

CANADIANS AT DIEPPE

An Eye Witness

Bob Bowman of the CBC Overseas Staff was one of the correspondents permitted to accompany Allied Forces on the Combined Operations raid on the Occupied French port of Dieppe on August 19th, 1942, in which one of our boys lost his life, two are missing, and three were wounded. Although Bowman's report did not reach shore, his vivid eyewitness account of Canadians in action is a definite contribution to the records of Dieppe. Here is the text of his broadcast on the CBC on August 20th.

"I am broadcasting now about the Dieppe raid. At a time when details are just becoming available, I would like to say this to you in Canada. We have suffered heavy losses and I am sure our men die—but never have I seen men die more bravely or fight with such great heart as our Canadian troops.

This was a combined operation, and I have spent part with our troops, with the Air Force, the Marines, the Commandos and the Navy. I am trying to find out now what percentage of the Air Force was Canadian. Because I feel sure it was a great percentage. At least nine aircraft fell to Canadian guns and many more were damaged. What a marvellous job they did in the face of intense fire from accurate and powerful German shore and sea-batteries.

Now let me start from the beginning. The plan, of course, was a close-guarded secret and the men were briefed until they were on board the ship. Although I did not travel with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry—a fine figure of a man, from London—Ontario—came on board and told me: 'Men, we are going into action. We are going to do what we can. We are going to get a crack at the beach. And then he told me the nature of the operation and what was expected of each man. There were no heroes, no delighted yells of whoop-whoop. The men were quiet and asked questions. It struck me that the questions were those that a general might ask when first told of an operation: 'What were the chances? What were the chances of success? What were the chances of being killed? What were the chances of being captured? What were the chances of being wounded? What were the chances of being taken prisoner? What were the chances of being killed? What were the chances of being captured? What were the chances of being wounded? What were the chances of being taken prisoner?'

We set sail in craft of all types under the cover of darkness. I was with the Calgary Tanks in one of the new tank-carrying craft. It was a lovely night and reminded me of home. Hardly had we set sail when our padre collected all the men together in front of the bow of the ship standing in front of a new type of tank they were using and he read from the sixth chapter of Ephesians with the aid of a flashlight.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore wake up, ye who are the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. In a few words he told us that in a few hours we would be striking our first blow to bring a sign of deliverance to the people of Europe, and the reason for this service was because we would know God's help.

The men were quiet as we sailed out into the darkness under the lovely stars. I could read my watch in the light of the half moon, and soon we said good-bye to the shores of Britain. I had a chat with the officer commanding our particular troop of tanks, and he told me about the hard work that had been put in for weeks to get them ready for this action. He was confident in them and in his men to whom he said the credit must go. And now I am going to quote from the notes I took as we went along—some written in the darkness, and some written under heavy gun-fire as they are smeared and dirty from the cordite. All the time I kept wishing I had a microphone in my hand, so taking notes in this way was my only substitute. On the way over I went up on the open bridge with the young Captain, a sub-Lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. And now from my notes just as they were written.

"AA tracers like red sparks, and there is a heavy red glow extending down the coast. Our bombers are at work... more heavy flashes of coastal guns and bombs. Our aircraft are flying in close to the water and over us and now dawn is breaking, also like a heavy barrage in the sky. There are puffs of smoke in the sky, evidently from heavy German sea-batteries, and the ships are weaving in. Our lads are calm and the tank men wearing black berets and sitting comfortably anywhere, are watching the action. The sky is becoming full of aircraft and the bombardment is becoming intense. Heavy thuds are shaking us even this far out to sea. The Captain is calmly steering us 'Port 10... Midships.' One bright fire is burning on the port horizon. Our medical men have put on their steel helmets and the guns are quieter. Perhaps the Commandos have landed and are fixing them. The destroyers are holding their fire and are sinking along beside us. The ships are spread out behind us in long lines with gun crews mounted, each flying a flag and a white ensign. There are fighter-patrols like flocks of geese high up and the bombers are scurrying home in the low haze over the water. The fighters look like shadows but in some formation.

It is now 8.30 in the morning. Fast troop-carrying ships are starting to pass to now. And there is a French transport carrying French Commandos. One of us with its white hull and black stripes, and it looks like a race to see who will get into action first.

The sky is streaked with "flying fools" and is laying a smoke screen to windward and now they are turning broadside and are plastering the town with their guns. The smoke screen is lifting and I can see ships everywhere. The small troop-carrying landing craft are moving in lines under the artillery barrage. A Spitfire has just crashed off our starboard bow, and into the sea like a stone. We could see the pilot trying to get out but he couldn't.

The troops are heading for the beaches on either side of the town—the Royal Saskatchewan and the Queen's Own Cameron's to the right. The Hamiltons and the Essex Boats are going into the centre and we wish are following. Two Messerschmitts have just tried to attack us, and a ship behind us has just shot one of them into the sea.

Our tank troop captain has come up to the bridge to warn the captain, and it is only a few minutes until our firing at us and at the small shore-bound, and in we go.

It is now 8.45. Planes are everywhere overhead, and the shore guns are firing at us and at the small troop-carrying craft ahead of it. I can see casualties—men are in the water. Our tanks are warming up and they are starting to climb the ramp which will go down like a draw-bridge when we reach the beach. Machine-gun bullets are whining around us, but our guns are crackling too at the aircraft over us. A tank landing craft is getting its tanks off behind the troops storming the beach and heavy bombs have just dropped astern of it. It is a heavy Junkers and he is trying to stagger into shore. He is full of lead from our guns. The tank landing craft ahead of us got her tanks ashore but she is sinking now trying to get out, and we are being stopped by orders from going in, with destroyers laying a smoke screen around us.

There is a heavy German gunfire from a tobacco factory. I can see it sweeping the beach. Another Messerschmitt is down. The "ack-ack" fire is wonderful and a heavy bomber has just been driven off. He was trying to sink us on our right; but a destroyer's guns got that Jerry. Our tank men are disappointed, but now come

an order to try to come in again and they are delighted. The German shore batteries are still active. They are firing at us. Four Pocke-Wulf bombers have just dived on us and two of them disappeared in flames. Our barrage is unbelievable and I am covered in black soot. Shells are falling on all sides of us, but we cannot get in to the beach, and we are ordered again to retire.

Three pilots are coming down by parachute. Another tank-landing craft has managed to get in but has been hit. Some casualties have just been brought out to our ship. The Padre of the Plailleurs de Montreal told me about trying to get on shore. He was killed all around him and one lieutenant had a bullet in his arm while he was trying to push the Padre down.

It is now 9.25. The Germans on the cliffs are even throwing hand grenades on our ships below. Nine incendiary bombs just passed overhead, but I was too interested to watch the gun firing or where the bombs landed. They were aimed at the destroyers ahead of us, but they missed them. We were heavily attacked again and the convoy guns have just brought down two more Junkers. There was just a sort of flash of flame and the bombers came down like leaves in the wind. And now dive bombers are attacking us. One of them has just been shot into the sea.

Strong reinforcements of our fighters are arriving and they are flying low around us to protect us from the dive-bombers. We can't get in to the beach. We have tried driving our tanks ashore, but they are being driven out. I have just been knocked down by a heavy bomb. In fact a stick of four bombs, a very near miss to the starboard. Some of our men are wounded. One of them is dead. Our fighters are wonderful, and they are protecting our men on the beaches who are being re-embarked.

Our aircraft are suffering heavily, and I have seen several of them come down in flames over Dieppe. The downed being brought off, but we heard that we have landed on every beach. Evidently the engineers have suffered heavily, and were unable to blast a way for the tanks for about an hour. The tanks formed a square

on the field and they are protecting the men while being re-embarked. The colonel of our tanks has attacked a machine-gun post on foot. The South Saskatchewan got in safely but the Queen's Own Cameron's following them have been hit by six-inch Howitzers, and there are casualties.

I am listening to our tank short-wave equipment and I know they are fighting like fools on shore. I can hear one of our tank captains saying "Come on over, boys, we are killing lots of Heinrichs." We are ordered to manoeuvre out of the harbour. It is afternoon now, but the destroyers are remaining behind just a few hundred yards off the shore, and they are sending in small boats to get our men out who can get away. They are wonderful. We have been here eight hours now, and small craft are streaming out under bombs and gun-fire.

Well, those are just quotations from my notes as I wrote them down. I wish I could continue but my time's up. I wish I could tell you of the journey home, and of the hundreds of stories I know about personal acts of bravery.

I wish I could tell you now how we feel as we wait for final news. It seems reasonably certain that our losses were as heavy as they were at Hong Kong. I hope you in Canada don't drop these losses will feel very proud that our men have been able to play at least the part they have wanted to play. I do know they have fought well and that everything—things that seem to have exceeded the limits of human courage and endurance—has been done to protect our troops during the fight and to get them off after it was over. Those of us who managed to get back, even wounded, feel very lucky indeed. It has been a bitter, hard fight.

"As We See It"

By J. A. Strong

THE COUNCIL of Ministers of the Vichy Government of France have made the statement that it was because of the drinking among soldiers that was the real reason for the collapse of the French nation. Again, in the first Great War, the Germans failed to reach Paris because of the great supplies of wine that had fallen into their hands as they marched through France and of which they drank too freely. This gives us an idea of the Russians usually have a supply of vodka, if enough of it was to fall into the hands of the enemy, it might prove of great assistance to the Russians.

It seems to be the fashion now to use profanity more often than it was used at one time. We even hear it on the radio and at times it is used in the columns of the Daily papers. The user seems to have the idea that a little profanity would emphasize his remarks. We can't see why we should associate the use of profanity with cheapness. We can surely get along without the use of profanity we would think. Some years ago we were on the train and an elderly lady got on and she was intoxicated. It was the first time we had seen a woman in that condition. Somehow the mistook us for her son Jimmy and naturally we tried to ignore her. We had never seen her before. Along with the intoxicated condition which she was in, she commenced to swear and looking back at it now we seemed to think that the put on quite an act. We were glad when the left the train and also pleased that a very small percentage of women in our Dominion would ever think that low.

THEN IN MURELY a year of plenty. A heavy crop of hay and fine weather for storing it and then a bumper grain crop and fine harvest weather for harvesting it and a good crop of fruit of all kinds and the same can be stated in regard to the vegetable crop. France was later than usual in bringing planted this year but it soon made up for lost time and the fields made up for lost time and the stock look to be as good if not better than usual and the stock look well. There are worse places to live than right here in Canada.

THEN HEEM to be the age of plain speaking. At one time when speaking of some particular person that "had what it takes," we used the term "intestinal fortitude," but today the word "guts" is used to put over the same meaning. Again we would speak about perishing but today it is just plain everyday sweat. Taking this summer as a whole we suppose this it would be classed as having been a cool summer. We did have some heat back in April and again we had it hot enough in August for a day or so but as a rule it has been a cool summer and the nights were just about right for sleeping. Verandahs weren't used nearly as much this past summer as they usually are and get it seemed to be a summer that made one sweat. We had plenty of moisture and perhaps the humidity was higher than average all summer, anyway it seemed to be no trouble at all to sweat, and as Amos would say: "We really sweated, we didn't sweat with it!" Sometimes we would envy a person that had the nerve to go without a shirt, we've never had the nerve to try but they do say that leaving the shirt off during hot weather is tops alright.

AN A BULE, we think of a summer storm as being local, that is, it doesn't storm all over the Province for instance at the same time, but the storm that we had on Saturday evening, week before last, must have been a general one. You will recall that we had quite a windstorm and rain around five o'clock in the afternoon and that it took the odd limb off and also took its toll of fruit as well. We had a letter from Sumdridge recently, which is located just this side of North Bay and they were telling us that they had that same storm at the same time up there and that it took its toll of trees in that locality as well. Again, another gentleman from the fruit district, was telling us that he had fifty pear trees that were on high ground and that the storm took practically every pear. It did blow over a few staked tomatoes for us and also took a fair-sized limb off one apple tree but that was the extent of the damage around our corner.

HURRY-UP MEALS FOR WORKING WIVES

A particularly timely article in the Housewife's Food Almanack in The American Weekly with this Sunday's (September 6) issue of The Detroit Times... lists suggestions to help wives, so many of whom are now employed in war-time industries, to prepare an appetizing meal quickly and have it balanced, interesting and palatable. Be sure to get Sunday's Detroit Times.

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THERE ARE ONLY A FEW PEOPLE WHO WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS ADVERTISEMENT

DON'T BE A WELLSHER

LET'S be brutally frank. The man or woman who buys a Victory Bond or Certificate to save face, then sells it—except in case of dire necessity—is a welsher.

—the tilt of a ship's deck under your feet as it slides to Davey Jones. No one is asking you to leave your favorite chair tonight and fly over Germany. None of these things is asked of you.

True, there is no law which says you cannot sell your Victory Bonds or Certificates. It is not a legal obligation that you keep them for the duration. But there is a moral promise to make a loan to your Country for the War period. To evade that undertaking through sale, at this time of great need, is to welsh—it is the denial of an obligation which you admitted and accepted by your act of purchase.

All you are asked to do is to lend to your Country—Canada—lend at interest all the money you can possibly spare to provide the tools for those men who are fighting your fight. You are not expected to deprive yourself to the extent that you must live below the level of ordinary decency.

Your Country does not ask you to deny yourself those necessary things which make for decent living, that you may buy Victory Bonds and Certificates. But the voice of Public Opinion does say that those persons who now insist on the unnecessary luxuries of life are not themselves decent.

But if you think you are doing your part by buying Victory Bonds only to sell them—then, you had better take yourself into a dark room and ask yourself some soul-searching questions. Ask yourself what you are doing to protect your loved ones, your Country, and your way of life.

Of course—you have no immediate cause for worry. No one will ask you to cross the beach and climb the cliffs of Dieppe. You are not in a slit trench with Stuka Dive-Bombers showering death about you. The blazing sun of Africa—the wind-driven sands—will never cut and blister your skin until every exposed part of your body becomes a festering sore. No—you will never feel the vibrant crash of a torpedo

If you do this we know what the answer will be. We know because the men and women of Canada are inherently decent people. They value the good opinion and respect of friends and neighbors. But most important is the fact that we Canadians value our own self-respect. We ask charity from none—we assume our obligation to work and lend. So there can only be one answer—you will hold your Victory Bonds and Certificates for the duration except in cases of extreme necessity.

NATIONAL WAR FINANCE COMMITTEE