The Shackling of Prisoners

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.