

1st BATTALION THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT – MARCH 1945

Battles do not observe the calendar and the battle to clear the ground up to the Rhine started in February went on until 9 March when 11 Armd Div and the Herefords were withdrawn from the front. The battle had been hard and had been costly to the Battalion.

The assault crossing of the Rhine was achieved and 11 Armd Div crossed as part of the follow on forces on 28th March. Psychologically the last barrier to victory had been crossed – it was now a matter of time; it was considered inevitable that Germany would be defeated, but Germans were now fighting on 'their home turf', many were still fanatical Nazis and followers of Hitler and would fight to the last. Hitler had ordered a 'scorched earth' policy and the advance into and across Germany would be hard and costly. The elation of crossing the Rhine was tempered by the realism of the fight still to come.

After a rush across the German countryside, the close of the month saw the Battalion well inside Germany on the banks of the Dortmund/Ems canal looking up at the Teutoburger Ridge.

WAR DIARY

The Brigade War Diary

Place	Date	Time	Incident	Ref to Appendices
B.L.A.	1 Mar		Patrols of 3/4 CLY and 15/19 H pushed to SOUTH from their main positions. 1 HEREFORD were subject to heavy machinegun and mortar fire.	
	2 Mar		Positions of units unchanged. 1 HEREFORD's attempt to feel to EAST met with heavy mortar fire. Bde HQ moved to about 1 1/2 miles SOUTH EAST UDELM. 3 MON and 1 HEREFORD re-organised as three rifle coys each. At 1900 hrs 1 HEREFORD started pushing EAST with one tp 15/19 H. Progress slow - held up by fire/main Hun def belt.	
	3 Mar		0530 hrs - Far side def line reached. Day spent waiting for 3 Odn Inf Div to put in their attack on SONNEBEK. Sappers started work on BAILEY bridges with covering parties of 1 HEREFORD and 3 MON.	
	4 Mar		During the day, 3 MON sent patrols forward to get form, gathered 20 PW all with low morale. 1900 hrs ODN attack on high ground commenced. Very slow. The remainder of the 3 MON moved forward to form the covering party forward with the bridges.	
	5 Mar		Preparation was made for 3 MON attack at first light. AVRES Crocodile, Sheridens and protective tp CLY moved down to 3 MON area. One coy and one tp of tks were sent forward to clear Huns who were sitting on the chosen jump pt between ourselves and 3 ODN Div. They came under very heavy fire and suffered casualties; great natural difficulties were met in the form of mud. 17 PW taken - 11 were civilians. By last night the Odns had not completed their task of clearing high ground.	
	6 Mar		0400 hrs the Odns started their attack on SONNEBEK. The Bde was then completely pinched out by 3 ODN Div and 3 Brit Div. The Div was put at ONE hr's notice as Corps reserve. At 1700 hrs harbour parties were warned for recon in a WESTERLY direction. 2000 hrs normal grouping was resumed.	
	7 Mar		Bde remained in situ, concentrated on clearing up etc. Harbour parties put at one hrs notice from 1200 hrs.	
	8 Mar		Harbour parties left at 0830 hrs to RV at DIEST. Bde A Bde moved to new area.	
	9 Mar		Div moved to new area of DIEST - LOUVAIN for rest and re-fit.	
	10 Mar		The Bde was in new areas at 0600 hrs. Bde HQ AERSCHOT 9668 - 3 MON WERREWER 8667 - 4 KS LI WESIMAEI 9065 - 1 HEREFORD HARBCHT 8268 - 2 Indep MG Coy - LUMBEEK 9657.	
	11 - 17 Mar		Bde concentrated on re-equipping - trg etc.	
	18 Mar		All effrs of the Bde attended a lecture given by the GOC, General Roberts at LOUVAIN. He stressed the importance of recovering the Team spirit now that the 29 Armd Bde had rejoined the Div, now fitted with the new Comet Tank.	

Place	Date	Time	Incident	Ref to Appendices
E.L.A.	19 - 26 Mar 45		The Bde continued to train and re-fit. Exercises were arranged between Inf Bns and Arm'd Regts. Entertainments were arranged, dances, films, sports, etc., 48 hrs in BRUSSELS. The Bde held a dance at the local hall for Offrs of the Div on 23 Mar in AARSCHOT.	
	26 - 27 Mar 45		Continued trg. Warning order received from Div for the Bde to be prepared to move to the area WESSEL on the 28th. Bde Comd attended Div Conference. Bde 'O' Cp held at 1930 hrs.	
	28 Mar 45		The Bde left AARSCHOT area for area WESSEL at 0630 hrs. Passed SP at DIEST at 0835 hrs. At approx 1745 hrs the head of the Bde main column crossed the RHINE. The Bde Comd attended an 'O' Cp at 8 Corps HQ. The Bde concentrated NORTH EAST of WESSEL 2342.	
	29 Mar 45		At 1415 hrs the Bde moved to concentrate WEST of BRIX 3549. The move was slow owing to the bad tracks, and the routes specially selected for the tks crossed and re-crossed the wheeled route numerous times. The DNS of COURT in front of the Div reported slight opposition and were able to progress well forward, and by last night were near GESCHOR 5073. The Arm'd Bde on two routes with heads at the rd running EAST-WEST through VELEN 4866.	
	30 Mar 45		The Bde moved forward at 0715 hrs and advanced slowly forward, with many halts, resulting to slowness of Armour in front held up more by rds than by enemy. The Hq moved to various tentative Hqs during the day until finally halting at the X rds at ASTERWICK for the night. The Bde was re-grouped with under comd 2 PAF, 15/19 H, 3 MON, 1 HEREFORD and 2 Indep MG Coy NF. During the day straggling Russian and Poles etc now liberated from their slave labour were seen streaming back along the rds. The Arm'd Bde had small skirmishes but little real opposition.	
	31 Mar 45		The Arm'd Bde at first light continued to adv against little opposition. The Bde Hq moved to the new area SOUTH of MURGSTEIN FURK. 3 MON laid on one coy to assist 15/19 H who were going to move NORTH to search the area of WETTERWEN 7102 and also to cross rds at 6898. The WETTERWEN party went well but the X rds party came under very heavy fire. Some casualties were received. 15/19 H claimed 4 - 88cm AA Guns, 4 - 2cm AA Guns and 2 of unknown calibre. PW taken admit they had themselves destroyed 8 of their own guns. From interrogation it was thought an AA Regt was on the high ground. 1 HEREFORD and 2 PAF YBO also moved to NORTH WEST to clear up METELEN, little opposition; a few PW taken by both parties. The Bde remained in same locations for the night. A visit to both previously mentioned places was laid for the morning at 0700 hrs. Bde HQ 728915 - 3 MON 732945 - 2 PAF YBO 685915 - 1 HEREFORD 673916 - 2 Indep MG Coy 727914.	(8)

The Battalion War Diary

PAGE ONE

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Month and Year.....MARCH 1945

ORIGINAL

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

1 st Bn The Herefordshire Regt

Unit.....

Commanding Officer.....Lt Col G.R. Tait Cain DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ESE of KERVENHEIM	1	0645	cl 40 Bridge completed at 004393 enabling the remainder of tks (which had been prevented from crossing as the fascines had collapsed) and necessary wheeled vehicles to join their sub-units. Hy NBW fire and shelling experienced throughout the whole Bn area during the day. Bn holds firm the ground which had been gained.	
		1500	Bn HQ moved to House 011389, where less shelling was experienced	
			Casualties for the 24 hours ending 1800 hrs Officers 2 wounded OR's 5 Killed 44 wounded.	
E of KERVENHEIM 2	1000		'B' Coy with one tp of 15/19 Hussars attempted to break the enemy dug defences at 027378. Right fwd pl eventually reached a point within 150x of the objective, where they suffered heavy cas; through intense mortar and MMG fire. The enemy allowed them to cross 200x of open country before bringing fire to bear thus making evacuation of wounded and the remainder of the pl	

WAR DIARIES SECTION

NO.

6 MAY 1945

G. H. G. Ynd Ecnstou

W. 3034 3822 1 320,000 0144 W. H. S. S. 1/5/51

SHEET TWO

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WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt

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

Month and Year MARCH 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	2 (cont)		... extremely difficult. Advance by the pl was impossible under the withering fire, so the Coy Cmd decided to consolidate with two pls at 025382, and 024381, with the remnants of the third at 026379. Three attempts were made to extricate the latter without success, and this was finally achieved during the first hour of darkness. Coy experienced intense and accurate Mortar and shell fire and also sniping during the day. 'A', 'C' and 'D' Coys remained in previous location.	
	2000		'A' Coy assaulted the same objective passing through 'B'. First attempt unsuccessful, but later left flanking attack was successful, and the posn gained. 'A' Coy took 5 POW. The Coy consolidated in area 027378.	
	2300		'C' advanced through 'A' with one tp 15/19 Russars u/c and successfully reached the east side of the defence line at 032375 against little opposition. Cas up to 2300 hrs; officers wounded 1	

WL 30051 5832 1,230,000 9/44 W. H. A. S. 51/9.74

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1st Bn the Herefordshire Regt

Commanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner, Gain

Month and Year MARCH 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	2 (cont)		... OR's Killed 7, Wounded 18. 53 reinforcements arrived at 'A' Ech.	
ESE of KERVENHEIM	3	0200	'B' and 'D' Coys both having suffered cas; and 'B' having no officers and with only one Sergt left formed a composite Coy under OC 'D' Coy, to effect this 'B' returned to 'B' posn at 016387.	
		0800	'C' subjected to very heavy mortar and shell fire but being well dug in suffered no cas; Bn maintained positions gained and awaited developments in 3 Cdn Div sector. Cas; OR's Killed 1, Wounded 5.	
"	4		Bay much quieter and enemy believed to be withdrawing his artillery. 3 Cdn Div continued to clear wooded area North of SONSBECK. Bn remained in same location. 15 Reinforcements posted to Bn.	
"	5	0930	Bn HQ moved to 026365 and 'D' Coy to area X rds 027367, 'S' in area of BN HQ.	

WL 30051 5832 1,230,000 9/44 W. H. A. S. 51/9.74

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MARCH 1945

Month and Year.....

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Army Form C. 2118.
Unit.....**1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt;**
Commanding Officer.....**Lt Col G.R. Turner Cain**
DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		1600	3 MONS cleared earthworks and reached rd junc 052361, where they halted and allowed 3 Cdn Div to attack SONSBECK from the north. This objective captured and there the Hereford Gp was pushed out. 28 Reinforcements posted to the Bn.	
E of KERVENHEIM	6,7,8,		Bn remained in same location with the exception of 'D' Coy who moved to Fm 018359 where shelter was provided for all men. (March 8. One Offr posted as reinforcement to the Bn)	
"	9	1045	Bn moved to HAACHT MR 826688 Sht 1; 800,000 8 Belgium, for rest and refit.	
		2300	Bn arrived at HAACHT.	
HAACHT	10-11		Bn resting and interior reorganisation carried out. 'B' and 'D' Coys separated to form once more two coys.	
"	12		Brig: J.B. Churcher DSO. addressed the Bn giving an account of the last battle.	
"	13		Training commenced at Coy level. stress being given to reinforcements	

WL 30691 5825 1.220,000 5/44 W. H. & S. 81/9.71

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MARCH 1945

Month and Year.....

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Army Form C. 2118.
Unit.....**1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt**
Commanding Officer.....**Lt Col G.R. Turner Cain**
DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
HAACHT	13 (cont)	 and moulding together of sub-units.	
"	14		Normal inf; trg;	
"	15		Normal Inf; Trg; Bde Band played the Retreat at 1730 hrs in the village square.	
"	16		Normal Inf. Trg.	
"	17	1100	RSM's Parade with Bde Band. Inspection of all tpt by ASM.	
"	18		Bn Church Parade with Bde Band in attendance. After Church the Bn marched past, the Brigadier taking the salute.	
"	19,20,21		Coys in turn practiced Fd Firing exercises at BOURG LEOPOLD Trg Area.	
"	22, 23		Coys in turn practiced Inf-Tk co-operation exercise, with 2F & F Yeo; (29th Armd Bde having come u/c 11 Armd Div)	
"	24 - 27		Normal inf trg;	
"	28		11 Armd Div moved from Belgium to cross the RHINE to a concentration area NE of WESEL, Bn moved at 0740 hrs and arrived in new location	

WL 30691 5825 1.220,000 5/44 W. H. & S. 81/9.71

SHEET SIX

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Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire RegtCommanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner 21stMonth and Year MARCH 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
			MR 3341 (Q1) at 2000 hrs. XX	
NE of WESEL	29		Bn moved to concentration area west of EARLE 3950 (Q1)	
W of EARLE	30	0740	Bn moved from Concentration area on route to OTTERWICK 6380 (P1) and OSNABRUCK XX 2106 (N2)	
		2300	Bn with 2 F&F Yeo u/c arrived at LEGDEN 5682 (P1) No enemy encountered all day.	
LEGDEN	31	0730	Bn moves. 23 Hussars forward on Div CL.	
		1100	Bn Gp to make firm base in the area HALTERN 6791 (P1), and LEER 6991 (P1); 15 Pz Gr; reported by Tac R, to be moving towards us during the night. 42 POW captured, all of varying identifications.	
			<i>[Signature]</i>	
			Lt Col;	
			Cmd 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt;	

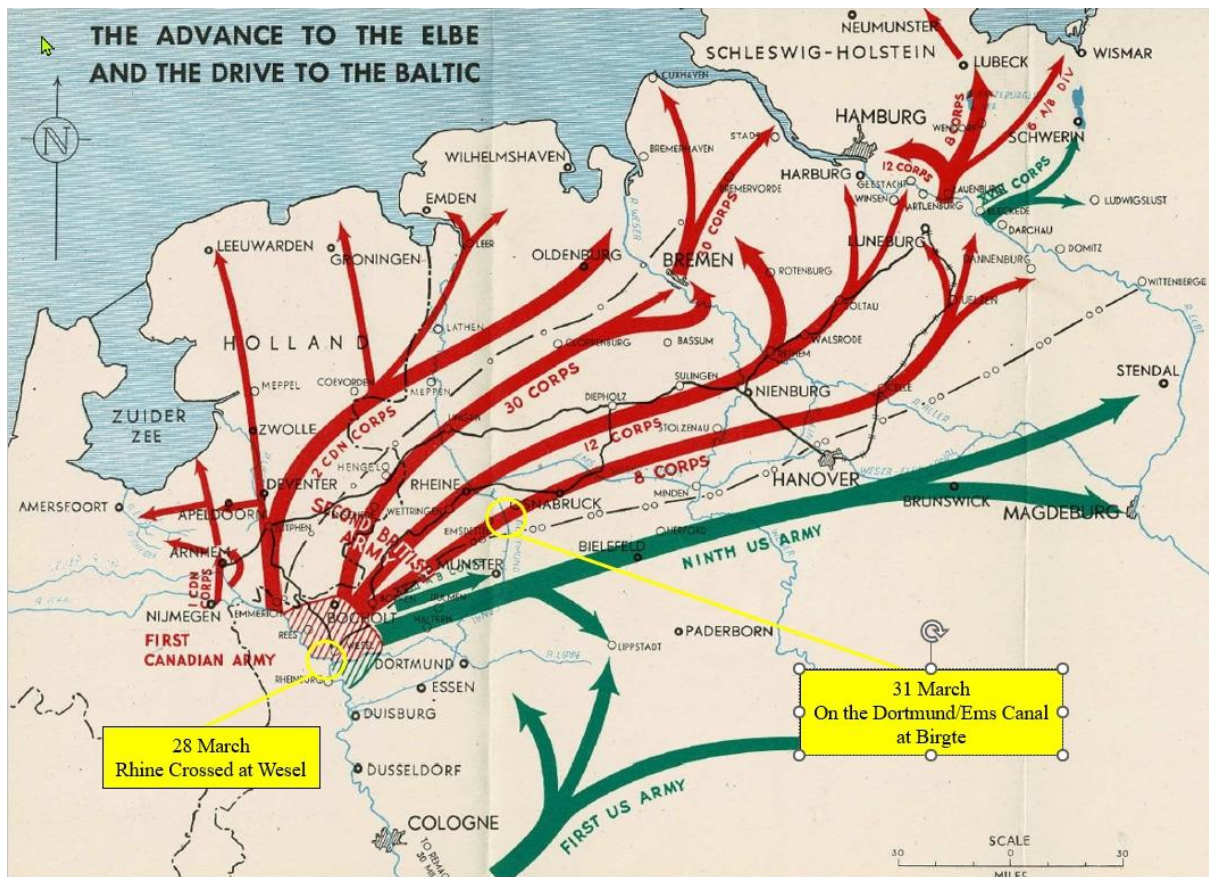
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The Officers of the Battalion, with the Brigade Commander, Brig Churcher sat in the centre. Taken in Haacht on the 18th. The location is still recognisable today although the building uses have changed.



Across The Rhine



March started with 3 Can Div operating on the Battalion's left and clearing the Hochwald Forest feature. The enemy was still in occupation of the Schlieffen line and on the 2nd B Coy with one troop of 15/19 in support put in an attack to force a breach in the line. The forward platoon covered 200 yards of open country and was within 150 yards of its objective. Having allowed them to come completely in the open the enemy opened up with heavy MG and mortar fire. Further advance by the platoon was impossible under the withering fire, so the Coy Comd decided to consolidate the position with the other two platoons. Three attempts were made to extricate the remnants of the pinned down platoon but each time intensified MG, mortar and sniper fire was brought to bear on the company. The stretcher bearers did gallant work crawling around with red cross flags and treating the most urgent cases. Evacuation of wounded was impossible.

In the evening A Coy passed through B Coy and put in another assault on the same objective. It was a light night made worse by artificial moonlight which silhouetted them as they moved. The leading platoon came under intense and accurate SA and mortar fire and the leading section became casualties. There was no cover, which made movement extremely difficult. The NCO commanding the platoon [Sgt Davies] displayed the finest gallantry. With complete disregard for his own safety and with a coolness which reassured his men, he moved round organising return fire and attending to the wounded. He personally reced the enemy positions and made a plan of their dispositions. During this time he was not more than 80 yards from the enemy and must have been clearly visible. He then left his platoon under command of his Pl Sgt and took back the information to his Coy Comd. Based on the information a successful company left flanking attack was put in and the company consolidated on its first objective. As soon as they were established, C Coy with a troop of tanks passed through. The enemy promptly reacted to the tanks more than the infantry and started to engage them hotly with Spandaus from right, left and centre. The tanks were quite happy about that. Their chief concern was bazooka teams which might be lying in the ditches waiting for them to come along the road. Therefore working in close cooperation with the troop, the leading platoons worked their way forward in single file along the ditches ready to deal with any lurking bazooka types. After the infantry had checked up to about 40 yards the tanks bounded forward again, drawing all the enemy SA fire and allowing the platoon to push on unengaged. By this leapfrogging arrangement the platoon reached the first obstacle of the Schlieffen line which was an anti tank ditch. Upon recce of the bridge over it the Pl Comd considered it too flimsy to carry a tank and the leading tank, trying to shear off to the right, brewed up on a mine. The others continued to give support and the platoon established itself in the excellent trenches provided by the enemy. By this time the enemy appreciated that his curtain of defensive artillery and MG fire had failed to check the advance and had evacuated the trenches. Patrols sent out forward failed to contact them so the company went firm in this area, supported by a platoon of machine guns from No 2 Independent MG Coy (4 RNF). The Schlieffen line had been breached but only as a result of a constant hammering and persistent assault.



Anti tank ditches about Udem



Passing through Udem

The immediate reaction to this was heavy shelling on the newly captured position which continued throughout the day. Odd snipers continued to make a nuisance of themselves but C Coy were reasonably happy in their German dug trenches. The Battalion continued to hold these positions for the next two days awaiting developments from the 3 Can Div sector. There was a noticeable decrease in shelling and it appeared that the enemy was withdrawing his artillery.

On the 5th the Battalion regrouped itself ready to continue operations towards Sonsbeck and Xanten and 3 Mons passed through to carry out the first phase. In the meantime big things were happening on the right flank. 3 (British) Div operating on the immediate right, having cleared the enemy out of Kervenheim made rapid progress and steered the Guards Armd Div which appeared from the direction of Geldern. This was all part and parcel of the American's advance from the south and everybody seemed to be heading for Sonsbeck at the same time. 11 Armd Div was halted on the spot and other formations polished off the remainder of the broken enemy force still left west of the Rhine.

Having been thus eclipsed from the battle the Battalion Group settled itself in to make up for the lost rations and sleep. All companies centred themselves on well stocked farms and forgot all about bully beef for the next few days.

It had been a hard fought battle from everybody's point of view. Supply and administration was made difficult by the treacherous track which would become a quagmire but which was the only route leading up to the fighting troops. Great credit is due to the echelon personnel and the ATK PI who ferried up food, ammunition, petrol etc. to keep the companies going, and also to the stretcher bearers who slaved magnificently against adverse enemy and ground conditions. Here is an account of the battle as experienced by a stretcher bearer attached to B Coy:

The day the Battalion had the task of clearing the enemy from the outskirts of Udem, it so happened that I was riding on the third tank of the leading squadron and I was not feeling so happy about that! We rode on our tanks until we reached a Canadian unit's forward position at the far end of the town. It was here that trouble started brewing and we had to detank owing to the excessive anti tank fire and shelling. For a while we sought cover but not for long as the platoons were given a task and ordered to go forward to clear the Germans out of a position on our right flank. Whilst clearing these positions one platoon in particular suffered quite a number of casualties and it was then that I heard the old familiar cry for stretcher bearers. It was not long before we had dressed the wounded and evacuated them to the RAP. On my return from the RAP I discovered that some of their tanks had been knocked out and that the crews had suffered casualties, some of them being severely wounded. We lost no time in evacuating the men and by the time we had taken the last of the wounded to the RAP darkness was fast approaching. By the time I returned, my company had moved forward and, since it was dark, I was instructed to remain with Battalion HQ till the morning.

After a very uncomfortable night of shelling I was given the location of my company which I found quite easily. We remained in these positions for the rest of the day. At dusk 2 companies passed us mounted on tanks and we moved up on foot. Hell seemed to be let loose that night. Jerry seemed to be slinging everything he had against us and it appeared that he was firing at us from every angle. We met with very stiff opposition over the bridges and suffered heavy casualties. It was a trying night for all the SBs concerned owing to the fact that the road and bridge were in a terrible state and were made even worse by our own tanks. The majority of our stretcher cases had to be carried to vehicles 1000 yards away. We did attempt to evacuate some with an abandoned carrier but this met with little success as the carrier soon ditched itself. It was daylight before we had finished evacuating our last casualty. I should like to mention that through this incident we lost two of our SBs through exhaustion. The position we occupied during that morning and for 24 hours later was by no means a healthy one. Jerry was

very consistent with his mortars and 88s. However we were lucky enough to escape casualties. The following day our company had the task of going forward to force a gap in the Schlieffen line in front of the forward companies. The enemy soon spotted us after we passed through our forward positions and gave us everything he had in the way of small arms fire and shelling. His fire was so effective that it pinned the company down for some time and it was here once again we suffered casualties. Evacuating the wounded was by no means an easy task as the ground was quite open and the enemy could easily detect the slightest movement. It was impossible for the squad and myself to avoid movement, so we decided to make her way towards the wounded under the cover of a Red Cross flag we carried. By doing this we were able to treat the wounded. We selected the most urgent of them for evacuation and two of the squad took a stretcher case while I myself crawled back with one on my back. After we had gone back some 100 yards or so a shell exploded nearby killing the wounded man who lay on the stretcher and wounded one of the SBs who was carrying it. Two or 3 minutes later I myself was hit in the leg by a sniper. As luck happened the Coy Comd had previously arranged for an ambulance half track to come up to C Coy and after being hit I found myself only a matter of 50 yards away from the vehicle. Not being seriously wounded, I was able to assist the man I was carrying to the half track. The other SB also made his own way to the half track, though he was pretty badly wounded in the back. I have not written every incident that occurred in this particular battle. Those that I have written about are the ones that I remember that remain clearest in my mind.

All companies had an equal share in the fighting and here is an account of the operation from C Coy's point of view:

It is far from easy to give an impersonal account of those few days which to us of C Coy remains so vivid - days that brought so many changes in the company which had grown up afresh on the river Maas, where changes have been few. A sudden contrast was made by the tremendous pace of events and the heat of things after those wearying winter months. We left our concentration area on the morning of the 27 Feb. Two companies had gone on ahead on the backs of the tanks into the town of Udem, which we had been informed was already taken by the Canadians. Many of us may have glanced away to the long green hill to our half left, little dreaming, as we plodded on in single file through the dust of the tanks, of the part it was to play in the unknown days ahead.

As we approached the outskirts of the battered town we remarked upon the engineers newly erected mines notices, the enormous anti tank ditch and wire entanglements and the small files of field grey prisoners with their hands on their heads, escorted by tired scruffy Canadian Scottish infantryman. I know many of us quietly thanked God that we had not been given the task of securing Udem. We were not left long in this kind of contemplation for almost immediately we were forced to lie low as shells came at us all along the road. We heard that A&B Coys had dismounted from their tanks and were clearing the further side of the town.

As we waited expectantly in this position we were ordered to pass through B Coy who were in the area of the station and swing left, making for the Y junction at the base of the green hill we had seen that morning. D Coy were to pass through A and were to work further to our left. We were also told we should have no difficulty in keeping to our axis as a wood ran parallel to our right all the way to our objective. As we passed through B Coy and from the shelter of the houses we could clearly see across the open ground the long line of the wood. The ground was cultivated and there appeared to be nothing abnormal about the fresh young fields of corn, now scarred with tank tracks.

As 13 Pl, which was leading, crossed the anti tank ditch all was still; there was no shelling and no small arms fire. The only disturbance was the crackling of the several burning farmhouses at the edge of the wood. This was the work of the tanks, the leading one of which seemed already to be on our first objective. We all moved on slowly in extended order well opened out. 13 Pl were within about 90 yards of the first burning farmstead, when intense Spandau fire was aimed at us from immediately ahead and from the wood on our right. 13 Pl caught the full weight of this murderous fire and were only saved from complete destruction by their wide dispersal. As it was, the whole of the leading section with the single exception of the bren gunner were mown to the ground by such close range fire. The bren gunner owed his life to a lone potato clump behind which he took cover. The enemy must have been able to see his position clearly since they continued to pour increasing bursts of machine gunfire at him and at the other two sections and Coy HQ further back. The Pl Comd managed to crawl forward and join the bren gunner at the potato heap. The Spandau immediately ahead was located in the farmhouse window and silenced. This gave limited freedom of movement behind the clump, since the remaining two Spandaus were some 200 yards to the right and screened by it. Nevertheless they proved awkward sweeping the top and both ends of the clump with fire. The Pl Comd was able to kneel behind this cover to shout orders and signaled that to the Pl Sgt and next section in whose area a tank had appeared. In spite of these shouts and signals the Pl Comd had to crawl back to the Sherman. To help him on his way back in the face of the enemy fire, the bren gunner brought his gun to bear on the corner of the wood. Once the tank was reached, its full firepower was directed onto the two remaining machine gun positions and the line of the wood. Under this fire support the rest of the platoon was able to make a frontal assault on the farmhouse area where some 18 prisoners were taken.

While this engagement of the leading platoon was being fought, the Coy Comd, who had weighed up the difficulties, ordered 14 Pl to move round to the left. They took a wide sweep making full use of the slight dip in the open country. By this time Coy HQ and the rear platoon were being subjected to harassing shelling. As 14 Pl drew level with the farmstead upon which 13 Pl were concentrating their attack, one of their number was killed instantly by sniper fire from another farm a little beyond, which also proved to be strongly held. In spite of this they put in an attack on this second farm and took more prisoners. Having cleared these two farms, after a brief period of reorganization, we pushed on.

In the late afternoon we reached the Y junction at the foot of the low hill we had viewed, perhaps rather vaguely earlier that day. A Coy had reached the top and from the numbers of Shermans that were 'brewing' we knew they must have had a difficult passage. As we dug in the night rapidly closed in on us and the shelling increased. We were relieved to see the two companies of 3 Mons moving up in the half light and exchanged gruff wishes with the dark lumbering forms. There was continuous shelling and the startling rattle of bullets exploding in the trees; 2 Hun paratroopers were caught trying to stalk a section position; news that all was not going well with the Mons was supported in evidence by the comments of those coming back along the lane near which we were sitting; there was no food and no news of food until early in the morning. It was a weird and miserable night.

With the morning of the 28th as so often happens in battle, our spirits improved. We had a snack in the early hours and were able to supplement this with as much as we could eat when light came and fires could be started. If anything the shelling had eased a little and the Mons were reported to have 2 companies across the stream ahead.

Orders were received during the afternoon for a further attack on the Schlieffen line the plan was for A Coy to breach the first entanglement and supported by a squadron of the 15/19 and we, with another squadron, were to reach the second anti tank ditch. The whole plan was to

be carried out at night. We cleaned our weapons and generally prepared ourselves, ready to move back in the early hours of darkness to join our tanks. There was no shelling as we married up and watched the first 2 companies get underway. A few minutes later we too climbed on the backs of our 'Big Brothers' and moved slowly under the brow of the Gochfortz position.

Slowly, very slowly, the tanks moved along the narrow open lane. They were unable to move from its hard surface as the fields on either side were marshy. Evidence of these treacherous surroundings were the deeply bogged tanks we passed, who had overshot a corner or unwisely endeavoured to pass a knocked out brother in their path. The Germans were not long in realising that something was developing. It is impossible to move tanks under these conditions without noise. The roar of their engines and the rattle of their tracks brought down upon us all manner of artillery and mortar fire. We ourselves understood the meaning of DF and the paratroopers must have registered on the road and, in particular, the crossing of the stream where we had succeeded in placing a fascine. Every time the tanks halted we lay alongside their tracks. This undoubtedly saved us a number of casualties, for every time we mounted again we suffered heavily from shell and mortar splinters. There was something rather awe inspiring in the way these splinters struck the massive steel structures of the tanks. We suffered in this way for some 2 1/2 hours before we crossed the stream and came abreast of A Coy who were reorganizing after their exploits. They had been fired upon from the woods immediately to the right and were forced to engage in very sticky night wood clearing. This unexpected operation was costly and a measure of control was lost. What is more we were still subject to shellfire and still some way from objective. The leading tanks were being engaged by close range enemy SP fire. It was because of this and the fact that they were unable to leave the road that we were ordered to move along on foot.

13 Pl took the lead and moved up to a small spinney by the side of which the CO's tank was bogged and from which forward position he was controlling the battle. The Coy Comds collected 14 and 15 Pls and we proceeded to dig in, in soft saturated ground, 13 Pl in the small copse with Coy HQ and 14 Pl behind. It was at this stage that the few remaining members of 15 Pl were used to reinforce the other two and Coy HQ. Tired that we were, we followed the advice to dig deep and cursed the water that appeared in the bottom of our holes.

As we had expected, and also firmly prophesied by the old stagers and commanders, with the dawn came the shelling. We were some 600 yards from our objective, behind which rose a high hill. With little doubt that it was from this vantage point the fire was being directed. As the first few hours of daylight developed it became increasingly clear how well the Hun could see us. We had no chance to camouflage ourselves. With the first attempt to distribute rations one man was killed instantly by a sniper from very close range. As a result for the remainder of the day we shot at every conceivable sniper position.

During that whole day and until darkness of the next we sat under the enemy's dominant position and was stalked until the trees of the copse were torn to pieces and robbed of their branches, and the greenfield behind was shell pocked as we had rarely seen before. We gave what assistance we could to those who were unable to stand the strain and watched A&B Coys abortive attempts to reach the perimeter of the defensive line ahead.

In the evening of the 4th we were given the general picture and details of our part in the second night attack with tanks that was to breach the Schlieffen line. After A Coy had secured the first anti tank ditch we were to push through dealing only with the opposition actually menacing the track. 13 Pl were to lead supported by a troop of tanks. A Coy reached their objective, the windmill according to the plan and we moved through. All was disturbingly quiet. Not even a single shell. The leading platoon were taking no chances and had one section in the dykes on

either side of the road. These sections move forward 40 yards, ensuring that there were no Panzerfausts, then lay down and allowed the first tank to move up and brass up the area ahead. When this had been done the whole operation could be repeated it was on the first leg of these stepping up tactics that two Spandaus opened fire on the tanks from some 400 yards range. This lively exchange of tracer continued for three legs, when the uneven battle became too much for the enemy and no further opposition was encountered. In the darkness 13 Pl reached their objective and recced some 200 yards beyond the most extensive and formidable trench system we had seen throughout the campaign. Apart from the anti tank ditches and wire there were two tremendous trenches some 12 feet deep, complete with fire steps and dugouts, the whole being lined with thick pine logs.

The following morning there was a little fire from the concrete emplacements on the hill in front but after the past few days this was hardly noticeable to us in our deep trenches. Coy HQ were the only ones to be worried and they were less fortunate and had to remain in the shallow communication trench beside the wireless carrier. They stuck this for one whole day and at night moved back to the area of the windmill.

For us this was the end of the struggle our very real fears of being ordered to push on (for we openly stated to one another that we had had enough) were put to rest with the news that the Guards Armd Div had come in from a flank and the enemy had withdrawn in face of this threat in his rear. We moved to two farmhouses in the area, making full use of their beds and clean straw, not to mention eggs, hot water etc. Here we received the glad news from the CO himself, when he came to speak to us that we were moving out to rest, and we were deeply thankful for his well done!



Pte Childs writes a letter home



Pte Sinar at 'the ready'



Pte Ward, the photograph is annotated 'due to go on leave the next day'; perhaps that's why he smiling!

Soldiers of the Herefordshire Regiment in their trenches about Sonsbeck on 6 March

Total casualties for operation blockbuster

Killed	28
Wounded	125

On 9 March the Div was withdrawn to Belgium to rest and refit, the Battalion moved to Haacht, a small town north of Brussels and from 9 to 28 of March the Div trained and reorganized in Belgium. It

was the longest and most enjoyable rest the Battalion had from battle and put us back on our feet. Reinforcements of officers and other ranks were received which practically brought us up to strength. It was the first time reinforcements could be trained and fitted in with their companies before going into action. Before they had been sent to the Div Battle School where they were fitted out and trained until required in the line to replace casualties. It frequently happened therefore that men joining the Battalion, usually recruits fresh from UK, had had no infantry/tank training and simply had to learn from bitter experience. While in Haacht however, a number of exercises were carried out with the tanks which gave them a good idea of what was expected of them.

For the first time since November, 29 Armd Bde rejoined the Div. They had pulled out to Belgium during the months on the Maas, as the tanks were of little use for such a role. Their refitting was interrupted in December when they were thrown into the battle to stop and push back Runstadt's drive through the Ardennes. Early in 1945 they received Comets to replace their Shermans and were waiting in the rest area to carry out combined training by the time the Inf Bde arrived there. Brig Churcher wrote in his memoirs:

..... we had advanced slowly and reached the Siegfried line and reached the small market town of Sonsbeck on the east edge of the line; we were luckily squeezed out of further operations by 3 Div on my right and the Canadians on my left and from the middle of March we were withdrawn from the whole of the battle area back to the area of Louvain. We remained in this general area for a complete refit and training for the reinforcements which we had to receive, at the same time the armoured brigade by now had been reequipped with the new tanks the Comet armed with the new 77mm gun, a most effective weapon and a splendid tank. It became clear to us that we would be one of the armoured divisions earmarked for the thrust through Germany after bridgeheads had been secured over the River Rhine.

The new tanks meant new ways of working as Ray Griffiths explained:

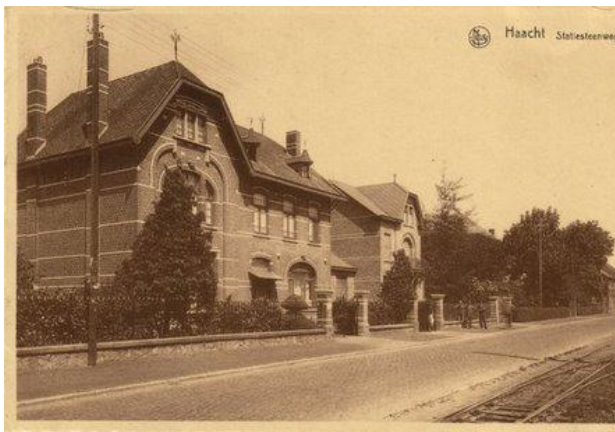
The new Comet Tank was received with great enthusiasm by the Armoured Regiments and with its extra speed and larger calibre gun was later to prove a great success. The previous format of the campaign during the early days was for the supporting infantry to accompany the armour on foot or in their soft sided troop carrying vehicles (TCVs) [3 ton trucks]. This generally meant that it was a 'catch up' situation. It was therefore decided that the infantry would, where applicable, travel on the rear of the tanks, thus making the armour more secure and the infantry not so foot sore, a tactic which proved to be most successful.

Haacht itself was an agreeable little village about 20 miles north of Brussels. All the men were accommodated in civilian billets and everything was done for their entertainment; not that it was really necessary to organize anything, for they were all capable of looking after themselves. Dances, football matches and trips to Brussels filled in the very pleasant days and training and parades were cheerfully accepted. The weather was good and spring was in the air. After 2 static months spent on the mud flats of the Maas and a gruelling struggle around Udem this was a poetic interlude, and the sap gradually rose until everybody blossomed, refreshed and ready to start again; the difference to the two weeks we had just experienced in Germany was unbelievable. It proved to be excellent preparation for whatever might await us across the Rhine and everybody made the best of it.

There was hard training, but time to relax as well of Sunday 25 March Bob Price recalls:

..... we put our best uniforms on, polished our boots, and went on church parade. The service was held in the little cinema. Then after our lunch Tom, Maurice and myself decided to hitch-hike to Louvain to see our old mate Stan, who had been taken to the 101 General Hospital to recover from his shrapnel wounds. We were in luck; the first truck we stopped

took us straight to the hospital. It was a massive place, and took us ages to find the ward Stan was in. Even then it took the three of us five minutes to find him. It was the biggest hospital ward I'd ever seen, with one hundred and seventeen beds, and what made it more difficult Stan was down under the sheets fast asleep. Even when we did find the right bed we didn't recognise him. Maurice passed him by the first time; here was a tidy, clean-shaven young man, his hair slicked back in his blue striped pyjamas. The last time we saw him he'd got a beard and a fortnight's grime on his face, no wonder we didn't recognise him right away. He was surprised and pleased to see us. He said his wounds had healed nicely and was hoping to be released from hospital in a couple of weeks. We told him not to be in too much of a hurry, he was better off where he was! We had a pleasant hour together, Maurice's dry sense of humour kept the conversation going, especially when the nurses were about. When the tea arrived it was time for us to go, we said our goodbyes and the other lads in the ward from our Battalion waved and wished us luck. It was only a short walk down the hill into the town, our first priority was to find the nearest canteen and get something to eat. NAAFI tea and buns tasted just the same everywhere; we had our fill and spent the evening in the cinema. I can even remember the film Spencer Tracy in 'Boys Town'. We then caught one of our trucks back to Haacht, arriving back at our billet at 11.30pm, tired after an eventful day.



A house used to billet members of the Battalion and the host family – these photographs given to a member of the Battalion.

As well as battle casualties men of the Battalion suffered from illness, brought on by and worsened by the hard living conditions they had endured. As Ken Crockford recalled:

I continued with the Herefords usually commanding 14 Platoon but on occasions as the situation required taking over as company commander or second in command for short periods until March 1945, when I was evacuated to hospital in Brussels. I do not remember much of the journey as I was unconscious for much of the time with severe dysentery. When after some days I recovered sufficiently to get dressed I asked the nurse where my uniform was she replied 'we burned it' I was provided with a dressing gown to enable me to walk to the quartermaster's stores in order to purchase new clothing. My salary as a Lieutenant was 12/6 (62.5 pence) a day my clothing cost me over £7.

It was whilst in Haacht that members of the Battalion started to notice the 'new' terror weapon being used by the Germans against Britain – the V1 rocket. As Ray Griffiths recalled:

Now and again, the peace and quiet was broken by the never to be forgotten sound of the German terror weapon, the flying bomb or 'doodle bug'. These frightening missiles with the distinctive sound of their jet engines passed overhead at frequent intervals en-route towards

the port of Antwerp and sometimes towards England. It was when one heard the engine cut out that everyone held their breath and waited while the missile dived to the ground and exploded.

The operation to 'Bounce The Rhine' took place on 24 March, both Bob Price and Ray Griffiths recalled the airborne part of the operation passing over Haacht:

[Price] The noise of low flying aircraft brought everyone out onto the streets to witness the largest air-assault in history. Wave after wave of gliders being towed to their drop zones on the other side of the Rhine. People cheered and waved, and still the planes passed overhead. What surprised me was how low they were, then suddenly it was all over and it went quiet and peaceful once again. It took some time for the realisation of what had happened to sink in, on this historic Saturday morning, but it also meant that in a few days time it would be our turn to breakout of the bridgehead that was secured by the troops in those gliders today. I can't say I was looking forward to that job very much.

[Griffiths] the sound of many aircraft was heard overhead and the most awesome sight of hundreds of aircraft appeared all over the sky, heading towards the East. Many of the aircraft were towing gliders and all were marked with the white symbol of the Allied Forces. At the time we were unaware of their destination and it was not until later that the report came through that upon this historic Saturday the air assault across the Rhine had begun. Soon it would be our turn to break out of the bridgehead at Wesel, secured by these glider-borne troops and begin our sojourn into the German hinterland.

Leave continued and Captain Alec Wardman went on leave to visit his wife in Belfast.

It was also a time to catch up on 'admin' including writing letters to family and friends – 4032935 LCpl Fred Cope of C Company wrote to his pal 4039173 Norman Gilbert. Norman had served with the Herefords and was wounded in the Autumn of 1944, as a result of his wounds he was discharged in May 1945. As well as the normal small talk and news of their mutual pals, he mentions the battle the Battalion had been in.



The recipient of the letter -
4039173 Norman Gilbert

APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel				(C.S. 20)												
WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS																
I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)																
Number 4039173	Christian or First names NORMAN WILLIAM	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary GILBERT														
Class of Release or Discharge and Date 15/10/45	Age and Service Group No. —	Rank PTE	Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) K.S.L.I.													
to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)																
(Name) MR. N.W. GILBERT		This Box for War Office Use Only 5 - OCT 1950 69 MEDALS ISSUED														
(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number — if appropriate) 35 HALIFAX ROAD SHIRLEY BIRMINGHAM		Strike out items which were NOT awarded														
NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for SEVERAL MONTHS		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1939-45</td> <td>PACIFIC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ATLANTIC</td> <td>BURMA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AIR CREW</td> <td>ITALY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EUROPE</td> <td>FRANCE & GERMANY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AFRICA</td> <td>MEDALS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DEFENCE</td> <td>WAR</td> </tr> </table>			1939-45	PACIFIC	ATLANTIC	BURMA	AIR CREW	ITALY	EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY	AFRICA	MEDALS	DEFENCE	WAR
1939-45	PACIFIC															
ATLANTIC	BURMA															
AIR CREW	ITALY															
EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY															
AFRICA	MEDALS															
DEFENCE	WAR															
If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps. Signature of Applicant: N.W. Gilbert If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased.																

4032935. L/C. H.E. Lope
 "C" Coy.
 1st Bn. Herefordshire Regt.
 B.L.A.
 12.3.45.

Dear Gil.

Just a few lines, long overdue again I'm afraid, to let you know that I'm still alive and kicking in spite of his letter to you. I hope you are keeping

Well Gil, I suppose you guessed what was happening when I didn't write to you, what with the news in the papers, too. But I don't suppose you can help much for what the papers say. The trench was been having another back, in Germany this time. Oh boy, what a do it was too, while it lasted. We were in for 3 weeks, but gee, I was glad to get out of it again. Needless to say, we lost a few of the boys, I was lucky this time (lich wood). Dai Morgan stopped one again, and Jim Walker got a fair piece in his hip, and Lpl Thorator got it bad in the back, and several more out of the way. We are taking things a bit easier

at present, getting ready for the final "back on" I guess. I've just been talking to Jackie Fern Gil, he was asking if I'd heard from you lately. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you Gil, Jack Chapman was killed, and Sgt King out of the Motors.

Well pal, I think I'd better address this letter to your home address, for you may have left hospital by now, and you'll probably get it quicker if I send it on to you.

Remember me to all at 120, and take good care of yourself. Gil, and maybe I'll be seeing you soon, not over this side though. So cheerio for now Gil, good listening on the "A.E.F.," and "All the Best," from

Your Old Pal,
 Fred.

Write back when you can Gil, and go easy on the ham and eggs.
 Hope you received my field card O.K.
 So long Gil.

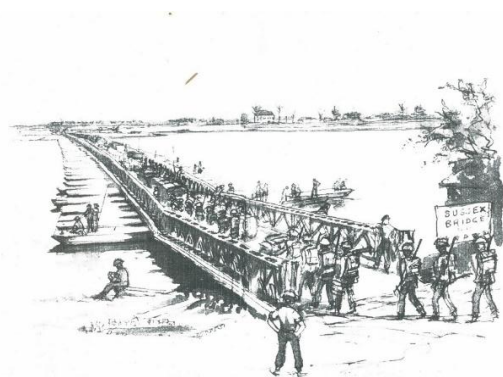
Norman Gilbert been a member of the Battalion football team and had won a football medal in the UK in the season 43/44.



[AFTERNOTE – in January 2000 an application was made by ‘Mr Cope’ for the medals of 4032935 Cope, which resulted in no medals being awarded – it is assumed that his medals had already been issued.]

APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel			
WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS			
I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)		28187	
Number 4032935	Christian or First names	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary COPE	
Class of Release or Discharge and Date	Age and Service Group No.	Rank	Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number)
to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)			This Box for War Office Use Only
(Name) MR COPE			NO Award
(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number — if appropriate) 47 AINSWORTH STREET MR. PLEASANT FENTON. STAKE ON TRENT ST4 4JR			26.1.00
NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for SEVERAL MONTHS			
If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.			
Signature of Applicant		If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased.	
		Strike out items which were NOT awarded STARS 1939-45 PACIFIC ATLANTIC BURMA AIR CREW ITALY EUROPE FRANCE & GERMANY AFRICA MEDALS DEFENCE WAR	

The Battalion left Haacht at 0740 hours on 28 March and all companies experienced difficulty in dragging their men away from their civilian billets. The journey to the Rhine was uneventful. It was pleasant to pass through places such as Horn and see them transformed to peaceful sleepy villages, recovering their calm composure after having been whipped into centres of bustle and activity by the comings and goings of troops with their machines of war. Cafes, 3 months ago ringed with Brens, anti tank guns and half tracks were now ringed with tables and sunshades. Fields and gardens still marked with minefield signs were no longer sown with mines but now sown with crops and flowers. The Battalion crossed the Sussex Bridge over the Rhine at Wesel in darkness at 2000 hours.



The Sussex Bridge over the Rhine



A destroyed bridge over the Rhine at Wesel – taken from the Sussex Bridge

The impression was almost the same as starting a fresh invasion. As we approached the river the rumble of guns could be heard in the distance to the east. To the north tracer lit up the sky as the Canadians were that night making another crossing over the river at Xanten and the sound of SA automatic fire could be heard between the occasional short lulls in the barrage. Across the river the town of Wesel was still burning and the gaunt skeletons of battered buildings stood silhouetted in the dull red glow. Searchlights played about the bridges from either bank while engineers carried on with their ceaseless maintenance and inspections. There were two bridges about 200 yards apart, one for wheeled vehicles and the others for tracks.

The river at this point is about 500 yards wide and the bridges seem to converge in the distance. In the darkness, but pricked out by the searchlights and starlight and with the burning town in the background they look like frail and meaningless protrusions in the expanse of water. It was a peculiar sensation to think that we were about to cross the Rhine a thing the papers and wireless had been

forecasting for months. Now here it was at last and all troops with baited breath, wondered what the crossing would be like and what prospects lay ahead for us. It was probably the fact that the bridge led across into the unknown and to more unpredictable battles that made the crossing so portentous. At each jointing in the section of the bridge, trestles on pontoon boats, dipped slightly as the weight of the vehicles passed over them, so we got nearer to grappling with this unknown. Across the river and amongst the rubble filled streets of Wesel, clouded with dust and smoke from the demolished and blazing buildings, these thoughts persisted and were accentuated. It was indeed like starting a fresh invasion and in fact proved to be the beginning of the final phase of the campaign.

Ray Griffiths recalled crossing the Rhine:

..... the Division moved from the Brussels area and headed for the German border and the first major obstacle, the River Rhine. The assault by 6 Airborne Div, by air to form a bridgehead on the eastern side of the river at Wesel during the later days of March 1945 was successful and enabled the construction by the Engineers firstly of a pontoon bridge, formed by interlocking raft-like boats together and later a more stable Bailey Bridge.

The actual crossing at this point was quite exciting, unending columns of every description of transport and armour were queuing up to take their turn on the pontoon bridge. This bridge was nearly 500 yards long and creaked and strained against the supporting and restraining steel ropes, the pontoons in the strong current were swept into a great 'U'shape. Overhead, as night fell, the air was filled with the sound of shelling, tracer and flares, a spectacular sight.

Although a scary crossing, the Division advanced into the badly damaged town of Wesel, where the paths were still being cleared by the pioneers and sappers. It had been heavily bombarded prior to the crossing and had been virtually destroyed, so the Division picked their way through the rubble and passed through 6 Airborne Div and we continued our progress into Germany.

The concentration area was about four miles northeast of the bridge. It was the point at which an airborne landing had been made and gliders, some smashed and others perforated with bullet holes, were still there in their hundreds. The following day the Battalion moved up to Earle and once more married up with the Fife and Forfar. Moving in the wake of the KSLI Group we then made a long and uneventful drive through Legden and on to Osterwick. The advance was being pressed home at high speed. After breaking through the opposition on the river, little coordinated resistance had been met so far. It was uncertain where the enemy would hold next but the policy was to keep forging ahead. 7 Armd Div advancing on our left were not able to get on quite so quickly, which gave us an uncomfortable feeling on that flank and necessitated our providing our own flank protection. 6 Airborne Div cooperated with an independent Armd Bde on our right, were at this stage slightly ahead of us. The Daily News campaign maps showed the armoured thrust rapidly spreading itself across Germany and we had great difficulty in keeping up with them. They were usually a day ahead.

However not everyone went forward with the Battalion as Bob Price explained:

At the end of the main street [in Haacht] farthest away from our cafe was a piece of waste ground the company used as a parade ground, we fell in there every morning for roll call. For the last fortnight this had been our first parade. When I fell in there that morning I didn't know it would be for the last time. After roll call the company commander read out a short list of names, mine was one of them. We were told to pack our kit and be prepared to leave the company tomorrow morning for the Divisional Battle School near the town of Weert in Holland. We had been chosen to be LOB (Left out of Battle).

To explain- there was only one battalion of the Herefordshire Regiment, and Army ruling at that time stated, if the battalion were to be wiped out in action the regiment would not be reformed. That's why this small force from the four rifle companies (about 50 men) were LOB, so that they would become the nucleus of a new battalion, should the unthinkable happen! It had been common practice at the beginning of the campaign, but for a long time now we'd never had enough men to spare to be left behind.

The following morning I said good-bye to our Belgian hosts, and the lads in the platoon. It was with a heavy heart and a feeling of guilt when I hugged Tom my digging in partner for so long. The tears ran down his face as I climbed aboard our transport and waved good-bye, but like he said, in the army you look after number one. There were a lot of faces in the platoon that sunny morning I would never see again.

On 31 March the Battalion was uncomfortably spread out along the road at Leer. 159 Bde Gp was working along the left route and 29 Bde Gp on the right. 29 Gp were pushing on and keeping pace with 6 Airborne Div. It was then that the Tac R reported the German 15 Panzer Grenadiers moving SE towards Munster. If they came down in force as they were reported it appeared that they could cut across our line to communication and isolate the armour and troops out in front. Therefore the Battalion Group was ordered to take up a strung out defensive position extending over 4 miles to counter any possible attack from the north. It seemed a grim task and we felt very thin on the ground. There was slight spasmodic shelling from an 88 Battery beyond the ridge to the north. Full preparations were made to meet the threatened attack, mines laid on likely approaches and anti tank defences tied up. As the Battalion was likely to hold this area for the next day or so patrols were sent out to check up on suspect woods and buildings. To the north of the road about 2 miles away lay the village of Stelen which B Coy with the squadron of tanks were sent to check and clear if necessary. It was found to be empty but just as the force was organising itself to return to base an enemy lorry, loaded with troops and with one fellow sitting on the radiator, swept round the corner of the street. It was easy meat for the tanks who gave it one 77 shell and left the infantry to collect survivors. The outsider of the party who was badly wounded argued that it was unfair to fire anti tank weapons at soft vehicles such as his, but the tank men didn't see his point of view! Forty odd prisoners were flushed during the day from the Battalion area. The anticipated attack never materialised and the next day another long drive through Burgsteinfurt, Emsdetten, Mesum and Rissenbeck brought the Battalion to the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Birghte.

Casualties

Surname	Initial	Rank	Regtl No	Company		Date	Location
Chapman	SJ	Sgt	4105639	S	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Holloway	RP	Pte	5501116	C	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Rider	AR	Pte	14735897	D	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Stewart	J	Cpl	3854813	B	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Wilkins	HS	Cpl	4105920	D	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Palmer	GT	Pte	4105866	S	KIA	01/03/1945	Kervenheim
Gibson	R	LCpl	980589			01/03/1945	Reichswald
Whittle	J	Pte	14735729	C	DOW	01/03/1945	Udem
Turner	R	Pte	5618491	B	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Hughes	O	Pte	14267818	B	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Bowkett	G	Pte	5116190	A	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Hollyman	REF	Pte	14497254	B	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim

Hutton	A	Pte	4105543	S	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Sheppard	J	Pte	14577749	B	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Roy	JE	Pte	3774848	D	KIA	02/03/1945	Kervenheim
Holloway	EA	Sgt	7598173	REME	Non battle	17/03/1945	
Kemp	CEJ	Pte	14576892	HQ	Non battle	31/03/1945	



(C.S. 20)
APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel
WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS
I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)

Number 3854813 Christian or First names James Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary Stewart

Class of Release or Discharge and Date K.I.A. Age and Service Group No. — Rank Cpl. Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) Royal Herefordshire Reg.

to be addressed to me as follows: (State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss) (Name) — (Full Post Address, w Post Town, County, Postal Dist and Numl — if appropri

NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for SEVERAL MONTHS receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.

Signature Applicant — If claiming as legate or next-of-kin, stat relationship to deceased —

CLASPS
3 17 JAN 1949
20 ISSUED

Strike out items which were NOT awarded.
STARS 148136 ✓
1939-45 ✓ PACIFIC
ATLANTIC ✓ BURMA
AIR CREW ✓ ITALY
EUROPE ✓ FRANCE & GERMANY
AFRICA ✓
MEDALS
DEFENCE ✓ WAR ✓ 5.0

Cpl James was a reinforcement to the Herefordshire Regiment, form CS20 was completed by his next of kin to apply for his medals – it is clear they were not familiar with The Herefordshire Regiment – given the 'Royal' title.

GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

The following ^{has} been concentrated here:—
(Name of Cemetery) Reichswald Forest British Cemetery
(Full Map Reference) Germany Sh 2A/3A 1/250,000 E 858504
(M. S.W. CRYE)

Report No. BADR/Conc 5363
Nationality British

(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	Sharpshooters	7892852	Frost J S	Sgt	27.2.45	K/A	XI	B	I	13.11.46	Udem Germany Sh 7 1/100,000 985425	12024
2	"	14403645	Sutton L	Tpr	"	"	XI	B	2	"	"	"
3	"	7906241	Brown H B	L/Cpl	27.2.45	"	XI	B	3	"	"	"
4	3 Mon	5114350	Hardwick K A	Pte	6.3.45	"	XI	C	1	"	"	986427 16921
5	"	14443944	Mahon M	Pte	5.3.45	"	XI	C	2	"	"	"
6	"	13117880	Goldberg A	Pte	27.2.45	"	XI	C	3	"	"	15325
7	4 K S L I	149462	Harrison R J	Maj	1.3.45	"	XI	D	1	"	"	"
8	KSLI/Hereford	3854813	Stewart J.	Cpl	1.3.45	"	XI	D	2	"	"	"
9	3 Mon	4923150	Gilbert J F.	Pte	27.2.45	"	XI	C	4	"	"	"
10	4 K S L I	1769823	Gittings R.	Pte	"	"	XI	D	3	"	"	"
11	KSLI/Hereford	5116190	Bowkett G.	Pte	2.3.45	"	XI	E	1	"	"	"
12	1. Hereford	3774848	Roy J E	Pte	"	"	XI	E	2	"	"	"

Date 14 Jan 47
(Signed) hudson Rank & Appointment Col., D.D.G.R.E.
Army Section: —
* 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.5085. 12-47



1st Battalion Herefordshire Regiment
Patrick Hughes
14267818 KIA 2/3/45 (21)

(C.S. 20)

APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel

WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS

I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)

Number 14267818	Christian or First names PATRICK	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary HUGHES
Class of Release or Discharge and Date 2.3.45	Age and Service Group No. 20	Rank PTE
Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) The Herefordshire Regiment		

to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

(Name) **MRS. P. HUGHES**

(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number —if appropriate)
**WILLOUGHBY
MARLBOROUGH
SALISBURY CHESHIRE**

NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for **SEVERAL MONTHS**

If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.

Signature of Applicant _____

If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased _____

This Box for War Office Use Only

STARS CLASPS

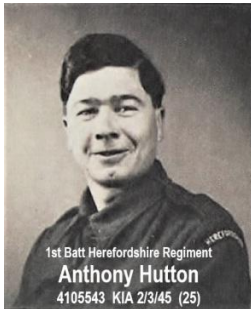
S 526 MAR 1950

Strike out items which were NOT awarded

1939-45	PACIFIC
ATLANTIC	BURMA
AIR CREW	ITALY
EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY
AFRICA	

MEDALS

DEFENCE **WAR 3-0**



1st Batt Herefordshire Regiment
Anthony Hutton
4105543 KIA 2/3/45 (25)

(C.S. 20)

APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel

WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS

I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)

Number 4105543	Christian or First names ANTHONY	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary HUTTON
Class of Release or Discharge and Date 2.3.45	Age and Service Group No. 20	Rank PTE
Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) The Herefordshire Regiment		

to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

(Name) **MR. J. D. HUTTON**

(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number —if appropriate)
**THE OVALS FARM
KINGSTON
HEREFORD**

NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for **SEVERAL MONTHS**

If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.

Signature of Applicant _____

If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased _____

This Box for War Office Use Only

STARS CLASPS

S 53 MAR 1950

Strike out items which were NOT awarded

1939-45	PACIFIC
ATLANTIC	BURMA
AIR CREW	ITALY
EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY
AFRICA	

MEDALS

DEFENCE **WAR 4-0**



1st Battalion Herefordshire Regiment
Joseph Sheppard
14577749 KIA 2/3/45 (19)

(C.S. 20)

APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel

WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS

I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)

Number 14577749	Christian or First names JOSEPH	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary SHEPPARD
Class of Release or Discharge and Date 2.3.45	Age and Service Group No. 20	Rank PTE
Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) The Herefordshire Regiment		

to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

(Name) _____

(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number —if appropriate) _____

NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for **SEVERAL MONTHS**

If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.

Signature of Applicant _____

If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased _____

This Box for War Office Use Only

STARS CLASPS

S 17 JAN 1949

20 MEDALS ISSUED

Strike out items which were NOT awarded

1939-45	PACIFIC
ATLANTIC	BURMA
AIR CREW	ITALY
EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY
AFRICA	

MEDALS

DEFENCE **WAR 3-0**

GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

Germany 2^e - 94

The following has been concentrated here:—
 (Name of Cemetery) REICHSWALD FOREST BRITISH CEMETERY
 (Full Map Reference) GERMANY Sh 2A/3A 1/250,000 E 858504
 (34. S.W. CLEVE)

Report No. BAOR/Conc
5228

NATIONALITY BRITISH

(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		Report Number *
											Place & Map Ref.		
1	4. K.S.L.I.	14421013	BARRATT N.H.	pte	2.3.45	K/A	XVIII	F	3	8.11.46	BOSSERTHOF GERMANY Sh 4303 1/25,000 027397	E/3344	14656
2	"	14499438	LYMOND N.E.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	4	"	"	"	"
3	"	14669301	WINZAR R.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	5	"	"	"	"
4	"	3597347	BARNES F.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	6	"	"	"	"
5	"	14326072	CHEESE H.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	7	"	"	"	"
6	"	14753306	CLARK J.C.	pte	1.3.45	"	XVIII	F	8	"	"	"	"
7	"	4035564	HUGHES S.T.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	9	"	"	"	"
8	"	14273355	LEGG A.G.	pte	1.4.45	"	XVIII	F	10	"	"	"	15977
9	"	14429744	ALLANSON K.A.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	11	"	"	"	12801
10	K.S.L.I./HERSFORDS	5618491	TURNER R.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	12	"	"	"	"
11	"	14577749	SHEPPARD J.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	13	"	"	"	"
12	"	14267818	HUGHES P.	pte	2.3.45	"	XVIII	F	14	"	"	"	"

Date 21 Dec 46

(Signed) Col.
 Rank & Appointment D.D.O.R.E.

* Where a grave has not already been registered, a Registration Report on A.F.W. 5372 will be prepared, and attached to this FORM.

The cause of death for the 2 non-battle casualties is unknown, it may have been illness or accident. Perhaps in Sgt Holloway's case the graves concentration report includes the annotation 'D ACC' – does this indicate he died as the result of an accident(?).

(L.M.S. LOUVAIN)

NATIONALITY BRITISH

(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		Report Number *
											Place & Map Ref.		
32	REME	77	HOLLOWAY E.A.	Sgt	17.3.45	"	I	F	6	"	" I " D "	" 4	12949

Wounded

It is clear that a great number were wounded as can be seen from LCpl Cope's letter, the OR's strength return and the War Diary where 63 wounded are recorded for first 3 days of March; full details of the wounded are not available.

It took some time for the authorities to process casualty returns as can be seen from the Casualty Notification in respect of 14745930 Pte D Lane who was wounded on 25 Feb and his NOK not notified until 3 March. He was later transferred to the Hospital at RAF Wroughton, Wiltshire. This was an air evacuation hospital close to airfields at Lyneham and Brize Norton



Army Form B. 104-80.

No. CAS/K.
(If replying please quote above No.)

Infantry Record Office,
Shrewsbury. Station
3rd March, 1945

SIR,

I regret to have to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office to the effect that (No.) 14745930
(Rank) Private (Name) D. LANE was
(Regiment) The Herefordshire Regiment, ~~is~~ dangerously ill at
(See 179 Field Ambulance on 25th February 1945, suffering reverse)
from Gunshot Wound Thigh, Fractured Right Femur, and Torn Femoral Artery. (Western Europe).
I am at the same time to express the sympathy and regret of the Army Council.

Any further information received at this office as to his condition or progress will be at once notified to you.

I am,
SIR,
Your obedient Servant,
[Signature]
Lieut. Colonel,
Officer in charge of Records.

Mr. S. Lane,
175, Newthorpe Common,
NOTTINGHAM.

Char FEMUR + + POST OFFICE 44185 No. 4429 OFFICE STAMP
RECEIVED 67 TELEGRAM
Prefix. Time has 67 Origin and Service Instructions. Words. 120
From GR 01 12/45 AM GR/T DHMS 53 To 120 m
PRIORITY-CA MRS LANE 175 NEWTHORPE COMMON
NEWTHORPE NOTTINGHAM
WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON 14745930
PTE LANE D 1 ST HEREFORD REGT ADMITTED THIS CCS
TODAY ON THE SERIOUSLY ILL LIST DIAGNOSIS WOUND OF
THIGH AND FRACTURE FEMUR MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO
ANOTHER HOSPITAL IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS all, with this form B or C
CCS RAF WROUGHTON ++ 123 14745930 1 ST GR/T

Honours & Awards

The following awards were awarded in March.

Name	Rank	Number	Award	For Action
Andow	Pte	14442529	MM	01/03/1945
Berridge FD	Capt	258900	MC	01/03/1945
Green, LE	Cpl	5618324	MM	01/03/1945
Stares	JWA		DSO	01/03/1945
Davies, F	Sgt	5111940	MM	02/03/1945
Rose, JT	Sgt	4105026	MM	02/03/1945

159 Inf Brigade 11th Ar Division 2 Canadian Corps		Date recommendation passed fwd 9 Mar 45
Schedule No. (To be left blank) Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt		Received passed
Rank & Army or Persl No. Private 14441519		Brigade 1 MAR 45 26 MAR 45
Name ANDOW James Walter		Division 17 MAR 45 14 APR 45
(Christian names must be stated)		Corps APR 17 APR 29
Action for which commended (Date & place of action must be stated)		AND 30 APR 1945 12 MAY 1945
<p>On the afternoon of 1st March 1945 Pte Andow's platoon was attacking enemy defensive positions South of UDM (MR 9840 Sheet 1710, 100). His section of which he was the Bren gunner, became pinned down in open ground by heavy and accurate fire from three Spandau - one firing from the upper window of a farm house to their front, and two from a wood to their Right Flank. Heavy casualties were being suffered and Pte Andow immediately brought his LMG into action against the enemy spandau to his front, and continued firing until he had silenced it. Throughout this time Pte Andow was exposed to intense fire from the two Spandau on his right, and entirely uncovered by the remainder of his section who were all now casualties. Pte Andow then changed his position and engaged the greatly superior fire power of the two Spandau on his right flank. He kept up an accurate fire on them until the supporting fire of the tanks could be brought to bear.</p> <p>Pte Andow displayed the highest courage and initiative on this occasion, and his resolute handling of his weapon largely made possible the success of the attack.</p>		<p>Recommendation Honour To be forwarded left blank</p> <p>M. M. (Immediate) Lt. Col. Comd 1. Hereford. (or Turner Cain)</p> <p>B. B. (Brig.) Comd 159 Inf Bde.</p> <p>M. M. (Maj. Genl.) Comd 11 Armd Div.</p> <p>(G. G. Simonds) Lt Gen Comd 2 Cdn Corps Apr 45</p> <p>H. D. (C. C. C. in-C.) First Canadian Army.</p> <p>36705 P.T.O. 815</p>



Pte Andow is presented with his Military Medal by FM Montgomery

(1299) Wt. 10520/1885 240,000 5/44 FHD Gp38/10. Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward 9 Mar 45
Received 10 MAR 45
Passed 26 MAR 45

159 Inf Brigad. 11 Armd Division 2 Canadian Corps
Schedule No. Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt
(To be left blank)
Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Lieutenant 258300
Name BERRIDGE Frederick David
(Christian names must be stated)
30 APR 1945 7 MAY 1945

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
During the afternoon of 1 Mar 45 the platoon commanded by Lt Berridge was attacking enemy positions SOUTH of UDEM. The leading section was pinned down in open ground by heavy and accurate machine gun fire from their front and right flank. All but one man were killed or wounded. Lt Berridge went forward to see the position for himself, and tried without success to signal to his supporting tanks. He then crawled 100 yards under intense fire to the nearest tank, and successfully directed its fire on to the enemy position that was holding up the advance of his platoon. In the meantime enemy shelling had commenced in the immediate neighbourhood of this platoon. Nothing daunted Lt Berridge collected the remainder of his platoon and cleared the area of enemy, capturing 20 prisoners and the machine guns which had held him up. Lt Berridge's prompt action and complete disregard for his own safety undoubtedly ensured the complete success of the attack. Throughout the operations on this day this officer's gallantry and leadership were an inspiration to his platoon.	<p>MO (Immediate)</p> <p>Lt Col Comd 1 HEREFORD (GR Turner Gain)</p> <p>B. B. Chander</p> <p>Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde</p> <p>Maj Gen Comd 11 Armd Div</p> <p>(G G Simonds) Lt Gen Comd 2 Cdn Corps</p>	<p>M.C.</p> <p>35833</p>	



Lt Berridge is presented with his Military Cross by FM Montgomery

In lieu of AFW 3121.
 Da recommendation passed forward 9 Mar 45
 Received Passed
 Brigade 10 MAR 45 26 MAR 45
 Division 27 MAR 45 14 APR 45
 159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division. 2 Canadian Corps
 Schedule No. Unit 1st Bn The Hertfordshire Regt
 Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Corporal 5618324
 Name GREEN Leslie Ernest
 (Christian Names must be stated)
 Action for which commended
 (Date & place of action must be stated)
 Recommended by
 Honour or Reward (to be left blank)

On the night of 1/2 Mar 45, "D" Coy was the leading Coy in a combined Inf/Armour attack with the object of breaking the SCHIEFFEN defence line at 9237 Sheet 4303. The Coy reached the forward edge of their objective about 1 a.m. 2 Mar 45, and was met by considerable SA fire from at least five MGs. The Tanks were met by well sited & tk defences and it was impossible to advance further. Almost the first burst of MG fire shot away two fingers of Cpl Green's left hand. He bled then up and said nothing of the incident until day light. Between 1 a.m. and daylight, Cpl Green and his Sec had the most responsible task of remaining out as a covering patrol to contain the enemy while what remained of the Coy was withdrawn to a more suitable consolidation position and dug in. At about 5 a.m. Cpl Green and his Section were withdrawn to dig themselves in within the Company locality.

M.M.
 Lt. Col. (Immediate)
 Comd 1 Hereford.
 (GR TURNER GAIN)
 J.B. Hunter Brig
 Comd 159 Inf Bde.
 M.M.
 Maj Genl
 Comd 11 Armd Div.
 P.P. Jones Lt. Gen.
 Comd 2nd Canadian Corps
 Apr 45
 W.D. Fraser, Gen.
 G.O.C.-in-C.
 First Canadian Army.
 P.T.O.

M.M.
 D.7.45
 36704
 81A

Despite the intense pain, Cpl Green organised his own sec posn and saw then dug in before reporting himself wounded. This is a very fine example of devotion to duty.

159 Inf Brigade 11 A.D. Division 2 Canadian Corps
 Schedule No. Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt
 Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Major 44411
 Name STARES John William Alfred
 (Christian names must be stated)
 Action for which commended: During night 1/2 Mar 45, the Bn with a regiment of tanks was ordered to break eastwards from GOCHFORTZ feature SE of UDEM (MR 9841 Sheet 4303) with object of reaching the SCHLIEFFEN LINE. Major Stares, Comd 'D' Coy was the leading Coy throughout the whole advance and Major Stares personally led his Coy in the three attacks involved in the operation. At the outset a small wood thought to be held by "friends" was found to contain 20 Germans well supplied with automatics. 'D' Coy's leading section were all casualties in the first burst of fire, and although the remainder of the pl charged the position they were beaten off with heavy casualties. Major Stares with his remaining platoon reinforced by a platoon from 'O' Coy, proceeded to attack and clear the wood, having first organised and controlled the fire of supporting tanks. All Germans met were killed. Farmhouse and orchard close to the route was next found to be held by bazooka and machine gun teams.

Recommended by J.B. Chamberlain
 Lt Col
 Comd 1 HEREFORD
 (GR Turner Cain)
 Brig
 Comd 159 Inf Bde
 D.S.O.
 (To be left blank)

During night 1/2 Mar 45, the Bn with a regiment of tanks was ordered to break eastwards from GOCHFORTZ feature SE of UDEM (MR 9841 Sheet 4303) with object of reaching the SCHLIEFFEN LINE. Major Stares, Comd 'D' Coy was the leading Coy throughout the whole advance and Major Stares personally led his Coy in the three attacks involved in the operation. At the outset a small wood thought to be held by "friends" was found to contain 20 Germans well supplied with automatics. 'D' Coy's leading section were all casualties in the first burst of fire, and although the remainder of the pl charged the position they were beaten off with heavy casualties. Major Stares with his remaining platoon reinforced by a platoon from 'O' Coy, proceeded to attack and clear the wood, having first organised and controlled the fire of supporting tanks. All Germans met were killed. Farmhouse and orchard close to the route was next found to be held by bazooka and machine gun teams.

FIELD MARSHAL
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
 ARMY GROUP

Major

35798

Major Stares took one of his platoons and personally cleared the area capturing a Bazooka team 500 yards WEST of SCHLIEFFEN LINE our tanks came under heavy and extremely accurate A tk fire, and could not advance further, it being impossible for tanks to leave the road. Major Stares took his Coy of two platoons and a section of RE forward to SCHLIEFFEN LINE and was met by fire from numerous machine guns in that line. Using tank tracks for cover, infiltrated his men forward to cover the RE while they checked the road for mines. On being ordered to withdraw to a more favourable consolidation position, Major Stares himself went to each section in turn and brought them away crawling, despite continued spandau fire sweeping the area. By his great devotion to duty and his personal courage the action was brought to a successful conclusion without further casualties.

First Canadian Army
 H. D. G. Crerar, Gen.
 G.O.C. in C.

24. If a casualty as under, fill in date.

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

FIELD MARSHAL

159 Inf Brigade 11th Armd Division 2 Canadian Corps

Date recommendation passed 27 Apr 45

Recd ad Passed

Brigade 10 MAR 45 26 MAR 45

Division 17 MAR 45 14 APR 45

Corps 60 APR 1945 7 MAY 1945

Module No. Unit 1st Bn The Dorsetshire Regt

W/Sergeant 5111940

D A V I E S

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross

(Date & place of action must be stated)

On the night of 2/3 March 1945 "A" Company were ordered to make and hold a breach in the GERMAN defense line SE of UDM.

Sgt Davies Commanding No. 9 Platoon was ordered to force a gap with the object of passing the remainder of the Coy through for consolidation.

On approaching the objective, 9 Pl came under intensive and accurate small arms fire, mortar and barbed wire. The whole of the leading section became casualties. The remainder of the platoon was extremely difficult, as it was a light night and also our men were silhouetted by artificial moonlight. Sgt Davies with complete disregard for his own safety and with a coolness and calmness which completely reassured his men, moved about organising return fire and attending to the wounded. He personally reconnoitred the enemy position and made a plan of their dispositions. During this time, he was no more than 80 yards from the enemy and must have been clearly visible.

Lt. Col. Comd 1. Hereford. (GR TURNER CAIN)

Brig. Comd 159 Inf Bde

Lt. Genl Comd 11 Armd Div

Comd 2 Canadian Corps (G. G. Simonds) Lt Gen

Comd 2 Can Corps

27 Apr 45

P.T.O. 81A

35883

21.6.45

159 Inf Brigade 11th Armd Division 2 Canadian Corps

Date recommendation passed 27 Apr 45

Recd ad Passed

Brigade 10 MAR 45 26 MAR 45

Division 17 MAR 45 14 APR 45

Corps 60 APR 1945 7 MAY 1945

Module No. Unit 1st Bn The Dorsetshire Regt

W/Sergeant 5111940

D A V I E S

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross

(Date & place of action must be stated)

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Lt. Col. Comd 1. Hereford. (GR TURNER CAIN)

Brig. Comd 159 Inf Bde

Lt. Genl Comd 11 Armd Div

Comd 2 Canadian Corps (G. G. Simonds) Lt Gen

Comd 2 Can Corps

27 Apr 45

P.T.O. 81A

35883

21.6.45

49

(1199) W45451/225 110m 1/44 FHD Gp38/10. PERIODICAL Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward MAY 45

Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 8th Corps

Schedule No. 1st Bn The Herefordshire

Rank and Army or Personal No. Acting Sjt (Corporal) 4105026

Name ROSE John Thomas

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

Recommended by: (Signature)

Honour USBA To be (Signature)

Acting Sjt (Corporal) ROSE has commanded a Rifle Pl throughout the period 1 FEB 45 to 30 APR 45 with outstanding efficiency and gallantry. From 27 Feb to 8 Mar 45 the Pl was operating in the area between the rivers MAAS and RUHR against well co-ordinated enemy opposition under very unfavourable conditions. On 8 Mar 45 Sjt ROSE's Coy was detailed in co-operation with a Sqn of tanks to break through defences forming part of the SCHLIEFFEN LINE. The enemy allowed them to cross 200 yards of open ground before bringing heavy and accurate MG and mortar fire to bear on the Coy. Many casualties were suffered and the men were pinned to the ground. Sjt ROSE's example and initiative throughout

11 OCT 1945

Lt. Col (Periodical) (RC FRIPP) (J.B. CHURCHER)

Comd 1st Herefordshire (RC FRIPP)

Comd 1st Arm'd Div

Lt. Genl. Comd 8 Corps

LIEUT-GENERAL. P.T.O. COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.

APU

(1199) W45451/225 110m 1/44 FHD Gp38/10. PERIODICAL Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward MAY 45

Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 8th Corps

Schedule No. 1st Bn The Herefordshire

Rank and Army or Personal No. Acting Sjt (Corporal) 4105026

Name ROSE John Thomas

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

Recommended by: (Signature)

Honour USBA To be (Signature)

Acting Sjt (Corporal) ROSE was an inspiration to all. He organised the evacuation of casualties as best he could and crawled round the sections during his men. The next example of Sjt ROSE's gallantry was on the evening of 3 APR 45 when his Coy was ordered to attack a heavily fortified position in a village of OBEN-BAULERSCHT (Map Ref 1950 055 1.100,000). While advancing through a wood on the approach to the village, the Coy came under heavy spandau fire. Sjt ROSE located the MG positions, and organised his platoon to assault them. He himself manned the pl PIAT, and although himself exposed to the SA fire, scored a direct hit on one of the positions. This speedy and effective elimination of the spandau enabled the remainder of the Coy to push on. Sjt ROSE again displayed his courage and determination on another occasion when a tank on which he was travelling with the rest of his pl HQ, was hit by a panzerfaust and casualties caused. Although himself severely shaken, Sjt ROSE immediately re-organised the pl and went into action to clear the enemy infantry. Not until after this had been successfully completed did he go to the RAP from which he was evacuated suffering from shock and exhaustion.

If a casualty as under, fill in date.

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

LIEUT-GENERAL. P.T.O. COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.

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	