Second World War Unit War Diary - Arthur Huyshe Yeatman-Biggs

The following is from the National Archives WO 172/4900

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**WAR DIARY**

Province: C-2118

12 MAY 44. BURMA. 1100. 47 Coln - Contacted Recce Plt at Pl 1400, and went into bivouacs. Returned S/D. and rest following day. Weather extremely hot.

13 MAY. 0400 hrs. 47 Coln - Attacked by Jap patrol with mortars estimated 30 strong. Original intention to stay until first light, and then clean up. Japs, however, made excellent use of cover, and as they were inflicting casualties on men and mules, it was not known whether they were an advance party of a bigger force moving up behind, it was decided to pull out. Main portion of Coln moved down boulder strewn charities with precipitous sides. It eventually became necessary to leave the charities. This necessitated off-loading the mules, and men-loading up the sides for some 800 ft. Japs failed to follow up, probably due to fact that their off was killed. Arrived bivouacs 1700 hrs.

Own casualties:

**Killed**: 69. (Major YEATMAN-BIGGS & Lieut SUTTLE)

**Wounded**: 39. (Adj Holmes)

14 MAY. 0400 hrs. 47 Coln - Walking wounded despatched under Capt. MAJSTA for flying out by light planes from NAMATAING 8074.

Coln ordered to move to MAINTHEIMING 796970, and proceeded via MAINTHEIMING 796975 - MAINTHEIMING 790875 - Pt 3390 33587300 - NANSANG chaung - MAINTHEIMING.

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**WAR DIARY**

Province: C-2118

4 - 10 MAY 44. BURMA.

**SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION**

**1 - 10 MAY 44. BURMA.** Garrisoned WHITE CITY. Enemy restricted their activities to spasmodic and ineffective shelling and sniping, and one air attack by approx 17 planes. During this time remainder 14 Bde concentrated in area of block to act as "buffers" to cover evacuation.

**14 MAY.** 1400 hrs. 47 Coln - Attacked by Jap patrol with mortars estimated 30 strong. Original intention to stay until first light, and then clean up. Japs, however, made excellent use of cover, and as they were inflicting casualties on men and mules, it was not known whether they were an advance party of a bigger force moving up behind, it was decided to pull out. Main portion of Coln moved down boulder strewn charities with precipitous sides. It eventually became necessary to leave the charities. This necessitated off-loading the mules, and men-loading up the sides for some 800 ft. Japs failed to follow up, probably due to fact that their off was killed. Arrived bivouacs 1700 hrs.

**OWN CASUALTIES:**

**Killed**: 69. (Major YEATMAN-BIGGS & Lieut SUTTLE)

**Wounded**: 39. (Adj Holmes)

**10 MAY.** 0400 hrs. 47 Coln - Attacked by Jap patrol with mortars estimated 30 strong. Original intention to stay until first light, and then clean up. Japs, however, made excellent use of cover, and as they were inflicting casualties on men and mules, it was not known whether they were an advance party of a bigger force moving up behind, it was decided to pull out. Main portion of Coln moved down boulder strewn charities with precipitous sides. It eventually became necessary to leave the charities. This necessitated off-loading the mules, and men-loading up the sides for some 800 ft. Japs failed to follow up, probably due to fact that their off was killed. Arrived bivouacs 1700 hrs.

**OWN CASUALTIES:**

**Killed**: 69. (Major YEATMAN-BIGGS & Lieut SUTTLE)

**Wounded**: 39. (Adj Holmes)
Dear Sir Claude,

Thank you very much indeed for your kind letter of the 8th December.

I will not pretend that the disbandment of our battalion has not been a very sad blow to us all. Many of my officers and men had served together since the formation of the battalion, and had a most wonderful pride in the unit. As a comparative newcomer, I am extremely proud to have commanded them, as, in my small experience, I have yet to see a keener, more intelligent, and a better disciplined body of men, than they were when I took over command.

There are two things by which we console ourselves. Firstly, that we have been lucky enough to go into action as a unit before disbandment, and secondly, that the majority of the battalion are still remaining within the Regiment.

Again thank you very much for writing. We do so appreciate it.

Yours sincerely,

P.H. WILFORD.

His Excellency General Sir Claude J.H. Anckinkock,

My dear Wilsford,

During the past few months it has become increasingly difficult to keep our British Infantry battalions out here up to strength. It is now unfortunately necessary to reduce temporarily the number of active battalions.

The excellent work done by the battalion when fighting in Burma recently with the Special Force is well known and full recognised but, after very careful consideration of all the many factors involved, and after a reference had been made to the War Office, I decided most reluctantly that the battalion under your command would have to be one of those to be disbanded.

It is, however, a consolation to me, and I hope it will be to you also, that the fine and well trained fighting material in the battalion will be available for the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment, which has been chosen to serve with the re-organized Special Force.

I wish you and all ranks the very best of luck and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

C.H. AUCHINLECK.

Lt. Col. P.H. WILFORD,
Commanding,
7th Bn. The Leicestershire Regiment,
C/o No. 20 Adv Base P.O.