Operation Jubilee:
The Canadians at Dieppe, August 19, 1942

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I haven’t any remorse about Dieppe. I believe now it was necessary. We tired out a lot of new equipment, new techniques. The losses, though costly, were valuable to future operations. As far I was concerned it was a job to be done. We knew it wasn’t going to be easy and it wasn’t. There is no room for remorse; that’s not the true character of a soldier.

Private Hugh Comack, The Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada

On August 19th, 1942, approximately 6,000 soldiers waded ashore on the beaches of Dieppe to take part in a raid code-named Operation Jubilee. The raid was to be a fifteen-hour coordinated effort between the Royal Air Force (RAF), the Royal Navy (RN), and ground forces composed mainly of men from the Canadian Second Division. The raid objectives were to destroy German military installations and to temporarily seize a port.

The raid was a complete disaster and it is clear that many mistakes were made that could have been prevented. The losses given were: 60 percent of the ground forces killed, wounded or taken prisoner; 106 of 650 aircraft destroyed; 33 of 179 landing craft lost at sea or on the beaches; and one of eight destroyers sunk. Goodman states it was Clausewitzian friction affecting the battle, and the ability to achieve operational objectives within carefully prescribed timelines meant that the pre-condition for successive steps were not met.

In Canada any discussion of Dieppe conjures up ideas of planning failures and ineptitude, which is the antithesis of when Canadians relive the decisive Canadian victory at Vimy during the First World War. This paper reviews the planning of the raid, the raid itself,

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1 Murray Burt. Winnipeg’s Ladies From Hell: How The Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada fought, remembered and grew in the regiment’s first century of war and peace. Library and Archives Canada Catalogue in Publishing, Ottawa, p. 79.
3 ibid, p. 1-2.
and attempts to ultimately define who, or what, was responsible for such a disaster. It will illustrate how a series of events and pressures, political as well as military, personal and professional led to the raid’s failure.

By the spring of 1942 the Allies faced severe pressure in all theatres of operation. The Axis forces controlled most of Europe, the Germans had been in Russia since the summer of 1941, and the Russians were sustaining heavy losses on the Eastern Front. Rommel continued to outmanoeuvre larger forces in Africa, and the Japanese had entered the war. Soviet Premier, Joseph Stalin, continued to push the United States and England to open a second front to take pressure off of the Russian frontier. In May 1942 Stalin sent his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov to emphasize the need for a second front and to indicate Russians contentment with a treaty, which promised mutual assistance and a guarantee not to seek a separate peace with Germany. British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill was pleased by these discussions and ordered the service chiefs to prepare a raid on the continent for later that year and envisaged a full-scale invasion with the Americans in 1943. It soon became apparent that time restraints were so great that any raid in September was out of the question, but planning went ahead for a ‘hit and run’ operation at Dieppe in August.

In October 1941, Churchill appointed Louis Mountbatten to replace Sir Roger Keys as Advisor to the British Chiefs of Staff (COS). Mountbatten was a career navy man,

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6 ibid., p. 424.
7 ibid.
having begun his service with the Royal Navy in 1916. He originally was not pleased with his new role as advisor and requested the command of the H.M.S. Illustrious. By January 1942 Mountbatten became the ‘mounting authority’ for all raids, though they still had to be passed by the COS. In March he was promoted to Vice-Admiral and made Chief of Combined Operations Headquarters (COHQ). COHQ made extensive use of British commandos between 1942 and 1944, in the lead up to the D-Day landings. Commando missions involved as few as a couple and as many as 600 men, and their value carried out lay with the collection of intelligence and in some spectacular instances, sabotage.

The first large scale raid took place in March 1942 at the French port of St. Nazaire and was considered a success by the British. The St. Nazaire raid gave the Allies the impetus to continue planning future raids and results seemed to indicate that an attack on a defended port was possible and would be successful, given the right circumstances. The stage was now set for what would be known as Operation Rutter.

On May 11th, 1942 Mountbatten submitted an Outline Plan to the COS for a frontal assault on Dieppe, preceded by air bombing. The opening paragraphs of the Outline Plan ran as follows:

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10 Colonel Lewis Boone. *Dieppe 1942: Reconnaissance In Force With Strategic Overtones*. U.S. Army War College, p. 3.
Objective

I. Intelligence reports indicate that Dieppe is not heavily defended and that the beaches in the vicinity are suitable for landing Infantry and Armoured Landing Vehicles at some. It also reported that there are forty invasion barges in the harbour.

II. It is therefore proposed to carry out a raid with the following objectives:
   (a) destroying enemy defences in the vicinity of Dieppe;
   (b) destroying the aerodrome installations at St. Aubin;
   (c) destroying R.D.F. (radar detection finding) Stations, power stations, dock and rail facilities and petrol dumps within the vicinity;
   (d) removing invasion barges for our own use;
   (e) removal of secret documents from the Divisional Headquarters at Arques-la-Bataille;
   (f) to capture prisoners.

Intention

III. A force of infantry, Air-bone (sic) troops and Armoured Fighting Vehicles will land in the area of Dieppe to seize the town and vicinity. This area will be held during daylight while the tasks are carried out. The force will then re-embark.

IV. The operation will be supported by fighter aircraft and bomber action.\footnote{Stacey, p. 58.}

Rutter called for an aerial bombardment of the dock area at Dieppe the night preceding the attack. The day of the raid would entail infantry flank attacks at Pourville and Puys, and a parachute troop drop to attack the German Divisional Headquarters. Thirty minutes after the flank attacks the frontal assault would go in, preceded by Hurricanes strafing the beach with cannon fire.\footnote{Stacey, p. 59.}

Canadian involvement in Rutter came in late April 1942. Upon approval of Mountbatten’s submission, the COS decided that plan evaluation would be handled by General Sir Bernard Paget, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Home Forces, who in

\footnote{Stacey, p. 58.}
\footnote{Stacey, p. 59.}
turn passed to his subordinate, Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Montgomery, GOC-in-Charge, South-Eastern Command, from whose command the landing force would be taken.\textsuperscript{14} The Canadian Corps formed part of Montgomery’s command, and Montgomery approached First Corps Commander General Harry Crerar. This was a long-awaited chance of action and Crerar was not going to let it pass by.\textsuperscript{15} A formal offer was then made to Canadian GOC Andrew McNaughton, stating that Crerar had accepted in principle, proposing the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Canadian Infantry Division for the attack. McNaughton telegraphed the proposal to the Canadian government in Ottawa and on May 15 approval came committing the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division to the raid.

Once the Outline Plan was approved, the final plan of attack could be prepared. The COS appointed three ‘Force Commanders’ to draw up plans for the operation and be responsible for their representative Services thereafter. The three commanders were: Naval Force Commander, Rear-Admiral H.T. Baillie-Grohman; Air Force Commander, Air Vice-Marshall Trafford Leigh-Mallory; and Ground Force Commander, Major-General Hamilton Roberts of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Canada Division.\textsuperscript{16}

As higher-level planning continued the Canadians set to training for their part in the raid on the Isle of Wright.\textsuperscript{17} Troops from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Canadian division selected by General Roberts consisted of battalions from the 4\textsuperscript{th} Brigade (the Royal Regiment of Canada, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the Essex Scottish) and the 6\textsuperscript{th} Brigade (Les Fusiliers

\textsuperscript{14} Neillands, p. 93.  
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p. 94.  
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p. 95.  
\textsuperscript{17} Stacey, p. 60.
Mont-Royal, The Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and the South Saskatchewan Regiment), along with tanks from the 14th Canadian Tank Regiment (Calgary Regiment). Attached to the force were Engineers, artillery detachments and necessary medical and other units.

The preparation undertaken was designed to harden the troops, as well as train them, and carried on at a fast pace throughout May and June. On June 11th-12th, Yukon I was launched as a large-scale exercise near Bridport Dorset, on a stretch of coast resembling the Dieppe area. The results were far from adequate; units were landed miles from the proper beaches and the tank landing craft landed over an hour late. Given the circumstances, Mountbatten decided further rehearsal was essential, and any effort to carry out the raid in June would be postponed. A second exercise, Yukon II, took place June 22nd-23rd with more favourable results.

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19 Stacey, p. 60.
While the men of the Canadian Second Division trained, the three force commanders set about putting together a plan and acquiring the necessary resources to execute the plan. COHQ retained control for the entire operation, while the force commanders played a critical role in shaping the plan and preparing the forces. Once appointed and briefed, they returned to their geographically separate headquarters to continue their planning. Planning in isolation from each other, decisions made by individual commanders were not significantly weighed against the cumulative impact on the overall plan.\textsuperscript{20}

Rear-Admiral Baillie-Grohman approached Admiral Sir William James, the naval officer in charge of Portsmouth, regarding the use of an 8” gunned cruiser or battleship for bombardment purposes. The admiral quickly stated that under no terms would the RN risk placing a capital ship into the mid-Channel in broad daylight where it could be attacked and sunk by the Luftwaffe.\textsuperscript{21} Baillie-Grohman returned to the committee to announce that ground forces would need to land only supported by the 4” guns of eight Hunt class destroyers.

Air Vice-Marshall Leigh-Mallory experienced a similar response when requesting a heavy bombardment of the port and headlands the night before the raid. Without the gun support of a capital ship, the need for a preliminary aerial bombardment took on increased importance. For various reasons, not least the threat to civilian lives, Leigh-Mallory was told by his superiors that a heavy raid of Dieppe by RAF Bomber Command was not forthcoming. As an alternative, the air commander proposed that close support

\textsuperscript{20} Goodman, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{21} Neillands, p. 96.
bombing and staffing runs occur prior to the landings and high altitude aerial bombing
focus on attacking targets east of Dieppe, such as Boulogne, Abbeville, Druoat and
Checy.\textsuperscript{22} In order to draw the Luftwaffe into a large fighter engagement, Leigh-Mallory
was given 67 squadrons for the attack, a force larger than had been committed by the
RAF at any one time, even during the battle of Britain.\textsuperscript{23}

With the plan having already gone awry there were two people who could have called off
the raid; Mountbatten and Roberts. Without the availability of a capital ship, or the
planned bombing of Dieppe prior to the raid, the Canadians were stripped of all necessary
support before they even waded ashore. Both men knew the reality of the situation, but
neither would go as far as cancelling the raid. The reasons were as follows:

Mountbatten was totally committed, having no other operation in hand, and
clearly believed that, with luck, Rutter still had every chance of success. As for
Roberts, the Canadians were desperate for action and Roberts would do nothing
that might damage that prospect and deny his men the chance to show what they
could do. Even had Roberts declined to take his men ashore, it probably would
have made no difference. The raid would have gone ahead anyway, either under a
new Canadian commander, or with the Canadians simply removed from the plan
and replaced by the Royal Marine Division, which was also available and happy
for action. Two more steps were taken on the road to disaster on the beaches.\textsuperscript{24}

The crucial decision still to be made was whether to mount a frontal assault on Dieppe or
a series of flanking manoeuvres whereby the port would be surrounded. Both options
contained issues. Opting for a frontal assault on Dieppe exposed troops to enemy fire set
up on the high chalk cliffs flanking each end of the one-mile long beach. If troops were

\textsuperscript{22} Canadian Military Headquarters, CMHQ (hereafter referred to as CMHQ) Report No. 153, \textit{Operation
`Jubilee': The Raid on Dieppe, 19Aug 42. New Light on Early Planning}. Appendix A, Appendix III,
paragraph 3.
\textsuperscript{23} Goodman, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{24} Neillands, p. 97.
able to land, they still had to climb the steep, sloping pebble beach and cross the wide promenade before finding cover from where they could conduct their mission.

Abandoning a frontal attack in favour of a flanking manoeuvre also posed problems. Such a plan allowed no convenient landing site for the Churchill tanks that were integral to the operation. The only landing spot suitably available to the tanks was the beach of Quiberville, eight miles to the west of Dieppe. It was not known whether the bridges crossing the rivers Scie and Saâne could support the weight of the Churchills, and by the time the tanks were able to roll into Dieppe, the element of surprise, so essential to the raid, would be lost.

It was intended that Rutter would launch on July 4th, or one of the days following. In order to take advantage of favourable tide conditions, the raid needed to take place by July 8th, and on July 2nd and 3rd, troops embarked and were ‘sealed’ aboard their ships. It was at this time the men were fully briefed that it was not another dress rehearsal code-named ‘Klondike’ as they were led to believe. On the night of July 3 the weather proved unsuitable for launch and the raid was postponed for twenty-four hours. The weather continued to remain unstable for the next few days, and when German aircraft bombed the assembled shipping on July 7th, without severe casualties, it was decided that Rutter would be scrapped. Because troops had been briefed about the objectives, and once dispersed it would no longer be possible to maintain secrecy, General Montgomery recommended that the operation should no ‘be off for all time.’

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25 Stacey, p. 60.
26 ibid, p. 61.
Who authorised the remounting of the raid shortly after its cancellation, or if it was officially authorised at all, is a matter of debate. The fact is, it was remounted and Captain John Hallett-Hughes, the naval commander replacing Baillie-Grohman, made his pitch to strike at Dieppe. He believed ‘the Government would still wish to see a divisional operation to be mounted that summer; and there appeared to be no other possibility so good as the Dieppe operation, for which a ready made plan existed and a force had already been trained’. The larger concern was security, but Hughes-Hallett argued embarking without preliminary concentration and therefore without danger of the Germans discovering what was afoot. On July 20th, the project was discussed by the COS which approved the revival of the operation by ‘inference’. Operation Jubilee was on!

The plan for Jubilee was altered slightly from Rutter. Airborne and glider landings were cancelled and replaced by a seaborne commando raid on the extreme flanks of the attack. These two attacks would land concurrently approximately thirty minutes before the main assault. No. 3 Commando targets were the coastal battery near Berneval (Yellow Beaches 1 and 2) east of Dieppe while No. 4 Commando targeted the coastal battery near Varengeville (Orange Beaches 1 and 2) to the west. These batteries covered the approaches to Dieppe.

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27 Neillands, p. 108.
28 CMHQ No. 159, paragraph 12.
29 ibid.
30 ibid, paragraph 14. The term ‘inference’ is the term grabbed on to by those who believe the COS never gave their approval for the raid.
Attacking simultaneously with the commando raid was the Royal Regiment of Canada (Royals) at Puys in order to seize the headland east of town, and the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) at Pourville to seize a bridgehead and headlands west of town. These attacks were to go in on August 19th, at 4:50 a.m. British Summer Time, while it was still dark enough making it difficult for enemy gunners to see their targets.  

Thirty minutes later the main attack itself would land at Dieppe with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI) landing on White Beach to the right and the Essex Scottish (Scottish) on Red Beach to the left. The main assault would be supported by the tanks of

31 Stacey, p. 65.
the 14th Canadian Tank Regiment (Calgary Regiment). Left at sea as a floating reserve was Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal (FMR) and the Royal Marine ‘A’ commando.  

Thirty minutes after the SSR had landed, The Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada (Camerons) were to land at Pourville, pushing through the SSR, to meet up with the tanks moving southeast from Dieppe, delivering a joint attack against the aerodrome. In essence the entire operation was to capture Dieppe, establish around it a perimeter, allowing Engineers to conduct extensive demolition. Outside of the perimeter the Camerons and the tanks would attack the aerodrome and the German Divisional Headquarters, mistakenly believed to be at Arques-la-Bataille.

The plan was laid out to such a high degree, still carried some basic flaws. The main flaw was no provision was made to call off the raid should something go awry, or if it stalled. The only provision was if the raid was not called off by 3:00 a.m., it was to move forward regardless of consequences. The plan lacked any kind of flexibility to be altered in mid-stream. The other flaw was that the withdrawal phase was not carefully planned out. The execution of the entire plan counted on two things: good communications allowing force commanders coordinate higher-level support and the commitment of the reserve, and second, the script going exactly as planned.

32 ibid.
33 ibid.
34 Neillands, p. 124-125.
35 Goodman, p. 10.
All across south-east England on August 18th, men and stores moved to the five places from which the raid would be launched: Southampton, Portsmouth, Gosport, Newhaven and Shoreham.36 Later that evening 6,106 men, of whom 4,963 were Canadian, made for the shores of France. Command was organised as follows: Captain Hughes-Hallett, along with General Roberts, sailed in the headquarters ship, the destroyer ‘Calpe’. Air Vice-Marshall Leigh-Mallory remained in England with No. 11 fighter group, which was the best place for controlling his squadron. A senior RAF officer represented him on ‘Calpe’. A duplicate headquarters ship, lead by brigadier C.C. Mann was provided in the destroyer ‘Ferme’, in case the Calpe was destroyed or disabled.37

Convoy of landing craft enroute to Dieppe during Operation Jubilee.

Throughout the night the flotilla made its way towards Dieppe until at 3:47 a.m. a German convoy ran into extreme leftward group of the Allied force carrying No. 3 Commando. British escort vessels fought a violent short-range battle with the Germans and were seriously damaged, scattering the craft carrying the Commandos. The result

36 Aitkin, p. 62.
37 Stacey, p. 66.
was only a small number of No. 3 Commando reached their designated landing area. Unable to destroy the coastal battery at Berneval, No. 3 Commando’s sniping and harassing fire directed at the battery kept it out of action for a few hours. No known fire from this battery affected the landing on the main beaches.\(^{38}\)

To the extreme west of Dieppe, No. 4 Commando’s attack went precisely to plan. They landed on the different beaches, Orange I and Orange II, and within a short time the enemy positions were cleared and the garrison cut to pieces.\(^{39}\) No. 4 Commando was the only unit engaged in the Dieppe raid to capture all of its objectives.

On Blue Beach, events for the Royals could only be described as a compete disaster. A mix-up in forming up their flotilla of landing craft caused them to arrive on the beach at 5:07 a.m. Because stealth was of the essence, landing at Blue Beach in daylight was met with a hail of gunfire from the alerted defenders. As landing craft dropped their ramps, troops were met with intense machinegun fire and heavy casualties were suffered immediately. In several cases officers and men were wounded or killed on the ramps as they attempted to leave the craft.\(^{40}\) Men able to make it across the beach were met with a sea-wall approximately 12’ high and covered in tangled wire. Beyond the sea-wall were machineguns mounted in houses that swept the beach where the men were. The Germans were well equipped with mortars, which they started to lob against the Royals. The Germans facing the Royals were so well concealed that Royals were shot down in heaps

\(^{38}\) CMHQ No. 101, paragraph 40.
\(^{39}\) ibid., paragraph 50.
\(^{40}\) ibid, paragraph 71.
on the beach without knowing where the firing came from. The third wave of Royals, situated approximately one mile off-shore, were to land when called in by the men on shore. Since no signal was received the senior officer took the decision to land at 5:45 a.m. near where the main body of troops had amassed. It was too late for reinforcements to be of any value and most subsequently became P.O.W.’s. The failure of the Royals to clear and command the headlands east of Dieppe would prove to be a serious matter for members of the Scottish.

The casualty total for the Royals was staggering. The unit’s strength upon embarkation was a total of 554 all ranks. Of these only two officers and fifty-four other ranks returned to England. Of those returning, one officer and twenty-nine other ranks were retained in hospital, while six other ranks died of wounds.

Just as the No. 4 Commando achieved greater success than no. 3 Commando, so too did the SSR on their flank attack at Pourville when compared to the Royals at Puys. The SSR landed on Green Beach on time to minimal resistance, although heavy fire broke out once the unit scaled the sea-wall and made their way inland. By 8:00 a.m. companies of the SSR working west of Pourville had occupied all of its objectives and had rounded up fifty to sixty prisoners. Companies of SSR working east of Pourville did not experience the same good fortune. The men of ‘A’ Company were to capture the radio direction finding station however as they attempted to cross the bridge spanning the river, the Germans swept the bridge with machinegun fire, causing many casualties. At this

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41 ibid, paragraph 74.
42 ibid, paragraph 131.
43 ibid, paragraph 146.
point SSR Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Merritt came forward to lead a number of parties across the bridge, exposing himself to enemy fire on numerous occasions. For his actions, Lt. Col. Merritt received the Victoria Cross. In spite of the best efforts of the men of the SSR and the Camerons, who by now had joined the battle, the final objective was not achieved. When it became apparent that capture of objectives east of Pourville were impossible, remains of the SSR and Camerons took up defensive positions and held them until it was time to withdraw.

Following the SSR, the Camerons were to land on Green Beach at 5:20 but arrived late. As they approached the shore it was apparent that the SSR had not opened up the bridgehead in the manner desired as shells were seen to burst in the water just off-shore. Piper began to play as the tiny craft holding the Camerons approached Green Beach. Touching down, Cameron Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel A.C. Gostling leapt from his craft and was immediately killed by a short burst of machinegun fire. Command fell to Major A.T. Law who left a small group of men to assist the SSR, while leading the remainder of the Camerons rapidly inland for approximately two miles to the rendezvous point with the Calgary tanks. As no tanks could be found, and with time running short, at 9:00 a.m., Major Law decided to abandon the attempt against the original objects and secure high ground beyond the River Scie. At 9:30 a.m. the Camerons began to withdraw to the Green Beach, followed by many members of the SSR at 10:00 a.m. where they awaited evacuation. While awaiting evacuation both the Camerons and SSR lost heavily as the enemy was able to direct intense fire on the beach. Casualties would

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44 ibid, paragraph 156.
45 ibid, paragraph 173.
46 ibid, paragraph 198.
have been greater, but for the action of the rearguard who could not be brought off and subsequently surrendered at 3:00 p.m.

The casualty count for the Camerons was as follows: of the 503 all ranks who embarked, 347 became casualties. Two hundred and sixty-five Camerons returned to England with 109 of these being wounded.\textsuperscript{47} The SSR embarked a total of 523 all ranks with casualties totalling 339. Three hundred and thirty-five SSR’s returned to England and 167 of these were wounded.\textsuperscript{48}

The frontal assault upon the Red (Scottish) and White (RHLI) beaches touched down at 5:20 a.m. These were preceded by air and naval attacks that provided some protection for landing craft as they approached the beach.\textsuperscript{49} As troops leapt from their landing craft and made their way towards town they experience further bad luck. The tanks of the Calgary’s, which were to arrive simultaneously with the infantry, were ten minutes late due to a navigational error. As there was no support for the infantry, the enemy was able to ring destructive fire upon the beaches. The RHLI war diary from August 1942 describes the dire straights the unit found itself in:

‘On landing we were met by heavy enemy fire of all types from the Casino, the buildings and positions along the esplanade and from the headlands on both flanks. The entire battalion was pinned down by the weight of this fire. ‘D’ Coy, on the west of the Casino was almost wiped out. In front of us lay three rows of wire, a six-foot wall, and 150 yards across the esplanade, Dieppe itself. Many of the officers and men were killed or wounded in an attempt to cross the beach and scale the wall…..’\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} ibid, paragraph 247.
\textsuperscript{48} ibid, paragraph 249.
\textsuperscript{49} CMHQ No. 108, paragraphs 17-24.
\textsuperscript{50} Royal Hamilton Light Infantry War Diary, August 1942.
Eventually, parties of the RHLI were able to make it across to the Casino taking an hour to clear it of the snipers lurking inside. Some parties were able to penetrate as far as the centre of town, where members engaged the enemy in close quarters.

As bad as it was on the beach for the RHLI, the Scottish experienced greater difficulty. The Red Beach upon which the Scottish landed was completely open and commanded by the east headland, of which the Germans had complete control. It was also overlooked by lofty buildings along Boulevard de Verdun and by pillboxes on the Esplanade wall, while sniper fire from the Casino was able to harass the troops from long ranges.\(^{51}\) By 5:45 a.m., only twenty-five minutes into the raid, it was estimated that the Scottish had already suffered a casualty rate between 30% and 40%.\(^{52}\) Only one small party of approximately twelve men, led by C.S.M. Stapleton were able get off the beach and accounted for a number of snipers. A letter from the Scottish Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jasperson describes Stapleton’s action.\(^{53}\)

As mentioned above, the tanks of the Calgary Regiment arrived late. Touching down the landing craft immediately attracted a large proportion of fire. Unloading the first three tanks took fifteen minutes as all had stalled on the ramp due to their engines not being warmed up previously.\(^{54}\) Of the twenty-nine tanks that attempted to land, two downed and the remainder made it to shore. Of these, fifteen were able to cross the sea-wall, and ten of these were able to return to the beach area. The remaining twelve tanks never

\(^{51}\) CMHQ No. 108, paragraph 58.  
\(^{52}\) ibid., paragraph 62.  
\(^{53}\) ibid., paragraph 65.  
\(^{54}\) ibid, paragraph 85.
made it off the beach, four had their tracks broken by shell fire, four by the chert (rock), three probably by chert, and the last tank choose to remain on the beach and was mobile for the duration.55

In spite of the carnage taking place during the main assault upon Dieppe, poor communication dictated that General Roberts received limited and inaccurate information. Believing a weak point had been exploited, he signalled the Royals to move to Red Beach in support of the Scottish, and he sent in the FMR to the same beach. Landing around 7:00 a.m. the FMR could accomplish nothing, many becoming prisoners.56 Around 8:00 a.m. reports reached the ‘Calpe’ indicating the Calgary tanks controlled the western section of the main beach and that the Casino had been captured. Hearing the news General Roberts sent in the reserve of Marines who met the same fate as the FMR.57

By 9:00 a.m. the Naval and Military Force Commanders aboard the ‘Calpe’ realised the landing of the reserves had little effect and that the enemy continued to control the headlands flanking the beaches. They consulted on a time for a general withdrawal and selected 10:30 a.m., then postponing it for thirty minutes to ensure word would get to the Camerons. Under the cover of naval and aircraft fire, at 11:00 the landing craft returned to the beaches to start evacuating the troops. No protocol was developed for embarking

56 Stacey, p. 80.
57 ibid.
from the beaches and men simply got aboard the boats in any way they could. In some of these circumstances, the craft inevitably became overloaded and unstable.\textsuperscript{58}

The Scottish returned to England with the fewest men remaining of all the units. Lieutenant Colonel McCrae’s entry into the Scottish’s war diary from August 1942 describes the scene:

‘Somewhere around 1100 hrs aircraft laid smoke on the water front and A.L.C.s came in to attempt to evacuate the troops. An effort was made to get those unhit and the wounded who could be moved into the A.L.C.s but enemy fire destroyed so many of the A.L.C.s that very few of the troops got off. I got away myself with a small party of wounded in a small wooden row boat and we were eventually picked up by a smoke laying ship and later transferred to a beach protection ship where there was a surgeon.’\textsuperscript{59}

If things were not bad enough for the Scottish stuck on Red Beach, six of the eight landing craft attempting to reach the beach were lost.\textsuperscript{60}

Everything was done to bring men off the shore. At 12:50 p.m. ‘Calpe’ moved very close to the eastern end of Red Beach to shell machinegun posts that were preventing troops stuck on Red from reaching the water. When it as determined that no troop movement was seen and only derelict landing craft littered the beach, ‘Calpe’ moved back out to deeper water.\textsuperscript{61}

At 1:08 p.m. a final message from ashore was received indicating the remaining force had surrendered.\textsuperscript{62} Shortly after the convoy of ships was steaming back to England with a

\textsuperscript{58} CMHQ No. 108, paragraph 239.
\textsuperscript{59} Essex Scottish War Diary, August 1942.
\textsuperscript{60} CMHQ No. 108, paragraph 270.
\textsuperscript{61} ibid., paragraph 277.
\textsuperscript{62} ibid., paragraph 262.
small remnant of the troops that had embarked a short time earlier. Fighter coverage was maintained over the force throughout the homeward voyage gradually diminished the closer the ships came to England. Troops began to arrive back in England during the evening of August 19\textsuperscript{th}, and the early morning hours of August 20\textsuperscript{th}.

Casualties from the frontal assault were high. The RHLI embarked 582 all ranks and experienced total casualties of 479. The Scottish embarked 553 all ranks and suffered casualties of 531! Only one Cameron officer, of the thirty that landed, returned to England and even he was wounded. The FMR embarked 583 men and experienced total casualties of 515. Compared to the other regiments, the 14\textsuperscript{th} Canadian Army Tank Regiment suffered few casualties. They embarked 416 men and suffered casualties of 175. The vast majority of these troops were never ashore. The Royal Canadian Engineers embarked 317 men and experienced casualties of 173 all ranks.\footnote{ibid., paragraphs 282-289.}

Following Operation Jubilee, bodies of Allied soldiers lay among damaged landing craft and Churchill tanks of the Calgary Regiment.
Of the 4963 all ranks of the Canadian Army embarked, 3369 became casualties, with 907 of those killed.\textsuperscript{64} As stories of the raid were released, and casualties started to trickle in, Canadians began to demand answers. COHQ had anticipated this and had even gone as far as planning in advance to portray any failure as a success and to manipulate the press. A memorandum developed by COHQ before the raid directs that any publicity communiqués should emphasise the raid was not an invasion, and stress the objectives gained; Canadian and American cooperation and the acquisition of valuable military information.\textsuperscript{65} The COHQ memorandum outlined the policy for publicity should the raid fail:

\textbf{5 IN CASE THE RAID IS UNSUCCESSFUL…}

a. The same basic principles must hold.
   1. We cannot call such a large-scale operation a ‘reconnaissance raid.’
   2. We cannot avoid stating the general composition of the force, since the enemy will know it and make capital of our losses and of any failure of the first effort of Canadian and American troops.

b. Therefore in the event of much failure, the communiqué must then stress the success of the operation as an essential test in the employment of substantial forces and equipment.

c. We then lay extremely heavy stress in stories or personal heroism – through interviews, broadcasts, etcetera – in order to focus public attention on BRAVERY rather than OBJECTIVES NOT OBTAINED.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{64} Stacey, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{65} Timothy Balzer. ‘In Case the Raid is Unsuccessful…’: Selling Dieppe to Canadians. \textit{Canadian Historical Review}, Vol. 87, no. 3, p. 412.
\textsuperscript{66} ibid.
One can only speculate about COHQs attempt to control the message; however it suggests that members were interested in making themselves look competent rather than having people know what really happened.

Although military planners did learn lessons from Dieppe, it came at a very high cost, and no one at COHQ seemed ready to jump forward to take the ‘credit’. Therefore, who was responsible for what can only be termed as a planning failure? Denis and Shelagh Whitaker in their book *Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, make a sound case that the raid was the product of British politicians and senior military leaders. Whitaker was a captain with the RHLI during Dieppe and the only officer from his battalion to return to England unscathed.

Peter Henshaw also makes a strong case in his assessment of the responsibility of Canadian military planners in England in mounting the raid. He postulates that through astute political manoeuvring, Canadian generals, in particular Andrew McNaughton, were able to wrest away from Ottawa control of Canadian troops in England. He states, ‘authorities in Ottawa wanted to retain control over the operational development of Canadian troops. McNaughton and Crerar believed that as ‘the men on the spot’ control with such matters rested with them and Ottawa relented.’

One final theory put forward by Brain Loring-Villa, lays the entire Dieppe debacle at the feet of Lord Louis Mountbatten. Villa’s smoking gun is the issue of ‘inference’, whereby

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the raid was discussed on July 20, the COS, but never formally authorised. Villa’s argues that Mountbatten did not have written approval to remount the raid, and therefore he is entirely responsible. One piece of evidence Villa uses is Churchill’s difficulty in recalling the authorisation for the raid when writing his memoirs.

Charles Percy Stacey displays a very Canadian-like trait when he assigns some blame to all of the parties. In supporting Villa’s theory, Stacey stated that Mountbatten’s ambition and egotism were notorious, although Stacey doesn’t believe the results of the raid were directly linked to Mountbatten’s personal ambition and motivation. Stacey does recount the story of his time in England immediately following Dieppe and writing and re-writing an official account of the raid, each time with heavy censorship from Mountbatten’s staff. Any attempt to link the raid to Mountbatten was summarily dismissed. This one particular issue is a point of contention with Villa.

Stacey writes that General McNaughton approved the plan and General Crerar pressed for opportunities for the Canadians to take part in raiding. This supports Henshaw’s argument that if the two senior Canadian commanders in England during Dieppe were not responsible, then who?

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71 Charles Percy Stacey. *A Date With History*. Denau Publishers, Ottawa, p. 102
72 Charles Percy Stacey. pp 90-94.
Finally in support of the Whitaker’s, that British politician and those higher up in the chain of command responsible, Stacey writes when Churchill expressed doubts regarding Dieppe, the Chief of Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, the British government’s senior military advisor, told him it was vital to any future invasion of North-West Europe.²⁴ No one comes out unscathed with Stacey, although not to the degree that the Whitakers, Henshaw and Villa would lead their readers to believe.

This paper reviewed the planning of the Dieppe raid from its start up as Rutter to its deadly ending on August 19th, 1942. It concluded with an attempt to place blame, and as was demonstrated there was enough blame to pass around. The illustrated how a series of events and pressures, political as well as military, personal and professional lead to the raid’s failure.

²⁴ ibid., p. 102.
References


Essex Scottish War Diary, August 1942, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter referred to as LAC), RG 24, Vol. 17513.


Royal Hamilton Light Infantry War Diary, August 1942, LAC, RG 24, Vol. 17513.


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