WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

NEWHAVEN

1 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

Preparations for the move to Inveraray are being made. Sixteen lorries and ten M/Cs were loaded and made ready for their journey by road.

NEWHAVEN

2 Mar 43

0700

Transport move off for CTC. Inveraray moving in a Bde group as per. Five days are being allowed for the complete trip, night halts to be made as Stevenage (89 miles), Doncaster (132 miles), Carlisle (142 miles), Glasgow (95 miles), the group to arrive at Shira Camp, Inveraray on the fifth day. Training as per syllabus.

NEWHAVEN

3 Mar 43

0800

Training as per.

1930

A TEWT was held at Bde HQ on Combined Operations. Lt-Col R.D. King, DSO, Capt J.R. Cameron, and all Coy Commanders attended.

NEWHAVEN

4 Mar 43

The Bn in two sections moved out of billets proceeding to OTC Inveraray. Two Coys of the H and P. E. Regiment took over the operational role of West NSR. Details as per.

Remaining at Newhaven is a rear party of 48 under command of Capt D.H. Neilson. Party proceeding to Inveraray when joined up with advance troops already there will total 32 unit Officers and 663 other ranks.

Capt D. McG. Archibald has been detailed as Bde MLO for the period of Combined Training and is proceeding with Bde HQ.

NEWHAVEN

5 Mar 43

Six Bren-gun Carriers were loaded for transportation by rail to Inveraray.

1630

Main body of troops arrive at Shira Camp, Inveraray. The transfer from train to boat at Ardrossan, Ayrshire came as a welcome change to all ranks and the really fine weather and pleasant scenery did much to revive spirits and lighten the burden of the last mile which was made on foot. Field Return.

NEWHAVEN

6 Mar 43

0800

Work commenced immediately and training is being carried out as per syllabus.

1230

Transport which left Newhaven on 2 Mar arrived at camp. All drivers report that weather was exceptionally good during the whole trip and that the journey was much enjoyed in spite of the distance covered.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

7 Mar 43

0800

The Bn proceed by LCT to field firing ranges to carry out a field firing practice as per.

1730

Troops arrive back at camp having used 75 rounds of ammunition per man during the exercise. Weather quite favourable and training so far is being enjoyed although the extremely rugged nature of the country provides planety [sic.] of hard work on all exercises.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

8 Mar 43

0820

All officers of the Bn and enough WOs, Sgts, and Cpls to make a total of 80 attend a lecture on Bde Group Landings at the lecture halls, Town Camp.

1030

The entire Bn attended films and lectures re Combined Operations at the main Cinema, Dukes Camp. All troops stayed at the Cinema until mid-afternoon but sandwiches and tea were served at noon under unit arrangements.

The weather broke with a vengeance today. Heavy rain and sleet through the day.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

9 Mar 43

0745

Part of the Bn embarked from Salmon Beach and proceeded by LCT to the LSI, SS Duke of Argyll where boat drill was practised under realistic conditions.

Weather Quite good today. Training as per Syllabus.

2000

The Officers of Shira Camp sponsored a dance at Inveraray. Brig Chas. Foulkes and several of the Brigade staff were present.

Maj MacAdam formerly of the West NSR and now G2,1 Cdn Div called on this unit today.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

10 Mar 43

0800

Training as per Syllabus.

Morning started with heavy rain and high wind which continued through the day.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

11 Mar 43

0300

A and B Coys carried out Pl and Coy landing practice in darkness as per Syllabu

Wind and squalls made the weather unfavourable for this practice.

2000

C, Sup, HQ, and Bn HQ carried out same practice as above. Weather conditions much better.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

12 Mar 43

Weather fine. Training as per Syllabus.

Final landing table was draughted from Bde landing table for Exercise “Eagle”. This is a Bde Exercise in which Bns are to be practised singly. Object of the exercise is to practise assault landings by day on a two Coy front, and the capture and consolidation of a beach-head. Field Return.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

13 Mar 43

Weather good. Training as per Syllabus.

1230

Troops move off for Exercise “Eagle”. The Bn including a portion of its MT embarked at Auchnatra Beach. From the time of embarkation until Zero (1500) the LCs cruised up and down Loch Fyne off the beach on which the Bn was to land. AT 1445 hrs the two assault Coys, A (right) and B (left and equipped with LCRR ) went in on Ardna Slaite and Ardna Beaches respectively under cover of smoke screen from LCS. The initial landing was successful and the reserve ( C ) Coy followed by Bn HQ and Bn Transport. When the beach-head was well secured the Bn reorganized on Ardna Beach and with the exception of the wheeled transport returned to Salmon Beach by LCT.

Brig Chas. Foulkes at the conclusion of the Exercise expressed satisfaction at the manner in which the assaulting troops had conducted themselves. The landing at consolidation was a complete success and the unit transport came ashore at the appointed time and place in good order and without the slightest confusion.

1730

Outline plan for Exercise “Dalmally” was discussed at Bde Commanders conference.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

14 Mar 43

0800

RC Church Parade (voluntary) at Dukes Camp.

0830

A list of priorities which had been prepared the previous night was submitted to Bde HQ.

Protestant Church Parade held at Dubh Loch, Shira Camp, Capt R. Phillips, , our Padre, officiating. The CO complimented the troops on their smart turnout and conduct on this parade and caused a notation to that effect to be put in Daily Orders for the day.

Following Church Parade training was conducted as per Syllabus. Lt-Col R.D. King, Maj J.A. Hebb, and Capt J.R. Cameron prepared preliminary landing tables for exercise “Damally”.

1230

Above tables were submitted at Bde Comdrs conference, and battalion commanders were briefed for the coming exercise.

1630

Battalion training conference held to discuss trg for the following day. It was announced here that the GOC 1 Cdn Div, Maj-Gen H.L.N. Salmon would be in the Bde area and inspecting the training of this unit at various times from 1400 hrs 15 Mar to 1400 hrs 16 Mar.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

15 Mar 43

0900

Bde landing table for exercise “Dalmally” received.

1900

A and B Coys carry out LSI training as per Syllabus.

1700

Bn Comds brief all Coy Commanders for exercise “Dalmally” on a model at Bde HQ. Arial [Aerial] photographs were also used.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

16 Mar 43

0800

Training as per Syllabus.

1800

Bn HQ and A Coy practise LSI training.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

17 Mar 43

Training as per Syllabus.

1800

Troops embarked on the various landing craft from 1800 hrs to 2130 hrs and stayed on these craft until 0130 hrs (Zero).

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

18 Mar 43

0115

A flare signal from HMS St Hellier [sic. Helier] signified that the exercise would take place.

EXERCISE “DALMALLY”

0130

A and B Coys touch down on Able Green (Salmon Beach) and Able White (Admirals Beach) respectively. The success signal was sent up from A Coy very shortly afterward, but no signal was received from B Coy. Lt-Col R.D. King immediately ordered C Coy to land on A Coys [sic. Coy’s beach, and A Coy to take Able White Beach in reverse. This was promptly carried out.

0215

Bn HQ landed on Able White Beach and pushed rapidly on to the assembly area (Malt Lands). The Bn moved off from the assembly area C Coy leading, followed by a skeleton Bn HQ, B Coy, Bn HQ proper, and R.C.E. The advance to Taynafead Aerodrome was harassed by a few enemy patrols but continued so swiftly that the airport was seized well before first light. Following capture of the airport the C&Y R. pushed through and launched an attack on the high ground beyond. As thos [sic] attack came to a conclusion (about 0920 hrs) the “Cease Fire” was given and the Regiment marched back to Shira Camp, arriving there at 1145 hrs.

Balance of day spent in organized rest.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

19 Mar 43

1000

Coy Commanders conference held to make arrangements for the return to Newhaven on the morrow.

1430

All officers attend conference at main Cinema, Town Camp. The Brigadier C.T.C., Chief of staff C.T.C., and Brig. Chas. Foulkes summed up the exercise “Dalmally” and the lessons which were learned both naval and military. As far as the West N.S.R. was concerned the exercise was on the whole well carried out.

1630

The semi-finals and finals of an Inter-Brigade Cutter race were held in Loch Shira, the course running from Salmon Beach to the stern of H.M.S. St. Hellier lying off Inverary Pier. In the first heat the West N.S.R. team scored an easy victory, as did also the C & Y R. in winning the second heat. The race between these two Regiments was strongly contested, the C & Y R. winning by a few feet. Following the races the Brig. C.T.C. presented to both teams prizes donated by the officers of 3 Cdn Inf Bde. Field Return.

SHIRA CAMP INVERARAY

20 Mar 43

0715

A, B, and C Coys with elements of Bn HQ including Lt-Col R.D. King, D.S.O., marched to Inveraray pier from which they embarked and proceeded to Ardrossan by ferry. At this point the train was boarded for Newhaven.

1310

The remainder of the Bn less transport with Maj. P.H. Stehelin in command were transported by lorry from Shira Camp to Dalmally where they entrained for Newhaven.

NEWHAVEN

21 Mar 43

0930

Bn arrived at Newhaven station and dispersed to Coy areas.

1100

Remainder of day spent in distributing kit and arranging billets, and taking over our normal operational role from the H & P.E. Regt. C Coy acting as duty Coy.

Transport loaded on trains at Arrochan [sic. Arrochar] and proceeding by train to Newhaven.

At the end of C.T.C. training it has been found that the two weeks of training were very instructive and most beneficial to all ranks. All troops have displayed the most keen and intelligent interest in the work at all times.

NEWHAVEN

22 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1100

Meeting of Coy Comdrs at which the C.O. outlined the training for the coming week.

2000

Lt-Col R.D. King, D.S.O., proceeded to H.Q. 1 Cdn Div to attend Bn Comdrs T.E.W.T.

NEWHAVEN

23 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1600

Lt-Col M.P. Bogert visited the unit.

NEWHAVEN

24 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus, otherwise a very quiet day.

NEWHAVEN

25 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1400

Bn parade held on Recreation Grounds, Newhaven.

NEWHAVEN

26 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

First instructions re Exercise “Past” were received.

Field Returns.

NEWHAVEN

27 Mar 43

0800

Training as per syllabus.

NEWHAVEN

28 Mar 43

Church parades as per.

NEWHAVEN

29 Mar 43

This day was spent in preparation for exercise “Past”.

1600

Conference at Be H.Q. re exercise “Past”.

1800

Bn O Gp conference re “Past”.

EXERCISE “PAST”

30 Mar 43

0920

Bn move over Bde S.P., rd june at Rottingdean, en route to concentration area near Burgess Hill. Marching tps arrived this area at 1655 hrs. A and F Echs moved off at 1250 hrs along the same route and arrived at 1345 hrs. B Ech proceeded to a Divisional Administrative area at Halland.

2100

Lt-Col R.D. King and Capt J.R. Cameron proceeded to Bde 0 Gp.

2245

Bn O Gp.

EXERCISE “PAST”

31 Mar 43

0630

Bn cross Bde S.P. (Ditchling) and marched to concentration area in Barham Pk by way of Hassocks, Steyning, Washington and Storrington. During this arch the coln was attacked several times by enemy A/C, also the advance was delayed at Wiston X Rds while the R22eR mopped up enemy posns near Washington.

2030

Lt-Col R.D. King is now acting as Brig Comdr and Maj P.H. Stehelin assumes command this unit. Bn O Gp held at this time. Before the ration lorries came up the Bn had to push on to Amberly and cross the River Arun by assault boat.