

## Second World War Unit War Diary – Cave Bradford

The following is from the National Archives WO 169/10310

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY. (Erase heading not required).

Month and Year July 43 1610

Unit 1st Bn The York and Lancaster Regt

Commanding Officer Lt Col D. C. Tennant

Army Form C. 2118

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendices.
SUEZ.	1.		Bn on the KT 101 sailed from Suez up the Canal to Port Said & arrived same evening. Weather fine.	
	2.		Bn Route March + Swimming Parade at Port Said.	
	3.		Bn Boarded KT 101 at Port Said.	
	4.			
	5.		KT 101 sailed from Port Said.	
	6.			
	7.		at Sea.	
	8.			
	9.			
SICILY	10.		Bn embarked on LCA 1401 from KT 101. & proceeded in Assault waves to beaches. H Hour 0245 hrs. C + B Coy landed east of the objective at 041144. At 0340 hrs & met slight opposition from Coastal Troops. 4 Enemy Killed, 30 Italian P.W. taken. LCI with 2 1/2 A Coy landed at the left of	Appx. 'A'

3043 - PMED - 500,000 - 4.42

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendices.
SICILY			How Green beach at 055175. at 0500 hrs & met slight opposition. LCI was subjected to shelling & mortar fire & one direct hit was scored which prevented unloading of stores.	
			Bn HQ with Lt Col D.C. Tennant on LCA 1019 met MG & Gun fire coming into beach. A direct hit was scored & landed on LCA on the water line but the craft was beached safely without a casualty. The LCA landed on the same beach as the LCI.	
CASSIBILE			D Coy in LCAs 1012, 13 & 14 landed on How Green beach at 0410hrs proceeded to capture the Railway Bridge & Road Bridge over the River Cassibile.	
			At 0740 hrs the Bridges over the River Cassibile were captured. Bn HQ advanced with 2 Coy forward to capture CASSIBILE. At 0905 hrs CASSIBILE was entered by A + D Coy & Bn HQ. B Coy took up covering position to the North of the Roads from the North. Enemy fighters & Bombers were very active.	Commando already in possession

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certainty at their first appearance. SIRMAL and, joining up with Capt. C. HOLMROD and party, were taken to the village, which had just been captured. The coy occupied a defensive position against the others to the W. of the village. The only action the coy had seem up to this time had involved Lieut. I. MCNEILAND and 7 pl., who had liberated some 200 prisoners.

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Copy A

BEACH LANDINGS.

We stood on the deck of the Dutch ship "EOLLEBURG" and watched the dim outline of SICILY. Earlier in the evening our bombers had flown over towards the island, and we could now see, round about 2100hrs, the fires burning in SIRACUSA and the flashes of the enemy anti-aircraft guns. The sea was rough, and the L.C.I.s alongside the bigger boats seemed too frail to survive. SICILY seemed very near, although when we first sighted it the convoy was some 40 miles away. After darkness most of us went below, some to play cards and talk, others to snatch a few hours of sleep. Sleep suddenly assumed a vital importance for we wondered when we would next be in a position to get any.

The two leading companies, 'B' & 'C' set off in L.C.I.s at the appointed time. 'B' Coy under Major D.B. Webster, were landed 55 minutes late and over four miles from the proper beach. They advanced along the edge of the cliff towards CASSINILE BRIDGE (060170) and on the way stormed and captured four enemy posts, killing three and capturing thirteen men of 206 Coastal Division. The coy lost Cpl. BARTER and Pte. Makin.

Having consolidated in the BRIDGE area, they formed a P.O.W. cage. Enemy air activity over the beaches was fairly strong and Pte. BUSH was killed in one such raid. Later the Coy was ordered to the area North of CASSINILE where the rest of the Bn was consolidating.

'C' Coy, under Capt. K.F. Brehaut, landed about the same time as 'B' Coy. They had a rough journey from the ship and their craft landed at a part of the coast where the cliffs were 12 - 18 feet high and dropped sheer down to the sea. Before touching down they picked up some survivors of the AIRBORNE BDE.

Striking inshore, the Coy met some of the 8 D.L.I. and about a dozen hysterical civilians, who bawled "Viva Americani" presumably to prove their own war aims. Questions revealed that the Coy's landing was made between AVOLA, 2 MBS, E.S.W., and CASSINILE, 7 MBS, N.E. Moving East they located Bn Hq. and were soon engaged in assisting 'D' Coy attack some pillboxes near the RAILWAY BRIDGE at 050179.

These activities delayed the Coy until about 1200hrs, by which time everyone needed a refresher. So tea was brewed. Then they moved on to CASSINILE and were put in position to cover the Northern approaches to the village along with the remainder of the Bn.

Cpl. BROAD and Pte. RISHWORTH were wounded.

'D' Coy, who were due to land at 0300hrs actually touched down at 0400hrs and so were the first coy to reach the shore. Capt. C. BRADFORD led the coy towards the Ry running parallel to the beach and thence to CASSINILE. They captured the CASSINILE BRIDGE defences, getting 11 Italians prisoners. As arranged, the coy, less 17 pl, met a patrol of the 6 SEMAPHORE at the level crossing and were told that this Bn were then attacking the village. Lt. A.P. DICKSON and 16 pl were sent forward to contact the attacking forces, but the village had already been taken on their arrival. This pl. remained to block the roads leading N.W. from the village, later being joined by most of the coy.

In the Bn defensive position the coy lost one man killed (L/C. Thrippleton) and one wounded (Pte. Cutts) through enemy fire.

'A' Coy was late in landing mainly because the L.C.I. failed to report to the ship's side on time, and they were landed on the wrong side of the beach. Travelling with the coy was Major E.C.J. WOODFORD and Bn Hq. While approaching the shore the craft came under fire and the men had only just disembarked when it received a direct hit. Capt. J.B. COOKE led the coy along the beach under cover of the cliffs to an orchard, where they were shortly joined by the Commanding Officer. Firing was going on, but not directly at their position. Having fixed their location the coy advanced East along the CASSINILE rd, joining up with Capt. C. BRADFORD and part of 'D' Coy at the level crossing W. of the village, which had just been captured. The coy occupied a defensive position alongside the others to the N. of the village. The only action the coy had seen up to this time had involved Lieut. I. MACFARLANE and 7 pl. who had liberated some BRITISH P.O.W. by killing their Italian captors and wiping out an enemy M.G. post. Pte. BENJAMIN of 9 pl. was killed after the coy had moved into position in the CASSINILE area.



BATTALION COVERING POSITION.

Having completed their various tasks, all coys concentrated in the area immediately N. of CASSINILE and were allotted their defensive zones.

The beaches were being bombed continually by the enemy. We watched the numerous dog fights with interest, and every time an enemy plane was shot down in flame the men raised a terrific cheer. The veterans of NORWAY were not slow to recognise the difference between that campaign and this. NORWAY had been a failure through lack of vital equipment, there had been no A.A. guns to ward off the GERMAN aircraft. It was different here in SICILY. The A.A. defences were marvellous, and everytime enemy planes appeared, our own aircraft seemed to appear in droves.

It gave us all a sense of security. The men were enthusiastic to see the enemy being beaten up. The several batteries around our position took a good toll of the Italian and German (mostly German) planes. We fired our Brens on numerous occasions, but only because our enthusiasm had overcome our better judgement; the attacking aircraft seldom came low enough to give us a good target.

Civilians were already streaming back to the village and the outlying farms. These seemed not to mind our presence, and after being conducted to headquarters were allowed to return to their homes.

Long strings of Italian prisoners were brought down the road by forward units. No Germans were seen up to now.

The enemy continued to bomb the beaches at various periods throughout the day, but only one bomb fell within our immediate area. It killed one NCO.

Patrols were sent out at nights but failed to encounter anything of interest.

The following day 11 July, the Bn proceeded to FLORIDIA and rested the night in some fields to the N. of that town, which had fallen only a short time before. We still had our small packs and the men were tired after the long march through having to carry the additional weight. So the packs were loaded on transport when we continued the march the next day.

We set off at 0430hrs, with 'A' Coy as advance guard, moving along the coast road to PRIOIA. Throughout the march we had a grandstand view of our bombing of AUGUSTA harbour and a good many dogfights in which our planes did gallant work.

On reaching PRIOIA Lieut. A.C. WILSON was ordered to take 9 pl. forward in carriers to MELLIE BRIDGE, which had been reported in the hands of the enemy. The BRIDGE area was found clear, but they were heavily mortared. This was the first occasion that the Bn had come across GERMANS, for there was no doubt as to who was manning those mortars. The Commanding Officer arrived in his carrier shortly after the leading troop and was wounded while observing the country ahead from the BRIDGE, Capt. R.N.B. MILWOOD O.C. A/tk pl. who had also come up with some of his guns and had taken command of the party, was killed. Part of 9 pl. was deployed to the right flank and the enemy were seen and fired on. Mortar bombs continued to drop in the vicinity of the BRIDGE and Lieut. A.C. WILSON was left behind with a small body of men to hold the BRIDGE. There were a number of casualties. Among the first people wounded, apart from the C.O. was Lieut. C.E. MAY, of the A/tk pl. Two Bren carriers and two A/tk portees were set on fire and were total losses. The other vehicles were dispersed while still under fire to a wood down a side road to the right of the bridge. Pte. KELLY, a portee driver, volunteered to drive some of the wounded men back to Bn Hq. All exits from the bridge were under heavy fire, but some of the wounded were in such a bad condition that the risk had to be taken. Pte. KELLY showed great daring in volunteering for this humane task. He knew the danger and undertook it cheerfully. The two wounded men he was carrying were killed when the portee received a direct hit just after starting off back over a low hill in the rear of the bridge. His portee was burned out and Pte. KELLY himself died after trying to save the men inside. Sgt. MURPHY, of the carrier pl. who had been put in command of the portee so he could make a report on the situation was also wounded along with several others who were nearby at the time and tried to render assistance.

It was not until darkness that the other wounded men could be evacuated. They had to be carried over rough country and then placed in carriers. These carriers were part of a patrol under Lieut. J. MARSHALL, who before reaching the bridge, had penetrated 11 miles into enemy held territory and killed the crews of two tanks. When the wounded men had been taken back in carriers the party holding the bridge consisted



of Lieut. A.O. WILSON, Sgt. ROBINSON, Ptes. DUNWORTH (A/tk pl.) PARLETT, MURDOCK, SMITH H. and MOORE. Sgt. HUNT (Apl.) and Pte. CLARKE 'A' Coy.

They were ordered to withdraw about 2300hrs, having been under heavy fire over five hours.

### THE BATTLE OF TENTUELLA.

13 July was the first day the Bn went into action as a unit. We advanced past MILLIE BRIDGE towards VILLASIMONDO, with Lieut. A.P. DICKSON and 16 pl. ahead. This pl. was held up by heavy enemy mortar and M.G. fire at TENTUELLA, and the sect of carriers under command *Lieut. J. Marshall* had to retire a little way back. The pl. took up a position on the right but could not push any further forward. 'D' Coy were there for 3½ hours and Capt. C. BRADFORD put in an attack with 18 pl. (Lieut. G.L. HENLEY) under covering fire from the other two pls. The attacking pl. was only able to go forward about 50 yds. No trace was found afterwards of Capt. C. BRADFORD while Lieut. G.L. HENLEY was killed along with six of his pl.. There were several casualties in the other pls, and Capt. J.W. KNIGHT, 2 i/c, was wounded at Coy Hq. which was heavily mortared. The coy withdrew on orders from the Commanding Officer.

'C' Coy were also held up by fire and deployed to the E. of the road.

When Major H.C.J. WOODFORD as the Commanding Officer, received the news of 'D' Coy being held up he went to see Capt. J.W. KNIGHT at the Coy Hq. At the same time the head of the Main Guard had reached an area which came under shell fire. The C.O. thought that this fire was being directed from O.P.s on the high ridge to the left so he sent 'B' Coy to seize the hill and thereby get observation on the enemy position. He also ordered 'C' Coy to move forward to the right of 'D' Coy to assist that coy as to reconnoitre the flank. Capt. KNIGHT of 92 Pd Regt who was F.O.O. with the Bn went up the group of buildings at the road junction and made an O.P. from which he conducted his Battery's fire. Soon after his arrival there two of our 3" mortars which the C.O. had sent forward at Capt. C. BRADFORD's request came into action and Sgt. CROFTS went to the gunners' O.P. to direct their fire. Almost immediately these buildings were blown down forcing the occupants to withdraw.

By 1100hrs 'C' Coy who were sent forward on the right in support of 'D' Coy were only just ready to move forward from the start line about 500 yds S. of the road junction. At this time the Bde Comd. came to Bn Hq. and ordered the C.O. to put in a Bn attack for which support was to be given by 92 Pd Regt and 1 Squadron of Sherman Tanks. There remained at the C.O.'s disposal only 'C' Coy, already formed up, and 'A' Coy in reserve. Orders were given for the attack to be made by 'C' Coy on the right and 'A' Coy on the left. The main road, incl. to 'A' Coy being the inter-coy boundary. The Div. arty were to fire concentrations on the enemy positions, while the C.L.V. firing A.P. Smoke and H.E. dealt with the enemy pillboxes located at the road junction. These had been re-occupied after 'D' Coy's withdrawal.

'C' Coy under Capt. K.F. BREHAUT, reached the enemy P.D.Ls without meeting any more opposition than long range M.G. fire. Then the fire thickened and enemy mortars opened up. The coy was going forward with 13 pl. (Lieut. R.M. MacNICOL) on the left, 15 pl. (Lieut. B. LANG) on the right, and 14 pl. (Lieut. P.A.K. BOSCAWEN) in reserve. On reaching the edge of the last field Lieut. R.M. MACNICOL was held up by intense fire, while Lieut. B. LANG was in similar circumstances on the right. Capt. K.F. BREHAUT who had led the coy with great coolness and daring, went back to Coy Hq. and sent a runner to ask for covering fire. All wireless sets in the coy were out of action. The coy at that time were on top of a deep ravine some 200 - 300 yds wide. The whole area was covered by enemy pillboxes on the opposite slopes and as he held the higher ground to the North, he used his mortars with great effect. His snipers were also active. Capt. K.F. BREHAUT again sent a runner back for help, and later CSM. CULLY DON. also went back on orders. The Coy Comd. was wounded, and the coy eventually withdrew, still under fire.

On the left, 'A' Coy were led into the attack by Capt. J.B. COOKE, and along with the 2 i/c Capt. C.B. de JAGER ~~was~~ seriously wounded in the first few hundred yds. The whole coy came under heavy M.G. and mortar fire and were unable to advance. Lieut. E. MACFARLANE and Lieut. A.O. WILSON with only three men each, managed to penetrate over the two ravines to a point overlooking the enemy positions and fired Brens and rifles. The enemy mortar bombs then set light to the grass around them, and Lieut. E. MACFARLANE, who had gone back to report on their situation, returned with orders to withdraw.

(Contd. sheet 4).

'B' Coy on the high ground to the left, found it impossible to get down the escarpment. They remained on the heights, and Major D.R. WESSELY formed an O.P. and through messages on his 18 set which were transmitted to the Bn and thence from the P.O.C.'s set to the Bty, was able to direct the fire of the 25pdrs on the enemy positions. At 1700hrs the coy was attached to 1/L.O.Y.L.I. for the latter's unsuccessful attack against the same positions after we had withdrawn. It took no active part in the attack but covered the Bn's withdrawal. Pte. FOK was killed by a sniper.

During the attack by 'A' & 'C' Coys, the arty support was only partially effective. The gunners did all they could but were badly hampered by lack of observation over the well concealed enemy positions and their P.O.C. Capt. MIDDLETON had his carrier and its wireless set destroyed by a direct hit in attempting to get to a satisfactory position.

The No. 11 set from Bde sigs, attached to Bn HQ, was burnt out as a result of a direct hit, and Lt-Col. DOUGLAS of the 1/L.O.Y.L.I. who came forward to recon. for a further attack by his Bn, was wounded by mortar fire.

The strength of the enemy position was further demonstrated when the 1/L.O.Y.L.I. attack went in later (1730hrs) with heavier arty support. It was also brought to a standstill and driven back. During the battle the O.L.Y. squadron lost 6 out of 8 of its Shermans by A/tk fire.

Throughout the day the behaviour of the Bn was most satisfactory, and was late the subject of a message from the Corps Comd.

After this Bn attack we were sent back slightly to the rear to reorganise and take up a defensive position. A hot meal was served and a roll call taken. We were longing for a good sleep, but orders came to continue the advance as the enemy had retired. So we collected ourselves and marched most of the night to VILLASANTO, where we concentrated. Here we were granted our night's rest.

On July 15 the Bn having rested and reorganised, were ordered out to locate and destroy enemy in the AGNONE area and to rescue some British paratroops and Co.andos who were lying up in the vicinity. A number of prisoners were rescued from the enemy and at the same time enemy prisoners were taken, but the whole affair was rather disappointing in its results. The men had looked forward to getting some of their own back by getting to close grips with the enemy. Instead they returned to camp without having encountered any.

Another quiet night was spent, although a few bombs were dropped in the locality destroying some transport at Bde HQ, sited nearby. 16 & 17 July were spent in the same area.

On 18 July the Bn marched to a concentration area to the N. of MONTINI, and at about 2030hrs set out to cross the SIEMTO RIVER with the object of continuing the advance by night. Orders were cancelled, however, and we returned to camp as information received at DIV. showed the enemy to be stronger than had been supposed.

The following day at about 1830hrs, the Bn left again and moved forward to an assembly area at 889665. The C.O. went to Bde to receive his orders, which were that the Bde would carry out an attack under a barrage and concentrations from a start line on the North of the SIEMTO RIVER. The first objective for the Bn was the line of the road from exclusive cross roads 886714 to inclusive road junction 870721, while the second objective was the line of the road from exclusive road junction 890741 to road junction 875735. 1 G.H. were on the right, 1 Y & L. left and 1/KOILL. in reserve. The objectives of 1 G.H. were in prolongation of ours to the right as far as the 90 gridline.

The barrage was being fired by the whole of 13 Corps Arty consisting of seven Fd Regts and one Med. Regt, and the barrage proper was to continue as far as 725 gridline, after which 50 DIV arty came out of range. From there to the second objective the rest of the Corps Arty were to fire timed concentrations. The Bde Comd's orders gave details of exploitations from the second objective as far as the high ground covering the approaches to MISTERBLANCO.

The transport, carriers, mortars and anti-tank guns of the attacking Bns were to follow up under Bde control and join their units on the second objective, then to take part in the exploitation.



On leaving Bde Hq. the C.O. drove to the Bn assembly area, arriving at 2215hrs. He gave out his orders to Coy Comds. in the dark and in the very limited light that remained. We were due to cross the startline at 0115hrs and the march up was calculated to take not less than 1½ hours.

The C.O.'s orders were as follows:-

"The Bn will attack with three coys up - rt 'B', centre 'C' and left 'A'. Boundaries - rt incl. rd - SIDERO BRIDGE - X rds 886714 - rd junc. 890741. Left incl. Ditch 870698 to 867707, thence the rd to rd junc. 875735.

Bn Hq. will follow in rear of 'C' Coy. 'D' Coy in reserve in rear of Bn Hq. with the task of mopping up any enemy passed over by the leading coys. Helping to keep direction, bofors guns of a Lt. A.A. Bty are to fire tracer up the line of the right boundary."

Detailed orders for exploitation from the second objective need not be mentioned here, as the second objective was never reached.

In great haste the Coy Comds gave out their orders and the Bn moved off to the startline at about 2315hrs. On the way up a message was received from Bde that zero had been postponed 15 minutes. Even then the Bn only just managed to form up at the startline on time. The barrage began to time and the Bn moved forward. Need for keeping close up to the barrage had been stressed by the C.O. but owing to the darkness and the unexpected fact that the explosion of our shells made no flash it was necessary to regulate the advance by ear rather than by eye.

It was the Bn's first experience of following a barrage and everyone found it a difficult task under the circumstances. Also German def fire began to fall among the advancing troops which gave them the impression that they were moving too fast or that some of our own shells were falling short. In consequence the troops fell far behind the barrage and when it ended, we found we had only reached the first objective.

In spite of the tracer fired by the Bofor guns, keeping direction was difficult, particularly owing to the lack of careful preparation and rather featureless of the ground. At the end of the first part of the barrage, a road marked on the map as only a track led the C.O. to believe he was on the first objective itself. Actually the Bn was at least 600 yds short of it. The codeword for reaching the first objective was sent and the advance continued. At first light, having been held up by mortar and M.G. fire the C.O. who was with 'C' Coy, checked up on the position reached. It was found that the coy's left was on a road with a farm building on its Eastern side. A bearing was taken along the road and a patrol sent out to the front reported a track to the left and a large ditch about 100 yds ahead. The bearing along the road and the presence of the ditch seemed to coincide with the features shown on the map at MASSA FOLLICIA 872731 and a message was sent to Bde Hq. giving this as the Bn's position. The message got through without difficulty, and the business of consolidation and re-organisation went on. When the light improved the line of electric power cables and pylons which became easily visible, and certain other features made it clear that the Bn had only reached CARDONE and MASSA FULVIERA, but all attempts to get this vital information through were in vain. A message of congratulation in response to the original report came through from Bde and orders to hold on at all costs were given. It was not until late in the evening that the true position was fully appreciated at Bde Hq. when the C.O. himself explained it to the Brigadier.

Reverting to first light, the situation proved to be as follows:-

'A' Coy was ahead of 'C' and in the area MASSA FULVIERA. 'C' Coy was at the farm house 871719 with 'D' Coy a short distance in rear. The C.O. ordered 'C' Coy to consolidate in the farm area and cover the road running North and South. 'D' Coy were ordered to move forward on the right of 'A' Coy towards CARDONE and make contact with 'B' Coy, believed to be on the right in touch with the Green Howards, but of whom there was at the time no sign. The C.O. accompanied by his batman, Pte. Knappton, went off in search of the remainder of the Bn. Hq. and 'E' Coy. After covering a considerable distance and with the light gradually improving, no sign of either could be seen and the C.O. returned via the track running through the last "A" in FULVIERA and a sunken road leading Southwards from it to the "A" of CARDONE. M.G. fire and mortar were still practically continuous and in one place about 200 yds to the N.E. of the route followed, the grass and bushes were burning fiercely. In the meantime there had been a brisk engagement, which left the Bn in possession of the area of CARDONE and the rd junc. in which 'D' Coy took a prisoner of 2nd. Panzer Grenadier Regt.

The position was consolidated with 'D' Coy on the right astride the sunken road just North of the bridge at 873720, 'A' Coy on the left in the area MASSA PILVERIA and the road junction, 'C' Coy in their original position and such personnel as could be collected, between CANDICE and the bend in the road at 878715.

In the meanwhile 'B' Coy's progress was as follows:-

They also had borne over to the left, but had got forward faster than the other coys. They crossed the road near CANDICE at about the time when the barrage ceased, and after coming under M.G. fire from the North of CANDICE, Major D.B. WEBSTER decided to try and work round the flank (left). Following the line of the ditch from the road junction 870721 to the N.W. they reached the road junction 858726 where they came under M.G. fire and mortars and suffered about 20 casualties. All wireless comm. had broken down, and it was impossible to return by the same route. The coy therefore withdrew West and Southwards and reached the SIERNO Bridge there making contact with A.I. tpt of the Bn. Having handed over casualties, the coy rejoined the Bn about 2100hrs 20 July and took up a position on the right of the Bn area.

During the day no trace could be found of the portion of Bn HQ. which had begun the advance under Major P.A.C. EDWARDS, and included the Adjutant, Capt. P.G. TRENKLE and RSM. DINSDALE. Searches and enquiries showed that this party must have borne away the right during the advance and eventually came under M.G. fire at very short range on the left flank of the Green Howards, whose 'B' Coy suffered heavy casualties North of the road junction 886714. One man of this party, Pte. CLIFFERTON of the Int. Sec. after remaining under M.G. fire for two hours, managed to crawl back along an irrigation channel and made contact with the Green Howards. On rejoining Bn HQ. he said he believed all the remainder of the party had been killed or wounded.

The Bn A.I. tpt had been under shell fire from time to time and suffered casualties. Capt. A.G. LEE and Lieut. W.H. KUSHEN were wounded and one carrier was burnt out.

It was a great disappointment that the Bn had only made such limited progress because the statements of German prisoners indicated that the severity of the barrage was such as they had never experienced in previous service on the Russian front, and that if only the infantry had been close up to it, they would have surrendered. Hast preparation and inexperience of advancing under a barrage seemed to have robbed us of the success we might have had.

The next day the position reached was held. Orders for resumption of the attack in order to seize the high ground to our front and left flank, were given each night but were cancelled; the first time owing to the fatigue of the troops and the fact that they had not had a meal since 1600hrs the day before; the second time owing to a change in the Army Commander's plan and a decision to withdraw the Bde within the bridgehead position held by 17 Inf. Bde slightly to the rear.

During the time we held our position we were under frequent and accurate mortar gun and M.G. fire. During the day the heat was very trying owing to lack of shade and shortage of water. The latter difficulty was slightly mitigated by the discovery of a well about 200yds forward of 'A' Coy's position from which supplies could be drawn under fire. Pte. COLEMAN of 'A' Coy made numerous trips to the well and showed the utmost disregard of personal danger. His courage and cheerfulness were a great encouragement to his comrades. Capt. B.E.W. ALDWELL, the M.O., in spite of a slight shrapnel wound also managed to bring forward a supply of water and a party of S.B's from No. 158 Pd. and evacuated casualties under great difficulties.

Patrolling was continued and contact was kept with the enemy. Worthy of mention is a very successful shoot directed by Capt. MIDDLETON R.A. P.O.C. of the 92 Pd Regt. 22 July. An M.G. position was located by Lieut. A.P. DICKSON's pl. and Capt. MIDDLETON moved up to the pl. position and engaged the target. It was observed that the enemy once left the M.G. position and took cover in a cornfield. The shoot was stopped and Bren guns were sited to cover the enemy's shelter area. After the enemy had been seen return to their position the shoot was resumed. Out they came again, and were received with well directed bursts from the two Brens which knocked them out.

Throughout this period no vehicles other than carriers and an occasional jeep could get forward to the Bn position owing to the accuracy of the enemy's fire. However by some hitherto unexplained error, orders seem to have been given for the A/tk pl. to move forward. They took the wrong route at "WINDY CORNER" in the Green Howards area and drove straight into the enemy's position where they were met by heavy fire which burnt out or immobilised all but one 2pdr portee, and inflicted casualties on the men, who had some difficulty in making their way back into our own lines. The guns and portees were a dead loss.

The Bn started to withdraw at 0230hrs on 21 July. 'A' Coy from their position at Hellfire Corner (as the men very soon called it) led the way out. Tired after their 24hrs of continual vigilance, the men were by no means dejected though they might well have been. Casualties had been rather heavy and many a man had seen his pal killed by the German Mortar bombs which had poured down on us; but they were cheerful and marched in good discipline was still good. More than one officer was proud of his troops as he took them along the roads bordered by great stretches of desolate country scorched by fire.

(Contd. sheet 7).



The carcasses of cattle and horses bloated in death, were encountered with distressing frequency, and it was with relief that we crossed the BRIDGE over the SIBETO and passed the church and farm buildings, which had been badly bombed, at ~~pass~~ STEFANO (S78691). The Green Howards were in this area waiting to follow us out.

We arrived at the rest area without mishap. It was on the forward slopes of a hill immediately South of a farm (924661) and just off a track leading from the GORNALUNGA DITCH to the main road leading to RUFFANO and CATANIA. We dug our usual hole in the ground (no one ever needed orders to do this) and cleaned our arms and our persons. Behind the hill was a number of 25pdrs who kept letting a few rounds off every so often on to the enemy in the CATANIA area. The town was clearly visible sprawling beneath Mt. MIA from our hill. The enemy did some shelling too, but only to our right flank and we took no notice until he started to range for the Bty behind. We had been allowed two complete days rest before the enemy decided to deal with our Bty. On the 24 July he dropped 9 shells in the Bn area, and we were surprised to find that 5 failed to explode. 'C' Coy however were nearer the top of the hill and therefore closer to the Bty received a direct hit. Three good men - Cpl. WATSON, L/C. SMITH, and Pte. DEARDON were killed, while 6 were wounded.

That same evening the Bn was put at  $\frac{1}{2}$  hrs notice to move back to a safer place, and at 2030hrs we started off by march route to area 902630, where Major D.B. WEBSTER now acting as 2 i/c, allotted coy positions. The area was suitable for dispersal being hilly and cultivated with orchards and plantations. We again dug in.

Early the following morning 3 red very lights were fired somewhere in the area, and 'B' Coy sent out two patrols to investigate. They failed to find out anything about this little display. Time flew quickly enough during the next few days and apart from a few special patrols our physical exertions were limited.

What pleased us more than anything was the arrival of reinforcements, with officers and men. Coys were made almost up to strength which landed, and new Bren guns came to take place of those destroyed or lost in action. By the 27 July we were ready for the fray again.

The following day the Bn relieved the Green Howards and came under Comd. of 17 I.B.

Copy of the C.O's orders for this relief are attached.

Subject: - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ WORK.

On. C. All Corps,  
War Diary (2).

File Appendix 'B'

The following will be brought to the notice of all ranks:-

The Corps Comd called at Bde H.Q. yesterday afternoon and expressed the warmest admiration of the Army Comd. and himself for the ~~splendid~~ fighting and marching that the Bde has done since the invasion began. He said that the the Bde had marched greater distances than they believed possible and had fought with the greatest determination.

The Corps Comd. said that the battle was progressing extremely favourably. The Italians and Germans now had no aerodromes on the island from which they could operate fighter aircraft and were in retreat in all parts of SICILY. If we could keep up the pace for the next three or four days he believed that it might develop into another Cape Bon, the finale in ~~AFRICA~~.

FIELD

17.7.43.

*M. J. Jones* Capt.,  
Adj. Gen., 1 Y & L.R.



Part D.—NOMINAL ROLL OF OFFICERS ON STRENGTH.

(Page 2.)

(Modified for India.)

(i) Officers posted to Unit (Total to agree with column 2 of Part A).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Substantive Rank.	Higher temporary rank, if held.	Name and Initials.	Corps.	Whether present with Unit (Insert Yes or No).	If not present with Unit state how employed.
Maj.	T/Lt.Col.	Tennent. D.C.	LY&L.R.	Yes.	
Maj.		Woodford. D.C.	J.	Yes.	
Capt.	T/Maj.	Edwards. P.A.C.	"	Yes.	
Capt.	T/Maj.	Webster. D.B.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Williams. T.W.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Williamson. D.	"	No.	Course.
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Tyzack. P.G.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Brehaut. K.F.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Cooke. J.B.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Cross. K.E.C.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Bradford. C.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Young. D.V.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Spence. R.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Ellwood. B.N.B.	"	No.	Course.
Lieut.	T/Capt.	Knight. J.W.	"	No.	Course.
Lieut.	A/Capt.	Lee. A.G.	"	Yes.	
Lieut. (QM)		Denham. S.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Hares. A.G.	Kings Own Regt. Lancaster.	Yes.	
Lieut.		Sutherland. D.B.	LY&L.R.	Yes.	
Lieut.		May. C.E.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Darell-Seal. M.J.A.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Wilson. A.C.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		McFarlane. I.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Brasier. T.	"	No.	Course.
Lieut.		Lang. B.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Howcroft. H.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		MacNicol. R.M.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Mawson. L.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Ramsey. D.S.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Couper-Johnston. J.M.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Treadaway. W.D.	"	No.	Course.
Lieut.		Blenkey. G.L.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Dickson. A.P.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.		Rushton. W.H.	"	No.	Course.

(ii) Officers attached from other Corps.

Substantive Rank.	Higher temporary rank, if held.	Name and Initials.	Corps.	Date of attachment.	Nature of attachment.
Capt.		Aldwell. B.E.W.	RAMC.	17.3.41.	RMO.
Capt.		McAniff. M.	RACHD.	28.5.41.	R.C. Chaplain.

1st Bn. The York & Lancaster Regiment.  
(Unit.)

25.4.43.

(Date of Despatch.)

(Signature of Commander.)

15.I.B. 5 Div.

(Force, Division, Bde., Area, etc., with which Unit is serving.)