

December 1944

Most of December was spent in outposts and patrolling on the Maas. The battalion was relieved on 27 December and went into rest and enjoyed a belated Christmas Day. Casualties had been high and as Ken Crockford recorded his experiences of leading a standing patrol which occupied a house overlooking the River Maas, which add 'meat' to the 'bones' of the War Diary and clearly illustrate the demanding and dangerous life of infantry soldiers.

By December 1944, the HEREFORDS had suffered the loss of one hundred and fifty five killed and approximately six hundred and thirty five wounded, a total eight hundred and thirty five - far more than the battalion had landed with in NORMANDY in June that year. The difference is explained by reinforcements being posted in from the United Kingdom and units which had been disbanded within BLA (BRITISH LIBERATION ARMY). As even these proved insufficient to meet the demand created by losses, it was necessary to rebadge reinforcements from THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS, THE ROYAL MILITARY POLICE and even at a later date others from THE ROYAL AIR FORCE. These reinforcements obviously suffered low morale at leaving their parent Corps or Arm of the Service and did not have the opportunity to prepare themselves for close combat fighting before being pitched into battle. That so many acquitted themselves as well as they did speaks highly of them, and the ability of the HEREFORDS to absorb so many into the "family of the regiment".

As will be appreciated from the foregoing, the battalion opposite ROEMOND in late December 1944 was very different from the one which had landed in NORMANDY in June that year. A number of individuals had survived, and fewer still survived until the end of hostilities in Europe.

The HEREFORDS did not have long to wait. After only two days at MELDERSLO the battalion reconnaissance party departed for an area WEST of HORN in preparation for the battalion to take over the following day from the 6th Battalion THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS (RWF) (part of 158 Infantry Brigade, 53rd WELCH INFANTRY DIVISION).

At 0900 hours on the 17th December, the main body of the HEREFORDS left MELDERSLO and by 1530 hours had completed the take over with the exception of the forward standing patrols which could not be relieved until after dark.

During the changeover, 'B' Company had been shelled and Second Lieutenant BACHE a platoon commander wounded.

The HEREFORDS defensive positions were located at:

| | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| BATTALION HQ | - | Area road junction (map ref 733921) |
| 'A' Company | - | HEUGDE (map ref 751923) |
| 'B' Company | - | Area WEST of BRICKWORKS (map ref 737905) |
| 'C' Company | - | HORN (map ref 751915) |
| 'D' Company | - | Area SOUTHERN Edge of HAELENSCH BROEK (map ref 760928) |

After dark, a patrol of one platoon moved down the road from HORN and relieved the platoon from 6 RWF located in a ruined house to the left of the road (map ref 769905) and brickworks (map ref 767903) about three hundred metres short of the blown bridge over the River MAAS.

The HEREFORDS had in support a battery of 25 pounder guns (8) of the 151st Field Regiment (The AYRSHIRE YEOMANRY, EARL OF CARRICKS OWN) ROYAL ARTILLERY. This battery registered DF (Defensive Fire) and DFSOS (Defensive Fire SOS) tasks around the HEREFORDS positions, the DFSOS being immediately in front. The HEREFORDS own 3" Mortar Platoon of six mortars also registered targets, their range being very much shorter than the guns. A company of medium machine guns provided by The ROYAL NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS was deployed to our flanks.

The situation was somewhat complicated by the unannounced movement of Dutch civilians. Some would take chances and visit their houses and farms between us and the river. Some crossed the river as and when they could evade the German sentries. We were warned to be wary of all civilians in the area, some of whom might well have been German soldiers in civilian clothing. Great care had therefore to be exercised before opening fire on any detected movement, particularly during the hours of darkness or heavy fog.

Just before our move to HORN I had handed over command of 14 Platoon, 'C' Company and taken over the appointment of second in command to that company with the acting rank of Captain. The Company Commander, Major LESLIE NORTHEY advised me that in the event of 14 Platoon being required to act in an independent role before a replacement platoon commander arrived I should be required to re-assume command of the platoon for the duration of the operation.

'C' Company was very happy with its new position. When not actually on sentry duty we had houses in which to keep warm and dry and regular meals became normal! The outside temperature was well below zero. The water on flooded fields was frozen and the countryside covered in snow.

I was not so happy about the patrol opposite the bridge, the location of which appeared to me to be a direct contradiction of all we had been taught in training and proved by experience. To maintain the patrol in the same location day after day, week after week appeared sheer madness. The enemy must have known the strength, times of change-over and just about all there was to know about it. We were informed that the decision had been taken "well behind the line" - at HQ 8 Corps in fact.

Just after 0230 hours on the morning of the 18th we received our first warm welcome from the enemy, over one hundred and fifty shells fell on the village on HORN. We left the warmth of the houses and manned our defensive positions in anticipation of an attack following the barrage, but none came. After an hour we "stood down" leaving our usual sentries on duty. For the rest of the night we saw flares being fired all around us and heard spasmodic burst of Spandau (German light machine gun) and our own Bren guns, but none in our immediate area.

The following day (the 19th) the ROYAL ENGINEERS came forward and cleared an enemy minefield in the vicinity of Battalion HQ. There was some enemy shelling and mortaring but probably restricted due to lack of vision as the result of a heavy mist which persisted throughout the day, although there was little doubt that they had "observers" on our side of the river. Peering through the mist hour after hour imposed tremendous strain on the sentries. It also muffled sound calling for even greater alertness.

During the day we heard a noise the like of which we had never heard before. We thought the Germans had produced a new weapon to sound even more terrifying than their moaning minnies. We ducked but there was no immediate danger the noise came from German jet aircraft, the first we had ever seen - or heard. Fortunately, they were more interested with what was going on behind us.

The mist persisted through the night and all day the 20th. The enemy was active along the whole front firing small arms, Nebelwefer (six barrel mortars known to the British as Moaning Minnies because of the noise the bombs made), 81 millimetre mortars (similar to the British 3" mortars), and occasional shells. No enemy patrols were encountered and no casualties were sustained.

The Carrier Platoon of the HEREFORDS set up "standing" patrols in addition to carrying out "mobile" patrols, and on the 20th they shot up the area East of 'D' Company with their medium machine guns (Vickers).

Enemy patrols were reported to be operating on our side of the river, possibly acting as spotters for their artillery or just seeking to create havoc.

On the 22nd an enemy patrol was reported to be in the area of WEERD (map ref 7691) but disappeared in the fog before it could be intercepted. After dark the ROYAL ENGINEERS again came forward and, protected by a platoon from 'A' Company, laid anti-personnel and Schu mines along our side of the river (map refs 785916, 774921, 774913). The ROYAL ENGINEERS suffered two casualties during the operation, both wounded by shrapnel. An enemy patrol of six was seen at map ref 752920 and another at map ref 746915. One of them was wounded by our rifle fire.

The 23rd passed quietly and it was thought the Germans were celebrating Christmas due to sounds of revelry heard from across the river. During the day a Troop from 474 INDEPENDENT SEARCHLIGHT BATTERY came under command in order to provide artificial moonlight as and when required. We all had previous experience of the use of this (reflecting searchlight beams from clouds) and whilst appreciating its tremendous value at nighttime we were also aware that care was required by us to avoid presenting silhouetted targets to the enemy.

The 24th was also fairly quiet with but little enemy shelling. During the day the Reconnaissance Troop of the 15/19th HUSSARS came forward in an infantry role and was placed under the command of 'A' Company to thicken their defensive position.

Christmas Day was a day of activity for the HEREFORDS. The personnel of 338 BATTERY, 75 ANTI-TANK Regiment ROYAL ARTILLERY came forward in an infantry role to take over 'D' Company's position. 'D' Company moved to the WEST of HORN (map ref 7490) an area known to have been used by German patrols. 'B' and 'D' Companies thus spent much of Christmas Day moving to and "digging in" to their new locations.

HATENBOER 26th - 27th December, 1944

On the 26th December, the Commanding Officer (CO) of the HEREFORDS received intelligence reports to the effect that the group of buildings known as HATENBOER had been occupied by Germans for at least three days, and that it was believed they were using it as a base from which to operate on our side of the river. He therefore decided that decisive action should be taken to eliminate any enemy in the buildings and surrounding orchards. He further decided that the proposed action should be undertaken by the platoon due to take over the forward position that evening, 14 Platoon.

During the afternoon of the 26th I was instructed to report to the CO at Battalion HQ for briefing. On arrival I was directed to a room in which I found the CO (Lieutenant Col BOB TURNER CAIN), his Intelligence Officer (known to all as BIFKINS), his Signals Officer (Lieutenant N A POWLEY - known as NAP), and an officer from 151 FIELD REGIMENT RA who I believe was the CO (Lieutenant Colonel AP TREVOR). During the 'O' (Order) Group the Brigade Commander (Brigadier JB Churcher) arrived but did not take part in the proceedings.

The CO introduced me to the CO of the "Gunnery" and told him that I would be commanding the patrol that night. Then, turning his attention to a large diagram produced by the Intelligence Section, he outlined his plan for the operation.

The plan was masterly in its simplicity (this was not unusual) and breathtaking in the amount of artillery allocated to support 14 Platoon. It was usual for a battalion to be supported by a battery of eight guns, but the Colonel's plan envisaged my platoon being supported by a whole regiment of twenty four. This was proof, if indeed any was needed, of higher commands' determination to keep casualties to a minimum at that time.

I listened as the plan unfolded with tremendous gratitude that such care had been taken in the planning, and such overwhelming support arranged. Yet, I was uneasy. As previously mentioned I was concerned to be taking over a position obviously well known to the Germans, although I had to admit to myself, to date it had not been attacked. My more immediate concern was what would happen as the guns lifted from one target to the next. Our experience had been that as our creeping barrages moved forward the Germans anticipating that infantry would move in, would bring their fire down onto the same area. Even a few shells or mortar bombs would give the attackers the impression one or more of their own guns was firing short, with resultant drop in morale. I pondered the problem.

Colonel Bob then asked if we had any questions, starting with the Gunner Officer. He had none, in fact everyone appeared to be completely happy except me. When it became my turn to speak, and being the most junior person in the room, I asked, rather timorously, "Please Sir, may I do it without the guns?" The shocked silence which greeted my request must have been equalled only by Oliver Twist when he asked for more. The difference being I was asking for less. Then everyone appeared to speak at once but the Colonel called for silence and, giving me an encouraging smile, said "Ken is not inexperienced, let us hear his reasons".

I gave my reasons as explained above adding that I would prefer to go in silently relying on our own platoon weapons if necessary, ensuring surprise, and hopefully creating havoc and retaining the initiative. The CO held a short consultation with the "Gunner" and came up with a compromise. The FOO would accompany me to the forward position and set up his OP (Observation Post). I would then attempt the operation without the 25 pounder guns support, but if I got into difficulties they would be immediately "on call". This arrangement suited me admirably. We had tremendous confidence in 151 Field Regiment for their swift response to our requests and the accuracy of their fire. I also had the morale boosting factor of being able to tell 14 Platoon that if we got into difficulties we had a complete regiment of 25 pounders "on call".

At about 1700 hours our FOO arrived and my morale soared even higher. It was Captain KEITH SPENCE who had frequently accompanied 'C' Company on previous occasions (although it must be said he usually had a 19 wireless set in a tank rather than an 18 set strapped to the back of a signaller). We had all grown to admire Keith both for his skill and undoubted bravery. With our favourite artillery regiment and FOO to support us we were ready to take on the German Army - we only hoped Keith's 18 set would work as well as his 19!

As darkness fell, accompanied by our most welcome friends we set off down the road keeping to the edges to minimise the noise of our boots on the cobbled road. Of necessity we were in single file on each side of the road with one hundred metres between sections and platoon HQ. We fully appreciated that such a formation presented magnificent enfilade targets to a possible enemy ambush, but we had no choice - the fields on each side of the road being covered by snow concealing frozen flood water and possibly more horrifying, German mines. We made all speed towards the bridge.

The house presented a very sorry state. The ground floor being roughly level with the raised road, and the cellar below road level. To the EAST we could see a black mass which appeared to be another house and what appeared to be a raised bank on which the track running to the NORTH had been constructed. Also to the left front were other dark "blobs" which we assumed were houses or farm buildings. The "fields of fire" appeared deplorable and confirmed my apprehension of occupying such a position. The other disturbing factor was confirmation that the two positions were in no way mutually supporting. If one was attacked there was no possibility of the other position providing covering fire unless they left the protection of their own positions. The two positions could only act independently in attempting to deny the use of the road to patrols leading towards HORN.

My sentries replaced those of 13 Platoon and we said farewell to them and our Gunner friends wishing them a safe return to HORN.

The basement presented a dismal picture of where those not on sentry duty were to rest. It was flooded and, in an effort to keep dry, previous patrols had constructed platforms from any material available. The air was damp and smelly, the scene illuminated by two candles. Being so cold, we were surprised that the water had not frozen. (We were later told that the outside temperature was 21°F below zero!)

At this time a German patrol attacked the location

About that time the telephone rang and a voice enquired as to "What on earth was going on down there?" I just said "We are being attacked" and rang off. Our only Bren gunner, Private PARKER, suddenly let out a yell and I thought he had been wounded but it was a yell of frustration, his gun had overheated and jammed. (He later told me that his barrel was 'glowing'). This inconvenience was slightly academic as he had practically exhausted all of his ammunition. What little he did have he unloaded and passed to the riflemen whose weapons were also getting quite hot, as one by one they ran out of ammunition.

Very soon we all ran out of ammunition and hand grenades and could only sit and await for what we thought was inevitable, an assault on the house under cover of intensive supporting fire (to keep our heads down), grenades thrown into the house followed by the attackers charging in, guns blazing. This is what we would have done and we had no reason to believe that the Germans would have done it any differently. Should any of us survive we would certainly be taken prisoner although, under the circumstances the chances of survival appeared distinctly remote! The telephone from the rear rang. It was the CO who asked for a situation report which I gave him. The CO said "Well done. If you are taken prisoners I know you will all uphold the best traditions of the British Army. Please convey my thanks to your men, hopefully it will not be too long before we all meet again."

As I replaced the handset I heard a bang in the house followed by a louder bang outside. On poking my head above the stairs I saw Private PARKES (14 Platoon Runner) sitting on the floor with a PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti Tank) between his legs. He was calmly arming a PIAT rocket, which he then loaded, raised and aimed at a dark mass ahead and squeezed the trigger. To our amazement the rocket exploded (they were noted for not exploding on contact). There were some screams but all firing against us ceased.

As darkness began to give way to the first grey of dawn, we could distinguish figures which appeared to be tending and collecting their wounded and possibly, dead. The Germans were again obviously not going to leave any possible means by which we could identify their unit.

I turned my mind to the problem of replenishing our ammunition. The only possible feasible course open appeared to be to borrow from those in the brickworks. However, in the increasing light of dawn, and not knowing where the enemy were, this would have been foolhardy. Equally foolhardy would have been what might appear to have been a logical reaction. That was to order Sergeant JACKSON to leave the safety of the brickworks and sweep across my front. At best he could have won a quick battle, but then he would be left with the problem of what to do with the Germans until the following evening. He would most certainly have had to disarm and send a sufficient number of uninjured soldiers back across the river with their wounded colleagues. The chances of them being shelled by their own artillery would be great. At worst, he could bump into a fresh patrol and not have the security of his position in the brickworks. It was almost certain the Germans would have left a small party to guard their boats and who would be fresh for battle. I therefore decided not to pursue the retreating enemy. Although this takes some minutes to explain the appreciation and decision probably took only a few seconds, due entirely to training and previous experience. Sergeant JACKSON did tell me by telephone that, although they had heard the noise of the battle, they had seen nothing of it.

Taking all the factors into consideration I decided we had no choice but to sit it out. Hopefully until relieved by the KSLI after dark that evening.

As daylight grew stronger we appreciated the hopelessness of our situation. Even if we had ammunition our fields of fire were deplorable, and both the brickworks and ourselves could be completely overlooked from the high buildings in ROERMOND where the Germans would most certainly have established OPs (Observation Posts).

We did not have to wait long, a loud crump to the front of us was sufficient to tell us we were being registered by mortars. (We did wonder why mortars and not guns). A second crump behind us confirmed our fears. The third bomb landed on our roof, sending splinters down on the sentries. We awaited the inevitable barrage to follow - but no barrage came. Had we any ammunition I would have ordered a one hundred percent "stand-to" on the assumption that we were to be mortared prior to another attack. There was no point in this and fortunately no further attack came.

Shortly after this the CO telephoned to say that in view of my total lack of ammunition, the gunners had arranged for a twenty-five pounder gun to be "on call" until I was relieved. It seemed at the time rather meagre after the proposal to use a whole regiment the previous day, but it was a kindly thought and very welcome.

The rest of the day passed quietly, disturbed only by the crack of two bullets fired into the house from across the river. We all had massive headaches due to the lack of sleep and explosions around us.

We ate our haversack rations (slices of bread, margarine and corned beef) but what tea had been left in the insulated containers from the previous evening was cold. Oh how we ached for those self heating cans of cocoa and soup, and twenty four hour ration packs with which we had been issued as we left England, never to be seen again, at least up at the front! Even the rations contained in the "fourteen man" compo packs would have been received with open arms, but we were told the whole of BLA was on "fresh rations" and no exceptions could be made for front line troops. Many hundreds of patrols throughout the campaign must have regretted that decision taken in the interests of health and economy (ie our health and the country's economy!)

At about 1800 hours we heard footsteps approaching from the direction of HORN, it was our welcome relief platoon from the 4th KSLI. We carried out relief procedures and thankfully made our way (cautiously in case of ambush) back up the road to HORN. On the far side we found our TCV (Troop Carrying Vehicle) with our ever faithful Royal Army Service Corps driver, Driver SPOTSWOOD (affectionately known as SPOTTY). We clambered on board and set of to rejoin the HEREFORDS for a delayed Christmas celebration at BAEXHAM.

We had come through the last twenty-four hours without the loss of one man. We all had massive headaches and felt groggy, but we were all alive and uninjured. My platoon expressed no surprise, frequently telling me that if I fell out of an aeroplane I would surely land on something "warm and soft, stand up, and walk away smelling of roses". I never felt like proving them right or wrong!

On arrival at BAEXHAM we received the welcome news that we were excused all duties for the remainder of the night. We were given tea and a meal, and directed to a stable which was to be our home for the next few days. Here we fell on to the straw and I certainly slept the "sleep of the just". The irony of being in a stable at that time of the year completely escaped us.

I recommended Private PARKES for an award as we were all convinced that had it not been for his imaginative action, the HEREFORDS would have been reduced by some twenty plus in strength! This recommendation got no further than company headquarters. I was informed that awards were only made for "offensive" action, our incident had been "defensive".

Note: .

The establishment of a platoon was 1 officer and 37 soldiers. Lack of reinforcements meant that a total strength of about 26 was more usual.

Sheet one.

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Month and Year Dec 44.

ORIGINAL
WAR DIARY

OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner Cain.,
D.S.O.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|--------------------|------|------|--|--------------------------|
| GRUBBENVORST - 1st | | | O.P.s established at 896147, 896154 and 877173. | |
| HOUTHUIZEN | | | Spasmodic shelling at WIELDER and GRUBBENVORST. | |
| | | | Patrols, nothing to report. Reinforcements - 1 offr & 12 O/Rs. | |
| | | | The u/m offrs and O/Rs were awarded the following decoration and take effect from 27 Nov 44. | |
| | | | D.S.O. Major R.C. Fripp. 2 IG. HELCHETEREN 9.9.44. | |
| | | | M.C. Major L.P. Northey. 'C' Coy. N of " 10.9.44. | |
| | | | D.C.M. Cpl. I.R. Everall. 1582 " HELCHETEREN " | |
| | | | D.C.M. L/c.D. Evans. 'D' Coy. " 9.9.44. | |
| | | | M.M. Sgt. L.F. Raines. " " 9.9.44. | |
| | | | M.M. Sgt. H. Dunn. " " " | |
| | | | M.M. Cpl. A.G. French. 1482 'C' Coy. N of HELCHETEREN 10.9.44. | |
| | | | M.M. Cpl. S.H. Haywood. 'A' Coy. HOENRICK. 10.9.44. | |
| | | | M.M. Cpl. A.C.T. Bond. 'A' Coy. " " | |

WAR DIARIES
No
10 JAN 1945
G.H.Q. 2nd ECHELON

Sheet TWO

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer LT. COL. G.R. Turner Cdn. DSO.

Month and Year Dec 44.

| Place | Dec. | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|------------------------------------|------|------|--|--------------------------|
| GRUBBENVORST 2. & HOUTHUIZEN | | | Similiar enemy activity to yesterday. Evacuation of all civs from all houses E of Rly commenced. Planes and individual S.A.A fire from E side of river during night, but patrols NTR. | |
| " | 3. | 1230 | O.P at 896154 shelled and forced to withdraw to alternative posns at 889150. No cas otherwise much the same as yesterday. Re-inforcements :- 6 O/Rs. | |
| " | 4. | 1400 | R.A.O.P. at 889150 shelled for 30 mins, no cas and O.P. remained in posn, similiar enemy activity as previous days. | |
| " | 5. | | 'B' Coy mortared in A.M. One Cas-(Wounded) Evacuation of civilians complete. O.P now atb 892159 instead of 896154 otherwise NTR. | |
| " | 6. | | 13 R.H.A. take over from 151 Fd Regt. R.A. in support of Bn. Building of strong points at HOUTHUIZEN 8917 and GRUBBENVORST 8914 and KALDENBROEK 8916 commenced | |

Sheet THREE

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Re

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner Cain D.S.O.

Month and Year... Dec. 44.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|-----------------|------|------|---|--------------------------|
| GRUBBENVORST | 7. | | slightly more shelling than usual during 24 hrs. | |
| & ROUTHUIZEN | | 1745 | 2 Germans seen in E fringe of GRUBBENVORST (possibly recce patrol). Subsequent clearing party could not find them. | |
| | | | Activity much the same as yesterday. R.E. laid mines in circular arc S of GRUBBENVORST 894146 to 897145. | |
| " | 8. | | Less enemy flares and S.A activity during night than usual. | |
| | | | Re-inforcements :- 9 O/Rs. | |
| " | 9. | | Working party in strong point at GRUBBENVORST brought more shelling and mortaring than usual. Area of Bn H.Q. lightly shelled A.M. and P.M. by a single gun; but many shells were apparently 'dud', this caused 3 O/R casualties (slightly wounded) in the Bn.H.Q. area and 4 more O/Rs at GRUBBENVORST during the day. 2 O/Rs slightly wounded by 69 grenades during training. | |
| | | 2200 | Returning from night firing posn at 888149, one mor carrier | |

Sheet FOUR

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner. Cain.

D.S.O.

Month and Year.....Dec. 1944.

(Delete heading not required).

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|--------------|------|-------|---|--------------------------|
| GRUBBENVORST | 9 | Cont. | blew up on mines on track at 888150. The carrier had been | |
| HOUTHUIZEN | | | down the track earlier in the evening and it was subsequently | |
| | | | found that the mines had been quite deeply buried. One O/R | |
| | | | killed and two wounded. Enemy quiet during night apart from | |
| | | | short and spasmodic mortar stonks. | |
| " | 10 | | Increased shelling and mor activity continues during day. | |
| | | | R.E. completed single belt of A.P. mines in circle around | |
| | | | GRUBBENVORST. Line of mines now 894146, 897145, 897147, | |
| | | | 895148. | |
| " | 11 | | Enemy generally quieter than last two days with reduced | |
| | | | shelling and mortaring throughout 24 hrs. | |
| | | | Re-inforcements :- 71 O/Rs. | |
| " | 12 | | Work continued during the night by 'D', 'C', and 'A' Coys on | |
| | | | their respective strongpoints. Bad weather restricted observation | |
| | | | to the EAST of the R. MAAS. | |

Sheet FIVE

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Month and Year DEC 1944

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (Erase heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.
Unit 1st Bn The HEREFORDSHIRE R
Commanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner Cain
D.S.O.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|---------------------------------|------|------|---|--------------------------|
| GRUBBENVORST & HOUTHUIZEN | 13 | 1200 | Bn commenced handing over to 8 RB, coys moving back independently to reserve area at MELDERSLO 8518. This operation was considerably helped by heavy mist and was uneventful. | |
| | | | The following awards have been made to the u/m:- | |
| | | | D.S.O. Lt Col G.R. Turner Cain. Commanding Officer. ZOMEREN | 21 Sept 44. |
| | | | M.C. Capt E.L.Mills. Second i/c 'c' coy. ZOMEREN | 21 Sept 44. |
| | | | M.C. Lt G.de Carle. 'D' Coy. IJSSSELSTEIN | 17 Oct 44. |
| | | | M.M. Cpl H.Pearson. 'D' Coy. ZOMEREN | 21 Sept 44. |
| | | | M.M. L/cpl Constable.R. 'c' Coy. ZOMEREN | 21 Sept 44. |
| MELDERSLO | 14 | | Bn located as follows:- 'A' coy 853188, 'B' coy 855192, 'c' coy 847193, 'D' coy 856198. BnHQ 834182. Working parties from coys cleared road HORST-MELDERSLO. Baths and entertainment. | |
| " | 15 | | Road clearing parties, baths and entertainment. | |
| " | 16 | 0800 | Advance recce party left for area WEST of ROERMOND. | |
| | | 1800 | Bn 'o' Gp in connection with Bde moving to take over positions | |

SheetbSIX

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Month and Year DEC 1944

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (Erase heading not required).

Army Form 118.
1st Bn The HEREFORDSHIRE Regt.
Unit.....
Lt Col G.R.Turner Caidn
Commanding Officer.....D.S.O.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|-----------|------|-----------|--|--------------------------|
| MELDERSLO | 16 | (cont) | ...from 158 Bde (53 Div) | |
| " | 17 | 0900 | Bn moves to new location, area HORN to take over from 6Bn RWF | |
| | | | 158 Bde 53(W)Division. | |
| | | 1500 | 'B' Coy shelled whilst taking over. 2/Lt Bache wounded. | |
| | | 1530 | Bn complete in new positions apart from forward sections. | |
| | | | Bn.HQ 733921, 'D'coy 760928, 'A'coy 751923, 'C'coy 751915, | |
| | | | 'B'coy 737905. Flares and spandaus active during the first half | |
| | | | of the night. | |
| HORN | 18 | 0235 | Heavy stonk (approx 150 shells) in HORN area, 151Fd Regt replied | |
| | | | Remainder of night quiet, but spasmodic mortaring or shelling | |
| | | | of forward areas during the day. O.P.established 754915. | |
| | | | 'D' COY HQ moved to 762931 and pl positions slightly altered. | |
| " | 19 | | Heavy mist throughout the day. Less enemy shelling and mortaring | |
| | | | than usual. RE's clear enemy minefield in the vicinity of Bn HQ. | |
| " | 20 | 0120/0215 | Period of enemy activity along the whole front, consisting | |

Sheet SEVEN

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Month and Year DEC 1944

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required).

Army Form C.2118.
Unit 1st Bn The HEREFORDSHIRE R
Commanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner Cain
D.S.O.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|-------|-----------|------|---|--------------------------|
| HORN | 20 (cont) | | ... of SA fire, mortar, NEW, 88mm, and possibly xxx one 15cm gun. No casualties, and heavy mist obscured observation. Very little enemy activity during the day, again heavy mist "blanketed" operations. | |
| | | 1500 | Carrier Pl shoot up area East of 'D' Coy, ^{with MMC's} Normal spandau activity during the night. | |
| " | 21 | | Two civilians in pay of Germans reported to have crossed to our side during the night. Patrols were sent out to search with the aid of the O.D. without result. Very quiet throughout the 24 hrs Mist continues. | |
| HORN | 22 | | Enemy patrol seen in WEEED area during morning. Fog prevented patrol from locating the enemy. | |
| | | 1930 | R.Es with one pl of A Coy as protection, laid AP and Schu mines along river side of bank at 785916. AP mines laid in double row with Schu mines in between in straight stretches | |

Sheet 8.

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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118,

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G.R. Turner Cain.
D.S.O.

Month and Year Dec 44.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|-------|------|--------|--|--------------------------|
| HORN | 22 | (cont) | at 774921, 774916 and 774913. RE suffered 2 cas (wounded) during the operation. 0253. Minefield completed. During the night enemy patrol of 6 reported at 752920 and another 4 at 746915. One of the latter injured by rifle fire. | |
| HORN | 23 | | Day and night quiet. Enemy thought to be celebrating Christmas as sounds of revelry were heard at midnight. Troop of 474 Ind S/L Battery under command to produce artificial moonlight when required. | |
| HORN | 24 | | Again quiet, small amount of enemy shelling and mortaring only. Recce Troop of 15/19 Hussars under command of 'A' Coy to thicken defences. (infantry role) | |
| HORN | 25 | 0700 | Party of 4 civilians and 2 RAF personnel crossed the river MAAS from ROERMOND bringing useful information of crossing point and routes of enemy patrols, and also local information on enemy defences. 338 Bty. A/Bk took over D Coy area, 15/19 Hussars took over B Coy area. W of HORN 740911. B Coy also moved posn nearer to HORN on the E to make a stronger Bn locality. 2 Coys therefore spent Christmas day digging in. | |

Sheet 9

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

Army Form 7118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col G.R. Turner Cain

D.S.O.

Month and Year Dec 14.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|-------|------|------|--|--------------------------|
| HORN | 26 | 0130 | Section of 'C' Coy which had been placed in posn at HATENBOER 762897, successfully ambushed enemy patrol of 25 to 30 strong. Seven believed killed and several injured. Our casualties NIL. The enemy took great pains to withdraw his killed and injured and ^{no} means of identification left behind. Civilians still living in the farm in the vicinity reported that the Germans had been there for 3 days. | |
| HORN | 27 | 1800 | Operation to clear HATENBOER farms and vicinity of Germans and civilians, found area clear of both. Civilians believed to be "hiding up" in the vicinity. | One, 14PE 09 aff. |
| | | 0005 | | |
| | | 0545 | Enemy raid on section and platoon H.Q. of 'C' Coy unsuccessful. Enemy seen and fired on by the section. Enemy fired 6 Panzer-faust bombs at platoon H.Q. house which all fell short, and this was silenced by the second bomb of a P.I.A.T. Enemy casualties believed at least 5. Own casualties NIL. | |

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I and the Staff Manual respectively. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.219. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

(Erase heading not required).

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner Cain.
D.S.O.

Month and Year.....Dec 41.

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Officer Commanding

1st Bn The HEREFORDSHIRE Regiment

1st January 1945