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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
ANTWERP Ref DOEL No. 23 SE 1/25,000	SUN 1 OCT 44		<p>The day was much the same as those past. Active patrolling was continued and an abortive attempt by a platoon from 'B' Coy to seize the station to the North was halted by the waters of an Anti-tank ditch. The Arty and Mortars had given the station area a terrific pounding but, unfortunately, the platoon could not find a place to ford.</p> <p>The Arty also started fires in ECKEREN to the North and Merxem to the East and there was evidence coming in to support the belief that the enemy was thinning out in that area.</p> <p>Further progress was reported by 5 Bde who were pushing towards us from an Easterly direction.</p>	9/9
ANTWERP REF DOEL No 23 SE 1/25,000	MON 2 OCT 44		<p>A lovely day and one on which the crazy battle for MERXEM was to reach a culminating point.</p> <p>The R.R.C on our right pushed two companies across the canal and into the Eastern section of MERXEM. They reported success and C Coy of the ESSEX went in to attack from the West and to clear up the CHATEAU and enemy strong points in the area. The attack went well from our area and 'C' was soon in the Chateau and beyond, having suffered few casualties. As the attack had gone so well, A and D Coys were pushed into MERXEM and advancing quickly, took up positions South of an anti-tank ditch with A on the right, 'D' in the centre and 'B' Coy which had not moved from it's original position protecting the left flank.</p> <p>This was a gala day for 'C' Coy under Major Burgess, as they did a very good job. In all, 53 prisoners were taken and they all proved to be from 1018 Bn - the 'Stomach Ulcer' Bn - category men who, having built many of the fortifications around ANTWERP, were abandoned by the NAZIS and told to defend what they had made. They were a uniformly miserable type and were only too glad to give in when rooted out of their positions.</p> <p>The roads in MERXEM were found to be heavily mined and the sappers were soon at work clearing things up. The population were extremely glad to see us as they had been short of food and under stress for some weeks.</p> <p>The day was also noteworthy for a patrol led by Sgt Kirkland of 'B' Coy. It consisted of 3 men and, swimming canals en route, got into ECKEREN, returning with a full and useful report.</p>	5/9

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Near FT DE MERXEM REF: STERNHOVEN No 24 SW 1/25,000	TUE 3 OCT 44		<p>On the whole, it was a most satisfactory day for the Bn as we finally succeeded in getting off our backsides and pushing the enemy out of a strong position - one which, despite his infirmities, he had defended quite well.</p> <p>The weather was clear and patrols during the night scouted the area for bridges and possible routes. One bridge was found over the A tk ditch, not more than 100 yds from FT DE MERXEM, one of the ring of Belgian fortifications around ANTWERP which had been used as a German strong point.</p> <p>During the morning 'A' Company attacked FORT DE MERXEM and at 1130 hrs were able to report 1 platoon inside the fort, having met little opposition as the enemy had pulled out of their positions and were continuing to harass us with LMG and rifle fire while withdrawing.</p> <p>BnHQ moved to an old chateau on the Northern outskirts of MERXEM.</p> <p>The Bn now dug in and waited further instrs. The remainder of the Div was sweeping up from the NE and the RHLI on our left had succeeded in their advances to the NORTH, so the stage seemed to be set for substantial advances on all sectors.</p>	<p>SH-9</p> <p>Appt 1.</p> <p>SH-9</p>
STABROECK REF DOEL No 23 SE 1/25,000	WED 4 OCT		<p>At 0800 hours 'D' Coy was on the move. The objectives were the two small villages of LAER AND DEN HOECK and all went well as little or no opposition was encountered. In the meantime, patrols to RECHEREN, to the WEST reported that town clear and indications all along the line were that the enemy was withdrawing rapidly. It was then decided to press on as quickly as possible, by-passing enemy pockets on the way, with a view to seizing a bridgehead over the OPSTALBEEK River some 10 kilometres to the NORTH.</p> <p>So, the advance was taken up by any means possible and it passed quickly through ST MARIABURG, turning off there to HOEVENEN and pressing NORTH through WITWERK to STABROECK. Very little opposition was encountered and once again the route was lined with delighted civilians who produced fruit and beverages and swarmed all over the vehicles wherever they stopped. At 1530 hrs 'A', 'B' and 'D' Coys had passed through STABROECK and were recceing crossings with 'A' well on the right, 'D' in the centre almost due north of STABROECK and 'B' wandering in the flooded area to the left. 'C' Coy, in the meantime was at STABROECK, on the Eastern outskirts of the town. BHQ was established in a large house in the centre of the town.</p>	<p>SH-9</p>

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PUTTE REF HUIJBERGEN NO 23 NE 1/25,000	THU 5 OCT 44		<p>At 1635 hrs 'D' reported finding a bridge and the Pioneers were immediately sent to clear it. 'D' Coy clung grimly to their bridgehead, meanwhile 'B' and 'A' moved into position and 'C' Coy was sent to force a crossing on the main axis of advance. This was a most successful day for the Bn. The set objectives had easily been taken and a very valuable bridgehead seized, due to the vigour and determination of 'D' Coy. More than 50 prisoners were in the bag and on more than one occasion the Jerrys had been seen hot-footing down the road trying to keep ahead of our advance.</p> <p>A cool, cloudy day and the attack continued relentlessly. 'B' Coy, under Major Laird were to advance and seize the village of PUTTE on the HOLLAND-BELGUIM border, meanwhile 'A' Coy cleared woods the NORTH AND WEST, 'C' Coy crossed the river and formed up. The purpose of the plan as a whole was to regain the axis of advance which was the main road between ANTWERP and BERGEN-OP-ZOOM.</p> <p>'B' Coy advanced successfully into PUTTE coming under heavy fire and sustaining a large number of casualties. At 1419 hrs the first of 'B' Coys sections was at the crossroads in town and holding on desperately. The remainder of the Coy was in position soon after and were greatly assisted in heavy fighting by the work of the arty POC, Capt Adams, who was with the leading troops at all times and was among the "liberated populace" waving to 'D' Coy when they subsequently marched in to the relief of 'B'.</p> <p>In the meantime, 'A' Coy made good progress against oppositon not nearly as heavy and established themselves in a position 300 yds NW of PUTTE. 'C' Coy meanwhile crossed the canal and took up a position as a firm base. At 1700 hrs 'B' Coy was relieved by 'D' and the 40 odd remaining were withdrawn to a fine and huge chateau (inks which Tac HQ had been established), there to have a rest. Two coys of the RHLI were placed u/c for the night and took up positions W and SW of PUTTE.</p> <p>Prisoners continued to stream in throughout the day and the total haul was well over 50. For the most part they were our old friends of the 'M' Bn. but there were also a number of youthful, embryonic marines, transferred to infantry only after the fall of BRUSSELS and showing no liking for army life.</p> <p>Major Laird OC 'B' Coy was evacuated during the day having led his Coy in their fine showing, although exhausted and ill himself.</p>	<p>SHQ</p> <p>SHQ</p>

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EAST OF PUTTE REF HUIJBERGERN No 23 NE 1/25,000	FRI 6 OCT 44		<p>A fine clear day. There was evidence of a gneral withdrawal of enemy troops in the direction of BERGEN-OP-ZOOM so the momentum of the attack was maintained. With the ESSEX SCOTTISH acting as a firm base, the RHLI and RRC pushed forward - the former to the sand dunes about 8 kilometres to the NNE and the later towards OSSENDRECHT. The two forward units met little opposition and as there was still an enemy pocket to the east it was decided to send the ESSEX out to clean it up.</p> <p>'C' Coy was chosen for the job and was soon on the move and reported fairly stiff opposition as they crossed fields dotted with bushes affording good cover, sustaining a number of casualties en route. The remaining Coys had an easier time and by 2300 hrs the Bn was in position with 'C' Coy well out to the EAST, 'A' in the PUTTE area and 'B' and 'D' to the SOUTH OF the village. BnHQ was set up in a small house on the EASTERN outskirts.</p> <p>In the meantime the RRC had reached OSSENDRECHT and the RHLI had taken their objective so the stage was set for the passage through of 5 Bde.</p>	SHM
EAST OF PUTTE REF BRECHT NO 24 NW 1/25,000	SAT 7 OCT 44		<p>At 0130 hrs the order came through to secure a start line for the FMRs - to the NE. This meant pushing the Bn positions forward several kilometres so an early breakfast was served and at 1200 hrs the Bn was again on the move.</p> <p>TachQ was moved further EAST to a house called VILLA ANNA and all went well until 'C' Coy came under heavy fire at their objective, which was a road junction. In this action, Major Burgess, under whose command 'C' Coy had made their recent good showing was wounded. The enemy were beaten off and it was not long before all Coys were in position. There was a heavy road block at 'C' Coys rd junction and after several attempts with carriers, it was found necessary to call the engineers in. This held up the FMRs and their tank support and, in the meantime 'C' Coy took a good deal of heavy mortaring from the EAST. TachQ was also located at 'C' Coy HQ which was a large house formerly used as a nursery school.</p> <p>As darkness fell the Bn positions were 'A' Coy, well to the NNW covering the Northern end of the start line, 'D' coy beyond 'A' on the NW side of a small lake, 'C' Coy at the main crossroad and 'B' Coy to the SW at the junction of the road to PUTTE. Patrols were immediately sent out to recce the NORTH and EAST and keep the enemy on the jump.</p> <p>Prisoners continued to come in throughout the day and once again the total was over 50. For the most part, they were members of 'M' Bn and in a very miserable condition.</p>	<p>Appx 1, 2</p> <p>SHM</p>

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EAST OF PUTTE REF: BRECHT No 24 NW 1/25,000	SUN 8 OCT 44		<p>Patrols during the night reported scattered groups of enemy to the NORTH and EAST. Patrolling was very active and for the most part, the Jerry seemed ready and anxious to give up the battle. A number of peculiar incidents occurred during a day which was otherwise not noteworthy. First of these happened when a German NCO was taken and promptly said that he could get us 4 more prisoners. He was sent out accompanied by Cpl MacIntosh of the 'I' and whistled in 4 of his comrades, who deserted eagerly. There was also the German MO who, arriving with his assistant to tend the wounded of a standing patrol, found that one of our patrols had taken over and wandered good naturedly into one of our slit trenches before realising his mistake.</p> <p>On the other hand there was the case of the RRC who optimistically reported 50 enemy emerging on their front with hands up; When a small patrol was sent out to "gather them in" (as the Royals put it) the Germans disappeared into trenches and began firing.</p> <p>Otherwise there was little activity. The FMRs and tanks were still held up by road blocks. Occasional mortaring enlivened a chilly, grey day. The Bn positions remained the same, partly in HOLLAND and partly in BELGIUM - probably the first time that the ESSEX SCOTTISH HAVE BEEN actively engaged in two countries at the same time.</p>	<p>Sept 1,</p> <p>SHH</p>
EAST OF PUTTE REF BRECHT No 24 NW 1/25,000	MON 9 OCT 44		<p>This was another chilly grey day. The FMRs column which was to beat up the enemy to the NE finally got going after being held up by road blocks and mines. The route taken differed from the original but good progress was made and by 1430 they were reporting 64 prisoners.</p> <p>The Bn. sat tight during the day, suffering only occasional mortaring. An unfortunate incident occurred when a 'B' Coy patrol under the command of the A/OC Capt Hogan was surprised, surrounded and taken prisoner. Two men of 12 escaped. The patrol apparently met opposition, thought the enemy was going to surrender and advanced too far.</p> <p>The word came through, during the afternoon, that we were to be relieved by the Camerons of Canada of 6 Bde and the replacement began after darkness.</p> <p>In the fighting around PUTTE a section of Belgian Maquis had been in action with 'C' Coy. Their efforts were most valuable, as they conducted themselves bravely and like highly-trained soldiers (which most of them were not) - three of 14 giving their lives for their country.</p>	<p>SHH</p>

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AT OSSENDRECHT REF HUIJBERGEN NO 23 NE 1/25,000	TUE 10 OCT 44		<p>During the early hours of the morning the Bn moved to the area of LEMBERG, about 2 kilometres SE of OSSENDRECHT. BHQ was in a farmhouse, which, although it was conspicuously clear, afforded obstacles (such as pigs and goats) to work. The Bn was deployed with 'D' and 'C' Coys forward and 'A' & 'B' Coys covering crossroads in the area.</p> <p>At 1430 hrs BHQ took over the headquarters of the RRC in OSSENDRECHT. The headquarters were in the town hall, a handsome and well-equipped building which had been damaged to some degree by shelling.</p> <p>During the day the RRC put in an attack to cut the main road to the SOUTH BEVELAND peninsula. The attack was partially successful and the Royals were able to report a number of PWs some of whom were paratroop rfts and very superior to the troops that we had been meeting. The ground was admirable for defence, being perfectly flat and barren and the enemy was well dug in all along the dykes. As a result the main road remained in German hands although the RRC positions made use of it difficult.</p>	<p>Appx 1</p> <p>SH9</p>
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	WED 11 OCT 44		<p>During the night two coys were ordered to stand by to assist 'E' Bde if required. The assistance was not needed and all was quiet again by one o'clock.</p> <p>At 1100 hrs, the Bn was on the move again to take over from the BLACK WATCH and CALGARY HIGHLANDERS, who had cleared HOOGERHEIDE some three kilometres to the NORTH and directly to the EAST of the BEVELAND Peninsula. The RHLI had preceded us and were already in positions on the Northern outskirts of the town. HOOGERHEIDE proved to be a shambles, the majority of the houses wrecked or damaged and the streets littered with dead Germans. BHQ was set up in a big school not far from the main road and the Bn was deployed with 'A' on the left in the centre of the town, 'B' coy to its rear and 'D' Coy on the right with 'C' Coy in reserve. Directly to our front and within a few hundred yards of us were the RHLI. On the left and well forward were the RRC.</p> <p>During the day, the SSR of the 6th Bde put in an attack on the right flank, running into opposition among the sand dunes and woods to the EAST.</p> <p>There was a considerable amount of enemy mortaring and shelling of our positions throughout the day, but no sustained activity. Patrols on our part were restricted to liaison with neighbouring units as the Bn role was a reserve one for the moment.</p>	<p>SH9</p>

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AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 1/25,000	THU 12 OCT 44		<p>The weather continued to be cool and cloudy. The Bn role was a passive one though there was considerable activity on the RRC front to the WEST and to the EAST on the SSR front. The day was given over to tightening up defences and probing enemy weak spots.</p> <p>The enemy remained quite active, tossing a number of mortar bombs at the school which was BHQ and at the main intersections in HOOGERHEIDE.</p> <p>In view of the importance of the positions and the fact that a determined German defence seemed likely to make our stay in HOOGERHEIDE of some duration, a description of the area is necessary.</p> <p>HOOGERHEIDE lies directly EAST of the BEVELAND peninsula and is about 7 miles SOUTH of BERGEN OP ZOOM. The town straddles the ANTWERP-BERGEN highway and is about 1½ miles SOUTH of the main highway to GOES on the peninsula. To the EAST lie scrubby woods and country, which for thickly populated HOLLAND, is relatively barren. To the WEST lies the town of WOENSDRECHT and to the SOUTHWEST low lying country, much of which was flooded. The whole area is admirable for defence except that the shortage of cover makes aerial reconnaissance easy.</p> <p>The Germans that we were meeting were our old friends of the "stomach Ulcers" but aided by odds and sods of all types and with a leavening of young and vigorous paratroops.</p> <p>During the day the RHLI put in an attack on WOENSDRECHT with one company. The attack was successful in that the objective was taken but withdrawal was forced by heavy enemy fire.</p>	SH9
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	FRI 13 OCT 44		<p>The night was full of sound and fury as the enemy put in counter attacks on the RRC and SSR fronts - on the left and right respectively. The RRC beat off their attackers but the SSR suffered a number of casualties and succeeded with difficulty in retaining their positions.</p> <p>At 1000 hrs, on a misty morning, the RHC of 5 Bde launched an attack on WOENSDRECHT. The attack, unfortunately, straggled far behind its artillery barrage and was unsuccessful. After suffering heavy casualties the black Watch withdrew to their original positions.</p> <p>In the late afternoon an enemy attack was again put in on the SSR position and was again beaten off with difficulty - a coy of R de Mais being despatched to assist the SSR.</p>	App 1, SH9

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AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NW 1/25,000	SAT 14 OCT 44		<p>Whilst all these interesting happenings were taking place the Bn remained in position at HOOGERHEIDE, in a state of readiness to assist when and where required. Contact patrols were maintained, occasional mortaring was suffered but there was nothing wildly exciting from the Bn standpoint.</p> <p>This was a beautiful day and a memorable and successful one for 'C' Coy and for the Regiment. At 0830 hrs 'C' Coy was ordered to stand ready to clear up a pocket of enemy between the SSRs and the R de Mais. By 1300 hrs Capt MacDonald, commanding 'C' Coy was reporting modestly that things were going "not too badly", though as the afternoon wore on prisoners came streaming in to the PW cage. It became clear that 'C' Coy was doing an excellent job and in hand to hand fighting took 126 prisoners at very small cost. Tales were told of how Sgt Levett ran forward, seized an enemy MG, turned it about and kept the Germans heads down while Lieut Kadey led his platoon in a determined bayonet charge. The enemy when faced with this sort of thing gave in quickly and the pocket was soon eliminated. The engagement reflected great credit on the Company Commander and on all members of 'C' Coy. The C.O. of the SSRs expressed his opinion as follows: "Your 'C' Coy did a perfect job - they couldnt possibly have done a better one".</p> <p>While this was going on the remainder of the Bn took over from the RHLI. The change did not entail much of a movement and BHQ was moved a few hundred yards to the town hall in HOOGERHEIDE. The Bn was deployed with 'D' Coy on the right and forward, 'A' Coy forward and straddling the main highway and 'B' Coy to the left and rear. 'C' Coy who reported themselves back in position by 1840 hrs were in reserve for the moment.</p> <p>The enemy continued to be fairly aggressive and some of the positions reported heavy mortaring. He switched his sources of fire continually and made things fairly hot, though his efforts seemed aimless and indications were that he was becoming increasingly jittery.</p> <p>The intermittent heavy mortaring gave the companies great practice in sending in "shellreps" and "Moreps" as Jerry shifted his gun and mortar positions and also caused Lieut Ken Jeanneret and his signallers to work overtime locating breaks in field telephone lines.</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>Append 2.</p> <p>SH</p>

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AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	SUN 15 OCT 44		<p>This was a relatively quiet day, marked by some enemy activity. We had become quite accustomed to the Germans DF mortar tasks in the area and knew fairly well when to duck.</p> <p>The Germans showed signs of increasing nervousness as they ordered the evacuation of all civilians from WOENSDRECHT by 2200 hrs. While this was going on the RHLI were teeing up a careful attack on the town, so the enemy must have had foreboding of disaster.</p> <p>The Bn activities were again limited to patrols mostly to the area of DOOL STRAAT some 800 yds to the NORTH, along which the enemy had established a defence line.</p>	<p>Appx 1.</p> <p>JH</p>
AT HOOGERNEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	MON 16 OCT 44		<p>The weather was cool and winter was in the air. The RHLI attack went in at 0330 hrs and moved steadily forward under a tremendous artillery barrage. By 0500 sub units of the RHLIs were on their final objectives and shortly afterwards requests for 'F' Echelon vehicles were coming in. This attack was extremely carefully prepared as WOENSDRECHT was a vital objective and word of its success was very satisfactory.</p> <p>With the RHLI success, 'A' Coy was ordered to move forward and 'C' Coy moved up to take up positions on the EAST side of the ANTWERP-BERGEN-OP-ZOOM highway. The RHLI had suffered a number of casualties in their 'A' Coy and our 'B' Coy was sent during the day to take up a position between the RHLI 'C' and 'D' Coys and placed under command of the "Rileys". To complete the confusion 'C' and 'D' of the R de MAIS were placed under Lieut Col Pangman's command and moved to take up a position in our rear thus giving everyone a tight defensive set up.</p> <p>The Germans continued to be fairly active on our front - shooting up flares during the night on the least provocation. Enemy mortars were accurate as usual and everyone had enough to keep him busy. As on many previous occasions, Major Bill Carr our Arty rep from 26 Bty 4 Pd Regt gave the battalion valuable assistance by bringing down "stonks" whenever targets presented themselves.</p>	<p>JH</p>

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AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN 23 NE 1/25,000	TUE 17 OCT 44		<p>This was a fine, clear day and there was little unusual activity. In order to further tighten the defences, road blocks and strings of 75 grenades were laid on the main lines of approach.</p> <p>The enemy remained active, though by no means as active as we were. Typhoons attacked any and all targets and the prodigious concentration of artillery which had been brought to the area made life miserable for the Germans.</p> <p>The troops when not on duty searched for jars of preserves laid away by thrifty Dutch housewives. The livestock in the area also suffered some casualties and platoons and companies had some all star meals for a change.</p> <p>Patrol activity was keen and showed the enemy to be as jumpy as ever.</p>	SHH
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN 23 NE 1/25,000	WED 18 OCT 44		<p>Another day similar to those just past. The weather was cloudy and a raw wind blew from the North. There was nothing very exciting to report, although German mortars were rather more active than usual. Due to the ground, observation was difficult and any suspected mortars or gun positions were plastered by our arty.</p> <p>Patrols sent out during the day found definite evidence of enemy withdrawal in the DOOL STRAAT area to the North and it was gratifying to know that our aggressive tactics were beginning to tell on something besides his nerves.</p>	apm 1
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN 23 NE 1/25,000	THU 19 OCT 44		<p>The weather cleared and the whole front seethed with minor activity. During the night, a 'C' Coy fighting patrol reached DOOL STRAAT at the main crossroads and reported the presence of enemy there. Further to the EAST, 'D' Coy recon patrols could find no evidence of them.</p> <p>The RRC on the far left reported enemy shelling and aggressive actions but on a lessening scale.</p> <p>The Germans continued attempts to infiltrate and sniping patrols were reported along the shallow draw which lay between our positions and those of the RHLI to the West.</p> <p>Everyone was getting heartily sick of HOOGERHEIDE at this point. The novelty had worn off and the flat wet terrain complete with the depressing sights of the ruined village were far from pleasant.</p>	SHH

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AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	FRI 20 OCT 44		<p>The night was again enlivened by patrols both our own and the enemy's. Our usual patrol of fighting strength to the main crossroads at DOOL STRAAT again came under fire and reported enemy activity in the area. A recce patrol also sent to DOOL STRAAT, though further EAST, set off an enemy booby trap which resulted in two members of the patrol retiring in confusion to announce that they had been fired on with rifle grenades and that the leader of the patrol was a casualty probably a fatal one. The patrol leader turned up quite intact an hour and a half later with a full report.</p> <p>The day was fair and warm and little of the unusual occurred. Mortaring was becoming rarer and small arms fire was also at a minimum on the company fronts. Action was in the air, however, and we heard that we were to be relieved shortly by a unit of 6 Bde, probably to rest for a push up the BEVELAND peninsula.</p>	SH9
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	SAT 21 OCT 44		<p>The Bn was replaced today by the FMRs of 6 Bde. The changeover took place at 1700 hrs following a day which was a replica of these just past. The Bn was supposed to move to a new area to the Southeast not far NORTH of PUTTE, but recce parties reported it so unsatisfactory that the CO decided to remain in HOOGERHEIDE taking headquarters in the school over again. The Coys were therefore, concentrated in houses in the town. At the same time the Camerons of Canada replaced the RHLI, releasing our 'B' Coy and the Black Watch of 5 Bde relieved the HRC, so that the whole of 4 Bde might have a rest.</p> <p>A very unfortunate incident occurred when a 10.5 cm shell burst through the wall of a house just occupied by A tk platoon HQ, killing the platoon comd, popular and capable Capt Jim Watt and slightly wounded 4 others.</p>	SH9
AT HOOGERHEIDE REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	SUN 22 OCT 44		<p>The atmosphere was dripping with action as the 4 Div put in a right hook attack aimed at BERGEN-OP-ZOOM. Progress was slow at first due to the difficult ground, but the 4th Div pushed forward slowly and after 24 hours were due EAST of and not more than 5000 yds from our position. This attack was, of course to force the enemy back and cut him off from the peninsula, and to free the main route through to GOES on SOUTH BEVELAND.</p> <p>The day was spent in getting things into shape for the coming operation - the clearing of the peninsula - known as "VITALITY".</p>	SH9

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AT HOOGERHEID REF HUIJBERGEN No 23 NE 1/25,000	MON 23 OCT 44		<p>During the morning, at Bde HQ a discussion was held on VITALITY and it became known, definitely, that the Essex Scottish were to undertake an armoured thrust along the peninsula with a view to seizing the vital railway bridge over the SOUTH V BEV LAND ship canal. We were, naturally, pleased to have the opportunity of leading the way in this all important operation. Brigade had a splendid set up of sand tables aerial photographs and maps and arrangements were made for study groups for the units taking part in the operation. That study was necessary will be seen by reading the information in the appendix attached. The ground was very good for defence and flooding caused by German demolitions made it that much more difficult.</p> <p>It was also decided during the morning, that the RRC would secure a start line for us, as otherwise, the chances of making a successful attack through a gap in the dyke onto the main highway seemed very poor.</p> <p>The whole affair was of course, dependant on the success of the 4 Div attack.</p> <p>The day, otherwise, was quiet. Padre "Joe" Cardy held one of his simple and very impressive services which was much appreciated by all ranks.</p> <p>The weather was cloudy and cool and rain had turned the churned up roads into bogs.</p> <p>The study groups continued at 4 Bde HQ and further preparations were made for VITALITY. Extensive Recce was carried out and it might be as well to describe the ground and route leading up to the start point.</p> <p>The main road through WOENS RECHT and westward onto the peninsula was not entirely in our hands and, consequently, a means had to be found to break across the railway tracks through the dyke and onto the highway past the enemy held locality. The dykes extended in glideron fashion from the ANTWERP- BERGEN-OP-ZOOM highway and the land in between was either flooded or marshy. The best available roads lay westward from OSSENDRECHT thence northward along the dykes to a point about three kilometres WEST OF WOENSRECHT. At this point a double track railway ran WEST on top of the dyke and between the route up and the highway. There was no method of crossing the railway except by blasting a gap in it.</p>	SH9

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			<p>The routes to be taken to the start point were for the most part, bounded on either side by ditches and were in a terrible state as a result of flooding, rain and the passage of heavy vehicles. The prospect of taking these roads at night was not a pleasant one.</p> <p>The Bn, during the day, practised loading and off-loading the new armoured 15 cwt's which were to carry the rifle coys. Otherwise the day was reasonably quiet, although our "rest" area was the target for some long range mortaring.</p> <p>Preparations for the forthcoming attack were not limited to operation ones, for the day, quiet tactically, was an extremely busy one for the 2 i/c, Major Don Mackenzie, who had to deal with many 'A' and 'Q' problems and for the members of 'P', 'A' and 'B' Echelons.</p>	
W HOOGERHEIDE REF BERGEN-O-Z No 15 SE 1/25,000	TUE 24 OCT		<p>The Bn pulled out of HOOGERHEIDE at 0100 hrs on this rainy, pitch bleak morning. 'C' Coy was to lead the attack and was preceded by a troop of armoured cars from the 8th Recce and a troop of tanks from the 10 Armd Reft; behind followed 'A' Coy with similar support and then came BHQ, 'D' and 'B' Coys, a platoon of Engineers, a platoon of MMGs from the Toronto Scottish and representatives from field and medium artillery. Behind them came a tremendous weight of everything that anybody ever dreamed of.</p> <p>The going was extremely difficult and dawn found the convoy strewn from the gap backwards for several miles. Many cars had gone in the ditches and the troops had piled on other vehicles to continue the journey. Chains were soon produced and by 0630 hrs the column was lined up and ready to proceed with only a few vehicles missing. Recce showed that the gap over the railway tracks consisted mostly of a nice piece of white tape, but the engineers working with pick and shovel soon improvised it so that tank and Recce men pronounced it passable.</p> <p>In the meantime, the RRC were engaged in clearing the start line and by 1020 all was in readiness for the dash to the canal.</p> <p>Progress across the gap in the railway was slow and the first three recce cars and tanks had not gone more than 600 yds past it when they were knocked out by a well-placed A tk gun. So the armoured thrust ended there and the marching troops were ordered to march once again. At 1050 hrs the RRC reported our leading troops to be passing them on the start line.</p>	<p>519</p> <p>540</p>

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AT CROSSROADS	WED		<p>The leading coys 'C' and 'A' found the going very tough due to the exposed nature of the ground and were not able to reach their objectives. Three capable and well-liked officers were lost when Lieuts Jones and Lindal were killed and Lieut Douglas was wounded. Casualties otherwise were not too high but control was difficult and a road block on the main highway made evacuation of casualties almost impossible. 'A' and 'C' coys were, therefore, withdrawn to the area of the start line in the vicinity of BHQ which was set up in a small rectangular pillbox.</p> <p>While this attack was taking place the armour was for the time, consolidated in the rear.</p> <p>After 'A' and 'C' coys had withdrawn the Artillery plastered all suspected enemy positions and typhoons also were called in.</p> <p>This was not a very successful day but the Bn had retired only to lick wounds and make plans and before the night was far advanced another attack was sent in.</p>	<p>219</p>
MR 537204	25		<p>The second attack mounted on a cold, clear, moonless night was very successful. With 'D' coy on 'A' coys left and the Arty pouring fire on the two crossroads which were the Bn objective, the troops with pluck and determination pushed ahead. The enemy, when our men got to close quarters, gave in easily. By 0600 hrs the objectives were taken and prisoners were pouring in - a total of 120 in all, most of them our old friends of the "Stomach Ulcers" bns. The Bn was then told to consolidate and the HRC ordered to push through us.</p>	<p>219</p>
REF	OCT		<p>The set up at the crossroads was a very pretty one. BHQ was in a large well-furnished house whose owners, arriving a few hours after our entry, surveyed the scene in pain. All the Coys found houses where jars of preserves etc were ready and waiting.</p>	<p>219</p>
YERSEKE No 15	44		<p>We were all glad to have the initial part of VITALIT behind us. While the canal had not been crossed, the tough shell of the defences at the narrowest point of the peninsula had been broken, making matters easier for everyone. The armoured thrust in which none of us had much faith had failed but the infantry had carried through as usual and to them much credit is due.</p>	
SW 1/25,000				

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AT MR489177 REF WAARDE No 23 NW 1/25,000	THU 26 OCT 44		<p>At 0400 hrs the Bn set off again in an attempt to swing behind the enemy at KRABENDIJK. The start line was secured by the RHLI but due to some error in calculations the RHLI had not consolidated as far forward as they were supposed to do and the Carrier platoon which was leading the way began to pick up prisoners right and left on the home side of the start line. Germans began to appear from every stump and hollow and before the attack had ever really begun over 70 prisoners were in the bag.</p> <p>This made us perhaps, a little over-confident but things went well as 'D' coy led the way along the dykes in the direction of GAWEGE and 'B' and 'A' coys moved up to the SOUTH, with 'C' Coy also to the SOUTH and moving along the marshy ground on the shore line.</p> <p>'D' and 'A' coy took many prisoners and the day's total soon mounted to over 150 but the attack was pinned down by enemy MG and mortar fire. 'C' Coy were ordered to attempt an outflanking movement from the SOUTH, but were almost trapped by an enemy force which lay low instead of giving up. 'C' Coy was withdrawn after wading through deep marshes and with the men tired and filthy.</p> <p>At 1600 hrs word came through that the Bn was to be relieved by the SSRs of 6 Bde and recon parties were sent to search for accommodation in RILLAND, a small town which was already jammed with troops. After some difficulty everyone was housed and the men were given a good meal, a chance to clean up and rest.</p>	SH
AT RILLAND MR 530190 REF WAARDE No 23 NW 1/25,000	FRI 27 OCT 44		<p>The day was spent in resting and cleaning up. The YMCA produced a chocolate and cigarette ration which was much appreciated. The troops were much intrigued by the quaint costumes of many of the women. For the most part, they looked like the advertisement for "Old Dutch Cleanser" and were harnessed with gold blinkers. The town of RILLAND was a spotlessly clean place and the inhabitants showed us a great deal of kindness.</p> <p>During the day word came through that the SSRs had obtained a bridgehead over the canal on the main highway and had all their coys across, although the bridge itself had been demolished. The FMRs were also across on the locks at the SOUTH of the peninsula, while the Camerons of Canada were trying to cross at the NORTH side. The RCE were busy putting in a Class 40 bridge, but were hampered by enemy mortar fire. As soon as the bridge was ready we were to move across the canal.</p>	SH

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LEFT RILLAND AT KAPELLE REF GOES No 14 SE 1/25,000	ARRO SAT 28 OCT 44		<p>At 1100 hrs the Bn moved off embussed in the armoured 15 cwts for the staging area at KRUININGEN.</p> <p>We arrived at KRUININGEN at 1200 hrs and moved off again, the rifle coys on foot at 1400 hrs. The countryside was well flooded and water lapped over the edge of the main road. On the Eastern side of the bridge the highway was packed with vehicles and many riders found it better to get out and proceed on foot.</p> <p>The marching troops pushed on quite unopposed and at dusk were heading Northward into the outskirts of KAPELLE. By 2000 hrs the Bn was in position there, with the RHLI flanking us on the left and the RRC, SOUTH of the highway and well forward. The inhabitants of KAPELLE, a pleasant little town were very glad to see us and BHQ was soon set up in a large house which, with that morning had been used as a German HQ.</p> <p>There was absolutely no enemy activity and the night passed uneventfully.</p> <p>In accordance with a new Divisional policy Major McIntyre, Capt MacDonald and ten men returned to 'B' Echelon for a 48 hr leave in BRUSSELS or ANTWERP. Though the number allowed to go was very small, great interest was shown in the first evidence of a leave policy since the unit disembarked.</p>	Sept 2, SH9
LV KAPELLE ARR GRAVENPOLDER REF GOES 14 SE 1/25,000	SUN 29 OCT 44		<p>This was a clear, sunny day and after a morning spent examining the country side and the town of GOES to the west, from the church tower it was decided that the enemy was pulling back as rapidly as possible.</p> <p>At 1215 hrs the Bn started out on foot in the direction of GRAVENPOLDER, to the southwest, by-passing GOES en route. There was no opposition although there was evidence that the RRC who had preceded us had met some enemy. We arrived at GRAVENPOLDER at 1800 hrs finding the RR^u there and with the SSRs close behind us. A bright nearly full moon cast queer shadows in the village which had been badly wrecked by bombing.</p> <p>A long wait followed but the troops were glad of the opportunity to get a bit of sleep.</p>	SH9
LV GRAVENPOLDER ARR NIEUWDRP REF ULISSINGEN E 14 SW 1/25,000	MON 30 OCT		<p>During the early hours of the morning the Bn moved out of GRAVENPOLDER bound for the NIEUWDRP area, less than a mile from the Western end of the peninsula. A bright moon still shone and the marching troops made good time while the drivers had an unusually pleasant journey. Again there was no opposition though shortly after arrived at 0630 hrs at a crossroad on the outskirts of NIEUWDRP, we picked up a shoemaker and a Red Cross man. Subsequently 17 other Germans who had been hiding in nearby cellars put in an appearance.</p>	SH9

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LJ NIEUWDORP ARR HEER HENDRIKSKINDEREN REF GOES No 14 SE 1/25,000	TUE 31 OCT 44		<p>The Bn moved into NIEUWDORP amidst great excitement and a public holiday was soon declared. The Bn was deployed to cover the main approaches to the area and BHQ was set up in a house on the Western edge of town.</p> <p>A patrol of platoon strength was sent out by 'C' Coy to find out what was going on in the area of the causeway to WALCHEREN ISLAND. It met opposition along the road to the causeway and retired with two casualties one of whom was Capt Fawcett 2 i/c of 'C' coy and in command during Capt MacDonalds absence on 48 hr leave.</p> <p>Otherwise the day was quiet and in our area there was no enemy activity.</p> <p>The RRC put in an attack on the enemy positions at the Eastern end of the causeway today. The attack was entirely successful and over 200 prisoners were easily taken.</p> <p>The Essex Scottish area was again quiet except for one or two long range mortar bombs. At 1300 hrs we heard that we were to be relieved by the HLI of 52 Div and were to withdraw to a concentration area WEST OF GOES, in the tiny village of HEER HENDRIKSKINDEREN - a place as quaint as its ^{name} name which means, "Mr Hendrik's children".</p> <p>It was to most of us a relief to have the operation over with. The Essex Scottish Regt had done its share and at 2000 hrs had withdrawn gracefully to begin a well-earned rest.</p>	<p>HA</p> <p>HA</p>

(J.E.C. PANGLOSS) Lt Col,
Officer Commanding
1st Bn, ESSEX SCOTTISH REGIMENT.