

### CHAPTER III

#### IN DESPERATE BATTLE: NORMANDY 1944

"I consider... (*In Desperate Battle*) to be inaccurate, an offensive production and an insult to the men of the Canadian army." Brigadier - General (ret'd) J.E. Anderson, Proceedings, 8:85.

"(*In Desperate Battle*) is riddled with throw-away lines that contain half-truths and blatant inaccuracies. A staff officer would consider it sloppy. It also lacks depth of understanding as well as balance." Colonel John English, Proceedings, 3:75-76.

#### AN UNTOLD STORY?

*In Desperate Battle: Normandy 1944*, the third and final instalment of *The Valour and the Horror*, purports to tell the story of Canadian participation in one of the most decisive campaigns of the Second World War. It focuses on the performance of Canadian troops and their officers in the summer of 1944 when the Allies stormed the beaches of Normandy and began the bitter struggle to break Hitler's hold on continental Europe. In some of the most vicious fighting of the war, the Allies ultimately defeated the Germans in Normandy and broke out into the open French countryside. But success came at a terrible cost. The Canadians, who remained in the thick of the battle from start to finish, left many of their finest soldiers behind.

According to the film-makers, "the true story of those battles has never really been told."<sup>(1)</sup> This came as a shock to the veterans and professional historians who appeared before the Sub-Committee. Professor Reg Roy of the University of Victoria, who has written extensively on the Normandy campaign, acknowledged that war correspondents at the time did not always give the Canadian public the full story of the war, but for good reason: their dispatches were censored so as not to reveal sensitive information to the enemy.<sup>(2)</sup> What was not revealed by reporters has since been uncovered by some of Canada's finest historians. Scores of books and hundreds of articles have been written about the Canadian army in

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(1) *The Valour and the Horror*, Post-Production Script, *In Desperate Battle: Normandy 1944*, p. 2.

(2) Proceedings, 3:61.