WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

1 May 40

0815

Training as per schedule.

1315

The Bn paraded to the sports field and each company carried on with organized sports.

On Parade 717 all ranks

Sick 31

Total Strength 783

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

2 May 40

0815

Training as per schedule.

On Parade 716 all ranks

Sick 31

Total Strength 783

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

3 May 40

0815

Training as per schedule.

On Parade 715 all ranks

Sick 31

Total Strength 783

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

4 May 40

0900

Clothing parade for Bn HQ. The rest of the Bn carried on with training

1230

The weekly sightseeing tour went to SOUTHAMPTON today. The visiting troops were greeted at the Civic Centre by the Mayor and at least a thousand people of Southampton. During the ceremony of welcome, the city police band played several selections outside the building. The party then entered the great Guild Hall and were guests of the Mayor at an afternoon tea. The Mayor and several Councillors made speeches of welcome, which were responded to by Major Ernst. The party was then shown over the beautiful Civic Centre buildings, which were built at a cost of $4,000,000. They visited the art galleries, library, law courts and the offices of the city employees. After this, the Rotarians took groups of 15 and visited various points of historical interest, including the Bar Gate, parts of the old town wall, St. Christopher’s Church, built in 856 A.D., and Tudor House Museum, which contained relics of the Stone Age presumed to be 5,000 years old and dug up in the vicinity of Southampton. They were also presented by the Curator with small pieces of Roman pottery dating back 1100 to 1400 years. These were dug up from a Roman camp within two miles of the city. The tour ended with a very enjoyable sing song on the steps of the Civic Building.

On Parade 699 all ranks

Sick 29 “ “

Strength, Total 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

5 May 40

0945

Church parade at St. Christopher’s Church, Cove.

On Parade 659 all ranks.

Sick 29 “ “

Total Strength 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

6 May 40

0945

The officers and PSMs went out to recce an area for a scheme of a Bn in retirement, the scheme to take place tonight.

2015

The Bn left barracks, the Coys going to their RV for the retirement and the Coy Comdrs going to their respective Coy HQs.

2045

The Coys left their RVs for their positions, and by 2100 hrs they were all in their respective positions. After each Coy had occupied its position, it marched back to barracks. The men were given hot tea before going to bed.

On Parade 636 all ranks

Sick 28 “ “

Total Strength 784 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

7 May 40

0815

Bn parade. Coys then carried on with regular training as per schedule.

1100

Parties went out to make a recce of the route to be followed in the Bde scheme for the following days.

On Parade 602 all ranks

On Leave 117 “ “

Sick 33 “ “

Total Strength 781 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

8 May 40

0900

Today the large Bde scheme began. The COO and Adj left for the CROWTHORN trenches, our first position, at 0900 hrs.

1045

The Coy guides left barracks.

1235

The rest of the Bn left barracks and proceeded to their positions in the trenches.

1545

All positions occupied.

On Parade 589 all ranks

On Leave 129 “ “

Sick 35 “ “

Total Strength 781 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

9 May 40

0745

The 2 i/c and guides left barracks for the Fleet Trenches.

1115

The Brig met the 2 i/c at Pondtail Bridge to give further orders and instructions.

On Parade 589 all ranks.

On Leave 129 “ “

Sick 35 “ “

Total Strength 781 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

10 May 40

0600

The “Cease Fire” was sounded, and the troops embussed and returned to the barracks.

1500

The IO was called back from the Snipers’ School in order to assist the Adj during the present emergency connected with the alarm and precautions to be taken against an invasion of this country by the Germans.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

12 May 40

The seven ORs from this Bn returned from the Div Snipers’ School, after a very successful course. The WNSR delegation did exceptionally well in all phases of the course. L/Cpl Embry, F.A., of “A” Coy, led the staff for his marksmanship. Lt HPB Jenkins was a close second, and L/Cpl Shaw, J.M. of “B” Coy, placed 3rd and Pte. Zwicker, G.E. of “D” Coy placed 7th. Other WNSR members of the team at the school also did well. L/Cpl Toole, H.E. of “A” Coy, was outstanding in scouting and stalking.

On Parade 652 all ranks

On Leave 79 “ “

Sick 33 “ “

Total Strength 785 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

13 May 40

1400

Our Bn went to the Bde sports finals at Delville Sports Grounds and defeated all other units of 3 Bde. They are now ready to enter the Div meet.

Owing to the danger of parachute troops making a landing here, each Bn has to detail a Stand to Company, which will be on trucks and fully armed during the hours of dusk at night and morning. “B” Coy was the first Coy to perform this duty in our Bn. They went on this duty at 2130 today.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

14 May 40

0800

The Bn spent the day practicing Woods Fighting.

On Parade 733 all ranks

On Leave 1 “ “

Sick 32 “ “

Total Strength 782 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

15 May 40

0800

General training by Coys.

On Parade 731 all ranks

Sick 33 “ “

Total Strength 781 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

16 May 40

0800

General training by Coys.

1415

The CoO and other members of the R Gp proceeded to the vicinity of Norris Bridge to make a recce for a night attack.

2330

The troops embussed and proceeded to Chestnut Copse, where they rested till the time to march to assembly areas.

On Parade 714 all ranks

Sick 29 “ “

Total Strength 764 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

17 May 40

0145

The Coys arrived at their assembly areas after marching from Chestnut Copse.

0330

The Bn “attacked” three objectives in the dark.

0500

On the completion of the exercise, the troops marched by Coys back to barracks.

1600

The Brig called the officers and PSMs of the Bn to a meeting in our officers’ mess and bawled us out in no uncertain terms for the mess we had made of our night fighting. He said that this Bn had slipped back in training and discipline and leadership during recent weeks, and that we were definitely not fit to meet the Hun as we are now.

On Parade 713 all ranks.

Sick 30 “ “

Total Strength 764 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

18 May 40

0800

Nothing of importance except the weekly inspections of the Coys by the 2 i/c.

On Parade 712 all ranks

Sick 25 “ “

Total Strength 757 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

19 May 40

Church parades.

On Parade 711 all ranks

Sick 24 “ “

Total Strength 756 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

20 May 40

0800

Training by Coys.

1330

The R Gp proceeded to vicinity of ELSTEAD where they met the BM to receive orders for and make a recce for an exercise of Bn in defense.

1530

Our O Gp proceeded to ELSTEAD.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

21 May 40

0500

Our F Gp arrived at their assembly areas in woods near ELSTEAD. During the morning the carrier pl of the C & Y Regt blundered into our area and were all captured, along with their officer, Lt Witty.

After an afternoon of resting and sleeping, the troops spent the night digging and wiring their positions. During the night the C & Y organized a raiding party under Lt Clark to recapture their carriers. This raiding party entered our Bn HQ position by a roundabout route which was out of bounds and in the ensuing fight Lt Clark received an injury to his eyes from a round of blank ammunition.

On Parade 713 all ranks

Sick 24 “ “

Total Strength 756 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

22 May 40

0900

The troops arrived back in barracks sooner than planned, because of the heavy rain that fell during the early morning.

This afternoon we received a draft of reinforcement from Canada. Most of them detrained at Farnborough North station and were met by the WNSR band and marched up to our barracks. The remainder came to Government Siding, Aldershot, and were brought here in trucks.

On Parade 713 all ranks

Sick 24 “ “

Total Strength 756 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

23 May 40

0800

Training by Coys.

On Parade 711 all ranks

Sick 21 “ “

New Reinforcements 167 “ “

Total Strength 922 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

24 May 40

0800

Training by Coys.

On Parade 703 all ranks

Sick 22 “ “

New Reinforcements 165 “ “

Total Strength 918 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

25 May 40

0900

The IO went with the Bde TO to make a recce of Route B of the J. C. Plan. The rest of the Bn spent the day making preparations for a MT move.

On Parade 708 all ranks

Sick 19 “ “

New Reinforcements 165 “ “

Total Strength 918 “ “

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

26 May 40

0400

Reveille.

0607

The MT move out of the barracks streets to take up their positions on the MINLEY ROAD in readiness for the troops who will march to the embussing point.

0737

The convoy moves out and takes the long road to WARMINSTER CAMP.

WINCHESTER CAMP

1232

The convoy reached its destination without any trouble. Going through ANDOVER we met 2 Cdn Inf Bde and commented unfavourably on the organization and spacing of their MT.

1400

The remainder of the day was spent in making recess by the RG and in settling down in Camp by the rest of the Bn.

WESTMINSTER CAMP

27 May 40

0930

The Bn marched out and occupied a reserve position on the plains.

2100

During the night “A” and “B” Coys went forward to dig for the R22eR which was occupying one of the forward positions. Both coys got lost and wandered around for over an hour before finding their correct digging positions.

WESTMINSTER CAMP

28 May 40

0500

“B” Coy sent a wiring party to the R22eR.

The rest of the morning and the afternoon was spent in resting. The I Sec worked all day correcting the enlargement of the map.

1800

Orders were received to move the Bde back to COVE. Most of the Bn spent the evening in packing up and getting ready to move. “C” Coy went on a digging job early in the evening. Mr. Parker and his scouts practised their gentle art, finishing up by marching back to WARMINSTER CAMP by compass across country.

WARMINSTER CAMP

29 May 40

0300

The Pl trucks came out to the Bn and loaded p1 stores.

0400

The Coys marched independently back to camp, to prepare for the trip back to GUILLEMONT.

0930

The Bn moved back to Guillemont Barracks by the same route and in the same order as for the outward journey.

1425

Arrived at Gullemont.

1440

All troops debussed.

The troops were paid as soon as they debussed.

1800

The evening was spent in preparing for another MT move—this time on “Active Service.” The real “War Diary” of this Bn is about to begin.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

30 May 40

0800

Today was spent in packing up and getting ready to move. An Adv Party, under Major Harris and Lt Parker proceeded to NORTHAMPTON to select billets.

GUILLEMONT BARRACKS

31 May 40

Another day spent in last minute preparations for an MT move.

The IO spent the day on a Bde road recce to NORTHAMPTON

2130

All troops in the busses and the MT of “Z Gp” lined up in the woods with the head of the column just inside the gate on the MINLEY ROAD.

2240

After the R22eR and the HQ details of 3 Bde had moved past our starting point, the 2 i/c signalled the convoy to start, and the West Nova Scotia Regiment began its trek to intervene in the Second Great War.

ROAD TO NORTHAMPTON

31 May 40

2317

We passed the Bde SP a few minutes late, owing to the lateness of 3 Bde HQ.

On Parade 706 all ranks.

Sick 20 “ “

Reinforcements 167 “ “

Total Strength 916 “ “