

Report Hasty P. operation near Nieuw Millingen (Apeldoorn) 17th April 1945

The morning of 17 April the unit was ordered to pass quickly into the city and capture the Royal Palace at Het Loo and clear the woods to the west. When the unit entered the city the newly liberated Dutch citizens crowded the streets on all sides, shouting and cheering and showering the Battalion with flowers and kisses and enjoying the moment to the full, but hindering the unit's progress to no end. Eventually LCol Renison found it necessary to draw his revolver and fire a couple of shots into the air. The crowd then sobered sufficiently to allow the unit to make it through to Queen Wilhelmina's front yard where the CO set up his Tac HQ1. The palace liberated, the unit moved into the woods west of the palace but encountered strong resistance with the Germans in strength in the Nieuw Milligen Woods. Most of the enemy were German and Dutch SS and the Germans were using heavy mortars and anti tank guns at close range. The fighting was fierce but by 21.00 hours the woods were cleared and a subsequent crossroads taken after yet another Hasty P attack supported by Tanks and flamethrowers. In the end the Germans withdrew. As earlier stated most of the troops encountered in the Nieuw Millingen Woods were SS many of them Dutch SS. An incident reported in The Regiment by Farley Mowat captures the essence of that fighting. Slightly to the rear of the advance companies a regimental stretcher bearer was administering morphine to a mortally wounded comrade when, from a range of only a dozen yards, two Dutch SS men exposed their hidden position in a ditch and fired at the stretcher bearer and his charge. Miraculously the Red Cross man was not hit. But he had had enough of the non-combatant's role and, snatching his dying comrade's Tommy gun, he cut the Dutchmen down.

At some point during the day an officer from The Regiment passing by the Royal Palace on his way to the rear to pickup supplies observed and confronted an entire platoon of 48th Highrs in full fighting order with bayonets fixed preparing to re-enact our taking of the Royal Palace. Regimental folklore has it that when approached by the Hasty P officer the 48th officer quipped, "Hell you damn Plough jockeys would arrive just now." He waved his arm to indicate a bevy of war correspondents and photographers. "Seems they are writing a yarn about how we stormed the palace and well, you know how things are.

87 POWs were taken. KIA were Lt C.W. Tompkins, Cpls E. Finton and D.B. Parr, LCpls J.A. McKay, and Ptes W. Kokot, H.P. Brown, and T.K. Pomeroy. Only four wounded.

