

**Transcription of Matlaske Patrol Diary.  
March 2011.  
The Wartime Diary of Sergeant Henry West**

Inside Front Cover:

1942. Matlaske Patrol.  
Members.  
H.West  
D.Thaxter  
W.Seaman  
A.Roper  
L.Youngs  
R.Bix  
L.Daniel x transferred  
B.Grubb left.

1<sup>st</sup> Page

May 13<sup>th</sup>. Inspection by **Captain Oxendon** at Wroxham.  
Present West, Thaxter, Youngs, Daniels, Seaman  
Absent owing to work. Bix. Roper.

May 19<sup>th</sup>. Weekly patrol meeting.  
Present. West, Seaman, Thaxter, Youngs, Bix, Roper.

May 24<sup>th</sup> Hand grenade and Tommy gun practice.  
Present. West, Youngs, Bix, Roper, Seaman, Thaxter.

2<sup>nd</sup> Page

May 31<sup>st</sup>. Practice for 2<sup>nd</sup> Coleshill Competition.  
Present. Bix, Roper, Youngs, Thaxter, West, Seaman

June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hand grenade practice.  
Present Bix, Roper, Youngs, Thaxter, West.

June 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>. Coleshill Competition.  
Bix, Roper, West, Thaxter, Seaman.

June 9<sup>th</sup>. Weekly Meeting at OB.  
West, Bix, Youngs, Thaxter, Seaman, Roper.

June 16<sup>th</sup>. Tommy gun practice for relay race.

Youngs, Bix, Roper, Seaman, West, Thaxter.

2<sup>nd</sup> page (continued)

June 21<sup>st</sup>      Practice for second round of competition.  
West, Youngs, Roper, Bix.

June 28<sup>th</sup>.      Group meeting at Cawston.  
West, Bix, Youngs, Roper, Thaxter, Seaman.

June 30<sup>th</sup>.      Hand grenade practice.  
West, Thaxter, Bix.

Pages 3 and 4

\*\* Poor pencil legibility\*\*  
All regarding signals.

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Targets.

1.      Enemy HQ
2.      Aircraft petrol
3.      Communication.
4.      Ambush

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\*\*Pencil poor legibility\*\*

1.      Speed of fuse.
2.      Priming
- 3      tamping
- 4      Safety Precautions.

Page 11.

Funny thing happened on train.

**Lt. Neave** had some seasick pills and gave one to **Kidmar** (?) who swallowed glass capsule as well.

#### Page 12.

Diary of trip to I.O.W.

Went to Norwich by bus / lorry. And had ½ hour to wait at station.

Third class carriage but plenty of room. 8 in compartment 4 **Baconsthorpe 1 Alby 4 Matlaske.**

Reached Liverpool Street station at 11.45 army trucks took us across London to Waterloo 12.00.

As we had to wait till 14.15 hrs we stayed put and had ¼ hr guard each so as to be free.

Air raid warning went.

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.....then crash. We heard a bang and **Lt. Neave** came in and said he saw a robot plane crash. Same gang in coach but this train is much faster and the sights are lovely (sic). We reached Portsmouth at 1745 hrs and went straight to the harbour. Very cold here but very interesting to watch invasion barges and to see HMS Warspite in dock she looks very battered.

We got on board a big launch and had a lovely trip to I.O.W 9 miles.

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Army trucks take us to Newport where we were split up. I go with **John Seaman, Striker Bell, Tofts, Smith and Dagliss** (sic) to HQ at **Billingham Manor**. The grub here is good and ? , Bell and I caught a bus to Newport and trip though very ? Country and what hills. Had a drink and got a lift back.....beds and slept well

Tues. After breakfast we are told we can go into Newport for an hour or so, be back by.....

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.....15.45 hours to go on duty.

Bus to Newport and look round the shops, buy bread and had lunch at Bugle Hotel, roast beef, veg, soup, peaches and custard and coffee for 2/3 each. The shops are full of cheap clothes and there are hundreds of fish.

Bus back at 14.30 hours. We were inspected by the Colonel at 1500hrs and had

a long lecture on the shortage of troops here.  
Are taken to Sandown by lorry and .....

#### Page 16

.....after tea we had a look round. It is not a very big place but there are some lovely areas. We are staying at the Sandringham Hotel and are put three in a room. Tofts, Bell and myself share a room. There is water laid on and we are very comfortable here.

Wed. After breakfast Bell and I caught a bus to Shanklin a famous holiday resort in peace time. After having a good.....

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.....look round we walked back to lunch. This afternoon we went to see Northern Pursuit, a very good picture and the news was all about the invasion, very interesting. We turned in after tea as we have to be on duty again tonight. It has been a warm sunny day and quite a lot of troops were having a dip.

Thurs. Today is hotter than ever and this morning I went with Tofts up in the hills to sleep in the sun. We woke at 11.30 hrs and went to a café for coffee and biscuits. It was the best coffee I have tasted. We sat in the garden and it was ideal. Two cups each and 4 biscuits costs 1/-.

After dinner Bell and I went to Newport but it was early closing so we gave up the idea of ? Till tomorrow. Tho the shops are shut we went into a posh café for minerals and cake, we sat upstairs and enjoyed it very much.

As we weren't hungry we did not come back for tea, but got in about 18.00 hrs. I noticed how lovely the houses fit into the landscape; they look as if they are born there, all are either slated or thatched, no tiles.

Although the soil seems poor there are roses everywhere and they look grand. Somehow it suits them.

The island is full of children and one can't help seeing how clean and healthy they look.

This evening we went to the pictures. Angels Sing and Nanny Drew Detective both were good, the first a real comic. We had tea in a forces centre, 4 ham sandwiches each and cakes and coffee. The centre was full of troops a number of whom had their flashes taken off ready for France. We are reading in our room now till guard time, I am having a real good time here and only wish Ivy and Brian [wife and son] were here.

#### Friday.

Today the weather is not so warm and the sun doesn't shine, we came off duty at 0530 hrs and went to bed.

I slept soundly and didn't wake up for breakfast. I have now got to the stage where I can sleep anywhere, even the Guard room loft now. Bell ? to have a hole in the floor for his hip to fit into. John Seaman, an Essex chap, Tofts and myself went to a café for doughnuts and coffee when we did wake up and had an enjoyable meal. For dinner today we had pork the best I have tasted since the war started. As we were having our dinner in the Sgts mess we saw all the others get up from theirs and march out into the yard at the back and started peeling spuds, they had a lot to peel before they were allowed to finish their meal. I had to laugh.

After dinner Bell, Smith, Daglish and myself went by bus to Cowes but it did not live up to expectations.

Sat. As I was guard commander last night I got no sleep so I slept till dinner time. After dinner Billy Seaman and I went to Shanklin to get some presents to bring home.

We hunted all over the town and at last I bought 3 purses that seemed pretty good and although Terry and Brian are too young for them they will keep.

As the sun was hot we came home and laid on the beach. There were plenty of soldiers and girls about. Sandown's Salute to the Soldier week ended today the target was £25000 and they got £38087.

We all feel homesick now and I long for a good bed again. I realise already why soldiers get browned off. We start for home at 07.00 so I shall be about fed up by the time I get home..