

THE SUPERB SECOND WAR 'BATTLE OF BOULOGNE' D.C.M. GROUP AWARDED TO A SERGEANT, 2ND BATTALION, WELSH GUARDS, FOR HIS REPEATED GALLANTRY DURING THE DEFENCE, 22 - 25 MAY 1940 AGAINST ELEMENTS OF THE 2ND PANZER DIVISION, INCLUDING THE HEROIC 'FINAL STAND' AT THE HARBOUR RAILWAY STATION, HIS COMPANY HAVING BEEN LEFT BEHIND WHEN THE REST OF THE BATTALION WAS EVACUATED FROM FRANCE THE PREVIOUS DAY. SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN PRISONER HE ESCAPED ONCE BUT AFTER 3 DAYS ON THE RUN WAS RECAPTURED, REMAINING IN CAPTIVITY UNTIL LIBERATED IN MAY 1945.



DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL, G.V.I.R. '2733460 SGT. D. J. JONES. W. GDS.', 1939-45 STAR AND WAR MEDAL.

D.C.M. *London Gazette* 26 February 1946. The original recommendation states:

'This N.C.O. was one of the few senior Sergeants left behind in the closing stages of the battle of Boulogne in May 1940, after the main body had been withdrawn during the night of 23rd May. All through the very testing and trying 36 hours that ensued until 25th May, he worked with indefatigable energy and exhibited extreme courage under the worst possible conditions.'

He assisted in organising the defence of the harbour railway station where the final stand was made; twice he climbed over the breastworks to help remove ammunition trucks which had been hit by enemy fire and was exploding, although all the time he was exposed to accurate German small arms and machine gun fire. When efforts were made to establish contact with the other side of the harbour to obtain help, this Sergeant volunteered to cross in a small row boat. This he did, accompanied by a

Frenchman. They were nearly successful in their mission when their craft was hit by enemy fire, sank and they were forced to return as the Frenchman was wounded. Sergeant Jones helped him in the water to the safety of dry land.

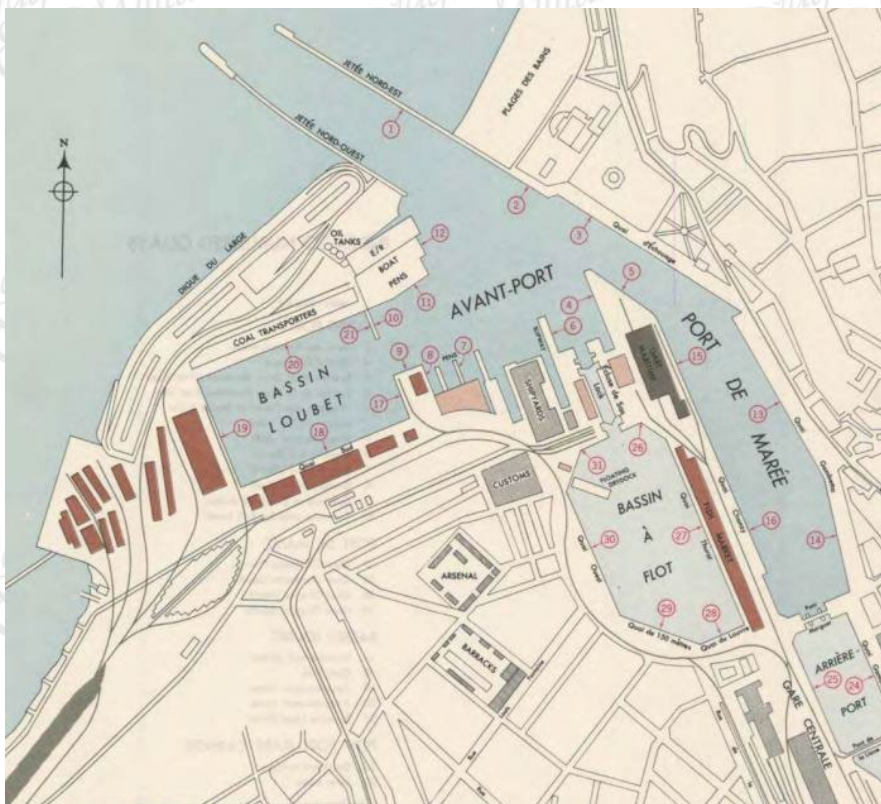
He was seldom absent from the front line defences and his cheerfulness was infectious, although the position was always utterly hopeless. The soldiers under his command were deeply infected by this N.C.O.'s bravery, cheerfulness and great devotion to duty and were themselves inspired to perform their duties with fortitude and energy.

The reason why this citation has not previously been submitted, is because the initiator was informed that Sgt. Jones had died on the line of march 'en route' to Germany as a POW.

The initiating officer has just returned from BAOR to discover this N.C.O. is still alive.'

David John Jones was born on 2 December 1912 and was a police constable before joining the Welsh Guards on 10 May 1932. Having reached the rank of Sergeant by the outbreak Second World War, he was serving with the 2nd Battalion at Camberley when with little notice, the 20th Guards Brigade was ordered to France to defend the French port of Boulogne. Arriving on the morning of 22 May, between then and early hours of 24 May, the Battalion fought heroically alongside the 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards, against elements of the 2nd Panzer Division:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Boulogne



By 23 May, with no chance of reinforcement and fighting against overwhelming odds, it was decided that saving what was left of the defending force was the only option. Whilst the fight continued, the majority of surviving British troops were evacuated via the harbour by 4am on 24 May. However, due to lack of communication, 3 Company of the Welsh Guards, which had been one of the forward companies, was left behind. Major J. C. Windsor Lewis, commanding 3 Company and the senior Guardsman left at Boulogne, formed a composite force of his own company and stragglers and carried on the defence. Initially defending the quayside sheds, Windsor Lewis and his men were forced into

the harbour railway station. On the evening of 24 May, under fire from tanks and machine-guns, they repulsed a German party which approached the quay in a boat. Without food, short of ammunition and with no hope of evacuation, the force surrendered at 1:00 p.m. on 25 May. The Germans captured approximately 5,000 Allied troops in the Boulogne area, the vast majority of whom were French.

Sergeant Jones was with Major Lewis throughout the defence, culminating in a last stand on 25 May and would later be awarded the D.C.M. for his gallantry during it. Jones was subsequently taken prisoner of war and was initially interned at Stalag XXIA Pozen in Poland before being moved to Stalag VIIIB Lamsdorf, Silesia in March 1941. In August 1942, he escaped captivity, remaining on the run for 3 days. In his POW questionnaire, of this he would state:

"August 1942. From FREUDENTHAL, SUDETENLAND. Volunteered to go on working party. Bribe civilians for clothes & overalls. Left the camp during evening & were recaptured 3 days later at OLMUTZ, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. Accompanied by P.S.M. VOAK, WELSH GUARDS. Where moved by Police, were chained together. Were treated fairly, once established as Brit. P.O.Ws & both returned to Stalag. Were both fit."

Regarding any sabotage attempts, he added:

"Made hay stores appear full when only half full. Changed destination cards of a few railway trucks. Aug. 1942."

Possibly due to his escape attempt, Jones was transferred to Stalag 383 Hohenfels in Bavaria in September 1942 and here he would remain until liberated in May 1945. It is unknown how long Sergeant Jones remained in the army after the war, he died in February 1994, his death being registered at Haverfordwest in Wales.



Major Windsor Lewis, Sergeant Jones's company commander, recommended Jones for the D.C.M. but not until after the war. According to Major Windsor Lewis, he had been told Sergeant Jones had

died during the march to captivity. However returning from duty in Germany in late 1945, he was either informed or met Jones and immediately submitted the recommendation. Major Windsor Lewis was himself awarded the D.S.O. for the defence of Boulogne and the M.C. for escaping captivity. He would rejoin his regiment and taking part in the liberation of Europe, gaining a bar to his D.S.O.

https://dunkirk1940.org/index.php?&p=1_50

The defence of Boulogne was credited with delaying German forces from reaching Dunkirk and therefore helping in the defence and evacuation of that port by the B.E.F. The Welsh and Irish Guards received the Battle Honour "Boulogne 1940"

Condition GVF, some minor contact wear. With copied research. A superb and rare award for the final stand at Boulogne

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS DURING THE BATTLE OF BOULOGNE BY MAJOR WINDSOR LEWIS, 3 COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION WELSH GUARDS

*"SUBJECT: OPERATIONS - BOULOGNE.
FROM: MAJOR J.C. WINDSOR LEWIS, WELSH GUARDS.
TO: REGIMENTAL ADJUTANT, WELSH GUARDS.*

Sir,

I have the honour to submit to Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding the Regiment an account of the Battle of BOULOGNE May 21/25th. My account will be in two parts; first as O.C. No. 3 Coy, 2nd Bn. WELSH GUARDS; secondly as Commander of the Small Allied Force which held the Harbour Station after the 20TH GDS BDE had been withdrawn.

After arrival at BOULOGNE on 22 May, No. 3 Coy was detailed to occupy a defensive position astride the village of OSTROHOVE just outside the town. It was difficult to move through BOULOGNE town owing to the congestion caused by the crowds of refugees and isolated parties of French soldiers who were streaming down the streets.

I had been in my position for an hour when the Commanding Officer arrived at my HQ in the village of OSTROHOVE and told me to move and take up a position further to the left, as the Bn was to hold a wide front.

My new position was on a frontage of over 1.000 yds., my Right forward Platoon being very isolated from the remainder of my Coy. My Left forward Platoon was in position on X Rds, EAST of ST MARTIN, my reserve Platoon and Coy being in small house and farm some 200 yds behind my Left forward Platoon on the Main Road. With me at my HQ and in position were 2 Anti-tank Guns, while another of these weapons was situated between No. 7 & 8 Platoons (my forward Platoons). This gun did good work and knocked out at least 1 tank.

No. 7 Pl established 1 road block in front of its position. No. 8 Pl put up two road blocks, whilst No. 0 Pl, my reserve Pl, dug themselves in for all round defence by the house across the Main Road and to the right of the farm where my Coy HQ were.

In the evening of 22 May we were attacked by Light Automatic Fire and 2 or 3 enemy tanks. My forward Platoons made a spirited reply and the tanks withdrew.

All Pls sent out patrols during the night, made contact with Coys on right and left, Nos. 2 and 1 Coy respectively, but had nothing to report re enemy movements.

About an hour after Stand-down the following morning, 23 May, our position was again attacked, this time more strongly by enemy tanks. After ¾ hour the tanks withdrew, one tank having been put out of action by our Anti-tank Gunfire.

The attack was resumed again within an hour. 3 heavy German tanks had appeared on our front, and both the road blocks of No. 8 Pl had been set on fire. The Coy were resisting this attack well, and No. 8 Pl was particularly well led by 2/Lieut. R.C.H. PILCHER, despite the fact that two tanks were practically on top of them. 1½ miles on my left flank I could see German Artillery getting into position, and more Tank movement could also be discerned in the distance. The shelling and firing from the tanks on our front was growing in its intensity. Word reached me by messenger that my right flank was exposed as No. 2 Coy had been forced to withdraw and with my own right forward Pl also compelled to withdraw, I decided to retire with what was left of the Coy.

When I reached the Citadel in BOULOGNE I sent a message to BDE HQ telling them where I was. I was told that all Coys were withdrawing and to conform to this withdrawal to the Quay.

In the afternoon I was ordered to establish Road blocks in the town. BOULOGNE was to be held. I had few men left by this time, but with three Sections forward covering Rd blocks and Coy HQ down the street about 300 yds in rear, I took up position. Shortly after dusk, 2 tanks approached my position and infantry could be seen infiltrating behind them. I opened as strong a fire as possible with my two Sections (the other was on opposite side of road) and we drove the infantry back and stopped the tanks temporarily.



In the meantime, intense M.G. fire and Rifle fire was directed at my position (in big empty municipal building) from the houses opposite. 2 houses on my left were set on fire, and some German infantry

had succeeded in occupying a house on our left flank, but they gave no trouble when dealt with by the Bren Gun fire of one of my Sections.

Firing died down after midnight and after Stand-to in the morning I sent out a messenger to discover what was happening.

From the time when I had first taken up my position until now, I had sent three messengers to Bn HQ but none of them had returned. I thought at the time the Commanding Officer might have retained them owing to the heavy firing that was going on. Later I discovered that only one message had got through. The other 2 men must have been killed.

I never received the Bn order to withdraw as I could not be found. I remained with my Forward Sections all the night as I was the only officer left in the Company after the battle in the morning. The others were all casualties. This explains why I never received the order to withdraw. I was therefore left in BOULOGNE with the two Sections that I had been with on the Road blocks; the remainder of my Coy were successfully evacuated to ENGLAND with the Bn.

On hearing the news after Stand-to in the morning 24 May that the Bn had gone, I decided to move as quickly as possible to the Quayside with the men I had left.

On arrival at Quayside with the remnants of my Coy, I found the utmost confusion in progress. There were stragglers from Nos. 2 and 4 Coys, 2 W.G., some IRISH GUARDS, about 150 refugees, 120 odd French soldiers with two officers, 200 of the AMPs, 120 men of R.E. and others. I collected this force in the sheds by the station while I, with a Major E.G.M. BURT of the R.E. who had since died, went off to find the minesweeper which had just come into the harbour and ask if it would evacuate us to ENGLAND.

The minesweeper, which was FRENCH, refused but said that when it put to sea again that morning it would make signals to any boat or warship that it saw to come to our rescue. I had previously been told by Staff Officers on the Harbour Station that the BDE had embarked overnight for U.K. but that boats were supposed to be returning for us. They never came, and I heard later that they had been sunk in the effort to reach beleaguered BOULOGNE.

On re-crossing the bridge with Major BURT to get back to the troops in the sheds, we were heavily fired upon by M.G.s from neighbouring houses but using cars, etc for cover we managed to reach the sheds without being hit.

The sheds were now very congested with troops and refugees, so I sent off an officer of the R.E., Lieut. KENNETH ROSCOE, to make a reconnaissance of the station itself and see how best we could defend it and obtain cover there for all. This officer returned shortly after with a comprehensive report and I decided immediately to move the refugees into the Shelters underneath the Station itself.

The Germans then began to open fire upon us in the sheds and several men were wounded. I immediately began to retire my force into the station. This was quite easily effected as there was a covered way of approach afforded by a line of railway trucks. The fire from the German tanks was quite severe when we finally abandoned the sheds which shortly afterwards went up in flames. The Germans then began to fire incendiary bombs into the Station and several of these lit up trucks which contained ammunition and inflammable matter. I hastily prepared the Station for defence by the erection of a sandbagged breastwork in front of the Station and on the left flank overlooking the Town and Custom House. The sandbags were already in the Station. Many of my Command, such as the AMPs were unarmed, and while they prepared the position and carried sandbags the W. GDS personnel and French took up positions under cover and in trains, two of which were in the Station. All Ranks worked very hard and carried out their tasks under fire from enemy tanks and M.Gs.

By midday 24 May we had established as good a defensive position as possible under the circumstances. The position was held by the W. GDS and French infantry. All these troops were

already thoroughly exhausted and their tenacity and bravery in keeping the enemy at bay for nearly 2 days without sufficient food and water is, I think, worthy of the highest praise.

Firing from the German tanks, of whom 3 were in front of our position, continued all day, sometimes intense at other times mild, and after 2200hrs dying down altogether. In the evening of 24 May, about 1800hrs, the Germans made an effort to land from a boat on my right flank. Their party of infantry was a small one and we drove them back to the other side of the Harbour with Bren A.T. Rifle and Rifle fire, inflicting losses upon them.

I was able to give the troops holding our positions some rest that night in relays, but early in the morning after Stand-to when the French infantry were holding our front line, the Germans again attacked heavily and we lost several men. At about 0900hrs I was able to see with binoculars big troop movements taking place on the high ground above BOULOGNE. I hoped these might be French but it soon turned out to be a big enemy force arriving to consolidate the capture of the town.

Their artillery which had begun to fire upon us the previous evening was increased, a bit shed to the right of my position was blown up and my own wounded men were being knocked about.

I made a reconnaissance to my flank to see if there was any possible way of escape, but the route was covered by two enemy tanks.



At noon the enemy, now strongly reinforced, opened up an intense fire upon my position and I was compelled to withdraw from my front line of breastworks into the Station itself, protected only by glass overhead and by a train on the left flank.

There was a little food and ammunition left and no more water, and after another hour of the greatest discomfort I decided that my position was now quite hopeless and that a massacre would ensue if I did not capitulate. Having an eye to the number of refugees under my care and the big percentage of unarmed men, I decided to surrender.

My little force had fought most splendidly in the face of heavy odds. Exhausted and without proper nourishment they never lost heart.

On a separate paper I have put forward the names of these Officers and O.R.s under me in both operations whom I consider worthy of decorations.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(sgd) J.C. WINDSOR LEWIS, Major."