



On 3rd Aug 1944 the Battalion came under command of the 44th Brigade in the 15th Scottish Division and remained so for this battle. The plan was for the Bde to attack at 0630 hrs on 4th Aug, three Bns up with the Welsh Guards on the right. The Bn. plan was to advance two up, 3 Coy right, 4 Coy left, objectives being 3 Coy COURTACON, then the South Eastern corner of the wood about 723412 and 4 Coy the North Eastern corner of the wood about 724419. Both these Coys were to exploit forward as far as the road running North from MONTCHAMP. 2 Coy was to follow 3 Coy and POW Coy behind 4 Coy, with the role of mopping up and clearing the wood in detail, and then to consolidate in the South Eastern and North Western corners respectively.

During the early hours of the morning the Germans came forward out of the woods and dug in just in front of No. 1 Pl. It was therefore arranged that the preliminary barrage should start at 0550 hrs instead of 0600 hrs and should be brought down 300 yards nearer our position. At 0545 hrs we withdrew from our position to allow for this. At 0630 hrs the barrage lifted and the leading Coys crossed the start line, which was the line of the stream running through Le PONT d'ELOY. We followed 4 Coy to the start line. Shortly after crossing it we encountered the

K.O.S.B's, who were supposed to be on our left, straying across our front. Half way to our objective, owing to the thickness of the country and the mist, we found that we had got in front of a Pl of 4 Coy. We therefore stopped to allow them to go on. 2 and 3 Coys reached their objectives without opposition. 4 Coy had little opposition and we rounded up about ten prisoners, including some Poles and Russians, whose morale was very low. After this, at about 1100 hrs, we were ordered to consolidate on top of and on the forward side of the hill Pt 279 at 724420 in order to guard a gunner O.P. and to try and link up with the K.S.O.B's. This latter task however, was impossible to carry out, as this regiment was not within 600 yards of our position and seemed to have disappeared in the woods. While the Coy was digging in I sat in the O.P. and watched at least a hundred infantry, many motor cycles and several tanks, crossing in and out of the village of MONTCHAMP. We had a magnificent view.

Geoffrey Hollebone (who has always accompanied this Bn. and given us support beyond all praise) asked 44th Bde for permission to fire, but they continually refused to allow it, as they did not know if they were our own troops or enemy. They appeared to be almost completely out of the picture.

After this, of course, the opposite happened. As we had not taken the initiative and shot at the enemy they started to shell us. After the first few had landed I was called to an O Group. While this was in progress heavy shelling took place on my Coy area, including the "Moaning Minnie" (14 barrelled mortar) and caused several bad casualties.

It transpired that 34th Bde wanted the Bn to occupy the village of MONTCHAMP. I was quite certain that it would need a full scale Bn. attack very heavily supported by artillery, but I do not believe Brigade did, in spite of the information we kept sending back. The Commanding Officer thought it would be wiser for POI ESNAUT to be taken first and so the plan was made. At 1700 hrs 3 and 4 Coys were to attack this village and at 1730 hrs 2 Coy on the right and POI Coy on the left were to attack MONTCHAMP. Owing to shortage of time for recon and preparation more time had to be asked for and our zero was fixed at 1800 hrs. Even so we were very short of time. As I blew my whistle for the Coy to get out of their trenches an artillery concentration came down and again caused casualties. We were obliged to run to our start line and this, together with the shelling, caused a number of men to get lost on the way. We suffered seventeen casualties that day killed or wounded before reaching the start line, to which we had to add a few who got lost and a few more who were tending the wounded.

Our start line was 400 yards North of MONTCHAMP and to the East of the Les FLEURES road which was inclusive to us. There was to be a three minutes artillery concentration when ordered by the Commanding Officer. This came down and at 1820 hrs we went forward. The Commanding Officer saw us over the start line and shortly afterwards was most unfortunately wounded by a sniper.

Within 300 yards we encountered two enemy tanks, a Mark IV behind which was hiding a Panther. My 2-in-C, Capt Sir R. Powell, who was up with No. 2 Pl, immediately took the PIAT and fired at the Mark IV and then threw a grenade. I am not sure that there was any crew in it, but there certainly was in the Panther which opened up and knocked out the PIAT. It then made a hurried retreat. We continued quickly into the village where we found another Panther which we hunted in and out of the gardens. As it withdrew Gdsm Godber stood up and fired three rounds from his PIAT from the standing position and scored a hit each time, but without success. We reached the Southern edge of the village and I decided to consolidate about 200 yards beyond in order to avoid mortar fire which was coming onto it. As we went forward we met and destroyed a M.G. post on our right. We then saw one in front together with a bazooka man. A small attack was put in under covering fire, which caused the enemy concerned to run away, but another M.G. opened up at us from the right and pinned us down. We got into a lane which crossed the road when we saw some Germ. coming up it with a M.G. We tried to stalk them with grenades, but they withdrew, and so we went back into the lane.

Immediately after this the enemy put in a determined counter-attack with at least four tanks and some infantry. Many of the Coy were caught in the open and overrun, as we had no anti-tank guns. Those of us in the lane were cut off from the remainder of the Coy and for a short time most bitter fighting took place. One tank stopped on top of the bank ten yards from us and fired its 88 mm at point blank range. Sir R. Powell threw a grenade into the tank which did the crew no good. One of them got out shouting at the top of his voice and spraying everything with a t.m. gun. By this time two other tanks had come up to within twenty yards of us on the road each side of the lane. We decided therefore to go down the lane, but after five yards we saw an enemy half track a hundred yards away coming towards us firing a M.G. and carrying about ten men. By now every man with me had either been killed or wounded. The enemy were dismounting from their tanks to take us prisoner, so I told Sir R. Powell to run across the road between two of the tanks as the

703422. The Coy, under Sir R. Powell, arrived at this place at about 2130 hrs. Everybody was busy getting into position when suddenly a MG 34 opened fire at 50 yards range. Nobody was hit and Sir R. Powell, Sjt. Kempson and L/Cpl. Llewellyn stalked it with grenades. They badly wounded one man and the other one ran away, but was killed by Sir R. Powell with a Bren gun. The Coy proceeded to dig in and finished this at about 0330 hrs on 3rd Aug.

During the night small numbers of enemy were heard wandering about in the woods. One walked up to a sentry post and was shot by L/Sjt. Smith.

By this time the Coy was very tired. They had fought thier first real battle with the enemy. They had dug in three times in the past 24 hours and had walked some 16 miles, mostly across country. They had completed every task which had been given them and had gained most valuable information. The total casualties suffered were eight killed and nine wounded.

Coy. Comd. MAJOR J.M. MILLER.
2 in C. SIR RICHARD POWELL.
NO.1 PL. SGT. KEMPSON
NO2 PL. LT. DA. ROGERS.
NO3 PL. SGT. SEAMARK.
A/CSM. CQ.MS. A.R. LEXIS.