

What friends... what an anniversary... what memories!

# Return to Dieppe on 25th anniversary of raid

R.S. Stewart writes an epilogue to the series of articles which appeared in The Free Press recently about the Dieppe raid and life in a prison camp. Lieut. Stewart was with the Royal Regiment when they landed at Dieppe on August 19, 1942. He was wounded and captured by the Nazis and spent the remainder of the war in a German prison. He returned to Dieppe for the twenty-fifth anniversary observances along with other veterans and describes his experiences.

On August 17th and 18th, 1967, all available accommodation in and around Dieppe was filled to capacity. My wife and I arrived on the afternoon of the 18th via the New Haven-Dieppe ferry. The channel was just as quiet as it had been when we carried out our heart-breaking raid of years before but the passengers, renewing old friendships and recalling other days, were excited, and at times a little noisy.

Newspaper correspondents were dashing here and there obtaining our views on books that had been written about the raid and photographers were busily snapping pictures of the actual survivors. As we neared the shores of France all eyes were on the coast.

Veterans of the Royal Regi-

ment of Canada were pointing towards Puy's on the left, while others were showing their wives and friends the spots where they had landed 25 years before.

Among the thousands who arrived in Dieppe on the eighteenth, one could count about 200 who had been there before. These included members of the various Canadian regiments from all parts of Canada, English commandos and marines, Canadian air force veterans, as well as Free French.

Most of the hotels in Dieppe are quite small and are located on the Esplanade, a large grassed area adjoining the beach. This is where many of the activities took place and those who were fortunate enough to be accommodated here could observe the go-

ings on from their balconies. Once again we stayed at the Hotel De L'Univers where the owners regard us as personal friends. As on our last visit we found the meals most delicious and friends vied for the privilege of spending time on our balcony.

On the evening of the eighteenth buses drove us out to the Canadian cemetery. Here, after a short religious service, the old French veterans began to perform their annual tasks - standing at attention until dawn. Any Canadian who was present took his place in the line. Every five minutes a bugler from the Royal Marines sounded a note and a new group lined up.

After all the Canadians had been given the opportunity of honoring their fallen comrades, our old French friends took over for the rest of the night. It was most heartwarming to see how the local people have looked after the graves for 25 years and it brought tears to our eyes to see them standing guard over them.

Although the main assault had been made on the town of Dieppe, other regiments landed to the east and west with the English Commandos coming in on the flanks.

Therefore on the morning of the nineteenth each regiment held a service at its own cenotaph. Naturally we headed for Puy's, a few miles outside the town. The friends who were to drive us to Puy's, were delayed so I rushed into the hotel and explained our predicament to the host. When I asked if he could get us a taxi, he immediately dashed out the door saying, "It is better to take my car. It will be faster."

Then through the narrow, crowded streets of Dieppe and along the winding road to Puy's we had the fastest ride we ever experienced. The route was lined with French policemen who waved us by when they recognized my Canadian crest and realized our destination.

We arrived just in time for the short but impressive service which took place. After the Padre had led us in prayer, wreaths were placed on the cenotaph by the various regimental organizations. Then a member of the Royal Regiment band played the Last Post and the Reveille. Standing on a rise of ground between the memorial and the beach, he put his heart into it and as we stood to attention, it seemed as though that never had it been played so well.

As our present C.O. Lt./Col. Douglas brought the service to a close we were very thankful that we had been spared on that fateful day and were fortunate enough to have been able to return and take part in the service for our departed comrades.

At 12:00 noon the big parade formed up on the Esplanade. As we marched past the saluting stand it was "Eyes Left" for Earl Mountbatten, British Admiral of the Fleet, who was Chief of Combined Operations at the time of the raid. Before reaching the official base it was "Eyes Right" as we went by the R.H.L.L. memorial. In my mind's eye, I could see several Hamilton boys of years before.

It was pouring rain as the parade headed off by the R.C.O.C. band. I believe the order of march was as follows:

The official veterans - selected by the Canadian government and the various regiments to take part in the ceremonies.

Then came the Dieppe veterans who are still serving in the Canadian forces.

The R.H.L.L. band was followed by the surviving veterans. We swung along, some of us finding the marching a little difficult but I am told that we did a good job.

The P.P.C.L.I. bugle band was followed by a guard from the Canadians presently serving in Europe.

The Royal Marine Band and the Royal Munnis were followed by a French band and French troops. As we marched along, Canadian and Royal Air Forces jets flew in salute over our heads. As they roared past they dropped thousands of poppies, one of which, strangely enough, landed on the balcony from which Mrs. Douglas and my wife were watching the parade. When our maid picked one up on the next balcony she pressed it to her heart and smiled at the ladies.

From the beach we headed through the main streets of Dieppe. Although the rain was pouring down every avenue was jammed 10-deep with men, women and children. It was heart-rending to see thousands of them standing in the rain and to hear their cheers as we passed by. Such expressions as "Ah Les Canadiens" and "Le Regiment Royale" were quite common.

I was marching beside the Colonel who could hardly believe his eyes or ears. He was so emotionally wrought up that he found the parade hard to take. For my part, I tried hard to smile and wave at these people but the welcome we were receiving caused more than smiles to appear on my face.

As we marched by Brunel Brothers' Florist Shop, I blew a few kisses to Madame, who with that charming smile of hers, returned the same to me. I could hear "Bob" being called out loud and clear and fortunately before we passed on down the street I spied Paul on an upstairs balcony. He had been trying frantically to catch my attention and I was delighted that we were able to exchange smiles.

The children were waving flags and bunches of wild flowers. Every living soul in Dieppe and vicinity was at the parade. The stores were closed and all business for the day had come to a standstill. The close friendship between the Canadians and these townsfolk will last forever. They will never forget because the boys and girls from a tender age have been taught the meaning of this day.

In the afternoon most of us revisited the beach where we had landed. At Puy's I spent some time with our present C.O. explaining where various things had happened. I showed him the spots where some of our chaps had been fatally wounded. He saw the exact location where I had been when I was wounded in the knee and the wall from which I had been knocked to the beach. He was very interested in the section of the cliff which had been scaled by Lt. Col. Catto, several officers and men. It was quite clear to him that our brave colonel had risked his life over and over again while leading his men to the top of the cliff.

Our official schedule was very full but as we entered the lobby of our hotel the hostess asked us if we could spare a few minutes

to visit the home of a French family who were anxious to entertain some Canadians. We were happy to know that these people were so eager to welcome us and indeed we did want to visit their home but I explained that we could spend only about fifteen minutes with them.

This home was full of old tapestries, beautiful china, and furnishings as well as paintings done by the father and daughter. Our wives were heartbroken that they could not spend more time with these charming people. If we had not been so rushed we could have visited more French homes. Many French families phoned the hotels and offered their homes to Canadians who had no accommodation. The hospitality of Dieppe and vicinity was unlimited.

At 6 p.m. we had to dash back to Puy's where the neighbourhood French people were holding a service at our cenotaph. Mass was said at 5:30 p.m. and there, headed by a band, the villagers crowded to the beach. A prayer was delivered in French and the children placed wreaths on our memorial.

At the chateau nearby we were entertained by a 20 minute film of the day the Royal Regt. Cenotaph was unveiled at Puy's. While enjoying the cocktails I had the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Mills the present owner of La Maison Blanche situated high on the hill overlooking the beach. I apologized for having broken so many of his windows in 1942. He excused me by admitting that he had not owned the white house at the time of the raid.

Along with about 15 others we revisited the Hotel Des Ormes where we were given a royal reception. The champagne appeared and after several toasts, I showed my friends the hole in the floor which had been bored by our cigarettes many years be-

fore. I'm wondering if the day will ever come when Madame Bonnet will put in a new flooring and erase this historic mark. She maintains that this will never happen.

As we started back for Dieppe headed by a French escort, farmers and villagers, both young and old, were gathered in groups waving to us all along the route.

In the evening, the Canadian government entertained both Canadians and French at a huge buffet and cocktail party I'm afraid that I had very little to eat because of the numerous friends I encountered and the ensuing talks which naturally took place.

The ceremonies came to an end with the fireworks. These in a very true fashion re-enacted the Dieppe raid. From our balcony, Lt. Col. and Mrs. Douglas, Paul and Madame Brunet, and Mrs. Stewart and I had a perfect view of the operations. The sky was lit with explosions and tracer bullets and the noise was terrific.

On our right we saw the Royals landing at Puy's and to the left we watched as the S.S.R.'s came in at Paurville. The R.H.L.L.'s landed right in front of us. The arrival of the other regiments and the Commandos was depicted most vividly. The tanks came in and two or three of them were left burning on the beach. The evening ended with an amazing display of fireworks which illuminated the sky for miles around.

But even though it was 11:30 p.m. all was not over for my wife and me. We were taken by Paul and Gergette Brunet to have a quiet visit with them and to see the changes which had taken place at their home since our last visit.

The lawns, flowers and fountains were beautiful. The inside was just as charming as before. We talked in our broken French and English until the wee small hours. The affection and deep friendship which exists between us will remain forever. What friends! What an anniversary! What memories!

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## News of the District

### HILLSBURGH.....

Hillsburgh started the Intercounty football semi-finals suffering a 1-0 loss to Glen Williams. Russ Spicer struck out 18 hitters and gave up only two hits before Danny Arbie managed to score from second on Ron Richies clean cut single to win the game. Sunday afternoon again in the Glen, Hillsburgh fought back to gain a 4-3 victory. This time Ron Little started and in the fifth accepted the help of Russ Spicer to restrain the Glen to only three runs.

### ORANGEVILLE.....

Orangeville could have licensed dining lounges in the near future. Sixty-nine per cent of the 1,346 people who voted were in favor of the dining lounges while 31 per cent voted no in the ballot held last Wednesday. The final result was 415 no and 931 yes. Only 39 per cent of the eligible voters used their right to vote.

### FERGUS.....

Nobody can figure out why but Hubert Rennie, 20, of Rockwood received only superficial injuries on Saturday night when a milk truck he was driving flipped over on the Orangeville road about three miles east of Fergus and the top of the cab was completely crushed. The tanker truck went out of control at the curve near the Shand dam and overturned. The driver was pinned in the wreckage for over an hour until he could be rescued with wrecking bars. The truck was owned by Pete Mulders of Guelph. Mr. Rennie was brought to the Fergus hospital but was soon released as he had suffered only a bump on the forehead and some slight abrasions to his face, arms and one leg.

Mayor John Campbell told the Fergus council on Monday night that they "should get down to work" on a comprehensive plan to improve streets in the town over the years to come. He said that a long-range plan was needed and since a lot of study and effort will be required, council should waste no time getting at the job. The mayor's remarks were sparred by some comments in the Fergus News-Record about the poor state of the roads in the community. He said that the "local editor likes to get under people's skins" but that recent comments had set him to wondering why the town patched so many streets instead of completely rebuilding them.

### MILTON.....

"Bloodie", the sand-colored mouse, biological phenomenon and prided mascot of P. W. Merry School for a short time last week, is missing and presumed dead. A pet of Nancy Peacock, the mouse disappeared from its cage Wednesday morning. Its owner assumes a larger animal, possibly a cat, pushed aside the bricks guarding the rodent, and died well. The one hope for the scientific world is that "Bloodie" was just one of a whole tribe.

### OAKVILLE.....

A bomb hurled through a window in the home of Halton County Family counselling service director, Rennie Vivian caused \$2,000 damage. The incident occurred early Monday morning at Mr. Rennie's home on Richmond Rd. in Oakville. Living room drapes, carpeting and the living room chestfield were damaged.

The Vivians escaped without personal injury, and ran to a neighbor's home after extinguishing the blaze. Investigating officials of the Oakville Fire Department labelled the incident a deliberate attempt to burn the house down, and attributed its failure to do so to the heavy drapes, which impeded the travel of the bomb. Mr. Vivian assumes the atrocity was the work of someone dissatisfied with his help in solving domestic problems.

### GEORGETOWN.....

Possibility of a movie theatre being started in the Georgetown plaza is being mooted by Metropolitan Developments Ltd. A bank, a food store and several other merchants are already lined up for a proposed expansion to the plaza. Georgetown is also anticipating that the next major Ontario government HOME (Home Ownership Made Easy) project could be started there. The report circulating had enough basis for Halton East Liberal candidate Robin Shuce to attack the idea at Georgetown fair. Mr. Shuce said HOME is just "another example of the Conservative government's lack of foresight and complete disregard for people's feelings." It didn't take long for Jim Snow, Tory candidate in the riding, to reply. He said Mr. Shuce's attack on the scheme "was a ridiculous show of incompetence of the Liberals". Voters will have to sort out their own preferences.

"Twas a grand, glorious Fair, living up to all expectations, was the way the Georgetown Herald described the annual Georgetown show. A perfect combination of a fine fall-day, superior exhibits, record crowd, plus many features made it a standard. A huge parade added an exciting note. Mrs. Norman Robertson, Acton, won most of the major awards in the hall exhibits.

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**Asstd. JAMS** **39c**  
HEINZ - 48-oz. TINS - (SAVE 23c)  
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OCEAN SPRAY - 15-oz. TINS - (SAVE 10c)  
WHOLE OR JELLIED  
**Cranberry Sauce** **2: 39c**  
AYLMER - 28-oz. TINS - (SAVE 11c)  
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