

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

1943

Appendix

MAY

SIDI AMEUR, TUNISIA (SPION KOP)

May 1st

02:15 'D' Company reported bursts of M.G. fire East of their positions.
03:00 'D' Company patrol return with one German prisoner who was sent to Brigade at 03:30 hours.
03:15 All Companies warned that patrol had returned (from area 7136 – 7235 and 741368.
03:55 36 Brigade moved in.
04:10 Shellfire reported between 'A' and 'B' Companies.
04:20 'D' Company reported bearing of flash 114° M. Time lag between flash and report 3 – 3 1/2 seconds. Arty. informed.
08:15 Enemy shelling pt. 174, 6737. 88mm?
08:40 Enemy shelling pt. 174 with Air Bursting shells.
08:52 'A' Company report our shells falling on Abdullah features.
10:12 'A' Company reported shells (enemy) falling on pt. 174.
10:30 Units of 10 Bde notified by Bde H.Q. of new state of readiness. 2 Beds. and Herts given two hours notice to move out. 2 D.C.L.I. at three hours notice. 6 Surreys not affected by this order.
10:50 'A' Company reported enemy shells falling on pt. 174.
13:15 11 Bostons bombed ridge in front of 'D' Company's positions, and farm to South of O.P. received a direct hit by shell.
16:50 Three Fokke-Wulfe 190 flew over Battalion H.Q. and were fired on by A.A.
21:10 Message received from Brigade Commanding Officer to R.V. at Brigade Headquarters at 0800 hours 2 May with map going North of present area.
21:20 O.P. reported seeing Verrey lights. 2 green and one white followed shortly by 1 green, East of their position.
21:25 'D' Company patrol reported by 'D' Company passing through on way to Djebbel Sambi Farm 721369.
22:00 All companies and Arty informed that 'A' Company personnel for listening posts would pass through 'A' Coy. At 0200 hrs.

May 2nd

00:10 'B' Company protecting patrol on mine lifting party reported back from El Ferhanhia 6935– 7035. Operation successful, mines lifted and road clear. Brigade and all Companies informed.
00:40 'A' company instructed to delay sending out listening post personnel until 0300 hours, unless 'D' company control

report is available before.

00:45 'D' Company O.P. reported no sign patrol.

01:50 'D' company patrol returned and reported enemy at Djebel Sahbi 7237. Farm very heavily damaged by our guns. Signs of occupation - two slit trenches. Small enemy force in area copse, not in the buildings. On leaving buildings patrol was fired on by sentry (approx. 0015 hours). Road clear of mines up to this area. Companies and Brigade informed. Brigade arranged with Arty to shoot copse at 0430 hours.

03:55 Sitrep received

04:15 'C' Company reported two white flares N.W.

05:30 'D' Company brought in deserter from 754 Panzer Grenadier Regiment captured in front of their position, and sent to Brigade.

07:45 Shell landed near Battalion Headquarters. Probably our own Arty.

11:25 720397 being shelled by our own Arty.

12:40 'A' Company reported H.T. in area 717373.

13:00 'D' Company reported three mortar bombs landing pt. 154.

17:30 – 17:40 About 12 shells landing area of Battalion Headquarters, mostly on line of track. Approximately one in three did not explode. One man wounded.

17:27 Nine Spitfires dive bombed and machine-gunned 'D' Company area. Approximately 12 bombs dropped.

22:30 Arty. fire on 1 Division front.

22:51 Message received from Brigade Commanding Officer to R.V. at Brigade Headquarters at 1100 hours 3 May. Preparations made for further recce.

23:00 'D' Coy. Sent out fighting patrol of 1 Officer and 25 Ors. Object: To assault all enemy found in area of Pt. 123 (721372). Time out 2300 hrs. Assault 0200 hrs. Time in 0400 hrs.

May 3rd

03:00 'D' Company patrol returned from 719367 with P.W. from 3 Bn. 754 Pz. Gr. Regt. who occupy 729372 with their Bn. H.Q. at Frenj. Also troop of Arty. located at 727377.

Brigade informed and P.W. sent back.

06:00 Battalion came under command 36 infantry Brigade.

09:55 'C' Company reported enemy party of 10 men seen moving area of 715375.

09:56 Arty. reported movement seen 724380.

11:00 Recce party of 6 R.W.K. contacted Battalion ready to be shown over area prior to taking over.

16:50 'A' Company reported two smoke shells in front of 'D' company. 'B' Company reported movement on ridge, bearing 100° from their position.

17:00 'B' Company reported enemy gun being towed in North East direction along Road Tunis – Medjez el Bab.

17:45 Enemy shelled Red Farm.

18:20 Enemy mortared gully 7035.
20:00 Six R.W.K commenced taking over.
21:30 Take over completed and 6 Surreys concentrated area pt. 68 to bottom of gully. Battalion 675351. See O.O No. 4 dated 4 May O.O. No. 4 attached at Appx 'A'

May 4th 15:00 – 18:00 Intermittent enemy shelling of main road Medjez el Bab – Peter's Corner.

May 5th 11:45 Enemy dropped about eight shells in Battalion area. Medium long range guns believed to be cause. Two men killed and four wounded. Brigade informed. 'C' Company's cook's truck also destroyed.
12:10 Divisional Commander arrived and spoke to Officers and W.Os.
13:00 Preparations for attack on the following day made. 10 Infantry Brigade O.O. No. 5 dated 5 May refers. O.O No 5 attached at Appx 'B'

May 6th 13:30 4 Recce Regiment reported 7 tanks 763357 and 4 A.F.Vs 736359. Recce held up by mortar and M.G. fire 730375 and have had to withdraw.
14:00-14:25 Battalion area shelled. Approximately 30 shells. One jeep and one mortar carrier out of action. Some casualties.
14:30 Battalion Headquarters moved back 400 yards.
17:00 6 Armoured Division troops still pouring through.
19:30 All quiet. Battalion had one third manpower on duty all night.

May 7th 07:00 Conference and Warning Order for move.
13:30 Battalion moved from battle positions and concentrated half mile back at foot of pt. 156. Our positions taken over by K.S.L.I.
14:00 Rain started which caused tracks to become boggy and unsound.
18:30 Battalion embussed and moved off in T.C.Vs. to Massicault, and concentrated area 803434.
20:30 Battalion established 603434. T.C.Vs remaining with Battalion.

May 8th 06:30 Battalion at half hours notice to move after 1100 hours.
12:00 Battalion to move to La Mohammedia by T.C.V. Battalion embussed.
12:30 Battalion moved off in Brigade convoy.
17:00 Arrived 059397 and Battalion concentrated.

May 9th 08:15 Road being shelled in area 0834.
11:23 Troop of our guns being shelled 7–8000 yards away.
Brigade informed.
17:30 Brigade informed us no move likely before 0700 hours 10
May. Open-air church service was held in the morning.

May 10th 10:00 Brigade Conference. Commanding Officer attended.
11:30 10 Infantry Brigade to move to area Menzel Bou Zelfa. 12
Inf. Bde to move to area Beni Khalled, and to send out patrols to
clear area with 6 Armoured Division.
12:40 Battalion embussed ready to move.
14:00 Convoy moved off and proceeded via La Mohammedia –
Bir Krasseur – Chouoka – Hammam Lif – Soliman. Population at
Hammam Lif showed terrific relief and were highly excited at
the arrival of British troops.
22:00 Arrived in new area which had previously been cleared of
enemy. Four Italians with armoured car surrendered and were
sent to Brigade.
23:10 Battalion Headquarters established at 453473.
23:50 Patrols sent out for local protection.

May 11th 05:30 'C' Company patrol brought in prisoners. P.W. sent to
Brigade.
06:00 Total P.W. 880. Cage established near Battalion
Headquarters and prisoners sent there.
07:00 Enemy tanks sighted 4154 (unconfirmed report). Our
A/Tk guns on the alert.
07:30 'C' Company encountered large concentration of enemy,
about 400.
08:00 P.W. 940.
08:10 Tanks went forward.
08:20 Total prisoners 1100.
09:15 Battalion moved along road and established H.Q. at
453478
10:00 Received orders for move.
12:30 Battalion moved off in Brigade convoy.
Order of March: 'A' Squadron Recce, 2 D.C.L.I, 'C' Squadron 48
R. Tanks, 10 Infantry Brigade H.Q., 1/6 Surreys.
18:30 West coast of Cap Bon reported clear. Considerable
number of enemy surrendering. Enemy passing in vehicles and
on foot to rear areas.
20:00 Battalion arrived at Melibia. Battalion established
877693. Brigade Headquarters and 75693. P.W. number about
5000. P.W. clearing point at rear of Battalion Headquarters.

May 12th Orders received from Brigade for clearance of any dumps and
collection of P.W. Prisoners still poured in and total for the day
amounted to approx. 2,000 German and 5,100 Italians.

May 13th Commanding Officer held a conference to issue orders for the day. Battalion continued task of clearing N.E. sector of Bon peninsular. Areas and tasks allotted as follows:
'C' Company sweep beaches.
'D' Company stay in Battalion area to collect salvage.
'A' Company sweep for dumps in area West of Battalion Headquarters.
'B' Company commence to bring in salvage from South of the area.
HQ Company, 4 Platoon and Anti-Tank Platoon to sweep area West of 'A' Company. More prisoners brought in and more material located but no large dumps discovered. Battalion Orders issued and a routine published bringing Battalion back to normal operational administration. Number of prisoners handled: Division approximately 51,000. Brigade approximately 29,000. Battalion approximately 19,000.
06:15 All Companies held drill and inspection parades. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies continued with salvage. 'A' Company administration day. Numerous enquiries received from locals and Arabs on civil administration problems.
14:00 Commanding Officer addressed 'A' Company. O.O. received from Brigade reducing Battalion salvage area considerably.
17:30 Commanding Officers conference held giving new salvage areas to Companies. List of honours and awards for recent actions submitted to Brigade.

May 16th Administration Day.

May 17th Parties organised for short leave in Tunis. Warning received that a draft should be sent to 2 North Staffs. Lt. Paskins sent to Souk El Arba to collect Bn. Kit Bags.

May 18th Bn. Kit Bags arrived.

May 19th Bn. concentrated.

May 20th 11:00 Comd. Officer, Capt. J.O. Strode and 63 O.Rs of the Bn. took part on the Victory March Past in Tunis.
12:00 Capt. P.H. Mornement, Capt. L.S.B. Scales, Capt. B.A. Crutchfield, Lt. G. Dowler, Lt. K.J. Bray, Lt. B.N. Willson, Lt. C.W. Deayton-Groome, Lt. E.A. Rose, and 172 ORs of Bn. despatched as reinforcement draft to 2 North Staffs. in 1 Div.
Lt. A.G. George and 36 ORs sent to Medjez el Bab to escort P.O.W. to England. Orders received from Brigade that Bn. would move to Bone on 22 May to take over P.W. duties. Lt. A.W.F. Paskins promoted to Capt.

May 21st Bn. made preparations for move to Bone.

May 22nd	Bn. moved by road to staging area near Beja via Korba, Tunis and Medjez el Bab. Portee overturned en route injuring Cpl. Mansfield.
May 23rd	Second stage of journey completed via Setif and Constantine. Bn. arrived at Bone and settled in. Commanding Officer and Adjutant visited Bone Area H.Q. for particulars of duties.
May 24th	Capt. Paskins and 13 Signallers escorted 800 P.W. from Bone to Algiers. Bn. found guard of 1 and 52 at No. 205 P.O.W. Camp, Bone daily, and 6 O.Rs. as escort to P.W. working parties at 212 P.W. Camp Morris.
May 25th	10:30: Comd. Offr's conference.
May 26th	Lt. Blackburn and O.Rs. escorted 1,000 P.W. from Bone to Oran.
May 28th	Air raid on Bone. Bn. witnessed two raiders shot down.
May 29th	Bn. beat 6 Gren. Gds. at soccer 1-0.
May 30th	Regimental Band played at the bandstand, Bone.
May 31st	Heats run of Bn. Sports Meeting.