

"C" COMPANY ACCIDENT

At 1700hrs 19 Aug 1942 after having sent transport the undermentioned arrived with the following statement:-

D-82017 L/Cpl. Farrell, J.H. being a member of No. 3 Section No. 13 Platoon and D-82328 Pte. Pilkington, T.L. being a member of No. 5 Section No. 14 Platoon, together state:-

"We were on board our ship at Southampton around 1630hrs on the 18th Aug having embarked somewhat earlier for a destination unknown. We were below at our allotted mess decks and were undergoing the administrative confusion of being issued with life belts (Mae Wests) plates and eating utensils and other necessities when we were ordered to prime our No. 36 Grenades. This was going on about 1710hrs when an urgent command to duck was heard from 15 Platoon area followed by an explosion. We got up and saw people bleeding and thrown about and moved over to render what help we could. Our services along these lines were badly needed and the Army M.O. kept us busy (Capt. Andy Anderson) helping the wounded off the ship to the waiting ambulances. Having been required to carry stretchers we made trips to the nearest hospital and on return found our boat had gone. Several repeated attempts to get on another ship went unrewarded, and we returned via the MDS under orders from Capt. Anderson. When questioned as to their opinion of what caused the explosion they said that a grenade had gone off which they thought had belonged to Pte. Smith, H. No. 15 Platoon. Their opinion was based on the fact that after the shout duck they had seen Smith try and throw a grenade out of an open port-hole and miss followed immediately by the explosion. It is supposed that in the excitement and administrative confusion, Smith had primed one grenade, put it down to receive plates, etc., and returned to his job of priming, picked up and set off the one he had already primed!

The statement ends and the L/Cpl. handed over some personal effects of Pte. Williams who had died of wounds.

The men were in their shirt sleeves and barefooted having left everything on board.

The following is the official list of casualties resulting from the accident:

- D-82105 Pte. Williams, E.P. - Dead - Mortuary Royal S. Hampshire Hosp.
- D-81928 Pte. Gour, L. / Dangerously ill - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-82357 Pte. Graham, W.D. Dangerously ill - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-81003 Pte. Carrie, A. / Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-81531 Pte. Shaw, W.J. / Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-81413 Pte. Rodney, R.W. / Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-82230 Pte. Rattigan, J. / Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
- D-81417 Cpl. Baddeley, C. / Not serious - 2 C.M.C.
- D-81332 Pte. Hare, A.J. / Not serious - 2 CMC
- D-82627 Pte. Vezeau, J.P. / Not serious - 2 CMC
- D-82858 Pte. O'Hara, H. / Not serious - 2 CMC
- D-82723 Pte. Hosie, J. / Not serious - 2 CMC
- D-82686 L/C Farmer, W.C. / returned / Not serious

(OVER)

-D-81059 Pte. Smith, H. - Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
-D-81950 Pte. Kirk, S.K. - Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
D-82268 Pte. Pollock, A. - Not serious - 2 CMC
-D-81296 pl. Kelly, D. - Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp
D-82124 Pte. Gavigan, W.D. - Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.
D-81489 Pte. Shaw, M. - Not serious - 15 Gen Hosp.