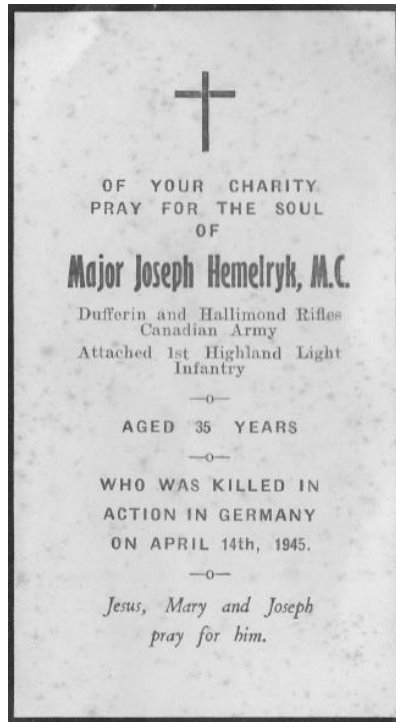


Major Joseph Hemelryk MC





Early years Joe was born on 24 February 1912 at Gerrard's Cross, Buckinghamshire. His father George Hemelryk was estate manager at Hollybrook Farm. George moved to Henfryn Hall, Dyserth, Flintshire in late 1912 and Joe enjoyed his childhood there. The pictures show the whole Hemelryk family in about 1921 (Joe is third in line from left) and Henfryn today.





Joe went to Stonyhurst College near Whalley in Lancashire in September 1923. He stayed there for 5 years from the age of 11 and completed the Oxford and Cambridge School Certificate in 1928. His obituary in *The Stonyhurst Magazine* states: "His years at Stonyhurst were not particularly remarkable. He picked up a prize here and there, but was usually about the middle of his class. Nor was he especially proficient in athletics. He was,

in fact, more or less the 'average' boy, as indeed are most other boys". It was here that he had his first experience of military life as he was a member of the Cadet Force.

After leaving school in July 1928 he and his older brother George (b. 24 Sep. 1910 at Denham, Buckinghamshire) sailed from Liverpool on 29 April 1929 on the *SS Duchess of Richmond* (3rd Class passengers), bound for St John, New Brunswick to work on his Uncle's farm (Richard Smith, Smith's Farm, Lethbridge, Alberta). George and Joe are shown here with their two oldest sisters, Maimes and Bertha. They would have timed this journey to avoid the harsh prairie winters in Alberta. They arrived at St. John on 29 April. He stayed there for some time and also worked in Ontario on a farm, but then returned to England. The picture below probably shows his brother George at Lethbridge at this time.



He travelled to Canada for a second time, sailing on *SS Duchess of York* on 27 March 1936 bound for St John, and again timed to avoid the Canadian winter. He went to work almost straight away at Cockshutt Plow Company, a very large Canadian manufacturer of



tractors and agricultural machinery based in Brantford, Ontario, as a production engineer. He boarded at the Brantford YMCA.

In contradiction to the statement in his Stonyhurst obituary he did not “at once decide to take his share in it” at the outbreak of war. At the start of the war Cockshutt's Brantford, Ontario factory, operating as Cockshutt Aircraft Division, manufactured undercarriages for several types of British bombers, including the Avro Lancaster Mk X being built by Victory Aircraft at Malton, and built plywood fuselages and wings for the Avro Anson training aircraft and for Britain's famous de Havilland Mosquito bomber. The Brantford plant, as Cockshutt Munitions Division also manufactured artillery trailers and artillery shells of variety of sizes. The work force at Brantford grew to nearly 6,000 people. A great number of the work force were women. Meanwhile, Cockshutt's other Brantford factory, called the Brantford Coach and Body plant, manufactured mechanical transport bodies, ambulances, and specialty trailers for the war effort. The importance of these tasks is probably the reason why Joe did not enlist in the military straight away.

1940-1941 He served in the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles of Canada, an Active Militia of Canada unit, from June 1940 until February 1941. This unit was mobilised for active service on 24 May 1941 (Joe formally enlisted in the Canadian Active Service Force on 1 May 1941) and served in a home defence role for the duration of the war. He had been



serving as a Provisional 2nd Lieutenant but reverted briefly to Private on enlistment in the Canadian Active Service Force. His medical examination showed him to be 6 feet 2 inches tall, weigh 179 pounds, have light brown hair and blue eyes. His hearing, eyesight and teeth were all satisfactory. His only distinguishing mark was a missing fourth toe on his right foot, amputated following a compound fracture. He was adjudged Medical

Category A¹. Starting on 1 May as Private, he was promoted to Acting Sergeant on 6 May and then sent to Officers Training Course Gordon Head, British Columbia (near Victoria BC). He was on this course from 14 June to 5 September, when he was appointed 2nd Lieutenant and sent to A.10 Infantry Training Centre at Camp Borden in Ontario until 12 October. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 5 October. His previous experience with the unit prior to mobilisation obviously stood him in good stead.

1942 Early 1942 saw him on yet another training course, this time on Platoon Weapons, at Nanaimo (near Gordon Head BC) from 6 March 1942 to 17 April. A spell of leave from 18 April to 8 May was followed by another course on Battle Drill at Courtnay Base near Nanaimo from 6 to 30 June. His company (A Company) was sent to Trofino, on Vancouver Island, from 3 July to 9 August and Joe qualified as a Motor Cycle Driver there on 10 August. On 15 August he was transferred from A Coy. to HQ Coy. and to be Transport Officer.

The unit then moved from British Columbia (Militia District 11) to Sussex, New Brunswick (Militia District 7) as part of the 71st Brigade, arriving on 25 August. At this point Joe's luck ran out and he was admitted to Sussex Military Hospital on 26 September suffering from primary atypical pneumonia. He was discharged from there on 9 October, but required convalescence and was classified Medical Category D. He recovered fairly quickly and his sick leave expired on 10 November and he was classified Medical Category A by a Medical Board on 22 November.

He was then sent on a Maintenance Course at Debert Military Camp in Nova Scotia, a large camp capable of holding division-sized units for final training prior to their deployment in Europe. He was there from 6 November until 13 December and was then granted Christmas leave from 19 to 28 December.

1943 The new year saw yet more training, this time at Woodstock, Ontario at an Advanced Driving and Maintenance School from 15 January to 27 February, doing an Instructors Course on wheeled vehicles followed by an advance Motor Cycle Course. He qualified Q1 as an instructor for wheeled vehicles and received a Distinguished qualification on the Motor Cycle course. On 26 April he was attached to the 26th Field Regiment, Canadian Artillery for a week-long First 7th Canadian Division Camouflage Course. On 15 May Joe became a Qualified Class III Carrier Driver and was promoted to Captain on 13 May.

All this training now started to show some results and, after annual leave from 12 to 29 July, he was posted to a transit camp at Windsor, Nova Scotia and sailed for Europe in



Sailing List 3137 on 26 August. In a report in The Ottawa Citizen on 4 September 1943, we are informed that among thousands of Canadian proceeding overseas, Captain J. Hemelryk of Brantford, Ontario, is "returning to Britain for the second time in this War." The

¹ See Appendix A for a sample of his enlistment papers

first time must have been unconnected with the military. On arrival in the UK on 1 September he was on the strength of #1 Canadian Government Reinforcement Unit until posted temporarily to the Perth Regiment of Canada on 19 October. This regiment had been training in England since 17 October 1941 and was just about to embark for Italy under conditions of great secrecy (everyone was told they were sailing to Northern Ireland). It is not clear if Joe sailed with them, but subsequent events make this appear unlikely. On 20 December he arrived back in Canada on Sailing List 341, now attached to No. 2 District Depot at Toronto and was granted disembarkation leave from 23 December to 5 January 1944.

1944 He was reattached to the Dufferin and Haldeman Rifles of Canada on 6 January at Chippawa near Niagara Falls. He was then Temporary Officer Commanding A Company at Sussex from 29 January and Temporary Officer Commanding HQ Company from 21 February. On 5 March he was taken off the strength of the Dufferin and Haldeman Rifles of Canada and attached to A34 Special Officers Training Course at Sussex until 29 March. He was then part of the CANLOAN scheme.

In the autumn of 1943, a scheme was devised whereby Canadian Infantry Officers could volunteer to serve with Regiments of the British Army. This came about due to the many campaigns fought by the British Army, half way around the world, which resulted in a shortage of junior officers, while the invasion of North-West Europe was imminent. The Canadian Army at this time had a surplus of officers, due in part to the disbanding of two Home Defence divisions, and also to the fact that the Canadian Army was fighting on one front only, in Italy. Officer training continued and it was discovered that Canada had more officers than could be employed in active battalions, at this time, with the result that many were cooling their heels in Reinforcement Units, Depots, and Training Centres.

The Canadian Government offered to loan junior officers to the British Army on a voluntary basis, under the code name "CANLOAN". They were attached for all purposes except pay and given special serial numbers with the prefix "CDN".

Six hundred and twenty-three Infantry Officers, together with fifty Ordnance Officers, whom the Royal Army Ordnance Corps were anxious to have, volunteered and served under the CANLOAN scheme, a total of six hundred and seventy-three in all. While the majority were Junior Officers, Captains were included on the basis of one for every seven Lieutenants. Some officers with higher ranks reverted and some from other arms of the service transferred to Infantry, in order that they could get in on this promise of early action.

In the early spring of 1944 all officers who volunteered were interviewed by a special Selection Board, and on acceptance were sent to A-34 Special Officers' Training Centre, Sussex, NB, where they underwent a short refresher course, while the necessary preparations for overseas service were speedily completed. During this phase they were under the command of Brig. Milton F. Gregg VC, MC, who, because of his continued keen interest in the welfare of all CANLOAN, is regarded as their Colonel-in-Chief and became Honorary President of the post-war CANLOAN Army Officers' Association. From Sussex they

proceeded overseas from Halifax in drafts of from fifty to two hundred, the first draft sailing in Sailing List 3796 on 30 March and arriving on April 7th, 1944 and the remainder following in short order. They were immediately posted to British regiments, as far as possible to the British Regiment, if any, to which their Canadian Regiment was affiliated.

Joe was in the first batch and is listed as CDN/4. He was immediately posted to No. 1 Battalion, The Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment). This unit was part of the 71st Infantry Brigade, which was in turn part of the 53 (Welsh) Infantry Division. The 71st Infantry Brigade consisted of the following units at the time of Joe's involvement with it.



- 1st Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment (*left 3 August 1944*)
- 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (1 Oxf & Bucks)
- 1st Battalion, Highland Light Infantry (1 HLI)
- 4th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers (4 RWF) (*from 4 August 1944*)

The story from here on comes from the War Diaries of 1 HLI² and the book *Red Crown and Dragon*³. But first it may be helpful to explain the organisation of an Infantry Battalion (Bn) in those times.

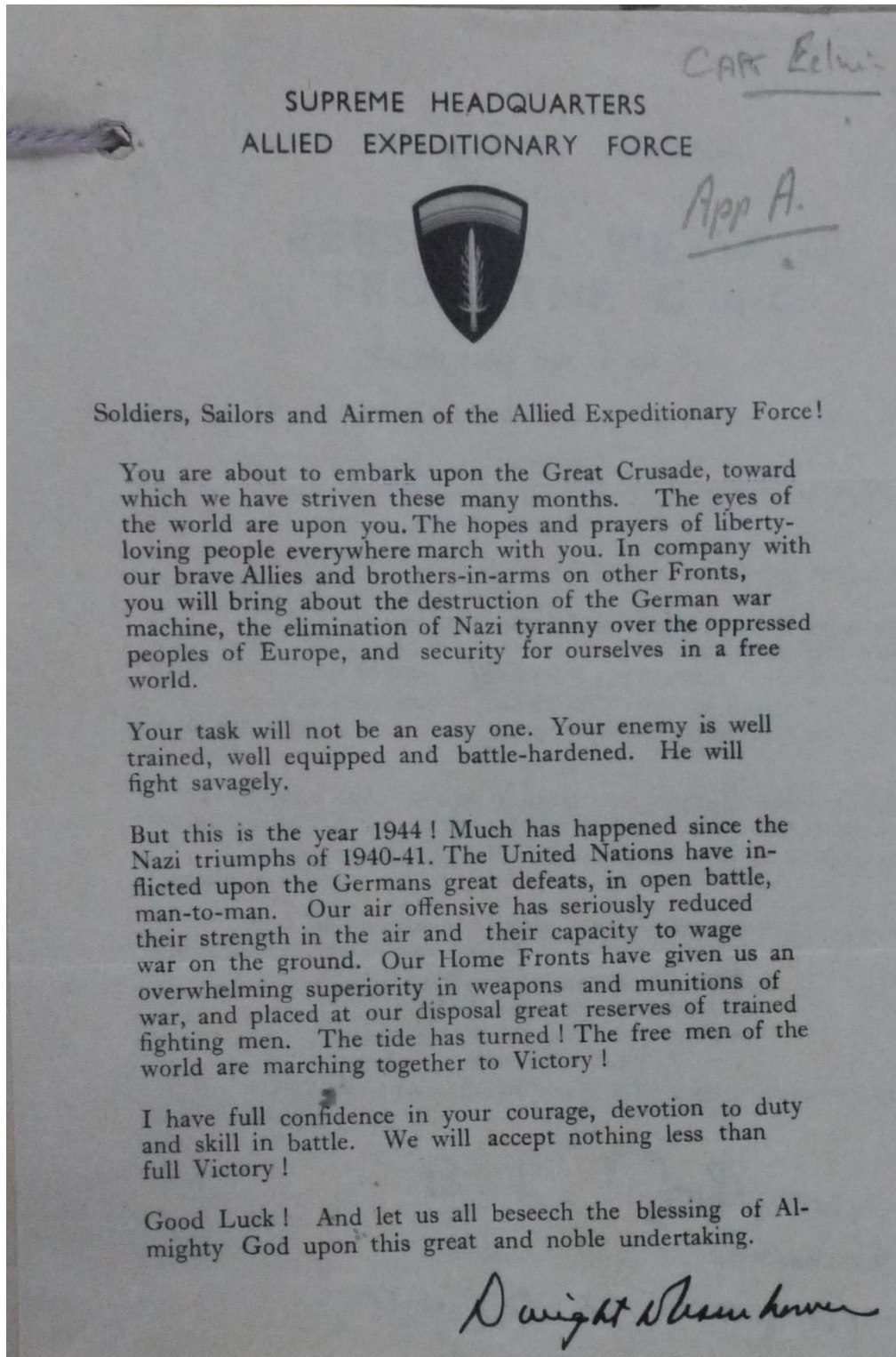
BN HQ Signals Platoon Admin Platoon	Commanding Officer 2iC Adjutant Motor Trans Officer Quartermaster Medical Officer Intelligence Officer	Lt. Col. Major Captain Captain Captain Captain Lieutenant Captain	
Rifle Companies (4x) (A, B, C, D Coys) Rifle Platoons (3x) Rifle Sections (3x) Coy admin Section	Company Commander 2iC Platoon Commander	Major Captain Lieutenant	Plus 1 man Plus 3 men Each 10 riflemen 7 men
Support Company Mortar Pl Sections (3x) Carrier Pl Sections (4x) Anti-Tank Pl Sections (6x) Pioneer Pl Sections (3x)	Company Commander Platoon Commander Platoon Commander Platoon Commander Platoon Commander	Captain Lieutenant Lieutenant Captain Lieutenant	Each 2 mortars/carriers Each 3 carriers Each 1 Atk gun, 2 carriers Total 22 men

² Full transcript of War Diaries from April 1944 to May 1945 included as Appendix D.

³ *Red Crown and Dragon*, Patrick Delaforce, with many quotes from Lt, later Capt, GCRL Pender who was Joe's 2iC in B Coy 1 HLI. Delaforce's (and thus Pender's) commentary is in italics.

April/May 1944 Joe and another CANLOAN Officer joined the Battalion on 9th April. 5 other CANLOAN Officers joined later in April/May. *Every battalion now had a quota of young, tough Canloan officers from Canada who fought (and often died) leading their Welshmen into battle.* The BN was based in the Brighton area undergoing training in preparation for D-Day. Joe was appointed 2iC of B Coy.

June 1944 The following messages were read to all forces.



21 ARMY GROUP

App B.

PERSONAL MESSAGE
FROM THE C-in-C

To be read out to all Troops

1. The time has come to deal the enemy a terrific blow in Western Europe.

The blow will be struck by the combined sea, land, and air forces of the Allies—together constituting one great Allied team, under the supreme command of General Eisenhower.

2. On the eve of this great adventure I send my best wishes to every soldier in the Allied team.

To us is given the honour of striking a blow for freedom which will live in history; and in the better days that lie ahead men will speak with pride of our doings. We have a great and a righteous cause.

Let us pray that "The Lord Mighty in Battle" will go forth with our armies, and that His special providence will aid us in the struggle.

3. I want every soldier to know that I have complete confidence in the successful outcome of the operations that we are now about to begin.

With stout hearts, and with enthusiasm for the contest, let us go forward to victory.

4. And, as we enter the battle, let us recall the words of a famous soldier spoken many years ago:—

*"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dare not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all."*

5. Good luck to each one of you. And good hunting on the mainland of Europe.

B. L. Montgomery
General
C-in-C 21 Army Group.

Part 1

SECRET

App C

The following message from the Supreme Commander will be read to troops by an officer after embarkation, if prior to 0001 hrs. D + 1, and only when no postponement of the operation is likely; alternatively, when briefing prior to embarkation after 0001 hrs. D + 1.

“ You are soon to be engaged in a great undertaking—the invasion of Europe. Our purpose is to bring about, in company with our Allies, and our comrades on other fronts, the total defeat of Germany. Only by such a complete victory can we free ourselves and our homelands from the fear and threat of the Nazi tyranny.

“ A further element of our mission is the liberation of those people of Western Europe now suffering under German oppression.

“ Before embarking on this operation, I have a personal message for you as to your own individual responsibility, in relation to the inhabitants of our Allied countries.

“ As a representative of your country, you will be welcomed with deep gratitude by the liberated peoples, who for years have longed for this deliverance. It is of the utmost importance that this feeling of friendliness and goodwill be in no way impaired by careless or indifferent behaviour on your part. By a courteous and considerate demeanour, you can on the other hand do much to strengthen that feeling.

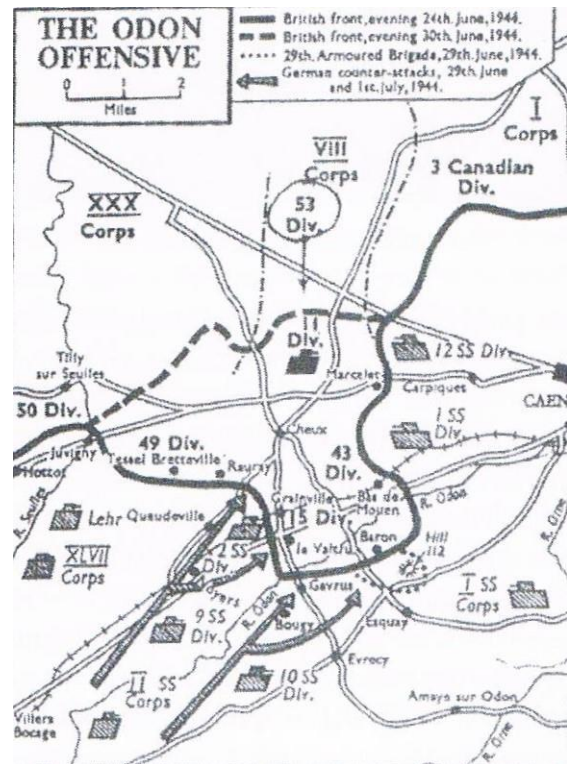
“ The inhabitants of Nazi-occupied Europe have suffered great privations, and you will find that many of them lack even the barest necessities. You, on the other hand, have been, and will continue to be, provided adequate food, clothing and other necessities. You must not deplete the already meagre local stocks of food and other supplies by indiscriminate buying, thereby fostering the ‘Black Market,’ which can only increase the hardship of the inhabitants.

“ The rights of individuals, as to their persons and property, must be scrupulously respected, as though in your own country. You must remember, always, that these people are our friends and Allies.

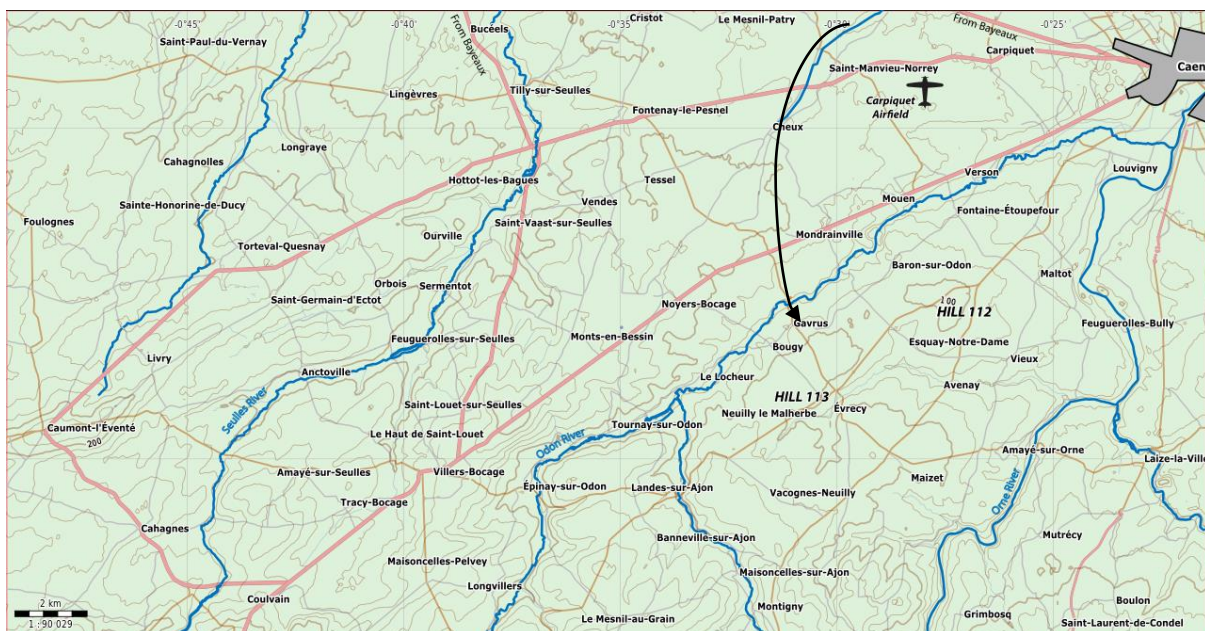
“ I urge each of you to bear constantly in mind that by your actions not only you as an individual, but your country as well, will be judged. By establishing a relationship with the liberated peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect, we shall enlist their wholehearted assistance in the defeat of our common enemy. Thus shall we lay the foundations for a lasting peace, without which our great effort will have been in vain.”

Once D-Day was launched on 6th June all leave was stopped and the Bn moved to marshalling areas in two distinct groups. The CO with all vehicles shipped out of London on SS Samzona, finally sailing for France on 24th after a period at anchor off Southend. The Marching Party sailed from Newhaven in two LCIs and one LSI on 24th. The 53 (Welsh) Infantry Division was to be part of XII Corps.

Arriving off Courseilles-sur-Mer in Normandy on 25th. The Marching Party went ashore at Graye-sur-Mer, west of River Seuilles, and assembled at 71 Bde concentration area at Beny-sur-Mer and remained there for the rest of the month. During this period the enemy recovered some ground lost in the initial assault.

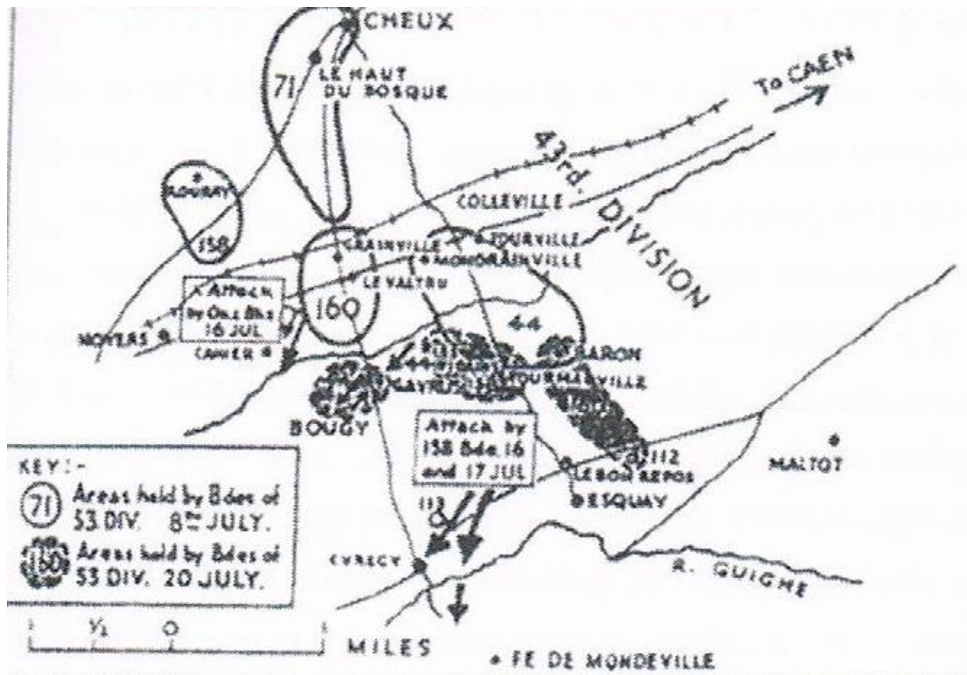


July 1944 The Bn was now involved facing the enemy for the first time (since 1940), moving to an area near Cheux on 10th. Here they faced elements of the 2nd, 9th and 22nd SS Panzer Divisions. Over the next 3



weeks they fought a slow moving battle in a southerly direction from Cheux towards Bougy and Evrecy. This mainly involved patrolling at nights and involved the first use of flamethrowers mounted on Bren Carrier on 29th. The Bn was relieved on 31st and went to a rest area at Mondrainville. Many casualties were incurred in this period. The map below shows the progress made by the 53 (Welsh) Division in this period. The sketch following was made of BN HQ at le Haut de Bosq on 13th July. On the 15th the following impression was recorded: *In the early evening the 1 HLI marched past down the hill, round the bend towards Tourmauville. In front was their Piper in his kilt and tam. He played a stirring march and the valley echoed with the sound of his pipes. A magnificent sight. I wished them well.*

Pender reports: 20-21st July. Found us at le Bon Repos area still in defence. All this time we were active and receiving a steady flow of casualties. The next day we moved to Hill 112, a much fought over mini-hill. It was a high cornfield and the corn came up to the average Jock's shoulders or head. It stretched for miles in each direction. It smelt of death from the fallen of both sides. The mess was absolutely awful. D Coy was on a forward slope in full view of the enemy. One could not get out of one's slit trench during daylight without being mortared or machine-gunned.









August 1944

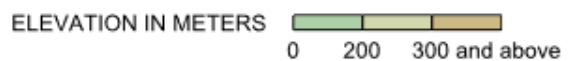
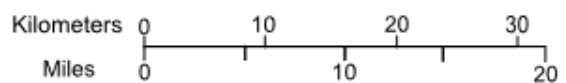
Rest was short-lived and the BN was back patrolling. They now became involved in the Falaise Pocket as part of XII British Corps.



Closing the Falaise–Argentan Pocket and the Mortain Counterattack

6–17 August 1944

-  Allied Axis of Attack
-  German Counteroffensive
-  Front Line, 8 August
-  Front Line, 13 August
-  Front Line, 17 August
-  Road



Joe is mentioned as leading a Fighting Patrol of B Coy on 3rd. On 13th they were ordered into attack, recorded as “the first attack the Bn has put in since entering this theatre of war”. In the next 7 days they advanced 33 miles, 17 of which were in the face of the enemy. Casualties were high and many enemy prisoners were taken.

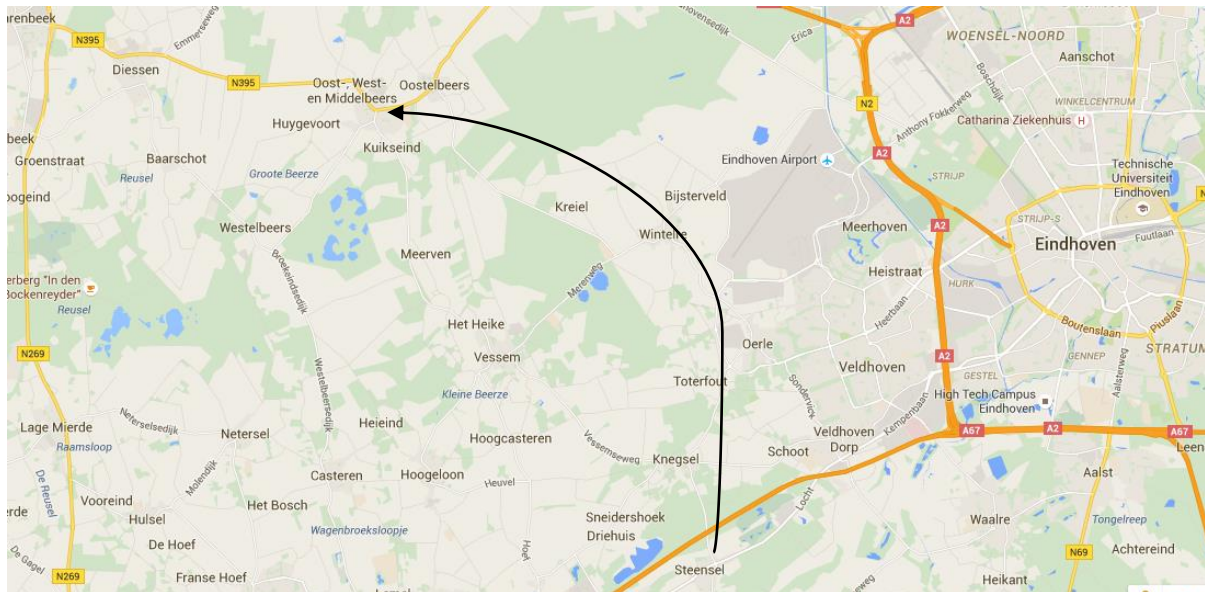
On 20th Pender reports a lighter moment: *My 16 Platoon, D Coy 1 HLI was in the thick of it. We were pressing forward through this frightful mess of burnt lorries, tanks, dead Germans and horses due to the RAF Typhoons and came upon a German Paymaster’s truck. The crew were dead and the contents were strewn across the road in thousands of notes. Though I had never been abroad before I recognised German, Dutch, Belgian and French notes of all denominations. Tired as we were we picked up as many as we could and stuffed them into the pannier among the oily tools on the Brengun carrier. When we reached Antwerp the dirty notes gave each person in 16 Platoon about fifty pounds, a lot of money in 1944.*

On 21st they moved to Montabard, about 9 miles SE of Falaise, for a few days for rest and reorganisation. On 26th they began a rapid advance across northern France, largely unopposed, and they crossed the River Seine on 30th.

Propaganda was used on both sides – see Appendix C for an example of German propaganda.

September 1944 They were soon crossing the River Somme and were involved in frequent mopping-up operations. On 6th they crossed into Belgium and by 9th were in military barracks just south of Antwerp. Pender tells us: *Names, dates I cannot remember. It was an endless nightmare of marching, sometimes lifted by Infantry personnel 3 ton trucks with Jocks exhausted in the back and out for the count.... We crossed the Seine on 30th August, the Somme on 2nd September, through Givenchy and Menin where we stayed the night and watched the Last Post being sounded at the Menin Gate in honour of the Allied Armies dead of 1914-18, played by the town’s fire brigade. All the way to Antwerp was an endless nightmare. There were some compensations, flowers, wine, fruit, pretty girls who all cheered their liberators to the highest. The Jocks showered the children and girls with chocolate and food.*

They then moved east and then north towards Eindhoven liberating their first towns in Holland, Eersel and Duisel (7 miles SW of Eindhoven), on 19th in a move north in support of Operation Market Garden, the airborne attack aimed at Arnhem, contact being made with American airborne troops on 19th. On 21st a lengthy attack began, starting at Steensel (SW to Eindhoven) aimed at capturing Oostelbeers and Middelbeers (west of what is now Eindhoven airport) by way of Wintelre. They got within 600 yds of their objectives in 12 hours, but clearing the villages and occupying them took until 25th. Casualties were heavy in capturing “the two Beers”. The Bn remained in defensive positions in the area, under considerable shell and mortar fire, until early next month.



October 1944

On 7th the Bn moved north through Nijmegen and occupied the bridgehead on the north side of the River Waal at Nijmegen, where they stayed until 17th. On 18th they moved to a concentration area at Ravenstein, SW of Nijmegen and planned and prepared for a Corps attack to liberate s'Hertogenbosch and Schijndel. This attack started on 22nd, with the Bn starting from the village of Geffen, about half way between Oss and s'Hertogenbosch and finishing at Vinkel, where they consolidated their positions and held them until they moved to Pepereind, SWS of s'Hertogenbosch, on 28th. On 31st the Bn moved back into Belgium at Neeroeteren, 25 miles SE of Eindhoven.

The Dutch family Mutsaerts, second cousins of the author, were living in Tilburg, SW of s'Hertogenbosch, at this time. Rene Mutsaerts (aged 9 at the time, now living in Vancouver, Canada) remembers Joe ringing the bell at their house as he was the one who answered the doorbell. He was amazed to see a British Officer standing at the door, one who so closely resembled his own uncle. Joe had a jeep and driver with him and took them on a tour of Tilburg, a great excitement for a nine-year-old boy! Rene's elder sister Mary Höppener-Mutsaerts (Amsterdam) remembers Joe taking them shopping in Tilburg. This visit must have occurred between 28th and 31st of this month. Tilburg was liberated on 28th.

November 1944

From Belgium they were quickly moved back into Holland and took over defensive positions at Thorn from The Belgian Brigade. Arrangements had to be made with the Mayor and local Dutch Home Guard for the future evacuation of civilians, areas in which farmers would be allowed to work and for assistance with defensive works. Nearly 600 civilians voluntarily evacuated from Thorn by 5th, meaning compulsory evacuation was no longer necessary. Slow progress was made up the western side of the River Maas (Meuse) and Canal van Nederweert to clear all enemy opposite Roermond. By 21st this had been achieved but flood waters from heavy rain and deliberate enemy flooding forced some withdrawal from forward positions as they became inundated. The Bn received a visit from Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery KCB, DSO who presented honours

awarded during current campaign. The end of the month saw water levels dropping by several feet and the Bn at Heugde, NW of Roermond, where they celebrated St Andrew's Day.

December 1944

After a week's skirmishing on the banks of the Maas the Bn moved on the 8th to a rest area at Veldhoven, SW of Eindhoven and the scene of the "Battle of the Two Beers". Here they spent a week in training and re-organisation. As part of this reorganisation Joe was appointed Company Commander B Coy with the temporary rank of Major. The Division now became part of British XXX Corps for the Battle of the Bulge, the German counter-offensive through the Ardennes which began on 18th December. The Bn was moved to several positions SE of Brussels to counter possible German break-throughs. By the 27th the enemy attack had been held at all points and it was expected that they would remain static for two weeks at Namur. The 40-strong Regimental Band came out for Hogmanay.

January 1945

This staying put not happen! On 1st the Bn moved 23 miles SE of Namur and took over defensive positions from Americans. They were involved in a number of small attacks northwards in an area SE of Charleroi. The weather had been increasingly bad from early November and movement was becoming increasingly difficult because of icy roads. On the 10th the Bn moved to Warzee, 15 miles SW of Liege for training, made difficult by snow on the ground. On 20th Bn move to Geldrop and XXX Corps came under the command of the 1st Canadian Army. There they began preparing for Operation Veritable, a pincer attack on Germany through the Reichswald on the high ground between the rivers Maas and Rhine.

February 1945

Training and planning for Veritable continued through the first week. The Reichswald Forest was 9 miles deep and 5 miles wide and was known to contain the northern end of the original Siegfried Line defences. The operation started on the 8th with 53 (Welsh) Division on the right center of the XXX Corps front. It was an infantry frontal assault, with armoured support, against prepared positions, in terrain that favoured the defenders. In order to reduce the defenders' advantages, large scale aerial and artillery bombardments were undertaken, amongst the largest of the war, albeit relatively brief. It was hoped that this would not only destroy the German defences throughout the Reichswald but also destroy the defenders' morale and their will to fight. Air raids were also undertaken to isolate the battle area from further reinforcement. The Bn was in the leading group on the first day (8th), then others took the lead for the next three days. On the 8th Lieutenant Pender was promoted to Captain and moved from D Coy to Joe's B Coy as his 2iC. The Bn was again in the lead on 12th and 13th. After some time in defensive positions the Bn was involved in very



heavy fighting on 24th and 25th. Casualties were again heavy. Throughout this battle movement was very difficult due to weather, bad roads and thick forest in parts. The photo shows infantry of the 53 (Welsh) Division in the Reichswald. Pender gives a general account



of the fighting in the Reichswald Forest: *For ten days we fought continuously in the forest in snow and rain. An advance of a few hundred yards was often a full day's work. Casualties from the airburst among the tree tops were very heavy. We were soaked right through to the skin and covered in mud. The Germans on our front had brought up a colossal gun which fired vast shells which made craters on landing big enough to penetrate Churchill tanks into with ease. They played havoc with our slit trenches. An eerie, much knocked about Schloss*

amongst the trees, with a WW1 monument in it, became a military cemetery. We carried back our dead for burial there at night.

March 1945

Early in the month the Operation Veritable continued and on 3rd there was a general withdrawal by the enemy across the whole Divisional front. The Bn moved to Issum on 4th in preparation for an attack NW towards Wesel in preparation for the crossing of the River Rhine. The attack started late on the evening of the 4th and met heavy opposition. It was in this attack that Joe won the Military Cross (MC). The citation for this medal explains the action. The signatures of the various Commanders are noteworthy (including Generals Horrocks and Crerar and Field Marshal Montgomery).

14/4

1 Infantry Brigade 53 (W) Division 30 Corps

Date recommendation passed forward 7 Mar 45
Received 8 March 10 March

Schedule No. Unit 1st Bn. The H.L.I.

Division 11 Gen 11 Gen
Corps 15 APR 1945 21 APR 1945
Army 6 APR 1945 7 MAY 1945

Rank and Army or Personal No. Capt A / Major CDN/4

Name HEMELRYK Joseph *Canadian*

Action for which commended
(Date and place of action must be stated)

Recommended by Honour or Reward (To be left blank)

This officer was in command of the right forward company of 1st H.L.I. when the battalion was ordered on the night of March 4th to gain part of a bridgehead astride the main roads in the woods N.E. of ISSUM (0926) in order to cover a bridging operation to allow the armour to advance towards the RHINE. In order to reach this objective he had to advance uphill over open ground swept by M.G. fire from spandau posts in the forward edge of the wood. In spite of the fact that both flanks of his company were exposed to heavy and accurate M.G. fire, the company on the left having been held up short of the wood, he put in a well organized assault on the enemy positions in the wood and succeeded in breaking through to his objective. Although this position became almost untenable by daylight as a result of an enemy counter attack astride the road on his left, Major Hemelryk kept his company in good heart by his personal coolness and disregard
OVER

Robt. Kindersley
Lt. Col. Comd 1 HLI
W. G. G. G. G.
Maj-Gen Comd 53 (W) Div
B. G. G. G.
Lt Gen Comd 30 Corps
W. G. G. G.
Lt. G. Gen. G.O.C. in C.
First Canadian Army.

850

M.C. 21. 6. 45

36024 P.T.O.

for his own safety. Throughout the day of 5th from exposed position under continuous mortar and small arms fire he accurately directed artillery and S.A. fire on enemy S.P. guns, M.G. posts and a tank which was little more than 200 yards from where he was.

It was largely due to his tenacity in holding such an isolated position, fine leadership and skill in directing fire under most difficult and dangerous conditions, that the bridgehead achieved its purpose and the armour was able to get through.

A. L. D. G. G.

FIELD MARCHAL
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
21 ARMY GROUP

If a casualty as under, fill in date.

Nature of Casualty	Date
Killed in action	
Died of Wounds	
Died	
Missing	
Prisoner of War	

The attack was successful. 60 POWs were taken captive during this operation but casualties were heavy. From the 12th the Bn then had a period of rest, refitting, reorganisation and training near Brussels until the 23rd. On 24th they moved to a concentration area near the Rhine, which had been successfully crossed by the British Second Army, led by 51 (Highland) Division on 23rd/24th near Rees and the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division between Wesel and Rees. The Bn crossed the Rhine on 26th and moved to Hamminkeln, 4 miles north of Wesel. On 29th the Bn moved forwards northwards and ended the month in Alstatte (6 miles south of Enschede), having cleared Bocholt and Winterswijk as they advance north, just inside the German border for the most part.

April 1945 By this stage enemy resistance was decreasing and on 5th a neighbouring brigade was opposed by a force comprising cadets from an Officer Training School, an NCO Training School and A Service Corps Training School south of Ibbenburen (17 miles west of Osnabruck. By now the Bn was advancing in an easterly direction towards the River Aller at Rethem. They had a few days' rest during which Joe wrote a letter to Leo & Betty Mutsaerts of Tilburg, which Betty Mutsaerts passed on to the author many years later. Much of the letter is of a personal nature.

*Major J Hemelryk
"B" coy 1st Bn H.L.I.
British Liberation Army
April 10th 1945*

*Dear Leo & Betty,
Just a note to let you know that all is well with me & that we are well into Germany & all hope to have the job finished ere long. We have been travelling fast & moving often & are consequently a little tired - however today & yesterday we have had a respite & a much needed rest - have just had a bath, the first for some weeks - had to peel off the dirt.*

.....

.....

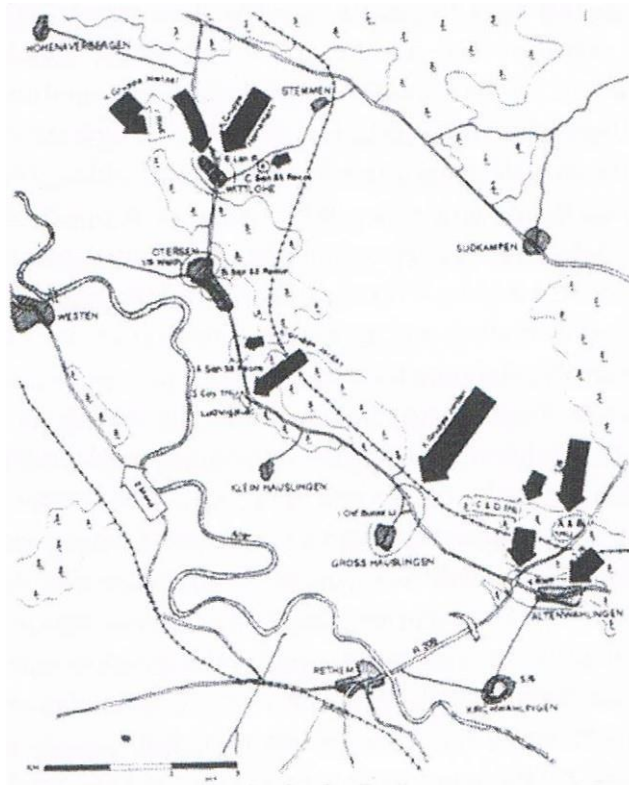
Excuse the short note - my love to all the kiddies & I hope they are all well.

To you both my love & I hope life is getting more settled.

Your loving cousin

Joe Hemelryk

After this short rest they attacked across the River Aller at Rethem towards Hauslingen. Opposition was slight in an attack starting late on the 12th. But resistance stiffened on the night of 13th/14th and early on 14th Joe was wounded. Pender gives the details: *It happened about 0100hrs after the two companies had done a long 3 mile outflanking movement across country. The two Company Commanders and myself were standing on the road, prior to taking up defensive positions, when we herd marching feet approaching from the east. Major Hemilryke [sic] OC B Coy hailed them thinking it was C or D Coy. Immediately heavy firing broke upon us. Major H was severely wounded ad a number of Jocks were killed or wounded along the track to our left rear. Things became particularly unpleasant.*



The savage battle for Rethem

The details are not elaborated upon in the War Diaries. Pender continues: *It was difficult in the dark to find my Company. Some were in a flooded ditch, some under a bridge, some in a scrub plantation. A and B Coy stretcher bearers evacuated some of the wounded but not those who had fallen within the enemy position, while I got the Jocks to fall back. All the time the Germans were bringing heavy fire to bear on the track. I pulled some of the Jocks out of the ditch physically as I could not make myself heard. Eventually everyone who was on his feet got back to A Coy position. A pretty sorry looking lot we were too. Some had lost their weapons and both Companies 18 radio sets were broken.*

In the morning a one-hour truce was arranged to retrieve the wounded on both sides. Private Buller, a stretcher bearer, stayed with the wounded Germans. He tells us: *All day we were under machinegun, rifle and mortar fire. We could not evacuate our wounded, as we had no transport. Some of them including Major Hemilryke died during the day. There was nothing to eat.*

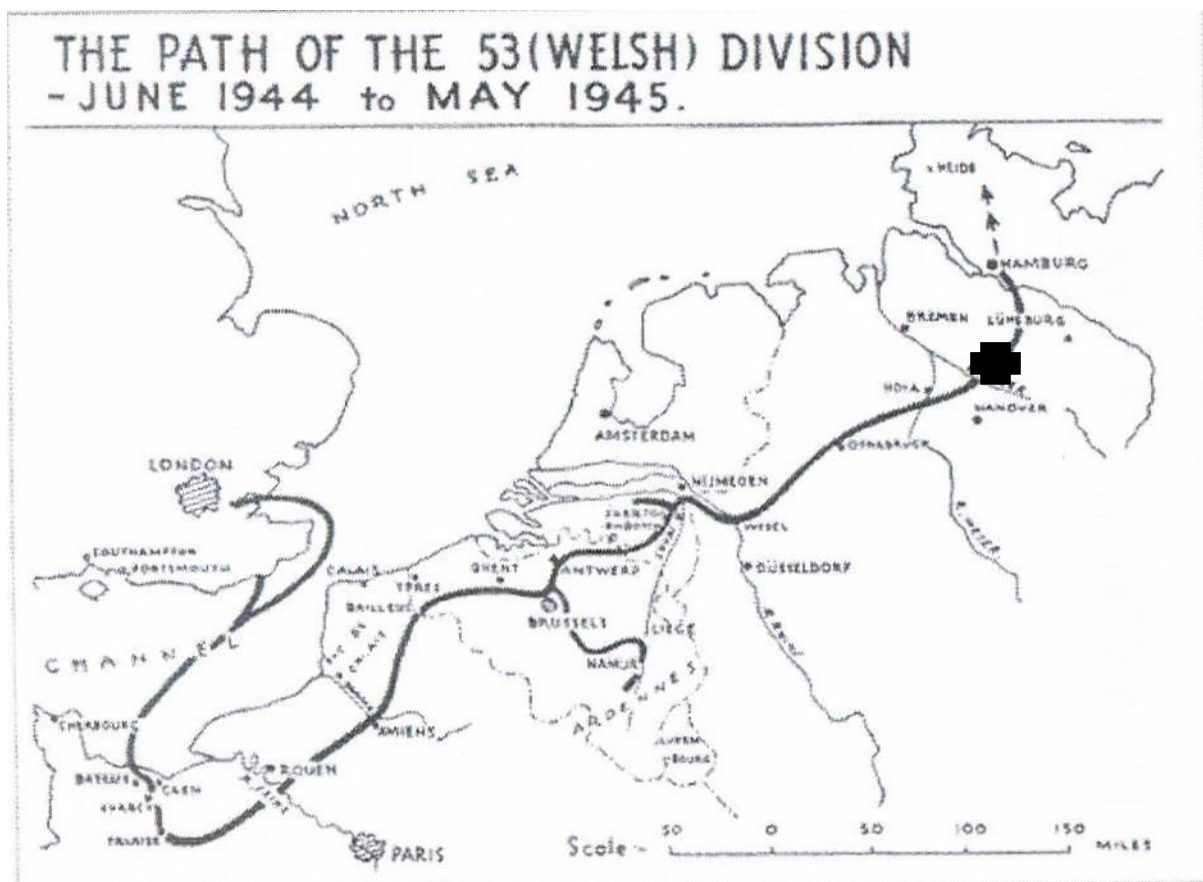
Joe was buried in a roadside cemetery in the woods on the edge of Groß Haüslingen. Before daybreak one section of the Anti-Tank Platoon was captured and was about to be shot when a Reconnaissance Armoured Car arrived and saved the situation. By midday the Bn had achieved its objectives. From here the Bn was moving generally northwards in the direction of Hamburg and resistance was increasingly disorganised and unmotivated. A number of smaller attacks were made and by the end of the month the Bn was at Mulmshorn, about 35 miles south west of Hamburg.

May 1945 Bn moved twice before finally entering Hamburg on 4th. On 4th May 1945, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery took the unconditional military surrender at Lüneburg from Generaladmiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg, and General Eberhard Kinzel, of all German forces *"in Holland , in northwest Germany including the Frisian Islands and Heligoland and all other islands, in Schleswig-Holstein, and in Denmark... including all naval ships in these areas"*. The Bn took over an admin area in the north of the city and on 5th the south east part of the city and with it a vast number of commitments in the form of guards on VPs etc. This also entailed dealing with POWs, ex POWs and DPs.



On 11th Capt JC Muir was awarded the MC

On 25th the late Major J Hemelryk was awarded the MC



An interesting insight into conditions faced by an officer on active service can be found in the list of his effects that were returned to his family. This is shown in Appendix B.

He was buried initially in a roadside cemetery in the woods on the edge of Groß Häuslingen. Finally, Joe was reburied at the Holten Canadian War Cemetery in Overijssel in the Netherlands, photographs of which were sent to his next of kin on 22 February 1949.



His name is inscribed on the Stonyhurst College War Memorial



Obituary from The Stonyhurst Magazine, July 1945

Major JOSEPH HEMELRYK. (O.S. 1923—1928)

Joseph Hemelryk, we regret to record, was killed in action on April 14th last, during a night attack on the Aller bridgehead. "He died of wounds on the battlefield," writes his Commanding Officer⁴, "when leading his company to attack an enemy strong point, East of the river Aller near Retham, and has been buried with others who fell on that day, in the pine woods on the outskirts of the village of Gross Häuslingen. I believe that he suffered very little before he died as his wounds were spinal and caused no pain. Joe has been through all our triumphs and misfortunes with us, always with the greatest cheerfulness and imperturbability, from the very early days and was the closest friend of all his brother Officers who came over from England with him. His loss will be deeply felt by them. His gallantry in action in all our battles has been surpassed by few, if any, other Officers of the Regiment."

Joe was the younger son of Lieut. Colonel George E. Hemelryk, O.B.E. (O.S. 1891) of Henfryn Hall, near Dyserth, Flintshire, and came to the College at the age of eleven in September, 1923. In the course of five years he quietly worked his passage up through the various 'Lower' and 'Upper' divisions of classes until he reached Grammar. His years at Stonyhurst were not particularly remarkable. He picked up a prize here and there, but was usually about the middle of his class. Nor was he especially proficient in athletics. He was, in fact, more or less the 'average' boy, as indeed are most other boys. "Joe was a real and genuine Stonyhurst boy," was said of him at his death; and that was generously meant to imply a great deal. Certain it is that from his home and from his school he learnt the meaning and the value of a good Catholic life: and what he so learnt he evidently continued to put into practice as long as he lived.

By the time he left Stonyhurst, in July 1928, Joe had completed half of his life. He was in Canada at the beginning of the war and at once decided to take his share in it. He was one of many officers in the Canadian army who in the course of the war were lent to the British

⁴ Lt Col CRM (Dick) Kindersley DSO MC

army: in his particular case, during the operations in Western Europe he was "B" Company Commander of 1st Batt. Highland Light Infantry.

A letter written to his father by a former C.O.⁵ adds further testimony to the sterling character of the son. "Though no longer in command of the Battalion I would like to offer you my deepest sympathy . . . Joe fell, I am told, as he had lived, a very gallant gentleman, at the eleventh hour. He joined me, as you know, shortly before D day, and in those months that have passed we had all got to love and admire him. He never spared himself, either in the care of his men or in the execution of his duty, and it is men like him that have brought Victory in sight. That he had to fall is the will of God, but the Regiment owes him an unrepayable debt. He was the life and soul of a party, and there was not an Officer or man who had not a personal regard for him."

Praise such as this, which rings so true, may afford some consolation at least in their heavy loss to Joe's parents and family, to whom we offer our sincerest sympathy. May he rest in peace.

He is also remembered on the War Memorial at Trelawnyd Village Hall. His family home, Henfryn Hall, lies within the village boundary.



His name does not appear on the War Memorial at Brantford in Ontario.

⁵ Lt Col Torquil McLeod

Civilian affairs.

First mentioned in preparation for Operation Veritable.

Policy was not to evacuate civilians outside Germany except in the initial stages and then only if "the civilian population is a nuisance to forward units".

Next mentioned in preparation for crossing the Rhine.

Evac and Move of Civs.

- a) There will be a complete standstill on any move from one town or village to another.
- b) For the first 24 hrs after a town or district is taken, civs will be confined to their houses.
- c) After first 24 hrs civs may be allowed to move locally under control of mil gov.
- d) Initially ESST of the Rhine there will be no evac of civs. If it is necessary to clear buildings, civs will be doubled up in other buildings in the same area.
- e) Later when ops become more static, evac from Bn areas will be allowed, but only on the authy of Bn HQ.

Refugees

- f) Refugees on the roads will be ordered to return to their houses. If this is impossible they may be sent to Bn POW collecting point.

Curfew and Black-Out

- g) Curfew and black-out will be enforced as follows:-

25 Mar – 1 Apr	1945 – 0700 hrs.
2 Apr – 11 Apr	2100 – 0715 hrs.
12 Apr – 25 Apr	2130 – 0650 hrs.

Enforcement of Orders

- h) The enforcement of Mil Gov orders is the duty of all ranks. Offenders will be arrested and handed over to Bn Pro.

Police

- i) German Police will be disarmed and confined to bks. Coys are responsible for finding guards for German Police Bks until they are taken over by Mil Gov.

Concentration Camps

- j)
 - i. All conc camp guards will be arrested and detained and a report showing location of camp sent to Bn HQ.
 - ii. Persons who are under detention in the camp will be as far as possible prevented from leaving.
 - iii. All records will be seized and preserved

Records

- k) All records captured will be carefully preserved for handing over to Mil Gov. Rooms containing Records will be locked, placed OUT OF BOUNDS and NOT used for billeting.

Displaced Persons

- l) Displaced persons will NOT be allowed to move. Large numbers will be reported to Bn HQ.

Procurement

- m) Except for urgent op needs there will be no procurement by any means of the following:-

Food	Solid or liquid fuel
Clothing and blankets	Load carrying tpt and spares (incl tyres & batteries)
Soap	
Med and San Sups	
- n) There will be no wanton destruction of enemy property.
- o) In the early stage Div Cattle Pounds will not be est. Units will feed and water livestock.
- p) Mil Gov will eventually est pounds.

Appendix A – Enlistment papers

ved..... **CMRN 279 ISSUED MAR 44** Card **2** Observations.....

ORIGINAL
DUPLICATE
TRIPPLICATE

FINGERPRINTED & PHOTOGRAPHED

M.F.M. 2
A.F.B. 271
450M-5-40 (5237)
H.Q. 1772-39-1645

(To be completed in triplicate. Copy designation to be shown by striking out terms not applicable.)

Unit **1st. Bn. Dufferin & Haldimand Rifles, A.F.** Regimental Number **1543, 459**

CANADIAN ACTIVE SERVICE FORCE
ATTESTATION PAPER

WSG COMPLETED 4 Dec 43

1. Surname..... **HEMELRYK**

2. Christian Names..... **JOSEPH**

3. Present address..... **Y.M.C.A. Brantford, Ontario.**

4. Date of birth..... **February 24th, 1912**

5. Place of birth..... **ENGLAND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DENHAM**
(Country) (County or Town) (Town or Township)

6. Religion (state denomination)..... **ROMAN CATHOLIC**

7. Trade or Calling..... **Production Engineer**

8. Married, Widower or Single..... **Single**

9. Name of next of kin..... **G.E. Hemelryk (George Edward Hemelryk)**

10. Relationship..... **father**

11. Address of next of kin..... **Henfryn Hall, Dyserth, North Wales**

12. Do you belong to, or have you served in the Active Militia of Canada? **yes 2nd Bn. Dufferin & Haldimand Rifles, A.F. February, 1941**

13. Have you served in (a) The Canadian Active Service Force? **no** (If Yes, Give Unit and Dates of Service)
(b) Any other Naval, Military, or Air Force? **no** (If Yes, Give Regimental No. and Unit)

14. Did you serve during the Great War 1914-1918? **no** (If Yes, specify Unit and Period of Service)

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION

I, **JOSEPH HEMELRYK** do solemnly declare that the above particulars are true, and I hereby engage to serve in the Canadian Active Service Force so long as an emergency, i.e., war, invasion, riot or insurrection, real or apprehended, exists, and for the period of demobilization after said emergency ceases to exist, and in any event for a period of not less than one year, provided His Majesty should so require my services.

Date **1 May 1941** **Joseph Hemelryk**
(Signature of Recruit)

JOSEPH HEMELRYK TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION

I, do sincerely promise and swear (or solemnly declare) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty.

Joseph Hemelryk (Signature of Recruit)

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OR ATTESTING OFFICER

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answers to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided by law.

The above questions and answers were then read to the recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me,

at **Shoreham Ont** this **1st** day of **May** 19**41**

CAPT. & ADJT.
1ST BN. DUFFIN & HALD. RIFLES, C.A.S.F.

Signature of Magistrate, Justice or Attesting Officer.
Office or Rank and Unit or appointment.

N.B.—ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE FACT THAT ANY PERSON MAKING A FALSE ANSWER TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS IS LIABLE TO A PENALTY OF SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY FORM
COMPLETED

FINGERPRINTED
PHOTOGRAPHED

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Name in full... Joseph Hemelryk Date... 29/4/41

Part 1. Information obtained from the recruit.

1. Age.....29..... 2. Have you ever suffered from any of the following diseases?
- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Rheumatism..... <u>no</u> | k. Ear disease..... <u>no</u> |
| b. Tuberculosis..... <u>no</u> | l. Eye disease..... <u>no</u> |
| c. Bronchitis or asthma..... <u>no</u> | m. Epilepsy..... <u>no</u> |
| d. Heart disease..... <u>no</u> | n. Nervous or mental disease..... <u>no</u> |
| e. Kidney or bladder disease..... <u>no</u> | o. Syphilis..... <u>no</u> |
| f. Gastro-intestinal..... <u>no</u> | p. Gonorrhoea..... <u>no</u> |
| g. Rupture..... <u>no</u> | q. Have you ever worn glasses?..... <u>no</u> |
| h. Varicose veins..... <u>no</u> | r. Are you now or have you in the past received disability pension or compensation? If so, give details..... <u>no</u> |
| i. Flat or deformed feet..... <u>no</u> | |
| j. Nasal trouble..... <u>no</u> | |
| pleurisy..... <u>no</u> | |

Joseph Hemelryk
Signature of Applicant

Part 2. Information obtained by medical examination. The recruit must be stripped.

1. Identification marks or scars. (If operative obtain history.)
.....amputated 4th toe - right foot.....
2. Height.....6.....feet.....2.....inches. 3. Weight.....179.....pounds.
4. Complexion.....fair..... Eyes.....blue..... 5. Development.....good.....
- Hair.....light brown
6. Chest measurement—Girth on full expansion.....38.....inches.
Range of expansion.....3.....inches.
7. Vision, right.....20/30.....left.....20/20..... 8. Hearing, right.....CV 20.....left.....CV 20.....
9. Condition of mouth and teeth.....satisfactory.....
10. The abnormalities (congenital and pathological) found on examination are as follows.....
.....urine, ear sm reflexes are normal.....
.....amputated fourth right toe following compound fracture.....

Good
Fair
Poor

Part 3. We, the examiners find no evidence of the diseases mentioned in Question 2, Part 1, except as stated in the remarks. We have examined the Recruit in accordance with the pamphlet "Physical standards and Instructions for the medical examination of recruits" and he is found fit for Category....."A".....
Special remarks when category lower than A.....

J. J. Kelly Major Colonel W. A. L. ... A. ... Capt.
President Member Member

VACCINATIONS, INOCULATIONS, BOARDS, RECLASSIFICATION OF MEDICAL CATEGORY

Date	Brief details and signature	Date	Brief details and signature
8-5-41	<u>Ray chid wa JP</u>	8/19/42	<u>Category A confirmed</u>
13 Jun 41	<u>T.B. + Vacc</u>	23 Jun 43	<u>1cc Dip Tox</u>
14-7-41	<u>etc</u>	15 Sep 43	<u>schief test (positive)</u>
2-15-41	<u>3</u>		
29-4-41	<u>Colour Vision Normal</u>		
14-8-42	<u>T.B.T. Kenna</u>		
19-10-42	<u>reclassified D.A.F. 227 A</u>	30 July 43	<u>reclassified Cat A</u>
18-11-42	<u>reclassified A.F.D. 227 A</u>	21 Feb 44	<u>PULHEMS confirmed</u>
15 Apr 43	<u>Re class Cat A</u>	1 Jul 44	<u>1 cc T.A.B.T.</u>
		27 Mar 45	<u>Pulheims confirmed</u>
11-3-44	<u>Typhus 1</u>		
18-3-44	<u>Typhus 2</u>		
25-3-44	<u>Typhus 3</u>		
25-3-44	<u>Vaccination</u>		

Y	O	B	P	U	L	H	E	M	S
1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

W. A. Brook Capt.

Appendix B Effects of Major J Hemelryk

Personal effects

1 Photograph
 1 Whistle
 1 Wristwatch 13273 O/3476
 1 Penknife
 1 Tobacco pouch
 1 Checque (*sic*) book The Royal Bank of
 Canada No 864877 to 864880 to O i/c
 Est.
 2 Fountain pens (Parker-Watermans)
 1 Cap badge
 1 Pocket watch & chain
 1 Ring
 1 Pipe (broken)
 1 Bank pass book No 28686
 1 Catholic prayer book
 1 Rosary

2nd inventory – presumably his kit.

1 Bedroll valise w/straps &
 sleeping bag (Polar-Down)
 1 Hair brush
 1 Keys in leather ease

1 Pillow slip
 5 Shirts
 2½ Suits pyjamas
 1 Trench coat
 1 Pr. leather gloves
 1 Glengarry
 3 Pr. shorts
 2 Collars
 1 Green sweatshirt
 3 Pipes
 1 Handkerchief
 1 Canvas bucket
 1 Pillow
 2 Photographs
 2 Towels
 1 Balmoral w/ hackle
 1 Pr. black oxfords
 5 Pr. socks
 2 Vests
 1 Tie
 1 Leather housewife
 1 Officer's haversack
 1 Leather belt

Appendix C Examples of German Propaganda June/July 1944 Normandy

AWP.D

*When you left
your wife*



you tried to console her in the belief, that by
this very last, great effort of all Allies together»
the war will definitely be over within a few months.

Well - in between perhaps you already changed your mind
a bit, getting just the first, slight impression of what means

Invasion

In order to preserve you from any further disappointments
You ought to know:

You are facing German soldiers now, defending the
forefield of their home.

S W 5

They are equipped not only with new weapons (and you will have the honour, to make their acquaintance) but also with the experience of three years war against the Bolshies.

Besides the Jerries have been rather busy in this country and by no means only in the coastal area — you certainly heard about «German accuracy».

And don't forget:

The men, you're facing now, don't defend territorial or economical or any other sort of material interests, but a very simple and elementary thing:

The life of their women and children and their national existence!

Do you think, there is only the slightest hope on a German capitulation...?

Happy end in a few months...?



«I tell you, these Germans are damned good soldiers!»

Statement of General Montgomery quoted by Wendell Willkie in his book «One World»

Did you write home already? Do it at once! A few hours from now, it may be too late!

Appendix D

1st Highland Light Infantry

War Diary 1944

April-May 1944


Mo	Day	Description
		Pages P1960055-P1960070
		Some military abbreviations: Div = Division; Bde = Brigade; Bn = Battalion; Coy = Company; Pl = Platoon; Recce = Reconnaissance; Atk = Anti-Tank; HQ = Headquarters; Trp = Troop; Arty = Artillery
4	1	Moved from Ilford to Brighton – Southwick area
4	3-4	Training with tanks on South Downs
4	5-7	Returned to Sittingbourne area
4	9	Capt. J Hemelryk and Lieut. W G Whitney, both of Canadian Infantry Corps, were posted to the Battalion under the CANLOAN scheme.
4	15	53 (W) Division exercise HENRY commenced.
4	22	Exercise HENRY concluded and returned to Sittingbourne.
4	23-30	Admin week.
4	25	Lieut. H J Hihn, Canadian Infantry Corps, posted to unit.
5	2-12	Four more CANLOAN officers posted to unit. Several British officers posted out to other units.
5	28-30	4 officers and 19 NCOs attended street fighting course at Limehouse.
5	28-31	Inter-company sports competitions.

June 1944

		Pages P1960071-P1960091 Some modern road numbers, names and locations are given in italics for reference and to help locate these actions on today's maps. Also occasional elaborations, that are not in original text, are added in italics.
1-4		Inter-company sports competitions continued.
6		D Day. All leave stopped and Bn on 6 hrs notice to move to a marshalling area. It is now apparent that 12 Corps, of which the Division forms part, is to be used in a "Build Up" role.
17-19		Vehicle Party + CO etc. (289 all ranks) moved to marshalling area and then to West India Docks for embarkation on <i>SS Samzona</i> , a US built Liberty Ship leased to Britain and sailing under the Red Ensign. Total of 57 officers, 554 ORs and 153 vehicles, with 1st HLI being the largest group on board. Marching Party (23 officers, 506 ORs) by train from Sittingbourne to Haywards Heath then to nearby Marshalling Area Camp J9 on 17th.
18		German "P" Plane (Pilotless Plane – <i>ie V1</i>) crashed near marshalling area.
20		<i>SS Samzona</i> sailed at 1400 hrs. and anchored off Southend at 1900 hrs. in company with many other similar ships and several LSTs. It was understood that the convoy would be held up for several days because high winds were preventing unloading onto the Normandy Beaches.
24		<i>SS Samzona</i> & Convoy sailed at 1945 hrs. (approx. 18 ships). Marching Party sailed from Newhaven in 3 ships: 2 parties in LCI and 1 in LSI at 2000 hrs.
25	0800 hrs. 2300 hrs.	Off Beachy Head. At 2230 hrs. anchored off Courseilles-sur-Mer, Normandy. The Bay presents an astounding picture. A mass of ships off all types from coasters & small landing craft to large freighters & passenger boats. There are also several cruisers & a Capital Ship, either the <i>Nelson</i> or <i>Rodney</i> . Our cruisers & the Battleship were in action in support of the Land Forces. All ships in the Bay made smoke, an A.A. precaution. Marching Party disembarked on the beach at Graye-sur-Mer, west of the River Seulles. Moved from there by motor transport to 71 Bde. Concentration area at Beny-sur-Mer, arriving by 2320 hrs.
26	1400 hrs.	CO and others disembarked with the vehicles and moved to Colombes-sur-Mer and then to 71 Bde. Concentration area, where they met up with the Marching Party. Orders received to form a defensive position at La Mare (junction D79 & D141) 7 m north of Caen.
27		Bn dug positions at La Mare but remained at Beny.
29		Remaining transport arrive at Beny. Bn up to strength with officers but deficient in ORs. La Mare positions completed.
29		Men sent in parties of 30 to bathe at Petit Enfer (<i>Luc-sur-Mer</i>). Numerous "stand-by" orders received and cancelled.

July 1944


Pages P1960092-P1960117		
1		Moved to Sainte Croix Grand Tonne. To stay the night there, then tomorrow move up to the area Cheux – Haut de Bosque to relieve 44 Inf. Bde. (15 (S) Div) who are on the west of the British salient and have today been heavily assaulted by the enemy. At least parts of the following units have been identified in the immediate front: 2 nd SS Panzer Div., 9 th SS Panzer Div., & 21 st SSS Panzer Div.
2		Bn moved out at 0800 hrs to march to Haut de Bosque and relieved 8th Battalion R.S.F., who moved out at 1330 hrs. 2000 hrs, a little shelling & occasional mortar fire.
3		A little mortaring and shelling.
4		Heavy mortar fire.
5/6		Intermittent mortaring and shelling.
7	2230 hrs.	The Pipe Band played in Bayeux – the first band to do so since D Day. Capt. Campbell killed by German mortar bomb while being briefed for a patrol in forward area with 1 st Ox. & Bucks. The Bn's first casualty of the campaign.
8		Bn ordered to relieve 1st Ox. & Bucks. tomorrow night.
9	1100 hrs. 2100 hrs. 2300 hrs.	Capt. Steptoe brought in a fighting patrol of 1st Ox. & Bucks. To our lines after they withdrew in the face of heavy MG & mortar fire. He showed considerable initiative. Commenced relief of 1st Ox. & Bucks. Bn HQ established in farmhouse, rear companies in position.
10	0400 hrs. 0430 hrs. 1030 hrs.	Forward companies in position. Signal office hit by mortar bomb – no casualties but communications with companies cut for 30 mins. Otherwise a quiet & satisfactory takeover. The Bn. now faces the enemy for the first time since 1940. The week in reserve has added considerably to the training of the Bn. The percentage of dead cows in the area being particularly high, the most noxious have now been buried. Patrol for tonight briefed – purpose being to recover any 1st Ox. & Bucks. wounded left out from the fighting patrol.
11	0300 hrs. 2200 hrs. 2230 hrs.	Patrol returned with one wounded Private from 1st Ox. & Bucks., he being the only one they could locate. Also brought useful information re enemy digging. D Coy heavily mortared. Fighting Patrol of 2 officers & 32 ORs left the lines – purpose being to obtain identification and information about enemy positions.
12	0430 hrs. 2330 hrs.	Patrol returned with little accurate information and no identification. Lt. Crabbe and 2 other ranks (Ptes., Sword and Donnelly of C Coy.) did not return. Lt. Crabbe thought to be wounded. Interviews of several people showed that Lt. Crabbe led a patrol of 16 men towards an enemy post when their position was given away by someone coughing, whereupon the enemy challenged the patrol, put up a flare and opened fire with Spandaus. As the fire was accurate the remainder retired to the firm base. Recce. Patrol sent out to recover the bodies of Lt. Crabbe & 2 ORs if found and to obtain more definite information on the enemy positions in the are covered by Lt. Crabbe's patrol.
13	0430 hrs. 2330 hrs.	Patrol returned: found no trace of missing men; good information about enemy positions; no casualties. Lt Taylor took five-man recce patrol to obtain detailed information about suspected enemy posts in triangular-shaped wood on our immediate front. See sketch below of Bn HQ at this date.

14	0400 hrs.	Patrol returned with fair information about the enemy in the wood. One OR, Pte. Steele, killed by Spandau fire in the Firm Base. Throughout this period in the line there was little activity other than patrolling. The enemy did not attempt to patrol against us and we dominated No Man's Land, which in this occasion was no more than 400 yds. deep. Our position was shelled and mortared at irregular intervals but the Bn. sustained very few casualties (no killed). This was chiefly due to good slit trenches with adequate head cover.
16		Heavy air attack on our rear, probably aimed at gun crews. One casualty (wounded).
17	1230 hrs. 2330 hrs.	Bn ordered to move to area Tourville-Mouen, officially a rest area, even though only 3000 yds. behind the line. Spasmodic shelling and mortaring. Heavy air attack, again directed at the gun lines. No casualties. Reinforcements arrived: 2 officer (Canadian) and 9 ORs, all men who have previously served with the Bn.
19	2300 hrs.	Commence to relieve 44 Inf. Bde. (15 (S) Division) in the line Bougy-Evrecy. 1 HLI took over from 6 KOSB forward left, 1000 yds. north of Evrecy.
20	0130 hrs. 0320 hrs.	Heavy mortaring and shelling all night made relief extremely difficult. German patrol 10-15 strong infiltrated between the forward Coys. to within 50 yds. of Bn HQ. It was driven off after a short exchange of LA fire and grenades. No casualties were inflicted be either side. Relief of 6 KOSB complete.
21	1100 hrs. 1500 hrs.	Heavy mortaring, 2 officers wounded, 1 seriously. German tanks and Infantry attacked neighbouring Bn. and occupied farm <i>Le Bon Repos</i> with considerable casualties.
22		Quiet.
23	2100 hrs.	Raid on <i>Le Bon Repos</i> by neighbouring units with support of HLI MG and mortar platoons after an artillery barrage. Raid a success, with 30 prisoners taken and many more killed. Enemy identified as partly 22 PGR of 10 Panzer Div. and on the left, in our area, 271 Div. The enemy retaliated with very heavy mortar fire, much of which fell in our area. 1 L/Cpl. Killed and 1 sergeant and 2 ORs wounded. Light casualties due to goo slit trenches and head cover. The CO's jeep received a direct hit and was destroyed. The RAP also received a direct hit but was undamaged, having been placed in a 6' deep pit dug by bulldozer, covered in stout beams and corrugated iron with 2' of earth on top.
24-27		Local patrolling at nights. Some trouble with German "roving Spandaus". On night of 27th RAF dropped leaflets addressed to the enemy on our position.
28	2325 hrs.	2 deserters, both about 18 yrs. of age, came in from 21 PGR of 10 Panzer Div. Mortar platoon did a section shot and managed to hit an ammo dump forward of Evrecy, which went up in flames.
29	2120 hrs.	Neighbouring unit carried out an attack supported by 6 bren carriers fitted with WASP equipment from 1 HLI. As far as is known this is the first time the WASP equipment was used in action (WASP is flame thrower).
		
30	2300 hrs.	Relief of 1 HLI by 1 E Lancs Rifles commenced.
31	1000 hrs.	Relief completed and Bn at rest area at Mondrainville, behind 71 Inf. Bde. HQ, about 2.5 m. north of Evrecy. Casualties to date:

	<p>Officers Killed – Capt. Campbell Died of wounds – Capt. McLeod Missing – Lt. Crabbe, Lt. Johnson Wounded – Lt. Whitney (returned to Bn. 30 July) Other Ranks Killed – 4 Died of wounds – 1 Missing – 4 Wounded – 36 Exhaustion – 16 Of these casualties 1 Officer and 16 ORs have rejoined.</p>
--	--



August 1944

Pages P1960118-P1960138		
1		In rest area. Orders received in the evening to take over from 1/8 Bn South Staffs R. (59 Div) in area Cahier/Missy on the west face of the salient. Air and recce reports show that the enemy has commenced to withdraw west of the line held by the Division and 59 Div are therefore being taken out of the line to assist in the breakthrough.
2	0600 hrs. 1500 hrs.	Commenced taking over from 1/8 th S. Staffs. Relief complete. The area taken over is very close country indeed. Recce patrols were sent out by night & made contact with the enemy. Light mortaring.
3	1500 hrs.	Daylight recce patrols were sent out. A recce patrol commanded by Cpt. Steptoe of A Coy entered Missy and, finding no opposition, entered the village and found no enemy. Capt. Steptoe climbed the church tower & could see no enemy in the surrounding country or in the village of Noyers, a mile to the north west. This was the first indication (1020 hrs.) that the enemy were withdrawing on our front and from all indications Capt. Steptoe's patrol entered Missy only an hour or two after the enemy had left. Further patrols were at once sent out and before last light the road Missy ~ Monceaux (D174) was occupied by the Bn. On the right of the Bn the 1 st /6 th S Staffs was relieved by the 4 th Bn RWF, who occupied Noyers. No contact was made with the enemy, but Capt. Hemelryk of B Coy who led a fighting patrol into the Monceaux-Arry area & found the bridge on the R. Odon mined and many S mines in the immediate vicinity. He had one OR killed (Cpl. Johnson). Battle patrols one platoon strong were sent out by night to occupy Sourdeval in the north and Le Locheur in the south.
4		These patrols were both firmly established in their objectives by soon after daylight. No enemy was contacted at Sourdeval but 1 prisoner was taken at Le Locheur. By daylight the area between the Noyers-Monceaux Rd. and a line Sourdeval to Le Locheur was mopped up by the Bn. No further enemy was found but several booby traps were sprung and many mines were found: S mines, Teller mines and a new type, the R 34. The Bn sustained 8 casualties from mines & booby traps, all ORs and one was fatal. By the evening the Bn took up a defensive position facing west on the line Sourdeval-Le Locheur with the Bn HQ at Chateau de Missy (pictured). 
5	1200 hrs.	Orders received to concentrate in an area immediately north of Gavrus. The 59 Div having advanced past the Bn's front in a south easterly direction our defensive role had come to an end. The Recce regiments of 53 Div and 59 Div had now moved south to the line of the R. Orne & reported that the enemy had carried out a complete withdrawal to the east bank of the river as far south as Thury Harcourt. By last light on the 5 th 158 Bde left & 160 Bde right had taken over the line of the river from the recce regiments.
6		The Bn rest areas is in a large wood some 6 miles behind the enemy lines. Thus for the first time since the beginning of July the Bn is out of enemy mortar

	1800 hrs.	range and the men can sleep above ground. The weather is good & all men get a good wash in the R. Odon & opportunity to wash their clothes. Orders issued for the Bn to force a crossing of the R Orne tomorrow night in the area Pont Du Coudray. The operation to be known as Operation Bugle. After extensive recce had been carried out the operation was cancelled at approx. 2100 hrs as 59 Div had made an assault crossing further south.
7/8		At rest in Gavrus area. All men were bathed in the R Ordon. The ENSA Concert Party visited the area & the band played to the troops on both days.
9	1100 hrs. 1930 hrs.	Orders received to stand by for a move south. Marching parties moved off, followed by the transport.
10	0030 hrs.	Bn concentrated in a new area south of Vacognes, about 6 miles south of their previous area. 71 Inf Bde is still in reserve. The composition of the Bde has now been altered: 1 st E Lancs R has been moved to 158 Bde and 4 th RWF have replaced them.
10/11		No move, weather bright & hot.
12	1245 hrs. 1800 hrs. 2300 hrs.	Bn moved embussed to an area east of the R Orne at Brieux. Bn moved on foot to area south west of Moutiers-en-Cinglais. Bn moved on foot through the Forêt de Cinglais to a concentration area immediately north of Fresney-le-Vieux.
13	0500 hrs. 0645 hrs. 0900 hrs. 1230 hrs. 1300 hrs. 1330 hrs. 1600 hrs. 1900 hrs. 2100 hrs.	Bn concentrated north of Fresney-le-Vieux. Orders received for an attack. The first attack the Bn has put in since entering the theatre of war. Objective pt 221 1000 yds south of main Thury-Harcourt ~ Falaise rd. (D6) and north of Le Haut d'Angoville. Fwd elements passed through Bois Halbout, held by 1 st E Lancs R 158 Bde Fwd elements on line Acqueville-L'Outre. Neither of the leading companies met strong opposition. But Spandaus working sometimes singly & sometimes in pairs caused considerable delay. Both companies were heavily mortared from time to time. Fwd Bn HQ established in Bois Halbout. Heavy shelling of area forward of Bois Halbout & of town itself, where several fires have started. A Coy on left reached a position 300 yds north of main Thury-Harcourt road (D6). D Coy on right reached the main road. B Coy supported by two troops of Churchills launched round the right flank to clear up pockets of enemy resistance. B Coy reached main road having captured 56 prisoners.
14	0330 hrs. 0500 hrs. 1530 hrs.	C Coy passed through A Coy directed on the high ground immediately north of Le Haut d'Angoville. C Coy on objective with D Coy behind them on Pt 221. Bn HQ moved at 0330 hrs. to Chateau at St Martin (<i>La Motte</i> - pictured) Total casualties to midday 14 th : 2 officers, Mjr. Richman missing, Lt. Whitney wounded; 52 ORs, of which only 6 were killed. A number of enemy were killed and 150 prisoners were taken. The enemy opposition consisted of elements of 271 & 277 Inf Divs and 12 SS Pzr Div. C Coy occupied Le Haut d'Angoville.



16	1000 hrs. 1830 hrs.	Orders to advance to and mop up area as far as Martigny. Attack supported by two Squadrons Greys. Opposition slight. Only enemy encountered was sporadic MG fire from SW. Leading Coys on objective and exploiting. Desultory mortar fire on A & C Coys which were forward. Casualties nil. POW 3.
17	0700 hrs. 1330 hrs. 1630 hrs. 2000 hrs. 2100 hrs. 2230 hrs.	Bn still in posn at Martigny. 18 enemy captured by C Coy 500 yds forward of their posn. Orders given for Bn to advance and take Pt 224. SW of St Martin de Mieux and exploit to river. 2 Sqns Greys under command. Advance started. Slight resistance, especially from MG posts. A Coy on right encountered stiffer opposition from enemy on edge of wood near objective. Fwd Coys reached objective. POW 1 Off, 41 ORs – all infantry. Bn HQ set up at farm at St Martin de Mieux. It was dive-bombed by Allied Lightnings and Typhoons although ground to air recognition strips were out. Orders for move to Pt 241. Bn to follow 1st Ox. & Bucks. As armour was passing through move was confused.
18	0900 hrs. 1400 hrs. 1600 hrs.	Move to Pt 241 complete. Orders received to attack and take high ground 188300. Attack supported by Sqn of Churchills. Advanced started with A & D Coys fwd. Stiff opposition from 3 Tigers encountered at 186298. They held up advance and Coys halted short of objective until daylight. Patrols were sent out during the night but owing to close country failed to deal with tanks. B Coy suffered 11 casualties from encounter with tanks.
19	0800 hrs. 1600 hrs. 1800 hrs.	Tanks reported to have moved. Coys moved up onto objective. C Coy moved forward to Nocy (<i>5.5 miles SE of Falaise</i>). Enemy opposition slackened. POW 19, all infantry. Bn ordered to capture Hill 252 – Montabard 228285. Bn at this time very tired. Advance started, C & D Coys leading on parallel route lines. Slight opposition encountered up to Chincamps. Mines were found here. Carrier Commander's vehicle blown up although he escaped but the driver was killed. D Coy dealt with opposition and A Coy moved through. One section of Pioneers lost when lifting mines. Leading Pl A Coy ambushed at Pt 222268 and suffered six casualties. After preliminary bombardment by 2 Regts RTA an attack was decided on.
20	0730 hrs. 0830 hrs.	Bn attacked and captured objective which was held by elements of 3 Para Regt. Bn exploited and cleared area forward to 236250. Total casualties 19. Captured: 1 Off; 170 ORs; 1 Field Hospital (containing 3 Offs, 25 ORs, 107 wounded. It also contained 5 British wounded, 4 of which were from this Bn.); 91 vehicles; 4 guns; 9 tanks In 7 days the Bn has advanced 33 miles, 17 of which have been in the face of the enemy.
21-25		Bn remained concentrated in area of Montabard for reorganisation and rest.
26	1630 hrs. 2130 hrs.	Orders for Bn to move fwd one day's march to Seine. Ultimate objective given as the Pas-de-Calais area. Bn advanced by march route to Orville 5459.
27	0800 hrs.	Bn complete in new area at Orville.
28		Further day's advance by TCV to Mesnil Rousset. (TCV = Troop Carrying Vehicle)
29		Further day's advance by TCV to le Boulay-Morin.
30	1145 hrs.	71 Bde advanced to cross <i>R Seine</i> at Muids (<i>20 miles SW Rouen</i>). They followed 4 Armd Bde whose objective was Gourney-en-Bray. This was reported clear by

		1300 hrs. although small pockets of enemy Inf. Were reported to have been left in the woods S and SW. Owing to small numbers the Bn was reduced to 3 rifle coys. The Bn crossed successfully but further advance was held up by roads being cratered.
31	0400 hrs. 0900 hrs. 1600 hrs. 1960 hrs.	Positions on high ground SW of Gournay with Bn HQ at Bout de la Ville finally occupied. 7 Armd Div with 4 Armd Bde under command passed through with objective The Somme. 71 Bde came under command 7 Armd Div and was at two hours notice to move. Remainder of Div mopped up in present area. FFI (<i>Resistance</i>) reported large body of enemy inf. In wood 1062. Although this was outside our area, Bn was ordered to clear wood. Done by D Coy with 1 section carriers under command. Wood cleared. Total enemy POW 8, 1 wounded.

September 1944

Pages P1960139-P1960159		
1	1015 hrs. 1140 hrs. 1445 hrs. 1815 hrs. 2000 hrs. 2130 hrs.	Bde continued under command 7 Armd Div, Objectives not defined. Adv held up by 15 Div Recce Regt using same CL. Also some confusion by Canadians coming in from left. Adv continued on new centreline further to right. Several flying bomb sites passed. Reported that they contained delayed action bombs. Adv again held up by Canadians. Adv continued. Bn harboured in area Avenses-Chaussoy (<i>20 miles west of Amiens</i>). Reported that 7 Armd Div had obtained a bridgehead at Piquigny and Bn warned that they would probably cross there. 12 POWs captured during the night. Further enemy reported in surrounding woods, but they caused no trouble.
2	1030 hrs. 1430 hrs. 1500 hrs. 1915 hrs. 2100 hrs.	Move forward as Bn Battle Group to cross Somme and occupy high ground beyond. After confused move owing to congestion on roads Bn in conc area St Leger-les-Domart 9976. Reported by civilians that enemy had left the night before and that the town had been shelled by enemy that morning causing casualties. Several collaborators found. Remainder of armour of 7 Armd Div passed through. Adv continued. Bn in alert conc area.
3	0915 hrs. 1200 hrs. 1715 hrs. 1930 hrs. 2345 hrs.	71 Bde reverted to under comd of 53 (W) Div. Bn ordered to stand by ready to assist 4 RWF to take Auxi-le-Chateau 9996. Our gunners dispatched to help. Enemy opposition proved fairly stiff for 4 RWF. Bn received 30 reinforcements, mostly specialists. Bn moved to Maizicourt ready to attack Auxi-le-Cahteau if 4 RWF should fail to take it. 4 RWF having met stiff resistance and been held up at Wavans, Bn attacked Auxi-le-Chateau: C Coy left, D Coy right, A Coy in reserve.
4	0300 hrs. 0310 hrs. 0330 hrs. 0700 hrs. 1330 hrs. 1830 hrs. 2100 hrs.	FFI met our forward troops reported enemy west of Auxi-le-Chateau and main bridge in the town blown, the other mined. Information rather confused. Pioneer officer removed charge from the bridge by himself in about 20 minutes. D Coy reported rail bridge in our hands. Town occupied. 4 Armd Bde took over from Bn. Bn advance again with the objective of mopping up area Haisnes~Auchy (<i>north of Lens</i>) Bn diverted to Frovillers. Bn continued advance with presumable objective Bethune.
5	0630 hrs. 0900 hrs.	Bn took over bridgehead at Givenchy from Queen's. In conc area Vielle-Chapelle with rest of Bde Group forward in Estaires.
6	1000 hrs. 1730 hrs. 2000 hrs. 2200 hrs.	Bn started adv to Werwicq (<i>Wervik just over the border in Belgium</i>). No opposition until Comines when our guard Coy, B Coy, located enemy in station. D Coy pushed round north of the town where further opposition was encountered. One carrier Sgt was fatally wounded. Enemy opposition cleared. B & D Coys pushed on to Werwicq.

		Bn in occupation of town. Orders given to push on to Menin. Members of local resistance movement contacted. They sent fwd a recce patrol to Menin which returned to report that there was a certain number of enemy still in the town.
7	0430 hrs. 0700 hrs. 1945 hrs. 2230 hrs.	Adv started. Town occupied, little resistance experienced. As it was thought that enemy might try to break out to the east, Bn was sent to take up defensive position at Gullegem~Heule. In position.
8	0800 hrs. 0845 hrs.	Bn advances to seize bridgehead at and west of Iseghem. Operation cancelled and Bn returned to Gullegem, thus performing the manoeuvre henceforth to be known as "A Duke of York". The Int. Sgt. Rode on to Iseghem and reported the town clear of enemy.
9	1210 hrs. 2100 hrs.	Bn embussed for drive to Antwerp. Bn in military barracks south of Antwerp. Since leaving the last rest area at Montabard the Bn has travelled approx. 480 miles. Vehicle casualties have only amounted to 2 Lloyd carriers (photo) and 4 motor cycles. Apart from these the Bn arrived with its transport complete. <i>Bn remained in these barracks for the next four days.</i>
14	2330 hrs.	Bn took over defensive position from 1 E Lancs R in docks area. Slight shelling, but otherwise enemy quiet.
15	2100 hrs.	Recce patrol crossed canal on right front. Found there were no enemy in the Polder and they seemed to have withdrawn to village about 1500 yds away.
16	1300 hrs. 2315 hrs.	Bn HQ & A Coy shelled accurately and persistently. 8 cas plus 3 belonging to recce party of relieving Bn. Bn relieved by Canadian Essex Scottish and moved to conc area south of Antwerp.
17	1400 hrs.	Bn moved to conc area near Baelen (<i>20 miles east of Antwerp</i>) with a view to crossing Escaut Canal when bridgehead secured by 158 Bde.
18		158 Bde having met fairly heavy opposition in gaining bridgehead, 71 Inf Bde, who were to cross after 160 Bde, were held up. Div objective was to come up and protect Allied airborne tps which had landed in NE Holland and borders of Germany.
19	0430 hrs. 1010 hrs.	Bn adv to cross canal, take and hold Eersel and Duisel (<i>in Holland, 7 miles SW of Eindhoven</i>) In posn on objectives having encountered no opposition and the Bn having liberated its first towns in Holland. During the rest of the day and night there were the usual alarms, excursions and reports from the local patriots. Contact was made with American airborne tps.
21	0530 hrs. 1130 hrs. 1215 hrs. 1500 hrs. 1630 hrs.	Bn relieved by 1 E Lancs R and moved to conc area in brickworks near Steensel. Bn ordered to adv and capture Middlebeers and Oostelbeers. Under comd were A Sqn 53 Recce R, 1PI (MMB) 1 Manch, and the usual Arty support. The plan was to advance on 2 centre lines – C Coy Adv Guard Group on right and A Coy Adv Guard Group followed by the rest of Bn on left. C Coy had to be prepared to take Wintelre on the way if not already taken by 4 RWF who had been attacking it for 24 hrs. Adv started. Held up outside Oerle while final assault by 4 RWF on Wintelre went on.



	1645 hrs.	Adv continued with a certain amount of shooting divided between ourselves, the enemy and the Dutch.
	2200 hrs.	C Coy held up by 7.5cm Atk gun at 328187. The enemy were forced to withdraw and the gun captured. Adv continued steadily, both fwd Coys meeting opposition. The country was difficult, tracks marked on the map practically non-existent and the night pitch dark.
	2300 hrs.	C Coy held up by strong enemy posn in wood. Enemy had 20mm gun which seemed to fire alternately along the ground and into the air. At this point Bn HQ on left C.L. was ahead of C Coy.
		A Coy held up at bridge 285203. When this was cleared Recce Sqn harboured for night.
22	0400 hrs.	Bn HQ established at 278209, 600 yds from Middlebeers.
	0500 hrs.	Both leading Coys having adv successfully against determined enemy rearguard actions, were held up outside their respective villages. B Coy moved up to Bn HQ.
	0515 hrs.	D Coy moved through A Coy and cleared buildings at 275212. These buildings were vital to future operations.
	0620 hrs.	C Coy's attack on Oostelbeers started.
	0720 hrs.	Attack successful, but another hour spent in mopping up.
	0730 hrs.	Recce Sqn ordered to move through A & D Coys, with B Coy in support, and enter village. This they were unable to do owing to rd block.
	0830 hrs.	Sqn of Cromwells (5 DG from 7 Armd Div) arrived to help in attack on Middlebeers. They were to break a way though rd block after it had been softened up by 17 pdr Atk gun. In doing this one tk was blown up by a mine, thus further blocking the rd.
	1500 hrs.	Bn attack on Middlebeers launched. B Coy gained first X rds in village, D Coy covered left flank. A Coy passed through B Coy with objective triangle of rds at north end of village. This objective was taken, but the Coy was subsequently forced to withdraw. One PI (comd Sgt McDonald) was isolated and never seen again. It was subsequently learnt from POW that it had withstood three direct assaults, in the second of which Bazookas had been used and in the third a 7.5cm gun. The 15 survivors were all wounded when taken POW. The Bn occupied these positions for the night.
23		All during this day C Coy was heavily mortared and shelled in Oostelbeers. MG was heavy and they had several direct skirmishes with the enemy. The plan of the Bn, with 5 DG under comd, was to push fwd in Middlebeers and secure a bridgehead at 269244. The enemy had however infiltrated back into the village and the day had to spent in mopping up, the MMGs doing particularly good work.
	1600 hrs.	D Coy sent fwd a Fighting Patrol of 1 PI comd by Lt McEwan to try to find the lost PI of A Coy. This Patrol did very well but of course found no trace of the PI. The night was spent in mortaring and shelling on both sides. Patrols were sent fwd and by morning it was found that the enemy had withdrawn slightly.
24	0400 hrs.	The tks left for another job.
	0830 hrs.	A Coy 4 RWF came under comd.
	0915 hrs.	B Coy ordered to push fwd to X tracks 272221 and Fm 269219.
	1100 hrs.	Rd to Oostelbeers opened by carrier patrol.
	1600 hrs.	B Coy on objective after heavy opposition. Final dispositions in Middlebeers were: B Coy fwd, A Coy on right of village, A Coy 4 RWF on left of village and D Coy on left flank.

		A further night's patrolling showed that the enemy had withdrawn no further.
25	1100 hrs. 1500 hrs.	Oostelbeers taken over by 4 RWF and C Coy moved to Oostelbeers. A Coy 4 RWF ceased to be under comd. Advance Bn HQ moved into village. The day was spent in patrolling and reorganising. To date in the battle for the two "Beers" the Bn had accounted for: 33 MG, 5 Bazookas and 7 Fd guns, taking 68 POWs with 27 enemy dead counted on the ground. 4 Vchles were also captured. Our casualties were 7 dead, 31 wounded and 21 missing.
26	1100 hrs. 1600 hrs.	Bn shelled intermittently. Cas. 1 dead, 4 wounded. Bn again became responsible for the defence of Oostelbeers and so C Coy took over from 4 RWF.
27/28	1700 hrs.	Two days in the defensive positions spent patrolling towards Steenfort and Huigvoort. This established that enemy had not withdrawn at all. Mortaring and shelling on both sides. Our snipers had great success and forced the enemy to withdraw from several outpost positions. Mr JAH Verhaden arrived as interpreter.
29		A quieter day till the evening when B Coy and Bn HQ were shelled and mortared. Extensive harassing task on enemy posns (suspected Coy) in Wood 270230 by MMG, Mortars and Guns. Mines laid by Patrol (Comd Lt McLean) behind enemy lines at 258212.
30	0800 hrs. 1500 hrs. 1800 hrs. 2300 hrs.	Raid by enemy on D Coy fwd position which was weakly held owing to the fact that members of previous night's patrol were resting. (Cas 1 dead, 1 Sgt wounded, 1 POW) Very successful Recce Patrol (Comd Sgt Griffiths) to Steenfort. Signs of enemy occupation in one house which had 14 cases of 8.1cm mortar bombs in it. Carrier belonging to Recce Regt also found. Raiding Patrol (Comd Lt Harbour) captured 100 mortar bombs from house in Steenfort but found carrier of Recce Regt was burnt out. More patrols were sent out during the night and houses at 268211 in front of D Coy fwd posn were booby trapped.

October 1944

Pages P1960160-P1960180		
1		Further Recce Patrols found that enemy were still in previous positions although fighting patrol (comd. Lt Lean) sent out to ambush enemy in Steenfort found the pace deserted.
2	0500 hrs.	Listening patrol sent out to Steenfort to act a Fwd O.P. This provided some excellent and effective shooting for mortars and guns. Reports that enemy were withdrawing from south towards <i>Wilhelmina Canal</i> . Recce patrols ascertained that enemy had not withdrawn opposite us.
3	0800 hrs. 1100 hrs. 1430 hrs. 1600 hrs. 2030 hrs.	Recce patrols, POW and civilians reported that enemy were withdrawing. Further Recce patrols sent out. They reported Baast and Huigvoort clear of enemy. As main bridge at 269223 was blown Pioneers were ordered to construct two Cl. 9 brs (<i>bridges</i>) at 268221 and 271224 in anticipation of a move fwd. These brs were completed in 3 hours and subsequently carried most of the Bde, Div Recce and Corps Recce Tpt. Carrier Recce patrol sent to Diessen, which was reported clear. Patrol then went to Hilvarenbeek, which was found to be still occupied by enemy. Bn ordered to adv and hold line of <i>Wilhelmina Canal</i> from stream at 280252 to 244252. Further carrier patrol sent to Laghaghorst, which was free of enemy, but mined. Bn layout as follows: B Coy left at Laghaghorst, C Coy right at Baast, A Coy and D Coy centre in square 2623. Coys in new positions. Only C Coy encountered any opposition and that a Spandau, the crew of which ran off when about to be outflanked and on the appearance of the Signal Off. laying cable from a carrier. Bn HQ remained at Middlebeers.
4	1030 hrs. 1630 hrs.	Bn HQ moved up to Voorteind. Recce patrol (Comd Lt McLean) contacted enemy in Houtakker. They did not appear very offensive. Further listening patrols were sent out during the night. Little to report other than the fact that the enemy were still on the other side of the canal.
5	1600 hrs.	A Coy heavily and accurately shelled. 5 cas – 2 of our own and 3 of the att. 17 pdr Atk trp.
6	0500 hrs. 1300 hrs.	A Coy pulled back to Voorteind in reserve. Bn relieved by Sqn of Corps Recce (The Royals) and moved to harbour area at Veldhoven.
7	0930 hrs. 2000 hrs.	Bn moved up through Nijmegen to take over from 8 DLI in the bridgehead west of Haalderen (<i>just north of the R Waal at Nijmegen</i>). Take-over complete.
8	1300 hrs.	As 6 HLI, who were on our right, were moving out dispositions of Coys were re-arranged to include some of the 6 HLI positions. D Coy had 1 Pl C Coy & 1 strong section B Coy under comd. Bn now holding wide front. Mortaring and shelling on both sides continued throughout the day. Patrols during the night discovered little enemy activity.
9/10		Enemy mortaring and shelling was on a slightly lesser scale. Our CB (<i>counter-battery</i>) and harassing fire was under Corps control and any fire on the part of the enemy was more than returned. Normally recce patrols sent out on our front.
11	1700 hrs.	Enemy, including one officer in soft hat and with cane, was seen to move into house at 763662 opposite rt pl of D Coy (Lt McKinley). The 6 pdr Atk gun with the platoon fired AP and HE into the house and fire was brought to bear from bren

		guns. The 6 pdr did not seem to damage the house particularly, but set fire to what must have been amn. or petrol in a house behind. This fire lasted 4-5 hrs. In turn the enemy shelled our forward positions, but his fire was returned with interest by our Arty and mortars (4.2 & 3 inch).
12	1800 hrs. 1900 hrs.	Plans made for fighting patrol to raid house occupied by enemy yesterday. The plan was for all possible fire from Arty, Mortars and MMGs to be brought down on enemy positions, including those interpreted by APIS (<i>Army Photographic Interpretation Section</i>), in the particular locality. After a lull the same fire was to be put down while our force, under Lt Maclean, advanced and formed firm base in houses 764664. Meanwhile the fighting patrol was to advance to the occupied house, clear it and take a prisoner. This patrol was comd by Lt McKinley. First fire plan started. This brought down a certain amount of fire from the enemy. Second phase started. Firm base formed successfully and fighting patrol went out. This patrol ran into mines and booby traps in vicinity of house. 8 men wounded and Sgt. Dearsley killed. Whole force then withdrew successfully, having obtained identification (Waffen SS). Opposition from MG and Mortars was heavy but our casualties were caused, with one exception, by the mines. 9 enemy known to have been killed.
13	0200 hrs. 2030 hrs.	Enemy, under the mistaken supposition that we now held the house, shelled the area heavily and counter-attacked. Recce patrol (Comd Sgt McKenna) found the enemy to be strongly dug in near ditch near Bund. Bn. relieved by 1 Oxf. & Bucks. and went into reserve positions in Bommel.
14/16		Bn in reserve.
17	1800 hrs.	Orders received that Div was to be withdrawn from Nijmegen bridgehead Bn relieved by 1 Dorsets and moved to conc area 707647.
18	2000 hrs.	Bn moved to conc area Ravenstein (<i>SW of Nijmegen</i>).
19/20		Time spent in preparation & planning for Op Alan which was Corps plan to capture s'Hertogenbosch, Schijndel and the freeing of Antwerp as a port. After several minor changes in plan 71 Inf Bde was to secure the rd Papendijk ~s'Hertogenbosch as far as pt 370482. 1 HLI rt, 4 RWF left, 1 Oxf & Bucks in reserve. 1 Oxf & Bucks were to form firm base in initial stages. HLI objective was to capture west edge of Wood 290487 and mop up wood to north of rd within Bde boundary.
20		Draft of young soldier reinforcements (mostly from BW) arrived.
21	1700 hrs.	Bn, with under comd 1 pl 244 Field Coy RE, moved to conc area Papendijk
22	0230 – 0630 hrs. 0530 hrs. 0630 hrs. 0830 hrs. 1015 hrs.	Corps Arty bombarded all known enemy gun and infantry posns. This was very effective as comparatively little enemy shelling was experienced during the advance. Carrier pl less one section got into Heike after a short sharp fight in which 8-10 enemy were killed. Mines, some of them box-type, were encountered. Three carriers were subsequently lost on these mines. The new enemy machine pistol was encountered for the first time by the Bn and a number were captured. A Coy crossed the start line and opposition was slight until fwd edge of Wood 405495 was reached. A Coy held up by fire from houses 406497 and 408494. The WASP flamethrowers were sent up to deal with this but could not get through owing to mines. RE PI sent fwd to assist assault pioneer section in clearing C.L. A Coy supported by 3" mortars and using PIATs dealt with opposition and dealt with opposition and fought their way through wood to 403495. Here, after more

	1330 hrs.	heavy opposition in which Coy 2i/c (Capt Steptoe) was wounded in the face, they got into houses 402495 but were held up by MG fire from line of houses 403493. It was again impossible to bring up the WASPs owing to mines and B Coy was ordered to move up and clear the houses from the north, while C Coy moved along north of main rd to clear houses from the south if B Coy proved unsuccessful.
	1700 hrs.	Line of houses cleared and B & C Coys made contact at rd & track junct 404490. At this point leading elements of both Coys were under MG fire from south of the rd. Accordingly, C Coy was ordered to hold present posn. And B Coy were withdrawn and directed along C.L. on L-shaped farm 392487. D Coy moved through A Coy directed on Mariaburg. A Coy posn taken over by Coy 1 Oxf & Bucks while two Coys 1 Oxf & Bucks went round right flank with objective Pumping Station 394406 and the clearing of north part of wood. A Coy objective Wood 392492.
	2030 hrs.	Now Bn HQ moved to Heike. C Coy ordered to adv along main rd and seize Vinkeloord. xxx strong opposition from well dug-in enemy MG posns and mortar fire. A, B & D Coys gained their objectives and consolidated. B Coy suffered 50% casualties one 1 PI from mortar fire. C Coy gained their objective and consolidated. <u>Total cas.</u> Killed – 10 ORs Wounded – 2 Offs, 28 ORs Missing – 4 ORs 75 POW (6 wounded) taken 39 (estimated) enemy dead 1 - 5cm Atk gun and many MG & SA captured.
23	1400 hrs.	Bn in same posns. Constant shelling and mortaring caused further cas.: killed – 1, wounded – 3. 1 Oxf & Bucks attacked Heidi and 158 Bde continued attack on s'Hertogenbosch. Bn took over posns as follows: A Coy 386485; B Coy 370483; C Coy remained in Vinkeloord; D Coy 371481; Bn HQ moved to Dairy 395487.
24	0830 hrs. 1200 hrs.	A Coy north and C Coy south of main rd. cleared woods to our fwd posns. Bn conc in area Heidi. Lt Col T McLeod took over command of 71 Inf Bde vice Brig Etrington who went to 158 Bde.
25/26		Bn still in conc area while 158 Bde continued attack and capture of s'Hertogenbosch
27		Plans made to pass through 158 Bde and attack Groot Devteren and Vlijmen. Plans subsequently cancelled. Lt Col T McLeod returned & reassumed command of Bn.
28	1300 hrs. 1330 hrs. 1600 hrs.	Bde plan formed to attack by night across <i>Afwaterings Kanaal</i> from the south. Orders were issued to move into suitable conc area, but it was found that the obstacle was a bigger one than had been expected. The gap to be bridged was 170 ft instead of 30 ft. Move therefore cancelled. Orders given for the following bridging sites to be recce'd, such recce to be prepared to fight for its information if necessary: I HLI Br. 270442; 4 RWF Br. 249442; 1 Oxf & Bucks Br. 265466. D Coy with under comd: Carrier PI less one section; WASPs; and 1 section Mortars, moved into conc area Pepereind 2742. Owing to fear of enemy infiltration back over the canal remainder of Bn moved down to Pepereind. Responsible for line of canal from Br. 270442 to bend in canal 295437. One Sqn 53 Div Recce under comd. 7 Armd Div in posn to SW. Contact patrols during the night had nothing to report.

29	1000 hrs.	B Coy took over from C Coy 4 RWF on Br. 249442. Woods to west being cleared by 7 Armd Div.
30	0330 hrs. 0600 hrs.	Small enemy patrol penetrated as far as B Coy HQ and shot one sentry. Apart from this nothing seen of enemy on Bn front during the night. Remainder of Bde moved into area with 4 RWF on left flank. 1 Oxf & Bucks in reserve.
31	0900 hrs.	Bn moved back into Belgium into conc area Neeroeteren (<i>25 miles SE of Eindhoven</i>) MC awarded to Capt. PN Steptoe and Lt. JA McKinlay for their work in Normandy.


November 1944

Pages P1960181-P1960218		
1	0745 hrs. 1700 hrs.	<p>Orders received for Bn to take over defensive posn from Belgian Brigade in Thorn.</p> <p>Recce parties left to meet Bde Comd at Neeritter.</p> <p>Bn with 1 Oxf & Bucks on left and under comd: 2 Pls MMG; 1 PI 4.2 Mortars; 1 Trp 6 pdr Atk guns in position as follows: A Coy left, D Coy right, B & C Coys centre. Line of <i>Canal van Nederweert</i> and <i>R Maas</i> covered. Enemy held Wessem and small bridgehead over canal.</p> <p>Certain amount of help from Dutch Home Guard in guarding of brs on left.</p>
2	0400 hrs. 1700 hrs. 1800 hrs.	<p>Small enemy patrol jumped D Coy fwd PI. It was engaged and one enemy killed, two wounded. Both the wounded were brought back. The documents of the dead man were subsequently recovered. All three were Corporals; 2 GAF (<i>German Air Force</i>), one Paratroop from the Fortress Battalion. It is considered that the whole patrol was accounted for.</p> <p>Day spent improving defensive posns, digging alternative posns etc.</p> <p>Slight enemy mortaring caused one casualty in C Coy.</p> <p>Arrangements made with Mayor and local Dutch HG (<i>Home Guard</i>) for the future evacuation of civilians, areas in which farmers were to be allowed to work, and assistance in defence works.</p> <p>Complaint sent to Bde that rations were not sufficient for present cold and wet weather.</p>
3	1700 hrs. 1800 hrs. 2200 hrs.	<p>Recce patrols during the night found enemy posns south of Wessem and in cutting 6987.</p> <p>52 reinforcements arrived.</p> <p>Bde Comd gave outline of plan to push back existing enemy bridgeheads on this side of the Canal and River.</p> <p>It was to be done in three phases. Phase 1 was for A Coy to adv and hold Chateau 681877. Plans were made to put this into effect with supporting arms on the next day.</p> <p>Two German spies in civilian clothes reported in F.2 Ech. area Kessenich.</p> <p>Believed enemy fighting patrol contacted fwd PI B Coy 687872. Enemy succeeded in getting MG into position here. Very accurate MMG fire was then brought down by 4 PI A Coy 1 Manch on the enemy MG. This caused the enemy to retire.</p> <p>Recce patrols sent out during the night located further enemy positions.</p>
4	0630 hrs. 1500 hrs. 2120 hrs.	<p>A Coy successfully occupied are of Chateau, although the Chateau itself had been set on fire earlier in the night by the enemy and was burnt out. 3 cas due to shelling.</p> <p>C Coy heavily mortared. Direct hit on their HQ. 1 cas.</p> <p>Enemy patrol tried to capture sec comd in A Coy left fwd PI. He managed to escape with wound in leg.</p> <p>Harassing tasks (MMG & Arty) fired during the night.</p>
5	1245 hrs. 2115 hrs.	<p>Nearly 600 civilians voluntarily evacuated from Thorn. It was stated that compulsory evacuation would not now take place.</p> <p>A Coy right PL heavily shelled, 4 cas.</p> <p>Considerable harassing tasks (Arty, 4.2 mortars. MMG, and 3 in mortars) fired during the day. Arty fired over 900 shells on Bn front and 3 in mortars over 500.</p> <p>Tasks mostly on enemy posns discovered by patrols during previous night.</p>

		Two deserters surrendered to B Coy. Enemy do not appear to know who is opposite them yet, and consequently their patrolling was active. They stated that our arty & mortar fire was extremely active and unpleasant. Further recce patrols during the night discovered that enemy had withdrawn from several posns presumably made untenable by our harassing fire. Enemy patrols were active, two bumping C & D Coys but not coming near enough to try conclusions.
6	0205 hrs. 0225 hrs.	Further extensive harassing tasks fired. Arty fired over 1500 shells on our front alone and 3 in mortars over 600. Three ambush patrols sent out during night but unfortunately enemy had changed his tactics, sending out his own patrols after midnight. Consequently, our own patrols did not contact any enemy. Enemy fighting patrol contacted fwd PI C Coy. They were fired on and retreated, leaving one dead. Enemy fighting patrol contacted B Coy. They too were fired on and it is considered some wounded as two MP44 found in area. PI Sgt of B Coy fwd PI slightly wounded by grenade.
7	1650 hrs. 2315 hrs.	Little immediate harassing fire from Arty owing to restrictions on number of shells. Lt Col T McLeod assumed comd of 71 Bde. Maj CA Harvey assumed comd of Bn. Maj Harvey wounded by shrapnel mine near C Coy fwd PI. Maj CRH Kindersley MC assumed comd of Bn. Fighting patrol from D Coy bumped enemy minelaying patrol at 698858 and shot it up. Other patrols during night proved negative.
8	2300 hrs.	Patrol from A Coy sent out to Lock 691878 to get information for the possible operation of attacking the Lock and blowing the gates to drain the Canal. They found enemy positions, that the banks were steep, and the water 4 feet from the top of the bank and therefore not "wadeable".
9	0215 hrs. 0700 hrs. 1000 hrs. 1515 hrs. 2000 hrs.	C Coy Recce Patrol located new enemy posns along canal bank in area 705870. Capt JJ Thornton, his runner, FOO (Capt Norman) and his signaller ambushed on way to C Coy fwd PI and taken POW. Planning began for attack on Lock. It was realised that the object. was a much bigger one than had at first been thought and it was not considered possible to achieve the object. With the available forces then under comd. Orders were then received for the plan to be dropped. Recce parties arrived from 6 Queens who were to take over from us. Lt Col T McLeod re-assumed comd of Bn.
11	0200 hrs. 1520 hrs.	Bn relieved by 6 Queens and moved to Veldhoven (<i>near Eindhoven</i>). Preliminary conference at Bde re future ops. Bn spent day in admin and reorganisation.
12/13		Spent in training for Op. Mallard.
13	0730 hrs.	Bde O Group for final plans Op. Mallard.
14	1400 hrs.	Bn O Group.
15		As CL40 could not be built in time, the Bn's attack was postponed until next day.
16	0500 hrs. 0715 hrs. 1330 hrs.	Bn Group, the infantry in Kangaroos (<i>tank body converted to armoured personnel carrier</i>), left Zinc Works to carry out its part in Op. Mallard. Bn Group in position ready to cross Canal van Nederweert, but owing to faulty construction of the CL40 bridge it was found impossible for the Kangaroos to cross in time. Coys therefore adv on foot supported by tanks. No active opposition from enemy but many mines and craters found. All Coys on objective. 2 POWs (1 deserter) taken.

17-20		Bn static in defensive posns in Bde reserve.
19		Lt Col McLeod proceeded on 48 hrs leave. Comd of Bn assumed by Maj CRH Kindersley MC
20	1800 hrs.	Bde O Group to discuss final plans for attack by 1 Oxf & Bucks and 4 RWF to clear enemy from west side of R Maas opposite Roermond.
21	0800 hrs. 1700 hrs.	A & D Coys came under comd 1 Oxf & Bucks and went fwd to take up defensive posns: A Coy Brickworks 736905; D Coy Horn 752913. Lt Col T McLeod re-assumed comd of Bn. Draft from Som LI of 31 ORs.
22	1000 hrs. 2200 hrs.	Bde O Group concerning plans for 1 Oxf & Bucks to clear enemy from ground down to Ferry 752895 and for this Bn to take over their posns. Take over started. 1 Oxf & Bucks met little opposition to their adv.
23	1100 hrs. 1800 hrs.	Take over complete. Water continued to rise during a day of steady rain. PI posn in Hatenoer (<i>between Horn and Roermond</i>) was subsequently abandoned. D Coy relieved B Coy in Brickworks 767904. They had to wade knee-deep in water to get there.
24	1145 hrs. 1420 hrs. 1820 hrs. 2000 hrs.	Water continued to rise during the day and slowly to engulf the forward posns. It was finally decided to abandon the posn at the Ferry and just keep one PI at Brickworks 766903. C Coy heavily shelled. 6 cas (one died of wounds). Bn HQ heavily shelled, two direct hits being scored. Bn HW again shelled, one direct hit, one cas. PI of C Coy relieved D Coy, but owing to floods they could not occupy Brickworks. Occupied instead Houses just to north. A further rise of the water again restricted the tenable area and the holding force was reduced to one section. Heavy counter-battery by mediums kept down enemy shelling during the night.
25		Draft of 32 ORs from Royal Fusiliers. Water continued to rise.
26		Little activity on part of enemy. Water still rising – within 50 yds of Bn HQ.
27		Following Honours awarded for the battle of Middlebeers and Oostelbeers: Major CRH Kindersley MC DSO Major Hon JHM Borwick MC Sgt Paton DCM L/C Boyle MM L/C Hawkins MM
28	1100 hrs. 1400 hrs.	Bde O Group when orders given that as Bde front was to be extended, two Coys of this Bn would take over from 4 RWF. Recce of new areas by B & C Coys.
29	1100 hrs. 1800 hrs.	Presentation by Field Marshal Sir Bernard L Montgomery KCB, DSO of honours awarded during present campaign. He announced that Home leave would start as from 1 January 1945. B Coy take over complete. Now in posn Broek 7692.
30		Floods subsided by several feet. Draft 12 Camerons arrived.
31	1000 hrs.	C Coy take over complete. Now in posn Heugde 7592. Bn celebrated St Andrew's Day with very successful dinner at which Bde Comd was chief guest.

December 1944

Pages P1960219-P1960238																	
1	1800 hrs.	As floods had further subsided D Coy sent section fwd to Brickworks 766904 and A Coy a section to Ferry 753896. Little enemy activity.															
2	0930 hrs.	Bde O Group. As it seemed likely that Bde would remain near present area for some time, plans for trg (<i>training</i>) including the establishment of a Div Inf School were discussed. Stressed that the main problem was trg of Junior Leaders.															
3	1615 hrs. 1800 hrs.	D Coy area heavily shelled. Op Mackintosh by the RAF to break the dam on the R Roer and so increase the floods on the R Mass reported a failure. Fwd sections of A & D Coys accordingly went out again.															
4		Little activity on either side.															
5	2015 hrs.	The floods having subsided further C Coy established a pl fwd in Weerd.															
6	0730 hrs.	6 pdr Atk, mortars and LMG formed diversionary fire plan for Op Leek. This was an operation by 4 RWF tp clear enemy from Lock 733880. Diversionary fire brought little response from enemy. Experimental use was made of smoke to hide gun and mortar flashes. This prove successful and is to be tried more extensively in the future for night firing.															
7	1100 hrs.	Recce parties from 6 RWF arrived. Final details for take over arranged.															
8	1415 hrs.	Relief complete. Bn in rest area in Veldhoven.															
10		<p>Light carrier Weasel demonstrated to Bn. Decided that after certain modifications it would be suitable for CO's reces, carriage of supplies, evac of casualties in bad weather which caused floods etc.</p> <p>Following honours awarded. They were presented by the CO after Church Parade:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Bar to MC</td> <td>Lt JA McKinlay</td> <td>MC</td> <td>DCM</td> <td>Sgt McKenna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MC</td> <td>Capt EM Andrews</td> <td>MC</td> <td>MM</td> <td>Cpl Houldcroft</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MC</td> <td>Capt PS Marsden</td> <td>MC</td> <td>MM</td> <td>Pte Satti</td> </tr> </table>	Bar to MC	Lt JA McKinlay	MC	DCM	Sgt McKenna	MC	Capt EM Andrews	MC	MM	Cpl Houldcroft	MC	Capt PS Marsden	MC	MM	Pte Satti
Bar to MC	Lt JA McKinlay	MC	DCM	Sgt McKenna													
MC	Capt EM Andrews	MC	MM	Cpl Houldcroft													
MC	Capt PS Marsden	MC	MM	Pte Satti													
11	1430 hrs.	 <p>Demonstration of the T16 and Windsor (photo) carriers. They are both improvements on the Universal Carrier with better steering and larger engines. Decided that the Windsor would be the better for the Atk PI and the T16 for the Mortar PI and Carrier Pl.</p>															
12		Maj Ednie left for course at Staff College Camberley.															
14		Draft of 63 ORs, most young soldiers.															



9-16		Period spent generally in re-organisation, training etc. All Coys vehs and kits inspected.
16	0930 hrs.	Commanding Officer and Second in Command attended conference on future operations.
17	1230 hrs.	Bn moved to Lierre (<i>7 miles SE of Antwerp</i>). HQ, B, C, D Coys located in the partially flooded Fort de Liere (<i>Fort van Lier</i>). A & S Coys in a prison in the town itself. The Div. now under 1 Corps in the Canadian Army for special trg.
17-20		Little trg could be done. Pl football league etc organised. Pipe Band played Retreat in the Town Square, Lierre.
20	0530 hrs.	Owing to the growing threat of the German attack against the American 1 st Army in the Malmedy area (<i>Battle of the Ardennes</i>), Bn was ordered to be prepared to move to Overyssche (<i>Overisje, 10 miles SE of Brussels</i>) by 1200 hrs.
21	0630 hrs. 1430 hrs.	Bn moved to area south of La Hulpe. Bn in position with recces being carried out for future defensive posns.
22		Bn role changed again, now a counter-attack one on R Dyle.
23		Further recces for new counter-attack role.
24	0530 hrs. 1400 hrs.	Bn moved to Mont St Jean and prepared defensive positions to meet any attack on Brussels via Waterloo (<i>which is just north of Mont St Jean</i>). Bn conference to settle four different plans of action in the event of the enemy forcing a crossing of the R Meuse and advancing on Brussels.
25	0830 hrs.	As the 6 th Airborne Div had not yet arrived and there was a threat that the enemy might soon reach R Meuse Bn moved hurriedly to Dinant (<i>25 miles SE of Charleroi</i>).
26	1000 hrs.	One Bde 6 th Airborne Div having arrived, Bn was relieved by 12 Dorset's and moved back to area Morialme in counter-attack role on R Meuse.
27	1130 hrs.	Bde conference at which it was stated that Bde was now under comd of 6 Airborne Div and in reserve. Owing to the situation on the front where the enemy attack had been held at all points, it was likely that Bde would remain in present location for two weeks. Trg with tanks in the reduction of pillboxes was discussed.
28	0900 hrs.	Bn left for Namur. Rushed start owing to the re-grouping of 6 Airborne Div. Scarcely any information obtainable. Move very difficult owing to state of rds which were covered in ice.
29	2100 hrs.	Military Band arrived.
30	1500 hrs.	Concert given by Military Band. Warning order received for move 31 Dec to Ciney. There were still hopes for being settled for Hogmanay.

War Diary 1945

January 1945

Pages P1960239-P1960257		
1	1145 hrs. 1945 hrs.	Bn moved to area Marche (<i>21 miles south east of Namur</i>) to take over defensive positions from Americans. Rds still frozen and great difficulty again experienced with tracks. Lloyd carriers were again quite useless. Take over complete with no incidents.
2	0200 hrs. 2030 hrs.	Recce patrol from D Coy discovered strong enemy post at rly and track junction 283824 and were fired on by two enemy LMG and machine pistols. One man missing. Bn relieved by troops from 4 RWF and concentrated in general area Hogne~ Waillet (<i>25 miles SE of Namur</i>) with counter-attack role.
3	1700 hrs.	Orders received for an attack to drive enemy from high ground south of Marche. Bde was to attack with two Bns, 1 Oxf & Bucks right, 1 HLI left. Bn plan was to advance along track from Br 301835 through Champlon-Famenne on to objective. A Coy adv guard Coy to capture high ground on left of Centre Line at Grand Namuroise 3382, B Coy immediate action Coy to capture high ground at right of Centre Line at Bois de Spiroux 3281. C Coy were then to pass through and clean up high ground 3482. Usual supporting weapons allotted to leading Coys. 237 Atk Bty under comd with A Sqn Northants Yeo. In support
4	1330 hrs. 1450 hrs. 1530 hrs. 1615 hrs. 1715 hrs. 1815 hrs.	H hour of 1 Oxf & Bucks having been put back, our own was consequently delayed. Attack started in a snowstorm which had been going on for some hours. Owing to weather conditions first part of CL was found impassable to vchs. Use had therefore to made of track just to south. Advance proceeded satisfactorily agst slight opposition up to Champlon-Famenne. Great difficulty still experienced moving Atk guns. Pl of D Coy sent to clear Bois Chardonne 3282 and reported no enemy. B & C Coys heavily mortared on eastern outskirts of Champlon-Famenne. A Coy through village and making towards their objective. Mines encountered outside village and several pockets of enemy resistance dealt with. Boundary between 71 Bde and 158 Bde having been changed, high ground 3482 now outside our area. B Coy accordingly ordered to pass through A Coy and take up a posn just the north of A Coy. C Coy directed on Aux Chesaux 3381. Mortaring continued to be heavy but only small parties of enemy infantry were encountered. C Coy met enemy position 334816 which was dealt with after some difficulty. A & B Coys on objective. Sappers sent up to deal with mines and report on state of roads. Difficulty over mines due to hardness of ground. Nothing very satisfactory done about the state of the tracks. C Coy on objective. 6 POW taken. Our cas: 1 killed, 2/Lt Turnbull, and 10 ORs wounded, mostly by mortar fire.
5	1500 hrs. 1830 hrs. 2015 hrs.	Capt JC Muir wounded in leg by sniper. 7 ORs wounded during the day. 4 POW taken. Orders given for attack tomorrow to clear enemy from ground down to line of R Hedree. Attack postponed owing to counter-attack by enemy on 158 Bde front. Patrols during night discovered enemy posns along line of river.
6	1100 hrs.	B Coy took over from A Coy and D from C Coy. A & C Coys in reserve in Champlon-Famenne.

	1830 hrs.	Attack down to river line ordered once again. Final orders given. A Coy left with objective line river 337813 to 344812. C Coy right with objective line of river 337813 to 328813. Not a great known about the enemy and only three definite posts located. Arty support consisted of two Fd Regts, four Med Regts and two Heavy Btys.
7	1100 hrs. 1200 hrs. 1235 hrs. 1300 hrs. 1345 hrs. 1405 hrs. 1500 hrs.	Tac BN HQ moved to Champlon-Famenne. H Hour. Attack started well although rate of progress slow owing to thick nature of the country and difficult going owing to snow. C Coy encountered slight enemy mortar fire. C Coy reserve Pl and Coy HQ came under very heavy shell and mortar fire which lasted consistently for half an hour. Posn 333815. Coy 2i/C Capt J McKinlay MC and afterwards Coy Comd Major Hon HJM Borwick MC wounded. The rt fwd pl was held up by enemy MG fire. AP mines were found in rd block at 331814. A Coy rt fwd pl reached objective having met only light opposition from enemy on the ground. Left fwd pl held up by MG post. C Coy left fwd pl in position on objective. Major W Bowie sent fwd to take over C Coy. A Coy left fwd pl having dealt with MG post ran into AP mines at 343846. All objectives gained. Capt EM Andrews MC assumed command of C Coy. Cas were: 3 ORs killed, 2 Officers and 14 ORs wounded and evacuated. Several more including CSM Day were wounded but remained on duty. 8 POW taken, 13 enemy dead were counted. 5 enemy MG posts silenced.
8	0330 hrs. 1500 hrs. 1800 hrs. 2130 hrs.	Enemy shellfire having slackened off, Higher Command considered that the enemy was withdrawing. A Coy therefore sent out recce patrols across br 334812. Enemy discovered at 335808. Recce patrol from A Coy found enemy post at 338811. B Coy relieved A Coy and D Coy, relieved C Coy. Warning order received that Bn would probably be relieved tomorrow.
9	1530	Bn relieved by 1 Canxxx and moved to conc area Noiseaux 3291 as Corps reserve.
10	2000 hrs.	Day spent in reorganisation. Orders received for move with rest of Bde to re-join Div in area Liege.
11	1130 hrs.	Bn moved to Warzee (15 miles SW of Liege). Rds still very icy. It was found that the movement of the majority was considerably speeded up by putting the tracks in the Bde at the rear of the Bde column.
12-19		Bn re-organising and trg. Div tactical role was counter-attack on American 1 st Army front in Aachen sector. Weather still very cold and with snow on the ground trg proved difficult.
17	1130 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended demonstration of the new T97 VT Fuze which proved very successful and full of possibilities. (VT = proximity fuse to allow artillery shells to burst above ground and increase their AP effectiveness)
20	0430 hrs.	Bn moved to trg area Geldrop (3 miles SW of Eindhoven). 30 Corps now under comd 1 st Canadian Army.
24	1430 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended conference at Bde on future ops. CSM Day C Coy awarded MC.
25		Commanding Officer proceeded on UK Leave. Command of Bn assumed by Major CRH Kindersley DSO, MC.
26		Pte Bryceland B Coy awarded MM.
28	1030 hrs.	Corps Commander visited Bn, met all Coy cmds and discussed future trg and ops. Particular stress laid on the trg of NCOs and the shortage of officers discussed.
29	1000 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended preliminary conference on Op Veritable.
30	1200 hrs.	Commanding Officer carried out preliminary recce of ground for Op Veritable.

February 1945

Pages P1960258-P1960321		
1	1715 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended Bde co-ordinating conference to fix details of fire plan for Op Veritable (<i>Also known as Battle of the Reichswald</i>).
2	1000 hrs.	Coy Comds briefed for Op Veritable.
3	1000 hrs.	Coy Comds conference with APIS. Op Instr No 2 issued.
4	1100 hrs. 1530 hrs.	All officers attended lecture by Div Comd on Op Veritable. Bn moved to harbour area 7359 to complete plans for Veritable. Move made difficult owing to state of rd, which was badly broken up. Bn very cramped in new area. (<i>Route Helmond, Uden, Grave, over Waal to near Groesbeek</i>)
5	0930 hrs. 1900 hrs.	Bn Comd attended Bde O Group. Preliminary Bn O Group.
6	AM 1830 hrs.	Coy Comds and Pl Comds carried out detailed ground recces. Order for move to fwd assembly area issued. 53 reinforcements received. Mostly young soldiers.
7	1000 hrs. 1400 hrs.	Final recces of fwd assembly area. Final O Group.
8	0630 hrs. 1030 hrs. 1330 hrs. 1700 hrs.	Bn move to Fwd Assembly Area. B & D Coys moved to SL (<i>start line</i>). Great difficulty with rds owing to weather conditions. B & D Coys on objectives in woods, having met fairly heavy opposition. All Coys on objectives as planned. Opposition had been severe and weather conditions had made things very difficult. Cas: 2 ORs killed, Lt Spotswood and 17 ORs wounded, 162 POW captured.
9	0830 hrs.	Orders given for Coys to concentrate in their own areas while 158 Bde passed through. No further move during day, but incessant rain made the tracks almost impassable. All supplies had to be taken fwd in Weasels (<i>see 10 Dec 1944 above</i>).
10	1530 hrs.	Orders receive to be ready to move by first light 11 Feb to relieve 1/5 Welch.
11	0600 hrs. 1230 hrs. 1900 hrs.	Orders for relief of 1/5 Welch cancelled. Bn ordered to be ready to move to conc area at one hrs notice. Moved to conc area on Cleve (<i>Klieve</i>) Rd. at 866515. Going extremely bad. Bn in conc area in reserve. Intermittent shelling. A further fall of snow made conditions even worse.
12	1000 hrs. 1530 hrs. 2200 hrs.	After differing orders, Bn finally ordered to clear woods to south. H hr to be 1445. A, B, C Coys fwd, D Coy in res. Little opposition expected. Wood clearing operation complete. No enemy were encountered and no cas suffered. 4 reinforcements received. Orders received to clear east edge of wood in conjunction with 4 RWF.
13	1000 hrs. 1200 hrs.	Clearing operation started. Fairly stiff opposition encountered. A ll Coys on objectives. Cas: 2 killed, 34 wounded (Maj W Bowie slightly wounded but continued at duty), 15 POW captured. Again it was very wet. All supplies were taken by Weasels and great difficulty was experienced in getting drinking water.
14		Bn relieved by 1 Oxf & Bucks and moved to conc area.
15		Bn in reserve engaged in re-organisation. Lt Col T McLeod assumed comd of 71 Inf Bde. Maj CRH Kindersley DSO MC assumed command of Bn. Approx 26 men evacuated as 'bomb happy'.
16	0800 hrs.	Harbour parties left for Nijmegen but subsequently recalled owing to change of plans. Bn warned for an attack on Pfalzdorf 9146 in two days' time. Date of attack subsequently changed to 17 Feb.


17.	0800 hrs. 1700 hrs.	As it appeared that the enemy had withdrawn during the night SL put fwd 1000 yds. Plan was for A Coy to attack on left, C Coy on right with B Coy guarding left flank on rlwy and D Coy in reserve. Attack proceeded satisfactorily agst stiff opposition, particularly on left. Owing to casualties suffered by A Coy, D Coy passed through onto final objective. Cas: 1 killed, Lt Collis and 21 ORs wounded, 158 prisoners captured.
18		Bn in defensive position. 20 reinforcements received. Owing to better roads, supply question now much easier.
19	1300 hrs.	Bn conc in area Pfalzdorf. The Div commended by Corps Command for its conduct in action up to date.
20-22		Bn resting and re-organsiing.
20		14 reinforcements received.
22	1900 hrs.	Bde O Group for Op Leek.
23	0900 hrs.	Bn O Group for Op Leek. 30 reinforcements received. Further personal message from Corps Comd thanking all ranks for the work they had done and thus made possible the attack on the American 9 th Army.
24	0700 hrs. 1430 hrs. 1700 hrs. 1730 hrs. 1815 hrs. 1825 hrs. 1855 hrs. 1913 hrs. 2010 hrs. 2027 hrs. 2120 hrs. 2245 hrs. 2345 hrs. 2350 hrs.	<p>Bn prepared to move fwd but owing to extremely stiff resistance on 160 Bde front they were unable to take Höst. Start of our attack therefore delayed for several hours.</p> <p>O Group held to form immediate new plan. Bn Group to assemble in Kerstenhof, SL just south of Höst, and to take Rottum and track from 934394 to 928391 exploiting fwd to natural Atk ditch. H Hour fixed for 1700 hrs. D Coy rt fwd, B Coy left fwd, C Coy rt flank, A Coy res.</p> <p>Bn in position in assembly area. As Höst had not been cleared by 6 RWF, attack could not proceed. Slight mortaring.</p> <p>Orders given for pan to proceed. Bn moving if possible round right flank of 6 RWF. Arty barrage arranged accordingly. H Hour 1745 hrs.</p> <p>D Coy halted by very hvy SA fire from Höst and by mortaring. Coy disorganised.</p> <p>Crocs in village and squirting (photo). D Coy suffered hvy cas. Other Coys moving fwd.</p> <p>Bn area bombed by enemy. Orders given for D Coy to clear and consolidate Höst. B & C Coys to go for original objective, A Coy to take over D Coy objective.</p> <p>Mortaring in area of Höst. D Coy still disorganised, 2/Lt Turnbull killed. Owing to hold-up part of original fire plan shot again.</p> <p>A Coy report hvy opposition from east. Nothing heard from B Coy for some time.</p> <p>A & B Coy now moving fwd again against hvy opposition.</p> <p>A & B Coy held up 400 yds north of objective. Being fired on from rear. C Coy ordered to move up astride main rd to deal with this.</p> <p>D Coy reported Höst clear.</p> <p>C Coy now moving fwd to original objective. No news of A for some time.</p> <p>B Coy left Pl on objective. A Coy still 400* short of objective having suffered hvy cas.</p>



25	0025 hrs.	A & B Coys on objective. Ordered to exploit fwd to Atk ditch. No enemy found on this side.
	0040 hrs.	C Coy on objective. Cas: 2/Lt Turnbull and 6 ORs killed, 53 ORs wounded, 13 ORs missing. 160 POWs taken and large number SA and equipment captured.
	0915 hrs.	Large number of enemy seen forming up in area 927388-930387. 3 Fd Regts fired Mike target scale 10 and conc was broken up.
	1250 hrs.	C Coy heavily shelled. 4 cas. Hvy shelling continued during day on whole area. Approx 30 enemy dead counted. 10 more POW rounded up during day.
	1900 hrs.	Take-over by \$ RWF started.
26	0030 hrs.	Take-over complete without incident except for difficulty in getting even Jeeps along tracks.
	1900 hrs.	In order to prepare for future ops Bn took over whole Bde front from 1 Oxf & Bucks & 4 RWF.
27		Enemy shelling and mortaring continued throughout the day causing slight casualties.
28	0930 hrs.	Bde O Group to settle plan for attack across two Atk ditches by 4 RWF.
	2330 hrs.	A & D Coys pulled back to clear the SL for 4 RWF & 1 Oxf & Bucks.

March 1945

Pages P1960321-P1960360 Items in red on 4th & 5th March refer to action where Joe was subsequently awarded the MC.		
1	0145 hrs. 2000 hrs. 2100 hrs.	Tks supporting 1 Oxf & Bucks milled about in C Coy area causing casualties, wounding Maj EM Andrews MC and killing Lt Huntington. Persistent shelling of Bn area while attack in progress. 4 RWF having suffered heavy casualties they were relieved by this Bn without incident. Bde gave warning order that Bn would be relieved by 2100 hrs. 2 Mar and take over sector in Nijmegen area.
2	0930 hrs. 1400 hrs. 1630 hrs.	Weeze reported evacuated. Orders for Nijmegen take-over cancelled. Bn moved down to clear Weeze. Weeze clear, only opposition was mines and demolitions, the latter being particularly effective in preventing quick advance. Bn in conc area in Weeze and reorganising. 90 reinforcements received. L/C Breese, a stretcher bearer, awarded MM for his work in the Ardennes.
3	2215 hrs.	General enemy withdrawal on whole Div front. Bn moved to conc area Kevelear (<i>Kevelaer</i>). Going very bad owing to extremely effective enemy cratering.
4	1330 hrs. 2000 hrs. 2300 hrs. 2330 hrs.	After various changes of plan, Bn ordered to move to conc area in Issum. Bn O Group for Op Grapenuts. This entailed Bn on rt of rd Issum~Wesel and 4 RWF on left of rd passing through 1 Oxf & Bucks, crossing stream at 107803 and forming br hd to enable Res to bridge stream. Bn Plan – B Coy right with objective edge of wood 116288 , A Coy left with objective trig pt 117285 with D Coy guarding right flank at 115284. C Coy in reserve behind A Coy. Little RA support available but attack preceded by concs. It was thought that few enemy would be found. Bn very tired. Attack started. Stream crossed successfully but from there on heavy opposition encountered. Owing to some of our own Arty falling short A Coy disorganised. A Coy reorganising. B Coy held up by heavy MG fire from edge of wood . C Coy ordered to pass between A & B Coys and outflank this MG position.
5	0045 hrs. 0055 hrs. 0415 hrs. 0500 hrs. 0630 hrs. 2330 hrs.	Progress still very slow against determined opposition. C Coy very slow in getting ahead. B Coy therefore pushed on and due to some fine work by leading Pl gained objective . A Coy still held up by heavy opposition from houses on rd. Major RS Nisbet killed. C Coy found rd block consisting of felled trees at 111285. It was found quite impossible for A Coy to gain objective, and it was finally decided that if the Coy consolidated at 113285 it would be sufficient to enable REs to start br. C & D in position as originally planned. REs very slow in coming up and br still not started. Heavy counter-attack by enemy using tanks. Driven off, but A Coy suffered 50% cas. 8 th Armd Bde had been unable to get ahead along rd as planned but sent fwd trps as far as possible to support us. Very heavy shelling continued all during the day . After 158 Bde had attacked through us, Bn withdrawn to conc area Issum to reorganise. Cas in the action heavy: Major RS Nisbet and 5 ORs killed, 47 ORs wounded, 16 ORs missing. A number of enemy dead were counted and sixty POWs taken.
6		Lt Mitchell and 30 ORs reinforcements. All sent to help reform A Coy. Day spent in rest and reorganisation.
7	1330 hrs.	Bn relieved by 1 Bn Royal Scots and moved to conc area (<i>Twisteden</i>).

7-11		Period of re-fitting and reorganisation.
8		Draft of 78 received, a mixture of young soldiers and men with from 2-4 years' experience.
11		Bn moved to Assche – a rest area west of Brussels.
21	0930 hrs. 1430 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended Bde conference on future ops. All officers and 70 senior NCOs from Bn attended lecture by Bde Comd on future ops.
12-22		Period spent in rest, re-fitting and training.
24	1145 hrs.	Bn moved to conc area 937282 preparatory to crossing Rhine in a follow-up role. (<i>Rhine crossed 23rd/24th April in Operation Plunder, led by 51 (Highland) Infantry Division.</i>)
26	1835 hrs.	Bn advanced across Rhine to conc area 1443.
27	1700 hrs.	Bn moved forward to conc area Hamminkeln 2048 (<i>4 miles north of Wesel, pictured below after bombardment prior to crossing.</i>)
		
28		No further move.
29	1000hrs.	Bn moved to conc area south of Bocholt with the idea of passing through 160 Bde when they had cleared Bocholt.
30	0045 hrs. 0630 hrs.	6 RWF having failed to clear the town, Bn advanced and finished job with help of 2 tps Crocs. Advance to Winterswijk started. Demolitions, mines and enemy rearguard posns encountered. Cas suffered, Lts Jowett and Willoughby wounded. Stiff resistance encountered from SP guns just south of the town, and having disposed of this Bn ordered to stay in posn for the night.
31	1130 hrs.	4 RWF having cleared Winterswijk during night, Bn passed through and entered Vreden without opposition. Pushed on to Alstatte but encountered heavy opposition from 88mm guns and enemy infantry. One carrier section lost. Bn dug in for the night, A & C Coys fwd.

April 1945

Pages P1960361-P1960387		
1	2130 hrs.	Orders received that Bn was under command 4 Armd Bde to advance through Wessem & Epe (<i>6 miles east of Enschede</i>) to area 6292 on the rt flank of 53 (W) Div.
2	1100 hrs.	Bn moved off with 44 RTR. Bde met little opposition apart from demolitions and the Bn was not committed.
3	0330 hrs. 0630 hrs. 0930 hrs. 1800 hrs.	Having built its own bridge and struggled through heavy mud Bn arrived in conc area 578975. B Coy sent patrol fwd of Bde posns but found no enemy. Clearing operation by B Coy down to Langenhorst 8500. No fight shown by enemy, 16 POW taken. Bn move to conc area Octrup 6201.
5	0700 hrs. 2100 hrs. 2300 hrs.	After various conflicting orders Bn moved to conc area Mesum (<i>27 miles north of Munster</i>). 155 Bde having been held up south of Ibbenburen by force composed of Officer Cadets, NCO Trg School and Service Corps Trg School, order given for Bde to clear town I HLI right, 4 RWF left. Bn plan was for A Coy to gain brhd (<i>bridgehead</i>) over stream south of Ibbenburen while B, C, D Coys passed through and cleared town to edge of high ground north of town. Attack started supported by 2 Med & 3 Fd Regts. A Coy gained brhd with only slight opposition. B Coy having passed through met stiff opposition from SA fire but continued to advance.
6	0100 hrs. 0300 hrs. 0420 hrs. 2145 hrs.	C & D Coys meeting very stiff resistance. Bulldozer having filled gap, guns sent up to help. All Coys on objectives, continuing to mop up. Bn axis considered clear. 1 Oxf & Bucks passed through to attack high ground beyond town. Mopping up in Bn area continued through the day. Over 200 POW taken. Bn casualties comparatively high. Bn moved to area Wollenhorst 1917 (<i>5 miles north of Osnabruck</i>) to protect Corps axis.
7	0900 hrs. 1830 hrs.	Bn took over from 6 HLI. On the arrival of the rest of the Bde, Bn was conc with the exception of D Coy which was left guarding the br at 148158. Recce Regt having bumped enemy in are 175218, B Coy was sent out to clear up the area. No enemy encountered and B Coy took up def posn covering br 174223
8	0900 hrs.	Bn with under comd B Sq Recce Regt engaged in cleaning up woods etc in Bn area.
9	1700 hrs.	Relieved by 1 Norfolk's and moved to conc area Burdorf 9061.
10-11		Bde in Div res.
12	1315 hrs. 1500 hrs. 1830 hrs.	Bn moved to assembly area Westen 0572. Enemy having withdrawn from Rethem 1066 orders given for an attack on Kl Hauslingen and high ground 108695. Bn plan was to attack with two Coys up, A right and C left with D Coy passing through onto high ground. B Coy were responsible for clearing main road. Adv started. Lt opposition met at X rds 095711, but when this had been dealt with Coys went fwd unopposed to their objectives.
13	1900 hrs. 2230 hrs.	Upwards of 35 POW from Hungarian Arty Trn Regt taken during the day. As 4 RWF had so far failed to get their objective Altenwahlingen 1467, Bn ordered to conc in area 126703 and if necessary take the objective from the north. 4 RWF having gained objective, A & B Coys ordered to adv and secure positions on high ground astride main rd at 147693.

14	0030 hrs. 0130 hrs. 0500 hrs. 1200 hrs. 1815 hrs.	<p>B Coy encountered slight opposition on reaching main rd. A & B Coys unable to adv against stiff opposition. Ordered to take up posn astride main rd 200 yds north of high ground. Major J Hemelryk wounded and died later. C & D Coys ordered to assist A & B Coys and to attack enemy from the south. Just as they were moving past Bn HQ enemy launched fierce if un-skillful counter-attack. This completely cut off A & B Coys but was driven off after heaving fighting (sic <i>heavy</i>). The Arty and 3 in mortars did good work. S Coy, which had been left back at 093712, was also attacked. One section of the Atk PI was captured and was about to be shot when a Recce Armd Car arrived to save the situation. Throughout these actions cas were heavy on both sides. Lt Collis was killed. A large number of POW were taken. A & B Coys advanced without further opposition onto high ground 137692. Bn took over from 1/5 Welch in area Stemmen 1075.</p>
15	0800 hrs. 1445 hrs.	<p>Sniping in D Coy area, otherwise quiet. 30 reinforcements received mostly ex LAA (<i>Light Anti-Aircraft</i>).</p>
16	1930 hrs. 2230 hrs.	<p>Orders given for an attack on Verden 0081. Bn moved to conc area Weitzmuhlen 0581. Further orders – Bn to attack down main rd, C & D Coys to capture Factory and Racecourse area east of town with A & B Coys passing through into the town itself.</p>
17	0530 hrs. 0820 hrs. 1335 hrs.	<p>Bn passed through 1 Oxf & Bucks who had captured intermediate objectives. C & D Coys on objective having encountered only light opposition. A certain amount of fire from SP guns and Nebelwerfers continued during the day and caused a number of cas. C & D Coys having sent fwd patrols into town and reported no opposition, A & B Coys advanced and town was cleared. Cas. were: 5 killed & 16 wounded. 1 Major, 1 Capt, 1 Lieut, 2 RSMs and 83 OR POW taken. Also captured Ord. Dump, Hospital containing 40 enemy wounded and 8 Fd guns.</p>
18	2230 hrs.	<p>Bn continued to clear up in town. 8 more POW taken. 81 Fd Regt having moved out on exposed right flank, Carrier PI and Atk PI sent to guard them.</p>
19		<p>Forecast of future events by Bde that Bn would probably move on 20 Apr in support of Guards Armd Div.</p>
20	0700 hrs. 1045 hrs. 2300 hrs.	<p>Bn moved to assembly area Riepholm (<i>8 miles west of Soltau</i>) with a view to occupying Hiddingen and Schwitschen to protect L of C of Guards Armd Div. As area between Riepholm and Hiddingen had not been cleared, Bn advanced with B Coy as Adv Guard Coy. All Coys gained objectives without serious opposition. 53 POW taken. Bde orders giving warning that Bn would be required to mop up Wittorf and woods north to xx northing.</p>
21	0815 hrs. 1100 hrs. 1700 hrs. 1900 hrs.	<p>Bn moved north through Jeddigen to adv on Wittorf. All Coys on objective in Wittorf with slight opposition and moved fwd to clear woods to north. C Coy seriously counter-attacked but opposition eventually dealt with, with help of tanks. Lt Mitchell seriously wounded. Other cas suffered. 32 POW taken. Area having been cleared, Coy came back to Wittorf. O Group for Bn to move to conc area Brokel (<i>Brockel</i>) with a view to clearing Wohlsdorf and Bartelsdorf. Guards Armd Div attack on Retenburg having been delayed until 22 Apr Bn plan was accordingly postponed.</p>
22	0800 hrs. 1130 hrs.	<p>Wohlsdorf and Bartelsdorf having been reported clear, parties sent out to recce necessary routes. Bn moved to defensive posns in villages. 94 POW taken in area without a fight.</p>

	2100 hrs.	Orders given for Bde plan for 23 AM. Bn task was to capture Westerholz. B Coy to adv along rd from Scheesel to Westerholz and then occupy north end of village. D Coy to follow, adv along rd and occupy south end of village. A Coy to clear centre of village. C Coy in res.
23	0730 hrs. 1000 hrs. 1700 hrs. 1845 hrs. 1945 hrs. 2030 hrs.	Adv started, led by B Sqn CLY All objectives taken. Slight opposition. Mines encountered on main axis. Div Recce having encountered pockets of enemy in woods on high ground 102091, Bn ordered to attack and capture high ground and exploit to main rd beyond. Bn plan was for D Coy to capture high ground which A & C Coys were to pass through and take up posns astride main rd. After preliminary Arty bombardment, attack started supported by tanks. Little opposition from infantry but heavy enemy Arty & mortar fire encountered. Plan changed in that Bn not required to go so far fwd. A & D Coys on objective north and south of high ground. Both suffered cas. Heavy shelling and mortaring continue during night. Our reply restricted owing to shortage of gun ammo.
24	1800 hrs. 2000 hrs.	2 Offrs and 49 ORs reinforcement received. All ORs from DWR. Commanding Officer and Adj. Attended funeral of Brig. Elrington DSO. Bde O Group at which Bn given orders to attack and capture Bockel on 25 Apr.
25	0930 hrs. 1830 hrs. 1915 hrs. 1930 hrs. 2100 hrs.	Bn moved to fwd conc area Hetzwege. Bn plan for the capture of Bockel was for C Coy to adv in left flanking movement to capture Sick. B Coy was then to pass through and make firm rd junc 041139 while A & D Coys went on to capture objective. Attack started from main rd at 058147. C Coy on objective, the only opposition being from slight mortaring. Hvy mortar & shell fire from direction Bockel which held up adv and caused cas. Arty fire having been brought down, Coys adv to objectives with little opposition from enemy inf. 14 POW taken.
26	1130 hrs. 1515 hrs. 1945 hrs.	Carrier patrol send fwd to capture rd crossing 039122. Br found to have been blown. Hy artillery & mortar fire on A Coy posn causing cas – wounded and bomb-happy. Orders given for Bn to capture Mulmshorn. Plan was to adv on two coy front, D right & C left. D Coy to secure X rds 041103 while C Coy went fwd to south edge of village. B Coy to pass through D and secure bldgs. 040100. A Coy in res.
27	0100 hrs.	Attack started supported by arty, 4.2 in mortars & MMG. No opposition encountered. 31 POW taken during mopping-up and patrol activities during day.
28	1000 hrs.	Commanding Officer attended Bde Conference on future ops.
29	1130 hrs.	Bde. Comd. addressed a representative Bn group and was introduced to some of the officers.
28-30		Time spent in adm and re-organisation.

May 1945

Pages P1960388-P1960399		
1	1430 hrs.	Bn moved to conc area Hanstedt 5220 (20 miles south of Hamburg).
2		1 Offr and 87 ORS reinforcements arrived, including several badly needed specialists.
3	1100 hrs. 1545 hrs.	Bn moved to conc area Geestacht 7640 (15 miles south east of Hamburg) Bn moved to Rahlstedt preparatory to entering Hamburg tomorrow.
4	0530 hrs.	Bn moved fwd into Hamburg, the city having surrendered unconditionally, and took over an admin area in north of city. (On 4 May 1945, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery took the unconditional military surrender at Lüneburg from Generaladmiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg , and General Eberhard Kinzel , of all German forces "in Holland , in northwest Germany including the Frisian Islands and Heligoland and all other islands, in Schleswig-Holstein, and in Denmark... including all naval ships in these areas")
	0330 hrs.	Bn took over 158 Bde area and with it a vast number of commitments in the form of guards on VPs etc. Coys therefore widely dispersed.
to 31		Time spent in reorganising Bn and administering SE part of Hamburg which entailed dealing with PW, PWX and DPs.
11		Capt JC Muir awarded MC.
25		The late Major J Hemelryk awarded MC.
29		Warning order received that Div would shortly move to a new area, and that the Bn would probably move 6 Jun.
30		Major WH McEwan, Capt JC Muir MC, Capt EJ Vale Mentioned in Dispatches.