

W A R D I A R Y

1st. Bn. Black Watch (R.H.R.) of Canada.
Month of July, 1944.

FOLKESTONE, KENT, ENG.	1st. Sat.	Weather - cloudy. Dominion Day. Everyone is in excellent spirits. Last minute preparations are going on. We can now look forward to that for which we have been asking for so long - a crack at Fritz. The veh. party left at 0100 hrs. for RUMFORD their concentration area.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
CLYNDE.	2nd. Sun.	Weather - fog in the morning, clearing in the afternoon. At 1130 hrs. the marching party left for the concentration area and arrived around 1300 hrs. at CLYNDE. After a very welcome meal most of the boys went to see a play in the camp.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
CLYNDE.	3rd. Mon.	Weather - raining. The morning was spent in resting and final equipping. We were pleased to hear, later in the day, that during the evening we would be permitted to visit the neighbouring town, BRIGHTON, EASTBOURNE etc.. Every one was back on time at 2300 hrs..	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
CLYNDE	4th. Tues.	Weather - cloudy, clearing on afternoon. As everyone was C.B. the day was spent in resting. It was announced that we would be moving early the following morning to our embarkation area. During the evening the boys drew emergency rations for two days, and completed final packing.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
NEWHAVEN.	5th. Wed.	Weather - clear and fine. Early this morning we were transported to NEWHAVEN HARBOUR in TCVs. and boarded a small cruising vessel, the "ISLE OF GUERNSEY" along with the REGIMENT DE MAISON-NEUVE and the CALGARY HIGHLANDERS. We were very crowded, averaging 58 men per room. At twilight the pipes of the BLACK WATCH and the CALGARY HIGHLANDERS played as the ship weighed anchor, and we pushed out into the CHANNEL as sailors and Tommys on the dock gave us the "Thumbs up".	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FRANCE. JUNO BEACH.	6th. Thur..	Weather - clear and very warm. After a very quiet crossing we arrived around COURMUILLE in FRANCE. We passed alongside the battleship H.M.S. "RODNEY" which had been assisting in shell- ing the enemy and breaking up his panzer attacks. This part of the Channel was busier than St. Catherine Street on a Saturday night. We reached shore and marched off to a nearby field where we shed our "Mae Wests", then marched through BANNVILLE where we had some tea and some bully beef. After an hours rest we marched through STL. CROIX and on to our area at VALERY -sur-MER where Maj. MOTZFELD, the officer of the advance party, was waiting to meet us.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
VALERY-sur -MER.	7th. Wed.	Weather - clear in morning, clouding up in afternoon. The day was occupied in maintenance and general cleaning up. During the night a force of 480 Lancasters bombed CAEN from about 12000 feet, not a single enemy plane interrupting the proceedings. Our known losses were three bombers and one fighter. One of the Lancasters, out of control, plunged headlong into the sea and burst into flames. The crew managed to bail out and are believed to have landed in the Allied lines.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>

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VALERY-sur
-Mer.
FRANCE.

8th.
Thur.

Weather - clear and fine. The vehicle party arrived last night around 0200 hrs. and today they are all busy on maintenance, etc. In the afternoon we paraded for inspection by Lt. Gen. SIMONDS. The Corps Commander reminded us that we should uphold our good name by our conduct and our fighting.

VALERY-sur
-MER

9th.
Wed.

Church parades were held today for Protestants and for Catholics. In the afternoon the N.C.Os. attended a lecture on tank recognition.

VALERY-sur
-MER

10th.
Thur.

Weather- clear and warm. The advance party, composed of Maj. Motzfeld and Sgt. Ritchie, left this morning to recce. our new concentration area as we are soon expecting to participate in the attack crossing the River ORNE. They recce. party buried some Canadians and some Jerrys. An O Group was held about 2100 hrs. for our move to the forward area. We started moving about midnight and reached our destination at 0400 hrs.. Our artillery can be heard giving the Hun no rest.

FRANKEVILLE

11th.
Fri.

Weather - cold and raining. Everyone dug in this morning and enjoyed a sleep for part of the day. Nine enemy aircraft flew over our positions during the afternoon and four were shot down. 4th. Cdn. Inf. Bde. moved into the line during the night. There was some shelling in our area, but no one was hurt.

FRANKEVILLE.

12th.
Sat.

Weather - cloudy. Same routine - everyone improving upon their slit trenches after the few shells we had yesterday. At 1430 six enemy aircraft were seen diving on Bde. H.Q.. Two were seen crashing towards the lines of the REGT. de MAISSONNEUVE who incidentally wounded and captured a sniper.

FRANKEVILLE

13th.
Sun.

Weather - cloudy and showers. No news of any move. The ARDENNE ABBEY received a few hits during air raids around our area, but we suffered no casualties.

FRANKEVILLE.

14th.
Mon.

Weather - clear and very warm. Bastille Day was celebrated at ROTS today. The guard of honour was provided by the REGIMENT de MAISSONNEUVE, our Bn. sending over as representatives Sgt. Carton from B. Coy. and Cpl. Lessard from the I. Secn.. They reported that it had been a most interesting and impressive ceremony and that it had been broadcast in French to MONTREAL. A strafing raid was made by 12 F.W. and M.E.109s, and of the three shot down one fell in flames in the area of the Regt. de MAISSONNEUVE. Shells fell in our D Coy. area, wounding Sgt. Hulley and L/cpl. Alexander..

FRANKEVILLE.

15th.
Tues.

Weather - clear and very warm. Not much change. It is now known that we will take part in the crossing of the River ORNE at CAEN and push SOUTH. During the night an extremely heavy artillery barrage commenced and continued, practically non-stop, all night.. A.Coy searched Verson for snipers and suspect civilians, finding none.

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FRANKEVILLE.
FRANCE.

16th
Wed.

Weather - clear and warm. Same routine. The C.O. attended an O. Group at Bde. regarding our first major operation. Lt. DUFFIELD, the Scout Officer, returned from the front line, having been attached to the ROYAL REGIMENT OF CANADA, 4th. Cdn. Inf. Bde., and held lectures on the precautions to be taken against enemy snipers and mortar fire, both of which had been giving the lads up front a lot of trouble. These lectures were found by all to be absorbingly interesting. The Bn. O. Group was disturbed when a few shells landed near the H.Q. Coy. office and Capt. STUART'S dug-out. The C.O. made the personnel of B.H.Q. carry out some drill on the emplacement of slit trenches.

FRANKEVILLE

17th
Thur

Weather - clear and warm. In the afternoon the C.O. held an O. Group in which he outlined the plan of the Higher Command for the break out from CAEN. The 5 Bde. will lead the advance for the 2nd. Inf. Div., the BLACK WATCH making the river crossing for the Bde., using 18 men Assault boats, and establish a bridgehead in FAUBERG de VAUCELLES. During the O.Group the Bn. was mortared, one bomb landing immediately behind B. Coy. 60cwt. cooker, killing Pts. BLEAU, WATT, GARRETT and WOOD, and wounding several others. At twilight, just after burying these men, the padre, Capt. BERLIS was wounded by another mortar bomb.

CAEN.

18th
Fri.

Weather - clear and warm. The terrific rumble of bombs falling on CAEN was heard at sunrise this morning as the R.A.F. with more than 1000 bombers opened up the new offensive. After them appeared another 1000 bombers, dropping fragmentation bombs. The Bn. moved by march route to CAEN at 0920 hrs. and concentrated on the southern side of the town. By this time the 3rd. Div. had crossed the River ORNE above VAUCELLES and were clearing towards it. Between noon and 2030 hrs. there were four O Groups, the Bn. being mortared during three of them. During the afternoon Lt. Jock NEILL was reported missing and Sgt. Nelson wounded by enemy s.a. fire from the East bank while making a recce of the area selected for the crossing. The final plan: B. Coy. with 36 men from Support Coy. plus one sec. Carrier Pl. would carry the boats across the Racetrack 0367 and cross in daylight, two pls. plus the dismounted carrier sec. at 032673 and one pl. at 035676; D Coy. taking up posn. along the ditch and line of trees bordering the river would be Fire Coy.. This was the only cover in the Race track area. C. & A., and D. Coys. would cross on a Kapok bridge, erected and placed by A. Coy. Due to the possibility of 3rd. Div. troops being in the area, the artillery concentration which we asked for was rejected. D. Coy. would be in posn. by H-15. H hour was 2215 hrs, when the Bn. broke from their cover at 031679, the platoons setting out for their crossing points by the most direct routes. When the two pls. making for the crossing point on the right flank had gone 300 of the 800 yds. total distance it was seen that D. Coy. had been delayed and had just reached the Western end of the Race track. B. Coy. kept on, and when the lead boat was approx. 50 yds. from the river the enemy opened fire with machine guns and mortars from the high ground along the East bank. The men kept on until casualties made it impossible for those not hit to support the boats. Those who were still able made for the ditch and were joined by D. Coy. and the enemy was engaged by fire.

Map.refs.
Sheet 7F/1.

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CAEN. Map refs. Sheet 7F/1 (con)	18th. Fri. (con)	The pl. making the crossing on the left flank met with no opposition. B. Coy. suffered 36 casualties including Lt. AUSTIN who died of wounds, and Maj. STEVENSON, wounded. The only boat not holed by enemy fire was the lead boat in which Cpl. Watson and a few men gallantly managed to cross the river, though Cpl. WATSON and others were killed in so doing. During this action the Bn. Medical Orderlies did magnificent work under fire, notable among whom was Cpl. STEELE of B. Coy. who tended the wounded under heavy fire with complete disregard of danger. At last light enemy planes bombed the racetrack, and upon darkness falling the Bn. crossed on the Kapok bridge and occupied the town without resistance. The night was spent in patrolling, neutralizing enemy snipers and digging in.
VAUCELLES.	19th. Sat.	Weather - clear and fine. Maj. STEVENSON was evacuated to A.D.S. at 1400 hrs. as the Regt. de MAISONNEUVE passed through our posns. to attack FLEURY-sur-ORNE which they reached and held without much difficulty. In turn the CALGARY HIGHLANDERS passed through them to Pt. 67. The Bn. moved up on the axis and took IFS where they consolidated, and during the night held firmly and beat off several counter attacks thrown against the position.
IFS.	20th. Sun.	Weather - clear and fine. F. Ech. rejoined the Bn. around 0400 hrs. at IFS and all were dug in by 0600 hrs.. Snipers were active all day in buildings and fields around our position and during the day 10 were brought in in a very shaky condition. Enemy mortars and shelling caused some casualties during the day, prompting us to seek the security of our slit trenches. Moaning Minnies were quite plentiful on our front and that of the CALGARY HIGHLANDERS. The Medical section under Capt. OHKLE in pick-up and caring for the wounded. The 6th. Cdn. Inf. Bde. attacked through us, with Artillery support, at 1500hrs. The attack went off as planned and objectives were taken. An enemy counter attack forced the SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN REGIMENT to withdraw with many casualties. Our Bn. remained firm and was placed under the command of the 6th. Bde. to counter attack.
IFS. HILL 67	21st. Mon.	Weather - Very heavy rain. Shelling and mortaring against our positions continued. During the night the 6th. Bde. had taken quite a knocking but no ground was lost. In the late afternoon we were told that we would have to attack HILL 61 to relieve the ESSEX SCOTTISH who were having a bad time. At 1800hrs. the Bn., under cover of a creeping barrage attacked successfully and consolidated, while the CAMERONS of CANADA attacked ST. ANDRE-sur-ORNE. During the night we were attacked by planes, but we suffered no casualties. Maj. FRASER commanding D. Coy. was wounded by a shell fragment while digging his slit trench and died a few hours later.

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IFS FRANCE. HILL 67	22nd. Tues.	Weather - still raining. Mortaring and shelling continues on a heavy scale and casualties are mounting. The R.A.P. continues to shine in evacuating casualties under all sort of conditions. In the morning the Bn. beat off a Jerry counter attack. The C.O. handled the situation very well. Lt. McGILL was wounded in the back by shrapnel.	<i>[Handwritten mark]</i>
IFS HILL 67	23rd. Wed.	Weather - cloudy. Around 0100 hrs. mines were laid on the road on the left of our posn. At 0400 hrs. a German fighting patrol approximately 50 strong infiltrated through the forward companies and attacked the Command Post. A short sharp fight ensued, lasting 15 minutes. Our casualties were one killed and one wounded while Fritz lost 17 killed and four wounded, while 22 prisoners were taken. During the day mortaring and shelling continued on a heavy scale with the C.O. taking all possible counter measures. At night a standing patrol was sent out to prevent the Germans from repeating last night's performance. Capt. TRAVERSY was wounded today by shrapnel. Support Coy. H.Q. was wiped out by a direct hit.	<i>[Handwritten mark]</i>
IFS HILL 67	24th. Thur.	Weather - clear and warm. At 0330 hours the mines previously laid down were lifted. Shells and mortar continue to land around us. In the afternoon the C.O. called an O Group to make preparation for operation SPRING which is to take place tomorrow. The plan: CAMERONS OF CANADA to clear ST. ANDRE-sur-ORNE, CALGARY HIGHLANDERS to take ST. MARTIN de FONTENAY and our Bn. to take MAY-sur-ORNE.	<i>[Handwritten mark]</i>
MAY-SUR-ORNE.	25th. FRI.	Weather - clear and warm. This morning at 0400 hrs. Lt. Col. S.S.T.CANTLIE, every bit a fighting man, was fatally wounded by machine gun fire while out on a recce with the I.O., Lt. DUFFIELD, who was also wounded. Lt. Col. CANTLIE died from his wounds at 0600 hrs. and was buried near the caves at FLEURY-sur-ORNE. At 0330 hrs. the CALGARY HIGHLANDERS started their attack, and from the outset a grim battle ensued. The CALGARY HIGHLANDERS did manage to get a Coy. into MAY-sur-ORNE but were unable to consolidate there. The Bn. under the command of Maj. GRIFFIN, acting O.C., formed up and went in on the attack, but the Coys. were able to get no farther than the ridge overlooking the town when they ran into a heavy concentration of fire, and of the fwd. companies, practically all are missing. F. Ech. was badly shelled and mortared on the outskirts of ST. ANDRE-sur-ORNE, where Sgt. JAMES was killed when a mortar landed in his slit trench. Capt. STUART was wounded as were many others. An attack on MAY-sur-ORNE by the Regt. de MAISONNEUVE was planned for 1900 hrs. to relieve the pressure on the Bn. but half way to the town they, too, ran into very heavy m.g. fire and were unable to reach their objectives. The BN. was now cut off, with very little chance of recovery.	<i>[Handwritten mark]</i>

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FLEURY-sur ORNE. FRANCE.	26th. Sat.	Weather - fair and windy. During the night the remainder of the BLACK WATCH were pulled back to regroup, re-equip and be brought back up to strength. A few, a very few, of those missing have managed to make their way back to the Bn. and of these, the large majority have been wounded. Maj. F.M. MITCHELL took over command of the Bn. with the rank of Lt. Col., and Lt. LAW was promoted to the rank of Capt. in the capacity of Adjutant, replacing Capt. STUART, wounded yesterday. Lt. MCKENZIE is the new I.O.. These appointments are typical of the changes which have had to be made throughout the entire Bn..	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FLEURY-sur -ORNE.	27th. Sun.	Weather - dull but warm. Reinforcements are starting to pour in and the day is spent in getting into some semblance of order once more. The O.C. addressed us today saying that in all its history, never has the honor of the "HACKLE" been higher than it is today. No more news of the missing boys.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FLEURY-sur -ORNE.	28th. Mon.	Weather - fair and warm. Slight air activity in the Bde. area during the afternoon, but no casualties. Re-organizing continues apace. We have had no more news of the missing.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FLEURY-sur -ORNE.	29th. Tues.	Weather - rain in morning, clearing in afternoon. Routine continues and things are now very quiet in this sector. The only guns we hear are our own - a most welcome change.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FLEURY-sur -ORNE.	30th. Wed.	Weather - fair, warm in afternoon. The Bn. is fast getting up to strength once more and training within the Coys. has been started.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
FLEURY-sur -ORNE.	31st. Thur.	Weather - fair and warm. As this eventful month draws to a close we find the Bn. reorganizing and re-equipping and everyone catching up on rest and sleep, the latter being disturbed more frequently by the mosquitos in our slit trenches than by the sound of the guns around our position.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>

ORDERLY ROOM
JUL 20 1944
File No. _____
1st Bn. The Black Watch
C.A.S.F.

J. J. J. J. J.
LT. COL.