

The Shackling of Prisoners

N.B. As per the disclaimer, neither the ICRC nor the authors can be identified with the opinions expressed in the Cases and Documents. Some cases even come to solutions that clearly violate IHL. They are nevertheless worthy of discussion, if only to raise a challenge to display more humanity in armed conflicts. **Similarly, in some of the texts used in the case studies, the facts may not always be proven;** nevertheless, they have been selected because they highlight interesting IHL issues and are thus published for didactic purposes.

[Source: Zayas, A. de, *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945*, University of Nebraska Press, 1989, p.108]

Perhaps the most notorious example of an official German reprisal concerned the shackling of prisoners of war following the British commando landing in Dieppe, France, in August 1942. As witness depositions show, numerous Germans who had been surprised by the British and who could not be immediately treated as prisoners of war were tied up for the duration of the commando action. In retaliation, Hitler ordered that all British prisoners of war in Germany should be similarly tied up. As counter reprisal the British government ordered German prisoners of war to be shackled. Only through the constant efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross was this vicious circle of reprisals and counter reprisals broken.