

slight.⁽⁹⁾ Indeed, Professor Robert Vogel of McGill University expressed the opinion that even in 1939 and 1940 the vast majority of Canadians who enlisted actually left jobs.⁽¹⁰⁾

The verdict of *In Desperate Battle* that Canadian training was "mostly casual and haphazard" and put lives at risk throughout the Normandy campaign was not greeted with equanimity by veterans appearing before the Sub-Committee. General Anderson commented that the 3rd Division "received the best possible assault training for over two years.... Certainly the success of the Normandy landing...would bear this out."⁽¹¹⁾ Colonel (ret'd) Donald Thompson, who commanded 13 Platoon of the Cameron Highlanders on D-Day, pointed out that Canadian troops were inexperienced in battle, but they were not "poorly trained. They were well-trained. They had the benefit of Combined Operations Training in England and in Scotland."⁽¹²⁾

There is evidence to suggest that Canadian training, especially among some regimental officers, was not always taken as seriously as it should have been, and this had grave consequences. But there is also evidence that, on the whole, the Canadians were indeed well-trained - as some have pointed out, perhaps even "over-trained." Some degree of balance seems to be missing from *In Desperate Battle*. Ultimately, the real problem came down to experience. The Canadian soldiers who stepped onto the beaches of Normandy could not hope to match the experience of their German opponents. Many of the officers and NCOs of the 12th SS Division, for example, had seen action against the Russians on the eastern front. The Canadians in Normandy, on the other hand, through no fault of their own, had to learn as they went along.

Into Battle

In Desperate Battle's depiction of the Canadian soldier's performance in Normandy did not sit well with many of the witnesses. In the words of Colonel English, "sensationalism came to count for more than historical accuracy."⁽¹³⁾

Especially controversial was the dramatic re-enactment of Joseph LeBouthillier, a Lance Corporal with the North Shore Regiment on D-Day, receiving orders from his officer to shoot any soldier who refused to disembark from the landing craft. General Anderson, a company commander with the North Shore regiment on 6 June, was astounded: "I can say without

(9) Proceedings, 3:61-62.

(10) Proceedings, 3:97.

(11) Proceedings, 8:86.

(12) Proceedings, 6:73.

(13) Proceedings, 3:75.