

TORONTO NAVY VETERAN BACK TO WAR ZONE

A British Port, Feb. 28.—A veteran of Dieppe, North Africa, Sicily and Salerno, Sub. Lt. Jack Dean, R.C. N.V.R., of Toronto, has just arrived back in Britain to return to combined operations after a short period of leave in Canada.

Dean, now 22, helped to ferry the Fusiliers de Montreal to the blood-stained beaches of Dieppe in 1941. With a Canadian flotilla of landing craft, he took part in the invasion of North Africa in the fall of 1942. Criss-crossing the Mediterranean twice again, Dean was with the Canadians who landed troops and supplies on the beaches of Sicily and later at Salerno and Naples when the fighting started on the Italian mainland.

Dean said here that Dieppe was the worst ordeal he had endured or witnessed during his two years in combined operations.

"We had to go in under heavy fire, and we were bothered all through the operation by aircraft shooting up the craft," he said. The worst damage was done by German flak. They were firing at us with anti-aircraft shells that exploded at a low level over our heads.

Landed Near Casino.

The flotilla landed the troops near the now-famous casino on the Dieppe beach. Soldiers and many of the young navy men who manned the landing craft were early casualties. One crew was taken prisoner and an officer and three ratings were killed during the first landing. Others were wounded and when Dean's craft left the beach it carried three infantrymen who had been hit before the landing craft reached the beach.

"We went back out to a destroyer with the wounded," he said, "and a few minutes later we started back for the beach with an army officer who was trying to land a radio set. But by then the fire was so heavy that our section of the beach was cut off. I saw our flotilla officer (Lieut. R. J. McRae, D.S.C., R.C.N. V.R.) come off the beach with his craft once and then try to go back in. None of us saw him again. We found out later he had been taken prisoner."

No Casualty Among Crew.

Dean's craft went through the Dieppe operation without a casualty among the crew. "We were lucky," he said. "It was our first big show and when it was over we knew we had been through something. We were all jumpy, all showed signs of shock."

In the North Africa invasion Dean was in an L.C.M. (landing craft mechanized), which landed on the coast between Oran and Algiers in the face of light machine-gun fire and ran a shuttle service from ships to shore.

"We worked steadily for 11 days," Dean said. "It was a 24-hour-a-day job and we would catch a couple of hours' sleep at night if the sea was calm when they were loading or unloading."

Dean's landing-craft carried United States troops ashore and then ferried in supplies — bulldozers, ammunition and tons of light equipment—until the merchant ships were empty. He returned to Britain and obtained his commission as a sub-lieutenant, and in a few months was back in the Mediterranean, taking troops ashore in Sicily.

Sicily A "Quiet Show."

"Sicily was a quiet show," Dean said. "Our flotilla made its landing near Syracuse after the first assault."

At Salerno in Italy Dean found things greatly changed since the beach fighting at Dieppe.

"The troops went ashore under the most tremendous air cover we had ever seen," he said. The Germans were obviously not giving up without a hell of a fight, but we had plenty to hit them with and the beaches were held. The day after the first landing we were taking in a group of United States army nurses to help set up a hospital."

Sub-Lieut. Dean was married during his recent leave, two days before he had to return to the east coast for passage to Britain. His wife, the former Irvine Elder of Toronto, lives at 150 Cranbrooke Ave.

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