

## Document Citation

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# CONTEMPORARY FILMS LTD.



The Story of

## PRIVATE POOLEY

*A factual re-enactment of Pooley's own story, a story so incredible, the Authorities hardly dared believe it . . .*

### SYNOPSIS

In May, 1940, as the hard-pressed British Army falls back on Dunkirk, a battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment is ordered to hold out as long as possible at a farmhouse in the French village of Le Paradis. After a gallant defence which gains valuable time the Norfolks are overwhelmed by superior German forces. Cut off without hope of relief, their strength reduced to less than 100, they surrender.

Filing out of their battered farmhouse position behind a white flag, the Norfolks are taken prisoner by a company of Hitler's elite troops, the Death Head S.S. The captured men are marched into a field, where they expect to await transport to prisoner-of-war camps.

Instead, to their dawning horror, they find S.S. troops waiting with two machine-guns. At a signal from the officer in charge, the Germans fire at the column of prisoners until nearly a hundred bodies lie in the meadow. Then German soldiers move in with bayonets and pistols to finish off any who are not dead.

Somehow two men, both wounded, remain alive and undetected. They are Privates Pooley and Carter. When the Germans have gone, Carter helps Pooley to the shelter of a farm building. Weak and dazed, the two soldiers vow that one day they will bring to justice the Nazi officer responsible for the murder of their comrades.

Though they are helped by a French farmer's wife, Pooley's wounds are so serious that the two men cannot remain in hiding. They give themselves up to German troops who know nothing about the killings. Pooley is repatriated by the Red Cross while Carter goes to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Back in Britain Pooley tells his story to an interrogation officer, but he is not taken seriously. He refuses to give Carter's name as a corroborating witness because he knows it is dangerous to do so while Carter is still in German hands.

In a German prison camp meanwhile Carter tells the story of the massacre to a British officer. In spite of Carter's warning against doing so, the officer decides to report the matter to the camp commandant. As Carter fears, the report is passed to the S.S. officer who ordered the shooting. Realising that an eye-witness could be dangerous, the S.S. men torture the British officer to make him reveal the name of his informant. To avoid doing so, he leaps from a window and is killed. The Nazis then search the camp records until they realise that the survivor of Le Paradis must be Carter.

When Carter is summoned for "interrogation" he knows that he is going to his death. Before he is taken away he tells the story of the massacre to a friendly guard, one of the older, decent Germans, who promises to remember.

At the end of the war, realising that Carter is dead, Pooley decided to carry on alone the fight to avenge his comrades. He returns to the scene of the murders, secures a statement from the farmer's wife who helped the two survivors after the shooting, and persuades the British war crimes investigation unit to take the matter up.

This time Pooley is taken seriously. Relentlessly the investigators question witnesses and track down the guilty S.S. officer who has changed his name. The guard to whom Carter told his story, now a civilian, comes forward to add his testimony. When the case is brought before a British military court at Hamburg three ordinary people—the British ex-private, now working in the post office, the French farmer's wife and the German ex-guard—all contribute evidence which establishes the S.S. man's guilt. The S.S. war criminal is sentenced to death.

So Private Pooley makes good his vow, given on that terrible day at Le Paradis, to bring to justice the man responsible for the murder of his comrades.



### Cast

Albert Pooley  
Garfield Morgan  
Bill Carter  
John Rees  
Madame Creton  
Cecile Chevreau  
Intelligence Officer  
Ferdy Mayne  
Hauptsturmfuehrer  
Alfred Muller

also

Jennifer Wilson  
Charles Houston  
Ronald Leigh-Hunt  
Andrew Ray

Script Franz Fuchmann

based on the novel by Cyril Jolly  
"The Vengeance of Private Pooley"  
(published by Heinemann)

Directed by Kurt Jung-Alsen Music Andre Asrie  
Production Werner Dau Camera Rolf Sohre

CERTIFICATE 'A'

70 Minutes

Co-Production by:

DEFA Studios Berlin and  
Contemporary Films Ltd.

Contemporary Films Ltd . 14 Soho Square . London . W1 . Gerrard 9392-3-4



## Press Acclaim For

## STORY OF PRIVATE POOLEY

**Sunday Telegraph:** "The resulting film is absolutely enthralling. Let no one be put off by the fact that the German soldiers speak German, that the Frenchwoman (Cecile Chevreau) who befriends the two survivors of the massacre speaks nothing but French. Let every intelligent filmlover repair to Westbourne Grove to see this film which has the unmistakable RING OF VERITY about it. To see it again I would willingly travel to the hinterlands of Woking or Widney or Wolverhampton. One cannot say fairer than that. It makes every other film now running in London—nautical or historical or Biblical—sound hollow and contrived."

**Financial Times:** "The achievement of the film is to realise the effect upon ordinary people of the strange conditions and strange emotions of war; and to isolate—without attempting to analyse—the feelings which drive on Pooley to bring the war criminal to book. Is it from a pure sense of justice, or a thirst for vengeance? One is left to conjecture, with Pooley."

**Daily Telegraph:** "It is a really wonderful story of persistence and retribution told with a powerful simplicity and quite without rancour, owing much to Lindsay Anderson's cool commentary and Garfield Morgan's dedicated portrayal of Pooley."

**Kinematograph Weekly:** "Fascinating, frightening and thrilling story, flawless acting, sensitive and shrewd direction and vividly realistic atmosphere."

**Daily Express:** "It is so terse that it becomes almost a documentary. Much of the background humanity is left out. For instance, it was three years before Pooley even mentioned the massacre to his wife, though she had heard him cry out in his nightmares. I find that astonishing—and heroic. But do see this film if you can. It is a small tribute to a very courageous man."

**Tatler:** "The story of Private Pooley's determination to bring the S.S. Commander to justice at all costs is grim, gripping and entirely true. See the film, please."

**Sunday Pictorial:** "Basically the true story of a wartime massacre of a British P.O.W. battalion. But it is the fight by a survivor against War Office lethargy and German reluctance to co-operate in exposing the Nazi officer responsible that provides an intriguing and absorbing screenplay."

**Sunday Citizen:** "This is an after-the-war-was-over story. Nevertheless it proves that Pooley is a hero. The story, however fantastic, is true. Postman Pooley verifies it. And that's more than either of us could say for many war films."

## PUBLICITY LINES

One man survived to bring a killer to justice. Ninety men were murdered—but one man could not forget the face of murder—Private Pooley never forgot it. No-one believed him, but he exposed a mass murderer. "That's the man who killed my mates!"

After eight years a British postman exposed a Nazi mass murderer.

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*AT FIRST. EVEN THE WAR OFFICE COULD NOT BELIEVE HIM*

starring  
GARFIELD MORGAN · JOHN REES · FERDY MAYNE · ANDREW RAY · ALFRED MULLER

## PUBLICITY AIDS

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