

War Diary 24 Bomb Disposal Platoon.

September to December 1944.

National Archives File WO166/15450.

This Section took part in the Liberation and Clearance of the Chanel Islands with Task Force 135.

28 to 31 August and September 1944. Locations, Balham, Fort Tregantle, Plymouth, Devon. Commanding Officer Lieutenant D Wignall RE.

28 August.

Section Strength.

1 Officer, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 19 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 6 Drivers.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

1100 Section proceeded by road to Fort Tregantle, to form part of Force 135. Placed under command CRE 158 CRE Works.

29 to 30 August.

Nothing to report.

31 August.

Orders received to mobilise, by 0100 hrs, 1 Sept 1944. Unit commenced to mobilise.

1 September.

Designation of unit changed from 24 Bomb Disposal Section to 24 Bomb Disposal Platoon. Censorship imposed.

2 September.

War Establishment increased by 1 Subaltern.

3 to 5 September.

Nothing to report.

6 to 8 September.

Unit on combined training.

9 to 13 September.

Nothing to report.

14 September, 1100.

Visit by General Officer Commanding Southern Command.

14 to 16 September.

Unit on combined training.

16 September, 1200. Visit by Commander Force 135. (Force 135 Liberated the Chanel Islands.

17 to 18 September nothing to report.

19 September. Lieutenant Beckingham RE posted to the unit.

20 September .

Nothing to report.

21 September.

Visit by Chief Engineer, Southern Command.

22 September.

Nothing to report.

23 September.

Unit taking part in exercises with 30 Royal Berks.

24 September.

Unit taking part in exercises with 30 Royal Berks.

25 September.

Nothing to report.

26 to 27 September.

Unit taking part in exercise with 1 Cheshires.

28 to 29 September.

Nothing to report.

30 September.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, Lance Sergeants and Corporals 4, Lance Corporals and Sappers 19, Drivers 6.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

Covering letter to Under Secretary of State (C7) War Office. Officer i/c RE Records.

Stating War Diary 28 August to 30 September 1944 enclosed.

Signed OC 24 BD Platoon. Lieutenant D Wignall RE.

1 October 1944. Location Fort Tregantle, Plymouth, Devon. Commanding Officer Lieutenant D Wignall RE.

1 October.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 19 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 6 Drivers.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

2 October.

Nothing to report.

3 to 5 October.

Training in Beach Mine Clearance.

6 to 8 October.

Nothing to report.

9 October.

Lt H W Beckingham and 15 other ranks, proceed to Penzance to work on Beach Mine Clearance.

10 to 11 October.

Nothing to report.

12 and 13 October.

Party at Fort Tregantle training in Beach Mine Clearance.

14 to 15 October.

Nothing to report.

16 October.

Lt H W Beckingham and 15 other ranks returned from Penzance to Fort Tregantle. Lieutenant D Wignall and 15 other ranks proceeded to Penzance to work on Beach Mine Clearance.

17 to 22 October.

Nothing to report.

23 October.

Lt D Wignall and 15 other ranks returned from Penzance to Fort Tregantle. Lieutenant H W Beckingham and 14 other ranks proceeded to Penzance to continue work on Beach Mine Clearance.

24 October.

Nothing to report.

25 October.

Platoon on Combined Training exercise.

26 October.

Platoon on Combined Training exercise. Lieutenant H W Beckingham and 14 other ranks returned from Penzance to Fort Tregantle.

27 to 31 October.

Nothing to report.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 2 Sergeants, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 19 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 6 Drivers.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

Postings in and out nil.

Letter same as September sending Octobers War Diary to War Office no change of Commanding Officer.

1 November 1944. Location Fort Tregantle, Plymouth, Devon. Commanding Officer Lieutenant D Wignall RE.

1 November.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants, Corporals, 19 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 6 Drivers.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

Total all Ranks 33.

2 November.

List of justifications to G 1098 as suggested by CE, Southern Command, received.

3 to 17 November.

Nothing to report.

18 November.

CE South West District visited unit.

19 to 29 November.

Nothing to report.

30 November.

Authority received to proceed with indenting for additional stores under modified G1098.

Casualties.

1 Sapper posted in.

1 Sapper posted out.

Reductions 1 Corporal to Sapper.

30 November.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sargeant, Lance Sergeants and Corporals 3, Lance Corporals and Sappers 20, 6 Drivers.

Attached 1 Army Catering Corps.

Total all ranks 33.

Letter same as September and October sending Novembers War Diary to War Office no change of Commanding Officer.

1 December 1944. Location Fort Tregantle, Plymouth, Devon. Commanding Officer Lieutenant D Wignall RE.

1 December.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 3 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 20 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 6 Drivers.

Attache 1 Army Catering Corps.

Total all ranks 33.

2 December exercise Merlin commenced.

3 to 13 December.

Nothing to report.

14 December.

Exercise Merlin ended.

(Exercise Merlin was a rehearsal for Nestegg, from W-Day to C+3 was undertaken, 6,100 troops were gathered and briefed, supplies loaded onto vehicles and ships, vehicles loaded onto landing ships and men were boarded. The Jersey force with 200 vehicles and 804 tons of supplies was landed at Paignton, the Guernsey force with 340 vehicles and 800 tons of supplies were landed at Brixham. There were 12 minor injuries. Lessons learnt was that there was a shortage of cooks and Nestegg plans were revised. There was a second exercise in February 1945. The 3rd exercise for mid-May was cancelled. Nestegg was the code name for the Liberation of the Channel Islands.)

15 to 17 December.

Nothing to report.

18 December.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham proceeded on leave.

19 to 26 December.

Nothing to report.

27 December.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham returned from Leave.

28 to 30 December.

Nothing to Report.

Letter same as September, October and December sending Decembers War Diary to War Office no change of Commanding Officer.

There is no War Diary in the National Archives Files for 1 January to 19 May 1945.

19 May 1945 Commanding Officer Lieutenant D Wignall.

Part of the Platoon led by Lieutenant H Beckingham was dispatched to Jersey.

19 to 31 May.

Unit engaged in clearance of under-water obstacles and anti-air landing poles in Guernsey.

28 May.

Jersey det returned to Plt HQ.

31 May.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

Postings in 2 Drivers. Posted out 2 Sappers and 2 Drivers.

Signed Lt D Wignall OC 24 BD Plt RE.

1 June 1945.

Location St Peter Port, Guernsey.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 to 30 June.

Unit personnel engaged on supervision of German PW clearing minefields, underwater obstacles and anti-air – landing obstacles. Also engaged in Supervision of Civilian Labour clearing anti-air-landing obstacles.

30 June.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sappers, 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

Reversions 1 Lance Corporal to Sapper. Appointments 1 Sapper to Lance Corporal.

Signed Lt D Wignall OC 24 BD Plt RE.

1 July.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 to 13 June.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of Civilian and PW Labour on removal of anti-air-landing obstacles.

1 to 20 July.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of PW clearing minefields round Guernsey.

(The clearance of the minefields in such a prompt time, could be attributed to the Germans meticulous record keeping. Also that the Officer in charge of the laying and his men also did the clearance).

1 to 24 July.

Unit personal engaged in the supervision of PW clearing roll bombs round Guernsey.

14 to 31 July.

Unit personal engaged in supervision of Civilian and PW Labour demolishing bunkers ect, and removal of wire. Also supervision of PW excavating for UX Bombs.

Bombs recovered.

3 x 250kg SG German Bombs all with impact fuzes.

31 July.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 August 1945.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 to 31 August.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of civilian labour removing German bunkers and other structures.

Also in supervising PW engaged on excavation for UX Bombs, removal of wire, bunkers and general rehabilitation work.

Bombs recovered.

1 x 250 kg SC German Bomb with 17 Fuze.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 Lance Corporal reverted to Sapper.

1 September 1945.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 7 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 to 30 September.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of Civilian and PW Labour removing German bunkers and other structures.

Also in the removal of mined underwater obstacles in FERMAIN BAY, saints bay AND PETTIT BOT BAY.

30 September.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

1 Driver posted to Y List.

1 October.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 18 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

4 October.

Platoon Strength.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham RE proceeded on Privilege Leave.

18 October.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham RE returned from Privilege Leave.

1 to 31 October.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of Civilian and PW Labour on clearance of barbed wire and demolishing bunkers etc.

31 October.

Captain D Wignall proceeded on Privilege Leave.

31 October.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 4 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 17 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

Postings in 1 Corporal. Postings Out 1 Corporal and 1 Lance Corporal.

Signed Lieutenant HW Beckingham. OC 24 BD Platoon.

1 November.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 3 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 16 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

15 November.

Lieutenant D Wignall returned from Privilege Leave.

1 to 30 November.

Unit personnel engaged in supervision of PW labour on clearance of barbed wire, and demolition of bunkers, gunsights etc

30 November.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 3 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 17 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

Postings in 2 Sappers 2 Drivers. Postings out 1 Sapper 1 Driver.

Signed Lieutenant HW Beckingham. OC 24 BD Platoon.

1 December.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 3 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 17 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

12 December.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham RE proceeded on Privilege Leave.

27 December.

Lieutenant H W Beckingham RE returned from Privilege Leave.

30 December.

Captain D Wignall proceeded on privileged leave.

(Lieutenant Wignall had been promoted to Captain, so he obviously has seniority over Lieutenant HW Beckingham)

1 to 31 December.

Unit personnel engaged on supervision of PW Labour on clearance of barbed wire, demolition of Bunkers and Gun sites ect

31 December.

Platoon Strength.

2 Officers, 1 Sergeant, 3 Lance Sergeants and Corporals, 17 Lance Corporals and Sapper. 6 Drivers, 1 Army Catering Corps.

Postings out 1 Corporal, 5 Sappers, 2 Drivers, 1 AAC. Postings in 2 Sappers.

Signed Lieutenant HW Beckingham. OC 24 BD Platoon.

