

1st BATTALION THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT – MAY 1945

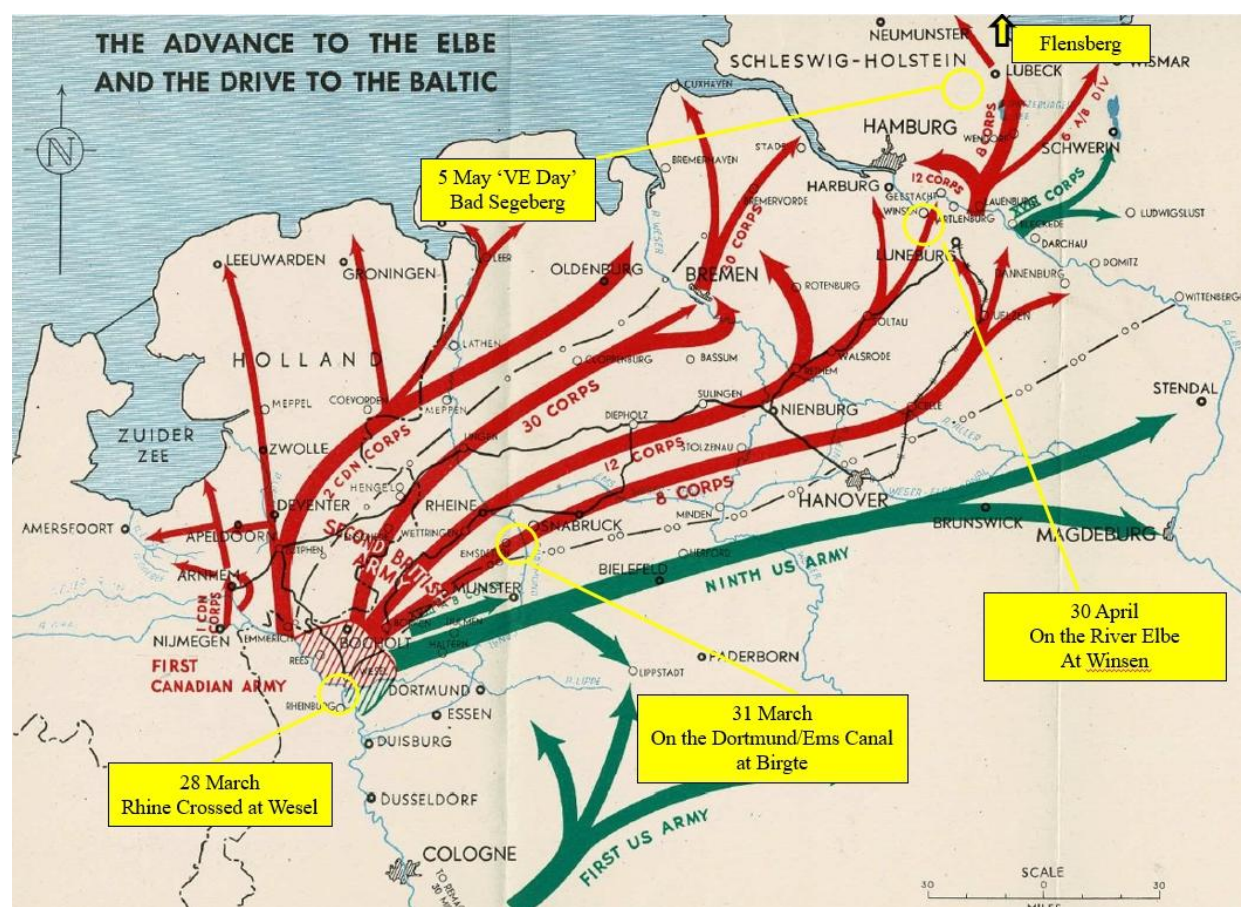
It was clear to everyone that Germany was defeated, but not all Germans accepted this and continued to offer fierce resistance. On 1 May Berlin surrendered to Soviet Forces and the Battalion was to suffer its last battle fatalities; a tragedy being so close to 'the finish'.

After the Surrender had been signed the Herefords moved north to Flensburg; the area was mainly rural and agricultural and has not been subject to bombing or the ground engagements of much of the rest of Germany; this and the generally benign attitude of the local population was well received.

Germany (and indeed much of North West Europe) was still however in chaos, there was no government and a ruined infrastructure, the Allies would have to take control to ensure a degree of security and administration. The Allied Control Commission was established with military commanders being given areas of responsibility. 159 Bde under Brig Churcher was given the Flensburg area.

The role changed from war fighting to almost 'policing', gone were combat ops and in were patrols and check points; gone were 'battle relaxations' of uniforms and in were pressed uniforms and polished boots. There were mixed feelings – but the safety of peace was welcomed but not so welcome was the 'spit and polish', 'bull' and routine.

The end of the month saw the Regiment taking part in Op Blackout – the arrest of Grand Admiral Doenitz and this puppet government.



WAR DIARY

159 Brigade War Diary:

Month & Year: May 45			WAR DIARY	Unit: HEADQUARTERS, 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE (Incorporating HQ 159 Inf Bde Def Pl and L&D att)	Comd: J.B. CHURCHER, DSO Brig	Ref to appdes
Place	Date	Time	Incident			
BLA	1 May		At 0015 the Bde moved off to cross the EISE. The move was slow. Both Bdes once in the bridgehead moved on one route owing to a small bridge collapsing on the 29 Arm Bde route "STERPLE" so all moved on "CHASE". Bde HQ arrived at KOLLO 8144 at 0530 hrs. Units were ordered to have breakfast and at 0630 be prepared to push on. The 15/19 H and 4 KSLI were still back in the LUNSBURG area and were expected to cross about 0900 hrs after the remainder of 29 Arm Bde Gp. The advance continued but was delayed by "Teg" mine laying trouble, craters and some few Bazooka men. By 2100 hrs the advance was halted with the 1 HEREFORD and 3 RTR Gp in GROWWOLD 7764 Bde HQ MOHNSSEN 8255, 4 KSLI and 15/19 H BANTHORST 8157. Approx 300 PW taken during the day.			
	2 May		At 0630 hrs the 15/19 H and 4 KSLI moved off to pass through the 3 RTR and 1 HEREFORD. Progress was good and opposition light. Prisoners of War were plentiful. By mid-day the Autobahn between LUBECK and HAMBURG was severed. PW were pouring in. Entire units were giving themselves up. Quantities of equipment were taken. A train was shot up by the 15/19 H outside BAD OLDESLOE carrying troops from DENMARK and guns for ships. There was also a hospital train in the station. The 3 RTR and 1 HEREFORD took HEIDWELD. Prisoners were being marched back in hundreds. The 29 Arm Bde captured LUBECK with little opposition. They also liberated Ofing 100. All RAF pilots and crews, approx 2000. By nightfall the bde was halted in the area BAD OLDESLOE - REINFELD - REINWISCHDOERF.			
			During the day the div re-positioned itself ready for further advance. During the day thousands of PW gave themselves up. Reports were coming in that the GERMAN Army had been ordered to give up and not fight. During the day reports came in that NEUSTADT, KIEL, NEUMUNSTER had offered to give themselves up. By the end of the day 3 RTR and 1 HEREFORD at BAD SEGBURG, Bde HQ at BUHNSDORF and 4 KSLI 15/19 at BAD OLDESLOE.			
			All during the day thousands of prisoners continued to come into the area. At times entire units gave themselves up. Small parties kept coming into the lines wishing to surrender divs, bdes, even corps. Rumours were ripe of suspected complete surrender. The Col of the Belgian PW Ofers camp was invited to dinner. (Col MOLEN of the Belgian Artillery). At 2100 hrs the HBC announced the complete surrender of the GERMAN Armies against the 21 Army Group at 0800 hrs on the 5th of May. Pockets of the German army continued to fight against the Russians and the Czechs. Orders were received and then cancelled for a move to KIEL. Then fresh orders to move to FIENSBURG.			
	5 May		The day was spent cleaning up. PW still came in in large numbers from Admirals to privates. NO move was ordered.			
	6 May		No move during the day. Routes were given out for our move to FIENSBURG, the town given for the Bde to occupy. Everyone seemed delighted as it is a completely unoccupied town. During the day an ofr and some 20 vehs and halftracks reported to the 1 HEREFORD. The German ofr in command said that he was from a technical school and was carrying a new secret weapon. A guard was put on until technical advisers from 21 Army Gp arrived. The weapon was reported to be in the form of Radar or infra red for night vision. The ofr reported they had knocked out 50 odd tanks for the loss of 3 of their own. It sounds to be an advance on our "tabley" equipment.			
			7 May			

Month and Year: May 45			WAR DIARY	Unit: HEADQUARTERS, 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE (Incorporating HQ 159 Inf Bde Def Pl and L&D att)	Comd: J.B. CHURCHER, DSO Brig	Ref to appdes
Place	Date	Time	Incident			
BLA	7 May		No move during the day. Report from div that Germany had surrendered to all three powers at 0130 hrs. This was reported on the HBC as a rumour but was awaiting confirmation. The pantomime of surrender continued, Generals handing over Corps and districts. Admirals handing over the Navy etc. During the day 8 Corps moved up with 15 (S) Div to their new area.			
	8 May		It was reported on the HBC that the Prime Minister was going to speak at 1500 hrs announcing VE day as today and tomorrow. At the present time the bde is unable to move to its new area owing to the fact that the German High Commanders were organising the handing over of the troops in the area before our arrival. This move is expected any day now. PW cages and collecting points were arranged for stragglers and the general marshalling of civilians. Continual enquiries by civilians, refugees evacuees etc requiring to return home. Enquiries ranging from asking permission to use their cycles to having a baby. The general atmosphere in the area seems to be friendly and relieved the war is over.			
	9 May		The Bde had orders to send recon parties to FIENSBURG. The remainder of the Bde to remain in same location. When the recon parties arrived contact was made with the Burgomaster of the town. After a very short talk it was soon realised that the towns population had doubled owing to refugees, wounded etc. All barracks were full, and all schools were being used as hospitals. The difficulty of finding billets for the brigade was enormous. Conferences were arranged between the Bde Comd and Capt LUTZ and FISCHER, Commanders of the town and many WEHRMACHT officials. Orders were given for the troops to evacuate two barracks, one north of the town and one south, and make camps outside the town. All arms were to be withdrawn and all German troops were confined to billets. Three days were given for the complete evacuation of the two barracks. A conference was arranged for 10 o'clock on the second day to get a progress report. All ships were ordered to 'stand still'.			
	10 May		The recon parties after spending the night outside SCHLESWIG again reported in FIENSBURG. On arrival it was found that the barracks south of the town was not to be handed over because since the conference between the Bde Comd and Capt LUTZ, General JUDL, Chief of German Staff had spoken to SHAEF and explained that the barracks contained all the signals communications of Germany. No action could be taken as the Bde Comd was not in FIENSBURG. Recon parties were continued to find a HQ. The British Naval Representative was contacted and it was suggested that we could share HQs as work as closely as possible. A conference was arranged at the HQ of General JUDL for 1945 to discuss the whole question. It was disclosed that in FIENSBURG were the HQs of all the German Navy, Army and Air Forces. Also the new seat of the Government. It seems that no action has been taken by the British High Command to co-ordinate the Bde taking over the town, and the orders coming direct from SHAEF through a telephone line direct from Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery to the Chief of German Staff. It was reported that the SHAEF mission was arriving any day. The conference at OKW went off with great dignity. All points were discussed between the Bde Comd and Col-General JUDL and Admiral BECKING also Capt LUTZ and FISCHER. The German Gen explained he had asked Gen Montgomery for a boundary around his HQ so that he could continue work without interference. This hindered the Bde considerably said we would not infringe the proposed boundary until it was confirmed one way or the other. Alternative accommodation was found for the 4 KSLI in another barracks instead of the Signal School near the OKW HQ.			
			11 May			

Unit: HEADQUARTERS, 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE
(Incorporating HQ 159 Inf Bde Def Pl and LAD att)

WAR DIARY

Cmd: J.B. CHURCHER, DSO Brig

Month and Year: May 45.

Place	Date	Time	Incident	Ref to Appues
BLA	11 May		Conferences were held all day in readiness for the units moving in. The KSLLI and 1 HEREFORD, 2 Indep MG Coy and Bde HQ coming into FLENSBURG. The 1 CHESHIRE to GLUCKSBURG. The difficulties were undecidable, owing to the overcrowding of the town. Arrangements were made for the gradual evacuation of the troops and Navy. Orders were given out concerning disarming all troops. Curfew, the organised local paper, military government etc each taking time to get moving. During the evening Lt-Col COBBETT, the representative of SHAEF Mission arrived in readiness to moving to the OKW, stayed the night at Bde HQ.	
	12 May		The usual normal conference was held at the Oberburgomasters Office. Representatives of all the German Departments attended and a progress report was given. After the conference a further conference was held at the OKW in the presence of Oberst Gen JUDL when the new government compound boundary was decided upon. Also details were asked concerning the number of troops and weapons in the area. Lt-Col COBBETT was presented to Gen JUDL. He explained his Mission etc and details of accommodation were arranged. During the day reporters and ofrs representing every kind of service in the army, newspapers, broadcasting, field security, internal security, AMBOT etc, each one requiring attention. Capt FINE the Div Interrogator joined the Bde HQ to help solve the organisation of the new camps for the evacuated troops from DENMARK and FLENSBURG.	
	13 May		1000 hrs conference was as usual held in the RATHOUSE. Domestic arrangements were discussed, evacuation etc, coal for the powerhouse, disarmament, food question. Route to be cleared for the entry of 1 HEREFORD. At 1600 hrs the 1 HEREFORD entered FLENSBURG, the first British force to enter the town. The salute was taken in the town square by the Bde Comd with Naval Ofcr Capt Bell Salter, RN and Chief of Staff SHAEF Mission Lt-Col COBBETT in attendance. The Military photographers were well to the front. During the afternoon the Bde Comd visited 4 KSLLI barracks to see progress and then visited the 1 CHESHIRE and 612 Pd Sqn in GLUCKSBURG to see their respective new locations. The situation now seems to be well in hand and all orders given seem to be being carried out in a religious manner. Few troops are seen on the road. No weapons except on the Guards. No steel helmets etc. No Nazi flags. No Heil Hitlers, but army salutes.	
	14 May		The Bde HQ moved into FLENSBURG to their new HQ at the old Police HQ, FLENSBURG. The Union Jack and White Ensign were flown over the building. The band played whilst the guard of the 4 KSLLI was mounted. The day was spent by everyone moving in answering innumerable questions. A report was brought in that the Garrison Commander, Capt LUTJ was accidentally shot last night. The details were being checked by the FS.	
	15 May		The daily conference now being held every other day was held for the first time at the new Bde HQ, the old Police HQ. The town was slowly being evacuated of troops. The death of Capt LUTJ was confirmed and checked by a visit of Bde IO and MO to the German HQ where the body was seen. The full Naval compliment belonging to Capt Bell Salter arrived. The HQ was combined Military and Naval. The Bde Comd and NOIC having offices next door to one another.	
	16 May		Usual dozens of callers came to the HQ including the Corps Comd, The Naval Admiral from KIEL, the Div Comd. Also the German Comd of the area General Count GOLLNICK who is taking comd of the area of FLENSBURG. The FS Sections started arresting wanted personnel, SS personnel, Gestapo etc.	/17 May

Unit: HEADQUARTERS, 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE
(Incorporating HQ 159 Inf Bde Def Pl and LAD att)

WAR DIARY

Cmd: J.B. CHURCHER, DSO Brig

Month and Year: May 45.

Place	Date	Time	Incident	Ref t	Pos
BLA	17 May		Usual callers continued to come. At 1400 hrs a conference was held at Bde HQ. Gen Gollnick and his Chief of Staff being present, also the new burgomaster. During the late afternoon, Lt-Gen Dewey, British Comd in DENMARK visited the Bde Comd. Capt Dobson phoned after dinner to say that he had evidence that Alfred ROSENBERG the Reichsleiter was at the Marine Hospital. The Bde Comd at once visited the 'Patria' where the SHAEF Mission was billeted to get orders. A 'Party' was arranged for the next day to surround the Marine School and capture ROSENBERG.		
	18 May		At 0830 hrs orders were given out to the 4 KSLLI carrier platoon and ofrs for the capture of Alfred ROSENBERG. At 0845 the party moved off. The Bde HQ two Honey tanks, four scout cars and the carrier platoon, Capt W Pinks, 1 Corps att to Bde HQ did all interpreting. The Hospital was searched (RM, Capt Dobson, Pd Security, Capt Pinks Lt Pintot, six MPs) The search was quick and thorough, producing Alfred ROSENBERG with wife and child (in Mrs ROSENBERG's bag were found one pistol and one knuckleduster). Also 20 odd SS troops acting as Red Cross orderlies were taken. Gen Admiral DOENITZ's house was also searched but nothing was found of interest.		
	19 May		Visitors continued to come to the HQ all day. Arrests were made of various SS and Gestapo people. Troops were continued to be sent south from DENMARK and also from FLENSBURG area.		
	20 May		Rumours were continuing to come in concerning the whereabouts of HIMLER. His arrest was on a higher level, no action to be taken by the bde but to be reported to Pd Sec. Numerous arrests were made of SS, Quislings, Gestapo and all other kinds of wanted Germans.		
	21 May		The Bde Comd and RM attended a conference at SHAEF Mission on the 'Patria' concerning the coming op 'Blackout' for the complete occupation of the German Higher Command Compound. (Arresting all concerned etc). The Bde Comd visited the Bde and remained for lunch.		
	22 May		Conferences were held all day concerning the coming op in the German Compound. Orders were given out to the 1 HEREFORD, 1 CHESHIRE and 15619 H, the regts taking part. The Bde Mess was full of visitors. 10s from Army Phantom, Security Officers, ALO's, reps from the Press came in hordes after the big story. The whole world seemed to be centred around FLENSBURG.		
	23 May		At 1000 hrs the operation commenced. By mid-day the OKW buildings etc had been searched, and all Categories for arrest taken. Grand Admiral DOENITZ, Gen JUDL Gen d Def. REINECKE, Gen-maj DETHLEFFSEN, Vice-Admiral BUECKNER, Admiral Wagner, Graf Schwerin von KROISIGK and many hundreds of others. All the leading lights were flown back by DAKOTA with an ofr escort. The remaining Category II were sent to the Castle at GLUCKSBURG and the Category III to Army at LUNEBURG. The tanks of the 15/19 H returning after the operation through the town created a very satisfactory impression on the up to that time 'cocky' populace. Two destroyers entered FLENSBURG waters adding to the picture. The RAF were unable to co-operate owing to weather conditions. Certain troubles were caused owing to the fact of the search and arrests being so thorough, as many German ofrs on Staffs and their records were taken and were required by the FLENSBURG Garrison Commander to continue to organise the demobilisation of troops in the KREIS of FLENSBURG.		

Sheet 5

In Lieu of AF Q2118

Unit: HEADQUARTERS, 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE
(Incorporating HQ 159 Inf Bde Def Pl and LAD att)

Month and Year: May 45. WAR DIARY Cmdr: J.B. CHURCHER DSO Brig.

Place	Date	Time	Incidents	Ref to Appdx
BLA	24 May		The day following the mass arrests brought many hangovers. Certain offrs reporting that they had been arrested with the others and had been searched and had had all their personal belongings taken away, and on being released on not being the wanted categories, were unable to get their belongings back. This also affected certain offrs which had been searched and stripped, belonging to staffs working the FLENSBURG Garrison. Other Category I people were reported still at large. Arrangements were laid on for further clean-ups. During the late evening two old German women reported to the HQ that they had been beaten up by some German soldiers after we had searched their village and found arms.	
	25 May		The 4 KSLI were sent to BUNSTROP just north of HUSBY to collect in all the troops in the village so as to identify the Germans who did the assaulting. By evening all the troops were in the KSLI barracks and the two old ladies identified six men out of the 300 responsible for the action. The six men were put in the goal to await trial. Further arrests of the OKW staff continued.	
	26 May		Visitors still continued to stream in; Press etc. German troops from DENMARK continued to cross the frontier in organised columns averaging 7000 a day. German troops leaving FLENSBURG averaged 2000 a day.	
	27 May		The first full Church Parade was held in FLENSBURG with band including the detachment of the Royal Navy. The Bde Comd attended a luncheon party consisting mostly of vodka given by the Russian Delegates of the SHARP Mission.	
	28 May		The first three troop trains were sent out from FLENSBURG for the South carrying men unable to march to the concentration area. The first football match was played in the stadium between the Royal Navy team and Bde HQ, resulting in a win for Bde 2 - 1. Late in the evening, Lord Haw Haw, alias William JOYCE was captured on the frontier, including Mrs. JOYCE. JOYCE was captured by two Press correspondents who were at the time collecting wood for their billet owing to the shortage of fuel. They were suspicious as soon as they heard JOYCE speak. When they tried to arrest him he put his hand in his pocket and at the same time one of the reporters shot three times, one shot hitting him in the buttocks. He was at once removed to the Fd Amb awaiting transfer to SLESWIG. His wife was detained for the night in the prison of Bde HQ. Both he and his wife put on a brave front of innocence. They had been in HAMBURG then moved to DENMARK via FLENSBURG, then ran out of money and returned to FLENSBURG and remained at the BARNHOF Hotel until the Bde arrived. Their arrest caused great excitement at Corps and Army.	
	29 May		Mrs. JOYCE was sent off by car to Army with an Offr escort.	
	30 May		A bn of SS troops coming through from DENMARK were taken over complete and were sent to the island of SYLT under the 58 Lt AA Regt. The usual hundreds of visitors continued to visit the HQ. The Colonel Commanding the DANISH Bde doing frontier duties came to dinner with his staff.	
	31 May		Little activity reported. A few cases of people disobeying curfew. These when caught were arrested and kept in the Police cells for the night and their names sent forward for trial by Military Government in the near future.	

The Battalion War Diary

ONE ORIGINAL

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs. Vol. 1. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2119. If this is not available, and for intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

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

Army Form C.2118.
Unit: 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt. at
Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp DSO.

Month and Year: MAY 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Kollow.	1st.	0500	Bn. arrives Kollow, orders to proceed with minimum delay through Schwarzenbök 8248.	
		0630	Hfd. group start advance. Mines encountered at intervals in road from X rds. 808500 to Havehorst 8152, knocking out 3 tanks and one carrier, causing cas. to bn. of 3 O.R.'s killed and one officer wounded. (Capt. Curtis, 2 i/c "A" Coy.)	WAR DIARIES SECTION No. 10000 G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon
		1230	Halt at Besthorst 8156 to allow R.E.'s to clear mines and time bombs from C.L. Various prisoners collected, most of them giving themselves up, and chiefly from 245 Eng. Bn. 245 Div.	
		1430	Advance continues to Hamfelde 8059 and Trittau 7780. Slight opposition met in latter town and artillery stonk laid on key cross rds. Enemy a/c attempted to bomb and strafe column. Small no. of enemy met South of Gronwold....	

WL-7724/988 4,000,000 242 W.H.A.S. 81/5075

TWO

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2118. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required).

Army Form C.2118.

Unit 1st Bn. Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp D.S.O.

Month and Year... MAY 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Gronwald	1st.	1430...	(cont....) NIGHT (1x88 K.O'D) and Bn. took up positions in this town. During day 300 POW taken. Total cas. 3 O.R.'s killed 7 - 8 O.R.'s wounded. One officer wounded.	
	2nd.		KSLI Gp. passed through early A.M. and captured Bad Oldesloe 7482	
		1200	Hfd.Gp. advanced to capture Reinfeld 8145. Route. Schenberg 7868. Eicheide 7672, Stubben 7874, Gr. Boden 7977 Rethwischdorf 7880, Frauenholz 8081, Reinfeld 8185. At Rethwischdorf many POW's taken, mainly from local AA units and also wounded making their way from the Russian front to Hamburg to seek medical aid. Reinfeld captured with little opposition, and large numbers of Germans gave themselves up. Town was held by an R.A.D. unit who "Downed weapons" Approx 2,000 P.O.W.'s taken during the day and night from various Wehrmacht, and Luftwaffe Units.	

WL 47754 998 2,000,000 8/45 W.H.A.S. 81,8275

THREE.

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Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Lt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp D.S.O.

Month and Year... MAY 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
REINFELD.	3rd.		Two German POW selected from yesterdays batch were placed on one of the leading tanks to effect the surrender of Bad Segeburg.	
		0800	Hfd.Gp. moved and surrender of Bad Segeburg effected at 1110 hrs. Slight mopping up necessary in outskirts only. The town sports ground was selected as a POW collecting point, and all Germans in services directed to it. Many thousands eventually made their way to the field during the day and night.	
BAD SEGEBURG	4th.		Collection of POW's continues unabated all night and all day and again many thousands pass through. "B" Coy. area clear wooded area NW of Segeburg and effect the surrender of a complete LAA unit with its equipment. Bn. maintains same positions with control points on all roads. Stand still order to 21st. Army Group and un-conditional	

WL 47754 998 2,000,000 8/45 W.H.A.S. 81,8275

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Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st. Bn. The Herefordshire Regiment

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp DSO.

Month and Year.....MAY 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
BAD SEGEBURG	4th.	(cont...)	surrender in NW Germany to be in force from 0800 hrs	
	5th.		10 REINFORCEMENTS TO THE BN.	
"	5th.	0800	Germans surrender unconditionally in NW. Europe.	
			Bn. maintains same positions and control points.	
			POW collecting pt. cleared of all Germans and the former	
			Army Major for the town - Major Chlebrushe placed in	
			charge of any further remnants under Bn. supervision.	
"	6th	1000	Church Parade.	
"	"	1100	Battalion March past. Brigadier J.B. Churcher DSO taking	
			the salute.	
"	7th.		15th. Scottish Div. pass through to occupy Kiel and	
			canal area. End of European War announced.	
"	8th.		V-E Day celebrated.	
"	9th.		Nothing to report.	
"	10th.		Deputation from Russian civilian camp at Wahlstedt 6298	

WL 20624 5632 1,220,000 9/44 W.H.A.S. 51/2/74

FIVE

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Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st. Bn. The Herefordshire Regiment

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp DSO

Month and Year.....MAY 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Bad	10th	(cont)	...reported a shooting incident in the village on May	
Segeburg.			the 8th. ^{WHEN} which some Russians were shot by German Wehrmacht	
			personnel. Investigation proved this report to be correct	
			and six bodies of Russians were found. The German villagers	
			were made to collect the bodies and dig the graves, after	
			which the Russians buried their dead. A full report of the	
			incident, together with names of persons suspected to be	
			responsible for the murders, was forwarded to Field Security	
			Police. The Russian D.P. and POW camps were afterwards	
			visited by an officer every 12 hours.	
"	11th & 12th.		Nothing to report.	
"	13th.		Bn. moved to occupy Flensburg, Route Neumunster 4751	Appendix A(1)
			Rendsburg, 2636, Schleswig 2663, Flensburg 2294 was reached	
			during the afternoon, the Brigadier taking the salute in	
			the town square as the motor vehicles passed through.	

WL 27724 988 2,000,000 8/42 W.H.A.S. 51/5/72

SIX

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st. Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.C. Fripp.

D.S.O.

Month and Year May 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Flensburg	14th. & 15th.		Battalion settles in Grenzland Barracks. All Germans with the exception of 12 retained for maintenance duties quitted the barracks.	
"	16th.		Training commences. C.O.'s policy to train young soldiers over age service group 25 in specialist roles and to prepare old soldiers under that group for their civilian posts. For this policy to be carried out, men were posted to "S" and "H.Q." Coys. for training in specialist roles leaving the rifle Coys. of relatively low strength. Great stress was to be placed on sporting activities on an organised basis.	
	17th.		Nothing to report.	
	18th.		Nothing to report.	
	19th.		Nothing to report.	

W. 30591 5029 1,220,000 9/44 W. H. & S. 51/9-74

SEVEN

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Unit 1st. Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Fripp. D.S.O.

Month and Year May 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Flensburg	21		The Brigadier inspects the barracks. Meyn. 0993 and Meynfeld patrolled by area patrol.	
	22		Schafflund 9306 patrolled. 405871. THE ROBERTS. H. of 'C' Coy AWARDED C.I.C.S. CERTIFICATE.	
	23		Operation Blackout - the object of which was to liquidate the puppet German Government formed by Admiral Doenitz, with the 15/19 Hussars and the 1st. Cheshire co-operating.	
	0930		Phase I. The Bn. moved off, and divided into two groups. (1) The CARRIER section followed by "A" and "C" Coys. in T.C.V's and Command Post moved up the Flensburg Glucksburg Rd. via Flensburg 245953 and halted with the head of the column at road junc. 249961. (2) "B" and "D" Coys. in T.C.V's moved up the coast rd. from Flensburg to MURWIK 246964 and halted at rd. junc. 246962.	
	1000		The Bn. was ready and in position.	
	1005		The Bn. received the order to commence.	

W. 30591 5029 1,220,000 9/44 W. H. & S. 51/9-74

EIGHT
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I.
Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F.
C.2119. If this is not available, and for
Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be
prepared in manuscript.

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

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit.....

Commanding Officer.....

Month and Year May 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Flensburg	23	1005	Phase II "D" Coy. moved to seal the South and South West escape ways at 248964 and 249965 ^{WHILE} whilst "B" Coy searched the buildings at 249964, and "C" Coy sealed the road from the coast at 249969 to 253966 whilst "A" Coy searched Admirals Doenitz house and the marine barracks, also hospital at 253970. The 15/19th. Hussars sealed the S.E. corner of the area and the corner ^{POINT} remained in reserve. Command Post and the prisoner collecting were at 253966. The Germans were taken by surprise and the operation was successful, a total of 756 prisoners were taken, among whom the following were the most important:- Grand Admiral Doenitz Admiral Lindeman, Korv.Kpt.von Krosig, Min.Rat.A.D.Stellrecht Min.Rat.Seifort, Oberst.i.G.Wirsing, Oberstlt.Antonius, Gen.Lt.Thomake, Major i.G.Heich, General Major Scheffer.	
"	24th.		Nothing to report.	

W1.30591 3802 1.220,000 9/44 W.II.A.S. 61/9.71

NINE
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I.
Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F.
C.2119. If this is not available, and for
Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be
prepared in manuscript.

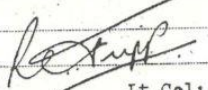
WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt.Col. R.C. Frupp D.S.O

Month and Year May 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Flensburg	25		Town patrols arrested 12 German military personnel for being on the streets without passes.	
"	26		Nothing to report.	
"	27		159 Inf. Bde. held a thanksgiving service at the Garrison Church, followed by a march past, with the Brigadier taking the salute.	
	28		Nordhackstedt 0591 patrolled. One German arrested in Flensburg for not observing the curfew.	
	29		Hemp 9201 Reistriek 8801, Proding Forst 0994 patrolled.	
	30		Langerau 0372 patrolled. 15 REINFORCEMENTS TO THE BN.	
	31		Lindwith Forst 0787 patrolled.	
			 Lt Col: Cmd 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt	

W1.30591 3802 1.220,000 9/44 W.II.A.S. 61/9.71

Across The Elbe and The End Is In Reach

Wardman - Everyone knew that the end was near as we drove towards Lubeck the German Luftwaffe making it last effort by trying to machine gun us as we travelled on; we later found that they were flying their jets off the Hamburg Lubeck autobahn and concealing them under the roadside trees when they were not flying.

On 27 Apr the Battalion had been relieved by 8 RB and had pulled back to Rottorf to regroup with 3RTR. There they 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 Kellow 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 passed on to Haverkost where 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 Trittau 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!

Wardman - We finally captured Lubeck complete with many ex prisoners of war and thousands of surrendered German troops. Lubeck was later handed over to another division as we were to proceed North towards Denmark - were we can liberate Denmark?

The following day, 2 May, the KSLI Group entered Bad Oldesloe which surrendered without resistance. The Battalion Group headed for Reinfeld and soon it was realised that something had happened to the German Army. By this time the enemy had downed weapons and were surrendering by the 1000. The roads were blocked by columns of them, moving aimlessly about. Bde and Div PoW cages could no longer cope with them and that evening the Battalion cage was a site for tired eyes. Platoons and sections sent out on patrol came back escorting batches of 200 to 300. The farmyards originally selected as a PoW cage soon became inadequate. Other arrangements were made by nightfall, the area was a seething mass of milling field grey, interspersed with the khaki brown of Todt workers and Hungarian uniforms. The situation had just been got under control when a platoon of C Coy marched in a column in single file a mile long. This was headed by an odd assortment of miniature tanks, horse drawn lorries and German service women. The officers were segregated and put in charge of sections and the tanks lit up the area with their search lights to assist our sentries in patrolling the perimeter.



Men of The Herefords on the tanks of 3RTR stand guard on the autobahn on 2 May

The following day the group pushed on to Bad Segeberg leaving behind an escort to march the prisoners to the Bde cage which was established nearby. Bad Segeberg surrendered by telephone without opposition! The companies took up positions where they were to remain for the next week.

Wardman - We entered Bad Segeberg and here we were told to stop, but prisoners still wanted to surrender: I myself went with my carrier platoon to take the surrender of an ack ack regiment and found myself also receiving the surrender of first the German army riding school from Hanover with all their horses then a brigade of Hungarian mortars followed by a Luftwaffe division and finally a convoy of supplies, rations petrol and ammunition which were on their way to the Russian front this convoy had no idea that there had been cut off by our division so fast was our advance.

The town sports ground was established as a PoW collecting point through which many thousands passed during the course of the week. Convoys of every type of German army and Luftwaffe vehicles were organised and sent away, overflowing with PoWs of every description. Horse drawn columns and marching columns were likewise dispatched, usually escorted by only two or three of our own soldiers to show them the way.

There were still some (after the event) amusing incidents as recalled by Bob Price:

We were clearing a very large house we taken our bren gunner with us for that little extra firepower in case it was needed. We just entered a beautiful room on the ground floor with oak panelling and luxurious carpets on the floor when suddenly a white telephone on a small polished table behind us started to ring. It was so unexpected it made us jump Simo our bren gunner swung round and with a short burst of fire blew the telephone off the table shattering everything in the line of fire. It was just an instinctive reaction but certainly made a mess of the telephone and the table it was on! The lower floor cleared we climbed the marvellous oak staircase to the gallery which ran around three sides of this large hall and started checking the rooms. In one of the bedrooms we found a well dressed woman probably in her late 30s. We took her with us and checked the remaining rooms. One was locked which she arrogantly refused to open. Simmo cocked his bren pushed her against the wall with the muzzle pressed under her chin. She opened the door! Hiding inside the room we found a German officer he didn't resist capture and came quietly. The woman broke down and cried when he was marched down the staircase. I happened to glance out of the back window before leaving the

room the courtyard was full of German soldiers. I nearly had a fit. By the time I got outside the German officer in charge had surrendered to our Company Commander. Not a bad afternoon's work 20 guns captured and 500 prisoners taken a foretaste of the thousands that were to come.



The advance to Lubeck – Herefords ride on 3RTR's tanks

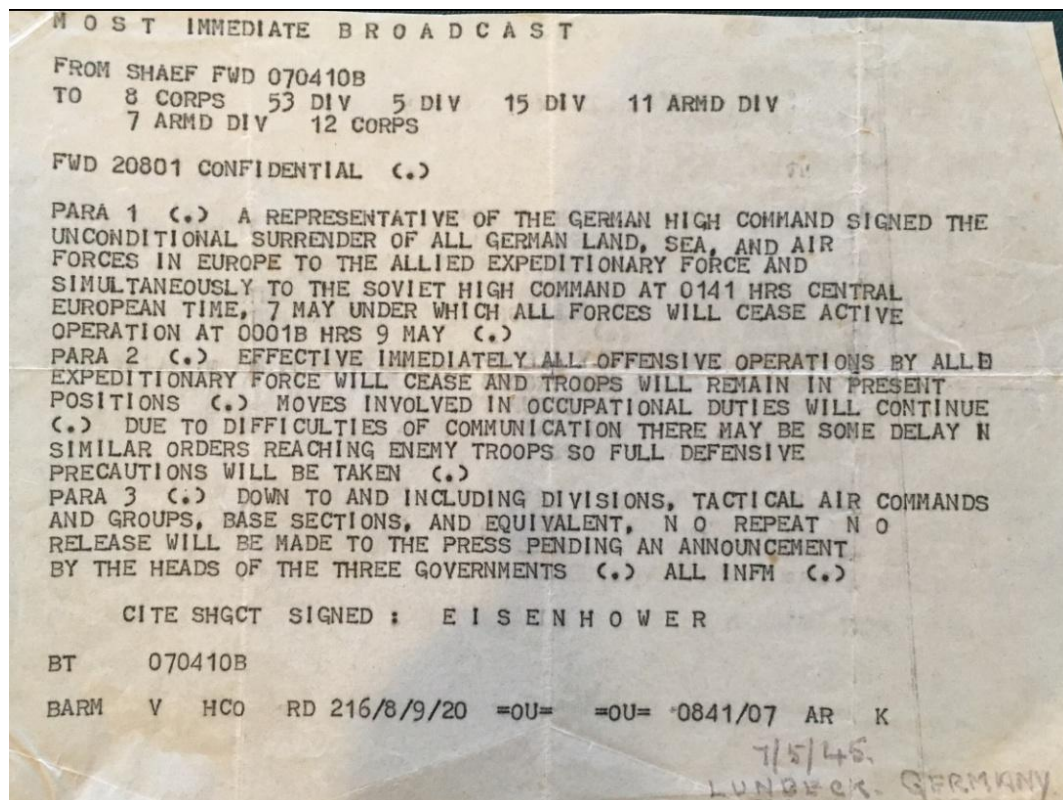
Seemingly surreal events were happening:

Price - down the road from the north German soldiers began to arrive some walking and some on bicycles in fact every form of transport you could think of. Next to company headquarters on the other side of the road was a very large field we began shepherding them into this field there we lined them up searched them then moved them to the other end of the field ready to be moved on to the prisoner of war camp; this went on all day I never thought I should live to see the day whole German divisions surrendered to us. In this way that evening ten of us marched 10,000 German soldiers about 12 miles to the nearest stockade; I remember walking along at the head of my 1000 strong column having a discussion with the German officer about the war and its consequences. He also asked me if it was true that Hitler was dead. We were tired out after a rather hectic but memorable day.

The following day we heard that a German armoured unit wanted to surrender but would only surrender to 3rd Royal Tank Regiment so we waited rather intrigued. Apparently they'd fought against a 3RTR in the desert. Eventually a small convoy of trucks and half tracks arrived and assembled in our field what surprised us was that they were still fully armed and formed up in a defensive circle like an old western wagon train. We had to put a guard on the field throughout the night I think I must have been the first British soldier to do a guard with a fully

armed German soldier. What a bizarre situation nevertheless we got along fine. I found out his main interest was popular music and the American big bands. We ended up walking up and down the road singing all the latest songs much to the consternation of the platoon Sergeant. We were wondering why this unit was so special apparently they had a secret night vision sight fitted to their guns. This was a valuable capture for us I think the Germans' main concern was that the night sight did not fall into the hands of the Russians.

At 0800hrs on 5 May the German forces in North West Europe surrendered unconditionally. To the troops the end of the campaign was not unexpected but still came suddenly. They could not relax until the issue had been sealed, signed and delivered. The last few days were anxious days, for odd fanatical snipers continued to cause casualties and nobody wanted to be killed in the last throw. Even so this did not interfere with the nature of duty and every man gave of his best until the bitter end.



Everybody took some part in the VE Day celebration but the occasion was not so joyous or spontaneous as one might have expected. There were ample wine stocks within the Battalion and many were in convivial mood, but it was not the glorious climax it might have been. The effect of the strain of 12 months continuous fighting could not be banished by one single event, momentous so it might be.

Bob Price reflected; yesterday we were being shot at today it was all over. It was just unbelievable. I'm afraid we went a little mad for a time. Someone found a pony and trap and we took it in turns to have rides up and down the road. We were like kids having donkey rides at the seaside. The serjeant major tolerated our mad hour but it soon became obvious we'd still got work to do. That evening after a lovely sunny day, the whole platoon sat eating our meal together, looking around at this happy group, I suddenly realized that I was the only one left from the original platoon that had landed in Normandy 11 months before. I tried to remember all those missing faces, but found it very difficult; I must admit to shedding a tear and feeling a little sad.

The Battalion consisted of 800 individuals and they all required their individual cure. It was VE Day and its immediate significant was no more bombing and shelling and that in itself was a pleasure. The lake by which we were sitting provided a picturesque setting for the firework display, comprised of very lights and 2 inch mortar flares, which was given in honour of the occasion. However there was still bitter fighting going on in the Far East and that the men knew they could be part of the force to be sent there.

Very soon it was realised there was still a tremendous amount of work to be done. First of all rounding up and marching the hordes of surrendering enemy, followed by the collection and destruction of war equipment.



The Hereford 'Rounding Up'

The disbandment of the armed forces and sorting them into their various categories was not our job but we had to provide guards and escorts. Immediately we became an occupational force instead of a fighting force and the whole outlook changed. Until the military government organisation was functioning correctly we had to sort out a mass of civilian complications ourselves. Apart from the German army and civilian problems there was the everlasting vexation of Displaced Persons (DPs). Followed by their repatriation. Trouble broke out in many of their camps where we endeavoured to restore and maintain order.

On Sunday 13 May we made our last operational move to occupy Flensburg in the north of Schleswig Holstein.

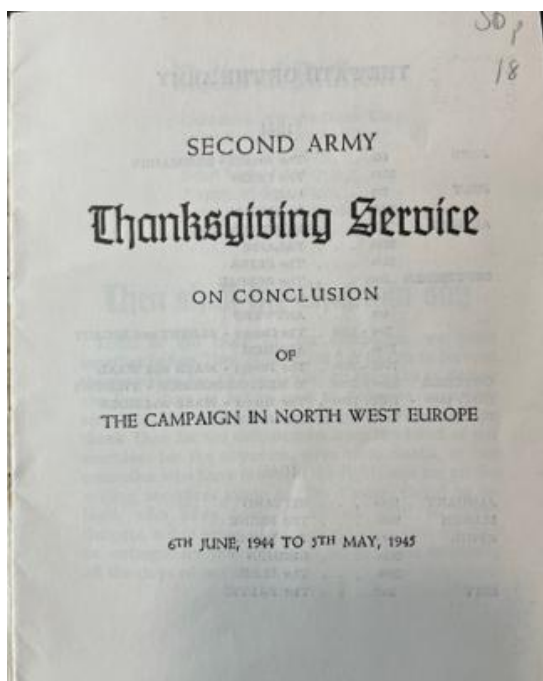
As Brigadier Churcher recalled in his memoirs: on the morning of the 10th of May I drove into Flensburg. The situation to say the least was bizarre. The streets were crowded with German staff cars filled with German officers. German army buses lurched through the town. The docks were patrolled by German naval and military police fully armed. The Luftwaffe was still in charge of the airfield. Flensburg and its environs were crawling with 60,000 German troops who had escaped the roundup further South and who were now occupying every barracks and building they could get into. There was no room for us. Flensburg itself was the last Nazi bolt hole. From the North Sea to the Baltic the Danish frontier was closed. Flensburg was a trap from which the only escape short of a breach of the surrender terms was diplomacy and guile - these were now being tried.

Here we took over an up to date Wermacht barracks and quickly set about resettlement. Individual taste in mufflers and uniforms was the first thing to go and all had to conform with a more standard pattern of dress. It was surprising how quickly creased battle dresses and polished boots replaced the less orthodox turnout and soon a high standard of appearance was reached. As an occupying force amongst the military nation it was essential to create a good impression and the men responded loyally. They realised that this regrettable sacrifice of individual taste was all for the common good and proved themselves to be just as efficient and smart under peacetime conditions as they had been in battle. After a few week things had begun to take shape and the policy for the control and occupation of our allotted Battalion Area Of Responsibility (AOR), together with our own internal policy, had been laid down.

After the German collapse on the 4 May 1945 Admiral Doenitz, who had been nominated by Hitler as his successor, formed a puppet government with which he intended to carry on the government to Germany. At first this was considered a convenient arrangement by the British authorities, as the country was in such a state of chaos that it was considered only the Germans were capable of regaining a certain amount of order. It was soon realised, however, that the Doenitz administration was not particularly efficient and that dangerous elements existed amongst its ranks.

So Operation BLACKOUT was conceived, the object of which was to 'liquidize' the puppet government, and also the OKW (military HQ) administration with a single stroke. The 1st Battalion Herefordshire Regiment was to carry out this operation in conjunction with the 1st Battalion the Cheshire Regiment and the 15/19 Hussars all units of 11 Armd Div.

Each unit was provided with a long list of wanted persons, divided into 4 categories according to their importance. The two infantry battalions were to search for and arrest these people, and the 15/19 were to assist in sealing off the area to prevent any person escaping. An account of the operation is given elsewhere.



Thanksgiving services were held by units and formations, including 2nd Army



A Brigade Parade in Flensburg, the salute being taken by Brig Churcher

VE Day was celebrated in the towns and villages in Britain; there was sadness amongst those that had lost a loved one but the overall atmosphere was one of a party and celebration.

After the excitement of Op Blackout, Battalion activity returned to more routine duties including PoW collection, guarding, 'sorting' and escorting, controlling and supporting crowds of DPs, maintaining local administration and policing. This included patrolling, checkpoints and 'being seen'. It was critical that the Allies 'put on a show' to show their efficiency and effectiveness to give confidence to the local civilian population and to demonstrate to the defeated military their competency. It was important that there was a demonstration that combat had finished – gone was full webbing and steel helmets and the soft General Service (GS) cap worn with just simple belt order webbing.



PoW escorts

There was the opportunity to rest and recover without the constant strain of combat, sports, including swimming in the sea and an element of 'military tourism' – visiting German Army & Navy locations and 'examining' enemy equipment – could all take place. A quantity of Germany 'welfare stores' had been 'confiscated' and were being enjoyed by all ranks!



Military 'tourism'



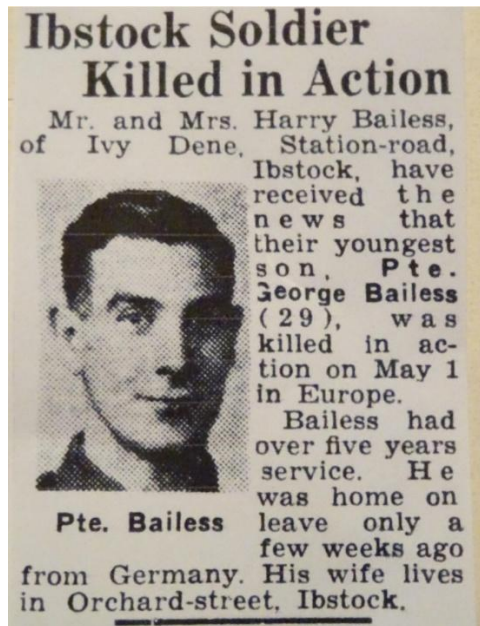
Tug of War at Flensburg

A Brigade band was formed, using The Hereford instruments and regular concerts and parades were undertaken.



Casualties

Name	Initial	Rank	Number	Company	Cause	Date	Location
Bailess	GH	Pte	4105715	HQ	KIA	01/05/1945	Havekost
Bower	GW	Pte	14812536	C	KIA	01/05/1945	Havekost
Buttifiant	SF	Cpl	14703237	A	KIA	01/05/1945	Havekost
Tarron	WE	Pte	4039637	HQ	KIA	01/05/1945	Havekost



Pte Bailess' medals and some other items were purchased by the Museum in October 2024.



Bob Price recalled the incidents involving 3 of these casualties: ... we continued down the road until we came to a small timbered house on the side of the road. The whole platoon went down the short garden path to check that the house was empty we were also looking for something to drink. Tom and I were returning up the path when the Company Bren Gun carrier passed the garden gate. Just at that point there was a loud explosion as the carrier went over a mine. It shot into the air and turned completely over landing upside down. The company commander and the driver were thrown clear but the two signallers sitting either side of the engine in the back were trapped. There was nothing we could do for them. Within a few minutes the vehicle caught fire and a short time after that the small arms ammunition it was carrying started to explode. In battle there are many ways to die and I've seen most but to be slowly burnt to death must be one of the worst. I shall never forget the screams that came from under that vehicle as long as I live, entombed as they were it was 10 minutes before their screams finally ceased. Although the ammunition still continued to explode for quite a long time afterwards. We left the carrier still burning on the side of the road and continued towards our first objective the village of Havekost. After the tragic event of this morning the mood amongst the lads was more subdued this afternoon. We weren't expecting too much trouble in the first two villages the main enemy force was reported to be in the village of Trittau a few miles further north.

GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

The following ^{has} been concentrated here:—
(Name of Cemetery) HAMBURG (OHLSDORF) BRITISH CEMETERY
(Full Map Reference) GERMANY Sh L 54 1/250,000 S 550615
(2 M. N. HAMBURG)

Report No. BAOR/Gono
5489

Germany 16 E 115.

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	H.L.I.	14834021	REID W.T.	Pte	1.5.45	D/W	II	F	8	8.10.46	GULROW GERMANY Sh L 5 1/100,000 835422	19606
2	R.B.	5571014	MEER J.T.	Rfn	1.5.45	D/W	II	F	10	"	"	11279
3	R.S.	14710191	GOULD E.A.	Pte	2.5.45	K/A	II	F	9	"	"	"
4	R.A.	14300236	ARBON A.	Gnr	1.5.45	K/A	II	F	6	"	WAGELAU GERMANY Sh L 5 1/100,000 835445	19605
5	R.A.	912206	HAMPSON A.H.	Gnr	1.5.45	K/A	II	F	7	"	"	"
6	HEREFORD	4039637	TARRON W.E.	Pte	1.5.45	K/A	II	F	5	"	SCHWARZENBECK GERMANY Sh L 5 1/100,000 808500	18611
7	"	4105715	BAILLESS G.H.	Pte	1.5.45	K/A	II	F	4	"	"	"
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												

Date 27.1.47.

(Signed) Heston Col.

Rank & Appointment Army Sec. 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.

The CWGC Grave Concentration report giving details for Ptes Tarron and Bailless, who it is assumed were the 2 signallers whose deaths were described by Bob Price.

Bob Price goes on to describe the circumstances of Cpl Buttifant's death:

We were advancing with one section behind us, one over the hedgerow to our right and the other to the left all travelling in single file. We had been walking about 30 minutes no sign of the village or the enemy. Just to our left we had been joined by a railway track and shortly afterwards the road started to go gradually downhill. This created an embankment on the left and a bank with a hedgerow on top to the right. Our section and the tanks were now travelling down a deep gully. The other sections began to have difficulties with the territory they were walking over so the section on the right climbed down the bank and fell in behind the tanks. Corporal Stan Buttifant leading his section on the side of the

embankment was also finding it more difficult to find a path through the brambles finally his route was completely blocked he couldn't even get back onto the road so they had to climb to the top of the embankment and walk along the railway track this was a fatal mistake. No sooner had the section got on to the track than a shell exploded amongst them. Corporal Buttifant was killed instantly four others were wounded. The survivors were distraught.

Honours & Awards

None

Officers' Plot

See Separate post

ORs' Strength Return

Date	WO1	WO2	CSjt	Sjt	Cpl	Pte	Bglr	Total	Remarks
Establishment	1	7	6	38	72	689		813	
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	
26/05/1945	1	8	6	31	56	734		839	

VE Day in Hereford

A selection of photographs of VE Day celebrations in Hereford







