

WAR DIARY.

In lieu of A.F. C 2118.

Month and Year:- October, 1944.

Unit:- 2nd Bn The Gordon Highlanders  
Commanding Officer:- Lt.-Col R.W.M. de Winton, D.S.O.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
HOLLAND	1		<p>Weather remains wet and cold, trench life becoming most uncomfortable. Bn informed that the 51st Highland Div were relieving 15 (S) Div the following day. Hoped that one of our own Bns will relieve us (1st or 5/7 Bns) - Constant patrolling during day.</p> <p>0810 "A" Coy sent Pl under command of Lt Burge to WOOD 273287 made contact with enemy patrol - one man killed - retaliate with M.G. and Mortar "Hate Shoot".</p> <p>1600 Standing patrol of 2 O.Rs from "D" Coy to M.R. 388288 report seeing enemy patrol on track at 365282.</p> <p>2000 Bren party (3 Brens) from "A" Coy. Harassing Shoot on HOUSE at 372288 and WOOD 373288 for ¼ hour (10 mags Bren). Slight shelling from Enemy Inf guns during day.</p>	
	2		<p>1100 Brig Sinclair (153 Bde), Brig Colville (227 Bde) with members of 1st and 5/7th Bns visit Command Post.</p> <p>0900 "A" Coy patrol 1 N.C.O. and 6 contact A. &amp; S.H. Standing Patrol 2 O.Rs from "C" Coy observe enemy movements in HOUSE 372288. WOOD 373288 Report clear of enemy. Appears enemy is thinning out. Strong points remain along railway. Fighting Patrol from "D" Coy (1 N.C.O. and 8 O.Rs) to contact enemy on railway 365275. Observed two enemy sentries on W. side of railway. Patrol returned to report.</p> <p>1400 "D" Coy patrol sent back to railway as object in morning had not been achieved. Orders were to fire at enemy if observed. Return to report hitting at least two enemy - were fired on from enemy M/G firing into top of trees - very inaccurate. Patrol lay quiet until firing ceased then returned fire from Brens.</p> <p>1100 Explosion heard on bearing 355° from O.P. (372280) thought to be enemy Amn Dump but not confirmed.</p> <p>1625 Recce party from 5 Camerons. Slight shelling during day, appears to be trying for Class 40 Br at M.R. 389249.</p>	

		1930	C.O. and Adjt dine with 153 Bde.	
HOLLAND	3	0800	Enemy fighting patrol attack O.P. - M.Gs and Light Inf Mortars. Difficult to tell exact location of firing but did not appear to be very close to O.P. Carrier Pl report seeing about 15 men enter WOOD 365278. Carrier Pl, 3" Mors and Gunners shoot up likely return routes to railway. No casualties - quiet by 0830 hrs.	
		1200	A tired and nervous enemy N.C.O. walked into our lines causing amusement owing to his poor condition. During day arrangements made for hand over to 5 Camerons. All surplus stores and tpt sent to Bn Assembly Area (395286).	
		1400	Commencement of "Hand Over". "A", "C" & "D" Coys of Bn change over, Camerons making slight adjustments and including their "B" Coy. We were very weak on ground.	
		1500	Bn report "STAG" - code word for completion of operation.	
		1515	Bn feed in Assembly Area.	
		1545	Move to Rest Area - Order of March Bn HQ, Sp Coy, "A", "D" & "C" Coys in 3 ton lorries.	
		1930	Arrived in DEURNE M.R. 653202 (1/25000 - 19 Sh VENRAIJ).	
		2200	Bn settled in new billets. "D" Coy in German Hutted Camp at M.R. 644209, remainder of Bn in private houses and cafes. Americans concerned about our lights and noise as enemy patrols and shelling of village were possible. Capt G. Potter joined Bn and posted to Mor Pl.	
	4	1300	Bn re-organisation. 3 coys made up to strength from drafts. For first time since leaving ENGLAND, central Officers' Mess in School. Mobile baths during day. P.R.I. opens canteen in Cafe.	
		1800	Pipes and Drums play "Retreat" in Square.	
		2100	Cinema show in local cinema.	
	5	1000	Bn trg including Drill and P.T. Bn quarter guard mounted at Bn HQ. Shelling of Village during afternoon.	
		1730	Bde Comd lectures to officers and N.C.Os - briefing of future operations.	
		1800	E.N.S.A. concert.	
	6	1000	Day's course for "I" Sec at Bde HQ.	
		1400	Bde "O" Gp.	
		1730	Div Comd lectures to officers in HELMOND (553220 Sh 5 1/10000).	

HOLLAND		1800 1930 2000	For the first time during this war, a performance of the Div. Pipe Band has been held on the Continent. The Pipe Band under Drum Major Wilkie and Pipe-Major Nicol paraded in the grounds of The Castle, HELMOND before the Corps and Div Commanders. After the performance the Corps Commander expressed his high approval of the excellent display that had been given. The programme was as follows:- Blue Bonnets over the Border - Skye Gathering - Atholl and Breadalbane - Because he was a Bonnie Lad - High Road to Linton - Glendurnie Highlanders - Lady Dorothea Stewart Murray - Farewell to the Creeks - The Mist Covered Mountain - Australian Ladies - Munlochry Brig - Scotland the Brave. Shelling of Village. Film Show.	
	7	1445 1730	Corps Commander's interview with C.O. and 2 i/c at Bde HQ. The Bde's intention to attack W. of Forest RUCHSWALD to GENNEP on TUE 10 Oct cancelled. Maj G.H. Hutchinson returns to Bn from hospital. Shelling during day. Two S.Bs wounded. For the first time on the Continent a performance of the 1st, 2nd and 5/7th Bns' Pipe Bands played "Retreat" NORTH of the ZON Bridge. It is a memorable occasion for the three Bns. The Pipe Band under Drum Major Ferguson (5/7th Bn) and Drum Major (1st Bn). The Pipe Majors, all from Balmoral Castle lead the pipers - Pipe Majors Brown (1st Bn), McGregor (5/7th Bn) and Nicol (2nd Bn). The Div and Bde Comds were present.	Retreat Programme Appendix I.
	8	1145 1900	Enemy patrols laid A/Tk mines on road between DEURNE and BAKEL. Two Jeeps of 11 Armoured Div blow up. Interpreter L. Dunke Jacob joins Bn from EINDHOVEN. Scale X Church Parade in "D" Coy Camp. Guest Night in Officers' Mess.	Appendix II.
HOLLAND	9		Return to Bn from hospital of Sjt Harris and 4 O.Rs. Owing to enemy activity it was necessary to send out patrols during the night. "A" Coy supply patrols along road to Bde HQ; they have nothing to report except meeting patrols from Recce, A. & S.H. and American Army. While repairing roof of factory, Pte Candie of Pioneer Pl fell through roof of factory and fractured his skull. American Div move to area of DEURNE and take over patrolling between DEURNE and MILHEEZE.	Appendix III.
	10	0920	Corps Comd lectures to Bn Comds at Corps HQ (8th Corps).	

			C.O. lectures to all Coys.	
	11	1545 1730 1930	Hockey match between offrs and Sjts. Score 0 - 4. Pipe Band plays "Retreat" at DEURNE. Film Show. 1st Publication of Bn News Summary as "BY DAND" taking the place of "The Gordonian".	Appendix IV.
	12	1630 1700 2030	Hockey. DEURNE Hockey Club v. Gordons Team. Score 1 - 0. Members of team presented with Souvenir Picture. Football Match A & S.H. v Gordons. Score 2 - 1. Bde Comd spectator at game. Film show in Deurne Cinema. 5 members of Bn return from Hospital. Night patrol in Village. Bn being worried by a number of Dutch civilians desiring to join British Army.	
	13	1645	The following awards were published:- Brigadier Sinclair J.R. - D.S.O. Capt MacPhail A.N., R.A.M.C. - M.C. Lt Hitchcock J.H. (Can Inf Corps) - M.C. 2817733 L/Sjt C. McGregor - M.M. Officers and N.C.Os visited HELMOND to see Armoured Troop Carriers.	
	14	0930 1400 1500 1400 2000	Bn Holiday with exception of officers and men on certain essential duties. Bde 'O' Gp. "C" & "D" Coys visit to Helmond to see Troop Carriers. "B" Ech move to area 598235. Reps from coys visit HELMOND. Film Show.	
	15	1000 1100 1800 2030	Church Parade in School Yard. Lecture of Officers and N.C.Os by Major Campbell (R.A.) on R.A. Support. Cinema Show in Theatre. Bn Concert arranged and produced by Capt Rae (P.R.I.).	Programme Appx VI.
HOLLAND	16	1000	C.O., 2 i/c and Coy Comds attend demonstration of Armoured Troop Carriers working with Tanks. General trg and recreation. Film in evening.	
	17	0900	Bn Exercise with Armoured Troop Carriers on Trg Area N. of Trg Pl Comds to work on briefing from Map and not on Ground - using Carriers as flank protection.	

		1400	Conference on morning's trg. Suggested that 2 i/c Coys should travel with rear pl together with the 18 set. Comn difficult, possible use of flag signal.									
		2030	Film show.									
	18		General trg. Coys practice quick decision orders and comn for use in Armoured Troop vehs.									
		1400	C.O. visits 51 Highland Div to make arrangements for take over from 153 and 152 Bdes. Visit to 1st Gordons. Nothing definite arranged as times of take over not certain.									
		2130	Bde 'O' Gp. Bn load and prepare to move. Bn '68 RESERVE' Sign put on all House and Buildings occupied.									
	19	0930	Bn 'O' Gp. 227 Bde to take over from 153 and 152 Bdes. Defensive role - to allow 51 H.D. to reform and prepare for attack N. of River DOMMEL (Sh 18 N.W.). Cameronians under command of 227 (H) Inf Bde.									
		1000	C.O. and I.O. leave for 5/7th Bn GORDONS from whom the Bn takes over. Recce of Coy positions etc.									
		1230	Coy Comds and guides arrive at 5/7th Gordons.									
		1430	Bn arrive at Assembly Area. - 153 Bde HQ 419314. - to reorganise into coy groups prior to moving forward. Food is cooked in this area.									
		1515	Mortar Pl and "C" Coy move forward to 5/7th Area 404314 (Map 18 N.W. 1/25000).									
		1530	Bn HQ move forward.									
		1600	"A" Coy with 2 6 pdr A. Tk guns, 2 Secs carriers and Coy Carrier.									
		1630	"D" Coy with 2 6 pdrs and 2 secs of Carriers.									
		1700	Move complete. Track leading down to Bn area impossible for wheeled vehs. Standing patrol as shown on sketch sent out to fill gap left by the Black Watch who moved out at 1800 hrs - also to let enemy think that posn still occupied.									
		1700	Change over as follows:- <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>2 Gordons Coys.</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>5/7 Gordons Coys.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>"C" Coy and 2 17 pdrs.</td> <td>"A" Coy.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"A" Coy and 2 6 pdrs.</td> <td>"C" Coy.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"D" Coy and 2 6 pdrs</td> <td>"D" Coy.</td> </tr> </table> 2 Secs of Carriers and the Assault 2" Mortar Section Standing patrol in Black Watch area.	<u>2 Gordons Coys.</u>	<u>5/7 Gordons Coys.</u>	"C" Coy and 2 17 pdrs.	"A" Coy.	"A" Coy and 2 6 pdrs.	"C" Coy.	"D" Coy and 2 6 pdrs	"D" Coy.	See Appx VII. Sketch of Coy locations.
<u>2 Gordons Coys.</u>	<u>5/7 Gordons Coys.</u>											
"C" Coy and 2 17 pdrs.	"A" Coy.											
"A" Coy and 2 6 pdrs.	"C" Coy.											
"D" Coy and 2 6 pdrs	"D" Coy.											
	20	0112	"A" Coy report farm building on fire - 600 yds in front of their F.D.L. Patrolling during day with harassing fire from									

			<p>Brens and Mortars - from position on Bn left flank and also GASTHURSHOEF area to make enemy think we still held the ground. Enemy mortaring on wood at 387324 (Sh 18 N.W. 1/25000).</p> <p>Considerable patrolling during day and night, no contact with enemy. Standing Patrol in GASTHURSHOEF. Enemy still thinks village is occupied as slight mortaring on one previous forward positions. Night patrols penetrated as far forward as 383328 with no contacts made. Tracks in Bn area becoming very muddy and difficult for tpt. All available men on road maintenance.</p>	
	21		<p>Still appears enemy think GATSHURSHOEF (M.R. 3932 1/25000) occupied by Black Watch. Mortared forward positions during day. Deception plan by firing 3" Mor and M.Gs from GASTHURSHOEF area. Held by 1 Pl Standing Patrol. Enemy not very active. No sign of patrols.</p>	
	22		<p>Active patrolling during night 21/22. "C" Coy contact enemy at 388316 (1/25000). Exchange of fire. No casualties. Heavy shelling of enemy posns during day. Enemy shell St Oedenrod. Mortar had direct hit on enemy digging at 385322. Bofors det under command of Bn.</p>	
	23	0001	<p>Active patrolling during night. No enemy contacted. 51st Highland Division put in attack on right towards our right flank.</p>	
	24	0630	<p>Party of 2 offrs and 5 O.Rs left for 48 hrs short pass in BRUSSELS. Bn move at 1200 hrs. Attack as shown in Appx XVIII. No enemy encountered. 1 O.R. killed by Box Mine. Bn HQ at 358296. Attack completed by 1600 hrs. Quiet night.</p>	
HOLLAND	25	1200 1500	<p>Two civilian prisoners handed to "C" Coy sent from BOXTEL. Bn marching personnel left for NOTEL (Sh 18 S.W. 1/25000). Arrived at new location. Conc in area for night.</p>	
	26		<p>Bde move to conc area MOERGESTEL as shown in Appendix XIV. Bn HQ established at 224316. Bde 'O' Gp at 1700 hrs.</p>	
	27		<p>Bde attack on TILBURG. See Appx X. Bn in town at 1830 hrs; great reception from civilians delaying operation for a short time. No enemy encountered. Civilians report enemy left town at mid-day. Bn spent peaceful night in good billets. Bn goes into Battle using KANGAROOS for first time, supported by tanks. No casualties.</p>	

	28		Div Pipe Band play "Retreat" in TILBURG - day of celebration for civilian population. It was hoped that the Bn would remain in TILBURG for a few days to clean up and enjoy civilisation for a change to the field and slit trenches. This was not possible as there was a threat of enemy infiltration on 8th Corps front at ASTEN, which was held by a small American Battle Group.	
		1400	Bn move to ASTEN with 227 Bde only, prepare for counter-attack role and defence of ASTEN.	
	29		Evacuation at own request of civilians in area of ASTEN, scared of counter-attack, atmosphere very tense. Bn moves to conc area in Sq 6113, defending 227 Bde HQ. Bde defensive role on ASTEN. Bn takes over from Americans. See Appx XI for dispositions. Active patrolling by enemy during night. Enemy using more and heavier arty than encountered since NORMANDY - Counter-attack expected. Americans withdrawn through our line and completed by 2400 hrs.	
	30	0430	Enemy Fighting Patrol of Coy strength attacked and took House M.R. 664108, occupied by "C" Coy. 3 O.Rs killed and 2 wounded. Two P.Ws taken. At 1400 hrs Pl of "C" Coy supported by two tanks counter-attacked and re-took house, taking 1 offr and 20 O.Rs P.W. Heavy shelling during day. 8 P.Ws taken during the evening by Maintenance Party from Sig Pl - kept in area under guard all night.	
	31		Active patrolling during night. Heavy shelling. Gunners firing all day. P.W. reported to be very effective.	