

Copy of Diary by
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Commander, 4 Parachute Brigade.

Note. This diary was written by Brig. Hackett in hospital and is compiled purely from memory.

Reference Maps - HOLLAND GSGS 4427 - 1/25,000 - Sheets GINKEL & ARNHEM.

Monday, 18 September.

Drop about 6 minutes late. Rivers MAAS, WAAL and NEDER RIJN quite clearly seen during run in. Some flak, and own aircraft hit several times by SA fire and once (just behind exit) by something larger in fuselage. Aircraft swinging and sun shining on to and off green and red lights made it difficult to tell when the green went on. I did not jump in any case until we were well up DZ towards road ARNHEM - EDE (i.e. towards Bde HQ RV). Considerable SA fire on DZ and apparently an engagement proceeding on S or SW and possibly on SE and E as well as mortar fire occasionally. Had some difficulty in collecting myself and the members of Bde HQ, all of whom scattered and rather confused. No sign of Advance Group and no blue smoke in view. After 10 minutes or so saw 10 Bn's green smoke south of main road. Found Captain TEMPLE, G3 and told him to set up blue smoke at about 627838 and RV there. House just to north occupied by enemy. Was joined by Captain BOOTY (Staff Captain), Captain JAMES (att Staff Officer), Lt. Col. HEATHCOAT-AMERY (attached to the Bde from A.M. Leigh Mallory's staff), War Correspondent J. SMYTH and then the Brigade Major. He had been with 7 KOSB trying to clear DZ which they had achieved (in part only) by an attack on the new road embankment on its S end just as we ran in.

By about 1515 hours all Bns were on the air, but 4 Para Sqn not and no contact with 133 Field Ambulance although Captain HARKESS found them at house 627840 (now clear of enemy), where they had set up DZ Dressing Station.

156 Bn were well organised west of DZ commanding road ARNHEM - EDE. 10 Bn's RV had been occupied by enemy, but they set up an alternative to the south and had then made good their original one. 11 Bn were organising at their RV 634823. Bde HQ Group was turning up satisfactorily and adequate control was established (forward only). 4 Para Sqn RE located in Sanatorium 631833. By 1530 hours Bde was a going concern, 75 to 80% strong.

About then GS01 Div arrival and reported that 1 Bde's push to the bridge had been checked. Brigadier Hicks was commanding Div and I was to change our plan to allow of 11 Bn going straight off after S Staffords to push in to bridge. I issued orders roughly as follows:-

- (i). 11 Bn to move off at once to come under command 1 Para Bde on arrival RV HARTESTEIN 1815 (exact time and place I have now forgotten).
- (ii). 156 Bn move now to 11 Bn's RV area and prepared to lead advance of Bde less 11 Bn along line of railway.
- (iii). 10 Bn hold hard area 624842.
- (iv). 133 Para Fd Ambulance move off south when casualty situation permitted and warn me when this was likely to be possible.
- (v). Bde HQ move soonest to old Advance Group Report Centre by Bn HQ of KOSB south east corner of DZ (634823).

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Meanwhile Bde HQ Defence Platoon and detachment from RASC Pl and other Bde HQ personnel had been securing some sort of defensive area round Bde HQ with spasmodic fighting against disorganised elements. A score odd of prisoners were brought in, together with two vehicles and a 37 mm Anti Tank gun, 81 mm Mortar etc. and a couple of vehicles.

Bde HQ moved about 1700 hrs and met HQ 7 KOSB at 634822. It found its own Advance Group (including Lt.F.R.LOCKE, OC Pro Sec) and set up. Brew up before dark. 4 Para Sqn RE had been picked up on the way.

KOSB were released now to return under cmd 1 A/L Bde and thanked for their job before and during our arrival, which would have been much harder going without them.

10 Bn were firm and were ordered to move south behind 133 Field Ambulance when latter was able to move. Meanwhile they were to detach a Coy to take over from KOSB in area track junction which arrived shortly after. 10 Bn was being attacked from time to time in a desultory manner and incurred casualties. Lt.MACKIE was killed here - a great loss to the Bde.

156 were on the move, skirting DZ on southwest directed on area 663806. Axis track north of and parallel to railway.

My intention was to move the Bde less 11 Bn towards the centre of Div activity as quickly as was compatible with the retention of its coherence. 133 Fd Amb was a conditioning factor now.

About 1800 hrs transport arrived with Lt.LOCKE, who had been sent off to guide it in. Major HAYNES reported 2 Airlanding Anti Tank Bty complete less one gun recoverable next day - we hoped (i.e. 11 x 6 prs, 3 x 17 prs). All unit tpt pretty complete.

Major PAGE guided off 156 Bn transport. 10 Bn was sent off to join up behind it on its move forward. Other units were put in touch.

At about dusk 156 were ordered to halt and reorganise and push on down axis of railway before first light. 133 were now clear of DZ and I met CO at my HQ. 10 Bn was behind and was deployed at my orders in area road and track junction 634823 with orders to rest and move along Bde axis at 0300. 133 were to move on to join up with 181 area sanatorium WOLFHEZEN 662802. Bde HQ was only awaiting disposal of these units to move as planned along Bde axis to house just east of WOLFHEZEN railway crossing. Main HQ had already gone leaving normal Tac HQ (Commander, Brigade Major, two rear links DRs all mobile).

4 Para Sqn RE was meanwhile moving to cross track 637814 (on Bde axis at west end of Bde area) and was to consolidate in an infantry role there.

2 Para Pl RASC was forming firm base on rd (Bde axis) in Bde HQ 646812.

About 1845 hours (just dark) Bde Tac HQ with 133 clear and KOSB out of the way moved to area Hotel 647813 and joined Main HQ.

About 2300 hours Major LINTON OC 2 Airlanding Light Bty RA arrived from Div HQ and brought further instructions. I then went to Div HQ, saw Brigadier HICKS and arranged the following task for 19 Sep:-

Advance between including road ARNHEM - EDE including railway to secure high ground KOEPEL 712793 with firm left flank on road.

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Tuesday, 19 September.

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Returned own HQ about 0130 hours.

Hostile bombing during night with flares, intermittent and annoying no damage.

Orders sent to units in conformity with task. 156 to secure KOEPEL, 10 Bn to occupy firm base, road, area 693811. 4 Para Sqn remain in position as back stop area 638814 plus Troop Anti Tank, Para Platoon Bde reserve. 133 WOLFHEZEN. Bde axis including track north of railway. Bde HQ moved to 668805 about 0700 before brew up.

Flak train at WOLFHEZEN Station destroyed by own air sp, indicated threat to Bdes arrival happily averted. Prisoners now about 50, sent to Div during previous night. About 12 more in hand. Last location Bde HQ had been asked for. Platoon enemy very hurriedly evacuated.

Visited 156 area JOHANIA HOEVE about 0900. Coy attack was making good feature 565 696796, successful few casualties.

Their plan was then to make good the LICHTEN BEEK WOODS about 705795 and use that as a firm base for attack on KOEPEL. On their left were 7 KOSB, in 4 Bde area but status undermined. HQ at Farm 693798. Task later to protect arrival of 1 Polish Glider Group.

10 Bn had met heavy opposition area 694806 and asked and received permission to disengage and try a bolder west flanking movement. I wanted to draw up Bde tail, but medical factors again important. A small party was still looking after DZ casualties unable to be moved to 133 first location. Main body 133 was to move from WOLFHEZEN sanatorium; when it did so (about mid-morning). I closed up 4 Para Sqn RE to WOLFHEZEN railway crossing and ordered move of Bde HQ to rd track junction 684799 at 1100 hours.

At 1030 hours on my return to Bde HQ from 156 Bn I met GS01 and CRA just arriving. GOC had got out of ARNHEM and returned to Div HQ. He requested my presence, if I was not pressed and otherwise would come to see me later. KOSB came under my command with task of protecting landing of Polish glider transport same afternoon area 6880. Things were now looking tidier. Visited KOSB and ordered them to stay put, and to be prepared to take over 156's LICHTENBEEK objective when captured, with one coy as firm base for 156's next advance. One Coy KOSB was committed to glider landing zone for protection, remainder of Bn firm base. Bde HQ set up new location (road track junction 684799) about midday. Badly strafed by hostile LFB: no Bde HQ casualties but 7 of KOSB caught in open moving towards Bde HQ on LZ patrol.

Closed 4 Para Sqn RE up to 672804.

10 Bn were now engaged at 690810 from north and east - a few casualties - But holding their own and consolidating.

Major PERKINS RE, OC 4 Para Sqn now reported in person. Sqn concentration new location and confirmed offensive task (W of Bde area).

OC 156 reported two successive attempts to capture LICHTENBEEK feature one coy up. Both had been repelled and casualties suffered. Bn had now for the moment shot its bolt. Bosche apparently very sensitive to any threat to that high ground. I ordered him to consolidate point 565 and informed him what I just heard from Div HQ that A/L Bde was about to launch an attack to open crossing road railway 699792 and he was to give main support. Time of attack 1500 hrs.

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About 1420 GOC arrived at my HQ and gave me account of his adventures in ARNHEM. Little or no news of my 11 Bn.

We discussed possible retrenchment and I advised cutting losses north of railway in case we were caught by counter attack troops (which were undoubtedly now gathering) too spread out. Difficulty for my Bde area was railway. No longer commanding WOLFHEZEN crossing which might any moment be occupied by enemy unless we controlled HALTE OOSTERBEEK HOOG crossing (699792). Bde area was cut in half by obstacle which tpt could not at present pass and considerable RE work only could enable it to do so. I favoured moving all S of ry and improving posn eastward taking rd ARNHEM - UTRECHT as Bde axis. This was plan 2 and would involve withdrawing 10 Bn pretty soon to secure the WOLFHEZEN crossing to provide for Bde tps.

Brig. HICKS arrived at my HQ and confirmed his arrangements for attack on ry crossing 699792 and asked for sp from 156 which I confirmed had been laid on. He then left.

10 Bn reported enemy attacks NE by some inf and normal SP.

156 and 10 reported continuation of fire by one or two SP guns which had been intermittent since about 0830.

10 Bn reported 5 tracked vehs probably SP guns. 156 reported further tracked vehs possibly tks.

Bde HQ by now well dug in tree area 684799 and quite capable of resisting attack unsupported. Men the better for digging.

GOC left ? 1440 hrs. I believe he walked back over the ry to jeep due S of Bde HQ.

Information received from Div about 1500 hrs indicated some reverse or at least threats of such in area south of ry (probably, I conjectured, from force of enemy reported at river during day through RENKUM - HEELSUM) together with situation noticeably satisfactory E towards ARNHEM. I therefore ordered 10 Bn to disengage forthwith and make for WOLFHEZEN crossing, seize and hold it for Bde to cross if necessary.

Reports from 10 Bn then became confused and intermittent and it was clear a difficult posn was developing for them. I subsequently learned their first RV on disengaging had been found held by enemy, which caused some disorganization and I understand their second too, which disorganized them more.

Order to implement plan 2 came through from Div now, with confirmation that posn of remainder of Div was giving rise to a little anxiety. Order already passed on to units already now briefed.

At about 1600 hours Polish Gliders began to land in area 6880. Enemy reaction was instantaneous and violent. Pressure was put on rear of withdrawing 10 Bn across whose path the gliders were landing (i.e. exactly between them and Bde HQ and their next bound).

As 10 Bn deployed by coys and in very fair order through the landing gliders great difficulty was experienced in persuading Bde tps and unit tpt in Bde tps area that they were not enemy especially as there was now a fair volume of small arms fire coming from the enemy from the same direction (all high and doing no harm). Tpt got rather jammed up and rd leading past Bde HQ to WOLFHEZEN and tps in some cases opened fire. Great energy and violence was needed by the officers of Bde HQ to prevent some confusion.

Poles landing from gliders engaged anything in sight and were themselves engaged in return which did little to help.

RE had reported tunnel suitable for putting tpt across ry at 668804 and were ordered defend from North and West until all was over.

156 were away and moving South of Bde HQ to a RV S of ry (?679796). KOSB were away and doing the same, their orders were to RV area 205 - 672794 and revert to command A/L Bde.

Bde HQ Gp was now to be prepared to operate as an inf det and was despatched to Pt 232 - 682797. I stayed at old location with Capt. BLUNDELL and Capt. JAMES commanding a det Def Pl to get all tpt clear and see that tps were out.

WOLFHEZEN crossing was partly occupied when 10 Bn arrived but they crossed in fair order and got into posn just South about 1800 hrs.

4 Para Sqn RE passed most of Bde tpt through the tunnel and some (I understand) over the level crossing at WOLFHEZEN. Some was utterly bogged in heavy sand plans made to recover it next day, which in some cases could not be carried out owing to enemy encroachment and in others (e.g. Bde HQ recce jeep) only resulted in the loss of further tpt trying to tow it out next morning.

The Germans to the North of the ry quickly overran the Polish Gliders and pressed on to the line of the ry when we held them at dusk. They were not many (2 pls to a coy) but active and strong in automatics. Bde HQ det largely from Def Pl under Capt. JAMES and Lt. Col. HEATCOTE-AMORY (att from AM Leigh Mallory's staff) were responsible and inflicted cas, suffering some too. A spirited counter attack led by the BM just before dusk gave some breathing space.

Posn at dark 19 Sep.

Bde HQ dug in as a def locality area pt 232.

156 Bn about 270 strong holding the perimeter about 678799 to the South and up to about 674797. 10 Bn about 250 strong 200 yards South of WOLFHEZEN crossing. I wanted to pull them in but they were rather disorganized and received permission to reorganize there during the dark. 4 Sqn RE between tunnel and level crossing on South of ry.

A POW announced that an attack was impending between 0300 and 0400 from about two coys North of the ry with SP guns and he thought a few tanks.

There was some harassing shellfire during darkness and a fair amount of movement with hostile SA fire together with much movement of a very small number of tracked vehs quite close; all ranks stood to but no attack developed.

I discussed at some length with Div by RT advisability of moving during the night towards our final location. I wanted to get integrated into the Div area. I was quite happy to stay but would have preferred to move to a villa near final location at say 2300 hrs; by then 10 Bn would be fit to do so in good order. Div deprecated a move but said I was to send recce parties in by night and follow at first light. I saw nothing to be gained out of recce parties in the dark and it was agreed in the end that I should move the Bde at first light.

Wednesday, 20 September.

Route for the move was to be area 232 thence track to last 'N' in hotel WOLFHEZEN - BREDE LAN - to junc with main rd ARNHEM - UTRECHT.

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Order of march - 156

Bde HQ Gp and Bde Tps
10 Bn.

An advance group with small protective element was made up from all units to precede 156 if possible. Situation regarding enemy, fluid and very uncertain. Country: woodland intersected by roads and ridges. Locations and situation in rest of Division hardly known at all. My intention was to get on axis main rd ARNHEM - UTRECHT and take up a posn facing Eastwards astride at East of HARTESTEIN near which I believed Div HQ still to be.

Comms not good rear back to Div intermittent. Btys low and no opportunity so far to charge. Capt. KENNET, OC Bde Sigs was still with me.

Bde under way about 0615, still needing a little space to move out from night disposition and assume order of march. Adv Gp under Capt. TEMPLE proceeding along first part of Bde axis as above comes under fire about 682785 almost at once. TEMPLE wounded right arm. Disposed some form of protective screen in the reshuffle with Bde HQ personnel under Capt. JAMES and moved Adv Gp and Bde tps back and in behind 156 down other tracks; some sporadic shooting which I believe to be caused by German patrols rather lost.

Bde got under way satisfactorily in designed order of march and on to BREEDE LAAN axis moving Southwards; some more A tk guns seemed to get left behind.

About 0715 hrs (fairly precisely) 156 were fired on by MG42 and 34 right front area 678786. They made strenuous efforts to clear it but as their outflanking movements revealed more and more opposition and a second coy was drawn in extent of enemy disposition was indicated was not the old patrol I had thought but a force moving East along axis either WOLFHEZEN - main rd - or HEELSUM main rd, whose left or left rear our Adv Gp must have bumped on first moving off. I now deployed 10 Bn to protect right rear and continued trying to push along original axis. Enemy now in action with mortars and A tk guns against any buildings we used.

Div Comd came up on blower at about 0740 ordering me to Div HQ at 0700 hrs. I gave his situation. We were completely engaged and free movement from us to him was impossible. Brisk probing all round revealed a weakness to our East where I took charge myself to exploit. D.M. led several small exploiting attacks and we killed a number of Boche (one at least to Bde Comd's rifle).

Everything well in hand and control adequate though our movements were a little constricted. Announced change of plans to Unit Comds. 156 no longer to try to push fwd on old axis, but hold there while 10 Bn took over adv and pushed along new axis (from track junc 682787 to rd track junc 687783). 10 Bn were slower than I would have liked starting org was not over strong. Lt. Col. SMYTHE had been wounded by a bullet in the right arm afternoon before and Major WARR in comd. Comms bad and when they did start they pushed on without much regard to the rest of the coln which lost touch with them and ultimately got divided in two.

Fire was now heavy on S & SW and there was frequent LA fire from N. Good progress was made clearing Eastwards but much sporadic fighting cropped up clearing small parties of Boche in wood.

As soon as 156 could get clear of BREEDE LAAN I asked through Major de Gex (2 i/c Lt Regt - since 1200 hrs day before with me) and got a troop stalk along it either side of new Bde axis to discourage

pursuit. Repeated. Good results - presume these relieved but OC 156 reported movement track vehicles.

Firing all round growing in intensity asked for A tk guns. OC 2 A Tk Bty said had none left, some had been hopelessly stuck day before, others abandoned owing to lack of tractors but am not yet in posn to know why there were none at all left in Bty.

About midday BM wounded bullet rt shoulder continued to function most gallantly. Lt.Col. HEATHCOTE AMORY wounded shoulder and leg. Other casualties.

10 En now reported on rd VALKENBURG LAAN moving S but gap between Bde HQ and then we were slowing up.

About 1215 tank appeared re-engaged at 400 yds on rt, but volume of SA fire discouraged it about 1225 another came to within 300 yds of tpt on left before blowing track off on 75 grenade. Only A tk weapon one PIAT with one bomb.

Enemy had now closed in around Bde HQ I.O.killed (Capt Blundell) OC 156 reported 2 i/c and Adj 156 missing.

I directed Major POWELL 156 to clear a cup shaped depression containing up to 30 Germans right in our path. Tanks had now closed in and set some of our transport alight. Had some difficulty in getting Lt.Col. HEATHCOTE AMORY out, strapped to stretcher on jeep next to blazing ann. BM now mortally wounded by bullet in head.

Major POWELL gathered handful of his coy, rushed the depression driving out the Boche. I moved around trying to rally remnants of it, but by now two or three tanks and German infantry moving freely through the coln and scattering it and all coherence lost.

In the depression I mustered Staff Capt. BOOTY, Major POWELL, Major PAGE and about 30 156, about 12 10 Bn about 12 Bde HQ, etc. and a score or so others. I appd Major DE GEX A/BM. There was no water or food insufficient weapons little ann. Many of us were using German rifles.

Capt. BARRON (A tk) Lt. St. AUBYN (156) and Capt. TEMPLE (though wounded) all most useful and gallant officers here.

Throughout the afternoon the enemy made frequent and determined infantry attacks with one tank to destroy us. We made frequent counter attacks to widen scope and recover freedom of movement.

Tank never pressed this attack to within range of our 82 grenade a repeated attempts to stalk it failed as inf were always close round it. They frequently pressed to within grenade range of us on NW & S but were always held off.

Major PAGE was wounded, fought on and was then killed. Capt. BARRON was wounded: bullet in hand and shoulder (I then took his British rifle in exchange for my German one). Other cas.

Radius of posn about 30 yds roughly circular.

Towards nightfall I had decided after consultations with Major DE GEX break through in direction of Div HQ with whom we had no contact since 1000 hrs. Enemy apparently determined to liquidate posn before dark and now pressing in more than ever. We made a dash for it Major DE GEX and self leading and got through with few cas to posn Cay Borders at 687786 (I think).

There I organized in to 156 det and Bde HQ det and disposing in def positions met OC 4 Para Sqn RE with half his unit intact and remainder believed nearly K.Od. elsewhere. Reported to Div HQ.

Div Comd ordered me to take over wef next morning comd of East side of Div perimeter from about 695785 round to river in the neighbourhood of church 697774.

Major DE GEX reverted to Lt Regt to my regret.

Capt. HARKNESS, BRASCO, was at Div HQ with an assortment of men and Lt. Col. Smythe with about 40 10 Bn later increased to about 70. 156 det (about 50 strong, Major POWELL in comd) were lodged immediately in the area it was proposed they should defend (houses 694786). I visited them before they moved in and Bde HQ det at SONNERBERG and then slept at Div HQ which was in its same location (693784).

Thursday, 21 September.

Asked for and obtained Major MADDEN RA(G11(Air), 1 Air Div) as BM.

Established HQ at 696784.

Comms problem. Line laid to Div HQ and subsequently to 10 Bn and 156 as 68 sets became available they were passed out. We had none in the Bde by now.

Order of Battle, 4 Bde.

1. Bde HQ, some signallers plus element of Def P1	About 40
2. 156 Bn	now " 60
3. 10 Bn	" " 65
4. 11 Bn (Major Lonsdale i/c)	" " 80
5. 1 Bde remnants (with Capt. TAYLOR Bde IO)	" " 150
6. Det S Staffords (Major HANE i/c)	" " 70
7. Det Glider Pilots (Capt. ^{GIL} OLGIVIE)	" " 35

MDS occupying hotels on either side of x rds 697784 on the East and one or two houses on either side running East from crossroads had been in enemy hands but 10 Bn had occupied 4 houses just to the east of them on the afternoon of 21st September and they were now ours.

11 Bn det which had got separated from the main body of the Bn on 19 September was well organized under Major LONSDALE, who was also the channel of comd for the 1 Bde and S Stafford det.

Locations and areas of resp.

11 Bn church 696773 - W, S & E.

S Staff E of ch from east rd 697774 to river 1 Bde from rd track junc 696774 to indeterminate bdy with 10 Bn. 10 Bn astride main rd 6784. Glider Pilot det from x rds at 697784 (hence forward known as MIX x rds) to rather indeterminate boundary with 156 Bn in area 694787 on whose left were Recce Sqn and KCSB.

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Some Recce Sqn appeared to be also on 156 Bn right.

I went round this area morning 21 September and made some adjustments. Hvy mortar fire on church in 11 Bn area and Major MADDEN acting EM was killed about 1000 hrs while assisting Lt.Col. THOMPSON, OC Lt Regt just wounded by another bomb. My driver, Pte. Ward, received slight splinters from another and my jeep was wrecked. Continued rounds to S Staffs, Lt Regt 2 Bty (Major LINTON) and Div HQ on foot.

During afternoon organization of Bde was continued. I was not happy about the gap between 10 Bn and the 1 Bde dets on their right.

156 Bn were attacked in their houses during afternoon by small numbers of infantry from North but saw them off. Glider Pilots reported movement in wood at 697787 and patrols 10 Bn were also attacked. 10 Bn were also attacked in their houses but held firm during the morning and early afternoon. During the late afternoon a heavy attack with at least one SP gun developed on these houses (10 Bn) which were pressed home. L of C was cut and a patrol from Bde HQ Def P1 which went up after dark rptd free German movement round these houses. It was assumed they had been lost and reported so to Div but no one had come back and they were not the surrendering sort. I still had hope. During the day fire was obtained from a Fd Regt in 30 Corps and useful shoots put down on main rd E of 10 Bn houses and wood to NE of MDS where there was much movement. Safety factor a severe restriction here owing to long range of shooting.

A further shoot against a map target from information given by Dutch civilian about activity round a large isolated hotel near ARNHEM contributed to an attempt to regain some offensive initiative.

During the evening Div Comd held conference and announced retrenchment on N of Div area. 21 Indep Coy would come under my comd as a result at 0200 hrs and a party of RASC under Capt. CRANMER BYNG at 0300 hrs.

Friday, 22 September.

21 Indep Coy 160 strong under Major WILSON moved in during early hours to occupy from rd junc 695780 to incl MDS x rds. Task was to hold defence position and work forward. Det from Div RASC under Capt. BYNG was put in same time from incl track junc 695776 to incl rd junc 695780 with orders to make every effort to move forward and take in next N to S parallel rd about 250 yds eastwards.

Half of 4 Para Sqn RE under Lt. BROWN who had been fighting hard with 21 Indep Coy outside Bde area came under comd about 0200 hrs and was given Bde res role with counter attack task from Bde HQ posn westwards across the green in front of Div HQ.

After light on Sep 22 it became evident that 10 Bn had retained two of their houses east of the MDS. The later afternoon attack had resulted in the almost complete ocllapse of all of them from the SP gun and fire from an A tk gun at short range. Houses all round had been set on fire. The house in which Lt.Col. SMYTHE in spite of his wounded arm and Major WARR had been holding out had then been stormed. Both were severely wounded. (I have since seen SMYTHE in hospital in ARNHEM paralysed from the waist down and Major WARR who has had one arm amputated).

Lt. SAUNDERS of 10 Bn had been killed.

The occupants of the other houses had however come to the surface again and re-established themselves. There were now no 10 Bn officers and 10 Bn remnants were comd by Capt. BARRON (2 ATk Bty) wounded in

hand and shoulder on 20 Sep, see above, and FOO Lt. WHITE.

Line comm re-established to 10 Bn and after frequent cuts to 156.

I visited 21 Coy, MDS (saw Lt. Col. MARABLE), RASC det (who were rather far back for my intention and whom I ordered forward), 11 Bn, 1 Bde, Lt Regt and Recce Sqn during morning 22 Sep. Major POWELL came in.

Met hvy mortar fire on church area (11 Bn) and on Recce Sqn HQ and own HQ a great deal from mortar what seemed 105 or 75, possibly from SP.

Visited Glider Pilots in their houses at 697787. German infiltration had been taking place and sniping was free.

Attacks on 10 Bn and 156 were almost constant during this day, 22 Sep, and use of the SP guns got bolder during the day.

A message was received from the MDS that a German officer had appeared in a SP gun with a red cross on it and said that unless we evacuated MDS area entirely it would be fired upon. I referred this to Div Comd and for the moment it appeared unjustified to evacuate which I communicated to Lt. Col. MARABLE.

Heavy mortar fire on my HQ during the morning and growing intensity of attack on 10, 156 and Glider Pilots with considerable volume of SA, A tk gun and SP fire all over the area made situation unpromising. Rain during part of the day made it downright miserable.

No ground however was lost though resources by nightfall had grown thin, particularly in automatic weapons and amm and PIATs. Frequent destruction of houses meant frequent breakage of weapons and there were no replacements. No rations during the day and water scarce. Own cas during day about 30. 1 Bde were attacked during the afternoon while a short lull was enjoyed on the northern end. One or two tks and one or more SP guns supported inf. The AFVs apparently moved North to South along houses at 697784 to 786 blowing holes in them. Inf following them were held by our own. At least one SP gun remained in the neighbourhood and improved its posn during dusk.

During the day 21 Indep Coy claimed one SP gun with a PIAT. Lonsdale force claimed one (both flamers), 156 winged one.

To unify 21 Coy front I decided to relieve 10 Bn remnants with them. Relief carried out by 230200 and remains of 10 Bn 50 strong with no officers of their own, under Lts. BARRON and WHITE were given some sleep in Bde HQ area after some very grim battling.

Throughout the night it appeared that SP guns were working forward many blazing houses on our N, NE and E front gave plenty of light. I organized several PIAT stalking parties but ??? (undecipherable)

Saturday, 23 September.

Shortly after first light 21 Coy were attacked in 10 Bn houses on heavy scale, similar to that of the previous day, with SP guns reducing houses to rubble and inf then infiltrating. They were driven out. Bde front line to East was then overrun. Bde HQ personnel in splendid order.

I visited 21 Coy and Glider Pilots. Lt. GROSE recalled from J10 at Division, though of 11 Bn, and was put in charge of remnants 10, who

were put in defensive posn in house 696786 just N of main rd. Mortar and shellfire on Bde HQ locality developed about 0830 and continued with varying degrees of intensity and some lulls during the day. Volume of SA fire from N, NE and E greater and from closer in. Attacks on 156 and GP with their small intermingled det of Recce Sqn were indicated by mid-morning. There had been much movement during the night in wood NE of MDS and built up area West of it. Infiltrations between houses on our Northern front became an established fact by midday, but strong pts still grim. In common with most dets defending houses against SPs & A tk guns nearly every strong point had left its house and dug in the garden nearby. Houses are a snare unless you can keep the SP and A tk guns at arms length and round the corner.

10 Bn proved this and 156 did so again and Glider Pilots and Recce Sqn support it.

Supply drop p.m.22 total failure. Still no rations, water scarcity serious in some dets; weapons strained all round and amm far from plentiful.

Mid morning GOC ordered me to establish comd post inside Div HQ perimeter. I extracted the minimum personnel from def posns in front line and set up 200 yds further back.

Lt. BOSWORTH from Div Sigs now functioning as Bde Sigs Offr in place of L/Cpl. RADEMEYER and then Sgt. PATTERSON borrowed from 21 Coy (original member 4 Bde Sigs Sec). Doing very well competing with extreme shortage of equipment and frequent cutting of line by shell and mortar fire.

Demands of tps for infm about relieving forces now long overdue increasingly hard to satisfy. It was clearly only a case now for sticking it and this was apparent to everybody. Spirit of men beyond praise but some (e.g.156) near the limit from strain, cumulative lack of sleep and food. Major POWELL's handling of this body deserves high recognition.

During afternoon arranged a force from Lonsdale force 40 strong with a PIAT and at least 4 automatics to be at call for reinforcement or counter attack and discussed with Major POWELL its use in his area, He professed his ability to hold on if sent 2 PIATs. I detached 2 from L force and sent them with 20 rounds.

Most of the afternoon I spent improving and helping to man Bde HQ def locality against which an even heavier volume of fire was developing. RASC def in the centre had had a slight reverse but recovered and I was now pretty confident about the line from incl MDS cross rds southwards. From there round to our western bdy on the N it was giving more cause for anxiety.

About 1700 hrs a Red Cross emissary came from the MDS to say that the Germans had now about 30-40 fighting tps in the MDS itself (about 80 yds fwd of the Bde HQ locality) and a German Major had delivered an ultimatum:- Unless we evacuate the Bde HQ plantation up to inclusive a small building used as an RAP, the whole MDS and Bde HQ area would be subject to a series of mortar concentrations. I had till 1930 hrs. I ordered its evacuation by 1900 hrs and doubled up the defenders from the E and on those in the W or upper end.

Discussed in the evening with GOC and CRA privately (on GOC's invitation) the possibility of withdrawal from N and NE. I expressed doubt in view of poverty of comms and slight degree of control of my ability to withdraw anything from there at the stage at which my Div Comd might require it but hoped to pull in part at least of Bde HQ det from their locality to cover a withdrawal on to more solid elements further South in Bde area. I briefed Capt. HARKNESS now comd Bde HQ locality and Capt. BOOTY, A/EM accordingly, but no one else.

Major POMELL came in after dark and Major WILSON, and I arranged with them and Lt.Col.MURRAY, OC 1 Wing G.P.Regt a shortening of line by giving up NE corner and holding further back among houses to N of the rd. As these houses were partly Boche-held the issue was not as straight forward as could be desired. A LO from G.P.det came in about 2000 hrs and was given a "Walkie-Talkie" by OGILVIE, one of two produced by MURRAY.

Owing to casualties from tree bursts had now dug new cmd post and sig exchange in open, 200 yds South in Div Maint Area. Occupied it about 1900 hrs with Chief Clerk, fwd link operator, one exchange operator, A/BM and 2 orderlies, leaving the remainder of Bde HQ personnel in their weapon pits. During night secured two shoots from 30 Corps 25 prs on wood NE of MDS and believe they may have relieved pressure.

A small proportion of the Polish Bde had been ferried over the river during the previous night and more had followed under mist during the day. Div Cmd agreed to make 200 available to me to take over my Northern sector. It was arranged that adv reps from them would meet me at 0830 at my cmd post.

About 2200 hrs I parted from Major POWELL who was returning to his sector and guided Major WILSON down through old Bde HQ locality to where his sector began, saw Capt.HARKNESS, returned to CRA's shelter which was a few yds from my cmd post and relieved congestion there besides being roomier. All was relatively quiet during remainder of night though a good deal of German movement was evident.

Sunday, 24 September.

Visited Recce Sqn and discussed with Capt.ALLSOPP guiding of Poles into sector. He gave me a runner to send back when their reps arrived at my cmd post, not many hundred yds from Recce Sqn HQ. Shelling and mortaring now heavy while returning to my HQ. I was hit by splinters from a close burst in stomach and left thigh about 100 yds from Div HQ. Runners leg broken. At first lull walked to Div RAP and sent out party for runner, and then had GOC warned of my mishap. Handed over as best I could to Lt.Col.MURRAY(1 Wing GPR) in Div HQ RAP about 1400 hrs.

I was put on a jeep and driven with others into ARNHEM where I am now.

(Signed) J.W.Hackett

St.Elizabeth's Hospital.
2 Oct 44.