

September 1944

September saw the Battalion advance in what became known as the 'Great Swan' - a 260 armoured 'dash' forward in 6 days from the Seine to Antwerp. This took advantage of the disorientation of German Forces caused by the almost annihilation of the German 7th Army in the Falaise pocket. The objective was to capture the port of Antwerp - in working order - to shorten the resupply route to the forward troops who were still be supplied 'over the beaches' from Normandy.

The Battalion had a short, sharp encounter at Helchteren and on the night of 21/22 crossed the Willem's Canal, an operation for which the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Turner-Cain received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO); his citation read:

Lt Col Turner-Cain was appointed to command 1st Herefords on 4 July 44. On the night of 21/22 Sep 44, his Battalion was ordered to make an assault crossing over the Willem's Canal at Zomeren. Zero hour for this attack was 1930 hrs.

The enemy were holding defensive positions close to the canal banks. Despite stiff opposition and the heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire which was brought down on the area of the crossing, three Rifle Companies had successfully crossed and were establishing themselves on the far bank by 2100 hrs. The initial success of this operation was largely due to Lt Col Turner-Cain's sound tactical ability and leadership.

Shortly afterwards, before the perimeter of the bridgehead was secured, a strong enemy counter attack developed; it was discovered later that this counter attack was delivered by no less than a Battalion of Infantry of high quality and long battle experience. Some of the enemy succeeded in infiltrating into the perimeter, and in the darkness the fighting was bitter and confused. Despite the critical situation Lt Col Turner-Cain remained at all times cool and undaunted; he maintained control of his Companies under the most adverse conditions, and committed his fourth Rifle Company at the right moment to restore the situation.

His presence in the crossing area for long periods, without regard for the heavy defensive fire, was a magnificent example and encouragement to his troops.

Throughout the night his Battalion maintained the Bridgehead against all enemy efforts to dislodge them. This enabled a Class 40 Bridge to be built by the Royal Engineers, over which tanks and a further Infantry Battalion of this Brigade were able to advance at first light to exploit the initial success and to capture Asten. Lt Col Turner-Cain's sound tactical ability made possible the great success achieved by his Battalion at heavy cost to the enemy; his coolness and personal bravery under fire were an inspiration to all ranks.



Lt Col Turner-Cain receives his DSO from FM Montgomery



The Herefords pass through Avesnes on 1 September 1944



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Sheet Two.

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, Cais.

Month and Year Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
COMITY	31 Aug.	0845	Village reported clear, 40 P.Ws taken by B Coy mainly. Identification	
			12 S.S. Div 102 Arty Bn and 49 Div Fus. Bn.	
		0845	Harbour parties moved fwd.	
		0900	Bn commenced move fwd on wheels.	
AMIENS.		1030	Cont. area south of Amiens 0653. Pivot formed in area of German Army H.Q.	
		1155	Bn moved forward to held br in Amiens.	
		1225	Arrived locn. 104576. KSLI 3 Coys across river, 3 pens to pass through.	
		2230	Bn moved out to H.E. Amiens and pivoted, 50 Div moved in and took over pens.	
AMIENS		2400	All Coys in posn, Bn area 1160.	
	1 Sep.		11 Armd Div to continue adv to Arras.	
		1030	Bn moved fwd. 29 Armd Bde leading.	
		1720	Arrived south of Aubigny west of Arras still no opesition.	
AUBIGNY	2	0930	Adv continued.	
		1130	Bn arrived Seuchez 4610 and pivoted on Vimy ridge.	
	3	0845	Commenced adv to Antwerp, 29 Armd Bde leading.	

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Sheet three.

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 C.M.

Month and Year. Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
SLUCHEZ	3	1030	Colm halted 5717 Enemy 800 strong reported area 5725 moving east. 29 Armd Bde engaging them.	
		1230	Adv continued despite more and more rumours from P&F.I. of enemy colms. Those on our route were dealt with, others left to follow up fms.	
		1830	Bn crossed Belgium frontier S.E. of Roubaix 8339. Adv continued through the night. Terrific welcome recieved in every village.	
	4	0615	Bn halted for two hours at Alost 4064. Orders recieved Armd Bde with KSLI and Mens to move forward and clear Antwerp. 1st Herefords with in sup 15 / 19 H to protect left flank. Bn formed coys ops to cover left flank and Div C.I. and prevent enemy colms crossing river Dendre.	
		1400	Armd Bde reported 5 enemy coys surrendered. 1 Herefords to move fwd to line of forts south of Antwerp.	
ANTWERP	1850	hours	Arrived outskirts Antwerp, B area 6692. Enemy holding out in small pockets. Bn to clear area south of town 6793	

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Sheet Four
WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. G.R. Palmer, Caim.

Month and Year: Sept. 44...

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
NETHERF.	4	195	Operation commenced. Very slow. Thick woods and houses rendered 16 sets quite useless, after 2015 hrs even at close range.	
	5	0030	All coys returned. Enemy A.A. site located and patrol 40 strong engaged, which withdrew after suffering casualties. Own cas: 1 killed 2 wounded. <i>the Patrol Leader 11. German Killed 1 died 2 days later</i>	
		0045 hrs.	Bn moved fwd with 2 coys up to clear forts on south and east side of city. Ports used by Germans to store ann and flour. <i>Swastika, Drape & Pomme!</i>	
		1315	No opposition met and Bn est in area 6893.	
		2015	Infm. Germans have blown brs over Albert Canal. K.S.L.I. dressing canal and est br head area. Morxen 7199 tonight. Hereford's to cross on orders, area 7298. 3 Mens to pass through K.S.L.I.	
	6.	0400 hrs.	K.S.L.I. across canal. "C" Coy 1st Hereford's move fwd to occupy bridges 699979 and 707962.	
	"	1100 hrs.	Infm. opposition considered too strong. A Brigade of 50 Div moving in to relieve 159 Brigade. K.S.L.I. under fire throughout the day.	
	7.	0800 hrs.	Orders prepared for the relief of 4th K.S.E.I. by 1 gds, supported by tanks	

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Sheet 5.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G.R. Turner, Cais.

Month and Year Sept. 44....

Place	Date	Hour	(continued)	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
				Passing through new br -hd. to be captured by 3rd Mems at 6999. Mems br-hd consisted of 2 pls 150 yds in front of defile caused by bridge over canal.	
				This defile covered from both flanks and centre by L.G. Mortars, and A.A.	
			1100.	Order for Mfds to attack cancelled, as br- hd was not sufficiently large enough. Bn. returned to own location 6893.	
				2000 hrs. Bn. moved to new location S.W. of the town, in Fort area 6594. 231 Bde. of 50 Div. taking over pos'n in North of town.	
	8 Sept.			Bn. now in semi-rest area at 2 hrs notice. Carrying on with maintenance, but prepared to provide mobile coln of 2 Coy's with supporting weapons at 1/2 hr notice. Carrier pl. maintaining patrols every 2 hrs to Holobken 6292.	not ant. p. found
				1:25 hrs. Carrier patrol located enemy posn with L.M.G's and 20m.m. cannons with J.P. in area factory, west of River 623933. Enemy also firing on "B" Coy. from area 662963.	
	9 Sept			11. Armd Div. to move over to right flank. Bn. under command 29th Armd Bde.	
				1915 hrs. Bn. commenced move.	

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Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit 1st. Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year Sept 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	9 Sept 1751		Crossed over Albert Canal at Beerlingen. 234751 over a class 40 br.	
	1815.		Arrived area Helchteren 3475 and contacted Pife & Perfar with whom we were to pivot for the night. Village reported held and Coy's despatched to clear, "A" Coy to North, "J" Coy to S.W. "C" Coy to South. "D" Coy to N.E.	
			A & C Coys little or no opposition and in posn by 203 hrs. B. Coy clearing with 1 pl. woods in their locality came under heavy M.G. fire and were pinned down until dark. Coy Commander * and 1. G.R. killed. D. Coy met main opposition.	* Capt BUNMER
			Houses on rd, running N.E. held by 2 pls and windmill 150 yds clear of village held by further pl. All posns strongly organized and covered by further enemy posns. in woods to N.E. & S.E. Heavy casualties among leaders and very slow work clearing house by house. Innumerable examples of extreme gallantry by Coy and Sect Comds. Houses and windmill area cleared by dark though close contact with enemy still retained by D; C; & B Coy's	
Helchteren 13			Gds Armd Div putting in attack northwards at 0900 hrs. 11 Armd Div to give right flank protection. 29th Armd Bde leading, followed by 159 Inf Bde.	

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Sheet 7.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt¹
Unit.....

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

Month and Year..... Sept 44.

Place	Date	Hour	(Continued)	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
				1 Kfds in support of 2 F & F Y. Village of Melchteren to be cleared by 2832	
				for 29th Armd to pass through.	
				0830. Commenced to move fwd	
				1200. En-counter battle South of Nechtel 3578 (see appx. attached)	
				1800 A Coy and A Sqn F. & F Y commenced clearing Koenrik 3783 supported by "B" Coy and	
				"B" Sqn from South. Approx 60 P.W's taken from village. Remainder Bn. Sp. moved into	
				pivot at 2100 hrs. "C" Coy & "C" Sqn held off the enemy from Nechtel area.	
Koenrik	11	0530		Bn moved fwd to Peer 4184 "A" & "B" Coy's with "A" & "C" Sqs cleared village	
				and took up posn East. 1 Coy following up delayed by br at 39484) collapsing	
				1 Coy remained in posn in Koenrik protecting soft vehs. The 2 fwd Coy's	
				met slight resistance 20 P.W's taken.	
				1400 Coy's in posn East of village.	
				2000 Remainder of Bn arrived Peer.	
Peer	12			Adv halted to enable supplies to be brought fwd. Bn providing 1 Coy with Sup arms	
				at 1/2 hrs notice. Remainder of Bn. engaged on Admin & maintenance.	

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MC
Sgt Leslie Montley
DCM
D/Cpl Ivor Everall 'C' Coy
Pte Douglas Evans (308)
MN
Sgt Harold Dunn
Cpl Arthur French
Sgt Leslie Raine

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Sheet 8

~~WAR~~ DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt Col Turner Oai

Month and Year Sept 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	13		Regrouping. 1st Hfds revert to comd of 159 Inf Bde.	
	1830		Reinforcements arrived total 31. R.A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. personnel will replace Bn specialists	
	14	1100	30th Corps Comd visited Bn. Introduced to offrs and spoke to reps of all Coys.	
			Paid high compliments to the Inf of 159 Bde which he said made the 11th Armd Div the finest he has ever comd.	
	1230		Enemy dropped a few Mortar bombs in the village area. Cas, 1 O.R. wounded. Bn. church, in progress at the time had to be closed prematurely.	PARADE
	1930		"A" Coy proceeded to Bree 5235. Enemy had been reported to be entering the village at night and shooting up the inhabitants.	
	15	0630	"A" Coy returned. No enemy activity during the night. Bn. at 1/2 hrs notice as Corps reserve.	
	1430		Further reinforcements arrived total 26	
	1900		"A" Coy again proceeded to Bree. Enemy reported by Ins of Court patrol this afternoon in that area.	
			"A" Troop of 46th Med. Regt R.A. in sup of "A" Coy.	
	16	0530	"A" Return again. No enemy activity	

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Sheet 9

Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Unit. 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year... Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	16	1230	11th Armd Div reverts to command of 8th Corps.	
		1430	Reinforcements total 5 Offrs (1 Major, 2 Lt's & 2 2nd Lt's) arrived at Major departed later.	
	17		Change over to zone "A" time.	
	17	1800	Further reinforcements arrived, Total 3 Offrs (2 Capt 1 Lt)	
		1200	1st Herefordshire Regt under command 29 Armd Bde.	
	19		Coy 15 cwt W/T trucks replaced by carrier Universal modified to take 19 Set.	
			Orders received to continue advance north passing through 50 Div br head over Escault Canal	
		1400	Bn commenced to move fwd with, in support F and F Yeo. Leading coy rode on tks.	
		1800	Crossed Escault Canal at De. Groote Barrier 355961.	
		1815	Crossed Dutch frontier at 3699.	
		1930	Bn pivoted in area south of Valkenswaard 4007. Enemy were reported to have cut Div C.L. approx 2 miles N of Valkenswaard.	
Valkenswaard	20	0700	Bn moved out to sweep south clearing enemy Bypassed yesterday. Coy's moving fwd on tks. D. Coy and Carrier pl, less one section remained as protection for soft vehicles.	

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Sheet 10.

Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year: Sept. 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		1000	Route reported clear. Soft vehicles commenced to move fwd.	
			First contact made with enemy at Leende 4807. C Coy cleared and took 5 P/Ws.	
			Adv cont and enemy again bumped and cleared in Heeze 4911 after stiff fight by C Coy.	
			B Coy & B Sqn F&F then ordered to sieze br over Willems Canal area Zomerem 6012.	
			Br was found to be covered by fixed lines of M.G. and A/T fire.	
Zomerem	21	0015	B Coy put in attack supported by Arty but enemy blew the br when barrage commenced.	
			Coy withdrew and occupied a posn 500 yds W of br and remainder of Bn formed pivot area 5811.	
		0600	C Coy and 2 Sgns tks moved fwd to recce and capture Boomen br 3815. Br was found to be blown.	
		1400	Bn under comd 159 Inf Bde. Orders issued for crossing canal tonight area 602128, with Arty sup.	
			Object to est br head 500 yds perimeter. When consolidated R.E. to build Class 4o br	
			for K.S.L.I. and F&F to pass over at first light and capture Aston 6113, Zero hr 1930 hrs.	
		1830	Bn H.Q. moved fwd and est W of canal 598127.	
		1930	Arty barrage commenced, A & D assaulting coys moved fwd. Crossing unopposed	
			and C Coy crossed over with only occasional enemy M.G. fire which could not be	
			definitely located.	

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Sheet 11

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.Cam.....

Month and Year Sept. 44

References to Appendices

Summary of Events and Information

Place	Date	Hour	
			2100 R.E. commenced Class 40 br.
22	0200		Enemy strongly counter attacked from Aston for three hours. Succeeded in infiltrating into fwd pl posn. Bn H.Q. also subjected to heavy mortar fire and casualties inflicted. Heavy Arty fire was brought down and attacks were held and br completed on time, enemy suffering very heavy casualties.
	0445		Coy K.S.L.I. moved fwd to est firm base West of canal area of br.
	0530		Br completed.
	0700		K.S.L.I. and tks commenced to pass through with arty sup to capture Aston.
	0800		90 enemy dead and considerable equipment reported by fwd coys around br head.
	0930		Bn HQ area mortared by Nebelwerfers and fm buildings being used by unit Med Offr and Pd Amb unit were set on fire.
	1530		Enemy force of coy strenght with A.F.Vs reported approaching from S.E. Later reported broken up by tanks and arty fire.
			^{RIVER CROSSING} Total cas for operation 25 killed and 35 wounded.
	2000		Enemy attempts at infiltration from South along canal bank were all held by D coy.

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Sheet 12

Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Unit..... Lt Col G.R. Turnert n.

Commanding Officer.....

Month and Year... Sept 44.

Summary of Events and Information

References to Appendices

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ZONEREI.	23	0730	D coy cleared East bank of canal with tp 15/19 H .P/As brought in total 20.	
			Identification Fallschirm Jager Regt HURIER	
			29 Armd Bde passed through to capture DEURIE 6520. 3 Brit Div to take over br posn.	
	24	1400	Orders received Bn to move to area N.E. Vlierden 6217.	
		1515	Recco parties left.	
		1830	Bn commenced move fwd and 2 K.S.L.I. (3 Div) moved in.	
VLIERDEN.		2000	Bn formed pivot area 6218.	
	25	0700	Orders received Bn to move to clear Helmond 5622. Wood 6120 to be cleared en route. In sup 15/19H.	
		0900	Bn moved fwd.	
			Coy patrols reported Wood clear of enemy and Bn received orders to move fwd and clear	
			Helmond which was reported to be held by small pockets of enemy in the factory.	
		1100	No enemy found in Helmond and Bn moved N.E. to clear Wood 5822	
		1230	Commenced to clear wood with two coys.	
		1400	Wood reported clear and two P/As taken.	
		1500	Orders received to move behind PAF Yeo to pivot in area West of Heide Van Oploo 6633.	

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HELMONT

prepared in manuscript. Sept. 44.

WAR DIARY

or

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Unitist. Br. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner C9ain.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		2000	Arrived posn.	
VAN O'LOG.	26	1245	Reece parties left for new location North of St Anthonis. 7138.	
		1430	Bn moved fwd.	
		1530	Arrived and formed pivot area 7040.	
		1930	Coy provided reece patrol of one Pl on Lass river 765430. Enemy patrols located.	
			It was 14 Pl 'C' Coy. in TCV Driven by Dr S. Spatswood (Spats) RASC.	
			<i>[Signature]</i> Lt. Col. Comd. <u>1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.</u>	

WL47724 908 2,000,000 8:43 W. H. & S. 51/6/75

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Sheet One. ORIGINAL

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

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st. Bn. The Parachute Mine Regt.

Commanding Officer W. J. J. P. Dunn Cdr.

Month and Year October 1941

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
St. Anthony's.	Sept			
	27	0300	A Coy move out to area S.W. of Beugen Hill 2.000 pl with O.P. est at Beugen to observe enemy activity E of River Maas.	
		1430	B Coy = relieve A Coy, Personnel from En H.Q. occupied B Coy 2nd pl posn until arrival of A Coy.	
		1900	Coy sent out fighting patrols every two hrs. Patrols from B Coy report no activity during night.	
	28	1830	D Coy relieves B Coy. Nil reports by patrols.	
	29	1730	Orders received to move to Handel tomorrow.	
	30	0845	En moved to Handel 5833 after relief by U.S. Forces in coy groups at half hrs interval.	
		1200	En H.Q. est at 599332 all coys in civilian billets.	
Handel.	Oct.			
	1.		Coys settling in. 44 O.Rs reinforcements = arrive. Baths, entertainments.	
	2		En commenced training and vehicle maintenance. Baths, entertainments.	
	3		Training included firing, 30yd range, and vehicle maintenance. B. Coy practice movement by night.	