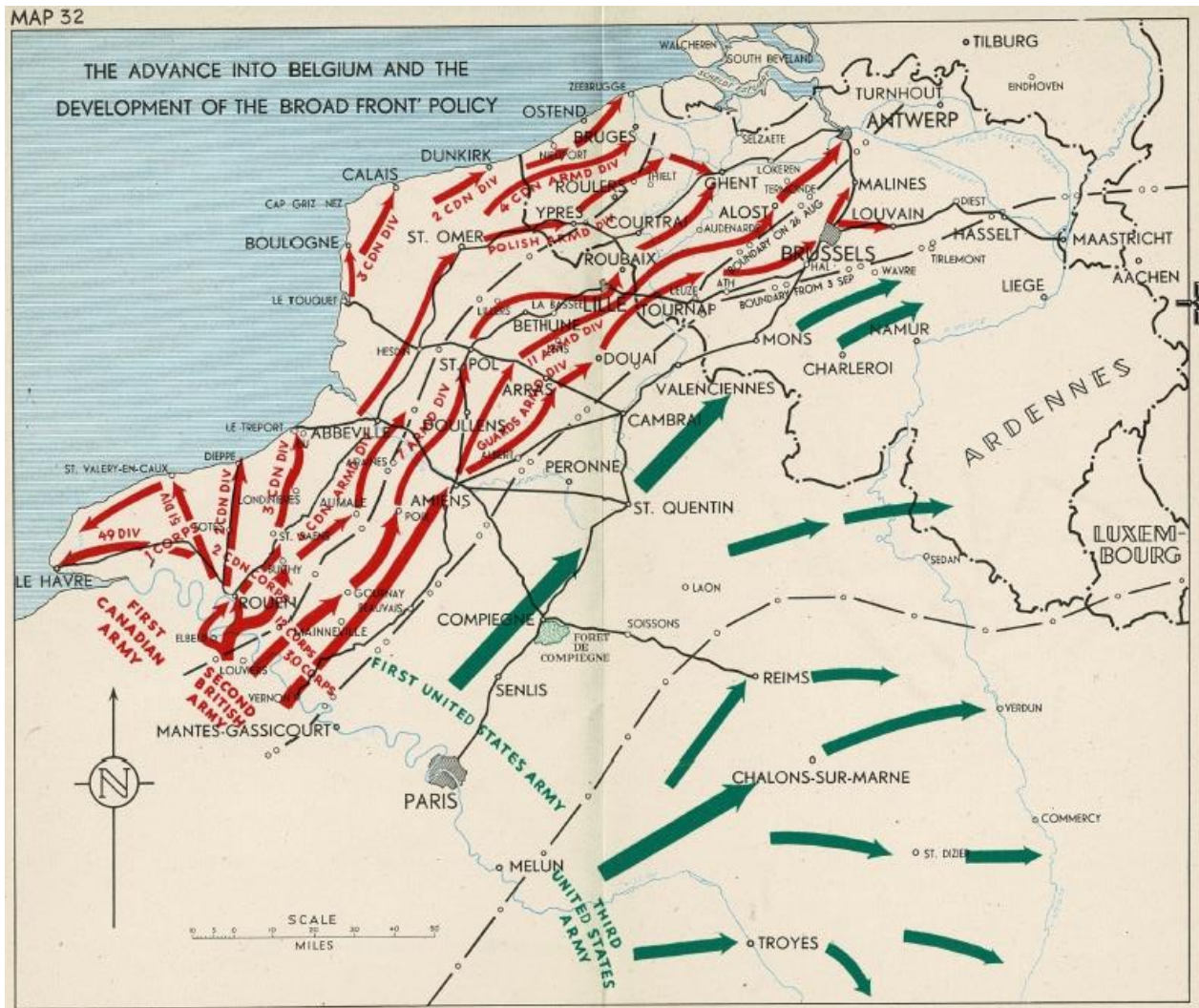


## 1<sup>st</sup> BATTALION THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT – SEPTEMBER 1944

September started with 11 Armoured Division leading ‘The Great Swan’ on the British headlong dash to secure the port of Antwerp. The days went by in a whirl of movement, units scarcely halted on route, when they did it was late into the evening with an early start the next morning. Names of very few towns and villages registered. The Allied advance across France was in full tilt on a ‘broad front’.



One location did stand out was on the night of 2 September when the Battalion spent the night on Vimy Ridge – the infamous World War One battle site which had in April 1917 been captured after a bitter prolonged fight by the Canadians. Brig Churcher had served here during that war and it can only be imagined what his thoughts might have been. As one officer recalled:

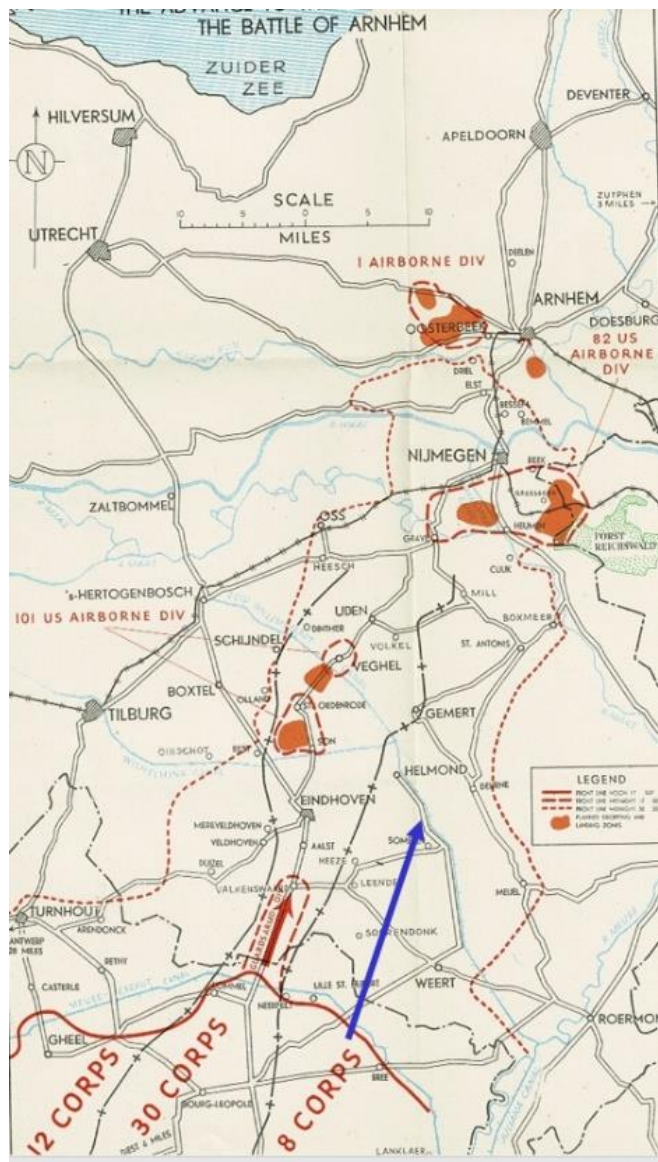
*On 2 Sep the Battalion stopped for the night at Souchez, and 2 companies were despatched to sit at the north end of Vimy Ridge. There we spent a cold and windy night. Two ATk guns were sent up with us and to get them into position on the track reminded one most vividly of the last war. The carriers had a bumpy ride over shell craters so large that one wondered how anyone had ever come out alive. The guns were able to get down into 2 craters that hid them completely. It seemed incongruous that after armies had contested this area for years during the last war we should occupy it with impunity and without fear.*

The dash to Antwerp was successful and the port was captured 'pretty much intact', unfortunately it could not be used immediately for shipping as the Northern shore of the Scheldt estuary remained in German hands and the river approaches were mined and covered by German artillery which prevented their clearance. An extract from a Belgium account at the time says:

*..... never will Antwerp be able to express in full its gratitude to the heroes of 11 Armoured Division (we can now name this unit as the BBC has in its broadcasts) ..... the daring advance by day and night in the utmost secrecy ..... we first learnt of this when the BBC announced British troops had crossed the Seine and reached Beauvais and the capture of Amiens ..... the shouts of joy, the excess of wild enthusiasm that greeted the heroes of 11 Armd Div covered with dust and half dead with fatigue will never be forgotten .....*

### **Op MARKET GARDEN**

September saw the bold strike deep into enemy territory by airborne forces to seize the bridges over the Rhine at Arnhem and open up a route into the industrial heart of Germany – the Ruhr valley. A land route was to be opened up to link up with the airborne troops at Arnhem by a thrust along a narrow route led by the Guards Armd Div. 11 Armd Div as part of 8 Corps, were to move towards Helmond to provide protection on the right (East) flank. Arnhem proved 'a bridge too far' and the audacious operation failed and with it an end to the war in 1944 disappeared.





## WAR DIARY

To help set the scene extracts from 159 Brigade War Diary:

WAR DIARY  
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~  
(Erase heading not required)

Army Form  
Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE  
Commanding Officer *W. Hunter* Brig.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1 and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B.L.A.	1 Sep 44		The Bde moved off at 0830 hrs with the objective the high ground WEST of ARRAS, the Gds Armd Div on our RIGHT directed on ARRAS. The Armd Bde leading the adv, very little opposition was met, many prisoners taken incl the Corps Staff of the 89 German Army Corps.	
	2 Sep 44		At first light the Bde was directed on LILLE area. At midday the Bde was halted outside LILLE with the Armd Bde and Div. Hq on the EAST side and the Inf Bde on the WEST, the NORTH edge of VIMY RIDGE. The halt was called owing to an intended airborne landing in BELGIUM the next day, which did not materialise. Celebrations were on a terrific scale in the town; the local Maquis produced fantastic stories of enemy cols moving in all directions; 99% proved false.	
	3 Sep 44		At first light the Div was directed on ANTWERP on two routes, via TOURNAI-RENNEL. A very slow start but speed increased during the day. Two SP guns and some Inf caused some trouble in the area AT TICHES. One Coy of 4 KSLI and one sqn of 15/19 Hussars stabilised the situation. The rest of the day was similar to the passage of the Royal Family on Coronation Day. The Bde halted WEST of BRUSSELS at 0030 hrs, area KESTRINGHEV 465.	A + B.
	4 Sep 44		At first light the Bde moved off with the objective ANTWERP. By midday the Armd Bde had entered the City. All the population were mad with excitement, giving us an unbelievable welcome. The Inf Bde had more difficulty in getting into the City owing to strong points being manned. An enormous number of people came out to give us a welcome, some to the extent of hindering the adv. An order from Div came through that no guns were to be used on the city. The 3 MON were ordered to take the Decks area, and the 4 KSLI the Central Park in the centre of the town. By midnight, fighting was still continuing, many PW being taken including General Graf von STOLBERG.	

**WAR DIARIES**

No. 1 6 OCT 1944

G.H.Q. 2nd ECHELON

WAR DIARY  
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~  
(Delete heading not required)

Army Form  
Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE  
Commanding Officer *P.B. Chamberlain* Brig.

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.

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B.L.A.	5 Sep 44		By first light the 4 KSLI were firmly established in the centre of the town; mopping up continued. The 3 MON were finding stiff opposition at the bridge, but managed to get some across and pressed on towards the deck area. The 1 HEREFORD were in reserve SOUTH of the town. By evening the town was firmly in our hands, including the deck area and sluice gates, all in good condition. The 2 DEVONS of the 231 Bde, 50 Div came under command; 3 MON in deck area, 4 KSLI making a bridgehead across CANAL, 1 HEREFORD guarding bridges, 2 DEVONS in reserve.	
	6 Sep 44		The 4 KSLI were ordered to cover all the hrs EAST of the town, all hrs having been blown. The 3 MON were heavily engaged in the deck area, 4 KSLI being ordered to make bridgehead across the ALBERT CANAL, by first light they had three coys across the CANAL by assault boats. Stiff opposition was met incl five enemy Mk IV tanks. The task was extremely difficult owing to being under observation. Shelling and mortaring was put down by the enemy. The tanks caused the KSLI a lot of trouble. The Sappers were ordered to build a bridge but owing to fire were forced to discontinue the task. At 1430 hrs the 2 DEVONS sent two coys fwd to help 3 MON to strengthen their pen and in late afternoon a sqn of 23 Hussars were sent fwd through 3 MON with a Coy of the MONS to try to get round behind the enemy causing the trouble to the KSLI. The KSLI still continued to hold their pen, although they were suffering heavy casualties. Supplies and ammunition could not be get across to them owing to continual mortaring and shell fire.	
	7 Sep 44		4 KSLI still held their bridgehead over the CANAL but the situation had generally deteriorated. The MONS in the deck area reported more activity and were able to call for arty fire on the enemy with very good effect. The Div Comd ordered the withdrawal of 4 KSLI to the WEST side of the CANAL. A fire plan in sq was prepared, the Sappers manning the boats and were being at 1500 hrs. The relief was carried successfully without further.	

\*5072. Wt.22601/1492. 2002. 8/42. W/L.P. Op. 856.



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WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Sheet 3.

Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE

Army Form 6

Month and Year SEP 44.

(Erase heading not required)

Commanding Officer *R. Chubb* Brig.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. I. A.	7 Sep 44	(continued)	less, although the three coys had heavy casualties whilst on the other side of the river. The 231 Bde was ordered to take over our pens and the Bde was ordered to take up pens in the Southern part of the town in readiness for a move fwd.	
	8 Sep 44.		The Bde was in its new pen, the day having been spent on maint, make and mend, bathing etc. The men were granted a 2 hrs' leave pass in the town. Reports continued to come in all day from civilians that the enemy was attempting to infiltrate South across the canal in the area WINGCHEM. The town itself continued its ordinary life, only to be disturbed very occasionally by shelling, which was inaccurate and sporadic.	
	9 Sep 44.		The Bde was ordered to move to the area of BEEKINGEN to act as Right flank protection to 30 Corps, whilst the Gds Armd enlarged their br-head. At 1115 hrs the Bde left ANTWERP on the route MECHELIN - LOUVAIN - BEEKINGEN, across the ALBERT canal by the br built by the sappers, and halted for the night at LIMMEN area 2368.	
	10 Sep 44.		The Bns spent the day clearing up woods etc. The Bde was grouped as follows: 3 MON, 4 KSLI, 15/19 H and 3 RTR, the 1 HEREFORD under comd 29 Armd Bde. The Bde took up pens for the night in the area HENSDEN. An attack was arranged on LAAR at 0800 hrs with 3 MON and 3 RTR. Stiffer opposition was met during the day.	C + D
	11 Sep 44.		During the night patrols reported the enemy withdrawing in a NORTH-EASTERLY direction. At 0800 hrs the 3 MON and 3 RTR put in their attack on LAAR but found the village deserted. Again the day was spent clearing the enemy out of woods etc., many PW being taken from Para Battle Groups, Hubner and Grassmehl, all armed by very young soldiers, mostly from Air Force ground jobs. During the evening the DUTCH Bde moved up SOUTH of the Bde area. During the day contact was made with the 1 US Army who were SOUTH of the CANAL with recon patrols to the NORTH of the CANAL and SE of our pen.	

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WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Sheet 4.

Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE

Army Form

Month and Year SEP 44.

(Delete heading not required)

Commanding Officer *R. Chubb* Brig.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. I. A.	12 Sep 44.		The Bde moved fwd protecting the Gds Armd moving NORTH towards the DUTCH frontier. The BCR were reported in HOLLAND during the afternoon. A small pocket of resistance which was reported at the Gds CL, being by-passed by them. This pocket was not cleared up during the day. The Gds were ordered to clear the village at 0800 hrs 12 Sep. 29 Armd Bde and 1 HEREFORD had a fierce battle between HECHTEL and HEICHHEKEN, capturing and killing many Germans, all very young and inexperienced (paratroopers).	
	13 Sep 44.		At 0800 hrs the Gds Armd attack on HECHTEL commenced with arty sp from the 151 Pz Regt, bty Med Regt and the Gds Armd own arty. The Gds had difficulty in getting into the village. A coy of 3 MON and 3 RTR were asked to act as a step-gap WEST of the village. 350 PW were taken, 50% from Battle Group Grassmehl and 50% from the Herman Goering Training Regt coming from UTRECHT. It is estimated that 200 were killed and a hundred odd escaped NE across the CANAL. In the late afternoon Bde HQ moved to a new location at WICHMAREL 3784. 3 MON and 3 RTR HECHTEL, 3483, 4 KSLI area 3977, 1 HEREFORD with 2 FF YEO PERER 4083. The 29 Armd Bde HQ plus 8 RB 3986, 23 H PRUIT BROGEL 4188. The Div was ordered to stay as 30 Corps flank protection in present locations, maint to be carried out, rest and general clean-up.	C, D + E
	14 Sep 44.		Remained in rest area, clean-up, maint, sleep etc - At 1300 hrs on the	F + G
	15 Sep 44.		18th an Airborne landing took place. During the week little took place.	
	16 Sep 44.		On two nights the Bde sent a Bn to BERE to prevent the Bn infiltrating	
	17 Sep 44.		WEST of the CANAL.	
	18 Sep 44.			
	19 Sep 44.			
	20 Sep 44.		The Div was now under comd 8 Corps with 3 British Inf Div, being prepared to act as right flank protection to 30 Corps, to move across a bridge to be built by 5 Br Div with a final objective of railway line KINHOVEN - HELMON D. At 1230 hrs the Bde moved off one route. The Bde Cp	H + I



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WAR DIARY

Sheet 5.

Army Form C. 2118

Unit HQ 159 INFRANTRY BRIGADE

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~  
(Erase heading not required)

Commanding Officer *R. B. Thunke* Brig.

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. L. A.	20 Sep 44	(continued)	consisting of 3 MON, 4 KSLI, 3 RTR, 151 Pz Regt, to move on the RIGHT route, on the LEFT route 29 Arm Bde Gp - 1 HEREFORD, FF YEO, 23 H and 13 RHA. The route was PEER - FRUIT BROGEL - LILLE ST HUBERT across 3 Br Div HQ class 40 br - BELMONT - BUDEL - SOERENDONK. Opposition was met in the villages NE of BELMONT which were cleared by 3 MON and 3 RTR. PW were taken from 10 SS Pz Bn and 21 Pz Grenadier Regt of 10 SS Div, also a mass of SS tps from various battle groups. The PWs report their orders were to withdraw EASTWARDS towards GERMANY. By last light the Bns were in the following positions - 3 MON, 3 RTR at SOERENDONK, 4 KSLI and Bde HQ at DUBE, 151 Pz Regt around NUIE. Main Bde HQ - JUST WEST of BELMONT. In fact the Bde was spread over two countries - HOLLAND and BELGIUM, the frontier being at BELMONT. During the afternoon, the TO 4 KSLI, Capt. Bourdillon, was killed by being blown up by a mine whilst going to look for a harbour area in his carrier.	H - I
	21 Sep 44		Re-grouping was ordered by Div. 3 MON and 3 RTR to come under comd 29 Arm Bde and 1 HEREFORD and 2 FF YEO to come under comd 159 Inf Bde. 1 HEREFORD and FF at first light were in area ZAMEREN 5912, on the edge of the ZUIDWILLEM CANAL. The 4 KSLI and Bde HQ and 151 Pz Regt moved up to the area VAARSEL 5711 just WEST of ZAMEREN, the route being through SOERENDONK - MAARHEKE - LESKOE - HEEZEL. During the afternoon a plan was made for a breach to be made across the canal. A cl 40 br to be built by the Sprs. H hr was arranged for at 1930 hrs, the HEREFORDS making the initial assault with a Pz Regt and Med Regt and 4.2" mortars supporting, to be followed by Sprs building the br, the 4 KSLI and 2 FF to be passed through to ASTEN, followed by a sqn of INNS OF COURT to fan out across the other side and find out the farm. At 1930 hrs the assault commenced and three coys crossed without any enemy opposition. Fire sp was given by the Pz Regt and Med Regt and 4.2" Mortars. At 2100 hrs the Sprs commenced their bridging.	

22293 Wt. 33096/1140 1.000m 12/40-McC & Co Ltd-51-8212 Forms C2118/22

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WAR DIARY

Sheet 6.

ARMY FORM C. 2118

Unit HQ 159 INFRANTRY BRIGADE

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~  
(Delete heading not required)

Commanding Officer *R. B. Thunke* Brig.

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. L. A.	21 Sep 44		At 0200 hrs the HEREFORDS reported that the enemy were infiltrating into their posn. Owing to the darkness and fog it was very difficult to get a clear picture. Enemy were reported all around the breach at 0300 hrs. The sprs reported br 50% completed but had ferried two carriers and two six pdr A Tk guns across. The posn seemed critical at a certain stage as an enemy Coy counter-attacked and penetrated as far as the Canal bank. Later the posn was cleared with continual use of DP tasks. One coy of 4 KSLI was brought fwd to make a firm base of the WEST side of the Canal. At 0730 hrs the br was opened. The 4 KSLI were across the Canal lock-gates before this time and as soon as the first sqn of 2 FF YEO arrived across the canal the posn soon became firm. They pushed out of the village of ASTEN 6113 and by midday the town was held by patrols of the INNS OF COURT were sent out to find the farm. Approx 250 PW taken from 30 Pz Bn and 65 Inf Bn and various odds and ends who had just arrived from BREMEN. The Comds of these units were also taken. By night the Bde took up the following posns - 2 FF and 4 KSLI in ASTEN, 1 HEREFORD tightly holding the two Cl-40 brs (second being built during the day), with the 15/19 H close to the HEREFORDS. The 29 Arm Bde moved to the area ZAMEREN with 23 H and 8 RB in readiness for crossing of the bridge in the morning. The 3 MON and 3 RTR left NW of BELMONT 5522.	
	23 Sep 44		At 0700 hrs 23 H and 8 RB crossed the br with orders to move in the direction of DEURNE. The 4 KSLI and 2 FF YEO continued to hold ASTEN but were ordered to extend to a larger perimeter and push the enemy back. The HEREFORDS continued to hold the br crossing. During the day the 231 Bde from 3 BRITISH Div was moving up to take over but owing to their late arrival and slowness of 23 H and 8 RB, also the 3 RTR and 3 MON, the 231 Bde double-banked our posns, the WARWICKS in ASTEN and 2 KSLI with 1 HEREFORD in the br area. Certain 88 mm and SP guns held up the adv owing to the tks being confined to the rds more than to the actual guns. Little activity took place during the night.	

\*5072 Wt. 22661/1490 300K 8/45 Wt. L.P. Gp. 656



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WAR DIARY

Sheet 1

Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Commanding Officer *J.B. Churcher* Brig.

(Delete heading not required).

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. I. A.	24 Sep 44		The Bde was prepared to push on NE towards DEURNE. The INNS OF COURT sent out patrols to find out enemy strength. The Armd Bde pushed on to VEIRDEN and LIKSEL 6614. Opposition was met all the way. SP guns still continued to put down harrassing fire on the rd between ASTEN and the bridge. Enemy were sending up reinforcements to try and contain the brhead. At 1800 hrs the HEREFORDS and Bde HQ and 151 Pz Regt moved up to the area VEIRDEN 6217. The Armd Bde was in and around DEURNE 6520. A Bn of 3 Br Div and the 15/19 H were in LIKSEL. During the night patrols were sent fwd and reports came in that enemy tpt, half-tracks, tks and SP guns were moving NE from the direction HELMOND - BAKEL and WILHELM.	
	25 Sep 44		At first light the Bde Cps moved off, 23 H and 8 RB moving in a NORTHEASTLY direction; 1 HEREFORD and 2 FF Yco towards HELMOND; 4 KSLI and 3 RTR towards BAKEL. During the day enemy resistance weakened and it was thought that the 180 Div were in the ST ANTHONIS area 7138 with 15/19 H, 4 KSLI, 3 RTR and 3 MON at DE RIPS 6630, 23 H and 8 RB area 6433. 1 HEREFORD and 2 FF YCO and Bde HQ with one Coy 1 HEREFORD and one sqn FF Yco NORTH of GEMET 5831. At approx 1800 hrs the Bde suffered some very unfortunate casualties when four half-tracks belonging to Battle Group HEKKE of 10 SS Pz Div, trying to escape from ST ANTHONIS, shot up an 101 Cq consisting of Brigadier Harvey DSO, MC, his EM, Maj Thompson - both suffering severe wounds, Lt-Col H.G. Orr of 3 MON and Lt-Col Silvertop - both being killed. During the night no reports came in and the Bde remained firm.	
	26 Sep 44		During the night nothing was reported. The INNS OF COURT sent out patrols at first light to R MAAS. The towns BERGEN and BOXMERS were reported occupied by the enemy with tanks and half-tracks and Inf. "Idmejuice" was sent for and accepted for BOXMERS. "Idmejuice" report nothing seen in town but shot up some half-tracks and vehs and Inf to the SOUTH. Soon after the INNS OF COURT	

\*5975. W1.22001/1499. 8/42. W/L.P. Gp. 856.

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WAR DIARY

Sheet 8

Army Form C. 2118

Unit HQ 159 INFANTRY BRIGADE

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Commanding Officer *J.B. Churcher* Brig.

(Delete heading not required).

Month and Year SEP 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B. I. A.	26 Sep (continued)		entered the town followed by a sqn of the 15/19 H. Reports of small encounters came in all day. Certain PW were taken incl an Offr of the 10 SS Pz Bde who reported they had only 10 tks left in the Bde. He pointed out the location of his remaining tks. The Bde remained firm for the night - 4 KSLI and 15/19 H area ST ANTHONIS 7138 - 1 HEREFORD and 2 FF YCO area 7040 with area from GELCO and the centre line SOUTH. Stabding patrols were sent out during the night.	
	27 Sep 44		The Bde remained in present locations, keeping CPs working over-looking the MAAS and calling for fire on likely targets. The Buns, using SPs and 88 mm shelled the area. Our guns were put on counter-bty.	
	28 Sep 44		The Bde remained in present location, INNS OF COURT sending out patrols, the 4 KSLI and 1 HEREFORD manning CPs in BERGEN and BOXMERS. The 15/19 H also patrolling and being a general nuisance to the enemy.	
	29 Sep 44		The Bde was ordered to move back and hand over to 7 Armd (US) Div and cend in area EAST of GEMET. Bde HQ moved at 1600 hrs.	
	30 Sep 44		4 KSLI and 1 HEREFORD moved during the day. Rest and general clean-up was carried out.	
			1. "ADDITIONAL APPENDICES. - INF TRG AS A RESULT OF OPB FROM 30 JULY-10 SEP 44"	
			BY BRIG. J. B. CHURCHER, DSO.	J
			2. AF&W 3003 and 3009 - FIELD RETURNS.	K



The Battalion WD including annotations from Lt K Crockford

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

Army Form G. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner C.M.

Month and Year Sept. 44.

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

WL 57214 899 2,000,000 S.13 W.H. & S. 5148775

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

Army Form G. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. R. Turner C.M.

Month and Year Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
SOUCHER	3	1030	Coln halted 5817 Enemy 800 strong reported area 5725 moving east. 29 Armd Bde engaging them.	
		1230	Adv continued despite more and more rumours from P.W. I. of enemy colms. Those on our route were dealt with, others left to follow up flames.	
		1030	Bn crossed Belgium frontier S.E. of Renaix 8339. Adv continued through the night. Terrific welcome received in every village.	
		4	0615 Bn halted for two hours at Alast 4064.	
ANTWERP	1850	hours	Orders received Armd Bde with KSLI and Bns to move forward and clear Antwerp. 1st Herefords with in sup 15 / 19 H. to protect left flank. Bn formed coys gas to cover left flank and Div C.L. and prevent enemy colms crossing river Bondre.	
		1400	Armd Bde reported 5 enemy coys surrendered. 1 Herefords to move fwd to line of forts south of Antwerp.	
			Arrived outskirts Antwerp, B area 6992. Enemy holding out in small pockets. Bn to clear area south of town 8793	

WL 57214 899 2,000,000 S.13 W.H. & S. 5148775

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Sheet 4  
WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2116.

or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn. Herefordshire Regt.

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

(Delete heading not required).

Month and Year: Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ATTWERP.	4	1956	Operation commenced. Very slow. Thick woods and houses rendered 16 sets quite useless, after 2015 hrs even at close range.	
	5	0030	All coys returned. Enemy A.A. site located and patrol 40 strong engaged, which withdrew after suffering casualties. Own cas 1 killed 2 wounded.	<i>The Patrol Led by 11. German Killed 1 died 2 days later</i>
		0845 hrs.	Bn moved fwd with 2 coys up to clear forts on south and east side of city. Forts used by Germans to store amm and flour.	<i>Sweetwater, Orpington &amp; Pinner</i>
		1315	No opposition met and Bn est in area 6893.	
		2015	Inf. Germans have blown brs over Albert Canal. K.S.L.I. crossing canal and est br head area. Workmen 7199 tonight. Hereford's to cross on orders, area 7296. 3 Mns to pass through K.S.L.I.	
	6.	0430 hrs.	K.S.L.I. across canal. "C" Coy 1st Hereford's move fwd to occupy bridges 699979 and 707962.	
	"	1100 hrs.	Inf. opposition considered too strong. A Brigade of 50 Div moving in to relieve 159 Brigade. K.S.L.I. under fire throughout the day.	
	7.	0800 hrs.	Orders prepared for the relief of 4th K.S.L.I. by 1 Bde, supported by tanks	

WL4721 908 2,000,000 S.13 W. 11 & S. 51/6775

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Sheet 5.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2116.

or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

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

(Delete heading not required).

Month and Year: Sept. 44.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
			Passing through new br-hd. to be captured by 3rd Mns at 6999. Mns br-hd consisted of 2 pls 180 yds in front of defile caused by bridge over canal. This defile covered from both flanks and centre by M.G. Mortars, and A.A.	
		//od.	Order for Bfde to attack cancelled, as br-hd was not sufficiently large enough. Bn. returned to own location 6893.	
		2030 hrs.	Bn. moved to new location S.W. of the town, in Fort area 6594. 231 Bde. of 50 Div. taking over pos'n in North of town.	
	8 Sept.		Bn. now in semi-rest area at 2 hrs notice. Carrying on with maintenance, but prepared to provide mobile coln of 2 Coy's with supporting weapons at 1/2 hr notice. Carrier pl. maintaining patrols every 2 hrs to Welobkon 6292.	<i>met on 1st of 1st</i>
		1325 hrs.	Carrier patrol located enemy posn with L.M.G.'s and 200m. cannons with C.P. in area factory, west of River 623933. Enemy also firing on "B" Coy. from area 662963.	
	9 Sept		11. Armd Div. to move over to right flank. Bn. under command 29th Armd Bde.	
		1915 hrs.	Bn. commenced move.	

WL4721 908 2,000,000 S.13 W. 11 & S. 51/6775



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Chest 6.

Army Form G. 211b.

WAR DIARY  
or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. G.R. Turner O.A.M.

Month and Year: Sept. 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	9 Sept 17h		Crossed over Albert Canal at Beeringen. 234751 over a class 40 br.	
	1815.		Arrived area Helchteren 3475 and contacted Pife & Perfar with whom we were to pivot for the night. Village reported held and Coy's despatched to clear, "A" Coy to North, "B" Coy to S.W. "C" Coy to South, "D" Coy to N.E. A & C Coys little or no opposition and in posn by 20.30 hrs. B. Coy clearing with 1 pl. woods in their locality came under heavy M.G. fire and were pinned down until dark. Coy Commander and 1. O.R. killed. D. Coy met main opposition. Houses on rd, running N.E. held by 2 pls and windmill 150 yds clear of village held by further pl. All posns strongly organized and covered by further enemy posns. in woods to N.E. & S.E. Heavy casualties among leaders and very slow work clearing house by house. Innumerable examples of extreme gallantry by Coy and Sect Comds. Houses and windmill area cleared by dark though close contact with enemy still retained by D, C, & B Coys	* Capt BUNMER
Helchteren 19			Gds Armd Div putting in attack northwards at 0900 hrs. 11 Armd Div to give right flank protection. 29th Armd Bde leading, followed by 159 Inf Bde.	

WL 4754 200 2,000,000 242 W. 11 & S. 51,6875

Sheet 7.

Army Form G. 211b.

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WAR DIARY  
or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Unit: 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer: Lt. Col. G.R. Turner O.A.M.

Month and Year: Sept. 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
			(Continued)	
			1 RFDs in support of 2 P & F Y. Village of Helchteren to be cleared by 0830 for 29th Armd to pass through.	
			0830. Commenced to move fwd	
		1230.	En-counter battle South of Hechtel 3578 (see appx. attached)	
		1330	A Coy and A Sqn F & F Y commenced clearing Heenrik 3783 supported by "D" Coy and "B" Sqn from South. Approx 60 P.W.s taken from village. Remainder Bn. Sp. moved into pivot at 2100 hrs. "C" Coy & "D" Sqn held off the enemy from Hechtel area.	
Heenrik	11	0830	Bn moved fwd to Peer 4184 "A" & "B" Coys with "A" & "C" Sqs cleared village and took up posn East. 1 Coy following up delayed by br at 39484s collapsing. 1 Coy remained in posn in Heenrik protecting soft vehs. The 2 fwd Coys met slight resistance 20 P.W.s taken.	
		1400	Coys in posn East of village.	
		2300	Remainder of Bn arrived Peer.	
Peer	12		Adv halted to enable supplies to be brought fwd. Bn providing 1 Coy with Sup Arms at 1/2 hrs notice. Remainder of Bn. engaged on Admin & maintenance.	

WL 4754 200 2,000,000 242 W. 11 & S. 51,6875

MC  
Major Leake Monthly  
DCM  
A/Cpl Ivor Eversall 'C' Coy  
Pte Douglas Evans (500)  
M.M.  
Sgt Harold Dunn  
Pte Arthur Strick  
Sgt Leslie Raine

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.2118. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

Sheet 8  
**WAR DIARY**  
 or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**  
 (Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Turner-Cai

Month and Year Sept. 44

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	13		Regrouping. 1st Hqs revert to comd of 159 Inf Bde.	
	13		Reinforcements arrived total 31. R.A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. personnel will replace Bn specialists	
	14	1130	30th Corps Comd visited Bn. Introduced to offrs and spoke to reps of all Coys. Paid high compliments to the Inf of 159 Bde which he said made the 11th Arm'd Div the finest he has ever comd.	
	14	1230	Enemy dropped a few mortar bombs in the village area. Gas, 1 G.R. wounded. Bn church, in progress at the time had to be closed prematurely.	
	14	1930	"A" Coy proceeded to Bree 5235. Enemy had been reported to be entering the village at night and shelling up the inhabitants.	
	15	0830	"A" Coy returned. No enemy activity during the night. Bn. at 2 hrs notice as Corps reserve.	
	14		Further reinforcements arrived total 29	
	15	1930	"A" Coy again proceeded to Bree. Enemy reported by Dams of Court patrol this afternoon in that area. "A" Troop of 46th Med. Regt R.A. in sup of "A" Coy.	
	16	0530	"A" Returns again. No enemy activity	

WL 6774 293 2,000,000 2-43 W. H. & S. 51/8375

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Sheet 9  
**WAR DIARY**  
 or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**  
 (Delete heading not required).

Army Form C. 2118.

Unit 1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year Sept. 44

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

WL 6774 293 2,000,000 2-43 W. H. & S. 51/8375



Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in P.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.

Sheet 10.

Army Form C. 2118.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year Sept. 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		1000	Route reported clear. Soft vehicles commenced to move fwd. First contact made with enemy at Leonde. 4807. C Coy cleared and took 5 P/Ws. Adv cont and enemy again bumped and cleared in Heeze 4911 after stiff fight by C Coy. B Coy & B Sqn F&F then ordered to sieze br over Willems Canal area Zomerem 6012.	
Zomerem	21	0015	Br was found to be covered by fixed lines of M.G. and A/Tk fire. B Coy put in attack supported by Arty but enemy blew the br when barrage commenced. Coy withdrew and occupied a posn 500 yds W of br and remainder of Bn formed pivot area 5811.	
		0800	C Coy and 2 Sgns tks moved fwd to recon and capture Boomen br 3815. Br was found to be blown.	
		1400	Bn under comd 159 Inf Bde. Orders issued for crossing canal tonight area 602128, with Arty sup. Object to est br head 500 yds perimeter. When consolidated R.E. to build Class 40 br for K.S.L.I. and F&F to pass over at first light and capture Aston 6113, Zero hr 1930 hrs.	
		1830	Bn H.Q. moved fwd and est W of canal 598127.	
		1930	Arty barrage commenced, A & D assaulting coys moved fwd. Crossing unopposed and C Coy crossed over with only occasional enemy M.G. fire which could not be definitely located.	

WL 47724 908 2,000,000 3-43 W. H. & S. 51/6375

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Sheet 11

Army Form C. 2118.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

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

Month and Year Sept. 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		2100	R.E. commenced Class 40 br.	
	22	0200	Enemy strongly counter-attacked from Aston for three hours. Succeeded in infiltrating into fwd pl posn. Bn H.Q. also subjected to heavy mortar fire and casualties inflicted. Heavy Arty fire was brought down and attacks were held and br completed on time, enemy suffering very heavy casualties.	
		0445	Coy K.S.L.I. moved fwd to est firm base West of canal area of br.	
		0530	Br completed.	
		0700	K.S.L.I. and tks commenced to pass through with arty sup to capture Aston.	
		0800	80 enemy dead and considerable equipment reported by fwd coys around br head.	
		0930	Bn HQ area mortared by Nebelwerfers and fm buildings being used by unit Med Offr and Pd Amb unit were set on fire.	
		1530	Enemy force of coy strenght with A.F.Vs reported approaching from S.E. Later reported broken up by tanks and arty fire.	
		2000	<sup>RIVER CROSSING</sup> Total cas for operation 25 killed and 35 wounded. Enemy attempts at infiltration from South along canal bank were all held by D coy.	

WL 47724 908 2,000,000 3-43 W. H. & S. 51/6375

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Sheet 12

Army Form C. 2118.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**

1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner C.Bain.

Month and Year Sept 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ZOHREH.	22	0730	D Coy cleared east bank of canal with tp 15/19 H.P./as brought in total 20.	
			Identification Fallschirm Jäger Regt HURZER	
			29 Armd Bde passed through to capture DUKER 6520. 3 Brit Div to take over br posn.	
	24	1400	Orders received Bn to move to area N.E. Vlierden 6217.	
		1515	Recco parties left.	
		1630	Bn commenced move fwd and 2 K.S.L.I. (3 Div) moved in.	
VLIERDEN.		2000	Bn formed pivot area 6218.	
	25	0700	Orders received Bn to move to clear Helmond 5822. Wood 6120 to be cleared on route. In sep 15/19.	
		0900	Bn moved fwd.	
			Coy patrols reported Wood clear of enemy and Bn received orders to move fwd and clear Helmond which was reported to be held by small pockets of enemy in the factory.	
		1100	No enemy found in Helmond and Bn moved N.E. to clear Wood 5822	
		1230	Commenced to clear wood with two coys.	
		1400	Wood reported clear and two P/As taken.	
		1500	Orders received to move behind PAF Yeo to pivot in area West of Heide Van Oploo 5635.	

HELMOND

Sheet 13.

Army Form C. 2118.

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.2118. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**

Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.

Commanding Officer Lt Col G.R. Turner C.Bain.

Month and Year Sept 44.

(Delete heading not required).

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
		2000	Arrived posn.	
HEIDE VAN OPLOO.	26	1245	Recco parties left for new location north of St Anthonis. 7138.	
		1430	Bn moved fwd.	
		1530	Arrived and formed pivot area 7040.	
		1930	Coy provided recco patrol of one Pl on Mass river 765430. Enemy patrols located.	
			It was 14 PL C Coy in TCV driven by Sgt Spaldwood (Spaldwood) RASC.	
			1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt.	



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

Stabs Cont. ORIGINAL

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

Army Form C. 2118.  
Unit 1st. Div. The Parachute Brigade Regt.  
Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G. P. Dunn O.M.

Month and Year 1944

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
St. Anthons.	27	0300	A Coy move out to area S.W. of Baugy Hill 2.00 pm with O.P. est at Baugy to observe enemy activity E of River Seine.	
		1130	B Coy relieve A Coy, Personnel from En H.Q. occupied B Coy and pl. post until arrival of A Coy.	
		1900	Coys sent out fighting patrols every two hrs. Patrols from B Coy report no activity during night.	
	28	1830	D Coy relieves B Coy. Nil reports by patrols.	
	29	1730	Orders received to move to Handel tomorrow.	
	30	0645	En moved to Handel 5055 after relief by U.S. Forces in coy groups at half hrs interval.	
		1200	En H.Q. est at 599332 all coys in civilian billets.	
Handel.	1.		Coys settling in. 44 O.Rs reinforcements arrive. Baths, entertainments.	
	2.		En commenced training and vehicle maintenance. Baths, entertainments.	
	3.		Training included firing, 30yd range, and vehicle maintenance.	
			B. Coy practice movement by night.	

The Great Swan Continues

From the Seine at Vernon to Antwerp is 260 miles. This distance was covered by the Division in the 6 days between 29 Aug and 4 Sep. It was one of the most spectacular advances in history and credit is due to every man that took part in it. It was a bold dash which paid good dividends and was only brought to a halt by its own resupply and support problems. At the time there was an advantage over the enemy who were still confused and disorganised after the routing of their 7<sup>th</sup> Army in Normandy. Every opportunity to exploit this advantage to the full was taken and a column of steel shot across France and Belgium at an average speed of 43 miles a day.

A detailed account of the advance from day to day would serve only to confuse with relatively insignificant place names. It was a battle space of supplies and endurance rather than enemy opposition. By the end of the 'swan' everybody realised that the name British Liberation Army had been well designed. Along the whole route both by day and night, the troops received an enthusiastic and uproarious welcome. Everybody could recount some particular episode which had happened to them at the hands of the joyous civilians.

Below is an extract from the War Diary covering the period.

28 Aug

11 Armd Div to move across Seine through bridgehead of 43 Div.

1200 hrs Battalion commenced move forward; 29 Armd Bde leading. Arrived concentration area west of River Seine.

29 Aug

1200 hrs Battalion left concentration area to cross Seine  
1800 hrs Arrived area Le Thilliers-an-Vix without opposition.

30 Aug

0615 hrs Battalion continued advance following 29 Bde  
Bde moving to first bound at Hedvicourt  
0715 hrs Arrived Hedvicourt  
1200 hrs Harbour party left to recce area of crossroads north of St Germain.  
1510 hrs Moved forward from Hedvicourt  
2030hrs Change of route. Div moving forward to Amiens tonight.  
All night drive – weather and visibility adverse.

31 Aug

0700 hrs Enemy reported in village of Conty. Battalion moved up on foot to clear with C Coy leading.  
Column halted on road.  
0845 hrs Harbour party left.  
0900 hrs Move forward recommenced on wheels.  
1030 hrs Arrived concentration area south of Amiens (60 miles approx.)  
1155 hrs Left concentration area and moved to hold bridge in Amiens; KSLI leading.  
1225 hrs Arrived location in the town, Three companies KSLI across river and 3 Mons to pass through.  
1315 hrs Mons passing through  
1800 hrs CO's orders.  
50 Div taking over bridge over the Somme tonight. We are to move over river and take up position north east of town.  
2230 hrs Battalion moved out.  
2359 hrs All companies in position.

1 Sep

1030 hrs Advance continued to Arras  
1720 hrs Arrived area south of Aubigny – 37 miles west of Arras.

2 Sep

0930 hrs Advance continues  
1130 hrs Battalion taking up temporary defensive position at Souchez 4680 – bridge at 5819 blown.

3 Sep

0845 hrs Battalion continues to advance



1030 hrs Column halted at 5577 – enemy 800 strong reported in area 5725 with brigade of tanks, 4 or 5 with 88mm moving east towards Carvin.  
 1125 hrs Carrier section patrol proceeded to high ground south of Le Bassie to watch a river bridge at 566429 and observe for enemy movement.  
 1230 hrs Advance continues  
 1800 hrs Crossed Belgian frontier. Advance continues throughout the night.

#### 4 Sep

0615 hrs Battalion halted at Alost (80 miles)  
 0845 Hrs CO's orders.  
 Armd Bde with 3 Mons and 4 KSLI moving forward to clear Antwerp. 1 Herefords with in support 15/19 Hussars will protect their flank. Battalion formed company groups to cover left flank of centre line.  
 1300 hrs Information from 29 Armd Bde that 5 enemy companies were surrendered in Antwerp and that they were moving to clear forts.  
 1415 hrs Battalion commenced move forward  
 1815 hrs Arrived outskirts of Antwerp. Information – enemy holding out as single pockets. Battalion to clear area south of town.  
 2000 hrs Operation commenced.

There was considerable traffic congestion at the Seine crossing and everyone thought his unit had priority. OC D Coy left his wireless vehicle to help organise the traffic and while he was away part of the column was directed over another bridge. His 2ic was oblivious of his absence and also of the fact that his vehicle had been misdirected after crossing the bridge and was leading a large part of the Battalion column along a completely unexplored route. At the next village his driver stopped to ask for orders, when suddenly they were attacked – not by the enemy but by the usual shower of tomatoes and eggs. It was a harassed Canadian, who, after much warmth over the air and several disputes with those behind him, led his column back to the Battalion's night position.

A member of the Battalion who took part in 'the great swan' describes his experience as follows:

*From an individual's point of view the swan from Laigle to Antwerp was no more than a victorious ride, and even those who had problems to meet of a kind not met before, now remember only those things which were pleasant. To S Coy the ride was even better than for the rest of the Battalion, perhaps because of the carrying capacity of their vehicles and their easier access to the cheering populace.*

*The night drive to Amiens was a nightmare for carrier drivers following the small white light of the vehicle in front, many a vehicle seeing stationary white arrows on the roadside stopped thinking it was the carrier in front stopped. The night was pitch black and it was necessary to have someone by the driver stuck out on the front of the carrier to assist him pick out the way. But despite this difficulty and the fact that at times the carriers lost the more swiftly flowing wheeled vehicles in front, no one lost the way. At each difficult junction or village there was always one or more FFI [Free French Army/Resistance] a torch in hand, a rifle in the other, and a cheery word to guide us on our way and the signing of the route by C17PS [?] never failed. These 2 facts were largely responsible for the success of this amazing night drive.*

One morning provided what was perhaps the strangest event of the campaign. At 0530 hrs the column halted in the semi darkness outside Conty. At the very end of the Battalion column a sleepy ATk section and platoon HQ, with the Pioneers behind, was still stopped on the narrow road when out of the darkness horses were heard approaching. In the dim light a hooded cart drawn by 2 horses was seen. Up went the normal shout 'pull into the side', everyone thinking such a harmless looking vehicle on a French road would be a farmer on his way to the village. The road cleared and the cart passed the rear 2 jeeps. As it passed the third the driver sleepily glanced at it and surprised us by shouting 'it's full of Boche!'. OC Pioneers jumped up and emptied his revolver into the cart. It was quite obvious that the Germans thought we were one of their own columns and were just as surprised as we were. The Germans scrambled out and fled across the fields. The last one to jump out was unlucky, and was effectively grabbed by a ham fisted Pioneer and made a prisoner; ATk crews sprayed the remainder with Bren and 2 or 3 rifles opened up, but it was still too dark to hit anything or to see more than 30 yards, and they got away from the column. OC B Coy warned over the blower sent a patrol across their line of escape and rounded them up. Meanwhile the captor was proudly showing his prisoner, a poor frightened lad of 17, to all and sundry.

The biggest danger for carrier drivers from then on was flying fruit. Many a kindly thrown tomato or plum found a target in a face, and when passing crowds, great care was taken and the speed slowed right down. It was true to say that every vehicle filled up with fruit and for weeks afterwards rotten fruit was being cleared from the floors.

By the time Antwerp was reached the Lloyd carriers were universally known as 'The Route Markers'. They [*broken down carriers*] were strung out from Amiens to Antwerp, and as their name implies were a help in showing the way the Battalion had gone.

It was in Antwerp that the first news was heard of Hall, Cox and Ball. They were Lloyd carrier drivers whose vehicles had been damaged beyond repair in the Falaise Gap and at Laigle they had been detailed to take them to workshops for back loading and to collect new ones. Unfortunately for them the Battalion moved in their 2 day absence and all trace of them was lost. We hoped they were coming up behind. Signals were dispatched and searches made in every workshop east of Brussels. HQs and workshops were quite rude when asked if they had any news of 'Hall, Cox & Ball' and frankly disbelieved that such a combination of names existed. Thus the search went on until the famous trio were located having reached 11 Armd Wksp. It was early October when eventually they rejoined the Battalion at Hander – MINUS CARRIERS!

On arrival in Antwerp 159 Bde Gp was widely deployed. 3 Mons with a tank regiment in support had made a leap forward to occupy essential dock installations on the north side of the town. The importance of this dash across France & Belgium had not only been to overrun the enemy but to seize Antwerp intact if possible, so that the port could be used as a maintenance and supply base. Until now all supplies, for all Allied Forces, were still coming through the 'Mulberry Harbour' created off Arromanches in Normandy. Now the leading troops had advanced 400 miles and this was putting a severe strain on road transport and slowing down the tempo of further forward movement. In fact at the end of the swan, the Battalion was living on compo packs which had been handed over to companies actually on the move. Ammunition was likewise replenished on the odd occasions when the column stopped either for a few hours sleep or because of minor trouble ahead. The Q Organisation was excellent and the Battalion never went hungry even though there were times when



the last carried meal had been consumed. The functioning of A and A1 Echelons<sup>1</sup> in those days was as remarkable as it was successful and the fact that the Battalion never went short of petrol, water, food or ammunition was due to the efforts of the Battalion Q personnel and supply organisation throughout.

The following photos are of the Herefordshire Regiment passing through Avesnes, 1 September. The welcome and pleasure of the local population is clear. Armed members of the FFI are clearly identifiable and are seen 'guarding' German PoWs.

The Battalion is identified by its unit 'tac (tactical) number' '63'.



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<sup>1</sup> - Normally on operations units were divided into echelons – the F Ech was the fighting element, the A1 Ech would be perhaps a mile or 2 behind the F Ech and contain the Regimental Aid Post and ammunition and fuel which might be required 'in battle'; the A2 Ech held the balance of ammunition, fuel and spares for the daily (nighttime replenishment). The B Ech would be further to the rear and would hold the admin support elements - clothing stores, pay and admin office etc; it would also act as the 'delivery point' for major spares, rations, resupply and reinforcements.





This photo shows the Pioneer Section stopping en route stopping for a brew up.



### Antwerp

On 5 Sep, after having spent the night on the southern fringe of the town, the Battalion was given the role of clearing the east side of the city including the forts. Antwerp is ringed to the south and east by a series of well constructed forts dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but luckily these proved not to be strongly defended. When C and D Coys cleared them stacks of weapons were found, which were handed over to the Belgian White Brigade (underground movement) but no serious trouble apart from that of over joyed civilians was encountered. Eventually by midday the Battalion had concentrated itself in Berchem and was able to relax.

The situation in Antwerp was very mixed. The enemy had cleared out of the city to the north side of the Albert Canal but still occupied the area of the Schelde Estuary. From these positions he spasmodically and indiscriminately shelled the city areas. In the city itself the civilians downed tools and entered into the spirit of liberation. It was thus very difficult for the Battalion, being in the Boche free area, to carry out its operational role to the letter and to keep at 'concert pitch'. Almost everyone sampled some expression of civilian gratitude either officially or unofficially.

During the late afternoon of 5 Sep the Germans blew the bridge over the Albert Canal. That night orders were received for the Bde to cross the canal at Merxem, to liquidate known enemy positions and to concentrate in the area north east of the town. The KSLI carried out a difficult night crossing by assault boats and by 0400 hrs had 3 companies across. A Herefords recce party went ahead with the CO to look at the ground prior to making the crossing and in the meantime the Battalion was moved up to the KSLI's old position. The crossing and subsequent attack never came off. By this time the enemy had ranged the bridgehead with mortar and 88mm and put down a concentrated barrage on

the area. Casualties were heavy and the advantage was with the enemy. The attempted crossing was given up, the KSLI fought a determined rearguard action to recross the canal and the Battalion returned to its morning positions.

After that the time spent in Antwerp was pleasant enough. OPs were out observing across the Schelde, carrier patrols operated amongst warehouses in case of attempted German crossings, but the situation remained quiet. There was a move to the area of Number 3 Fort on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Most civilians around there still wanted 'cigarettes for poppa' and 'chocolate for mama' so all was well.

After 4 days of somewhat disturbed enjoyment which unfortunately we couldn't sit back and drink in at our ease, the Battalion said goodbye to many real and new found friends and pushed on to the next position. With it, besides memories, it took an equitable quota of selected wines and cigars recently removed from warehouses and sidings where it had been stacked up and loaded to trains ready for shipment to Germany. It was noted that the remainder of these stocks which had been liberated were later sold to the Battalion by NAAFI as a special Christmas treat! *C'est la guerre!*



Wilf Slade, in a pioneer jeep with welcoming residents of Antwerp.

It's interesting to look at the – windscreen less - jeep and the 'equipment' mounted on it – jerricans (fuel or water(?)) and a petrol cooker on the front bumper (handy for a quick brew(?)), ammo boxes fixed to the front wings, a jerrican forward of the passenger 'door', a stretcher along the side; sten guns on the bonnet and the trailer stacked high!



### Helchteren and Hechtel 9-10 September

Whilst the Battalion was mixing it in Antwerp 30 Corps had pushed on north east from Brussels and forced a crossing over the Albert Canal. 11 Armd Div handed over the task of clearing the area north of the city and was sent over to the right flank of the new thrust towards Holland to give flank protection.

Within 7 hours, at a steady 25 MIH (miles in the hour) the Battalion had transported itself to a new battle area via Lere, Louvain, Beeringuen. 2 Fife & Forfar with who we were to work with in the next operation had moved ahead of us and we concentrated in a wooded area just west of the small village of Helchteren. By that time it was close to 1900 hrs and already the light was becoming defused and mellow. No recce had gone on ahead of this point so the Battalion was debussed and started out on its feet for its allotted company area which included the relief of a company of 8RB who were in close contact with the enemy. It was necessary to do a certain amount of clearing before nightfall and to check up on the close by woods to ensure that no enemy were lying in our midst. It was not an area in which to harbour and possibilities of infiltration seemed plentiful and ominous. The tanks had herded themselves into a tight little knot in the centre of the Battalion area and were getting on with their refuelling and maintenance. There was an air of unpleasantness and foreboding about the place and it so proved that these impressions were justified.

B Coy was to the south of Battalion lay out and consisted of a series of oddly shaped and varying sized woods. They set about clearing as much as possible before dark. One platoon led by the Coy Comd emerged from the forward edge of a strip of wood. After they had gone a few yards a Spandau opened up and caught them completely in the open. The Coy Comd (Capt Bulmer) who had recently joined the Battalion and 2 others were killed.

D Coy had a bitter and isolated battle entirely on its own. They were to occupy the village of Helchteren on the centre line and had about half an hour of daylight in which to clear it. Moving up in single file on either side of the road they approached the village and everything seemed in order.

As the company moved through the outskirts of the village all seemed well. The first few houses were passed and nothing happened. It was already semi-dark and it looked as if the company would be established on the far edge of the built up area before complete darkness enveloped it. The trouble started on the far side of the crossroads which were in the centre of the village. Enemy fire was opened up from buildings on either side of the road and grenades lobbed from windows. The leading platoon suffered severe casualties including its commander. Mortar bombs started crashing down and the company found itself in a hotbed of trouble. With the enemy ensconced in their commanding positions, aided by thickening darkness, there was every reason for the company to recoil, leaving the situation as it was, and to sit in the west side of the village to prevent the enemy interfering with the rest of the Battalion Group. The Coy Comd however, quickly sized up the situation and set about organising a detailed clearing operation. The main opposition was coming from a dug in company position in the area of the houses and a windmill on the eastern side of the village supported by heavy and light mortars and MG fire from both flanks and a sunken lane immediately beyond. The company started a systematic clearing of the houses leading to the main position. With strong opposition coming from all directions the operation was slow and costly.

The Coy Comd appreciated the key positions had to be cleared despite the fact that by this time darkness had almost fallen. Having lost 2 platoon commanders and 4 section commanders he rallied

his company, collected his reserves and changed position. The enemy put down a tremendous barrage of small arms and mortar fire. Nothing daunted, the company assaulted over 150 yards of open ground leading up to the position. The attack was carried out with courage and ferocity, and 3 PoWs were taken, the remainder of the enemy platoon being killed with the bayonet in their dug out position.

Throughout the night the company held on to the village in close contact with the enemy. The following day the advance was continued in another direction which raised the problem of extricating the company from contact with the enemy. Some wounded were still in the village from the night before and they had to be evacuated. Making full use of all company weapons and a brilliant rearguard action was carried out in the face of consistent interference during which further casualties were suffered.

### The Encounter Battle

Closely linked with and part of the Helchteren battle was the following day's operation when the Battalion switched north and started its advance to Hechtel. The battle proved a classic infantry tank cooperation and produced clear evidence of the understanding and reliance which years of training and months of fighting had developed between the infantry and tankmen. This action became the subject of a 'War Office Information pamphlet' which is reproduced below.

After an unpleasant night at Helchteren it was quite a relief to receive orders in the early hours that the advance was to continue northwards at first light. Little opposition had been met by patrols during the night in that direction but it was evident that the enemy were in some strength at the eastern and southern exits of the village, so just before dawn C and D Coys, which had been in close contact with the enemy throughout the night, withdrew from their positions and formed up behind A Coy on the northern road.

Here they met the Fire and Forfar and the advance began with A Coy and A Sqn acting as advance guard, preceded by some Stuart tanks of the Recce Tp. The squadrons were down to an average of 10 tanks each on which A, C and D Coys were riding while B was in TCVs.

In this action Lt Kotchapaw (15 Platoon) his sergeant and 2 section commanders were killed.



## CURRENT REPORTS FROM OVERSEAS

### No. 68

#### SECTION I.—AN ACTION NEAR HELCHTEREN

##### Opening situation

1. After the armoured dash through Northern FRANCE and BELGIUM had liberated BRUSSELS on 3 Sep, columns pushed on North-East and North towards HOLLAND. By 10 Sep one of these columns had reached the vicinity of HELCHTEREN, and on that day a force comprising one armoured regiment and one infantry battalion, with artillery support, was ordered to advance Northwards towards HECHTEL, some 8,500 yds distant, and to secure the main road running East and West through that place. The advance began at 0830 hrs with A Sqn and A Coy acting as advanced guard, preceded by some Stuart tanks of the reconnaissance troop. The squadrons of the armoured regiment contained an average of 10 tanks each, on which A Coy, C Coy, and D Coy of the battalion were riding, while B Coy travelled in troop carrying vehicles.

##### Deployment

2. First contact was made with the Germans about 2,000 yds from the starting point. They appeared to be holding a small wood to the right of the road, as well as some small ridges immediately to the South of the wood, and they opened fire on the leading elements of the force just after they had crossed the railway. A Coy immediately jumped off the tanks of A Sqn and both sub-units deployed to the East of the road. The enemy's fire, however, was too heavy for A Coy to advance with ease across the open ground between the railway and the road without considerable fire support. The advanced guard was, therefore, ordered to deploy as a fire group astride the railway so as to cover the proposed attack by C Sqn and C Coy, which were to be sent forward on the left flank with the object of rolling up the German positions from West to East.

3. The commanders of C Sqn and C Coy carried out a brief reconnaissance and decided to make the close approach through the broken country to the West of the road, with the tanks advancing in line ahead and C Coy still riding on them as far as the selected forming up place. The trees and thick undergrowth that bordered the road on either side would provide cover from view from the located enemy positions to the East of the road, and so far no enemy posts had been located to the West of the road. Two Stuart tanks

commander and put under command of one of the remaining lance corporals who led it on to the railway line. Here contact was made with 13 Pl. Fire was then opened on both platoons from enemy positions that had hitherto remained unlocated on the East side of the railway.

8. The company commander decided that 13 Pl and 15 Pl must now be given time to reorganize. He therefore ordered 14 Pl, supported by the two reserve tanks of squadron headquarters, to pass round their right flank to clear up this opposition, while covering fire was provided by 13 Pl and 15 Pl, as well as by 1 Tp and 2 Tp. 14 Pl and their tanks reached the railway line without much difficulty, but as the first tank crossed the track it was shot at by two enemy infantry anti-tank weapons. Fortunately the tank commander managed to indicate to the commander of 3 Sec the location of these two weapons; at once the latter led his section forward across 150 yds of open ground to deal with the crews with the bayonet.

9. Meanwhile the squadron and company commanders had moved up to the line of the railway and found that so many prisoners were giving themselves up that they were becoming difficult to handle. A second collecting post was, therefore, established in the cutting (marked B on the map). A further 50 prisoners were taken when the other two sections of 14 Pl went forward and successfully silenced the enemy battery of 8-1-cm mortars that had caused the damage to 15 Pl. The crews of these mortars, although in possession of small arms, surrendered quickly when they saw our bayonets and the rapidly approaching tanks.

##### Reorganization

10. All organized resistance soon ceased, but mopping up continued for some considerable time. Many Germans were found hiding at the bottom of their weapon slits, while others had been buried when our tanks had crushed in the soft sandy walls of their posts. As soon as possible a long column of prisoners was sent back to the axis of the advance under the escort of one tank, and carrying parties were organized to evacuate the wounded of both sides.

11. Meanwhile C Sqn and C Coy reorganized in the area of the railway cutting (marked B on the map), and as much as possible of the enemy's equipment and ammunition was destroyed. The tanks much enjoyed crushing the numerous anti-tank weapons found on the position, while C Coy broke up the 8-1-cm mortars with German grenades. No casualties were suffered by C Sqn during the action and the company only lost four killed and 11 wounded. At least 30 enemy dead were found in a quick count,

had gone on ahead and had reported no contact as far as the wood. It was, therefore, agreed to use the road as the start line with the forming up place just in rear. (See Map 1.)

4. The close approach was completed without incident, and the forming up was covered by concentrations fired on the enemy positions by a battery of field artillery. C Coy deployed with 15 Pl on the right and 13 Pl on the left, while 14 Pl with two tanks from C Sqn headquarters was to form a firm base facing North to protect the left flank of the attack. Later this platoon was to come into reserve. Of the assaulting platoons, 15 Pl with 1 Tp of C Sqn in support was directed to attack the ridge (marked A on the map) to the South of the wood, while 13 Pl with 2 Tp in support cleared the wood. Both these platoons were to exploit to the line of the railway. The tanks were ordered to advance with the infantry, making full use of HE from their main armament, and the squadron commander also emphasized the need for a combination of fire and movement between the tanks and infantry sections.

##### Attack

5. Very soon after the assaulting platoons crossed the start line, 15 Pl came under enemy MG fire from the forward slopes of Ridge A. HE and Besa fire from the tanks, however, enabled it to assault up the slope and to overrun the posts opposing it. Mopping up was left to the rear section, while the forward sections swept on with the tanks over the ridge, only to be met again by intense MG fire. For a moment it appeared as if the attack would be checked, but the tanks redoubled their efforts and the infantry went on into the lower ground beyond.

6. On the left, 13 Pl had meanwhile made good progress through the wood and was level with the leading sections of 15 Pl. All the enemy posts had been overcome and some 15 prisoners captured. They appeared to be part of a mixed force made up from parachute units. The commanders of C Sqn and C Coy moved up to Ridge A to watch the battle from there, while company headquarters, 14 Pl, and the reserve tanks followed them forward. The CSM opened a collecting post for prisoners and soon had marshalled some 40 Germans. He also set about arranging for the collection of the wounded.

7. 15 Pl had barely got into the low ground when the Germans started mortaring the whole area, despite the large number of their own troops that were still there. Within two or three minutes the platoon commander and the commander of one section had been killed and the platoon sergeant and the other two section commanders wounded. The situation showed signs of becoming precarious. The platoon, however, was reorganized by the company

and there may well have been more. The final count of prisoners was in the neighbourhood of 400. C Sqn and C Coy were then ordered to return to the axis and to continue the advance.

12. Thus ended a most successful tank-infantry battle on the squadron-company level. The close co-operation between all tank and infantry commanders, and an understanding by each arm of the capabilities of the other, made wireless communication between them almost unnecessary.

13. During the action high trajectory support from artillery and 3-in mortars was organized and conducted from a command post, sited in a position from which the whole battle area could be seen. The battery of artillery was used to sweep the ground from West to East and back again in front of the attacking troops, while the East mortars were given the tasks of searching the ground to the East of the railway—where the sound of Spandau and mortar fire could be heard—and of thickening up the artillery concentrations. The support given by the artillery and mortars was most effective, causing a great many German heads to remain permanently below ground level while the attack was in progress!

##### Note

It would appear from the narrative that this force fought a model encounter battle. Its highly successful result can be mainly ascribed to the determination of C Sqn and C Coy and to the excellent co-operation and mutual understanding that existed between all the arms engaged.





At approx. 1500 hours I received orders from my sergeant to go ahead and contact A and C Coys who were putting in an attack on the village of Hoenrik which lay to the right of the main Hechtel road. The companies had put in the attack across country which was impossible for an MC to cross, so I had to remain on the roads. Hechtel was marked up as having been taken by the Guards Arm'd Div and I thought it safe to go through there and turn right towards Peer, so I continued up the main road. Then within 400 yards of Hechtel the road became blocked by fallen trees. Thinking that the Guards had Hechtel, I made room between the trees and rode on into the village. Near the first house I noticed several soldiers cleaning their rifles on the side of the road. I, of course took them to be either personnel of the Guards or of A Coy, but to my amazement (horror!!) they turned out to be Germans. I had no alternative but to stop the engine and shout 'Kamerad'. Four of the Germans came towards me – one with his rifle in the hip position. As they approached I said 'I have come as a friend and not an enemy as there are 2 of your comrades and 2 of mine who are wounded down the road and need medical attention.' This they did not understand and went to fetch a corporal who could speak English. I explained to the corporal why I had come into their lines. By this time I was surrounded by Germans and the corporal gave them orders to place my MC under cover. During these proceedings I was making good friends with all the company and handed round my cigarettes, which were appreciated – cost of round approx 45 cigarettes. I set up a conversation with the corporal, who said he was going to take me to see the officer at his HQ. We started to walk to the HQ and had not gone far when one of the German soldiers came running down the road and gave me my writing materials. Before he had time to leave us another one came running down the road carrying my small pack. I was wearing a German watch and if they searched me it would be 'check' so I removed it from my wrist and managed to place it in my pocket without the corporal seeing me. Before entering the HQ I gave it to him, telling him it belonged to one of his wounded comrades down the road and asked him if he would give it to the officer. So we entered the German HQ. Dinner was just being served, which consisted of eggs and potatoes, but we passed through the kitchen and into the front room of the house where the officer was sitting at a table surrounded by NCOs and men. On our entry all the men got up and came towards us. I think I must have been the first British soldier they had seen as they gazed upon me like a second Fuhrer. The corporal left me to these admirers and reported to the officer. Quite a few could speak good English so it wasn't long before I was in conversation. One remarked that the war would be over by Christmas and that he would be going home to his people and I would be going home to mine. (very relieving news to me in my position). I didn't question him as to who was going to win the war as I was in no position to argue. This little gathering cost me 30 cigarettes. While my conversation had been going on the corporal had handed over the watch to the officer who placed it on his own wrist and then gave the corporal his orders. After he received his orders he came to me and said 'we are going back to the place where we have come from'. On reaching my MC I found that all my kit had been removed from my panniers. I asked the corporal where it had all gone to and he looked at the German soldiers standing around, who vanished and returned about 5 minutes later with all my kit. The corporal made them pack it all back again and fasten up the straps. He then turned to me and said would I check my kit and see it was all there. I did this and of course said 'yes', as it was of little use saying otherwise. He seemed very anxious to know if I had got my wife's photograph back and I assured him I had. He said I was now going back and I went over to start my MC. This I was soon told not to do as if they were walking so was I. He then detailed 5 armed men to come down the road with me to collect the wounded comrades. All the remaining men went back to their battle posts which to my surprise were situated in the tops of the fallen trees. Eventually we started down the road. The NCO detailed 2 of the escorts to

*push my MC and I made no objection! We had gone about 100 yards down the road when our artillery opened up. Luckily it wasn't dropping anywhere near us but it made the corporal ask how much further his wounded comrades were. I said about 400 yards. After another 50 yards our artillery opened up again and this time he said 'we are going back and you are coming with us'. This of course did not fit in with my plans and luckily he agreed with my suggestion to take 2 of them down the road to attend the wounded and bring them all back on my MC.*

*On the left of the road approx 50 yards apart were 2 knocked out tanks. We were now walking on the right of the road and on looking well ahead I could see some of our tanks approaching so I changed over to the left of the road, so as to make use of the knocked out tanks to cover the approaching British tanks from the German's view. When close to the knocked out tanks I stopped to adjust my straps and have a smoke as time was now getting precious. The 2 Germans then noticed the approaching tanks and asked if they were American or English. I told them they were English and that they were now my prisoners. This they took very calmly and walked in front of me with their hands up.*

*The tank commander peered through the turret of his tank pointing his revolver at me and the 2 prisoners. I told him how I had come to be ahead of the tanks but this he did not believe. He asked for my pay book and got in touch with my unit to confirm my identity. On returning to my section I found out that the Battalion had taken a track leading to Hoenrik off the main Hechtel road. This track I had missed which resulted in giving me 2 hours with the Germans.*

This incident is also recorded in the F&F diary:

*We had not gone far when I came up to a group of burned out TCVs with quite a number of dead Guardsmen scattered about. Moving on I suddenly saw 3 men walking towards me right in the middle of the road. I had a good look at them through my binoculars and decided that they looked like one British soldier and two German parachute soldiers (the German parachute helmets were fairly easily recognised). Eventually the group reached me and I saw that they were a DR of 1 Bn Herefordshire Regt - our infantry partners that day - and 2 German parachute medical orderlies. The Englishman said that he had lost his way and had been taken prisoner. He had then persuaded the German that he had passed some German wounded (he hadn't) and offered to guide stretcher bearers to them - hoping that we would come along and release him.*

*The two Germans pointed to their Red Cross armbands and then made signs that we should let them go free. I obviously could not do this and I ordered all three to continue to the rear. This they did.*

*The DR's story was established as correct the medical people decided that his action was in breach of the Red Cross treaty. The two German stretcher bearers were returned to their own lines a couple of days later*

After A Coy had mopped up strongly defended ATK positions in the area of the railway station and D Coy had cleared its area around the convent at Wychmael the group eventually concentrated itself in a tight knot in the darkness in the small village of Hoenrik. With their usual gusto the tanks had brewed up a number of buildings in the village, the light from which assisted reorganisation. Companies continued to collect odd prisoners and another 50 or so added to the score for the day. It had been a hard and anxious day's fighting but the returns showed a handsome profit. The MO is credited with

having liberated the railway station single handed and to have been rewarded with the gift of a bottle of brandy and the station master best hat!

The following day the party advanced eastwards against light opposition and eventually fetched up at Peer, where it remained in comparative peace and quiet for the next week. Occasionally sudden salvos from enemy artillery would land with the unexpectedness and irregularity of reinforcements, quite unpredictable and might turn out to be one or a hundred. A newly arrived major met his match on his first evening when treated by the MO with an '88' (cocktail) in lieu of a No 9. The '88' was of the usual strength.

During this semi rest period there was one party frolic at Bree about 10 kms east of Peer. Bree was a small village and apart from a daily check by a recce troop of the Inns of Court no British troops were located there. The Germans had started a habit of sending a patrol across the Escaut canal terrorising the local population by ransacking the place and burning a few houses, then carrying out a foraging raid before returning to the other side. This happened on 1 occasion and the Burgomeister appealed to British troops to protect his people. Consequently A Coy was despatched at dusk on 2 consecutive nights and returned in the mornings. Although a simple operation, and though the enemy did not interfere, it entailed many headaches for the Coy Comd on the spot. The first thing he did was to impose a curfew on the village at 2200 hrs in order to prevent enemy from mingling in civilian clothes with the natives after dark. This was not successful as the inhabitants were very human. Women had babies in the early hours of the morning; midwives and doctors started running about the place; the local priests deemed it necessary to perform nocturnal ministrations; and refugees from the east side of the canal, realising that soon the battle would be raging around their homes and villages, journeyed by night and sought sanctuary in the newly occupied British Zone. However the Coy Comd dealt with the situation with courtesy, tact and firmness and everybody lived happily ever afterwards.

### **Zomeron to The Maas**

During the rest in Peer preparations were being completed in UK for an attempt to bring the war to a speedy and decisive conclusion. British and American airborne troops were being briefed and prepared to seize bridges and crossings over the Maas and 2 tributaries of the Rhine at Grave, Nijmegen and Arnhem respectively [*Op Market Garden*]. 30 Corps was to make a lightning advance by land to join up with the 1<sup>st</sup> British and 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> American Airborne Divisions, open up a supply route and make the bridgehead secure. 8 Corps in which 11 Armd Div was now operating was allotted the role of right flank protection for the armoured thrust and played an important part in preventing 30 Corps supply lines being cut. They were in fact severed from time to time, but always from the left flank. The role of right flank protection proved almost as bloody as that of the spearhead of the advance.



There was time for a football match during the rest at Peer:



On 19 Sep the Battalion moved forward under the command of 29 Armd Bde and passed through 50 Div which had forced a crossing over the Escaut canal at De Grootte Barrier. At 1825 hrs on that same afternoon we crossed the Dutch Frontier and continued to move along the route taken previously by The Guards Armd Div as far as Valkenswaard. The Bde Gp concentrated and harboured for the night just south of the town. All along the route there was ample evidence of the severity of the battle the Guards had fought. Woods on either side of the road had been splintered and slashed about by artillery and tank fire and burnt out tanks, half tracks and carriers told the story of stubborn enemy resistance. Buildings in the Bde concentration area were still smouldering when we arrived. Torrential rain made movement off the metalled roads treacherous and once again we were in the forefront of the battle. By this time our head was almost level with, but to the right of that of the Guards. Thereafter they continued to push NNE whilst 8 Corps fanned out E and NE.

At first light the following morning, teamed with the Fife & Forfar Yeomanry, the Battalion moved due east towards Leende, after checking up on suspected enemy pockets which it was thought might have been by-passed the day before. First contact was made with the enemy just west of the village. C Coy together with their squadron of tanks cleared the village and rounded up 5 PoWs. As in France and Belgium it was discovered that the underground movement of Holland was most eager to take care of our prisoners, but acting on a directive from higher formation and in the interests of the prisoners' well-being, they were disposed of through the normal channels. In this village we had our first impressions of newly liberated Dutchmen. Perhaps they were not so effusive as the Belgians, but they were sincerely happy and grateful, as one realised on better acquaintance.

It was then appreciated that the enemy was not holding in any considerable strength and orders were received for the Battalion to seize the bridge over the Bois Le Duc Canal at Zomeron. This proved to be easier said than done. The first difficulty was to find a way there, since armoured warfare in Holland is restricted and controlled by dykes and canals. The next important ATk obstacle was the Bois Le Duc

canal and it was obvious that the enemy was intent on denying us a crossing as long as possible. In order to achieve this and allow himself time to prepare his defences for the canal, he had blown the dyke bridges on all the roads leading eastwards. It therefore became necessary to try and pick out a route along the side roads and farm tracks. This involved many a change in direction for it was frequently found that after the first few tanks had gone over these small bridges they collapsed and the remainder of the column was cut off. Eventually after many a hit and miss and assisted by the Fife & Forfar recovery vehicles the column once more reached the main road running due east to Zomeron.

It was already getting dark and preliminary orders for the attack on the bridge were given on the move. D Coy was dropped to give local protection to 13 RHA in their gun area about 6 kms from the canal and the remainder of the Battalion moved on to the outskirts on Zomeron. Recce elements were sent straight ahead into the village and dealt with minor opposition and patrols from B Coy were immediately sent out on foot to recce a route to the FUP shortly before midnight. At 5 minutes before Zero the supporting artillery put down a barrage which roused the enemy's suspicions of an imminent attack and, with a colossal roar, up went the bridge. Without artillery the attack would have been suicide for the bridge was covered by machine guns laid on fixed lines. A bridging operation had now become necessary and so the attack was called off for fresh plans to be made. No bridging material was up with the fighting troops and considerable preparation would be necessary. B Coy was withdrawn to a built up area overlooking the bridge and the rest of the Battalion, together with the Fife and Forfar formed a pivot just west of the village.

In a battle of speed and movement against light opposition such as we had just accomplished from Peer to Zomeron the 'soft' vehicle have a thankless life. Under command of the MTO or OC S Coy they moved as a separate body with a section of carriers and ATK guns acting as local protection. If the column was on the move they were always in trouble and especially so if Bde HQ was following the Battalion in order of march. Bde HQ would come up on the air telling us that our tail was wagging too much and to get vehicles closed up. This was relayed over the Battalion net to the Officer in charge who answered the callsign '15 Charlie' and usually travelled at the rear of the column. Poor old 15 Charlie used to get it in the neck about 10 times to the gallon and no matter how he tried something always seemed to be wrong. If it wasn't vehicle interval then the driver of A3 [*vehicle identifying number*] had been observed by a prying eye not wearing the chinstrap under his chin and a rocket would be initiated to be passed through the normal channels. It was always difficult to imagine exactly what did happen to a column on the move. Bde HQ would want to know why the column was halted while in actual fact the receiving control vehicle was moving at a rate of knots. Then would start a game of Mata Hari. 'Are you moving Able 3?' 'Yes mata Hari'. 'Then who the hell isn't? Go back 15 Charlie and have a look see and for f\*\*\*\*s sake get a move on .....'. Super Sunray's [*Bde Comd*] views on traffic control were again forcibly expressed and more than one vehicle is thought to have been spirited into the ditch by the mere knowledge of his presence at the next crossroads!

When the enemy was encountered in force and it became necessary to deploy the Battalion, the 'soft' recced an area and disposed themselves in self protection, falling in behind the column or bounding forward to another MT area, when the leading troops pushed on again. They were always vulnerable to attack from the flanks when the Div was making a ground attack and their most bitter complaint was about harbouring for the night. Usually fighting went on till dark and then the 'soft' would be called up from the last bound. Invariably they had to find an area for themselves somewhere in the Battalion locality and what was good for the 'feet' was not always good for the wheels. In consequence there was many a frayed temper amongst these orphans of the night but somehow or other, despite

route diversions, breakdowns and filthy impassable tracks, they always managed to rejoin their companies before dawn broke.

Such was the occasion at Zomeron. Crawling over farm tracks and half demolished bridges they eventually arrived in the pivot area just west of the village and once more the Battalion less B Coy was in a tight blob ready for the crossing of the Bois Le Duc Canal.

Early in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, the Battalion with the Fire & Forfar were regrouped in 159 Bde. A and C Coys set off with C Coy mounted on C Sqn to attempt a cavalry charge across another bridge over the canal to the north. On arrival the bridge was found to have been blown so plans were made for an assault river crossing over the canal at Zomeron that night and for a bridge to be built. During the day B Coy with tank support closed to the canal bank opposite the broken bridge and spent the day harassing the enemy bank.

At 1930 hrs A and D Coys crossed the canal in assault boats and reached their objective which was to form a perimeter 500 yards the other side of the canal. They reported all quiet and C Coy were ordered to cross the canal to support the leading companies. E Coy were held in reserve this side of the canal. C Coy crossed by means of the lock gates which had been left undamaged and achieved their objective which was to form a close block guarding the bridging site by taking up a position approximately 200 yards from the bridge, on either side of the road leading to Asten. Immediately C Coy were in position, the enemy counter attacked and started to infiltrate between the 2 leading companies and C Coy. It transpired later that the enemy had kept quiet in the cellars of houses and dugouts in the bank of the canal until the companies were in position. They were able to do this despite the daylight stonking as the canal bank was built up above the level of the fields. Into this steep bank they had dug in and were thus untouchable to shells and bullets. They again lay low when our attack went in and only came to life when their counter attacks from Asten started. How unnerving it is to have enemy attacking in the dark not only in front but on the flank and in the rear. Two platoons fell back but were again able to occupy their old positions. The enemy counter attacked during the night at least 4 times. C Coy found the barn which had been taken over as Coy HQ was actually occupied by a number of enemy. A local encounter took place at Coy HQ which was extremely unpleasant. There was 'ding-dong' fighting throughout the night but the sappers, despite all small arms fire and mortars which were being aimed at the bridge, completed the bridge at 0700 hrs on the morning of 22 Sep.

From the Fife & Forfar Diary:

*On the 21<sup>st</sup> regrouping was carried out and 2 Fife and Forfar Yeomanry and Herefords were transferred to 159 Brigade and came up to the Willems Canal at Zomeron and found all bridges blown. With 29 Brigade operating to the north, a crossing of the canal was planned so that 159 Brigade could perform a right hook beyond Helmond and so take the enemy troops opposing 29 Brigade in the rear.*

*On the afternoon of 21<sup>st</sup> plans were made for the crossing of the canal, beyond which lay the village of Asten about a mile distant, and the Yeomanry moved up to be ready to support. It fell to the Herefords to cross and form a bridgehead behind which the sappers would build a bridge during the night, and to help them in their task fire plan 'Orange' was arranged. Its name was not inappropriate, as every Dutch house now flew the orange flag, banned for so many years in recognition of their liberation. The Ayrshire Yeomanry and a medium regiment were to supply the artillery support.*



*Two companies of Herefords swarmed across the canal against stubborn opposition and the sappers began their work under a vicious barrage of enemy shells and aided by 'artificial moonlight' provided by a searchlight battery rushed up for the occasion. With the Herefords in their tiny and beleaguered bridgehead was Maj Mitchell. While taking supplies up to him in the evening Capt Nicoll of 124 Battery was badly wounded in the leg, arms and face, and was evacuated. This was the third time in the campaign that Captain Nicoll had been wounded, but on the first two occasions he had been able to return to duty.*

*The Herefords across the river had an extremely sticky time. Shortly after midnight defensive fire was required on the road leading from Asten to break up a counter-attack on the pitifully small bridgehead. Again at 0120hrs more fire was requested, and at 0210 a spirited assault was launched by the enemy just as the third company of the Herefords was getting into position. By 0230 the situation was critical, with defensive fire now continuous, and indeed at one period the bridgehead almost ceased to exist. The Germans penetrated right into the house occupied by the headquarters of one of the Herefords' companies [C Coy] with which was Captain Lucas of the Yeomanry. It was only by switching off his wireless set and hiding in a cupboard that he escaped capture, the enemy coming within a few feet of his hiding place.*

*The Herefords rallied, and the sappers were able to continue their work though with heavy casualties, for the bridge was under continuous artillery and machine gun fire. With half an hour's delay, because a direct hit caused damage that took time to repair, the bridge was ready in the morning for the advance of the tanks.*

*'A' Squadron of Fife and Forfar Yeomanry - formed up on the road leading to the bridge, in line ahead. When the word was given a tremendous barrage opened up and the tank moved forward over the bridge and between the houses which flanked the road on the other side of the canal; from these enemy infantry poured a hail of bullets. Just beyond the houses the entire leading troop was knocked out, all its tanks fortunately slithering or being pushed off the road into the ditch, from where the crews continued to fire at the German infantry who seemed to be swarming everywhere. The Troop Leader was mortally wounded while engaging them with his pistol from the turret. The rest of the squadron were able to press on, although every tank was hit many times over with one kind of projectile or another, and fan out in Asten village to defend it against counter-attacks until the rest of the Fife and Forfar tanks and the KSLI came through to make the place secure, behind fire plan 'Lemon'. Later, a count of enemy dead round the bridgehead revealed that some two hundred Germans had been killed defending their positions.*

The local encounter at C Coy referred to above is described in further detail:

*At approx 2200 hrs on 21 Sep Coy HQ of C Coy was attacked by the Boche who had hidden in the buildings around the HQ. The Coy Comd, 2ic and CSM together with other members of the HQ, replied with stens and rifles and the enemy in turn hurled back stick grenades. The CSM shot an officer who was attempting to get away but he and the company runner were both wounded. Unfortunately it was not possible to remove the wounded, as it was 0300 hrs the Boche dug in within 15 yards of the HQ and remained there the rest of the night. The only way*

*out, at that time, was by using grenades and the ammunition having run short, it was decided to lay 'doggo'.*

The situation was restored at approximately 0500 hrs. Casualties on both sides were heavy but on looking round afterwards it was apparent that the enemy suffered more casualties than the Battalion. At 0800 hrs the Fife & Forfar with 4 KSLI on their backs, crossed the bridge and after a short encounter made their way into Asten. Unfortunately 3 of the leading tanks were either 'bazooka'd' or blown up by mines in one of the most spectacular and gallant charges ever made.

It was a night of unpleasant incidents for everybody; here are a few:

Signals Companies had taken No 18 [radio] Sets for Battalion communications which were later to be duplicated by line. The line parties crossed the canal over the lock gates used by C Coy and were paying out their line past the buildings on the far bank. It was essential to get lines through as quickly as possible as the 18s were usually a bit 'dicky'; and the signallers were paying more attention to joints and pliers than to their rifles or the enemy. Without warning grenades were thrown from windows above, seriously wounding 3 of the party.

Carrier PI The carrier PI were to cross the canal with their vehicles on Mk V rafts as soon as they could be constructed. When the infiltration started they were sent forward on foot and manhandled their Vickers across the lock gates. Taking up position about 200 yards across the bridge on either side of the road they gave an excellent account of themselves, firing over open sights with loosened clamps at enemy appearing at grenade range in front of them. Finally with barrels hot and ammunition low they pulled back to the bank and carried on from there.

Stretcher Bearers Evacuation of casualties across the canal was practically impossible. The SBs carried out what first aid they could on the spot. Two of them were electrocuted on a live power cable which had fallen into a ditch on the side of the road. It was found the following morning that several of the enemy had perished in the same way.

ATk PI The ATk PI took their first gun and carrier down to the canal about 2200 hrs to be ferried across on the Mk V rafts. Halfway across the first raft collapsed owing to faulty construction and down went the carrier loaded with ammunition. The back end stuck in the mud with the front out of the water. The lighting system short circuited and the headlights played like searchlights until they could be put out. Eventually after very tricky manoeuvring which told the enemy exactly what was going on, 3 guns were ferried over.

Battalion HQ Battalion HQ had its share of nightmares. Although on the home side of the canal the Germans plastered the area continuously with aimed mortar fire. As seen later from the enemy side, he was able to observe every movement and soon had the position located as a HQ. The RAF/RAP [?] was brewed up and several casualties suffered. The actual command post was a dug out scarcely big enough to house all essential HQ personnel. The place was strung around with headset leads for the Battalion and Bde wireless sets, 18 Set contraptions and a telephone line. Working with a dimmed light it was altogether confusing. Then down came another stonk, cries of agony outside, and a gunner FOO badly wounded, straggles himself across the intricate entanglement of communications. Telephones were ringing. Bde was shouting for information and the whole system went to pot for a while.

Communications were vital at the time as the CO had a most difficult task to sort out what reports were coming through and to try to piece together the true picture. When communications had become so disrupted and officers were no longer available on the company terminals he had finally to contact the Coy Comds physically to make any sense at all of the fluid and confusing situation. The few remaining signallers made an heroic effort to restore and maintain communication and the highest praise is due to them.

RE The Royal Engineers were magnificent. With an uncertain bridgehead in front of them and the enemy approaching to within no distance at all they stuck to their task. They were constantly harassed by mortar and SA fire and suffered heavy casualties. About 0300 hrs when the situation appeared desperate they were instructed to abandon the building, with the bridge little more than half completed. By 0430 hrs the position improved and again under control. They resumed work, completing the Bailey Bridge by 0530 hrs in a fight against time. They were in time – as on many similar occasions.

Rifle Companies As usual the Rifle Companies had the worst time. It is never pleasant to part of a bridgehead and this occasion was no exception. Movement in the dark across unknown ground is a difficult business and the appearance of enemy in rear of the forward troops is enough to alarm the stoutest hearts. Rumours played their part in causing alarm and despondency – ‘do you know the Coy HQ have gone back across the canal?’; ‘have you heard that XX PI have been wiped out?’; ‘the bridge can’t be finished until after dawn’; ‘the enemy have crossed the canal lower down and have cut off Battalion HQ’ – all these and sundry other tales spread rapidly about. When the platoons dug in they met water within a foot of the surface – a horrid thought when you know that you must stay there for another 6 hours and it’s not healthy to be above ground. It was easy to hear the shouts of the enemy as they came down the road in preparation for a counter attack and it was somewhat reassuring to hear our own artillery which kept up a steady series of stonks throughout the night.

At such times as these officers – and NCOs to a smaller degree – have much to be thankful for. They are busy – a message from the CO; keeping contact with the company on the flank; a runner from platoon; helping to control the artillery fire; getting round the men to reassure them that all is well (but is it!?). They have not really time to be afraid. But the private soldier has very little to occupy his time. He knows he must sit and wait – and think and try not to go to sleep. It’s a funny thing but even with an aggressive enemy 100 yards away the temptation to sleep is sometimes unbelievably strong. ‘if only I could have a fag’; ‘or a cup of char’; ‘when is it light? - 0545 hrs yesterday but it’s foggy today’; ‘what did the sergeant say?’; ‘no one in front of me? - then what’s that rustling?’; ‘or aren’t the bushes moving at all?’; ‘it’s my son’s birthday today - I wonder if he’ll have to sit in a wet trench when he’s 25’; ‘that Spandau sounds closer’; ‘shall I have a shot or will it give my position away’; ‘I nearly dropped off then’.

The coming of dawn is a great event in one’s life and on this day particularly so. The news of the completion of the bridge spread rapidly and by 0600 hrs the rumble of friendly tanks could be heard. For those who could see it was like having a very good seat at the dogs as the Fife & Forfar charged along the road. Two minutes of cheers, 5 tanks at last, then victory. Boche appeared like mushrooms on the ground and the English papers were able to report ‘that our armoured forces overcame stiff opposition on the Escaut Canal’.



From the worst battles there are always amusing incidents to hear about later. One unfortunate fellow suffering from exhaustion could not be evacuated and was put in a slit trench near Coy HQ, where he went to sleep. A patrol collected a prisoner who also could not be evacuated and was put into the same slit trench and likewise went to sleep. About first light the exhaustion case wore up and the shock of seeing his roommate almost rendered him beyond medical assistance. It was discovered next morning that one unfortunate enemy had been caught, all too literally, with his trousers down and had made an easy mark for one of A Coy sentries.

Such was the Zomeron bridgehead. The following morning 4 KSLI passed through and 2 days later after being relieved by 2 KSLI of 3 (Br) Div the Battalion again pushed on. The night's battle had been touch and go. The Bde Comd speaking of the Bde after the campaign said: 'we were halted at times, but we were never driven back, not one yard'. The Battalion had held out but at bitter cost – 25 men killed and 35 wounded.

Although 4KSLI had gone through us we still had to protect the bridge. The approaches were thickly wooded and infiltration easy. On the following evening one of our patrols made contact with the enemy approaching down the canal bank and gave ground too willingly. The result was that their platoon had to spend the night within grenade range of the enemy who has stalked right up to their position. By this time we had learned the value of patrols keeping the enemy at arm's length and engaging him with artillery. Once he gets close life is very unpleasant. One attempt to dislodge him before light failed as the Pl Sgt in charge was wounded and so a full scale sweep by a platoon had to be arranged at first light. It was supported by one tank moving down the towpath and also by a Bofors used in the ground role – most effective. The bag was a good one (20 PoWs and as many dead) and proved a most necessary tonic to rather waning morale. The enemy were well supplied with explosive charges destined either for the bridge or our tanks, and it was with pleasure that we threw his equipment into the canal.

The end of the month saw the Battalion out of action and ready for a rest!

### Casualties

<i>Name</i>	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>Cause</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Shelton	TJ	Pte	14438587		DOW	04/09/1944	Antwerp
Morris	EA	Pte	4038451	C	DOW	07/09/1944	Antwerp
Bulmer	OT	Capt	87117	B	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Cattell	W	Pte	5259560	B	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Creamer	FB	Lt	285429	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Davies	W	Pte	5251394	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Howard	DE	Pte	5126604	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Jones	JR	L/Cpl	4042347	B	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Mark	EA	Cpl	4036688	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Robinson	AA	Pte	4035987	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Tye	A	Pte	14391729	D	KIA	09/09/1944	Helchteren
Blount	SJ	Pte	14347613	C	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Derry	W	L/Sgt	4105769	C	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Hemberey	FW	Pte	4080145	A	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Hunt	GV	Sgt	4104876	A	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Jeffer	D	Pte	5126621	C	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Kotchpaw	WJ	Lt	Cdn/270	C	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Langley	J	L/Cpl	4038882	A	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Stevens	PB	Pte	4038277	C	DOW	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Tranter	AE	Pte	5107452	A	KIA	10/09/1944	Hechtel
Jones	F	Pte	4041740	C	DOW	20/09/1944	Leende
Lloyd	WA	Cpl	4042358	C	KIA	20/09/1944	Leende
Barrows	WA	Pte	5255941	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Bickerton	GJ	Pte	4105730	S	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Fowkes	E	Pte	14714357	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Gray	MS	Pte	14221897	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Holland	WH	L/Cpl	14210383	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
John	WR	Pte	14591147	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Littler	F	Pte	5113990	C	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Lucas	H	Cpl	4034935	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Moses	J	Pte	14585314	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Nicks	TG	Cpl	14428400	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Stennett	WE	Pte	4922299	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Summers	W	Pte	5119682	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Todd	WGS	Pte	4036623	C	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Tomkins	F	Sgt	5248815	B	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Wisedale	JC	Pte	4041923	D	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Burgess	AW	Cpl	4035139	A	KIA	21/09/1944	Zomeren
Bedford	ER	Pte	4041826	B	KIA	22/09/1944	Asten
Smith	FW	L/Cpl	4039281	B	DOW	22/09/1944	Asten
Tedstone	GT	Pte	4923789	C	DOW	22/09/1944	Asten
Wycherley	IA	Pte	14409732	B	DOW	22/09/1944	Asten

Mellor	F	Pte	14210319	B	KIA	22/09/1944	Asten
Price	HW	Cpl	4035552	B	DOW	24/09/1944	Asten
Quincey	E	Pte	2050972		DOW	29/09/1944	Belgium


**WAR CASUALTIES**

**—♦—**

**CAPT. O. T. BULMER, KILLED IN ACTION**

The news of the death in action of Captain O. T. (Becket) Bulmer, youngest son of the late Mr. E. F. Bulmer and Mrs. Bulmer, Adams Hill, Hereford, will be received with very great regret in the wide circles in which he had hosts of friends. Capt Bulmer, who was 31 years of age, held a commission in the Herefordshire Regt before the war, and was mobilised with the Territorials on the outbreak of hostilities. He went overseas a few weeks ago and was quickly in action. One night this month—so we gather from letters—he and his men went forward to wipe out three or four machine-gun nests in a wood. When they were some 300yds from their objective they came under lively fire, and for a time took cover. When matters became quieter he gave the order to advance, but quickly the German fire was re-opened, and he fell, mortally wounded.

Capt Bulmer married Miss Robinson, of Barton Bradstock, Dorset, in February, 1943, and there is one daughter.



Capt Bulmer's name is recorded on the Pembridge War Memorial.



He had originally enlisted in The Herefordshire Regiment as a private soldier (Regimental number 4105049) on 1 Oct 1938 and was later Commissioned. He was employed as a Farm Manager.

Lt Kotchapaw was a Canadian Loan (Canloan) Officer – the history of this scheme is recounted at the end of this month's account.

Ken Crockford, who had taken over Lt Kotchapaw's platoon when he was injured and then handed it back to him wrote a long letter (to the Regimental secretary) covering amongst some regimental aspects details of Lt Kotchapaw's death; the detail was destined for the Canloan History Society and is included below:



Thank you for your letter dated 30th June 1987. I have had a long association with General Jack Churcher, since 1944, and his family since I became his ADC when he assumed command of 5 Infantry Division in Brunswich in May 1947! I am a regular visitor to his, and his childrens houses, and he and Mrs Churcher, visitors to mine.

When I joined 1st Herefords in Normandy in July 1944, they were resting and re-equipping after their first encounter with the enemy on Hill 112, the battle which resulted in General Jack being awarded his first DSO, being made Brigadier, and assuming command of 159 Brigade. (I together with about thirty other rank "deserted" from an RHU (from where we were to be posted to the 5th DCLI), and reported to Lt. Col. Bob Turner-Cain who had assumed command of the 1st Herefords. That is a story in itself!)

Col. Bob posted me to C Company, commanded by Major Jack Phillips, the Second in Command was Capt. Teddy Mills, but there were no other officers. 13 and 14 Platoons were commanded by sergeants, and 15 Platoon had been commanded for about six months by a CANLOAN Officer by the name of W Kotchapaw. He had been evacuated wounded from Hill 112 and the Platoon placed temporarily under the command of a Sgt. Lobb. I do vaguely remember there were other Canloan officers around but on the battlefield one rarely saw other company officers and times spent "out of the line" were rare and short. I cannot recall any attempt at forming a battalion officers mess when out of the line until Christmas 1944.

Lt. Kotchapaw returned to C Company on 16th August, the day before we entered Flers. His batman Pte Charlie Bowden who I inherited on joining 15 Platoon was evacuated wounded only that morning (whilst I was away from the Platoon area attending an 'O' Group). Lt. Kotchapaw arrived later in the day. He naturally wanted his old Platoon back and I was fortunate in taking over what I still believe to be the finest platoon I could possibly have inherited - No. 14, Platoon of C Company. I remained with

14 Platoon (apart from the odd taking over as 21C or Company Commander) until March 1945. 14 Platoon had a magnificent Sergeant (Ben Shotton who was delighted to hand over command and remain as what I can only describe as the ideal Platoon Sergeant.) He unfortunately was killed at Veulen in Holland on 18th October 1945.

Lt. Kotchapaw commanded 15 Platoon until he was killed at Hechlel in Holland on 10th September 1944. It was during a company/squadron battle of short and sharp duration.

Whilst driving along in TCVs the Fife and Forfar came under attack. The tanks kept the enemy heads down whilst we debussed from our TCVs and put in a company/squadron attack. 13 and 15 Platoons attacked whilst 14 Platoon was held back in reserve. I think the next half hour was one of my worse experiences of the campaign. I was not used to being "out of the thick of a battle" and we endured a mortar attack and listened to bangs and thumps ahead but felt completely out of the picture. After what seemed an age the company runner came to 14 Platoon area and told me that 15 Platoon had suffered heavy casualties and could make no further progress. I was to take 14 Platoon through 15 Platoon and take the position. As we went through 15 Platoon we discovered that both Lt. Kotachapaw and L/Sgt. Derry (his senior section commander) had been killed and that the remnants of 15 Platoon were being gathered together and reorganised by a L/Cpl (who was awarded a well earned DCM for this action) Lt. Kotchapaw and Sgt. Derry were lying apparently unscratched and we were told that they had been killed by blast from a mortar bomb.

I was fortunate in that with the dashing aid of the 2nd Fife and Forfar we took the position, and captured a great number of German Paratroopers without further loss. Some of the Fife and Forfar tanks had exhausted their ammunition but still paratroopers were bobbling their heads up out of their slit trenches and aiming panzerfaust rockets at them. The tanks just came forward with us and screwed around on top of the trenches, a dangerous procedure as they could only deal with one slit trench at a time, but together with C Company the attack proved a complete success without further loss.

I have rambled on somewhat but I thought the Canadians would appreciate an account of the battle in which Lt. Kotchapaw was killed. I hope it also illustrates the high regard and respect which 1 Hereford had for the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry. They were truly our "Big Brothers" and I trust we proved worthy "Flat Footed Friends" (The code names used over the radio). It also true that Lt. Kotchapaw was held in the highest esteem by 15 Platoon who mourned his loss as front line soldiers do, deeply, but not always apparent. He is still remebered at gatherings of "Old Camrades" *with affection.*

I have been back to Normandy four times since 1945. The first time I stayed with a family in Flers and Jack Churcher with a family "out in the sticks" which he hated. On the second and fourth occasions we both stayed with a delightful family in the village of Artis. Jack did not come ~~to~~ the third occasion when although we were entertained by Flers, the main activities were



centred on Putanges.

General Jack's family were very concerned about him attending the 40th Anniversary Celebrations in 1984, but said on our return that he looked 10 years younger. He said he felt it! I don't think he will be allowed to attend another - even with me hovering half a pace behind him and making certain he takes his heart pills at the appropriate times.

I have spoken to Alex Wardman over the telephone. I believe you know him, he was our Carrier Platoon Commander for most of the campaign although he did command C Company for a short period after Jack Phillips was wounded. If he can discover anything about CANLOAN Officers (through friends and OCA) he will be in touch with you.

I shall be delighted to join both the Officers' Association and the KSLI Officers Dinner Club, and enclose the Deed of Covenant and Bankers Order. I also return a Personal Data Record which I hope you will excuse being in manuscript form.

With Best Wishes

Yours sincerely

K H Crockford, Major

*P.S. We never knew Lt Katchafraws first name -  
He was known as "Katch" to all.*

24724357 Pte Edward Fowkes aged 18 of Derby

Buried Mierlo Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery







1083/1/A/8                      5.G.6              55  
 14714357 Private  
 E. Fowkes  
 The Herefordshire Regiment  
 21st September 1944 Age 18  
 (Cross)  
 He gave his all  
 That we might live,  
 Ever remembered  
 By his mam, dad and Irene

**GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM**

The following <sup>has</sup> been concentrated here :-  
 have

A Gp/Concen/  
 Report No. 1877

(Name of Cemetery) Mierlo British Cemetery  
 (Full Map Reference) Holland sq. 3.1/250,000. 524.180      Nationality - British  
Holland 43E-25

(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	Hereford 1ST	14210383	Holland J.W.H.	L/CPL Pte.	K/A	21.9.44	V	G	4	25.7.45	Sh. 4 Scale 1:100,000 Zonen MR. 599.127	
✓ 2	"	5119682	Summers W.	"	"	"	V	G	3	"	"	"
✓ 3	"	2555241	Barrows W. A.	"	"	"	V	G	1	"	"	"
✓ 4	"	14714357	Fowkes E.	"	"	"	V	G	6	"	"	"
✓ 5	4 K.S.L.I.	14719505	Kinnear G.	"	"	22.9.44	V	A	3	"	"	" HOLLAND 4-230 220
✓ 6	"	1762562	Bradford P.W.	"	"	23.9.44	V	A	7	"	"	"
✓ 7	"	14548880	Isted J.H./C.	"	"	22.9.44	V	A	6	"	"	" S.S.P.C./N.W.E/1582.
✓ 8	"	4036426	Ball S.F.	"	"	"	V	A	4	"	"	" " " /1582
✓ 9	"	4040312	Massey W.L.	Cpl.	"	"	V	A	2	"	"	" " " /1582
✓ 10	"	14341029	Devalle H.	"	"	"	V	A	5	"	"	" " " /1582
✓ 11	"	4033859	Lelaitre H.	Pte.	"	"	V	A	1	"	"	" " " /1582
12												

Date 24 Aug. 45      *as taken 15.8.45*      (Signed) *[Signature]*

\* Where a grave has not already been registered, a Registration Report on A.F.W. 3372 will be prepared, and attached to this FORM.      Rank & Appointment AD. 15.8.45

PSS 2270. 20 M. 6/45

Also buried in Mierlo Cemetery is 14585314 Pte Henry Moses of Wednesbury Staffordshire.



1083/1/A/8                      5.G.9              57  
 14585314 Private  
 H.J. Moses  
 The Herefordshire Regiment  
 21st September 1944 Age 19  
 (Cross)  
 Son of Charles and Sophia.  
 In God's garden  
 Of remembrance  
 We meet every day

### Honours & Awards

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>For Action</b>	<b>LG</b>
Crockford KH	Lt	304130	Order of Leopold	04/09/1944	
Dunn, H	Sgt	4036204	MM	09/09/1944	01/03/1945
Evans D	Pte	4035808	DCM	09/09/1944	01/03/1945
Fripp RC	Maj	97801	DSO	09/09/1944	01/03/1945
Raines, LF	Sgt	4113845	MM	09/09/1944	01/03/1945
Bond, ACT	Cpl	4038591	MM	10/09/1944	01/03/1945
Everall IR	LCpl	4105061	DCM	10/09/1944	01/03/1945
Haywood, SH	Cpl	4038083	MM	10/09/1944	01/03/1945
French, AG	Cpl	4036078	MM	10/09/1944	22/03/1945
Northey LP	Maj	256477	MC	10/09/1944	
Constable, REJ	L/Cpl	5443575	MM	21/09/1944	01/03/1945
Miles D	Sjt	2575757	MM	21/09/1944	01/03/1945
Pearson, H	Sgt	4460191	MM	21/09/1944	01/03/1945
Turner-Cain GR	Lt Col	50884	DSO	21/09/1944	01/03/1945
Dalton, R	W02	4031735	MM	21/09/1944	24/01/1946
Evans, VG	Pte	4034848	MM	21/09/1944	
Mills EL	Capt	242920	MC	21/09/1944	
Singleton GM <i>Awarded while serving with KOYLI</i>	Maj	88390	MC	25/09/1944	24/01/1946

### Citations

Crockford

Date recommendation passed fwd

159 Inf      Brigade 11th Armd Division      Corps

Schedule No. .... Unit 1st Bn The Berfordshire Regt  
 (to be left blank)

Rank & Army or Persl No. *W/Lieut (A/Captain) (304130)* .....

*CROCKFORD* ..... Kenneth Harold .....

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date & place of action must be stated.)	Recommendation Honour To be awarded left blank
<p>At ANTWERP, on the night of 4 Sep 44, CC "C" Coy sent 14 Platoon on a patrol to contact another Coy.</p> <p>Some 400 yards from their objective they were ambushed by a party of Germans which outnumbered them three to one. Nevertheless, Lieut CROCKFORD ordered his Pl to attack and led them throwing grenades and firing his Sten Gun.</p> <p>After a fierce hand to hand engagement the enemy in the face of such a determined attack, withdrew leaving some ten or twelve of their number dead in the street.</p> <p>This fine leadership by Lieut Crockford extricated his Pl from an awkward posn and completely put the enemy to route.</p> <p>This offr displayed the same magnificent standard of devotion to duty throughout the whole campaign in BELGIUM and was a constant inspiration to his men.</p>	<p><i>ES BAYNARD</i>      Chevalier of  <i>Major Order of</i>  <i>Cond. Croix (Glasgow)</i></p> <p>1 HEREFORD Leopold II with  <i>159 Inf Bde.</i> palm &amp; Croix  <i>159 Inf Bde.</i> Lt-Col. de Guerre  <i>159 Inf Bde.</i> Cond. 1940 with  <i>159 Inf Bde.</i> palm</p> <p><i>G.P.S. ROBERTS</i>      Maj-Gen.      Comd.      11 Armd Div.</p> <p><i>SPB ROBERTS</i>      Maj-Gen.      A/Comd 3 Corps Dist.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>A-7160</i>      P.T.O.</p>





Army Form W.3121

6287. Wt.41216/51. 240M. 12/42. W.Y.L.P. 356. Form W.3121/0.

Date recommendation passed forward  
 Received: 15 Sep 44 Passed: 16 Sep 44

159 Inf Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 30 Corps  
 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment

Schedule No. 15 Sep 44 Division 11 Arm'd Div  
 Rank and Army or Personal No. A/Sjt. 401604 Corps 30  
 Name DUNN, Harold (Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
At MELCHETERN 3575 (Map Sheet 147) on the evening of 9 Sep 44 A/Sjt. DUNN was Pl Sjt of the reserve platoon during an attack put in to clear the East end of the village. The left forward platoon suffered serious casualties during its first attempt to clear the area of the windmill at the extreme end of the town. Both the Pl Comd and Pl Sjt were wounded. Sjt. DUNN was placed in comd and immediately re-organised the pl for its second assault on the objective. Despite heavy MG and mortar fire he lead forward one section to neutralise the enemy fire and then returned to lead the remaining sections into the assault. By his complete disregard of personal danger Sjt. DUNN restored the morale of his men, who successfully captured the objective, killing several of the enemy and taking 3 prisoners including their Pl Comd. At first light on the following morning the platoon was subjected to considerable MG and sniping fire.	<u>[Signature]</u> Brig. Comd 159 Inf Bde (J.B. CHURCHER)	M.M. (Immediate)	M.M. 1.3.45
	<u>[Signature]</u> Lt-Gen Comd 30 Corps		28315
	<u>[Signature]</u> Lt-Gen Comd Second Army	LIUT. GENERAL	

B. H. Donaghey F.T.O.  
 FIELD MARSHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP

Army Form W.3121

Date recommendation passed forward  
 Received: 15 Sep 44 Passed: 16 Sep 44

159 Inf Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 30 Corps  
 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment

Schedule No. 15 Sep 44 Division 11 Arm'd Div  
 Rank and Army or Personal No. A/Sjt. 401604 Corps 30  
 Name DUNN, Harold (Christian names must be stated)

On orders from his Coy Comd he successfully extricated this platoon, in order that the advance could be continued in another direction. He personally rescued 2 men who were wounded in the Coy building and brought them to safety. Throughout the whole action Sjt. DUNN's coolness and courage were a fine example to his men and he was largely responsible for the success of the operation.

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
On orders from his Coy Comd he successfully extricated this platoon, in order that the advance could be continued in another direction. He personally rescued 2 men who were wounded in the Coy building and brought them to safety. Throughout the whole action Sjt. DUNN's coolness and courage were a fine example to his men and he was largely responsible for the success of the operation.	<u>[Signature]</u> Lt. Col. Comd, 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment. (L.A. Turner Cain)	M.M. (Immediate)	M.M. 1.3.45

If a casualty as under, fill in date.

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

B. H. Donaghey F.T.O.  
 FIELD MARSHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP



159 Inf Bde, 11 Arm Div, 30 Corps		Date recommendation passed forward
Schedule No. Unit Herefordshire Regt.		Received 16 Sep 44
Rank & Army No. Private 4035808		Passed 16 Sep 44
Name EVANS Douglas		Div 71 Inf Div 18 Sep 44
		Cor 30 SEP 1944 8 SEP 1944
		Army 28 OCT 1944 8 NOV 1944
Action for which commended		
(Date and place of action must be stated)		
Recommended Honour or Reward		(To be left blank)
<p>During evening 9 Sep 44 at HELCHETEREN 3575 (Map Sheet 47). A Coy attack was put in to clear the eastern end of the village. The enemy held not only the houses on either side of the road with two pls, but had a third pl dug in on the NW outskirts around the windmill. These posns were in turn covered by Mortar and MG fire from woods on the left and right, and a sunken lane immediately beyond. It was quite the strongest and most bitterly defended position ever attacked by this unit.</p> <p>On reaching the end of the houses, Pte Evans found his pl cmd and his own section cmd were casualties.</p>		
<p>PTC. B. K. R. [Signature]</p>		<p>11 HEREFORD 159 Inf Bde 11 Armd Div Lt. Genl 30 Corps LIEUT-GEN COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY 2nd Army</p> <p>D.C.M. D.C.M. 1.3.45 29911 A</p>

Without further orders, EVANS took charge of his section, reorganised it and prepared to attack the strong Windmill posn. He led them in their attack through MG and Mortar fire without fear or hesitation, and put his men into the German posn, clearing them at the point of the bayonet. He personally captured the Bazooka which a little time previously had put one of our tanks out of action. He immediately reorganised his section posn in the consolidation. A number of our own and enemy wounded were left in the windmill area, but these could not be reached by the SB, owing to enemy fire which then swept the area. Private EVANS himself volunteered to go forward alone and evacuate these wounded. He located the wounded and personally brought back the wounded German Pl Cmd. Undaunted, he organised a small carrying party and went forward again to evacuate the remainder of the wounded. Although the area was under heavy enemy SA and Mortar fire, he organised the evacuation so successfully that no wounded were left in the posn. The courage of this Private soldier, and his latent power of leadership contributed in no small way to the successful action of the Company.

11 Armd Div  
Lt. Genl  
30 Corps  
LIEUT-GEN  
COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY  
2nd Army

24.5.1  
18990



159 Inf Bde. 11 Armd Div. 30 Corps. Recd. 28 OCT 1944

Schedule No. Unit: Herefordshire Regiment. Division 16 Sep 44

Army No. and Rank: 97301. Major. 26 SEP 1944

Name: FRIPP, Reginald Charles. (Signature) 18 NOV 1944

Action for which commended. Recommended Honor (Date and place of action must be stated) Award

At HILCOMPTON 3575 (Map Sheet 47) on Saturday 9 Sep 44 at 1900 hrs. Coy comd by Major R.C. FRIPP was despatched to clear the road leading East from the village and to occupy the Eastern end of the village for the night, thus relieving the Tk troop in the neighbourhood. The houses and windmill at the Eastern end found to be strongly held by a Coy of enemy dug in and supported by heavy and light mortars and MG fire from both flanks and a sunken lane immediately beyond. This action lasted for two hours. The enemy opposition was extremely stubborn, and inflicted altogether 27 casualties of Major FRIPP's Coy, including 2 Pl Comds and four Sq Comds. Seeing his subordinate Comds become casualties, Major FRIPP with complete disregard for his own personal safety, went forward and led his men into the attack. The village had to be cleared house by house; Major FRIPP positioned himself wherever the fighting was the fiercest, encouraging and exhorting his men to the assault. When the village was cleared, a strong enemy pl posn around a windmill was encountered. This posn was covered by enemy mortar and I.C. fire from both flanks and also from a sunken lane in its rear. Major FRIPP rightly appreciated that this key posn had to be cleared despite the fact that

P.T.O. /that

Maj.Gen. 11 Armd Div.  
Lt.Gen. 30 Corps.  
Lt.Gen. 2 Army.

1-3-45  
29544  
LIEUT.-GENERAL.  
COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.

by this time darkness almost fallen. He collected his reserves and placing himself at their heads charged the posn with the bayonet. The enemy put down a tremendous barrage of S.A. and mortar fire. Nothing daunted, Major FRIPP assaulted with his reserves over approximately 150 yards of ground. The attack was carried out with such courage and ferocity that only three German prisoners were taken, the remainder of the enemy pl being killed with the bayonet in their dug out posns. With coolness and great ability Major FRIPP re-organised his Coy during the night, although still in contact with the enemy.

The following morning the advance was continued in another direction and a further action had to be fought in order to be able to extricate the Coy from its posn. Major FRIPP organised this action with great ability. He himself stayed with the last platoon to leave. The 2nd mortar crew, owing to enemy fire, were unable to get into a suitable firing posn. Major FRIPP himself took the 2nd mortar and personally fired the mortar to cover the withdrawal of his Coy. This he did with great effect and his Coy only suffered a further eight casualties during this operation.

Throughout this period Major FRIPP displayed the highest qualities of leadership and personal bravery; it was undoubtedly due to his outstanding gallantry that his Coy was able to overcome the very strong enemy position, and that such heavy casualties were inflicted on the Germans.

1-3-45  
B.L.A.  
15 Sep 44.  
/AP.  
LIEUT.-GENERAL.  
COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Distinguished Service Order to Major Fripp



Raines

(6987D) Wt 16905/203 120,000 6/41 H J L Ld. Op 745 Forms/W.3121/6 Army Form W.3121

159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division 30 Corps

Schedule No. 111  
 Unit 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment  
 Army No. and Rank 5116845. W/Sgt.  
 Name RAINES, Leslie Frederick

Date recommendation passed forward  
 Received 15 Sep 44 Passed 16 Sep 44  
 Division 11 Armd Div  
 Army 28 OCT 1944

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
At <u>HERFORDSHIRE 3575 (Map Sheet 47)</u> on the evening of 9 Sep 44, Sgt. RAINES commanded the reserve platoon during the Coy attack to clear the East end of the village. The pl on the right of the road almost reached its objective but came under heavy M. and mortar fire which killed the Pl Comd and wounded the Pl Sgt and 2 Sec Comds. This pl was forced to withdraw into the village. Sgt. RAINES was ordered to make a further attack on the enemy position. Darkness was falling when Sgt. RAINES led his pl into the attack. He used his own fire to such good effect and lead his men onto their position by a covered approach with such success that the enemy were taken by surprise and forced to withdraw. During the night contact was kept with the enemy, who managed to occupy the building overlooking Sgt. RAINES' position. At first light Sgt. RAINES organised an attack to clear the enemy again from this position. This was successful at cost of 4 further wounded.	<u>J. B. Churchier</u> Brig. Comd 159 Inf Bde (J. B. CHURCHIER)	<u>D.S.O.</u> (Immediate) <u>M.M.</u>	<u>A.I.C</u> <u>902 21</u> <u>55A</u>
	<u>B. G. Horne</u> Lt-Gen Comd 30 Corps	<u>M.M.</u>	<u>13.45</u>
	<u>Lt-Gen</u> Comd Second Army	<u>28316</u>	

B. H. Montgomery F.T.O. FIELD MARCHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP.

LIEUT.-GENERAL  
 COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.











Haywood

Army Form W.3121  
Recommendation passed forward

159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division 39 Corps  
 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment  
 Schedule No. (To be left blank)  
 Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Cpl. 438083.

Received 15 Sep 44  
 Passed 16 Sep 44  
 0 SEP 1944  
 18 SEP 1944  
 28 OCT 1944

Name **HAYWOOD, Stanley Herbert.**  
 (Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
In the early evening of 13 Sep 44 during the attack by the Coy supported by tanks to capture <del>WARRICK</del> village 3783 (Map Sheet 2b 036) the leading right hand platoon came under heavy M and sniper fire from the high ground South of the railway. At this time the support of the tanks was lost due to their having to make a detour to avoid marshland. Cpl. HAYWOOD commanded the leading section and undeterred by the loss of his Pl Comd, killed a few moments before, he led his section up rising ground in the face of M.G. and rifle fire to capture the features held by the enemy. In this he was successful and killed or captured the M.G. crew, taking four prisoners. Although shot through the arm and minus his 2 IC killed, Cpl. HAYWOOD kept up the momentum, leading his men and platoon through to the far end of the village, taking in his stride further prisoners and knocking out an 88 mm gun and crew.	Gen Comd. See over M.M. Maj-Gen Comd 11 Armd Div	M.M. M.M.	

F.T.O.  
 B. h. Bonbravery  
 FIELD OFFICER  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 11 ARMY GROUP

Army Form W.3121  
Recommendation passed forward

159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division 39 Corps  
 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment  
 Schedule No. (To be left blank)  
 Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Cpl. 438083.

Received 15 Sep 44  
 Passed 16 Sep 44  
 0 SEP 1944  
 18 SEP 1944  
 28 OCT 1944

Name **HAYWOOD, Stanley Herbert.**  
 (Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
By his fearless leadership and courage Cpl. HAYWOOD made it possible for his platoon to complete the clearance of one side of the village and disabled the Coy to reform. He held the position before dark and before the enemy had time to reform.	Gen Comd. See over M.M. Maj-Gen Comd 11 Armd Div	M.M. M.M.	

F.T.O.  
 B. h. Bonbravery  
 FIELD OFFICER  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 11 ARMY GROUP

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



French

		Date recommendation passed fwd	
		Received	Passed
159 Inf Bde. 11 Armd Div. 30 Corps	Brigade	16 Sep 44	16 Sep 44
Schedule No. ...	Division 17 Corps	20 SEP 1944	28 SEP 1944
Unit - 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regiment	Corps	28 OCT 1944	13 NOV 1944
Rank and Army Number	Army		
W/corpl 4036078			
Name FRENCH Arthur George			
Action for which commended		Recommended	Honour (to be awarded)
On 10 Sep 44, North of HELCHETEREN 3575 (Map Sheet 47), the Pl in which Cpl French commanded one section, was given the task of crossing the rly line with a tp of tks, and mopping up a considerable number of enemy positions in open ground beyond. The tks immediately came under fire from two A tk weapons. The A tk weapons were some 150 yards from Cpl French's section, and between lay open ground which was swept by enemy MG fire and rifle fire from covering posns. The whole ground was extremely open and there were no covered approaches to these enemy A tk weapons which could be used.		Brig. Comd. 159 Inf Bde. Lt.Col. HEREFORD (G.R. Turner Cain). Lt.Gen. B.P. Hornsby Lt.Gen. W. ... Lt.Gen. ... COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY	M.M. (Immediate) Lt.Col. HEREFORD (G.R. Turner Cain). M.M. 1.3.45 28322
PTO.			

		Date recommendation passed fwd	
		Received	Passed
Cpl French instantly realised the danger to our tks, and with supreme personal bravery, rushed forward with his section across the open ground, despite the fierce enemy SA fire he succeeded in reaching, with his section, the enemy A tk gun posns, despatching with bayonet five of the enemy; the remaining eight enemy tks then gave themselves up as prisoners.			
The successful elimination of these enemy A tk weapons brought about entirely by the speedy and heroic action of Cpl French with a section of only six men, by his courageous and determined leadership, he was able to annihilate superior numbers of the enemy.			
On 10 Sep 44, North of HELCHETEREN 3575 (Map Sheet 47), the Pl in which Cpl French commanded one section, was given the task of crossing the rly line with a tp of tks, and mopping up a considerable number of enemy positions in open ground beyond. The tks immediately came under fire from two A tk weapons. The A tk weapons were some 150 yards from Cpl French's section, and between lay open ground which was swept by enemy MG fire and rifle fire from covering posns. The whole ground was extremely open and there were no covered approaches to these enemy A tk weapons which could be used.		Brig. Comd. 159 Inf Bde. Lt.Col. HEREFORD (G.R. Turner Cain). Lt.Gen. B.P. Hornsby Lt.Gen. W. ... Lt.Gen. ... COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY	M.M. (Immediate) Lt.Col. HEREFORD (G.R. Turner Cain). M.M. 1.3.45 28322
B.L.A. M.M. 15 Sep 44			
LIEUT-GENERAL			



Northey

6387(D) Wt 16308/293 120,000 6/41 J R & L Ld. Gp 745 Forms/W.3121/s Army Form W.3121  
 Date recommendation passed forward

159 Inf. Brigade 11 Armd Division 30 Corps  
 1st Bn  
 Unit The Herefordshire Regiment

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (To be left blank)

Army No. and Rank MAJOR 156477  
 Name Northey Leslie Percy (D.C.M.)

Received 15 Sep AA 16 Sep AA  
 17 Sep 44 18 Sep 44  
 20 SEP 44 28 SEP 44  
 28 OCT 1944 28 NOV 1944

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>North of MALCHETTEREN 3575 ( Map Sheet 47) in the wooded area 3579, on morning of 13 Sep 44, strong enemy positions were located, which later were found to contain 6,000 Germans mainly 10 Para Bn. An Inf/Tk attack by "C" Coy 1 HEREFORD and "C" Sqn Fife &amp; Perth, was developed on the enemy's right flank, the depth of the objective being approximately 1700 yards. This operation was commanded by Major Northey, and proved to be completely sound in its detailed Inf/Tk planning and execution. During the first 1,000 yards, the assault came in for considerable casualties and Mr. Fire, which caused heavy casualties among leaders of the forward platoons, including Pl Comd, Pl Sgt, and all Section Comds in one platoon. Major NORTHNEY, with complete disregard for his own safety, went among his leading troops re-organising them, and encouraging them to continue the attack, which they did with unrelenting fierceness, killing and bayonetting the Germans in their positions.</p>	<p>C.O. M. C. (Immediate)                  Brig Comd M.C.                  159 Inf Bde (J.B. CHURCHER)                  Maj-Gen                  Comd 11 Armd Div                  Lt-Gen                  Comd 30 Corps                  LT-GEN.                  COMMANDER SECOND ARMY.</p>	<p>M.C.                  1.3.45                  29780</p>	

B.H. Northey  
 FIELD MARSHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP

Army Form W.3121  
 Date recommendation passed forward

159 Inf. Brigade 11 Armd Division 30 Corps  
 1st Bn  
 Unit The Herefordshire Regiment

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (To be left blank)

Army No. and Rank MAJOR 156477  
 Name Northey Leslie Percy (D.C.M.)

Received 15 Sep AA 16 Sep AA  
 17 Sep 44 18 Sep 44  
 20 SEP 44 28 SEP 44  
 28 OCT 1944 28 NOV 1944

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>North of MALCHETTEREN 3575 ( Map Sheet 47) in the wooded area 3579, on morning of 13 Sep 44, strong enemy positions were located, which later were found to contain 6,000 Germans mainly 10 Para Bn. An Inf/Tk attack by "C" Coy 1 HEREFORD and "C" Sqn Fife &amp; Perth, was developed on the enemy's right flank, the depth of the objective being approximately 1700 yards. This operation was commanded by Major Northey, and proved to be completely sound in its detailed Inf/Tk planning and execution. During the first 1,000 yards, the assault came in for considerable casualties and Mr. Fire, which caused heavy casualties among leaders of the forward platoons, including Pl Comd, Pl Sgt, and all Section Comds in one platoon. Major NORTHNEY, with complete disregard for his own safety, went among his leading troops re-organising them, and encouraging them to continue the attack, which they did with unrelenting fierceness, killing and bayonetting the Germans in their positions.</p>	<p>C.O. M. C. (Immediate)                  Brig Comd M.C.                  159 Inf Bde (J.B. CHURCHER)                  Maj-Gen                  Comd 11 Armd Div                  Lt-Gen                  Comd 30 Corps                  LT-GEN.                  COMMANDER SECOND ARMY.</p>	<p>M.C.                  1.3.45                  29780</p>	

B.H. Northey  
 FIELD MARSHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Military Cross to Major Northey



Constable

Date recommendation passed forward.

RECEIVED

159 Inf Bde. 11 Arm Div. 8 Corps. *2 Oct 44*

Schedule No. *1000*

UNIT 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt. Div. 8 Oct 44

Army No. and Rank *443575 (L/Corp)*

NAME. CONSTABLE Richard Edward

Action for which commended. Recommended at Honour (To be filled in or blank)

(Date and place MUST be stated) by or Award.

On the night 21/22 September 44, 1 HEREFORD made an assault crossing of the WILHERMS CANAL at ZOMEREN in order that a Class 40 Bridge could be constructed by the Engineers before first light. The assault crossing by the three Rifle Companies was successfully completed. The enemy swiftly counter-attacked the small perimeter with the support of heavy mortar and artillery fire. At the same time parties of enemy who had hidden in fox holes within the perimeter during the initial advance in the darkness, came to life. L/Cpl Constable was "C" Company's Clerk whose HQ was situated within the perimeter adjacent to the main road running from the enemy position

Lt. Col. M.M.  
Comd. 1. HEREFORD. IMMEDIATE.  
(R. TURNER CAN.)  
Brig  
Comd. 159 Inf Bde.  
Maj Gen  
Comd 11 Arm Div.  
Lt. Genl.  
Comd 8 Corps.  
LIEUT-GENERAL B. W. NORTON  
FIELD MARSHAL  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
21 ARMY GROUP

to the bridge.

He was a member of a party which was placed in a defense position along the road outside his Company HQ. He himself in charge of three or four men was given the task of holding the road. About 30 German Infantry, together with three or four MGs attacked this position. L/Cpl Constable and his detachment with a Bren LMG and rifle succeeded in inflicting heavy casualties and forcing the Germans to withdraw to a bank about 20 yards away. The enemy from this position put down continuous small arms fire on L/Cpl Constable's detachment. Despite this danger L/Cpl Constable continued to fire his Bren for some 45 minutes with good effect until the weapon jammed. The enemy hearing this automatic fire cease, advanced. L/Cpl Constable then seized a Sten gun and beat off this attack, killing and wounding several of the enemy.

The determined leadership and personal bravery of this NCO in no small way was responsible for denying to the enemy ground which dominated the bridge.

(Date and place MUST be stated)

*2 October 44*

On the night 21/22 September 44, 1 HEREFORD made an assault crossing of the WILHERMS CANAL at ZOMEREN in order that a Class 40 Bridge could be constructed by the Engineers before first light. The assault crossing by the three Rifle Companies was successfully completed. The enemy swiftly counter-attacked the small perimeter with the support of heavy mortar and artillery fire. At the same time parties of enemy who had hidden in fox holes within the perimeter during the initial advance in the darkness, came to life. L/Cpl Constable was "C" Company's Clerk whose HQ was situated within the perimeter adjacent to the main road running from the enemy position

Lt. Col. M.M.  
Comd. 1. HEREFORD. IMMEDIATE.  
(R. TURNER CAN.)  
Brig  
Comd. 159 Inf Bde.  
Maj Gen  
Comd 11 Arm Div.  
Lt. Genl.  
Comd 8 Corps.  
LIEUT-GENERAL B. W. NORTON  
FIELD MARSHAL  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
21 ARMY GROUP



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Military medal to LCpl Constable





Miles

IMMEDIATE

In lieu of AFW 3121

159 Infantry Brigade - 11 Armd Division 8 Corps. Date recommendation passed forward

Schedule No \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: J Tp 11 Armd Div Sigs - att 159 Inf Bde. RECEIVED PASSED

Army No. and Rank 2575757. W/Sjt. 8 Oct 44 10 Oct 44 10 Oct 44

Name David MILES 20 OCT 44 11 Oct 44

Action for which commended (Date & Place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honourable Award (To be left or Award as blank)
<p>On the night 21/22 Sep 44 I HEREFORD were ordered to form a bridgehead over the WILLEMS CANAL at ZOMEREN. A class 40 bridge was constructed over the Canal during the night in order to pass elements of the Bde across at first light.</p> <p>W/Sjt Miles was in charge of a Line Detachment under comd of the Bridge Control Officer, with orders to lay a line across the bridge. The line was laid during the night under heavy fire. The line det was then withdrawn, but Sjt. Miles remained with the Bridge Control Officer to ensure that comms were maintained.</p> <p>During the night enemy infiltrated through our post to the bank of the canal and brought fire to bear on the Engineers working on the bridge, with the result that they and the bridge control were forced to withdraw</p>	<p><i>D. B. Churcher</i> Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde (J. B. CHURCHER)</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> Maj-Gen Comd 11 Armd Div</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> Lt-Gen Comd 8 Corps</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> LIEUT-GENERAL, COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.</p> <p><i>B. H. Nonhealey</i> FIELD MARCHAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF 21 ARMY GROUP</p>	<p>M.M. (immediate)</p> <p>M.M. 1.3.45.</p> <p>28096 (P.T.O.)</p>

IMMEDIATE

159 Infantry Brigade - 11 Armd Division 8 Corps. Date recommendation passed forward

Schedule No \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: J Tp 11 Armd Div Sigs - att 159 Inf Bde. RECEIVED PASSED

Army No. and Rank 2575757. W/Sjt. 8 Oct 44 10 Oct 44 10 Oct 44

Name David MILES 20 OCT 44 11 Oct 44

<p>In addition the line on the bridge was several times cut by mortar fire; at one time, a stretch of 300 yards was cut in as many as eleven places. On each occasion Sjt Miles repaired it at great danger to himself, and remained at his post throughout the night under heavy mortaring and shell fire.</p> <p>He displayed great coolness throughout the whole op, and his outstanding example was a great inspiration to all around. By his devotion to duty under conditions of great difficulty and danger he personally ensured the maintenance of comms with the detachment on the far side of the Canal; his courageous efforts were thus of vital importance to the success of the op.</p>	<p><i>D. B. Churcher</i> Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde (J. B. CHURCHER)</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> Maj-Gen Comd 11 Armd Div</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> Lt-Gen Comd 8 Corps</p> <p><i>W. S. Miles</i> LIEUT-GENERAL, COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.</p> <p><i>B. H. Nonhealey</i> FIELD MARCHAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF 21 ARMY GROUP</p>	<p>M.M. (immediate)</p> <p>M.M. 1.3.45.</p> <p>28096 (P.T.O.)</p>
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... recommendation passed forward  
 11 Armd Div. 8 Corps. **RECEIVED PASSED**  
 The Herefordshire Regiment  
 UNIT No 4460191 Private  
 (Acting Corporal) **PEARSON Herbert**  
**NAME** PEARSON Herbert  
**ACTION FOR WHICH COMMENDED** (Date and Place MUST be stated)  
 On the night 21/22 Sep 1944 Pearson was in command of a Section whose task was to cross the CANAL at ZOMEREN and establish itself on the perimeter of the bridgehead some 500 yards EAST of this position covered the main road running to the bridging site and was accordingly of vital importance. The Section successfully made an assault crossing of the canal but on proceeding to their objective met a greatly superior enemy force advancing down the road to the bridge.  
 Cpl Pearson on his own initiative and with great skill quickly maneuvered his section to form an ambush.  
 Lt. General  
 COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.  
 M M  
 13:45  
 28319  
 B. h. Ron  
 FIELD MARSHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP.  
 - over -

Despite the darkness he exercised such excellent command that he was able to inflict casualties on the enemy compelling the enemy to withdraw in disorder. Some hours later the enemy counter-attacked this bridgehead in force, and after a sharp struggle captured two of PEARSON's Section.  
 Cpl PEARSON without regard for his personal safety, rushed forward from his position, taking advantage of our own artillery fire at that time, and located these prisoners. He himself rushed in killing the enemy guard with his sten gun, and brought the prisoners back to his own Section. Throughout the night with the support of heavy mortar and artillery fire on the bridgehead locality, the enemy continued to counter-attack. Despite his isolated position, Cpl PEARSON kept his Section intact, and continued to harass the enemy at close range. On two separate occasions on his own initiative he led his section forward to drive away enemy parties which had succeeded in infiltrating on the flanks of his position. Despite the enemy's attempts to annihilate the bridgehead with what was subsequently discovered to be superior forces, the perimeter was maintained intact, and a bridge was completed. The success of this operation may be largely attributed to Cpl PEARSON who, with his section, denied the use of the main road to the enemy throughout the night. His personal courage and leadership was outstanding.  
 2 October  
 Lt. General  
 COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.  
 M M  
 24.8.1  
 DIER



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Military Medal to Cpl Pearson





**IMMEDIATE**

Form W.312  
Date of recommendation passed forward 11 Nov 44

159 Infantry Brigade 11 Armd Division 8 Corps Received Passed

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_

Rank and Army or Personal No. 50884 W/Maj. T/Lt-Col

Name: George Robert TURNER-CAIN

Date of Action for which commended: 21/22 Sep 44  
(Date and place of action must be stated)

Recommended Reward: D.S.O.

Lt-Col TURNER-CAIN was appointed to command of this Brigade on 4 July 44. On the night 21/22 Sep 44 his Bn was ordered to make an assault crossing over the WILLEMS CANAL at ZOMEREN. Zero hour for this attack was 1930 hrs. The enemy were holding defensive posns close to the canal bank. Despite stiff opposition and the heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire which was brought down in the area of the crossing, three Rifle Coys had successfully crossed and were establishing themselves on the far bank by 2100 hrs. The initial success of this op was largely due to Lt-Col TURNER-CAIN's sound tactical ability and leadership. Shortly afterwards, before the perimeter of the bridgehead was secured, a strong enemy counter-attack developed; it was discovered later that this counter-attack was delivered by no less than a Bn of Inf of high quality and long battle experience. Some of the enemy succeeded in infiltrating into the perimeter, and in the darkness the fighting was bitter and confused.

Maj.-Gen.  
Comd 11 Armd Div  
D.S.O.

Lt-Col  
Comd 8 Corps  
Killed in action  
Died  
LIEUT.-GENERAL  
COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY  
P.T.O.

B. H. Bond  
FIELD MARSHAL  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
21 ARMY GROUP

Avon II

159 Infantry Brigade 11 Armd Division 8 Corps Received Passed

Despite the critical situation, Lt-Col TURNER-CAIN remained at all times cool and undaunted; he maintained control of his Coys under the most adverse conditions, and committed his fourth rifle coy at the right moment to restore the situation.

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

Throughout the night his Bn maintained the bridgehead against all enemy efforts to dislodge them. This enabled a class 40' bridge to be built by the Royal Engineers, over which tanks and a further Inf Bn of this Div were able to advance at first light to exploit the initial success, and to capture ASTEN.

Lt-Col TURNER-CAIN's sound tactical ability made possible the great success achieved by his Bn at heavy cost to the enemy; his coolness and personal bravery under enemy fire were an inspiration to all ranks.

ff casualty as under, fill in date.

Nature of Casualty	Date
Killed in action	
Wounds	
Died	
Missing	

Maj.-Gen.  
Comd 11 Armd Div  
P.T.O.



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Distinguished Service order to Lt Col Turner-Cain





Dalton

(1299) Wt.10520/1885 240,000 5/44 FHD G038/10.

49A  
Army Form W312

Date recommendation passed forward 17 Jun 45

159 Inf Brigade 11 Armd Division 8th Corps  
1st Battalion  
Schedule No. Unit The Herefordshire Regiment  
Brigade 1.7.45 3.7.45  
Division 4.7.45 9.7.45  
Corps 11.7.45 18.7.45  
Rank and Army or Personal No. W/GSM 4 0 3 1 7 3 5  
Name D A L T O N ROY  
(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
CSM DALTON joined the Bn in AUG 44, since when he has been in every action. He has always displayed the utmost steadiness and determination, and even under the most unpleasant conditions has managed to maintain a cheerfulness which proved so invaluable both to his Coy Comd and also the NCOs and men under him. On every occasion he ensured that his Company was supplied with ammunition even when they were occupying forward positions and could only be approached across bullet-swept country. He also took every opportunity to ensure that his Company were fed as often and as well as possible. At ZOMEREN BRIDGE on the evening of 21/22 Sep 1944, the enemy put in a strong counter-attack in the dark. This WO's Coy had only just crossed the Canal, and many men got lost in the darkness. He volunteered with only one Private soldier and two LMGs to occupy a very	W. P. G. G. M. M. (Periodical) Major Comd. 1. HEREFORD (WAP CROFTS MC) Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde (JB CHURCHER DSO) Maj Genl 11 Armd Div Lt Genl Comd 8 Corps.	M.M.C. M.S. 30.10.45 P.T.O.	PA. 2nd
..... exposed	24 JAN 1946	46589	

exposed position near to the enemy in order to enable his Coy Comd to go round and collect the remnants of a platoon which had got lost when its commander was wounded. He stayed in this position for twenty minutes, beating off the enemy by the well controlled fire from his LMGs. When the missing platoon arrived, he put them in position, and constantly moved amongst them to check on the ammunition supply and maintain the men's morale.

This WO combined loyalty to his Officers and a continual regard for the interests of the men.

By his personal courage he had frequently inspired his subordinates for that extra effort when it was most needed and most difficult to produce.

If a casualty as under, fill-in date.

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



(119) W.45451.225 110m 1/44 FHD G.P. 10. **PERIODICAL** Army Form W.3121

Recommended forward **21 Oct 44**

159 Infantry Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 8 Corps Received 21 Oct 44 Passed 25 Oct 44

Schedule No. **1 HEREFORD** Division **21 Oct 44** **14 Nov 44**

Rank and Army or Personal No. **Private 409848** Army **15 NOV 1944** **26 NOV 1944**

Name **EVANS, Victor Gregory**

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
Pte Evans has been at Command Post throughout the period 1 Aug - 31 Oct 44, both by day and night, and has assisted in keeping the vital communications with Coys open continuously, often for very long periods without rest.	<i>M. M. (G. R. TURNER-CAIN)</i> Lt-Col Comd 1 HEREFORD	M. M. (G. R. TURNER-CAIN) Lt-Col	
This Signaller has been under very close shell and mortar fire, often with no protection, for hours on end, especially at the following places :-	<i>J. B. (J. B. CHURCHER)</i> Brig Comd 159 Inf Bde	J. B. (J. B. CHURCHER) Brig	
LE PITT 1 Aug			
FORGUES 3, 4 and 5 Aug			
LE BAS PERRIER 8 and 9 Aug			
LE THEILL 14 Aug			
BRIOUCE } 18 Aug			
BOUCHE } 18 Aug			
ZOMEREN 21/22 Sep			

At ZOMEREN on night 21/22 Sep the Bn was making a night crossing of the WILLEMS CANAL, which was fiercely contested by the Germans, whose counter attack by fire fell on Bn HQ. Pte. Evans was manning the 18 Sep, which was the only link with the coys across the river, and,

**LIEUT-GENERAL, P.T.O.**

**COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.**

29941

(119) W.45451.225 110m 1/44 FHD G.P. 10. **PERIODICAL** Army Form W.3121

Recommended forward **21 Oct 44**

159 Infantry Brigade 11 Arm'd Division 8 Corps Received 21 Oct 44 Passed 25 Oct 44

Schedule No. **1 HEREFORD** Division **21 Oct 44** **14 Nov 44**

Rank and Army or Personal No. **Private 409848** Army **15 NOV 1944** **26 NOV 1944**

Name **EVANS, Victor Gregory**

despite the fact that five shells fell within 10 yards of his position including one on the parapet of his trench, he remained completely calm and continued to man the control set throughout the night.

Pte Evans' steadfast example and coolness has been the link which ensured the smooth running and flexibility of this Bn on all the most awkward occasions.

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
Pte Evans has been at Command Post throughout the period 1 Aug - 31 Oct 44, both by day and night, and has assisted in keeping the vital communications with Coys open continuously, often for very long periods without rest.	<i>M. M. (G. R. TURNER-CAIN)</i> Lt-Col Comd 1 HEREFORD	M. M. (G. R. TURNER-CAIN) Lt-Col	
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LE THEILL 14 Aug			
BRIOUCE } 18 Aug			
BOUCHE } 18 Aug			
ZOMEREN 21/22 Sep			

At ZOMEREN on night 21/22 Sep the Bn was making a night crossing of the WILLEMS CANAL, which was fiercely contested by the Germans, whose counter attack by fire fell on Bn HQ. Pte. Evans was manning the 18 Sep, which was the only link with the coys across the river, and,

**LIEUT-GENERAL, P.T.O.**

**COMMANDER, SECOND ARMY.**

29941

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



Field Marshal Montgomery presents the Military Medal to Pte Evans



Mills

Date recommendation passed forward  
**RECEIVED** **PASSED**  
 159 Inf Bde 11 Arm Div 8 Oct 44  
 Schedule No .....  
 UNIT 1st Bn The Herefordshire Regt Div 8 Oct 44 to 10 Oct 44  
 Army No. and Rank 242920 (A/Capt) 10 Oct 44

NAME MILLS Edward Leslie 20 OCT 1944

Action for which commended  
 (Date and place MUST be stated)  
 On the night 21/22 September 1944  
 1 HEREFORD made an assault crossing  
 of the WILHELM CANAL at ZOMMEREN in  
 order that a Class 40 bridge could  
 be constructed by the Engineers  
 before first light.  
 The assault crossing by the three  
 Rifle Companies was successfully  
 completed. The enemy swiftly counter-  
 attacked the small perimeter with the  
 support of heavy mortar and artillery  
 fire. At the same time parties of  
 enemy who had hidden in fox-holes  
 within the perimeter during the initial  
 advance in the darkness came to life.  
 Capt Mills was Second-in-Command of  
 "C" Company whose HQ was situated  
 within the perimeter adjacent to the  
 main road running from the enemy  
 position to the bridge.

M.C.  
 1. 3. 45  
 29816  
 FIELD MARECHAL  
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
 21 ARMY GROUP



110101 BERRAY

His Company Commander, on instructions from the Commanding Officer had left the Company HQ to re-organise the platoons which had been over-run. Captain Mills appreciating the critical situation gathered his small party of Company HQ and placed them in a defensive position along the road. About 30 enemy infantry with three or four MGs immediately attacked; Captain Mills' small party repulsed this force when within 10 yards range, and the enemy withdrew to a small bank approximately 30 yards away where they kept up a continuous fire on the HQ locality. Despite this very heavy small arms fire at point blank range, Capt Mills with complete disregard for his own safety went from man to man encouraging them and personally distributing ammunition. Five of this small party, including the CSM, became casualties. After three quarters of an hour, the only Bren LMG in Captain Mills' party jammed, and the enemy started to advance. Captain Mills quickly re-organised the remnants of his small party and attacked. He himself went forward throwing grenades. This bold action upset the enemy advance and they withdrew to the bank leaving behind several dead and wounded. Later on two Germans attempted to stalk his post; Captain Mills personally located and destroyed these enemy weapons. This Officer's example of personal bravery and leadership was undoubtedly responsible for maintaining his Coy HQ intact and denying the vital ground dominating the bridge head, to the enemy.

2 Oct 44  
S.M.  
24 E. 1

LIEUT. GENERAL  
COMMANDER SECOND ARMY

Singleton

Maj Singleton had served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and was transferred to the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

16

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

Date recommendation passed forward

146 Inf	Brigade 49	Inf Division	1 Brit	Corps	Received	Passed
Schedule No.	Unit	1/4 KOYLI	Hereford	Brigade	15 June	18 June
(To be left blank)			(George Mason)	Division	19 June	19 June
Rank and Army or Personal No.	WS Capt T/Major	88390		Corps	2 July 45	27 July 45
				Army		

Name..... SINGLETON, George Michael.  
(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
14 June '45 Major Singleton has served with 1/4 Bn KOYLI since July 44, as a Rifle Coy Commander. During this period he has been wounded in action three times. His leadership in battle has always been of the highest order. His Company has reflected his personality and leadership in the manner in which every task has been completed. During the period of the campaign, fighting has been carried out under conditions ranging from the bocage of NORMANDY to the open flooded areas of WESTERN HOLLAND, and Major Singleton has shown complete ability to deal with a situation whatever the difficulties.	MAJ BARLOW POOLE MC. Comd 1/4 K.O.Y.L.I. D.S. GORDON, Brig. 146 Inf Bde.	MC Periodic	P.A. Nil
During the attack on RYCKE/VORSEL, BELGIUM on 25 and 26 Sep 44, Major Singleton's Company was ordered to secure the left flank of the Bn. During this operation the Coy came under enemy fire from three sides and was attacked by inf and armd cars. Arty fire was brought down and corrections were made by Major Singleton. All enemy attacks, which were carried out in a determined manner, were beaten off and the flank of the Bn was secured.	MAJ GEN Comd 49 Div.		
Major Singleton has shown himself to be an outstanding officer and leader both in battle and out of the line. His personal example and ability, has, on many occasions, contributed greatly to the success of the Bn.	Lt-Gen. Comd. 1 Corps Dist.		11.45

P.T.O.  
24 JAN 1946



## Officers' Plot

See Separate post

### ORs' Strength Return

The strength returns do not present the full picture and they only give a snapshot total and do not include details of gains and losses.

Date	WO1	WO2	CSjt	Sjt	Cpl	Pte	Bglr	Total	Remarks
<b>Establishment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>689</b>		<b>813</b>	
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	

Reinforcements continued to be received to make good casualties. These included 4105507 Pte HT Kemp, from Hereford who had joined the Herefords in May 1939 and trained as an Army 'shoemaker'.

NOTIFICATION OF IMPENDING RELEASE PAGE THREE

Part I To: SAC, Military Disembarkation Camp Unit in U.K. To be completed by units overseas who are despatching men to U.K. for release.

Surname (Block letters) **KEMP**  
 Christian Name **HARRY THOMAS**  
 Army No. **4105507** Age and Service Group **27c**  
 Present Rank **Pte** Unit, Regt. or Corps **1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regiment KSLI**  
 Documents attached **AFB 122 H1157**

Part II To be completed by unit overseas or in U.K.

(a) Trade on enlistment **Boot Repairer** (b) Trade courses and trade tests passed **Colobler**  
 (c) Service Trade **Boot Repairer**  
 (d) Any other qualifications for civilian employment

Military Certificate Testimonial:

Pte Kemp, joined the Army in May 1939, and has been employed as a Regimental Boot repairer since joining this Battalion in September 1944 from the 2 Herefords. A very keen type of man, and completely trustworthy. I have no hesitation in recommending him to any civilian employer, who wishes to use his services.


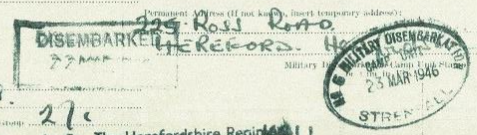
Place **S.A.O.R.** Date **17 MAR 1946**  
 Officer's Signature **Lieutenant Colonel**  
 Army Education Incent (including particulars under (a), (b), (c) and (d) below). This section will not be filled in until the receipt of further War Office Instructions.

(a) Type of course **Handicrafts** (b) Length **5 weeks** (c) Total hours of instruction **35** (d) Record of achievement **Very capable & intelligent workman.**

Part III To: Officer in charge of local office, **Shrewsbury**

Disembarkation Address (If not kept, insert temporary address): **229 Ross Road, Hereford**

Surname (Block letters) **KEMP**  
 Christian Name **HARRY THOMAS**  
 Army No. **4105507** Age and Service Group **27c**  
 Present Rank **Pte** Unit, Regt. or Corps **1st Bn. The Herefordshire Regiment KSLI**  
 Documents attached **AFB 122 H1157**

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Return to France & Belgium

Wilf Slade

Ken Crockford



Canloan History



## HISTORY OF CANLOAN

In the fall of 1943 a scheme was devised whereby Canadian Officers could volunteer to serve with Regiments of the British Army. This came about due to the many campaigns fought by the British Army, halfway

around the world, which resulted in a shortage of junior officers.

The Canadian Army at this time had a surplus of Officers, due in part to the disbanding of the two Home Defence Divisions and also to the fact that the Canadian Army was fighting on one front only, in Italy. The training of Officer material continued and it was discovered that Canada had more Officers than could be employed in active battalions at this time, with the result that many were cooling their heels in Reinforcement Units and other instructional duties.

The Canadian Government offered to loan Junior Officers to the British Army on a voluntary basis, under the code name "Canloan". They were attached for all purposes, except pay and given special serial numbers with the prefix CDN.

Six hundred and twenty-three (623) Infantry Officers, together with fifty (50) Ordnance Officers, whom the Royal Army Ordnance Corps were anxious to have, served under the Canloan Scheme, a total of six hundred and seventy-three (673) in all. While the majority were Junior Officers, Captains were included on the basis of one for every seven Lieutenants. Some Officers with higher ranks reverted and some from other arms of the service transferred to Infantry, in order that they could get in on this promise of early action.

In the early spring of 1944 all Officers who volunteered were screened, then proceeded to A 34, S.O.T.C., Sussex, N.B. where they underwent a short refresher course, while the necessary preparations for overseas service were speedily completed. During this phase they were under the command of Brig. Milton F. Gregg,

V.C., M.C., now our Honorary President, who because of his continued keen interest in the welfare of all Canloan is regarded as their Colonel in Chief. From Sussex they proceeded overseas in drafts of from fifty to two hundred; the first draft arriving on April 7th, 1944 and the remainder following in short order. They were immediately posted to British Regiments, as far as possible, with the British Regiment, if any, to which their Canadian Regiment was affiliated. While with the British Regiment each wore the badge of the Regiment to which he was attached, as well as the Canada badge.

They took part in the bitter fighting in N.W. Europe, many landing on the Normandy beaches on D Day and some serving with the British Army in Italy.

### Casualties

Killed in action or died of wounds	128 (20%)
Wounded	310 (50%)
Prisoners of war	27 (5%)
<b>Total Casualties</b>	<b>465 (75%)</b>

### Decorations

41 Military Crosses (1 with bar)	1 Silver Star (U.S.) 4 Croix de Guerre (French) 1 Order of Bronze Lion (Dutch)
1 Distinguished Service Cross	
1 M.B.E.	

(an unrecorded number of "Mentions in Despatches")

In addition, 2 D.C.M.'s and 6 M.M.'s had already been awarded members of the group for previous service in the ranks of the Canadian Army. An enviable record of which Canloan as a whole can be proud.

The original intention was that Canloan Officers were to serve in N.W. Europe or the Mediterranean only, however, a number volunteered for other theatres with some eventually going to South East Asia.

That the Canloan scheme was a success is shown by the report published in the Official History of the Canadian Army, under the authority of the Department of National Defence.

"The Canloan scheme may be accounted decidedly successful; the gallant young Officers loaned to the British Army under its terms did their country credit and made a distinguished and significant contribution to the Military effort of the Commonwealth and the winning of the war".

While Canloan can be justifiably proud of their splendid war record, the same qualities of leadership are being exhibited in their postwar re-establishment. An examination of this roster will reveal that many are leaders in both business and professional life. It is also interesting to note that Canloan served in the Canadian Armed Forces after the War and again saw action in Korea, served in Germany, and assisted in peace-keeping throughout the world. Others served in the Reserve Force and in some cases have been appointed to command.

Brig. Gregg has said of Canloan: "I know of no other veterans' group whose trails crossed so casually yet whose esprit de corps is so high. They have met the tricky task of re-settlement with the same courage and resourcefulness which distinguished their battle record. Theirs is a rich immediate tradition."

### SERVICE IN KSL/HERFORD

	SERVED	KILLED
2 KSL	2	1
4 KSL	10	1
5 KSL	1	
1 HFD	4	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>