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Return to Dieppe: September 1944

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Return to Dieppe

September 1944

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Dieppe holds a special place in the memory of Canadians. Operation "Jubilee," the August 1942 raid on Dieppe was one of the truly tragic moments in Canada's history. In a new book on the battle Denis and Shelagh Whitaker have recreated the atmosphere of the times and provided Canadians with the best study of the background of the raid since C.P. Stacey's version in *Six Years of War. Dieppe: Tragedy to Triumph*, published in August 1992 on the 50th anniversary of the raid, is strongly recommended.

The Canadians returned to Dieppe in September 1944 as liberators. Montgomery had assigned the capture of Dieppe to the Second Canadian Infantry Division in his Directive of August 20 when it was assumed that the Germans would defend the port. Operation "Fusilade," which included a preliminary attack by Bomber Command, was timed for September 1st. Fortunately, 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (14th Hussars) had advanced from Rouen with great speed and were able to report that the enemy had

evacuated the city the previous day. The Bomber Command attack was called off while its planes were in the air just 20 minutes away from their target.

As the two lead motorcyclists entered the town the population of Dieppe filled the streets. The local newspaper, *La Vigie Nouvelle* described the reception of the Canadians:

The crowd ran forward to meet them and it was so dense that both men could advance no further. Women threw themselves on them and kissed them. The citizens then gathered around the Monument to Victory where both soldiers had gone to deposit the flowers they had been given. The ceremonies took place and the crowd sang "La Marseillaise," "God Save the King" and "Tipperary."

Similar scenes were to be reported throughout the day and on September 3rd the whole population of the city turned out to watch Second Division parade through the town. No one who was there could forget the emotions of that day, and no one doubted that liberation was more than just a word.

OVERLEAF:-

Right: The "small beach" at Puy where the Royal Regiment of Canada landed is clearly visible in the air photo as are the cliffs on either side of it. The entrance to Dieppe Harbour is at the top of the photo.
(LCMSDS)

Left: This view of "Blue Beach" at Puy is looking south towards the outer arm of the Dieppe Harbour entrance.

(NAC PA 39805)







Above: Looking north from the top of the cliffs showing the commanding view possessed by the defenders. The ruins of the Casino are in the foreground. (NAC PA 136022)

Right: The main beach at Dieppe assaulted by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, Essex Scottish, Calgary Regiment (Tank) and "A" Commando, Royal Marines. The dominating cliffs at the south end of the beach are evident. The ruins of the Casino close to the beach are clearly visible as is the sea wall. The distance from the harbour entrance to the cliffs is approximately 1600 yards. (LCMSDS)

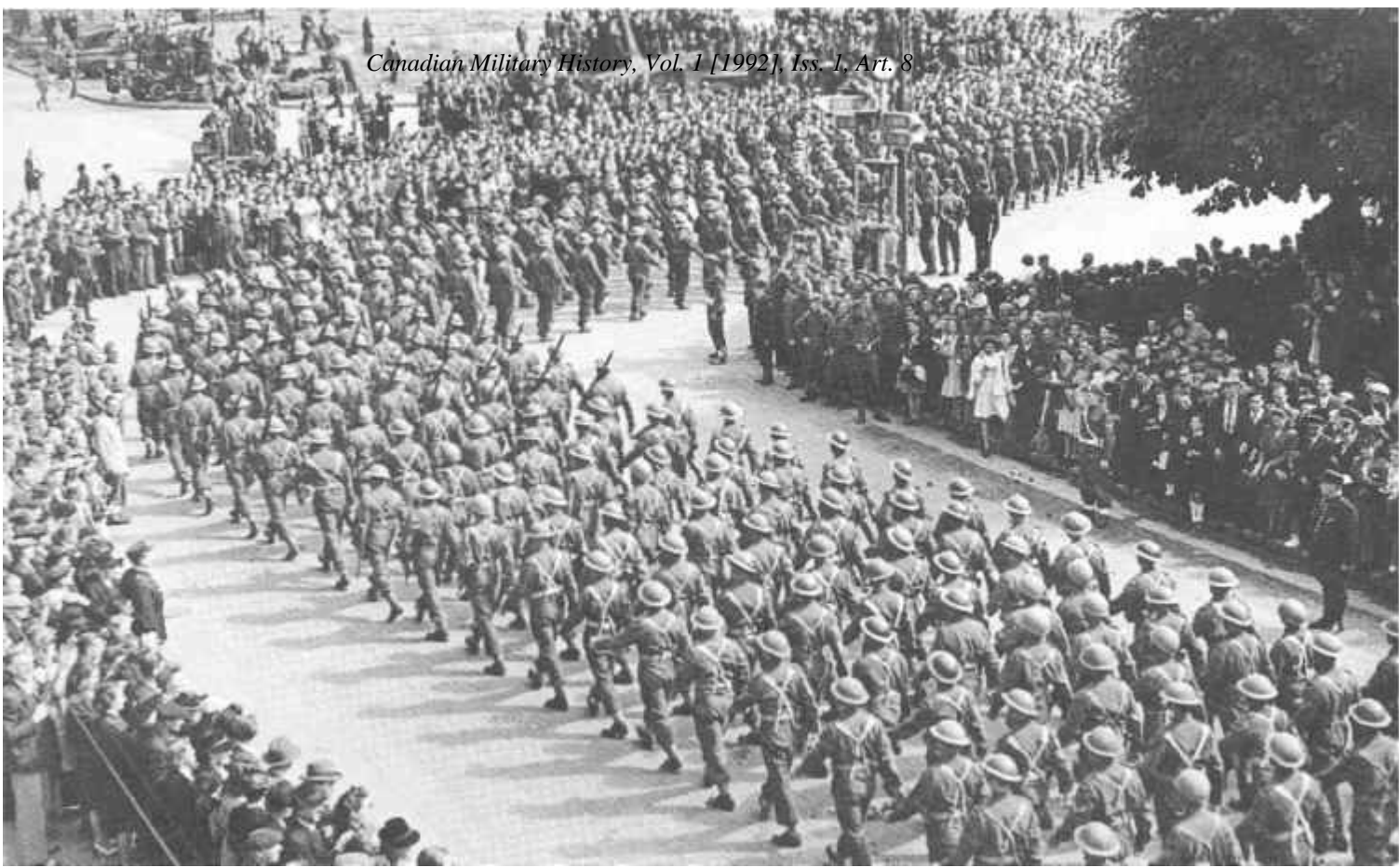


Right: Dieppe is at the bottom, of the photograph and Pourville at the mouth of the River Scie at the top. Historians have yet to fully explore the implications of the relatively successful landings here by the South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Queens' Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. (LCMSDS)

Below: Green Beach at Pourville from the north side. (NAC PA 137299)







*Above: Men of Second Canadian Infantry Division parading through Dieppe, 3 September 1944.
(NAC PA 39685)*

*Below: The parade approaches the reviewing stand. Lient.-General H.D.G. "Harry" Crerar takes the salute.
(NACPA 116270)*

