

Abstract

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British and American Special Forces in World War II: Easy Company and the No. 4 Commando
(Under the Direction of DR. JOHN MORROW JR.)

A study of the British No. 4 Commando and Easy Company of the 2nd Battalion 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the United States 101st Airborne Division exposes a further understanding of Special Forces in World War II. Both the United States and Great Britain devised these Special Forces in 1940 in order to create an offensive to slow the invading Axis powers. The objectives, training, and doctrine remained distinct for the paratroopers and the commandos, who all volunteered to join the overtly dangerous forces. A look at the raids for which each unit is best recalled, Dieppe for the No. 4 Commando and D-Day for Easy Company, illustrates the demands put on the men and the successes in their endeavors. Lord Lovat led the No. 4 Commando in Dieppe and Dick Winters led Easy Company on D-Day, but these men also led their special forces in many other battles studied in this work. The upbringing of both leaders and their actions post war warrant attention in an attempt to understand how these men came to lead as courageously and brilliantly as they arguably did throughout the war. This study is primarily focused on Easy Company, the No. 4 Commando, their actions during World War II, and the impact these men had on Allied victories.

INDEX WORDS: Easy Company 2nd Battalion 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment United States 101st Airborne Division, British No. 4 Commandos, Lieutenant Lord Lovat, Major Dick Winters, World War II, D-Day, Dieppe

BRITISH AND AMERICAN SPECIAL FORCES IN WORLD WAR II:
EASY COMPANY AND THE NO. 4 COMMANDO

by

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DEDICATION

My Great Great Uncle David Kenyon Webster inspired me to write this work, and as such I dedicate this thesis to him. He bravely volunteered to fight in WWII with intent to fight for his country and gain the experience needed to write about the experience of a paratrooper in WWII. Webster's memoir, Parachute Infantry: An American Paratrooper's Memoir of D-Day and the Fall of the Third Reich, is nothing short of brilliantly captivating and eye-opening. His memoir's foreword by Stephen Ambrose and his character on the HBO series Band of Brothers lend credibly to his memory and all the members of Easy Company. Though I have never met my Great Grandmother's incredible brother, he died exploring the world of sharks in the Pacific Ocean, his spirit for adventure, his courage, and his intellect are attributes I desire to achieve daily. The love of history that is fostered by those close to me, first and foremost by my dad who encourages me and shares my enthusiasm along with the support that comes from my mom, sister, grandmother, extended family and friends leaves me forever grateful. Without a doubt, I owe my passion for history and decision to make it my field of study to my high school history teacher Mr. Westphal, and also to the many great history professors at UGA including Dr. Morrow and Oxford University's Dr. Archer. I hope that in writing this thesis I not only captured my enthusiasm for the discipline, but that I have made those who have lent their support proud. Thank you to all of you for your constant support, encouragement, and enthusiasm for a subject I love so much. I dedicate this thesis to you.

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CHAPTER ONE

NO. 4 COMMANDO AND EASY COMPANY PARATROOPERS

The British Commandos, particularly the No. 4 Commando, and Easy Company of the 2nd Battalion 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the United States 101st Airborne Division both exemplify the courage, brotherhood, determination, skill, and the utmost mental and physical strength of men fighting in World War II. Though they originated on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the formulation of both the No. 4 Commando and Easy Company as Special Service Forces unites them historically, as does the dire need of new tactics to help create an offensive to counter the advancing Germans and Axis powers in the 1940's. Similarly, all the men in these forces were volunteers; thus bravery and determination were necessarily marked qualities of the men freely joining those initially independent regiments intended for particularly dangerous assignments. While similarities abound, so too do differences. The Commandos and the Parachute Infantry Regiment were both devised in 1940; however, British Commandos saw combat anywhere from three to four years before the Americans would have their chance. While the paratroopers of Easy Company dropped from planes, the No. 4 Commandos made amphibious landings by sea-craft. No. 4 Commando is best known for its attack on Dieppe August 19, 1942; and Easy Company, for its heroic actions on D-Day June 6, 1944.

An even closer look at both of these Special Forces avails itself through the two men who led them. Strong courageous leadership was common to both Easy Company and the No. 4 Commando. Brigadier Lord Lovat and Major Dick Winters, head of No. 4 Commando and Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) Easy Company respectively, were exemplary individuals of great integrity and courage under fire, with a rare ability to take men beyond where they thought

they could go. The similarities and differences in tactics across nations fighting for the same objective are vital to historical understanding. Historians and World War II enthusiasts alike will recall much about Easy Company from the sheer volume of literature and film devoted to these men. However, British Commandos were arguably as impressive, daring, and essential to the war effort and the ultimate Allied victory, as a comparative study of the British Commandos and American Paratroopers will show.

Therefore it is fitting to start at the beginning with the creation of the new Special Forces both in the United States and in Great Britain. Formed in 1940, the British Commando began fighting almost immediately thereafter. The Commandos evolved as a reaction to the fall of France and the evacuation of Dunkirk. Determination drove Winston Churchill to create an offensive force to harass and slow the ever- invading German forces. The overall objective was to create the opportunity to “Strike back hard and effectively against German- occupied Europe.”¹ What Churchill had in mind were seaborne hit-and- run raids against the German Wehrmacht. One might wonder, why not simply use a pre-existing unit and train them to reach Commando status instead of recruiting men from the rank and file of the British forces? The problem was that no singular unit could be spared; they were all desperately needed to defend the Isle from Hitler and Mussolini and to prevent the fall of Great Britain. To take a few men from regiments already in place was less taxing on each unit and still provided the opportunity for an aggressive offensive.

On June 10, 1940 Lt. Col. Dudley Clarke began to draw up extensive plans for the new raiding force. Many of the ideas outlined in the proposal stemmed from the Boer Commandos who were so effective against the British during the Second Boer War lasting from 1899-1902. The idea of creating a force that more closely resembled guerrillas, as opposed to the otherwise

¹ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 4.

more strictly regimented British Forces, was an original, experimental, and ultimately brilliant plan. Churchill and the War Staff greeted Clarke's proposal with enthusiasm and high hopes. The War Office issued a call to arms for volunteers to join the new branch of the Special Service Brigade Commandos. In fact, this call was made nation-wide the day before Clarke's detailed proposal with the new recruits being titled as part of independent companies, not Commandos. The proposal outlined many key aspects and stated:

“The main characteristics of a Commando in action are being capable of operating independently for 24 hours; capable of very wide dispersion and individual action; not capable of resisting an attack or overcoming a defense of formed bodies of troops, i.e. specializing in tip and run tactics dependent for their success upon speed, ingenuity and dispersion.”²

Thus the men were light infantry, equipped as such, and trained for this purpose only. Simply stated, these men had little to no business defending, but rather their sole objective was the quick and devastating offensive.

Although an experimental unit, the Commandos quickly exemplified British determination to fight the Axis. The response of volunteers was surprising considering how little they knew about the new Special Force. Unlike the Americans who later volunteered for the paratroopers, British volunteers were men already in service in other units. They had already undergone and passed basic and much more extensive training. Furthermore, these men had to request their commanding officers to release them for Commando service. As a result only the very best joined the Commandos, and the rank and file lost many of its best men to the nine new Commando units. Selection for the Royal Marine Commandos speaks volumes of the volunteers. Not only were these men brave, daring, and adventurous. They offered themselves up for

² Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 10.

something they knew little to nothing about at a huge risk to secure the fate of their country. They were, without a doubt, among the best Britain had to offer.

The volunteers who did make it through the extensive training were seconded to the Commandos, meaning that they still remained part, at least on the books, of their original regiments. Young men came from all over the country to create the British Commandos. While many volunteered, a shortage of sufficient equipment, arms, and funds slowed the recruiting process particularly from the southern region (The No. 4 Commando was under Southern Command with men coming primarily from that region). While men may have been outstanding for their original units, that strength did not promise them a place in the highly selective Commando units, nor did it promise greater pay. Many men were humiliatingly returned to their original units (RTUed) if they were not deemed well suited for the Commando.

If the Commandos were to succeed as an amphibious raiding force, they would require the best the country had to offer; the War Office and Commanding Officers were not willing to save time by taking men who were less than the very best. Men had to show the ability to act quickly and individually, expose mental strength, physical strength, endurance, and an aptitude for sea adventure. Acting in pairs was a vital part of the Commando tactic. Men had to shed what they had learned in basic training and learn to trust their own judgment and instinct as well as that of their partners. Those in command needed assurance that the judgment of their recruits was top-notch, primarily because there was not always someone available to give them direct orders once engaged in an assault. Training (that will be discussed in a further chapter) assured this through the use of specific strategies. For example, giving men a time and place to be but leaving it up to them to find a way to reach the destination 100 miles or more away was common.

Across the Atlantic, the 101st Airborne Paratroopers were not an entirely new concept for the American Army. In fact, American General William Mitchell proposed the idea of a parachute regiment in WWI, which likely would have been employed had it not been for the Armistice. Due to the Armistice demobilization and the lack of foresight for a later tactical offensive, a parachute regiment was not put into place. Germany, however, was a step ahead of the United States and became the first Army to use paratroopers in combat in 1940.³ The United States Army created an American Parachute Test Platoon and developed it into an official company in October 1940.⁴ From this Test Platoon grew the 101st Airborne, who trained under the command of General William C. Lee, the “Father of the Airborne.” After the 82nd Infantry division was divided to create the 101st in 1942 General Lee famously remarked that, “The 101st Airborne division has no history but it has a rendezvous with destiny.”⁵ General Lee’s supposition was proven valid in many ways.

In July 1942 Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Regiment 101st Airborne was finally assembled three years after the war first began to rage in Europe. “The 506th was an experimental outfit, the first parachute infantry regiment in which the men would take their basic training and their jump training together, as a unit.”⁶ Due to its experimental status it took a year for the outfit to become a part of the 101st Airborne as the Screaming Eagles. “Easy Company was divided into three platoons with a headquarters section...” Furthermore, each platoon comprised “three twelve-man rifle squads plus a six-man mortar team squad to a platoon.”⁷ All together these various sections created Easy Company, part of the 2nd Battalion of the 506th along with Dog,

³ James A Huston, “Tactical Use of Airpower in WWII: The Army Experience,” *Military Affairs* 14, no.4 (1950) (Winter): 166-185.

⁴ Philip Katcher, *US 101st Airborne Division 1942-1945* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1978), 4.

⁵ Mark Bando, *The 101st at Normandy* (Osceola, Wisconsin: MBI Publishing Company, 1994), 9.

⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 16.

⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 16.

Fox, and the Head Quarters Company. Major Robert Strayer, a tough but fair reserve officer, led the 2nd Battalion. Colonel Robert Sink commanded the entire Regiment using his know-how as a top West Point Alumnus.

The men who joined the newly formed parachute regiment were, first and foremost, volunteers. This cannot be stressed enough, for it put the men who enlisted a cut above the rest. They chose to fight for their country, and did so without being conscripted. That aside, these young men committed themselves to one of the most dangerous divisions of the American Army. Why were these men so driven, brave, and committed? What motivated them to join a part of the Army so new and unknown? Stephen Ambrose expresses it best exclaiming:

“They were special in their values. They put a premium on physical wellbeing, hierarchal authority, and being part of an elite unit. They were idealists, eager to merge themselves into a group fighting for a cause, actively seeking an outfit with which they could identify, join, be part of, relate to as a family.”⁸

The men who joined were from all over the United States, but shared their middle class status. The Great Depression undoubtedly affected these men as it did all Americans. Raised in homes and communities with parents and neighbors who were tough, hard working, and dedicated to making it through difficult times fostered resilience in the new recruits. They learned to be self-reliant and accustomed to hardship. These young men grew up under the most trying of economic times but never resented their country for it.

The volunteers were city boys, southerners, farmers, mountain men, coal miners, factory workers, high school dropouts, graduates, and even college students. Primarily though, the men were young, white males, of middle class backgrounds, single and fit, with athletic or hunting

⁸ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 14.

backgrounds, and little higher education. The fifty- dollar bonus given to enlisted paratroopers monthly, and the hundred given to its officers was another obvious incentive. It was not only money, but also the adventure and thrill that drove these recruits, many of whom would not survive the rigorous training. A man joining the paratroopers could rest assured the man he was fighting next to was the best of the best, like himself, reliable and trustworthy. This offered a kind of comfort and reassurance not offered to those conscripted to other parts of the U.S. Army.

While the Commandos and the 101st Parachute Infantry Regiment were put in place a few years apart from each other, it is clear that the volunteers had many things in common. All were brave young men who showed incredible desire to fight for their country at great personal risk, and this above all else is what made these special services a success. The courage it took to request to be a part of an experimental unit known to be highly dangerous is admirable. These men strove not only to survive the war, but also to have the opportunity to make a real difference with other men who shared the same sentiment. They were elite in physical and mental strength, and most certainly in acquired skill. The new Special Forces comprised the best both countries had to offer and it was not long before people began to recognize them as such. The characteristics of brave individuals who wanted to see action and see it fast and who sought adventure but were thoughtful in mind and skilled in war are clear. The advantage of the great prestige that came with the 101st Airborne and the feeling of further independence that came with the Commandos was an added bonus for the young men.

CHAPTER 2

HOW THE COMMANDOS OPERATED: OBJECTIVES, TRAINING AND DOCTRINE

The overriding objectives for both Easy Company and the No. 4 Commandos were not all that different in theory. The Commandos and the Paratroopers, both had a common purpose to alter a pre-existing war plan in a way that gave Allied powers a more decisive advantage against their Axis enemies. The difference in these Special Forces lay in exactly what this advantage would entail.

The objective set for the Commandos changed multiple times throughout the war. At the onset the objective of the Commandos was to commit quick raids to throw off the enemy and gather intelligence. These reconnaissance missions, however, changed throughout the war, and as a result so did the training. Only five short months after its creation the No. 4 Commando was attached to the 1st Special Service Battalion which comprised Commando Nos. 1 through 5, 8, and 9 and independent companies. The No. 4 Commandos, however, were not limited to the 1st Special Service Battalion but rather also served in 3rd Battalion along with the men of No. 7 Commando. The men were not happy with this change for numerous reasons, including that the Special Service (as the War Staff had chosen to name it) sounded remarkably similarly to the German SS men they were fighting against. Furthermore, the numbers once combined were now too large for training and operations.

A necessary revision occurred in February with each troop containing three officers and sixty-two men of other ranks. Effectively this meant that one to two complete Commando Units could fit into a carrying craft. The No. 4 Commando was fully attached to the 3rd Special Service

Brigade. In April 1943 yet another change was made to Special Service Brigade. After invasions in North Africa it was recognized that in the event that Commandos were needed to stay on to fight after their initial raid they were not equipped, trained, or managed in a capacity that would allow them to do so successfully. Brigadier Robert Laycock, OC Special Service Brigade, who was “now fully convinced that in future Commandos would primarily participate in larger-scale operations overseas, mount large-scale raids, and fight alongside regular Army formations in a conventional role to an extent never envisaged before, as well as mounting ‘traditional’ short-term raiding operations” wrote a reorganization proposal.⁹ Command structure required changes and men needed to be fit for both use on raids and prolonged fighting and follow-up. Thus once this plan was accepted by both the War Office and Lord Louis Mountbatten (who would later become Chief of Combined Operation), “The primary aim was to increase both the firepower and administrative facilities of each unit to enable them to carry out their original role and fight alongside regular units for protracted periods of time, although not at the expense of tactical flexibility.”¹⁰

At this point the No. 4 Commandos under new Special Service Group order of battle in March 1944 were reattached to the 1st SS Brigade along with the No. 3, No. 6 and 45 (RM) Commando (UK). A heavy weapons troop was added to the six fighting troops in each Commando Unit. “Laycock had proposed that henceforth the command of the Special Service Brigade be decentralized, grouping units into three separate brigades (each of the three commandos under its own commander, who in turn was responsible for his group, thereby freeing Brigade HQ to deal with matters of general policy and large –scale operations...)”¹¹ New Royal Marine Commandos were added in 1943. They were not volunteers and as such lacked the

⁹ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 27.

¹⁰ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 27.

¹¹ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 30.

same gusto and skill as their predecessors, but combined to make the No.42 -No. 48 (RM) Commando units.

The changes made in 1943 suggested a much larger change in the direction the war was headed. In order to create a cohesive combined force the Commandos still relied on the skills they knew best, “ A combination of aggressive patrolling, ambushes, and infiltration in advance of the forward edge of the battle area helped redress the balance between themselves and more heavily armed conventional enemy units.”¹² The Commandos blocked lines of communication, made small-scale landings, and destroyed key bridges and roads throughout the war. However, by 1943 large-scale amphibious landing had become the norm along with continued participation in the fight. The Commandos’ skills for raiding and harassing, creating an offensive, collecting intelligence, and confusing the enemy were never fully thrown by the way side. Commando units comprised 500 men and then subdivided to create ten fighting troops who were now trained to do far more than raid and run.

It was not just the organization that changed but training, weaponry, supplies and equipment as well. In 1942, the Commandos first visibly distinguished themselves from the rest of the army by wearing green berets and the Combined Operations patch. At first the men were given the same weapons as the British Military, but in short time these were scaled back and heavy weapons were left behind. No modes of transportation were given to the Commandos, but in 1943 this too changed as landings became larger.

At the onset, training for the Commandos, like the Paratroopers, had to be newly devised. “Although studied in staff colleges only lip service had been paid to carrying out amphibious operations in the UK before World War II and as a result no training manuals existed whatsoever

¹² Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 44.

upon which Commando training could be based.”¹³ Initially the training was left up to the Commanding Officers of each Commando Unit. While Commanding Officers played the paramount role at first in building the training regiment, the War Office did not wait long and soon had regulations of its own written. In fact, after 1942 the Special Service Brigade produced its own set of training guidelines.

The first training center was developed in May 1940 in the mountains of Scotland at the Irregular Warfare School, later to be called the Special Training Center or the STC. Lord Lovat was among the top instructors at this initial training base. The training was not easy and men that could not meet the standards were quickly returned to their original units. At the STC the syllabus included, “field craft, demolition work, close quarter combat, weapon training and signals, as well as including endurance marches, cliff climbing, swimming with full kit, seamanship and boat work, night operations, map reading, and stalking.”¹⁴ This tutelage lasted until 1942 when training was moved to a Commando Depot established by Charles Haydon. The new depot in West Scotland’s Achnacarry soon came to be called the Commando Training Center, a mere fourteen miles from the old STC.

The center filled the ongoing need for trained Commando replacements. These men dubbed their depot Castle Commando where it sat atop the mountains and demanded strenuous and difficult exercises under Colonel Charles Vaughan. Taught to act both independently and together, the men were trained individually as well as with their units. Commandos were treated differently than the rest of the British army. They were posted with locals instead of on bases, and were left to their own devices to get to training and locations prior to assignments. This was a strategic training method that continued the development of independent thought and self-

¹³ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 33.

¹⁴ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 36.

reliance. Achnacarry also tested the physical and mental preparedness of its men by forcing them to live in conditions that were far from the comforts they new at home. Even cooking was left up to the men. With no mess halls, the men would return to their canvas tents after a long day of arduous training only to have to find and then cook their own food many a night. All in all 25,000 men passed through the gates of Achnacarry. Many did not leave as Commandos, but those that received the honor were in the finest physical and arguably mental condition of any British Forces. It was not long before Achnacarry was unable to keep pace with the demand to train new members of the Special Service Brigade and an operational holding area responsible for covering basic training was created.

Along with the Commando Training Center at Achnacarry a Commando Mountain and Snow Warfare Camp was opened in Aberdeenshire, Scotland on December 2, 1942. This center was specifically created to prepare the men for an operation in the ice and snow covered mountains of Norway. The No. 4 Commandos were the second unit to train in the Cairngorn Mountains of Aberdeenshire. In six weeks the men were trained to move quickly, fight, and live in arctic terrain. This would be put to good use in the No.4's raids on Norway's Coast. Training was clearly extensive and specialized to meet each operation's needs. However as time passed and the roles of the Commandos changed, so too did the training. Training placed greater emphasis on learning more conventional infantry roles and less emphasis on raiding tactics. Before the Commandos would fight in Operation Overlord on the beaches of Normandy, it was imperative that they learn to work with larger groups to seize objectives. Training was widened, "and cooperation with regular units and formations during the follow-up phase of major amphibious landing, including armored and artillery units."¹⁵ Regardless of the changes in the Commandos from 1940 through to the end of the war, the offensive was always stressed. The

¹⁵ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 41.

importance of the attack never left the minds of the men, as it was their specialty and most often their primary objective. The unexpected attacks through surprise landings and raids in places deemed inaccessible by the enemy was what the Commandos had been trained to accomplish. The night operations, cliff climbing, skiing, and water skills learned in training were paramount to success.

The training changes that occurred early in 1943 required Commandos to learn the art of the defensive. Reorganization was deemed necessary and men were more fully equipped to stay as part of an ongoing unit with better armor and heavy infantry weapons as opposed to their traditional lightweight hit and run raiding equipment. “The high morale, training, and expertise of Commando Units and their specialized organization and equipment, however, were still reflected in many fighting methods employed. To dominate the battlefield, Commando tactics were always exploited.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 43.

CHAPTER 3

HOW EASY COMPANY OPERATED: OBJECTIVES, TRAINING AND DOCTRINE

For the paratroopers, it was ability and aim to be the first to hit a drop zone, set up, and surprise the enemy that set them apart. Paratroopers were trained and given the ability to reach locations that were otherwise inaccessible, and they could prepare an area for landing by large forces, as will later be discussed and seen in their actions on D-Day. While the objective for the Commandos changed multiple times throughout the war, the paratroopers' overarching objectives did not. Herein lies a major difference between the two Special Forces. This is not to say paratroopers could or would not have adapted to changing objectives; there was simply no need to. While it took months for the men of Easy Company to be given their wings and initiated into the United States Airborne, once this was achieved their goals, broad objectives and formations remained primarily the same. Sometimes Paratroopers were called to work in smaller units, other times they worked with combined operations. Again, this aside little changed.

The training the men of Easy Company endured was nothing short of brutal. Only the best would survive. The statistics speak for themselves from the 5,300 enlisted volunteers came only 1,800 graduates – about 1 in 3. Camp Toccoa was tough both on the officers and on the privates and was known particularly for Mount Currahee, which stood tall in the Blue Mountains of Georgia. Close to 2,000 feet high, Mount Currahee was a six-mile roundtrip run, and was performed almost daily by the men. Upon completion of training the mountain could be run or “double timed” in less than 50 minutes or a just a little over 8 minutes a mile. The word Currahee translates from Cherokee to “stands alone” and became a slogan and insignia for the 506th. The rigorous obstacle course, calisthenics and drills put the men in great physical condition, so much

so that they were able to outdo a newly achieved Japanese military marching record. The 506th completed a 118-mile march from Camp Toccoa to Atlanta in 72 hours with only 12 of the 586 men failing to complete the march. The Parachute Infantry could afford to be selective, and as such only the best men got through and went on to jump training at Fort Benning after six arduous months of “Currahee”.¹⁷

Fort Benning was a camp for paratrooper training that worked in a series of stages A-D. Each stage represented a different part of the training and lasted one week. After Camp Toccoa the men of the 506th were so fit they embarrassed the officers who began training them at Fort Benning. The men were thus not required to complete the A stage for physical training. Stages B, C, and D taught the paratroopers how to pack and wear their gear, jump and land correctly, and maneuver their parachutes in the air. At first they jumped from towers to learn the basics and then they were required to complete a series of five jumps from C-47’s to earn their wings. On December 26, 1942 over 94 percent of the 506th men qualified and earned their wings, an impressive record that still stands.¹⁸ In January the men moved from the Georgia to the Alabama side of Fort Benning where camp was much more “luxurious” and a good break for the men.

By March 1943 the men were on the move again this time to Camp Mackall in North Carolina, the home to the Airborne Command. Training intensified and the men learned more about field experience and tactics. Next Easy Company moved to Kentucky for Camp Sturgis. Sturgis was an entirely outdoor field experience and simulated battles with red and blue sides. From June 5th to July 15th the men endured the outdoors day after day learning to trust and use

¹⁷ Richard D. Winters and Cole C. Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 17.

¹⁸ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 30-32.

the ground, improving their directional sense in both day and night, and boosting their mental endurance. It was during this time the 506th was absorbed into the 101st Airborne.

The 506th moved to Camp Breckenridge for a short respite after Sturgis and many men were given furloughs. They then moved for the seventh time to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the staging area before war. The men worked on their firing skills and fine-tuned the rest until they were sent to Camp Shank, New York. Easy Company knew that Camp Shank meant deployment to Europe instead of the Pacific, which was pleasing to most. Camp Shank is often referred to as “Last Stop U.S.A.”¹⁹ After fourteen months of training in the U.S., the men transformed from civilians to extremely fit, knowledgeable, confident, and prepared paratroopers.

The SS Samaria was the vessel responsible for transporting the 506th from New York to Liverpool. The ship was built to carry 1,000 men but 5,000 walked aboard. Food was awful and the sleeping situation was even worse. Many soldiers became sea sick and others just outright bored on their long cramped voyage across the Atlantic. Easy Company docked in Liverpool, England and then took the British rail system south. The men spent eight to nine months training in the quintessentially British hamlet of Aldbourne. Aldbourne became their home away from home where they learned and abided by British customs and traditions. The officers were placed in private homes while the enlisted men stayed in barracks.

The men trained for eight months in the hilly British terrain and cold climate. Stephen Ambrose points out that, “Most of what they learned in training proved to be valuable in combat,

¹⁹ Richard D. Winters and Cole C. Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 46.

but it was the intimacy, the total trust, that comradeship that developed on those long, cold, wet English nights that proved to be so invaluable.”²⁰

It was during this time that Easy Company’s hatred for their “chicken-shit” commander Lieutenant Sobel really grew. Men recognized not only that he was unfair, but also incompetent when it came to battle situations, frequently getting them lost or acting poorly under pressure. It was undeniable that Sobel got the men in great physical condition through their earlier training, but they believed he would surely lead them to their deaths in battle. Second Lieutenant Dick Winters and Lieutenant Herbert Sobel led the men in very different ways. Winters commented that Sobel led by fear while he led by respect and trust. Sobel was above Winters in rank as the Commanding Officer for Easy Company during training. At one point Sobel had Winters court marshaled for doing latrine inspections fifteen minutes late, a true miscommunication on inspection time between the two men.

This was the last straw for the men of Easy Company. They had lost all respect for Sobel and petitioned to turn in their wings if Sobel was not removed from command, an act that could be considered mutiny during war. These men learned and wholeheartedly believed that paratroopers only move with the best. They knew C.O. Sobel was not the best. Many men joined the paratroopers initially because they wanted the security of knowing the man fighting beside them was a well-trained and driven man like himself. Sobel did not meet their expectations and so they united in their disagreement and arguably their comradeship grew stronger through their shared hatred. Colonel Sink defused the situation by transferring Sobel to a newly opened paratrooper training station and 1st Lieutenant Thomas Meehan was appointed Commanding Officer of Easy Company.

²⁰ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 46.

With the officer situation straightened out, it was time for the men to enter the last stages prior to combat. Easy Company belonged to the 506th PIR of the 101st Airborne, which was assigned to VII Corps along with the 82nd Airborne and 4th Infantry Division for D-Day.

CHAPTER 4 THE EARLY YEARYS FOR LORD LOVAT AND DICK WINTERS

Two men from different upbringings came to lead the men of Easy Company and the No.4 Commando. Lord Lovat and Dick Winters had their similarities; however it was not necessarily their likeness, but rather specific aspects of their upbringing that made them exemplary leaders. Their abilities were not mere factors of the environments in which they were raised, but arguably helped create the strong men they became.

In 1911 Simon Fraser Lovat, called “Shimi” by those who knew him best, came from a life of privilege. In the Scottish Highlands, Lovat’s parents raised him, but more often than not it was the elderly servants with whom Lovat spent his childhood days. Given the chance to roam the acres of their estate barefoot or on horseback, Lovat developed an early love and admiration for nature along with acquiring a tough spirit. Coming from a lineage of men who had all served their country, Lovat was primed to be the leader he later became. His father was a General in World War I and founded the Lovat Scouts during the Boer War. Lovat, as a General’s son, grew up around top Commanders and even the former Prime Minister Henry Asquith. His biggest hero growing up was Lawrence of Arabia.²¹ Lord Lovat became the seventeenth Baron Lovat and the twenty-fifth chief of the Fraser Clan after his father passed away in 1933.²² Lovat accumulated a wealth of knowledge from his father, if even from demeanor alone, and from his everyday surroundings.

²¹ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 48-49.

²² Pegasus Archive. “Brigadier The Lord Lovat”. http://www.pegasusarchive.org/Normandy/lord_lovat.htm (accessed December 1, 2008), 1.

Naturally, education by the very best tutors was the only option for a young Shimi; this education led to his admission into Ampleworth College. After Ampleworth, Lovat received acceptance to the world-renowned Magdalene College at Oxford University. With a top-notch education and furthermore a membership in Oxford University's Cavalry Squadron to claim for himself, Lovat stood primed for success. Prior to volunteering for the Commandos, Lovat was commissioned to the Scots Guard shortly after his father's death. Even a family with the wealth and estate of the Lovats held was not immune from the Great Depression. Lovat cites the Depression as a reason for enlisting in the Scots Guard. Once the death duties of his father were paid off, Lovat proposed to the woman he loved, Rosie, and had his first child the week before World War II was declared. Clearly feeling he might be absent like his own father to his newborn son and solemn at the start of yet another war, Lovat wrote:

When did hearts so careless beat,
When was grief so far,
For love is a child in the days of peace,
But a man in the days of war."²³

Lovat served another five years in uniform rising through the ranks in World War II.

Major Dick Winters came from humble beginnings where his leadership and athletic abilities had time to grow. He grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania with a strong religious upbringing and Amish roots. Winter's family had a military history. His uncle was a debilitated World War I veteran who had survived a gas attack, and his lineage also indicated he was a descendant of Timothy Winters, an American soldier who fought in the Revolutionary War. Like most of the army, Winters grew up during the Great Depression. Though his father was lucky enough to keep his job, money was tight and times were not easy. At a young age the Depression

²³ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 12.

instilled in Winters and many soldiers the need to fight through tough times and to come out on top, an applicable lesson for a fighting man. In grade school, a young Winters was appointed captain of his school safety patrol. He was an athlete both at Lancaster Boy's High School and Franklin and Marshall College. First and foremost he was a wrestler, but he also played football and basketball.²⁴ Winters upbringing showed a strong tradition of discipline, commitment to serve his country, athleticism and aptitude, determination and leadership.

In August 1941 Winters joined the army under the Selective Service and Training Act. He performed well at Camp Croft for basic training and was sent to Fort Benning's Officer Candidate School. Upon graduating from OCS he requested to be placed as an officer of the paratroopers. Shortly thereafter, he was sent to Camp Toccoa. Winters was one of eight officers for the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment under commanding Officer Sobel and 2nd Battalion commanders Colonel Sink and Major Strayer. Colonel Sink ran a tight ship with only 148 of the initial 400 volunteer officers successfully completing the training. Once the officers were trained, the camp filled with civilians, enlisted men with no military training. Of these volunteers only 1,800 of the 5,300 enlisted men completed training. Thus the beginnings of a selective and strong Easy Company were formed.²⁵

The upbringings of both men entail familial lineages rife with military history. Though the path for their careers was not necessarily paved for them, the beginnings were undeniably present. Similarly both men were fit through athletics or outdoor ventures, and educated at a college level. Perhaps most importantly, both Lovat and Winters, though an ocean apart, saw

²⁴ Larry Alexander, *Biggest Brother: The Life of Major D. Winters, the Man Who Led the Band of Brothers* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2005), 20-25.

²⁵ Richard D. Winters and Cole C. Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 1-19.

their countries in need of help and voluntarily joined overtly dangerous special forces without ever looking back.

CHAPTER 5

DIEPPE

In 1942 the Allied powers still lacked the strength for a full-fledged attack on the German forces occupying French and other European lands. For the time being, harassment of the Axis powers was all that could be done to slow the two-front war Germany fought, and move the focus away from Russia and back to the West. Without the possibility of a full invasion, the Commandos became the answer to the call for harassment and deterrence of Eastern advancement. Prior to the spring of 1942, British Commandos proved their ability to raid successfully in Norway and St. Nazaire, France. The latter raid occurred on a much larger scale than the first two, confirming even further the abilities of the Commandos. Thus less than three weeks after the No. 2 Commandos hugely successful raid on St. Nazaire (in which volunteers from the No. 4 participated), the No. 4 Commandos were chosen for another mission. They were to harass, test the true strength of the Axis defense, and lastly uncover essential information on defenses in the West.²⁶ With Lord Lovat Leading the No. 4, 252 men made their way across the English Channel to raid a French Port known as Dieppe. This is the raid for which the No.4 is best known. The work of the No. 4 is hugely admirable as is evidenced by Lord Lovat's recognition through the Distinguished Service Cross.

Those in command considered many northern French ports along the coast before deciding on Dieppe. The coast was a formidable objective, named the Iron Coast for its steep cliffs and rocky terrain. Dieppe was not necessarily an exception to the natural obstacles of the

²⁶ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 10.

Iron Coast; however it would provide a good sample to judge the difficulty of invading the coast as a whole. Those in command also listed the following reasons for choosing Dieppe:

“Dieppe possesses a harbor used by the enemy as a port of call for his coastwise convoys, on which he is compelled to rely to an ever increasing extent for supplying his far-flung garrisons... There are also in Dieppe marshalling yards, gas works, a power station, petrol dumps and a pharmaceutical factory, all of which is desirable to destroy.”²⁷

After deciding on Dieppe as the port of choice, the Chiefs of Staff began extensive planning to devise what they hoped would be yet another successful raid. As a Combined Operation the No. 4 and No. 3 Commando were supplementary forces to the multiple Canadian forces deployed along with the Royal Army, Navy and Air force. It was not by mere chance that these Commandos were selected, but rather by what Lovat best describes as process of elimination; with other units thin from illness, disbanded, broken up in different training locales, or serving elsewhere the logical choice was the No. 4 Commando. Lord Lovat vividly describes the new Chief of Staff Robert Laycock informing him of the raid in July 1942, “...Bob Laycock, who had replaced [Charles] Haydon, arrived hot-foot from Ardrossan. There was no warning of the visit. He found me perched in the ruins of Dundonal Castle with a group of selected marksmen...” In essence he said a big raid was on and the No.4 were to play a pivotal role.²⁸ All forces needed prepared ceaselessly for the extremely difficult raid that lay ahead.

Though the overall training for the Commandos has already been described in detail, the training undergone specifically for the raid on Dieppe was extensive and in many ways unique. The NCO's were intentionally not made aware of their assignment to raid Dieppe, nor any of the logistics. They were of course completely aware of their move to Weymouth and then training at

²⁷ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 111.

²⁸ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 237.

Lulworth Cove, where they underwent eight dress rehearsals masquerading as training exercises though all premeditated specifically for “Operation Jubilee” or the Dieppe raid.²⁹ Training consisted of the skills needed most in the Dieppe Raid. Combined Forces training included in the Dieppe Raid was extensive and based on knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of previous raids. “Men engaged in climbing up steep places, street fighting, negotiating wire, attacking pillboxes, advancing with tanks, handling weapons of all kinds...”³⁰ The previous training for amphibious landings held the Commandos in especially good stead. Furthermore, intelligence was by no means lacking as the Commandos had the support of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. There were photographs, models made to scale by the RAF, details of tidal patterns, and maps drawn with the enemy’s locations as well as detailed information of towns drawn in. Those in charge had time to evaluate these and use them in training. By the time of the raid every detail was ironed out including the assigned seating of each man on the assault boats.

The raid was to go as follows: The No. 3 and No. 4 Commando were to land in the cover of darkness the morning of August 19, 1942. The Commandos’ objective was to take the two outer flanks of Dieppe and in doing so destroy the two coastal defense batteries of 5.9 inch guns so that the naval ships could remain near shore to attack in daylight. The beaches would then be cleared for the other regiments to land and make their attacks more directly on the town of Dieppe. The hope was that the Luftwaffe would come in as back up and the RAF could engage in a successful air attack. On the night of August 18th, as soon as dusk was upon the English Channel, 200 vessels moved out to sea all headed for the Iron Coast.³¹ Specifically, the No. 4 Commando traveled aboard the Prinz Albert to cross the English Channel. Inside the Prinz were

²⁹Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 241.

³⁰ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 113.

³¹ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 116.

8 assault landing craft of the Thornycraft design. These LAC's could hold a maximum load of thirty- five armed men, were 41-feet long and bulletproof until the landing ramps were employed.³² The No. 4 Commando were traveling in state of the art sea-craft, but this did not allay the men's many other fears. They ate breakfast onboard at around 1:15 a.m. before hearing the last briefing by Lord Lovat and filing out to their designated LAC. Once aboard the smaller boats the men traveled as fast as the two Ford V8 engines would allow to cross the remaining ten miles to shore. With one mile left, the No. 4 Commando's LAC's split up with 121 men headed for Orange One Beach and the other towards Orange Two Beach.³³ Both beaches assigned to the No. 4 were on the Western Flank while the No. 3 Commando was responsible for the East.

The 252 men of the No. 4 Commando were off to assault the gun battery covering the western approach to the port of Dieppe.³⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Lovat MC led those headed to Orange Two Beach near the mouth of the River Sane. By 6:50 a.m. the Commandos destroyed the six-gun battery defended by wire pillboxes and two flak towers of concrete. Those Commandos traveling near the River Sane came across 35 German men from assault troops who were a part of the battery's garrison. They successfully destroyed them before making the direct assault with the other part of the No. 4 Commando who had attacked from the front. The men charged the German battery leaving all shot or bayoneted except for the four men they took prisoner.³⁵ Telephone wires were cut and a whole garrison destroyed before the No. 4 Commando made their way back to the re-embarkation location near Orange One Beach. The tide had gone out requiring the men make their way through chest deep water to their landing

³² Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 241.

³³ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 115.

³⁴ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 247.

³⁵ Lord Louis Mountbatten, *Combined Operations the Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 122- 123.

craft covered by smoke screen. No. 4 made their way to safety and by 9:00 a.m. the Commandos aboard the Prinz Albert were on their way home to England after accomplishing their objective. The casualties included 16 killed and 40 wounded or missing for the No. 4 Commando. As stated by Derek Mills-Roberts of the No.4:

“ We all felt Shimi Lovat had planned the attack on the battery brilliantly. In the planning stage he had to contend with those who wanted it done differently, but he was strong-minded enough to get his own way. Once the operation had started, he had led and controlled it perfectly.”³⁶

The raid on Dieppe was by no means a flawless Combined Operation. The No. 4 Commando succeeded in their objectives, but the British and Canadians suffered many losses. “Almost 4,000 Canadian and British had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The Canadians lost 2/3rds of their force...”³⁷ The No. 3 Commando did not fare as well as the No. 4. Their landing craft encountered engine difficulties and they were spotted early on. All in all, the raid on Dieppe is deemed unsuccessful with so many casualties and losses in air and at sea. However, the raid provided valuable information that would later be used in Operation Overlord. And the success of the No. 4 Commando’s actions was noted as an available model for operations in the future of a similar kind. It was for the brilliance in the planning of the No. 4’s actions that Lovat received the Distinguished Service Cross.

³⁶ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 256.

³⁷ Geoff Slee, “Combined Operations” (Combined Operations Memorial Fund, 2001), http://www.combinedops.com/no_4_commando.htm (accessed October 2, 2009).

Lord Lovat tells of arriving ashore in Newhaven still unsure of the ultimate success of the raid, only to be met by a grave faced Brigadier Laycock saying the news from France was bad.³⁸ Lovat was immediately sent to London to make his full report following which he spent the night in the Guards Club library. He was without money and all the rooms were booked. A long day for Shimi Lovat ended with an uncomfortable night and horrid dreams from the invasion that day.

³⁸ Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 264.

CHAPTER 6 EASY COMPANY ON D-DAY

Easy Company belonged to the 506th PIR of the 101st Airborne, which was assigned to VII Corps along with the 82nd Airborne and 4th Infantry for D-Day. For the men of VII Corps the objective of D-Day, simply put, was to take Utah Beach via the four causeways over the land Rommel had purposely flooded for the German defensive. Utah Beach was the code name for Contentin Beach of Normandy, France. The Slapton Sands of Devonshire, England provided the perfect location for D-Day dress rehearsals or “Operation Tiger”, for the VII Corps. In April, both infantry and airborne practiced on the coastal terrain similar to their D-Day locale.³⁹ On March 3, 1944 the 506th PIR performed their last jump prior to D-Day. This hugely successful operation with both mass air and land operations had the honor of being reviewed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and newly appointed Brigadier-General Maxwell D. Taylor.⁴⁰ With all systems approved, the men moved out from Aldbourne leaving their personal possessions behind as well as the village they had come to love. On May 29, 1944 Easy Company boarded trains to Hungerford on the Great Western Rail Station that headed them south and closer to the English Channel. Private David Kenyon Webster describes the sound of the train along the tracks as they approached the day and destination they had so long prepared for as, “D-Day calling, D-Day calling, D-Day calling.”⁴¹

³⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 56-58.

⁴⁰ Philip Katcher, *US 101st Airborne Division 1942-1945* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1978), 4.

⁴¹ David Kenyon Webster, *Parachute Infantry: an American Paratrooper's Memoir of D-day and the Fall of the Third Reich* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 5.

The men were stationed in Uppottery, a marshalling, area for five days prior to D-Day. Winters received his initial briefing from Captain Hester and close friend Second Battalion S-2 Nixon. Here he studied their companies' objectives using detailed sand tables that revealed every bridge, church, and even fox hole. Together 1st Lieutenant Meehan and Winters briefed the men of Easy Company as to what lay ahead in regard to both their overall objectives and specifics about what to expect. Easy Company was assigned the task of securing Causeway # 2 after landing near their drop zone of Ste. Marie du Mont. Together the whole of the 101st Airborne would secure all four causeways of Utah Beach, which would allow them and the infantry access to the town of Carentan and thus the mainland of Normandy. The importance of Easy Company's task was clear; without this causeway the infantry from the 4th Division would not be able to move off the beaches and would remain sitting ducks for the German defensive. Winters' comments in his postwar memoir show that securing the causeway would not be an easy feat. He explains that the marsh surrounding the causeway could be waded through, but there were deep ditches dropping to about eight feet that were cut across the marsh. Private David Kenyon Webster's memoirs mentions these same drainage ditches and the great expense of energy and difficulty it took him to wade across and to help secure Easy Company's objective.

D-Day was initially scheduled for June 5, 1944, but bad winds and inclement weather postponed the assault. In the meantime the men cleaned and sharpened their weapons, reviewed their objectives, smoked fervently, painted their faces black and green, and some received haircuts (mohawks) like Native Americans. By this time the men had already heard the encouraging speeches from Brigadier General Taylor asking the men to give him just three days and three nights of hard fighting, Eisenhower called D-Day "The Great Crusade," and Colonel Sink called it "The night of nights." With these words in mind the men marched from their tents

to the airplane hangars where the C-47s awaited their arrival at 8:30 p.m. on June 5. The air was filled with tension- the men would board the planes at 10:00 p.m., leave the runway at 11: 20 p.m., and jump over Normandy at 1:20 a.m. The paratroopers were given airsickness pills and leg bags for their jump, both of which had never before been used by the men. Neither of the last minute changes worked well for the men. Thanks to the airsickness pills, many of the paratroopers had to fight off drowsiness and overwhelming desire to sleep in the fields throughout the first night. The leg bags were seemingly a good idea that came from the British paratroopers, but the men were not accustomed to the procedure of releasing the bag before landing and many lost their ammunition, weapons, k-rations, and escape kits with a map, French money and compass. Winters lost his leg bag upon landing, making him an officer without a weapon for his first few hours in Normandy.

The pills and leg bags were not the only things that did not work as planned. The \$10,000 dollar jump (as it was often referred to because that was the standard life insurance for each Paratrooper) had to overcome many hurdles. General Eisenhower climbed to the top of a roof in Uppottery to watch as the aircraft took off and he could see the 6,000 invasion fleets headed in the same direction. The importance of the night was clear to all, especially Eisenhower, who watched with tear filled eyes. The C-47's flew in a V-formation often called the V of V's with each V at nine planes wide. Each plane held 18 men with Easy Company flying in Serial 12 planes # 67-73.⁴² Approximately 20 minutes before the men were due to drop they passed over the Channel Islands and had to fly through a thick cloudbank. This cloudbank separated many of the V's and only the central aircraft in each serial had the technical equipment to guide the other eight planes to their drop zone. At this point the men were all standing, hooked up and preparing

⁴² Richard D. Winters and Cole C. Kingseed, *Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 77.

to drop, wondering when the enemy would begin to fire. Not long after the sky was filled with enemy fire and the pilots quickened their pace to dodge the flak. Conditions were headed south and fast.

The ideal jump was not a reality for the paratroopers. Normally a jump occurs around 600 ft at 100 to 120 knots. Private David Kenyon Webster wrote that he jumped from 300 ft instead of 700 and most planes were traveling at a minimum of 150 knots. Not only were drop elevation and speed incorrect, but without the aircraft's ability to navigate to the drop zones men were dropped ad hoc all along the coast. Only 10 of 81 planes hit the drop mark. A total of 13,400 men of the American Airborne jumped on the green light under these conditions. Many men lost their lives on the jump and many aircraft were downed before the men had a chance to evacuate. The Commanding Officer for Easy Company, 1st Lieutenant Meehan, was killed in a crash landing. Easy Company was scattered across 20 kilometers. Winters, who was now the standing C.O. of Easy Company, landed bruised and battered 8 kilometers from Ste. Marie du Mont (the drop zone) near the town of Ste. Mère Église. Similar scenarios occurred for many paratroopers and historian Stephen Ambrose points out that, "All across the peninsula, throughout the night and into the day of D-Day, paratroopers were doing the same – fighting skirmishes, joining together in ad hoc units, defending positions, harassing the Germans, trying to link up with their units... Their training and confidence thus overcame what could have been a disaster."⁴³ The men of the 506th were prepared and in the best physical condition of all the American forces. The training runs up Mount Currahee and night expeditions under Sobel were about to be put to the test.

⁴³ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 75.

The scattered landings had caused the Germans to overestimate the number of paratroopers landing, along with the exact landing locations. This worked greatly in the allies' favor. The Americans and the British were given passwords 'flash and thunder' and crickets (metal noise makers that sounded like crickets) to identify one another in the dark of the night. Easy Company, though scattered, had an objective to accomplish and needed to do so quickly. The causeways had to be secured and the men only had a few hours before the invasion fleets were due to arrive.

There is no singular tale of Easy Company's actions on D-Day, because the hasty drops did not allow for all the men to land together. However, the actions of Easy Company's C.O. Winters speak volumes. After landing with no leg bag, a compass destroyed by water, and no weapon but the knife strapped to his boot, Winters set about to find other men. Soon he was leading 50 men from the 502nd Regiment. Using one of the paratroopers' flashlights, map and compass he was able to lead the men toward St. Marie du Mont. While making their way through the brush they heard a group of four German wagons approaching. Instinct aided the men in their quick reactions, and two of the wagons were gunned down and the German drivers were killed. Many men were forced to kill for the first time. Winters was then able to arm himself with a German revolver, ammo, and canteen. The men kept moving and near dawn they encountered men from the 506th and the Battalion Staff.

Winters was assigned his first combat mission from Captain Clarence Hester in the town of Le Grand Chemin. The infantry, due to approach via causeway #2, was being fired on by a German machine gun battery stationed near Brecourt Manor. There were fifty Germans manning four battery stations. Winters led an attack with 12 men of Easy Company; quickly he devised a plan to take out each of the 105mm cannons individually. He and his men fought bravely. Four

men were killed and six were wounded but Easy had stopped the Germans. Fifteen German gunners lay dead and the rest were taken as POW. The onslaught of fire on the incoming infantrymen was terminated allowing for Easy Company's objective of capturing Causeway #2 to be accomplished.

All of the twelve men who fought at Brecourt Manor were recognized for their bravery and skill. Winters was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor and received the Distinguished Service Cross. The rest of the men were awarded either Silver or Bronze Stars. Private Lipton, one of Easy Company's fighters, later remarked, "The attack was a unique example of a small, well-led assault force over coming and routing a much larger defending force in prepared positions".⁴⁴ That night, before C.O. Winters went to sleep, he prayed to God for help on D-Day plus one. Private Webster, who had also fought bravely on D-Day in the town of Vierville (on the way to Carentan the next objective), most likely said a similar prayer on the night of June 6th.

The accomplishments of Easy Company continued long after D-Day, with their next mission of capturing Carentan secured only a few days after Brecourt Manor and Causeway # 2. All in all, the men of Easy Company fought in Normandy for over a month as opposed to the three hard days and nights they were promised. But the men did not disappoint; they accomplished all of the D-Day objectives despite the initial drop difficulties. The morning of June 6th 23,000 US infantrymen set foot on Utah Beach with a low casualty count of 197 men. Obviously this success cannot all be attributed to Easy Company, the ocean current in fact landed the men in a locale that saved many lives, but securing the causeway and eliminating the German gun- battery definitely had a large impact on the men's ability to come ashore safely. Following

⁴⁴ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 84.

Easy Company it is clear that, “Everything about D-Day was dramatic- the overarching strategy, the vast mobilization, the sheer number of troops. But it’s the daring boldness and intrepid courage of the men that stand out.”⁴⁵

The men of Easy Company are true American heroes. These men were civilians transformed into the best and bravest of fighters. Private David Kenyon Webster wrote home to his mother that, “Those things that are precious are saved only by sacrifice.” He knew this all too well as 230 paratroopers, many of who were his close comrades, died on D-Day.

⁴⁵ Douglas Brinkley, “What They Saw When They Landed.” *Time*, 31 May, 1.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT CAME BEFORE AND AFTER DIEPPE FOR THE NO. 4 COMMANDOS

The No. 4 Commandos did not stop fighting after their raid on Dieppe, nor did Easy Company go home after D-Day. While the actions of the men in these Special Services are best told through their most successful and noted endeavors, it is equally important to recognize the fighting that continued until the war's end. It must also be noted that Dieppe was not the No.4 Commandos' first raid, but rather their fifth and most notable assault. Prior to raiding Dieppe, the No. 4 participated in four other raids: Lofoten Islands (Operation Claymore), Vaagso (Operation Archery), St. Nazaire (Operation Chariot), and Hardelot. Following the raid on Dieppe in August of 1942, the No. 4 served in Operation Overlord and Walcheren; With the days of amphibious landings and assaults behind them, all that was left for the No. 4 was guarding the approaches to Antwerp before disbanding in November of 1945.

Operation Claymore was the first raid for the No. 4 Commando. By March 4, 1941 the first large-scale commando assault was in full swing. The British Navy and the No. 3 and No. 4 Commando were responsible for harassing the area in and surrounding the Lofoten Islands of Norway. By 1941 the Germans had full control of the area; these islands had many fish oil factories used in the production of German munitions. The objective for the No. 4 Commando was destruction and reconnaissance. The mission itself took four days. The voyage required a three-day trip from Scapa Flow at the tip of Scotland across 800 plus miles of Norwegian Sea to the Lofoten Islands at the northern most part of Norway. The raid was a huge success with the No. 4 helping to destroy 18 fish oil factories, sinking 20,000 tons of enemy shipping, burning millions of gallons of oil and petrol, and bringing back 315 Norwegian volunteers, 60 suspected

Quislings and 225 German prisoners. Even more impressively, they accomplished all of the aforementioned by the time of the midday re-embarkation. The reconnaissance part of the mission was likewise achieved with the capture of a German Code Machine and set of ciphers that Bletchley Park code breakers used to help break German code.⁴⁶ For many Commandos this boosted morale after months of training with no action, while others were disappointed that they had trained so hard without meeting much resistance. Regardless, the success did not go unnoticed by Churchill, the War Staff, or the civilians.

After a reneged attempt to raid the Canary Islands, those in command looked again toward Norway. This time their target was Vaagso with the objective of destroying military installations, garrisons, fish oil factories and shipping boats. They were also to recover intelligence and bring back P.O.W.'s and Norwegians who wanted to escape. The No. 4 Commandos were asked only to send their medical and engineer detachments to participate.⁴⁷ Though similar to the Lofoten raid, during Operation Archery the Commandos and others in the Combined Operation would meet resistance on December 27, 1941. Inclement weather pushed the raid back two days before RAF Bombers and British Naval gunfire could aid the men in accomplishing all of their objectives. The plan was elaborate: smoke screens, plenty of intelligence provided beforehand by photographs, and four separate landings. Arguably, the largest accomplishment followed the raid when Hitler made the decision to send additional troops (thousands of men) away from Russia to guard the coasts of Norway. This time 100 German prisoners, 4 Quislings and 77 new recruits for the Norwegian Free Army returned to the UK; with the Combined Operations leaving in their wake 15,630 tons of shipping destroyed, 150 German soldiers killed, and German aircraft downed and airfields damaged. Casualties for the

⁴⁶ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 58.

⁴⁷ Geoff Slee, "Combined Operations" (Combined Operations Memorial Fund, 2001), http://www.combinedops.com/no_4_commando.htm (accessed October 2, 2009).

commandos ranked higher than previous raids with 20 killed and 57 wounded.⁴⁸ The raid once again confirmed the skill of the commandos, and more importantly for future raids (namely Dieppe and Overlord) the ability to land on rocky shore and scale cliffs.

In March 1942 No. 4 Commandos volunteered to participate in the assault on the port at St. Nazaire. Operation Chariot is often called the ‘greatest raid of all’. The objective was to destroy the dry-dock from which Germany sent its capital ships into the Atlantic. This would help allay the ongoing fear of traveling allied convoys in the Atlantic Ocean. The volunteers from the No. 4 were assigned the task of demolition. Their demolition party consisted of other Commando including 200 men from No.2 Commando. These squads underwent periods of intense instruction prior to their departure.⁴⁹ The Commandos came ashore following the intentional crash of the HMS *Campbeltown* into the dry dock. All Commandos came under heavy fire, in some instances losing half the men aboard their landing craft. The strength of the Commandos was considerably weakened and they were prevented from accomplishing their objective of destroying selected targets within and near the dock. Their boats for re-embarkation were destroyed by gunfire. Only 50-70 men were able to fight their way away from the dock since they could not escape by boat. Of these 50-70 Commandos most were captured. They did ultimately accomplish the overall objective of rendering the dock of St. Nazaire. Operation Chariot was a success, especially after the timed bombs on the HMS *Campbeltown* detonated the next day killing hundreds of Germans and further destroying the dock. It was a heavy loss for the Commandos and all involved, but a large gain in terms of slowing the Germans.

⁴⁸ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 66.

⁴⁹ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 67.

Operation Abercromby at Hardelot took place in April 1942 for the No. 4. Lord Lovat led his men to damage and capture a search light battery of 100 men. Though Lovat and his men landed successfully ashore, the Canadian Carleton and York Regiment did not due to navigational struggles.⁵⁰ The Commandos were spotted once ashore and with time running out and too much wire entanglement and gunfire coming their way, the No. 4 were ordered to pull out. It was, however, recognized that Lord Lovat managed to get his men ashore successfully.

The raid on Dieppe came next in succession along with Lord Lovat's promotion to Lieutenant Colonel of the No. 4 Commando, and the Distinguished Service Award. The raid was deemed a failure, but Lord Lovat and the No. 4 emerged as an example for future raids. A Canadian officer remarked that, "for his rank and role, Lovat probably possessed the finest military brain of the War."⁵¹ Dieppe was a primary model used when constructing the plan for Operation Overlord, D-Day. Lovat's promotion to Brigadier came with the responsibility of leading all the commandos fighting under the No. 1 Special Service Brigade at Normandy. The No. 4 Commando was the first Commando Unit to land on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. The 500 Commandos traveled by the Princess of Astrid or the Maid of Orleans across the English Channel to Sword Beach. Taking out German strong points and conducting reconnaissance remained the objective throughout Overlord. "In Normandy his [Lovat's] Commando Brigade fought six miles through the German defenses on the first day."⁵² No. 4 managed to capture Ouistreham and link up with the 6th Airborne Division, after which they went on to fight in the Orne Bridgehead enduring many casualties.⁵³ Unlike the American

⁵⁰ Geoff Slee, "Combined Operations" (Combined Operations Memorial Fund, 2001), http://www.combinedops.com/no_4_commando.htm (accessed October 2, 2009).

⁵¹ Pegasus Archive. "Brigadier The Lord Lovat". http://www.pegasusarchive.org/Normandy/lord_lovat.htm (accessed December 1, 2008), 1.

⁵² Lord Lovat, *March Past* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978), 9.

⁵³ Tim Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-1946* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 91.

Airborne Paratroopers, the Commandos were not immediately pulled out of Normandy, but rather hunkered down to fight with brief reprieves. Commandos by this point had been trained beyond light infantry assault tactics, and this training was now put to use. On August 1, 1944 the No. 4 led an advance to Dozole after digging in between Sallanelles and Le Plein. They reached and held their objective through four counterattacks.⁵⁴ The fighting continued until the men received their reprieve on September 8, 1944 at the Isle of Wight. Even still, the men of the No. 4 returned again to Normandy to take over for No. 46 Commandos. It was during Operation Overlord that Brigadier Lord Lovat was injured in Bréville. A stray shell from the 51st Highland Division hit him and tore into his back and side. Though Lovat recovered from the injury, it marked his departure from WWII.⁵⁵

The last of the amphibious raids launched by the No. 4 occurred in November 1944 at Walcheren. The island of Walcheren, guarded by the Germans, blocked the approach to Antwerp. This port was vital to supplying allied troops and so for the last time the War Staff planned Operation Infatuate. With the help of the No. 1 Commandos and French troops, the No. 4 Commando assaulted the town of Flushing with success. From there they moved to clear the Overduin Woods and were sent forward to engage enemy resistance at Vrouwenpolder. Success in Operation Infatuate led to a posting guarding the entries of Antwerp. The No. 4 remained at Antwerp until they were disbanded in June 1945 with only 150 men left standing.⁵⁶ The No. 4 Commando did not sit idle between their 7 assaults but actively trained throughout the war. If any man was ever seen as unfit to serve as a Commando, he was immediately sent back to his

⁵⁴ Geoff Slee, "Combined Operations" (Combined Operations Memorial Fund, 2001), http://www.combinedops.com/no_4_commando.htm (accessed October 2, 2009).

⁵⁵ Pegasus Archive. "Brigadier The Lord Lovat". http://www.pegasusarchive.org/Normandy/lord_lovat.htm (accessed December 1, 2008), 16.

⁵⁶ Geoff Slee, "Combined Operations" (Combined Operations Memorial Fund, 2001), http://www.combinedops.com/no_4_commando.htm (accessed October 2, 2009).

original unit. The No.4 Commando had a hand in almost all of the major assaults throughout WWII and did so with frequent success and aptitude that garnered respect.

CHAPTER 8

THE EASY COMPANY SURVIVORS OF NORMANDY MOVE ON

After D-Day Easy Company went on to fight Operation Market Garden, the front lines in Holland, Bastogne, and then on to occupy Hitler's Eagle's Nest before patrolling parts of Austria. Easy Company, along with the all of the American Paratroopers, was among the first to return to England from Normandy after D-Day. The people of London greeted the Paratroopers with great fanfare in the streets and pubs, where most men celebrated, and did so in a means so rambunctious all of London took notice. The men were then sent back to Albourne to await their next assignment and continue training. This wait seemed longer than expected, for each time Winters thought he and Easy would be off to fight again the infantry troops would advance ahead of schedule. In essence, the paratroopers who normally jump ahead of the infantry would have been jumping uselessly behind.

By July 1944 all surviving members of the 101st invasion returned to their base, and Easy did not even leave Albourne for their next mission until September 16, 1944. The men had adequate time to rest and continue training along with introducing new recruits to their respective companies. "Sergeant Martin looked around the first platoon barracks the first night back after Normandy, and half the men who had been there from September 1943 to May 1944 were gone."⁵⁷ The replacements had high standards to live up to and Company Commander Winters made sure they were up to the task. He used live ammunition in training drills, though not recommended, it quickly gave the recruits a much better understanding of the reality they were to come up against.

⁵⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 110.

By September the time had arrived for the men to take action once again. “The 101st had its baptism of fire in Normandy, and most importantly from a psychological standpoint, had taken the measure of the German soldier and his capabilities.”⁵⁸ The veterans, though nervous about returning, were nonetheless prepared for their return to combat. Field Marshall Montgomery wanted to end the war by Christmas of 1944 and strongly believed Operation Market Garden was the solution. The objective of the operation was to open up a highway running north to south through occupied Holland that would allow the British Forces the road to Berlin. Easy Company set out to hit their drop zone and secure the bridges to make way for the British Second Army and the Guards Armored Division, both of which wanted to cross the lower Rhine River by driving through Arnhem. With confidence running over from the Presidential Citation they had received for their impressive job in Normandy, the men believed in the mission they set out to accomplish.

The jump took place on September 17, 1944 during daylight. The men landed in what they called perfect drop zone conditions, and were quickly off to work. However, before Easy Company could even secure their first bridge, the Germans were ahead of them destroying their path. Easy could not get through their first town of Nuenen. Operation Market Garden became a logistical and tactical nightmare. The key to the success of the operation had been taking the highway and doing so quickly before the Germans could create an offensive, a nearly impossible task. The British tanks had not rehearsed the operation with Easy nor had they worked closely together in the past. The commendable degree to which the American Infantry and the American Paratroopers worked together in Normandy had caused those in charge, including Monty, to overestimate the ability of the 101st to create the same results with the British. Ultimately,

⁵⁸ Mark Bando *The 101st Airborne: From Holland to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1995), 6.

“Operation Market Garden was a high risk operation that failed.” Easy Company were outmanned, outgunned, and failed to reach their objectives.⁵⁹ In ten day Easy Company had lost 22 of their initial 154 men. Surrounded by the Germans, Easy had done their best to delay the Germans moving counter clockwise from town to town starting with Nuenen in the south. By September 20th the Germans had retaken the bridge at Arnhem and all hope for a successful operation was lost. Staying in Holland at this point for Easy Company was purely defensive.

From October to late November Easy Company engaged in what can best be described as trench warfare along the front lines in Holland. It was here that Winters led a 35 men platoon to route two German Companies of 300 men. For this brave act, and the consistent results preceding it, Winters was promoted after returning from Holland in 1944. The promotion of Winters from Easy Company Commander to Executive Officer of the 2nd Battalion for the 506th PIR was undoubtedly an honor, but ultimately one that bored Winters who enjoyed the frontline action. The men of Easy Company who survived the war have nothing but positive things to say about Winters including the fact that, “ He was the best combat commander we ever saw...”⁶⁰

By November 26, 1944 Easy Company was pulled from Holland for a brief respite in Camp Mourmelon, France. By this point however only 98 of the 154 men from Easy entering Holland returned. Their break was brief and concluded on December 18, 1944. Clearly the war was not to be won by Christmas.⁶¹ The next battle that Easy Company faced would be one of the most trying. Easy Company was sent to Bastogne utterly unprepared. “When Easy set out to meet the Wehrmacht, on the last greatest German offensive, the company was under strength,

⁵⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001),140.

⁶⁰ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001),166.

⁶¹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 167

inadequately clothed, and insufficiently armed.”⁶² The men had no long underwear or heavy coats, their boots were not lined or waterproofed, and many were without helmets and more importantly their comrades they had so recently fought with by their side. The objective was to fill the gap in the line/ring protecting Bastogne. As the men approached those retreating from Bastogne warned them of what they were about to face, telling them there was no hope. Easy Company knew the German offensive in the Ardennes could not continue and they hunkered down for the Battle of the Bulge. Here Easy Company did what those retreating had promised they could not. Easy held off the Germans and their offensive, though enduring many casualties in the undertaking. In one of the coldest months of Belgium’s winter, the men of Easy Company fought and continued to fight without ceasing until the German’s offensive was no longer. They were then moved to engage in the attack at Noville and then on to Alsace where they remained in the reserve for two weeks. Here they were finally able to get warmer clothing and a shower after six long and arduous weeks.

Before finally returning home, Easy Company finished their patrol at Haguenau and then went on to occupy Hitler’s Eagles nest in Berchtesgaden. Here they sent remaining German troops to POW camps and put up a guard around the town. By May, the men moved south to Austria where they were to “maintain order, to gather in all German soldiers, disarm them and ship them off to P.O.W camps.”⁶³ By mid July the men of Easy Company began to leave for their homes in the United States or were moved back to France where they were stationed before their departures. “On November 30, 1945, the 101st was inactivated. Easy Company no longer

⁶² Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 178

⁶³ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 228.

existed.”⁶⁴ After their heroic actions on D-Day the men continued to fight in Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Austria, from foxholes to trenches to snow covered woods and liberations of a concentration camp these men fought with all they had to give. And to the war effort they certainly gave a great deal.

⁶⁴ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 297.

CHAPTER 9 VICTORY

Easy Company and the No.4 Commando are not carbon copies of one another simply originating on different sides of the Atlantic. However, many similarities between the two do exist. These similarities lie mainly in the creation of both Special Forces, specifically for WWII under the same overarching objective. Originally the Commandos and the Paratroopers were trained to create an offensive, be the first to land, lead the way for the infantry, and send a message to the Axis powers that the Allies were not giving in. Later the Commandos learned they would need to serve as more than a raid and run force, and Easy Company likewise spent long periods on the front line after their initial jump into Normandy. Though their differences are obvious their similarities expose how successful the British and the Americans were in achieving the overriding objective behind the creation of these Special Forces.

Brigadier Lord Lovat and Major Dick Winters moved through similar progressions while working their way through the ranks. Neither Lovat nor Winters was in charge of their unit or company from the onset, however both led in their company or unit's most renowned assault. While Winters was in command of Easy Company on D-Day, he was later promoted to Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion for the 506th PIR; similarly, Lovat was promoted to Brigadier of the 1st Special Service Brigade after the raid in Dieppe. Both of these promotions came after significant recognitions for these commanders, the Presidential Citation for Winters' actions on D-Day and the Distinguished Service Award for Lovat's raid of Dieppe. These leaders did not solely lead Easy Company or the No 4. Commando respectively, but became responsible

for them and then many others. Both men were greatly admired and respected by the men they commanded.

Furthermore, the Paratroopers led by Winters, and the Commandos led by Lovat were also incredible individuals. Winters and Lovat were able to bring the best out of their men. We can see this in the many successes achieved by Easy Company and the No. 4. Both units were put in positions of great importance. Easy Company led the charge on D-Day and the No. 4 led the way in the Dieppe raid. The failures the men encountered were, more often than not, matters out of their own hands, as evidenced by Operation Market Garden and Dieppe. Never was there an objective lost due to a lack of heart, which is shown in the continual importance of the missions the men were assigned to take part in.

To say that these Special Forces, the American Paratroopers or the British Commandos, were the reason the Allied powers were able to turn the war around in their favor is beyond the scope of this work. However, focusing more specifically on the 101st Airborne 506th PIR Easy Company and the No. 4 British Commando does show that without at doubt these men played an important role in the Allied Victory. What if the dock in St. Nazaire was kept open and allied convoys were continually harassed by German capital ships? What if Easy Company had not stood their ground in the Battle of the Bulge and the Germans had taken Bastogne? Innumerable questions just like these exist and will continue to do so forever. This is true not just for Easy Company or the No.4, but for every man and every event that occurs in war. While the answers to these questions will never be known with absolute certainty, there can be no doubt that the actions of Easy Company, the No.4 Commando, and their leaders made a major difference in the eventual outcome of the Allied victory in Europe.

EPILOGUE

LORD LOVAT AND DICK WINTERS POST WORLD WAR II

Both Major Dick Winters and Lord Lovat survived World War II despite injuries. Their brave actions in war recommended them for still bigger things. Post war, Major Winters reactivated to train infantry men and soldiers for the Korean War after a short stint working for a friend in New Jersey. Following the Korean War he returned home to Pennsylvania and became a feed supplier until deciding to retire with his wife in Hershey, Pa where he resides today. He continues to tell his story both in lectures at Universities and for the HBO Series Band of Brothers. Lord Lovat was asked by Winston Churchill to become Captain of the Gentlemen- at-Arms in the House of Lords. Lovat turned this down for a part in a more political arena where in 1945 he became Under-Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and would later become the Minister of Economic Welfare. Following Churchill's stint as Prime Minister, Lovat returned home to his estate and acted as a speaker on Highland affairs in the House of Lords along with his membership to the Inverness County Council until his death in 1995.⁶⁵ Neither of the men were ready to leave the world surrounding war entirely. Lovat went into politics and government which led a country's affairs and as such are linked with war; Winters trained men for the Korean War something not entirely new for him considering the training he led at Toccoa. Neither man however saw the front lines again post war.

⁶⁵ Pegasus Archives. "Brigadier The Lord Lovat". http://www.pegasusarchive.org/normandy/lord_lovat.htm (accessed December 1, 2008), 15-16.

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