

48 Bomb Disposal Section/Platoon

1 April 1944 to 30 November 1944.

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Officer Commanding Lieutenant J F Lancaster.

1 to 5 April.

Location Ashford.

BD Works at Rigshill, Charing.

6 April.

Section proceeded to Rifle Ranges at Hythe.

7 April.

ND Works at Rigshill, Charing, bomb removed.

8 April.

Rest Day.

9 to 15 April.

Duty Section BD Works at Charing, Bomb removed 13 April.

16 April.

Rest Day.

17 April.

Training under Section arrangements.

17 to 19 April.

Corporal's I Waving and Blackmore proceeded on B AND a Course at Duke of Yorks Barracks, London.

17 April.

Corporal Waving posted to Home Duties.

18 to 24 April.

Training under Company Arrangements.

21 April.

Sapper Baker posted to 103 Reinforcements Group.

23 April Lt Lancaster RE and 5 other ranks proceeded to Chatham on shallow water diving course. Remainder Rest Day.

25 to 30 April.

BD Works at Leigh, TBD Works at Leigh, Tonbridge. Mine Clearance in Dover.

28 April

Driver J Johnson proceeded to Troon, on Wet-Shock Wading Course.

29 April.

Lieutenant Lancaster RE returned from Chatham, Section Rest Day.

30 April.

Lt Lancaster proceeded to Weymouth, Waterproofing Course.

1 to 6 May.

Location Ashford.

Section on BD Works Leigh and First letter ?andway, also AA Shells.

7 to 9 May.

Duty Section and taking over Billet.

10 to 13 May.

Military BD and Mine Training.

14 May.

Rest Day.

15 May.

Military and BD Training.

16 May.

Training. Lt Lancaster and Corporal H A Boggis moved to closed location, under 7 GHQ Army Troops.

17 May.

Sappers Military Training NCOs BD Recce and new method of reporting and clearance.

18 to 19 May.

Section Scheme at Canterbury British Bombs.

20 to 21 May.

Packing Stores and Loading onto Section Transport.

22 to 27 May.

Training in Anti Gas procedure, MT, Signals, Embussing and Debussing. Reporting and Clearance procedures.

28 May.

Rest Day.

29 to 31 May.

Repacking and Waterproofing Stores and Reloading MT Waterproofing the Ford 15 CWT.

1 to 3 June.

Location Ashford.

Packing equipment and waterproofing vehicles.

4 June.

Rest Day.

5 June.

Packing equipment and waterproofing.

6 June.

Received orders to move.

7 June.

Location Portsmouth Area.

Moved to Marshalling Area camp A2.

8 June.

Marshalled.

9 June.

2330 Moved out of Marshalling Area.

10 June.

Location Gosport.

Embarked on Landing Ship Tank.

11 June.

0200 Sighted torpedo crossing bows.

0615 At anchor of coast of Normandy.

1930 Disembark at LE HAMEL, arrived to assembly area at BUHOT.

12 June.

Location COURSEILLES

1100 Moved onto Bivouac area at COURSEILLES.

1130 to 2230 Commenced BD Operations. Disposal of four UX 50kg and Seven UX 250kg bombs.

13 June.

Location COURSEILLES

Disposal of five Rocket shells, one 100lb US bomb, two 50kg, one 1000lb British bombs. Found previously unrecorded German aircraft rocket bomb.

14 June.

1230 Disposal of five Rocket Shells, three SC 10kg anti personal, two AA Shells.

15 to 20 May.

Section disposed of ten bombs, seventy-five rockets and one hundred and 10 shells.

20 June.

Location COURSEILLES and HERMANVILLE.

0800 Detachment of Sergeant Joseph and two sub sections sent to HERMANVILLE to record and collect German explosives and booby traps. Are under intermittent shell-fire. Detachment leaving HERMANVILLE in transport shelled, but no casualties.

21 to 30 June.

Location COURSEILLES.

2100 on the 21 to 2359 on the 30 May.

Section disposed of one bomb, ten shells and four unexploded rockets.

1 to 6 July .

Location COURSEILLES.

No enemy bombs dropped in section area. Six 500lb British bombe, two 100lb American and two 5'' phosphorous rockets UX reported and all cleared on day of report. Sufficient work for one sub section, remainder employed supervising French Labour on roads for 7 GH Troops RE.

7 July.

Suspected that mined houses along sea front at ST AUBIN SUR MER MR 0184 might be housing fugitive Germans, possibly acting as Ops. Commenced clearing paths to houses and searching. Mines found French anti-tank, ?, and twin Tellermines placed 5ft apart with wooden pressure bar over top.

8 July.

Location ST AUBIN SUR MER.

Completed search of houses, no Germans found. Commenced to clear whole area for use as tent camp.

Disposal of one 100lb, one 500lb GP American bombs and one UX rocket shell in COURSEILLES and ST AUBIN SUR MER.

9 July.

Completed clearance of mined area. Removed 50 French A/T mines, 11 S mines and 36 Tellermines. Disposed of one 100lb American bomb. Noted that although mines in this area were laid in 1942 nearly all Tellermines and about 20% of S mines in good condition. Ground, dry sandy soil and ground.

10 July.

Location COURSEILLES.

Disposal of our stock, one 20lb frag bomb and 3 target indicators. Commenced work for Garrison Engineer.

13 July.

Location COURSEILLES.

Repairing beach exits

14 to 15 July.

Section carrying stores for Garrison Engineer and one sub section cleaning billet at St AUBIN.

16 July.

Location COURSEILLES and ST AUBIN SUR MER.

Received permission move into billets at ST AUBIN.

17 July.

Section cleaned billet and digging slit trenches. One UXB discredited.

18 to 21 July.

Carrying stores for Garrison Engineer. Disposed of two 500lb GP American bombs and 9 shells.

22 July.

Informed that billet required for Canadian Rest Camp. Moved to new billet in ST AUBIN.

29 to 31 July.

Disposed of 4 five-inch rocket shells. Visit to mine school Bayeux Work for Garrison Engineer.

1 August.

Location ST AUBIN SUR MER.

Section carrying out minor repairs to billets in coastal area for Garrison Engineer.

2 to 6 August.

Section transporting stores for Garrison Engineer COURSEILLES. Commenced cadre course for Junior NCOs. In British and Allied Bombs. Completed course on 6 Aug No BD Work.

7 August.

Received orders to move to CAUMONT area. Stores packed and billets handed over to Town Major.

8 August.

Location CAUMONT.

Sec moved to CAUMONT. Commenced recce of area for bombs.

9 August.

Located numerous surface bombs and shells in BEMY BOCAGE area, with assistance of French Gendarmes combined BD operation.

10 August.

Located further bombs in ST MARTIN area. Continued recce of area.

11 to 17 August.

Received warning order to move to area of ESTRY.

19 August.

Moved to ESTRY. Old battle area heavily mined. Recced billet area and roads for mines.

20 August.

Recce of CONDE-SUR-MOIREU for bombs. Town almost completely destroyed and most UXB found in outlying villages, which were still inhabited. It is most probable that about 50 UXBs remain buried under the city.

All UXBs in this area were found by two section, although several were near important roads; e.g. one British 500lb bomb in the centre of the town 10 yards from the edge of the main road VIRE-CAEN. Three bombs fitted with 37 tail pistol found and blown in situ. No damage caused.

21 August.

Received orders to supply mine-detecting party for work near FALAISE under Lt Lancaster. Clearing for 2 Army Rear HQ.

22 August.

Remainder of Section sent to BAZUCHES to complete mine-clearance. Sect Sgt with small party of Sec ? personal continued work in CONDE.

23 to 26 August.

BD work in CONDE. Recce of FLERS and ATHIS area. Considerable assistance obtained in FLERS from M L'abee' AMILLARD, professor in FLERS seminar, who acting in a volunteer capacity had obtained reports of positions of bombs and mines in the area and acted as guide and assistant., it is obvious from experience in this area that if some individual or group could be appointed for ARP warden duties within a few days of liberation of a town, who could work with civil affairs and with the nearest available BD unit, a great deal of time could be saved in locating incidents, and casualties both civil and military reduced by the marking of minefields, as many are found by the inhabitants.

27 August.

BD Works in CONDE-FLERS area.

28 August.

Removed since 21 Seven American bombs, Sixteen British bombs and collected approx. twenty German bombs and containers from FLERS airfield.

Received orders to move to area BRETEUIL.

29 August.

Moved to REMECOURT MR9749.

30 to 31 August.

Location BEMECOURT.

Recce and BD operations at COMCHES.

1 to 8 September.

Not mentioned directly in War Diary, however on the 1 September Sections were redesignated as Platoons.

Location BEMECOURT.

BD work in surrounding villages, CONCHES, VERMEUIL, CLISOLLES. RUGLES and Labourgemmiere. Removed 11 US, four British and one German bomb.

8 September.

Received orders to move to BELGIUM.

9 September.

Location LA NEUVILLE.

Moved to LA NEUVILLE SUT OUDENIL.

10 September.

Location ARRAS.

Moved to area of ARRAS and bivouacked.

11 September.

Location MEISSE.

Moved into billets at MEISSE, near Brussels.

12 September.

Commenced recce of area MALINES and MELSBROEK for bombs. Contacted Belgium BD Organisation and obtained a guide.

13 to 15 September.

BD operations in area MELSBROEK Ju and MALINES, one sect engaged in removing German 250kg bombs laid as demolition charges on rail and road bridges.

16 to 17 September.

Platoon ordered to commence search of premises in Brussels for booby traps and delayed action charges. Quantities of ammunition found but no booby traps.

18 September.

BD operations in MELSBROOKE.

19 to 21 September.

Recommenced search of houses and Barracks in Brussels. With civilian labour began breaking open locked safes in premises searched. In majority of cases safes found empty.

22 to 28 September.

Continuation BD operations at MELSBROEK. Disposed of thirteen American bombs and one British.

1700 on the 28 September received orders to move to EINDHOVEN for urgent BD works. Loaded stores and moved with HQ Sect and two Sect.

2330 arrived at EINDHOVEN and bivouacked

29 September.

0630 Searched for bombs reported in area. Contacted Civil Affairs and was informed that report originated on 21 Sept and all-important bombs disposed of by DUTCH BD Organisation.

30 September.

Contacted DUTCH police and commenced work on remaining bombs.

1 to 14 October 1944.

BD Operations in EINDHOVEN area, no bombs reported through military channels. Reports received directly from DUTCH police.

Quantities of German ammunition cleared from billets in area.

Received order to reconstruct bridge over stream at BORKELENSCHAP, using local materials as far as possible. Bridge to be Class 40.

Completed plans for single-span bridge with concrete abutments, six RSJs having been obtained from VALENSWAARD. Plans approved.

15 October.

BD work suspended. Commenced preparation of abutments and collection of materials.

16 to 22 October.

Completed collection of materials and construction of West abutment.

22 October.

Order received to build Class 18 Bailey bridge over gap as temporary measure. Collected Bailey stores and set out bank seats.

23 October.

0730 to 1030. Constructed 60foot single-span bridge, without end piers. Completed three hours before specified time.

24 to 31 October.

Constructed East abutment of composite bridge.

Continued construction of composite bridge under Bailey. Work delayed pending permission to remove Bailey Bridge.

1 to 6 November.

Location EINDHOVEN.

Platoon operating in EINDHOVEN area. Work mainly disposal of UX shells and clearance of unexploded ammunition to dump.

13 50kg bombs disposed of at HEEZE.

6 November.

Instructions received to de-launch Bailey Bridge at SCHAFT.

7 November.

De-launched Bailey Bridge and laid decking and approaches to composite bridge. Road re-opened one hour after commencement of work.

8 to 11 November.

Completed superstructure, cementing and tarmac of composite bridge.

9 to 11 November.

BD operations in EINDHOVEN area. One Section sent on detachment to TILBURG for BD work. Cleared booby traps from two church towers in town and removed ammunition from unit billets.

12 to 17 November.

1530 work in TILBURG handed over to 24 BD Company RE and section withdrawn.

BD operations in EINDHOVEN area. Arranged for all UXB reports to be coordinated by Civil Affairs and transmitted to 48 Platoon.

18 November.

Commenced work on German bomb jettison area near VESSEM N BRABANT.

Nineteen bombs defused.

23 November.

Platoon sent on recreational journey to Brussels.

24 to 30 November.

Collection of ammunition in BEST and completion of work at VESSEM. Defused and burnt out, twenty 500kg, eleven 50kg bombs.

Blown in situ 92 SD2 German bombs.

