

John Doiron

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Sacrifice- The forfeit of something to a cause considered to be of a greater value. It is hard to say that a person's life is of lesser value than anything. People are all to be considered equal. A person who chooses to risk their life for the sake of another's is just one of the amazing few who realize that peace is within our hands, and that it is our duty to help protect those who cannot protect themselves. These heroes don't look for any rewards; they just find satisfaction in justice. In times of war, the hero inside of people is discovered and they willingly sacrifice their lives for others. John Doiron- a man from a small farming community in Prince Edwards Island- was a hero to our country when he agreed to help fight in World War Two.

Like many young men, John would have felt obligated to help protect his country. The idea of enlisting first came up when he got into a small argument with his girlfriend- and future wife. He signed up in 1941 when he was twenty-one years old. He was informed shortly thereafter he would soon be traveling overseas to fight, but was not told where he would be sent. The war was being fought all over the world, so he had no clue where he would be serving his country.

In October of the same year, John was one of the 1975 brave young men to board a ship to Hong Kong. Hong Kong was, at the time, one of the many colonies of Britain. Britain had control of Canada's foreign policy, so as soon as Britain declared war, Canada was automatically involved. John's job was to defend Hong Kong from the Japanese, who had already proved to be a strong threat at the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

The troops sent to Hong Kong seemed to be as forgotten then as they are now. We were well aware that the Japanese were a large risk, but Canada didn't properly supply the troops. Weaponry was supposed to have been sent by boat to the island, but the boat stopped in Manila, where it was also needed. John and his fellow soldiers now had a decreasing chance of victory. They had one gun between two soldiers, they were not trained as well as they should have been, and had only a few short weeks to learn a plan of defense before the battle started on December the 8th, 1941.

John bravely fought beside his fellow soldiers despite the odds. Although they fought to their limits, many of the Canadian troops were taken prisoner, including John who was captured on Christmas Day. The men who were taken prisoner were placed in concentration camps. The conditions in these camps were at best appalling. John was deprived of food and water. He was beaten by the capturers and forced to work in coalmines.

John was left in these degrading conditions for three and a half, long, years.

In this time, John was only able to write one letter home to his family, whom he loved and missed deeply. Much of what he wrote was blacked out because the Japanese had censorship over what the prisoners could say in their letters home. In the last few months of camp, John developed pneumonia and was placed in a hospital. He returned home very frail and forever changed. Although he would never experience these conditions again, he frequently had nightmares about the horrific years as a prisoner of war.

This traumatic experience did not stop John from living life to the fullest. He rarely spoke of his experience, and rather put his attention to his loving family of nine. He married his girlfriend in March of 1946 and they had six children. John's family described him as having a strong work ethic and a great sense of humor. He had a wonderful gift of making people laugh, especially children, whom he held very close to his heart. John would have been a comfort to his fellow soldiers.

John Doiron died in 2004 just before he would have turned 84 years old, finally at Peace. He was a hero to our country and the world. We will never forget the hardships that he suffered for us. John Doiron was a brave Canadian who realized that the world could be a better place for all of us. He sacrificed his youth, health, and heart for something he considered of great value-freedom. All Canadians should be grateful for the heroes that young soldiers discovered-within themselves.