

the route heavily and had also blocked the road in many places by cutting down trees. A bulldozer was sent for to remove the obstacles and the advance continued. (W.D., A. & S.H. of C., 3 May 45; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 3 May 45, serial 85)

The companies set out the same evening to capture Wiefelstede, sq 2518, Sheet 2714, some three miles North-East of our position, on the main road. We were also advised that the Argylls' final objective was the village of Spohle, sq 2123, and that we were to reach this objective with as little delay as possible.

(W.D., A. & S.H. of C.,  
3 May 45)

531. The journey to Wiefelstede proved an easy one; apart from occasional sniper fire and light mortaring, the Germans did not show their hand. However, no sooner had the Argylls begun to consolidate in the village than a heavy concentration of mortar fire descended upon them. This mortaring continued throughout the night but luckily did not interfere with Lt-Col Coffin's strenuous patrolling programme, which was laid on to screen the work being carried out by Maj-Gen Vokes' engineers on the road back to Gristede (2114). (Ibid; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 3 May 45, serials 112, 116)

532. Linc & Welld R. had not been in contact since midday. The area to the north had become the responsibility of 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, and when the Argylls passed on to Gristede Lt-Col Coleman was left in position on the east bank of the lake. This period of unemployment was not to last long, however, for at 1430 hours orders for the next move were issued. Linc & Welld R. was to relieve Alq R. at Ofen. After a slow, uninteresting trip, the battalion arrived at Ofen at 1900 hours. Here the unit was dispersed so that all approaches to the village from the east, north, and south were well covered. (W.D., Linc & Welld R., 3 May 45). In the light of events, it did not seem possible that the troops would remain here for long, but as will be seen, the Linc & Welld R. had really fought its last battle. (Ibid, 4 May 45). The positions it vacated were taken over by 27 R.M. Bn, which, having successfully cleared a good portion of the road Jeddelloh - Oldenburg, handed over the responsibility of the area between that road and the Kusten Canal to elements of 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 3 May 45; Weekly Summary of Ops and Activities, 4 Cdn Armd Div, 29 Apr - 5 May 45, op cit, para 10; also W.D., 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt R.C.A., 3 May 45)

2 CDN ARMD BDE CLOSES THE LEFT FLANK,  
3 MAY 45\*

533. Despite the demolitions and other obstructions encountered on the road to Westerstede (1217), Brigadier Robinson's effort towards the north-west progressed very favourably. "B" Sqn 1 Cdn Armd C. Regt led the way.

---

\* Reference maps as for para 522; also Appx "E".



...road blocks on the centre line were numerous. These were dealt with by the extensive use of civilian labour. WESTERSTEDE was reached at approx 1600 hrs by 2nd tp and the Sp troop. Elements of 1 Pol Armd Div were encountered there.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Armd C.  
Regt, 3 May 45)

During the thorough reconnaissance of the town which followed the troops discovered a large German hospital containing several Allied wounded, including a few Canadians. A further sortie to the north beyond Linswege (1620) took place without incident. (Ibid). Meanwhile, as other forces under command of 2 Cdn Armd Bde cleared Lindern (0914), Mansie (1114) and Westerloy (0916) and established another contact with the Poles at Apen, "D" Sqn of the Dragoons struck out from Rostrup towards Langerbrugge (1715). North of the airfield, however, the Staghounds ran into a small pocket of enemy troops who were well dug in and showed a willingness to fight it out. Bypassing this resistance, one troop of armoured cars and its S.A.S. attendants was able to reach the road junction (174153) at Langebrugge (1715). "B" Sqn with R.H.Q. and "A" Sqn remained at Westerstede, while "C" Sqn, having passed through "D", was on its way to Hullstede (1418). (Ibid; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 3 May 45, serials 64, 49, 70, 77, 92, 113)

534. The movements of 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt were considerably more restricted during 3 May, as the unit War Diary states:

We counted up to 42 obstacles of various sorts that our tps met while endeavouring to carry out recce on the div front during the day. They ranged from rd blocks, rd craters, mines, to rds impassable to Staghounds.

(W.D., 18 Cdn Armd C.  
Regt, 3 May 45)

Nevertheless, after a trying time spent in sidestepping craters and obstacles, "A", "B" and "C" Sqns began moving forward in their allotted areas. On the left "B" Sqn followed the Elmen-dorf - Hullstede road as far as Langebrugge, then swung to the right to complete a wide reconnaissance of the wooded sector as far north as Garnholterdamm (2020-2019). "A" and "C" Sqns, having moved on to the axis Neuenkrug (2512) - Bokel (2715) and Nuttel (2717), explored the side roads between 10 Cdn Inf Bde and 4 Cdn Armd Bde, at the same time aiding whichever of the two formations it contacted. (W.D., 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, 3 May, 45; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 3 May 45, serials 56, 59, 65, 74, 75, 90, 108). "D" Sqn, which did not have a task during 3 May, was moved late that evening to a concentration area in the woods north of Neuenkrug (2512) and stood by in readiness for the morrow. (Ibid, serials 81, 103, 114). At 2100 hours orders for the next day's work by the armoured car units were received.

18 Cdn Armd C. Regt and 1 Cdn Armd C. Regt explore NORTH within limits of Div bdy RIGHT, 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt LEFT - 1 Cdn Armd C. Regt bdy incl to 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt SPOHLE 2223 thence rd to rly 2330 thence rly to rly junc 2333 thence NORTH to 2438.

(Ibid, Serial 110)



Even a casual glance at the map will indicate that if these instructions were followed both regiments would spend, to say the least an interesting day.

THE LAST FEW MILES -  
OPERATIONS 4 CDN ARMD DIV, 4 MAY 45\*

535. Maj-Gen Vokes' troops remained in contact throughout the evening of 3 May but made no great effort to press on in the darkness. During the night there occurred an interesting incident worth mentioning. The civilian telephones in this area were even yet in good working condition and one of the interpreters managed to place a call through to the Burgomeister at Wilhelmshaven. A conversation followed during which the Germans holding the great naval station were given a chance to send an emissary to the Canadians in order to discuss the terms of surrender. The Germans were not willing to give up however, and the Burgomeister declared that "he would fight to the last man and the last bullet". Little did the enemy guess that the events of the next 24 hours would deny him this doubtful honour. (W.D., 22 Cdn Armd Regt, 3 May 45)

536. On the following morning each brigade moved off again to join in what was fully expected to be one of the last battles. The armoured division's front was now solid all the way across from 1 Pol Armd Div's right flank to the area south-east of Rastede, where 2 Cdn Inf Div had joined hands with the "Green Patch" formation on the previous day. At 0930 hours the intention for the day were passed on to the commanders concerned.

4 Cdn Armd Bde - Intention to clear CL with Alq R. and 21 Cdn Armd Regt to swan out to LEFT coming back to CL at intervals. PW report about 400 enemy on about line of 22 northing. 10 Cdn Inf Bde - A. & S.H. of C. to seize rd junc 231218 and SPOHLE 2123. A. & S.H. of C. complete and firm in WIEFELSTEDE 2518 with fwd elements at 251189.

(4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log,  
op cit, 3 May 45, serial  
25)

537. Brigadier Moncel's immediate intention was to capture Lehmden (2821). Lake Sup R. (Mot) supported by 3 Sqn of 22 Cdn Armd Regt would approach the objective from the south-west, while the Algonquins and the Foot Guards would move up from the south along the line of the railway. The major portion of the Grenadiers was to remain between the two forward battalions, while on the far right a battle group composed of "B" Coy Alq R. and a squadron of 21 Cdn Armd Regt maintained a base from which 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt would work out to the north-east. (Ibid, serial 27). "A" Coy Alq R. had handed over its positions on the airfield north-west of Oldenburg to a company of Linc & Welld R. at 0800 hours and then proceeded to join the main body of the battalion around Rastede. Here Lt-Col Akehurst was told to hold his men in readiness to push on north and mop up in the wake of the motor battalion. But Lake Sup R. (Mot) met bitter fighting and did not get far during the morning. "B" Coy on the right came within sight of Lehmden (2921) and "C" Coy on the left moved another thousand yards towards Nethen (2720), but no farther

---

\* Reference maps as for para 511; also Appx "E".



for the enemy had turned and met the Canadian advance with heavy volleys of small arms fire. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 4 May 45). "B" Coy particularly experienced some excitement.

Only 300 yds ahead of them they could see the enemy working feverishly to fell trees across the rd. Consequently the coy and its tp of tks from 2 Sqn of 21 Cdn Armd Regt did much destruction.

(W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd  
Bde, 21 Cdn Armd Regt,  
4 May 45)

538. In the early afternoon, Lake Sup R. (Mot) was instructed to press on to Lehmden (2291). At the same time the Algonquins were given a patrol task, that of circling the woods on the east side of Rastede. (4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serials 47, 53, and 54). Progress towards the north was slow, yet by 1700 hours "B" Coy (Lake Sup R. (Mot)) was at the outskirts of Lehmden (2921), although held up by several road blocks which the armour could not by-pass because of the soft ground. Since for the time being no further advance was possible along the main axis, Lt-Col Keane swung one of his companies off the route to clear the woods on the left. Support for this operation was provided by tanks from both 21 and 22 Cdn Armd Regts. (Ibid, serial 67; also W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and Lake Sup R. (Mot), 4 May 45). While the woods were being swept, a platoon of "B" Coy managed to get across the road block and some carriers edged around the obstacle to resume the attack (ibid).

539. Several anti-tank guns still lurked about and many small battles took place before these fearful pieces were neutralized and their fanatical crews killed or made prisoner. Typical of these actions is the one so well described in 22 Cdn Armd Regt's War Diary:

...force was held up by a road block. After engaging it with tank and carrier fire, the tank bulldozer came up and cleared the block but almost immediately a loud explosion was heard and L/Cpl Long reported another big tree down across the road 400 yds ahead. A section of the Scout Pl moved up peppering it with fire. The Badger then flamed the block bringing out many prisoners. The bulldozer then moved up and cleared the road block under heavy sniping...

(W.D., 22 Cdn Armd Regt,  
4 May 45)

540. Opposition remained heavy until steady pressure and a consistent drenching with artillery and mortar fire forced the resistance to crumble. "B" Coy finally reached the village of Hahn (2822), where 150 prisoners were taken. Once Hahn was clear, the infantry and tanks pressed on to consolidate at the north-western end of the woods between Hahn and Bekhausen (2823). "A" Coy, having completed its work in the woods west of the centre line, finally followed "B" Coy to settle in the village of Hahn. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and Lake Sup R. (Mot), 4 May 45). For the Grenadiers the later part of 4 May provided plenty of action. It is always something of a test to follow and support a motor battalion. But when infantrymen see victory within their grasp and are bent on going ahead regardless of ground or resistance, the role of the supporting armour becomes



twice as fiery and exciting, and the outcome of every move depends upon the ability of the individual crew commander to "read" the battle. The tankmen were not found wanting and the fury of their attack proved overwhelming. (W.D., 22 Cdn Armd Regt, 4 May 45). The day's effort was a wholehearted one, several tanks being lost and with them many of their crews. But not only the fighting men suffered, the Padre of the Grenadiers was killed while carrying out one of his many missions of mercy. (Ibid)

541. The enemy also put up a stiff fight against the Argyles, who (under command of 10 Cdn Inf Bde) had the job of getting through Wiefelstede (2518).

At first light A and B Companies proceeded to push North of the town, advancing towards the objective: Spohle. They found the going quite a bit stickier during the morning, encountering 20 mm fire as well as AP shells from an enemy SP gun!

(W.D., A. & S.H. of C.,  
4 May 45)

Despite the fanatical show of force, however, Lt-Col Coffin kept his men moving forward and by midday the "Jocks" with some tanks from Lt-Col A.G. Chubb's 28 Cdn Armd Regt were within 750 yards of Mollberg (2520). The prisoners gathered on this venture presented an interesting assortment.

They belonged to various "battle-groups", but this fancy term by no means put them in the Commando class of fighters. According to their statements - and the bedraggled appearance of this motley crew confirmed these statements - a battle-group was formed by some ambitious German officer, who gathered various stragglers off the roads, added some convalescent cases from a nearby hospital, honoured the group with his own name and proceeded to lead them into battle for "Vaterland und Fuhrer":

(W.D., A. & S.H. of C.,  
4 May 45)

542. Regardless of the physical state of his subordinates, the German commander in this sector still appeared capable of causing the Canadians considerable grief. A change in plan was therefore carried out. "C" and "D" Coys were allotted some of the supporting armour and sent to the west in the hope that the village of Dringenburg (2222) would fall an easier prey and thus cut off the retreat of the stalwarts defending Mollberg (2520). Lt-Col Coffin's guess proved wrong, for although some ground was gained, the going, against heavy and continuous enemy fire, was slow. (Ibid, also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serials 31, 35, 45, 50, 57, 80; also W.D., 28 Cdn Armd Regt, 4 May 45)

543. Linc & Welld R. did not participate in active operations on 4 May. The unit remained at Ofen (2708) and Metjendorf (2910); from here Lt-Col Coleman planned to move soon to occupy more comfortable quarters in the barracks (2508) south of Wehnen (2608). Another new arrival was 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, which used the routes opened up by 2 Cdn Inf Div through Oldenburg to get closer to the scene of operations. The move



was no doubt inspired by the fact that Lt-Col Wotherspoon had recently been placed in temporary command of the infantry brigade. (W.Ds., Linc & Welld R., 29 Cdn Recce Regt, 4 May 45)

544. Before he left his unit Lt-Col Wotherspoon informed his officers at an orders group held late on 3 May that although he believed the regiment had fought its last battle, a move to the north was imminent. On the next morning 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt formed up in one long column and departed on a long journey that was to take it back over some of its old battle grounds such as the village of Sage. After a six-hour journey through Ahlhorn crossroads (3178), Wildeshausen (4778), Oldenburg and Ofen (2708), the unit arrived in its selected concentration area north-east of Oldenburg near the villages of Westerholtsfelde (2610), Metjendorf (2910) and Ofen (2708). (These lie to the west of the Oldenburg airfield). (W.D., 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, 27-30 Apr 45, 1-4 May 45; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 29 Apr 45, serials 79, 84, 92, 102, 30 Apr, serials 29, 38, 50, 53, 65; also Memorandum of Interview Lt-Col G.D. de S. Wotherspoon, op cit, para 27)

545. The operations of 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt for the past two weeks, especially between 13-25 Apr, are worthy of mention for a number of reasons. In the opinion of the commanding officer it was the first time (and the last) that the opportunity occurred for the regiment to be used to its best advantage. It had been able to deploy on a wide front, fighting during the day and pulling back out of contact for the hours of darkness. The mobility and fire power of the armoured vehicles had been employed to the fullest extent. As one official account put it:

The most effective method of dealing with the enemy in his village posns was to pin him down with one tp or sqn, to cover one flank with a second, and to attack from the other flank with the third.

(Memorandum of Interview, Lt-Col G.D. de S. Wotherspoon, op cit)

546. Intercommunications with the artillery had proved somewhat of a problem. The field guns had mainly been out of range. Even with a F.O.O. of the medium artillery at the regiment's headquarters, the task of relaying, made necessary by constant screening of wireless sets, had not been fully solved. However, the fire power of individual squadrons had often been put to good use to replace this discrepancy and many novel forms of employment were discovered for the various weapons at the disposal of the armoured reconnaissance regiment. In summing up the unit's duties, the account of operations states:

AA tks, supported by heavier types, were found especially effective against an entrenched enemy armed with SA and BAZOOKAS. It was estimated that, with such sp, two AA tks would be more effective against an enemy in woods and copses than a full sqn of tks.

(Ibid)

547. The value of an accompanying infantry component proved its worth, for without "D" Coy Linc & Welld R. not much headway could have been made. Progress would also have been even slower had it not been for the engineers (8 Cdn Fd Sqn R.C.E.) and their ingenious pieces of equipment. After 13 Apr



the two troops of engineers built over a dozen class 40 Bailey bridges, filled between 30 and 40 craters (some of which were over 150 feet wide) and checked more than 100 miles of road for mines and booby traps. A glance at the engineer reconnaissance maps contained in Lt-Col Wotherspoon's war diary will show the extent to which the Germans cratered and mined and obstructed the routes travelled by 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt. (Ibid; also W.D., 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, May 1945: Appx 5, Details of Engineer work by S.A.R. and R.C.E. party during advance from Vrees to Oldenburg; also Appx Nos 6-10 inclusive, "Maps & Traces")

548. In all, the men of the South Alberta Regiment made a splendid showing and captured 300 prisoners. The cost, however, was anything but light.

During ops from 13 Apr until the cease fire on 5 May, the Regt lost some 30 tks on mines, four to SP guns and four to BAZOOKAS. Our personnel cas were 6 killed and approx 30 wounded.

(Memorandum of Interview,  
Lt-Col G.D. deS. Wotherspoon,  
op cit)

549. The operations of 2 Cdn Armd Bde and 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt on this last day of action are also worth noting. Movement was both fast and widespread and quite fulfilled the hopes raised by the orders of the preceding day. From Westerstede (1218) 1 Belg S.A.S. Regt carried out a swift patrol to Hullstede and discovered the place clear. (4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serial 13). Simultaneously the squadrons of 1 Cdn Armd C. Regt set out for Zetel (1536) and Spohle (2123). At many points the Dragoons found the road impassable for Staghounds, but with their usual energy they kept going. "B" Sqn with elements of the S.A.S. entered Grabstede (1730) at about 1330 hours; "C" Sqn, working on two axes, reached Grunenkamp (2028) on the left, while on the right Petersfeld (1921) was entered. Beyond these points the enemy was found waiting behind each obstacle, however, and he was well armed with machine guns and mortars. Many skirmishes took place in the course of which more than one armoured car was disabled or destroyed. (W.D., 1 Cdn Armd C. Regt, 4 May 45; also 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serials 30, 63, 73)

550. The Manitoba Dragoons (18 Cdn Armd C. Regt) spent an equally active day. Lt-Col P.C.R. Black's troopers operated on a wide front with "B" Sqn on the left, "A" Sqn in the centre, and "C" Sqn on the right. The first bit of good news came from "C" Sqn at about 1000 hours when it reported that eighty prisoners and three guns of various calibres had been captured north-east of Rastede. (W.D., 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, 3-4 May 45; 4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serial 29). "A" Sqn, working out to the north-west of Wiefelstede, spent much of the time trying to find diversions around the roadblocks but managed to capture a few prisoners and immediately put them to work lifting mines (ibid, serial 59). The Argyles were in action in this area too and during the latter part of the day some of the Staghounds worked in co-operation with Lt-Col Coffin's men (ibid). "B" Sqn also had trouble finding a good route directly north of the lake, where most of the obstacles and craters were well covered by small groups of the enemy (ibid, and serial 74). All these squadrons reported the presence of anti-tank guns, and this lent truth to the belief that the Germans were in the process of establishing yet another line of defence. The day ended well



with 115 prisoners seized, and all squadrons withdrew into selected concentration areas for the night. (W.D., 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, 4 May 45)

551. The "Intentions for Tomorrow" message usually published before the forward troops settled down for the night was issued by Maj-Gen Vokes' headquarters at 2050 hours; but in a somewhat slightly different style. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 10 Cdn Inf Bde, 2 Cdn Armd Bde and 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt were merely told to "Sit tight where you are now for tonight - be prepared to push on tomorrow". (4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serial 82). The last part of the message indicated that no chances would be taken, for the armoured brigade particularly was still in deadly contact. If the Germans in this sector decided to ignore the order to lay down their arms and preferred to fight it out, then Maj-Gen Vokes' men were prepared to force their submission by a further onslaught and by the repeated application of generous quantities of high explosive. (W.Ds., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div, H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 4 May 45)

552. There was, however, (to quote 10 Cdn Inf Bde's War Diary) "...a general feeling everywhere that the end was in sight and that a mass surrender might come at any moment". (W.D., H.Q. 10 Cdn Inf Bde, 4 May 45). Rumours heard on the battlefield are numerous and sometimes quite fantastic, and rumour was rampant on the evening of 4 May. A startling broadcast by the B.B.C. at 2000 hours raised everyone's hopes to a new high but yet, until the news was confirmed through the regular Army channels, the battle-weary soldier could not quite be expected to forget the words of the latest official message - "Be prepared to push on tomorrow -". Nevertheless the B.B.C. had said that it was all over. Was it over? Would he "push" on tomorrow? The soldier little guessed that in a matter of another five minutes the official happy verdict was to be given to him personally. (4 Cdn Armd Div Ops Log, op cit, 4 May 45, serials 82 and 84)

553. For the armoured division the advance from the Kusten Canal to the very threshold of victory had meant two weeks of concentrated effort which had been both tiring and bloody. Nevertheless,

all requirements of the fighting tps were met, and at no time was the adv either impeded or delayed by the lack of any essential supplies.

(Memorandum of Interview,  
Lt-Col W.G.M. Robinson,  
O.B.E., op cit, Part II,  
para 5)

The work of R.C. Sigs in maintaining line communications and in making intelligent use of the civilian communications resources was outstanding. In addition, the employment of "Y" Section of the "signals intercept" unit provided excellent results.

Through this service the Div Int services, for the first time in their history, became really tactical in their effect.

(Ibid, para 8)

This made it frequently possible for us to know the enemy's immediate intentions and thus allowed effective counter-action to be taken. (Ibid)



554. Throughout the course of operations, Maj-Gen Vokes' men had been hindered by the enemy's steadfast refusal to fight on ground suitable for armoured deployment.

The hy track pressure of our tks not only made it impossible for us to fight our armour over soft ground, but it consistently proved too much for the type of rds over which we had to move.

(AEF: 45/4 Cdn Armd Div/C/F,  
Docket I - Folio I: Operations  
and Activities 4 Cdn Armd Bde,  
30 Mar - 5 May 45, Part II,  
para 1)

One important factor which did, in fact, make much of the progress possible was air supremacy (ibid, para 3). As the commander of 4 Cdn Armd Bde later stated:

The fact that we enjoyed so great a degree of air supremacy made it possible for us to take advantage of certain moves and groupings which were entirely unorthodox, but which were entirely to our advantage under the circumstances.

(Ibid)

But, in considering all factors, it must be remembered that the morale within the armoured division was always extremely high. It bore out the age-old axiom that if men are well supplied, well supported, well informed, and have confidence in their leaders, they will, as Brigadier Moncel so aptly worded it, "Respond to almost any demands made on them". (Ibid, para 3)

#### THE OPERATIONS OF 2 CDN INF DIV, 19-30 APR 45\* SITUATION & PLANS, 19-20 APR 45

555. All this time the Germans had maintained an equally stubborn resistance on Lt-Gen Simonds' right flank, where 2 Cdn Inf Div supported by 10 Cdn Armd Regt had been fighting since 19 Apr. On that day 4 Cdn Inf Bde arrived to relieve 129 Inf Bde (of the famous 43 (Wessex) Inf Div). As the formation (Brigadier F.N. Cabeldu) moved up, reconnaissance parties of each battalion looked over the area and unit intelligence officers gathered all possible information about the enemy, terrain, mines, and patrolling. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19 Apr 45). The ground along the Ahlhorn-Wildeshausen road, presently held by 129 Inf Bde, stretched across nearly 15,000 yards of rather wild country containing few farms and many wooded areas. The brigade's war diary for that day (19 Apr) passed the following comment.

Very few roads in the area have been checked. All not checked must be considered mined and all lane ways to woods and farms and any likely turning places.

(Ibid)

---

\* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4414, Western Germany 1:25,000 Sheets 3015 - Grossenkneten, 3016 - Dottingen, 3017 - Harpstedt, 2916 - Kirchhatten; also G.S.G.S. 4416, Central Europe 1:100,000 Sheets M2 - Oldenburg, M3 - Bremen; also Appx "F".



It was reported that the enemy had not been overly aggressive during the past week, but this was no indication of his future intentions. Shortly after midday on 19 Apr the three battalions arrived, and by 1500 hours the take-over was completed. (Ibid). Essex Scot had relieved 1 Worc, on the right R.H.L.I. now occupied the centre sector vacated by 5 D.C.L.I., while R. Regt C. held the left facing the village of Sage (3283) towards which 7 S.O.M.L.I. had been patrolling. (W.Ds., R. Regt C., R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, 17 Apr 45)

556. After a careful tour of the forward defended localities, Brigadier Cabeldu decided that an attempt should be made to expand northwards, contact the enemy, and thus provide greater security for the main lateral highway route on which the brigade was based. Accordingly, Essex Scot pushed up into the little settlement of Griesenmoor (3930) on the right and sent out fighting patrols from there towards Moorbeck (3983) and Glane (4182) out on the eastern flank. "B" Coy soon reported that it was within 500 yards of Moorbeck (3983) and not being engaged, although some of the enemy could be seen ahead. Lt-Col Pangman at once ordered "D" Coy to occupy Moorbeck. Shortly after this the hamlet of Glane was declared clear and a platoon of "C" Coy remained there as a flank guard. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde; Essex Scot, 19 Apr 45). By that time both of Brigadier Cabeldu's other battalions had gone forward. In the centre a patrol from "A" Coy R.H.L.I. found Grossenkneten (3583) clear and by 2000 hours it was occupied by "A" and "D" Coys. The rest of the battalion followed and 2230 hours found R.H.L.I. firmly settled around the village. (W.D., R.H.L.I., 19 Apr 45). On the left R. Regt C. (led by "D" Coy) was moving towards the community of Sage without the slightest interference by the enemy. (W.D., R. Regt C., 19 Apr 45)

557. During the night R. Regt C. completed the occupation of Sage and established contact with patrols of 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt which had ventured east from the regimental firm base at Garrel. Meanwhile, as Essex Scot and R.H.L.I. patrolled vigorously far to the front, the divisional engineers laboured in heavy rain to repair and maintain the routes leading into the forward area. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Apr 45). Brigadier Cabeldu's position was not a particularly happy one. His positions were very exposed in what he termed excellent tank country but there were no tanks available to support him. Besides this, the whole sector was so liberally strewn with mines and booby traps that it was small wonder that the enemy preferred to remain out of contact in these tricky surroundings. (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Docket I, Ops Log, 19 Apr 45, serial 4820). The intention of 2 Cdn Inf Div for 20 Apr was as follows:

4 Cdn Inf Bde to tap out area Grossenkneten (3584) Sage (3283). 5 Cdn Inf Bde to conc area Ahlhorn (3377). 6 Cdn Inf Bde and 8 Cdn Recce Regt (14CH) to move from Groningen to conc area Cloppenberg (2072). Elements 2 Cdn A tk Regt and 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt to provide W.W.P. as detailed.

(Ibid, Serial 4822)

W.W.P. was a new abbreviation, it stood for "Werewolf protection". In the light of recent events this was considered a necessary measure, for it was believed that certain groups of Nazi fanatics would undoubtedly attempt to disrupt Allied operations if the opportunity arose. (Weekly Summary of Ops and Activities, 2 Cdn Inf Div, op cit, 15-21 Apr 45, para 8)



558. 20 Apr passed without any unusual occurrence. The forward troops patrolled and tried to establish flank contacts, the engineers still slaved at their tasks along the main roads, and "C" Sqn 8 Cdn Recce Regt kept a keen watch on the left flank from the northern edges of the Cloppenburg Forest (2581). (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Apr 45). The enemy made his appearance all across the front, especially north of Sage, where the South Albertas were continuing to harass the area with fire from their Shermans. (2 Cdn Inf Div, Ops Log, op cit, 20 Apr 45, serial 4899; also W.D., 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, 20 Apr 45). This kept the enemy fairly busy and allowed Brigadier McGill's 5 Cdn Inf Bde to sort itself out without interference in its bivouac south-east of Ahlhorn. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Apr 45). The following daybreak, however, produced a sinister warning when it was discovered that five men (almost an entire section post) of R. Regt C. were missing. It certainly looked like the smooth working of the Werewolf organization and Lt-Col Lendrum ordered an exhaustive search of his area to be made. Since it was not the first time that this had happened, the wrath of both officers and men reached a high pitch and dark thoughts of swift vengeance filled the minds of all. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Regt C., 21 Apr 45; also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit; 21 Apr 45, serial 4914)

#### DIVISIONAL PLANS, 21 APR 45\*

559. At Maj-Gen Matthews' conference later that morning, the Intelligence Staff outlined the enemy's situation. It was pointed out that resistance had softened up greatly in the past few days, especially in the region of Bremen. This port was expected to fall soon. But it was also expected that 7 and 8 Para Divs and 15 Panzer Grenadier Div, which at present formed the bulk of the opposing forces, would retire slowly to defend the other North Sea ports. The G.O.C. explained that 2 Cdn Inf Div's present role was to provide left-flank protection to Lt-Gen Horrocks' 30 Brit Corps and that the real Canadian offensive operation in this sector would commence on the morrow. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Apr 45). The plan was for 5 Cdn Inf Bde to pass through Brigadier Cabeldu's present positions to capture Huntlosen (3688) and Hosune (3588) and to clear the woods between Hosune and Hengtslage (3188). At the same time 6 Cdn Inf Bde (which was now en route to the divisional sector) would do a wide flanking movement on the right from the line presently held by 43 (W) Inf Div. Brigadier Allard's battalions were to seize Neerstedt (4586) and Ostrittrum (4087) and then exploit to Kirchhatten (4191). Sometime later 4 Cdn Inf Bde would be given a task on the right. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 21 Apr 45, serial 4974)

560. On receipt of these orders the forward troops stepped up their patrolling, battalion areas were put in order and large numbers of civilians were gathered together to be given the job of clearing debris and fallen trees from the roads in rear of the units. In addition, many displaced persons, including Russian prisoners and Belgian slave labourers (from farms recently overrun by the Canadians), were evacuated to special camps to the rear. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Apr 45). Meanwhile, at headquarters of 5 Cdn Inf Bde detailed instructions were issued for the forthcoming attack. Calg Highrs

---

\* Reference maps as for para 555; also Appx "E".



would move off at 0600 hours 22 Apr and advance up the main axis Dohlen (3485) - Huntlosen (3688), followed at 0800 hours by R.H.C. Then, at 0900 hours, on the left axis, running north through Sage, 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt was to clear a way with a company of R. de Mais. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 20 - 21 Apr 45)

561. Before the day ended the mass of fighting troops and supporting artillery were either in position or concentrated, ready for the task ahead. 6 Cdn Inf Bde had completed its long journey from Groningen and was settled in rear of 129 Inf Bde astride the road Wildeshausen - Neerstedt (4586). 8 Cdn Recce Regt, less "C" Sqn which had already begun to ~~reconnoitre~~ the forward area in front of 129 Inf Bde, was gathered at Holtinghausen (2674). (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes and units, 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 21 Apr 45). The Fort Garry Horse (10 Cdn Armd Regt), which was to supply the armoured support for the attack, remained in Lethe (2978), west of the Ahlhorn (3379) crossroads, refitting for the work at hand (W.D., 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 21 Apr 45; also Vanguard: A History of the Fort Garry Horse, p. 117)

\*  
THE ADVANCE BY 5 CDN INF BDE, 22 APR 45

562. At 0600 hours on the damp, raw morning of 22 Apr, Calg Highrs, supported by elements of "A" Sqn 10 Cdn Armd Regt, left their concentration and moved through the positions held by R.H.L.I. at Grossenkneten. The advance carried the troops in to Dohlen (3486) and then on through the rising ground just north of the village. There was no sign of resistance. The Black Watch with "D" Coy in front followed up at 0800 hours along the same route as the leading battalion and, having passed through Dohlen, swung north-eastwards to occupy the area of the railroad junction at Huntlosen (3688). At this stage the enemy began to hurl over mortar and shell, whereupon our troops lost no time in replying. As most of this fire seemed to come from the hamlet of Sandhatten (3990) across the Hunte river, the 4.2 mortars of Tor Scot R. were put on to this area. Soon the target areas were being smothered by heavy mortar and tank-gun fire of "A" Sqn, 10 Cdn Armd Regt working with R.H.C. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 22 Apr 45; 2 Cdn Inf Div, Ops Log, op cit, 22 Apr 45, serials 4982, 4984, 5006). This discouraged the enemy to some extent and Lt-Col S.W. Thompson, D.S.O., M.C., pushed on towards the Hunte river. The west bank of this obstacle could not be reached, however, as several minor streams and rivulets projected from the main waterway to form a complicated barrier. In any case the troops could see that all bridges in this part of the country were beyond repair and so R.H.C. firmed up to form a defensive semi-circle bounding the western, northern and eastern approaches to Huntlosen (3688). (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 22 Apr 45).

563. All this time the woods on the left of the main areas had been occupying the attention of Calg Highrs and three companies of R. de Mais. The clearance of this area was completed by mid-afternoon against very light opposition. There were the usual stragglers, all of whom seemed happy enough to give up, but no firm contact was made with any of the enemy's fighting groups. (Ibid, also W.Ds., Calg Highrs, R. de Mais. 22 Apr 45). Over on

---

\* Reference maps as for para 555; Also Appx "F".



the far left a small battle group composed of a Sqn of 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt and a company of R. de Mais exerted fair pressure along the road to Hengstlage (3188) but could make no headway beyond that place because of the many mines and craters. (Ibid, also W.D., 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, 22 Apr 45).

564. Night-fall found 5 Cdn Inf Bde well established in its allotted area. R.H.C. held on at Huntlosen with strong out-posts as far east as the Hunte River. Calg Highrs had withdrawn into a firm battalion base to the south-east of R.H.C., while R. de Mais dug in on a westward line from Calg Highrs left flank to join hands with its fourth Coy presently situated east of Hengstlage (3188). Contact with the South Albertas on the left was laid on for the night as well as with Essex Scot further to the south of R.H.C. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde & units, 22 Apr 45). The War Diary of 5 Cdn Inf Bde records that it was really NOT a very satisfactory day - no fighting and no score of Huns. We were really a day too late from all reports. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 22 Apr 45). The last entry was quite correct, for earlier in the day civilians had reported that the enemy had pulled back to the east bank of the Hunte River. (2 Cdn Inf Div, Ops Log, op cit, 22 Apr 45, serial 5044)

\*  
THE ATTACK BY 6 CDN INF BDE, 22 APR 45

565. Maj-Gen Matthews' right-hand effort also made good progress since its start at 1300 hours. Brigadier Allard's task was to capture Neerstedt (4586), Ostrittrum (4087), and Kirchhatten (4191), and gain control of the roads leading north from that place. The attack was done in three phases. The first began at 1300 hours when Fus M.R., commanded by Lt-Col J.A. Dextraze, struck out through the front line held by 129 Brit Inf Bde. With Neerstedt as the objective, the Fus M.R. had instructions to exploit up the axis as far as possible so that the engineers of 11 Cdn Fd Coy could sweep all the mines and other obstructions from the route. (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, 22 Apr 45, Ibid, Appx 5, Ops Log, Sub Appx "A", Notes on Comds "O" Gp held at H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde - 0900 hours, 22 Apr 45). The attack was well supported; "A" and "C" Coys Tor Scot R. (M.G.) were on hand to provide heavy mortar and medium machine gun fire, a troop of 23 Cdn A.Tk Bty was allotted for each phase, and 6 Cdn Fd Regt fired a timed fire programme. 3 Cdn Med and 5 Cdn Fd Regts were on call for targets of opportunity. (Ibid, also W.Ds., Tor Scot R. (M.G.), 23 Cdn A.Tk Bty, R.C.A., 5 and 6 Cdn Fd Regts, 22 Apr 45)

566. Lt-Col Dextraze's men found the going very difficult; mines lay everywhere and the tanks of "C" Sqn 10 Cdn Armd Regt could only crawl along the precarious and narrow lane cleared by the sappers. There was practically no opposition but it was almost five hours before the leading battalion finally consolidated on the northern outskirts of Neerstedt. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 5, Ops Log, 22 Apr 45, serials 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 27, 28, 30, 44; also W.D., Fus M.R., 22 Apr 45). Meanwhile the South Saskatchewan, who had been waiting for Neerstedt to fall, had come forward and swung left from the rear of Fus M.R. at about 1600 hours. Lt-Col J.V. Stott's part in the brigade plan was to consolidate in Ostrittrum.

---

\* Reference maps 1:25,000, 3016 - Dotlingen, 3017 - Harpstedt, 2915 - Wardenburg, 2916 - Kirchhatten; also Appx "F".



The C.O. decided to do the attack in two phases; the first being the capture of GEVESHAUSEN, MR 424873; and secondly the capture of the bn objective, the town of OSTRITTRUM, MR 405873. These phases were to be done on coy bites; phase one being completed first, consolidated, and then followed by phase two.

W.D., S. Sask R., 22 Apr 45)

Here again there was no resistance and by 1900 hours the first phase of the advance was completed. "B" Coy was firm at Geveshausen (4287), "A" Coy held a dominating position to the south (4286) while "C" and "D" Coys were well settled astride the road Geveshausen - Neerstedt centred at the hamlet of Ohe (4387). Patrols were immediately dispatched towards Ostrittrum. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, S. Sask R., 22 Apr 45)

567. Whereas the advances of both Fus M.R. and S. Sask R. were unopposed, that of Camerons of C. ran into trouble as soon as the leading Cameron companies left the northern outskirts of Neerstedt. The Camerons of C. began their task with "D" and "C" Coys on the left and right of the main road respectively. Both sub-units were soon busy side-stepping the mines and craters which confronted them. The clearance of any area other than the road and the verges was prohibited by time, for by 2000 hours "C" and "D" Coys had only gone as far as the northern edges of the wooded ground at Braker Sand (4389). From here on the obstacles were fewer and "A" Coy was passed through against very light resistance mainly shelling. The road fork at the base of the Hatterholz wood (4291) was the next objective, and "A" Coy managed to reach it before mid-night. Past this point, however, the enemy engaged our infantry with small arms and mortar fire. This sudden revival of resistance indicated that the Canadians were going to have to fight for Kirchhatten. Brigadier Allard now ordered the Camerons to hold until first light rather than risk any confusion in the darkness. While the Canadians dug in the artillery harassed the town, providing good cover for the scouts sent in to determine the enemy's strength. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Camerons of C., 22-23 Apr 45)

568. Throughout the hours of darkness there was increasing patrol activity to the front on the left flank (where Brigadier McGill's troops were firmly based west of the Hunte River and off to the right) by patrols of Fus M.R. towards the positions held by 129 Inf Bde, (43 (W.) Inf Div). (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 22 Apr 45, serials 5068, 5976). At the apex of 6 Cdn Inf Bde's spearhead the Camerons' scouts probed carefully to gain contact. By 0500 hours the Camerons had a new attack laid on and at 0530 hours "B" Coy, supported by one troop of the Fort Garry's tanks and the fire of a regiment of field guns, went through "A" Coy to clear along the left of the road in the direction of Kirchhatten. (W.D., Camerons of C., 23 Apr 45). Despite the fact that its commander soon became a casualty, "B" Coy pressed forward against severe shelling and on through a mine field to reach the southern fringe of the little town, taking twenty-four prisoners. There the troops consolidated briefly to allow "C" Coy to take up the advance on the right of the axis. It was here that a lone enemy plane swooped down to strafe the Canadians in their shallow "slits". (Ibid).

569. After a short pause "B" Coy went on once more, pacing "C" Coy, and at 0900 hours reported that it had reached Kirchhatten. At the same time, on the right "C" Coy was fast approaching the built-up area. Shelling and mortaring had by now



become heavier and some infiltration was noticed on the right. The Commanding Officer therefore ordered the medium machine guns of ~~Tor~~ Scot R. (M.G.) to lay a "blanket" of harassing fire into the woods east of the axis to discourage any further interference. The medium guns at Brigadier Allard's disposal were also employed to engage a concentration of German tanks and infantry reported to the north of the town. By mid-day two of the Camerons' companies were firmly settled in Kirchhatten, but the other companies were having a hard time getting on because of heavy small arms fire from the flanks. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Camerons of C., 23 Apr 45)

570. The situation remained unchanged for some time. Then, quite suddenly, at 1500 hours a deluge of shell and mortar fire engulfed the battalion's sector. The bombardment finished as quickly as it began and the Canadians, veterans of many such experiences in the past, did not have long to wait for the inevitable counter-attack to come in. The full fury of this effort fell upon "C" Coy at Kirchhatten. (W.D., Camerons of C., 23 Apr 45). As the War Diary of Camerons of C. relates:

Enemy ~~launched~~ counter-attack on Tac Hq and "C" Coy sp by hy shelling from 155 mm guns. Resistance on both sectors was very hy but was repulsed by 1640 hrs. About 40 enemy put in attack against Tac Hq and 200 against "C" Coy. "D" coy was also counter attacked by a strong force and one Pl was pushed back. A counter attack sp by tks and arty was launched immediately, and they succeeded in regaining this posn and driving the jerries into the woods.

(W.D., Camerons of C., 23 Apr 45)

571. Luckily, the Canadian troops did not suffer much, although all company commanders reported that the artillery had dealt out drastic punishment to the German force. The battalion's snipers enjoyed particular success and tallied up a good score from well-concealed positions on the flank approaches to the ~~Regimental~~ Headquarters. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 23 Apr 45, serials 5156, 5157, 5158, 5168,)

572. As the afternoon passed opposition decreased, mainly due to the fact that extra pressure was being applied on Brigadier Allard's right. On this flank "B" Sqn 8 Cdn Recce Regt was now overlapping the position held by 129 Brit Inf Bde along the railway leading north-east from Brettorf (4885) and was in the process of tapping out the regions of Immer (5191) and ~~Bur~~stel (5292). (Ibid, serials 5160, 5169, 5181, also W.D., 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 23 Apr 45). Brigadier Allard had also strengthened his left flank by moving S. Sask R. into Sandhatten (3990). Having moved up behind the village of Kirchhatten shortly after the Camerons had entered it, S. Sask R. from there struck westwards along a road which, like all others in the area, was well mined and cratered. There was little active resistance, however and by 2100 hours Lt-Col Stott's companies were dispersed as follows: "A" Coy in Sandhatten itself, "B", "C" and "D" Coys in line from north to south covering the left flank, while the support company spread itself along the road from the main battalion position east ~~wards~~ towards Kirchhatten. (W.D., S. Sask R., 23 Apr 45). Additional precautions were taken by placing standing patrols along all possible lines of approach. (Ibid)

573. Fus M.R., with the exception of two companies, remained at Neerstedt until late evening. These sub-units were then shifted to a point some 1500 yards further north along the road to Kirchhatten to secure that part of the lines of communication to



the forward battalions. Later, when 4 Cdn Inf Bde moved into the area, all four companies journeyed to take up a flank-guard position north-east of Kirchhatten. (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, serial 5166 and 5168, 23 Apr 45). In all it had been a fairly successful day for 6 Cdn Inf Bde. S. Sask R. reported that it had captured 15 prisoners and killed 40 Germans, Camerons of C. captured another 40, while Fus M.R. gathered in five. In proportion our own casualties were fairly light. (W.Ds., S. Sask R., Camerons of C., Fus M.R., 23 Apr 45, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, Serial 5204)

574. Originally the divisional intention was to provide left flank protection for 30 Brit Corps to advance on Bremen, but by the evening of 23 Apr it was apparent that 2 Cdn Inf Div would be given the additional task of taking the important city of Oldenburg (3205). Just before midnight 23-24 Apr the following message was issued by Maj-Gen Matthews' headquarters:

intention 2 cdn inf div 24 Apr 45 (.) 6 cdn inf bde to remain area KIRCHHATTEN 4191 SANDHATTEN 3990 (.) 4 cdn inf bde to cut rd GANDERKESEE - OLDENBURG area FALKENBURG 5095 (.) 8 cdn recce regt (14CH) to tap out axis GANDERKESEE - GRUPPEN-BUHREN 5399 and GANDERKESEE - BERGEDORF 4992 (.) 3 cdn LAA regt to relieve 5 cdn inf bde area HOSUNE 3588 (.)

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div, April 1945, Appx 8, "Intentions" Msg GO - 9 232300B)

575. It was anticipated that mines and craters would continue to constitute the enemy's main power of defence in his withdrawal to the north if Maj-Gen Matthews' persisted in following the main axis. An operation was therefore planned for 4 Cdn Inf Bde to swing east and across country from the firm base at Neerstedt and parallel to the line at present held by 129 Inf Bde. But Neerstedt had to be well secured first. As already related, Brigadier Allard's men had done just this, and it was now possible to launch 4 Cdn Inf Bde into the attack. Extensive preparations for the new effort had been going on all day with both of the other brigades receiving fresh orders. (Weekly Summary of Ops and Activities - H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div, op cit, 22 Apr - 28 Apr 45 - para 2 - 3)

576. Brigadier Cabeldu's tactical headquarters moved into 6 Bde's area shortly after midday 23 Apr. The remainder of the brigade group followed in order - R. Regt C., Essex Scot, R.H.L.I., one sqn of tanks from 10 Cdn Armd Regt, and 11 Cdn Fd Amb. The guns of 4 Cdn Fd Regt detailed to support the attack were already in their new gun area, having moved earlier that morning. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde and units and 4 Cdn Fd Regt, R.C.A., 23 Apr 45). In the brigade's new area south-east of Kirchhatten the units were given the plan for the attack, which was due to begin at 0630 hours 24 Apr. It was to be a two battalion effort. The object, as the brigades diary stated being to:

get astride the main OLDENBURG - DELMENHORST rd in the area of KIRCHKIMMEN and FALKENBURG. R Regt C are to lead on the left axis KIRCHHATTEN and go as far as DINGSTEDT; RHLI are to move on the right axis NEERSTEDT to FALKENBURG. Essex Scot and Bde HQ are to follow on right axis.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 23 Apr 45)



"B" Sqn 10 Cdn Armd Regt would provide armoured support. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 23 Apr 45, serial 5165)

577. Maj-Gen Matthew's left flank remained generally quiet throughout the day. One company of R. de Mais repeated its efforts of the previous day and in the face of heavy mortar fire cleaned up several farms near Henstlage in cooperation with 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt. (W.D., R. de Mais, 23 Apr 45). The remainder of the brigade continued to sweep its surroundings and to patrol, bringing in several prisoners and deserters. However, the information divulged at the G.O.C.'s conference prophesied a change, and word soon arrived that 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt with under command one troop 108 A.Tk Bty would relieve Brigadier McGill's troops before first light on 24 Apr. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 23 Apr 45; also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 23 Apr 45, serial 5145)

578. The enemy's order of battle against 2 Cdn Inf Div presented a very sketchy affair at best, and it was appreciated that no fuller picture of German strength would be available until the next pitched battle took place. Certainly no definite change had been discovered since 19 Apr, when the following information was given out by Maj-Gen Matthews intelligence staff:

Opposite this div are elements of 8 Para Div NORTH of the FORST CLOPPENBURG with 24 Para Regt on the enemy's right and some of 22 Para Regt left...North of WILD-ESHAUSEN 115 PGR has been identified and SOUTH of DELMENHORST 104 PGR has been met - both belonging to 15 PG Div. All these divs and other miscellaneous units in the BREMEN - ODEENBERG - KUSTEN CANAL area are believed to be operating under the comd of Maj-Gen ERDMANN, GOC 7 Para Div.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div, April 1945, Appx 3, 2 Cdn Inf Div Int Summary No. 79, 19 Apr 45)

As on other fronts, it was obvious that most of the local German headquarters continued to control troops of assorted formations -

a miscellany of odd units and hurriedly gathered rfts. Other units of which nothing is known yet will almost certainly turn up, but are likely to be under one or more of the fms mentioned above.

(Ibid)

579. The enemy's intention, so it seemed, had not changed. He still clearly intended to sacrifice men and material in the now somewhat hopeless attempt to save the larger of the German North Sea ports. (Ibid). In summing up the sort of resistance encountered, another divisional intelligence review states:

Enemy opposition has been slight consisting mainly of SA fire from small parties of inf, mine laying and felling of trees across the rds...The enemy is selecting woods and villages from which to put up a resistance evidently intended to delay rather than halt our advance in a sector which is relatively unimportant compared with the approaches to WILHELMSHAVEN, BREMEN, HAMBURG, or BERLIN.

(Ibid, No. 81, 23 Apr 45)



Such folly as the costly attempt to recapture Kirchhatten from Camerons of C. while the very heart of Berlin was being bombarded seems typical of the enemy's overall suicidal efforts, which in this sector could do little else but cover another minor withdrawal to another obstacle. (Ibid)

580. Two points however do deserve some comment. First, from all reports and recent experience, 2 Para Corps was not making any real attempt to halt the Allied advances on the line Bremen - Oldenburg with its best troops.

the latter task is left to less select naval units and odd battle groups under two low grade div staffs. Second, 8 Para Div appears disposed to guard OLDENBURG, and it is possible that the enemy appreciated a drive by us NORTH to OLDENBURG along the main rd, and located one of his better (but not so good now) fms accordingly.

(Ibid)

Secondly, whatever the main concern of 2 Para Corps might be, one thing was certain, the physical and material resources of the Corps were quite inadequate. Thus we could expect to be delayed further by the means so much in evidence at present. (Ibid)

#### 4 CDN INF BDE CUTS THE ROAD \* DELMENHORST - OLDENBURG, 24 APRIL 45

581. Brigadier Cabeldu's attack began at 0630 hours 24 Apr. On the right was R.H.L.I., on the left R. Regt C., each battalion being supported by one troop of Shermans from 10 Cdn Armd Regt. Essex Scot lingered in rear with orders to follow up whichever of the infantry units met the least resistance. (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, Serial 5221). Making fair progress against light resistance, the leading troops ("B" and "C" Coys) of the Hamilton unit reached the village of Nuttel (4691) and there seized fifteen dejected prisoners. These unfortunates stated that they were part of a company group and that they had been left as a rearguard while the main body withdrew to the north (Ibid, Serials 5223, 5228, also W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., 24 Apr 45). On the left R. Regt C. had much more to do. Although by 0900 hours Lt-Col Lendrum's men were barely clear of the Camerons of C's. positions in Kirchhatten, they were already heavily engaged by German infantry positioned in the small copses and farm houses in order to dominated the intervening pasture lands with rifle and machine-gun fire. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 24 Apr 45).

582. R.H.L.I. pressed its advance throughout the morning and by noon Lt-Col Arrel's troops were past Nuttel (4691). It was reported that elements of 8 Cdn Recce Regt were closing in from the South to protect the right flank. Yet, despite this good news, it became unceasingly urgent to extricate R. Regt C. from the unwanted battle on its start line so as to reroute the left-hand effort. All artillery resources were diverted to this task but the enemy persisted stubbornly, making every yard of ground costly. (Ibid, W.Ds., R. Regt C., 4 Cdn Fd Regt R.C.A.,

---

\* Reference maps as for para 563; also Appx "F".



also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serials 5226, 5236, 5244, 5252, 5253, 5255). It was at this stage that Brigadier Cabeldu decided that....

as progress on right was so much faster than on left the RHLI must be firmed up and Essex Scot sent in to ease pressure on R. Regt C. It became apparent especially in the light of captured maps that our adv was carrying us right across the 90 degrees to the enemy defs, his FDLs along the woods being full of tps.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde,  
24 Apr 45)

583. Accordingly, R.H.L.I. was told to firm up as soon as possible north of Bergedorf (4993) and Lt-Col Pangman's Essex Scot was urged to follow the R.H.L.I. axis as far as Nuttel (4691), form a base of operations there, then strike northwards to Dingstede (4694). At the same time R. Regt C. was given a limited objective west of Dingstede to reach as best it could, depending upon opposition. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serial 5352)

584. The Essex lost no time; with "B" and "C" Coys leading, the unit reached Nuttel, firmed up a base there and swung north. No easy passage was anticipated but it turned out that the enemy was by now becoming disorganized, not so much by reason of the Canadian's superiority of fire as by the variety of directions from which the troops were advancing. The weather, too, was favourable, and Typhoon and Spitfire fighter bombers were up over the local battle area paying particular attention to places which, as some captured maps indicated, were enemy headquarters localities. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 24 Apr 45). As the Scottish forged ahead to Dingstede a steady stream of prisoners flowed back into the brigade collecting posts; many of these Germans were questioned on the spot and willingly gave out information. All told the same story, of various small battle groups fighting in many cases under ad hoc divisional staffs. The brigade's diary thankfully noted:

The paratps are conspicuous by their absence - probably back OLDENBURG way preparing one of their characteristically fanatical receptions and leaving some other poor dog to do their dirty work out here.

(Ibid)

585. The brigade order issued during the early afternoon called for the consolidation of Dingstede by Essex Scot. From there Lt-Col Pangman was to patrol eastwards towards Steinkimmen (4794), which was his final objective. R. Regt C.'s limited objective (mentioned earlier) was centred on the hamlet of Grashorn (4493), and it was expected that once Essex Scot was firm it would be an easy matter to pass the Royals on through to the northern part of the Kimmerholz feature (4895) to cut the main thoroughfare at the road junction (4896). (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serial 5257). Both infantry battalions ran into the usual nuisance of mines, deep craters, and some accurate sniping, but by 2000 hours R. Regt C., ably aided by some of the Fort Garry's tanks (whose progress had been hastened by the R.H.L.I.'s threat from the south), was past the road running south from Grashorn (4493) on a wide front. At the same time Lt-Col Pangman reported his leading troops settling in at Dingstede. (Ibid, serials 5288, 5293, 5300, 5306, 5311; also W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Regt C., Essex Scot, 24 Apr 45).



586. Both R. Regt C. and Essex Scot continued their progress until darkness descended. At 2255 hours 4 Cdn Inf Bde sent divisional headquarters a message which placed the Royals in company positions as follows; "B" Coy was north of Grashorn facing north, "A" Coy was astride the main road to Dingstede about 1200 yards north-east of Grashorn, and "C" Coy, having swept through the woods on the right of the axis, was firm near Im Hau (458935). "D" Coy tailed the battalion and was occupying the region of the crossroads south of Grashorn. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serial 5332). Lt-Col Pangman held Dingstede with "A" Coy, he had "D" Coy to the west waiting to contact R. Regt C., while "B" and "C" Coys had moved on to firm up around the farm and road fork at Bei der Bake (472949) on the left and the length of the road to Steinkimmen (4794) as far east as Im Horn (4794). (Ibid). R.H.L.I. was reported in full control of the Bergedorf crossroads which dominated the main part of the village from the north-west. Fully expecting a link-up with Essex Scot, Lt-Col Arrel placed "B" Coy on the knoll 500 yards north-west of the vital crossroads and had strong carrier patrols watching the ground below Im Horn (4794). "D" and "A" Coys formed the main base while "C" Coy was consolidated for the time to the north-east along the track above Boddensbrok (4993). (Ibid)

587. Meanwhile Maj-Gen Matthews had been keeping a close watch on the development of the attack. After he had conferred with Brigadier Cabeldu the units of 4 Bde were given their tasks for the following day.

The intention is to push on to original objectives area of FALKENBURG and KIRCHKIMMEN to get astride the main rd. This is to be done by RHLLI pushing to FALKENBURG on the right and R Regt C passing through Essex Scot posns on the left. Plans were laid incl arty and fire programme tentative H hr being set as 1030 hrs in the morning.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde,  
24 Apr 45)

In preparation for this venture an intensive programme of patrolling was to be carried out. (Ibid)

588. The relation of 4 Cdn Inf Bdes advance to the larger divisional plan can best be explained by quoting a portion of the intention issued late on 24 Apr.

when 4 cdn inf bde firm astride rd 5 cdn inf bde to seize RETHORN 5499 STENUM 5598 and cut rd GANDERKESEE - MOOR 5300 area GRUPPEN BUHREN 5399 (.) 6 cdn inf bde to round out present posns area KIRCHHATTEN 4191 SANDHATTEN 3990 (.) 8 cdn recce regt to maintain contact (a) between 51 (H) div and 4 cdn inf bde (b) between 4 cdn inf bde and 6 cdn inf bde (.)

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div,  
April 1945, Appx 8, Intentions  
msg GO - 9 dated 242230B)

589. To this end 5 Cdn Inf Bde had already concentrated. This move having been completed by 1300 hours 24 Apr, Brigadier McGill had Calg Highrs at Brettorf (4885), R.H.C. around the road junction 2500 yards to the east, and R. de Mais on the rising ground west of Hockensberg (4882). (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf



Bde and units, 24 Apr 45). The ground vacated by 5 Bde was now being watched over by 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt, which, with one troop of 108 A.Tk Bty under command, specially established a line of mutually defended outposts to maintain a secure left flank west of the Hunte river. (W.D., 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt, 24 Apr 45, also 3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serials 5243, 5246)

590. The situation of 6 Cdn Inf Bde at Kirchhatten had not changed much, although the occupants of this area did experience some bitter fighting in trying to expand northwards. Enemy activity, which began by a spirited though unsuccessful attack against Camerons of C. at first light, increased gradually, but the initiative remained with the Canadians. During the day Camerons of C. and Fus M.R. improved their positions to form a defensive semi-circle extending north and east of Kirchhatten. The Camerons particularly had a hard time and were furiously engaged time after time. This indicated to Lt-Col R.L. Rutherford that more serious trouble was about to appear, and he therefore laid on special artillery tasks to deal with it. The enemy's counter attack came in at 2210 hours and was a most fierce effort. "B" Coy, upon which the full brunt fell, was soon in dire straits, and all supporting arms were at once diverted to its aid. Then, having repulsed the enemy with heavy loss, the Camerons set about securing their area by establishing observation posts over all probable approaches to the front line and by dispatching strong fighting patrols. (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Fus M.R., Camerons of C., 24 Apr 45, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serials 5329, 5338)

591. Fus M.R., who had been employed in a role of right flank protection for both the base at Kirchhatten and the attack of R. Regt C. to the east, were moved at about mid-day to new positions extending from the Camerons right on the north-eastern fringe of the town along the paved road to Dingstede as far as the road fork directly south of Schmede (4393). (Ibid, serial 5251). The right-hand company was thus on the axis used by R. Regt C., where it was able to some extent to protect the rear of Lt-Col Lendrum's position. Fus M.R. took several prisoners, some of whom were discovered wearing civilian clothes over their uniforms. (Ibid, serial 5287, 5304). S. Sask R. stayed at Sandhatten throughout the day and sent out strong patrols to probe the opposition, who by heavy small arms fire made it quite difficult for our patrols to advance. Yet 6 Cdn Inf Bde's task, though tedious and sometimes costly, was a most important one, for it represented the security of the left upon which the entire division was to pivot later when the main effort was directly aimed at the city of Oldenburg. For another four days this same work continued. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, S. Sask. R., 24 Apr 45)

592. Amid these reports of fierce company battles and long gains by the infantry battalions, against determined opposition it would be a grievous fault to lose sight of the valuable assistance rendered by 8 Cdn Recce Regt to the current operations. True! only "B" Sqn was committed along the right flank of the division, but the operations carried out by it from the area of Immer and Burstel towards the thrust made by R.H.L.I. on Bergedorf had great influence on the enemy's reactions to 4 Cdn Inf Bde. Working north-westwards from the line of the railway (which 51 (H) Inf Div held), the reccemen exerted enough pressure to cut the road Bergedorf - Ganderkesee (5493) south of Zu Thionfelde (5193). (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 24 Apr 45, serials 5226, 5236, 5238, 5252, 5255, 5263)

593. A few snipers were met and dealt with by scout cars, advancing warily because of the mines. The troopers were experts in their business, however, and whenever the advance was forced to



a halt they left the shelter of their cars to lift the mines and mark them. Engineer aid was requested but, in view of the number of mined areas which the other fighting units had found, it was some time before the C.R.E. could release any to Lt-Col Alway's men. "B" Sqn moved forward slowly all afternoon and gathered in several dozen prisoners. (Ibid, serials 5263, 5274, 5283; also W.D., 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 24 Apr 45, incl Appx 14, Message Log, 24 Apr 45, timings 0910, 1010, 1115, 1425, 1430)

# \* OPERATIONS OF 4 CDN INF BDE ON 25 APR 45

594. The night of 24/25 Apr was spent in feeling out the enemy's line to the north-east. Both Essex Scot and R.H.L.I. took a number of prisoners from whom it was learnt that Falkenburg (5095), the small town selected as the main objective of R.H.L.I. was well occupied by the Germans. (Ibid, 25 Apr 45, serial 5342). H hour had already been set for 1000 hours, but early in the morning Essex Scot reported that work on a large crater on the left axis would not be completed unless the engineers lent a hand. The Brigadier therefore ordered his sappers up and at the same time sent his brigade major to size up the situation at the crater. The obstacle was a formidable one and there was considerable delay, but at 1112 hours Lt-Col Lendrum stated that R. Regt C. would be ready to attack at 1130 hours. (Ibid, serials 5365, 5371, 5373; also W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 25 Apr 45)

595. At H hour the artillery programme began and the two infantry battalions sprang forward. On the right R.H.L.I. with "A" and "D" Coys up, on the left R. Regt C. led by "B" Coy passed through the Essex Scot front line east of Dingstede. The enemy met the attack with well-coordinated fire, but with efficient cooperation by the artillery and the tanks of 10 Cdn Arm'd Regt the troops gained ground slowly. Towards noon opposition decreased, in fact almost vanished, and by 1235 hours R.H.L.I. had reached the outskirts of Falkenburg (5095). On the left the Royals could not make such good progress because of several self-propelled guns covering the various craters on their axis. Furthermore, the enemy on this flank appeared well-equipped with 20-mm guns which were hard to knock out. However, with the aid of a dozen odd rocket-firing Typhoons, the attack was pressed home on both flanks and by 1600 hours R. Regt C. and R.H.L.I. were firm on their objectives. R.H.L.I. consolidated at Falkenburg with "C" Coy protecting the northern flank, "B" on the south, "D" Coy to the east and "A" Coy on the western side of the town. (W.D., R.H.L.I., 25 Apr 45). R. Regt C., having settled "B" Coy at the crossroads (4896) north-east of Steinkimmen (4794) and then having passed "C" Coy on to the north of the main road, had brought up "A" and "D" Coys on the left to occupy the hamlet of Vor den Holze (4896) astride the highway and the Kimmerholz woods south of it. (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 25 Apr 45, serial 5424)

596. Now that his men had a good hold on the road from Ganderkesee to Oldenburg, Brigadier Cabeldu made certain readjustments to secure his position and ensure a firm brigade base so that 5 Cdn Inf Bde's effort might be launched without delay. "D" Coy of Essex Scot was given the task of consolidating along the left (4796) of Kimmerholz woods (4896), patrols were laid on for contact between R. Regt C. and R.H.L.I., and "B" Coy Tor Scot R. (M.G.), was positioned on the rising ground (5093 - 5094) between Bergedorf and Ohrt (5094) to guard the brigade's right flank. The forward battalions themselves initiated a wide programme of patrols for mutual

---

\* Reference maps as for para 563; also 1:25,000, Sheet 2917 - Delmenhorst, 2815 - Oldenburg; also Appx "F"



contact and security; amongst these was one carrier force which R.H.L.I. sent to cover the bridge (518948) south-east of Falkenburg. During all this time and well into the night the artillery air O.P. planes rendered valuable assistance to the general consolidation of 4 Cdn Inf Bde by engaging all likely target areas. This did much to keep down the fire of the enemy's guns although all three battalions areas received severe attention throughout the night. (Ibid, serials 5420, 5436, 5456, 5447, 5448; also W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 25 Apr 45)

597. Meanwhile, at divisional headquarters arrangements had been completed for a fuller employment of Maj-Gen Matthews' reconnaissance regiment. The recon situation in so far as it concerns "A" Sqn can best be explained by quoting a liaison officer's report which reached divisional headquarters.

A Sqn will relieve 5 CAMERONIANS after which will endeavour to contact RHLL. Rds between RHLL and GANDER-KESEE 5493 seems to be heavily mined. Sappers from A Sqn will accompany A Sqn. If rd heavily mined only way to make contact will be with aslt pl and Col ALWAYS feels distance is too great for such a small body of men. 25 Apr 45 - A Sqn will endeavour to maintain contact from 5 Bde to 4 Bde.

(2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 25 Apr 45, serial 5422)

"B" Sqn, which held a good position in the area Inner (5191) - Burstel (5292), was to continue to operate there for the time being, while "C" Sqn was entrusted with the task of maintaining contact between 4 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes on the left. (Ibid, serial 5421)

#### PATROL ACTION AND REGROUPING \* OPERATIONS 5 and 6 CDN INF BDES, 25 APR 45

598. By the time that 4 Bde had consolidated its positions along the road Ganderkesee - Oldenburg, Brigadier McGill's 5 Cdn Inf Bde having been alerted earlier, had regrouped and moved its headquarters nearer to Delmenhorst, whence it expected to be launched into the attack on 26 Apr. Since it was planned to shift the entire brigade by T.C.Vs to its assembly area early on the following day none of the infantry units moved. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 25 Apr 45). For 6 Bde it was another day of intense patrol activity against an enemy who, though not strong in numbers, had small groups well placed at mutually supporting vital points. Prisoners continued to come in after each successive treatment by the Canadian guns and mortars but identifications were so numerous that it could be clearly seen that the German commanders were literally pressing every single man they had into front line service. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 25 Apr 45)

---

\* Reference maps as for para 589, also G.S.G.S. 4416 - Central Europe, 1:100,000, Sheets M2-- Oldenburg, M3 - Bremen; also Appx "F"



THE ATTACK CONTINUES, 26 Apr 45<sup>\*</sup>

599. In the chill, wet dawn of 26 Apr Brigadier McGill's battalions embussed and were transported from their concentration areas to the north-western fringes of Delmenhorst. Here the units shook themselves out and at 0735 hours R.H.C. went forward with "B" Coy leading. This advance was not contested in any way and within ninety minutes "B" Coy was firm at a point where the main axis joins the southern road to Almsloh (5596). "C" Coy then passed on and, after some slight delay at a large crater near Steenhaf (5597), reached its objective on the eastern slope (548976) of the Mittel Hoop (5498), feature. Still there was no opposition. Lt-Col Thompson then ordered "D" and "A" Coys to carry on the advance and by 1030 hours these two sub-units occupied positions on the west and east of Stenum (5598). (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.C., 26 Apr 45, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 26 Apr 45, serials 5479, 5480, 5484, 5489). While "A" Coy pressed on along the eastern edge of Stenum Holz, "C" Coy was sent through "D" to seize the road junction (545986) on the western side of the large woods. Once this was done "B" Coy passed through to capture Rethorn without trouble by 1315 hours. Lt-Col Thompson was quick to follow up his success on the left with "D" Coy, with which he aimed to occupy the factory area alongside the railway some thousand yards further to the north. (W.D., R.H.C., 26 Apr 45)

600. Apart from a slight amount of badly-directed mortar fire, "D" Coy's move to the factory was not opposed. While this sub unit dug itself in, "C" Coy swung to the north-east from Rethorn to consolidate at the road and railway crossing site south of Nutzhorn (5500). In all cases the tanks of 10 Cdn Armd Regt swept every foot of the road with "co-axial" fire, thus running a fine bit of interference for the infantry. During this advance the Fort Garrys lost one tank. (Ibid, also W.D., 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 26 Apr 45)

601. Meanwhile "A" Coy had not been having such an easy time. As soon as they left the shelter of the eastern tip of the woods, a murderous fire met the highlanders, and considerable initiative was necessary to lead them past this "hot spot". Well-placed artillery fire crushed the resistance and at 1640 hours R.H.C. reported itself firmed up on the battalion objective, "A" Coy having swept on to occupy the gap in the woods west of Schierbrok (5699). (W.D., R.H.C., 26 Apr 45; also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 26 Apr 45, serial 5550). The R.H.C.'s position, based on the small town of Rethorn, was by no means an isolated one for "B" Sqn 8 Cdn Recce Regt taking a hand had travelled up from the area of Burstel (5192) to commence operations on the left and right of 5 Cdn Inf Bde. Furthermore, Lt-Col Alway's "A" Sqn had moved up from Ganderkessee to reach the demolished bridges at Almsloh (5596) and Bookhorn (5395). (Ibid, serials 5482, 5491, 5495, 5508, 5510, 5537, 5542)

602. R. de Mais' part in the operation called for a wide patrol effort to the west and, as soon as Brigadier McGill saw that the Black Watch was safely through its first phase, he ordered the Maisonneuves to strike out. Lt-Col Lalonde's attack began before midday and was totally successful despite some heavy shelling from 88-mm guns and the direct fire of several 20-mm weapons, which were especially active on the right against "A" Coy. Nevertheless, the assault was pressed home. "A" Coy swept through the Mittel Hoop woods to capture the built-up area at Gruppen Buhren (5298), while "B" Coy crossed the open land further south to settle at Brandewurth (5397). Shortly afterwards "D"

---

\* Reference maps as for para 593.



Coy lunged out from "B" Coy's position to consolidate the cross-roads at Bissen (523967) on the left and "C" Coy followed "A" Coy to straddle the road between Bulterei (525976) and Westerloge (519974). Patrols were at once dispatched in all directions and one of these (from "D" Coy) contacted 8 Cdn Recce Regt at the river Bookhorn. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, April 1945, Appx 13, Msg Log - serials 822, 831, 832, 833, 834, 836, 839, 843, 844, 857, 849, 854, 860, 865; also W.D., R. de Mais, 26 Apr 45)\*

603. The time was ripe now for the launching of Calg Highrs, whose allotted objective was the stretch of road north from Gruppen-Buhren (5398) to the line of the railway. It was the brigadier's intention to use R. de Mais' position as a firm base from which to attack, thus Lt-Col W.D. Heyland had been forced to keep his battalion concentrated on the main axis south of Stenum until such a time as R. de Mais was consolidated. Gradually, as the French-Canadians gained ground to the west, Calg Highrs moved up behind them, and shortly after 1800 hours, Lt-Col Heyland's leading company ("A") with supporting elements from the Fort Garry Horse, began its attack along the right side of the road. (W.D., Calg Highrs, 26 Apr 45). The first 500 yards were hard to traverse for the ground was open and under very thick fire from medium mortars and 20-mm guns. Nevertheless, "A" Coy gallantly led by Major F.H. Clarke pressed home the assault and consolidated the area of the road junction (533996) north of Brummelhoop (5399). West of the axis "B" Coy (under Major "Sandy" Pearson) had to contend with similar conditions but also managed to reach its objective at the crossroads (520995) south of Hohenboken (5199). (5 Cdn Inf Bde Msg Log, op cit, 26 Apr 45, serials 866, 872, 877 inclusive)

604. "C" and "D" Coys lost no time in following up the initial assault. By that time opposition had slackened off and both sub-units were able to proceed without difficulty. As the enemy could be observed in positions beyond the line of the railway, the commanding officer decided that "D" Coy should stop and dig in around Bookholzeberge (5300), thus allowing the artillery a good margin for its fire tasks. "C" Coy, however, went directly to the chosen objective at the hamlet (524002) east of Hohenboken (5099). (Ibid, also W.D., Calg Highrs, 26 Apr 45). By 2350 hours the battalion was firm. While patrols were sent out to scout around the farm at Ohlebusch (537994) and to determine whether any enemy remained in the open land between Calg Highrs and the Black Watch, the guns of 5 Cdn Fd Regt and the heavy mortars of Tor Scot R. (M.G.) laid down harassing fire on all lines of approach to the brigade's positions. (Ibid, also W.Ds., Tor Scot R. (M.G.); 5 Cdn Fd Regt R.C.A., 26 Apr 45)

605. The situation of 4 Cdn Inf Bde had not altered much. On 26 Apr contact was maintained with the enemy's outposts just beyond the brigade perimeter. The Canadian guns harassed the Germans continually although the enemy's guns and mortars were themselves fairly active. The main tasks however for 4 brigade were first, to clear the routes within its area; this was no small task -

Engrs worked all night clearing rd blocks and filling craters; hundreds of trees are down and great craters

---

\* The story of this attack is clearly indicated in the message log of 5 Cdn Inf Bde, it is NOT clearly told in W.D., R. de Mais, (April 1945)



up to 120 ft across are blown in the main highway;  
the work is tiring the resources of our engrs.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde,  
26 Apr 45)

--- secondly to make sure that no German soldiers or civilians were still at large in the sector. To ensure this a wide-spread sweep was arranged by the brigade-major, who allotted the specific areas to be cleared to R.H.L.I. and Essex Scot south of Falkenburg on the main highway, the R.H.L.I.'s patrols joined with Lt-Col Alway's 8 Cdn Recce Regt working out of Ganderkesee (5993). (Ibid). But the big job of the day fell to the sappers and, in order to get additional information as to engineer requirements for the immediate future, patrols were ordered to cover as great a length of the main highway as possible. (Ibid)

606. Brigadier Allard's battalions also spent a quiet day, although the troops continued to carry out active patrolling. Much valuable information was gained about the enemy's positions to the north and a few prisoners were brought in for questioning. (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 26 Apr 45, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 26 Apr 45, serials 5536, 5543). For 8 Cdn Recce Regt, however, the day's work produced greater results. Lt-Col Alway, having placed "C" Sqn as a link between 4 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes, had "A" Sqn based at Ganderkesee, whence the scout cars roamed to the north and west to cover the length of the Welse river. "B" Sqn, which had previously been successful in contacting 4 Cdn Inf Bde north of Burstel, was later moved over to the divisional right flank to operate between the forward localities of 152 (H.) Inf Bde (now formed along the north-western outskirts of Delmenhorst) and the line Almsloh (5596) - Wiedau (5696) - Schierbrok (5699). (Ibid, serials 5504, 5508, 5529, 5542, 5552, 5571, also W.D., 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 26 Apr 45)

607. The intention of 2 Cdn Inf Div for 27 Apr was as follows:

5 cdn inf bde to round out present posn and tap out towards HUDE 4802 (.) 4 and 6 cdn inf bdes to regp present areas (.) 8 cdn recce regt (14 CH) to screen RIGHT flank of 5 cdn inf bde and maintain contact between 4 and 6 cdn inf bdes (.)

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div,  
April 1945, Appx 8 "Intentions"  
GO 11 dated 262130B)

From this directive Brigadier Megill formed his own intentions. He ordered Calg Highrs to complete consolidation and then to exploit with one company to straddle the line of the railway (517009) 1000 yards directly north of Hohenboken (5199). Once this was done R. de Mais could clear the thick woods to the north and west. R.H.C. were thus to rest in reserve. (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 26 Apr 45, serial 5614)

608. The exploitation carried out by Calg Highrs and R. de Mais encountered only light resistance. Lt-Col Heyland first sent out strong patrols supported by the guns of 5 Cdn Fd Regt, then built these up to full company strength to consolidate a length of the railway line for 3000 yards west of Bookholzberge (5300). Similarly, on the left R. de Mais swept through the high woods and westwards to firm up along the road Hohenboken - Kirchkimmen.



From these positions patrols were organized to maintain contact with each other, with 4 Cdn Inf Bde on the left and R.H.C. on the right. Although not actually committed, the Black Watch had cleared the intervening ground to the Calg Highrs area at the same time keeping close contact with "A" and "B" Sqns of 8 Cdn Recce Regt which spent some time in probing to the north end east. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units; 27 Apr 45; W.D., 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 27 Apr 45, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 27 Apr 45, serials 5638, 5639, 5640, 5644, 5645, 5647, 5648, 5650, 5656, 5669, 5670, 5681, 5687, 5705, 5711)

609. With the exception of Essex Scot the major part of Brigadier Cabeldu's formation continued to enjoy the pause in operations. Lt-Col Pangman's men patrolled north from Dingstede with fair success, and this resulted in one of the companies being moved to a position on the highway east of R. Regt C.

A number of mines were encountered heavily booby trapped, some AA fire....Enemy resisted this quite strongly but some very accurate observed arty fire plus direct fire from some of the sp tks of Fort Garry Horse soon discouraged him and Essex Scot edged fwd another 1000 yds.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde,  
27 Apr 45)

This was a good move, for it gave the brigade commander control of still another stretch of this valuable route. Brigadier Cabeldu lost no time in putting his engineers to work on it. (Ibid). It must be understood, however, that the other battalions were not completely idle; they too patrolled with vigour to contact and gain whatever ground of value was found vacant. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 27 Apr 45, serials 5655, 5666, 5677)

x

PLANS FOR THE ATTACK ON OLDENBURG, 27 APR 45

610. By the late afternoon of 27 Apr the divisional sector had taken on the appearance of a gigantic yet most suitable spring-board for the forthcoming thrust on Oldenburg, and Maj-Gen Matthews called together his brigade commanders to discuss and coordinate the plan. At the orders group an intelligence officer in reviewing the present situation stated:

In the local area captured documents and PW have yielded a very comprehensive picture; our opposition is mainly from battle gps - RHODE, WEISE, GEISLER, SEIFERT THEIME LIER, von ALBERT plus 358 Marine Unit, these mostly under comd of 490 and 471 inf div staffs. 8 and 7 Para Divs formerly in the battle seem to have made themselves scarce.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde,  
27 Apr 45)

Once again it seems that 7 and 8 Para Divs had withdrawn to form yet another line of defence further to the north. (Ibid)

---

x Reference maps: 1:25,000 Sheets 2915 - Wardenburg, 2916 - Kirchhatten, 2917 - Delmenhorst, 2815 - Oldenburg, 2816 - Derne, also Appx "F"



611.  
time:

As the G.O.C. 2 Cdn Inf Div pointed out at the

there was no change in the original task allotted to the Division, and the objective was still to get as near to the WESER as possible along the existing axis of advance. The task of clearing the area south of the WESER as far north and west as HUDE became the responsibility of 5 Cdn Inf Bde with 8 Cdn Recce Regt (less one sqn) in support. The rest of 2 Cdn Inf Div was to turn its attention to that portion of OLDENBURG south of the canal running through the town.

(2 Cdn Inf Div, Weekly Summary  
of Ops and Activities - op cit,  
22 - 28 Apr 45, para 8)

Maj-Gen Matthews had little choice in the way of routes:

there were two possible axes of advance in the direction of OLDENBURG. One followed the main road running into the town from the south-east, and the other, which had the advantage of some cover, led northwards through the Forest OLDENBURG.

(Ibid, para 9)

612.

Accordingly, the following plan was laid down:

- (a) 4 Cdn Inf Bde was to be positioned along main axis around Moorhausen (4099).
- (b) 5 Cdn Inf Bde was to first clear Hude, then sweep on northwards to the Weser river.
- (c) 6 Cdn Inf Bde would capture Munderloh (4194) and join up with 4 Cdn Inf Bde, then
- (d) 6 Cdn Inf Bde was to commence its attack through the wooded area west from Kirchhatten and (either by itself or with 4 Cdn Inf Bde depending on the situation) eventually build up its effort into a fully developed main attack on that part of Oldenburg south of the river.

(Ibid, also W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn  
Inf Bde, 27 Apr 45, also  
AEF:45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F,  
Docket II, Special report No.  
5, Plans for the Capture of  
Oldenburg)

613.

The artillery bombardment of Oldenburg was to be confined to the southern part of the town, except for any counter-battery and pin-point targets with which it might be essential to deal. The brigade commanders were told that with the exception of hospitals and hutted camps they could "beat up" the town freely. As if to add conviction to this permission, the G.O.C. announced that, apart from a good deal of close support that was to be available from fighter-bombers and a mass of field and medium



guns, each brigade was to have a squadron of crocodiles, flails, and Kangaroos under command. (Ibid, also 2 Cdn Inf Div Weekly Summary of Ops and Activities, op cit, 22 - 28 Apr 45)

614. One particular feature of the impending operation stands out. Maj-Gen Matthews' formation was in fact approaching the town from the east in a rather unusual and slightly unorthodox manner. This peculiarity may seem difficult to fathom yet it is really quite simple when one considers that the original task of 2 Cdn Inf Div had been to provide flank protection for Lt-Gen Horrock's 30 Brit Corps. As an official report states,

...the unusual approach had probably confused the enemy and had certainly denied him the use of two important lateral roads.

(Special Report No. 5 Plan for the capture of Oldenburg, op cit, para 6)

It was not, however, intended to develop the final attack on Oldenburg as one immediate operation. The most immediate need was to secure "limited objectives and to get into positions from which the momentum of the final phase could be maintained without interruption". (Ibid)

#  
THE APPROACHES TO OLDENBURG, 28 APR 45

615. The next move towards Oldenburg was made by R.H.C. at 0700 hours 28 Apr 45. Advancing in the bright sunshine, the Black Watch, supported by elements of "A" Sqn 10 Cdn Armd Regt, moved westwards through Calg Highrs. There was a little resistance, but, by advancing on two axes and by pivoting one company on the position gained by another, Lt-Col S.W. Thompson soon had his battalion firmly settled on the northern, western and south-western slopes of the kidney-shaped feature (4800 - 4999) which overlooks the road running through Violstedt (4899). The total of prisoners was well over fifty. (W.Ds., R.H.C. 28 Apr 45; 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 28 Apr 45; also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, op cit, 28 Apr 45, serials 5742, 5745, 5751, 5755, 5761). Simultaneously, on the right Calg Highrs took advantage of Lt-Col Thompson's attack to improve their own positions. Using all available artillery to pound the line of the railway and any suspected enemy posts on the northern flank, the Calgaries were by late evening firmly astride the tracks within 2500 yards of Hude (9802). Lt-Col Heyland also held several points commanding the approaches from the north. All this time R. de Mais kept a steady hold on the left, maintaining contact with 4 Cdn Inf Bde. (W.Ds., Calg Highrs, 28 Apr 45; also 5 Cdn Inf Bde Msg Log, op cit, R. de Mais, 28 Apr 45, serials 926, 941, 946; also W.D., Calg Highrs April 1945, Appx 3, Sitreps dated 296045B)

616. No major changes were reported by either 4 or 6 Cdn Inf Bdes during 29 Apr. The day was spent in patrolling and in preparation for the next phase of the advance to the north-west. The details of the tasks were issued to the brigade commanders, who in turn informed their respective units that night.

Intention 2 Cdn Inf Div 29 Apr 45. 4 Cdn Inf Bde to posn itself area DRECKORT 4399 FUCHSBERG 4397 SANDERFELD



4597. 5 Cdn Inf Bde to seize HUDE 4702. 6 Cdn Inf Bde to seize MUNDERLOH 4195. 8 Cdn Recce Regt (14CH) to (a) screen RIGHT flank 5 Cdn Inf Bde and tap out towards R WESER (b) maintain contact between 4 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes.

(2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 28 Apr 45, op cit, serial 5794)

617. In view of the above intention, however, certain readjustments were necessary and these also took place on 28 Apr. With the Second British Army in possession of Bremen it was felt that, in order to step up the pace of the Canadian advance and to maintain equal pressure on that flank, while 2 Cdn Inf Div turned to Oldenburg, reinforcement was required on Lt-Gen Simonds' right. 3 Brit Inf Div was therefore allotted to 2 Cdn Corps with orders to relieve 2 Cdn Inf Div (5 Cdn Inf Bde and 8 Cdn Recce Regt in particular) of all responsibility east of the road Ganderkesee - Bookholzberge and to probe to the north. (Ibid, serial 5750; also Stacey, The Canadian Army 1939-45, p. 269; also AEF: 45/2 Cdn Corps/K/F Docket 1, Folio 2, G.O.C.'s Activities, 28 Apr 0800)

618. In accordance with these instructions 185 Inf Bde of 3 Brit Inf Div took over the new area by 0600 hours 29 Apr. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, April 1945, Appx 17, Op Order 185 Inf Bde No. 14, 28 Apr 45). 1 Norfolk settled astride the railway south of Bookholzberge, 2 K.S.L.I. were dug in along the railway from the right of 1 Norfolk up to and including the road and rail junction at Schierbrok (5699), while 2 Warwick occupied a position just west of the road Bookhorn (5395) - Gruppen-Buhren (5398). Elements of 3 Brit Recce Regt relieved 8 Cdn Recce Regt on the immediate flanks. (W.D., Calg Highrs, April 1945, Appx 3, Msg dated 290045B). Over on the extreme left of Maj-Gen Matthews' sector, west of the Hunte River, 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt held its ground and reported no changes apart from the usual patrol actions. (Ibid)

#### THE THRUST TO OLDENBURG COMMENCES, 29 APR 45

619. Although it was a day of widespread activity, 29 Apr did not produce any particular problems for 2 Cdn Inf Div. All three brigades made favourable gains against very light opposition indeed. Contact with the enemy was difficult to establish and even more difficult to maintain since the majority of the German soldiers facing 2 Cdn Inf Div were loth to fight for any length of time. Surrender and quick evacuation from the battleground seemed to be the chief thought in the minds of those who were left behind as rearguards. (Ops and Activities of 2 Cdn Inf Div, op cit, 29 Apr - 5 May 45). On Maj-Gen Matthews' left (while 3 Cdn L.A.A. Regt continued its patrols west of the Hunte river) 6 Cdn Inf Bde attacked at 0900 hours towards Munderloh (4194). This task fell to Fus M.R., who went forward with the support of a troop of Shermans, a troop of Crocodiles and a flail. The companies took their time in covering the distance to the objective, for mines abounded, but by 1600 hours all of Lt-Col Dextraze's sub-units had consolidated and taken up position for all-round defense on the oblong feature which takes in the village (4194) and the ground to the east of it. (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde and Fus M.R., 29 Apr 45)

---

\* Reference maps as for para 604: also Appx "F".