep going forward on the beach." I replied.

"Good! All of you DO NOT forget... KABOOM!"

Just then a shell landed just a few metres away from our transport and it almost sank us!

"Everyone alright!?" demanded the Sarge.

"Yes sir," we all replied haphazardly.

"TWO MINUTES!!!" shouted the transport driver.

“Alright, now men, as I was saying, do not stop moving up the beach keep moving or you WILL get shot, do not forget that!”

“Sir yes sir!”

“ONE MIN... *Fizt*”

By now we were in range of the MG42's in the beach bunkers and a bullet hit the driver in the head and he collapsed dead.

“Oh shit! Sarge what are we going to do now???” screamed Pt. Coil.

“Calm down Coil! Joey! Get on that steering wheel and land this transport!!!”

“Yes sir!” I replied.

I landed the transport and let down the ramp. We were on the beach and started running for our lives against the fury of the relentless machine gun fire and mortar rounds going off around us, I saw many of my comrades fall down dead or go flying without most of their limbs from mortar rounds. It was a horrific situation all around me but I couldn't stop moving to help, for I would be a sitting duck just waiting for an MG42 to blow me away. We kept running up the beach and toward the bunkers. Surprisingly we weren't losing a lot of men but still the casualties were more than just minor. Finally we reached the bunkers.

“Coil, Joey, Sanders, Martin! Get in that bunker and clear it out!”

“Yes sir!” we all replied.

I threw a grenade in and after the explosion we burst in with bayonets fixed, most of the Germans inside were dead, but two were still alive, Martin was getting ready to shoot them both, but I stopped him. He shoved me aside but I got on him again, this time he stopped.

“But these bastards tried to kill us Joey!” said Martin

“They're wounded and unarmed!”

“Exactly, I'm putting them out of their misery!”

“Do you even have a sense of honour, or mercy!? For all we know these soldiers could have been drafted like us into Hitler's army and forced to shoot at us to survive this war just like we are trying to do!”

Martin was speechless... so were the others. Sgt. Hawkins entered, the hellish battle still going outside.

“What are you doing standing here?! Keep moving and clear out the rest of the bunkers!”

“Sir what do we do with these two Germans?” Martin asked.

“What? Take them prisoner. Now get moving the reinforcements will deal with them! Now move out!”

“Yes sir!” We all ran out of the bunker and continued the routine through out the battle.

The Seawall, the second largest wall of the Normandy beaches, which we had to breach in order to fully take the beach, artillery and naval bombardment took awhile, but eventually it was destroyed and we, the 3rd Canadian Division, had taken Juno Beach. Reports of the other beaches taken by the Americans and British, made it evidently clear that D-day was a success. Though sadly the allied casualty rate was high that day, Omaha Beach was the worst, the Americans had taken that beach. For us: 574 dead and 340 wounded, I suppose those aren't high, but it isn't low. We lost Sgt. Hawkins that day too; we thought the Germans had surrendered but a few were still fighting and 2 German soldiers burst out of a sand pit door and started blasting their MP40s away. Sgt. Hawkins along with 2 others I never got to know, were shot dead.

My place in this war might end at any time. I know that, but I've barely started to fight in it. But after today I see that it doesn't matter what race you are or whatever, we are all human beings and we share the same feelings, pain, misery, and so on... yes, I am a Native, and the white man may have wronged all Native people in many ways, even now. But still we're all human beings...

“Joey, come over here.” said Martin.

“Yeah, yeah, coming” I walked away with these thoughts in my head.