WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

1/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1200

Received Intelligence Commentary from 3 Cdn Inf Bde, which announced that German Forces had invaded Denmark and were attacking Norway. All officers waited for the 1300 hrs. BBC broadcast. For the first time since we came here, we feel that this news may herald the beginning of active military operations.

Lt. H.F. Parker, on his recent snipers course at S.A.S. Hythe, led the entire school by a wide margin in sniping and marksmanship.

On Parade 718 all ranks

Sick 40

Total Strength 789

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

2/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

Preparation for M.Q? Move on 3 Apr. Race of first debussing point at Borden Camp, and completion of all plans.

On Parade 722 all ranks

Sick 42 “ “

Total strength 789 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

3/4/40

0800

Everybody busy with last minute preparations for M.T. move.

0830

Guides from I See meet M.T. from C.A.S.C. at e?r?r by Bde. HQ to guide them to embussing points on Hawley Hill. The M.Q. are brought past W.N.S.R. garage for numbers to be painted on them.

0930

Troops marched out to proceed to embussing points.

0950

Carriers and 1NQ? Began to leave for hiding place on Minley Rd. These vehicles were not sent out in proper order. Consequently they had to be rearranged on MINLEY RD, this resulting in considerable confusion. Vehicles began to move from their hiding places. Maj. Harris stood at Xrds MINLEY RD – LONDON RD and fitted the C.A.S.C. M.T. into their places among the vehicles coming up MINLEY RD. Col crosses S.P.

1445

Tps. in debussing area. The debussing area was changed at the last minute on request of C.A.S.C. officers, and a few of us new of the change, hence much confusion in debussing and finding position.

1450

The C.O. goes for his orders from Bde.

S H E E T 2

1545

Recce party goes forward in C.Os car. Recce party consisted of Adj. IO., Bde T?O and Capt. Steadman, Major Harris acting 2 i/e left in charge of F group.

1830

After recce, the Ogp. came to R.V” at a put, received their own orders and sent guides back to advanced debussing area to guide Tps up to Coy areas in the Bn. defensive position at 1830 hrs.

1915

Communication by Bn. Sigs established between Bn. HQ and “A” and “C” Coys.

2030

Coy’s warned to prepare to march home. A flurry was caused by the apparent disappearance of the lanterns to be carried at front and rear of each Coy. The IO. and R.S.M. drove back to Barracks to consult the Q.M. on the whereabouts of these lanterns. The Q.M. told us that the C.O.M.S. of each Coy had them in Coy trucks.

2240

Last Coy marches into Barracks to the great relief of Col. Gregg, who had waited in the barracks strut to check the Coy’s in.

On Parade 714 all ranks

Sick 34 “ “

Total Strength 787 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

4/4/40

0700

Reveille. The men had an extra hour to sleep this morning, after their exertions of yesterday. This morning is a holiday.

1400

Brig. Price and the B.M. met officers at 3 Inf. Bde. in our Officers Mess to discuss the lessons learned from yesterday M.T. movement. The B.Ms. comments showed that the first debussing area chosen by Col. Gregg at Borden was much superior to the one used on the advice of the C.A.S.C. Officers.

On Parade 720 all ranks

Sick 32 “ “

Total Strength 787 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

5/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

0955

This morning “A” Coy put on a demonstration of the pl in attack. “A” pl “attacked” and occupied HAWLEY HILL. The rest of the Bn. witnessed the demonstration. The chief points learned from the exercise were: the need for more speed in recce and advance by assaulting sections, at 0956 the pl scouts emerged from the woods and were fired on from HAWLEY HILL. Not until 1058 did the final rush with bayonets reach the enemy position.

1200

All Officers of 3 Inf Bde met in our Officers Mess to hear lectures by Col. Charrington and Col. Villain Stuart. They discussed problems of defense of tank obstacles. Points brought out by Col. Charrington: 1. Enemy most likely to attack obstacle with Infantry, 2. Sequence of tanks in defensive position (a) make obstacle Tank proof (b) Think about enemy Inf. 3. Always have posts along obstacle at night to stop enemy patrols. 4. M.S. & Arty no longer frame work of defense; now it is tank obstacle & Inf. Arty & M.G. now only helps Inf. 5. We have exaggerated Tank danger. Points brought out by Col. Villien-Stewart: 1. Study how to keep from firing into other posts till other posts are gone. 2. Don’t dig before the most careful planning of your posts position.

S H E E T 2

3. Study methods of making reliefs in the dark, suggest leaving tripods set to guide relieving secs.

1630

Lecture to W.N.A.R. Officers & C.S.Ms. & P.S.Ms. in Gym stresses necessity of dispersion during movement.

Lt. Annaud & Lt. Smith went to “the trenches” with the “Van Doos.”

2230

Five new Officers arrived from Canada. These are: Mjr. Ernst, A. Capt. Bryson, H.M. Capt. Moore, Capt. Clesmott?, Capt. Courtney.

On Parade 719 all ranks

Sick 31 “ “

Total Strength 787 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

6/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1330

A party of nearly 100 of our Bn. went by N.T. to visit Windsor Castle. The party was under command of Mjr. Harris. The trip was arranged by Mr. [illegible].

Lts’ Armand & Smith returned from “trenches.”

On Parade 717 all ranks

Sick 33 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

7/4/40

Church parade as per schedule.

On Parade 687 all ranks

Sick 34 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

8/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule

1015

Col. Gregg called all Officers into Pay Office to welcome the new Officers and to the provisional distribution of officers in the Bn. This provisional dist is as follows:

Bn. HQ

Lt. Col. Gregg, C.O.

Mjr. Ernst, 2 i/e

Capt. Stek[illegible]elin Adj.

Lt. Jenkin, [illegible]O.

Lt. Parker, A/scout O.

HQ Coy.

Capt. Hebb, O.C.

Mjr. Berringer, Q.M.

Lt. Day, Sigs.

“ Spurr, Carrier

“ Beck, T.O.

“ Cochran, Attached

A Coy

Capt. Moore, O.C.

Lt. Miller, 2 i/c

“ Arnaud.

“ Smeltzer, Attached.

B Coy

Mjr. Harris, O.C.

Capt. Clemmett [illegible]

Lt. Smith

“ Perry, attached.

C Coy

Capt. Gemmell, O.D.

Capt. Bryson, 2 i/e

Lt. Johnson

D Coy

Capt. Courtney, O.C.

“ Steadman, 2 i/e

Lt. Creuse

On Parade 721 all ranks.

Sick 39

Total Strength 786

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

9/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1330

The C.O. & I.O. recce areas for the Coys to use in tactical training.

1930 - 2045

Lt. Johnson and Lt. Jenkins went out to the trenches with the R22R. to observe the process of relief and occupation of trenches.

2030

Rehearsals of embussing and debussing in the dark.

On Parade 725 all ranks.

Sick 39

Total Strength 786

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

10/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1945

The Officers of the W.N.S.R. gave a birthday dinner to Lt. Col. Gregg. All Officers were present. Lts. Jenkins & Johnston having been sent back from “the trenches” in a R22R truck for the occasion. The arrangements for the dinner were made by Capt. Cashem who only learned about the plan at 0900 hours. The toast to Col. Gregg was proposed by Capt. Cashem, and Lt. Col. Gregg replied with a short speech. The toast to the W.N.S.R. – ”the future heroes of Canada’s Front Line” was proposed by Capt Stehelin who gave a brief speech. This toast was replied to by Mjr. Ernst, our new 2 i/e. The instrumental music was provided by the WN.S.R. band. The C.O. greatly pleased all present by carrying his birthday cake around and cutting a piece for each Officer, and when the dinner was over, he shook hands with every member of the Orchestra, all the waiters, cooks and stewards. After dinner the Officers returned to the mess lounge where the celebration was continued with songs, jokes and stories. The story receiving the greatest applause was told by Major Harris. He related an incident during the last war when he assisted a farmer’s daughter in France to bring about a liaison between her cow and the neighbor’s bull. Perhaps the most notable feature of the evening was the successful persuasion brought to bear on Mjr. Harris and Mjr. Ernst resulting in the purchase by these officers, of a bottle of whisky. This success created such a president

S H E E T 2

That the Mjrs., Capts. and even Lieuts. Purchased whisky for the celebration.

The C.O. retired about midnight but the celebration did not come to an end till hours later. This was the best evening we have had since coming to England. Not the least enjoyable feature of the evening was the absence of all R22R Officers from the mess--they being in the trenches or otherwise employed up to midnight, thus the W.N.S.R. had the mess to themselves for the first time.

On Parade 730 all ranks

Sick 42 “ “

Total Strength 789 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

11/4/40

0445

Reveille.

0520

Bn marched to Coy assembly areas for an attack on a wooded hill to the west of HORNLEY FRM. Lt. Parker took his snipers and scouts and posted them in the woods on the “objective” to watch and report on the progress of the attack. The I.O. took his “I” sec, to a clump of woods directly in front of the objective. From this point of vantage, both “enemy” and “our tps.” could be watched. Incidentally now of the scouts and snipers observed the I Sec. in this clump of woods. The Coys advanced, making use of cover with various degrees of skill. “C” Coy especially was exposed to “enemy observation” while moving up to their starting point. Much more training in the use of cover for concealment during an attack is needed.

0700

The attack was over and the objective consolidated by 0700 hours. After a brief lecture by the CO to the assembled Bn, we marched back to camp for breakfast.

1300

A program of organized sports was carried out during the afternoon.

1400

Orders were received from Bde for a Bn exercise and M.T. movement by night to be followed by an “attack at dawn.” The Recce Grp. consisting of the C.O Adj. and Scout Officer and one Orderly room clerk (Sgt. [illegible]) proceeded to the vicinity of CAMBERLEY where they met Brig. Price, Col. Beasley and our B.M.

S H E E T 2

1515

An O.Gp. consisting of the 2 i/e, I.O., Sig. D, Coy. Commander’s Pl. comdrs. And their orderlies and guides proceeded to an R.V., where they met the Bde. C?O. who showed them the debussing area (the wrong one as we learned later from the C.O.) and the boundries of the Bn, in the attack (wrong left boundary).

1630

The C.O. gave his orders to Coy Comdrs who then were their recce and gave their orders to this pl. Comdrs. Then everyone recce the area of the exercise. The I?O. and Coy guides taking careful note of the routes to and within the Bn area.

1930

Supper for the Recce and O.Gps.

2150

COs conference with Coy Comdrs, 2 i/c, Adj. Q.M. and I.O. present.

2100

Everybody had a very busy evening preparing for the nights’ exercise. Embussing ordered for 2330 hrs. Bn. H.Q. staff worked feverishly preparing operation orders for the M.T. movement and the attack. The men received a good meal before embussing.

2330

Embussing of trps in C.A.S.C. vehicles began, and head of column began to move away from Barracks area. The “A” eschelon wehicles [sic.] went out one gate and “B” eschelon out the other gate and were the fitted together in their proper places by Major Harris at the corner by Bde. H.Q.

S H E E T 3

2340

The head of the column was on road to FLEET when it was halted owing to delay in embussing trps in C.A.S.C. vehicles.

2350

The Column was ordered to advance and proceeded slowly, crossing the S.P. at exactly 0001 hrs 12 Apr. 40.

On Parade 731 all ranks

Sick 38 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

12/4/40

0001 - 0310

The M.Q col proceeded along route laid down in Bde Order. Details from the R.C.M.P. were at the corners to guide traffic, the only halt occurred coming away from Workingham at the blindest corner in the whole route, there was no man from the R.C.M.P. to direct traffic. Fortunately the I.O. and T.O. in the leading car were following the progress of the column by a marked map. They noted that the corner had been missed, and halted the column to call in the DRs and direct them to take the next turn left, thus bringing the convoy back on the correct route with only a short delay. The ration trucks and a few “A” eschelon vehicles, led by the Bde T.O. got lost and didn’t reach their objective till 0500 hrs.

0310 - 0332

Debussing. As each C.O.S.C. vehicle was unloaded, it moved away, then the Coys marched into their assembly areas, each Coy accompanied by its own “A” eschelon vehicles.

0430

Coys in assembly position and Bn. HO. set up. The last minute details of preparation for the attack occupied the rest of the time. The Z? At 0555 the I sec established an O.P. overlooking the line of Adr and the objective.

0615

ZERO

0630

Rain began to fall.

0820

The battle was “called” because the rain and the slowness of the advance. The leading Coys never reached their first objective.

S H E E T 2

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

12/4/40

Breakfast was served by the QM and his staff. After breakfast, the Coys marched to barracks, the last Coy arriving at 1100 hrs.

1300

Half holiday.

2000

The Sgts of W.N.S.R. and R.22R held their usual bi-monthly dance in mess hall. A number of Officers from both Regts were present.

On Parade 736 all ranks.

Sick 35 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

13/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1000

Capt. Ogubnik returns to us as our M.O.

1045

All training cancelled for the day to allow officers and WOs to attend meeting in our Officers Mess for the discussion of lessons learned during exercise of 11/12 Apr. Mjr. Faulkes reviewed the purpose and plan of the exercise giving the narrative which led up to the morning attack on the 12th Brig. Price made the following comments: 1. [illegible] Embussing and debussing discipline excellent. Lights on vehicles too bright. 2. Pace of errors from debussing to assembly points too fast. Trucks and carrier should move to assembly areas without lights. 3. One Coy. overshot its mark at assembly area–need sentry posted. 4. Need sentries to prevent men straying in front of starting line. 5. Security - Sentries should always be posted to prevent surprises. 6. Too free use of flood lights? Strict discipline re smoking. Attack: 1. Chief need was for information sent back. 2. Be specific in information. Send exact positions. 3. Most verbal messages sent were completely unintelligable [sic.]. 4. Some loss of direction - gp left on left flank of Bn. 5. “A” Coy in trenches was crowded. 6. “B” Coy moved up too close to S.L. 7. Sec comdrs on fire control & fire discipline was bad. 8. Lack of pl. Comdrs. Making plans when held up. 9. Lack of [illegible]. 10. In [illegible] to stop at every enemy rifle shot should get ahead

S H E E T 2

As far as possible. 11. Secs in plc tendency to deploy with li?s before necessary. 12 Move across starting line was good. 13. Control in assembly was good. 14. S.B. did not know where R.A.P. was. 15. Men need to know bugle calls.

Mjr. Faulkes: 1. Avoid jack rabbit attack, keep men going till held up by fire. 2. “Movement with fire” instead of “fire with movement.” 3. Infiltration should be stressed. 4. Initiation in junior leaders needed. 5. Messages not good. 6. Negative information as important as positive info. 7. Coy comdrs should have runner who can write messages. 8. Flashlights should not be made use of only by Officers & P.S.Ms. 9. Cover flash light with blue paper. 10. Big improvement in embussing and debussing. 1. Suggest NO whistle or Sig for embussing and debussing. 12. Twenty-two minutes for debussing and getting C.A.S.C. trucks clear. 13. Local protection important, e.g. against parachute tps. 14. Fire order must be used.

Discussion of questions.

1300

A party of nearly 100 men paraded for a trip to Oxford to visit the University and other points of interest in the city. This trip was planned & directed by Mr. Van Dalwis?s and Mjr. Harris. The same as the trip last Saturday.

The I.O. was detailed to guide the convoy of M.T. This party was delayed in starting owing to the discovery that two WNSR trucks were not in running condition, a Bde truck claimed to appear on the scene & was “commandeered” by Mjr. Berringer and Mjr. Ernst. The capture of this Bde truck had an interesting sequel: Bde ordered the WNSR to supply a truck for this use; this WNSR truck was struck by a carrier while being used by Bde Consequently, neither Bde nor the WNSR were in a position to just up a kick about the use of their respective trucks.

We finally started about 1330 hr and reached Orford at 1545 hrs. We were divided into three separate parties and each party was guided on a sight seeing tour of Oxford University. During our tour of the University, one group encountered a party of ATS who were also seeing the University. There was a brief and decisive action on the lawn, the hero of the skirmish being Lt. Johnston. Then we went to the Town Hall where tea was served to the men. The Officers, with the exception of Mjr. Harris, Mjr. Ernst and Mjr Berringer, visited the home of Col. Jourdani?e where they were given tea and a view of the Colonel’s magnificent collection of medals won by personnel of his old Regt.

2000

The party left OXFORD before dark leaving one car load of Officers to attend the dances in the Town Hall.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

15/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

Pay day.

Some of the personnel of HQ Coy proceeded to Long Siberia range, Bisley, for some additional rifle and Bren shooting. Two sniper rifles (P14) arrived. Lt Parker is delighted with them.

On Parade 733 all ranks

Sick 34 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

16/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

1450

Light snow falling.

1855

Heavy rain, hail and snow.

Lt Parker begins to train his snipers on the Long Siberia Range, Bisley.

0730

More details go to Range for additional shooting practice.

On Parade 730 all ranks

Sick 32 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

17/4/40

0730

More details taken to Long Siberia range for additional shooting practice, rifle and Bren gun.

1500

The Officers attended a meeting of 1 Cdn. Inf. Div Officers in Garrison Theatre, and were addressed by Gen. Ironsides. He promised that we should soon receive our full equipment. He believes the critical phase of the War is at hand.

2230

Considerable stir in Camp as reports reach us that 2nd Bde. men were called out of movies, theatres, etc, to report to Barracks. We suspect that some change in our routine is afoot. When we learned that our 3” mortars are called in by Bde, we wonder what is up.

On Parade 736 all ranks

Sick 28 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

18/4/40

0730

More details go to the range.

0800

Training as per schedule.

1000

Lt Parker had to turn his snipers rifles in to 3 Bde for issue to 2 Bde.

1200

Col Leach of the Med Arty, addressed the Officers of 3 Bde in our Officers Mess. His topic was the organization and the employment of the Arty.

1600

COs conference in lecture hut. Next week’s program discussed.

1745

The Officers of WNSR gave a cocktail party to Lt. Crouse

And presented him with a table set. Lt. Crouse is the first matrimonial casualty among the Officers since coming to England.

2000

Reports reach us that 2 Bde has moved away and are believed to be heading for Norway.

On Parade 740 all ranks

Sick 27 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

19/4/40

0800

Training as per schedule.

Lt Parker supervised the zeroing of rifles for the Bn. He uses some of his snipers as marksmen. The Coy carried out a sniper scheme in the training area back of the Barracks. The scheme was to give practice in controlled dispersion and fire orders.

1100

Lt Crowe was married to Miss Helen Isabel Findlay, [lots?] of the WAAF in the Farnborough Parish Church. Lt Col Bullock performed the ceremony. Guests at the wedding were: the bride’s mother, Mrs. Gregg, Major Harris, Capt Stekelin, Capt Cashen, Major Burgoyne, Capt Elliott & Sgt Colbran. The best man: Capt. Steadman. Bridesmaid: Jean Craven of the WAAF

1315

Inspection by the CO and training as per schedule.

On Parade 743 all ranks

Sick 25 “ “

Total Strength 788 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

20/4/40

0815

Inspection by CO

1045

Conference of officers and WOs in gym. Subject: The occupation of trenches. The I Sec spent the morning [illegible] the routes to HANGMOOR RANGE and ALDERSHOT and PIRISRIGHT [sic. PIRBRIGHT?] TRENCHES.

1200

All leaves for this weekend cancelled by Bde order.

1215

A large party proceeded in a visit to WINCHESTER.

1345

Voluntary sports parade.

On Parade 742 all ranks

Sick 24 “ “

Total Strength 787 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

21/4/40

Church Parades as per order.

The IO and Scout Officers accompanied the Bde IC to HQ 1? Cnd. Div where Capt Malim, GSOs, told us to turn on the heat on our Officers to make them more security (text illegible).

Some heads will fall. This statement was very helpful to us. Then Capt. Mathers and Capt. Armstrong told us about the Div school for snipers which is to start on 29 Apr. 40. We were told that IOs must become trained snipers but that the ideal arrangement is to have a separate Scout Officer to take charge of sniping and scouting. The WNSR now has this arrangement though it is not yet officially sanctioned. “B” and “D” Coys occupied the practice trenches tonight. Advance parties reached RV at 1730 hrs. At 1940 hrs and 1945 hrs, “B” and “D” Coys started their march to the trenches. Reliefs were completed at 2250 hrs (B Coy) and 2311 hrs (D Coy). By midnight Bn HQ was organized, with communications and defenses set up. The Sigs had to return to Barracks, and the I. Sec. took their places at the telephones.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

22/4/40

0815

Parade.

“B” & “D” Coys stayed in the trenches till relieved by the Sects Guard at 2300 hrs. The “battle” was interrupted by an armistice, which lasted from 0900 hrs till 1700 hrs. During this armistice the troops rested till noon, then after dinner they worked at improving and cleaning the trenches. Hostilities appeared with renewed vigor at 1700 hrs. The most notable incidents during the day were, first, the capture of a “B” Coy Officer by a patrol from “D” Coy at 0345 hr, and second, the unofficial battle in “No Man’s Land” at 2000 hrs, which took place in a dense cloud of scouts emanating from “D” Coy’s trenches. At 2300 hrs the Coys embussed and returned to Barracks without incident except for a short delay in starting the Truce? Two pls of “A” Coy proceeded to HANGMOOR RANGE to practice fire and movement.

On Parade 733 all ranks

Sick 25 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

23/4/40

1000

The first big event of this day was the inspection of our Bn by the Hon Norman McLeod Rogers, Canada’s Minister of National Defense. After the inspection, Lt Col Gregg dictated a brief speech to be broadcast over the BBC. His speech was as follows: Just at this moment the Hon. Norman Rogers, Canadian Minister of National Defense, has completed an inspection of the West Nova Scotia Regt. He was pleased to say that he was greatly pleased with their appearance. On my own part, I wish to say to the mothers and fathers in Nova Scotia that your boys just put on a great show today. They are all feeling cheerful and they will give an excellent account of themselves whatever they may be called upon to do. I know that I am expressing the feeling of all ranks in my Regt. in sending to all of you in Nova Scotia our best wishes.”

1315

All officers, WOs and NCOs preceded by MT to Hangmoor Range to witness a field firing demonstration put on by two pls of “A” Coy.

1930

A dinner in honor of the Hon. Norman Rogers was given by the officers of the WNSR. The CO of the R22R and several senior officers from 1 Div and 2 Div were guests.

2138

Lt Col Gregg proposed a toast “to Canada and Norman Rogers.”

2141

In a nine-minute speech, Rogers first thanked Gen McNaughton for permitting him to see the WNSR. Then he drew a picture of the harmonious blending of races in Nova Scotia. He said “we are but a link in a chain of history—linking those before and those who will someday take our places.” Referring to the CO of the R22R, he mentioned having attended a dinner in London with that unit “where the spirits of Wolfe and Montcalm were present.” He said that “many things we fight for today are the same as in 1914-18.” “That spark of freedom symbolized by the name ‘Canada’.” “We were built on freedom and can only survive in freedom.” “We must strive for a world in which we may be free from fear. We cannot build anything permanent on fear or hatred—only on confidence.” He declared that 1 Can Inf Div has “established an unchallenged place in the affections of the English people.” “This is the proudest day of my life.” He finished by congratulating Col Gregg and his officers and Gen McNaughton on their work in the WNSR and 1 Div.

On Parade 738 all ranks

Sick 26 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

24 Apr 40

1600

Speech by Brig JAH Gammell, 4 Corps, BEF at Garrison Theatre. Brig Gammell described the work and life of a British Bde in the line in France. He commented on the excellent performance of MT during the severe winter weather.

On Parade 739 all ranks

Sick 25 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

25 Apr 40

0930

“B” Coy proceeded from camp to take up a defensive position near HAWLEY HILL. “A” Coy marched out to “attack” “B” Coy, but were delayed in starting so much that the attack was a washout.

1315

From the Bn parade ground the Bn marched to the Sports Field where the final Coy competitions were held. “HQ” Coy won the competition. Brig Price visited the sports. The spectacle of the afternoon was the 100 yd dash run by our CO and several officers. Lt Perry won this race.

1430

The officers proceeded to Laftan’s Plains, where a demonstration of bridging was put on by the RE. The eventful happening of the day was when an officer and a sjt attempted to demonstrate the crossing of the bridge on motorcycles. They were fished out of the Canal, not because the bridge was unsafe, but because the MCs took too much room!

1615

Lecture by the IO on German tactics in the Attack. All WOs and NCOs attended.

On Parade 736 all ranks

Sick 26 “ “

Total Strength 786 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

26 Apr 40

1730

“A” and “C” Coys took over the trenches from the Scots Guards at 2200. Advance parties reached their RV at 1730 hrs. The Coys marched from barracks to the trenches. The only casualty occurred at midnight, when PSM Schaffner, “C” Coy, was injured by a blank fired by one of his own men. He was returning to his own trench and failed to give the password on being challenged by the sentry. The wadding of the shell lodged in his chest. He was immediately taken to hospital.

On Parade 736 all ranks

Sick 29 “ “

Total Strength 785 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

27 Apr 40

1000

Lt HF Parker and Lt HP Jenkins and some other ranks proceeded to Aldershot to attend a snipers’ school at Maida Barracks. This school is being run for 1 Cdn Inf Div, and the instructors are all from 1 Div. Lt HF Parker is instructor in shooting and sniping, but the IO declared that Parker would never make a sniper of him.

1700

In the Aldershot and Pirbright trenches the daily armistice ended at 1700 hrs, when a very light signalled the beginning of the mighty battle. At 2200 hrs the real battle took place when the Coys were ordered to shoot “all the fireworks.” It was an ideal night for an attack as the air was heavy and smoke hung heavily for a long time over no man’s land.

1315

For the second time a party went from the Bn on a tour of Windsor Castle. After photographing the deer in the Park, the party went to the Castle, where guides escorted them to St. George’s Memorial Church, where they heard the great pipe organ. Then the party saw the grounds and outside of the state apartments, finally climbing the Round Tower of William I.

On Parade 732 all ranks

Sick 30 “ “

Total Strength 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

28 Apr 40

0945

Church parades.

“A” and “C” Coys were given the day off in order to rest after their hard fighting in the trenches.

On Parade 732 all ranks

Sick 27 “ “

Total Strength 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

29 Apr 40

0800

The I. Sect of this Bn buffered a severe loss when Sgt Colbron was transferred to Bde HQ.

0815

The final results of the Regimental sports were posted this morning, showing “A” Coy as 1st, “B” Coy as 2nd, “C” Coy as 3rd, “HQ” Coy as 4th. We are now ready to enter the Bde competition.

0830

WOs and Pl? Comdrs paraded to Hawley Pond to attend a demonstration on bridge building under the instruction of an RE Sjt.

2230

“A” Coy, under cover of darkness, built a Kapoc bridge 85 ft long, then took the Coy across in 19 min. As each pl crossed the bridge, they took up positions to protect the ones crossing

On Parade 724 all ranks

Sick 30 “ “

Total Strength 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

30 Apr 40

0815

Training of the whole Bn consisted of arm and gas drills. Respirators were checked for size and damage, and the men went through the gas chamber.

On Parade 717 all ranks

Sick 30 “ “

Total Strength 783 “ “