

WAR DIARY

OR

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required)

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded

to O. i/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

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

Title pages will be prepared.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
At BOXTEL Ref Bortel 1:25000	1 Jan 45		News years morning was clear and bright. Recce parties set out early to examine the positions the Battalion would, or rather, might occupy in the event of a German crossing of the River MAAS. At about 0930 hrs enemy fighters put in an appearance over BOXTEL. There were 4 Focke Wolff 190s in all and they disappeared shortly afterwards having attacked the railway station and caused little damage. The pipe band played in the streets during the day greatly to the joy of innumerable children. The Officer's Mess held an "At home" in the afternoon at which representatives from all units in the Brigade Battle group were present. Persistent rumours among the civilians of paratroop landings at EINDHOVEN caused a flurry in the evening, but it subsided after the RHLE (who were duty battalion in charge of paratroops) had chased around the country for a while. Positions had been established during the day to be taken in the event of emergency. On the code word ARGOS, the Brigade group would move to a spot due NORTH of TILBURG, on BRUNO to NE of TILBURG, on CADIZ to crossroads south of S'HERTOGENBOSCH, and on DUNLOP to a town SE of S'HERTOGENBOSCH. Routes, timings and orders of march had been laid down and all was in readiness for eventualities.	Appx '1' Appx '5' RWM
At BOXTEL Ref Bortel 1:25000	2 Jan 45		The weather turned mild but heavy clouds hid the sun. Little of interest occurred, except that additional reccees were made by Coy Comds and the supporting arms. The Battalion was well settled in now and it seemed almost too good to last, as most of the billets were excellent. The local people kind and cooperative and the work easy. Training parades, consisting mostly of route marches were carried out in the evening. An ENSA stage show was put on at the RICHE theatre in BOXTEL.	 RWM
At BOXTEL Ref Bortel 1:25000	3 Jan 45		This was another quiet day marked by little of interest. The weather was unkind again and a raw wind blew from the EAST. Training consisted for the most part of lectures and as we were duty battalion we were CB and on one hour's notice. There was a great deal of interest shown in the draw for leaves to England, for which some 8 officers and 260 ORs were immediately eligible.	 RWM
At BOXTEL Ref Bortel 1:25000	3 Jan 45		After an 'O' Gp at Bde the Battalion was informed that it would be moving shortly to VUGHT, a small town about 10 kilometres to the NORTH, at the junction of the main highways from S'HERTOGENBOSCH to TILBURG and EINDHOVEN. Apparently Army was not yet satisfied that the threat from the North had subsided and had decided to have someone Johnny on this important spot. Recce parties left at 1230 hrs of another cloudy morning and returned to report that our prospective billets would, for the most part, remain occupied by 29 Arm'd Regt, until until the following morning.	 RWM

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(continued) At BOXTEL Ref Bortel	4 Jan 45		As a result, only 'A' coy and the Carrier platoon moved up at 1700 hrs, the rest of the battalion staying in BOXTEL. Otherwise the day was similar to those just past, route marches being the chief activity.	
1:25000 Lv Bortel Arr VUGHT Ref S'HERTOGENBOSCH	5 Jan 45		The Battalion moved out of BOXTEL at 0900 hrs, arriving at VUGHT at 1000 hrs. Our new area was in the middle of the town, in billets of various sorts. BHQ and part of Sp coy were in an enormous monastery formerly occupied by the Germans and notable for some very good and amusing murals as well as amusing slogans - best of which was "The Fuehrer's wish is our Command". The Battalion was not deployed tactically but was prepared to move immediately to a prearranged defensive position. An Officers Mess was set up under what were certainly the most comfortable conditions since 6 July and all was merry - and too good to last.	Appx '2' RWM
1:25000 At VUGHT Ref S'HERTOGENBOSCH	6 Jan 45		The weather cleared slightly and turned quite cold. The rifle coys held training parades and all was merry and bright until 1900 hrs when race parties were ordered to be ready at BHQ at 0830 hrs the following morning. We were to return to the NIJMEGEN area as Army had apparently decided that the threat to TILBURG and S'HERTOGENBOSCH had subsided. Lt Col Pangman went to 4 Bde today to be A/Brigadier as Brig Cabeldu went on his 7 day leave. Major Don MacKenzie therefore became A CO of the Battalion.	Appx '3' Appx '4' RWM
1:25000 Lv VUGHT Arr NIJMEGEN Ref NIJMEGEN	7 Jan 45		The Battalion pushed off again at 0900 hrs of a misty, miserable morning. The route was the same as the one taken on the way down - thru BEST, ST OEDENRODE, VEGHEL, UDEN, GRAVE to NIJMEGEN. The roads were of secondary class, upon which English pioneers were operating as if on a 5 year plan. The convoy made fairly good time and by 1400 hrs we were ensconced in the same billets that we had left on 29 Dec 44. After an 'O' group at 4 Bde at which it was decided that nothing was likely to happen at the moment the Battalion settled down to train and wait. Major Doug McIntyre left for the UK tonight with a party of NCO instructors. He was replaced as CO 'A' Coy by Major Ken McIntyre. The first of the 7 day leave personnel also left, in great good spirits, to seek action on the home front.	 RWM.
1:25000 At NIJMEGEN Ref NIJMEGEN	8 Jan 45		It snowed heavily during the night and the morning found the trees and roads blanketed in the familiar fashion of home. The day was quiet and taken up by training. There was, as yet, no sign of a move. In the evening, the YMCA put on a movie at a hall in the vicinity and also served tea and biscuits. Bupt Walter Graw and his forces always contrive to better matters for the troops.	Appx '5' RWM
1:25000				

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M.F.M. 11
40/P & S/37 (9/42)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
AT NIJMEGEN REF NIJMEGEN 1:25000	TUE 9 Jan 45		During the night, a third Div raid in the GROESBEEK area netted three PWs at the rather heavy cost of 16 killed or wounded. The PWs turned out to be from our old "friends" 1051 Gr Regt of 84 Div. The weather was cloudy and cold again and the day was spent in route marches or lectures. The YMCA put on a different show from the previous night, including a sing-song during which everyone sang enthusiastically and impressively.	Appx '1' RWM
AT NIJMEGEN REF NIJMEGEN 1:25000	WED 10 Jan 45		There was little of interest on another cloudy, cool day. BHQ was inspected by the A/CO in the morning and wild was the rush to get equipment. A complete if somewhat motley parade was the result. There was no sign of a move, as yet, and the day was taken up by training, once more. Most of us were surprised at the Dutch winter which, for one reason or another, we had expected to be reasonably selubrious. On the contrary, snow lay crisp upon the ground and a raw wind blew, in the manner of home.	Appx '7' RWM.
AT NIJMEGEN REF NIJMEGEN 1:25000	THU 11 JAN 45		The weather was again cloudy and cold. During the day a recce party went to the R Wpg R area in GROESBEEK SOUTH - the one from which we had pulled out on Christmas Day. We found that the Winnieps had pulled back their lines some 5-600 yards, so that they were no longer sitting on the enemy's doorstep, ready to spit in his eye. Otherwise there was little activity and the day was taken up with training.	 RWM
LV NIJMEGEN REF NIJMEGEN 1:25000 Arr GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK No. 12 NW(E)	FRI 12 JAN		The Battalion went back into the line today after its long "rest" - if it could be called a rest. The changeover with the Winnieps began at 1730 hrs and the rifle coys began the 7 mile trek down a couple of hours earlier. The switch went without a hitch and by 1930 everyone was in position. The Battalion disposition had 'B' Coy on the right, on high ground overlooking saucer-like country which rose in the EAST to the Reichwald. 'D' Coy next in the centre and 'A' Coy forward on the left. 'C' Coy was in reserve. To our left was the Royal Regt of Canada and in reserve, in the woods behind the RHLL. Our first action on getting into the new position was to send recce patrols out to the areas occupied previously. In all but one case, the positions proved to be unoccupied. A German patrol followed an 'A' Coy patrol led by Lt McMillan almost back into our lines, but turned back at the last minute.	Appx '2' RWM.

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	SAT 13 JAN 45		The weather was cloudy and cool, but visibility was fairly good. Patrols during the night made contact with the enemy in one instance only. It was decided, during the day to place outposts in, approximately, the positions formerly occupied and, by 1930 hrs all outposts were in position without incident. Battalion OPs during the day, reported a good deal of enemy movement. The Jerry was either green or careless, for he was seen in several places, ambling about unconcernedly. Efforts were made to put a stop to this sort of thing and they were reasonably successful as he began to run, not walk to the nearest entrance. Jerry was, by no means, active otherwise, in the area. He employed his usual methods of sending intrepid individuals out with SCHWEISSERS to keep us busy but they were the extent of his activities.	Appx '1' Appx '3' Appx '4' RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	SUN 14 JAN 45		Reports of enemy movement began to pour in from outposts and OPs as the Jerry wandered around on our right flank, apparently without knowledge of our proximity. He did not appear to know that our outposts were there. He also seemed to have retained his original positions. although moving his PDLs forward in the right sectors. He had MG posts in the monastery, once occupied by "C" Coy and also on the road leading WESTWARD from it, and was seen, busily engaged in tapping blackouts into place on the monastery. Our 3" Mortars plastered anything and everything that hove into view, having acquired an unexpectedly large quantity of ammunition. The day was reasonably quiet and cool and new, virgin snow glistened everywhere. White snow suits were issued to the companies in limited numbers and were a tremendous help to patrols and outposts. They made a man almost invisible against the white background and startled a few individuals who bumped into white-clad figures before realising that they were there. Padre Cardy never a man to be stopped by difficulties held a service for Support Coy in the Pioneer Pl Hq.	 RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	MON 15 JAN 45		Another cool, cloudy day with little to report except increased small arms fire, especially from the area of the monastery. In the early evening, spasmodic vehicle movement was reported at a crossroads directly to the EAST. Mortar fire was brought to bear on the spot and dispersed what seemed to be an enemy ration party. The troops were pretty well settled in by now and every possible form of heating device was in use. Coal was scarce, but wood was no problem and on the whole no one was suffering much from the cold.	 RWM

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	TUE 16 JAN 45		A "C" Coy fighting patrol under Lt Austin attempted to get into the monastery during the night. They crawled to within 50 yards of it along a ditch but had to cross an open space to get to the monastery and were prevented from so doing by the clear visibility and crisp snow. They reported a number of MGs in the area and plenty of signs and sounds of the Jerry. There was also a lot of enemy movement during the day and on one occasion our artillery caused casualties among a group of Jerries digging beneath one of the numerous gliders in the area. One enemy also had trouble with a mine, as a loud explosion was heard followed by moaning. A further recce patrol to the monastery area during the evening confirmed Lt Austins findings and reported a number of enemy in the monastery area.	RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	WED 17 JAN 45		Recce patrols during the night found the Jerry quite jittery and popping up flares all over the place. The day was cloudy, cool and quiet except for the first bit of enemy shelling and mortaring that we had received. It started shortly after 1500 hrs and continued at intervals, for an hour, causing little damage. The enemy continued to show himself quite a bit and our Mortars took full advantage of his carelessness. During the evening, the engineers commenced work on the roads in the area, presumably for forthcoming possibilities. In the evening a little harassing fire was laid on the monastery. It consisted of three men shooting PIATS and BRENS and caused CSM "Les" Dixon to report, picturesquely enough and in approved "veiled language" that "Three little pots of jam are now shooting raspberries at the monastery."	Appx '6' RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	THU 18 JAN 45		This was another cool, cloudy and uneventful day. Patrols during the night had trouble in finding Jerry to our EAST although he was thick and obvious to the SOUTHEAST. There was a little activity except some mortaring, until 1845 hrs when a number of Jerries were spotted attempting to take things out of a burning house. They were dispersed but continued to stand around and gape, from a reasonably safe distance, as if watching a fireworks display. Our five outposts reported a quiet time on the whole, though there was a considerable amount of small arms fire and some flare activity in the evening. Major Mackenzie, the 2IC who had been acting CO left today in the quiet manner so typical of this efficient and very popular officer. Major "Cy" Steele took over, in the continued absence of Lt Col Pangman, with the best wishes of everyone and with many months of extremely able handling of "D" Coy behind him.	RWM.

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	FRI 19 JAN 45		Visibility was good and the Jerry made himself quite obvious, chiefly along BREDEWEG and BRUUK Streets - roads which we were beginning to know like the streets of home. We tossed so many mortar bombs at him that he began to grow tired of it all and throw a few back. We were becoming quite professional in the handling of such matters though and the sound of an enemy mortar was enough to start the platoons off on the trail of "Moreps" - bearings etc, to the sound and flash. These were immediately passed back to the Counter Mortar officer at 4 Bde and counter battery work often resulted. There was little to report otherwise, except the usual small arms and flare activity at night. There were several causes for congratulation today as Capts Stan McDonald and Frank Chauvin became A/Majors commanding "C" and "B" Coys respectively. Lts Les Bond and Bob Meanwell also became A/Cpts as 2IC "B" Coy and Adj. Capt Fred Tilston went to "C" Coy as 2IC after 18 months of very able service as Adjutant. Major Earl Reekie departed, with the good wishes of all, to be G3 at Div.	Appx '1' Appx '2' RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	SAT 20 JAN 45		Patrols during the night reported contact with the enemy, both on the EASTERN and SOUTHERN flanks of our position. An enemy patrol, complete with BAZOOKA, also came marching along the main road, straight up to Outpost "E" - manned by the Carrier Platoon. It was dispersed by fire leaving one dead. The deceased's paybook showed that he came from II Bn 1052 Grenadier Regt of 84 Div. This was a welcome identification as knowledge of the people on our front was lacking. The day was noteworthy only for occasional mortar fire - heavy stuff from well back in the Reichwald - which caused little damage. After dark there was MG and flare activity as usual, but nothing out of the ordinary.	Appx '3' Appx '4' RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	SUN 21 JAN 45		A misty, unpleasant day started badly as an enemy patrol ambushed a ration party proceeding from Outpost "E" at about 0500 hrs. This cost the life of popular Sgt "Buzz" Rawlings of the Carrier platoon and 3 other wounded casualties. One man escaped unscathed to return with the news. The Jerries had evidently been in wait for some time and departed without any attempt to obtain identifications. Patrols during the night again reported "contact with the enemy to the SOUTH- in the area we know as the "row of trees" Jerry had things well sewn up behind these trees but it was our constant hope to catch him out of his shell somewhere along the line.	 RWM

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M.F.M. 11
40/P & S/37 (3072)

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	SUN 21 JAN 45		The day was quiet enough (except for a visit from the Corps Commander) though the fact that we were out of communication with outpost "B" caused some concern. There was quite a bit of mortaring around 0700 hrs and it was thought that the line had been broken. As it could not be fixed in daylight, nothing could be done at the time. When the relief party went out at 1900 hrs, it could find no trace of Cpl Back and his 7 men. The telephone wires had been cut and the set removed - everything was gone as cleanly as a whistle. This was a very neat job on Jerries' part as he had, apparently, put down his mortar fire as a diversion and sneaked up to snatch the whole outpost. It also jarred us out of a false sense of security and the desire to sneak downstairs to get warm while on guard. The Padre kept up the good work with a service at the RAP for the Pioneers, Mortars and a number of "C" Coy personnel.	RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	MON 22 JAN 45		There was little to report from patrols who were still having a little trouble keeping in contact with the enemy on our left front. The Jerry was again quite visible during a day on which visibility was good. He made use of sleighs for bringing rations and equipment around and often left these on the road while he hot-footed it for cover from our mortars. The Outposts also had a quiet time and were very much on the alert - profiting from the experiences of outpost "B".	RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK #12 NW (E) 1:25000	TUE 23 JAN 45		A fighting patrol with Lt Chester in charge, to houses 92-1, an enemy haunt, proved to be fruitless as Jerry was not there. The patrol commander, disgusted, lined his patrol up and beat his way across the 500 yards of open space, back to the starting point. No results. The talk in the trenches was all of the Russian drive these days. Signs had been erected on the 3rd Division front pointing out that the Russians were welcome. These in full view of the Germans, of course. The Jerry not to be outdone had fired over a few of his own propaganda, leaflets, most of which were not of a very high calibre of entertainment. Visibility was good on a clear, cool, sunny day but there was less enemy movement to report. There was a considerable amount of mortaring around noon and one casualty, in "A" Coy, resulted. It died away, however and the afternoon and evening were quiet.	RWM

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FORM 107-2 8/37 (3072)

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK 12 NW(E) 1:25,000	WED 24 JAN 45		Our patrols again had trouble in finding the German who did not seem to be moving his outposts with any degree of consistency. During the morning, which was clear and cold, the Jerry put up a great volume of smoke from houses and dugouts all over the front. What the purpose of this was is not clear, though, no doubt, he hoped to deceive us in some fashion. The day was quiet otherwise and enemy movement was on a lesser scale. though he still wandered around on the outskirts of the Reichwald as if he really owned them.	RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK 12 NW(E) 1:25000	THU 25 JAN 45		A quiet day again. Outpost "C" which had been close to the monastery shifted it's position slightly and found its new abode thoroughly, if clumsily booby-trapped by our predecessors the RWpGRs. The customary patrol to the "row of trees" on the SOUTH found Jerry ready and waiting and did not accomplish very much. There was some shelling from 75 mm guns between 11 and 1200 hrs but no casualties resulted. Most of the enemy's dirty work was done from positions on the outskirts of the Reichwald, where he could pull things into position in reasonable security. The impression gained from a couple of weeks in the area was that he was quite thin on the ground and was trying to create the idea that he had a lot of stuff there by excessive movement.	Appx '1' Appx '5' RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK 12 NW(E) 1:25000	FRI 26 JAN 45		Visibility was far too bright for successful patrols as the moon approached its full. The morning was cloudy and cold again however and a very dull, quiet day followed. There was little of interest except a bit of shelling around 1700 hrs. There was considerable excitement over the continuance of the Russian drive. Morale was extremely high and the tremendous climax to which the war seemed to be plunging found everyone keyed up and genuinely anxious to do his part. The few radios were tuned in for the news at all hours great interest was displayed over places that most of us had never heard of before. A patrol by Sgt BARRIE and Pte MALKOSKI to lay up for 72 hrs in the REICHWALD ended unfortunately in the early morning of the 26th. Completely equipped and briefed, these brave men had pierced well into the enemy lines and had laid up in a barn. They were discovered there and Sgt Barrie, slightly wounded, gave himself up and talked the Jerries out of searching the bldg. Pte Malkoski thus escaped and made his way back to our lines.	Appx '2' RWM

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AT GROESBEEK SAT REF GROESBEEK 27 12 NW(E) JAN 1:25000 45			Life continued its rather monotonous round as a chilly wind filled in tracks and footprints. An enemy burial party was spotted on the edge of the Reichwald and dispersed. The Jerry was reasonably visible again though quite cagey about it all. He had an elaborate system of crawl trenches throughout the area and used them whenever possible. When it was not possible he ran in the open, though some of the braver and more careless spirits walked. A patrol by Sgt Salisbury of "D" Coy probed further to the EAST, in the area of BRUUKSCHE STRAAT than had previously been done but did not make contact with the enemy. There was little of interest otherwise as the Jerry seemed content to leave us in peace.	Appx '3' Appx '4' RWM
AT GROESBEEK SUN REF GROESBEEK 28 12 NW(E) JAN 1:25,000 45			The outposts reported a quiet night and a full moon made visibility extremely good and patrolling difficult. A "B" Coy patrol under Cpl BOE twice approached the row of trees to the SOUTH and were pinned down by fire on both occasions. The day found a substantial increase in enemy mortaring - heavy stuff from well back, though it was limited to between 1400 and 1430 hrs. We watched the crew of an American bomber parachute to safety in the early afternoon. The plane crashed almost on the German border and a favourable wind blew the airmen into friendly lines. An enemy loudspeaker broadcast something or other at 1930 hrs. It could be heard in the forward positions, though no one could make out what was said. Not that it mattered.	 RWM
AT GROESBEEK MON REF GROESBEEK 29 12 N W(E) JAN 1:25000 45			The weather was again cloudy and cool, though visibility was fairly good. Patrols to the road running WEST from the monastery could not find Jerry who was, apparently staying close to his main positions. There was an increase in enemy movement, they were seen digging more communication trenches and wandering around with full equipment on as if a change-over had taken or was taking place. The night's patrols went out early as the full moon made matters awkward no matter what the starting time was. An "A" Coy patrol under Cpl Fleming went forth to recce the Anti-Tank ditch running through BRUUKSCHE STRAAT and returned to report no enemy encountered. Pte MALKOSKI, of Reichwald fame, also went out to attempt an ambush of a ration party seen by himself and Sgt BARRIE. This patrol got lost for a time, scoured most of the Royal Regt area and eventually bumped into a position which was quite strongly held. A patrol from "D" Coy, under Sgt JACKSON went SOUTH to the row of trees and reported the enemy MDLs to be strongly held.	 RWM.

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AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK 12 NW(E) 1:25000	TUE 30 JAN 45		The morning proved to be cold and misty with snow falling heavily. There was a certain amount of shelling and mortaring between 1100 hrs and 1230 hrs, but little other activity. Observation was difficult though BLIND BILL (One of our OPs) reported 12 Jerries carrying white bundles, of a suspicious nature. These might have been anything but quite possibly were mines. The front, at this time, seemed to be on the verge of boiling over. The Corps Arty plastered anything and everything at the slightest provocation. Engineers were everywhere mending roads, (to last until the first thaw) putting pickets along the verges, felling trees, working night and day. The Russians successes continued to mount, the Ardennes bulge had practically disappeared - so we looked at life and saw that it was good - though slightly soil worn.	RWM
AT GROESBEEK REF GROESBEEK 12 NW(E) 1:25000	WED 31 JAN 45		Two patrols by "A" Coy with Cpls Fleming and Carrigan carrying the ball tried to obtain the measurements of the Atk ditch running through BRUKSCHE STRAAT. In both cases the patrol was held up by enemy movement in the area. The day, reasonably clear, was very quiet and enemy movement was slight. There was little of interest and a number of officers and NCOs were able to get out to attend instructional films at MOOK. In the evening, Cpl Carrigan again attempted to reach the Atk ditch - succeeded this time despite difficulties and brought back full and much-needed information. So, January passed to our relief and doubtless to the relief of the half-frozen citizens of NIJMEGEN who huddled around their faggots hoping against hope that the war would soon end.	Appx '1' Appx '5' RWM.

J.E.C. Pangman
(J.E.C. PANGMAN) Lt Col
Commanding
THE ESSEX SCOTTISH REGIMENT.