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VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA
TO BATTLEFIELDS IN FRANCE, AUGUST 1946.
NOTES ON TOPOGRAPHY, ETC.

1. During the month of August 1946 the Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, who was then in France as leader of the Canadian Delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris, visited the Canadian battlefields in Lower Normandy and (subsequently) the area about Dieppe, the scene of the raid of 19 August 1942. Mr. King was accompanied by Major-General George P. Vanier, D.S.O., M.C. (Canadian Ambassador at Paris) and by other members of the Canadian Delegation.
2. Mr. King was received with the greatest warmth throughout his tour, and it was very apparent that the French population in the areas visited have the pleasantest recollections of the Canadian troops who operated there during the late war and that the liberation of large regions of France by the Canadian Army has forged new and strong links of friendship between that country and Canada. This episode accordingly merits the attention of the historian.
3. The present writer accompanied the Prime Minister's party during the tours, and was able to point out certain features of the battlefields to Mr. King. He also had the opportunity of improving his own knowledge of the battle areas. Certain notes on topography and related subjects which it is desirable to record for future historical purposes are accordingly included in the present report.
4. The Prime Minister visited Caen and the adjacent areas of Lower Normandy, including the beaches on which 3 Cdn Inf Div landed on 6 Jun 44, on 10 and 11 Aug 46. The tour here is described in some detail in an account written by the present writer on the suggestion of the Hon. Brooke Claxton, Minister of Health and Welfare, who was present. An amended copy of this account is attached as Appendix "A".
5. The Prime Minister visited the Dieppe area on 17, 18 and 19 Aug 46 (19 Aug being the fourth anniversary of the Dieppe raid). He arrived from Paris about 1900 hrs on 17 Aug and returned thither on the evening of 19 Aug. The following is a brief outline of his Dieppe tour.
6. After his arrival on 17 Aug the Prime Minister and his party were tendered an informal dinner at the Casino Municipal, which occupies temporary accommodation replacing the structure destroyed by the Germans in 1942. On 18 Aug the Prime Minister and his party drove to Puys, where they attended Protestant and Roman Catholic services held on the narrow promenade just above the sea-wall. A guard of honour was mounted by the Canadian Provost Corps. The local population were present in large

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numbers, and the weather was exceptionally fine. The Cardinal of Rouen was present at the Roman Catholic service and spoke eloquently of the men who died on this beach. Subsequently Mr. King laid the first stone of a monument which a local committee is erecting to the memory of the many men of the Royal Regiment of Canada who fell here, and the Canadian party was entertained at an official luncheon at which there was the usual exchange of compliments. The Prefect of Seine Inferieure was among the guests. In the afternoon of 18 Aug the Canadian party visited Berneval, where Mr. King inaugurated a small monument to thirteen men of No. 3 Commando who were killed here, and St. Martin-en-Campagne, where the Prime Minister unveiled a plaque bearing the names of the same thirteen men. (The Berneval monument, incidentally, describes them as "Allied soldiers", but the St. Martin plaque uses the certainly inaccurate phrase "Detachement Canadien".) The party then drove on towards Penly, and Mr. King unveiled on the roadside near the village a stone marking the spot where two soldiers who had been wounded and captured at Berneval were killed in an attack by our own aircraft while being transported in a German vehicle not bearing Red Cross markings. (These details were recited by a local official who received the Prime Minister.) The two soldiers, whose names are not known, are described on the stone as Canadians, but it seems probable that they were actually British.

7. From Penly the party drove to Petit Appeville (the village described on our military maps as Bas de Hautot), where a wreath was laid at the main crossroads, now identified by a plaque as "Carrefour des Canadiens". The party then went on to Pourville, where Mr. King unveiled a more pretentious memorial to the men who fought in the raid. This memorial bears the @ insignia of 2 Can Inf Div. After a vin d'honneur at the temporary Casino in Pourville the party drove to St. Aubin-le-Cauf, south of the Foret d'Argues, where Pilot Officer Gardiner, R.C.A.F., (a son of the Canadian Minister of Agriculture) who was killed here during the Dieppe operation, is buried in the churchyard. Mr. King and the Hon. Mr. Gardiner spoke to the assembled villagers. The party then returned to Dieppe for an official dinner, and subsequently attended a concert of Canadian music.

8. On the morning of 19 Aug the party drove to the Canadian cemetery at the Bois des Vertus. Here again there were Protestant and Roman Catholic services, a firing party of the Canadian Provost Corps fired three volleys, and wreaths were laid on the Cross of Sacrifice. The children of the vicinity decorated the graves. The Prime Minister addressed the large gathering of French people who attended the ceremonies, emphasizing the fact that it was time that the Paris Conference ceased to argue over procedure and got on with the business of making peace.

9. The party then returned to Dieppe, where wreaths were laid on the civic Monument aux Morts. Thereafter, at the Hotel de Ville, the Prime Minister and the Ambassador were made "Citoyens d'Honneur" of Dieppe. After a short visit to the civic hospital, the entire party was entertained at an official luncheon at one of the Dieppe schools.

10. In the afternoon the Prime Minister laid the corner stone of a monument to be erected by the City of Dieppe to commemorate the raid of 1942 and the liberation of the city by 2 Cdn Inf Div in 1944. This ceremony took place at the west end of the promenade, just below the old Castle, and near the ruins of the Casino. It is apparently not yet certain that this will be the final position of the monument. The stone as laid is adjacent to the "Stele du Canada", a monument erected by the civic authorities in 1926 to commemorate the association between Dieppe and Canada dating back to the earliest days of French colonisation in the New World. Two new inscriptions have lately been cut on this monument, recording the raid by 2 Cdn Inf Div on 19 Aug 42 and the liberation of the city by the same division on 1 Sep 44. The Mayor and a member of the French Government (the Under-Secretary to the President of the Council) spoke, and the Prime Minister read a prepared address which was translated by the Ambassador.

11. It had been arranged that a R.A.F. Spitfire Wing would fly over the beach during the ceremony. Only one Spitfire appeared.

12. These ceremonies were followed by perhaps the most remarkable demonstration of the whole tour. It had been arranged that the guests of honour should walk through the streets of the town to the Chambre de Commerce. The parade was led by an excellent French Army band, followed by the detachment of the Canadian Provost Corps which had provided guards of honour during the various ceremonies and by a group of ten officers and other ranks who had participated in the raid of 1942. Then came the Prime Minister and his party. The sidewalks along the route (which was gaily decorated) were crowded with people and every window and balcony had its occupants. As the little procession made its way down the main street to the harbour area, following the band which was playing "Sambre et Meuse", it was greeted with the most lively enthusiasm. Cheering and applause were incessant; great numbers of flowers were thrown at the marchers; it was an extraordinary demonstration of gratitude and affection, which the Canadian visitors found very moving.

13. After further ceremonies at the Chambre de Commerce, the Prime Minister's party returned to Paris in the early evening.

14. Among those present during these ceremonies at Dieppe were the Senior Officers of the three Canadian Services in the United Kingdom (Lt.-Gen. J.C. Murchie, Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q.; Air Vice-Marshal R.E. McBurney, R.C.A.F. Liaison Officer; and Capt. A.M. Hope, R.C.N.) Major-General J.H. Roberts, the Military Force Commander for the Dieppe operation of 1942, was also present.

NOTES ON TOPOGRAPHY, ETC., DIEPPE AREA.

15. The following additional facts relative to the terrain of the Dieppe area are set down here as a matter of convenient record. These paragraphs should be read in conjunction with the entries in the Diary of Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., for 2, 3 and 5 Sep 44.

16. It should be noted that the invariable local spelling of the village called on our operational maps Puits is PUYs. This spelling is used on road signs and also in a booklet prepared by the local committee to commemorate the events of 1942 here.

17. Puits is an extraordinarily strong position. There is low ground beyond the sea-wall only at its east end, where the road reaches the beach. On the western section, a steep high bank rises close behind the sea-wall. At the top of this bank a small German gun, probably 5-cm, still remains in an open position.

18. It is quite clear that the defences here were materially strengthened after the raid of 1942. Local people confirm that the concrete pillbox adjacent to the house half-way up the east cliff (Diary of Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., 5 Sep 44) was in action on 19 Aug 42 and was responsible for many casualties. They stated, however, that another heavy concrete position on the same cliff directly below (i.e., only a short distance above the beach) had been constructed later. Pretty clearly, this was also the case with three concrete gun-emplacements, including the one in the west cliff.

19. The sea-wall at Puits is steep and high. At the far west end of it is the double set of steps referred to in the evidence of survivors of the fighting here. The ramp leading to the beach further east has now been restored.

20. The "Carrefour des Canadiens" at the village called on our maps Bas de Hautot, which apparently is known locally as Petit Appeville, is reported by the people to mark the furthest penetration of the Canadians on 19 Aug 42. M. Grau, the Mayor of the commune of Hautot-sur-Mer, which includes this area, told the writer on 19 Aug 46 that seven soldiers (he did not know their unit, but it must have been Camerons of C.) reached this point (the road junction at 207660) and indeed got a little beyond it, to his own house, whose position I could not definitely identify.

21. The ground on either side of the lower reaches of the River Scie is steep and commanding; this is particularly true of the east bank in the area of Caude-Cote and Quatre Vents Ferme. The straight road running through Pourville across the mouth of the Scie is completely commanded from the east by this high ground. The houses on either side of this road have all been destroyed, but the bridge where Lt.-Col. Merritt distinguished himself still exists.

22. The Secretary of the Dieppe Mairie, M. Roger Lefebvre has written a book entitled "Zone Cotiere" (Dieppe, Imprimerie Dieppoise, 1946). This book (a copy of which is in D.H.S. Library, C.M.H.Q.) affords an interesting account of the experiences of the civilian population of the Dieppe area during the occupation, and deals at some length with the raid itself. M. Lefebvre had much to do with the burial of the British and Canadian soldiers who fell in the raid. It is clear that M. Lefebvre lived at Pourville. He mentions (page 60) that the Casino at Dieppe was blown up by the Germans on 5 Sep 42. It is worth noting (pages 41-2) that the Germans began blowing up houses which interfered with the fire of their beach defences as early as 29 Jun 42. It is also of interest

to note (page 135) that on 28 Aug 44 the Germans, who had decided by this time not to defend Dieppe, demanded horses to remove the artillery from their blockhouses. This explains the fact that so many emplacements were empty when we entered the town four days later.

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23. Attached as Appendix "B" are certain notes on the topography of the battlefields of Lower Normandy, prepared as a result of the tours mentioned in para 4 above. These notes are supplementary to those resulting from a visit of Capt. R.A. Spencer of Hist Sec., C.M.H.Q., to the battlefields from Calais to the Normandy beaches in July and August 1946. Capt. Spencer's notes will be available at both Hist Sec., C.M.H.Q. and Hist Sec. (G.S.), D.N.D., along with about 170 photographs of terrain taken during his tour.

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VISIT TO BATTLEFIELDS OF LOWER NORMANDY

by the Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada and Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Major-General George P. Vanier, D.S.O., M.C., Canadian Ambassador to France, August, 1946.

1. The Prime Minister's party left the Hotel Crillon, Paris, shortly after 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, 10 August, 1946. The party drove by way of Mantes and Evreux and was met at the boundary of the Department of Calvados (near l'Hotellerie) by M. Pasquier, Secretaire General de la Prefecture. M. Pasquier accompanied the Prime Minister throughout his tour until his departure from Falaise for Paris on the evening of 11th August.
2. The party drove on to Caen by way of Lisieux, which is greatly damaged. Many signs of battle were also visible in the vicinity of Cagny, south-east of Caen. At the city limits of Caen the Prime Minister was met by a motorcycle escort and the party proceeded to the mairie, where the leading dignitaries of the city were assembled for a vin d'honneur. The Mayor (M. Guillou) read an address of welcome. The Prime Minister replied briefly in French and at somewhat greater length in English, the English remarks being subsequently translated by General Vanier.
3. The party then proceeded to the Prefecture of the Department of Calvados, where an official luncheon was served. M. Pasquier, the Prime Minister and the Ambassador made short speeches.
4. The luncheon was not over till about 4 p.m. The party then left to tour the battlefields south of Caen. Driving south on the main road to Falaise (Route Nationale No. 158, the Canadian axis of advance in July and August 1944) they turned off to the eastward to visit the villages on the gently rising ground hereabouts which were so bitterly disputed in the latter part of July and the early days of August. The route passed through Bras and Hubert-Folie. After a short pause on a railway bridge which affords a fine view in all directions, the convoy reached Bourguebus, a greatly damaged village which was in the Canadian front line at the end of July 1944. Here the Prime Minister was received by the local authorities and the children of the village sang for him. The ceremonies took place in one of the wooden huts of which the village is now largely composed.
5. The party drove on through what was No Man's Land in July 1944 to the remains of the village of Tilly-la-Campagne. This place now scarcely exists, the sites of the houses being marked merely by neat piles of stones. Canadian tanks still stand where they were knocked out in the fierce attacks on this village (delivered by the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, the Calgary Highlanders and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment) and two enemy self-propelled guns still remain in the middle of the village, pointing outwards.
6. The party now moved on, crossing the main Falaise road, to the mining village of Rocquencourt, also greatly damaged, whose ruined church-tower dominates the area. The convoy then drove on west to Fontenay-le-Marmion. At the crossroads in this hamlet the Prime Minister was met by the entire population, headed by the mayor, who formally welcomed him. A streamer across the road read in flowers "Honneur au Canada". The Prime Minister was presented with flowers and with a gift, and the school children sang "O Canada" and (in English) "God Save the King". The "Marseillaise" was also sung. The Prime Minister and the Ambassador replied to the welcome in suitable terms.

7. At Fontenay the convoy turned north and crossed the west end of the ridge which was so significant a tactical feature during the fighting in this region. On the north side of the ridge a halt was made to enable the Prime Minister to survey the ground, including the villages of St. Andre-sur-Orne and St. Martin-de-Fontenay, over which the Calgary Highlanders and the Canadian Black Watch made their gallant and costly attacks on 25 July 1944. The party then returned to the main Falaise road and drove south to the Canadian cemetery which goes by the name of Bretteville-sur-Laize but is actually situated on the main road near Cintheaux. At the cemetery a very large number of French people had assembled; the mayors of the nearby villages welcomed the Prime Minister, flowers were presented to him and the children sang. After replying to the addresses and thanking the people for their solicitude for the graves of our dead, the Prime Minister walked about the cemetery.
8. The party now drove on to the south. At Grainville-Langannerie it left the main road to visit the spot east of Estrees-la-Campagne where the British Columbia and Algonquin Regiments ran into the enemy's new gun-screen on 9 August 1944. Many of the British Columbia Regiment's tanks remain on the spot to testify to the heavy losses sustained here. The Prime Minister was shown the memorial cross erected by the 4th Canadian Armoured Division in honour of the men who fell here.
9. Returning to the main road, the Prime Minister's party drove on into Falaise, a town almost totally destroyed by bombing. Here the Prime Minister was received at the mairie by the mayor, Doctor Galloue. The Prime Minister and the Ambassador replied, and the Canadian party was tendered a vin d'honneur.
10. Although it was now late in the evening, the unexpected reception from crowds along the route having upset the time table, the party drove south-east through the "Falaise Gap" of 1944. At St. Lambert-sur-Dives (the village where Major D.V. Currie of the South Alberta Regiment won the Victoria Cross) the Prime Minister was received by the sous-prefet and the mayor. He was again presented with flowers, some of which he placed on the village war memorial, and there was the usual exchange of addresses of welcome and thanks.
11. The party then drove to Chambois, the village where the Falaise Gap was finally closed at 7:00 in the evening of 19 August 1944, by the junction of the 1st Polish Armoured Division (operating under the First Canadian Army) with the 90th United States Infantry Division. Here addresses were presented at the mairie and replies were made by the Prime Minister and the Ambassador, as well as by Mr. Brooke Claxton, Minister of Health and Welfare, who spoke in French. The church bells were rung in honour of the occasion.
12. The Canadian party now returned to Falaise, where a dinner was tendered the Prime Minister in a nearby chateau, the home of M. Jaquet, Secretary General for Reconstruction for the Department of Calvados. The dinner began about 10:30 p.m. and finished only about 1:30 a.m. The party then returned by motor to Caen, where the Prime Minister and the Ambassador spent the night at the Prefecture.
13. On the morning of Sunday, 11 August, the Prime Minister, the Ambassador and their party left Caen to tour the beaches on which the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division made its assault landing on 6 June 1944. En route, the Prime Minister stopped at a crossroads just north of Caen where General Crerar had an observation post during the operations in this area. This point commands a splendid view of Caen and the country to the south.

14. The party reached the sea at St. Aubin-sur-Mer, where the entire population of the village was assembled beside the beach and the Prime Minister was received with an address of welcome by the mayor and was given flowers by several children of the village. The Prime Minister, the Ambassador and Mr. Claxton replied. These ceremonies at St. Aubin were completely unexpected and had been spontaneously organized by the local authorities.

15. The party drove on westward to Bernieres-sur-Mer, where the Prime Minister was again received with addresses of welcome and was shown the memorial which commemorates the landing here of Le Régiment de la Chaudière. One of the principal streets of this village has been named "Rue de la Chaudière". The Prime Minister walked down to the beach and climbed into a tank landing craft which still lies on the sand here.

16. The next stop was at Courseulles-sur-Mer, where there was a more informal reception. The Prime Minister said a few words in French in answer to the mayor's welcome, and visited the village war memorial, where a band played "O Canada". The Prime Minister mounted one of the German gun emplacements on the beach and was able to get a good impression of the nature of the beach defences, which were very strong at this point. A Canadian amphibious tank was visible, half submerged in the water offshore.

17. From Courseulles the party drove to the Canadian cemetery north of Beny-sur-Mer. Here many hundreds of people from the neighbouring villages had assembled. A short religious service was held at the cross of sacrifice in the cemetery. During the service the Prime Minister spoke in English, his remarks being translated by the Ambassador. The ceremonies ended with the singing of the "Marseillaise".

18. The party now proceeded to Arromanches, the site of the famous artificial harbour. Here there was an informal reception on the beach and the Prime Minister received more flowers. He viewed the remains of the harbour. The concrete breakwaters and many of the sunken blockships still remain, but the pierheads and the roadways leading to them have now been removed.

19. The schedule had again been upset by the unexpected receptions along the route and the party was an hour late at the Hotel de Ville in Bayeux. Here the municipality tendered a ceremonial luncheon, at which the Prime Minister met four young ladies of the Canadian Red Cross Society who are working in Bayeux. The Prime Minister replied to the mayor's address of welcome, dwelling on his wartime association with General de Gaulle. His remarks were again translated by the Ambassador. After the luncheon, the party visited the public library adjacent to the cathedral where the Prime Minister was shown the famous Bayeux Tapestry which commemorates the Norman conquest of England.

20. From Bayeux the party drove to the Chateau d'Audrieu. Here the Prime Minister was received by the owner, Colonel Level-Livry, who is also the mayor of Audrieu. Colonel Level wore the uniform of a Squadron-Leader of the R.A.F., decorated with the Star of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour and the ribbons of the British D.S.O. and D.F.C. and bar. He explained in an address of welcome, read in English, that he feared that he was now wearing this uniform for the last time.

He conducted the Prime Minister to the point in the garden of the chateau where 19 Canadian soldiers, chiefly of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, were murdered by the Germans on 8 June 1944. The Prime Minister placed on the spot the flowers previously presented to him by the children of the village. The party then returned to the chateau, a beautiful 18th century building, where the Prime Minister and the Ambassador were tendered a vin d'honneur. The return to Caen was made by way of Carpiquet, where the Prime Minister drove across the airfield which was the scene of such bitter fighting by the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade early in July 1944.

21. In Caen the party drove to the church of Saint-Etienne ("Abbaye aux Hommes"), where Mr. King was received by the Monsignor. The Church was illuminated in his honour, and the organ played "O Canada" while the Canadian party was conducted around it. Mr. King was shown the empty tomb of William the Conqueror near the high altar.

22. The party now drove to Falaise by Route Nationale No. 158. Mr. King visited the castle of Falaise and was shown the room which is reputed to be the birthplace of the Conqueror. He also saw the marks of the shots fired by Canadian guns in the course of clearing German snipers from the castle at the time of the capture of the town by the 2nd Canadian Division on 16 and 17 August 1944.

23. At Falaise the Prime Minister and the Ambassador said goodbye to M. Pasquier and the Canadian party returned to Paris during the evening by way of Argentan, Laigle, Dreux and Versailles, reaching the Hotel Crillon at about 11:30 p.m. on 11 August.

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CPS/MJM
22 August 46.

NOTES ON TOPOGRAPHY, ETC., OF THE
BATTLEFIELDS OF LOWER NORMANDY

1. These notes are the result of a hurried visit to the Canadian battlefields of Lower Normandy on 9, 10 and 11 Aug 46.
2. The writer accompanied the Prime Minister of Canada on a tour of the battlefields made at this time. The Prime Minister arrived at Caen at lunchtime on 10 Aug and during the afternoon and early evening was conducted on a tour of the battlefields south of Caen, covering the following route: Faubourg de Vaucelles - Bras - Bourguebus - Tilly-la-Campagne - Rocquancourt - Fontenay-le-Marmion - road junction square 0361 - road junction square 0561 - Canadian cemetery 080542 - Grainville-Langannerie - Falaise - Trun - St. Lambert-sur-Dives - Chambois.
3. On 11 Aug the Prime Minister visited some of the battlefields north of Caen, travelling by road junction 036701 - Langrune-sur-Mer - St. Aubin-sur-Mer - Bernieres-sur-Mer - Courseulles-sur-Mer - Canadian cemetery north of Beny-sur-Mer - Arromanches - Bayeux - Audrieu - Carpiquet - Caen (Abbaye aux Hommes) - Falaise (castle).
4. In addition to accompanying the Prime Minister on the above tour the writer reconnoitred the route south of Caen independently on 9 Aug.

Villages and Sites South of Caen

5. The country south of Caen is in general open, but always contains enough small woods and other tree cover to conceal anti-tank guns. There are few really steep slopes, but the general tendency is a gentle steady rise as one drives southward from the vicinity of Cormelles. The enemy always had the advantage of excellent observation over the ground across which we had to attack. This is fertile wheat-growing country, and at the time of the visit the Norman farmers were reaping a very bounteous harvest. The countryside is lovely and peaceful; the contrast with its grim aspect in 1944 is remarkable.
6. There is an excellent view from the railway bridge between Hubert-Folie and Bourguebus. The factories at Colombelles, which stand on high ground, are very prominent. Several enemy tanks are visible in the fields north of the bridge. Bourguebus is much damaged and the population are in the main accommodated in wooden huts.
7. Tilly-la-Campagne is completely destroyed, the sites of the buildings being marked only by heaps of stones. The trees about the village have been considerably damaged. As one approaches it from the north-east one sees to the left of the road several Sherman tanks, evidently knocked out while attacking the village. Just short of the village on the right stands a flail tank. In the middle of the village two German self-propelled guns stand close together, pointing outwards; a Sherman, perhaps knocked out by one of them, is close by. Rocquancourt is greatly damaged, and its church-tower, still a prominent object, is much mutilated. The mine buildings and shaft-tower to the south-east are very conspicuous landmarks.
8. Driving west from Rocquancourt to Fontenay-le-Marmion one appreciates the tactical importance of the Verrieres ridge. Verrieres itself is not in a particularly commanding position, as it lies on the lower north-east portion of this ridge; but to the west of it the ground rises steadily and dominates the surrounding country both north and south. Fontenay-le-Marmion

lies close under the relatively steep southern slope, and the road leading north out of the village climbs rapidly. The opposite side of the ridge, facing the north, has a more gentle slope. The top of the ridge is relatively flat, and one has to drive to about 037610 before getting a view to the north and west. From here one looks down on St. Andre-sur-Orne and St. Martin de Fontenay from a considerable elevation. The mine just south of St. Martin, with its shaft tower, is prominent. May-sur-Orne cannot be seen. The Black Watch, attacking from the mine towards Fontenay on 25 Jul 44, were assailing a decidedly commanding feature. Their route affords no cover. In 1946, as in 1944, it was sown in wheat or some similar grain.

9. The tanks of 28 Cdn Armd Regt (B.C. Regt), or many of them, still remain on the field where this unit and part of the Algonquin Regiment was almost destroyed, east of Estrees-la-Campagne, at about 143490. The tanks are on high ground, but there is slightly higher ground to the south, from which doubtless much of the enemy fire came. The tanks are greatly damaged; one, "Boss", had been penetrated by at least six shots, probably of 88-mm calibre. These shots appear to have come from a generally south-westerly direction, doubtless from a gun or guns concealed in trees on the skyline. The field where the tanks stand is full of scrubby trees and bushes, and it is difficult to count them, but they appear to be about 20 in number. Several of them stand by hedges where they have evidently sought covered positions from which to fire. A German 88-mm gun stands nearby, in rear (north) of the tanks, at 143496, alongside the road from Estrées-la-Campagne to Maizières. This is an unshielded dual-purpose gun of the early type. It may perhaps have been overrun by the tanks during their initial advance. A German half-tracked vehicle lies alongside it. (It may be remarked that a shielded 88 remains among trees on the south side (080542) of the Canadian cemetery at Cintheaux).

10. At Quesnay, immediately east of the main road to Falaise, three M.10 tank destroyers, bearing unit number 77, stand beside the road. The village is much damaged. Quesnay Wood is only a stretch of scrub and small trees, but many trees were doubtless destroyed by our bombing.

11. The mines at Aisy (the title on the office building is "Mines de Soumont"), on the high ground north of Potigny, are undamaged, and their lofty structures are visible for many miles. The village of Bons-Tassilly has been almost completely destroyed, at least so far as the houses on the main road are concerned. From here to Falaise, however, there is considerably less destruction along the road. The Laison River where it crosses Route Nationale No. 158 is hardly more than a ditch.

Falaise and The Gap

12. Falaise is in great part destroyed; this is particularly the case in the central part of the town between Route Nationale 158 and the Hotel de Ville below the castle. The Hotel de Ville itself still stands, however, and the statue of William the Conqueror in the square in front of it is undamaged. The castle has suffered comparatively little damage, although it has been fired at and one chamber in the round tower ("Tour Talbot") shows the marks of fire (probably 6-pounder shot) evidently directed at a window which was used by a sniper. These shots evidently came from the rocky cliff directly across the valley of the Ante.

13. The area of the "Gap" has been much cleaned up, although a few enemy vehicles remain in the ditches. On the high ground on either side of the main Trun-Chambois road at 333277 there is a large dump of enemy equipment. It includes several Panther tanks and a large number of 88-mm guns (probably about 20). The majority of these guns have shields, though some have not. Guns of other types are also present, including one field gun with wooden wheels.

14. Neither St. Lambert-sur-Dives nor Chambois appear to be very badly damaged. At Chambois a sign at the main crossroads (now called "Place de la Victoire") commemorates the junction of the Poles with the Americans, on 19 Aug 44. The local priest told me that the actual point of junction was on the high ground just to the north-east of the village.

15. In my drives about these battlefields and their vicinity I saw many Panther tanks, but only one which I could definitely identify as a Tiger. This was on the southern outskirts of Vimoutiers.

The Canadian Beaches

16. The enthusiastic reception which the local population accorded the Prime Minister made it impossible for me to see as much of the beach defences from St. Aubin to Courseulles as I would have wished. I saw nothing at St. Aubin except some derelict craft offshore. At Bernieres I had a better opportunity and was able to note the concrete defences above the seawall here (see photograph, "Canada's Battle in Normandy", page 54). These defences are slightly east of the railway station. Some craft remain on the beach here, including the forepart of an L.C.T. which the Prime Minister climbed over.

17. At Courseulles there are many concrete defences. There is definitely a group of concrete emplacements at the east end of the village's beach, and others on either side of the harbour mouth. A Sherman tank stands half-submerged in the water just off the west side of the harbour mouth. There is a small gun in an open position on the east side, a few yards inland. Some of the blockships of a "Gooseberry" shelter, including an old British cruiser, still lie offshore.

18. The Canadian cemetery north of Beny-sur-Mer has a finely elevated situation, overlooking the sea and all the beaches on which 3 Cdn Inf Div landed.

19. At Arromanches the concrete breakwaters of the artificial harbour and many of the sunken ships remain, but the pierheads and roadways leading to them are gone.

20. The town of Bayeux is quite undamaged.

21. At Carpiquet airfield the hangars and other buildings still stand, in the main, but are greatly damaged. The sheet-metal walls of the hangars which we passed in approaching the village from the direction of Marcelet display innumerable small holes, doubtless the result of shell and bomb splinters and perhaps to some extent of small arms fire.

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