

Dieppe



The Allied situation in the spring of 1942 was grim. The Germans had penetrated deep into Russia, the British Eighth Army in North Africa had been forced back into Egypt, and in Western Europe the Allied forces faced the Germans across the English Channel.

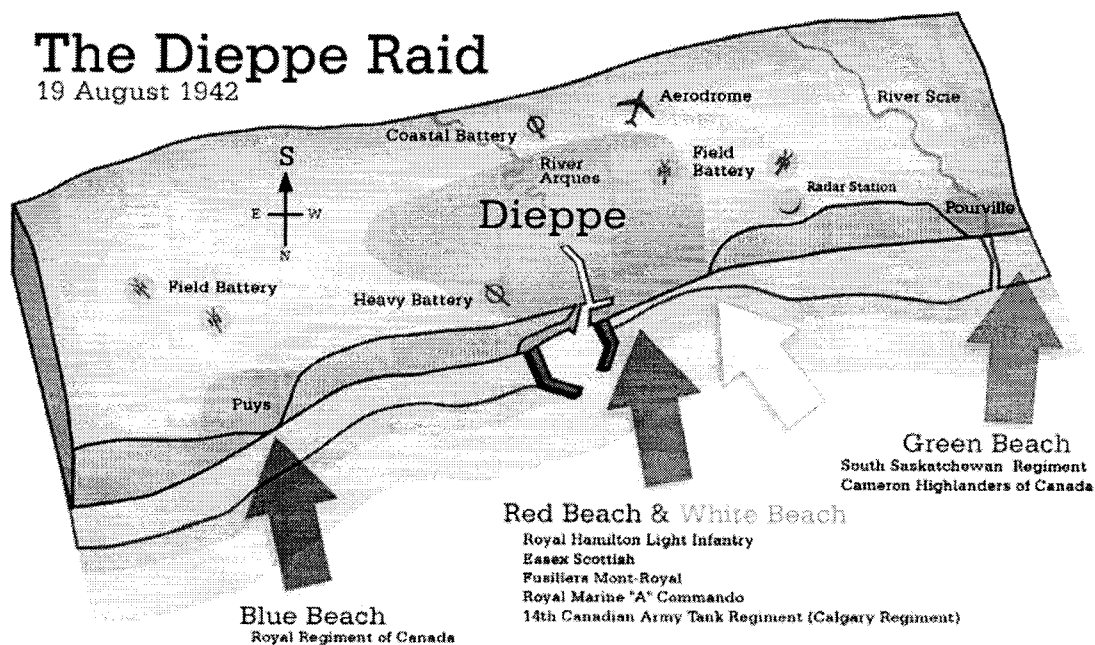
The time was not yet ripe for a full-scale invasion of Western Europe, and the Allies decided to mount a major raid on the French port of Dieppe. The raid would also provide an opportunity to test new techniques and equipment, and be the means to gain the experience and knowledge necessary for planning the invasion of Europe.

The attack upon Dieppe took place on August 19, 1942. The troops involved totaled 6,100 of whom roughly 5,000 were Canadians, the remainder being British Commandos and 50 American Rangers.

The plan called for attacks at five different points on a front of roughly 16 kilometres. Canadians would form the force for the frontal attack on Dieppe and would also go in at gaps in the cliffs at Pourville four kilometres to the west, and at Puy to the east.

As the assault force approached the coast of France in the early hours of August 19, the landing craft of the eastern sector unexpectedly encountered a small German convoy. The noise of the sharp violent sea fight which followed alerted coastal defenses.

The raid at Dieppe was unsuccessful, and the troops were forced to evacuate. The Canadians lost heavily during the withdrawal. The enemy was able to bring fierce fire to bear upon the beach from dominating positions east of Pourville, and also from the high ground to the west. Of the 4,963 Canadians who embarked for the operation only 2,210 returned to England, and many of these were wounded. There were 3,367 casualties, including 1,946 prisoners of war; 907 Canadians lost their lives.



- Handout constructed from information found at www.vac-acc.gc.ca.