

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

HISTORICAL OFFICERS REPORT

NO. 142

Operation "JUBILEE": The Raid on Dieppe,  
19 Aug 42. Further new information.

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18 Jul 45

Operation "JUBILEE": The Raid on Dieppe, 19 Aug 42  
Further New Information

1. A long series of Reports has dealt with the Dieppe operation of 19 Aug 42. Those of most recent date (Nos. 116, 128 and 130) have recorded new information which has come to hand at various times from a number of sources, including repatriated prisoners of war. As a result of the victorious operations in North-West Europe in the spring of 1942, the remainder of the Canadian Dieppe prisoners have now been repatriated from Germany, and certain additional facts have thus become available.

2. The senior Canadian officer who became a prisoner of war as a result of the Dieppe operation was Brigadier W.W. Southam, commanding 6 Cdn Inf Bde. After his return to the United Kingdom Brigadier Southam perused the various accounts of the operation prepared by Hist Sec, C.M.H.Q., and subsequently himself prepared a "Report on Approach, Landing, and Subsequent Events, Dieppe" which is attached to the present Report as Appendix "B". A corrected draft of this document, signed by Brigadier Southam, is on C.M.H.Q. file 24/Dieppe/1.

3. Brigadier Southam also wrote the memorandum dated 18 May 45 which is attached as Appendix "C". This, it will be noted, calls attention to the fact that on 13 Sep 42 (i.e., within a month of the operation) the senior Canadian officers confined in Oflag VIIB held a conference on the operation and drew up a report and recommendations upon it. Brigadier Southam considered it important that an attempt be made to obtain this document, and the matter was accordingly called to the attention of the War Office, the suggestion being made that Lieut. L.D. Lee, Royal West Kent Regiment, who served in effect as camp secretary and had made a shorthand record of the report, might be able to throw some light on the matter.

4. The representation made to the War Office appears to have had no effect, but fortunately Lieut. Lee on his return to England wrote Brigadier Southam, and as a result of the Brigadier's answer visited Historical Section, C.M.H.Q., and made available the notebook in which the report was recorded in shorthand. (This notebook is labelled: "Lt. L.D. Lee. Shorthand Reading Exercises. O'Henry's (sic) Short Stories.") The report was transcribed and a transcript, which has been checked by Lieut. Lee, is attached hereto as Appendix "A". It is a document of considerable importance. The original notebook has been placed on file 24/Dieppe/1.

5. The other document to which Brigadier Southam's memorandum calls attention ("Recommendations based on Dieppe Experiences"), has not been traced; it may probably be safely assumed, however, that the substance of it is contained in the longer document attached as Appendix "A".

#### COMMENTS ON NEW DOCUMENTS

6. The documents attached hereto afford some interesting additions to our knowledge of the Dieppe operation. It is important to caution the Official Historian, however, against taking them in all respects precisely at their full face value. It must be remembered that the officers who became prisoners of war were not in possession of the full facts concerning the results of the operation. (It may also be in order to record a remark made by Lieut. Lee: "Every P.W. is always extremely bitter.") Criticisms issuing from a prisoner camp are liable to be somewhat coloured by circumstances.

7. Brigadier Southam's own report did not greatly alter the account of the operation as already known. It throws additional light on the Brigadier's own activity, indicating in particular that the messages received from him, to which references are made in Report No. 108 (paras 249 ff.), were sent from "the remains of a scout car" of 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn.

8. The report prepared by the officers in Oflag VIIIB (Appendix "A") requires rather more extended comment and explanation.

9. In this report units are referred to by identifying letters. Significance of these letters is as follows:

"A" Battalion - S. Sask R.

"B" Battalion - R. Regt C.

"C" Battalion - R.H.L.I.

"D" Battalion - Essex Scot.

"E" Battalion - Camerons of C.

"F" Battalion - Fus M.R.

10. The following comments on the content of this report are set down in the order in which the points occur in the document itself:

(a) The statement that Commando troops on the left flank were attacked by E boats "as early as 0200 hours" is quite unsupported by any other evidence; as noted in Report No. 1001, para 24, the first encounter was reported by the Navy as taking place at 0347 hrs.

(b) The statement that the infantry assault ships came under fire "by 0340 hours" is unsupported by any other evidence except that of Lt.-Col. R.R. Labatt noted in Report No. 128 (para 43 and Appendix "D" (ii), para 9). Lt.-Col. Labatt may have contributed this point to the conference report. In the absence of other evidence, and particularly of Naval evidence, it must be assumed that he was mistaken and that this firing did not take place.

(c) The statements that the enemy was forewarned of the raid, had reinforced his garrison, and in general "had the raid taped will in advance" represent a view which appears to be universal among returned prisoners as well as among the men who returned to England from the raid (see Report No. 109, paras 15 and 19). These very widespread convictions, which the Germans undoubtedly did everything possible to foster among prisoners of war, must be taken into account by the Official Historian; but they do not appear to undermine the conclusion reached in Report No. 109, paras 14 - 23, that the enemy did not have advance information of the raid. To the present writer it appears incredible that if the Germans have been forewarned it would have taken them five hours to get their main air effort under way (Report No. 109, para 18).

(d) With respect to the number of troops successfully evacuated the impressions of the officers left behind are quite inaccurate. Thus they believe that "only one platoon" of Camerons of C. "got away", whereas the facts are that 265 all ranks of the unit returned to England (Report No. 101, para 249). In the case of the R.H.L.I., the conference report states, "it is unlikely any of this battalion reached England"; actually, seven officers and 210 other ranks

returned (Report No. 108, para 283).

The belief that very few men of the force is a whole could have returned to the United Kingdom was universal among the men left on the Dieppe beaches. Brigadier Southam himself mentioned that so much activity was seen offshore and so many craft were seen to be hit or sunk that the men left behind felt that there could have been very few survivors (Diary of Hist Offr, C.M.H.Q. 14 May 45).

(e) The statement with respect to Essex Scot that "No Naval craft came in to evacuate this battalion" is not supported by Naval evidence, which indicates that probably at least eight craft went in on RED BEACH, six being destroyed (Report No. 108, para 274).

(f) With respect to the assault of R. Regt C. ("B" Battalion) on BLUE BEACH, the report of the conference strengthens the conclusion reached in Report No. 101 (footnote, page 13) that "The landing arrangements for this beach went badly awry". It will be observed that the opinion expressed by the conference is that the first wave landed 35 minutes late, as compared with the Naval report which places the landing 17 minutes late (Report No. 1091, para 67). It may be noted here that the evidence of Capt. R.R. Laird, R.C.A.M.C., Medical Officer with R. Regt C., who believes that he was in the first L.C.A. to touch down, is in agreement with the Naval report (memorandum of Capt. Laird's evidence by Lt.-Col. E.H. Jones, 12 Nov 43, on C.M.H.Q. file 24/Dieppe/1).

(g) The statement that the leading tanks landed "approximately on time" is not supported by Naval evidence (see Report No. 108, para 25).

(h) The statement that the Commanding Officer of Fus M.R. was killed is inaccurate (see Report No. 108, para 168).

(i) The officers who became prisoners were impressed with the strength of the German air force during the operation ("General Observations", para 7).

(j) The criticism of the inelastic nature of the plan ("General Observations", para 2) is in agreement with the official "Lessons Learned" (Report No. 109, para 2).

(k) The criticism of R.A.F. briefing ("General Observations", para 10) appears to be unjustified. The attacks on the beach by the R.A.F. after the operation was over were probably the consequence of the inevitable time lag noted in Report No. 108, para 258.

#### EVIDENCE OF LIEUT. J.E.R. WOOD

11. Additional information on the Dieppe operation has been obtained from Lieut. J.E.R. Wood, R.C.E., who was repatriated in the spring of 1945 from Oflag IVC. An account of the operation written from this officer while in Germany has been lent to Historical Section (see Diary of Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., 17 May 45).

12. Mr. Wood was evidently in L.C.T.3, which did not withdraw from the shore after touching down. His account has not been copied at length, but certain points in it are of interest and should be noticed here. Speaking of the situation on the beach, he writes, "I crawled up for a look over the crest. Taking cover along the sea-wall in a shacking big anti-tank ditch about seven feet deep were the Infantry." Subsequently another reference is made to this anti-tank ditch along the sea-wall: "The mechanical excavator was at one end. It must have been dug recently, concrete evidence of a break in Security."

13. The existence of the anti-tank ditch and the presence of the excavator is confirmed by other evidence (Report No. 108, para 98). It is worth noting, however, that the mere digging of an anti-tank ditch is not specific evidence that the enemy knew of our intention to attack Dieppe; he was generally apprehensive of attack all along this coast, which we had been openly threatening for many months; and defensive construction was in progress at many points.

14. Mr. Wood, like Mr. Counsell (Report. 128, para 41) is definite in stating that it was understood by the attacking force that "The town would be flattened by aerial bombardment." Writing of the period after the surrender, Mr. Wood remarks, "We marched through Dieppe to the hospital. To my way of thinking surprisingly little damage was done. Certainly the front had not been flattened by the R.A.F. Later I heard the bombing was cancelled at the last minute. .... Had there been a strong aerial bombardment I feel the whole course of the action would have been altered."

15. Mr. Wood, unlike some returned prisoners, has no criticism of the R.A.F. He writes: "Some of our people later claimed they never saw the

Air Force. Of course they didn't. They were too busy up top keeping the Luftwaffe off us. I can truthfully say we were not machine gunned on that beach except by our own people after we'd folded up. That means the R.A.F. did its staff."

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel

D.D. Hist Sec

#### CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS DIEPPE

1. The object of the DIEPPE Operation was to carry out a large scale raid; to capture and destroy beach and coast defences, inland battery positions, aerodrome, harbour installations and to capture enemy invasion craft; the whole Operation to be carried out in a space of time governed by the tides which was approximately eight hours. The days during which the Operation could be carried out were from 18 - 23 August inclusive. The first five days would necessitate a two-tide operation, the last two a one-tide operation. An ancillary object was to draw out enemy naval and air force units.

#### INFORMATION

2. Enemy. Information from air reconnaissance and ground sources indicated normal beach defences (wire at DIEPPE), no wire at PUIITS, pillboxes, numerous anti-aircraft and field artillery positions and defended localities. 110 Division occupied the area. Reinforcements available. Armoured Division in vicinity of AMIENS. SS Hitler Division in vicinity of PARIS.

3. Own troops taking part. Force Headquarters (2nd Canadian Division). Two infantry brigades (not war establishment - each battalion of 550 strength approximately due to physical limitation of naval craft). Tank battalion (Army), Royal Canadian Engineers detachment. Medical detachment. Provost detachment. Special Mortar and Medium Machine Gun detachments. Anti-Aircraft and Field Regiment detachments (to operate captured weapons). Military Commandos, Marine Commandos. Royal Navy and Military beach parties. Royal Air Force (bomber, fighter). Royal Navy with personnel carrying and special craft.

#### METHODS

4. Landing were to take place on six beaches

(a) at zero -- Commandos to land on outer flanks under cover of darkness to destroy coast guns.

(b) at zero -- Infantry battalions to land: "A" Battalion at POURVILLE, "B" Battalion at PUIITS - surprise landing under cover darkness. Task -- "A" Battalion to secure POURVILLE and enable exploitation battalion to pass through, to secure radio direction-finding station and thereafter to hold north-west sector of DIEPPE beachhead being part of the outer perimeter to cover withdrawal. "B" Battalion to secure PUIITS and the barracks there, high ground to east of PUIITS and high ground to headland, east of DIEPPE which included heavy and light anti-aircraft positions, in field battery positions and gas works, south of DIEPPE on River Arne, and then into Brigade reserve in DIEPPE.

(c) at zero + 30 two battalions to land on beach at DIEPPE each supported by one troops of tanks: Task -- frontal attack on DIEPPE. Right battalion ("C" Battalion) to overcome beach defences, mop right half of DIEPPE, secure West Headland and BAMBETTA BARRACKS and establish perimeter defence on left on POURVILLE (see para B supra); left battalion ("D" Battalion) to overcome beach defences, mop left half of DIEPPE including any naval craft in harbour basin, secure military and naval headquarters in DIEPPE, then to secure race track south of DIEPPE and East Headland, establishing a perimeter defence from left of "C" Battalion to and including East Headland. With these battalions Royal Canadian Engineers personnel to land with demolition parties to blow sea wall and road blocks, destroy enemy communications.

(d) at zero + 30 "E" Battalion to land from "R" craft at POURVILLE and exploit through to destroy field battery, aerodrome and time permitting, enemy divisional headquarters at A de B.

(e) at zero + 70 -- Marine Commandos to enter harbour basin, secure area of harbour, take over naval headquarters to carry out certain demolitions in harbour area and secure enemy invasion craft for removal to England.

(f) at zero + 75 -- Brigade Headquarters to land on DIEPPE beaches and establish themselves in DIEPPE. Additional troops to land, tanks and further detachments Royal Canadian Engineers to land at DIEPPE.

(g) remaining battalion ("F" Battalion) plus further tanks to

stay afloat as reserve under force headquarters and subsequently for "F" Battalion to land and establish inner perimeter defence at DIEPPE.

(h) Royal Navy programme to provide initial bombardment of DIEPPE front and West and East Headland followed by fire on request of Forward Observation Officer with each battalion, who had call on one destroyer.

(i) Royal Air Force programme -- support of varying intensity through Operation commencing with bombing of defences (artillery positions) followed by smoking of East Headland and low flying attack of DIEPPE front, + 95 on request during Operation, close support and maintaining gradually receding bomb line around bridgehead on withdrawal.

(j) Royal Canadian Engineers -- most comprehensive programme for destruction of dock installations, power house, rolling stock, communications, torpedo dump in caves East Headland, also to prepare demolition charges for each battalion to destroy enemy weapons.

(k) Administration and Quartermaster arrangements to include establishment of dumps in DIEPPE, medical evacuation scheme and provost control of beaches for withdrawal.

#### THE ACTION CARRIED OUT

5. As early as 0200 hours E Boats attacked "R" craft (Commandos on left flank). Shortly after German Air Force dropped flares over infantry assault ships which came under fire by 0340 hours from shore batteries. Exclusive right Commandos and "A" Battalion all units came under heavy fire while afloat and on the way in and suffered heavy casualties. Beach defences were definitely greatly stronger than anticipated. There were further heavy casualties from intense enemy fire on landing due to additional medium machine guns (establish four companies). Elements of enemy reconnaissance battalion were observed well forward and Germans state their defences were "Standing to" and had been for four days.

6. Commando on right secured surprise and carried out its task. "A" Battalion secured complete surprise on landing on their right flank gained all their objectives. On left flank were unable to capture the high cliff overlooking "A" Battalion beach. On being ordered to withdraw succeeded in re-embarking seven L.C.A.s of troops. Time of re-

embarking approximately 1100 hours.

7. Exploitation battalion encountered fire from cliff overlooking "A" Battalion beach on landing and suffered casualties, their Commanding Officer being killed. This battalion made its way up west bank of River Scie to R.R. line but was unable to cross to East and consequently withdrew, a number being re-embarked in B.C.A.s with "A" Battalion. Heavy casualties. It is believed only one platoon got away.

8. "C" Battalion - sustained heavy casualties from West Headland while afloat and on landing, came under fire at close range from eight pillboxes and two light artillery emplacements. The right company was practically wiped out after the capture of five pillboxes and the Casino. The battalion was too weak to attack the town although a small party entered the town remaining there for three and a half hours completely cut off. While in the town this party mopped up streets in vicinity Eglise St Remy inflicting many casualties and destroying an enemy field gun. In all some 45 enemy prisoners were taken and utilized as stretcher bearers in withdrawal. It is unlikely any of this battalion reached England as all L.C.As. allocated to withdrawal were destroyed by enemy fire.

9. "D" Battalion - suffered first casualties on touchdown from intense medium machine gun fire on flanks followed by mortar fire. The battalion landed considerably to right of its appointed place. Stretch of flat promenade about 200 yards in depth to buildings along front directly in front cover by medium machine gun and mortar fire. Companies could not get through wire on top of sea wall, heavy casualties followed each attempt. One small party succeeded in entering town as far as harbour basin - two lorries of enemy troops killed and numerous snipers in buildings. Companies finally too weak to attempt any further attack and were ordered to hold beach until withdrawal. No naval craft came in to evacuate this battalion and it is believed none returned to England.

10. "B" Battalion - no surprise achieved - no preliminary bombardment or special fire laid on. Only part of three leading assault companies were landed in first wave and these were brought 35 minutes late by Navy. Remainder of companies finally reached beach nearly one hour late. Effect of darkness and smoke screen entirely lost. Contrary to "Intelligence" reports wall covering beach heavily wired. Beach covered by medium machine gun fire from fortified house and pillboxes all along cliffs, also mortar and artillery. Succeeded in blowing gaps in wire but only twenty men and officers succeeded in reaching top of cliffs. Remainder were either killed or pinned on the beaches under the cliffs.

Some wounded survivors may have reached England in returning L.C.M. that had come into the beach late. Of 700 in battalion and attached troops, approximately 150 were taken prisoner.

11. Commandos on left were badly shot up on way in and were so decimated that their task was not carried out.

12. Brigade Headquarters - one Brigade Headquarters (left) did not land - no known survivors. The other Brigade Headquarters suffered casualties before landing. Communications lost almost at once - the Brigadier the only officer who got ashore. Pinned on beach after landing - survivors totalled 15.

13. Tanks - initial landing of three L.C.T.s approximately on time (nine tanks), a dry landing, moved up shingle but stopped by anti-tank ditch. About this time one troop from first flight was able to reach promenade at extreme east and near harbour jetty where they came under heavy fire from cliffs. One tank reached promenade on extreme west end of promenade and came under heavy fire. Town could not be entered due to road blocks and these tanks tried to neutralize observed enemy positions from promenade. They also tried road blocks on their own without success. Consequently tanks were confined to promenade and beach. Approximately eighteen tanks had racks knocked out by fire but the interior of tanks were not effected by fire. Subsequently out of remainder of battalion, eleven tanks reached shore making in all twenty-nine tanks. Many L.C.T.s sunk. No tanks were evacuated. Commanding Officer of Battalion was killed. Intercommunication was good throughout within tank battalion but communication with infantry useless.

14. "F" Battalion was ordered in by Force Headquarters to assist "C" and "D" Battalion forward into DIEPPE. They were in "R" craft and came under heavy fire both before and on touchdown suffering heavy casualties and numerous "R" craft were sunk before landing, the Commanding Officer being killed. They were pinned to the beach and landed in a very bad spot on extreme right, which brought them under heavy enemy fire. They were unable to get forward.

15. Marine Commandos who were to enter harbour were diverted to land in craft on DIEPPE beach in an attempt to assist move of battalions forward in to town but suffered the same fate as "F" Battalion, being landed in approximately the same place. Their Commanding Officer was killed. They were unable to get forward of the beach and suffered heavy casualties. It appears that Force Headquarters intended to force the town by the use of "F" Battalion, additional tanks and Marine Commandos in frontal attack but the plan failed.

16. Withdrawal Plan. The plan originally contemplated an outer and inner perimeter, the latter to be formed by "F" Battalion to enable the outer battalions to withdraw through a secure but limited beachhead but this plan obviously did not come into effect. The Force Commander appreciating withdrawal should be made at earliest possible moment, considering the tide, ordered withdrawal for 1100 hours. No other orders came through as to withdrawal other than establishing zero. Apparently the Naval craft in the pool some several miles off shore waiting to take troops off were badly shot up because only a few L.C.A.s and L.C.T.s came in and these on the extreme right of DIEPPE beach with the exception of one L.C.T. which came in on the left. Several were sunk before touching down, and L.C.A.s which did not land to re-embark troops were so overcrowded that at least two sank on withdrawal. All the time they were machine gunned and under fire from heavy guns. Many were killed in the water. Smoke to be supplied by Air and Navy was inadequate and poorly timed to cover withdrawal and no benefit was obtained from it.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. The enemy obviously had the raid tape well in advance and were ready in a strength greater than "Intelligence" reports indicated.
2. The raiding force lacked adequate reserves and the plan was not elastic enough to meet the unexpected situations that developed, too much detail having been laid on by higher command.
3. Effect of darkness and surprise was almost completely lost through early detection of force by E boats and air and the late landing by Navy of "B" Battalion.
4. L.C.T.s slow, difficult to manoeuvre and very vulnerable.
5. Naval bombardment not adequate to neutralize targets.
6. Smoke to be laid on by Navy and Air ineffective and poorly timed.
7. German Air Force very strong and prevented Royal Air Force from complete mastery of air leaving whole force vulnerable to bombing and fire from German Air Force.
8. A German staff officer observed the force was too big for a raid, too small for invasion but a "most perfect exercise".

9. The fire battle must be won, particularly in combined operations before infantry can hope to press in to form a bridgehead. System of enemy fire against infantry was to pin with medium machine guns then blast with mortars. Their fire was extremely accurate and they were very quick in locating our positions.

10. One of our Royal Air Force pilots shot down reported that Royal Air Force was poorly briefed and progress of Operation not given them, which accounts for bombing of beach by Royal Air Force after Operation had ended.

#### REPORT ON APPROACH, LANDING, AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS DIEPPE

1. The voyage from Newhaven was without incident, and the sea was like a mill-pond. Dusk had fallen before we left Newhaven, and the tasks of briefing the troops, cleaning weapons, preparing grenades, disposing of escape kits were proceeded with under far from ideal conditions. All troops aboard L.C.T. No. were quiet and in excellent spirits.

2. I was called on deck at approximately 0400 - as we went on considerable tracker could be seen ahead of us, to right and left, presumably in the areas of Green and Blue beaches. Shortly after first light a few fighters flew over us - it was too dark to properly distinguish them - some shots were fire from some of the accompanying L.C.T. but nothing further took place.

3. I remained on deck watching the a/m tracer for some time, then went below to check over arrangements for disembarkation. W/T sets were tuned to "receive" - but reception was very poor. We did get one success signal, from Lovat's Scouts indicating one objective taken. At this time, I climbed the ladder to go on deck, and had just reached the top when there was a flash which seemed to be almost in my face - my immediate thought was that someone had thrown a thunderflash. However, I was tumbled off the ladder, and landed on a man below me. It was then that Lieut. Norris, Comd 6 C.I.B. Def Pl exclaimed "Well - they got me"; I also saw that the centre tank was afire, and a soldier with fire blackened face was attempting to put it out. This proved to be Lieut. Bennett. By this time we must have been very close to shore - I was not conscious of any heavy fire to any type. Norris was pulling himself aft along the deck. My next memory is of the ramp being dropped and the tanks moving ashore. One, if not all tanks blew their waterproofing as they went through the gates, - I remember being annoyed and thought that casualties would result. Lieut. Hanneson 6 C.I.B. I.O. was lying across the front of a jeep. I took it that he was working No. 46 sets. I

asked him if he was O.K., - his reply was "Yes Sir". I turned to see a Medical Orderly attending to Lieut. Norris - asked if he was alright - he replied "I'm O.K. Sir, don't worry about me." A Naval Officer appeared at the ramp - I think I said "Here we go lads" - and went to meet the Navy. Just as I stepped ashore, dry, something landed close enough to cause both of us to flatten out, partially in the water. I have absolutely no recollection as to the subject of our conversation, nor the duration thereof. I next went to foot of ramp, I looked in and shouted at troops aboard to hurry all material ashore. The scene on the beach was one of utter confusion. Men both living and dead were lying about, the former under what cover they could gain from groynes and the slope of the A/T ditch. Fire from M.G. L.M.G. and snipers were steady and unpleasant and continued to be so throughout the morning.

4. Soon after this I saw my 19 set and went to help get it across the beach. We suddenly realized we were about to be run down by a Churchill - moving quickly from East to West. We waved at it, and attempted vainly to move the 19 set from its path; some fast jumping saved us from being bumped but the 19 set was not so fortunate. I then looked for my B.M. and Bde S.O. with their 19 set and finally (time unknown) met S/Sgt Armatage who had been on the same craft with them. He reported that the two officers and 19 set had been at the stern of the L.C.T. He thought Capt. McLean, Bde S.O. had been wounded. Soon after this I found Major Rolfe 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn - operating a W/T in the remains of a scout car which he stated had been run over by one of our tanks. His operator was inside, while Rolfe remained outside. Nearby one of our tanks seemed to be doing nothing. I finally attracted attention to Tank Comd who informed me they were nearly blind as waterproofing had not been completely blown from the front. I was able to cut away sufficient material to enable them to see - and suggested they get on to "promenade", find out what was doing and let me know. (It occurred to me, not less than six months after capture, that I should have called for a tank on the promenade, boarded it, and recce'd for myself. By then it was too late.) Mortar fire was quite heavy - bursts landed across promenade to our front, - in the water behind us, - and to right and left on the beach. My thoughts were very distinctly, "The next one gets us". Rolfe's operator did and continued to do a most creditable job - he switched wave length and attempted to contact S.S.R. and Camerons - we did contact 4 Bde at one time, and Brigadier Mann at another time.

5. Lieut. W. Millar, 7 Fd Coy, reported to me, and proved of the greatest assistance during the morning in helping to get the men spread out - wounded made comfortable, etc.

6. My memory of any air action, other than a cannon attack by R.A.F. after the show was over, was seeing a German plane part company with a wing and go crashing into the sea. No parachute came out of it. (Bombs dropped after a/m attack, near Casino, caused only pillar of pink smoke I saw that day).

7. My attention was drawn to R craft coming in behind Casino - I took it to be the F.M.R. and wondered why they were coming in there. I could see quite plainly that they were subjected to murderous fire as they came in. UP to this time the only member of my Bde H.Q. whom I had seen were S/Sgt. Armatage, the Def Pl Sgt Major who was wounded in the leg, and who was on the beach just behind our Scout Car, and the signallers who had had the 19 set and these had disappeared. I do not think that at any time the sea was clear of swimming men, and wrecked small craft. The swimmers were a constant target for S.A.A. and mortars and I saw several direct hits or near misses from the latter.

8. Sometime later I saw A.L.C.s coming in behind the Casino - their approach was the signal for a headlong rush of several hundred men who waded into the water - shoulder deep, in an attempt to board them. Some boats were hit, some were swamped - it was my thought that certainly none would get away. I walked over to that area - a beached L.C.T. was shielding many wounded and unwounded men both on the seaward side and on board. I ordered them all to be prepared for arrival of more A.L.C.s - and made it clear, (I thought) that priority must go to wounded. I added that any disobedience would be settled if necessary with pistols in the hands of officers. Lieut. Calder, Q.O.C.H. of C. was of the greatest assistance in trying to organize the expected evacuation. About this time I met Lt.-Col. Labatt who had just swam ashore after being on the way out in a small boat. He was wearing only a Naval Duffle Coat and was obviously in his own words - "Pooped!" He told me of receiving a message to "take comd 4 Bde acct casualties" -- A few minutes later he Adj Capt. Poag swam into the beach - I gave him a hand up from the water and as he stepped away he received several bullets in stomach from a burst of M.G. fire. He was given immediate attention in the form of morphine and shell dressings.

9. In addition to the large number of casualties sheltering in and behind the beached L.C.T. every tank and available cover shielded its quota of wounded and unwounded. With regard to the latter and their inactivity, there was no sign of fear or panic - they seemed to be stunned - and almost incapable of action (and in some cases - conversation). I urged those about this area to get busy - look for, and deal with the Germans who were firing on us. Foremost among those to take action on this order was Capt. R. Gravel, F.M.R.

10. I then returned to 19 set - and shortly afterward saw a white flag being waved from a beached L.C.T near the West Pier. Subsequent action there not known. Very soon after this, numerous white towels or shirts were seen in the direction of the Casino. Rolfe and I were by now destroying and burning our papers - some which were not yet burned were put into the car to be burned. "The next report" was that German soldiers were closing in across the Esplanade. The operator was ordered out of scout car - and - to best of my knowledge - an incendiary was started inside the car. My remarks to those with me were something like - "Sorry lads, we might as well pack up too." - By now German soldiers were standing on top of the wall so we raised our hands - and that was that.

11. As we field through a guard, all equipment was removed from each man. We were herded onto the promenade and I was amazed at the numbers, particularly officers, who were present. I had considered most of them had been killed or wounded. The latter was actually the case in many instances.

12. At this time a cannon attack came in from the sea - and whatever its effect on the targets - I confess its effect on us was a bit shattering. Almost coincident with this attack, a bomber flew from E. to W. over the beach - dropped its bombs in vicinity of Casino - and from this arose a dense column of pink smoke. Questioning various people elicited the information that - Lt.-Col. Menard had been killed - Major Sabousin and been blown up in an R craft - and many others were stated to have been killed or drowned, but no one seemed certain of anything.

13. The Germans then ordered us to the beach again to look after wounded. The place was a shambles - bodies on the beach, in the water - our impression was "How in God's name did so many come through". Capt. R. Wallace, Calgary Regt, can give a more detailed report of work on the beach where he worked for some time as, after assisting on only one stretcher, I had to pack -in due to pain in leg from which a small piece had been removed, and to loss of the use of right arm. We were next formed up - officers in one group - and marched to Dieppe Hospital. As we approached, we were marched through some hundreds of our O.R.s who were on the margin of the road.

14. Treatment afforded wounded was very meagre - First aid was applied slowly - while surgeons (?) made some effort to attend to serious cases. At entrance to hospital we were searched and had such things as protractors, note books, etc., removed. A German "news real" cameraman

was present, grinding out pictures of all of us.

15. A short time later walking cases and several who should not have been so considered were loaded into trucks and taken to R.R. Station where we were put into a train. We travelled all night, arriving early next morning (Aug 20) at Rouen. Into buses - to a large hospital. Several wards were quickly filled beyond capacity. Certainly the numbers were far beyond anything the Hospital Staff could cope with. Some soup was served and an effort was made to fix up as many as possible. Sometime during the afternoon, all officers were called out and removed across to another wing. Fresh arrivals were coming in all the time.

16. On Friday morning (21 Aug) we were given some coffee and bread and marmalade for breakfast. Soup came for lunch and we had just finished this when we were ordered OUT. When we reached the front door, we found numerous stretcher cases outside. I remember speaking to Major Went, R.R. and C. and to Capt. Hainault. F.M.R. We were again put into buses and after driving about for some time, arrived at a R.R. station and were put into 2nd class carriage.

#### ARRIVAL AT TRANSIT CAMP, VERNEUIL, FRANCE

17. In the late afternoon of Saturday 22 Aug, we arrived at Verneuil, and were marched to the transit camp, where I found Comdr Lambert, R.N. and Lt.-Cols. Jasperson, Catto, Labatt, and many other officers together with approximately 1,500 O.R.s We were housed in wooden huts and given palliases and 2 blankets each. There were no sign of any brutality or rough treatment from the Germans.

18. Sunday 23 Aug we received soap and towels. During the day we were visited by English speaking German officers who called out officers for a "chat". The net result of these chats was that those called out received a few cigarettes in exchange for nothing. On Monday 24 Aug I was permitted to visit each hut, where I spoke to the men on such matters as discipline, morale, etc. We were given a letter form and allowed to write to anyone we wished. I know that some if not all of these letters finally reached the addressees.

19. Rations were extremely limited - The Germans claimed large number of P.W. has surprised them. We had bread, margarine, honey - and (24 Aug) a good soup. On the next day we received a very good stew at 1430.

20. Wednesday 26 Aug - All men having had a good rest everyone was

ordered to shave and clean up as much as possible. (Some French clothing had been issued to those in need of it). The results were extremely satisfactory - appearance and behaviour was noticeably improved.

21. Thursday 27 Aug - We went through shower baths - (cold) which again improved spirits of all. F.M.R. received from French Red Cross (?) a box per man with cake, biscuits, chocolate and cigarettes. If this was a piece of propaganda to incite feeling between French Canadians and others it failed completely. The F.M.R. shared all they received with everyone in camp - wounded personnel all received extra shares.

### MOVE TO OFLAG VIIB

22. Friday 28 Aug - We were told we would move out that day to final destination - officers one place - O.R.s another. We were to take 11 O.R.s as orderlies. This figure we had raised to 20. We fell in at 1500 - two officers were missing - after long search they were found hiding in roof of a hut. We marched out at 1700 (after the Commandant had presented me with a few packs of cigarettes - "for my Senior Officers"), and on arrival at station officers were put into rather good 2nd class coaches, O.R.s into normal trucks.

23. The German officer i/c escort was Lieut. Knout. His outstanding contribution to the trip was the purchase and distribution on Saturday 28 Aug of French molasses cakes and sweet biscuits. Each officer received a cake and a few packages of biscuits. Several officers and O.R.s escaped from the train, most of them were recaptured and eventually rejoined us.

24. Sunday 30 Aug - Noon on a siding outside Cologne (O.R.s cars now gone) when we were given as much as we could eat of an excellent stew and coffee. Sunday afternoon we rode up the Rhine Valley - the perfect weather and beautiful scenery contributing a great deal to improve the spirits of everyone.

### PRISONERS OF WAR

25. Monday 31 Aug - Approved late afternoon Eichstatt, Bavaria - detrained - marched to what we soon learned was Oflag VIIB. We were housed in wooden huts 18 in a room (the wounded were put into the camp hospital) after being stripped and searched. (Most of personal items were later returned intact - all "notes" were not returned). Later in the evening, after considerable argument with the Germans we received

coffee. We soon learned how long we had to feed ourselves on the ration of break and margarine we received.

26. On Wednesday 2 Sep several hundred British officers arrived from Warburg. Our orderlies were used to take them tea or coffee while they were undergoing a search on the playing field. They sent us a few cigarettes per man - which were a veritable Godsent.

27. Thursday 3 Sep - At 1500 we were moved from our huts, and the confinement of a barbed wire fence, to the Barrack blocks which comprised the camp. All Canadian officers were installed in Block II. (I was given a room to myself, while immediately above we were Lt.-Cols. Jaspersen, Merritt, Catto, Labatt. We met the "S.B.O." Major J.H. Higgon, Welsh Guards, and a S.O., Lt.-Col. P. Krick - G.I. I.S.A. Div. At subsequent conference German Command being present, it was decided that Higgon, who was familiar with organization and routine, and who spoke German, should continue to act as S.B.O.

28. Friday and Saturday, 8-9 Sep we were initiated into the issue of Red Cross food parcels (and the German's bloody mindedness). All Dieppe personnel received substantial extra rations. German rations were at all times poor, and well below, up to 50% of our entitlement. Had it not been for Red Cross supplies - I hesitate to think what our condition would have been.

29. Thursday 10 Sep - Several hundred more officers and O.R.s from Warburg.

30. Sunday 13 Sep - 400-500 from Warburg, bringing camp strength to approximately 1,500 officers and 250 other ranks.

31. By now all of the Fus were settling into our new mode of life, and soon Canadian officers were moving to other parts of camp by ones and twos to live with English, Australian and New Zealand officers.

32. "Repats" have reported on the "Shackling" on 8 Oct 42 and subsequent events until officially released on 22 Nov 43.

33. From this time on Canadian officers took an active part in practically all activities, athletic and otherwise, in the camp. They were at all times a credit to the Canadian Army - and were popular and welcome throughout the camp. Particularly active were Lt.-Col. Catto, who for some time was "Works Officer" and was also active in the sphere of sports and Major E. White, S.S.R. i/c Tin Store Shop, Major McCool, R.R.C. orchestras bands, help to officers who were studying. The

treatment of Senior officers by the Germans was the same as that afforded to all others. they received no "privileges" - except at a later date when there being 1 Brigadier, 10 Lt.-Cols we were excused check parades and were counted in my room at my request to Comm.

34. An outstanding feature of camp life was "The Canary" a radio set which brought us the B.B.C. news practically every day from our arrival until we were liberated. Too much credit cannot be given to those officers who so successfully secreted and operated this machine. In August 1944 it appeared that the war would end reasonably soon. At this time, I caused an order to be issued stating that at the cessation of hostilities, or at such time as might be considered advisable, I was to assume command of the camp. I also issued various orders regarding discipline, baggage, bounds, disposal of camp equipment, etc.; plans were made for a special platoon of officers who would attempt, if necessary to force a way out of camp. Duty platoons detailed for each company - R.V.s laid down for all personnel. On 5 Feb 45 the Senior Medical Officer, Major Hawkins, informed me that he considered I was medically unfit to take command of the camp. On 6 Feb 45 I issued an order to that effect and stated that command would be assumed by Lt.-Col. Douglas Thompson, D.S.O., M.C., W.R.Y. This officer took command of the camp on 26 Mar 45.

35. 12 Apr 45 - Orders from Germans that camp would be moved on Saturday 14 Apr either by rail, M.T., or on foot. In any event, a few sick, including myself, would remain in Eichstatt hospital - if moved by M.T. "sick" party would be considerably larger, and if on foot more still would remain. Move was finally made on foot - on 14 Apr. Before rear of column had cleared camp they were strafed by Thunderbolts (U.S.) who, most fortunately had used their bombs on some M.T. on road across the valley. As a result, 7 officers were killed and 40 odd wounded - (5 of these died later) and five or six amputations of leg or arm were made. Only one Canadian officer, Capt. Money, Seaforth of Canada, was injured - his cheek being grazed. Following the attacks, all ranks returned to camp - where confusion reigned for some time. One result was that we were allowed to paint P.O.W. in large letters on roofs of buildings, and letters were ploughed up on fields.

36. That night, about 100 officers and 75 other ranks were moved by truck, after dark, to Moosburg. The trip took only two hours and was reported as without incident.

37. On the evening of 15 Apr 45 the camp again marched out, leaving in hospital approximately 80. These were moved to various military and civil hospitals in the town on 16 Apr.

38. At the Reserve Lazarette, where I was quartered, we received every consideration from the Germans, who were obviously glad of our presence. Food of good quality was reasonably plentiful, and we had in addition, our own Red Cross parcels and Argentine "Bulk". It was the unanimous opinion of all British officers that the Nuns and German Red Cross Nursing Sisters are deserving of great praise and every consideration for their work for and attitude towards P.W. Except for numerous "Red" warnings our days were uneventful until 23 Apr when rumours were rife that the Americans were only a few miles away. That evening Germans blew 2 or 3 of their bridges. The main bridge in town had been prepared for demolition but the wires were cut. (Two Germans were hanged for this action). Late p.m. 24 Apr we watched arty action on a ridge a few miles to the North West. About 2210 - shells commenced falling in the town - all moved to shelters and downstairs. It soon became event that only 3 targets were being fired on, presumably exits from the town, and only one of them fairly close by. Shelling continued until nearly 0400 25 Apr. Again at 0445 a few rounds came over, and this was repeated at about 0600 for a few minutes. At approximately 1010 - I was told that (a) white flags were out on the town hall (b) American troops were coming up the street (c) the Senior Medical Officer asked me to come to the hospital entrance. This I did and found 2 soldiers of the 342nd Regt 86th (Black Hawk) Div - and we were free. Soldiers on foot, in jeeps, and tanks poured into and through the town in a steady stream.

39. Now we were free, an dour late guards were P.W. However, we did not wish to upset the routine of a hospital, and therefore did as little as possible to upset their normal arrangements.

40. A P.W. X Rep from S.H.A.E.F. visited us next day - his job being to arrange our evacuation, my M.T. to an airstrip. This evacuation took place on the morning of 29 Apr. We travelled, via Nuremberg, to Hertzogenaerach airfield - they were full - so we proceeded to 109 U.S. Evac Unit at Langenzenn, where our treatment left nothing to be desired. That night one enemy aircraft flew low, over the camp, and M.G. fire was used on a nearby target. Next day we were returned to the airstrip about 1600 - and at 1800 emplaned - took off at once - landed for half hour at Liege - proceeding to Swindon where we arrived at 2225 hrs. Thence to 98 U.S. Gen Hosp where our reception was kind, but rather disorganized.

W.W. Southam, Brigadier,  
Canadian Army.

London, England

May, 1945 MEMORANDUM

18 May 45

TO: Chief of Staff,  
C.M.H.Q.

(Attention: D.G.G.S.)

Dieppe - Precis and Recommendations

1. On the afternoon of Sunday 18 Sep 42 a conference was held at Oflag VIIB for the purpose of recording as far as possible the action taken by various units taking part. Present were, Brigadier Southam, 6 C.I.B.; Lt.-Col. Labatt, R.H.L.I.; Lt.-Col. Jasperson, Essex Scots; Lt.-Col. Catto, R.R. of C.; Lt.-Col. Merrit, S.S.R.; Major Page, Calgary Regt; Major Marchand, F.M.R.; Capt. Turner, Q.O.C.H. of C. Other officers were called in and questioned as necessity arose.
2. The results of this conference were given to the Security Officer of the camp, Major Robert Helse. An edited copy was circulated through the camp for information. The original was transcribed into shorthand and "hidden" away. Before leaving Bichstatt I asked Capt. Philip Symington, H.M. of the camp, if it was available. He stated that it was either with the camp records - then at Moosburg, - it might possibly have been destroyed when one or two "hides" were accidentally broken by Russians who moved in after we left the camp, or it might be available in the shorthand note books of Lieut. Leslie Lee, R.W.K., some of which had been sent to this officer's home sometime previously as surplus kit.
3. I consider it most urgent that steps be taken to locate this document which was recorded when the events were fresh in the minds of the officers concerned.
4. At the same time as the a/m precis, a series of "Recommendations based on Dieppe experiences" were recorded, handed to camp Security Officer for forwarding by code to 2 Cdn Div via W.O. I was later informed by this officer that the W.O. had acknowledged receipt of these recommendations. I do not know if 2 Cdn Div received them.

(W.W. Southam) Brigadier,  
Canadian Army.