

1/7th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary August 1944

AUGUST 1944

- 1st Aug. Area LA PAUMERIE.
0600 hrs. Bn. still at LA PAUMERIE X rds.
1300 hrs. Bn. moves to conc. area ECORIGNY. C.O. & I.O. go to 1/5th & 1/6th Queen's at CAHAGNES. This is in ruins and still smouldering from attack by our aircraft. Little enemy arty. activity. Bn. stops in area for the night.
2330 hrs. Raid by e/a. A/P bombs dropped locally but not in Bn. area.
- 2nd Aug. 0630 hrs. Bn. moves to area 7355 S.E.
1400 hrs. 90 enemy Inf. reported in LA RIVIERE 7456. 'A' Coy patrol to LOCQUEVILLE and find it clear. 'B' Coy push fwd. to LA RIVIERE with Mortar Pln. & Sqn. 5 R.T.R. in sp. 34 POW's and LA RIVIERE cleared.
1600 hrs. Press correspondent visits Bn. HQ and has conversation with the C.O. which we later hear quoted on the wireless news.
1700 hrs. 'A' Coy go fwd. with R.T.R. to area 772526.
2000 hrs. Tks. attack high ground at 7752. Remainder of Bn. remains in present area. Bn. area shelled spasmodically during the night.
A few casualties from 'D' Coy. No e/a activity noted.
6 O.R's wounded.
- 3rd Aug. 0530 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. Bn. is to attack and capture wood & high ground area 7753. 'C' & 'D' Coys will lead on RIGHT and LEFT respectively. 'A' & 'C' Coys in reserve. Inf. & Tks. co-operate.
0600 hrs. Bn. starts to move up to AA area 769527.
0700 hrs. Tac HQ established in house at 769527.
0830 hrs. 'C' & 'D' Coys cross SL preceded by 4.2" Mortars support.
'C' & 'D' Coys & Tks. report on objective. 'B' Coy moves up to conform on RIGHT of 'D' Coy & clear wood 7853. Bn. settles in posns. gained. 'A' Coy remains well in reserve. Heavy shelling and mortaring of Bn. area during all day.
1600 hrs. Lt. W.G. LALONDE killed by shellfire. Lt. D.R. ANDERSON and Lt. J.E. CATLEY wounded.
2100 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. 1/6th Queen's have been very severely mauled at Pt. 188 7951. 1/7th Queen's to establish firm base in area of sq. 7852 and hold firm base at all costs.
2130 hrs. Bn. starts move. Caught in Nebelwerfer stonk. Approx. 35 cas.
Bn. HQ area included. 1 half track and 3 jeeps damaged.
2230 hrs. The Carriers that are covering the occupation of the posn. bump Tks. and Inf. at 787527. Gallant resistance is made by them and they hold them off. Casualties I killed 2 wounded.
- 4th Aug. 0100 hrs. Bn. in posn. and firm.
0530 hrs. Day breaks fine – misty – clears up at 1100 hrs.
1200 hrs. Inf. reported milling at ST GEORGES d 'AUNAY. Area will be stonked by 'J' Bty. 3 R.H.A. observation splendid from Bn. HQ.
One can see VILLERS BOCACHE quite clearly which brings back memories to those who participated in the earlier push there. 3 P.O.Ws are from Coys of 751 G.R. 326 Div. which has been badly mauled during the last few days.
15-1600 hrs. Area behind Bn. HQ spasmodically shelled but no casualties incurred.
2100 hrs. C.O's 'O' Gp. 'A' Coy have pushed out to ST GEORGES d 'AUNAY and found it clear. A standing patrol established itself there.
Division to push on 5 Aug. on the route LA MONNERIE – LA POSTE – MAISONAILLES – AUNAY SUR ODON – high ground to N.E. 22 Armd. leading 131 Bde. following with 1/7th Queen's in lead.

All activity (enemy) quietens to a minimum as the day draws to a close.

- 5th Aug. 0530 hrs. The Bn. moves to a new conc. area recd by the 2i/c Maj. J.A. COCKCRAFT.
0730 hrs. C.O. holds an 'O' Gp. And issued orders concerning Bns. advance to AUNAY SUR ODON. The Bn. is at 30 mins to move.
1600 hrs. Bn. is ordered to move u/c of 22 Armd. Bde.
1625 hrs. C.O. meets the Brig. at the Bde. S.P.
1640 hrs. The Bn. withdraws from its operational role and assembles in conc. area LA MONNERIE 7552.
1825 hrs. C.O. attends 'O' Gp. At 22 Armd. Bde. at 863527.
2130 hrs. C.O. holds an 'O' Gp. At 863527. 'B', 'C' & 'D' Coys to occupy firm base.
Bn. HQ in wood at 878503. 'A' Coy to patrol fwd. to LA VALLEE.
2300 hrs. Patrol reports LA VALLEE clear but heavily mined. 'A' Coy ordered to occupy it.
- 6th Aug. 0330 hrs. 'A' Coy occupied. LA VALLEE.
0500 hrs. Carrier Pln. entered LA VALLEE from N. along heavily mined rds.
Sappers lifted large quantities of Tellers & M10's moved in.
The whole operation was aided by a thick mist. 'D' Coy attempted to occupy BOIS DU MT D'ANCY but was recalled to firm base owing to strong enemy posts. LA VALLEE was heavily shelled and mortared throughout the day. 3 R.H.A. had very accurate shooting on enemy reverse slope posns. on the 172 feature.
Lt. ROPER (Carriers) wounded by shellfire. 'A' Coy went tk. hunting with PIAT, Tk. withdrew. Patrol led by Maj. P.E. BARNSEY silenced M.G. post.
2100 hrs. Brig. visited the Bn. Bn. is to attack along the line of the high ground overlooking LA VALLEE.
- 7th Aug. 0100 hrs. Rd. running N.W. and S.E. through LA VALLEE laid by the 'I' Sec. as a S.L.
0330 hrs. A box barrage 300x deep by 600x was put down S. of the rd. for 30 mins. 'D' Coy cleared inside the box and there was hand to hand fighting. 50 P.O.W's were taken. The Sappers followed along the rd. lifting mines. The barrage lifted 300x and was laid for a further 30 mins. and 'D' Coy took another 20 P.O.W's. A further 300x lift and the area cleared. Much stiffer resistance. A further 300x lift and 'D' Coy consolidated at rd. junc. 881461. 'C' Coy had moved behind 'D' Coy available for mopping up, now continued the advance under a dog leg barrage; enemy posns. were mopped up and they reached their objective on top of ridge at 870457. 'B' passed through and consolidated astride the rd. between 'D' & 'C'.
BAGREP. 3x 88mm guns
17 Spandau's
1x 75mm gun
112 rifles
1 Half Track
1 Full Track
1 10 ton truck
1 Ambulance.
Other equipment was not collected and enemy dead were not counted as time was insufficient.
0430 hrs. Bn. HQ established in farmhouse 879471 was heavily stonked and mortared.
0700 hrs. 'B' Coy counterattacked and one Pln. badly mauled. Heavy mortar fire came down on area.
0930 hrs. Tks. arrived in support.
1200 hrs. Lt. A.J. DUNSTON the Bn. I.O. was wounded. Lt. R.A. HUGHES the Assault Pioneer Pln. Comdr. becomes I.O.
1400 hrs. Lt. R.G. RIST wounded by enemy shellfire.
1900 hrs. C.O. holds Bn. 'O' Gp. 24 O.R's wounded and 3 O.Rs killed during day.

2100 hrs. Bn. HQ moves to a new location in farmhouse 871473. Very heavy mortar and shellfire by the enemy during the day was experienced and one or two casualties were incurred. Owing to heavy shelling of x rds. 870470 a diversionary route had to be made to contact Coys. by way of track junc. 862475 – track junc. 860463 X rds. 870457

- 8th Aug. 1000 hrs. 2i/c Maj. W.G.L. COCKCROFT recced new area for the Bn. to concentrate in readiness for future operation (advance on CONDE).
During the morning a German patrol of 4 men complete with equipment were captured by a fwd. Coy.
1800 hrs. Lt. J.A. HOWE joined the Bn.
2100 hrs. The Bn. came u/c of 22 Armd. Bde. for the move to CONDE.
2300 hrs. 'B' 'C' & 'D' Coys established Standing Patrols during the night.
2330 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. Casualties during the day 1 O.R. wounded, 1 O.R. killed. Sporadic mortaring and shelling of the Bn. area was experienced during the day. In particular 'A' Coy received much attention but fortunately no casualties were incurred. Total number of P.O.W's during day was 9.
- 9th Aug. 0800 hrs. 'C' Coy Comdr. Maj. PETER BOSANQUET 67101 killed and Lt. H.L. MACKENZIE wounded by enemy shellfire. 2 O.R's also wounded. Capt. J.B.L. AINSWORTH assumed comd. of 'C' Coy.
1200 hrs. Defensive fire was laid down by arty. on a German Coy posn.
Not known if any casualties incurred. Bn. snipers killed 5 enemy during the day.
2300 hrs. C.O. holds Bn. 'O' Gp. Concerning move the following day to conc. area. Casualties during the day 4 O.R's wounded, and 1 killed.
- 10th Aug. Bn. reverts to cond. Of 131 Inf. Bde.
1200 hrs. The Bn. moves to conc. area 8649 for purpose of resting and re-organising.
1300 hrs. Bn. arrived at conc. area 8649.
2000 hrs. CSM EDWARDS V. of 'D' Coy presents an impromptu concert to the Bn. which was very much appreciated. Guest party at Bn. HQ given by the Comdg. Off. Lt. Col. W.D. GRIFFITHS MC. NAAFI goods which included cigarettes, beer and chocolate were issued to the men. No work was carried out in the afternoon and evening and the men cleaned themselves and rested.
- 11th Aug. Weather very hot no cloud.
1400 hrs. C.O. holds a conference to discuss new organisation of the Bn.
It was decided to have 3 Coys only, 'A' 'C' & 'D' making them up to strength from 'B' Coy. 'B' Coy HQ to remain at A. 2 Ech. until the formation of a new Coy. Capt. D.L. FENNELL 'B' Coy Comd. promoted to Major and transferred to 'C' Coy to take over Comd. Capt. E.G. DEVER transferred to 'D' Coy as 2i/c.
1115 hrs. 30 Corps Comd. Lt. Gen. B.J. HORROCKS addressed offs. And N.C.O's of the Bn. Others were also present at the address. He gave a clear picture of what had happened in NORMANDY up to the present time. He paid tribute to the soldiers of the Queen's Bns. praising them for their very fine work in the very hard fighting they had been through. In the afternoon the Bn. was allocated time for baths in T.C.V's. they were given clean clothes for their old ones. A mobile cinema visited the Bn. area and gave three performances which received full attendance.
- 12th Aug. Weather very hot and sunny very few clouds.
1130 hrs. The Bde. Comdr. Brig. PEPPER visited the Bn. He congratulated the men on their magnificent performance in their actions up to date. 1 O.R. casualty during the day. The men again had the day to themselves of which they took full advantage. Quite a large number visited the Jerboa Club (7th Armd. Div. Club).

The Bn. was allocated a certain number of seats as the ENSA Show starring GEORGE FORMBY at 131 Bde. area. The show was a great success. The Bn. Dance Band played at the Jerboa Club during the evening by permission of the C.O.

- 13th Aug. Weather very hot and sunny.
0900 hrs. C.O. attended a conference at Bde. HQ concerning future ops.
I.O. attended an I.O. conference at Bde. HQ. various faults were found with the existing organisation.
Infm. Too slow reaching Bde. HQ and bagrep required.
1800 hrs. Inter pln. football commenced in HQ Coy. The Carrier Pln. V A/Tk. Pln. Match was enjoyed by all. Result A/Tk. 10 – Carriers Nil.
Bn. Dance Bn. again played at the Jerboa Club.
- 14th Aug. Morning very misty but cleared away and became very warm later.
0900 hrs. arty left here to go bathing at ARROMANCHES on the coast.
Maj. W.G.L. COCKCROFT lead the party.
1800 hrs. The Sig. Pln. v R.A.S.C. (Tp. Carriers) football match was a great success and the Sigs. Won by 3 goals to nil.
1930 hrs. Bn. HQ V Mortars football match resulted in a draw the score being 4 – 4.
2030 hrs. CSM EDWARDS V. presented another show to the Bn. in the evening.
- 15th Aug. Weather sunny but overcast.
1200 hrs. C.O. holds conference in which Bn. training was discussed.
1615 hrs. Bn. again was allotted baths.
1900 hrs. Bde. Comdr. visits the Bn. with the Bde. Maj. And dined in the Offs. Mess.
- 16th Aug. 0030 Orders from Bde. Bn. to be at one hrs. notice from 0600 hrs.
0620 hrs. 2i/c recces new conc. area 0264. Order of march Bn. HQ, 'A' 'C' 'D' Coys, Carrier Pln. Mortar Pln., A/Tk. Pln. HQ Coy.
0945 hrs. Arrived at Conc. area.
1000 hrs. C.O. holds an 'O' Gp.
1100 hrs. 2i/c recces new conc. area 1155 ST SYLVAIN.
1430 hrs. Bn. move to conc. area 113357 – 130543 – 122563.
1700 hrs. C.O. & I.O. visited Bde. HQ for orders.
1900 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp.
- 17th Aug. 0800 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. and issues orders for the advance on LISIEUX.
Bn. HQ location 227504.
1000 hrs. Bn. moved off and halted in area recced by 2i/c at 2250.
1230 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. And explains that owing to resistance by enemy being stronger than was expected on the Bn. axis to LISIEUX 5487 a change of plan had been made and a new axis introduced. The final objective of the operation being track 486746 – 484715 2000x E. of LIVAROT 4673.
1500 hrs. The Bn. moved from area 2250 and advanced along the new axis which was track junc. 235493 – ST PIERRE SUR DIVES 2649 – X rds. 283477 – X tracks 285486 X tracks 325474. The Bn. 'O' Gp. moved in one Gp. In front of the column in order to be immediately available for orders from the C.O.
2030 hrs. Bn. HQ location Farmhouse 286486.
2150 hrs. Bn. HQs. Moved to new area 300x further along rd. to farmhouse 290485 which had been 'D' Coy location.
'C' Coy with 8 Hussars were leading the column all day.

Last light loc. Bn. HQ 290485, 'A' Coy 298485, 'C' Coy 302483, 'D' Coy 299482. Lt. D.B. WATERHOUSE, Lt. J.D. CUTHBERTSON & Lt. R.D. CLEARE joined the Bn. All three offs. Came from 2 Bn. Hertfordshire Regt.

Our own aircraft were very active over Normandy. A few German planes dropped bombs in the area of bridge at ST. PIERRE SUR DIVES.

The R. DIVES in the course of the advance was crossed without incident although orders were received from Bde. for everybody to be clear of ST. PIERRE SUR DIVES as soon as possible in case the enemy attempted to shell the bridge over the R. Progress from track junction 235493 2 the R. DIVES was at first very slow owing to congestion of the rd. by other foms. but speeded up a little later on.

- 18th Aug. 'C' Coy cont. the advance on LIVAROT and found very little resistance. Many reports were received from French civilians and suitable action taken. C.O. went fwd. to keep contact with 'C' Coy.
1230 hrs. Bn. HQ moved from 286486 to area 316475.
1400 hrs. Arrived at new location at the base of BIOS DE QUEVRUE.
1430 hrs. 2i/c reced new area for Bn. HQ.
1500 hrs. Bn. HQ moved to the top of the BOIS DE QUEVRUE at X tracks 326474.
'D' Coy called fwd. by the C.O. to attack X tracks 403727.
'A' Coy called fwd. by the C.O. to establish themselves on X tracks 336468. 'C' Coy remained at 400736 on the axis of adv.
'D' Coy attack found more opposition than expected, in fact the enemy were holding a line from 407725 – 33459.
1800 hrs. All round defence of Bn. HQ was organised owing to thick forest land in which it was thought enemy may have been in hiding and capable of making a short attack on our vehicles at night. No incident however occurred. C.O. issued orders for men to sleep by their weapon pits fully armed with a man on guard in each section all night.
2000 hrs. 'B' Coy were ordered by the C.O. to break off their attack and establish themselves in area 333473 in order to establish a firm base. Last light locations Bn. HQ 326474 'A' Coy 336468 'C' Coy 400736, 'D' Coy 333473, Casualties during the day, 1 killed three missing 10 wounded.
- 19th Aug. 'A' Coy. Continued the advance.
1205 'D' Coy ready to move.
1430 hrs. Bn. HQ moved to new location 408724 and remained there all night.
One halftrack was put out of action by an M10 and its crew killed by Carrier Pln. 'A' Coy reached X rds. 427717 where they were held up by 3 Mk. VI (Tiger) tks. 10 of our fwd. Coy were captured and one was killed. 'D' Coy passed through 'A' Coy and went as far as 431719 'C' Coy remained at 413723.
2000 hrs. Bn. formed a firm base astride the LIVAROT rd. in area 4172.
Last light locations Bn. HQ 408724, 'A' Coy 415726, 'C' Coy 415723, 'D' 417230. Casualties two killed, two P.O.W's. eight wounded.
2100 hrs. NAAFI goods issued to the men. One P.O.W. remained the night under guard and sent back in the morning. P.O.W. very demoralised.
- 20th Aug. Enemy raided the fwd. areas with approx. 15 planes.
0015 hrs. H.E. & A.P. bombs were dropped over a fairly wide area. Two casualties were incurred in A.2 Ech. area 4073 from A.P. bombs.
0045 hrs. 2 O.R's killed.
0800 hrs. C.O. holds an 'O' Gp. Bn. at 30 mins notice.
1100 hrs. 3 Offs. Arrived from A.2 Ech. They were Lt. D.B. WATERHOUSE, Lt. J.D. CUTHBERTSON and Lt. R.D. CLEARS. 2 O.Rs also arrived.
All were posted from 2 Bn. Hertfordshire Regt. Lt. Lt. D.B. WATERHOUSE posted to the Carrier Pln., Lt. R.D. CLEARE posted to 'D' Coy, Lt. J.D. CUTHBERTSON understudying Lt. R.A. HUGHES BN. I.O.

1530 hrs. One man of 'D' Coy was captured by the enemy on the 19th returned to Bn. R.A.P. with info. As to whereabouts of 5 other wounded. The medical Cpl., Cpl. MCDUGALL immediately went out and brought the remainder in. the enemy had left them behind because of shortage of tpt. They were being cared for by civilians.

1600 hrs. Bn. moved to a new area to form a firm base while the 1/5th & 1/6th Queen's attacked in the area of LIVAROT 4672. Bn. HQ established at 433726. 'A' Coy 436720, 'C' Coy 436717 'D' Coy 440719.

1630 hrs. 4 Russians who has surrendered to the French civilians handed over to the Bn. All 4 were in civilian clothes.

1800 hrs. All posns. established.

2100 hrs. 1 Swiss prisoner brought in by Carrier Pln. Originally in the 185 Ordnance Bn. he was transferred to 54 Battle Gp. which was disbanded and was again transferred to 54 Battle Gp. from which he deserted. Casualties during the day 2 O.Rs killed.

- 21st Sug. 0140 hrs. Bn. to be ready to move at 0630 hrs.
0700 hrs. 'C' Coy and 1 Sec. Mortars u/c 5 D.G. advanced to area of LIVAROT 4672.
The original intension of the Bn. was to move to area FERVAQUES and form firm base in area 5276. Later however all three Coys of Bn. came under separate comd. of the three Regts. Of 22 Armd. Bde. as detailed.
1000 hrs. 'D' Coy and 1 Sec. of Mortars u/c 1 R.T.R. moved from their location to support in area of FERVAQUES but were not required and moved back onto 'D' Coy axis and joined them at X rds. 4979.
1400 hrs. Bn. HQ moved to Farmhouse 488784.
1830 hrs. Intension 'A' & 'D' Coys supported by a Sqn. of 1 R.T.R. should capture high ground 5385. They moved up to area 5284 in T.C.V's. However, it was then discovered that elements of 1 R.B. had already reported the area clear of enemy. As a result 'D' & 'A' Coys debussed and worked their way in easterly direction from rd. LISIEUX – LIVAROT and established themselves on high ground about 539849 and 539841 respectively.
1900 hrs. 'C' Coy placed u/c 5 D.G. and moved to area 495785. However, on arrival there they were placed u/c 1 R.B. (22 Armd. Bde.) and moved to area 540760 (FERVAQUES) to support elements of 1 R.B. heavily engaged by enemy in their area. Casualties incurred during the day were 2 O.R's wounded. Bn. HQ again moved this time a short distance back to area 474775 as it was possible that arty. fire would have to be turned on to the BOIS DE NOIRE MAYEL 4878 in vicinity of last HQ.
- 22nd Aug. 1300 hrs. Bn. HQ moved to 537842 arriving at 1500 hrs. 'D' Coy intention to cross the river and cut rd. LISIEUX – GLOS 5785 at 555860 and rd. LISIEUX – BAYMAIS at 560877. A Pln. of 'D' Coy under Lt. R.D. CLEARE with 1 Tp. of 1 R.T.R. in Support commenced the operation. The Inf. were held up by a semi-circle of M.G's N. of the rd. and ryl. at 550860.
Although the leading Pln. waded across the river, they had to withdraw owing to the opposition being heavier than was expected.
The plan was not successful. The Tks. and the Inf. Pln. withdrew to S. of the ryl. and remained in a position of observation.
Fairly heavy mortar fire. 'A' Coy moved into the area vacated by 'D' Coy but they were not used in action.
1700 hrs. 'C' Coy reverted to comd. of Bn. 2i/c went to FERVAQUES to guide the Coy up to conc. area 540845.
1800 hrs. 'A' & 'D' Coys less 1 Pln. were ordered to withdraw to their original areas at 539841 and 539849 respectively.
2000 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp.
2100 hrs. 'A', 'C' & 'D' Coys established in conc. area. Last light locs. Bn. HQ 537842 'A' Coy astride the rd. 538840, 'C' Coy 540847, 'D' Coy astride the rd. 578852.

2130 hrs. Standing patrol from 'C' Coy went to high ground 550850 & 'A' Coy sent a Standing Patrol to X rds. 537835. Nothing was reported.

Lt. N.F. BURRELL wounded. 6 O.R's wounded during the day.

23rd Aug. 0400 hrs. Lt. G.I.S. BURNETT carried out a patrol down to the river line and reced it for a distance of over 1 mile and included the two bridges across the river in the area where 'D' Coy was held up 5585. The recce was excellent, a very detailed report was brought back, and Lt. BURNETT lifted a number of mines in the area of the 2 bridges.

1130 hrs. Bn. HQ area came under shellfire. Capt. J.K. WOOD, Mortar Off. Was slightly wounded together with his signaller.

1200 hrs. The u/m offs. joined the Bn. having been posted to the Bn. on 21st Aug.:- W/Lt. A.E. BARTON-BEVERIDGE, (Queen's) Lt. B.F. HARLEY (Cdn. RCA), Lt. A.E. LAWRENCE (Cdn. RASC).

1330 hrs. C.O. issued orders for attack on high ground astride rd. LISIEUX – THIBERVILLE bout 5787.

131 Bde, intension to send 1/5th Queen's along main rd. E. from LISIEUX while 1/6th Queen's attacked on a parallel axis in the river valley immediately to the S.

As soon as these Bns. had reached their objectives in area 5587 and 5586 the 1/7th Queen's would move via LISIEUX and pass through 1/5th Queen's and advance to pt. 151 5787. The 1/5th Queen's attack commenced at 1430 hrs. but was eventually held up in area 553876. Consequently the 1/7th Queen's did not move from conc. area.

1430 hrs. 6 Russian prisoners brought in by French civilians to 'A' Coy (No identification).

1645 hrs. Bn. at 1 hrs. notice to move.

2100 hrs. 2 P.O.W's 3 O.R's wounded in action during the day.

24th Aug. 0700 hrs. 1/5th Queen's sent fwd. strong patrols E. along main rd. without meeting opposition. Consequently, orders received for 'D' Coy to advance to the river again in area BEUVILLERS 8486 and to seize and hold the bridge 1,000 yds. to the S.E. This operation was carried out successfully during the morning.

1315 hrs. C.O. holds 'O' Gp. BN. at ½ hr. notice to move. Very heavy rain made movement difficult.

1545 hrs. The Bn. moved off to new conc. area about orchard at 573874 and arrived at 1800 hrs.

1800 hrs. 4 G.A.F. prisoners handed over to us by French (Identification 20 Flak Regt.)

1900 hrs. Last light locations of the Bn. Bn. HQ 571876, 'A' Coy 571873, 'C' Coy 573869, 'D' Coy 564876. No enemy air activity over Bn. area but many Allied night fighters heard.

25th Aug. Orders for Bn. Gp. to move at 0615 hrs. to GIVERVILLE 7891.

Order of march :-

Carrier Pln.

'A' Coy with u/c 2 Det. Mortars, 1 Det. A/Tk. guns

'C' Coy with u/c 2 Det. Mortars, 1 Det. A/Tk. guns.

Main Bn. HQ.

'D' Coy with u/c 2 Det. Mortars, 1 Det. A/Tk. guns.

M.G. Pln.

1 Bty. 17 pdrs. (towed).

Bn. S.P. 573875.

Route rd. junc. 873874, X rds. 703863, rd. junc. 716891. Area GIVERVILLE 7891.

Bn. moved off at 0715 hrs.

0800 hrs. Bn. pulled into the side of the rd. for 30 mins. halt just west of L'HOTELLERIE 6686.

1024 hrs. Bn. came u/c 22 Armd. Bde.

1100 hrs. Arrived at 791919. Bn. HQ to established just outside GIVERVILLE 7891.

1200 hrs. C.O. went to 22 Armd. Bde. HQ to receive orders from Brig. for the crossing of the R. RISLN at PONT AUTHOU 8895. Bn. to be at immediate notice to move. Tps. to be in TCV's.

1345 hrs. Bn. moved to new area. Order of march :- 'A' Coy, 'C' Coy, Carrier Pln. then Main BN. HQ 'D' Coy, Supporting arms.

1600 hrs. Arrived at new area.

1700 hrs. By this time elements of 22 Armd. Bde. had crossed the R. RISLE at PONT AUTHOU 8895. 'A' Coy placed u/c 5 R.T.R. who crossed the river and intended to take up firm base posn about pt. 161 9297. They did not reach this objective but occupied firm base posn. 1,000 yds. to the S.W.

Remainder of Bn. given task of left flank protection area LES PILLARDS 9079. 'C' & 'D' Coys crossed the river on foot and moving N. established firm base posns. 'C' Coy about tracks and orchards 913975 & 'D' Coy in orchards at 903975 with the Carrier Pln. supported by Bn. A/Tk. guns watching the rd. in area 882970.

2215 hrs. Bn. HQ moved from 867960 to the E. side of the R. RISLE being then located at 903966. A sharp air raid developed while the column was on the move but fortunately the attack was not directed on the bridge at PONT AUTHOU 8895 across which the column passed and no damage was inflicted.

Last light locations, Bn. HQ 903966, 'D' Coy 903975, 'C' Coy 911976.

26th Aug. Weather very fair very few clouds.

0715 hrs. Bn. HQ moved from rather exposed posn. to area of orchards immediately S. of 'D' Coy 904974. During the morning 'A' Coy u/c 5 R.T.R. moved onto the pre-arranged objective pt. 162 9297. 5 R.T.R. cont. the advance N. reaching the line of the rly. At 930003 but 5 D.G. on the right were held up by Inf. armed with Bazookas. It was decided to push 5 D.G. through 5 R.T.R. followed by 1/7th Queen's who would ultimately establish a firm base posn. about pt. 142 9407.

1400 hrs. Orders issued by C.O. for the operation. During the afternoon the plan was completely changed. The new plan involved a thrust N. by 22 Armd. Bde. with u/c 1/7th Queen's through MONTFORT SUR RISLE 8601 to establish firm base posns. immediately N.W. of the FORET DE MONTFORT. The 1/7th Queen's would be in the area BRESTOT 8807.

1600 hrs. 'A' Coy rejoined Bn.

1800 hrs. Bn. moved to S.P. at rd. & track junc. 920987.

Order of march :- 'C', 'D', 'A' Coys.

Support Gp. (M.G. Pln.)
(A/Tk. Bty.)
(Mortar Pln.)
(A/Tk. Pln.)
(Bn. HQ.).

'O' Gp. at this time had moved fwd. to APPEVILLE 8503.

2030 hrs. Bn. moving in rear of column passed S.P. Centre line rd. to rd. junc. 870008 – APPEVILLE 8503 to area 8604.

2300 hrs. Bn. less one Coy formed firm base posn. area of track and rd. junc. 853048.

27th Aug. 1100 hrs. Bn. received order no move before 1200 hrs. 5 D.G. having advanced N. to within 2 miles of BOURNVILLE 8412 and by-passed several pockets of Inf. the Carrier Pln. was sent out to patrol approx. 3000 yds. N. of Bn. HQ The reported area clear of enemy.

1400 hrs. One Sqn. of 1 R.T.R. and one Sqn. 5 R.T.R. with 'A' & 'D' Coys advanced to BOURNVILLE 8412 with intention of moving E. along the rd. to area 9910. Just W. of ROUTOT. The advance was slow and Coys only reached area 8810 by nightfall. They were pulled back to firm base area 8711. One German off. With his batman riding pillion on a m/c knocked off his machine by 'D' Coy patrol. The off. Carried a marked map showing defensive posns. in the FORET DE BROTONNE 92.

1645 hrs. Command post moved to 846119. Slight shelling of BOURNVILLE by long range guns.

2130 hrs. Command post moved to area of fwd. Coys 872115.

28th Aug. 0130 hrs. Enemy patrol approached main Bn. HQ area 846118 exchange of shots and one rifle snatched off a German. No casualties to own tps.

0600 hrs. Main Bn. HQ joined Command Post.
 0900 hrs. C.O. gave orders for advance on ROUTOT 9210. 'D' Coy with one Sqn. Tks. followed by 'A' Coy with 1 Sqn. Tks. made good progress and entered ROUTOT before 1200 hrs.
 1025 hrs. Bn. HQ moved to 913105.
 1200 hrs. Bn. less 'C' Coy disposed approx. on 11 Northing between 94 & 91 Eastings facing N. in which direction the enemy had withdrawn.
 1400 hrs. Bn. reverts to comd. 131 Inf. Bde. Ordered to conc. preparatory to move in reserve. 'C' Coy rejoined Bn.
 1600 hrs. Bn. conc. in area 9110/
 1900 hrs. Bn. moved to rear area 8696.
 2030 hrs Bn. arrived in new area.
 2200 hrs. Reinforcements arrived at 'B' Ech.

- 29th Aug. Bn. moved from first conc. area to new conc. area at 0680 and 0680 (LE MESNIL BROQUET).
- 30th Aug. Weather wet. All offs. attended Bde. conference at which Comd. 131 Bde. outlined the intended course of future operations beyond the R. SEINE.
- 31st Aug. Bn. left conc. area enroute for the area between the R. SEINE and R. SOMME. Route taken – see attached O.O. (new series) No. 1 dated 30th Aug.
 2200 hrs. Bn. leaguered for the night in area rd. junc. N 610228 less 'C' Coy which was detailed to act as local protection to 131 Bde. H.Q in area 611235.

Lt. Col. W.D. Griffiths MC,
 Comdg.
 1/7th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regt.

In the field.
 WDG/1s.

Officer List 26th August 1944

A/Lt. Col. W. D. Griffiths, MC	Queen's		
T/Maj. W.G.L. Cockcroft	R. Berks.		
T/Maj. P.E. Barnsley	Hereford.		
A/Maj. E.G. Sandys	Queen's.		
A/Maj. E. S. Corbett	Hamps.		
T/Capt. D. L. Fennell	Queen's.	Lieut. P.M. Jones	Queen's.
T/Capt. G.H. Courchee	Essex.	Lieut. P. Greenall	Queen's.
T/Capt. J.B.L. Ainsworth	S. Staffs.	Lieut. E.C. Read	Queen's.
T/Capt. B. G. Meara	S.W.B.	Lieut. E.D.J. Martin	Queen's.
A/Capt. A. Reed	Duke of W.	Lieut. A.E.B. Beveridge	Queen's.
A/Capt. S.E. Brown	Hamps.	Lieut. B.F. Harley	R.C.A.
Lieut. E.G. Dever	Kings.	Lieut. A.E. Lawrence	R.C.A.S.C.
Lieut. J.D. Cuthbertson	Beds & Herts.	Lieut. H.A. Baker MM	Queen's.
Lieut. G.I.S. Burnett	Queen's.	Lieut. (QM) C.H.J. Stammer	Queen's.
Lieut. R. A. Hughes	Devons.		
Lieut. J.A. Howe	Cdn. Inf.	Capt. J. Sheehan.	R.A.M.C.
Lieut. D.B. Waterhouse	Beds & Herts.		
Lieut. R.D. Cleare	Beds & Herts.	Rev. J. Macintosh	R.A.Ch.D.

1/7th Bn. the Queen's Royal Regiment
Operations 5-10th August.

On the 5th August the Bn. was placed under command of 22nd Armd. Bde. and at 0530 hrs, the Bn. was concentrated at LA MONNERIE.

The task allotted to 22nd Armd. Bde. was the capture of CONDE SUR NOIREAU an important rd. centre.

The Armd. Regts. moved on one route South of VILLERS BOCAGE and then turned in a South Easterly direction towards our objective. 1/7th Queen's were behind the Armd. Regts. and in consequence suffered with badly churned up roads on which to move over in their vehicles.

At 1600 hrs, the Bn started to move off and made good progress for the first 4 miles until a very boggy stretch of rd. caused a hold up. Meanwhile orders were being issued which included the capture of LA VALLEE an important rd. junction. The Armd. Regts. were held up on a line about 4000 yds. from this objective.

Owing to a diversion around the boggy stretch of rd. having to be made much valuable time had been lost and it was not before 2130 hrs, that the head of the Bn. reached it's forward RV.

At this time the 'O' Group had laboriously made its way to the head of the column and moved off immediately to a point of vantage between the two Armd. Regts. on the high ground N.E. of LE PUIITS. Here it was decided to form a firm base and orders were accordingly issued, dispositions 'C' Coy right 'B' Coy left and 'D' Reserve. 'A' Coy were ordered to patrol forward to LA VALLEE and if it was found possible without a set piece attack to occupy it with the Coy.

LA VALLEE lies at the bottom of a basin with high ground rising on all sides around it. The problem was a difficult one for Major CORBETT but he tackled it admirably. The patrol from 'A' Coy reported that the village was clear of enemy but heavily mined also they heard M.T. movement on the far side. 'A' Coy moved forward to occupy the village and at dawn were found to be just on the point of entering it.

Whilst 'A' Coy were moving across country arrangements were made to get the 258 A/Tk. Bty. of the Norfolk Yeomanry into the village at first light and set up A/Tk. defence.

At first light the Carrier Pln. under Lt. ROPER moved off from the Bn. firm base down the road through HAMARS to approach the village from the north. This was a hazardous task as the road was known to be mined however these were lifted clear and the Carrier Pln. arrived to help 'A' Coy in the defence of the village.

The sappers had lifted considerable numbers of Teller mines in LA VALLEE thus clearing a path for the deployment of the M10's which arrived shortly afterwards.

The whole of this operation was covered by a thick mist which was very fortunate as the road from HAMARS down to LA VALLEE was under enemy arty. fire from Pt. 172 on the SUR LA MONT feature 1000 yds. to the east.

Taking full advantage of this loss of visibility imposed upon the enemy 'D' Coy were ordered to move forward in T.C.V's and given the task of battle patrolling their way up to the BOIS DU MT d'ANCRE a formidable Ridge covered with a thick forest. Possession of this dominating feature by us would deny the enemy of observation down into LA VALLEE which lay at the foot.

However the "FORM" gradually began to take shape and with the enemy posts so active just outside the village and with the discovery of a camouflage tank about 100 yds. to the South it appeared

that the enemy were holding the high ground in strength. Therefore orders were given stopping 'D' Coy operation and instead a recce patrol was given the task of getting information of the enemy.

The natural smokescreen the mist covered their movements and all risks were worth taking under this cover.

'D' Coy were successfully turned round and moved back to the Bn. firm base N. of LE PUITS.

In the village itself the enemy put down heavy mortar and shell fire which was a good incentive for fast digging in.

Major P Hilton of J battery 3 R.H.A. was as usual after a good O.P. and established himself at a hedge junction on high ground N.E. of the village. This was a very bold choice and he could not be spared Inf. protection but this did not deter him and later when the mist cleared the O.P. looked right into the river slope positions of the enemy on the 172 feature.

The enemy were quite unaware of this advantage we had achieved and were walking about quite unconcerned. However this state did not last for long as the 3 RHA and especially J Bty. had the finest days shooting for a long time and with a sniping gun individual weapon pits were knocked out in turn. Incredibly accurate shooting by Maj. HILTON and Capt STOKES from the O.P. gradually illuminated these positions and it is interesting to quote a POW statement who said No. 3 Coy of 990 G.R. had a hundred men but owing to the surprising number of direct hits on slit trenches strength was now only 50.

In the village itself tank hunting parties were organised to knockout the tanks. The first attempt was unsuccessful as the enemy had the approaches well covered and any movement to get within P.I.A.T. range was met with very unhealthy M.G. fire from well concealed dug in positions. Lt. ROPER at this stage was wounded which was a great pity after the fine work the Carrier Pln. had carried out under he's gallant leadership.

Further attempts to get near the tank by using other approaches did not meet with success as the tank which was well camouflaged could not be located. The exertions of 'A' Coy put the wind up the tank which finally withdrew.

Major P BARNSELY of 'D' Coy was leading forward his patrol to brief them in their tasks when quite suddenly they run onto an enemy M.G. post who opened fire at about 15 yds. range. However this was quickly answered with a revolver and Sten gunfire which silenced the post and enabled the patrol to withdraw and get back its wind.

As visibility improved both the enemy guns and our own were more active and the remainder of the day was a very unpleasant one for those in LA VALLEE or anyone trying to get to LA VALLEE the usual result being that you were chased all the way down the road with fire from the enemy.

At 2100 hrs, the Brigadier visited Bn HQ and ordered that the Bn was to keep up the pressure on the enemy and carry out a night attack along the line of the road to the high ground overlooking LA VALLEE.

This appeared to be a very difficult task when we were in such close contact with the enemy but we were keen to keep up the offensive and here was the Bns charms. Plenty of arty. support was available to support the Bn. but the real problem was how to use it correctly bearing in mind the close proximity of our own F.D.L's to the enemy and the nature of the country to be attacked, a stiff hill covered with thick forests. Lt. Col. P. GREGSON was most helpful in his suggestions in the use of the arty. and his idea of a box barrage was accepted and a plan was developed on these lines.

'A' Coy in LA VALLEE were to hold F.D.L's and clear nearest enemy posts.

A box barrage with its inside distance of 300X deep by 600X across to be put down S. of the main road.

'D' Coy to get inside the box and assault all enemy positions clearing the area inside the box before the barrage lifted another 300X.

'D' Coy were given an objective of the road halfway up the hill at the rd. junction 881461 and to get them there 3 lifts of the box barrage were arranged. The Sappers under Lt. BEACH were to advance up the road clearing mines and booby traps behind the leading Coy to enable supporting arms to move up on the objective at first light. 'C' Coy were to move behind 'D' Coy available for mopping up in the first three phases but to form up in front of 'D' Coy's objective and continue the advance under a dog leg barrage assaulting the enemy positions as they moved on until they reached their objective which was a reverse slope position commanding the crossroads on top of the Ridge at 870457. When the second objective was reached 'B' Coy was to pass through and consolidate astride the road between 'D' and 'C'. Each Coy was then to patrol forward to the next Coy locality starting with 'A' Coy in LA VALLEE.

The choice of a start line was not easy but finally the road running N.W. and S.E. through the village was selected.

Zero was at 0330 hrs, when 'D' Coy crossed the S.L. and the barrage for phase one commenced.

Further points about the plan.

The timings of the barrage must be very flexible so that the barrage could be continued or shortened to fit in with the mopping up operation of the infantry.

Comms. between leading troops and the Bn HQ were vitally important. Very light signals were to be used if wireless failed. Whistle signals were used between leading Pln's to prevent one Pln. getting too far ahead.

Close touch was essential between Pln's and sections the road gave a good centre line and dividing line. The moon was no help owing to the density of the wood.

Careful timings of the approach of Coys to the start line were important so that Coys waited on the start line the shortest possible time this avoiding the harassing fire the enemy put down on VALLEE all through the night. 90 mins. was allowed for 4000 yds. approach march.

Importance of all junior Comds. clearly understanding the plan ordering had to be given out 4000 yds. from the start line and only the C.O. had seen anything of the country being attacked.

Great accuracy was needed from the RA and obtained. A trial barrage was put down at 0230 hrs, so that the leading Coy knew what to expect. No movement forward was to be taken place in any of the three phases until the line of the barrage was clearly seen.

The enemy were known to be dug in within 200 yds. of the Start Line so great dash was essential from the start.

All consolidations must be for all round defence as the enemy were liable to counterattack or infiltrate from any direction.

Sections of our ease were to move behind the leading Pln's to immediately clear the road of minds to enable supporting arms to be got up as early as possible.

The password was to be thoroughly known by everybody.
No hand grenades were to be used owing to the density of the wood.

'D' Coy leading was 60 strong in two Pln's of 30. The right-hand Pln. had the road included.

The two remaining Coys of the Bn were kept well behind the Start Line with the supporting arms and called up as required.

This required careful timing to ensure that the second Coy was close behind the leading Coy as phase three finished.

HOW THE ATTACKED WENT.

Phase 1.

Within 5 minutes of the start of the attack at 0330 hrs, hand to hand fighting was taking place. Some Germans were found half asleep in their trenches they were roused with shouts of wakey wakey. The bayonet and the butt stroke we're freely and effectively used. The Sten gun fired into packed slit trenches also paid a good dividend. As one or two isolated posts held on fierce hand to hand fighting ensued, the barrage had to be continued for a further 20 minutes. The Germans obviously preferred to be taken prisoner to retiring through the barraged 50 P.O.W's were taken in phase one many of them conveniently coming out onto the road forming themselves into squads and doubling in step into VALLEE the pace being maintained by a soldier and a bayonet in the rear.

Phase 2

This phase went more easily and white handkerchiefs, shirts and not so white pants were freely waived, a further 20 POWs were taken. The 30 minutes allotted for this phase proved sufficient.

Phase 3.

Phase three brought rather stiffer resistance a number of wounded Germans were found collected at the T Roads. R.E's were busy clearing mines along the road during all three phases.

Phase 4.

'D' Coy now consolidated at the first objective.
'C' Coy who had arrived just behind 'D' now moved forward to the second objective. Just outside the wood at 874459 the crew of a 75mm anti-tank gun was driven off and an 88mm was found abandoned at the X rds. 870457. The enemy were however firmly established in a house near the X rds., so 'C' consolidated on the reverse slope of the Ridge to the E. their supporting arms arrived up at 0700 hrs, the R.E's having cleared the road by this time. The O.C. then decided that the position would be materially strengthened if the house covering the X roads was demolished. He ordered his M10 Bty. Comdr to do this. This was successfully accomplished. Patrols were then able to report the X rds. clear and found 3 88mm guns in the area abandoned.

'B' Coy was in position astride the road between 'D' and 'C' Coys by 0700 hrs, and was immediately counter attacked but saw it off after one Pln. had been badly mauled.

There was a certain amount of Spandau fire from the N. and N.W. and when the mist which had greatly helped the consolidation of the three Coys lifted heavy mortar fire came down. Our tanks arrived in support at 0930 hrs.

The Bn held this position until midday on 10/8/44 when they were relieved. The results of this operation were:-

1 X 88mm anti-tank guns
1 X 75mm anti-tank gun

17 Spandau's
112 rifles
1 X halftrack troop carrier
1 X 10 tonner
1 X ambulance
142 POWs and an unknown number of German killed.

The Bn casualties were four officers and 40 O.R's.

The three-inch mortar Pln. in LA VALLEE had a very unpleasant time but no calls for support by the forward Coys were neglected.
Their magnificent fighting spirit was admired by all who ventured to see them.

Some very gallant acts were carried out by the unit stretcher bearers in particular L/Cpl. TOOK and L/Cpl. LEE were conspicuous and of course Cpl. MACDOUGALL carried on even when slightly wounded.

In an account of operations many names are not mentioned but we could go on at length and mention individual acts such as Cpl. PETHICK and his sections stand in their positions under intense fire for three days without budging, the many unrecorded deeds in 'B' Coy area but it will suffice to say that the Bn fought magnificently everyone played his part and once again the 1/7th Queen's gave the enemy a very bloody time and no doubt helped to shorten the war considerably

Lessons.

1. The timings of the fire plan must be very flexible for an operation of this kind and easily changeable.
2. A blocks barrage in very thick country is a very effective way of gaining a limited objective.
3. In thick wooded country it is often impossible as in this case for Coys to be mutually supporting. Therefore Coy positions must be cited for all round defence with continuous patrolling between Coy localities.
4. Armour must be in position with the leading infantry at first light to exploit the success obtained.

Lieutenant Colonel WD Griffith MC
Commanding
1/7th Bn the Queen's Royal Regiment.