

39 Combat Engineer Regiment

D-Day and Normandy highlights of the Regiment's 6 Field Squadron (now known as 6 Engineer Squadron).

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower



Juno Beach - Regina Rifles Assault Wave



Here was the Army, the Air Force and the Navy all working as a real team. Gone were all thoughts of Seniority and past records. Each branch of the service was giving of its best, and results were to show that the best was good enough, to start rolling back the carpet of enemy troops, giving the Allies a slim foothold on the Continent and to presage, months later, the final defeat and surrender of all the German Armies.

Now to the -job at hand The Assaulting Companies of the 7th GIB (Canadian Infantry Brigade) went in at "H" hour which was 0735 hours on the bright, clear morning of June 6th, 1944. A momentous day.

This Unit's first landings were on "Mike" and "Nan" beaches at COURSUELLES-sur-MER. The assault party from No. 2 Platoon went in with the forward Companies of the Regina Rifles and the Winnipeg Rifle Regt. at H plus five minutes, encountering very heavy resistance from the pill boxes and machine gun nests that were still active despite the many hours of heavy bombardment suffered during the preceding night. This was no mean enemy. The Assault Engineers assisted the Infantry to get off the beach and then accompanied them inland where they reached their objective near le FRESNE CAMILLY at about 2300 hours. No. 1 Platoon landed 70 minutes later and still met quite heavy but intermittent fire from mortars and snipers. Despite this, they proceeded to clear "Mike" exit of mines, where they found some French mines encased in wooden boxes making them more difficult to locate with the mine detectors.

When this exit from the beach was clear, the platoon moved inland along the 7th CIB route searching for mines and doing any other Engineer chores that came their way. They passed through GRAY-sur-MER, BANVILLE, REVIERS, AMBLIE and on to le FRESNE CAMILLY. Very heavy opposition was not encountered, although one nasty sniper had to be dislodged from a church steeple. This was accomplished by putting a few well aimed shots from an SP gun through the steeple and the march inland went forward. A number of prisoners were captured and sent back to the beach with an Infantry escort.

Headquarters marching party caught up with the bulldozers and a few tipper lorries and after thumbing a ride proceeded inland with them. By this time No. 3 Platoon and the remainder of No. 2 Platoon had landed and were at work clearing mines and making road repairs along the Brigade route. At dark they assembled and spent the night in REVIERS, while HQ bivouacked at le FRESNE CAMILLY. Altogether it had been a day of high tension and excitement, but by evening every one of the landing party were seasoned soldiers, that is, those that were left. Our losses were heavy, particularly No. 2 Platoon, which was the first to land.

KILLED IN ACTION—L.-Sgt. W. F. Stewart, Sprs. M. G. Adams, A. Bleoo, IL N. Brewer, A. T. Jackson, L. Lacroix, A. J. L. Martin, J. E. Sawdon, R. R. Sparkes, R. D. Tarlington and A. H. Johnson, who by the way, received the doubtful honour of being named as the first Official casualty on the assault. Actually he was the first to receive official burial in an Army cemetery.

WOUNDED AND LATER DIED OF WOUNDS—L.-Cpl. G. H. Cooper and L-Cpl. J. T. K. Ferguson.

WOUNDED AND EVACUATED TO HOSPITAL SHIP were L.- Sgt. W A. Meek, Cpl. P. H. Wilkinson and Sprs. N. F. Rundle, J. Dusault, W Beehler, O. W. Bezeau, A. E. Goodrum, R. C. Jackson, J. McKay, T. G. McDonald, T. B. McCarthy, J. L. W. Poirier, N. Sopher, R. C. Spencer, J. P. Sweda, S. W Wilkins and F. Zarebinski.

MISSING IN ACTION from a minefield operation were: Sprs. W. E. Campbell, J. lonel and G. A. Benner.

Altogether it was a costly day for the Company and a sad day for those whose loved ones would not return. The price we pay for FREEDOM is ghastly.

The Company has had its baptism of fire and superlatives are not needed for the remainder of this account. The next few chapters will consist mainly of facts and figures regarding our actions and accomplishments during the remaining months of the conflict.”