WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

BIGGIN HILL[, KENT]

1 Aug 41

0800

Coys carry on as per syllabus and new Carrier personnel undergoing rigid training. Adjt Capt Millard proceeded to London on military business, returning in the afternoon.

1200

Brig Ganong visited this HQ and conferred with Lt-Col Ernst. STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 33 Other Ranks 741.

BIGGIN HILL

2 Aug 41

0800

General routine, Coys busy wiring.

1000

Lt-Col Ernst and Maj Webb were members of a general Courts Martial held in Church Hall, MERSTHAM.

1500

Bath parades all Coys.

2000

The weekly dance was held in the hall at Keston. A large number attended and a good time was had by all, including several officers who were accompanied by the CO.

BIGGIN HILL

3 Aug 41

0830

RCs held Church services in the YMCA tent.

1000

C of E parades were held on the Cricket Pitch.

1100

Snipers Smith, Cameron and Lowden proceeded to Borden on a Snipers course. 2” mortar personnel participated in range practice at the range in WOLDINGHAM.

BIGGIN HILL

4 Aug 41

0800

“A” “B” “C” and “D” Coys start intensive 3” mortar training.

1800

Maj-Gen Price together with Lt-Col Foulkes, Lt-Col Laing and Maj Fordyce all of 3 Cdn Div visited this HQ.

BIGGIN HILL

5 Aug 41

0900

Adjt Capt Millard proceeded to London and successfully defended two of our lads who were in the “toils” over the week-end.

1530

Brig Ganong visited this HQ and conferred with Lt-Col Ernst. One Pl from “A” Coy proceeded to Woldingham range to hut for unexploded mortar bombs and were successful in locating them.

1730

Lt-Col Ernst, Capt Millard and Capt Letourneau attended a gathering of Allied Officers at the Overseas League in London as guests of Sir Justin Lucas. Among the distinguished gathering were: Lady Willingdon, Dutch Foreign Minister, the Rt. Hon. Arthur Greenwood and Cyprian Beaumont, MP. This, we are informed, was a very colorful affair.

1900

Seaforth of C. visited this Regiment and a game of Soft Ball was indulged in, also Volley Ball and Tennis. The visitors won the Soft Ball go with a score 7-2, while Tennis, and Volley Ball were won by this Regt.

BIGGIN HILL

6 Aug 41

0800

Coys busy, general routine and wiring.

1600

CO and Adjt proceeded to Brigade and attended conference re general organization.

1900

CO left on “7 days.”

1930

Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

7 Aug 41

0830

General routine. This has been an unusually quiet day. Tps pursuing daily tasks etc.

1930

Concert party at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

8 Aug 41

0830

Coys busy wiring and trench digging.

1330

Sports at the Cricket Pitch. Soft Ball, Volley Ball and Horse-shoes.

2000

Dance at Keston Hall.

STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 34 Other Ranks 743.

BIGGIN HILL

9 Aug 41

0800

Training has been suspended for the time being in order that slit trenches be dug in Coy areas.

1500

The Brig visited this HQ and conferred with the CO.

1930

Bingo tonight at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

10 Aug 41

0830

RCs held Church parade to the YMCA where services were held.

1000

C of E and ODs paraded to the Cricket Pitch where services were held.

2000

Sing Song at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

11 Aug 41

0830

Coys busy digging slit trenches. Capt Smith, Lieut Beaton and Lieut Johnson proceeded to Croydon where they attended an Officers driving and maintenance course. This is also a vehicle holiday.

1400

50% of Bn HQ attended a SA training class. Balance of personnel will attend tomorrow. These classes will continue throughout the month.

1500

Major Bryson, 2 i/c, attended a conference at Bde re forthcoming Exercise “Roft.”

1900

Coy cmndrs conference by 2 i/c re Exercise to begin Wednesday next. Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

12 Aug 41

0800

Personnel of Bn preparing for Exercise which will take place tomorrow.

1330

Maj Bryson 2 i/c and Coy cmndrs attend a conference at Bde re Exercise “ROFT” tomorrow.

1930

COs conference re Exercise ROFT.

Bingo at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

13 Aug 41

0800

Bn ordered to stand to. Personnel busy getting Barack Room stores together in preparation for Exercise ROFT.

1700

Bn crosses starting point at main gate in the following order: “C,” Bn HQ, “HQ” Coy, A, D, and B Coys. Bn marched 13 miles to embussing Pt.

2100

Bn arrived at embussing Pt and waited 5 ½ hrs for tcv’s who were to transport tps to concentration area.

BIGGIN HILL

14 Aug 41

0220

Tps emboss and proceed to concentration area near DUNFOLD [sic. DUNSFOLD].

0510

Tps reach concentration area, DUNFOLD.

0530

Bn HQ set up in URNINGFOLD [sic. BURNINGFOLD] HALL.

0600

Tps turn in for rest which was well earned.

1530

Weather report received which indicates bad weather, rain etc.

1830

COs conference re move to new area.

2025

Bn passes SP on march to new concentration area.

2330

Bn passes Bde SP. It is now raining quite heavily and very dark.

BIGGIN HILL

15 Aug 41

0600

After a march of 26 miles in the rain, the Bn reached MINSTED and fell out by the side of the road and slept in the rain and wet. During this march there were many casualties caused by blistered feet. After these casualties were attended to by the RAP who were in the rear of the convoy, they were “pitchforked” off the truck and got along as best they could for the balance of the march. Those who were able, partook of their “haversack” breakfast.

0950

Brig Ganong arrived and warned the Bn to be ready to move at any time after 1030 hrs. The R22eR and Carleton & York have gone forward while the West NSR was to be held in reserve.

1030

Bn standing to in reserve.

1230

CO calls conference of Coy cmndrs.

1415

Bn HQ A B C and D Coys move out to support the right flank of Bde.

1530

CO held conference with Coy cmndrs to discuss new orders which have just arrived from Bde by LO. The West NSR is to push through Carleton & York and take up position 5 miles ahead in WILDHAM WOOD in preparation of assault on the enemy who are holding LAMBDOWN HILL about one mile SE of WILDHAM WOOD. CO issues orders for Unit to proceed to WILDHAM WOOD and take up position for the night.

2200

Bn arrives at WILDHAM WOOD in heavy rain after a small skirmish with the RMR who were in position immediately NORTH of WILDHAM WOOD. Bn took up position, had a hot supper and bedded down for the night.

STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 34 Other Ranks 743.

BIGGIN HILL

16 Aug 41

0200

Our IO, Lieut Higgins proceeded to Bde to learn of any information re attack today.

0300

IO returned to Bn HQ with orders for CO and traces.

0800

Tps get breakfast and prepare for attack on LAMBSDOWN HILL. CO issues orders to attack and take LAMBSDOWN HILL on a 2 Coy front and exploit forward to the road WEST DEAN, MID LAVANT.

1000

Leading Coys B and D cross the start line and go into action followed closely by A and C Coys who are acting in support of B and D Coys in first phase.

1115

LAMBSDOWN HILL captured and supporting Coys A and C, push through to exploit as far as road WEST DEAN, MID LAVANT.

1200

Exercise “ROFT” concluded.

1300

Major General Pearkes and Hon Angus L MacDonald, Minister of Naval Affairs for the Dominion, visited the Unit. Officers were introduced to “Angus L” by Major Bryson. “Angus L” talked with the Officers for some time about affairs here and at home.

1400

Unit starts for embussing Pt at CHARLTON. Through the good graces of Maj-Gen Pearkes, the West NSR busses embussed the tps at SINGLETON, which saved quite an unnecessary march.

1700

Tps embussed and started for home.

2200

Tps arrived home wet, early, and worn out but still happy.

BIGGIN HILL

17 Aug 41

No Church parades were held today owing to the lateness in return of Regiment last night from Exercise ROFT. Range practice was also cancelled on account of this.

1000

Bath parades continue until 2000 hrs. L/Cpl Shaw, Pte Affleck and Pte Foster proceeded to Borden on a Snipers Course.

BIGGIN HILL

18 Aug 41

0800

Coys busy digging slit trenches and wiring. Pay parades.

1400

CO, IO, and Coy cmndrs RV at Bn HQ and proceed to Bde for Brigadiers comments for and against Exercise ROFT.

1915

Concert Party at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

19 Aug 41

0800

Coys busy wiring and trench digging.

1400

Sports at the Cricket Pitch this afternoon.

1600

Certain personnel took part in a Medical Exercise “Cascara” for the purpose of training the medical personnel of the Units in the handling of casualties in action. From Bn HQ those attending were: MO Adjt, 8 stretcher bearers and five of the medical staff.

BIGGIN HILL

20 Aug 41

0800

Personnel of Coys busy wiring and digging slit trenches.

0900

Lieut Higgins and Snipers Section proceed to HANGMORE RANGE for rifle practice, returning at 1930 hrs.

1400

SA training for employed personnel.

1700

Personnel who participated in Exercise, “Cascara” returned. This scheme was an outstanding success.

1930

Concert Party at the YMCA. The “T.W.E.R.P.S.” from Bromley put on a splendid show.

BIGGIN HILL

21 Aug 41

0800

Coys busy wiring.

1400

SA training continues for the employed personnel of the Unit.

1930

Concert Party from London put on a show at the YMCA. This was an exceptionally good show and was managed by Sunny Millar of radio fame.

BIGGIN HILL

22 Aug 41

0800

Coys carry on according to syllabus. Wiring, and more wiring. Nothing of import to report for the balance of the day. STRENGTH RETURN: Offices 34 Other Ranks 743.

BIGGIN HILL

23 Aug 41

0830

A number of the personnel from the various Coys including Bn HQ RV’d at the main gate and proceeded by bus to Aldershot where they witnessed the Cdn Forces Track and Field Championships. These Sports were under the patronage of Lt-Gen A.C.L. McNaughton, GOC Canadian Corps, Maj-Gen the Hon P.J. Montague, Senior Officer CMHQ and AIR Commodore L.F. Stevenson, AOC Royal Canadian Air Force.

Sports get under way. 1 Cdn Div on a whole were the winners taking 45 points while L/Cpl “Tommie” Falls of this Unit won the Shot-put.

Premier W.L. McKenzie King and Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner were also present. Major Hebb returned from Farnboro where he has been attending a course in air photography.

BIGGIN HILL

24 Aug 41

0830

RCs attended Church parade in the YMCA hut.

1000

C of E and ODs paraded to the Cricket Pitch for Divine Service.

BIGGIN HILL

25 Aug 41

0800

Coys continue wiring.

1400

SA training continues with employed personnel of this Unit.

1500

Brigadier Ganong visited this Unit and conferred with Lieut-Col Ernst.

1930

Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

26 Aug 41

0800

Coys busy wiring. Major Bryson proceeded to Odiham airport where he will participate in a short course re AILO.

1330

Bn formed up at main gate and proceeded by TCVs to the Guards Depot, Caterham, where the entire Brigade was inspected by Rt Hon W.L. McKenzie King, Canada’s Prime Minister. The Guard of Honour was composed of personnel of the R22eR. With the Prime Minister were, Lt-Gen McNaughton and Maj-Gen Pearkes. The Prime Minister spoke for about fifteen minutes in which he delivered a message from “the folks back home” to the boys over here, at the conclusion of which, three “rousing” Nova Scotian cheers were tendered the Prime Minister. Bn returning to Biggin Hill at 1830 hrs.

1930

Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

27 Aug 41

0500

The Sniping section in charge of Cpl Francis proceeded to SHORT SIBERIA RANGE for rifle practice. Lieut Higgins left for same range at 0800 hrs.

1000

Capt Millard proceeded on recce for a rifle range in the vicinity of GODSTONE. Lt-Col Ernst proceeded to Div and attended conference.

1400

SA training continues for employed personnel.

1930

Movies at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

28 Aug 41

0800

Coys engaged in wiring and general duties.

1600

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

1930

Bingo at the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

29 Aug 41

0800

Coys engaged in wiring and general duties etc.

1330

Pay parades start with Bn HQ.

1400

Bde Major and Bde IO visited this HQ and conferred with CO.

1500

Bath parades starting with Bn HQ. STRENGTH RETURN: Officers 35 Other Ranks 739.

BIGGIN HILL

30 Aug 41

0230

First casualties arrived at RAP in the exercise of handling bombed casualties.

0800

Coys continue wiring. The last casualty arrived at RAP bringing the total to 36 which had been “cleared” through the RAP in the performance of this exercise.

0900

Capt Millard proceeded to LONDON on military business. Lieut. Higgins made a recce in the vicinity of WESTERHAM regarding a rifle range for the purpose of zeroing rifles in the coming week. Pay parades continue with A, B, and D Coys.

1600

West NSR Orchestra proceeded to LONDON where they played at the Overseas League.

1930

Dance at Keston Hall sponsored by the YMCA.

BIGGIN HILL

31 Aug 41

0800

Cpt Francis proceeded on PT course.

0900

Usual Church parades on the Cricket Pitch.

1000

Lieut Higgins accompanied by four members of the section proceeded to WESTERHAM to prepare targets for rifle zeroing during the coming week.

1200

Pte Purdy and Pte Wall proceeded on Snipers Course at WHITLEY.