WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

1 Nov 40

0400

Two large bombs dropped miles from any building, on the Downs. This is the first sign of aerial activity we have seen for some time.

Six stretcher-bearers attached to the Unit to-day from RCAMC. This will enable the band to be recalled from the Companies again.

POSTED STRENGTH OFFICERS - 31

O/RANKS - 748 - ATTACHED 4

1

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

2 Nov 40

1000

Major J.A. Bebb “A” Coy. Commander proceeded to Company Comdrs School for 5 weeks Course.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

3 Nov 40

During last night a heavy gale created a heavy sea and all night we could hear mines being exploded on the beach below the cliffs. Some of those near the School shook the buildings.

F43634 Cpl J.A. Deveau “D” Coy and F42560 Cpl Jefferson, K.M. “C” Coy returned today from Corps Junior Leaders School.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

4 Nov 40

Lt Col Greg returned to the Unit today after his illness which kept him from moving to the Coast when the Unit moved.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

5 Nov 40

Sjt Instr Tullett, Army School of PT who has been attached to the Unit for the past few weeks returned to-day to the 15 Bn Queen’s Royal Regiment.

The Unit has been so far away from the usual air-raids at our billets in Woldingham that that sort of thing had been more or less forgotten. However we heard to-day that some of our Rear party: F49875 L/Cpl F.E. Blakeney, F49820 Pte L.J. Richard, F41646 Pte L.J. Smith, F40647 Pte J.N. LeBlanc, F40590 Pte R.W. Bond, F42661 Pte L.J. Muise and two men returned from leave, F29868 Pte W.F. Ferguson and F40640 Pte L.E. Hopkins had a very narrow escape when two bombs wrecked the house next to the one in which they were sleeping. Pte R.W. Bond received a slight injury. These men then proceeded to rescue the people in the wrecked house. They have been warmly praised by the local ARP Wardens. (Subsequently L/Cpl Blakeney was cited in Army Orders).

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

6 Nov 40

There is not a great deal to record because the Unit is so scattered that Unit activity of any kind is out of the question. Nothing but routine guards and patrols.

Instructions received today that Canadian Soldiers are not to enter bombed buildings or assist in rescue operations, except where absolutely necessary.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

7 Nov 40

Lt J.R. Cameron “B” Coy returned to duty today from Corps HQ Training School, where he has been instructing.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

8 Nov 40

New combination mountings for AA and A/Tk rifles were received today for all our Platoon trucks.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

9 Nov 40

A group of Officers from the PPCLI reported today to make a recce of the Unit area in preparation for taking it over at some time in the near future.

It was found today that all the Hand Grenades issued to the Unit are defective. Sabotage is suspected, by higher formations.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

10 Nov 40

Another party reported in today from the PPCLI to recce this area.

Plans now being made for the return to billets at Woldingham and every one seems to look forward to the return.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

11 Nov 40

Armistice Day—The Unit celebrated by carrying out routine duties and patrols. Lt Col Gregg attended a ceremony at Brighton.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

12 Nov 40

Word received today that our Shoulder titles have been approved by Ottaway.

The Unit entertained at dinner tonight for the visiting Officers from the PPCLI. Lt Col A. Bock, 15th Bn QRR and staff, were also in attendance, together with Brigadier C.B. Price and Staff. The dinner was a great success and it speaks well for the cooks that they were able to do such a fine job with limited material to work with.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

13 Nov 40

Lt D. McG. Archibald joined the Unit today as a reinforcement, and is posted to “D” Coy.

F40594 Sgt R.E. Mervin “B” Coy and F41575 Sjt M.L. Zinck, proceeded to Army School of PT at Aldershot today for a Boxing Course.

ROEDEAN SCHOOL, nr. BRIGHTON

14 Nov 40

Capt J.B. Granville attached today as our new Padre.

“C” Section 12 TCC today ceased to be attached to this Unit. This is the last of the attachments that made up the compact “Z” Group of which the Unit was so proud.

The Unit today turned over to the PPCLI the area which for the past month we have come to know so well. A formal ceremony was carried out at Guard Change and the Nova Scotia flag was lowered to return once more to the staff in front of “Southdean” at Woldingham. The changeover was made very smoothly and the Unit moved out in MT Convoy, joining the Brigade Convoy at HURSTPIERPOINT. The move “home” was made without incident. Everyone seemed glad to get back to Woldingham which is becoming more and more ike home daily.

The IO attended a lecture at MERSTHAM, on MIlitary LAW, given by the DJAG Eastern Command.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

15 Nov 40

Pay Parades today occupied most of the time.

The Officers have ordered the newly approved Field Service dress cap which looks quite smart. The body of the cap is dark blue with gold piping and flesh coloured inserts in the crown, with the Unit Badge done in fine gold thread.

We received today a small quantity of steel visors for steel helmets, designed to protect the face from falling splinters. These are to be tried out as an experiment.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

16 Nov 40

Nothing of note occurred today. The time was spent mostly in getting settled again and planning for the future as it seems that we may be here for some time.

A meeting of Company Commanders was held at which L Col Gregg outlined the plans he had in mind for winter training.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

17 Nov 40

Training carried out under Company arrangements.

4 Nissen Huts to be erected in the Company areas were received today and there has been considerable scratching of heads in an endeavour to sort out the pieces and to try and start erecting one hut.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

18 Nov 40

Word received today that HON J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National Defence is to visit the Division. The CO has asked HQ if it can be arranged for him to inspect this Unit for the Minister’s native Province, and to be entertained at lunch by the Unit.

After some discussion at a meeting of Company Commanders it was decided to make quite a few changes in the dispositions of WOs and NCOs among the companies in order to smarten the Unit up a bit.

It was also decided that Major H.M. Bryson “A” Coy take over HQ Coy and that Major J.A. Hebb “HQ” Coy take over “A” Coy.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

19 Nov 40

Training carried out under Company arrangements.

Lt Col Gregg, Capt P.H. Stehelin and Lt J.O. MIllard, went to Brigade HQ to participate in an indoor Map Exercise.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

20 Nov 40

The Unit sent out a convoy of 30 odd Lorries to haul coal from Isleworth on the Thames. This is apparently going to be regular affair since it is not easy to obtain coal by rail. The boys don’t think much of the idea, naturally.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

21 Nov 40

The funeral of Pte C.J. Chiasson “D” Company was held today at Brookwood cemetery. A firing and burial party was provided from “D” Company. Pte Chiasson died as a result of injuries received when he was struck, in the blackout, by one of our own trucks.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

22 Nov 40

Major W.C. Gemmell acted as umpire today in an exercise carried out by 1 Cdn Inf Bde.

All Bn HQ Officers and some of the Company Officers today moved into private homes where they are to be billetted [sic. billeted] in order to make the space available in the Unit billets for the men.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

22 Nov 40

The Unit carried out an all day route march today for the first time in many months. The whole Unit stood up to it very well and it is planned to have a regular weekly march of at least 20 miles.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

23 Nov 40

0400

Two heavy bombs in the “A” & “B” Coy area this morning. These are the first near ones since we came back from the Coast. No damage done to buildings.

1900

Lt Col Gregg attended a dinner at Brigade Headquarters at which the Unit band played.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

24 Nov 40

Major W.C. Gemmell appointed to Command the Field Punishment Camp which is to be opened soon at Div HQ.

F39701 Sgt M.E. Varner “HQ” Coy proceeded to Div HQ where he is to undergo a short Course before being attached to the Staff of the new FP Camp.

F39679 Sjt H.S. Cuninham “C” Coy proceeded to Pl Weapons School near Dorking for a 4 weeks course.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

25 Nov 40

Lt G.L.F. McNeil proceeded to Bisley to take a Small Arms Course.

1900

Major AA Ernst, gave a Lecture to all officers at the Bn HQ Mess tonight on Gas. This subject is Major Ernst’s hobby and he certainly does know his Gases and always gives an interesting talk.

F39681 Sjt E.F. Quinlan proceeded to Sigs School where he is to take a short Course in R/T.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

26 Nov 40

The Mobile Bath Unit has been set up near Caterham and is now available to the Unit on Three afternoons each week.

F39908 Cpl K.L. Cook returned today from a six weeks Course in cooking at Guildford.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

27 Nov 40

A Working Party was sent to-day to Purley Ice Rink to help in getting the Rink ready for skating. The Division have taken over the Rink for the Winter and it is hoped to get a Hockey League organized as well as skating.

Lt Col Greg and the Company Commanders proceeded to Weybridge to hear a lecture by Hon L.S. Amery.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

28 Nov 40

As this was the Unit’s day for going to the Mobile Bath Unit the Companies marched off independently and went by a round-about 12 mile Route ending at the Baths. After Bathing the men marched back to billets.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

29 Nov 40

Lt Col Gregg, Major Harris, The Adjutant and IO and all the Company Commanders proceeded to a RV near GOUDHURST, Kent to take part in a TEWT.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

30 Nov 40

Pay Parades occupied most of the day.

F49875 L/Cpl F.E. Blakeney “A” Coy proceeded to Black pool today where he is to be the guest of the City, together with a party of ten from the 1 Cdn Div.

A meeting was held today of all the Educational Officers from the Companies, at which Lt Col Gregg outlined the plans being formulated to carry out educational work during the winter, for the troops.

A Dance was held at the Woldingham Golf Club for the men of the Unit. 75 members of the WAAF were invited and the dance was a decided success. The Regimental Dance Band provided music.