

Swifter than Eagles

WAR MEMOIRS OF A YOUNG OFFICER 1939-45

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL AIDAN SPROT MC

*... swifter than eagles
to overtake thine enemies ...*

from the Regimental Collect
of The Royal Scots Greys



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CHAPTER XXIX

Across the Elbe to the Baltic – and Peace!

There were many rumours as to what the next operation would be but it was generally known that we would be crossing the Elbe and making a dash somewhere. The next day C Squadron moved off to come under command of the Grenadier Armoured Battalion and got over the Elbe by a pontoon bridge at Lauenburg, having been straddled on the way. The rest of the Regiment remained another day till 1 May when Colonel Duggie, in the RIO's Stuart tank, and Recce Troop, moved on ahead in order to cross the bridge that day. After passing through Lüneburg they pulled off the road onto the racecourse and the whole of 11th Armoured Divisional column which was following did likewise. However, when this other column discovered that Recce Troop were only having breakfast, they realized their mistake and moved on. The traffic control at the bridge was very strict and would only allow those vehicles to cross which belonged to 11th Armoured Division so the Colonel told the Recce Troop to split into pairs and mix themselves up with the other tanks. This they did and managed to cross and get to Boizenburg with no questions being asked.

In the meantime I had taken RHQ, A and B Squadrons to a concentration area at Adendorf just beyond Lüneburg. At a crossroads in the latter place where I should have turned left, I was not allowed to as it was 'one-way' so I had to go straight on past the airfield which, with all its new concrete roads, was not marked on my map. I began to get lost and was not sure how near we were to the front so I kept going left to where we should be and eventually found myself in Nutzfelde which I found on my map. It was then only a short distance through Scharnebeck and Erbstorf. Hugh had gone ahead, and, as usual, had found us excellent billets. While we were all parked on the road waiting to pull in the Brigadier passed and, as usual, I was the wretched person at whom he let fly about all our 'captured' civilian cars, including Hugh's fire engine, which he said were blocking all the roads. I promised I would get rid of them straight away – I think we had them for another month!