

NOTE

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Directorate of History  
National Defence Headquarters  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0K2

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SECRET

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The Operation at Dieppe, 19 Aug 42  
Some New Information.

1. The Dieppe operation of 19 Aug 42 has been the subject of a long series of detailed Reports, notably Nos. 100, 101, 108, 109 and 116. Since those Reports were written, the Allied Armies have invaded North-West Europe, and the port of Dieppe, which 2 Cdn Inf Div had unsuccessfully assaulted on 19 Aug 42, was occupied by the same formation on 1 Sep 44.
2. The new information presented in this Report may be said to fall into two main categories: that which deals with the influence of the Dieppe operation upon the planning and execution of Operation "OVERLORD" (the assault on the Normandy beaches on 6 Jun 44), and that resulting from examination of the German defences and the scene of the operation generally following our occupation of Dieppe. In addition, certain further information obtained from two Canadian officers who participated in the raid is appended.

THE LESSONS OF DIEPPE AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON  
OPERATION "OVERLORD"

3. It is not proposed in this place to attempt a detailed analysis of the influence exercised by the Dieppe operation upon the plans for the attack on Lower Normandy in 1944. It is intended, rather, merely to make the basic points, to call attention to the importance of this matter from the point of view of the Official Historian, and to collect and preserve certain specific pieces of evidence which have become available in recent months and which are of basic importance for both Operation "JUBILEE" and Operation "OVERLORD".
4. The lessons officially drawn from the Dieppe operation were detailed in the Combined Report on the operation (C.B. 04244) and are reproduced in great part in Report No. 109 (para 2). It will be noted that among them the need for an extremely heavy scale of fire support (such as was not available at Dieppe) held a paramount place. Para 333 of the Combined Report emphasizes as a fundamental lesson,

The necessity for fire support in any operation where it has not been possible to rely on the element of surprise. This fire support must be provided by heavy and medium Naval bombardment, by air action, by special vessels or craft working close inshore, and by using the fire power of the assaulting troops while still sea-borne.

5. These requirements are reflected in the most definite manner in the fire-plan for Operation "OVERLORD", in which all the elements of fire support just referred to were duly provided. Whereas the Naval bombardment force at Dieppe



had consisted only of four exceptionally small and lightly armed destroyers (Report No. 108, para 17), the Allied Navies provided for "OVERLORD" a great bombardment force which included battleships, monitors, and cruisers in addition to a large number of destroyers and smaller craft. The air support included large-scale attacks by heavy bombers, which (for reasons described in Report No. 100, paras 42, 43, 133 and 139) had been eliminated from the support plan for the Dieppe operation. It may be noted in this connection that the only powerful bomber force available in the United Kingdom in the summer of 1942 was Bomber Command of the R.A.F., a force whose activity and training at that period were directed almost exclusively to night bombing. The American day-bomber force, which subsequently became so important, was only in process of creation, although it will be remembered that the "handful of Fortresses" then in Britain attacked the fighter aerodrome at Abbeville during the morning of the raid (Report No. 109, para 44). The American VIII Bomber Command had actually carried out its first mission based on Britain (directed at Rouen) only on 17 Aug, two days before the Dieppe enterprise (Target: Germany; The U.S. Army Air Forces' Official Story of the VIII Bomber Command's First Year Over Europe (London, 1944, p. 29)).

6. The "special vessels or craft working close inshore" were also much in evidence on the Normandy beaches on 6 Jun 44. They included particularly the L.C.T.(R) or Landing Craft Tank (Rocket) and L.C.A.(H.R.) or Landing Craft Assault (Hedgerow), in addition to great numbers of L.C.S. (Landing Craft Support) of various types. Both the rocket craft and the Hedgerows had been used for the first time in the assault on Sicily, 10 Jul 43 (see Report No. 126, paras 204 and 220).

7. Much consideration had also been given to "using the fire power of the assaulting troops while still sea-borne". This was achieved mainly by the employment of self-propelled field artillery, which fired from tank landing craft during the run-in. Four Canadian field regiments were employed in this role on the 3 Cdn Inf Div front on 6 Jun 44. This particular expedient was not anticipated in the official Dieppe lessons, which spoke of the "fire power of the assaulting troops" in terms of Bren guns and 2-inch mortars, though it was noted that S.P. mobile artillery "provided that it is put ashore immediately" could help to cover the initial assault (C.B. 04244, para 363).

8. The large-scale employment of self-propelled artillery in the assault phase was thus, in another aspect, in keeping with the official Dieppe lessons, which also included the recommendation that "Some form of light or self-propelled artillery must be provided once an assault has got across the landing place and is making progress inland" (C.B. 04244, para 342). At Dieppe, there had been no artillery support whatever other than that provided by the destroyers.

9. It should be briefly noted here that the technique resulting from the lessons of Dieppe and ultimately employed with such success on the beaches of Lower Normandy was apparently first tested on a large scale by a Canadian formation. This was 3 Cdn Inf Div, which applied it in Exercise "PIRATE", an assault exercise carried out on

16-21 Oct 43 at Studland Bay, Dorsetshire. In this exercise the elements of support described above as incorporated in the "OVERLORD" fire plan were virtually all employed, including particularly the use of S.P. artillery during the approach. The heaviest Naval craft actually participating in the "PIRATE" bombardment which covered the landing of the assault brigade on 17 Oct were, it is true, destroyers, and weather prevented the full realization of the R.A.F. support plan; nevertheless, the essential ingredients of the "OVERLORD" plan were present, and the conclusion subsequently reached was that the combined fire plan of the three services had "proved itself to be workable and feasible, subject of course to further training based on the detailed lessons learned" (3 Cdn Inf Div Report, Exercise "PIRATE", 1 Nov 43: Appx to W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, November, 1943).

10. On 12 Nov 44 the G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army advised the G.O.C. 3 Cdn Inf Div that as from 1 Dec 43 the latter formation would be associated with 1 Brit Corps for operational direction and training in preparation for participation in the "OVERLORD" assault (C.M.H.Q. file 3/OP OLD/1). Training proceeded accordingly, and 3 Cdn Inf Div duly participated in the assault, under command 1 Brit Corps on 6 Jun 44.

11. The foregoing paragraphs may serve to suggest the tactical contribution which the Dieppe operation made to the success of Operation "OVERLORD". This basic fact has not been overlooked in public comment on Dieppe subsequent to the execution of "OVERLORD". In this connection, attention may be directed to the two articles by Capt. Cyril Falls which appeared in The Times (London) on 4 and 5 Aug 44. Copies of these articles, which were based in great part on information supplied to Capt. Falls by Historical Section, C.M.H.Q., are attached to the present report as an appendix.

12. It is apparent, however, that the influence of "JUBILEE" on "OVERLORD" cannot be assessed purely in terms of its effect on tactical detail, fundamental as that evidently was. There is good reason to believe that it brought about a most significant alteration in the viewpoint from which very important individuals in the United Kingdom considered the problem of an assault on North-West Europe. On this point we have the evidence of Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, who on 7 Jun 44, at a briefing conference for the officers of his headquarters, remarked,

Until the evidence of Dieppe proved otherwise, it had been the opinion in highest command and staff circles in this country that an assault against a heavily defended coast could be carried out on the basis of securing tactical surprise and without dependence on overwhelming fire support, in the critical phases of closing the beaches and overrunning the beach defences.

General Crerar's comments on this occasion are reproduced in full as an appendix to this report.

13. Also attached as an appendix in this connection are letters exchanged in June, 1944, between General Crerar and the C. of S., C.M.H.Q., with reference to the influence



of "JUBILEE" on "OVERLORD". General Crerar's letter (written before the assault on Normandy had actually been delivered) makes the point that, if Dieppe had, by some chance, proved an easy success this might well have had disastrous results for the larger and more important operation. The documents appended to this letter serve to establish further the chain of connection between "JUBILEE" and "OVERLORD" and are useful contributions to the history of the planning stages of the latter operation, which will be the subject-matter of a subsequent report.

14. Enough has been said to indicate that the Official Historian, in making his final appraisal of the Dieppe operation, must do so in the light of events on the coast of Lower Normandy on 6 Jun 44. Considered in itself, Operation "JUBILEE" was merely a comparatively minor and at the same time unsuccessful and extremely costly operation, which was seized upon by many uninformed critics, in the Canadian Parliament and elsewhere, and which in Canada probably did something to shake public confidence in the command of the Canadian Army. Considered against the background of Operation "OVERLORD", however, Dieppe appears in a quite different light, and it is from this viewpoint primarily that the historian must regard it. He will probably find himself in agreement with General Crerar's estimate of the significance of Dieppe: "The sobering influence of that operation on existing Allied strategical conceptions, with the enforced realization by the Allied Governments of the lengthy and tremendous preparations necessary before the invasion could be attempted, was a Canadian contribution of the greatest significance to final victory".

#### THE OCCUPATION OF DIEPPE, 1 SEP 44

15. The story of the Canadian occupation of Dieppe in 1944 is part of the history of the campaign which at the moment of writing is still in progress, but a brief notice of it will not come amiss in the present Report. In the advance through France which followed the victories won in the Falaise area in August, 1944, First Cdn Army was on the left of the Allied line, and thus advanced along the Channell coast. The possibility of operations against Dieppe was inevitably a matter of special interest to the Canadian forces, and not least to the Chief of Staff, First Cdn Army (Brig. C.C. Mann), who had been the senior Canadian staff officer concerned in the operation of 19 Aug 42. When it became apparent that an advance across the Seine was immediately in prospect, arrangements were made which would result in the port of Dieppe being attacked by 2 Cdn Inf Div, with 6 Cdn Inf Bde on the right and 4 Cdn Inf Bde on the left, as in 1942 (although this time the attack would be delivered from the land side). At the same time, it may be noted, arrangements were made to direct the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division (which as part of 1 Brit Corps was under command First Cdn Army) upon the port of St. Valery-en-Caux, where this formation had been virtually destroyed in June 1940.

16. Arrangements were made for an extremely heavy scale of Naval and Air support for the proposed attack on Dieppe, which was known by the code name Operation "FUSILADE". In addition to a heavy attack by Bomber Command, it was

arranged that the Royal Navy would provide a bombardment force including, as at first arranged, two battleships ("Warspite" and "Malaya"), two monitors ("Erebus" and "Robert"), four cruisers ("Mauritius", "Enterprise", "Emerald" and "Flores"), and eight L.C.G. (L). (Information given the writer verbally by C. of S. First Cdn Army, 28 Aug 44, and directive (603/Future/1, 27 Aug 44) from First Cdn Army to 1 Brit Corps and 2 Cdn Corps (copy in Hist Sec file AEF/First Cdn Army/B/F)). As subsequently settled, the Naval bombardment force was reduced to the two battleships, plus "Erebus" and "Mauritius" and H.M.S. "Bellona", described as a "fighter direction ship" (ibid., Operation "FUSILADE", Naval Communication Orders, 31 Aug 44).

17. These preparations proved unnecessary. Although the enemy's strategy at this period was largely based upon denying us the possession of the Channel ports, which would shorten our lines of communications and facilitate our operations in the Low Countries and against Germany, he chose to abandon Dieppe without a fight, and the town was occupied on the morning of 1 Sep by the reconnaissance regiment of 2 Cdn Inf Div. This unit (8 Cdn Recce Regt) had had a very small detachment present at Dieppe on 19 Aug 42 (Report No. 100, Appx "A"). It had been uncertain until the last moment whether or not the town was held by the Germans and the "set-piece" attack would be required. The Bomber Command attack had been tentatively ordered for the evening of 1 Sep, and was cancelled only 20 minutes before the time fixed as the last moment for a change of plan.

18. The G.O.C. 2 Cdn Corps ordered 2 Cdn Inf Div to "stand down" at Dieppe for a short period to rest and re-organize. The Division, accordingly, was enabled to make arrangements for appropriate services of remembrance at the cemetery in which the men killed on 19 Aug 42 were buried, and for a ceremonial march through the town, in which the units which fought in the 1942 assault might take part. These moving observances took place on Sunday, 3 Sep, in the presence of the Army Commander, Lt.-Gen. Crerar, who spoke briefly at the cemetery and took the salute of the parade in the Rue Claude Groulard.

19. The cemetery in which the Canadian dead of 1942 were interred is situated roughly 2,500 yards south of the town, at 218652, near the North-West corner of the Bois des Vertus. This "Cimetiere des Vertus" had been very carefully tended by the French people of the district, as the green turf and the neat flower-beds testified. Every grave was marked with a wooden cross bearing a number, and the name of the man buried there could be discovered by consulting a list kept in the French custodian's hut nearby. The cemetery contains a few British graves of 1940, while some British airmen were buried there at dates subsequent to 1942; but the vast majority of the graves are those of Canadians who fell in the great raid.

20. The Dieppe newspaper "La Vigie Nouvelle" of 5 Sep 44 contains a full and eloquent account of the recent events in the town, including the departure of the Germans on 31 Aug, and the arrival of the Canadians the following morning. According to this source, two men on motorcycles were the first arrivals, and they received the warmest of welcomes:



A 10 h. 10, deux motocyclistes canadiens qui précédaient le gros de la troupe, apparurent au haut de la rue Gambetta.

Ce fut un moment de délire. On se précipita à leur rencontre et, au bas de la côte, la foule était si dense, qu'ils durent s'arrêter. Vingt femmes leur sautèrent au cou et les embrassèrent avec joie.

21. The newspaper also describes the services at the cemetery on 3 Sep and the "Défilé Triomphal" through the streets of the city which followed. These accounts, containing as they do eager expressions of gratitude to the Canadians, and touching references to the raid of 1942, render this newspaper a Canadian historical document of considerable interest. A copy of it will be found on the G.S. War Diary of H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div for September, 1944.

22. It may be noted that the enemy in his withdrawal from Dieppe did not succeed in effecting total demolition of the dock area. ("La Vigie Nouvelle", 5 Sep 44, states that his careful preparations were largely nullified by measures taken by "others" - presumably French patriots.) The consequence was that the port was ready to receive ships as early as 6 Sep. The first ship actually arrived on 7 Sep, and thereafter the possession of the port greatly eased the maintenance problems of 21 Army Group (Aide-Memoire, "Highlights of Administration, First Canadian Army", 24 Sep 44).

#### EXAMINATION OF THE ENEMY DEFENCES

23. The defences of Dieppe had been materially strengthened since the raid of 1942, and perimeter defences had been created covering the town on the land side. These defences, and particularly the minefields covering the town, may be traced on the Defence Overprint dated 29 Aug 44, photostats of which it is hoped to forward at a later date. It may be noted in passing that among the weapons in position inside the minefields were static rocket projectors (probably 28/32 cm); the writer saw a considerable number of them on 3 Sep 44, set in the ground at about map reference 221657, with rockets still in position pointing westwards towards the valley of the Scie.

24. The writer visited Dieppe on 2, 3 and 5 Sep 44, immediately after the occupation of the town by our forces. The following observations are set down concerning the German defences, with a view to supplementing the reports already written.

25. The Pourville area to the West of Dieppe, in which S. Sask R. and Camerons of C. operated (Report No. 101, paras 137-249), was not closely examined, but was seen from the high ground to the East, overlooking the beaches and the village. On this high ground, in 1944, there was a great deal of German Radar equipment, the installations in this respect obviously having been greatly expanded since 1942. There were a number of concrete defensive positions in evidence, including one heavy emplacement situated near the top of the hill close to and just above the main road from Dieppe and sited to sweep the Pourville beach in an

effective manner. Ammunition scattered profusely about indicated that this position had held a French 75-mm gun, evidently on a mobile carriage. The gun itself had been removed. This emplacement was probably a new one, built subsequent to the raid of 1942.

26. It is of interest to note that the whole of that portion of the village of Pourville lying on the narrow neck of land separating the marshy flats of the Scie Valley from the sea had been destroyed, the Germans having evidently demolished every house here as a precaution against further landing operations. When this was done is not known to the writer, but it seems probable that the demolitions were carried out shortly after the raid of 1942.

27. The main beaches in front of the town of Dieppe itself were rather more carefully examined. Here the Casino is merely a ruin, having been blown up by the Germans soon after the raid (the writer was advised of this at the time). It was presumably at the same period that the Germans also destroyed all the houses West of the Casino and under the West cliff (i.e., on the Rue Alexandre Dumas).

28. Reports obtained following the operation of 1942 indicated the presence of various gun positions in the West cliff. This cliff was accordingly examined with some care. A maximum of three positions which might have mounted artillery pieces was located. One of these was in the lower outworks of the Castle, and one in the lower part of the cliff near the point where the sea wall meets the cliff about 200 yards West of the Casino. In both these cases the nature of the embrasure suggested that it was intended for a comparatively small gun. The third position examined was somewhat below the summit of the cliff, on the same "step" in it on which the Castle stands. This position had excellent command of the Eastern portion of the beach. It had presumably been developed from a cave and was evidently designed to hold a 75-mm gun. As in the case of the emplacement overlooking Pourville above referred to, much French ammunition of this calibre was scattered about, but the gun itself was gone. The concrete above this emplacement was marked in at least two places by what appeared to have been small shells or shot. The concrete work was not new, and it seems likely that this emplacement was in action on 19 Aug 42. It was probably the position which was engaged by Lieut. Drysdale's tank, as described by Major C.E. Page (Report No. 107, Appx "B"). Major Page, it will be noted, "thought that this gun might possibly have been of 75-mm calibre".

29. On the summit of the West cliff, on which were situated a number of pleasant villas, which in 1944 had obviously been long unoccupied except possibly by German troops, there were a number of heavy concrete positions, of which one at least was merely an O.P. One gun position (above the Castle) was examined. If there had been a gun in it, it had been removed.

30. The beaches in front of the town were encumbered by numerous anti-landing obstacles, and the writer was told that they had been found to be elaborately mined. It will be recalled that there were no authenticated accounts of the presence of mines in 1942.



31. The heavy road-blocks at the ends of the streets facing the sea were still in position, and there were also some heavy concrete blocks in the town itself.
32. The positions in the East Cliff above the harbour were not examined at close range, but they were obviously extensive. There was a great deal of concrete work visible here, and the writer obtained the impression that these positions had been extended since the aerial photographs facing page 22 of C.B. 04244 were taken in 1942.
33. The village of Puits (Blue Beach), where R. Regt C. landed (Report No. 101, paras 57-136), was also visited. This village is itself a narrow defile, being situated in a ravine which causes a small gap in the cliffs.
34. The defences here had obviously been considerably developed since 1942. Only those in the East cliff were examined in detail by the writer. In this cliff there was a complicated system of concrete works, which included however few actual fire positions. At the foot, just above the beach, was a light tank turret which had evidently mounted a 37-mm gun (which was gone). At the summit of the cliff was an O.P. which had once been glassed-in and which possessed a very extensive command of the sea, the coast and the adjacent country.
35. In the lower part of the West cliff at Puits was a concrete position which it appeared might mount a 75-mm gun. On the low ground immediately above the beach was a small gun (apparently about 50-mm), still in position in an open emplacement. The large house directly facing the sea-wall and the beach at this point ("the house on the right", Report No. 101, para 72), was in ruins, though not wholly demolished; it seemed possible that the damage had resulted from gunfire during the raid.
36. Of special interest was the house halfway up the East cliff, which was examined, with its surroundings, in considerable detail. This is the house which appears prominently in the old photograph forming the middle cut of the plate facing page 17 of C.B. 04244. (Cf. Report No. 101, para 72.)
37. This house was found to be undamaged, and had evidently been occupied by German troops quite lately. It is a red brick house with white trim. The house itself had not been strengthened in any way, although it was surrounded by trenches and positions of various sorts; but in the grounds, immediately to the North-West of the house, was a very strong concrete pillbox disguised as a domed summer-house. There were no weapons permanently mounted in this position, and it was referred to in a note pencilled up on a door in the house as an "L.M.G. Bunker". The main aperture of this pillbox enfiladed the beach and the sea-wall, in what can only be termed a murderous manner, at very short range. The writer examined it carefully, and the fact that there were bullet-marks on the concrete convinced him that this position was in existence in August 1942. It was very probably responsible for a high proportion of the casualties of R. Regt C. The casualties in actual killed at this point were heavier than in any other sector (Report No. 116, para 37).

38. It may be worth noting that in 1944 the Germans had in position at Puits a considerable number of fougasse flame-throwers. These were found as the result of an examination by Lt.-Col. Sawyer (G.S.O.1, C.W., First Cdn Army) and officers of his staff. This party succeeded in setting off the flame-throwers and in so doing accidentally detonated a beach mine, fortunately without occasioning any casualties. (Information from Lt.-Col. Sawyer.)

39. In general, examination of the terrain at Puits merely reinforces the conclusions reached in Report No. 101 (para 69), to the effect that surprise and a degree of darkness were essential to a successful assault at this point. An attack upon this very narrow and strongly fortified beach was clearly an extremely perilous operation.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM CANADIAN OFFICERS

40. Attached as an appendix to this report are two documents relating to the operations of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry on 19 Aug 42. One of these is an account of the operation by Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt, who commanded the unit at Dieppe and is still a prisoner of war. This was written to Lt.-Col. Labatt's dictation by Lieut. (now Capt.) L.C. Counsell of the same unit, in Oflag VII B, and was brought out of Germany by Lieut. Counsell in a false bottom of his waterbottle when he was repatriated to the United Kingdom on medical grounds in June, 1944.

41. Also appended is a memorandum of an interview with Lieut. Counsell himself, which adds certain points to our knowledge of the operations of the R.H.L.I. Of special interest, perhaps, is his comment that the junior officers and men of the assaulting force had not been told that the heavy bombing attack which had formed part of the original support plan for the operation which had been cancelled, and that in consequence they "felt let down" when they saw no evidence of bomb damage on landing. It is conceivable that this impression contributed something to depriving the initial assault of the momentum which was so essential.

42. Lieut. Counsell's statement that there were certainly boat casualties on the right flank of the R.H.L.I. during the run-in is of some interest.

43. It should be recorded that the accuracy of Lt.-Col. Labatt's account was questioned in some particulars by Brig. S. Lett, who commanded 4 Cdn Inf Bde at Dieppe, in conversation with Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., on 22 Jun 44 (see Diary of Hist Offr for this date). Brig. Lett mentioned as an example of a dubious statement the story that markers for a mortar rehearsal held by the Germans just before the operation were found on the beach (Lt.-Col. Labatt's account, para 31). Brig. Lett also questioned the statement (*ibid.*, para 21) that he had himself, after his wound, handed over command of the brigade to Lt.-Col. Labatt. It was pointed out to him, however, that there is no doubt that this took place (Report No. 108, para 214). It is worth noting that Lieut. Counsell himself has no recollection of certain incidents reported by Lt.-Col. Labatt, notably the shelling of the landing ships



just after the L.C.As. were lowered. No other evidence for this alleged incident has been seen.

45. Lt.-Col. Labatt's account was, of course, written a long time after the events which it describes, and in view of this, and in the light of the above observations, it should probably be used with some reserve.

#### LIST OF APPENDICES

46. The following appendices are attached to the present Report:

- Appx "A"      (i) Letter, C. of S., C.M.H.Q., to C.G.S., N.D.H.Q., 3 Jun 44.
- (ii) Letter, G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, to C. of S., C.M.H.Q., 31 May 44.
- (iii) "Principles to be Followed in the Organization of Fire Support for an Assault Landing (Exercise "PIRATE")", 30 Aug 43.
- (iv) "Summing up by Comd 1 Cdn Corps, Combined Operations Study Period, 26-31 Jul 43", 31 Jul 43.
- Appx "B"      (i) Personal Message from Lt.-Gen. Grerar, to be read to troops (undated)
- (ii) "Introduction to Briefing of Officers, H.Q. First Cdn Army" (Remarks by G.O.C.-in-C., 7 Jun 44).
- Appx "C"      "Dieppe and Cherbourg" (Two articles from The Times (London), 4 and 5 Aug 44).
- Appx "D"      (i) Memorandum of Interview with Lieut. L.C. Counsell, 6 Jun 44.
- (ii) Narrative of Experiences at Dieppe by Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt.

C.B.S.

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel,  
Historical Officer,  
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

C O P Y

A I R M A I L

DIPLOMATIC BAG

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

LONDON

TOP SECRET AND  
PERSONAL

3 June 44

Dear

I am enclosing two copies of a letter and correspondence passed to me today by Harry Crerar.

I consider it to be a most important document and I am sure the Minister will be very interested in reading it. I suggest that you pass one copy to Historical Section for record. I am passing a copy to Historical Section over here.

As you know, fire support in combined operations has been one of my hobbies also. The forthcoming operation is the only one, in my view, in which fire support is adequate to the task in hand. We have been fortunate in other landings. They have all been practically unopposed, with the exception of Dieppe.

I think you will agree that Harry's reference to Dieppe is a happy one. It expresses a point of view that cannot be talked about now but nevertheless should find its place in history.

This is all for now. Cheerio.

Sincerely yours,

Lt.-Gen. J.C. Murchie, CBE.,  
Chief of the General Staff,  
Department of National Defence,  
Ottawa, Canada.



TOP SECRET

GOC-in-C 1-0-2

Headquarters,  
First Canadian Army.

31 May 44

Dear Ken:

I mentioned to you that the technical and tactical knowledge, and appreciation, of the problem of the large-scale assault landing was "bought and paid for" at DIEPPE, and that, most appropriately, the evolution of the requirements in the assault phase of "OVERLORD" had been a resultant Canadian contribution.

I forward, herewith, copies of an address, and an instruction, of mine of last year, which are of interest in the above connection. With only certain changes in the sequence of craft "flights", which later discussion and experience indicated to be desirable, the tactics, technique and procedure then laid down have been fully adopted by Higher Command.

Yours ever,

'SGD' Harry

Lt-Gen K. Stuart, CB DSO MC  
Chief of Staff,  
CMHQ.

PS.

I am also inclined to the view that, when considered history is written, it will be found that had DIEPPE, with great good luck, turned out to be a cheap success, there would have resulted a false and quite inadequate appreciation of the problem of invasion. The "sobering effects" of the DIEPPE operation, in my opinion, have had an important effect on Allied policies, strategy and, of course, Combined Service tactics.

SECRET

GOC 4-0-4-23  
Main HQ 1 Cdn Corps  
30 Aug 43

PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED  
in  
THE ORGANIZATION OF FIRE SUPPORT  
for  
AN ASSAULT LANDING  
(EXERCISE "PIRATE")

1. The following principles will generally govern the development of a plan for fire support of an Assault landing on a strongly defended enemy beach sector - as will be encountered anywhere along the coast of Northern France and of the Low Countries. These principles will be followed by you in planning the fire support for Exercise "PIRATE", in conjunction with Naval and Air Force Commanders.
2. There is no possibility of strategic surprise in a large scale landing operation directed against trans-Channel objectives and the probability of local tactical surprise is too remote to be taken into consideration. It will be assumed, therefore, that the enemy in the coastal sector concerned is alert, manning his defences and expecting attack.
3. The plan must be based on the assumption that weather conditions will not be better, and may be slightly worse than the average of the time and place. It should be capable of adjustment to meet the changing conditions of light, tide, etc., over a period of not less than three days.
4. The planning requires to be preceded by an appreciation, on the part of the Commander of the Assaulting Force (Army), of the battle he is called upon to fight after the troops have landed, including the objectives he is required to secure, the forces needed to capture them and the timetable of intended events. From this appreciation will be developed the requirements to be met in the organization of the Combined Operation, including the provision and disposition of craft for assault personnel, the plan of fire support from the sea and from the air, before and after "touch-down", the arrival of "follow-up" formations, etc.
5. In actual circumstances, much consideration requires to be given by the Assaulting Force Commander (Army), in conjunction with the Naval and Air Force Commanders, to the bombardment programme prior to D day. The general policies as to this will usually be laid down on the highest level. In Exercise "PIRATE", however, it can be assumed that this has been done, and carried out. Exercise Naval and Air bombardment and support plans, and Action, should therefore be limited to the requirements on D day, both before and after H hour.
6. It is considered that Air action, on D day should mainly concentrate on the neutralization of CD batteries not open to direct observation from the sea, to the destruction of important enemy communications, and to the attack on enemy troop columns moving up to the battle area. Naval ship bombardment, on a heavy scale, of beach area and defences during the period when craft are closing the beaches, should be provided. After the landing of FOCs, Naval ship bombardment of targets inland will be required.



7. The paramount portion of the combined operation problem is that which will be encountered in the period commencing when the assaulting troops are closing the beach, and terminating when those troops have established a "beach-head", and cleared the beach from direct observation and direct fire. As surprise of any nature must be entirely discounted, and as artificial or natural concealment from smoke or darkness will do little to prevent the effect of the enemy's pre-determined fire plan, it follows that this portion of the operation will mainly depend for success on "overwhelming fire support, including close support". Smoke can be a most useful adjunct but it must not be regarded as a substitute for fire effect.

8. The difficulties inherent in a combined operation make it impractical to integrate, with accuracy, the many details of fire and movement which would provide an exact solution to this portion of the operational problem. This disability must be compensated for by the adoption of a plan which will produce an overpowering, general, fire effect with the simplest possible programme of movement. Enemy observation areas outside the scope of the fire plan will need treatment by smoke.

9. The rapid and reasonably effective gapping of beach minefields and wire, before the Assaulting Infantry touch down, is a matter of vital importance. I do not consider that a procedure which requires Assaulting Infantry to wait on the beach, close to high water mark, while selected RE personnel deliberately gap beach minefields and wire, to be practicable. Smoke or darkness will not prevent very heavy fire from enemy weapons, on a pre-determined plan, sweeping the beach generally during the opening stages of a landing and inflicting heavy casualties on all those compelled to remain on it for any considerable time.

10. I therefore set great store on the employment of LCA (Hedgerow) - say two craft per company front - as a means of detonating a high proportion of mines, of clearing wire belts, and of exposing trip wires. The blast effect of which each salvo of 24 Hedgerows is capable, should produce a recognizable "lane" along which reasonably complete gapping might be speedily affected. For this purpose, the early landing of "Scorpions" (before infantry touch down) and the further action of these machines up the "blast lanes" is indicated. Such action should produce a series of gaps feasible for infantry to exploit, and so, get quickly over the bullet-swept area and upon the enemy defenders with few preliminary casualties.

11. In spite of the heaviest bombardment and the particular prospects of stupefying the enemy beach garrison, temporarily - following the successive "crash actions" of Rockets and Hedgerows - it must be anticipated that a proportion of direct fire enemy weapons will be manned, and functioning, when craft touch down on the beach. I consider it of great importance, therefore, that first Flight of craft to reach the beach should be composed of "special close support craft ... or some form of mobile fort". The role of these "mobile forts" will be to take on the direct fire fight with the enemy weapons as the latter disclose themselves. This is probably best accomplished after they have grounded in shallow water. The "forts" must be able to take a lot of "punishment" and give back more than they receive. At present, LCGs and DD Tanks appear most suited to undertake this essential task.

12. While it is essential that the assault forces should not be less than the minimum estimated necessary for success, it is equally essential to retain the maximum force as a reserve, to

exploit success where it is promised or achieved. The time available, for a Commander to reach a decision as to the employment of his floating reserves will be very short indeed. A piecemeal commitment of such reserve forces may be futile and such procedure will be avoided. While one opportunity to effect the decision may be presented, second chances are most unlikely to occur in tactical circumstances. The reserve portions of units or formations will therefore be committed in whole, and at speed following a quick appreciation and decision on the part of the Commander.

13. As stated, the principles outlined above will generally govern your detailed planning for Exercise "PIRATE". There is no more important requirement at the moment than the development of a simple, forceful technique, utilizing craft and weapons now, or shortly to be, available, which will meet the tactical problem of an assault landing of the cross-Channel type. As a further guide to you in this matter, I append a series of diagrams which illustrate certain fire and movement situations which, subject to the agreement of the Naval Force Commander, I desire should be successively produced as the craft close the beach. Intensive joint study, experiment and practice with Force "J" during the next few weeks, should produce realistic answers to questionable points. The object of the assault phase of Exercise "PIRATE" is primarily to demonstrate the conclusions so reached.

(Sgd) H.D.G. Crerar

(H.D.G. Crerar) Lt-Gen  
Comd 1 Cdn Corps

RR

Copies to:

Commodore J. Hughes-Hallett, DSO,  
Air Marshal J.H. D'Albiac, DSO,  
Air Vice Marshal W.F. Dickson, CB, DSO, OBE, DFC,

2 Cdn Inf Div	(for infm)
2 Cdn Armd Bde	"
First Cdn Army	"
BGS	"
DA&QMG	"
CCRA	"
CE	"
CSO	"
File	"
War Diary	"



SECRETGOC 4 - 1 - 8  
HQ 1 Cdn Corps  
31 Jul 43SUMMING UP BY COMD 1 CDN CORPSCOMBINED OPERATIONS STUDY PERIOD26 - 31 JUL 43

1. We have listened to, and taken part in, some very interesting discussion concerning a suitable plan for an assault landing and attack on a heavily defended enemy beach. The setting of DIEPPE is particularly appropriate for that purpose. It has given us a unique opportunity of applying the lessons of the past to the most extreme problem we are likely to meet in the future. And, we owe it to those who fought it out on the beaches on that August day last year, to see to it that every ounce of value is, indeed, obtained from everything they then did, or gallantly failed to do.
2. The discussion which has followed the presentation of the 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Div plans has brought out some marked similarities, and, also, differences in view, as to what constitutes the main issues in this problem of an assault landing and as to the technique best suited to its solution. I am not going to deal further with the points which emerged in the discussion but, instead, give you what I consider to be the principles on which any sound plan for an assault landing must be based. In doing so, I shall draw fully on the experiences of the past.
3. Now, the first thing to do is to see the problem of any combined operation, involving an assault landing and attack on strong, organized beach defences in its general form. However, directly and clearly one looks at it, the problem is certainly the most difficult and complicated to be met in war. It cannot be otherwise when it involves the three Services, whose several activities are mainly based on the three different elements of water, land and air. The staging of an attack by land forces, based upon the land, can be difficult enough - yet this may be independent of conditions of tide and sea, of wind and cloud - each, or several, of which factors may be dominant in the planning of the action of the other two Services.
4. When a tactical situation is complicated and even confused, there is but one sound course to follow - determine the essentials and proceed to secure them in the simplest and most forceful manner. In other words, if it is impractical to integrate, with accuracy, the many details of fire and movement which would go to make an exact plan, this disability must be compensated for, by employing greater fire with the simplest possible programme of movement.
5. Let me make it clear, however, that it takes intelligence, imagination and knowledge, to produce a simple, forceful plan of action. I am not suggesting that the sound course, such as this, is the easy course, by any manner of means. Masterly simplicity is more difficult to achieve, by far, than perplexing complexity.
6. I said that I would use the gallant though costly experiences of the 2 Cdn Inf Div at DIEPPE as the test of what must be done, or provided - and what must be avoided - in framing the plans for an equivalent assault operation. I shall go over some of the more important lessons then learned.
7. I consider that the outstanding lesson of DIEPPE is that without complete surprise, which in any event should never be counted upon, there is absolute need for overwhelming fire support, including

close support, to get the assaulting forces on to, and through, the beach defences. With the added complication of an unstable, shifting surface such as the sea, on which to deploy the attacking forces, the tactical problem of an assault landing on the strongly defended beaches of Europe is similar to that which faced the Canadian Corps at Vimy and in the battles of 1918. The same general technique as then employed, is required for its solution.

8. In the year which has passed, much technical and material progress has been made in this vital matter of fire support. As a result of the lectures and discussions earlier this week, you have now a very good idea of the means which now can be made available. A forceful, uncomplicated method, and adequate means, of developing an overwhelming fire effect (or "swamping fire") on the enemy defences during the immediate approach and landing, is the primary requirement.
9. My next essential is that the plan, including methods and means, must be capable of execution even if weather conditions are below average. A plan which is practical only under ideal conditions of sea, cloud, visibility, etc, can be regarded as impractical. We shall probably never get those ideal conditions. Average, or slightly below average, conditions must be the basis on which we should expect to work.
10. The next very important item, in any plan which requires thorough consideration, and probably large scale use, is the provision of local and, perhaps, general, concealment through the extensive, intelligent use of smoke.
11. Smoke will not neutralize the enemy guns, mortars, and machine guns which fire on fixed lines - and there will be many. It will, however, successfully prevent the enemy from seeing things as they are, and adjusting his counter-measures accordingly. He is compelled to go on fighting the battle of his own imagining, only. This may be quite different from the battle actually taking place.
12. Finally, there is the great need of ensuring in the plan the maximum flexibility as regards its execution, and while it is essential that the assault forces should be not less than the minimum required for success, it is equally essential to retain the maximum force as a reserve, to exploit success where it is achieved.
13. Having outlined a number of the most important considerations in the general tactical problem of an assault landing, I shall now put before you a few conclusions which I have reached concerning the particular requirements of this morning's Model Exercise.
14. To start with, my object must always be to produce the simplest and most assured plan of fire and movement. What the fire, or movement, lacks in exactitude, must be compensated for in volume and speed.
15. On that basis, I come to the decision that I must so group my various types of support and landing craft that the control of their action, in successive and progressive stages is best secured.
16. Now, the fire from the supporting craft and, incidentally the smoke, can be generally separated into the following categories:
  - (a) Long Range Fire - capable of some degree of neutralization of beach defences from ranges up to 6 - 10,000 yds, and of engaging landward defences to some depth, after craft have closed beach, and means of observation established ashore. In this category, as examples, come such support craft as LCG (M), LCG (L), LCT (SP).



- (b) Medium Range Fire - capable of large scale neutralization of beach defences from ranges up to 2 - 3,000 yds. LCT (R) is, presently, the most important producer of this.
- (c) Short Range Fire - capable of large scale neutralization of beach defences, including mines and wire, from short ranges of 100 - 300 yds. LCA (Hedgerow) is the present "best bet". This short range fire can also be developed to some extent by troops in LCA, before touching down. LCS are also well adapted for the "short range" fire fight with enemy weapons in permanent beach emplacements.

17. The object which it is desired to achieve is to cover the movement in of the personnel craft by the provision of continuous and ample fire support. This fire support should commence before enemy interference by fire from his own beach defences becomes noticeable. It should be sustained until the moment the assault craft touch down on the beaches, and the assault troops rush and overcome the defenders and defences.
18. I therefore put up the following as a proposed organization of fire support, and of movement, in the critical period of closing the beaches.
19. Briefly, I propose to organize my support and personnel craft into four principal flights:-
- Flight A - Long Range Support Craft
  - Flight B - Medium Range Support Craft
  - Flight C - Short Range Support Craft
  - Flight D - Personnel Landing Craft
20. At distances of from 10,000 to 6,000 yds from the beaches, the Flights proceed to landward in that order - Flight A providing fire support. Between 6,000 to 3,000 yds, Flight A checks speed and, while it continues to carry out its fire and smoke plan, Flights B, C and D pass through it. At the selected range, Flight B, the Medium Range fire support (now leading), adds its important quota to the neutralizing or swamping fire. The sequence of Flights at this stage, therefore is B, leading, then C, D and finally A.
21. Between 2,000 and 1,000 yds from the beaches, Flight B then checks speed and Flights C (the short range support) and D (the Personnel Landing craft) pass through. Assisted by the fire support of Flights A and B, Flights C and D close the beach. At close range of 100 - 200 yds, Flight C swamps the beach defences with fire, Flight D, the personnel landing craft, touches down, immediately after, and the action on land commences (See diagrams attached).
22. This in brief outline, and without touching on the additional fire support from Naval ships and from aircraft, is the assault landing "fire and movement" plan which I should like to see tried out.
23. There may be difficulties in implementing this plan from the Naval point of view, of which I am unaware. I contend, however, that there are definite advantages in respect to simplification of the organization of the assault forces, their fire and movement. I suggest that control of Naval craft should be easier in that Naval flotillas do not require to be split. Also, the action of the various craft should be clear to the assaulting troops who can then appreciate what stage has been reached at all times. A combination of timing, with adjustment, as required, by light signals, should produce the required fire and movement forward of the several Flights at the appropriate moments.

24. I put this proposed organization of landing and support craft, and method of closing the beach, before you because, in my opinion, in the Combined Operations Exercises which I have seen to date, it has always struck me that the Army has attempted to dispose its assaulting forces on the sea, as it would do so on the land - that is to say, in depth and in groups. I submit that the governing conditions of an assault landing are basically different and that a different technique is therefore required.
25. However, whether or not when planning an assault landing with the representatives of the other Services, you find virtue or the reverse in the particular proposals I have put before you, keep the principles I have given you firmly in mind. Masterly simplicity must be your object and unremitting endeavour. Attractive complications in fire and movement must be resisted. What will be lacking in pin-point accuracy must be more than made up by widespread and overwhelming force. And, finally the problem beyond all others for the military force commander to solve is from the moment of touch down to the penetration and capture of the beach defences.

RR

H.D.G.C.

DISTRIBUTION

2 Cdn Inf Div  
3 Cdn Inf Div  
2 Cdn Armd Bde  
CCRA  
BGS  
CE  
CSO  
DA&QMG  
Chief Umpire  
War Diary  
File



## FIRST CANADIAN ARMY

## A PERSONAL MESSAGE

FROM

LT-GEN H.D.G. CRERAR, C.B., D.S.O.,  
GOC-in-C, FIRST CDN ARMY

It is not possible for me to speak to each one of you, but by means of this personal message, I want all ranks of the Canadian Army to know what is in my mind, as the hour approaches when we go forward into battle.

I have complete confidence in our ability to meet the tests which lie ahead. We are excellently trained and equipped. The quality of both senior and junior leadership is of the highest. As Canadians, we inherit military characteristics which were feared by the enemy in the last Great War. They will be still more feared before this war terminates.

The Canadian formations in the assault landing will have a vital part to play. The plans, the preparations, the methods and the technique, which will be employed, are based on knowledge and experience, bought and paid for by 2 Canadian Division at DIEPPE. The contribution of that hazardous operation cannot be over-estimated. It will prove to have been the essential prelude to our forthcoming and final success.

We enter into this decisive phase of the war with full faith in our cause, with calm confidence in our abilities and with grim determination to finish quickly and unmistakably this job we came overseas to do.

As in 1918, the Canadians, in Italy and in North West Europe, will hit the enemy again and again, until at some not distant time, the converging Allied Armies link together and we will be rejoined, in Victory, with our comrades of 1 Canadian Corps.

(Sgd) H.D.G. Crerar.

(H.D.G. Crerar) Lt-Gen

To be read to all troops.

INTRODUCTION  
TO  
BRIEFING OF OFFICERS, HQ FIRST CDN ARMY

- 
1. THE PURPOSE IN CALLING YOU TOGETHER TODAY IS TO ENSURE THAT ALL SENIOR AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS OF HQ FIRST CDN ARMY ARE NOW GIVEN THE NECESSARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE TREMENDOUS OPERATION OF WAR WHICH WAS LAUNCHED YESTERDAY, SIXTH HOUR SIXTH DAY SIXTH MONTH, AND THAT THEY ARE ADEQUATELY BRIEFED CONCERNING FUTURE INTENTIONS AND PLANS - THESE BOTH GENERALLY AND IN PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE TASKS OF FIRST CDN ARMY.
  2. I SHALL TAKE UP A FEW MINUTES OF YOUR TIME ON THE GENERAL ISSUES. AFTER I HAVE FINISHED, THE CHIEF OF STAFF, DA & QMG, GSO 1 INT, COL GS AND A QMG (MOVES) WILL EACH CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR MORE DETAILED KNOWLEDGE BY FILLING IN THE ESSENTIALS OF THE PRESENT, AND OF THE PROSPECTIVE FUTURE.
  3. TO COMMENCE WITH, I THINK IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT, AT THIS TIME, ALL OF YOU SHOULD REALIZE WHAT A VITAL PART THE GALLANT AND HAZARDOUS OPERATION OF THE RAID IN FORCE ON DIEPPE, BY 2 CDN INF DIV, HAS PLAYED IN THE CONCEPTION, PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE VAST "OVERLORD" OPERATION. I SHALL, THEREFORE, GIVE YOU IN BRIEFEST OUTLINE THIS IMPORTANT BACKGROUND.
  4. UNTIL THE EVIDENCE OF DIEPPE PROVED OTHERWISE, IT HAD BEEN THE OPINION IN HIGHEST COMMAND AND STAFF CIRCLES IN THIS COUNTRY THAT AN ASSAULT AGAINST A HEAVILY DEFENDED COAST COULD BE CARRIED OUT ON THE BASIS OF SECURING TACTICAL SURPRISE, AND WITHOUT DEPENDENCE ON OVERWHELMING FIRE SUPPORT, IN THE CRITICAL PHASES OF CLOSING THE BEACHES AND OVER-RUNNING THE BEACH DEFENCES.
- IF TACTICAL SURPRISE WAS TO BE THE BASIS OF THE PLAN, THEN BOMBARDMENT, PRIOR TO IMMINENT "TOUCH-DOWN" OBVIOUSLY REQUIRED TO BE RULED OUT. DEPENDENCE ON TACTICAL SURPRISE ALSO IMPLIED AN APPROACH UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS AND LANDING AT FIRST LIGHT. ADEQUATE AIR SUPERIORITY, AFTER SURPRISE HAD BEEN ACHIEVED, AND THROUGHOUT THE OPERATION, WAS, OF COURSE, CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL, AND REQUIRED TO BE ASSURED.



5. VERY BRIEFLY, SUCH WERE THE CONCEPTIONS HELD BY THOSE ON THE HIGHEST LEVELS CONCERNED WITH PLANNING THE OPERATION AGAINST DIEPPE AND, HOWEVER HAZARDOUS THE OPERATION, IT WAS NATURAL, AND PROPER, THAT AFTER NEARLY THREE YEARS OF WAR, WITHOUT ANY FIGHTING BY CANADIAN TROOPS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARRYING OUT THIS ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARY TO FUTURE LARGE SCALE INVASION SHOULD COME TO A CANADIAN DIVISION.

6. I AM NOT GOING TO TAKE UP YOUR TIME BY ANALYSING THE RESULTS AND LESSONS OF DIEPPE. A VERY COMPLETE OFFICIAL AND SECRET REPORT WAS LATER MADE AND SOME OF YOU, NO DOUBT, HAVE STUDIED IT.

I WILL, HOWEVER, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT FROM THE STUDY OF THOSE EXPERIENCES EMERGED THE TECHNIQUE AND TACTICS FIRST DEMONSTRATED BY THE 3 CDN INF DIV IN "PIRATE" EXERCISE LAST OCTOBER, AND THAT THIS TECHNIQUE AND THESE TACTICS, WERE THOSE ADOPTED FOR THE VAST COMBINED OPERATION WHICH TOOK PLACE YESTERDAY.

7. ONE MORE POINT IN THE NATURE OF A PERSONAL OPINION. ALTHOUGH AT THE TIME THE HEAVY COST TO CANADA, AND THE NON-SUCCESS OF THE DIEPPE OPERATION, SEEMED HARD TO BEAR, I BELIEVE THAT WHEN THIS WAR IS EXAMINED IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE, IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THE SOBERING INFLUENCE OF THAT OPERATION ON EXISTING ALLIED STRATEGICAL CONCEPTIONS, WITH THE ENFORCED REALIZATION BY THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS OF THE LENGTHY AND TREMENDOUS PREPARATIONS NECESSARY BEFORE INVASION COULD BE ATTEMPTED, WAS A CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION OF THE GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE TO FINAL VICTORY.

8. TURNING FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE, I DO NOT PROPOSE TO DISCUSS THE ACTUAL EVENTS, AS THEY HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THIS HOUR EXCEPT TO TOUCH ON ONE OR TWO POINTS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CANADIAN ARMY.

9. WHAT IS NOW TAKING PLACE ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL IS PART OF A GREAT STRATEGIC PLAN DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT THE SPEEDY AND UTTER DEFEAT OF GERMANY BY MEANS OF HEAVY AND CONVERGING ASSAULTS ON OCCUPIED EUROPE FROM THE U.K., FROM RUSSIA AND FROM ITALY. THIS TREMENDOUS ALLIED COMBINED OPERATION WHICH COMMENCED YESTERDAY MUST

THEREFORE BE REGARDED AS BUT A PART OF A MUCH GREATER STRATEGICAL PLAN. IT IS WELL TO BEAR THIS COMPREHENSIVE INTENTION IN MIND NOW, AND IN THE FUTURE, IF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EVENTS IS TO BE CLOSELY APPRECIATED.

10. THE ROLE OF 3 CDN INF DIV AND 2 CDN ARMD BDE, WITH THE CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONAL UNITS AND TROOPS UNDER COMMAND OF MAJOR-GENERAL KELLER IN THIS OPENING PHASE IS A VITAL ONE. IN A FEW MINUTES, THE CHIEF OF STAFF, WILL GIVE YOU AN EXPLANATION AS TO THE INTENTIONS AND SOME IDEA AS TO HOW THESE HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FIRST CDN ARMY WILL BE TO TAKE OVER THE LEFT SECTOR OF THE BEACH-HEAD, OUR MOVE OVER COMMENCING FAIRLY SOON. THERE ARE SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE TASKS, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION THEN OBTAINING, ONE OF WHICH THE CDN ARMY WILL THEN TAKE ON. WITHOUT GOING INTO ANY DETAIL, I WILL HOWEVER INFORM YOU THAT THESE POSSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN STUDIED BY MYSELF, AND CERTAIN MEMBERS OF CDN ARMY STAFF, AND THAT THE GROUND HAS BEEN CLEARED FOR RAPID AND DEFINITE PLANNING AND ACTION, AS SOON AS SUCH BECOMES PRACTICABLE.

11. BEFORE CALLING ON THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO GIVE YOU THE PICTURE OF THE CURRENT OPERATIONS AND THE PROSPECTS WHICH LIE AHEAD, I WANT TO IMPRESS ON YOU THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR CONTINUING THE 100% SECURITY AS REGARDS OUR PLANS. IT IS THE SUPREME COMMANDER'S INTENTION, AND IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE, THAT THE ENEMY WILL CONTINUE TO BELIEVE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE THAT ANOTHER ALLIED COMBINED OPERATION AGAINST A DIFFERENT PORTION OF THE COAST OF EUROPE IS TO TAKE PLACE. A LARGE SCALE DECEPTION PLAN IS OPERATING TO THAT END. COMPLETE SECURITY IS VITAL, THEREFORE, AND WHAT IS SAID HERE MUST NOT BE TALKED ABOUT TO OTHERS AT THIS STAGE.

H.D.G.C.



# DIEPPE AND CHERBOURG

## I—AN EXPERIMENT AGAINST A FORTIFIED COAST

### PLAN AND EXECUTION OF THE RAID

From Our Military Correspondent

Nearly two years have passed since the raid on Dieppe on August 19, 1942. It has been much discussed, but the fact that a lodgment has been secured on the west coast of France now makes a franker approach to it possible. A few of its links with the present campaign must still remain undisclosed in the interests of security, but it is possible to indicate in broad lines its connexion with the forced landing in Lower Normandy.

The operation may be regarded from two points of view. In the first place it was an attempt to harass the enemy and inflict damage upon military installations, and one of a series of raids carried out with that object. In the situation of to-day that is by far its less important aspect. It need only be said here that the intention was to carry out a large number of demolitions which would have caused the enemy a great deal of temporary trouble and pains. They were to have included dock facilities, the railway sidings, and above all the tunnel south-west of the town. The destruction planned in this

instance would have interrupted traffic with Havre and Rouen for many weeks.

To a much greater extent the raid on Dieppe was a trial, and the most important of its kind. This was the only raid involving the landing of a large body of troops on a strongly defended coast, a coast which was to be invaded as soon as the necessary strength and appliances could be assembled. It was essential to obtain data to work upon for the development of all these appliances. It was no less important to reconnoitre more closely than was possible from the air alone the nature of the defences and to observe the enemy's reaction.

The troops chosen for the enterprise were mainly Canadian, large elements of two brigades of the 2nd Canadian Division, a battalion of the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade, with small detachments of other arms and services. In addition the military units were drawn from the 3rd, 4th and Royal Marine "A" Commandos. The choice of Canadian troops was natural and in accordance with Canadian desires. The troops were most eager for action. Though two Canadian battalions had taken part in the defence of Hong-kong, the field army had not hitherto been engaged. The 2nd Division had not even had such active employment as the 1st had experienced in June, 1940, in France and in the expedition to Spitsbergen in 1941. The military force commander was Major-General J. H. Roberts, G.O.C., 2nd Canadian Division.

### THE DESTROYERS' TASK

The naval force, primarily consisting of various types of landing and support craft, included no ships larger than destroyers, eight of the "Hunt" class, but the total number of vessels employed was about 250. It was not at that time considered feasible to bring battleships into the Channel. The technique of protecting them was very much less advanced than it is to-day, and the Navy could ill afford heavy losses. The air force element was strong, but it was mostly fighter cover. The only direct support was from cannon-fighter squadrons, which could scarcely be expected to silence a strongly protected position permanently. There was no high-level bombing prior to the assault. Suitable day bombers, such as Fortresses, were not available in adequate numbers, and it was considered that night bombing would block the streets against the tanks. It would also do away with the element of tactical surprise, but at the same time very likely without destroying positions on the sea front from which fire was likely to be directed against the landing parties.

These various considerations all carried weight, but their result was to confine the tactical support of the troops from the water and from the air to bombardment by 4in. guns of the "Hunt" destroyers and attack by the cannon of the fighters. The destroyers were to bombard the main beaches for 10 minutes, and then shift their fire to the flanking headlands for another 15 minutes. Similarly, the fighters were to attack these beaches for 10 minutes, and then turn against the buildings as the landing craft touched down. The essential question to be answered before undertaking such an operation was whether the aim should be complete tactical surprise or whether a measure of tactical surprise should be sacrificed in favour of overwhelming fire support. The plan banked on tactical surprise, and this was not only because the means for providing the overwhelming fire was deficient but also because the attainment of tactical surprise was considered so important.

The plan comprised four preliminary landings at dawn: by the Commandos on

the flanks at Berneval (Yellow Beach) and Varengeville (Orange Beach), and by Canadian troops at Puits (Blue Beach) and Pourville (Green Beach). This was to be followed by a frontal assault on Dieppe itself (Red and White Beaches) half an hour later. The task of the Commandos was to silence heavy batteries above Yellow and Orange Beaches. On the inner eastern flank at Blue Beach the Royal Regiment of Canada was to clear the big headland overlooking the Dieppe beaches. On the inner western flank at Green Beach the South Saskatchewan Regiment was to occupy the even bigger headland above Pourville; later on the Cameron Highlanders of Canada would land on this beach and advance inland to capture the aerodrome of St. Aubin. The main attack on the Dieppe beaches was the task of the Essex Scottish on Red Beach and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry on White Beach. The first wave of tanks was to land simultaneously with the infantry and, it was hoped, push through

the town with the aid of parties of engineers and cooperate with the Camerons against the aerodrome.

Approximately an hour before the time fixed for the first landings there occurred the incident so well remembered, the encounter of the landing craft of No. 3 Commando with a small hostile convoy. In the short-range action which followed the landing craft scattered. The enemy was prematurely alarmed and a good deal of loss occurred. Nevertheless a handful of men from the Commando, sniping and giving an impression that it amounted to many times its real strength, drew the enemy's fire from the targets on the main beaches. The Orange Beach attack of No. 4 Commando was a complete success. The Varengeville battery was carried; the guns were destroyed; and the whole of the German detachment killed or taken prisoner.

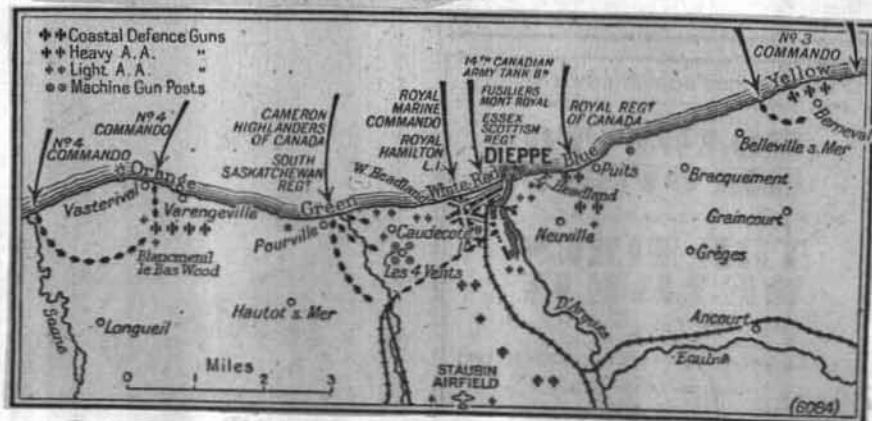
The Canadian attacks on the inner flanks were not successful. That on Green Beach went off the better of the two. There was no opposition till the landing took place, though fire was afterwards hot. Pourville was entered, and progress made up the high ground towards Dieppe. In spite of the greatest heroism, however, the trench system round Les Quatre Vents Farm could not be carried. The Camerons, following up the South Saskatchewan, nevertheless advanced two miles inland up the Scie, but there was no sign of the tank support, and the battalion was recalled. Blue Beach was a disastrous affair. The convoy attack had put the enemy at Puits on the alert, and the touch-down was late. Only one small party succeeded in getting off the beach. The failure to clear the headland involved heavy losses from the artillery installed upon it for the troops attacking the Dieppe beaches.

## A ROOM-TO-ROOM FIGHT

It is impossible to describe in detail the events on these beaches. The first touch-down was only a little late, but the tank-landing craft were delayed 15 minutes, so that there was a gap in time between the cessation of the bombardment and their arrival. Intense fire was directed on the beaches from the castle, the casino, and the west cliff. The casino was captured after fighting from room to room. This enabled parties of the R.H.L.I. to enter the town. Ramps could not be built for the Churchill tanks to cross the sea wall, owing to the heavy fire, but a number—the latest information suggests 15—did get over by means of special pilings. They were, however, prevented from entering the streets of Dieppe by the blocks, which could not be demolished. The floating reserve, the Fusiliers Mont-Royal, with the Marines as a second wave, was ordered to land, the decision being apparently based in part on a mutilated message that the Essex Scottish had entered Dieppe, whereas, in fact, only about a dozen men got through. The reinforcement could do no good and suffered very heavy loss, which would have been greater still had not the Marine Commando's disembarkation been in part countermanded by its commanding officer.

The order for withdrawal was issued at 11 a.m. Most of the tank crews remained in their tanks to cover it by their fire. The destroyers also stood in so closely to protect the re-embarkation that one of them was actually grounded by the stern as she turned away. The air cover was brilliantly successful. German bombers did not put in an appearance for some five hours, and were then roughly handled. It was estimated that, in all, 170 hostile aircraft were destroyed.

*To be concluded*





# DIEPPE AND CHERBOURG

## II—EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM LANDINGS

### INFLUENCE ON SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS

From Our Military Correspondent

While the profits of the Dieppe raid are at first sight debatable the losses are only too manifest. The Canadian casualties alone numbered 3,371, and this without any of the demolitions projected having been carried out. Yet when the asset side is examined it will be found to amount to an invaluable total. Dieppe proved to be the source from which almost every lesson affecting future operations, and especially the landing in Lower Normandy, was derived. None of the varied information and background acquired in the Mediterranean conflicted with it, or for that matter appreciably added to it.

The first and most important lesson was the need for overwhelming fire support, including close support during the initial stages. This would have to comprise support from the air, heavy and medium naval support, and support by special vessels working close inshore. The types of support craft available in 1942 were neither adequately armed nor adequately armoured for continued action against strong coast defences. It was the experience of Dieppe which led to the creation of the support craft now in use, just as it was that experience which brought battleships and cruisers into the bay of the Seine in June, 1944.

A corollary to this lesson was that it might be necessary to abandon the ideal of complete tactical surprise. A preliminary bombardment does not do away with tactical surprise in the broad sense, but it does abandon such opportunity as may exist of actually putting troops ashore before the enemy is aware of their approach to the beaches. Against defences organized as were those of the west coast of France it was seen to be more important to pulverize the resistance in advance than to catch sections of the garrison asleep, specially since there existed no certainty that this could be accomplished in any case.

#### COMBINED HEADQUARTERS

The need for a combined headquarters was no less clearly indicated. The outline plan of every form of combined operation must be prepared by an experienced inter-service staff. This has now become a commonplace, but it was not so then. Again, while a combined operation needs even more meticulous planning than any other, in none is flexibility more necessary. The well-known military axiom, that the place to which it pays least well to send reinforcements is the place where there has been a failure, applies even more strongly to an opposed landing than to normal warfare. This points to the widest possible front and to a number of landing places, because with a cramped front and few landing places the commander can do little to impart flexibility. It points also to the necessity for retaining a substantial reserve, since forces once committed lose their flexibility; in fact the initial landing force must be the minimum which can do the job.

The coast in the region of Dieppe is marked by high, steep cliffs, with few openings, and with fishing ports or holiday resorts in the mouths of what openings there are. This fact must provide at least a partial answer to the strong criticism which has been launched in instructed circles against the plan on the ground that it involved a frontal attack on a densely built town. It is also to be noted that the flank attacks at Puits and Pourville were not successful, and that though there were some elements of success at Pourville there were none at Puits. It may therefore be conceded that there could not have been a successful envelopment of the town from these two landings. Nevertheless, Dieppe furnishes one more argument against the frontal attack when avoidable. When the Canadians set out to take Dieppe in 1942 they landed at Dieppe. When General Montgomery's army group set out to take Cherbourg in 1944 it landed some 15 miles away.

It was shown that the most advanced of the enemy's anti-tank defences must be destroyed before tanks were landed; otherwise it was probable that they would either be stuck on the beaches under fire or stopped by obstacles soon after leaving them, as happened at Dieppe. It was at first thought that tanks must be held back till the defences were captured, but this view was modified, and in the Cherbourg landing tanks early on the scene greatly contributed to the capture of these defences. But discussion on the problem set in train a series of experiments in special equipment and method which have since borne abundant fruit.

One of the most significant of all the pointers was in the direction of airborne

troops. As a fact, the conditions suitable both for landing craft and airborne troops did not occur throughout the whole period within which the operation was scheduled to take place; the conditions as regards light and tide were favourable for ships and landing craft, but they would not have permitted the employment of airborne troops at the required time. But technique and equipment were improving, and before two years had passed methods which were then considered hazardous had become readily practicable. That being so, the use of airborne troops prior to the landing and even to the preliminary bombardment would restore the element of surprise to a large extent. Their immense value in "jumping" obstacles was too patent for further emphasis upon the subject to be needed.

### SMOKE SCREENS

The use of smoke at Dieppe brought up a number of topics for discussion. In general it was considered that the smoke made by ships, aircraft, and land forces was extremely useful but inadequate in quantity. When employed to cover the withdrawal it was not developed quickly enough. At Dieppe the approach of the landing craft could not be screened by smoke because the cannon-fighters were required to go in and attack just before the craft touched down, and if smoke had been laid by aircraft at this stage the bombarding ships would have lost sight of their targets. Here the deduction was that action by fighter aircraft, if considered necessary, must precede the use of smoke to cover craft approaching landing places. It was also decided that for a daylight assault full use must be made of smoke when occasions demanded it, particularly to cover ships or craft required to remain comparatively close to the shore, and that specially fitted craft should be provided for this purpose.

Among other lessons learnt was the need for a great improvement in aircraft recognition by naval and land forces, this having been far from good at Dieppe. Many useful hints as to the means for providing for security emerged from the discussions. Attention was concentrated upon combining this vital necessity with the no less urgent need for preliminary "briefing" of the forces engaged. Without the latter officers and men could not be expected to know enough of the intentions of their superiors to enable them to take advantage of a favourable situation or minimize the effects of a setback. Though there had been two rehearsals for the Dieppe raid, fresh emphasis was put upon their necessity. It was considered that special training would be required for all engaged in tasks such as night operations, street fighting, attacks upon concrete casemates.

The raid exercised a profound influence upon the Admiralty as regards both production and tactics in combined operations; upon the War Office with special reference to engineering; upon the Air Ministry with special reference to close support. It brought about a new realism in the attitude to all such projects, and, paradoxically, though the difficulty of the raid had if anything been underrated, and it had nevertheless failed to reach its material objectives, yet study of it led to greater confidence in the success of combined operations on a much larger scale. Where the first footing in Lower Normandy was concerned, this confidence was absolute when the invasion plans were finally passed.

### DEBT TO CANADIANS

The heavy sacrifices of the Canadians were not made in vain. The gallant lives lost were not thrown away. In the months that followed, the study of the experiences at Dieppe made more and more discoveries and confirmed more and more conclusions till a technique was developed which was first demonstrated by the 3rd Canadian Division in the exercise last October. In the personal message from Lieutenant-General H. D. G. Crerar to his troops on the eve of the invasion there occurs this passage: "The plans, the preparations, the methods, and the technique which will be employed are based on knowledge and experience bought and paid for by the 2nd Canadian Division at Dieppe. The contribution of that hazardous operation cannot be overestimated. It will prove to have been the essential prelude to our forthcoming and final success." These words were fully warranted and provide the most complete justification for the raid on Dieppe.

*Concluded*

The first article appeared yesterday.



CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW WITH LIEUT. L.C. COUNSELL,  
R.H.L.I., AT CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS,  
6 JUN 44.

Subject: The Operation at DIEPPE, 19 Aug 42.

1. Lieut. Counsell commanded No. 18 Platoon, D Coy, R.H.L.I., in the raid on DIEPPE. He was severely wounded and became a prisoner of war. He was repatriated to the United Kingdom on medical grounds in June, 1944. He brought with him from GERMANY in a false bottom of his water bottle an account written by himself to the dictation of Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt concerning the latter's experiences at DIEPPE, where he was O.C. R.H.L.I.
2. Although Lt.-Col. Labatt states that the landing ships carrying the assault forces were shelled by the enemy just after the L.C.As. were lowered, Lieut. Counsell does not himself remember this taking place.
3. D Coy was to land on the extreme right of the R.H.L.I. to the west of the CASINO. This Company, however, suffered severe casualties from enemy fire before landing. Although there had been two L.C.As., carrying Nos. 16 and 17 Platoons, to the right of Lieut. Counsell's own boat, he believes that neither of these actually touched down. That carrying No. 17 Platoon was, he says, destroyed when a mortar bomb struck a bangalore torpedo which this craft was carrying. Lieut. Counsell did not see this but he heard the explosion which destroyed the boat. Lieut. Woodcock, who was in this boat, was blinded by the explosion but got ashore and was subsequently repatriated from GERMANY.
4. Lieut. Counsell's L.C.A. touched down at exactly the proper place, north-west of the CASINO, but although No. 18 was supposed to be the left platoon of D Coy no troops whatever landed to the right of it.
5. Mr. Counsell saw the cannon fighters going in to attack shortly before the R.H.L.I. touched down. He remarks "We were all a little disappointed" by the smallness of the air support at this moment; the fighter attack seemed to be over in a moment. Lieut. Counsell states that the junior officers and men of the force had not been informed that the bombing attack on the town which had formed part of the plan at an earlier time had been cancelled, and it was therefore a source of surprise to them to see no evidence of bomb damage as they landed; the result of this, Mr. Counsell states, was that "you felt let down".
6. Mr. Counsell is certain that the fighters were not still attacking at the moment when the R.H.L.I. touched down. He states however that just at the moment of landing there was a distinct lull in the enemy fire, and he believes that this may have been due to the fighter attack.
7. Both Lt.-Col. Labatt and Lt.-Col. Jasperson (O.C. Essex Scot) told Lieut. Counsell at Oflag VIIB that their battalions were landed "right on time".
8. After landing, Lieut. Counsell, finding there was no troops to his right, decided he should make an effort to

make with his own men for the Company rendezvous, which was the houses under the cliff to the right (i.e. the west) of the beach. Immediately in front of the point where he landed there were gaps in the German wire. These had not been blown by our own men, and Lieut. Counsell believed and believes that they had been left by the Germans as traps. He made no attempt to get his men through them, but went forward himself with Cpl. Haines to cut the wire further to the right. While cutting the wire he was wounded by an enemy mortar bomb. Cpl. Haines extricated Lieut. Counsell from the wire and roughly dressed his wound. Lieut. Counsell told Haines to tell Sgt. Rogers (now a prisoner of war) to get the rest of the Platoon forward to the houses. Haines left on this mission and Lieut. Counsell did not see him again. The two advanced sections had come up by this time, and Lieut. Counsell gave orders for one section to rush across the road under cover of fire from the other section. This rush was made but resulted only in the section being shot to pieces.

9. By this time Lieut. Counsell was suffering severely from the effects of his wound and his recollection of events is patchy. He remembers Cpl. Bissett and Pte. Kerslake being wounded, and recalls urging the men not to "bunch", which they were tending to do. Bissett was hit again in the stomach and Lieut. Counsell gave him morphine; he then found that Kerslake had been hit again, this time being shot through the head.

10. Mr. Counsell remembers the tide coming in and wounded men being washed out to sea by it. He also remembers seeing Fus. M.R. coming in and landing nearby; he saw five men landing from a boat and being shot down immediately.

11. Lieut. Counsell also remembers seeing the rush for the boats when they came in at the time of evacuation; he saw about four boats touch down immediately in front of the CASINO. There was no control, and he thinks one or more boats were swamped by the rush.

12. Lieut. Counsell also remembers seeing German working parties, later in the day, going up to dig out their own dead from the "Opera Box" position referred to by Lt.-Col. Labatt, which had been hit by Naval fire.

13. Lieut. Counsell himself was picked up off the beach by the Germans, he thinks about 1800 hrs. He was treated as well as could be expected in the circumstances, and was moved very shortly to a hospital at ROUEN.

14. Lieut. Counsell believes that the Germans suffered a very considerable number of casualties at DIEPPE. He was told that a German Roman Catholic chaplain who visited wounded men in the Rouen Hospital said that he had buried 300 Germans in one day. Lieut. Counsell himself did not hear this remark.

15. Lieut. Counsell has no personal knowledge of a party of the R.H.L.I. commanded by Lieut. L.C. Bell getting into the town of DIEPPE. Similarly, he has never heard of tanks getting into the town.

16. In spite of the evidence of certain Naval witnesses, Lieut. Counsell considers it extremely unlikely that any of our tanks were ever in possession of the enemy and firing on our ships.



17. The invariable story told by German officers, etc., concerning the DIEPPE operation was that they had full knowledge of it in advance and were "waiting for us". Lieut. Counsell was told that 15,000 German troops had been moved into the area in expectation of the raid. (These German stories are of course contradicted by the evidence of prisoners captured during the raid and also by the German report on the operation now in our possession.)

18. Lieut. Counsell read this memorandum in draft on 12 Jun 44, and after making a couple of minor emendations accepted it as accurate.

C.S.

(C.P. Stacey) Lt.-Col.,  
Historical Officer,  
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

## CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

LONDON  
21 Nov 44.

The Secretary,  
Department of National Defence,  
OTTAWA, Canada.

Historical Record - Dieppe Operation

1. Further to my 24/Reports/1/2 (Hist) dated 20 Nov 44, attached for your retention, please, is a copy of a personal letter, dated 11 Jun 44, from Lieut.-General H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, to Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q.

2. The information contained in this letter was not incorporated in Report No. 128. In view, however, of the Army Commander's expressed desire that it should be recorded for historical purposes, it is suggested that the copy of the letter now enclosed should be attached to the copy of Report No. 128 already in your hands. This will ensure its availability to the future Official Historian.

(Sgd.) C.P. Stacey, Col.

for (P.J. Montague) Major-General,  
A/Chief of Staff,  
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS



Dear Stacey:

I have your letter of 10 Jun 44 and I am glad that the information I gave you in my letter of 8 Jun proved of some use.

I am not quite sure as to what you refer to in the last paragraph of your letter under reply - unless it concerns a recent communication of mine to the C of S, CMHQ, on the subject of the tactics and technique of the recent assault landing and the debt which is owed, in that connection, to DIEPPE. Assuming this is the case, I am attaching a copy of certain remarks I made on 7 Jun, at the commencement of a meeting of several hundred of the more senior officers on this HQ, during which they were generally "briefed" regarding the operations which commenced the day before.

You will note in my remarks that I refer to the tactical conceptions held "in highest command and staff circles in this country" at that time. While I think it highly undesirable to be more specific these days, when history is written, it should, I believe, be made clear that the basic tactical planning for the DIEPPE Operation was undertaken by Montgomery (Army), Mountbatten (Navy) and Leigh-Mallory (Air). Roberts, then commanding 2 Canadian Division, worked out the detail plans for the employment of his forces but the basic plan for the Army was that of Montgomery.

You will remember that the original operation was planned for June, that weather prevented it being carried out and that before it had been revived and finally executed on 19 Aug, Montgomery was appointed to command of Eighth Army. Eventhough there was no change in the Montgomery plan of June and that of the operation actually carried out - so far as I can remember - (except the elimination of the Parachute troops), it would have been quite wrong to have brought his name into the controversy which then arose, and, I consider, it would still be quite wrong to do so.

I am not sure whether this point was touched on in your memo on DIEPPE but, in any event, I pass the above on for your consideration.

Send Chapter VI along when it is completed. I may not be able to read it at an early date but, if there is a lull in the proceedings, an opportunity may occur.

Yours,

(signed)

(H.D.G. Crerar)

Lt.-Col. C.P. Stacey,  
Historical Officer,  
Canadian Military Headquarters,  
2 Cockspur Street,  
London, SW1.

COPY

Dear Col. Duguid -

Many thanks for allowing me to look over the enclosed records.

I hope my notes may be of some value to you.

There are several points I wish to discuss with my officers and when they are cleared up to my satisfaction I will come to Ottawa and again go through these files.

Again many thanks

Sincerely

(signed) R.R. Labatt

26 Aug. /45



DIEPPE REPORT 100

Page 33 - Sec 143

R.H.L.I. embarked 1700 hrs. Southampton (H.M.S. Glengyle) but due to civilian workmen aboard "briefing" could not be started until 1900 hrs. Additional equipment was neither properly sorted nor cleared. Invaluable time was lost.

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REPORT 108

Page 3 Sec. 16

H.M.S. Glengyle was being shelled from the shore before the last M.L.C. was lowered.

Page 4 Sec 19 - 20

There was no bombing of the town. The A.L.C. flotilla never stopped on the way in ( i.e. that bound for Red & White beaches)

Page 6

The R.H.L.I. and the Essex Scots landed exactly on time.

Page 9 - Sec 38

The pill-box through which entrance was first gained to the Casino was at the N.E. corner. This was knocked out by B 37360 Pte Hugh McCourt R.H.L.I. The deed was witnessed by Maj. Lazier and myself (R.R. Labatt). Brig. R.E.G. Roome (awards & decorations) has a good description of what happened.

Page 9 Sec 40

The Casino was cleared by Capt. J.M. Currie and a party from R.H.L.I. detailed by myself. Later he was joined by Maj. Lazier. There was no plastic being exploded in the building while this was going on.

Page 11 Sec 51

I was never in the town. Having organized the clearing of the Casino I directed my attention to the Right Coy. Too weak to move forward it was necessary to leave the survivors of this company in action on the beach. Here they prevented Germans who could be seen massing at the foot of "West Cliff" from making a flanking counter attack down the full length of the beach.

When Brig. Lett became a casualty I was ordered to take command of the 4 C.I.B.

I set up Bn. & Bde HQ in the open by the sea wall 15 yds E of the Casino. The Casino itself was not satisfactory although it would have provided excellent shelter. Due to the difficulty of intercommunication it was essential that I obtained a continuous all round

view of the area. This was achieved.

REPORT 108 Sec 124 - (Also Report 107 Appendix <sup>"C"</sup> Sec 4)

I had the whole esplanade under continuous observation. Only 3 (three) tanks were able to reach the esplanade during the entire action.

REPORT 108 Sec 130

This road block which had been seized by Capt. Hill, was never blown. On arrival the R C E s found that an important part of the specially prepared charge was missing - or had been lost en route.

REPORT 108 Sec 132

No tanks got into the town.

REPORT 108 Sec 161 - 2 - 3

This episode did not take place.

REPORT 108 Sec. 231

Two Blenheims laid a perfect smoke screen the full length of Red & White beaches at 1100 hrs. They flew a straight course at 300 - 400 ft and became the target of every enemy weapon within range. It was a brave action and I hope the pilots were successful.

Unfortunately the screen was not renewed.

REPORT 108 Sec 264

After "Vanquish" no boats came into Red beach at all - although they were expected.  
There was NO beach control.

REPORT 89 Appendix F Sec 4

In justification to Capt. Currie R.H.L.I. it must be pointed out that he himself cleared the Casino. Sgt. Hickson was obviously there as his description of the situation is accurate. Capt. Currie personally lead the clearing with great gallantry. Witnesses Col. W.D. Whitaker, Major H.F. Lazier & Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt.

REPORT 89 Appendix F Sec. 15

Lt J.G. Counsell lay wounded at the waters edge. Lt.L.C. Counsell under West Cliff. Neither was in the Casino. Sgt. Hickson's story is not reliable. He seems to be a sort of Baron Munchausen. It was reported to me that the men of no units other than the R.H.L.I. got into the town. As we controlled the one gap made I consider this to be accurate.

REPORT 107 Appendix B Sec. 23.

This is true. I heartily concur.



REPORT 128 Sec 43.

Mortar range stakes were standing on the beach on our arrival. We did not know what they were for until told afterwards by the Germans. Although I did not notice them myself we were told that there were also buoys anchored offshore for this purpose.

REPORT 128 Sec 43

Shells were falling around H.M.S. Glengyle before all A.L.C. s were lowered. Major H.F. Lazier in the last M.L.C. told me it was a toss up whether or not they would wait to lower him. The shelling was extremely obvious. The closest miss was about 450 yds astern.

REPORT 128 Appendix D

I have corrected in pencil many mistakes in transcription and punctuation. As these changes alter the meaning considerably would you please correct all copies of this Appendix.

REPORT 128 page 10 Sec 45

It must be understood that this account was never meant to be seen by anyone except my wife. While the narrative form was adopted to amuse me as a P.O.W. all the matter used is extremely accurate. I planned to base any subsequent reports on this account. Any events that did not occur first hand or about which I was hazy - were omitted.

( signed) R.R. Labatt

REPORT NO 128 HISTORICAL OFFICER CMHQ  
APPENDIX "D" (ii)

Narrative of Experiences at Dieppe 19 Aug '42  
by Lt.-Col. R.R. Labbatt, O.C. R.H.L.I.

Amendments made personally by Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt  
at Ottawa 26 Aug. '45

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para. 3, l. 16	For "knowledge of each man" read "knowledge <u>by</u> each man"
para. 4, l. 8	Read <u>Skeleton web</u> , colt 45 ( 2 extra maps)
" l. 9	Read <u>Maps</u> in oiled silk
" l. 10	Read <u>Pencils</u>
" l. 12	Read <u>Message pads</u>
" l. 13	Read <u>Binoculars</u>
para 7, l. 2	Read <u>We were</u> nearing the rendezvous
" l. 5	Opposite "Who'd take the G.C. home". in margin read "GLENGYLE"
l. 8	For "cheerio" read "cheer o "
para 8, l. 3	Read "the deck beside <u>it</u> "
para 9, l. 4	Read "the other craft was lowered. <u>Looking</u> up and up"
" l. 5	Read "towards the bridge, <u>one</u> realized"
l. 8	For "We were moving forwards " read "we were to move forward"
para 10, l. 6	For "S.S.R. would land at the East I 7 West IV at Dieppe" read "S.S.R. would land East and West of Dieppe".
l. 7	Delete "at first light"
l. 16	Delete "beach" and substitute "and the S.X."
para 12, l. 16	Read "the cliffs. The S.S.R. were landing right on time. No sign of the Royals to the East which was disturbing, or was it?"
para 16, l. 18	Marginal note - " I since have # B37360 Pte Hugh McCourt"
para 19, l. 9	For "O.Rs" read "Secs"
para 20, l. 2	For "while reorganizing Bn Hq" read "while POAG reorganized Bn Hq".
para 21, l. 13	Read "the Esplanade. From the Casino I could see the devilish position they were in"
para 22, l. 2	Read "McCutcheon's set, (he was F.O.G.) and via"
para 23, l. 6	For "8 of these" read "3 of these"
para 26, l. 6	Read "organized resistance, <u>when</u> it came"
l. 8	Read "beach. <u>My</u> great needs were"
para 30, l. 7	Read "on closer inspection <u>it</u> proved to be"
para 33, l. 11 & 12	For "But it was not a wounded officer, it was poor McCutcheon" read "But the officer was not wounded. It was poor McCutcheon".



## REPORT No 128 HISTORICAL OFFICER CMHQ.

## APPENDIX "D" (ii)

Narrative of Experiences at DIEPPE 19 Aug '42

by Lt. Col. R.R. Labatt, O.C. RHLI.

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& l 12

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