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Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda (Series 14)

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~~Confidential~~
to (R.W. Coristine),
Lt Col, GS,
for Chief of the General Staff.

[illegible]

/HS

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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

15 Dec 44

CANADIAN OPERATIONS - NORTH-WEST EUROPE

Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda (Series 14)

1. Further to my 24/A F/1/3 (HIST), dated 27 Nov 44, attached are additional Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda dealing with Canadian Operations in North-West Europe.

2. These Extracts are circulated for general information only, and opinions stated are not to be considered as necessarily expressions of official doctrine.

(SGD)

for (P.J. Montague) Lieut-General,
Chief of Staff,
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.

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CANADIAN OPERATIONS IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE

JUNE - OCTOBER 1944

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARIES AND MEMORANDA

(SERIES 14)

.....

1. OPERATIONS AGAINST THE DEFENCES OF CAP GRIS NEZ (ACCOUNT BY
LT. COL. D.F. FORBES, O.C. Nth NS HIGHRS, GIVEN TO HIST OFFR,
3 CDN INF DIV, 27 OCT 44).

1. The capture of CAP GRIS NEZ, which was undertaken, and completed, on 29 Sep 44, occurred midway between the fall of BOULOGNE and CALAIS. On that day a truce existed in CALAIS but it did not effect the quite independent operation against the cape defences.

2. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, which had the task of capturing or destroying the two cross-channel batteries at HARINGZELLES and FRAMZELLE, positioned two battalions, Nth NS Highrs and HLI of C, for simultaneous attacks from the south and east.

3. Nth NS Highrs were based on AMBLETEUSE, with one company in ONGLEVERT, and one platoon in AUDRESSELLES. The village of AUDRESSELLES contained a German training school of some sort, which had been abandoned, and which possessed a recreation room filled with handsome furniture. This furniture the battalion removed in five 3-ton lorries and re-arranged to provide an officers' and sergeants' mess in AMBLETEUSE.

4. The southern defences of CAP GRIS NEZ, for which Nth NS Highrs were responsible, consisted of two fortified areas (see sketch-map): the control station at CRAN AUX OEUFS, and the battery position at HARINGZELLES. Both were surrounded by mines and wire. Extensive reconnaissance was carried out by patrols to establish what routes could be followed by armour; some anxiety was felt, for there were many ditches, skillfully concealed, which constituted tank obstacles. The first plan called for Flails at the head with one platoon of Infantry, followed by AVSRE and Crocodiles with the rifle companies. The discovery of the anti-tank ditches, with their false covering necessitated putting the AVSRE in front with fascines to fill them and so provide a passage for the rest of the armour.

5. The assault was to be launched with two companies up, D Coy on the right attacking the northernmost gun, and B Coy on the left taking out the other three. C Coy was then to follow up, passing through D to capture the control station. The battalion had under command one squadron 141 RAC (Flails), two troops Crocodiles and one troop AVSRE, and in support two troops of B Sqn, 6 Cdn Armd Regt.

6. Heavy bombing of the objective was carried out on the night before the attack. In support of the assault a comprehensive artillery programme had been arranged. As the troops moved forward the artillery was to cease and fire support was then to be given by tanks. In this way continuous shelling of enemy positions was to be assured.

7. During the night 28/29 Sep, the infantry and armour moved up and positioned themselves in the re-entrant centred on 697657. This area, which was slightly wooded, had previously been marked with white tape. An OP was also set up here.

8. On the morning of 29 Sep the attack began. At the outset D Coy found it necessary to make a wide swing to the right owing to difficult ground but it continued forward and shortly encountered the outer defences of the battery. They were held up for a time by a pillbox at 688687, but the Crocodiles flamed it out and the advance went on.

9. B Coy meanwhile was pursuing a more direct route north-westwards to the gun position, the Flails doing magnificent work. Proceeding along a track they crossed the stream by the bridge at 685663 and edged themselves forward into the area of the casemates. An AVRE was brought up near Number 3 gun and commenced to pound its concrete casemate with petards, while the infantry threw grenades into its open front. Against the solid walls the petards had little real effect, but they achieved penetration through the window slits, and in any event their shattering detonation produced a notable moral result.

10. The enemy garrison gave little fight, they were not even aware that an attack was in progress, despite the din from the right where D Coy had been clearing the pillbox, until their casemates were being blasted. All four huge guns soon surrendered. Phase I was complete.

11. C Coy now set out with a troop of Flails through D Coy's position along the track leading to the coast (just north of the 67 northing grid line). This road was so badly cratered that the Flails bogged down. Fortunately a reserve troop had been kept intact and with this troop C Coy made a second start, having no choice but to proceed cross-country. This meant breaching two minebelts--that of the gun position and that of the control station. This process did, in fact, render the Flails immovable, one by one. The last to break down, however, shot C Coy into the control area with its gun. Here too the enemy soldiers were taken by surprise, although what kind of warning they must have required was not clear. C Coy quickly dug them out of their concrete shelters. The last bunker was blown up by the enemy in most spectacular fashion.

12. The troops now moved northward intending to capture the garrison commander, who was not in their area. On the way they encountered a party of HLI of C, who had just taken that officer prisoner.

13. HLI of C had had equal success in their sector and with the joining of forces it became very clear that the "exercise" was over. The scene now indeed resembled the conclusion of a scheme in England, for the troops were plainly aware that they had only to await the order to stand down. Nth NS Highrs, leaving one company to guard the area, soon marched back to AMBLETEUSE to their quarters in time for dinner and were met at the outskirts by the battalion's pipe band.

14. The operation was a model assault and was conducted with very few casualties. The cost in tanks had been fairly high, but most of these represented tracks blown on mines, or vehicles bogged in impassable ground.

2. DYKE WARFARE (ACCOUNT BY MAJ R.G. HODGINS, 2 IC, HLI of C,
GIVEN TO HIST OFFR, 3 CDN INF DIV, 26 OCT 44).

I

1. Early in October HLI of C, along with the rest of 9 Cdn Inf Bde, left the area of CAP GRIS NEZ to concentrate north-east of GHENT in BELGIUM. A very few days were then made available to them to train for an assault landing across SAVOJAARD PLAT. First of all the officers and NCOs were shown the amphibious "tanks", or Buffaloes (LVST), which were to serve as landing craft, and were taken for a short ride in them. Then all personnel concerned were given an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the vehicles, everyone making a brief voyage in the TERNEUZEN CANAL. When their seaworthiness was thus demonstrated, the details of loading were worked out. Each craft could hold 30 men; those carrying vehicles could take nothing larger than a carrier.

2. This meant that a completely new supply system had to be created. Done as it was in a very short space of time, staff and supply work was excellent. Even the fighting groups were affected: companies were of necessity each reduced to 90 all ranks for reasons of space.

3. The voyage up the TERNEUZEN CANAL commenced at 1730 hours, 7 Oct 44. Delays at the ramps near its mouth at NEUZEN 2711 compelled a postponement of 24 hours. The assault force was therefore dispersed, the vehicles harbouring in farms near the canal.

II

4. Near midnight on 8 Oct, the convoy set forth once again, swimming through the NEUZEN channel beyond SAVOJAARD PLAT. There was no difficulty in recognizing the beach, and distinguishing features were picked out at once. Coloured flare shells served as confirmation. At about 0200 hours, 9 Oct, the LVST moved in to land the infantry near the little harbour 208130 (Amber Beach). But at the water's edge confusion rapidly developed. The craft was intended to carry the men up to the dyke, but many bogged in the mud. Some troops attempted to change craft; most merely walked up the beach. The mud itself was a quagmire. Maj Hodgins told of one man sinking to his waist in it, and having to be pulled out, with a great sucking noise, by three others grasping his arms and webbing (See sketch map).

5. The companies were now thoroughly mixed up, for some loads had been conveyed well inland and others had not. It was also found difficult to orient oneself and there was much shouting and uncertainty. A German machine gun commenced firing tracer bullets on the beach, not certain of its target but merely searching the area. Several men were hit by this blind firing. There was no shelling until daybreak. The troops took cover in the runnels which cross the flats until sub-units had been sorted out. Then they set out for their objectives.

6. The assault had begun with three companies up - B, C and D. A Coy, in reserve, was to be committed on the CO's orders. B Coy on the left, advanced along the dyke to the south to capture the machine gun emplacements around the dyke junction 213123. It was the most difficult objective and the company was forced to pull back without taking it. C Coy, in the centre, moved straight down the road through PAVILJOEN 204125 to the fork at 199122. On the right D Coy advanced inland along the road to its junction with the second dyke at 196127. Each company then proceeded to es-

establish contact with its neighbour. Shortly after first light a juncture was made with Nth NS Highrs, the other assaulting battalion.

7. The enemy fought tenaciously, launching one counterattack after another with great determination. These were not the garrison troops of BOULOGNE or CAP GRIS NEZ, but soldiers of a highly trained field division. Maj Hodgins saw several such fierce counterattacks directed at C Coy's position: the enemy dashed along the ditches, bouncing out here and there over the culverts, greatcoats flapping, and wearing full equipment. Heavy fire from B Coy's objective, still uncaptured, supported them. They were driven off, however.

8. With the first wave of vehicles, the Wasps came ashore and at once flamed all opposition out of the machine gun emplacements so that B Coy was able to secure the area. The flame throwers were most effective; their sole drawback was that they were too few in number.

9. When CH of O (MG) landed, they engaged the orchard centred on 192129, which concealed a large party of enemy. One platoon of HLI of C then entered it, taking about 60 - 70 prisoners. The rest fled, running across open country and giving the machine gunners a splendid target, which they were quick to take advantage of.

10. Once consolidated, there was no change in position until the night 10/11 Oct, when the battalion relieved Nth NS Highrs on the right, and 7 Cdn Pouce Regt in turn took over the area of HLI of C. The next battalion objective was the town of BIERVLIET 1311.

III

11. The attack on the town began in mid-afternoon, 11 Oct. D Coy, right, and A Coy, left, advanced along the parallel dykes in square 1812. C Coy was in support and B Coy was in reserve. The attack was very successful and the battalion entered the town at dusk. Each company occupied a quarter of it and consolidated there. During the night 11/12 Oct, however, another sharp counter-attack was delivered against D Coy in the southwest sector and one platoon was temporarily overrun, but recovered.

12. This was the only real threat, but the danger remained. The companies, never at full strength, were now somewhat depleted, and reinforcements were not yet available. The following day the ground lost to the enemy in D Coy's area was regained, and later QOR of C relieved the battalion in BIERVLIET. 1 Cdn Inf Bde was now completely ashore.

IV

13. On the afternoon of 13 Oct, HLI of C took over a new battalion area in front of R de Chaud, around KONIJNENBERG FARM 182131, due north of BIERVLIET. At 1100 hours the next day, 14 Oct, they attacked through Nth NS Highrs, who were consolidated near DRIEWEGEN 1612, to the line of the road running southeast from WITTEBURG 152125. This was not an easy task. No advance was possible except along the roads, which were stubbornly defended. Three companies made the attack--C Coy on the right along the northern road, B Coy up the track in the centre, and A Coy reserve. A Coy's route was heavily mined, and this accounted for the death of Sgt NIEZANNY, a skilled flamethrower, whose carrier was blown up. In one small area of the road 108 mines were found.

14. During this action, Typhoons and Spitfires attacked the battalion, fortunately without causing casualties. By nightfall the road was reached, Bn HQ was set up in the basement of the school at DRIEWEGEN, 162162. That night the first reinforcements arrived; officer casualties had been particularly heavy.

15. There was no fighting during 15 Oct while Nth NS Highrs cleared the area in front of the battalion. On 16 Oct they advanced once more, this time to the dyke road which runs southwest from ROODENHOEK 1314 to the 13 northing line, and consolidated there. The following day they moved to an area south and southwest of SASPUT 1216. At the start they took by surprise an enemy party asleep in a farm at 132142. Evidently the Germans found dyke-fighting as exhausting as did our own troops. During the move a shell struck the CO's carrier, killing the signaller, but the CO himself, Lt Col R.W. Strickland, was unharmed. On arrival the companies positioned themselves along the STATEN DIJK, roughly from SASPUT to PLANKENPOORTIE 119141. Bn HQ was located in the farmhouse 132142, whose inhabitants spoke very good English.

16. In this farmhouse moving pictures were shown on 18 Oct, despite the nearness of the enemy. Chocolate bars were sold (for Belgian francs, although this was in HOLLAND). Relaxation was vital, however, for the operation had proved an exacting task. The enemy had opened the sluice gates at NOMMER EEN 1217, thus flooding the land west of the dyke line. For several days the troops remained in this area, moving once northwestwards closer to BRESSENS 0918.

17. It was a most unhappy location: the dykes were very low and under direct observation from BRESSENS. Shelling was frequent, with additional heavy fire from the big guns at FLUSHING. Bad weather, and almost impassable roads added to the misery. Great difficulty was experienced both in bringing provisions in and casualties out.

18. SD&G Highrs attacked BRESSENS on 21 Oct; for this operation HLI of C were in reserve. Their next task was the capture of SCHOONDIJKE 0914, which it was hoped to begin that same night. But affairs were not in readiness until the following day. In preparation, A Coy moved on SASPUT, and C Coy to SLIJPLAAT. B Coy remained on the dyke to the west and D Coy was only to move from the south when the operation started. Two companies 1 C Scot R relieved two of HLI of C.

V

19. The attack on SCHOONDIJKE began about 1530 hours, 22 Oct. B Coy set off down the two dykes leading southwest from the NIEUWE HAVENPOLDER 1116. Smoke meanwhile covered C and D Coys moving in the same direction along the road (The LARGE HEEREN WEG) from SASPUT. They formed up amongst farm buildings northeast of SCHOONDIJKE. There was some shelling and 20 mm fire from the right. An artillery concentration silenced the 20 mm gun, and the companies moved out of the area being shelled.

20. By dark they were just inside the town but made no further progress that night. B Coy in the meantime had consolidated at the bend in the dykes, near 091158. A Coy, in reserve, had not been committed. At first light on 23 Oct, all companies moved off to their objectives. D Coy was to take out the concrete fort installation in the northwest sector, C Coy was directed on the southwest sector as far as the creek (MOLLENREEK) at the west. B Coy was to consolidate on the dyke northeast of the town. In the seizure of these objectives a troop of MIOs was of great assistance.

21. The fort in D Coy's area had seemed formidable from the air. On entering it, they found it to contain nothing more deadly than an RAP. There were no guns, but many vast pillboxes and casemates, with elaborately bricked communication trenches. Out of this mysterious fort about 35 PW were taken. Apparently it had been abandoned, for its defences faced northwest to the sea.

22. Another example of the enemy's determination was met during the earlier stages of the operation when a German section of six men and an NCO attempted to counterattack a coy in the town. Needless to say it was a hopeless failure but it served to demonstrate the enemy's aggressiveness.

23. SCHOONDIJKE itself was flattened, chiefly by bombing. Typhoon Rockets had also done great damage there.

VI

24. Comments on the Operation. Dyke warfare, or "polder-fighting", requires entirely new tactics and poses many problems in consequence. Troops had seldom encountered such continuous and difficult fighting. Movement is restricted to dykes and heights of land are unknown. The enemy is afforded excellent opportunity to use his many automatic weapons. Engagements are largely company and even platoon actions.

25. The failure of the enemy, under conditions so favourable to defence, to halt the advance must have two chief explanations: the very great determination and initiative of our troops which can overcome the enemy's advantages, which include complete familiarity of the featureless terrain; and the skilful employment of artillery. FOOs are placed well forward with the infantry, and the latter know the value of following the fire closely. Despite the enemy's frequent counterattacks, he very rarely recovered any ground save for the action at BIERVLIET on the night 11/12 Oct.

26. In such country vehicles have an extra vulnerability, since they must move, in silhouette, on open dyke roads. Only the paucity of enemy anti-tank weapons can account for the few vehicle casualties. MLOs have proved valuable, firing from behind dykes. Wasps were particularly effective in dislodging the enemy from dug-in positions.

3. COMBAT LESSONS FROM 7 CDN INF BDE (RECEIVED FROM HIST OFFR 3 CDN INF BDE)

7 C.I.B. COMBAT LESSONS

1. Air Bombardment

Against concrete defences, air-bombardment does not appear to be particularly effective but the effect on personnel is demoralizing. Inf attacking immediately after can subdue the defenders quite easily. Rockets appear to be very effective against field emplacements.....

3. Use of Flame

The Germans used a flame thrower on one occasion in COURSEULLES SUR MER without effect, as our tps at the time were behind cover. The actual flame thrower was not located.

4. Arm Supply

There have no complaints. The supply of arm at all times has been adequate.

5. A.Tk Weapons

- (a) The PIAT has been found effective against Panther tks. On one occasion, a Panther was killed by a PIAT fired at a range of approximately 15 yds. Three hits were made, two striking the side of the turret and going right through and one striking the tk just above the tracks. Another Panther was knocked out at a range of 50 yds using one bomb which struck the turret on the side. Against lighter skinned vehs, the PIAT has been found very effective, one bomb being sufficient on all occasions.
- (b) The 6 pr A.Tk gun using SABOT amn appears able to KO any German tk by striking either at the side or back of the tk.

6. INF CUM TK TRG

Where the past trg in tk inf co-operation has been practiced it was found to be very practical. On occasion where liaison was not practiced, the close co-operation and support by the tks was not forthcoming. It is suggested that always before a battle, the closest liaison must be made between tks and inf to iron out any points before the battle starts.

7. Destruction of the 8.8 cm Sp A.Tk Gun

If a posn can be pinpointed, arty can deal with them. Tk stalking tactics can be adopted on occasion. The use of smoke to allow the inf to approach close enough to use the PIAT is also suggested....

9. Reaction of Inf Sections Attack by Aircraft

The natural reaction seems to be to scatter for cover. This was in line with previous trg. LMGs were got ready for use and sec leaders invariably took control.

10. Trg Weaknesses

The following weaknesses in past trg have been disclosed. It will be noted that some of these involve individual trg:-

- (a) Personnel are not sufficiently expert in reading night activity including noises, judging distances, direction, etc
- (b) There is a tendency to send back vague infm which in many cases, by the time it reached the recipient by word of mouth, was garbled beyond all recognition. Offrs have, on occasion, given messages to signallers by word of mouth and then scurried off without waiting to hear the actual message sent. The result on many different occasions has been that the message sent was entirely different. During a battle, an offr or senior NCO should always be on the wireless....
- (c) Personnel are not sufficiently familiar with their own and the enemy mines....
- (d) It was found that fire control on the sec level during an attack was weak. After the first day or so, fire discipline in the defence was good.
- (e) NCOs need more trg in the use of prismatic compass and in map reading.
- (f) More trg should be given in the use of the 2" mortar.... It is an excellent weapon and the platoons now appreciate its value.

- (g) It is suggested that the street fighting trg had one weakness. It tended to be too much of a "drill" in much the same way as battle drill was treated a couple of years ago. It is felt that personnel did not realize that what they have learnt during street fighting trg was merely a guide and could not be slavishly followed in all circumstances.

11. Attack on Pillboxes or Strong Points

In the initial assault, attacks were made by neutral support and cover by smoke to permit the explosive charge to be placed against the pillbox, usually to the rear, which appeared to be more lightly defended.

12. Use of Fire SP

The bn or the coys can, on occasion, make their way forward by use of their own fire power but it is usual also to have the assistance of arty to take on targets that cannot be reached by the bn weapons or can best be seen from an OP by an Arty FOO.

13. Shortage of Amn

On no occasion have the forward tps been short of SA or mortar amn.

14. Use of Snipers

The snipers are used in both offensive and defensive roles. They are now organized as a sec and work as a rule under bn control.

15. Use of Reverse Slopes

Reverse slopes posns are being used where possible. However, someone is always placed on the forward slope to give warning of enemy approach and if possible, alternative forward slope posns are dug during the night but not fully occupied during the day.

16. Counter Mortar Methods

For some time shell reps were furnished in a more or less haphazard manner by both coy and bn OPs. Recently however, the new mortar rep giving a time, location of the observer and the bearing has been used. The actual location of the observer is known at Bn HQ previously and therefore much time is saved by the observer reporting the bearing and time only. This is immediately sent on to Bde HQ where it is handled by the counter mortar offr.

17. Sec Strength

This averages out to about eight which is a satisfactory figure both from the point of view of control and also hitting power....

19. Use of Carrier Platoons

Following uses have been made so far of the carrier pl:-

- (a) As a pl, to protect the forming up place and start line during an attack.

- (b) To give additional fire support during the attack.
- (c) To give fire support during the river crossing.
- (d) The pl split with a sec going to the coy in a defensive posn but normally in defence they have been held in reserve near Bn HQ.
- (e) They have on occasion, been used for carrying inf stores where wheel vchs were found to be too vulnerable.

20. Handling of LMGs

- (a) This weapon has on occasions been fired from the hip when assaulting through standing crops and also on the final assault over open ground. It is felt that the method is justified providing personnel using the weapon have had experience. While the actual casualties inflicted may be small, it does help to keep the heads of the enemy down, giving the assaulting tps a chance to close with them. This practice was found effective at ranges up to 100 yds.
- (b) The LMG tripod has been used and has been found very effective. However some sec and pl comds and even coy comds are not sold on the use of it at the moment....
- (c) All 25 LMG mags are carried within the sec, the usual breakdown being as follows:-
 1. 2 i/c - 4 mags, ball with tracer 1-in-4.
 2. No. 1 - One mag incendiary with tracer 1-in-4;
One mag AP with tracer 1-in-4; two mags ball with tracer 1-in-4.
 3. No. 2 - As for No. 1
 4. Six rfn - Two mags each with tracer 1-in-4.

21. Alternative Posns - LMG & 2" Mortar

As a rule, these have been prepared in all posns. The change to alternative posns is made an order of the pl comd. It is felt, however, that sec comds should be instructed that when the pl comd cannot control this change over, it is at their discretion to do so, but the pl comd must be notified at once of this action.

22. 3" Mortars

(a) Normally, the 3" mortars are used as a battery, depending entirely on the ground and the distance to the objective. It has been found that in the attack, a greater volume of fire support can be given to forward coys by the employment of the pl as a battery. It is suggested that if two coys are used in the attack, that one det of mortars be put in support of each coy, with the task of arriving on the final objective as soon as possible after the objective has been taken. This leaves four mortars in the battery. In the defence, it has been found that it will rarely be necessary to allot dets to coys and that the employment of the pl as a battery gives quick and effective fire support.

(b) NCOs can control a fire unit of more than two units. In the attack a MFC is sent with the forward coys. He has direct communication with the pl by wireless with a second channel through the bn net, to Bn HQ where the pl comd will normally be found. In the defence, DF SOS tasks and DF tasks are given to the mortars, and additional fire can be called for over the bn wireless net or by line.

(c) The proportion of smoke to HE appears to be satisfactory.

23. A.Tk Pl

(a) The trg of the A.Tk Pl appears to have been very sound. It is suggested that invariably the A.Tk Pl comd will be close at hand and available at all times to the Bn Comd. He should be put in the picture early, either in the attack or in the occupation of a defensive posn so that he will have ample opportunity to study the map for likely tk approaches. It will rarely be possible to actually recce the ground beforehand and this close study of the map is essential if the guns are to be quickly placed in posn. The bn A.Tk guns are invariably the first on the ground.

(b) In street fighting the 6 pr HE can be put to very effective use much like the sp given by tks; a round of AP to knock a hole in a wall and a rd of HE fired through that hole has been found most effective. HE fired either during the attack or from a defensive posn tends to give the location of the gun away and it is then taken on by enemy arty or mortars. After all, it is primarily an A.Tk weapon and should be used as such.

(c) The gun can be fired effectively at night by using the 2" mortar parachute flares.

24. The 69 Grenade

The 69 grenade has not been used to any great extent although patrols have carried it at night for its surprise effect. It can only be used where it can be thrown against a hard surface, as it will not explode on grass or in crops. It is also suggested that it would be useful in clearing houses and placed a short distance in front of defensive posns, in conjunction with trip wire, pull switch, cordtex and detonator to give alarm in case of approaching enemy, both to the enemy and to ourselves....

26. The 77 Grenade

This is a favorite grenade in the unit. It is both an offensive and defensive weapon. Can be used as anti-personnel and is effective in giving quick and immediate cover for withdrawal or to cover an attack at close quarters. Has been used with effect in close fighting.

27. Tracer Amn

This is used by ourselves mostly to indicate targets. At night its uses should be limited as it tends to give away posn. The enemy appear to use tracer mainly for the effect they consider it has on morale. Sometimes it has been found that this use of tracer by the enemy has had the opposite effect. During an assault they mixed tracer with ball when giving covering fire to keep our head down until the inf got across. The tracer made it obvious to our tps that the covering fire was well up over our heads and consequently their object of keeping our heads down was not achieved.

28. Amn Carried

(a) Rifle: Normally 50 rds per man carried for the rifle.

(b) LMGs : 25 mags loaded for each LMG. Sometimes an additional 50 rds per man is carried for the use of LMGs.

29. 2" Mortar Amn

Existing scales of 2" mortar amn are felt to be adequate, both of HE and smoke. The quantities normally carried with the mortar are 13 smoke and 12 HE.

30. Light Portable Bridges

The carrying of the above by pioneer pls has not been found necessary at the present time.

31. Inf Tk Intercom

The 30 set has not been satisfactory. The outside telephone on a tk has on occasion been used to contact the crew comd, but normally the tks are not working in such close support and it is unusual for the inf to communicate with the tks in this way.....

32. Ground Air Signals

The yellow collanese triangles only have been used. It is felt that smoke discloses our posns if they are not already known and for this reason it is unpopular. It may be of interest to note that so far, on no occasion has the RAF asked for identifications to be displayed and that one pilot shot down in our area had not heard of this method of identification.

33. Picks and Shovels

The inf bn does need extra picks and shovels. The practice has been to have every man carry either a pick or a shovel. Entrenching tools are no longer carried and have been turned in.

34. Enemy Mines

- (a) Very little experience as yet.
- (b) We feel that trg in the past has not been adequate due to scarcity of actual samples.

35. Scales and Maps

The issue of above has been adequate but sometimes it is felt that the defence overprint has not been issued soon enough. Comds at all levels should have an opportunity to make a thorough study before an operation.

36. Vehs

The present type of veh appears to be satisfactory in all instances. The more extensive use of trailers is advised. We have found them most suitable for the carrying of amn, petrol and other supplies.

(c) The proportion of smoke to HE appears to be satisfactory.

23. A.Tk Pl

(a) The trg of the A.Tk Pl appears to have been very sound. It is suggested that invariably the A.Tk Pl comd will be close at hand and available at all times to the Bn Comd. He should be put in the picture early, either in the attack or in the occupation of a defensive posn so that he will have ample opportunity to study the map for likely tk approaches. It will rarely be possible to actually recce the ground beforehand and this close study of the map is essential if the guns are to be quickly placed in posn. The bn A.Tk guns are invariably the first on the ground.

(b) In street fighting the 6 pr HE can be put to very effective use much like the sp given by tks; a round of AP to knock a hole in a wall and a rd of HE fired through that hole has been found most effective. HE fired either during the attack or from a defensive posn tends to give the location of the gun away and it is then taken on by enemy arty or mortars. After all, it is primarily an A.Tk weapon and should be used as such.

(c) The gun can be fired effectively at night by using the 2" mortar parachute flares.

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The 69 grenade has not been used to any great extent although patrols have carried it at night for its surprise effect. It can only be used where it can be thrown against a hard surface, as it will not explode on grass or in crops. It is also suggested that it would be useful in clearing houses and placed a short distance in front of defensive posns, in conjunction with trip wire, pull switch, cordtex and detonator to give alarm in case of approaching enemy, both to the enemy and to ourselves....

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(a) Rifle: Normally 50 rds per man carried for the rifle.

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4. SUPPLY PROBLEMS IN AN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION (EXTRACT FROM
WAR DIARY, H.Q., R.C.A.S.C., 3CDN INF DIV OCTOBER 1944)

C O P Y

C.R. .S.C.
3 Cdn Inf Div

Sir:

Herounder please find my report on BMA established for 9 Cdn Inf Bde operation "SWITCHBACK" - amphibious landing on the SCHELDT Pocket, area BIERVLIET, HOLLAND, 9 Oct 44.

As per your instructions, I proceeded to WIPPELGEM, BELGIUM, along with three amm, two pet and two sup issuers to list and to take note of loading of thirty eight Terrapins, which were to maintain 9 Cdn Inf Bde and supporting tps. They were loaded with the following and in priority of landing - Amm, Water, Sups, (corno packs) Rum, Blankets, Pet and Flame Throwing Fluid, making a total of 152 tons. Terrapins were completely loaded by 1500 hrs. 7 Oct 44 and we then proceeded to 9 Cdn Inf Bde HQ where we were briefed, Capt McLellan joined us. Our job was to proceed across the SVOJLARDS PLANT, a stretch of water approx four kilometers distance, land on green beach (sq 1914), recon a pet, amm and sup dump which was to be called a Beach Maintee Area, from which units could draw readily all desirable commodities. D Day was Oct. 9th, H Hour was approx 0130 hrs for two assaulting bns. We were to go across in the morning, but since the beachhead was so small at that time we were unable to land until 2100 hrs that evening, being transported by two buffaloes (LVT) each carrying one jeep. A point of interest here arises in that the beach was being heavily shelled from several directions, the guiding lights on the beach had been destroyed and consequently we were not landed in the correct spot. The rest of that night was spent on the beach in slit trenches. Capt McLellan's jeep was unfortunately destroyed by a shell. We contacted 9 Bde HQ and the next day made a recon along with BRASCO 9 Bde. Instead of selecting three different dumps for amm, sups and pet, it was decided to establish one dump to hold all commodities. This proved a wise decision as all anticipated locations were shelled within the next four or five days, which no doubt would have been unfortunate had we been there. That evening (Oct 10th) the thirty eight Terrapins arrived, which we unloaded in the dark, completing this around midnight. Thirty six loaders had been provided by 9 Bde as part of the BMA Staff.

Capt T.R. MacDonald had arrived that day also, along with eleven jeeps and trailers. Their job was to haul amm from the beach, when transported over by buffaloes, because the buffaloes, unlike the terrapins, could not leave the beach on account of the harm done to their tracks by the hard roads. They off-loaded onto the beach and the jeep platoon with their trailers hauled to the BMA. These worked very satisfactorily from time to time. They were also to establish forward amm, pet or suppts should the tactical situation arise. This never happened.

On 11 Oct the DAQMG visited us and was apparently quite satisfied. On the night of Oct 11 and during the day of Oct 12, 8 Cdn Inf Bde came in to enlarge the dump. 8 Bde provided one offr, Capt Bourassa and thirty men. Capt Bourassa was made Camp Comd of the BMA. Also we received two more amm, sup & Pet issuers. Units would come in by troops, sqns, companies and even pls, to draw their requirements. We supplied them. Replenishment was controlled by Div from the other side. A state was sent them twice daily and terrapins arrived once daily with

requirements as stocks got low. The terrapins did an excellent job and are ideal for maintaining such a dump. They loaded from RCASC dumps on the other side. We carried in the BMA at its maximum, approx 240 tons amn, 60 tons pet, deriv, FTF (H) CO2 bottles, and oil, and 100 tons sups, water blankets, stretchers and signal equipment.

It is interesting to note that one shell, landing in our dump, perforated twelve jerricans of pet but did not catch fire.

We also handled refugees and some prisoners, and feeding of same. The three hundred prisoners did enough work to warrant the bully beef, hard tack and water expended on them.

We continued to supply 8 and 9 Bdos along with supporting troops all their requirements until Oct 18 when all remaining pet and sups were withdrawn to coy lines and the amn remained there as a forward amn pt under command of Capt E Manning.

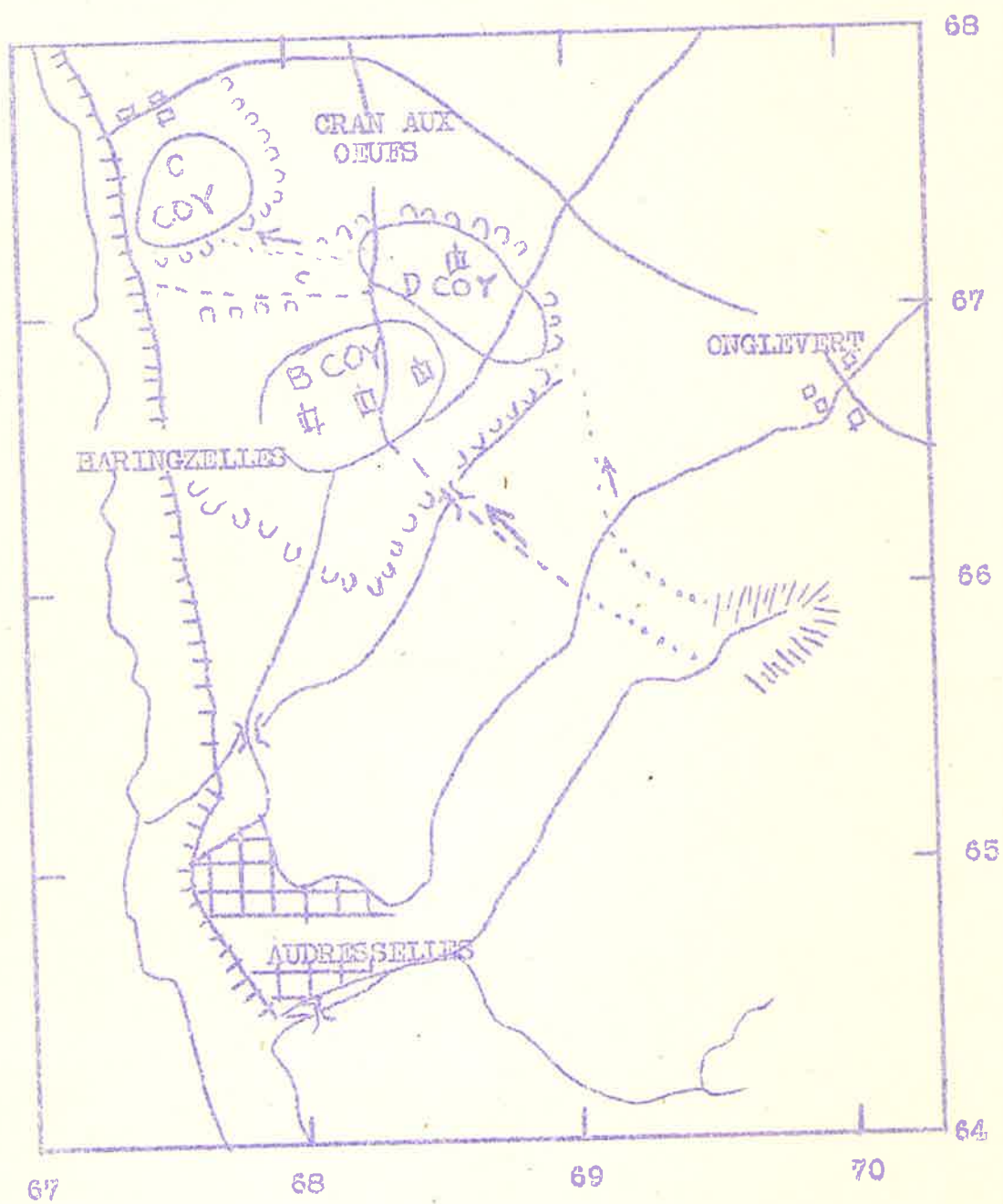
Lessons to be learned from this operation are as follows

1. Adequate facilities should be provided for refugees in the early stages. In our case we took this on because of necessity. We handled one hundred and fifty people - young and old overnight as shipping space was not available.
2. A P.W. camp, together with proper staff should be set up in early stages.
3. An Ordnance Officer with small Staff should be located in the BMA, to handle mainly signal equipment.
4. Wireless communications should be available between BMA and those controlling the replenishment of the BMA for urgent needs.....

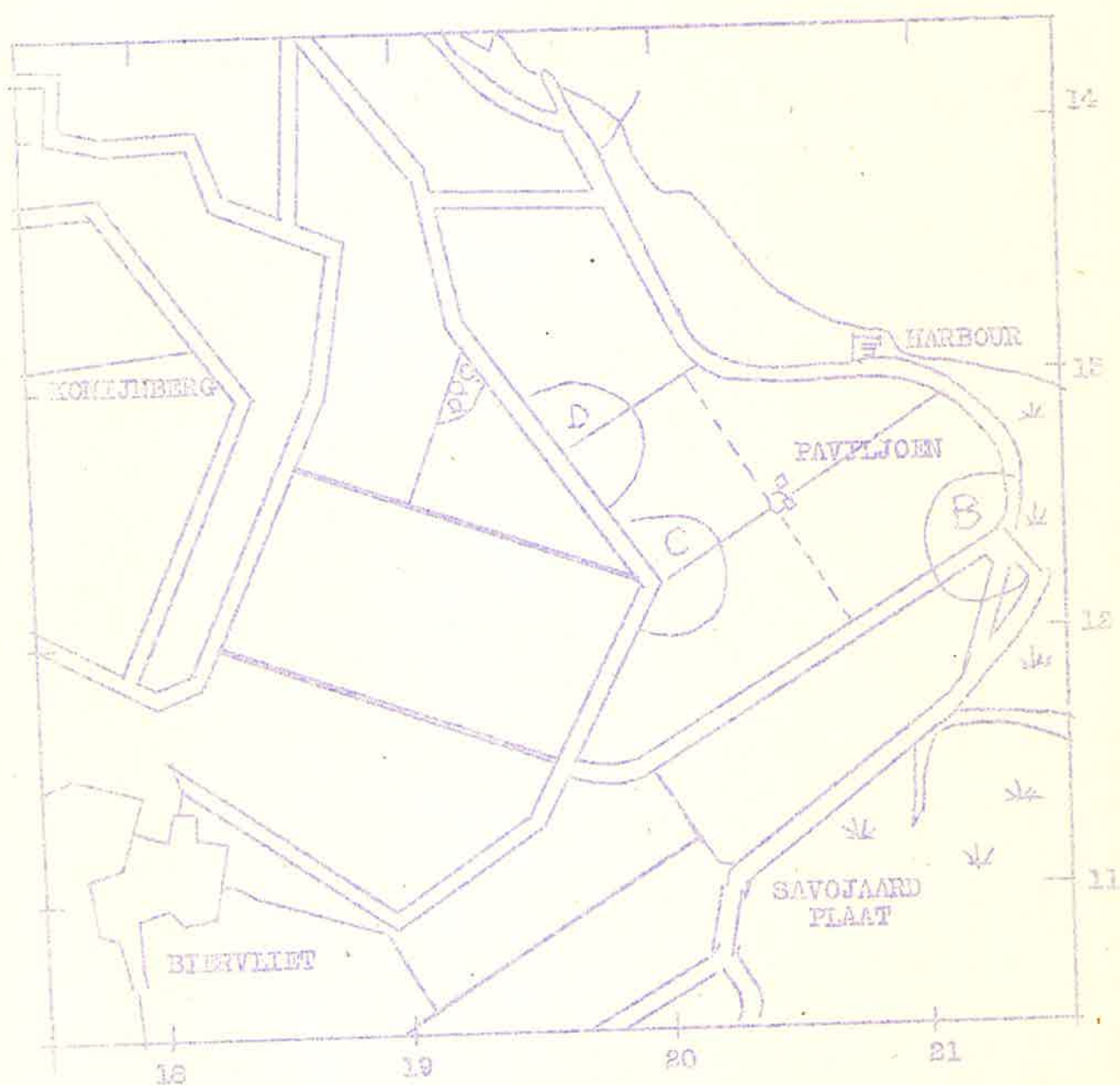
Field
25 Oct 44

sgd AJS Turvey Capt
HQ RCASC 3 Cdn Inf Div

SKETCH MAP
OPERATIONS AGAINST THE DEFENCES
OF CAP GRIS NEZ



SKETCH MAP
DYKE WARFARE



LEGEND

- Road
- Dyke or dyke-road