

1/5th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary November 1944  
November 1944.

1st Nov. Area E 160464.

From O.P. slight movement of enemy seen in positions along AFTWATERINGS canal from 177473 to 171483 which our 3" mortars stonked. Slight enemy reaction.

Awards for Gallantry announced of DSO to Maj. H.J. NANGLE, MC to Capt. H.D. MOORE R.A.M.C. & Lt. L.J. WHEATLEY, & MM to Cpl. F. SHEPHERD and Pte. J. PILKINTON.

2nd Nov. Night 1/2, Recce patrols 1. To sluice gates 161494. 2. To 175467, N.T.R.

Very slight enemy movement seen over canal but snipers score hits.

3rd Nov. Night 2/3 Patrols 1. Recce to sluice gates 161494. 2. Cover mine laying & recce between standing patrol at 179462 to 177 467, had N.T.R.

Lt. A.R. CLACK and Lt. A.N. STONE join Bn.

4th Nov. Night 3/4. Patrols 1. Standing at 171493 to stop infiltration. 2. Standing at 178461 with similar tasks had N.T.R.

1615-2000 hrs. Diversionary fire plan carried out by Bren guns & 3" Mortars to cover initial phase of attack by 51 H.D. on AFTWATERINGS "Island" brought slight enemy return fire.

7 Reinforcements received & posted.

5th Nov. Area 133435.

Night 4/5 Standing patrol at sluice gates 161494 contact enemy there find mines & note flood water to be increasing.

1500 hrs. Bn. moves to conc. area, KAATSHEUVEL 1343.

6th Nov. Area E 245487.

1300 hrs. Bn. moves via LOON OP ZAND 1539, UDENHOUT 2038, x rds. 223360, HELVOIRT 2640, x rds. 258418, Bridge 249442, x rds. 259474 to HAARSTEEG 2448 – arriving 1510 hrs.

1 O.R. killed, 1 O.R. wounded by booby trapped teller mines.

Lt. F.J. COX leaves Bn., posted to 101 Rft. Gp.

7th Nov. From O.P. considerable enemy movement seen (digging, M.G. posts, 88mm, A.F.V.) N. of R. MAAS which were stonked by our arty.

8th Nov. 1315 hrs. O.P. reports much enemy movement.

O.P. abandoned as enemy stonk area heavily.

Lt. G.W. BEVAN joined Bn. from 1/7th Queen's.

9th Nov. Area E 270408.

1300 hrs. Bn. moves to conc. area HELVOIT 2740 on relief by Cdn. Lincolns.

10th Nov. Area K 661874.

0920 hrs. Bn. moves via TILBURG E. 1732, POPPEL 1320, MERKPLAS 0010, BEERSSE 309906, LICHTAERT K 0395, CASTERLE 0697, GHEEL 0988, NEERPELT 3994, Peer 4083, BREE 5084, KINROY 608410, ITTERVOORT 6687 where Coys relieved 1st Bn. Ox. & Bucks L.I. (71 Bde. of 53 Div.) after last light.

- 11th Nov. Area K 661874.  
N.T.R.
- 12th Nov. Night 11/12 Recce Patrols 1. To house at 675893, 2. To house at 678884, had N.T.R.  
Slight enemy shelling & Mortaring at long intervals. O.P. see enemy occupation of Pill Box at 686888  
which 3" Mortars & Arty. stonk heavily.
- 13th Nov. Night 12/13 Recce patrols 1. To Canal bank at 675895 has N.T.R., 2. Recce to 894994 saw enemy  
patrol. 3. Ambush to 672897 has N.T.R.  
Slight enemy shelling & Mortar fire during day. Some enemy movement seen by. O.P.
- 14th Nov. Night 13/14, Patrols 1. Recce to canal, 678889 – 681886, 2. Recce to canal 675895. 3. Ambush at  
680882, had N.T.R.  
1600 hrs to 2030 hrs. Diversionary fire plan by Bren gun groups and 3" Mortars to assist 1/7th  
Queen's in this attack on lock at 690898 draws slight enemy return fire. Snipers have 9 certain kills  
& 1 possible.
- 15th Nov. Night 14/15, Patrols, 1. Fighting to surround houses at 674894. 2. Recce to canal at 676895 had  
N.T.R. Last light recce patrol to bridge 682885 had N.T.R. finding enemy positions on our side of  
canal unoccupied.
- 16th Nov. First light Recce to 682895 show enemy have withdrawn on our front following upon 53 Divs.  
Advance.
- 17th Nov. 3 O.R's wounded by mines. Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema, baths, Ensa  
concerts, Discussions, "Griff" talks, Games & P.T.
- 18th Nov. N.T.R. Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema, baths, Ensa concerts, Discussions,  
"Griff" talks, Games & P.T.
- 19th Nov. 12 Reinforcements received & posted. Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema,  
baths, Ensa concerts, Discussions, "Griff" talks, Games & P.T.
- 20th Nov. Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema, baths, Ensa concerts, Discussions, "Griff"  
talks, Games & P.T.
- 21st Nov. Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema, baths, Ensa concerts, Discussions, "Griff"  
talks, Games & P.T.
- 22nd Nov. Sgt. G.W. TAYLOR granted immediate emergency Commission.  
Bn. during rest period has recreational activities (Cinema, baths, Ensa concerts, Discussions, "Griff"  
talks, Games & P.T.
- 23rd Nov. Area, K 714884.  
0915 hrs. Bn. moves (Bn. HQ & "A" & "B" Coys only) via bridge 682886 to HEEL 7188 where it is to  
relieve 4th Welch Bn. Our arrival probably observed by enemy, arty. & Mortar fire kill 2 O.R's.
- 24th Nov. 1700 hrs. Ambush & mine laying patrol to 733878 contacts enemy there & 1 O.R. is missing.  
Slight enemy shelling of HEEL during am & last light.  
C.O. writes account for circulation, of SOMME river crossing by Bn. 1st & 2nd September 1944.

## Appen. J1

- 25th Nov. Awards for Gallantry announced of DSO to C.O. Lt. Col. J.H. FREELAND, Maj. J.E. EVANS & Maj. J.A. BALL.  
Slight enemy shelling of HEEL at midday & early evening.
- 26th Nov. Night 25/26 Patrol to houses at 733878 scores hits there with P.I.A.T bombs with no enemy reply.  
21 Reinforcements received & posted.
- 27th Nov. Night 26/27 Fighting patrol to secure houses at 733878 is driven off by enemy fire. 3 casualties.  
Slight enemy shelling of HEEL during day.
- 28th Nov. Extension of flooding in locks area 733878 stops any patrols there by us.  
Lt. G.W. BEVAN promoted A/Capt. w.e.f. 14th October 1944.
- 29th Nov. N.T.R.
- 30th Nov. Area K 602744.  
First Light. Bn. commences move via Bridge 682886 to KINROOL 6084, MAESEYCK 6379, to conc. area at ROTHEM 6074 where reorganisation of 131 Bde. is to take place.  
20 Reinforcements & posted.

Lt. Col. J.H. Freeland DSO.  
Comdg.  
1/5th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regt.

30/11/1944.

## Appen. J1.

THE CROSSING OF THE RIVER SOMME.  
1st and 2nd September 1944 by 1/5th Queen's.  
Written by the Comdg. Officer Lt. Col. J.H. Freeland.

### 1. GENERAL SITUATION.

After crossing river SOMME on 31st August 44 the Bn. advanced rapidly to river SOMM not once deploying for battle. 7th Armd. Div. was leading 12th Corps advance which was acting as left flank protection for the more rapid thrust of 30 Corps further to the East. Little opposition was met by 22nd Armd. Bde. but many prisoners in a disorganised state were captured. On approaching the SOMME, the Div. was ordered to seize a crossing about 5 miles east of ABBEVILLE and to capture this place. While the Div. was deploying the Bn. received orders to go off on an independent mission to guard the bridge at PICQUIGNY 6 miles West of AMIENS at which place the R.E's we're building a bridge.

### 2. SITUATION AT PICQUIGNY.

On arriving at PICQUIGNY at 1500 hrs. with "A" Coy group leading as advanced guard (Major E.W. BALL) the situation was entirely different to that given to the C.O. 8 D.L.I. 50 Div. who were advancing on the right of the Div. had been in possession of PICQUIGNY since 0900 hrs. that morning after a stiff fight to clear

the town. The Boche had blown the bridge and were still on the far bank and continued to give trouble from Spandaus and Mortars.

The R.E's were therefore waiting to start on the bridge as soon as enemy opposition was cleared. 8 D.L.I. received orders to move East that evening and it was therefore up to the Bn. to clear the enemy from the far bank and protect the bridge site.

Meanwhile shortly after the Bn. arrived 50 Div. arty. Stonked enemy positions on the far bank and our Mortars joined in. The enemy's reaction to this was to leave his positions and stream up the open rolling downs in full view giving the Gunners including "D" Battery 3 RHA which was as usual support to the Bn. a perfect "Larkhill shoot". The M.M.G'S joined in and the Boche were hurried on his way.

### 3. THE CROSSING.

Meanwhile "A" Coy who had taken up position on the near side of the demolished bridge quickly dashed across a wooden footbridge and formed a close bridgehead in ground thick with trees and hedges with a village about 500 yds. in front. No enemy could approach "A" Coy in daylight without being seen from the near bank from which our Arty. and Mortar O.P's and M.M.G'S could do the necessary execution. "B" and "D" Coys then took up positions on the near bank with the troop of 17 pdrs. which could cover the hills on the far side.

Shortly after dark when everyone had settled down for the night feeling rather pleased with themselves at having formed a bridgehead over the famous SOMME without a single casualty orders were received for the whole Bn. to cross the river and concentrate 1000 yards on the far side as soon as the our R.E's had completed the bridge. The whole Div. was also to cross this bridge and push on any towards St. POL bypassing ABBEVILLE which was now to be left to the 1st Canadian army to deal with.

The Bn. completed its concentration on the open hills on the far bank by 0500 hrs. in the pouring rain with 2 Coys up astride the road and near to a demolished Flying Bomb site around which the bomb craters gave evidence of the accuracy of the RAF's concentrated attacks. From dawn onwards 22nd Armd. Bde. past N.E. through our position and about 1200 hrs. the Bn. followed on. The capture of the Flying Bomb site was a very satisfactory for those members of the Bn. who live in London or Southern England while our rapid advance through the SOMME country so famous in history was an astonishment to everybody as it was here that the first organised Boche resistance to the breakthrough was expected.

A few prisoners including some wounded were captured on the far bank at dawn on 2nd September.

#### Officers Serving 16th November 1944

Lieut.-Col. I. H. Freeland  
Major E.W. Hall  
Major J. E. Evans  
Major D. A. Grant MC  
Major E. W. Hall  
Major H. J. Nangle DSO  
Major G.R. Ball  
Capt. W. G. Chatterton  
Capt. G. F. A. Cole  
Capt. W. T. Crook  
Capt. J. C. Franklin

Capt. R. C. Maclean  
Capt. P.N.P. Plunket  
Capt. D.J. Watson  
Capt. R.J.C. Marshall  
Lieut. M.L. Baker  
Lieut. D. B. Bangham  
Lieut. G. W. Bevan  
Lieut. A. R. Clack  
Lieut. C. F. Dickson  
Lieut. E. W. Franklin  
Lieut. W. E. Gell

Lieut. F. T. Newcomb  
Lieut. R. G. Newell  
Lieut. A. N. Stone  
Lieut. A. L. Trewby  
Lieut. L. J. Wheatley MC  
Lieut. A.M. Traplin  
Capt. F. D. Packer (Q.M.)  
Capt. H. D. Moore, MC, R.A.M.C  
Rev. V. C. Castle R.A.Ch.D.