



The Herefords at the River Weser crossing

The following morning the group moved south, cross the river, then worked its way north again to arrive in an area almost opposite Schlusslberg. The advance continued eastwards unopposed through Windheim and Dohren until it reached the outskirts of the small town of Loccum where the leading troops came under fire. The column was halted and an appreciation made. The Battalion Comd's plan was to attack with B Coy on the left and C Coy on the right, each supported by a squadron of tanks. B Coy had the biggest share of the fighting and the detailed account of their operation runs as follows:

The outer perimeter of the town was strongly held by enemy of battlegroup Volkaes and C Coy with C Sqn F&F had first across from 200 yards of open ground before the actual clearing of the houses could begin. The attack was pressed home by 10 and 11 Pls in the face of heavy enemy fire and a footing was gained in the enemy's perimeter defences. A few casualties were suffered during this period but some 20 enemy prisoners were taken.

The second phase consisted of a lengthy house to house clearing operation with the tanks giving close support. Some casualties were suffered both by the tanks and ourselves, but a considerable number of prisoners were taken and the tanks knocked out two 88 mm guns.

Having reached our objective on the northern outskirts of the town, we consolidated, but the left forward platoon then reported that they were being engaged by an 88mm gun over open sights. The close reconnaissance revealed the presence of an enemy position of four 88mm guns excellently camouflaged against some haystacks just forward of the company position. OC Sqn made a gallant attempt to neutralize these guns, but they were so well sited that it proved impossible for him to do so without accepting a suicidal risk to his tanks. Meanwhile as the situation created by their fire at 50 yards range was distinctly unhealthy, we decided on an infantry attack. This was carried out by 12 Pl, who until then had been in reserve, and was supported by the fire of the remainder of the company squadron group. Two of the company snipers had meanwhile established themselves in the attic and farm overlooking the enemy

positions and harassed the enemy gun crews to good effect, until a direct hit on the floor below obliged them to withdraw!

12 Pl's attack led with great dash by the Pl Comd was completely successful and resulted in overrunning the enemy gun position and eliminating the gun crews. B Coy then continued their advance and had the satisfaction of knocking out a further 88mm gun which had previously accounted for a squadron commander of the F&F in his scout car and three carriers of the MG Pl.

B Coy's share in this operation covered 6 hrs of very close action and together with C Sqn they accounted for seven 88 mm guns besides a considerable number of enemy killed and captured.

The enemy was using all resources it could as illustrated by Bob Price:

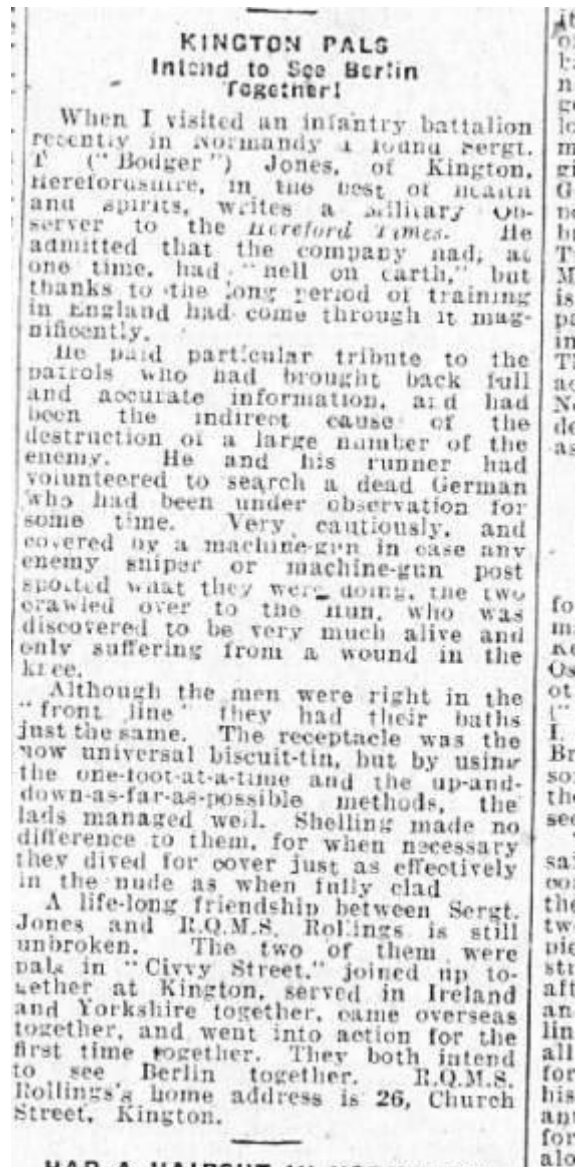
The battle for the town of Loccum was fast and furious, at least seven 88mms were knocked out before the town was taken, A Coy only played a minor role in this battle, but I vividly remember one instant. We were advancing across a rough ploughed field, when 3 German soldiers about 200 yards in front of us dropped to the ground and lay still. I turned to Simo our Bren gunner who was walking alongside and said, 'give them a burst' although he fired from the hip he was bang on target 2 of them immediately sprang to their feet, hands high in the air the third lay still I don't think any of us were quite prepared for what we found when we reached them. The first thing we noticed was a pair of white silk knickers, the unlucky soldier was a woman. She was wearing a skirt and dark silk stockings instead of trousers. Simmo's fire had blown her knee caps off it looked pretty bad, but she never made a sound, not a murmur, although she must have been in terrible pain. The 2 men were wearing Red Cross arm bands, but they were also carrying pistols. This annoyed me I pointed to the Red Cross symbol then the gun and thumped one hard in the chest with my fist. He was very lucky he wasn't shot on the spot. After the loss of 1 April the mood of the company had changed. One individual in the platoon who lost his mate in that battle went berserk, it was some time before he could be left anywhere near any prisoners on his own.



Ptes Hargest and Lewis examine a captured German Panzerfaust (Bazooka).

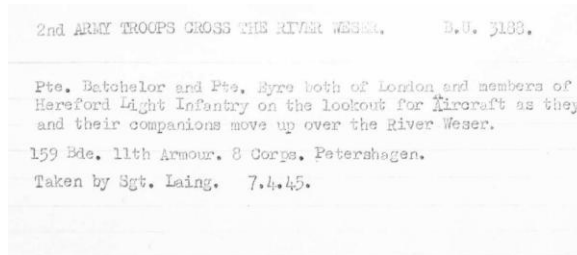
The Panzerfaust was the German weapon of choice at this time, Bob Price recalled one incident: *the defenders, mainly determined bazooka men concealed at the side of the road gave us the most trouble. Usually the first 4 tanks in the column carried no infantry, for obvious reasons. On this occasion the bazooka men fired at the third tank from a house situation near the road. Fortunately for the tank the bazooka hit the toolbox mounted on the side of the tank, doing no serious damage. The tank immediately stopped, swung the turret round and stuck the 77 mm gun through the window and fired, killing everyone in the room. I think at this stage of the campaign the majority of tank casualties we were getting were from the bazooka. In the hands of very determined men they were a very effective weapon, even though the bazooka man was invariably killed afterwards.*

A newspaper report from the
Hereford Times



The other companies were in the meantime engaged in clearing operations and collecting PoWs, went firm for the night and the 15/19 and 1 Cheshire Group passed through the following morning. This was the first time the Cheshires, who had come to 159 Bde to replace 3 Mons, who had been in action with us since Normandy, suffered heavy casualties and become ineffective. They continued the advance eastwards, clearing minor opposition from the woods astride the route and the Battalion Group was stepped up behind them. Finally about 1630hrs, while they were completing clearing a large wood, which would still take considerable time, we were pushed through in order to keep up the pace of the advance. From Eilvese where we passed through them the route switched northwards through the village of Hagen, Dudensen and Laderholz towards the river Aller. The aim was to push on as far as possible before nightfall and to start with, the going was good and opposition negligible. With the tanks moving well out in front and the 25 Pounders bounding forward as their guns got out of range, this 'leapfrogging' enabled rapid progress to be made. The policy was to give each village a preliminary 'stop up' before the group arrived, if there was anybody not quite sure whether to resist or surrender it helped them to make up their minds! As each leading company/squadron reached a village it deployed to check up whilst the fresh group took the lead and pushed on. And so it went on until we came to the village of Lederholz.

Air sentries were essential to guard against the possibility of German air attacks.



The photos below show Cpl Fred Batchelor with chums LCpl Frank Cartwright and Cpl Albert Western taken after VE Day; in 1992 the 3 chums got together again, for the first time since 1945!



About 400 yards to the north of the village where the road turned east the leading tanks encountered a roadblock covered by enemy infantry with SA and Panzerfaust. B Coy with one squadron was sent to deal with it whilst C Coy with C Sqn went first SE to Mandelsloh, thence, having found it clear, north to Niederstocken. There they had an independent battle. It did not take long to convince the enemy mostly Hitler Jugend that they were on a bad wicket and 70 PoWs were quickly rounded up. The enemy in Obere Bauerschaft (Lederholz) proved more tenacious and B Coy had a set battle.

The area to the left of the village was wooded and it was decided to do a left flanking attack through the woods. As the company was advancing through the woods to the attack it came under heavy and effective fire from enemy positions further in the wood on their left flank. One platoon was ordered to contain this interference while the company secured its main objective this flank protection platoon had a very difficult time against the numerically superior and well positioned enemy who continued to engage them with automatic fire at close range. Outstanding work on the part of the Pl Comd, Pl Sgt and Bren gunner was an example to the rest of the platoon, who continued to engage the enemy and inflict casualties by well controlled fire and personal initiative. With support from the tanks and well laid smoke the main attack was put in against the roadblock position. Several casualties were suffered and others were only saved by the dash and determination with which the operation was completed. A number of enemy were killed and a handful of PoWs taken but the rest escaped between the buildings and into the wood. Systematic house clearing was carried out and the Battalion prepared

to move eastward to join C Coy who were by this time happily established in Niederstocken with their bag of prisoners. Darkness was already falling and A Coy took the lead. They moved on tanks and enemy MGs and rifles opened up at them from more woods on their left. It was obvious that the enemy would continue to hamper movement of the column, but it was too late to start a wood clearing operation. Supplies and the soft vehicles would have to follow along the same road. It was therefore decided to abandon the attempt to join C Coy and to go firm in Laderholz. The company/squadron group were capable of looking after themselves and the tanks shared their compo¹ packs with the infantry.

The rest of the Battalion Group took up a defensive position amongst the burning farm buildings and cottages. The soft vehicles bounded forward and arrived under the guidance of the PT Sgt in the Battalion area about 0200hrs; the Battalion had moved so rapidly that we had got out of range with 15C² and he had been left in the blue, which accounted for them being so late and irate on arriving. A wood clearing operation was laid on to round up the enemy in the woods at first light the following morning. A full scale sweep was started at 0645hrs but the enemy had disappeared and no opposition was met. A Coy was sent with a squadron of tanks along the route intended to have been taken the night before, and passing through C Coy, turned south and took up a position at Mandelsloh. Battalion HQ with the rest of the Group steeped up to Rodewald due West of Helsdorf to await completion of the bridge there which would take us across the river Leine.

As with the crossing of the Weser the plan for crossing the Leine was changed and the Battalion Group again crossed over a 6 Airborne bridge, this time at Neustadt. It similarly meant first to move south then a reverse move on the other side of the river to get us back onto our Div axis. Orders were given to clear a route northwards through the northern perimeter of the Airborne bridgehead and on to Esperke without opposition. About 2 kms north of Grindau the first trouble was encountered when the leading tank, with D Coy up, was knocked out. The company detanked and dealt with the opposition. The Battalion Comd decided to carry out a two company attack on Schwarmsredt. A small town about a mile to the north, B Coy clearing the wooded hills on the right and D Coy the scrub on the left. When both companies had made sufficient ground on the flanks C Coy were to be unleashed to go straight through the village and onto the juncture of the two rivers, Leine and Aller at Bothner. Here is an account of B Coy's part in the attack:

The road formed a rough dividing line between the 2 companies with B on the right and D on the left. B Coy attacked with 10 and 12 Pls forward and 11 Pl in reserve supported by a squadron of tanks. Some 300 yards of dead flat open ground had to be crossed before gaining the protection of a small wood immediately adjoining the town. Immediately we deployed into the open we came under accurate small arms fire which completely pinned down the left hand platoon and progress became very difficult. It proved almost impossible to locate the enemy's position exactly. The enemy was using his mortars with good effect and his very accurate sniping made all attempts at observation most hazardous. Casualties were beginning to mount up and the Battalion Comd ordered a stonk on the houses at the outskirts of the town in the hope of neutralizing the enemy fire. Unfortunately this fell very short; The first salvo landed amongst the right forward platoon killing the Pl Comd and causing several other casualties. Attempts to get forward under a smokescreen was unsuccessful as the wind was completely wrong, but it was by now evident that the main enemy position was well over to our left, and that as soon as C Coy attack went in the enemy's attention was likely to be diverted. This proved to be the case. C Coy's attack immediately relieved the pressure and they mopped up several snipers on the way.

¹ Composite rations

² 15 Charlie – radio callsign

The second phase consisted of systematic clearing of our sector of the town with the tanks and close support. This yielded several prisoners and was accomplished without further loss. B Coy finally dug in in the area of a crossroads on the northeast outskirts of the town. The first excitement was when an enemy half track towing a 75 mm gun drove down the main road into 11 Pl's position. They ambushed it successfully, putting a PIAT bomb through the radiator and killing all the crew as they baled out. About half an hour later enemy were observed crossing the open ground to our front but with very satisfactorily stopped up by the Besas of the tanks. Enemy movement, suggestive of a counterattack, was also observed in a village some 2 miles to the northeast. A heavy stonk was brought down on this area by the gunner OP. The enemy soon became aware of our presence and mortared our area regularly throughout the remainder of the day, but we had no more casualties before being withdrawn to reserve that evening.

For a while it was hard to decide from which area the sniper fire hindering B Coy in the initial stages of their advance was coming. About 200 yards in front of the start line along the main road was a group of white hutments which aroused suspicion. A platoon of C Coy was therefore ordered to check up and clear them if necessary. The Pl Comd himself gives the following account:

The CO sent his runner for 13 Pl Comd and together with the Coy Comd pointed out the ground ahead. The open road leading straight down to the hutments; The line of B&D Coys attack which had bypassed the hutments; D Coy's shattered wireless carrier some 300 yards away on the side of the road and half way to the wood. His instructions were that we should deal with the enemy who had destroyed the carrier, rescue any survivors of the crew and clear the hutments of snipers.

I elected to move up the left of the road and smoke cover from the tanks was arranged. The platoon moved off in extended order, two sections leading followed by platoon HQ and the third section. It was the task of the rear section to deal with the D Coy carrier as they passed. This they did. Unfortunately they could not give any assistance to the wireless operator who was killed, but they did establish the fact that the 2ic of D Coy was still alive. Several tanks drew up behind the advancing sections and threw 2 inch mortar smoke bombs over their heads, giving an immediate and perfect smokescreen. These tanks were unable to use their firepower since it was not clearly understood exactly what had happened to the two leading companies already in the wood and scrub on either flank.

At approximately 100 yards from the hutments the first two sections broke cover of the smoke and instantly came under fire from the huts. At the same moment about a dozen Panzerfausts were thrown through the air like slow moving footballs from the edge of the road. For a moment the platoon hesitated and ducked as the anti tank bombs exploded. Then as one man they went in. The Panzerfaust had been fired from a section position dug in on the road embankment. The right hand section tackled this while the other section advanced to the huts under cover of both Bren guns. The German Marines in the road position were annihilated in a swift and vicious grenade exchange. The Sect Ldr played a great part, almost planting a No 36 Grenade in the enemy weapon pits as he dashed up right across the road. During the whole of this swift and unexpected encounter all the platoon weapons were in use the third section and Pl HQ having brought their fire to bear on the right end of the hutments. In spite of the road position it was only a matter of minutes before the left hand section at the end of the hutments was joined once more by the right hand section. Both sections, by individual fire and movement and supported by the rear section's fire, then proceeded to clear the huts. They worked well, leaving nothing to chance and using grenades and bullets freely. In this clearing operation they unearthed the remainder of the Marine Pl and took some 15 prisoners.

Meanwhile the Coy Comd who was with the tanks giving smoke, noticing the amount of opposition the platoon had come across, ordered the remainder of the company up to assist in consolidation and as 13 Pl reorganized he passed the other two platoons through into the village unopposed. In this action solely by the use of their own weapons and their rapid and concerted movement, the platoon was able to completely overthrow an established enemy of similar strength.

It was at this time when Brigadier Churchill recalled in his memos the following unfortunate incident: we moved the brigade group forward into a harbouring area for the night. I ordered units to put patrols out as there were a number of Germans around in the woods. The Herefords resumed their advance in the morning after an unsuccessful patrol clash during the night in which they had lost two of their men who had been taken prisoner. The advance hadn't long been going when I saw clouds of smoke rising into the air near where the Herefords were. I asked what was happening only to be told that the village was burning. As there had been no artillery or armour fire in the area I couldn't understand it, so I went forward and saw the commanding officer and discovered that the Germans had perpetrated a terrible crime on our two prisoners. They were found in the village by the Battalion tied to a chair with their throats cut. Naturally there wasn't much love lost with that village and the troops set the whole place alight. There is nothing much more for me to say about that except to say to the troops 'well done, now get on with your advance'.

Thus after close and difficult fighting, Schwarmstedt was cleared. Opposition was determined and in all about 60 PoWs of 2 Marine Div were taken. C Coy was passed through Schwarmstedt to the northwest to clear the village of Bothmer. This was carried out in the face of considerable mortar fire. In the evening the Battalion was relieved by 1 Cdo Bde who were to force the crossing over the Aller and withdrew to Grindau and Esperke, cleared earlier in the day. The group remained here for the next two days.

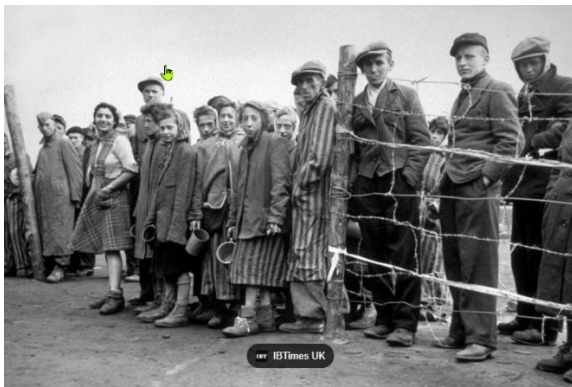
As Bob Price recalled:

After the capture of Schwarmstedt we dug in across the main road and consolidated our position. Tom and I dug our trench in the grass verge giving us a good field of fire up the road towards the river. The defenders of this large village had fought a stubborn battle but had been crushed by sheer power, consequently the whole village was now burning furiously, not many houses would be left standing by nightfall. The smell from the burning flesh of the dead cattle and the smoke from the houses cast a thick cloud over the whole area, making visibility no more than a few yards in places. During the battle we were clearing some outbuildings to a farm when I had to climb over what I thought was a pile of debris. But under the debris was a dead cow and my legs suddenly broke through the animal's rib cage right up to my knee. What a bloody mess, my boot and trouser leg were covered in blood. I wiped off what I could with handfuls of straw but it looked a mess. Our new platoon commander thought I've been shot in the leg when he saw it. I thought I should smell very nicely in a few days time. After dark I was on guard, all the fires had burnt themselves out, but visibility still wasn't very good, when I heard something coming up the road behind us. It was a muffled sound but I couldn't identify it, so I woke Tom. We turned the bren gun round and waited. Out of the mist and smoke loomed a tall figure in a beret – 'halt' I called out. The figure stopped called out his rank and name '1st Commando Brigade' he answered, the column slowly continued up the road towards the river Aller. I then realised why I hadn't recognized the sound, commando boots had got thick rubber soles not the standard issued leather and studs like us. We wished them good luck and settled down again, very glad we hadn't got the job they'd got to do that night. During the night they crossed the river mainly using the railway bridge a little further downstream and established a small bridgehead between there and the village of Hademstorf.



On 12 Apr a deputation of German and Hungarian officers crossed the river Aller to negotiate for a non fighting area. Beyond the river were a number of Displaced Persons (DPs), slave workers and concentration camps; Belsen was one of the camps. An epidemic of typhus had broken out and the German medical authorities feared that in the fighting the DPs and internees would make a break for freedom and thus spread the disease. The terms laid down by the British commanders were not acceptable to the commander of the German 1 Para Army controlling military operations in that area, therefore, after deputations had been passed backwards and forwards, it was decided that we would fight our way through the area. Before the next operation special precautions were taken against infection. L63 powder was applied as it had never been applied before. On the night of the 12th clouds of it was billowing over the area and the Battalion emerged looking like a lot of miller boys.

On the 15th **Belsen Concentration camp** was liberated – the sights were almost unbelievable – Richard Dimbleby, a British journalist who was embedded with the Army filed his report of what he had seen, but his superiors did not, at first believe it! Over 60,000 emaciated prisoners were in a desperate state – starving and in need of immediate medical care. 13,000 unburied bodies lay about the camp, despite providing immediate aid a further 14,000 inmates would die.



It was at this time that Captain Alec Wardman returned from leave and his account illustrates the speed of the advance:

I returned to the railhead at Bourg Leopold and enquired where the Division was – I was told they were 'somewhere' in Germany, but had pushed on so far and so fast that no one knew exactly where they were, and that I should wait for a truck from the Division which will arrive to pick up those returning from leave. I was lucky a truck turned up within about 3 hours.

We travelled up through Germany where there did not appear to be any British troops. On crossroads German police were controlling the traffic and making certain that nothing hindered our progress. Eventually we arrived at our B Echelon – our supply group bringing up rations, fuel and ammunition. The Regimental Quartermaster is in command of this group – I asked if I could go forward immediately, but he told me it was not possible until the next day as they were 90 miles further on when rations were delivered that day and were now even probably further ahead!

We set off early the next day and reached the Battalion about 1500hrs. I had only been with my platoon for about 30 minutes when I was called to an O Gp. We were to move about 3 miles and then a special issue of DDT would be delivered and everyone must strip and dust their bodies and clothes thoroughly, we were going to enter an area where typhus was rife and these were necessary precautions. Little did we know that we were going into the area of Belsen concentration camp and that some of us would enter the camp.

One battalion had forced a crossing over the river Aller and we passed through and continued the advance, in every place there were some fighting before occupation; some of this fighting was very fierce but still we kept going we now began to free PoW camps many of them already under control of the prisoners themselves; they were delighted to see us but we could not stop it was always onwards.

Ray Griffiths also recalled this time:

11 Armd Div continued eastward and crossed the Rivers Leine and Aller and after bypassing Hannover, headed northward towards the major River Elbe. Early on 13 April a delegation of the German Medical Corps arrived, under a white flag, at the Cheshire Regiment HQ and told of a concentration camp at Belsen, 10 miles north east of Engenhausen and warned the Division not to approach within 3 miles of the camp as a serious outbreak of typhus had reached epidemic proportions.

We halted some distance from the camp and were ordered to a farm building where we were sprayed with a white DDT powder, which filled every crack and crevice it could find, including our battle dress, overalls and equipment. Upon our dispersal to our canvas sided TCV (troop carrying vehicles) we sat and waited for the order to proceed to the distant camp. The area we were in was like a nature reserve, trees, heather, grassy plains; a place of peace and quiet but it was spoilt by a distinctly horrible smell pervading the air, as if we were close to a large sewage works or agricultural compound.

Thankfully, our small group did not reach the camp although some Officers visited the place and regretted doing so. The camp was finally liberated on 15 April by other members of the Division.

After the trauma of Belsen, the 11 Armd Div advanced rapidly northwards, crossed the Aller and after many skirmishes and minor battles were the first to reach the River Elbe. This was later recorded as

a magnificent advance of over 300 miles over a period of 21 days, involving the crossing of three major rivers, the Ems, Weser and Aller and the Dortmund/Ems and Dortmund/Weser Canals and the major battle at the Teutoburger Wald.

Bob Price commented a typical soldier:

..... we hadn't a clue where we were going today, except we were following the river upstream, so we just assumed we were getting back on to our original line of advance. It was a lovely stretch of countryside, this whole area was covered by woodland, mainly silver Birch, with the trees coming right up to the roadside in many places. Just about the worst possible conditions for an armoured division to operate in.

The river was commanded by dense woods on the far bank. On the 13th the Cheshires tried to break out eastwards from the bridgehead to Winsen. Slow progress was made against strong anti tank and Panzerfaust opposition and the Battalion Group was stepped up behind them as they advanced. By nightfall they were still some 3 miles short of Winsen, with our Battalion close on their heels. The following morning they made another unsuccessful attempt to break through. We were then ordered to carry out an outflanking movement northwards through the woods and to attack Winsen from the northeast. One squadron of the 15/19 was to accompany us.

At 1230hrs the group passed through the sleepy eyed battle stained Cheshires and passed the 88s they had knocked out.

The move through the woods was uneventful apart from the hard work the carrier drivers had to put in to get their vehicles through the sandy tracks. Having learned a wood clearing lesson on the Dortmund-Ems canal, the operation commenced with a series of leapfrogging tactics with two companies up on each leg. As A&D Coys consolidated on the first limited objectives, so B&C Coys passed through. As the companies closed in on the final objective the resistance increased and with the darkness closing in the companies' efforts became more determined. Resisting enemy were dealt with summarily as the companies became more aggressive, spurred on by commanders at all levels.

The realities of war and sudden death were recalled by Bob Price:

We were asked to assist the Cheshires and launch an attack, the Battalion lined up in the woods on either side of the road as we slowly moved through the trees we could hear the shells from the 25 pounders exploding in front of us. For the next 30 minutes we picked our way through the trees our main problem was keeping our line straight as we advanced through the more densely part of the woods. We didn't see any sign of the enemy in the woods at all and in front of us we were approaching the last of the trees beyond them were open fields. We could then see the town of Winsen, the houses and churches were visible above the trees. Before we broke cover and moved into an open country we stopped and waited for everyone to catch up. I was only about 10 yards from the road and from my position through a gap in the trees I could see right down the road. I noticed some movement on the grass verge about 200 yards away no doubt in my mind it was a German soldier. I called out to Jim³ our section leader who came across in front of me and like me got up on one knee to get a clearer view through the trees and undergrowth. I never had the time to answer his question, one second later he was dead. The sniper's bullet hit him straight between the eyes and ripped the epaulette off the shoulder of my battledress; an inch lower and it would have smashed my collarbone. I've never hit the ground so fast, for a second Jim didn't move, then slowly toppled over on his side, the blood pouring from the hole in his head. Behind me someone murmured

³ - 14508555 Cpl James (Jim) S Dooley.

bloody hell and slowly repeated it over and over again. A few yards to my left Jim's mate, a young lad was sobbing his heart out. I shouted to him to keep down there was nothing he could do for Jim now.

The shocking realization of what had happened, the thought that I was probably this sniper's original target, and if I hadn't called out to Jim he would be alive now, and I would be the one dead. At this point one of the section climbed onto the leading tank and informed the tank commander about the sniper and where he was hiding. What happened next surprised everyone, the tank took off down the road like a scalded cat, ran on to the grass verge, stopped with this one track over the sniper's trench and spun around several times compressing the soil on top of the sniper, burying him alive.

The order came down the line to move out we climbed aboard the tanks and headed down the road towards the town, passing the spot where the sniper was now buried.

Despite these personal tragedies the action had to go on, but this well illustrates the precarious position of leading infantry units and the suddenness with which things could change.

With the assistance of the tanks, smoke and HE of the 3 inch mortars throughout the operation and a final crushing artillery stonk on Winsen itself, the operation just had to succeed. There was never any question of being held up, for the companies crashed through any opposition. In complete darkness, apart from the light of blazing buildings, including a church the Battalion consolidated, each company clearing up its local area. About 30 PoWs of the battlegroup Totzeck, formed from students of the Nebelwerfer School at Celle, were taken and one 75mm limbered behind a half track ready to pull out, was impounded.

The success of the action was due to the speed at which it had been carried out. Difficult and heavily opposed situations existed on some companies fronts at certain phases were neutralized and liquidated by the energetic action of other companies committed to provide a diversion and distract the enemy. Active protective patrolling by companies throughout the night was uneventful although it was certain that there were still enemy around trying to make good their escape.

By first light the following morning the group was again geared up ready to move. Pushing northeast along the center line the first opposite of the day was encountered from a roadblock near Welthausen. This was manned in the usual way by Panzerfaust and riflemen. A Coy was called forward and with a local flanking movement uprooted the enemy the next company/squadron group then passed through while A Coy cleared up the village, including several snipers. From then onwards that was the type of opposition encountered Panzerfausts, covered by riflemen, holding isolated positions, usually on the outskirts of the villages. Prompt and energetic action by the leading elements as soon as they bumped such trouble saved lives and speeded up the advance. Platoons and companies went straight into their attacks with grenades and bayonets supported by the tanks, and although the enemy were mainly marines, known to be stubborn fighters, the waves of opposition were too much for them. During the course of the day, after covering about 20 miles, approximately 200 PoWs were collected. Plans for the various actions were quickly drawn up by the Coy Comds and rapidly executed by their men and the day was outstanding success for the Battalion. In all, 12 separate actions were fought by various companies and all of them were successful.

The Battalion Group which reached Hermansberg about 1800 hrs and for a change it appeared that we would take up our positions for the night by daylight. Companies were given their various tasks. Then over the air in customary wireless jargon came fresh orders from the brigade. Air recce had located about 80 jet propelled enemy aircraft, presumed to be without petrol, in the fringe of a forest 10 miles to the north. Another race was on to reach the area before darkness closed.

C Coy Comd was wounded when the tank in which he was travelling was blown up on a mine. It was a lucky escape and he was a great loss, as he was one of the dwindling number of officers who landed in France with the Battalion.

During one village clearing operations the CP was halted at a bend in the road just outside the village. All spare personnel were taking advantage of the halt to organise a brew when the Carrier Section, protecting the CP, unearthed half a dozen Bosch fully armed from slit trenches within 15 yards of the half track CP vehicle. It just shows you can't be too careful and how easily accidents can happen.



A group of Herefords stop for a brew en route

A Coy, still intact, was pushed along the road immediately and the remainder of the Battalion fell in in the new order of march instantly decided by the CO. In front of A Coy was a squadron of tanks without infantry. Unless the opposition increased it appeared quite likely that we would make it. As the leading squadron crossed over the stream at Muden about halfway to our new objective, the enemy blew the bridge and effectively changed our plans. A Coy reached the river but could not get across on tanks. The leading squadron was on the other side without infantry, not a very enviable position! It was still possible for infantry to cross the partially demolished bridge and it was therefore decided to send two companies across to sit in a tight knot with the tanks and form a solid bridgehead around the exit from the bridge.

As Bob Price recalled: we were soon over the river to support the tanks, we engaged the small demolition party killing three and capturing the remainder. Our new company commander, Major Tapper, a big man was cheered by the lads as he grabbed 2 German soldiers by the scruff of their necks and frog marched them down the road.

Steel Brownlie of the Fife & Forfar Yeomanry recalled:

The Herefords and Fife & Forfar Yeomanry group moved due East to clear Walhausen. The Herefords dismounted to make an assault. I went round to the left to find a good fire position. I blazed away with high explosive and tracer to help the infantry forward and the attack went in past the wrecked road block and into the blazing streets. I followed through the burning debris. The Herefords with our close support forced the defenders to retreat but a few snipers were left. They killed or wounded several of the infantry but we tank commanders ducked up

and down [in the tank turrets] to present as small a target as possible while still seeing what was going on. House to house fighting like that in Waldhausen was always exhilarating.

Bridging material was called up and after considerable delay building was begun. In the meantime the remainder of the Battalion curled up on the near bank of the river and all went well. By this time we were an isolated little group about 10 miles forward of anybody else and full arrangements were made for our local protection. There was no interference on either side of the river throughout the night and the bridge was completed by 1030hrs the following morning. At first light patrols carrying out normal clearing of company areas discovered all manner of things. C Coy found three 50mm atank guns in the middle of the area they had taken up by darkness. PoWs were brought in in droves with a final total of about 400. These were mainly relics of the last war, now employed in the German Labour or Pioneer Corps. No resistance was encountered but no chances taken.

It was here that we had our second change of CO during the campaign. The first one had been on the river Odon. As it was then, so again, the 2ic took over command. In this respect we were extremely fortunate, for each time we had a new CO it was one who had served with the Battalion for a while, who knew the men and the form. Thus continuity was ensured.

The 16 April saw Soviet troops commence operations directly against **Berlin**, which they entered on the 21st eventually overcoming all resistance on 2 May.

The following day 16 Apr, the Bn Gp was held up for a while at Polzen, just north of the bridge built during the night, to allow 29 Armd Bde Gp to pass through on the northern route to Ebstorf the two routes haven't converged at Polzen. In the afternoon another long range thrust was started in the direction of Eimke which would bring us level again with 29 Bde Gp at Ebstorf. By this time the advance was going so rapidly that we were able to keep up with the speed with which the Daily News would have us move, and sometimes we were actually ahead of the BBC News!

In this present drive we passed through one of the Luftwaffe most up-to-date airfields and contentedly took stock of the damage done by the Allied Air Forces to the landing strips and planes on the ground. There were also abandoned planes in the hangars and woods surrounding the aerodrome , so far as could be seen they were in good condition. There were hundreds of ground staff and administrative personnel anxious to give themselves up and the TCVs following in the column, especially allotted for the collection of PoWs, were soon full up. In all about 500 were collected during the day.

The route across the airfield was very difficult to follow on the map and the leading Tp Comd experienced many an anxious moment, as he felt his responsibility as navigator for the column somewhat keenly. Even beyond the aerodrome, it did not improve much as it lay along secondary tracks and side roads. There was always a feeling of false security about these moves. Although unopposed there was never any saying where the enemy was going to crop up next and it was dangerous to relax. As a column by a wood east of the aerodrome, a Spandau opened up from the right at the CP Gp on the move. A DR travelling behind the half track was killed and it was lucky there were no other casualties. Nearby tanks braced up the area but it was not possible to halt the column to deal with it.

This was the first day that the 2ic had rejoined the Battalion after an absence of several months and he took it as a personal insult that the half track in which he was travelling should be singled out for attack. He was also reminded of the Bde Comd's view on traffic control when a short distance on, the bigger part of the group was forced to a standstill by road difficulties! B Coy with its squadron of F&F were leading, followed by Battalion/Regimental Tac HQs. One of the rear tanks of the Regimental HQ Gp bogged and the rest of the column, followed by Bde HQ, piled up behind it.

Recovery vehicles and bulldozers trying to get it on track again went off the hard track into the squelchy mud on either side and made a perfect jam. The Brigadier, exasperated at the delay, expressed his annoyance and almost blasted a way through, but the mud still held its victims. It was not till several hours later after darkness had fallen that prisoners, who had arrived from every direction, built a log track and got the column moving. As the track was still unsatisfactory, only essential vehicles and personnel were moved up and the remainder, included the 25 Pounders, went firm in the area for the night.

In the meantime B Coy with its squadron carried out a successful attack at on Eimke. The village was held by approximately 45 to 50 enemy with 75 mm anti tank guns. Fortunately the surprise attack came in on them from an unexpected direction and their guns were pointing the wrong way. The tanks quickly put paid to the weapons while the infantry put in an assault and carried the position at the point of the bayonet. Thus taken by surprise the issue was not long in doubt and after mopping up the posts and clearing the area the company consolidated.

It is interesting to note that the cooks' lorries, having used a different route, were speeding eastwards towards the village and reached it just as the company was preparing to attack. If they had been a few minutes earlier it is doubtful whether the Battalion would have had any food that night, or alternatively the cooks would have been in possession of the place before the company attack went in!

Moving up to Eimke the Battalion passed through Bramsbostel where the difficult cross country track rejoined the main road. Here we received the salute of every European country as we passed hundreds of ex PoWs, just released from their confinement - free men. So mixed with their feelings at this newfound freedom that they didn't know whether to cheer or greet us ceremoniously.

As Bob Price recalled: our platoon dug in on piece of waste ground near the edge of a wood. On the other side of the road was the village school. We could hear the children playing while we dug out trenches. The cook's wagon set up behind the school and started to prepare our meal. When it was ready each section went in turn. I stopped behind on the bren gun. While they were away I noticed someone peering at me through the trees from the edge of the wood after a few minutes a strange figure stepped into the open, and after a moment's hesitation slowly walked towards me. I couldn't believe my eyes in front of me stood someone looking like Ben Gunn out of Treasure Island his clothes were in tatters, he'd got hair down to his shoulders, a long beard and was absolutely filthy. In a very quiet voice he asked 'are you English?' 'yes' I replied he slowly started to smile then jumped up and down waving his arms about. I looked on in disbelief. Finally he calmed down and told me who he was he was a British soldier taken prisoner in 1940 he escaped from a prisoner of war camp and had been on the run for about two years living mainly off the land. He didn't even know D-Day had taken place.

The soldiers were always looking for somewhere comfortable to spend the night as Bob Price recalled:

..... each platoon cleared a different part of the village we went straight down the main road to the far end of the village taking one of the tanks with us clearing houses as we went. Up to now we only found very frightened civilians. By now it was getting dark and as we approached the last few houses I remember how thirsty we were. The last house on the left was well alight but on the right a large house we deliberately left it intact so we could sleep in it. Next to it was a bungalow the occupants an old couple were crouching in the doorway absolutely terrified. Simo the bren gunner put his arm around the little old lady and tried to reassure her that we weren't going to burn down their house. Then he made gestures to them that we were all thirsty. The old man soon understood what we wanted and disappeared into the house returning with a bucket of milk that's all they'd got. With all the smoke my tongue felt like a

crisp the milk tasted great it didn't take us long to empty the bucket; Simo gave the man a cigarette.

There was also time for fun:

The last house on the left, as I mentioned was burning well flames were coming out of all the upstairs windows. It was then we noticed someone come out of the house carrying two chairs. He put them down on the grass about half way between us and the house then dashed back in again this time he struggled out with a table. He couldn't see us in the ditch the only light was from the fire. Suddenly one of the lads jumped up ran across and grabbed the two chairs and concealed them in the ditch. Each time he brought a piece of furniture out of the burning building 2 of the lads fetched it and put it out of sight. The poor chap couldn't understand where his furniture was disappearing to but he also couldn't stop to find out because there wasn't much time left before the building would collapse. Finally he gave up when it became impossible to beat the flames; he sat on the last surviving chair a picture of despair. The platoon sergeant broke up our little game, it was back to work and our section was given the job of checking one of the remote farms on the outskirts of the village.

Germany was in total chaos, but in the German Forces a degree of routine still existed – an incident recalled by Bob Price well illustrates this:

Simo was on guard when suddenly he heard someone singing and footsteps coming down the road towards him. He quietly waited finger on the trigger of the Bren gun. Out of the mist marched a uniformed figure singing away as if he hadn't got a care in the world. Simo waited patiently until he was only a few yards away then stood up and screamed 'halt'. The figure, clearly shocked dropped his shoulder bag and his hands shot into the air; it was a Luftwaffe pilot coming home on leave.

The following day the Battalion moved north to take over Ebstorf from 29 Arm'd Bde Gp. At the time 15 Scottish Div were about to attack Ulzen further to the east from the South. The Battalion's role was to take up a defensive position in this area in order to cut off the enemy's relief and escape routes. The area was surrounded with woods and small hamlets all of which had to be cleared. The armour checked up on the more distant villages but wood clearing and patrols devolved upon the companies. D Coy had a particularly nasty instant when carrying out wood clearing to the east of the Battalion position. They ran into Spandau fire at short range and suffered proportionately heavy casualties.

15 Scottish Div made rapid progress and the Battalion Group was relieved of its responsibilities by 6 Airborne. The route from there onwards lay northward to the Elbe. In the afternoon of 18 Apr the new thrust started and we pushed on against light opposition throughout the following day. The Hereford/F&F Group was working in conjunction with the Cheshire/15/19 Group which were passed through each other or deployed according to the routes or reports of the enemy. The Cheshires entered Luneburg without opposition while we continue to push northwards.



Rare photographs of the
Herefords 'in action'



With luck we hoped to make Winsen that night and no time was wasted. The leading tanks were moving well and approaching the village of Tottorf when the enemy blew the bridge over the stream behind them, the same thing exactly as had happened at Muden. The remedy likewise was the same although the enemy this time was a more pugnacious type. After an artillery crash on the village and surrounding woods A and D Coys were put across the stream against light opposition and took up a bridgehead position. The engineers came up and built a bridge by night and our patrols failed to make contact.

The following day it was planned to reach Winsen about 15 kms away as quickly as possible. At first light C Coy was detached with a squadron of tanks to cross over a bridge further to the left, then work round and approach the village from the south west well the rest of the Battalion struck at it from the east.

B Coy supported by a squadron of tanks was ordered to pass through the bridgehead and continue the advance towards the Winsen. Almost immediately the leading tank was bazooka and several casualties, including the leading Pl Comd, were inflicted on the infantry riding on it. Owing to the closely wooded nature of the country it was impossible for the tanks to deploy off the road and the remnants of the leading platoon, organised by the Coy Comd, dismounted and went straight into the enemy MG posts and effectively put them out of action. Spandau and rifle fire then came at the company from further in the wood and a fresh plan was immediately made to sweep the wood with

the two remaining platoons. The Coy Comd called for an artillery stonk and by the speedy planning and execution of the operation overran the enemy posts, killing or capturing the 25 occupants. The opposition was not yet finished. As the company emerged from the wood another enemy post opened fire across open ground from a house about 300 yards away. Here the tanks were able to give valuable support, and a successful right flanking attack, covered by a smokescreen from the companies 2 inch mortar was put in across open ground on to the position. At this stage we were also harassed by the enemy artillery sited on the north of the river Elbe in defence of Hamburg.

After this decisive action by C Coy the opposition decreased and another company/squadron group was passed through. Odd Panzerfaust teams and snipers were mopped up on route and the Battalion Gp entered Winsen early in the afternoon. During one of these local encounters a burly PI Comd, who had previously had his flowing moustache irreparably destroyed by a bazooka passing him by at close quarters, gained his revenge. He had just led a full blooded assault on one of these posts and the sole survivor was a youngster about 18. With great restraint the PI Comd refrained from sending him to join his comrades. On second thoughts, he lifted the puny little fella by the scruff of the neck and stood him on the edge of his slit trench. Bellowing have this one on me you *****! He landed him a Metropolitan Police right hook and rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

Wardman –

..... when we reached the town of Luneburg we then knew that we were not far from the river Elbe here we had to wait for about 3 days while an infantry unit made a crossing and the engineers built a Bailey bridge. We now knew that the war was effectively over.

Winsen was a small town about 6 kms south of the Elbe and the group remained there a week. A composite force, consisting of one platoon, one carrier section and one platoon carrier and a troop of tanks, push forward to Hoopta on the river itself. Apart from this forward platoon area there was no activity worth recording. All companies had taken over suitable billeting areas and except for providing this forward platoon in turn on a daily roster and organising local protection patrols, they were left to themselves.

Battalion HQ was flooded with civilians and occupation problems. The local police force was taken under command, curfew imposed and all civilians ordered to stand fast. It was not a bad place. A few days later a military government detachment arrived and we were able to pass the baby - almost all of it - to them.

Around Hoopte enemy patrols were active and several skirmishes took place. Whilst it was clear Germany was defeated, discipline amongst the German forces remained in tact; they would generally not disobey orders and remained fighting even though to the Allies it seemed totally useless and wasteful. Typical of any encounters was one on the night of the 24 Apr it chiefly concerned the carrier section forming part of the standing patrol and the Sect Comd recounts the story:

At 0400 hrs suspected enemy movement was reported it was very dark and difficult to observe so I stood the section to, and then crawled forward up to the track to investigate, covered by the rest of the section. Just then heavy shelling came down on the position and I guessed it was being put down preparatory to an attack. I was able to get back to the section before the attack developed from the two sides. The area was very built up and the enemy were able to approach quite close before they could be engaged. Two Huns were killed within 10 yards of the section trenches and a third one was taken prisoner. Owing to the heavy fire put down by our own LMGs the enemy withdrew and one party dived into a house at the side of the position. From there they fired 2 Panzerfausts at one of our tanks in the area, but failed to hit it. I organized a party to attack the house, which we easily approached under cover of darkness. We went in with grenades and Stens and killed 2 of the enemy and took another 3 PoW.

On the next night the enemy came again but were again defeated by the alertness of our sentries. The PI Comd with 2 men gave chase but he was not blessed with good vision by night and fell 15 feet over the riverbank. As he collected himself and uttered the usual cave word he heard a chuckle disappearing down the street, but the position was intact and on no occasion during their stay in Hoopte did the enemy succeed in inflicting a single casualty on ourselves or our Big Brothers [Armoured support] despite their nightly visits with a wide range of weapons.

On one occasion the CO visited the FOO with this platoon and drew his attention to a barge moving along the river Elbe 300 yards away. The gunner officer was new to the job and, obviously anxious to please, rushed out of the room and returned with a Bren with which he engaged the offending craft. The CO was surprised at this unusual use of an OP but gladly assisted in controlling the fire. He offered a word of advice to the FOO, and did not visit him again for two days a wise precaution.

On 27 Apr the Battalion was relieved by 8 RB and caused back to and pull back to Rottorf to regroup with 3RTR. Bob Price recalled:

Our billet was a large house with a nice garden. We'd all got beds to sleep on and for the first time since leaving the battle school in Holland I was able to undress and go to bed. Considering I hadn't had my boots off for nearly a month my feet were pretty good; I couldn't say the same thing about my socks and underclothes. I shall not forget that first night. I slept a full 10 hours instead of the usual two or three, no guards no stand to. The next day we were able to wash and shave and get clean socks and under clothes. Prisoners were now becoming a big problem with hundreds of them coming in every day.

There we remained for three days and on 30 Apr set off to cross one more river, this time the Elbe. Traffic congestion leading to the bridge was bad and the Battalion finally crept across about midnight and arrived in the concentration area at Kollow about 0500hrs. Orders were issued immediately for the advance to continue to the general area of Lubeck and after a hastily consumed breakfast the Group started forward again at about 0630hrs. Passing through 15 Scottish Div's deep bridgehead we passed on to Haverkost where to our costs we found the road was mined. Three tanks and one carrier were blown up and several casualties suffered. More mines were encountered at the Basthorst and the column halted while the RE and the Pnr PI dealt with them. The latter are justly proud to relate that they accounted for as many mines as their more experienced teachers. No other enemy position was encountered when the advance again continued. Leading companies on patrols started to round up prisoners who surrendered on sight. The route led on to Tritteau where opposition was first met and 88 mm shells landed amongst A Coy from the area of the railway. The enemy was quickly put to rout by a flanking sweep and more PoWs taken bringing the day's total up to 300!

Casualties

The number of casualties for April, second only to those suffered in July 1944 indicate the ferocity of the fighting.

Name	Initial	Rank	Number	Company	Cause	Date	Location
Foster	TH	L/Cpl	5259581		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Carpenter	F	Pte	5618727		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Chapman	GE	Pte	5618606		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Cole	HE	Cpl	14625202		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Dagenhard	LA	Pte	14816537		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Dowler	AK	Pte	14737899		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Judd	DJ	Pte	14802424	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Longdon	J	L/Cpl	5253487		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Maloney	J	Pte	6342207		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Marshall	LC	Pte	14733642	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Mitchell	S	Pte	14210323		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Onions	C	Pte	14795168		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Portch	RF	Pte	14778632		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Raines	LF	Sgt	5113845	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Redstone	LW	L/Cpl	6292162		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Smith	WE	Pte	14738008	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Spittall	AJ	Lt	258187	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Sullens	WG	Pte	14803351		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Young	J	Cpl	4920201	D	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Hopkinson	GG	Lt	Cdn/160	A	KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte
Anstey	C	Pte	14808349		KIA	01/04/1945	Birgte.
Moloney	JL	Pte	14645799		C	01/04/1945	Reichswald
Shufflebottom	A	Cpl	4460144	C	DOW	06/04/1945	Schlesselburg
Bushell	J	Pte	4037470	B	KIA	06/04/1945	Schlusselfburg
Holdnall	CG	Pte	14822242	C	KIA	06/04/1945	Schlusselfburg
Wells	JS	Pte	14801646		C	07/04/1945	Reichswald
Hayler	JW	Pte	14718069	B	KIA	08/04/1945	Mandelsloh
Cumming	AH	Pte	5619626	D	KIA	10/04/1945	Grindau
Hancox	TE	2/Lt	330179	B	KIA	10/04/1945	Grindau
Richardson	CR	Pte	6399601	HQ	KIA	10/04/1945	Grindau
Sealey	GW	Pte	14740711	HQ	KIA	10/04/1945	Grindau
Hewins	RE	Pte	14812908	B	KIA	10/04/1945	Schwarmstedt
Hopkins	DW	Pte	14805550	B	KIA	10/04/1945	Schwarmstedt
Dooley	JS	Cpl	14508555	A	KIA	14/04/1945	Winsen
Francis	CB	Pte	2572256	C	KIA	14/04/1945	Winsen
Pepall	DH	Pte	5253540	C	DOW	14/04/1945	Winsen
Bowden	CB	Pte	14808730		C	15/04/1945	Germany
Howard	SE	Pte	14754372	C	KIA	15/04/1945	Muden
McDermott	J	L/Cpl	4919665	A	KIA	15/04/1945	Muden
Powis	J	Pte	4035659	HQ	KIA	16/04/1945	Brambostel
Bennell	JW	Pte	14734513	D	KIA	17/04/1945	Eimke
Clarke	CB	Pte	14804597	D	KIA	17/04/1945	Eimke
Clayden	JW	Pte	14497070	D	KIA	17/04/1945	Eimke
Gumett	PW	L/Cpl	14744320	D	KIA	17/04/1945	Eimke
Jordon	S	Pte	1579901	D	KIA	17/04/1945	Eimke
Hill	WJB	Pte	14729624	B	KIA	19/04/1945	Ebsdorf
Townend	W	Pte	14728774	B	DOW	19/04/1945	Ebstorf
Enright	J	Pte	14751680	C	DOW	20/04/1945	Winsen
Panter	J	Pte	14770155	C	KIA	21/04/1945	Winsen
Marriott	S	Pte	14846157	A	Non battle casualty	21/04/1945	



Lt Hopkinson

KILLED AT 18 ON RHINE FRONT Pte. D. J. Judd of Corston

Pte. Derek James Judd, aged 18, was killed in action on the east side of the Rhine, on Easter Sunday, April 1.



The third son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Judd, "Dry-leaze," Corston, Derek was called up in June, 1944, after serving with Claverton Down Home Guard. He had been employed as a clerk at George Mannings and Sons, builders, Claverton Down, where

his younger brother works in a similar capacity.

He was an old boy of a grammar school in Leicester.

SHUFFLEBOTTOM.—Cpl. ALBERT VICTOR (Herefordshire Regt.), died of wounds, Germany, April, 1945. Nobly he answered his country's call. Loved by All. MOTHER and DAD, and Brothers BILLY and RON (serving); also his Fiancee Miss K. FARRELL.

12, Broadosks Road, Sale.

SHUFFLEBOTTOM.—Cpl. ALBERT VICTOR (Herefordshire Regt.), died of wounds, Germany, April, 1945.

A silent thought, a secret tear.

Brother and Sister-in-law BILLY and ETHEL and Nephews BILLY and PETER.

SHUFFLEBOTTOM.—Cpl. ALBERT VICTOR (Herefordshire Regt.), died from wounds, in Germany, April, 1945.

We will always remember you smiling.

Uncle BERT and Auntie NELLIE.

Pte. Kenneth Dowler who served with both the Herefords and the K.S.L.I.'s Regiments in Germany, was reported missing, believed killed, on 1 April, 1945. Any news of him would be welcomed by his mother, Mrs. Dowler, of 104, Latimer-street, Birmingham.





Pte CB Clark

ABBEY 7841 780
Tel: Maidstone 4900. Ext. 447.

Form E.2.

Any further correspondence on the subject should be addressed to—

THE DIRECTOR,
Graves Registration and Enquiries,
As opposite,
and the following number quoted:—

GERMANY 102A.8/3

15TH OCT 1947

Dear ADAM,

I have to inform you that YOUR SON
14804597. PRIVATE CLARK C. B.
THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT.
is buried IN PLOT I. ROW L. GRAVE NO. 12.
HAMBURG (OHLESDORF) CEMETERY, GERMANY.
2. KILB. N. HAMBURG.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs CLARK.

For Director,
Graves Registration and Enquiries.

We also, 24.10.47 W. & J. J. Gp. 26.512.

1382

The Graves Concentration report showing some of the Ibbenburen casualties:

GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

The following has been concentrated here:—
(Name of Cemetery) REICHSWALD FOREST BRITISH CEMETERY
(Full Map Reference) GERMANY Sh2A/3A 1/250.000 858504

Report No. WEGRE/CONC/
7520

NATIONALITY BRITISH & CANADIAN

(1) Serial No.	(2) Regt. or Corps	(3) Army No.	(4) Name & Initials	(5) Rank	(6) Date of Death	(7) K/A, D/W or Died	(8) Plot	(9) Row	(10) Grave	(11) Date of Reburial	Previous location of grave Place & Map Ref.	Report Number
1	1 HEREFORD	14210323	MITCHELL S.	L/Cpl	1.4.45	D/W	XVI	F	19	15.4.47	IBBENBUREN GERMANY Sh95 1/50.000 9606	12922
2	"	14738008	SMITH W.E.	Pte	"	K/A	XVI	F	11	"	" " " "	"
3	"	5113845	RAINES (MMY) L.F.	Sgt	1.4.45	"	XVI	F	12	"	" " " "	"
4	"	CDN/160	HOPKINSON G.G.	Lt	"	"	XVI	F	15	"	" " " "	"
5	"	14808349	ANSTEY G.	Pte	"	"	XVI	F	8	"	" " " "	"
6	"	14803351	SULLENS W.G.	"	"	"	XVI	F	17	"	" " " "	"
7	"	14802424	JUDD D.J.	"	"	"	XVI	G	3	"	" " " "	"
8	"	5618606	CHAPMAN G.E.	"	"	"	XVI	F	14	"	" " " "	"
9	"	4920201	YOUNG J.	Cpl	"	"	XVI	F	18	"	" " " "	"
10	"	258187	SPITTALL A.J.	Lt	"	"	XVI	F	16	"	" " " "	"
11	"	14625202	COLE H.E.	Cpl	"	"	XVI	G	2	"	" " " "	"
12	"	5259581	FOSTER T.H.	L/Cpl	"	"	XVI	G	1	"	" " " "	"

Date 1 July 1947.

32 Gm/CONC/375/D/85.

* Amended see file 207/7/58 107

(Signed) [Signature] Col. D.D.G.R.E.

* Where a grave has not already been registered, a Registration Report on A.F.W. 3372 will be prepared, and attached to this FORM.

PSS. 42413. 10-46. 5034

Wounded

Many were clearly wounded but full records have not been located.

Honours & Awards

The following awards were awarded in April.

Name	Rank	Number	Award	For Action On
Bevan, G	Sgt	4080973	MM	01/04/1945
Tapper RG	Maj		MC	01/04/1945
Royster, HT	Cpl	5615505	MM	20/04/1945
Gale MS	Maj		MC	20/04/1945

3.

Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward 21 Apr 45

Received 22 Apr 45

Passed 22 Apr 45

159 Inf Bde Brigade 11 Amd Division 8th Corps

Schedule No. (To be left blank) Unit The Herefordshire Regiment.

Rank and Army or Personal No. (A Serjt) 4080973

Name B EVAN Gomer

(Christian names must be printed)

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

On 1st April 1945, Sgt Bevan's pl was involved in a wood clearing operation EAST of the DORTMUND-BES CANAL - (Map Ref 97006 - Sheet No. 1/1000000 92) His Coy encountered a well prepared and strongly occupied enemy position in the wood held by a force of German Officer Students who were fighting fanatically. Early in the operation the pl cmd became a casualty and Sgt Bevan took over a very depleted pl. On his own initiative he attempted to lead his pl to a fire position from which he could cover the advance of the remainder of the Coy against this dominating feature of high ground. Whilst attempting this manoeuvre the pl was counter attacked by a force about 100 strong. Sgt Bevan re-acted to the situation immediately and being in complete control of his very depleted pl, repelled the attack, himself manning the PIAT to great advantage. They maintained this position successfully and finally when all amm had been expended were ordered

(Contd)

Recommended by Lt. Col. Comd 1 Hereford (RC FRIP) M.M.

Honour or Reward M.M.

(To be left blank)

COMMANDER SECOND ARMY

-2-

to withdraw. Although wounded by a sniper, Sgt Bevan went round rallying his men throughout this most difficult and isolated operation.

Rank and Army or Personal No. (A Serjt) 4080973

Name B EVAN Gomer

(Christian names must be printed)

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

On 1st April 1945, Sgt Bevan's pl was involved in a wood clearing operation EAST of the DORTMUND-BES CANAL - (Map Ref 97006 - Sheet No. 1/1000000 92) His Coy encountered a well prepared and strongly occupied enemy position in the wood held by a force of German Officer Students who were fighting fanatically. Early in the operation the pl cmd became a casualty and Sgt Bevan took over a very depleted pl. On his own initiative he attempted to lead his pl to a fire position from which he could cover the advance of the remainder of the Coy against this dominating feature of high ground. Whilst attempting this manoeuvre the pl was counter attacked by a force about 100 strong. Sgt Bevan re-acted to the situation immediately and being in complete control of his very depleted pl, repelled the attack, himself manning the PIAT to great advantage. They maintained this position successfully and finally when all amm had been expended were ordered

(Contd)

Recommended by Lt. Col. Comd 1 Hereford (RC FRIP) M.M.

Honour or Reward M.M.

(To be left blank)

COMMANDER SECOND ARMY

If a casualty as under, fill in date:

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



Maj Tapper receives his Military Cross from FM Montgomery

1199) W.45451/235 110m 1/44 FHD Op 18/10.

Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward 24 May 45

Received 24 May 45 Passed 27 May 45

159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division 8th Corps

1st Battalion

Schedule No. (To be left blank) Unit The Herefordshire Regiment

Rank and Army or Personal No. (A/Corporal) 546 125 510 5

Name ROYSTER HARRY TITUS

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
At ROTTORF (MR 728300 - 1/100,000 Sheet I4), on April 20th 1945, Corporal ROYSTER was riding on a tank which was bazooked. His Pl Comd and two other men on the tank became casualties. Although severely shaken, Cpl ROYSTER took control over the remainder of the men whom he organised for the necessary work clearing immediately. Owing to the nature of the country the tanks were unable to deploy. In this operation his Platoon came under sniping fire, and the platoon Serjt was wounded. Corpl ROYSTER took command of the remainder of the platoon which now numbered 15 and led them on to the two located enemy posts. He personally destroyed one Spandau post and killed the crew of four. On reaching the objective, his platoon came under heavy fire from another enemy position, but he re-organised his platoon, and beat off one enemy counter-attack, before being reinforced by another platoon.	<i>[Signature]</i> Lt. Col (IMMEDIATE...) Comd 1 Hereford. (RC FRIPP) <i>[Signature]</i> Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde (JB CHURCHER DSO) <i>[Signature]</i> Maj Genl Comd 11 Armd Div <i>[Signature]</i> Lt. Genl. Comd 8 Corps <i>[Signature]</i> LIEUT. GENERAL	M.M. 2/8/45.	37615

- OVER -

COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.

Army Form 100 (Rev. 1-15-53)

1. Name (Last, first, middle initial)
 ROYSTER, ROBERT L.

2. Grade or Rate
 Corporal

3. Branch or Service
 Infantry

4. Component
 1st Infantry Division

5. Station
 1st Infantry Division

6. Date of Award
 1 May 54

7. Reason for Award
 By his determined leadership and disregard for personal safety, Corpl ROYSTER ensured the success of an operation, which might otherwise have proved very expensive in tanks and men.

8. Name of Authority
 FIELD MARSHAL
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
 ARMY GROUP

9. Signature
 R. L. Montgomery

10. Date of Signature
 1 May 54

11. Nature of Casualty

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

If a casualty as under, fill in date.



Cpl Royster receives his Military Medal from FM Montgomery

Date recommendation
passed forward 24 May 45

159 Inf Brigade, 11 Armd Division 8th Corps

Received 24 May 45

Passed 27 May 45

Schedule No. Unit The Herefordshire Regt.

Brigade 24 May 45

Division 24 May 45

Corps 28 May 45

Army 3 JUN 1945

Rank and Army or Personal No. (A/Major) 1 2 6 9 6 9

Name G A I P Michael Sadler

(Christian names must be stated)

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

Recommended by

Honour or Reward

(To be left blank)

At ROTTORE (MR. 728300-1/100,00 Sheet 14) on the morning of the 20th APRIL 1945, Major Gale's Company, assisted by a Sqn of tanks was ordered to pass through the two leading Companies which had been protecting the REs whilst a bridge was built, and continue the advance towards WINSEN (6431).

Almost immediately one of the leading tanks was bazooked and severe casualties, incl the leading Pl Comd, were inflicted on the infantry riding on it. The country was so thick that it was impossible for tanks to deploy off the road, and Major Gale who was just behind the knocked out tank, led the two remaining sections straight on to the enemy post. He appreciated that speed was essential in order to avoid further trouble. Major Gale destroyed all the occupants of this enemy post, but was met by Spandau and rifle fire further in the wood. This required a fresh plan, and leaving the original platoon as a firm base, he went to organise a sweep by his two remaining platoons.

Lt. Col. (IMMEDIATE)

Comd. 1 HEREFORD (RC FRIPP)

Comd. 159 Inf Bde.

Comd. 11 Armd Div

Comd. 8 Corps.

Comd. 3 ARMY GROUP

Comd. 21 ARMY GROUP

Comd. 12 ARMY GROUP

Comd. 1 ARMY GROUP

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If a casualty as under, fill in date.

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



Presentation of the Military Cross to Major MS Gale – 12 August 1945

Officers' Plot

See Separate post

ORs' Strength Return

<i>Date</i>	<i>WO1</i>	<i>WO2</i>	<i>CSjt</i>	<i>Sjt</i>	<i>Cpl</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>Bglr</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Establishment</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>689</i>		<i>813</i>	
13/06/1944								913	Rail Party 384; sea party 529
01/07/1944	1	7	7	39	72	673	6	805	
29/07/1944	1	7	8	38	74	594	6	728	
02/09/1944	1	7	9	41	70	582	6	716	
30/09/1944	1	6	13	36	62	539		656	
28/10/1944	1	7	10	39	64	565		686	
28/12/1944	1	8	8	36	71	764		888	
27/01/1945	1	8	8	36	69	751		873	
03/03/1945	1	7	7	34	58	626		733	
31/03/1945	1	8	6	37	70	787		909	
28/04/1945	1	8	6	36	60	718		829	