

2005

## Shooting the War: The Canadian Army Film Unit in the Second World War

Sarah Klotz

*Library and Archives Canada*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh>



Part of the [Military History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Klotz, Sarah "Shooting the War: The Canadian Army Film Unit in the Second World War." *Canadian Military History* 14, 3 (2005)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Canadian Military History* by an authorized editor of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact [scholarscommons@wlu.ca](mailto:scholarscommons@wlu.ca).

# Shooting the War

## The Canadian Army Film Unit in the Second World War

Sarah Klotz

“The exploits and adventures of these tripod toters, both in and out of actual combat, will no doubt enliven the pages of more than one book which will be written some day about World War II.”<sup>1</sup> Jon Farrell, *Canadian Geographic Journal*, June 1945

Very little has been written about the Canadian Army Film Unit (CAFU) since the end of the Second World War, despite Jon Farrell’s postulation. There have been a few short newspaper articles related to the Film Unit and the D-Day footage that made it famous, but there has been no scholarly study by either military or film historians.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the CAFU was to create an official audio-visual record of Canada’s Army, just as the official historians, war artists, and photographers were documenting other aspects of the war.<sup>3</sup> The Film Unit started as only a few men, but expanded substantially throughout the war, increasing the scope and breadth of its productions. The men and women of the CAFU who operated the cameras, edited the film, and then distributed the finished products were different from the civilian war correspondents and commercial newsreel cameramen who were also creating a visual record of the war. The CAFU attached cameramen to military units and they shot real-time footage of Canadians in battle. This footage was then used to create the CAFU films, and formed the basis of National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and commercial newsreel company productions.



Most of the existing scholarship exploring Canadian film and the Second World War focuses on the NFB and John Grierson, the father of the documentary in Canada and the NFB’s first film commissioner.<sup>4</sup> The historiography suggests that the NFB was, for all practical purposes, the main film institution creating Canadian motion pictures. This was true, but much of its wartime film footage came from the cameras of the CAFU – footage that was shot in harm’s way. Despite this neglect by historians, the CAFU played an essential role in the history of Canadian film. Much of what subsequent generations have seen or know about the Second World War comes from footage shot by the Film Unit. Yet it is a difficult story to tell since it must be pieced together using primary sources, both textual and audio-visual. The Film Unit will receive the credit that it deserves and will find its place again in the history of the Second World War.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was no official mandate for securing Canadian wartime moving images at the start of the war, but the Public Relations Office,

formed in 1940 and commanded by Captain W.G. Abel, obtained or assisted in the recording of several films relating to the Canadian forces' activities in the United Kingdom since their arrival in December 1939.<sup>5</sup> The movies were shot by commercial companies, an improvised film unit made up of soldiers from the Photographic Section of the Canadian Corps (later Army) Headquarters, and British commercial companies commissioned by the NFB.<sup>6</sup> But these groups worked on an *ad hoc* basis, and so there were enormous gaps in the coverage. Furthermore, they were generally uninterested in most military issues like training and day-to-day activities. As a result, the motion pictures they produced were a patch-work of images, driven by the demands of entertainment and publicity, and a poor visual historical record.

Accordingly, in January 1941, Lieutenant-General Andrew McNaughton, who commanded the Canadian Corps in the United Kingdom, asked Major C.P. Stacey, the newly-appointed historical officer, to report on the value of establishing a permanent film unit. Stacey recommended the organisation of a unit of soldier-cameramen within Public Relations, which would eliminate the reliance on commercial companies and ensure "an admirable collection of historical films dealing with Canadian military activity in this country."<sup>7</sup> While the earlier commercial films focused on publicity and entertainment, Stacey, perhaps not surprisingly, thought the value of moving images was rooted in their use as an historical record. McNaughton agreed, and it was decided that an army film unit would be established. Unfortunately, nothing was done for over half a year.

That changed in August 1941 when John Grierson was quoted in various newspapers that he was going to run a film unit for the Canadian Army.<sup>8</sup> Grierson had been adept at expanding his role in the Canadian film industry before the war, and he clearly had his eyes set on the war overseas. While the *National Film Board Act* (1939) specified that no government department could produce films without the authority of the NFB, this was difficult to enforce overseas and completely ignored by McNaughton. When Grierson arrived in London that same month, he met with senior Canadian officers, where he argued for control over all film work. In one

heated discussion with Lieutenant-General Price Montague at Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London, Grierson went so far as to claim that only he, as Film Commissioner, could approve and direct film activities. Montague did not take kindly to the idea of a civilian interfering with the army and Grierson's claims were disregarded.<sup>9</sup>

This was the impetus needed at CMHQ to establish the film unit, which had been forgotten in the activity of training and expansion. The Canadian Army Film Unit was officially formed in October 1941 to ensure "accurate presentation of Canada's war effort."<sup>10</sup> It was to record subjects suitable for theatrical release in Canada, produce training films, and document the activities of the Canadian Army.<sup>11</sup> It operated under the Public Relations Office at CMHQ and, at first, comprised just two officers and two other ranks.<sup>12</sup> They began to film the overseas units, but were plagued by faulty equipment and lack of supplies.

A disappointed Grierson returned to Canada, later acknowledging the authority of the army to film its own activities.<sup>13</sup> However, Grierson's well-earned reputation as a master director ensured that some of his suggestions for personnel were accepted. George Noble, a British cameraman with whom Grierson was familiar, and Michael Spencer, a former NFB employee, were recommended, becoming two of the founding members of the CAFU.<sup>14</sup> Despite this seemingly supportive relationship, Grierson continued to look for ways to wrestle control away from the Film Unit.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lieutenant Jack McDougall, a former cameraman and director for the Associated Screen News (ASN), commanded the CAFU. The ASN, a Canadian film company, would contribute several additional experienced personnel to the CAFU. Assisting McDougall were the aforementioned Noble and Spencer, as well as Al Grayston, also a former ASN employee.<sup>15</sup> All had cinematographic experience in Canada or the United Kingdom and were eager to put their skills to use.

The men of the film unit underwent training in refresher cinematography courses through

John Grierson, Film Commissioner,  
National Film Board of Canada.

British film schools, but they were also instructed in regular infantry battle drill.<sup>16</sup> Although the formal film training was useful, nothing could supplement the shooting experience received in the field. Before this trial-by-fire, however, the CAFU practiced its art by covering parades, training and manoeuvres.<sup>17</sup>

The soldier-cameramen produced films almost immediately, and within a month of the CAFU's establishment it had fulfilled a number of NFB requests for footage. It also developed a plan of future projects.<sup>18</sup> Yet the overseas forces, with the exception of two battalions sent to Hong Kong in 1941 and a few other garrison units, were training in England and defending the United Kingdom against possible German invasion. The only topics available to the CAFU were training, non-combat roles, and social activities. And so these themes were prevalent in early productions.

In an effort to support operational activities in the army, by early 1942, training films were being produced. The CAFU developed scripts in conjunction with training schools, and was then responsible for securing the required shots.<sup>19</sup> Like standardized training manuals, film allowed the army to ensure that all troops received a consistent message. Army instructors believed in the effectiveness of training new recruits through the replication of battle situations. The CAFU was asked to shoot mock-battles, but later in the war some scenes in the training films were taken from footage of actual battle sequences.<sup>20</sup> The main purpose of these motion pictures was to instruct, and *Smoke of Battle* (1944), for instance, was used as a refresher course and to show experienced troops how to effectively use smoke screens in combat.<sup>21</sup>

By enlisting the CAFU to produce these movies, instead of a civilian company, the army was able to secure footage that was top secret.<sup>22</sup> In the short film, *Ronson Flame Thrower* (1942), animated diagrams were used to describe the physics behind the flame thrower and how it was built.<sup>23</sup> There were also close-ups of different parts of the equipment and live-action shots of soldiers using flame throwers in mock battles. Due to the secret nature of the subject matter, it would have been risky for a civilian organisation



Library and Archives Canada PA 169789

to produce the film. Already, the military-controlled CAFU was proving its value.

The CAFU's theatrical films also had great value for the Canadian Army. Through the production of more than a dozen twenty-minute motion pictures, the Public Relations Office was able to propagate a positive view of the army to both military and civilian audiences in Canada and abroad.<sup>24</sup> The films were scripted and sometimes comprised staged footage, paralleling closely the modern-day documentary. They received a warm reception internationally.

*Wood for War* (1941), the first CAFU theatrical short, documented the work of the Canadian Forestry Corps in Scotland and detailed the camaraderie shared between Canadian lumberjacks and local Scots.<sup>25</sup> The production of *Wood for War* was followed by *Motorcycle Training* (1942).<sup>26</sup> This movie highlighted the impact of the motorcycle on the effectiveness of the army through a series of dramatized sequences, where a dispatch rider rushed to deliver an important message. The films, distributed in the British Ministry of Information weekly series, were both immensely popular and later dubbed into several foreign languages.<sup>27</sup> However, international success did not ensure distribution in Canada. In fact, *Wood for War* and *Motorcycle Training* were never shown to Canadian audiences. Although the films were quality productions, the NFB, which was responsible for the Canadian distribution of the CAFU films, did not think that the subjects had a broad enough appeal. The NFB commended *Wood for War* but it also claimed it was unable to support this film as it did not fit with its "own plan of theatrical distribution."<sup>28</sup> This was just



Photo by Barney J. Gloster, Library and Archives Canada PA 152095

*The Smoke of Battle* film in the making. A film crew looks on as a house is set on fire, Sussex, England, 8 August 1944.

the beginning of the difficulties between the CAFU and the NFB, and it set the stage for the “war of wills” that was to play out over the coming years.

Although the NFB and the soldier-cameramen were intended to work cooperatively with the former advising the CAFU on the type of material to be shot, the first correspondence received from the NFB did not arrive in London until May 1942 – eight months after the Film Unit was formed. The relationship between the two organizations had been strained since Grierson’s failed attempt to gain control over the Film Unit in August 1941. The poor relationship was a cause of concern for many in the army, and Major W.G. Abel of the Public Relations Office was particularly worried that an unhelpful NFB would be detrimental to the army’s public image; he tried to find a compromise: “Lieutenant McDougall is, of course, familiar with the stuff that you have required in the past,” Abel wrote to Grierson in May 1942. “It appears that he is shooting with that in mind, but precisely the same information led him to produce ‘Wood for War.’ It would be a great pity if the material that has been going forward has not been suitable, and that through lack of advice corrections were not made.”<sup>29</sup> Abel’s intervention did little to ease the tension, and there were few additional attempts by the NFB to assist the CAFU in its film-making. But

the NFB’s unwillingness to support the CAFU was a blessing in disguise, forcing the overseas unit to develop its own in-house expertise, including the coordination and distribution of its own productions to commercial newsreel companies.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the spring of 1942, the 2nd Canadian Division began training for a raid on Dieppe, France. Although members of the CAFU were initially requested to film the action, they were later denied the opportunity just days before the operation. Instead, three British cameramen accompanied the Dieppe expedition and, consequently, there was no CAFU-produced film footage of the raid. This was the first major action by Canadian troops in England in nearly two years and it was very upsetting to the soldier-cameramen that they were not allowed to participate. Aware of the raid’s importance, the NFB soon requested all of the CAFU’s footage. The CAFU was in the humiliating position of having to ask the British War Office for copies of the film shot by their cameramen.

McDougall was furious that his men had been denied the opportunity to film the Canadians. “Where the fault lies I have no way of knowing, but the fact remains that we had a definite job to

do, we were trained, prepared and equipped to do it, and when the time came to do it we were deliberately ignored,” wrote McDougall.<sup>30</sup> He asked CMHQ to examine this issue and develop a policy for operational film coverage. McDougall also presented an ultimatum: if CMHQ was not satisfied with the current quality of work then he would ask to be replaced and transferred back to combat duties. McDougall’s threat was successful and he received full support and backing from both the Public Relations Office and CMHQ in late August 1942.<sup>31</sup> A policy for operational coverage was soon established.

At the same time, the Dieppe debacle set off another power struggle between the NFB and CMHQ for control over the Film Unit. The footage of the Dieppe raid, accused Grierson, “was especially poor, lacking not only in the imaginative approach but also in quality.” Grierson twisted the dagger, patronizingly reminding CMHQ that the NFB and the Canadian public were accustomed to films of a certain class and “it must, above all, be newsworthy and of a quality which will enable our various needs in recruiting, public relations and morale to be adequately served.”<sup>32</sup>

It is difficult to reconstruct precisely the Dieppe footage that the NFB received, but it is clear that no cameramen hit the beaches and so all shots would have been from ships several kilometres away, thus failing to convey the immediacy of combat.<sup>33</sup> There were scenes of the air battle, but the majority of this footage was taken from a distance, and the air craft appear as little more than dark specks in the sky. The best footage was shot from planes looking down on the battlefield, but there was precious few shots to enliven the long distance footage from the ships. It is not surprising that when the CAFU produced its retrospectives on the Dieppe raid later in the war that the majority of the footage was German.<sup>34</sup>

Grierson hoped to use the failed opportunity at Dieppe to gain control over the CAFU, arguing in September 1942 that CMHQ should be responsible only for the policy of the Film Unit, and that “the National Film Board, should be given the opportunity to exercise [its] proper responsibility as its executors.”<sup>35</sup> Yet since the CAFU was not the source of this footage, it was difficult for Grierson to use this botched coverage

as a reason for control. More importantly, after running the Film Unit for a year, the army was not about to hand over the job of documenting its war to a civilian agency. Abel and McDougall rallied to the defence, and the NFB’s request for control was denied; in fact, more personnel were attached to the Film Unit. This influx of additional resources enabled the CAFU to produce the *Canadian Army Newsreel*, its most popular and widely viewed film product.

The first *Canadian Army Newsreel* was released on 16 November 1942, with all subsequent productions available on the fifteenth of every month. The *Newsreel* contained between five to ten stories an issue and was composed of CAFU footage. The newreels were approximately ten minutes in length with sound and narration, featuring stories, initially, on sporting events, inspections, parades, commemoration, training, and non-combat duties.<sup>36</sup> Once the Canadian Army was involved in active battle, however, the *Newsreel* also included combat footage.

These short movies were a source of entertainment and information for the soldiers. “The *Canadian Army Newsreel* has a good reputation with the troops for unbiased and unpropagandized news,” testified one report.<sup>37</sup> At the time, the men of CAFU did not consider their work on the *Newsreel* as propaganda, as their primary role was to document the army. But since the films were edited and scripted, there would certainly be a bias – the Allies were trying to win a war and would do whatever they needed to win, including building the morale of the soldiers by carefully edited footage.<sup>38</sup> For example, in the earliest *Newsreel* production on the Dieppe raid, *Dieppe Heroes Honoured* (1942), the CAFU focused primarily on the commemoration of the raid.<sup>39</sup> The story recorded Dieppe veterans receiving awards at Buckingham Palace and there was little mention as to what happened during the raid or of those who never returned. From this newsreel alone, one might imagine it was a victorious operation.

The newsreels were distributed through the Auxiliary Services as part of the regular recreational program.<sup>40</sup> “Each issue has been very warmly greeted by the troops,” noted McDougall, they “seem to want as much of this sort of thing as we can give them.”<sup>41</sup> Initially, it was only possible to show the newsreel to

soldiers stationed in Britain, but, by the end of 1943, the Auxiliary Services requested that the *Newsreel* be presented wherever the Canadian Army was posted or fighting.<sup>42</sup> The *Newsreel* was also available to soldiers in Canada through the Public Relations Office.

In early 1943, a special War Establishment was approved to increase the number of cameramen in order to more fully cover future operations.<sup>43</sup> This expansion created a small editing team and a field unit for operational coverage. The No. 1 Film Unit was composed of three cameramen, one officer and two other ranks. It was attached to Divisional Headquarters, but it would travel between brigades or battalions, shooting the army's activities.

The officer of the Film Unit was the primary point of contact for the brigade and it was essential for him to be kept abreast of any action. "They should not be regarded as interfering "press" representatives, but as front line soldiers, performing a very necessary military duty," opined one optimistic report.<sup>44</sup> And this was generally the case, as most soldiers supported the CAFU's activities. The cameramen were attached

to various operational units to document their actions and usually attended briefing sessions for upcoming engagements. Forewarned of the next operation, the men of the CAFU took their position near the front and waited for the battle to begin. They were well within range of sniper, artillery, and mortar fire.<sup>45</sup> The cameramen spent most of their time preparing for the battle, realizing that they would have very little opportunity to capture the actual chaos of war on film.<sup>46</sup>

The CAFU's first entry into battle occurred at Sicily when the No. 1 Film Unit landed with the first assault wave on 10 July 1943.<sup>47</sup> The landings were lightly contested, and Sergeant Alan Grayston filmed the early morning activities, getting some of the best footage, including shots of Canadians charging up the beaches and breaking down wire barricades. Lieutenant Al Fraser also filmed the landing, focusing on a group of "knocked out guns," before moving on to a captured airfield to record prisoners.<sup>48</sup> The 1st Division, with the Film Unit following, pushed the enemy back in what became a hot, dusty, and nasty campaign. Almost immediately, Fraser arranged for the unit's precious footage

to be sent back to London for censorship and editing. The transfer of material was usually done by plane in order to ensure that the footage arrived within a day or two of being shot.

Each soldier-cameraman was supplied with a portable camera, usually the Bell and Howell Eyemo, a lightweight metal tripod, and 900 to 3,000 feet of film (thirty to ninety minutes) that was carried in pouches on the front and back much like soldiers carrying ammunition.<sup>49</sup> They were also equipped with a pistol and a knife. The members of the Film Unit considered themselves as part of the fighting force and often volunteered to assist units in battle, including putting down cameras and picking up rifles.

---

Film Unit movie camera mounted on the turret of a Sherman tank, 23 May 1944 in the vicinity of the Hitler Line, Italy.



Photo by Strathby Smith, Library and Archives Canada PA 140098

The Film Unit did not create any theatrical films from the footage shot in Sicily, but a number of *Newsreels* carried their footage.<sup>50</sup> While *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 13 – Sicily* (1943) presented the crossing and assault landing, the next issue focused on the Canadians' battle for Leonforte and Agira. The film showed heavy combat with tanks advancing and the Canadians encountering German mortar fire outside of Leonforte. The battle was characterized by fierce street fighting, but the cameramen were unable to record the action. Instead, the editing team in London used other available footage, like the shots of Leonforte destroyed after the battle, to create the *Newsreel* story.<sup>51</sup> The film also documented the fight for Agira at the end of July 1943. Unfortunately, the operation began before daybreak, so the light was not ideal for a well-exposed shot. Although they were working in difficult conditions, to say nothing of filming under enemy fire, the cameramen were resourceful. For instance, as the artillery shells were fired from the Canadian guns, the muzzle flash lit the surrounding area and created a ghostly and powerful image of battle. The quality of the footage was improving and the Sicilian campaign was very successful for the Film Unit. Yet the Sicily battles also proved that a cameraman could not record everything, and even when in position it was difficult to get good shots due to light, fragile equipment, and enemy fire.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the Canadians were capturing unique footage on the battlefield, an administrative battle continued to rage over control of the CAFU. Although Grierson's last attempt to envelop the Film Unit was unsuccessful, his complaints continued, as did his lack of cooperation in distributing the CAFU productions. The NFB charged that the Film Unit was full of amateurs, lacking the creative talents of NFB directors and cameramen. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. The majority of the CAFU personnel had prewar cinematographic experience, be it with the NFB, ASN, or other broadcasting agencies. This, coupled with their military training, made them a good fit for a unit that required its personnel to negotiate film techniques and artistic construction, as well as be accepted as equals by the troops who they were to accompany into battle.

In an attempt to bridge the perceived artistic gap between the NFB and the CAFU, the Public Relations Office again tried to find a compromise, suggesting that Gordon Sparling be attached to the CAFU to head up its production activities in London.<sup>52</sup> Sparling was a veteran film-maker of the ASN and it was thought that an individual possessing his experience would assuage Grierson. When Grierson heard of the recommendation, he reacted poorly, attempting to block Sparling's attachment to the CAFU under the pretence that the ASN could not afford to lose a man of such experience. Grierson, it seemed, was trying to starve the CAFU of experienced film-makers. "When I took leave of my employer at Associated Screen, he was most sceptical that 'the army unit was anything more than two men and a boy,'" wrote Sparling. "This was, I found, typical of the general impression in Canada."<sup>53</sup> The CAFU had earned a strong reputation among senior officers at CMHQ and the fighting men in the field, but their work had not yet been recognized across the Atlantic.

\* \* \* \* \*

John McDougall, now promoted to Captain, commanded the Film Unit in the field while Sparling took charge over the London headquarters. McDougall and three men set out for Italy in September 1943. The Film Unit faced difficulties prior to landing as a U-Boat sank the ship upon which they were travelling. No one from the CAFU was hurt, but McDougall risked his life to save the one camera that was aboard; its destruction would have resulted in a serious delay in documenting the Canadians in battle.

The Film Unit was in Italy for four months before it was combined with the Photo Unit, forming the Canadian Film and Photo Unit (CFPU). While both the still and movie cameramen documented the Canadians in several battles, it was at Ortona in December 1943 where the unit solidified its reputation.<sup>54</sup> Ortona was an important anchor along the German defensive line, and it would not be relinquished lightly. The enemy had fortified the town, bombing streets and demolishing buildings to force the Canadian infantry into open squares where they would be easy targets for snipers.<sup>55</sup> To avoid these killing grounds, the Canadians pioneered "mouse-holing" tactics – attacking from building to building by blowing holes in adjoining walls, allowing them

to stay inside and avoid most of the snipers.<sup>56</sup> While this tactic protected soldiers, it added to the difficulty of filming combat. The cameramen were thus forced to make choices relating to subject matter, not based upon importance but more on proximity, safety, and sometimes courageous opportunity. But the cameramen were tenacious. Sergeant Jack Stollery was with the tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment as they made their way through the battle-ravaged streets. The tanks came under German fire and their advance was halted. “Stollery was unable to cover the action from where he was so he pushed ahead for another hundred yards with camera and tripod, and calmly photographed the little battle which developed,” recounted one after-battle report. His actions “so surprised the commander of the leading tank that he opened up the hatch of his tank and took a picture himself with his own camera.”<sup>57</sup> Stollery was awarded the Military Medal and his citation read, in part: “His appearance with the forward troops in moments of great danger...was in no small way responsible for bolstering their morale.”<sup>58</sup>

The Ortona footage reflected the brutal nature of the fighting. *Battle of Ortona* (1943) included the first images of dead soldiers in the *Newsreel* and the first image of a Canadian soldier wounded in action, though his injury was not severe. Canadians were recorded sorting out the German dead and digging their graves, giving them “a decent burial.” The film then moved on to show the rows and rows of German dead lying on the ground and then cut to a shot of Canadians marching towards Ortona. The last image was of a close-up of a dead German soldier with a gruesome head wound, the narration identifying the body as “one of Hitler’s soldiers... with a picture of his Fuhrer beside him.”<sup>59</sup> Notwithstanding the earlier difficulties of capturing combat on film, the CFPU coverage of the battle for Ortona resulted in superb footage. The intensity of the fighting could only have been captured by cameramen at the front. Although the newsreel’s message highlighted the German defeat, there was no denying – or hiding – the difficult battlefield conditions.

The Ortona material was well received by the commercial newsreel companies, and was shown throughout North America. “Unit deserves highest praise,” cabled Sparling.<sup>60</sup> The men of the Film Unit even heard back from their families at

home, who had seen the footage, and at least one cameraman’s parents wrote worriedly about their son’s safety as he filmed the sharp end of war.<sup>61</sup>

From their experiences in Sicily and Italy, the soldiers of the CFPU knew that camera work was very different when trying to stay alive on the battlefield. McDougall recounted that “one of the miracles of the last six months is the fact that we haven’t had a casualty yet. Our lads have been right up with the most forward troops day after day,” and that “everyone has his own collection of near misses.”<sup>62</sup> The CFPU did not remain this lucky: a still photographer was killed and two cameramen were wounded seriously in January 1944.

Attached to different operational units to ensure the fullest coverage, the cameramen were isolated from one another, and thus had a tremendous amount of independence to decide what to capture on film.<sup>63</sup> Although they had freedom to shoot what they wished, there was always a question of self-censorship. No formal policy existed on filming sensitive subjects, such as showing dead Canadian soldiers, but according to oral testimonies and existing footage, very few of the cameramen recorded these grim events. Dead and maimed Canadians would have signalled a defeat or setback and were not fitting content for other soldiers or those on the home front.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, to leave them out reduced the effectiveness of their film as a documentary tool. These two conflicting goals were not easy to negotiate, but in this case sensibilities overruled the desire to show all aspects of the war.

Although self-censorship occurred, the men of the Film Unit drew the line at representing fabricated scenes as factual accounts. Since the CFPU’s main function was to document Canadian activities, “uncompromising truthfulness was decided upon. Re-enactment could easily become the thin edge of the wedge whereby the historical and record value would be completely sacrificed to propaganda, and cheap heroics.”<sup>65</sup> This meant that every day of shooting would not always result in useable footage. If the operational unit to which the cameramen were attached was not involved in any major battles, there might not be much to

**Opposite:** Sergeant George A. Game, CAFU, filming on the outskirts of San Leonardo di Ortona, Italy, 10 December 1944.

see or capture on film. Conversely, sometimes the battles were not conducive to recording footage; the CFPU's cameramen, at one point in Italy, were caught in three days of shelling with the Royal 22e Régiment, but due to these deadly conditions they were unable to record much useful footage. Al Fraser of the No. 1 Film Unit explained the unit's difficulties: critics "seem to think that we can manufacture an Ortona every day of the week, you know this isn't possible, and thank goodness [it] is not possible, if the pix [sic] from here have not

seemed very news-worthy, it is due to the plain fact that there just isn't any news at present."<sup>66</sup> Yet much of this unnewsworthy footage was essential for documenting the daily life of the Canadian Army and was used in the *Newsreels*.

Despite the success of the CFPU, the relationship between it and the NFB continued to worsen, with Grierson making a final attempt to gain control in March 1944. Grierson was anxious to improve the overall quality of the





Film Unit recording an attack by the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division in Normandy, 8 August 1944.

CFPU films and, in his new role as head of the Wartime Information Board, he mobilized his resources and contacts with the media. "Whenever Grierson invades this country there is always some advance notice of his coming," remarked Abel.<sup>67</sup> Grierson never made it to London, but the intent of his visit was mentioned in the May 1944 issue of *Maclean's* magazine. Grierson, it was reported, had planned the trip because of his dissatisfaction with the CFPU footage: "lately the Army photographers have been sending back too few battle pictures, too many studies of Brass Hats."<sup>68</sup> By denigrating the reputation of the CFPU, it appeared that Grierson was hoping to again manoeuvre for control. Sparling was understandably furious, "it makes surprising reading for the rest of the army who are thus informed that CFPU personnel are only 'uniformed photographers' (similar to civilian war correspondents) rather than soldiers assigned to special duties."<sup>69</sup> The good work of the CFPU, which had continued to support the army with training films and publicity material, allowed Abel to appeal to his superiors:

A continuous check over a period of years indicates that we have had a lack of support which some of our very excellent films have not deserved, and it would seem strange to us now that having failed so far to obtain cooperation,

the very organisation on whom we had relied, should be given direction and disposition of our future material.<sup>70</sup>

The ongoing lack of NFB support was enough to thwart Grierson's take-over bid, but control over Canadian film productions was also changing in preparation for the invasion of Northwest Europe. The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) was now responsible for, among other things, the coordination of all publicity services in Europe, including film and photography.<sup>71</sup> It would have been nearly impossible to integrate a civilian body like the NFB into this multi-national military structure, especially with Canada as a junior partner. The Public Relations Office felt that the new arrangement through SHAEF would only improve the distribution of the CFPU's military films, with Abel concluding that "we will probably get into the Canadian theatre much more frequently than we ever did through the cooperation of the Film Board."<sup>72</sup> As well, with SHAEF taking the lead on distribution, Canadian footage would now be shown to a larger international audience. This was the last salvo in

**Opposite:** The Allied bombing of Cap Gris Nez being captured on film, 26 September 1944.

the Grierson's battle for control of overseas film. Soon after these arrangements were made, the CFPU proved itself again as a professional force.

\* \* \* \* \*

In February 1944, John McDougall, with the No. 1 Film Unit in Italy, was called back to England to organize a second field unit for the forthcoming operations in Northwest Europe.<sup>73</sup> By June 1944, there were close to 200 people attached to the CFPU, with most responsible for the transfer, editing, and creation of the films at the London headquarters.<sup>74</sup> Although there had been some good footage from the Italian campaign, the professional reputation of the CFPU was solidified on 6 June 1944, as it was responsible for the first footage and stills of D-Day landings to reach the public anywhere in the Allied world.

The Canadians laid claim to having the first Allied cameraman on French soil. Sergeant Dave

Reynolds of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion jumped into France in the early hours of 6 June, but like so many of the paratroops his drop was scattered and he missed his landing point. More detrimental, his camera was lost, torn from his body during the descent. Although Reynolds was unable to record any footage, he joined up with a unit of British paratroops who were advancing on a group of enemy defended houses. Attesting to his combat training, he led a section into a house, clearing the building, killing three German soldiers.<sup>75</sup> Cameramen were responsible for shooting the war on film and, when necessary, Axis soldiers.

At Juno Beach, Sergeant Bill Grant came ashore safely with Lieutenant Frank Duberville, a still photographer. They filmed the fierce fighting, watchful for any landing crafts that would be able to transport their motion pictures and stills back to London. Grant's film of the landing was the first to arrive in London, beating all other footage by six hours. Of the 700 feet of film,



the censor passed 400 feet, which was sent off immediately to the commercial newsreels. Grant's powerful footage was shot from the landing craft behind the soldiers and captured the men huddled together, waiting to disembark.<sup>76</sup> The ramp of the craft fell away to reveal dark, fortified houses on the French coast. The infantry then advanced into the water, making their way to the beach while under heavy enemy fire. This experience of battle was captured on film and remains some of the most poignant footage of the war.<sup>77</sup>



Images from the film shot by Sergeant Bill Grant on D-Day.

Grant's D-Day film was featured in all the British Empire newsreels. It was also the first footage to reach North America, beating the others by a day. Yet the Canadian D-Day film footage was praised not only because it was received first, but also because of its quality. Even after the American footage was distributed, the CFPU was still considered to have shot the best battle scenes. McDougall described the reception of this material in a SHAEF pre-screening theatre:

The theatre was packed with a lot of senior American officers, the censors[,] and our own representatives. We sat through about three or four thousand feet of rather dull American stuff, having to do mainly with preparations and embarkation. Then came Grant's stuff. And it was good. It was bloody good. All through the theatre you could hear people whispering to each other and muttering as good shot followed good shot. When it was all over there was much excitement and planning on how to get it to Washington the quickest possible way.<sup>78</sup>

A similar reception was received in Canada and the United States. "Invasion Pictures Scoop

by Canucks," and other laudatory newspaper headlines served as great publicity for the CFPU and the Canadian Army.<sup>79</sup>

At the end of June 1944, John McDougall and the No. 2 Film Unit arrived in Normandy. Caen fell on 10 July and the next day McDougall and Grayston began work on *You Can't Kill a City* (1944), a documentary based on the destruction and reconstruction of the city.<sup>80</sup> This was the first Allied scripted motion picture recorded on

a battlefield. As they shot the film, the Germans, who were just on the other side of the river, were firing mortar shells into the city. The film was released later that same year internationally by the British Ministry of Information and was translated into several languages. Even the NFB, which had not been in contact with the CFPU for months, distributed the film in Canada.<sup>81</sup> The relationship improved between the CFPU and the NFB after the invasion of France, and likely because of the unit's celebrated work on D-Day. Grierson even paid a visit to the Film Unit in the summer of 1944, later stating in a CBC radio show that the men of CFPU "are fine soldiers, and up there where any other man will go."<sup>82</sup> He further credited the Film Unit by saying that "no one should think as they see the newsreels of *Canada Carries On* or *World in Action*, or listen to CBC news reports, or read the stories of the Canadian war correspondents, that any of it is done without danger and without great determination."<sup>83</sup> The relationship between the NFB and CFPU had indeed changed.

The Canadian Army continued to push back the German forces in the summer of 1944 and the CFPU was there to capture it on film. But



This famous image of Major David Currie (holding pistol at left) at St. Lambert-sur-Dives was captured by still and motion picture cameras. It has been described by historian C.P. Stacey as the closest “we are ever likely to come to a photograph of a man winning the Victoria Cross.” The cameraman on the left is often cropped out of this photograph.

it was difficult work, and the cameramen were often caught up in the fighting. The 5th Brigade’s 19 July 1944 attack at Fleury-sur-Orne became disorganized when one of the advancing units, Le Regiment de Maisonneuve, failed to coordinate its attack with the supporting barrage.<sup>84</sup> The Film Unit got mixed into this confusion and arrived in Fleury-sur-Orne with the advance troops. During the battle, a number of Germans surrendered to the cameramen. Within minutes, though, an artillery barrage hit their position and all, captors and captives alike, dove for cover. When the intense barrage was finished, the Film Unit was left with three prisoners, the rest had escaped or been killed.<sup>85</sup> Having survived the attack at Fleury-sur-Orne, cameraman Jimmie Campbell was killed the next day, while recording the Canadians in action.<sup>86</sup> “There was no question of him missing a good shot just because the Jerry fire was heavy,” reported a radio broadcast. “In fact, the heavier the fire, greater the action, the nearer he’d crawl with his camera.”<sup>87</sup> The two

reels of film he shot were sent to London, and when developed, they included fierce combat footage.<sup>88</sup>

During the battle for the Scheldt Estuary (September to November 1944), Sergeant Lloyd Millon attached a camera to an assault craft in order to obtain moving images of the infantry as they raced into battle. The cameramen were improving their filming techniques but Millon did not live to see the results, as he was killed during the operation.<sup>89</sup> The strain of war continually interfered with the ability of the combat cameramen to film Canadian actions. During the fierce fighting at the Leopold canal, the Film Unit was unable to provide comprehensive coverage, since again, a camera was damaged, and Sergeant George Cooper was forced to watch helplessly as the Canadians stormed the positions. Yet even if Cooper had a camera, the water-logged attritional fighting would have been difficult to shoot, since mobility was greatly



Sergeant Margaret King at work on an editing machine in the film library of the Canadian Army Film Unit, London, England, 19 December 1944.

three cameramen had been killed and eighteen were wounded. The CFPU had truly filmed the sharp end of war.<sup>93</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The Canadian Army Film Unit was established in 1941 with four men, “one old Newman-Sinclair camera and one Eyemo camera, one table, two chairs and an empty film tin used as an ashtray.”<sup>94</sup> It evolved into a professional unit of close to 200 men and women, who were responsible for the popular *Canadian Army Newsreel*, internationally-distributed theatrical pieces, and poignant footage, including the incredible D-Day landing film. Although there were power struggles with the NFB over the overall film quality and alleged non-professionalism of its staff, the soldier-cameramen’s main responsibility was to create an audio-visual record of the Army’s activities in the Second World War. And in this they succeeded.

Jon Farrell’s 1945 comment on the inclusion of the Film Unit in the histories of the Second World War seemed at the time to be a certainty. But for the cameramen who risked their lives to document the war for Canadians, there are but few and fleeting references in military history or film study historiography to their deeds. This is all the more surprising since the CFPU left such a strong visual and textual record of its experiences. The moving images captured by the men of the CFPU have persisted in the post-war construction of memory through the use and re-use of this footage in countless modern documentaries. Despite this historical legacy, most historians who have explored Canadian film in the Second World War remain focused on the NFB, ignoring or wrongly assigning how wartime footage was shot and processed overseas. Yet perhaps more important than “enliven[ing] the pages of more than one book,” it is hoped that now, sixty years later, proper tribute has been given to the CFPU, and its long and difficult battle to document the Canadian Army in the Second World War.

reduced in the porridge-like conditions. Even when footage was captured, it still had to make it through the war zone to the London offices. After filming on the beach at Westkapelle, Sergeant Ken Dougan stored his equipment and footage in a landing craft overnight. The craft was sunk in the evening by artillery fire and his equipment and footage were lost. Such were the trials of filming the war.

The No. 1 Film Unit was ordered to Northwest Europe in early 1945 after a long and difficult tour of duty in the Italian theatre. Upon its arrival, the two field units were combined to provide better coverage of the Canadian Army.<sup>90</sup> The Film Unit focused primarily on the Canadian divisions that were operating in Northern Holland and Western Germany. The difficult battlefield conditions continued to plague the cameramen, and the censors restricted all images of flooded areas so that the Germans would not know the extent of the military difficulties. Yet still the Film Unit documented these campaigns, including the joyous liberation of civilians, and was even present for the final surrender of the German armies in early May 1945.<sup>91</sup> Attesting to the danger of shooting the war from the front lines, the CFPU had a casualty rate of approximately ten percent.<sup>92</sup> Only four of the original twelve sergeants were left in the Film Unit by war’s end:

## Documentary War Film on the Web

Film documented the Canadian war effort in both the First and Second World Wars. Though many of these films and newsreels are hidden away in archives, they are increasingly being made available to a wider audience through the Internet. Researchers can find these films on three websites in particular: the National Film Board, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and the Library and Archives Canada.

### National Film Board of Canada

The National Film Board site <[www.nfb.ca/ww1](http://www.nfb.ca/ww1)> showcases "Images of a Forgotten War - Films of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War." Here, one can find upwards of 25 short films about the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) ranging in length from only a couple of minutes to ten or twelve minutes. The films are divided into two sections: "Building a Force" and "War Time." Under the "War Time" section are films about the battles for Arras and Vimy Ridge. There are also films relating to the Hundred Days campaign, including the battle of Amiens and the Drocourt-Quéant Line. Other films ranging from artillery to gas warfare, from wartime medicine to the forestry corps, offer a glimpse into the varied wartime experiences of the CEF. In addition to the films, one can find "Pieces of History," a section that provides 1000-word essays by historians to support the film footage, including essays on medicine, the air war, and life in the trenches. There is also

a series of still photographs to further complement the audio-visual record.

### Library and Archives Canada

A silent newsreel, "Canadians Capture Vimy Ridge," can be found on the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) web page "Canada and the First World War" (<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html>). Click on "We Were There" and then "Donald Fraser" to find the video.

The LAC website also contains a virtual exhibition on the disastrous Dieppe Raid of August 1942. "Through a Lens: Dieppe in Photography & Film" ([www.collectionscanada.ca/dieppe/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/dieppe/index-e.html)), developed by Sarah Klotz, presents Canadian and German army newsreels. The German newsreels allow one to observe the raid's grim aftermath. The first newsreel is narrated in German while the second, a propaganda piece aimed for occupied countries, is narrated in Dutch (with English subtitles). While the German newsreels are superior in quality, the Canadian newsreels on this site present some moving images from after the raid, including the presentation of awards to Canadian soldiers and a victory parade through Dieppe in 1944.

### Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

On the CBC website <[www.cbc.ca/news/background/ortona](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/ortona)> one can find numerous newsreels about the battle for Ortona, as well as more general footage of the Sicilian and

the Italian campaigns. There are four newsreels relating to Ortona, including a seven-minute film simply titled "Battle of Ortona." There is also a film of the Seaforth Highlanders honouring their dead and one of General H.D.G. Crerar inspecting his soldiers after the Battle of Ortona. "Sicily Snapshots" includes footage of training drills and Canadian Engineers building roads. The "Battle of San Leonardo" offers a glimpse into the harsh fighting of the Canadians before Ortona. In addition to the newsreels found on the CBC website there are also a number of radio broadcasts from Sicily and Italy by CBC correspondent Matthew Halton.

### Other Websites

Film footage of the Canadians landing at Normandy is also available to the general public. On the Shooters web page <<http://www.jamesoregan.com/Shooters/>>, one can find the famous 17-second D-Day film of the Canadians landing on Juno Beach. It remains one of the most poignant films ever shot of Canadians in battle.

By providing authentic footage from both World Wars, these websites allow all Canadians to glimpse the experience of battle. The films on these websites are an essential tool in telling the story of the Canadian Army.

Brandey Barton is completing her Masters of Arts degree in History at [Wilfrid Laurier University](#)

## Notes

1. Jon Farrell, "History in the Taking: Some Notes About the Canadian Army Film & Photo Unit," *Canadian Geographic Journal* (June 1945), pp.277-287.
2. Two articles were published during wartime, one in *Maclean's* and one in *Canadian Geographic*. See L.S.B. Shapiro, "Camera Commandos," *Maclean's* (15 April 1945), pp.40-43 and Farrell, "History in the Taking." A few newspaper articles appeared in the 1960s, following the NFB series *Canada at War*; for example, see "Canadians Led the World with Invasion Pictures," *Winnipeg Free Press* (31 March 1962); "Canadian Cameramen Led the Way," *Canadian Press* (30 March 1962); "Canada's Camera Commandos Scored World Scoop on D-Day," *Ottawa Journal* (4 April 1962). For more recent articles see Brian O'Regan "Canadian Cameras First on Beaches," *Ottawa Citizen* (2 June 1984) and Randy Boswell, "How 20 Seconds of History Show Canada's Coming of Age," *Ottawa Citizen* (6 June 2003).
3. Laura Brandon, "The Canadian War Museum's Art Collections as a Site of Meaning, Memory, and Identity in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D: Carleton University, 2002); "Genesis of a Painting: Alex Colville's War Drawings" *Canadian Military History* 4.1 (Spring 1995), pp.100-104; and "D-Day and After in Canadian Art," *Canadian Military History* 3.1 (Spring 1994), pp.26-32. For Stacey's involvement in the writing of the official histories, see C.P. Stacey, *A Date With History: Memoirs of a Canadian Historian* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1983); "The Life and Hard Times of an Official Historian," *Canadian Historical Review* LI, 1 (March 1970); "The Historical Program of the Canadian Army Overseas," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVI, 3 (September 1945), pp.229-238; Tim Cook, "Clio's Soldiers: Charles Stacey and the Army Historical Officers in the Second World War," *Canadian Historical Review* 83.1 (March 2002), pp.29-57.
4. Forsyth Hardy, *John Grierson: A Documentary Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979); Gary Evans, *John Grierson and the National Film Board: The Politics of Wartime Propaganda*; D.B. Jones, "Assessing the National Film Board, Crediting Grierson," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, Television* 9, 3 (1989), pp.301-8; D.B. Jones, *Movies and Memoranda: An Interpretive History of the National Film Board of Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute and Deneau, 1981); Joyce Nelson, *The Colonized Eye: Rethinking the Grierson Legend* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1988); Peter Morris, "Backwards to the Future: John Grierson's Film Policy for Canada," *Flashback: People and Institutions in Canadian Film History - Canadian Film Studies* 2, Gene Walz (ed.), (Montreal: Mediatexte Publications, 1986), pp.17-35; "Re-thinking Grierson: The Ideology of John Grierson," *Dialogue: Canadian and Quebec Cinema - Canadian Film Studies* 3, Pierre Veronneau, Michael Dorland, and Seth Feldman (eds.), (Montreal: Mediatexte Publications and La Cinematheque Quebecoise, 1987) 21-56; and Nicholas Pronay, "John Grierson and Documentary - 60 Years On," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9.3 (1989). The most recent study of Grierson, Jack C. Ellis, *John Grierson: Life, Contributions, Influence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), continues the trend of downplaying the role of the CAFU.
5. A memorandum was drafted in the early days of the Second World War recommending the establishment of a film and photographic unit for the Canadian Army by Frank Badgely, formerly of the Canadian War Records Office and later of the then Canadian Motion Picture Bureau. Library and Archives of Canada [LAC], Records of Boards, Offices, and Commissions, Wartime Information Board, RG 36-31, volume 16, file 9-A6, Memorandum from Frank Badgely to W.S. Thompson, 3 January 1940.
6. LAC, Records of the Department of National Defence [RG 24], v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, Copy of Cable Received from Canadian Government Film Officer to Canadian Exhibitions and Publicity, 18 January 1940; Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH], Historical Report No. 2, 7 January 1941.
7. *Ibid.*
8. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Memorandum from Major W.G. Abel to Senior Officer, Canadian Army Film Unit, n.d.
9. LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, interview with Michael Spencer by Dan Conlin, 21 September 1986, 1hr, no. A4 9909-0029(1) and LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, Reunion of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, 19-21 September 1986, 2 hrs 30 mins, nos. A4 9909-0020(1), A4 9909-0021(1) and A4 9909-0022(1).
10. DHH, Historical Report No. 2, 7 January 1941; for McNaughton's nationalist beliefs, see J.L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 1995).
11. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, McDougall to Abel, 21 October 1941; *Ibid.*, Canadian Army Film Unit, General Outline of Policy, n.d; LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17/3, Sparling to Editor, *Maple Leaf*, 6 October 1945.
12. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Administrative order No.152, 13 October 1941.
13. *Ibid.*, Memorandum from Major W.G. Abel to Senior Officer, Canadian Army Film Unit, n.d.
14. LAC, interview with Michael Spencer by Dan Conlin, 21 September 1986.
15. LAC, interview with Michael Spencer by Dan Conlin, 21 September 1986.
16. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Abel to B.G.S., 28 February 1942.
17. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17, McDougall to Burn, 11 May 1943.
18. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, McDougall to Grierson, 21 November 1941.
19. LAC, RG 24, v. 12331, File 4/Film/3/2, Letter from Lieutenant-General K. Stuart, 18 May 1944.
20. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/4/2, Response to a questionnaire by the Canadian Army Film Unit, n.d. [ca. 1944]; *Ibid.*, Macklin to Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 13 January 1945.
21. *Ibid.*, Macklin to Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 13 January 1945; *Ibid.*, *Smoke of Battle* production sheet, n.d. [ca. 1944].
22. Farrell, "History in the Taking"
23. LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Ronson Flame Thrower*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1942), 18 mins, no. V1 8502-0086.
24. It is difficult to verify the number of films produced by the CAFU, as a complete list of its films no longer exists. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17/3, Sparling to

- Editor, *Maple Leaf*, 6 October 1945.
25. LAC, National Film Board of Canada fonds, *Wood for War*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1941), 10 mins 20 secs, no. V1 9109-0001.
  26. LAC, National Film Board of Canada fonds, *Motorcycle Training*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1942/1943), 7 mins 37 secs, no. V1 9109-0001.
  27. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, Report on Canadian Army Film Unit Activities, [ca. October 1942].
  28. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, 4/Film/1, Letter from Ross McLean, Assistant Film Commissioner, NFB to Major W.G. Abel, n.d.
  29. *Ibid.*, Abel to Ross McLean, Assistant Film Commissioner, NFB, 27 May 1942.
  30. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, McDougall to Public Relations Office, 20 August 1942.
  31. *Ibid.*, Abel to Brigadier General Staff, 21 August 1942.
  32. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Grierson to Clark, Director of Public Relations, Department of National Defence, 25 September 1942.
  33. Analysis of the available footage at the LAC and the Imperial War Museum supports this statement. See unedited footage at the Imperial War Museum, *The Dieppe Raid, Return From The Road, The Dieppe Raid*, (Army Film Unit, 1942), no. MGH 36; [*Unedited Dieppe footage*], (Army Film Unit, 1942), no. AYY 248-01; and LAC, White collection, *Combined Operations, Dieppe*, (Gaumont-British News, 1942), no. V1 9910-0001.
  34. After the Dieppe raid, the Film Unit produced a number of stories related to the invasion for their *Newsreel*: LAC, National Film Board of Canada fonds, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 1*, (Story 6) - *Dieppe Heroes are Honoured*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1942), no. V1 8607-0030; LAC, A.G.L. McNaughton collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 15* (Story 2) - *The King Presents Colours to Dieppe Veterans*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1942), no. V1 8607-0031; LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 20* (Story 3) - *Farewell and Hail!* (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1943), no. V1 8607-0031; LAC, A.G.L. McNaughton collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 21* (Story 5) - *Canadians Awarded Croix de Guerre*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1943), no. V1 8607-0031; LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 42* (Story 6) - *Dieppe* (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1944), no. V1 8607-0033; LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 85* (Story 5) - *Dieppe Anniversary*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1945), no. V1 8607-0037. *Newsreel No. 42* and *No. 85* made use of graphic German footage of dead, injured, and captured Allied soldiers. If there had been an attempt to suppress these types of images, they would certainly not have been included in these *Newsreels*.
  35. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Grierson to Clark, 25 September 1942; *Ibid.*, Memorandum from Joseph W.G. Clark, Director of Public Relations, to the Minister of Department of National Defence, 25 September 1942.
  36. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, McDougall to Abel, 19 December 1941.
  37. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/4/2, Sparling to DDP, CMHQ, 4 September 1944.
  38. This view is shared by past members of the CFP. See LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, interview with Ken Ewart by Dan Conlin, 20 September 1986, 1hr 30 mins, no. A4 9909-0028(1).
  39. LAC, National Film Board of Canada fonds, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 1*, (Story 6) - *Dieppe Heroes are Honoured*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1942), no. V1 8607-0030.
  40. The *Canadian Army Newsreel* in its entirety was probably not shown to civilians but individual stories may have been distributed.
  41. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, McDougall to Herbert Sallans, Department of Public Relations, 10 February 1943.
  42. LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, interview with Lew Weekes by Dan Conlin, 25 September 1986, 2hrs, 20 mins, nos. A4 9909-0030(1) and A4 9909-0031(1).
  43. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Proposed War Establishment (Appendix A) for the Army Film Unit, 26 January 1943.
  44. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Abel to B.G.S., 28 February 1942.
  45. Procedure based on LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/11/2, War diary for month of May 1944.
  46. LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, interview with George Game by Dan Conlin, 19 September 1986, 2hrs 10 mins, nos. A4 9909-0025(1) and A4 9909-0026(1).
  47. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17/3, Sparling to Editor, *Maple Leaf*, 6 October 1945.
  48. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/11, Fraser to McDougall, 8 July 1943.
  49. LAC, RG 24, v. 12230, File 4/Film/2, Abel to Public Relations Service, First Canadian Army, 26 November 1942.
  50. LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 13 - Sicily*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1943) and LAC, A.G.L. McNaughton collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 14* (Story 2) - *Sicily*, (Canadian Army Film Unit, 1943), no. V1 8607-0031.
  51. LAC, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 14* (Story 2) - *Sicily*.
  52. LAC, RG 24, v. 12329, File 4/Film/1, Gibson to C.G.S., 2 June 1943.
  53. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, Sparling to Commanding Officer, CAFU, 23 September 1943.
  54. When Abel and Clark visited the film and photographic units in Italy they decided to amalgamate the two units. For more information, see LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/13, McDougall to Sparling, 22 December 1943.
  55. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War: The Canadians in Italy 1943-1945*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1957), pp.325-328.
  56. W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.135.
  57. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/1/2, Notes on the History of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, n.d. [ca. post 1945].
  58. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17/3, CanMilitary to Defensor, 21 September 1945.
  59. The preceding quotations are from the narration of the film as transcribed by the author. LAC, J.P. Rigby collection, *Canadian Army Newsreel No. 24*, (Story 2) - *Battle of Ortona*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1943), V1 8607-0032.
  60. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/11, Sparling to Fraser, 8 February 1944.
  61. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17, Fraser to Sparling, 22 February 1944.
  62. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/13, McDougall to Sparling, 22 December 1943.

63. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/11, Fraser to McDougall, 14 August 1943 and LAC, Conlin fonds, interview with George Game by Dan Conlin, 19 September 1986.
64. Using the audio-visual record alone it is difficult to confirm if the Canadian cameramen filmed dead and wounded soldiers; the original unedited footage, which may have included such scenes, is no longer available. It is unknown if this is due to the self-censorship of cameramen, film editors and producers, or by formal government censors in order to eliminate (or not record) scenes that would have been detrimental to morale. LAC, interview with Lew Weekes by Dan Conlin, 25 September 1986.
65. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, McDougall to Abel, 21 October 1941; *Ibid.*, Canadian Army Film Unit, General Outline of Policy, n.d. [ca. 1941].
66. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/11, Fraser to McDougall, 31 March 1944.
67. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2/2, Abel to J.W.G. Clark, Public Relations Armed Forces, 10 March 1944.
68. "Backstage at Ottawa," *Maclean's* (15 May 1944).
69. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2/2, Memo, Attack on CFPU by National Film Board from Gordon Sparling to DDP, CMHQ, 15 June 1944.
70. *Ibid.*
71. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/1/2, Sparling to DDP, 20 May 1944.
72. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2/2, Abel to J.W.G. Clark, Public Relations Armed Forces, 10 March 1944.
73. The new field unit was named the No. 2 Film Unit.
74. LAC, RG 24, v. 12333, File 4/Film/17/3, Sparling to Editor, *Maple Leaf*, 6 October 1945.
75. Shapiro, p.40.
76. It is uncertain whether Grant filmed the footage himself or if the camera was attached to the landing craft and activated by one of the soldiers aboard the boat. Bud Roos stated in his oral testimony (see LAC, Dan Conlin fonds, interview with Charles E. (Bud) Roos by Dan Conlin, 22 September 1986, 1hr 30 mins, nos. A4 9909-0023(2) and A4 9909-0024(1).) that Grant's camera was affixed to the landing craft. However, Ted Barris believes that Grant shot the footage himself and provides other anecdotal evidence supporting this statement in *Juno: Canadians at D-Day, June 6, 1944* (Toronto: T. Allen Publishers, 2004) 150-154.
77. Grant's raw footage is no longer available, but a variety of edited films using the footage can be seen: *Crusade for Liberation*, *Left of the Line*, *Green Fields Beyond*, the Canadian Paramount News film, *Battle in France*, and the News Parade film, *Invasion of Fortress Europe*. See LAC, Canadian Army Newsreel No. 33 (Story 1) – *Crusade for Liberation*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1944); LAC, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences collection, *Left of the Line*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1944), no. V1 7901-0013; LAC, Department of National Defence fonds, *Green Fields Beyond*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1945), no. V1 8211-0030; LAC, Norman Gunn collection, *Battle in France*, (Canadian Paramount News, 1944), no. V1 8309-0106; and LAC, Mr. MacDonald fonds, *Invasion of Fortress Europe*, (Castle Films, 1944), no. V1 8708-0040.
78. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/2, Sparling to DDP, CMHQ, 15 June 1944.
79. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/10/2, Press Index No 4, 27 June 1944.
80. LAC, Ken Woodbridge collection, *You Can't Kill a City*, (Canadian Film and Photo Unit, 1944), 11 mins 12 secs, no. V1 8501-0084.
81. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/10/3, Note by [?], n.d. and File 4/Film/11/2, Spencer to Sparling, 20 December 1944.
82. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/10/2, Talk on a Visit to Normandy and Brittany: CBC Sunday, 20 August 1944, 8:45 pm by John Grierson, 20 August 1944.
83. *Ibid.*
84. Colonel C.P. Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War: The Victory Campaign, the Operations in North-West Europe, 1944-1945* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1960) 173.
85. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/1/2, Notes on the History of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, n.d. [post 1945].
86. LAC, RG 24, v. 12332, File 4/Film/10/2, Press Index No. 10, 8 August 1944.
87. *Ibid.*, Script for *Eyes Front*, 10 August 1944.
88. The appraisal of the footage was included in the script for *Eyes Front*. However, this footage, if still available, has not been identified. *Ibid.*, Script for *Eyes Front*, 10 August 1944.
89. Shapiro, p.42.
90. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/1/2, Notes on the History of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, n.d. [post 1945].
91. J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp.304-306.
92. This figure represents the entire unit, many of whom never left London. For those in the field, the chance of being wounded or killed would have been much higher.
93. A reorganized field Film Unit, No. 4, worked in Germany until March 1946 when it was finally disbanded. Another new field Film Unit was created to work with the 6th Division in the Pacific, under the command of Colin McDougall. This Film Unit was sent to the Pacific, but only arrived after the Japanese surrender. Although the Department of National Defence's suggested in February 1946 that the permanent Canadian Army should establish a film and photo unit, massive postwar cutbacks scuttled its formation. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/4/3, Sparling to Department of National Defence, 4 February 1946.
94. LAC, RG 24, v. 12330, File 4/Film/1/2, Notes on the History of the Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit, n.d. [post 1945].

Sarah Klotz is a project manager at the Library and Archives of Canada. She recently received her masters from the University of Ottawa. Her thesis explored the filming of the Canadian Army during the Second World War.