

NOTE

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See Also Special Report of 11 Feb 43

Communications to and from Canada concerning  
The Operation (DIEPPE)

DUPLICATE

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Preliminary Report on Operation "JUBILEE" (The Raid on  
DIEPPE), 19 Aug 42.

1. This Report presents an outline sketch of the important combined operation in the DIEPPE area, carried out on 19 Aug 42 by a force which included large elements of 2 Cdn Div and other Canadian troops. It will be a considerable time before a complete historical Report on this operation, which was by far the most extensive yet undertaken by the Canadian Army Overseas, can be prepared. In the meantime the document attached as Appendix "A", a draft prepared originally with a view to publication by the Government of Canada, is presented as a preliminary account.
2. After a period of more than two and a half years from the time of the landing of 1 Cdn Div in the United Kingdom, during which there was to all intents and purposes no actual contact with the enemy, the Canadian Army Overseas underwent what was in a definite sense its baptism of fire in the DIEPPE raid. This raid was much the most extensive of the many combined operations which have been undertaken against the enemy-occupied coasts of Western Europe since so much of the continent was overrun by the Germans in 1940. The Canadian Army found the major part of the landing force, providing for the purpose two Infantry Brigades of 2 Cdn Div (4 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes) as well as an Army Tank Battalion equipped with Churchill tanks, and large detachments of miscellaneous units.
3. This was an extremely hazardous operation involving an attack on a very strong position (the strength of which, moreover, is now admitted to have been somewhat underestimated) and our losses were very heavy. A preliminary report indicates that the total number of Canadian troops embarked for the operation was 4,912 (304 officers, 4,608 other ranks). There returned a total of 2,147 (109 officers, 2,038 other ranks). These figures are to be regarded as merely approximate; in a subsequent report it is hoped to provide final ones. On 15 Sep 42 the Canadian Government announced that the total Canadian casualties in the operation amounted to 3,350 dead, wounded and missing (Times, LONDON, 16 Sep 42). The heaviest losses were suffered by 4 Cdn Inf Bde, which according to the same preliminary figures already mentioned embarked 94 officers and 1,604 other ranks, and brought back 17 officers and 334 other ranks.
4. The brief account of the operation which is attached as Appendix "A" was prepared by the writer as the result of a request received from the Dominion Government for a statement in the form of a "White Paper" which could be given to the public in explanation of the objectives and events of the operation. The writer was instructed to prepare such a document. It was felt that since the enemy was known to have

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captured the copy of the Military Operation Order taken ashore by H.Q., 6 Cdn Inf Bde, security was rather less important than in normal cases, and that it would be possible to present a fairly full account of the operation for the benefit of the Canadian public. In an interview with Brigadiers PENHALE and MANN, at which the writer was present, on 31 Aug 42, Major-General HAYDON, Vice-Chief of Combined Operations, expressed the personal view that in these circumstances it would be proper to prepare the "White Paper" on the basis of the preliminary report of the Military Force Commander (Major-General J.H. ROBERTS, M.C., G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div). The writer accordingly wrote a draft on this basis. This was submitted to General McNAUGHTON for his comments and revised in accordance with them. The draft as thus revised is the document attached to the present Report as Appendix "A".

5. When, however, this draft was subsequently submitted to Combined Operations Headquarters, the authorities there took exception to many passages in it. It appeared that C.O.H.Q. strongly objected to, among other things, the publication of any material which might seem, even by implication, to admit the loss of the Operation Order. The Chief of Combined Operations (Vice-Admiral Lord Louis MOUNTBATTEN) told Brigadier YOUNG (then B.G.S., C.M.H.Q.) that the publication of this draft would be worth £500,000 to the enemy. Accordingly the draft was revised by the Public Relations staff of C.O.H.Q. (the actual work being done, curiously enough, by a United States officer, Major LAWRENCE, who is a member of that staff). The writer then again revised his account, following the general lines of Major LAWRENCE'S draft, but using as far as possible, under instructions from C.M.H.Q., the words of his own original version as here appended.

6. The revised account, necessarily very much less informative than the one originally approved by General McNAUGHTON, was passed by Combined Operations Headquarters and in due course forwarded to OTTAWA for publication if the authorities there saw fit.

7. It is thought that the original draft here presented, although necessarily hastily written and incomplete, is not wholly without historical value. Accordingly, it is forwarded, pending the completion of a fuller account, the preparation of which will be a matter of months.

8. As already noted, the draft owes much to General ROBERTS' preliminary Report, some passages of which were incorporated in it verbatim. The writer also drew heavily (particularly in the references to preparation and training, and the results of the raid) upon his own notes of General McNAUGHTON'S remarks to a party of visiting Canadian editors, in an interview at HEADLEY COURT, near LEATHERHEAD, on 27 Aug 42.

9. It is worth noting that this operation will be extremely well documented. With a view to the collection of all possible information of operational value, it was directed that all Canadian personnel returning from the operation should make written statements of their experiences. These statements constitute historical sources of unusual interest and value. A large number of files of these, obtained at H.Q. 2 Cdn Div, are at present in the hands of the writer at C.M.H.Q.; and he understands that in many cases, at least, copies of these personal accounts have been placed as appendices upon the War Diaries of the units concerned.

10. The documents relating to the preparation of the "White Paper", and the negotiations with C.O.H.Q. in the matter, are on C.M.H.Q. file 4/PRESS/3/3.

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POSTSCRIPT. - Since the foregoing paragraphs were written, the "White Paper" has been published in Canada by the Minister of National Defence. A moderately complete version appears in The Times (LONDON), 19 Sep 42.



















