

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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1st Bn., THE ESSEX SCOTTISH REGIMENT

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	FRI 1 DEC 44		<p>The Bn moved back into the line on a cloudy, unpleasant day. The move began at 1330 hrs and was completed in good style, by 1630 hrs. 4 Bde was deployed on the outskirts of MOOK with the RHLLI on the Eastern front, RRC to the South and West and the Essex Scottish wedged between the two and slightly to the rear. Behind the Bde to the West, ran the River Meuse. The ground was rather unusual in the Bde area. The RHLLI posns were in thick woods, which were part of a reforestation project, and through which ran a gully haunted by the patrols of both sides. Infiltration in this area was a simple matter but keeping direction was a difficult problem. In addition the woods were wired, mined and booby-trapped and no one had a very clear idea of where these obstacles were. The RRC posns were to the West, covering the main road and extending as far as the river Meuse. The ground in the Royals area was as flat as a billiard table and quite barren. The heavy rains and consequent flooding had made a regular mud flat of the position and one Coy at least had to be fed at night by Weasels. Contact with the Germans was very close and a man had only to stick his head up to find out where they were. The Essex Scottish posns were on high ground behind the RHLLI and to the left of the RRC. "B" Coy was on the left in comparatively open country, "C" Coy in the centre on the forward slope of a hill which ran down to a draw between our positions and those of the RHLLI. "D" Coy was to the right of C with the platoons strung in a line along a road which ran through a heavily wooded gully. "A" Coy was on the right flank on high ground overlooking the main road from Mook to Nijmegen. BHQ and Support Coy were in houses in low-lying ground on the Southern outskirts of Mook. The Bn role appeared to be a relatively easy one as we were in reserve and had no special tasks. Nearly all of the men were in dug-outs, however, and the mud and cold made things unpleasant.</p>	JS.
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	SAT 2 DEC 44		<p>The weather took a turn for the worse and there was rain and sleet during a night which was uneventful. The day was quiet and recreational transport was provided to Nijmegen for a limited number. The RHLLI distinguished themselves by taking 3 PW during the evening as a result of an aggressive patrol. These were the first taken on the Divisional front - or in fact on the Corps front - and great was the rejoicing. The prisoners, 2 of whom were over 40 years of age, proved to be from 1224 Gr Regt of 190 Div and talked freely. The initiative and energy for which Canadian troops are noted could be seen in the way that many of the troops fixed up their dug-outs. Some of them were positively remarkable.</p>	app 2. JS

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MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25,000	SUN 3 DEC 44		It rained again during the night and the morning was cloudy and cool. At 1000 hrs Lt Col Pangman went to 4 Bde to act as Brigadier while Brig Cabeldu went on leave. Major Don Mackenzie therefore, became A/CO. In the afternoon 26 Belgians, armed and equipped with Canadian materials arrived at BHO, ready and anxious to fight with us. Where they were from or who had sent them was not clear but we could not accept their services, however, much we might have admired their spirit. The day was uneventful otherwise. Patrols on the Bde front reported contact with the enemy who remained, never-the-less, quite unaggressive.	App 1. FD
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	MON 4 DEC 44		The weather cleared and a welcome sun dried up some of the mud. Another uneventful day followed with moving pictures at the "Y" and in Nijmegen to relieve the monotony for some. The RHLI and RRC reported some activity in their patrols but our own patrol program was nil. The Germans continued to be comparatively inactive on our front, although sensitive to any movement or shelling.	FD
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	TUS 5 DEC 44		The weather, so important to Allied hopes of an early victory, was cloudy and cool again. There was little of interest during the day except that a Bde patrol centre was opened in Mook. The centre was actually a resting place for men coming in wet and hungry from patrols. It provided a warm bed, food and hot drinks as well as a place to dry and clean clothes. It was soon to become very popular. During the evening, the RRC phoned to say that one of our patrols was trying to push through their lines using a two day old password. We were rather amazed at this as none of our patrols were out. Investigation showed that it was a patrol from 5 Bde who had been causing almost as much trouble as the enemy.	FD
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	WED 6 DEC 44		It was cloudy again in the morning, but cleared in the afternoon. Once again there was little activity - though the MMGs and heavy mortars of the Toronto Scottish kept the enemy hopping on our front. Lt Col Pangman returned to the fold after his sojourn at 4 Bde. The Christmas spirit was in the air as parcels from home came rolling in, to remind the forgetful of wives, mothers and sweethearts. Wooden shoes were a popular Christmas present to those at home, partly because they were typical and partly because little else was obtainable. Patrols from the RRC and RHLI had little trouble in finding the German but closing in for a kill was a different proposition due, chiefly, to the nature of the country.	FD

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MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	THU 7 DEC 44		The night was notable for a 2 platoon attack by the RHC of 5 Bde in the area between the RHLL and Calgary Highlanders. In the attack, 1 PW was captured, but the patrol suffered a number of casualties, although estimating that they had killed 27 of the enemy. The day was miserable as rain poured down, turning the roads and tracks into mires. Wet feet were the rule, despite rubber boots and an attack of trench feet became a worry. During the evening probably as a result of the 5 Bde attack, "B" and "C" Coy received a few mortar bombs, but no casualties were suffered.	App 1, FJ.
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	FRI 8 DEC 44		The weather turned fair again and a warm sun was much appreciated. The roads in the vicinity were, on the whole, well drained and improved tremendously with a few hours respite from rain. Another quiet day followed, notable only for one of the usual "paratroop landing" scares. Such rumours arise occasionally, grow and spread with startling rapidity. Preparations were started on a Battalion dance which, it was hoped, would take place on 18 DEC at the Wintergarden in NIJMEGEN.	FJ.
MOOK No.12 NW(E) MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25,000	SAT 9 DEC 44		The day was cloudy and dull. Activity was at a minimum although snipers were busy on the RHLL front. The only Essex Scottish commitment on the front was a standing patrol in the RHLL sector, so the Bn was having an easy time, though living conditions were poor. Recreational transport was provided for a small percentage to the theatre in NIJMEGEN and this was much appreciated.	App 2, FJ.
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	SUN 10 DEC 44		The monotonous routine continued although the weather improved and a bright sun shone after a night of heavy rain. Activity was again light and was restricted to patrolling on the part of the RHLL and Royals. A standing patrol from the latter regiment spotted two Germans walking towards them. As the Jerries got within a few yards a green member of the Royals' patrol shouted, "Hey Bud" at them. The Jerries promptly fired and escaped in the general confusion.	FJ.
MOOK O.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK :25000	11		The day was notable only for the arrival of a recce party from the Regt de Maissoneuve from 5 Bde who were to take over from us in the near future. It could not be said that the type of warfare the Canadians were fighting at present was conducive to the best of morale. The feeling that we were getting no closer to the end of the war, the weather and the thoughts of Christmas combined to cause a general lack of enthusiasm which, though by no means serious, was noticeable.	FJ.

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	11 DEC		There was nothing of interest during the day which was clear after a cloudy start. Our only activity was the standing patrol in the RHLI sector, which had become a nightly feature.	FT
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	12 DEC 44		The weather was clear and very mild. Activity was again slight and consisted of patrolling and sniping. Due to the flooding the RRC area afforded little for variety in the way of patrols and the close country also limited RHLI patrolling. During the week a Brigade patrol centre had been opened in MOOK. The idea had originated with Brig Cabeldu and promised very good results. At the centre, tired and dirty men, back from patrols, could rest, wash and get some good meals. It soon proved popular with all the units of 4 Bde.	Appx 1, FT
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	13 DEC 44		The German was a little more active today and popped over a few rockets shortly after dark causing some excitement but little damage. The day otherwise was dull, in keeping with the weather. There was no rain but plenty of slippery mud to trap the unwary driver.	FT
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	14 DEC 44		Shortly after midnight the Jerry suddenly bubbled over with energy. About 40 heavy rockets landed in the area from the direction of the Reichwald. Just what caused all the fuss was uncertain and it subsided almost as quickly as it had started, having done little damage. The day was cloudy and foggy and there was little activity until the evening when a few more rockets whined their way overhead. The Germans had been using so many varieties of projectiles that heated arguments invariably arose as to what the last one was.	FT
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	15 DEC 44		4 Bde was relieved by 5 Bde today, with the Regt de Maisonneuve taking over from us, the Black Watch from the Royals and the Calgary Highlanders from the RHLI. In our case the changeover was completed without incident by 1630 hrs and the Battalion was settled in much the same positions in MOOK as we had occupied on the last time out. The changeover between the Calgarys and the RHLI was marred by the fact that some of the Calgary's vehicles used an exposed route and promptly came under fire. We were glad to be out and found that the river which had been lapping at our doorsteps on the previous occasion, had receded considerably. A trg syllabus had been drawn up and we also looked forward to the Battalion dance and the Padre's Christmas concert.	FT

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MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	16 DEC 44		The weather was cloudy and cool, though the rain held off. The day was taken up by bath parades, pay parades and interior economy generally. The 'Y' put on a movie in the evening and recreational transport was also laid on to Nijmegen. Christmas was very much in the air as parcels rolled in by the hundred to show us that we were not forgotten by those at home.	App 2, JJ
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	17 DEC 44		Padre Joe Cardy held on of his popular services at 0930 hrs of this cold and cloudy morning. In the afternoon, the Battalion held a study group at 4 Bde HQ, the subject: "Pursuit of Withdrawing Enemy", dealt with the successful action from Antwerp to Putte. Lt Col Pangman was in the chair and representatives from all units in the Bde were present, as well as Brig Cabeldu and the new Bde Major. The 'I' Sec had made a sand table model for the occasion and the whole discussion proved to be a success. There was again little activity along the front and news of a German breakthrough on the First US Army front was the chief topic of interest.	JJ
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	18 DEC 44		Trg was carried on by all companies despite unpleasant weather conditions. The emphasis was placed on getting back into some sort of physical condition after the rheumatic days spent in slit trenches. In the evening, a Christmas dance was held at the Wintergarden in Nijmegen, at which about 300 men of the Battalion were present. Many of the units holding dances there had had trouble in the women of dubious character who assaulted the food tables and retired with large baskets of refreshments. In our case, strenuous efforts were made to keep such people outside and so successful were they that there was a shortage of women at the dance. The whole affair was on a very high plane, however, and could be called a success, though hardly an outstanding one.	App 1, 7 JJ
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	19 DEC 44		The weather continued to be miserable, a thick fog cutting visibility almost to zero in the morning, it cleared a bit in the afternoon but the sun refused to shine on our efforts. In the evening, the Pipe Band and some other members of the Bn under the guidance of Padre Cardy, put on a very clever and entertaining concert at the Parish Hall in MOOK. The concert was a series of skits based on the "Hellzapoppin" idea, containing many excellent songs and culminating in an impressive tribute to the accomplishments of the Essex Scottish. The stage setting and costumes were extraordinarily good and the whole affair reflected great credit upon all who had anything to do with it. The concert was to run three nights thus giving everyone an opportunity to see it.	JJ

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MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	20 DEC 44		The trg syllabus was carried on, as usual, on this misty rainy day. There was little else of interest except a 'B' Coy party at the Bde patrol centre and the second showing of the concert. During the day, a recce party from the Camerons of Canada, of 6 Bde, whom we were to relieve in the near future, came to inspect our establishment. The front in our sector remained inactive despite German efforts in the south, which had achieved quite a breakthrough and were causing concern. It was considered quite possible that the Jerry would try an attack from North of the Meuse and there was some evidence of a build-up there.	JS
MOOK No.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	21 DEC 44		Another misty day passed quietly, but in the evening there was a great flap as rumours of paratroops concentrating caused the cancellation of the concert and interfered with an officers mess dinner at the patrol centre. The Bn was ordered to stand to but the whole thing proved to be a false alarm. The mess dinner, though late, carried on with Lt Col Peter Bennett, Lt Col Deziel and Capt Alec Hayes among the guests. Unfortunately, the concert audience could not be rounded up again despite enthusiastic efforts on the part of the cast who ran down the street shouting "Come back, come back, it's all a false alarm."	JS
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	22 DEC 44		The weather cleared and a warm sun shone. After the excitement of the previous night, it was decided to prepare for enemy air operations and we were given definite tasks. On the code word "Oppenheim", the Bn was to stand to and 'A' Coy was to take over protection of MOOK bridge. The code word FRANKENSTEIN meant that air operations had actually begun and the whole division would then be placed in a state of uproar and readiness. During the afternoon, a Recce party went to the Camerons of Canada area to scout the positions which we were to take over on the following day. The position was south of and next to the one we had formerly occupied in Groesbeek and had previously been handled by the RHLI. In the evening, Padre Cardy took his concert party to Div HQ where it was warmly greeted and was pronounced a great success. The 'Y' put on a movie at MOOK for the benefit of the Bn.	App 2, JS
MOOK NO.12 NW(E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	23 DEC 44		The Bn moved back into a front line position today after more than three weeks in a reserve role. The changeover began at 1400 hrs but the coys were unable for the most part, to move in until after dark. It was completed without incident by 2030 hrs. Our new position had 'B' Coy on the right, 'C' in the centre and 'A' Coy on the left	JS

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	23 DEC 44		with 'D' Coy in reserve. To the Bn left was the Royal Regt of Can and to the right was the Calgary Highlanders of 5 Bde. To the rear, in reserve was the RNLI. The forward coys were in very close contact with the Jerry and could only be reached safely at night. The ground was rolling, quite well built-up and about 2 kilometres away, to the ESE was the Reichwald forest. A long ridge ran North and South about 500 yards from BnHQ and an intrepid Jerry armed with a machine gun was in the habit of infiltrating nightly and dusting up the road and houses in the area. The position could not be called the most attractive in the world but our activities were to be restricted to standing patrols, with the occasional recon patrol thrown in. The enemy was not especially aggressive, though he had obviously taken heart over his early successes on the US First Army front and was unduly cocky about it all. It should be added that vehicle movement in the area was prohibited by day and a barrier, guarded by the Regt'l police was put up at the edge of the woods about 400 yards behind BnHQ. From the barrier to BnHQ a white tape was laid to protect the unwary from walking into enemy hands.	FS
GROESBEEK No.12 NW (E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	24 DEC 44		The night passed uneventfully and a crisp, clear sunny day followed. Five standing patrols to prevent infiltration, had been sent out but only minor activity on the Jerry part was reported. 'G' Coy reported hearing Christmas carols - in English - from the German lines, so apparently the spirit of the season was upon them. The spirit did not remain very long, though, as the Jerry started mortaring at 1430 hrs and kept it up for a short time. During the afternoon, much to our surprise, we learned that 4 Bde was to be relieved by 7 Bde of 3 Cdn Div on the following day. Apparently 4 Bde was to be withdrawn for a special job, as yet unknown to us. Christmas eve was clear and a bright moon shone peace upon all men and also aided our friend with the Machine Gun who forced rapid deployment on the part of anyone walking from the barrier to BnHQ.	FS
GROESBEEK NO.12 NW (E) GROESBEEK 1:25000	25 DEC 44		Christmas day, clear and bright, frosty and sunny, quiet until the evening when the changeover with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles of 7 Bde took place. Just what happened to this movement is uncertain, but in any event, there was certainly a lack of effort somewhere on one of those "higher levels", probably due to the festive season. The Winnipeg Rifle Coys scheduled to start coming in at 1730 hrs arrived, by the wrong route, some hour and a half late. The change not easy at any time was	FS app 5 /8

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	25 DEC 44		was finally complete at about 2145 hrs and the rifle companies fully equipped and in a bad humour were all on the road to a concentration area on the Eastern outskirts of Nijmegen, a march of about 7 miles. The new billets proved to be two large buildings, side by side on a quiet residential street - an area formerly occupied by the reserve Brigade of 3 Cdn Div. They had electric light, running water and most of the conveniences, though colder than a refrigeration plant. Our stay was of uncertain duration, but the Bn immediately settled down to make the most of whatever time we might have. Today, the latest competitor with the London "Times", put in its first appearance. The "SX Sniper" it was called published by the 'I' Section, and containing news from the fighting fronts of the world.	FS
NIJMEGEN REF NIJMEGEN 1:25000	26 DEC 44		The weather remained clear and cold. A recce party proceeded to the S'Hertogenbosch area at 0900 hrs as we had been told to expect a move there. Evidence had been accumulating that the German was building up forces on the "Island", between the WAAL and MEUSE on this thinly held front and plunge towards Antwerp. The day was quiet and the companies went on route marches in order to keep busy. In the evening the 'Y' put on a show in a nearby hall.	FS
NIJMEGEN Ref NIJMEGEN 1:25000	27 DEC 44		This was a quiet day, with the anticipated move still in the air. The sun shone brightly again and a heavy frost tinted the trees. The companies concentrated on route marches and there were recreational facilities available at the 'Y' and in Nijmegen. In the evening the officers mess held a dance in the city at a very cozy and Christmasy spot. It was a pronounced success thanks to the efforts of Major Thomson, the Mess President and his cohorts.	app 1, FS
NIJMEGEN Ref NIJMEGEN 1:25000	28 DEC 44		Evidence of the enemy concentration North of the Meuse continued to roll in and we were expecting word to move. It came at 1530 hrs, but to the surprise of everyone, proved to be a recce of 5 Bde area - in our case, the positions of the Black Watch. Apparently, the Corps Comd objected to having a Brigade pulled out for a special task and then put back in, however, for the order to change over was cancelled at 2130 hrs. Otherwise the day, which was cloudy and cold, was quiet. Trg was continued though the troops were kept close to billets in order to be ready to move.	FS

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LEAVE NIJMEGEN ARR BOXTEL Ref BOXTEL #18 NW 1:25000	29 DEC 44		After an 'O' Gp at 4 Bde at 1200 hrs, Recce parties were despatched to Boxtel, a small town, about 20 kilometres east of Tilburg and 12 kms due south of S'Hertogenbosch. The Bn prepared to move off and did so at 1645 hrs. The route led through Grave, Uden, Veghel, St Oedenrode and Best. The column moved through a dense fog and arrived at Boxtel at 2315 hrs. While the Bde moved, an 'O' Gp was held at 4 Bde Tac HQ and it was learned that we were now under comd of 1 Cdn Army and were in Boxtel as a reserve in case the Jerry should try an attack from North of the Meuse. The Bn was for the moment, squashed into the steam heated Agricultural School at Boxtel and into one other large but frigid school building. Providing that nothing happened, our immediate future looked reasonably rosy, and what could we do but sit back to await events?	Appx 2, 5 J.S.
BOXTEL Ref BOXTEL NO.18 NW 1:25000	30 DEC 44		The day was spent in getting organized and making reccees for our prospective tasks. We had five possible jobs, in the event of a German attack. One was to take up a defensive position about four kilometres north of Tilburg; a second to take a position NE of Tilburg; the third and fourth to protect the area South and SE of S'Hertogenbosch and the last to defend the immediate area of Boxtel. In addition, an airport at Schindel, about 9 kilometres to the East, was the responsibility of one Bn each day. These possible tasks required a great deal of preparation and kept the CO and coy comds running about the countryside in their jeeps - not a very pleasant pastime in Holland at this time of year.	J.S.
BOXTEL Ref BOXTEL	31 DEC 44		The weather was clear and cold again and the year petered out to a gentle conclusion. Padre Cardy held a service in the Riche Theatre at Boxtel in the morning and the afternoon passed quietly. There was little hilarity at night though the sturdy Dutch burghers were disturbed by one lad, who, attired in a tank corps hat and the shoulder flashes of another unit in the Bde, peppered the streets with a Sten gun. When apprehended, he gave as his excuse that no one had told him not to do it - which somehow reflected the sense of responsibility abroad in the world, as the year ended.	J.S.

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