

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

1941

Appendix

September

SOUTHAMPTON

- Sep 1st Bn. attended a gas demonstration at Gas Compound - Chilworth - 842376. Liquid mustard was shown to troops, and they were familiarised with the smell of phosgene. Those who had not previously experienced D.M. were given a 1/20,000 th. concentration (approx.)
- Sep 2nd Battalion attended Kapok Bridging demonstration, also demonstration by Battle Patrol of a river crossing by improvised means.
- Sep 3rd Junior officers weapons course commenced. Six officers attended. Training programme consisted of instruction in A/Tk rifle, Thompson S.M.G. and 2" Mortar. M.O.I. films were shown to the Battalion in the evening.
- Sep 4th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 5th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 6th Junior officers weapons course terminated.
- Sep 7th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 8th/9th 8 Corps Exercise 'Arthur'. Battalion gave assistance to 8 Corps by representing itself as an enemy parachute Battalion. The objective was Churchstanton aerodrome near Taunton and the Battalion was successful in capturing it. A letter of thanks to Cmdr 5 Corps from Cmdr 8 Corps which was forwarded to the Battalion states 'I should like to thank you for providing two Battalions to help us in our exercise 'Arthur'. They played their part very well and were a great help in making the exercise a success.
- Sep 10th Bn. training in barracks.
- Sep 11th Chemical warfare demonstration. Battalions saw drums fired from cylinders and, in a subsequent exercise that day, was sprayed from the air. The weather conditions were not absolutely ideal for such a demonstration. Some of the spray passed over the troops. It was estimated however that a fair percentage were contaminated, with approximately 20% badly contaminated. It was necessary for 2% of the Battalion to change clothing.
- Sep 12th/13th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 14th Combined operations commenced. 'B' and 'D' Companies at Hayling Island.
- Sep 15th (a) Divisional Concentration Scheme. Exercise 'Stampede'. A skeleton force representing the Battalion moved by M.T. to the Concentration Area. Owing to Combined Operations very few of the Battalion actually took part.
(b) 'A' and 'C' Companies at Hayling Island.
- Sep 17th Whole Battalion took part in Combined Operations - Exercise 'Rubicon' with the Royal Navy. At 1530 hours the Battalion embarked in 'invasion' barges at Hayling Island and made a daylight landing in the Emsworth -

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Wittering area under cover of smokescreen. On landing the Battalion advanced inland to line West Wittering - Nunnington Farm 223185. At 21:30 hours Battalion commenced withdrawal and, under cover of darkness, recrossed in A.L.Cs and M.L.Cs to Hayling Island.

- Sep 18th/19th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 20th Battalion exercise set by Commanding Officer during which R.A.F. were asked to co-operate by photographing the M.T. in its hide at Langley Wood (6640). Conditions were not satisfactory for photography but R.A.F. recce report from height approximately 500 feet states 'eight men and three mechanical transport stationary at fork on road 653408'. Similar practice from same height a quarter of an hour later states 'a column of 60 mechanical transport and eight motorcyclists proceeding along the road from Landford turning right up lane into woods 667411 - 671407 - 671402 - 69?399'
- Sep 21st Battalion training in barracks
- Sep 22nd Specialist training terminated.
- Sep 23rd A Brigade night driving exercise was held in order to give experience to M.T. drivers. Company Commanders took part in this exercise together with a sufficient number of officers, W.Os, and N.C.Os for the front seat of each vehicle. The Carriers did not take part. Route was from Southampton - Romsey - Stockbridge - Micheldever - Winchester - Southampton. Approximate time taken was six hours.
- Sep 24th - 26th Battalion training in barracks. Also night exercise for Intelligence Section and the Battle Patrol introducing two night compass marches across country with 'Roads out of Bounds'.
- Sep 27th Battalion training in barracks.
- Sep 28th Specialist training terminated.
- Sep 29th Exercise 'Bumper' commenced. Battalion moved by M.T. to the area east of Henley on Thames, leaving Southampton at 0700 hours. Battalion moved again by M.T. at 2330 hours to area Berkhamstead arriving at approximately 0500 hours.
- Sep 30th Battalion in hide until 1200 hours when orders were received to move forward to line Watford - Tring.