

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

1943

Appendix

December	BOUGIE, ALGERIA
Dec 1st	6 pdr. A/Tk and 3" Mortar Cadre Course commences. Capt. P.M. Plastow assumed command of "S" Coy. and Capt. J.F. Edwards assumed command of H.Q. Coy.
Dec 2nd	Coy. Cross Country Run held. Major Lollar, U.S. Army, and Capt. Baker, A.M.G.T. staff, attached to Bn. for 4 days. The Bn. debated that 'A Large Standing Army of Occupation in Germany after the War is essential for Peace'. The motion was carried.
Dec. 3rd	Bn. drew with 4 Recce 1 – 1 in the Divisional Football League. Night Patrol Scheme arranged by C.S.M. Joiner.
Dec 4th	Div. Mountain Warfare Course ended. 2 R.W.K. Officers left. Bn. Church Parade held.
Dec 5th	3 Offrs. and 213 ORs. from 2nd Bn. The East Surrey Reg't arrived as reinforcements
Dec 6th	6 pdr. A/Tk and 3" Mortar Course ended. New draft 'settling in'. Comd. Offr. spoke to all Officers and N.C.Os. on the future of the Bn.
Dec 7th	Bn. fired rifles and Bren guns on Clausel Range. Bn. Brains Trust held session, Capt. Sloan Question Master.
Dec 8th	Draft of 1 Officer and 40 ORs. from 2/6th Bn. The East Surrey Regt. arrived as reinforcements
Dec 9th	Mountain Warfare Cadre Course commenced. Chief Instructor Major G.G. Maggs M.C., Assistant Instructor Capt. P.M. Plastow. Draft training and testing period commenced under direction of Major A. Smart.
Dec 10th	Cadre and Draft training continued. Bn. Concert Party started intensive rehearsals for Christmas Shows.
Dec 11th	Cadre and Draft training continued. 10 Offrs. and 212 ORs. from 10th Bn. East Surrey Regt. arrived. 3 Offrs. and 70 ORs. from 10th Bn. R. Sussex Regt. arrived to bring the Bn. up to War Establishment.
Dec 12th	Bn. warned for move in three days. Comd. Offr. attended Div. conference. New Draft allotted to Coys. Bn. prepared for move.
Dec 13th	Preparations for move continues. 2 Offrs. and 4 ORs. from 2. R.F. attached to the Bn. for move. 1 Offr. and 24 ORs. of 21st Tank Bde. arrived as rear party.
Dec 14th	Preparation for move completed. North African currency exchanged for B.M.A. money.
Dec 15th	Bn., 24 Offrs. and 818 ORs. struck camp and proceeded by M.T. to Bougie station. Comd. Offr. and Adjutant proceeded by car to Algiers. Remainder proceeded by train to Aghra station, Algiers. Comd. Offr. and Adjutant embarked p.m. on H.M.T. Cuba, 12,000 tons.
Dec. 16th	Bn. arrived Aghra station 0600 hrs, and marched to and embarked on

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H.M.T. Cuba. All embarkation completed by 1400 hrs. Men settled down in overcrowded mess decks. No indication given of destination. Popular rumour is Cairo or Liverpool. Comd. Offr. collected mail for the Bn. from Base Post Office, Algiers

AT SEA

- Dec 17th Bn. settled down to troopship routine. H.M.T. Cuba weighed anchor at 1410 hrs and headed East. Little surprise expressed by the majority of troops. Few had expected to go home, and no disappointment was apparent. Our convoy of ships hugged the coast. Very little movement felt on board, and no cases of sea-sickness reported.
- Dec 18th H.M.T. Cuba off Bizerta at about 1500 hrs. A convoy of 34 ships passed, heading West. 3 cases of malaria admitted to the Ship's Hospital, 3 relapses, 2 fresh cases. Comd. Offr. confined to his bed with a high temperature and suspected malaria.
- Dec 19th M.O. confirmed that Comd. Offr. had a relapse of malaria. Malta sighted off Port Bow at 0710 hrs. Bn. Church Parade held at 1030 hrs, conducted by Rev. G.H.T. Blake C.F. MO.'s inspection of Bn. at 1400 hrs. Destroyer Jarvis came alongside at 1640 hrs. and shot a line amidships over the boat deck. O.C. Troops, Lt. Col R.D. Lake D.S.O., The Northamptonshire Regt., was waiting to receive the secret document which was attached to the line and hauled aboard.
- Dec 20th P.T. commenced on Promenade Deck. Convoy of 34 Merchant Vessels and naval Escort passed at 1600 hrs to the Northward. Sand dunes at Barka visible to the South at a distance of about 15 miles. Destroyer Jervis again delivered a message byline at 1600 hrs.
- Dec 21st No land visible, very calm. 16 ORs. in hospital, 12 with malaria. Rumoured that we shall disembark at Port Said on 23rd. No official news.
- Dec 22nd Visibility very poor because of rain. At 0900 hrs a convoy was sighted to the South, apparently hove-to. H.M.T. Cuba presumed to be off Alexandria. All B.M.A. money collected ready for exchange at our destination. Troops had a washing day. No parades. Final of Bn. Ship's Tug-of-War Competition. H.Q. Coy. beat "S" Coy. Disembarkation Warning Order issued at 1400 hrs. Drivers and a small advance party commanded by Capt. G. Sloan and Capt. F.C. Ridger respectively warned to disembark at 1800 hrs. Pilot came alongside at 1600 hrs, and ship anchored off Cherif Quay, Port Said at 1900 hrs. Major J.A. Garnons-Williams, 2 I/c., and E.S.O. came on board at 2000 hrs together with Field Cashier. All money was exchanged for Egyptian currency. Advance party of 2 Offrs. and 24 ORs. detailed to disembark at 2100 hrs. Main body ordered to disembark at 0530 hrs on 23rd. Advance party, commanded by Capt. F.C. Ridger, Q.M. disembarked at 2200 hrs.

PORT SAID, EGYPT

- Dec 23rd No water was available, breakfasts were not prepared at the appointed times, but were made available by the ship's staff after a

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harangue. Lighter ordered for 0530 hrs. came alongside at 0600 hrs, and the Bn. disembarked. The Bn. entrained by 0730 hrs, and were issued with a cup of tea and a bun. Baggage lighter was late, and the train moved off at 0850 hrs, leaving a small baggage party to follow by road. Train made good time and proceeded South along the banks of the Suez Canal to Geneifa, 7 miles North of Kabrit. Transport was available and conveyed the Bn. by shuttle service to Kabrit. A tented camp was allotted by the advance party. Rations were not available, and transit rations were issued at 1730 hrs. Major J.O. Strode M.C. rejoined the Bn. from Gaza. Baggage party arrived by road at 2230 hrs, 24th Dec.

KABRIT, EGYPT

- Dec 24th Day devoted to settling in and cleaning up the camp. Major J.A. Garnons-Williams, 2 I/c. rejoined the Bn. from Gaza, and assumed command vice Lt. Col. R.O.V. Thompson who was evacuated to No. 1 General Hospital from H.M.T. Cuba. Major A. Smart and Major G.G. Maggs M.C. collected as much Christmas fare as possible. Bde. Comd. Brig. Shoesmith, O.B.E. paid a flying visit to the Bn., and informed the Comd. Offr. of future.
- Dec 25th Bn. Church Parade held at 1130 hrs. Rev. Wilson, Padre 2 D.C.L.I. officiated. One 15 cwt truck collected from Bde. for use of the Bn.
- Dec 26th Bn. commenced 'Physical Fitness' training under Coy. arrangements. P.T., route marches and W.T. were ordered. M.T.O. and 60 drivers proceeded to 154 Transit Camp, Amriya, to collect vehicles.
- Dec 27th 13 x 3 tonners, 2 x 15 cwts and 1 water truck issued to the Bn. Capt. D.C. Fuller, L.O., M.E. C.T.C. attached to the Bn. Bde. Comd. Brig. Shoesmith O.B.E. spoke to all ranks of the Bn. on 'The Future'.
- Dec 28th Bde. Comd. spoke to all Officers of the Bde. on training. Comd. Offr., Adjutant and Coy. Comds. visited beaches on Great Bitter Lake. Physical Fitness training continued. 8 Jeeps issued to the Bn. 20 ORs. collected vehs. from Div. 2 Offrs. and 40 ORs. proceeded to Tel El Kebir to collect vehs.
- Dec 29th Officers from 2 Echelon, M.E.F. visited the Bn. Lt. V.H. Jones posted to H.Q. 10 Inf. Bde. as L.O. Major J.A. Garnon-Williams visited the Comd. Offr. in No 1 General Hospital, Quantara. 8 x 3 ton loads of G1098 stores arrived from Ados. 7 Pioneers commenced 5 day 'Mine Course' at the C.T.C. 10 x 15 cwts issued to the Bn. from Ataqa.
- Dec. 30th 1 Offr. and 40 ORs. proceeded to Tel El Kebir to collect vehs. for the Division. 47 Offrs., W.Os., and N.C.Os. attended 2 day Cadre Course at C.T.C., Kabrit. Comd. Offrs. car collected from Ados.
- Dec 31st Comd. Offr. discharged from hospital and assumed command of the Bn. R,S.M. held Drill Parade attended by the Band. The Bn. then completed an assault course in full equipment. C.T.C. Cadre Course ended with a night Bangalore Torpedo exercise. 80 ORs. visited the Mine Museum at the C.T.C.