WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

1 May 41

Training to-day was carried out in the form of a Battalion Scheme, “Training in the Attack with Barrage, Control, Formations.” This scheme was carried out on the North Downs Golf Course at Woldingham.

Lieut J.W.M. Smeltzer started training the entrants for our Battalion Track and Field Day, which is to be held on the 24th May.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

2 May 41

The Battalion went on an 18-mile Route March to-day.

The Commanding Officer and the Company Commanders went to Lark Hill, Salisbury Plain to witness an Artillery Demonstration.

Competition for the Gregg Softball Trophy is well under way. The standing to date is as follows: A Coy - 6, HQ Coy - 4, B Coy - 2, Bn HQ - 2, D Coy - 2, C Coy - 0.

Strength Returns - Officers - 35 - Other Ranks - 743

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

3 May 41

The usual Company Inspections were carried out to-day by the CO.

A Battalion Sports Meeting was held to-day in the Bn Officers Mess to make arrangements for our coming Battalion Sports Day. A Softball Game was played this afternoon at Upper Warlingham between the HQ Coy Softball Team and a team made up of Officers of the Unit. HQ Coy winning 26 to 10.

A Dance was put on at the YMCA to-night for the Troops.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

4 May 41

The usual Church Parades were held at St. Paul’s Church, Woldingham to-day.

Major A.A. Ernst returned from a 7-week Staff Course to-day.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

5 May 41

Training to-day was carried out under company arrangements.

A Picture was shown for the troops to-night at the YMCA.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

6 May 41

Range Practises were carried out to-day on the 2” Mortar Range and the Miniature Range. The remainder of the Battalion trained under Company arrangements.

A Social was held at the YMCA to-night for the Troops.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

7 May 41

Training to-day under Company arrangements. All CQMSs attended a Lecture on Ammunition at the QM Stores to-day.

This afternoon was Sports Afternoon. Various Softball Games were played. Tug-o-war teams were also practising this afternoon for the Battalion Sports Day.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

8 May 41

Training to-day as per syllabus.

Movies were put on at the YMCA to-night for the troops.

A Farewell Dinner was put on at Seldon [Selsdon?] Park Hotel to-night for Lt-Col M.F. Gregg, VC, MC, who is leaving us to take over command of OCTU. Col Gregg took over command of the WNSR in Feb 1940. Besides being a very capable Commanding Officer, he was a father to each and every man in the Regiment. During the last year Col Gregg’s health hasn’t been very good and we all hope that he gets a chance for a rest on his new appointment and that he doesn’t work so hard. Every Officer, NCO, and man in the Regiment wish Col Gregg every success in his new appointment, plus some well earned promotion. Major A.A. Ernst succeeds Col Gregg as Commanding Officer of the WNSR. We all wish Major Ernst every success in his new appointment and feel confident he will carry on in the footsteps of Col Gregg as one of the best. The dinner was attended by all the Officers of the Unit and a presentation of a Silver Cigarette Box with the WNSR Crest engraved was made to Col Gregg by Major K.P. Harris, the Mess President, on behalf of the Officers of the Unit.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

9 May 41

Lt-Col M.. Greg, VC, MC, visited each Company in turn to-day to bid them farewell. A gathering of the WOs and NCOs was held at Bn HQ where Col Gregg was presented with a farewell letter. Each and every man as one expressed their regret at seeing Col Gregg leave the Unit.

Strength Returns - Officers - 35 - Other Ranks - 740

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

10 May 41

The usual Coy Inspections were held to-day by the Commanding Officer. All the Coy Comdrs attended a demonstration on the 2” Mortar and the 3” Mortar.

The usual weekly dance was held at the YMCA to-night where everybody who attended had a swell time.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

11 May 41

To-day being Sunday, the usual Church Parades were held at St. Paul’s Church, Woldingham.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

12 May 41

A Coy spent the morning on the Grenade Range, while D Coy spent the afternoon there. The remainder of the Unit went on a short Route March in the morning and trained under Coy arrangements in the afternoon. A Mess meeting of all Officers was held at Bn HQ to-night.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

13 May 41

The Brigade Exercise “Rhine” started to-day. Everybody busy turning in Carrack Room Stores, and preparing to move to our position of readiness. At 1100 hrs the CO, 2 i/c, IO, and TCO went to Brigade to attend the Brigadier’s Order Conference. At 1750 hrs the Unit crossed the SP at Godstone and proceeded to West Maling [Malling?] where we took up a Position of Readiness.

SURREY

14 May 41

AFter spending an uneventful night at West Maling, we moved out about the middle of the afternoon to go to a forward Assembly Area just East of the River Medway, preparatory to crossing the river by assault-boat to-night. At 2300 hrs the Scouts went forward and made a recce of the River bank and picked out the possible approaches to the river. These approaches were then taped and all made ready for the kick off.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

15 May 41

At 0030 hrs the leading companies started to cross the Medway. After a few mud baths and dunkings, we completed the crossing at 0230 hrs and formed a bridge-head on the West side of the Medway. When we recrossed the River later on in the morning and lined up for breakfast, it was a sight worth recording, everybody covered with mud from head to foot but singing and laughing and as happy as larks. At one time during the crossing, Ollie Whynott from A Coy had to be pulled out of the mud by three or four of his pals. He had sunk in the mud to his armpits. If it hadn’t of been for his respirator, he would probably be going yet. Another incident was when the IO was guiding the CO from one Company to another. All of a sudden, the IO vanished. The CO started looking around, wondering where the IO had disappeared to when he noticed a hole and looked down to find the IO down it, standing up to his waist in mud and water. With some assistance from the COs cane, the IO was able to extract himself and crawl back to solid ground. At another point, some of the paddlers who had worked hard in taking the boats full of men across, laid down on the bank to rest. They fell asleep and awakened all of a sudden to find that the tide had come in and was up to their waist. At 0845 hrs the Unit crossed the SP for home and arrived home about noon, tired and muddy, but all in good spirit. Everybody was given the afternoon off from training to dry out and clean up.

A Concert Party was put on at the YMCA to-night for the troops.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

16 May 41

Usual Coy Inspections were carried out by the CO this morning.

The 1 Cdn Recce Sq. put on a demonstration of the new Beaverettes for the Unit this morning on the road by the North Downs Golf Course, Woldingham.

Pay Parades were held to-day.

R.S.M. Humpherson H.S., CSM Foley R.C., Sgt Mervin R.E, and Sgt Ramey E.V. attended a short course in the Care of Ammunition to-day at the Div Amm Coy.

Strength Returns - Officers - 35 - Other Ranks - 743.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

17 May 41

Training to-day was carried out under Coy arrangements.

A Dance was held in the YMCA to-night for the troops.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

18 May 41

To-day being Sunday, the usual Church Parades were held at St. Paul’s Church, Woldingham. Thirty-five NCOs from the Unit went to the Guards Depot to-day on a Drill Course.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

19 May 41

To-day B Coy spent the day on the Grenade and Mortar Ranges, taking part in Range Practises. The remainder of the Unit went on a short Route March.

Lieut R.T. Annand and Lieut W.F. Fraser reported to the Air Ministry to-day for a Course on Meteorological Work.

Capt C.E. Miller, Lieut C.B. Cochrane, and Lieut R.W. McCarthy attended a Lecture on the “Battle of Britain,” by Mr. H. St C. Saunders.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

20 May 41

Training to-day was chiefly Platoon Inspections and some work in Patrolling.

All Officers, CSMs, Sgts and the Mortar Platoon attended a Training Film on the 3” Mortar at Caterham Drill Hall do-day.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

21 May 41

A Battalion Scheme “Withdrawal” was carried out to-day by the Unit.

Major F.B. Courtney, Capt C.E. Miller, Lieut R.T. Annand, and Lieut N.B. MacNab acted as umpires in a scheme for the Division.

A Picture at the Warlingham Hospital was attended by a number of Officers and Other Ranks to-night. Everybody had an enjoyable time.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

22 May 41

The Unit went on a 20-mile Route March to-day. A hot meal was sent out to them at noon. A/CSM Williams S.F. was selected to attend CCTU.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

23 May 41

The usual Saturday morning. Inspections were carried out to-day as to-morrow is to be our Battalion Sports Da

Major A.A. Ernst attended a Dance at 3 CID put on by the Brigadier and Staff.

Strength Returns - Officers - 33 - Other Ranks - 742

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

24 May 41

As to-day is a Canadian Holiday, the Unit held its Sports Day. There were a good number of competitors in every event. The final Company standing was: D Coy 48, C Coy 46, B Coy 42, Bn HQ 30, HQ Coy 27, A Coy 10. A special Officers’ dash was held the result being as follows: 1st Mr. R. Waldon (YMCA, Bn HQ), Lieut C.B. Higgins (Bn HQ), Capt C.U. Letourneau (Bn HQ). Brig H.M. Ganong was present. After the events, the Officers and their friends attended a Cocktail Party in the Officers Mess.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

25 May 41

To-day being Sunday, Church Parades were held in St. Paul’s Church, Woldingham. The Band was in attendance.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

26 May 41

Training to-day consisted in Lectures and Exercises in Crossing gas contaminated areas. A Battalion Parade was called on the Woldingham Village Green this morning where a Drill demonstration was put on by the NCOs who had attended Drill Courses at the Guards Depot, Caterham.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

27 May 41

The Unit took part in the Divisional Exercise “Brenda” to-day. In the morning, all surplus stores were turned in and the CO and IO went to Bde to the Brigadier’s Order Conference. CO returned to Unit about 1200 hrs and issued orders. The WNSR crossed the SP at Whytelea at 1416 hrs to proceed to Position of Readiness just South of Hothfield. At 1900 hrs we moved from our area at Hothfield to a new area just South of Kingsnorth. CO went to Brigadier’s Order Conference about 2100 hrs, and on his return at about 2300 hrs we made ready to move to a Forward Assembly Area in Sandling Park.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

28 May 41

Arrived at our Forward Assembly Area at 0455 hrs and prepared to go into the attack. Forward Companies pushed off to the attack at 0600 hrs. Objective was reached and taken about 0900 hrs. The Unit then returned to Forward Assembly Area and had a hot meal. We crossed the SP for home at 1330 hrs and arrived home about 1700 hrs, tired but happy.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

29 May 41

Training to-day was carried out under company arrangements. B Coy went to Deal to-day to do some Wiring.

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

30 May 41

B Coy still at Deal, wiring. A Demonstration was put on to-day by our 3” Mortar Platoon. All Officers, WOs and Sgts attend a Lecture to-day at the Drill Hall, Caterham, by the Brigadier on “A/Tank Tactics”.

150 Officers and Other Ranks attended a Training Film at the YMCA to-night.

Strength Returns - Officers - 33 - Other Ranks - 738

WOLDINGHAM, SURREY

31 May 41

The usual company Inspections were carried out by the Commanding Officer. Pay Parades were held to-day.