

Second World War Unit War Diary – 6th Bn. Durham Light Infantry - Chamberlain

The following is from the National Archives WO 169/5007

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.			WAR DIARY XX INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (Erase heading not required).		6TH BN. THE DURHAM LIGHT INF. 151 INFANTRY BRIGADE. 50TH. (N) DIVISION. Army Form C. 211	Remarks and references to Appendices
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information			
AREA. ALAM NAYIL. 880269. Ref: 1/50,000 Sheet 6. EL MIRREIR.	23rd. OCTOBER.	0920.	<p>Capt. F.L.Cole.M.C. was admitted to hospital.</p> <p>"C" Coy. O.P. reported M.E.T. movement on a bearing of 212° from ALAM NAYIL approx 6000 yards away, this was presumed to be in the area just South of the ALINDA Depression. It became generally known on that day that the offensive against the enemy positions was to start on night 23/24th. October, zero hour being 22.00 hrs. 23rd. Oct.</p> <p>The Battalion was to move forward and take up positions in the STEPPES area, with "A" Coy. in area 87822667, "D" Coy. in area 87852657, and "C" Coy. in area 87932657. Bn.H.Q. was to be in a position between BARNARD Gap and the small minefield leg at 87952662. This operation was only to be carried out if 7 Arm'd. Div. and 44 Div. were successful. Consequently the day 23rd. Oct. was spent in getting all arrangements ready for the operation.</p> <p>A patrol under Lieut. G.I.E.Green and a section of carriers including 2 carriers with 3" mortar fittings, went out into the STEPPES area with the object of finding out details of the enemy defences in the area of Pt. 97 (878264) and in particular to ascertain how far north these defences extended in that area. While our patrol was out our artillery fired harassing tasks on the East end of the ANGAR Depression, and the enemy positions on the Northern tip of the MUNASSIB Depression between DON and VOLGA Minefields. The 3" Mortar Carrier under 2/Lieut.R.W.Fringle also opened up harassing fire on areas known to be occupied by the enemy on the Northern tip of the Depression in order to create a diversion during raid by 9 D.L.I. on NORTH POINT. 88042648.</p> <p>The patrol under Lieut. Green was however able to go South as far as 87882647, without encountering either mines or wire. The patrol was then fired on by one M.G. presumed to be in area 87852643, but withdrew safely.</p> <p>Meanwhile, noise of the battle developing in the Southern Sector increased during the night.</p> <p>The same night, the Signals Officer, Lieut. J.A.Wedgwood and the I.O. 2/Lieut.G.E.H. Mansell rec'd. a position xxxx for Bn. H.Q. In the event of the operation allotted to the Battalion being carried out. A position was chosen at approx 87932667. A Gap was also completed in the DON Minefield by Sappers of 505 Fd. Coy. R.E. from 88012675 to 87932674, and through our own minefield opposite "D" Coys. position to allow Bn. MT. to pass through when the operation was carried out.</p>			
	Night. 23/24.					

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AREA. ALAM NAYIL. 880269. Ref: 1/50000. Sheet 6. EL MIRREIR.	24th. OCTOBER.		<p>A SITREP from Bde. stated that the raid by 9 D.L.I. the previous night on NORTHPOINT position had not been successful, and that a raid on the TWINS (880264) by 69 Bde. had also failed. The operation to be carried out by the Bn. would not therefore take place the following night.</p> <p>During the day much movement of M.T. was observed in the direction of the ALINDA Depression. Our artillery shelled the ALINDA and MUNASSIB depressions on many occasions during the day, and there were many signs that a fierce battle was raging at intervals between the MUNASSIB depression and HEMMAT, including heavy shelling, smoke screens, and the noise of M/Tk. Gun Fire.</p> <p>Lieut. E.V.Bluit proceeded on a course on Platoon Weapons at the M.E.T.C.</p> <p>The listening post outside "C" Coys. Gap in the minefield reported hearing several tracked vehicles a good distance away in the direction of the ANGAR Depression. Enemy tanks were never in evidence however, and the report could not be confirmed.</p> <p>A Strong patrol went out under Capt. T. ff. Chamberlain and Lieut.A.H.Sandwith. The patrol went West through JARROW Gap, then South along the West edge of the DON minefield. As it was approaching the small minefield leg at 87952662, our patrol was suddenly heavily fired on at short range from the West corner of the small minefield by 2 L.M.Gs. and several Sub Machine Guns- several members of the patrol were at once wounded including Capt. Chamberlain and Lieut.Sandwith. An Italian Officer then rushed forward with two other men shouting "Surrender" in English. He threw a grenade but was then shot down by rifle fire. Our patrol, which was in a very unfavourable position, then had to withdraw, and when a check had been made it was found that there were two members of the patrol missing: the patrol commander, Capt.T.ff.Chamberlain, and a Sapper from 505 Fd. Coy. R.E. who accompanied the patrol. Several men were slightly wounded, and Lieut Sandwith and one O.Rk. were evacuated to hospital. A strong patrol under Capt. J.H.Chapman was sent out at once to try and find Capt. Chamberlain and the Sapper, and also to contact and destroy the enemy patrol. No sign could however be found of the missing officer and sapper, or of the enemy.</p>			
	Night 24/25	2145.				
	25th.	0600.	<p>A patrol of 2 Sections of Carriers under Lieut. P.B.Hodgson went out before first light to find out if there were any signs of enemy withdrawal in the area of the VOLGA minefield, and also to try and find the officer and man missing from the previous night's patrol. The carriers went as far West as BARRET Gap without being fired on, and then made their way back to JARROW Gap, where they turned South along the West side of the DON minefield as far as BARNARD Gap and slightly South of it. No trace could be</p>			