

centre" arrangement with a small paid staff and office volunteers who to answer calls.

All the drivers are volunteers, use their own cars and give up their time for free. They are paid (by the clients) 45p per mile for fuel and running costs. This is not a free service but costs are kept down with a low one-off joining fee (£10 at present) and £3 per trip administration fee.

Between 65 and 80 drivers are on the books with about 60 available at any one time. There is no upper or lower limit for the amount of commitment from each driver.

Throughout the District the DDVC has approximately 1600 clients at any one time. The demand for their services is growing, last year 367 new clients signed up for and recently there has been an average increase of 30 per month.

Last year 7 new drivers were recruited but more are always needed. Over the course of last year the drivers made 11,460 journeys which covered 105,363 miles in total. Most were short journeys to local hospitals but some were longer, London and beyond.

If anyone is interested in knowing more about volunteering or in the transport service the contact details are:

General enquiries tel: 01304 367898 or email office@ddvc.org.uk

Transport enquiries tel: 01304 380513

Website: <http://www.doverdistrictvolunteering.org.uk>

Facebook: [volunteeringdoverdistrict](https://www.facebook.com/volunteeringdoverdistrict)

MARCH MEETING

— Second Speaker —

Dover's Forgotten Commando Raid

A talk by Phil Eyden

Reported by Terry Sutton

Called in as our speaker at the last minute, Western Heights' researcher Phil Eyden thrilled our March meeting with his talk about the wartime Operation Abercrombie in which Dover-based Commando played the leading role in a raid on the French coast in April 1942.

Phil, a leading member of the Western Heights Preservation Society, researched the Abercrombie raid after it was revealed the Commando unit and a Canadian force prepared for the secret attack while stationed at the Drop Redoubt on the Western Heights.



Lord Lovat Briefing Officers at the Drop Redoubt

As a result of his research Phil (our speaker because of the ill-health of the advertised speaker) has authored and published a new book *Dover's Forgotten Commando Raid* now on sale at £15 for Western Heights' funds. Many of the photographs he screened at the meeting, he said, had never been shown in public before. Nor had many of the details been revealed until his book was published.



Phil explained the Allied raiding force at the Heights consisted of about 100 members of No 4 Commando, under the command of The Lord Lovat and a detachment of 60 Canadians of the Carleton & York Regiment from New Brunswick. They were carried to the German occupied coast at Hardelot by elements of the Royal Navy in various craft including Dover-based Motor Gun Boats (MGBs).

The aim of the raid, he explained, was to put out of action a searchlight unit near Hardelot, to "snatch" a few German soldiers for intelligence purposes, and to check out the sand dunes along that part of the Pas de Calais coast.

Questioned by a member of his audience, Phil accepted that the raid was not a success. The searchlight still worked after the attack (the Commando members were recalled as they began putting it out of action), no German

Lord Lovat (left) Lt Jack Ensor Carleton and York Regt Canada (right)

prisoners were taken but what was learnt during the raid assisted in the planning of future operations.

The Canadian force, in RN craft, was swept by sea conditions away from its landing zone and the Canadian soldiers returned to Dover's Eastern Docks frustrated. While the British Commando unit was ashore there was a fire-fight between Royal Navy and German coastal craft offshore.

As a result of the raid, and a previous attempt, there were four British casualties, all from the Royal Navy. One Commando was shot in the foot but was brought back to Dover. It is believed one German defender was killed. One of the navy men, Able Seaman Angus MacKenzie from a Motor Gun Boats is buried at St James' Cemetery, Dover.



B Troop Commandos Filming With Pathe News After the Raid

Phil, during his research, discovered a cinema propaganda Pathe News newsreel and still photographs which were taken by Reuters during the actual operation.

* Mr Eyden's book reveals that just before the raid military intelligence monitored telephone calls in and out of Dover after two reporters began asking questions about what was being planned.