

The Dieppe Raid – More Sapper Fatalities than D-Day: Tributes to the Fallen Sappers

By **LCol K. Holmes, CD (Ret'd)**

2017 marks the 75th Anniversary of Operation JUBILEE, the WW II Allied raid on Dieppe, France across the English Channel that took place on 18/19 August 1942. There were more Sapper fatalities during this operation than we were to suffer on the D-Day Invasion two years later. See: <https://cmea-agmc.ca/d-day-tribute-2015>.

Originally conceived as Operation RUTTER in April 1942, the Allies planned to conduct a major division-sized raid on a German-held port on the French Channel coast and to hold it for the duration of at least two tides. The aim was to affect the greatest amount of destruction of enemy facilities and defences before withdrawing. This ‘reconnaissance in force’



WHITE and RED Beaches looking east as seen from the Castle

action was intended to test the defences of Hitler's continental fortress and the capability of the Western Allies to launch large-scale amphibious assaults against Hitler's "Fortress Europe". This operation was intended to give the Germans fear of an attack in the west and cause them to direct considerable effort to their Channel defences at the expense of other theatres of operation. The operation was also intended to provide an opportunity for the Allies to test new techniques and equipment and to gain knowledge and experience for an eventual invasion of Europe.

The first attempt to launch Operation RUTTER on 8/9 July 1942 was abandoned due to bad weather but it was revived almost immediately as Operation JUBILEE. After several delays, the raid was set to go on 18/19 August. The Canadian-led assault force comprised some 6000 troops, 5000 of whom were Canadian, with the remainder being primarily British Commandos and 50 American Rangers. The Royal Canadian Engineer element comprised about 350 all ranks from 2nd Canadian Infantry Division that were grouped into a number of parties with the role of clearing the obstacles on the beaches and demolishing specific targets in-shore.



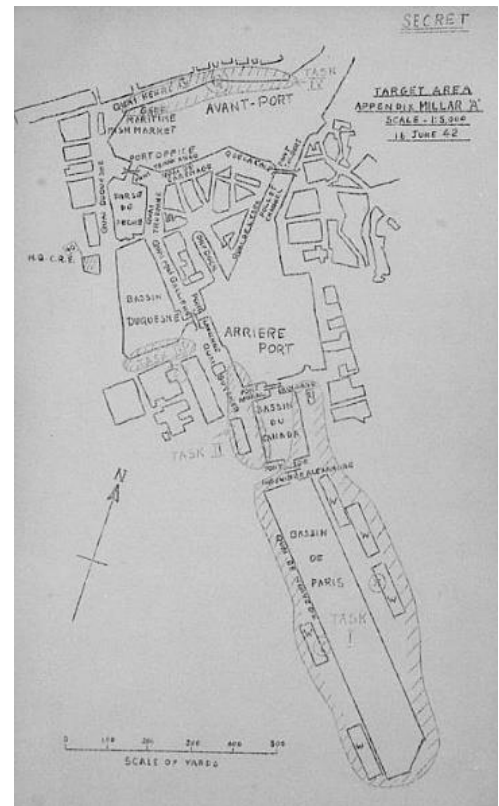
Dieppe Raid 19 August 1942 - Charles Comfort, National War Museum

The Raid, unfortunately, failed to achieve any of the objectives of the troops of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. Within a few hours of the dawn assault on the heavily fortified port, 4000 of the men were either killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The raid lasted only nine hours but, among nearly 5000 Canadian soldiers involved, 907 were killed and 1874 taken prisoner. Assault engineers suffered almost disproportionately when they landed at Dieppe. Of the 50% of the Sappers who were able to get onto the beach, only seventeen came back to England and ten of these were badly wounded and later died in hospital. There were a total of 27 Engineer fatalities – 23 were Killed in Action, one Died of Wounds, and three died while Prisoners of War. Some military historians believe that, despite the terrible carnage, valuable lessons were learned that made a great contribution to the success of the D-Day landings.

A memorial was erected at Newhaven, England in 1977 to honour those Royal Canadian Engineers who lost their lives as a result of the Dieppe Raid. Newhaven was chosen because they had embarked for Dieppe from Newhaven and because many of the wounded were put ashore at Newhaven following the raid. The monument was erected and financed by a group led by the 11th Field Company RCE WWII Veterans based in Sarnia, ON.



RCE memorial at Newhaven,
England



Sketch map carried by Lt Millar
pointing out his objective

The monument was unveiled on 17 August 1977 to mark the 35th anniversary of the Raid. It has come to be regarded as a tribute to all the Canadian forces who took part in the raid and, indeed, to all those who served during World War II. An annual commemoration service is held in the gardens at Newhaven each August, usually on the weekend prior to commemorations held in Dieppe itself.

As part of our activities to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid, the CMEA has produced a set of tributes to recognize each Canadian Sapper who died on the Raid, in hospital or while Prisoner of War. Our 27 Fallen Sappers are remembered by name on the monument at Newhaven. The [Canadian Virtual War Memorial](#) also honours their sacrifice.

Take a moment to view the tributes to our Operation JUBILEE sappers who sacrificed their lives. Clicking on each name will take you to their personalised. You can scroll through the complete set to appreciate the many 'average Canadians' who responded to the call during WW II.

Royal Canadian Engineer Fatalities Resulting from the Dieppe Raid 19 August 1942

Rank	Surname	Forename	Unit
B25362 Spr	Barnes	Harold Edward	2 nd Fd Coy
B25432 Spr	Bergey	Oliver Loraine	2 nd Fd Coy
B25143 Spr	Bisset	William Nichol	2 nd Fd Coy
D16448 Spr	Bockus	Leslie Ernest	2 nd Fd Coy
G51067 Spr	Breau	Raymond Amon	2 nd Fd Coy
B25382 Spr	Brown	William Albert	2 nd Fd Coy
B25442 Spr	Charbotte	Peter	2 nd Fd Coy
B25113 Spr	Cowlishaw	Frank	2 nd Fd Coy
A19443 Spr	Davison	Alexander Russell	11 th Fd Coy
M 41565 Spr	Elliott	Delbert Alvin	2 nd Fd Coy
B25220 L/Cpl	Gage	Thomas R	2 nd Fd Coy
A19167 L/Cpl	Hall	Alfred Harry	7 th Fd Coy
A19313 Spr	Hodson	Cyril	7 th Fd Coy
A18156 Spr	Jones	Glyn	1st Fd Park Coy
B25266 Spr	Maville	Joseph John	2 nd Fd Coy
A18185 Spr	McCaslin	William Henry	1 st Fd Park Coy
E37016 Spr	McGie	Chester	2 nd Fd Coy
Lt Col	McTavish	Gordon Howard	Comd
Lt	Millar	William A	7 th Fd Coy
A19108 Sgt	Murray	Ronald Charles	7 th Fd Coy
A20388 Spr	Oliver	Sydney George	11 th Fd Coy
D16504 Spr	Ramsay	John	11 th Fd Coy
B25296 Cpl	Russell	Thomas Daniel	2 nd Fd Coy
B25161 Spr	Sharp	Clarence Joseph	7 th Fd Coy
A20167 Spr	Shova	Elmer	11 th Fd Coy
A20261 Spr	Smith	Hugh	11 th Fd Coy
A19340 Spr	Williams	Stuart	7 th Fd Coy