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## ‘In Case the Raid Is Unsuccessful ...’ Selling Dieppe to Canadians



On 19 August 1942, two brigades of the Canadian Second Division supported by British commandos carried out the disastrous raid on the French port of Dieppe. Designated Jubilee, the operation, planned under the authority of Mountbatten’s British Combined Operations Headquarters (COHQ), envisioned the troops capturing the port, taking prisoners, and destroying war materiel. British commando units silenced enemy batteries on the extreme flanks of the raiding force, but the Canadians suffered disaster. At Puys, the Royal Regiment of Canada was slaughtered in the narrow space between the cliff and the sea. On the beach in front of Dieppe, the main force landed in the face of heavy fire, and only small groups of infantry managed to enter Dieppe, achieving little. The few tanks that made it off the shingle beach could not cross enemy barricades into town. At Pourville, the South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Winnipeg Camerons penetrated inland against initially light opposition but could not reach their objectives and lost heavily in the withdrawal. Under withering fire, only a few re-embarked, and many were left to three years of captivity. The cost was immense: of the 5000 Canadian troops involved, 3367 became casualties. Dieppe was a disaster.

Ever since the Dieppe raid there has been vigorous debate about its purpose, planning and execution, and the value of the ‘lessons learned.’ The most recent example is the debate over Brian Villa’s contention that Lord Louis Mountbatten launched the raid without official approval.<sup>1</sup> The

1 Villa in *Unauthorized Action* makes a complex and well-researched argument that Mountbatten never obtained authorization from the Chiefs of Staff and on his own initiative revived the raid as Jubilee after the original Operation Rutter was cancelled in July 1942 because of weather. Mountbatten was concerned with furthering his own career and reputation by launching a successful raid. Villa’s thesis did not convince everyone. Peter Henshaw makes the best counter-arguments, contending that the Canadian Army, especially Gen. Andrew L. McNaughton, was also vital to the resurrection of the raid. McNaughton saw the command structure in Jubilee giving the Canadian Army full military control of the raid under Mountbatten as a victory in his struggle with Ottawa and the British Home forces for more autonomy for the

disagreements over that interpretation have overshadowed his revelation that Lord Mountbatten, who coordinated the raid, conspired to influence the writing of the history of Dieppe. He convinced Churchill to replace a critical account in a draft of *The Hinge of Fate* with a more positive interpretation. Similarly, Mountbatten forced C.P. Stacey, the Canadian official historian and arguably the most important writer in Dieppe historiography, to modify the account of Dieppe he wrote shortly after the raid. Thereafter, Stacey relied heavily on Mountbatten's right-hand man, John Hughes-Hallet, in interpreting the event.<sup>2</sup>

Despite continuing interest in Dieppe, historians have largely neglected the story of how English-speaking Canadians were told of the raid in 1942, apart from occasional mentions of its propaganda value or of slights to Canadian nationalism. For example, in his official history of the Canadian Army, Stacey noted the American emphasis on the participation of fifty US Rangers in the raid, the lack of recognition given to Canada in the initial press coverage, the negative Canadian coverage after the release of the casualty figures, and the harm that was done to the reputation of Canadian Gen. Andrew L. McNaughton.<sup>3</sup> The few authors who briefly surveyed the press coverage found a common pattern of the initial portrayal of the raid as a success, growing concern as the casualty numbers were gradually released, and then shock as the full number was revealed a month later.<sup>4</sup> Several claim that the publicity was deliberately deceptive and misleading but cite little evidence to demonstrate this fact.<sup>5</sup>

Canadian army. Furthermore, while the Chiefs of Staff never specifically approved the raid, Henshaw argues that they had already given Mountbatten permission to remount cancelled raids on his own authority. A debate between the authors in *Canadian Historical Review* did not resolve the issue, with Henshaw arguing that procedures for reviving cancelled raids were unclear and Villa insisting on the necessity of Chiefs of Staff approval. Barring the discovery of new information, the debate may never be totally resolved because both historians admit that Operation Jubilee never received specific approval. See Brian Villa, *Unauthorized Action: Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989); Peter Henshaw, 'The Dieppe Raid: A Product of Misplaced Canadian Nationalism?' *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (1996): 250–66; Brian Villa and Peter Henshaw, 'The Dieppe Raid Debate,' *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (1998): 304–15.

2 Villa, *Unauthorized Action*, 20–41.

3 C.P. Stacey, *History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War: Six Years of War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), 393–6.

4 Jacques Mordal, *Dieppe: The Dawn of Decision* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1962), 256–8; Ronald Atkin, *Dieppe 1942* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 254–7.

5 Phillip Knightley claims that the British Ministry of Information deliberately deceived the public about Dieppe, but does not specify how. His citation of the *Combined Report* sheds little light on this point. Gillis Purcell, head of the wartime CP, cites correspondent Ross Munro, who wrote that military authorities tried to soften Dieppe through

A chapter in Béatrice Richard's *La Mémoire de Dieppe: Radioscopie d'un mythe* investigates the French-language reporting on Dieppe and hints at official manipulation of information but does not examine military and government records.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the Canadian and British records reveal that COHQ and other allied authorities planned in advance to portray any failure as success and to manipulate the press to further this claim. Their communications strategy played a key role in shaping English-language press coverage of the disaster.

Propaganda and censorship are an important element in modern warfare. During the First World War, the harshness of Canada's censorship regime under Chief Censor Col. Ernest J. Chambers far surpassed that of her allies, all of whom censored the press and controlled information, in 'its attempts to coddle citizens and repress dissent.'<sup>7</sup> In the Second World War, the allied powers recognized the need to manage information and created such organizations as the British Ministry of Information (MoI), the American Office of War Information, the Canadian Bureau of Public Information, and later, the Wartime Information Board to control the release of government information and to maintain national morale.<sup>8</sup> Through 'voluntary' censorship, newspaper editors in the United States, Canada, and Britain followed an official list of information prohibited from publication and consulted censors about uncertain items. Most regulations were designed to prevent the enemy from gaining useful information, although in Canada material that might hinder recruiting or 'cause disaffection from his Majesty's forces' was also prohibited, although not to restrict 'criticism in good faith.'<sup>9</sup> In addition, at the front, the military services often censored war correspondents' stories before release to the newspapers. Thus, the military was the chief source of news about operations upon which even the propaganda services had to rely.

censorship of news, especially the casualty figures. See Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2000), 345; Gillis Purcell, 'Wartime Press Censorship in Canada' (master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1946), 131.

6 Béatrice Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe: Radioscopie d'un mythe* (Montreal: VLB Éditeur, 2002), 49.

7 Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), xiv.

8 For information on the propaganda organization in Britain, see Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979). For the United States, Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978). For Canada, William R. Young, 'Making the Truth Graphic' (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1978).

9 Purcell, 'Warime Press Censorship,' 14, 18-19.

Realizing the importance of information control, three days before the Dieppe raid, COHQ hosted a meeting of representatives of all organizations involved in the raid or in related publicity. A record of this meeting demonstrates how military authorities sought to control the public portrayal of Dieppe even before the raid. Present at the meeting were representatives of four British agencies, the MoI, 'the Admiralty, Political Warfare Executive, the War Office, the Air Ministry; as well as First Canadian Army and Headquarters [sic] and European Theatre of Operations United States Army.'<sup>10</sup> The communiqués, press arrangements, and general publicity strategy were discussed at the meeting. The classified *Combined Report*, a summary of all aspects of the Dieppe raid issued in September 1942, contains a sanitized version of the public relations plan produced by the meeting. Its public relations section contained three major emphases – the propaganda battle with the Germans concerning the communiqués, press difficulties, and confusion over the size of the Canadian contribution – that dealt mainly with the problems encountered immediately after the raid. This version does not suggest that any thought was given to public relations after the release of the initial communiqués.<sup>11</sup>

A memorandum for the Jubilee Communiqué Meeting, in the files of First Canadian Army, includes many of the planning considerations not listed in the *Combined Report*.<sup>12</sup> Although the title seems to imply an agenda for the meeting, the memorandum presents these policies as already decided. It argues that the communiqués should emphasize that the raid was not an invasion and stress the 'objectives gained,' Canadian and American participation, and the acquisition of 'valuable military information.' The fact that COHQ planned to appeal to 'lessons learned' before any were actually learned did not appear in the *Combined Report*. An even more potentially embarrassing deletion was an outline of policy if the raid failed.

5 IN CASE THE RAID IS UNSUCCESSFUL: ...

- a. The same basic principles must hold.
  1. We cannot call such a large-scale operation a 'reconnaissance raid.'
  2. We cannot avoid stating the general composition of the force, since the enemy will know it and make capital of our losses and of any failure of the first effort of Canadian and U.S. troops.

<sup>10</sup> *Combined Report*, 196, 194, 75/502, C.B. 04244 (hereafter cited as *Combined Report*), Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> The anonymous and undated memorandum's title and its inclusion of draft communiqués as appendices, as well as its location among items sent by COHQ to First Army, demonstrate its COHQ origins.

- b. Therefore, in the event of much failure, the communiqué must then stress the success of the operation as an essential test in the employment of substantial forces and heavy equipment.
- c. We then lay extremely heavy stress on stories of personal heroism – through interviews, broadcasts, etcetera – in order to focus public attention on BRAVERY rather than OBJECTIVES NOT ATTAINED.<sup>13</sup> [emphasis in original]

This paragraph makes the startling revelation that any failure was to be portrayed as success, and the key was to emphasize that the raid was an 'essential test,' which would provide valuable 'lessons learned' for future operations. The communiqués issued following the raid virtually quoted the memorandum: 'Vital experience has been gained in the employment of substantial numbers of troops in an assault, and in the transport and use of heavy equipment.' Additionally, if the raid failed, bravery was to be emphasized to distract public attention from defeat. While courage was mentioned only briefly in the communiqués, it became a major feature in the press coverage of Dieppe. This was not a unique approach to publicity in defeat; early in the Pacific War, American reports portrayed defeats in a 'hopeful and heroic cast.'<sup>14</sup> The British reporting on Dunkirk was similar. These three emphases would set the pattern for the public relations campaign.

By COHQ's own standards, the raid was a failure, since the measure of success was capturing tactical objectives, most of which remained in German hands. Thus, most of the elements of this 'failure plan' went into effect. The first point of the plan – avoiding calling the operation a 'reconnaissance raid' – at first glance might seem to militate against the raid being considered a failure, since the communiqués described Dieppe as a 'reconnaissance in force.' Yet this term, suggested by Churchill on 20 August, addressed COHQ's concern about potential public skepticism over deploying large forces in a raid with limited objectives. Dieppe was not a 'reconnaissance raid'; it was a 'reconnaissance in force' requiring strength.<sup>15</sup>

The 19 August raid was the biggest Canadian news story of the war to that date. For over a month, the news of Canadian soldiers landing in a large raid was almost daily front-page news. In her study of the French-

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum for Jubilee Communiqué Meeting, Operation Jubilee papers, file 59-1-0 INT. 215 C1 (D360), vol. 10708, RG 24, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter cited as LAC).

<sup>14</sup> *Combined Report*, 199; Richard W. Steele, 'News of the Good War: World War II News Management,' *Journalism Quarterly* 62 (Winter 1985): 712.

<sup>15</sup> Mordal, *Dieppe*, 256.

Canadian press coverage of Dieppe, Richard describes it as going through three phases: strategic story, heroic phase, and revelation.<sup>16</sup> These phases, which can also be discerned in the English-language press, were largely influenced in both content and tone by the dominant sources of information on which the newspapers relied, and they were shaped by COHQ's 'failure plan.'

In its planning, the COHQ recognized the importance of war correspondents accompanying the force to counter enemy propaganda and to 'ensure an unbiased report for the public.' Combined Operations Headquarters selected twenty-one correspondents and photographers to cover the raid, but allowed them to cable their stories only after a debriefing at 1045 on 20 August and after censorship. Thus, the first reports were delayed until 1805 on 20 August. Combined Operations Headquarters took steps to avoid future delays, but believed that little harm resulted to public relations.<sup>17</sup>

The lack of correspondents' stories forced the newspapers to rely on four official communiqués, each progressively longer and more detailed, beginning at 0600 on 19 August. They portrayed Dieppe in the best possible light. The first merely revealed that a raid, not an invasion, was underway. The second, issued at 1258, gave a bare outline of the raid in progress, emphasizing the success of the British commandos on the flanks and mentioning the nationalities of the troops. The third, put out at 2010, revealed the use of tanks, described friendly and enemy air losses, and, while admitting that 'casualties were heavy on both sides,' claimed that 'vital experience' was gained. The final communiqué, released at 2250 on 20 August, was much more detailed and confident of success. Emphasizing the objectives allegedly achieved, it explained that the encounter between the landing force and the German coastal convoy 'only threw out the time schedule of this particular party by twenty minutes.' While admitting that casualties were heavy, 'they were not unduly so in view of the operation.'<sup>18</sup> As planned, the communiqués gave the distinct impression of a hard-fought but successful battle.

A statement issued by Canada's Minister of National Defence, Col. James L. Ralston, did not differ much from the COHQ communiqués. It pictured Canadians 'reaching objectives' and destroying 'many of the enemy defence works before withdrawing.' Although not adding much to public knowledge of Dieppe, it emphasized the courage of Canadian troops, as was the pattern suggested by COHQ. Yet Ralston's statement

<sup>16</sup> Richard, *Dieppe*, 49.

<sup>17</sup> *Combined Report*, 194.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 199–200.

was more candid about costs than the COHQ's communiqués: 'Casualties were severe.' For domestic purposes, he exhorted the public to work hard at home to support those who had fought at Dieppe.<sup>19</sup>

Accepting the information in official Allied communiqués led most Canadian newspapers to portray the Dieppe raid as a success. Headlines proclaimed Canada's leading role in the great raid. 'Canadians Spearhead Battle at Dieppe ... Help Smash Nazi Opposition,' declared the *Toronto Star*. 'Canadians Lead Commando Raid on France – Objectives Gained after Day Long Battle,' summarized the headlines of the *Victoria Daily Times*. 'Success of Operation Proves Jolt for Nazis,' claimed the *Montreal Star*. The *Regina Leader-Post* announced that the 'Allied Victory Was Decisive.'<sup>20</sup> These were typical of the flavour of front-page headlines and the tenor of the stories as well. The editorials also reflected the optimistic tone of the headlines, expressing great pride in the achievements of Canadian troops in attaining most of the raid's objectives as reported by the communiqués.<sup>21</sup> Editorial cartoons also demonstrated the initial belief in Dieppe's success, a favourite theme being gigantic Canadian soldiers threatening tiny Nazis. The *Vancouver Province* had Hitler shivering in bed while a huge spectral Canadian soldier loomed out of the darkness. The *Toronto Star* featured a towering Canadian with a Tommy gun leaping across the Channel to squash an unsuspecting occupier. The *Montreal Star* showed a tiny Hitler covered in European blood sheepishly looking behind him as a giant finger labelled 'Dieppe raid' threatens to crush him.<sup>22</sup> These cartoons reflected the view that the raid was a mighty blow against Germany. The *Globe and Mail*, however, was more cautious. While encouraged by the communiqués' 'authoritative statements that it achieved its chief objectives,' it observed that the 'full story' of Dieppe was 'yet to be disclosed.'<sup>23</sup>

The lack of detail in the official account led to speculation, mainly about the composition of the raiding force, and the number of casualties, thus causing some inaccurate reporting. Some papers that went to press

19 *Toronto Star*, 20 August 1942, 3.

20 *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 Aug. 1942, 1; *Victoria Daily Times*, 19 Aug. 1942, 1; *Montreal Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 1; *Regina Leader-Post*, 20 Aug. 1942, 1.

21 *Victoria Times*, 19 Aug. 1942, 11; *Globe and Mail*, 20 Aug. 1942, 6; *Hamilton Spectator*, 20 Aug. 1942; *Montreal Gazette*, 20 Aug. 1942, 8; *Toronto Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 6; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 20 Aug. 1942, 13; *Calgary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1942, 4; *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 Aug. 1942, 8.

22 *Vancouver Daily Province*, 20 Aug. 1942, 4; *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 6; *Montreal Daily Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 10; *Globe and Mail*, 20 Aug. 1942, 6; *Regina Leader-Post*, 19 Aug. 1942, 1.

23 *Globe and Mail*, 20 Aug. 1942, 6.

before the release of the third COHQ communiqué announcing the withdrawal, pondered the possibility that Dieppe was an invasion. Others speculated on the details of the fighting. Lacking eyewitness accounts, the *Hamilton Spectator* imagined 'leading raiders with knives and clubs' leaping on 'German sentries.'<sup>24</sup> Given the slow release of official casualty lists, the press gleaned some information, mainly casualty numbers, from German and Vichy sources. The CP cited German communiqués, which claimed 1500 Allied prisoners. Vichy sources reported 3500 'mostly Canadian' troops killed in the landings. Labelling these reports as 'claims,' the press, in its initial evaluations of the battle, did not take them very seriously. W.R. Plewman, in the *Toronto Star*, estimated that the Canadians numbered one-third of a force of 12,000 to 15,000, that heavy casualties meant a loss of 10 per cent, and therefore Canada had suffered 'up to 500 casualties.'<sup>25</sup>

While most speculation was wildly inaccurate, the fourth communiqué confirmed the *Montreal Star's* guess that the Canadian units were the same regiments reported to have received amphibious training earlier that year. Other journals were unaware of the extent of Canadian participation. Francis Williams, controller of press censorship for the MoI, issued three statements on 19 and 20 August, advising the press not to overemphasize the contribution of smaller Allied contingents at the expense of the Canadians, who were said to be one-third of all personnel from all involved services. This was misleading information because the actual landing force itself was overwhelmingly Canadian. Therefore, the foreign press continued to emphasize American or British troops, much to the consternation of Canadian authorities.<sup>26</sup> This understandable speculation continued until September when Churchill revealed the composition of the force and National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) the total casualties.

After the release of the communiqués, the stories of war correspondents took centre stage and their dominance of the news forms the second period in the Dieppe publicity, beginning 21 August and lasting until mid-September. Reporters attempted to patch together a more complete picture of the raid, but human-interest stories, largely focused on heroism, became the main element of news coverage. On 20 August, Bob Bowman of the CBC twice broadcast his story of watching the battle

<sup>24</sup> *Hamilton Spectator*, 19 Aug. 1942; *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 Aug. 1942, 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Calgary Herald*, 19 Aug. 1942, 1; *Ottawa Journal*, 21 Aug. 1942, 1; *Toronto Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Montreal Star*, 19 Aug. 1942, 1, 11; *ibid.*, 200-1; Ralston to McNaughton, cable 27 Aug. 1942, 4/Dieppe/1, vol. 12329, C-2, RG 24, LAC.



from a tank landing craft. The accounts of Fred Griffin of the *Toronto Star* and Wallace Reyburn of the *Montreal Standard* were published both in their own and other newspapers. The most widely read reports in Canada were those by CP reporter Ross Munro. His initial story related his attempt to land with the Royal Regiment of Canada on Blue Beach, where most of the men in his landing craft were killed or wounded. Over the following days, he wrote the story of each regiment. After returning to Canada several weeks later, he made a speaking tour of each Dieppe unit's hometown.<sup>27</sup>

The correspondents had great difficulty in compiling a more complete story of Dieppe. Like any participant in battle, they knew little more than what they had personally witnessed. After failing to land at Puys, Munro transferred to another landing craft that failed to reach the main beach. Despite admitting the 'smoke was so thick that one could not see much of the town,' Munro concluded that the Canadians 'seemed to have the town well under control.' After providing their own eye witness accounts, the correspondents wrote stories based on interviews of other participants who were also ignorant of the big picture and told sometimes-contradictory accounts.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the claim of the *Combined Report* that 'correspondents were given every opportunity to write the raid as they saw it,' after the war Munro said that censorship made it difficult to produce a more complete and accurate account, but he did not specify what was censored, apart from revealing failure.<sup>29</sup> As usual, the MoI reviewed correspondents' cables for information thought to be useful to the enemy and anything that would weaken British relations with its allies. In addition, COHQ departed from normal British policy by insisting it censor foreign correspondents' stories before the MoI saw them. If COHQ had been concerned with security only, the MoI alone could have been entrusted with the job, because it had advisors from all three services.<sup>30</sup> It seems there-

27 A.E. Pawley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Overseas Radio in the Second World War* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1975), 29-34; Bob Bowman, *Dieppe* (Ottawa: Wartime Information Board, 1942), 1; Fred Griffin, 'I Am Bailing Out,' *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 Aug. 1942, 1, 7; 'CP Told the World ... about Canada and Dieppe,' PA 1-8-1, vol. 135, E133, MG 30, McNaughton papers, LAC.

28 Ross Munro, 'Mid Shot and Shell on Dieppe Beach,' *Regina Leader-Post*, 20 Aug. 1942, 2; Ross Munro, *Gauntlet to Overlord* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1972), 338.

29 Munro, *Gauntlet to Overlord*, 339; transcript CBC *Close Up* interview, file #6, pt. 2, Ross Munro, E507, MG 30, George Ronald Fond, LAC; Purcell, 'Wartime Press Censorship,' 131; Atkin, *Dieppe 1942*, 257; Knightley, *First Casualty*, 348-9.

30 *Combined Report*, 195-6; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, 246; Francis Williams, *Press, Parliament, and People* (London: William Heinemann, 1946), 21.

fore that COHQ's main concern was not security but the portrayal of the raid as a success.

Despite the veil of censorship and warnings not to speculate on casualty numbers, Canadian and British war correspondents filled in some details. The American Press reporter Drew Middleton explained that the correspondents were not even aware of the total casualties.<sup>31</sup> Not until mid-September did NDHQ officially release this information. Nevertheless, without mentioning the numbers of casualties and troops involved, Munro's description of the carnage on Blue Beach, for example, would lead readers to believe that casualties were heavy. Munro described the role of each regiment in the attack, revealing, for example, that the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders penetrated four miles inland at Pourville and that General Hamilton Roberts and Brigadier Churchill Mann planned the raid on the basis of COHQ's original outline plan.<sup>32</sup> Yet journalist William Stoneman concluded that the 'whole story could not be told except in the most general terms and in dramatic, personal experience manner' until 'the end of the war.'<sup>33</sup> While the correspondents were able to communicate some new information, only the military had access to a more complete picture.

Unable to tell the whole story of Dieppe, reporters emphasized human-interest stories and soon fulfilled Ralston's promise of 20 August that 'in the next few days there will emerge many stories of dauntless heroism.'<sup>34</sup> Richard characterizes this stage of French-language reporting as the heroic phase, and heroism was also the main ingredient of English-language stories.<sup>35</sup> Munro and Griffin reported Col. Cecil Merritt's actions at the Scie Bridge that later earned him the Victoria Cross.<sup>36</sup> Correspondents also featured the deeds of enlisted men, such as twelve members of the Fusiliers Montréal who escaped capture after clubbing their captor with a lead pipe.<sup>37</sup> Such stories filled the newspapers for

31 Purcell, 'Wartime Press Censorship,' 151; Knightley, *First Casualty*, 348.

32 Ross Munro, 'Peg Regiment Battles 4 Miles Inland at Dieppe,' *Vancouver Sun*, 22 Aug. 1942, 17; Munro, 'Canadian Staff Officers Planned Raid for Months,' *Toronto Star*, 25 Aug. 1942, 10.

33 William H. Stoneman, 'Full Dieppe Story Not Yet Revealed,' *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 Aug. 1942, 10.

34 *Toronto Star*, 20 Aug. 1942, 3.

35 Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe*, 54.

36 Ross Munro, 'Colonel Is Hero,' *Montreal Star*, 22 Aug. 1942, 2; Fred Griffin, 'Wounded Give Griffin First-hand Accounts of Heroism on Beach,' *Toronto Star*, 24 Aug. 1942, 2.

37 William Stewart, 'Fusiliers See Captured Mates Slain by Enemy,' *Montreal Star*, 21 Aug. 1942, 4.

weeks and would be repeated in October after the announcement of the decorations from the Dieppe raid.

The Public Relations Officers (PROs) and publicity units working with the press followed the suggested COHQ pattern by promoting interviews emphasizing heroism. The Public Relations Officers, who were an integral part of the Canadian military, were influential in providing information to the press, especially by arranging interviews with the raiders. They made a special effort to accommodate the press after British United Press reporter Francis H. Fisher publicly complained that accredited war correspondents did not have immediate access to the men of the returning force. To make up for this fiasco, the PR units strove to make eyewitnesses available, probably chosen to shape the heroic focus of the stories.<sup>38</sup> These formed the basis of many human-interest stories about the raid. Such interviews were not solely the result of the initiative of the PROs; Gen. McNaughton, commander of the First Canadian Army, actively encouraged interviews with participants in the raid and was more responsive than the British generals in making Dieppe raiders available to journalists.<sup>39</sup> Correspondent A.E. Cummings credited this response to McNaughton's greater understanding of the value of the press in wartime.<sup>40</sup> The heroic stories, of course, made good newspaper copy.

The correspondents' reports were the main source of information during this second period, but a few official releases, notably casualty lists, continued to influence press coverage. First published on the evening of 21 August, they continued regularly until 4 September when Adj. Gen. Harry Letson announced that all casualty records had arrived from overseas and the next-of-kin had been informed. The list numbered 170 dead and 626 wounded, although Letson indicated that 'there are much larger numbers listed as missing.'<sup>41</sup> How much larger these numbers were remained secret until the Canadian military released the information on 15 September. The delay was due to MoI pressure on the Canadian military to stop publishing the names of the missing, allegedly to avoid alerting the Germans to those who may have evaded capture. A

38 GS 2995 NDHQ to CMHQ, 21 Aug. 1942, Dieppe Reports, 112.1 D66, Directorate of History and Heritage (hereafter cited as DHH), Department of National Defence; Maj. Abel, memorandum re GS2286, 22 Aug. 1942, file 4/Dieppe/I, vol. 12329, series C-2, RG 24, LAC.

39 GS 3070 McNaughton to VCGS, 27 Aug. 1942, *ibid.*

40 A.E. Cummings, 'Gen. McNaughton Sees Value of Press in War,' *Calgary Herald*, 10 Sept. 1942, 5.

41 *Ottawa Journal*, 4 Sept. 1942, 1.

more convincing explanation is that the MoI wanted Canadian compliance with the British policy of delaying the publication of casualties.<sup>42</sup>

The growing casualty lists had several effects on press coverage. First, the tone of the press became more sombre. With pictures and stories of local casualties, newspapers across the country illustrated the cost. The *Globe and Mail* observed, 'Dieppe the name that thrilled the nation with high hopes scant days ago, has brought deep gloom to hundreds of Canadian homes.' A *Globe and Mail* editorial cartoon featured a group of civilians complaining about conditions on the home front; in the background was a shadow of a Canadian soldier on a giant Dieppe casualty list.<sup>43</sup> Civilian sacrifice could not compare to the loss of life at Dieppe.

As well as fostering a more sombre tone, the casualty lists encouraged some doubt about the official version of Dieppe. Until the release of the final casualty numbers on 15 September, most newspapers continued to portray Dieppe as a heroic, if tragic, success. Nevertheless, some journalists began to be critical. The *Ottawa Journal* was the first to question elements of the official version, objecting to the comment of Lt. Gen. Kenneth Stuart, chief of the general staff (CGS) at NDHQ, that 'we walked into the Boche's parlour through the front door at a time we chose and we left by the same front door when we wanted to leave. We were able to test the Boche defences under actual combat conditions, kill Huns and destroy what we could.' The *Journal* could not reconcile these comments and the image of a heroic victory with the growing casualty lists: 'Can we be expected to know the truth and act upon it if those who are leaders keep the facts from us and try to feed us on sugar-coated stories?'<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in the weekly magazine *Saturday Night*, Wilson Woodside called Dieppe both a success and a failure. He cast doubt on whether the Canadians had indeed captured the town or even intended to do so.<sup>45</sup> John Collingwood Reade of the *Globe and Mail* was the most critical: 'Despite official protestations that the Raid on Dieppe was a startling success, there is little evidence to justify that conclusion.'<sup>46</sup> Reade's skepticism became the editorial position of the *Globe and Mail*.

In what Richard characterizes as the third phase, the 'revelation,' from 8 to 19 September, official releases provided the overview that the correspondents could not, and again became the main source of the press

42 GS 3008 CMHQ to NDHQ, 24 Aug. 1942, 4/Dieppe/1, vol. 12329, C-2, RG 24, LAC.

43 *Globe and Mail*, 24 Aug. 1942, 6; 28 Aug. 1942, 6.

44 *Ottawa Journal*, 25 Aug. 1942, 10.

45 Wilson Woodside, 'Our Success and Failure at Dieppe,' *Saturday Night*, 29 Aug. 1942, 12.

46 John Collingwood Reade, 'Dieppe's Lessons Being Studied,' *Globe and Mail*, 26 Aug. 1942, 3.

coverage.<sup>47</sup> In fact, this last stage really began on 15 September, when NDHQ began releasing its information. Churchill's September revelation that Canadians formed most of the landing force inspired little editorial comment, since Canadians already understood that Canada led at Dieppe. The publication of the total casualties on September 15 had a more profound effect. Until then, the total casualties published were 925; the release of the missing more than tripled them to 3,350.<sup>48</sup> This 134-page NDHQ release, the longest one-day casualty list in Canadian history, was so massive that some papers printed it in instalments.<sup>49</sup> Editorials almost uniformly expressed shock at the enormity of the losses. For example, the *Globe and Mail* observed that 'the announcement ... must have shocked and dismayed every Canadian.'<sup>50</sup> Some newspapers began to criticize the military's information policy. The *Regina Leader-Post*, while accepting the need for heavy casualties, was critical of the tendency to 'soften the blow, to minimize the losses, and accentuate the "glory" part' of Dieppe.<sup>51</sup>

The next revelation came on 18 September, when Ralston published an official explanation of Dieppe. On 26 August, NDHQ had asked McNaughton for this white paper to publish in the newspapers. Though giving a more complete overview than the communiqués and correspondents, the white paper provided little new information. It claimed that the main objective of the raid was to 'gather information and experience vital to the general offensive program,' explaining in very general terms the planning, command structure, and forces involved. It called a chance encounter with the German convoy a key element in the battle since it alerted the defenders and delayed the landings. Thus, when the Royal Regiment of Canada landed late at Blue Beach, it faced alert defenders and its inability to silence the batteries that enfiladed the main beach 'affected the success of the landings.' Therefore, bad luck caused the heavy casualties. The paper also featured accounts of the gallantry of Canadian and Allied troops, retelling the story of the heroism of Col. Merritt. It also highlighted the few tactical successes of the raid. Ralston assured the public that heavy casualties were to be 'expected in amphibious operations of this type,' and, while saying 'no public analysis of the lessons learned is possible,' concluded that the information gained by the raid was of great value.<sup>52</sup>

47 Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe*, 63.

48 *Toronto Star*, 10 Sept. 1942, 14.

49 *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 Sept. 1942, 12.

50 *Globe and Mail*, 16 Sept. 1942, 6.

51 *Regina Leader-Post*, 17 Sept. 1942, 11.

52 The complete text of the white paper is in the *Toronto Star*, 18 Sept. 1942, 3.

The first concern behind the white paper was to address the 'slight uneasiness in the minds of the Canadian people' about Dieppe, reflecting the beginnings of criticism as the casualty lists grew. National Defence Headquarters also wanted information beyond the correspondents' accounts, which were 'nearly all confined to a description of the evacuation and fighting on the beaches ... rather than the fact that our troops carried out an offensive attack and succeeded in penetrating the enemy defences.'<sup>53</sup> This statement raises doubts about NDHQ's understanding of Dieppe, especially in light of Gen. Stuart's ridiculous 22 August comments about Canadians 'walking through the Boche's front door.' Confirming Stuart's ignorance was his 24 September memorandum to Ralston, defending the raid as a success while admitting he had 'limited knowledge' and was 'not aware of the official purposes of the operation.'<sup>54</sup> The positive portrait of Dieppe in the communiqués and newspapers likely overly influenced Stuart and NDHQ. However, the penetration of defences at Pourville and by very small parties on the main beach were not typical.

The third purpose of the white paper was to justify the cost of the raid. National Defence Headquarters wanted 'some indication of the benefits gained from the raid,' to counteract the impact of the casualty lists. The paper was to demonstrate that 'casualties were not, repeat not, unduly high in view of the operations.'<sup>55</sup> The difficulty was that the casualties were much higher than the anticipated maximum of 600.<sup>56</sup> National Defence Headquarters did not necessarily know of these estimates, though McNaughton certainly did.

Historical officer Maj. C.P. Stacey was assigned the task of writing the white paper. After Stacey submitted it on 4 September, Maj. Gen. Haydon of Combined Operations demanded its review and approval by COHQ, who insisted on deleting much of the report, allegedly for security reasons. Outraged, Brig. H.A. Young of CMHQ confronted Mountbatten and complained that 'little purpose' would be 'served by preparing despatches for submission to Canada if they were to be heavily censored.'<sup>57</sup> Although understating COHQ's interference in the white

53 GS 383 VCGS to McNaughton, 9, 26 Aug. 1942, 4/Dieppe/1, vol. 12329, series C-2, RG 24, LAC.

54 Memorandum Stuart to Minister, 24 Sept. 1942, file HQ S.8809, vol. 24, series III B II, MG 27, Ralston papers, LAC.

55 GS 383 VCGS to McNaughton, 9, 26 Aug. 1942, 4/Dieppe/1, vol. 12329, series C-2, RG 24, LAC.

56 '1 CD Corps Adm. Instruction, Jubilee No. 1,' 106, 19 Aug. 1942, file 6/Dieppe/1, vol. 12468, series C-2, RG 24, LAC.

57 Brig. Young, memorandum 5 Sept. 1942, 23, 4/Dieppe/1, vol. 12329, series C-2, RG 24, LAC.

paper in the official history, Stacey was not constrained in his memoirs, where he recorded his anger and listed the major changes.<sup>58</sup> A comparison of the original and the published text makes clear that Mountbatten's many objections were based on perceived deviations from the COHQ public relations plan.<sup>59</sup>

Mountbatten felt that Stacey's paper did not do 'justice to the good fighting spirit displayed by the Canadians in the operation'<sup>60</sup> and added more heroic description to Stacey's already heroic draft narrative. It conformed to the plan to distract from failure by emphasizing the troops' courage. Combined Operations Headquarters also deleted most of Stacey's statements that hinted at failure or would put the raid in a bad light, including, most significantly, one of his concluding statements: 'It is obvious from the above narrative that a great part of the limited and local objectives of the raid were not attained. The demolitions actually effected were on a much smaller scale than had been hoped for, although considerable damage was done.' Instead, the revised version boasted that 'enemy batteries and a radiolocation station were destroyed, heavy casualties were inflicted ... prisoners of war were brought back, and one and possibly two armed vessels were sunk.' Since COHQ saw the capture of objectives as the raid's measure of success, it could not permit Stacey's honest assessment of the mission's tactical accomplishments.

Stacey's original white paper was a relatively detailed and frank account of Dieppe; COHQ's revisions certainly rendered it both less informative and more promotional. Nonetheless, even before its revision, the white paper represented an apology for Dieppe, fulfilling some of the purposes suggested by NDHQ. Stacey claimed heavy casualties were expected in amphibious landings, citing Gallipoli as a precedent, although COHQ removed that battle's name to avoid damning comparisons. Stacey also appealed to the 'lessons learned' to justify the cost of the raid. This apology was part of COHQ's publicity strategy from the beginning. Yet, despite its limitations, the report clarified the overall operation and ended some misconceptions, especially the belief that Canadians succeeded in capturing Dieppe, when in reality only 'small parties' penetrated the German defences and got into the town.<sup>61</sup>

The white paper and the simultaneous release of the total number of Canadians involved in the raid, allowing the 67 per cent casualty rate to

<sup>58</sup> Stacey, *Six Years*, 394; C.P. Stacey, *A Date with History* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), 90–3.

<sup>59</sup> In the following paragraphs, all quotations from Stacey's original draft are from CMHQ 1940–1948, report 83, 'Preliminary Report on Operation Jubilee,' DHH. All references to the published white paper are from the *Montreal Star*, 18 Sept. 1942, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Brig. Young, memorandum 5 Sept. 1942, 23.

<sup>61</sup> *Toronto Star*, 18 Sept. 1942, 3; Stacey, *Six Years*, 380, 390.

be calculated, led to increased criticism of both the operation and government information. On 19 September, the *Globe and Mail* complained that Ralston's report provided no more information and created such new questions as why a raid clearly dependent on surprise was not aborted after the convoy encounter. John Collingwood Reade became even more critical, questioning whether the raid was 'well conceived, adequately planned, and shrewdly directed.' The gains were not worth the casualties, as any lessons learned were offset by knowledge gained by the enemy. He believed that the chief lesson of Dieppe was 'that military commanders should have learned from their own mistakes and the inadequacy of their own equipment. No useful purpose is ever served by puffing up a doubtful experiment and magnifying it into a great victory.'<sup>62</sup> Similarly, the *Ottawa Journal* observed that had the Germans raided an English port and experienced similar results, the Allies would have marked it as a major victory. It complained that the 'effort to minimize the price paid has been rather painfully profuse.'<sup>63</sup>

Most of the press, however, was either silent or accepted the official version of the Dieppe story. A number of editorials had already conceded the high cost of this type of raid.<sup>64</sup> The *Winnipeg Free Press* claimed that Ralston's 'complete and candid' statement refuted the critics of the raid, pointed to the value of the 'lessons learned,' and was far more honest than Stuart's much-maligned statement of Canadians walking through the Germans' front door. An editorial in the *Montreal Star* praised the report as revealing the whole story, especially the explanation of the effects of the convoy encounter, and asserting that the raid was part of an 'agreed offensive policy.' A *Calgary Herald* editorial cartoon of 19 September demonstrated that the revelations did not change its views on Dieppe. The cartoon showed a surprised Hitler with a sign reading 'Dieppe' on his back, kicked in the buttocks by a giant foot labelled 'Commando raids,' the force propelling him into the arms of an angry Russian bear.<sup>65</sup>

The varying responses of both French- and English-language newspapers to the September revelations often mirrored the editor's political stance. In Quebec, *Le Canada*, a pro-Liberal paper, used its Dieppe coverage to promote support for the war effort and national unity. *Le Devoir*, strongly opposed to both the war and King's government, used the raid to attack the government, but it did not directly criticize the

62 *Globe and Mail*, 19 Sept. 1942, 6; Reade, 'Many Grave Doubts Raised by Official Report on Dieppe,' *Globe and Mail*, 19 Sept. 1942, 3.

63 *Ottawa Journal*, 22 Sept. 1942, 8.

64 *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 Sept. 1942, 15; *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 Sept. 1942, 24; *Toronto Star*, 17 Sept. 1942, 6.

65 *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 Sept. 1942, 15; *Montreal Star*, 18 Sept. 1942, 10; *Calgary Herald*, 19 Sept. 1942, 7.



military aspects of the raid.<sup>66</sup> In English Canada, while the major newspapers fully supported the war, many opposed King's government, especially on conscription, the most important political issue of 1942. Conservative papers like the *Globe and Mail* saw in the Dieppe story an opportunity to assail the King government's conscription policy. After the release of the total casualties, Conservative newspapers attacked King's reluctance to fully implement conscription, the *Toronto Telegram* declaring that the government 'could not through its opposition to conscription, leave our men unsupported in the field.'<sup>67</sup> However, these efforts to revive the issue by invoking the Dieppe casualties were unsuccessful. According to Patrick H. Brennan, 'After the summer of 1942, conscription rapidly faded from view as an issue in English Canada.'<sup>68</sup>

Critics had to walk a fine line between attacking King's policy and appearing to undermine the war effort. Only those papers most hostile to the government, such as the *Globe and Mail*, openly criticized the Dieppe operation itself. Well known for support of the Conservatives, it boasted of being the 'foremost newspaper critic of the government.'<sup>69</sup> Over time, its criticism of Dieppe became blunter. In the spring of 1943, when Ralston defended Dieppe in Parliament from both CCF MP Tommy Douglas and the Conservative opposition, the *Globe and Mail* consistently rejected the minister's explanations, calling the raid 'a fiasco of the first order; a tragedy of military blundering without parallel in this war.'<sup>70</sup> The *Ottawa Journal*, also a Conservative organ, was likewise critical of the raid and the government, but was less blunt than the *Globe and Mail*.

Conversely, newspapers that supported the Liberal government were the least critical of Dieppe. The *Winnipeg Free Press* consistently backed the government's defence of Dieppe, as did the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Toronto Star*.<sup>71</sup> However, despite its usual support for the Liberals, the *Regina Leader-Post* criticized the delay of 'military authorities' in reporting the cost of Dieppe, believing that the Canadian public could have handled the bad news. This probably had much to do with the visibility of the casualties and grief in the small communities of southern Saskatchewan. Nonetheless, the *Leader-Post* was careful to attack only shadowy 'military authorities,' not the Liberal government itself.<sup>72</sup> Many newspapers

66 Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe*, 23, 72–3.

67 *Toronto Telegram*, 19 Sept. 1942; *Montreal Gazette*, 17 Sept. 1942, 8.

68 Patrick H. Brennan, *Reporting the Nation's Business* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 65.

69 *Globe and Mail*, 27 May 1943, 6.

70 *Globe and Mail*, 27 Apr. 1943, 6.

71 *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 Sept. 1942, 15; 17 Sept. 1942, 17; 21 Sept. 1942, 15; 19 May 1943, 15; 27 May 1943, 14.

72 *Regina Leader-Post*, 17 Sept. 1942, 11.

avoided taking a clear side in the debate. By default, this evasion gave tacit support to the official version of the story and its handling by government. It also was another way to avoid criticism of the war effort.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, partisan politics were important, but not always determinative of editorial positions on Dieppe.

The press coverage of Dieppe was influenced by the limited sources of information on which it relied, namely the official communiqués that portrayed Dieppe as a success. War correspondents, who had only incomplete knowledge of the events and were under censorship, emphasized heroic human-interest stories, which the military encouraged. The complete disclosure of casualties and an official overview of the raid broke the illusion of success created by the initial communiqués and continued by the correspondents, creating a more sombre tone. What had begun as Canada's first day of martial glory had become a day of grief, and in the opinion of some, a disastrous failure.

While what is truthful may be a question of perspective, COHQ's portrayal of Dieppe as a success was too obviously a false claim to stand unquestioned. Phillip Knightley explains the principles of effective military public relations: 'All the military manuals follow basic principles – appear open, transparent and eager to help; never go in for summary repression or direct control; nullify rather than conceal undesirable news; control emphasis rather than the facts; balance bad news with good; and lie directly only when certain that lie will not be found out in the course of the war.'<sup>74</sup> The COHQ version claiming tactical success did not last a month without raising questions, let alone until war's end. While both COHQ and the Canadian military tried to colour the information, COHQ was more willing to cover up unpleasant facts about the raid. Nonetheless, even after COHQ editing, the white paper could not conceal the tactical failure of Dieppe. The 'lessons learned' justification was much more effective, since the nature of the lessons needed to remain secret until the war's end.

In his study of German and British propaganda, Michael Balfour discusses three types of falsehood in propaganda applicable to the Dieppe raid: 'the deliberate lie,' 'suppressed truth,' and the 'slanting of news.'<sup>75</sup> Outright lies were the least common element, most notably the claim

73 Newspapers that did not defend or criticize the government on Dieppe after 18 Sept. include the *Vancouver Sun*, *Hamilton Spectator*, *Halifax Herald*, and *Vancouver Province*. The *Calgary Herald* did not express an editorial opinion until it called for an end to the parliamentary Dieppe debate on 29 May, although even the *Globe and Mail* wanted to end the controversy by this time. The *Regina Leader-Post*, apart from its 17 Sept. editorial, also remained silent.

74 Knightley, *First Casualty*, 484.

75 Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, 427–31.

that casualties were not as heavy as expected. Information allegedly of value to the enemy was suppressed, although much seemed aimed at keeping the public rather than Germans in the dark. Playing up the heroism and the alleged value of the raid, 'slanting the news' was the major type of falsehood in the Dieppe publicity.

Given the deception involved, it is unsurprising that the public relations campaign had very mixed results among Canadians. No poll clearly demonstrates contemporary public opinion about Dieppe. A Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO) poll about Canadians' trust of war news, published on 19 September 1942, showed that 56 per cent of Canadians trusted war news, while 36 per cent did not, but in Quebec, the majority were distrustful. Although Richard cites this poll, the date of the polling is unknown. Typically, CIPO polls, while claiming to be current, were conducted three to eight weeks prior to publication. Both the newspapers and *Public Opinion Quarterly* give only the date of publication.<sup>76</sup> Since the polling likely occurred before Dieppe, the most that can be concluded from this poll is that the majority of English Canadians trusted war news.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that while some Canadians accepted the official story of Dieppe, others did not. The military felt pressured to put out an official explanation of Dieppe, because of the 'feeling of slight uneasiness in the minds of the Canadian people about Dieppe.'<sup>77</sup> This was an understatement; the military would not feel pressured to respond to 'slight uneasiness.' Some contemporaries noted public questioning of the official version of Dieppe. Gillis Purcell of the Canadian Press advised McNaughton not to be concerned with newspaper criticisms of Dieppe, even though they were 'a reflection of comment on the street.'<sup>78</sup> A *Winnipeg Free Press* editorial also condemned talk on the street, criticizing those who claimed that the British deliberately used the Canadians for this 'stunt' to avoid casualties themselves.<sup>79</sup> However, this distrust of the official version of Dieppe was not limited to 'the street.' Mackenzie King, after reading aloud the white paper, wondered 'if the information gained could begin to equal the heavy losses.'<sup>80</sup> There was too great a disparity

76 Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe*, 61; Daniel J. Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy: Polling Market Research and Public Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 84; *Public Opinion Quarterly* 6 (Winter 1942): 659. Unfortunately, the date cannot be determined because no CIPO poll records before 1945 are preserved. Association of Public Data Users, 'Submission to the National Data Archive Consultation Working Group,' 17 Sept. 2000, <http://www.capdu.ca/> (accessed 18 May 2006).

77 GS 383 VCGS to McNaughton, 26 Aug. 1942, 112.1 D66 *Dieppe Reports*, DHH.

78 Purcell to McNaughton, 28 Sept. 1942, file PA1-8-1, vol. 135, series E133, MG 30, A.G.L. McNaughton Collection, LAC.

79 Reprinted in *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, 24 Aug. 1942, 20.

80 Mackenzie King Diaries, 769, 19 Sept. 1942, LAC.

between the events at Dieppe and the overly optimistic story sold to the Canadian public.

The expectation in a liberal democracy is that government officials and agencies should not lie to the public, for that would undermine confidence in the system itself. In wartime, this line blurs, as there are often valid security reasons to withhold or even falsify information. However, even then it usually benefits the government to release as much accurate information as possible. If official information is unreliable, people distrust it, and a critical public policy tool becomes weakened. Balanced against the long-term benefits of wartime openness in publicity is the temptation for short-term gain by covering up or misrepresenting unpleasant items. Nonetheless, there is always the risk that the truth will emerge, doing damage to reputation and public trust. The bitter parliamentary debates of 1943 on Dieppe and the cloud of suspicion that developed about the raid continues to this day, suggesting that this was the case with the Dieppe publicity. The entry of Canada's Army into continuous action beginning in July 1943 in Sicily certainly focused public attention on other matters. However, questions about Dieppe lingered: as Stacey wrote in 1948, Dieppe remains 'the most hotly-discussed operation of the war.'<sup>81</sup> Controversy became the dominant tone in Dieppe historiography. Yet there was little long-term damage to English Canadians' trust in war news in general, as 62 per cent of Canadians expressed confidence in it in 1944, although a majority in Quebec still mistrusted it.<sup>82</sup>

How unusual was the publicity for the Dieppe raid? Allied military authorities deliberately concealed failure from the public on other occasions. Navies in particular were unwilling to publish news of sinkings that might otherwise remain unknown to the enemy. For example, the Americans did not fully report losses at Pearl Harbor until one year after the attack, and the Royal Navy did not admit the sinking of the light cruiser *Curacao* in a 1942 collision for almost three years.<sup>83</sup> The Royal Canadian Navy similarly delayed reporting shipping losses in the St Lawrence River. The timing and contents of the news releases were 'manipulated according to defence needs.'<sup>84</sup> While naval defeats might be kept secret, it was impossible to conceal large-scale military disasters

<http://www.King.archives.ca/EN/Default.asp> (accessed 5 Nov. 2003). In subsequent years, Mackenzie King came to believe that the lessons of Dieppe were necessary for the successful invasion of France.

81 C.P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army at War, 1939–1945* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1948), 83.

82 Jeffery A. Keshen, *Sinners, Saints, and Soldiers* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 18.

83 Knightley, *First Casualty*, 244, 298.

84 Michael L. Hadley, *U-Boats against Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 80.

such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tobruk, with the loss of key defensive positions and many prisoners. The Dieppe raid's lack of an obvious overall goal and purpose and its hit-and-run nature, never intended to hold a position, meant that success or failure was more difficult to measure. The temptation to conceal failure was therefore greater.

Was this level of deception typical of Second World War Canadian Army publicity? Carl Vincent's discussion of the Hong Kong news shows that the government handled most of the publicity, although it depended on scanty British reports based on Japanese sources and included deceptive British claims about a planned relief of the garrison by the HMS *Prince of Wales*.<sup>85</sup> While Hong Kong sheds little light on Canadian military publicity, it is clear from the confusion in the aftermath of Dieppe that policy coordination with its allies was underdeveloped. Eventually, beginning in the Italian campaign, the Canadian Army handled its own field press censorship rather than relying on the British. Censored stories were wired directly to Canada, often beating official military press releases that had to work their way up the chain of command through CMHQ in London, occasionally with embarrassing results for Ottawa.<sup>86</sup> The Canadian Army continued to manage its own publicity and war correspondents in Northwest Europe. However, opinions on the severity of Canadian field press censorship in that campaign vary. According to Gillis Purcell, some correspondents believed that field censorship frequently was used to avoid embarrassment to generals and the government. Conversely, Richard S. Malone, commander of the army's European public relations unit, claims that Canadian military censorship was imposed on only two occasions for considerations other than security during the Northwest Europe Campaign, although he claims it was much more common earlier in the war.<sup>87</sup> However, Claude Beaugard convincingly argues that Canadian military censors, following the lead of their Allies, were concerned not only with protecting military secrets but controlling the entire public perception of the war, sometimes resulting in 'political censorship.' Correspondents because of strict military controls and restrictions produced only the desired official version of events. These evaluations of military information policy suggest that Dieppe was not the only occasion on which the Army's publicity was misleading.<sup>88</sup>

85 Carl Vincent, *No Reason Why* (Stittsville, ON: Canada's Wings, 1981), 215–17.

86 Richard S. Malone, *A Portrait of War 1939–1943* (Toronto: Collins, 1983), 210–11.

87 Purcell, 'Wartime Press Censorship in Canada,' 131–5; Richard S. Malone, *Missing from the Record* (Toronto: Collins, 1946), 80, 191–2; Malone, *A World in Flames 1944–1945* (Toronto: Collins, 1984), 58.

88 Claude Beaugard, *Guerre et Censure au Canada, 1939–45* (Sillery, PQ: Septentrion, 1998), 132–6, 138.

Canadian authorities faced a great obstacle in being more candid about Dieppe; they were part of an alliance. As a junior partner in a larger coalition, Canada has always experienced tension between the ability to act independently and the need to show solidarity with more powerful allies. Had Canada parted from the British pattern of falsehood that characterized the Dieppe publicity, it could have embarrassed the British and strained the alliance. Short-term gain and alliance solidarity trumped an accurate account of Dieppe for the Canadian public.

Lord Mountbatten certainly achieved his goal of protecting his and his organization's sterling public reputations. Despite much public criticism of the raid in the Canadian newspapers, little muck was aimed at him. In time, it no longer became necessary for Mountbatten to maintain the fiction about the tactical successes of the raid, and, like Stacey, whose white paper he had once condemned, he portrayed the raid as a costly tactical failure that taught lessons that contributed to later success in Normandy.<sup>89</sup> This metamorphosis is understandable since Mountbatten's goal of protecting COHQ's and his own reputations seemed more important to the original publicity than the actual events of the battle themselves.

During the Dieppe raid, smoke obscured the view of the battle for Gen. Roberts, who commanded the landing forces from HMS *Calpe*. That restriction, coupled with a communications breakdown, kept the commander from having an accurate idea of what was happening on the beaches. The Canadian public also faced a smokescreen when it was told about Dieppe. Stories of heroism, claims of success, and the lack of a timely overview of the raid obscured the reality of disaster. Like Roberts, Canadians squinted through the smoke to get brief glimpses of what had happened to their boys on the beach. For weeks, they had to guess at what had transpired, and even when the white paper was released, questions remained unanswered. Those who had lost family, who had to suffer for months waiting to hear the fate of the missing, certainly deserved a more open and honest explanation of what had happened and why.

89 Earl Mountbatten of Burma, 'Operation Jubilee: The Place of the Dieppe Raid in History,' *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution for Defence Studies* 119, no. 1 (1974): 29, 30.

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