

W A R D I A R Y

FOR THE MONTH OF

Unit: HQ 227 (H) Inf Bde

Comd Offr: Brig EC Colville, DSO

D E C E M B E R 4 4

Between December 1-8 the Brigade, concentrated in ASTEN (6213), continued training. Brigade and Divisional conferences were held to discuss the policy of holding a line of the River MAAS (See Folio 1, Appx D).

On December 3 the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Brigade played in the town square and the Burgomaster had tea at Brigade HQ.

On December 7 the Brigade relieved Bns of 158 and 160 Bdes, of 53 Div, on a line from the Derivation Canal (7998) to North of BAARLO (8705), which was later extended on the left as far as 875080.

Throughout the month two Bns were in the line; one Bn in reserve at EGCHHEL (772037) and Bde HQ at HELDEN (793037). Reliefs were carried out as shown in Folio 6 Appx D.

The problem of observing the entire river line and covering it by fire was not an easy one and on a few occasions enemy patrols crossed the river.

On the night 11/12 Dec, 10 HLI had two skirmishes with the enemy. First a section going to its night position was ambushed at 861029. One member of the patrol was wounded and one enemy was taken prisoner, but was too seriously wounded to be interrogated. Later another patrol bumped the enemy on the road leading due east from BAARLO. One man of 10 HLI was killed and one wounded.

Three enemy patrols were seen during the night 17/18 Dec; a small one at 852024 and three enemy at wood 841015 were seen by 10 HLI and a strong patrol of 14 at 806980 by 2 Gordons. In each case the patrols were engaged by small arms fire and followed up by a fighting patrol, but no contact was made. Patrol which crossed at 806980 immediately went back across the river in a motor boat and were engaged by mortars.

On the night 21/22 a rubber boat with a crew of three crossed at 836008 and was shot up by a Gordons post. One of the crew swam to the river bank and was taken prisoner. Soon afterwards three enemy, who had been lying up all day on the West bank, came down to the river bank expecting to be taken back across the river and were captured. Much useful information was obtained from these prisoners of 7 and 15 coys of Para Regt HARDEGG (See Folio 16 Appx F).

By day excellent OPs were established by Inf and RA and a great deal of information was obtained (See Folios 1-15 Appx F).

In general, the enemy had every advantage in establishing OPs as the ground on the East bank overlooks that on the West, but he took little advantage of this, and it is interesting to note that the prisoners taken by 2 Gordons were

sent on recce because it was thought that there were few troops in this sector as very little movement had been observed.

An exercise to test communications and observation from OPs was held on 23 Dec (See Folios 1-3 Appx J)

The Comd-in-Chief, Field Marshall Sir Bernard L Montgomery, KCB, DSO, presented medal ribbons to men of the Division at ZOMERON School (591112) on 13 Dec, when seven officers, including Lt Col RWM de Winton, CO of 2 Gordons, and seven ORs of the Brigade received awards.

After the presentation, the Bde Comd, BM and DAA and QMG attended an address given by the C-in-C to senior officers.

At Christmas the best was made of difficult circumstances and each Bn in turn had a good dinner when out of the line. Messages of good wishes were received from the Divisional and Corps Commanders (See Folio 4 Appx J).