

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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1st Bn. THE ESSEX SCOTTISH REGT
Canadian Army (Overseas)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
LY HEER HENDRIK KINDE ARR BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	WED 1 NOV 44		At 0715 the Bn moved out of HEER HENDRIK KINDE bound for a rest area near MECHLIN, between ANTWERP and BRUSSELS. It was a beautiful day and the column rolled past familiar points now no longer touched with war. There was the site of the A tk gun which had so effectively stopped our armoured thrust; there was the gap in the dyke so important to our chances -- now broadened and deepened to allow easy passage of any type of vehicle. We passed WOLFSBOSCH, HOOGHEIDE, PUTTE, CAPELLAN, ST MARIANUS, already in process of rebuilding with industrious Dutch villagers busy hammering shingles on the roofs. The damp dyke side where dead Germans had lain with blackened faces and arms outflung in grotesque attitudes were clean and bare again. Bury the dead, rebuild and carry on as before. At 1230 hrs we arrived at the dispersal point and shortly afterwards were in the small village of BONHEIDEN searching for billets. It was not long before the kindly Belgians had taken everyone in and we were well settled. BHO was in a small shop, formerly a restaurant, where the housewife insisted on sweeping the floor, stoking the fire and preparing coffee at every conceivable hour. A Coy Comd meeting was held at 1800 hrs and it was decided to spend the time in training, reviewing equipment and in rest leaves to Brussels and Antwerp were inaugurated. 1/2 of the troops being permitted to go to one city or the other. 48 hr leaves were continued and on a slightly increased scale. We were guaranteed 48 hrs rest, but as the 5th and 6th Bdes had not arrived yet, prospects of a longer period seemed good.	JF
AT BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	THU 2 NOV 44		Training parades and inspections were carried out by all companies with emphasis being placed on getting things into spick and span shape again. Many of the troops were in a ragged condition after long weeks of wear and tear and new battle-dresses, rubber boots and anklets were much appreciated. The 10 hr and 48 hr passes to ANTWERP and BRUSSELS were a great break for everyone. ANTWERP was about to open up as the port which would handle the supplies to break Hitler's back. It teemed with the vigour of all nations, gaiety and the tenseness of activity were set against the crash of flying bombs and the sombre background of food shortages, men from the front and men from the rear were there, each with his story to tell and only too anxious to tell it. Liquor was reasonably easy to get -- at atrocious prices -- and raw enough to remove the lining of the stomach. War was everywhere and nowhere.	JF

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AT BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	FRI 3 NOV 44		A cool, cloudy day with the wind blowing solidly from the north. Training parades were carried out on a mild scale. Supervisor Walter Graw of the YMCA succeeded in getting a hall - a former cafe and dance hall - and soon had moving pictures going. The pubs were filled at night and many were the calls for the watery Belgium beer. An Officer's mess was set up in the front of a shop which sold stoves. The stock of merchandise seemed to vary but together with the admiring gaze of bystanders helped to make meals a little unusual.	JS
AT BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	SAT 4 NOV 44		Again it was cloudy and cool though the rain held off. The Bn was scarcely recognizable by now. New and carefully pressed uniforms blossomed forth on every side. Vehicles had been maintained and the rattles had disappeared. The people of BONHEIDEN continued to be extremely kind and many were the impromptu parties held. There was no sign of our moving yet and the continuing rest was more than welcome.	JS
AT BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	SUN 5 NOV 44		This was a quiet pleasant day. Padre Joe Cardy held a service at 1030 hrs. As he said, he had held services in many places but it was the first time that one had taken place in a tavern. The Padre has the knack of getting everyone into the swing of things and despite the lack of music everyone sang lustily. There was nothing otherwise of interest, though many of the troops took the opportunity of going to MALINES, an ancient town, noted for a magnificent cathedral.	JS
AT BONHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	MON 6 NOV 44		Another day of rest and peace. Training parades and inspections were carried out by all companies. There was an ENSA show at MALINES and a number of the troops managed to see it. Rumour had it that the Div would soon be moving to the NIJMEGEN sectors, and this was confirmed by Lt Gen Simonds the A/GOC who spoke to all officers of the 2nd Cdn Div at 1000 hrs in MALINES. The GOC reviewed the SCHIEDT campaign and revealed that the Canadian forces engaged there had fulfilled their tasks of clearing the peninsula and south side of the estuary by 1 NOV 44. He expressed the belief that the war could end this year - if the Germans made their stand on the WEST bank of the Rhine - where they quite logically might do so. Lt Gen Simonds also gave the information that the Div role was to be a holding rather than assaulting one for an indefinite period. The GOC's talk was unusually interesting and was given against a background of 1/25,000 maps of the Western front - an IO's nightmare.	JS

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AT BOHHEIDEN REF ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	TUE 7 NOV 44		<p>A cool, but bright, clear day. Recce parties left at noon from all units for the new sector at NIJWIGEN. The Essex Scottish Representatives were: the C.O., the Coy Comds of A, B, C, D and Sp Coys, a representative from Sigs and the I.O. The trip from BOHHEIDEN to NIJWIGEN was approximately 110 miles and led through MEERXEM, TOUNHOUD, TILBURG, S HERTOGHNBOSCH, to GRAVE a few miles SOUTH of NIJWIGEN. The road was broad and good and jammed with traffic. In some of the towns, notably S HERTOGHNBOSCH, very recently liberated, the people still gazed at us with curious eyes. The countryside was quite attractive and prosperous. In TILBURG almost undamaged -- the varnished, spotless and identical doors -- were typical of Dutch character. The Recce column arrived at GRAVE late in the afternoon and, as it was then too dark to see our new positions we sought out billets for the night. Everyone was soon comfortably settled with the aid of Capt Ron Goodenough and his sledgehammer German and prepared for an early start. In the meantime, the Bn continued its course of training, and readying itself for the move.</p>	59
AT BOHHEIDEN ref ANTWERP No 3 1:100,000	WED 8 NOV 44		<p>At 0930 hrs the Bn recce party arrived at GROESBEEK a small badly damaged town some three kilometres from the German border and 8 kilometres SE of NIJWIGEN. There were the positions of the 7 Hampshires of 43 Div from where we were to take over. On the right were the 5 Dorsets who were to be replaced by the RHLI and in reserve, the 6 Dorsets.</p> <p>The Coy positions proved to be on the Eastern outskirts of the town and were inaccessible by day as they were under observations. The ground to the East of GROESBEEK was quite well-built up in flat ground which ended in a ridge just over the German border. To the front, facing EAST, was the REICHWALD and to the rear high ground, heavily wooded and containing many roads and tracks.</p> <p>HM of the 7 Hampshires was in a cellar in the centre of town. This Bn proved to be most helpful and handed over everything available - most of the changeover being made in quite a professional manner. The front was apparently very quiet, activity being restricted to patrolling and not very aggressive patrolling at that. It was agreed that the changeover would take place on the night 9/10 NOV 44.</p> <p>The Bn moved off from BOHHEIDEN at 2030 hrs of a very black night. The 7 days rest had affected a great change and had been far more than welcome. Reinforcements had brought the strength virtually up to WR and new equipment had replaced the large amount lost in the SC-BLDT campaign.</p>	56

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AT GROESBEEK REP GROESBEEK No 12 NW 1/25,000	THU 9 NOV 44		The Bn arrived at the dispersal point at GRAVE at about 0730 hrs, were met there by the unit guides and led to the Bn concentration area which was on a mud road in the midst of heavily wooded country about a mile WEST of GROESBEEK. The trip up had been a long, tiresome one and the weather, on arrival, made things a little more unattractive, as it was raining and cold. After an all day wait, the Bn moved into position starting with "A" Coy at 1700 hrs. The change was made without incident and in very efficient fashion, due largely to the manner in which the 7 Hampshires had arranged things. By 2235 all Coys were and contact had been made with the 82 US Airborne Division on the left. The Bde was deployed with the RHIL right and forward, the Essex Scottish left and forward and the RRC in reserve. The reserve Bn position was NOT a very attractive one as the RRC was in the woods and had little shelter. So, for the first time the Bn, took a new role - that of waiting combined with active patrolling.	FS
AT GROESBEEK REP GROESBEEK No 12 NW 1/25,000	FRI 10 NOV 44		The weather had cleared and observation was very good. There was a little shelling of the Bn positions during the early morning, but activity was very restricted and, for the most part consisted of making our cellar dwelling more comfortable. The English troops had lived in the various buildings for a month or more but had made few local improvements. GROESBEEK had been gone over pretty thoroughly but there was plenty of chairs, carpets, etc. for our new home. The Bn disposition, at this time, showed "A" Coy on the right, "D" Coy, next, straddling the railway track which ran EAST and WEST through the town. Next came "C" Coy and on the left "B" Coy. This set-up, not entirely satisfactory to Col Pangman, was later changed. The town of GROESBEEK, once a pleasant holiday place had been badly damaged, scarcely a house remaining intact. The only signs of habitation were a few goats and sheep, which wandered aimlessly around.	FS
AT GROESBEEK REP GROESBEEK No 12 NW 1/25,000	SAT 11 NOV 44		During the night 7 patrols were sent out most of them for reconnaissance purposes, as it was found that little was known of the enemy along the Bde front. Many of them did not make contact with the enemy, but one patrol set off some mines and suffered 4 casualties, all of whom were brought back to the lines. The mines in the area were quite a menace as no one seemed to have a very clear idea of where	FS

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW 1/25,000	SUN 12 NOV 44		<p>Allied mines were and none at all of the enemy fields. The day was given over to manning OPs, adjusting fire tasks and generally tightening up the defences. A Coy Comds meeting (which was to become a daily affair) was held at BHQ. The American 82 Para Div on our left, staged a noisy demonstration at 1100 hrs, throwing everything they had at the German to show him that 1914-18 had not been forgotten.</p> <p>Patrols during the night reported making contact in one instance only. Some excitement was caused by an enemy patrol which wandered into 'A' Coy lines - allegedly gave the countersign correctly - then lost its nerve and ran. Visibility was very poor during the day and little could be seen from the OPs. During the evening the 3rd Can Div took over from the 82 US Airborne and at 2345 hrs, 'B' Coy reported contact with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. There was little else of interest. The enemy was quiet except for sporadic mortaring and kept out of view very well.</p>	JS
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW 1/25,000	MON 13 NOV 44		<p>A rainy, foggy Monday. Patrols again were active and made contact with the enemy. A 'B' Coy patrol complete with a Pioneer, checked the minefield reported on the Coy front and found that it consisted of tellermines and probably AP mines behind which the German was dug in on a line running North and South. Visibility was very poor during the day and there was little of interest. The chief difficulties encountered were in keeping the troops from wandering around as activity or movement invariably brought down mortar fire. OP reports consisted mostly of the convenient "smoke coming out of chimney" type. A friendly goat enlivened things around BHQ, shadow-boxing with all passers and wagging a ridiculous tail when patted.</p>	JS
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25,000	TUE 14 NOV 44		<p>Our patrols reported little sign of enemy activity during the night. Visibility was poor again and there was little to be seen or heard during the day. A flying bomb passed over the Bn area at 1030 and rumour immediately had it that it had started within two miles of the area, though this was not confirmed.</p> <p>All the talk in the officers' mess centred on the idea of taking a locomotive stationary on the tracks nearby, and giving it a running start towards Germany - loaded with explosives. There were many varieties of the idea, each a little more imaginative than the last.</p> <p>There was a good deal of shelling of the Bn area late in the evening but no casualties were caused and the activity subsided before midnight.</p>	JS

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12NW(E) 1/25,000	WED 15 NOV 44		<p>Patrols again had trouble keeping in touch with the enemy, though one German patrol did wander into 'A' coy area and was promptly chased out again. Unfortunately no PWs were taken. A 'B' Coy patrol got the minefield on their front pretty well taped.</p> <p>There was little activity during the day and visibility was again poor. The enemy threw over a number of rocket bombs in the afternoon but caused little damage. A good sample of rocket imbedded itself near 'C' Coy HQ and the counter-mortar officer at 4 Bde was informed of it. He had been waging an enthusiastic campaign to get information about new German rockets and mortars and had everyone dashing for craters as soon as the shooting had subsided.</p>	FS
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25,000	THU 16 NOV 44		<p>Patrols during the night made contact with the enemy in two instances, but no damage was inflicted on either side. The Germans continued to be unaggressive but did react nervously to our activities.</p> <p>Visibility was good during the morning and the sun shone warmly. The counter mortar officer came and removed the rocket in 'C' Coy area, leaving greatly pleased with his find and cradling it in his arms like a prize baby. It proved to be a 21cm rocket not new but rare and only found on vital fronts.</p> <p>There was some enemy shelling during the day and moreps poured in from Coy OPs, most of which were doing a good job with little enemy movement to work on.</p> <p>During the evening 'C' and 'D' coys exchanged positions with 'D' assuming the reserve role.</p>	FS
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12NW(E) 1/25,000	FRI 17 NOV 44		<p>An 'A' Coy patrol under Sgt Bennett had an interesting little skirmish with the enemy, who opened proceedings by throwing a grenade which passed over the whole 'A' Coy patrol. Our patrol returned without casualties and feeling that they had inflicted several on the enemy. During the night a deserter, Polish, came into 6 Bde lines - the first PW taken on the Divisional front - and everyone at Div HQ was a-twitter.</p> <p>The day was clear and Typhoons were busy on our front blasting suspected enemy locations in a chateau and a church.</p> <p>The Germans were not very active though their mortars were busy around 1800 hrs for a brief time.</p>	FS

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	SAT 18 NOV 44		<p>The shell game of now its there and now it isn't, continued as patrols had a hard time finding the Germans. Visibility was not good during the day and there was little activity until 2200 hrs when rockets started coming over at a great rate. There were flares shot up and MG fire from the 3rd Div front on the left, but, as usual, the sounds of strife subsided quickly.</p> <p>This static type of warfare is not good for Canadians. The troops have been growing more restless daily and movement in such a position is not recommended. However, due to the control exerted by Col Pangman and his coy comds, there was little trouble on our front.</p>	J-S
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	SUN 19 NOV 44		<p>The Germans were more aggressive during the night and a 'C' coy patrol under Lt Chester ran into some trouble, apparently from a roving enemy patrol which fired and withdrew - to reappear elsewhere and fire again. No casualties were suffered.</p> <p>The day was clear and uneventful though the Arty did succeed in setting fires to what appeared to be an enemy ammunition dump. There were many small dumps throughout the area and in one spot near 'A' Ech - about 1 1/2 miles behind the Bn lines, there were several million rounds of German small arms ammunition.</p> <p>It must be said that the Jerry was very cagey along the front. He showed himself very little and appeared at nights in positions which had been unoccupied before, to surprise us. He was apparently quite determined to defend his country bitterly.</p>	J-S
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	MON 20 NOV 44		<p>The RHLI finally got the first identification of enemy on the Bde front. Unfortunately the man was dead and his paybook - all the information obtained - showed that he belonged to the 107th Regt.</p> <p>A daylight patrol by Lt Godin of 'C' Coy brought in useful infm about SHU mines along the railway. There was some slight enemy activity during the day, though the chief excitement was caused by 3rd Div MGs which fired into our lines shortly after dark.</p>	J-S
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	TUE 21 NOV 44		<p>The day was clear, after an uneventful night. A lone enemy plane appeared over the lines and dropped a couple of bombs near Bde HQ, in the morning. The Typhoons soon retaliated and drew some ack-ack fire which was unusual and a bearing was obtained on the gun.</p> <p>An 'A' Coy lay-up patrol consisting of Cpl Leach and Pte Malkoske returned, after being three days and two nights in the wilderness. They had been given up for lost, /g</p>	J-S

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25,000	TUE 21 NOV Cont'd		<p>and, in fact, had been for a time. They brought back some good infm but reported little sign of enemy movement.</p> <p>Patrols continued to be unsuccessful in obtaining a prisoner along the entire Divisional front. This was partly due to the nature of the country, but largely due to the canniness of the German - who certainly did not want to give us any infm as to his strength in the area.</p>	FD
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25,000	WED 22 NOV 44		<p>This was a particularly uneventful day. We learned that we were to be replaced by 5 Ede on the night of 23 NOV, and received a visit from the CO of the Regt de Maisonneuve.</p> <p>A patrol by 'D' Coy with Lt Perchaluk in charge ran into trouble, but emerged without casualties after the patrol comd had thrown a grenade at a couple of ambitious Jerries.</p> <p>The weather continued to be variable, the nights often as clear as a whistle and the days either clear and sunny or very damp and dismal.</p>	FD
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	THU 23 NOV 44		<p>The Bn moved out of position and into a reserve area after another quiet day. The changeover was effected in efficient fashion, due to careful preparations, but was marred by a very unfortunate incident. As 17 Pl of 'D' Coy was moving out and was close to BHQ, an enemy mortar bomb landed nearby and caused 17 casualties - four of which proved to be fatal. The rain and darkness caused another as the 'I' Cpl was seriously injured when hit by a carrier. This was a sad ending to our period in the line, as casualties had been very light prior to this incident.</p> <p>The Ede reserve area was at Mook, some 3 kilometres WSW of GROESBEEK, and on the Eastern bank of the River Meuse. Two coys ('D' and 'Sp') because of shortage of accommodation were on the WEST side of the river close by a pontoon bridge which replaced the railway bridge destroyed by the Germans (see illustration). The area was under observation from further upstream and the enemy occasionally popped over shells, just to let us know that he was there. The town of Mook had taken a bad pounding and was not the most satisfactory rest area possible, but at least we were not in cellars as we had been at GROESBEEK.</p>	FD

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AT MOOK Ref GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	FRI 24 NOV 44		<p>The day was cool and cloudy. The Bn started on a syllabus of trg immediately, though the first day was given over to reorganization, bath parades, pay parades and so on.</p> <p>The Bn had one duty only - to supply a guard for the pontoon bridge which, incidentally, was seriously threatened by the rising waters of the MEUSE.</p> <p>The YMCA soon had a hall and was putting on shows each day. In addition, there was a recreational truck to NIJMEGEN twice a day for the purpose of visiting the ENSA cinema there. The city of NIJMEGEN - a prosperous and attractive place - had been quite badly damaged, but was crowded with refugees and making a pathetic attempt to carry on business as usual. Dutch civilians of the ORDE DIENST, patrolled the highways and byways in their peculiar helmets and took a great part of the burden of traffic control and guard duty off the shoulders of the Allied military authorities.</p>	FD
AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	SAT 25 NOV 44		<p>The day was enlivened by shelling around BHQ, one piece of shrapnel passing through a book in the hands of Peter Mark One, the Dutch Liaison Offr. 'C' Coy cookhouse also caught fire to create some excitement.</p> <p>The waters of the MEUSE continued to rise and the pontoon bridge was by now almost impassable. A ferry system was inaugurated and the guard on the bridge was responsible for getting voyagers from the shore to the bridge and from the bridge to the shore, as the flood waters lapped over both ends.</p> <p>The coys got well into their syllabi, copies of which are appended. The trg areas were not entirely satisfactory, but there were several ranges which helped matters along.</p>	FD
AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	SUN 26 NOV 44		<p>This was a cloudy, dismal day. A church parade was held by Padre Cardy at 0930 hrs, and was appreciated by everyone.</p> <p>The waters of the MEUSE continued to rise and were, by now, almost on the back doorstep of BHQ.</p> <p>Trg was carried on as usual and during the afternoon there was a good deal of shelling of the Bn area.</p> <p>Many of the men, influenced, no doubt by the "29 days till Christmas" spirit, spent their spare time in tying up trinkets to be sent home. Wooden clogs appeared to be the favourites - probably because they were the easiest to get.</p>	FD

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AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	MON 27 NOV 44		<p>This was a lovely, crystal clear day. Trg was carried on as usual and there was little of interest to report.</p> <p>The Division had not taken a PW as yet, which was a sorry state of affairs, and was deplored on all sides. The Germans continued to be very cagey, though and taking a prisoner was easier on paper than in reality. Suggestions were numerous, but academic.</p> <p>Recreational transport to NIJMEGEN continued to be popular and some very good films were shown at the Winter Garden there.</p>	JS
AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No NW(E) 1/25000	TUE 28 NOV 44		<p>A recon party left to look over the 6 Bde area at 1330 hrs. The Essex Scottish were to replace the South Saskatchewan Regt, at present in reserve. The new area was less than a mile from the rest area in MOOK, so the changeover promised to be an easy one.</p> <p>The trg syllabus was carried on as usual and had, to date, been successful as many of the troops were reinforcements and were not fully trained.</p> <p>A Bde Officers dance was held at the Winter Garden during the evening and it proved to be very popular.</p>	JS
AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	WED 29 NOV 44		<p>We learned that we were to replace the SSRs on 1 DEC and preparations for the move were started. Trg continued with the emphasis on route marches, as the prolonged static warfare tended to soften everyone up.</p> <p>Some fine rumours permeated the atmosphere, best of them being that one of the 6 Bde Bns had been shoved back 2000 yds by a counter attack (which would have placed them in the centre of the MEUSE river). Another had it that suicidal Germans in rubber bathing suits and carrying explosives had blown up the bridge at GRAVE. Rumour fortunately, invariably exaggerates the initiative of the enemy.</p>	JS
AT MOOK REF GROESBEEK No 12 NW(E) 1/25000	THU 30 NOV 44		<p>The month ran to a peaceful conclusion with a quiet, warm day. It had been the easiest month that the Essex Scottish had passed since 6 JUL. A week of rest - two weeks of static warfare and a week of trg had been both welcome and boring. It was true that to the South the Germans were slowly being pushed back, but in the Can area it seemed that the war would never end - and certainly not until we were asked to adopt a more dynamic role.</p>	JS

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	THU 30 NOV 44 Cont'd		<p>There was little of interest during the day - trg, preparations for the move and movies, together with a very slight amount of enemy shelling.</p> <p><i>J.E.C. Pangman</i></p> <p>(J.E.C. PANGMAN) Lt Col, Commanding Officer, 1st Bn, ESSEX SCOTTISH REGIMENT.</p>	<i>JS</i>