

The Rise and Fall

Dieppe – Sacrifice for Success: Dieppe to D-Day

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The single most pivotal day during World War II was June 6th, 1944, D-Day. The successful invasion of France by the Allied forces would lead to the final defeat of Germany less than a year later. The gathering of knowledge gained from other amphibious operations, the preparation of the invasion forces, and the accumulation of the ships, air forces, landing crafts and other vital instruments of invasion really started in earnest in 1942 with the Dieppe raid of August 19th. Some argue that Dieppe was a tragic mistake and not worth the sacrifice in lives and prestige.¹ Many books and articles have been written for and against the raid and it continues to be one of the most controversial operations of World War II. Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations which planned and launched the raid, Churchill, and a few others, have been villainized for approving the operation, and some historians have accused Mountbatten of flying solo in remounting and launching the raid after its initial cancellation in July of 1942.² The Dieppe raid was vital for two reasons which were strategic deflection of enemy forces and operational tactics for amphibious invasion. The strategic effects of the raids, threat of raids and Dieppe itself, helped pull and hold German military units from the Russian front and potentially North Africa at a critical stage of the struggle and regardless of the regrettable casualties suffered during the Dieppe raid, the operational factors learned were invaluable in developing the successful formula which led to victory on June 6th.

¹ Timothy Balzer, "In Case the Raid Is Unsuccessful...': Selling Dieppe to Canadians." *Canadian Historical Review*. X (2006) : 24, accessed April 12, 2019, <http://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/459>

Jennifer Munson, "The Dieppe Raid: Avoidable Disaster or Lesson in Amphibious Assault?" *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History* 8 (2):102-112. (2018) : 24, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/aujh/vol8/iss2/7/>

² Brian Loring Villa, "Mountbatten, the British Chiefs of Staff, and Approval of the Dieppe Raid." *The Journal of Military History* 54 (2): (1990)201-226. doi: 10.2307/(1986) 043. : 24, accessed April 10, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1986043?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

This paper looks towards many primary documents in the form of diaries, memories, letters and other accounts of the Dieppe controversy but highlights the thoughts and views of three documents which relate to tactical operations, strategic objectives and insight into the general impression of some key participants. These documents are German War diaries from the period relating to the defence of Dieppe and the Western Front, Churchill's writings on the specific event, and a document from the Mountbatten papers to Hughes Hallett, which indicate his general feelings regarding the achievements of Dieppe. The German documents which were declassified in 1986 offer a fascinating insight into German thoughts and views of the defence preparations at Dieppe and in France. This window into the effects which the raids were having on the German soldiers and command, re-enforce the view that strategic objectives to help relieve the Soviet Union were in fact being effective. The Churchill memoir may be written with a view to polishing the reputation of Dieppe but Churchill's process of quoting other leaders, using his firsthand knowledge of the conversations and the events, all contribute towards an insightful assessment of the Dieppe Raid's objectives and results. The Mountbatten letter is particularly significant because it is simply a letter to his second in command about the Dieppe raid and their assumed mutual recognition of the positive results of the raid. Although they are from quite different perspectives, they do enhance the view that the Dieppe raid was worth the cost due to the results it achieved through the gathering of vitally essential operational information and the strategic influence he raiding threat including Dieppe had upon the German decision-making process.

The geo-political landscape at the beginning of 1942 had digested the attack by Japan on several countries in December and brought the USA formally into the conflict with Germany when Hitler declared war after Pearl Harbour. Even before the US entry into World War II, British and American authorities were meeting to develop strategies regarding an alliance to resist Nazi aggression. The main commitment that came from these meetings, know as Arcadia, were that Germany would be the first and main target

of military resources and operations which would assure Britain and Russia considerable relief from German aggression and pressure. This strategy was debated by the Americans internally, once the Japanese launched their surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, but Roosevelt stood by the Germany first position with the expectation that immediate or short-term offensive activities would be planned and implemented by the British and Americans against German forces.³

The three main objectives of Arcadia were the occupation of North Africa in 1942, present a holding action in the Pacific against the Japanese, and build up American forces in the UK in anticipation of an invasion of France in 1943.⁴ The fear by Churchill and the British that overall inaction in Europe might lead the Americans to re-consider this policy and turn towards Japan was one of the factors which put pressure on Britain, Combined Operations and Mountbatten to develop a large scale raid on the French coast. Another of the big issues in the development of the Dieppe raid revolved around the constant and desperate demands from Stalin to open a second front in France to draw German forces away from the Russian Front. The Soviet armies had managed to hold the line around Moscow in December of 1941. By the spring of 1942 the German army was re-equipped, refreshed and launched another enormous summer campaign in the southern Soviet Union targeting the Caucasus oil fields and eventually Stalingrad. The Soviets were in constant danger of collapse from the German offensive and desperately needed a British/American threat to draw German forces away to the west. Churchill was under a state of siege from Stalin, the Soviet ambassador and any other point of contact between the Soviets and the British to open a second front in France.⁵

³ Charles Perry Stacey, and Gerald WL Nicholson,. *Six years of war; the army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956), 310

⁴ Keith Sainsbury,. «'Second front in 1942'—a strategic controversy revisited. *British Journal of International Studies* 4 (1)(1978): 48. doi:10.1017/S0260210500114512.

⁵ Winston Churchill, *The second world war - Volume Four* (London: Random House, 2002), 370-415

In Brian Begbie's study of the lack of a sufficient naval bombardment at Dieppe, he also surveys the historiography of British strategy regarding the approach to fortress Europe once Hitler had occupied most of mainland Europe. The historian Leslie Hollis argues that nothing was more important than the establishment of a second front in France once Russia was invaded. Arthur Bryant takes the more traditional British view of a continental strategy of encirclement, containment, harassment (in the form of smaller raids) and eventually direct confrontation once the enemy was weakened enough to be confronted. Chester Wilmont in *Struggle for Europe* and this harkens back to the successful strategic approach of the 7 years war and the Napoleonic wars. Michael Howard jumps into the discussion with his support of the Mediterranean strategy which he sees as the use of naval and air forces, backing up land forces which would be used to harass and erode the Axis hold on continental Europe. David Stafford takes the containment and harassment strategy and claims that internal stresses and allied pressures in the east will bring Nazi Germany to the point where you might get what he describes as the detonator effect, which will cause a complete and almost immediate collapse of the German Reich. What these historians and strategists all have in common is their view that raids and secondary attacks were the first step to re-entering the European mainland.⁶

The formation of Combined Operations and the eventual assignment of Louis Mountbatten to command it, was partially a result of the desperate need to distract Hitler and Germany from the Russian front. Several raids were quickly planned of which one involved Canadians landing at the German occupied Norwegian Island of Spitzbergen to free Russian and Norwegian prisoners, destroy coal suppliers and communication installations and cause as much damage and harm to German interests as possible.⁷ This raid encouraged Canadian authorities, who were anxious to get their troops into action, to look upon the

⁶ Brian T. Begbie, "Naval gunfire support for the Dieppe raid" (PhD diss, University of Ottawa, 1999) : 7, accessed April 12, 2019, <https://ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/8622>

⁷ Stacey, and Nicholson, *Six years of war; the army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific*, 26.

raiding operations in a positive manner and step up to additional opportunities such as Dieppe. Another large raid was against the German dock and naval facilities at ST Nazaire and resulted in considerable damage being done against the Germans, but like Dieppe, at a high cost.

By the spring of 1942, a big raid was planned by Mountbatten and combined operations to potentially land a force, including tanks, and capture a port town or city, hold it for several hours or a few days and then evacuate. This was intended to test tactics and operations for amphibious landings, shake up the German command in the west, show the US that action was being taken, and offer encouragement to the Soviets. The operation was code named Rutter and was scheduled planed for June or July 1942. One of the main reasons for the raid was to develop and test landing tactics and skills for a future invasion of France which would lead to the defeat of the German's in the West and the end of the war. Questions such as the effectiveness of pre-landing bombing, heavy naval bombardment, frontal assault on a defended port, the effective landing and use of tanks, techniques to breakthrough heavily prepared shore defences, the use of airborne and commando troops and many other questions were key reasons, from a military point of view, for a larger raid.⁸

The large-scale raid was also intended to encourage the German's to draw forces away from Russia or at least to stop sending additional forces to Russia from the west, but it was also hoped to rattle the German confidence in the west and potentially raise French moral. The pressure which Churchill and the British were under from Stalin and Russia was enormous and it was a calculated risk to balance off and sacrifice against relieving Russian losses and to try and ensure that Russia remained in the war.

⁸ Stacey, and Nicholson, Six years of war; the army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, 326

Although not an actual invasion as envisioned with Operation Roundup, or some of the other potential attacks, this would provide proof to the Russians that something was being attempted.⁹

This debate in a historiography realm has survived many other issues surrounding the raid to become a question of was it worth the casualties and was anything really learned from the operation.

The overall policy effected for 1942, as summed up by Major General R.H. Dewing ... called for "the continuation of a raiding policy based on the St. Nazaire pattern, but on a larger scale, involving operations requiring the troops to hold the raided area for one or two days. JZ Raids would be as large as equipment availability would permit. Thus very similar to American, the British raiding policy probably owed much to it.¹⁰

These historians and strategists all argued that the reasons for Dieppe were crucial to Russian survival, maintaining American support and containment of Germany, and learning how to raid or invade on a larger scale, and Mountbatten was acting as the instrument of the general allied authority to get Dieppe or something like it off the ground. The initial raid known as Operation Rutter was to be launched in late June or early July but was cancelled due to weather issues and German observation of the invasion forces assembling. This served as a severe disappointment to almost all involved but was secretly re-scheduled for August of 1942 under the new name Operation Jubilee.¹¹

Brian Loring Villa, argues that the Dieppe raid was remounted by Mountbatten without any authorization and was a result of his own ego and ambition to bring glory on himself. He further goes on

⁹ Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, *War Diaries 1939 - 1945*: (London: Phoenix Press, 2003), 275

¹⁰ Begbie, "Naval gunfire support for the Dieppe raid", 8.

¹¹ James Goodman, "Operation JUBILEE: The Allied Raid on Dieppe (1942)--A Historical Analysis of a Planning Failure" (PhD diss, MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLL QUANTICO, 2008) : 6, accessed April 7, 2019, <https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA491502>

to make the case, although very weak, that Mountbatten had conspired to rewrite history in order to defend the decision to launch the Dieppe raid, going so far as to cherry pick quotes from Mountbatten's official biographer, Philip Ziegler, regarding the pressure brought to bear to write things his way.¹²

He then blames Ziegler for actually telling the story. "After some initial avowals of puzzlement as to the raid's goal and purpose, Ziegler comes back to the familiar arguments. Ignoring completely the fact that the planners had already recognized that a port could never be captured in usable form, Ziegler asserts:"¹³

Villa states that these arguments are backed up by Churchill, Sir Alan Brooke, MacNaughton and several others involved in the decision-making process but they are in fact not. This has become the bane of Dieppe, in that rather than telling the story of events as they unfolded and what the real results were, good and bad, we have degenerated into a historiological blame game trying to nail a particular figure with the responsibility of the high casualty rate of the raid and sensationalizing the high casualty numbers.

Ziegler then address this operational side of the raid.

"But there was another justification for the raid. It was official doctrine in the middle of 1942 that the invasion could not succeed unless the Allies secured two or three major ports.... In this sense it was a dress rehearsal for invasion – a 'reconnaissance In force' as Brooke and later Churchill styled it, in which the techniques of Combined Operations were tried out in their most trying circumstances."¹⁴

Not much was known about launching larger invasions and when Hughes Hallett was asked about guaranteeing the success of the raid Sir Alan Brooke told Churchill that "if he or anyone could guarantee success, there would be no object in doing the operation,"¹⁵

¹² Villa, "Mountbatten, the British Chiefs of Staff, and Approval of the Dieppe Raid ,:202.

¹³ Villa, "Mountbatten, the British Chiefs of Staff, and Approval of the Dieppe Raid ,:2023

¹⁴ Philip Ziegler, "Mountbatten: A Biography." (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 187

¹⁵ Philip Ziegler, "Mountbatten: A Biography." (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 190

The German's had over 40 invasion barges and related vessels in the harbour area which were a target of the raid. Radio and radar installations were to be destroyed, air bases attacked, and German prisoners captured for later interrogation regarding coastal defences, planning and strategy.

Another key plus to launching a larger raid such as this was to develop the inter arms operation skill set required for the army, navy and air force to work together and coordinate their activities for optimal outcomes. The use of tanks, naval and air attack, direct port assault and special weapons utilization were also to be tested. This knowledge and experience would be absolutely essential to launch a successful invasion of France later on.¹⁶

On March 28, 1942 the St Nazaire raid was executed by combined ops and at that point German military forces in France were very low. There was only one tank battalion near Paris.

“on June 25th Hitler directed that several of the most formidable formations...were to “be retained in the west as a reserve: ... Those specified were the 6th, 7th and 10th Panzer Divisions, the S.S. Division “Das Reich”, the Flieger Division...and the “Goring” Regiment.. On the following day... the Fuhrer, in consequence of the gathering of small vessels on the south coast of England”, ordered the “Reich” Division... to be transferred to the West immediately.”¹⁷

Hitler became so concerned about an allied invasion in France that by July 9th he transferred additional divisions and units to France from the Russian front. The spotting of the ships in harbour while preparing to launch Rutter, by the German fighters and several reports of activity and apparent preparation for a raid or an invasion had rattled Hitler. His choice of pouring all of these additional forces into the 1942 Russian campaign or hedging his bets against an allied action on the Western front in France

¹⁶ Winston Churchill, The second world war - Volume Four (London: Random House, 2002), 414-415

¹⁷ Stacey, and Nicholson, Six years of war; the army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, 350

resulted in a weakening of the Russian Front and potentially the ultimate failure of the Germans at Stalingrad.¹⁸

The actual raid on Dieppe in August was made much more difficult by this increase in forces and the heightened alert levels that were impressed upon the troops and it also resulted in a reinforcement of concern regarding the Western Front. David Ian Hall argues that there was a whitewashing of the raid in order to portray it as a necessary learning experience for D-Day rather than the tragic defeat he believes it was. Hall states that "On 2 and 13 August, Hitler chaired two conferences on the Atlantic Wall at his advanced military headquarters, code named Wehrwolf, at Vinnitsa, in the Ukraine." Page 3 the German view of Dieppe.¹⁹

Although Hall gives an excellent account of the propaganda use which the Germans put the Dieppe newsreels and photos to, he does not address the issue of the drawing off of considerable and perhaps decisive army and air force resources to France or the effect this had on the campaign in the Middle East with Rommel also starved of decisive resource. As Hall states, it was only a few weeks later "After 7 September, Hitler accepted the fact that the Eastern army needed a rest and it would spend a second winter in the east before resuming the decisive attack the following spring."²⁰ This resulted in the stalemate and ultimate defeat of the German 6th Army at Stalingrad.²¹

Hall goes on the quote Hitler

"We must realise that we are not alone in learning a lesson from Dieppe. The British have also learned. We must reckon with a totally different mode of attack and at quite a different place." Their continued

¹⁸ Stacey, and Nicholson, Six years of war; the army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, 350

¹⁹ David Ian Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." Canadian Military History 21 (4):2. (2015) : 3, accessed April 12, 2019, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol21/iss4/2>

²⁰ Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 4-7.

²¹ Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 12-38. The original comes from (Horst Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War Vol.VI, p.1056.)

vigilance and the Atlantic Wall now had a vital role. He reassured them: "If nothing happens in the next year, we have won the war."²²

Hall concludes that although Dieppe was a tactical surprise, it was anticipated on an operational and strategic basis by the Hitler and the Germans. This argument however does not support his entire thesis that Dieppe was a complete failure but that it in fact did contribute not only to the survival of the Soviets in the East but also helped starve Rommel of resources and lead to the reversal of the Africa Korps fortunes. As quoted above, Hitler also recognized that the British and Americans would learn the lessons from Dieppe needed for the eventual success of D-Day. The threat of a raid or invasion by August 1942 had already achieved the strategic success of the transfer of forces from other fronts and the prolonged stationing of them in France against another attack. The propaganda war which Hall focuses on, which the German's did skillfully use Dieppe for, was a hollow and ultimately inconsequential victory.

In 1986 the Directorate of History National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa Canada declassified Report no. 36 which was issued by Army Headquarters and was titled "The Development of the German Defences in the Dieppe Sector (1940-1942) Information from German War Diaries" which was originally written in 1950. These diaries, notes and documents support Hall's position regarding the swift build up of German forces in France after St Nazaire and the strategic effect that invasion and/or large raids had on Hitler's and German military thinking regarding protecting the French coast line at the cost of Russian front and North African efforts. Some of the conclusions the Germans came to, regarding the raids including Dieppe, were that after the invasion of Russia, raiding along the coast of Western Europe might

²² Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 12. The original comes from (National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. [NARA] Microfilm Series T – Records of German Field Command Armies. Record of Hitler's secret speech to Western Commanders, 29 September 1942, First Army War Diary, Annexes T312/23/9706 et. seq. (Microcopy T312/Roll 23/Pages 9706 onwards) as cited in David Irving, Hitler's War, pp.410 & 860.

be viewed as an option by the British. Hitler viewed St Nazaire as a wake-up call to German forces, that additional raids would be coming and by April he expected a great surprise from the British and Americans.²³ German leaders were expecting a large raid or invasion attempt on 25/26 of June.²⁴ July dates were then projected by German leaders as a critical time frame to expect a raid on the French coast.²⁵

On July 10, these papers refer directly to Hitler's fear of an invasion and the transfer of divisions to France. From these papers it becomes clear that the apprehension which Hitler felt regarding an invasion or raid attempt on the French coast infected his decision-making process regarding the transfer of more troops and the application of considerable resources to the Atlantic Wall. The process not only continued after Dieppe but was accelerated. The anticipation by the Germans of the specific dates that were being considered for the Dieppe raid in both July and August were based upon the same weather, tidal and lunar factors as Combined Ops choose to schedule the raid for.²⁶

The papers also show a heightened sense of expectation during both July and August invasion dates which made it very difficult to avoid a quick response from the German defenders who were warned and waiting for action. This level of alert somewhat dictated the outcome of the action and disadvantaged the raid from the beginning.

²³ Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 20.

²⁴ Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 24.

²⁵ Hall, "The German View of the Dieppe Raid August 1942." 25.

²⁶ German Documents, March 31, 1950, Headquarters, Historical Section Army. The Development of the German Defences in the Dieppe Sector (1940-1942) Information from German War Diaries, Department of National Defence. Directorate of History and Heritage, Canadian Army. Ottawa: Department of National Defence.

“During the nights from 10-20 Aug, however, a combination of lunar and tidal conditions would be favouring Allied landing operations, and Fifteenth Army in consequence had ordered for the period the maintenance of the highest degree of watchfulness and readiness for action, In compliance with this order, every night from high-tide to sunrise 302 Inf Div was kept alerted according to the scale required by "Threatening Danger", which explains in part the quick reaction of the Division” ²⁷

With the creation of Combined Ops and the expectation that multiple raids could be launched from Norway to Southern France, a high level of operational activity was projected. The issues of launching raids which required several concurrent factors to be in place such as weather, moonlight, up to date intelligence, assembly activities going smoothly and several other operational issues. The majority of the raids were cancelled or in the case of Rutter, cancelled/postponed and re-scheduled. The number of cancelled raids was one of the reasons Rutter was relaunched as Jubilee. Combined Ops was desperate to prove its value and along with several other considerations encouraged Mountbatten and Churchill to follow through with the Dieppe raid.

Operation Rutter was originally developed and approved by Montgomery as the commander of the Army component of the operation. He had the Canadian Divisions under his command at that time and decided to use one of their divisions as the main land unit. He offered this opportunity to General McNaughton and was almost immediately taken up on the opportunity by the Canadians to finally get into action. Montgomery was to later claim in his biography that he was against the raid but while he was the top army authority, he not only supported the raid but was instrumental in several of the decisions that would lead to such difficult results during the raid. ²⁸

²⁷ German Documents, March 31, 1950

²⁸ Philip Ziegler, "Mountbatten: A Biography." (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 188-189

Who Authorized the remounting of Operation Rutter, as Jubilee, is perhaps one of the most controversial issues in today's debates regarding the Dieppe raid. The records are scarce or do not exist regarding the actual authority applied in the remounting of the operation and some, as previously suggested, state that Mountbatten had taken it upon himself to launch the raid in August because of his ambitious need for glory and recognition. The alternative argument focuses in on the intense need for security. To reset the same raid with Dieppe as the same target was considered a security issue because if German intelligence had gleaned any evidence of the original July operation, they may have ramped up the defences of Dieppe in anticipation of the raid

This led Mountbatten to severely restrict the circulation of information regarding the re-scheduled August raid. This meant that only very required, need to know participants, were exposed to the new operational details. This also meant no additional training leading up to the operation, and a loss of previously trained personnel who were replaced by inexperienced new replacements in the assigned units.

Mountbatten's position was that the operation was not actually cancelled but delayed so no new authorization was required. The evidence is overwhelming that Mountbatten not only had the support of the participating branch heads, and the Canadian authorities, but that he was also backed and encouraged by Churchill whose papers and writings show a complete approval of, and support for Jubilee.

Churchill was on a secret mission to Russia and in the North Africa when the raid occurred and his confidence regarding the raid, to Stalin, served as concrete evidence of British efforts to relieve the Russian forces on the Eastern Front. Once the raid was over, all attention was turned to Operation Torch, the landing of American troops in North Africa.²⁹

²⁹ Winston Churchill, *The second world war - Volume Four* (London: Random House, 2002), 415-415

Due to the high percentage of casualties, and the failure to achieve almost all of the main tactical objectives at Dieppe, a fierce debate eventually erupted among historians regarding the politics, preparation, and operation of the raid. Some claim that the raid was remounted and launched due to personal ambitions and was a tragedy in almost all ways. Others take the position that the strategic politics of the Grand alliance pushed participating planners and commanders into launching the raid while another school defines the resultant lessons learned as vital in the growth and development of tactics, weapons, techniques, planning guidelines, overall resource allocation, and proper combined operations between the service arms, which lead to the success of Operation Overlord and the ultimate defeat of Germany.³⁰

The question of Dieppe's role in the historiography debates should not be framed in its tactical failures and loss of life. The resultant consequences of the strategy of raiding and threat of invasion were strategically the most important aspect of Combined Operations and Churchill's approach to threatening the Germans in France. The lessons learned from the raid were vitally important to the development and application of successful amphibious landings with proper naval, resource and air support. It is difficult to argue that D-Day could have occurred in 1944 without a Dieppe type operation and the two years of preparation which took place afterwards. It is forever regrettable that so many allied troops were lost on August 19, 1942 but it was the cumulation of many battles and campaigns which the allies had fought since the beginning of the war which saw far greater losses and was the beginning of a relatively unbroken string of success which resulted in victory over Germany in 1945. The earlier generation of official historians and commanding participants recognized that Dieppe was a sacrifice but a necessary one in order to learn the hard lessons that need to be learned and in order to achieve a strategic advantage at

³⁰ John Terraine, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 95-96.

the apex of the war against German. Lord Louis Mountbatten later wrote to his 2IC from Combined Ops Hughs Hallett, "I am so very glad that after giving up your turn to go sea in order to help out at C.O.H.Q. you should have been able not only to carry out the Dieppe Raid but subsequently to take part in one of the very few big ship actions in this war." ³¹These are the not the words of a coverup but of pride in a job well done and a recognition of invaluable contribution to the imminent invasion of Normandy which were backed up by a message from Allied leaders to Mountbatten after D-Day which said "the success of the venture, has its origin in developments effected by you and your staff of Combined Operations. Signed: Arnold, Marshall, King, Brooke, Smuts, Churchill."³²

Word Count - 4382 Words

³¹ Letter from Lord Louis Mountbatten to Hughes Hallet, May 28, 1944, Hartley Library, University of Southampton- Archives and Manuscripts and Special Collections, Mountbatten Papers, #Docref=MB1/C115/23 Carbon copy of a typescript letter from Lord Louis Mountbatten to Captain J.Hughes Hallet concerning the raid on Dieppe, 28 May 1944

³² John Terraine, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 98.

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1) Letter from Mountbatten to

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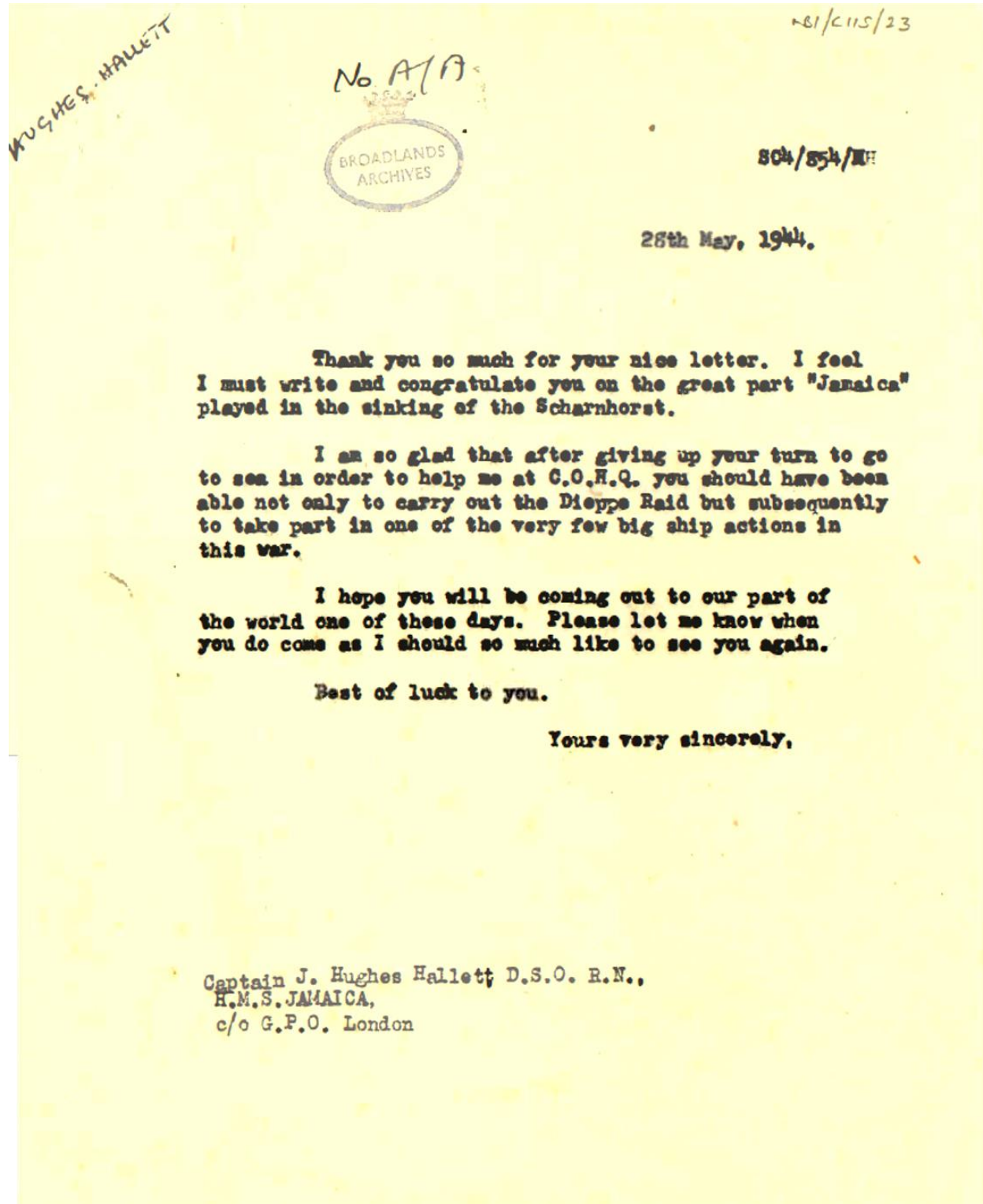
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2) Churchill – Hinge of Fate August 19, 1942 Dieppe

the shipping which had been concentrated. The weather continued bad and the troops disembarked. It was now decided to cancel the operation altogether. General Montgomery, who, as Commander-in-Chief of South-Eastern Command, had hitherto supervised the plans, was strongly of opinion that it should not be remounted, as the troops concerned had all been briefed and were now dispersed ashore.

However, I thought it most important that a large-scale operation should take place this summer, and military opinion seemed unanimous that until an operation on that scale was undertaken no responsible general would take the responsibility of planning for the main invasion.

In discussion with Admiral Mountbatten it became clear that time did not permit a new large-scale operation to be mounted during the summer, but that Dieppe could be remounted (the new code-name was "Jubilee") within a month, provided extraordinary steps were taken to ensure secrecy.

For this reason no records were kept, but after the Canadian authorities and the Chiefs of Staff had given their approval I personally went through the plans with the C.I.G.S., Admiral Mountbatten, and the Naval Force Commander, Captain J. Hughes-Hallett. It was clear that no substantial change between "Jubilee" and "Rutter" was suggested, beyond substituting Commandos to silence the flank coastal batteries in place of airborne troops. This was now possible as two more infantry landing-ships had become available to carry the Commandos, and the chances of weather conditions causing "Jubilee" once more to be abandoned were considerably reduced by omitting the airborne drop. In spite of an accidental encounter between the landing-craft carrying one of the Commandos and a German coastal convoy, one of the batteries was completely destroyed and the other prevented from seriously interfering with the operation; so that this change in no way affected the outcome of the operation.

Our post-war examination of their records shows that the Germans did not receive, through leakages of information, any special warning of our intention to attack. However, their general estimate of the threat to the Dieppe sector led to an intensification of defence measures along the whole front. Special precautions were ordered for periods like that between August 10 and August 19, when moon and tide were favourable for landings. The division responsible for the defence of the Dieppe sector had been reinforced during July and August, and was at full strength and on routine alert at the moment of the raid. The Canadian Army in Britain had long been eager and impatient for action, and the main part of the landing force was provided by them. The story is

vividly told by the official historian of the Canadian Army* and in other official publications, and need not be repeated here. Although the utmost gallantry and devotion were shown by all troops and by the British Commandos and by the landing-craft and their escorts, and many splendid deeds were done, the results were disappointing and our casualties were very heavy. In the Canadian 2nd Division 18 per cent of the five thousand men embarked lost their lives and nearly two thousand of them were taken prisoners.

Looking back, the casualties of this memorable action may seem out of proportion to the results. It would be wrong to judge the episode solely by such a standard. Dieppe occupies a place of its own in the story of the war, and the grim casualty figures must not class it as a failure. It was a costly but not unfruitful reconnaissance in force. Tactically it was a mine of experience. It shed revealing light on many shortcomings in our outlook. It taught us to build in good time various new types of craft and appliances for later use. We learnt again the value of powerful support by heavy naval guns in an opposed landing, and our bombardment technique, both marine and aerial, was thereafter improved. Above all it was shown that individual skill and gallantry without thorough organisation and combined training would not prevail, and that team work was the secret of success. This could only be provided by trained and organised amphibious formations. All these lessons were taken to heart.

Strategically the raid served to make the Germans more conscious of danger along the whole coast of Occupied France. This helped to hold troops and resources in the West, which did something to take the weight off Russia. Honour to the brave who fell. Their sacrifice was not in vain.

* * * * *

While in Cairo I pressed the question of giving strong air support to the Soviet southern flank.

*Prime Minister (Cairo) to Deputy Prime Minister,
Foreign Secretary, General Ismay, and C.A.S.*

19 Aug 42

I agree that there is no possibility of influencing the situation in the

3) German War Diaries – please see PDF for entire document

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R E P O R T N O . 36
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)
ARMY HEADQUARTERS
31 Mar 50

The Development of the German Defences
in the Dieppe Sector (1940 - 1942)
Information from German War Diaries

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