WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

NEWHAVEN

1 Dec 42

0800

Working parties the same as yesterday.

1630

REgular weekly training conference held at Bn HQ.

1830

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert attended a lecture at Bde HQ.

NEWHAVEN

2 Dec 42

0800

The usual work party of three officers and one hundred and fifty ORs proceeded to local farms to pull sugar-beet. As a result of these work-parties training within the unit has been almost completely disrupted during the period we have been supplying them.

1400

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert and Maj J.A. Hebb visited the Bde Carrier and Mortar school.

1900

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert attended a TEWT at Div HQ.

NEWHAVEN

3 Dec 42

0700

Maj J.A. Hebb proceeded on course to Barnards Castle, Co. Durham.

0800

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert paid a visit to the NCO school.

1000

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert attended a conference at HQ 1 Cdn Div.

1900

A cloth-model exercise, “Bn in the Defence” was held at Bn HQ.

NEWHAVEN

4 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1530

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert proceeded to Bde HQ to attend a training conference, following this a TEWT was carried out at 1600 hrs. Field Return.

NEWHAVEN

5 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus. Lieut D. McG. Archibald and Lieut A.W. Rogers appointed to rank of Capts.

NEWHAVEN

6 Dec 42

Church parades as per. Otherwise a very quiet Sunday.

NEWHAVEN

7 Dec 42

Maj W.C. Gemmel SOS to NETD. Maj P.H. Stehelin assumed command of Sup Coy.

1600

All officers attend a conference at Bn HQ. This is in addition to the regular weekly conference due to the large number of questions re administration as well as training.

NEWHAVEN

8 Dec 42

0800

The AA Plat and Bren gunners of two coys carry out AA firing at balloons. The Carrier, Mortar and A/tk Plats have returned from the school where intensive training was carried out under Bde arrangements. This period of training is said to have been highly beneficial.

1600

Regular weekly training conference held at Bn HQ. Lieut C.L. Putnam proceeded to No 3 CTS Borden to act on the instructional staff.

1930

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert attended a TEWT conducted by 1 Cdn Inf Bde. The TEWT was in the nature of combined operations.

NEWHAVEN

9 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus. The unit was allotted two station-wagons said to be in a decrepit condition and a water trailer (ditto) today.

1900

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert attended a TEWT at HQ 1 Cdn Div.

NEWHAVEN

10 Dec 42

0100

Maj J.A. Hebb returned from course.

0700

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert, Maj P.H. Stehelin and Lieut H.M. Eisenhauer along with several ORs proceeded on skeleton sig exercise “Hunters?” On this exercise Lt-Col Bogert acted as chief umpire of 3 Cdn Inf Bde and Maj Stehelin acted as OC West NSR.

NEWHAVEN

11 Dec 42

0800

Maj J.A. Hebb went with a Bde recce party to Tunbridge Wells to look over a range on which this unit will carry out firing practise during next week. They also investigated the matter of billets which we will occupy during that period.

1000

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert and Lieut K.M. Eisenhauer attended a TEWT in the Snap Hill Barn area. This was in the nature of “Inf in the attack in co-operation with tanks”. Maj P.H. Stehelin proceeded on a one day course on camouflage at Tunbridge Wells.

1400

The first trial game of the Bn soccer team was played on the Recreation Grounds, Newhaven. The team, which is under the direction of Lieut J.K. Rhodes and P.S.M. Henning, [sic.] is said to have shown great promise. Field Return.

NEWHAVEN

12 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1030

O gp conference held at Bn HQ to make final arrangements for the move to Front Range.

NEWHAVEN

13 Dec 42

Church parades as per.

1715

Ten officers and two hundred and ninety-nine ORs proceeded by train to Tunbridge Wells. The Bn will carry out this range practice in two groups. This first group was comprised of A and C Coys and half of Sup Coy and Bn HQ who will be firing on 14 and 15 Dec 42.

NEWHAVEN

14 Dec 42

0800

The remaining half of the Bn carried out training as per syllabus. Capt Kennedy of the Carlt & York R called to complete arrangements for the taking over of the anti-raid role in this Bn area by that unit during the night of 15/16 Dec 42.

NEWHAVEN

15 Dec 42

Pay parades as per.

0900

Conference at Bn HQ to complete arrangements for the move of the second half of the Bn to Tunbridge Wells. Lieut A.J.W. Dyer SOS on being appointed staff learner at HQ 3 CIB.

1800

B and D Coys, remaining elements of Sup Coy and Bn HQ plus the Scout and Sniper Secs proceeded [sic.] by train to Tunbridge Wells. Arrived at 2130 hrs.

2100

First group returned by train to Newhaven.

NEWHAVEN

16 Dec 42

Second group carry out firing practise. Weather very wet and hazy. Visibility poor.

NEWHAVEN

17 Dec 42

Second party finish practise. Still raining quite hard causing very poor shooting conditions.

2030

Second party, less Scouts and Snipers, return by train to Newhaven. The Scouts and Snipers remain until tomorrow, when a Bde Scout and Snipers shoot will be carried out.

NEWHAVEN

18 Dec 42

Maj J.A. Hebb, Lieut R.W. Bullock and Lieut S.F. Williams attend a conference at Bde HQ in connection with a Bde concentration of Carrier and Mortar Plats for the purpose of intensive training, to be held at Rottingdean commencing 20 Dec 42. Instead of the usual Bn parade Lt-Col MP. Bogert inspected each Coy in their own area in the order worn on the range in order to eliminate certain minor differences in turnout. The Scout and Sniper Secs of this unit firing in the Bde meet won the shoot by a healthy margin, the score being (average per man) West NSR 74, R22eR 65 and Carlt & York 61. But in spite of this it is felt that the team, on a whole, suffered from lack of practice.

NEWHAVEN

19 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus, otherwise very quiet.

NEWHAVEN - SEAFORT [sic.SEAFORD]

20 Dec 42

The Carrier and Mortar Plats moved to the Bde concentration area at Rottingdean. The remainder of the unit less certain elements left for normal duties, moved to an area near Seaford to carry out Inf training in co-operation with tanks.

SEAFORT (sic)

21 Dec 42

The four rifle Coys marched out to the Snaphill training area where the officer i/c of a Sqn of the 12 AT Bn gave a lecture on the general characteristics of tanks, including performance and armament. This was followed by a complete crew of a Churchill tank, each of whom recited in exact detail the nature of his duties in the tank. Following this all members of this unit were given the opportunity to explore the tanks under the guidance of the officers and NCOs in charge of them. Also all officers liaised with their opposite numbers in the AT Sqn and prepared their Plat exercise for the following day. Weather very disagreeable, raining throughout the day.

SEAFORT (sic)

22 Dec 42

0900

Each Plat was put through a Plat exercise supported by one troop of tanks. After each exercise constructive criticism was offered. The weather was even more disagreeable than yesterday, rained constantly and the mud was very deep.

1100

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert, Capt J.R. Cameron and Capt S.D. Smith attended a demonstration put on by elements of 2 Cdn Inf Bde. This demonstration illustrated the fire-power of an Inf Coy.

SEAFORT (sic)

23 Dec 42

0900

Each Coy was put through an exercise involving one Sqn of tanks in support Constructive criticism was again offered after each exercise. The day turned out to be clear and cold, all the tps entered heartily into the spirit of the exercises and much profitable experience was derived therefrom.

1600

The Bn arrived back at their billets in the Bn area.

NEWHAVEN

24 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1600

Weekly training conference held at Bn HQ. Today the unit was granted an advance in pay in order that they may properly get into a festive mood and celebrate the Xmas holiday.

NEWHAVEN

25 Dec 42

This being Xmas day, is to be treated as a Sunday, normal duties only to be performed. Contrasting with the merrymaking at the Xmas Eve dance at Drove Hall, Xmas day was appropriately ushered in by midnight Mass at C Coy mess hall. Thereafter, “not a creature was stirring” until 0830 hrs on Xmas morning, when Holy Communion services began at Christ Church, Newhaven, followed by similar services at C, D, and Sup Coy areas. Solemnities dutifully fulfilled, at 1100 hrs the officers of the Bn gathered in the mess at Peacehaven, where the clinking of glasses, handshakes and cries of “Merry Xmas” announced the opening of Xmas day festivities. Brig Chas. Foulkes called to wish the officers a Merry Xmas. At 1200 hrs the officers dispersed to their various Coys to be present at the men’s dinner. And what a dinner! Turkey and roast pork in abundance, which, with numerous supplementary dishes, heaped the deep, wide-rimmed plates to full capacity. At Drove Hall, B Coy and Bn HQ were seated along three rows of tables, brightly decorated with red and green with a row of candles in the centre, and a gift from the Knights of Columbus at each place. Here the NCOs served the men, while the officers assisted in tapping a bountiful supply of beer. Shortly before dinner egan, Brig Foulkes entered the hall, commented on the pleasant decorations, then departed. Lt-Col Bogert, who had been visiting the Coy messes in company with Brig Foulkes, wished the men a Merry Xmas, and expressed the hope, which was enthusiastically received that next year we would be having our Xmas dinner with our families at home. While this happy party was in progress, similar scenes might be seen throughout the Bn where, to use the words of Capt J.W.K. Smeltzer, OC A Coy, “all ranks basked in the happy atmosphere of goodwill”. With the comfortable laziness which followed such a hearty repast, the afternoon was spent quietly. Everyone who had access to a radio, listened to His Majesty’s broadcast to the Empire at 1500 hrs, and the Cdn Forces programme, including Gen MacNaughton’s message at 1730 hrs.

1900

The officers at Peacehaven mess sat down to a dinner that would have “stumped” Goering and made Goebbels blush with shame. In the cheerful light of flickering candles the table, with its appetizing burden of turkey, pork and Xmas cakes, brought back memories of the “Old Order of Good Cheer”, and to those of us who were present to drink a toast to the King and to our absent friends, it was indeed “good cheer” and a fitting ending ot a merry Xmas. Field Return.

NEWHAVEN

26 Dec 42

Training as per syllabus. Lt-Col M.P. Bogert spent a large part of the morning with the A/tk Plat. Lieut J.W.K. Smeltzer today appointed to the rank of Capt.

NEWHAVEN

27 Dec 42

Church parades as per App 1, otherwise a very quiet Sabbath.

NEWHAVEN

28 Dec 42

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1400

This is the last day of the NCO class, Lt-Col M.P. Bogert gave a closing address. The standard of this class is very high.

1430

Brig Chas Foulkes called, and he and Lt-Col Bogert went to an area near Glynde to look at some ground suitable for putting on a demonstration of flat trajectory weapons in the attack. Later it was found that this ground could not be requisitioned.

1830

All officers of the Bn met at officers mess, Peacehaven, to discuss, chiefly, training for combined operations.

NEWHAVEN

29 Dec 42

1100

Lieut H.M. Eisenhauer proceeded to A range, Burling [sic. Birling] Gap, to attend a demonstration of a quadruple Bren mounting. This mounting appeared quite effective, it was the opinion of a large number of the officers present that the very rapid expenditure of ammunition would detract considerably from its value.

1600

Weekly training conference at Bn HQ. C Coy officers visited the Carrier & Mortar concentration area of Rottingdean to plan a demonstration of a Coy in the attack teamed with Carriers and Mortars. This morning a message was received cancelling the special training scheduled to take place during Feb. This evening the BM informed Lt-Col M.P. Bogert by phone that the decision to cancel the special training had been reversed. Capt C.R. Day returned from secret mission and immediately proceeded on leave.

NEWHAVEN

30 Dec 42

Training as per syllabus except C Coy which carried out a rehearsal of the demonstration which they will put on tomorrow.

NEWHAVEN

31 Dec 42

0800

All available officers and NCOs attended a demonstration in the area of Rottingdean. In this an Inf Coy (C Coy, West NSR) was organized as combat teams on conjunction with Carriers and Mortars (from Bde Concentrations) i.e. each of the two fwd Plats having under command two Secs of Carriers and two detachments of Mortars. The combat teams demonstrated attacks on outer posns of the enemy encountered during the approach march. It was quite impressive. IN summing up Brig Chas Foulkes pointed out that smoke should only be used to screen movement of tps and not during the final assault which should be covered by fire as long as possible. He also suggested that mortar fire should be used as a heavy concentration before the assault and not frittered away uselessly.