WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

LOWER KIDNEY WOOD[, BEDFORDSHIRE]

1 Oct 41

0335

Bn arrived in LOWER KIDNEY WOOD after being diverted from original intended area at GREAT OFFLEY and took up position of defence to protect LUTON from the SOUTH.

0815

Lieut Higgins our IO arrived from BDE with orders for us to move to NORTH of LUTON and take up position from WARDOWN PARK to ROUND GREEN.

SITREP: “[Carleton] & York R in area BISCOTT to NORTH WEST of LUTON having had to withdraw from BARTON-in-the-CLAY. R22eR cut off at HITCHIN and unable to get back. Heavy enemy attack coming from NORTH between BARTON CLAY and HITCHIN. Believe to be in strength about 4 Divs. The 43 Div have been identified in vicinity of HEXTON. 54 Div have been identified in and around DEACON HILL. 2 Div identified about PINCHES CROSS. 6 armoured Div believed to be in area around UPPER STONDON.”

0900

Our Bn crossed SP for new area. Arrived new area 1030 hrs and set up defence between WARDEN PARK and ROUND GREEN

1100

Bde IO brought orders for us to “slide slip” our right flank around EASTERN side of LUTON and contact Hastings & PE Regt in area NEW TOWN. A Coy plus 2 sections of Carriers ordered for this job.

1240

A Coy reports having contacted enemy at bridge over CANAL at 548399. Bridge has been blown casualties 4 Carriers.

1245

2 prisoners brought in from C Coy from 56 A/Tk. Papers on prisoners show 62 Bty A/Tk at LILLY, 56 A/Tk Bty at KING WALDON HQ at WHITEHALL FARM 618427. 2 or 3 Bty’s at St. PAUL WALDON in a wood. Notified our FOO and sent info on to Bde.

C Coy report large number of enemy seen advancing over WARDEN HILL in general direction of LUTON. B Coy reports having contacted Carlt & York R on our left flank.

1330

One Coy Sask L I reports to Bn HQ to come under command and were immediately dispatched to our right flank BRAMBRIDGE - SLAUGHTER WOOD to lay down infilaid [sic. enfilade] fire across our front between our posn and WARDEN HILL.

1450

At 1500 hrs 1 Cdn Inf Bde is going to attack from the WEST across their front on our left and we are to hold our posn to the last man. Seaforth of C will relieve Carlt & York R who will take up posn line LILLE - GREAT OFFLEY.

1500

C Coy reports quite an amount of patrol activity on their front. Patrols about the strength of pls.

1530

C Coy report having captured 1 carrier, 1 armoured car, 2 M/C’s and nine prisoners from Recce Corps 4 Dorsets, 117 Bty RA. A Coy have also captured 1 15 cwt truck with eight prisoners from 217 Bty RA, 4 Bn Dorsets Regt. and Recce Corps.

1610

Activity on our front in direction of WARDEN HILL seems to be increasing.

1630

3 prisoners stumbled into Bde HQ. They were from the Recce Corps and attached to the London Scottish. They were doing a Recce in Luton and encountered some of our tps Activity increasing in direction of C Coy and STOPPLEY COMMON. Attack seems imminent

1715

Warning Order from Bde to be ready to move at 1745 hrs in direction of HITCHIN and take up posn at LITTLE WYMONDLEY and contact R22eR who are in HITCHIN.

1830

SITREP: R22eR are at HITCHIN with no serious enemy opposition. Carlt & York R moving from LUTON to GREAT OFFLEY and are encountering enemy in unknown strength in vicinity of LILLE. West NSR ready to move from LUTON area. Seaforth of C have reached GALLEY HILL and report enemy action from NORTH. 2 Bde passing through LUTON at 1830 hrs.

2000

Bn crossed SP at ROUND GREEN

2300

Bn encountered heavy rifle fire at 597455.

2330

Middle of coin fired cn by apparently small numbers of the enemy. A Capt and 5 ORs have been taken prisoner by A Coy.

2 Oct 41

0300

Bn arrives at Xrd 566419.

0630

Our Bn have taken up posn along line of road from SLAUGHTER WOOD to WIGMORE HALL. Have not as yet contacted Units on flanks

0830

Word comes through that we might expect a heavy attack from the SOUTH.

0950

LO from Bde reports that all rds leading from LUTON have been bombed.

1000

Engaged enemy vicinity WINCHELL WOOD and WINCHELL FARM Attack proceeding according to schedule aided by supporting Arty fire from 92 Bty.

1030

LO reports from Bde that we are to advance and capture a point just NE of KINDS WALDEN and hook up with Carlt & York R who are in GREAT OFFLEY. Simultaneously the 2 Bde of our Div on our left flank and 1 Bde on our right will be pushing in their attack.

1055

C Coy report enemy on our left flank. Carriers sent up to investigate.

1100

53 walking wounded just evacuated, also 13 stretcher cases.

1140

CO calls conf of Coy Cmdrs.

1220

Bn HQ closes and Bn moves in following order: A Bn HQ C B D and HQ.

1340

A Coy runs into enemy fire at KINGS WALDON.

1530

After vicious battle with superior enemy numbers, the Bn less 100 tps withdraw as casualties to LILLE. It is understood from Umpires that we also inflicted heavy losses to enemy, but at last were overcome by sheer force of numbers.

1700

Arrived at LILLE and put up for the night. In the meantime the 100 tps who were left at KINGS WALDEN were putting up a wonderful scrap.

2030

B echelon arrived and a well deserved hot meal was served and everyone turned in for the night.

3 Oct 41

0630

Exercise “Bumper” concluded. Strength Return Officers 36 ORs 748.

4 Oct 41

0200

Bn cross Bde start line for return trip to BIGGIN HILL.

0500

After a 3 hr halt Bn proceeds to area at BIGGIN HILL.

1430

Convoy arrives at HOLWOOD PARK. Balance of day spent in getting settled down and gathering up loose ends after exercise “BUMPER”

5 Oct 41

0900

No Church parades today. Bn resting up after exercise “BUMPER.”

6 Oct 41

0800

In view of the appreciation, admiration and pride which is felt for the splendid effort of all ranks under his command, Brigadier Ganong has decreed that, with the exception of essential guards and duties, today shall be observed as a holiday by Units of 3 Cdn Inf Bde.

7 Oct 41

0800

General routine and training as per syllabus.

1600

Brig Ganong visited this HQ and conferred with Lt-Col Ernst.

1930

Concert party at the YMCA. This concert was exceptionally good and much appreciated by the boys.

8 Oct 41

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1130

Brigadiers conference at the Drill Hall, Caterham, when officers of this Unit were highly complimented for their part played in recent exercise “BUMPER.” It was quite evident from the Brigadier’s remarks that Units in this Bde were outstanding and were highly spoken of by the various umpires for good work done in the above exercise.

1430

COs conference for Coy cmndrs. Remarks on training and a resume of the Brig conference earlier in the day were the main features.

1900

Movies at the YMCA.

9 Oct 41

0800

Training as per syllabus. This was altogether a very quiet day. Just the usual routine with no “visitors.”

BIGGIN HILL

10 Oct 41

0830

Coys carry on as per syllabus.

1600

COs conference for Coy Cmndrs re next week’s training and various regimental activities, also a discussion re privilege leaves and forthcoming move. Lieut Reardon, Signal Officer, and two men visited 52 Bn Kent Home Guard and endeavoured to enlighten them on the “hidden mysteries” of modern signalling as evidence by letter.

2000

Dance at Keston Hall with West NSR orchestra in attendance.

STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 36 Other Ranks 742.

BIGGIN HILL

11 Oct 41

0830

Training as per syllabus. Bn HQ went on route march 8 miles.

0900

Lieut Higgins left for REIGATE to attend lecture given by Sir Malcolm Campbell on his famous “BLUEBIRD”. Speed on land and water was Sir Malcolm’s subject which lasted 2 ½ hrs. The lecture was illustrated with slides and was intensely interesting.

0930

CO inspected HQ Coy while at the same hour Maj Bryson, 2 i/c, inspected A Coy. Nothing of further import today.

BIGGIN HILL

12 Oct 41

0900

RC Church parade at YMCA Hut.

1000

Protestant parade at the Cricket Pitch with band in attendance.

1400

Pte Langley, JD left for Borden today where he will undergo a course in sniping.

BIGGIN HILL

13 Oct 41

0830

Training as per syllabus.

0930

Lt-Col Ernst accompanied by Lieut Higgins joined Lady Stanley at breakfast this morning where they met and chatted with Capt de Stafford, Minister of Information.

1500

Football practice at Bde sports grounds.

1900

Movies at YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

14 Sep 41

0830

All Coys of this Unit went on route march today. 18 miles.

1030

Lieut Higgins visited Bde and discussed coming exercise “Scout.”

1400

Lieut Higgins attended conference for IOs of all Units in this Bde.

1600

Brig Ganong visited the Unit this afternoon and conferred with Lt-Col Ernst.

2000

Concert party at the YMCA. This was put on by the RCA and was exceptionally good.

BIGGIN HILL

15 Oct 41

0830

Training as per syllabus.

1000

Pay parade HQ Coy. Let-Col Ernst left for Hythe where he witnessed an assault demonstration. The Brigadier also went along.

1330

Pay parade Bn HQ.

1500

A rugby team made up of the personnel of 3 Cdn Inf Bde, locked horns with the London Irish in a hotly contested game of rugby. The final score being 8 - 3 in favour of the Irish.

1800

Movies at the YMCA. This was a double header. After the movies a Concert party “took over” and they were well received by the soldier audience.

BIGGIN HILL

16 Oct 41

0830

Training as per syllabus.

1000

Lecture by Maj Heb, Capt Miller and technical Sgt Ramey were more or less severely injured this afternoon when Capt Miller attempted to demonstrate a new type grenade which failed to explode. They were in the process of demolishing this grenade with an incendiary bomb when it unexpectedly exploded causing the loss of three toes on Capt Milller’s foot and severely cutting Sgt Ramey about the face. First aid was obtained at the RAP, later they were removed to hospital.

1900

Concert party at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

17 Oct 41

0600

Scouts, Snipers and “I” section with Lieut Higgins left for HANGING HILL where they took part in an exercise together with other Units of 1, 2, and 3 Bde’s. This exercise is to be one of observing, scouting and sniping.

1830

The above personnel returned to billets after a rather hard and tedious day.

1300

Major Harris returned to Canada today.

2000

Dance at Keston Hall with West NSR orchestra in attendance.

STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 35 Other Ranks 742

BIGGIN HILL

18 Oct 41

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1015

COs inspection C and D Coys.

1130

COs inspection HQ and B Coy.

2100

Lieut Higgins goes “La Conga” in DORKING tonight, and during the “rush,” “bumped” into no less a person than Leslie Howard, famous English film star.

BIGGIN HILL

19 Oct 41

0810

RC Church parade at YMCA.

1000

C of E parade held on the cricket pitch. Major Courtney busy lining up personnel for rifle practice at ASH RANGE tomorrow.

BIGGIN HILL

20 Oct 41

0600

335 of the personnel of this Regiment proceeded to ASH RANGE for rifle practice. Personnel was made up of those who failed to classify in the last practice. Major Courtney will be i/c party.

0800

Lieut Higgins, Bn IO, together with NCOs of “I” section proceeded to Ditto attend demonstrations of fieldcraft, stalking and concealment. This demonstration was put on by Maj. Armstrong.

1900

Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

21 Oct 41

0800

Training as per syllabus.

0900

31 picked personnel from all Coys paraded before Lt-Col Ernst. From these 31 men, 21 were selected by the CO. These men will form a special pl and will undergo a period of intensive training in assault work. The CO has selected Lieut Bent to command this Pl.

1900

Bingo at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

22 Oct 41

0830

Route march for Bn this morning. 18 miles.

1100

Capt CE de Pencier from 3 Fd Regt RCA has been attached to this Regiment. Capt Johnston proceeded to 3 Cnd Fd Regt. This is an exchange of officers who will familiarize themselves with various duties of these regiments.

2000

Officers mess meeting. Plans made for dance to be held in their quarters this coming Saturday. Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

23 Oct 41

0800

Training as per syllabus.

0930

OCs conference Coy comdrs arranging training syllabus for coming scheme, preparations and arranging lining up of route which will be used by the Queen when she presents the Colours to Sask LI.

1100

Brig Ganong visited this HQ and conferred with Lt-Col Ernst.

1930

Concert party at the YMCA. This was a splendid show.

BIGGIN HILL

24 Oct 41

0910

The bn proceeded to WHYTELEAFE and lined the route to the GUARDS DEPOT where Her Majesty the Queen has consented to present the Colours to Sask LI. Personnel of 1 Cdn Div have been given the opportunity of seeing the Queen as she passes along the route Those present at the presentation from this Unit were: Lt-Col Ernst, Maj Hebb and Lieut Higgins. The Queen was attended by Lady Nunburnholme, Lt-Gen McNaughton, Maj-Gen Pearkes and Col Ralston, Minister of National Defense for Canada. After the presentation, the Queen took the March Past.

1730

Col Ralston, Col Curry and Brig Ganong visited Lt-Col Ernst and members of the Office Mess. Later in the afternoon a pleasant half hour was spent at tea with Lady Stanley at “Holwood.”

1930

Dance at Keston Hall. The Bn orchestra was in attendance.

STRENGTH RETURN: Officer 33 Other Ranks 747

BIGGIN HILL

25 Oct 41

0800

Lt-Col Ernst left for TUNBRIDGE WELLS where he attended a camouflage course.

1500

A number of Officers of this Unit attended a Bazaar and tea at Woldingham Golf Club in aid of the Red Cross.

1600

Capt Millard returned from PETWORTH where he attended a Coy cmndrs course of one month.

2100

A dance was held by the Officers of this Unit at “Nightens” which was a very colourful affair. Staff Capt Kenyon from Bde attended in place of the Brigadier.

BIGGIN HILL

26 Oct 41

1000

Usual Church parades to the YMCA hut and Cricket pitch. There was a special Anglican service conducted by Lt-Col C. Hepburn, DAPC Cdn Corps.

BIGGIN HILL

27 Oct 41

0830

Training as per syllabus.

1100

Mrs. Evelyn Tufts, representative of the Editorial Staff of the Halifax Herald, Halifax, Nova Scotia, visited the Unit today and talked with many of the personnel during the morning and afternoon. Mrs. Tufts lunched with Col Ernst and Officers at the Officers mess.

1600

The YMCA moved from the Marquee in which they have occupied all summer to the village Hall at Keston, which is about five minutes walk from the Unit area.

1900

Movies tonight at the YMCA, Keston Hall.

BIGGIN HILL

28 Oct 41

0900

Maj H.K. Bryson left this morning for Holding Unit where he will take over the duties of DAA & [illegible]MG of the “D” gp of Holding Unit.

1300

Col Withy, sub-area commander for aerodromes together with Col Webb, visited the CO today.

1400

Brig Ganong visited the Unit this afternoon.

1900

Concert party at the YMCA, Keston Hall.

BIGGIN HILL

29 Oct 41

0945

A demonstration was carried out by Maj Armstrong of 1 Cdn Div on Field craft, observing and scouting. Major Webb has been appointed acting 2 i/c in place of Maj Bryson.

1000

CO Maj Courtney, Capt Millard, Capt Jenkins, Lieut Cameron, Rhodes, [illegible. B?nt] and Putman proceeded to C?P HILL where they attended exercise “Manna”. This was conducted by Brig [illegible] L. Lloyds. Maj. Webb, Lieuts Spurr and MacNab attended a lecture at HORSHILL re the Indian campaign in Syria.

1520

A heavy snow squall was witnessed this afternoon, but melted away very quickly.

BIGGIN HILL

30 Oct 41

0700

335 of the personnel of this regiment proceeded to REXHILL? Via TOVs to view motion picture “49 Parallel” at the ODEON Theatre.

0900

Capt Walkter, 3 Cdn Fd Regt RCA, has been attached for one week with this Unit, while Maj Stehelin goes to 3 Cnd Fd Regt RCA replacing Capt Johnson.

2100

Lt-Col Ernst attended the GOCs dance at “A mess”, Div HQ.

BIGGIN HILL

31 Oct 41

0700

Lt-Col Ernst proceeded to THETFORD, Suffolk where he attended a demonstration, “The Attack by anti-tank arty.

0800

Bn route march 18 miles.

2100

Lt-Col Ernst attended a dance sponsored by the Brig and Bde officers at “TINNIVELLI [sic. TINVELLI].”

STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 31, Other Ranks 744.