

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

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Appendix

March

TURLITO AREA

Mar 1st

During the night heavy rain fell almost continuously and mist lay in the gullies, enemy shelling was on the normal scale with the emphasis on Cerasola. There were also spells of mortaring on both Cerasola and Ornito, and exchanges of small arms fire with enemy. At first light a thick mist obscured visibility and rain was still falling heavily.

0030: 4 mortar bombs fall on "C" Coy area.

0135: "B" Coy heard TSMG fire in area 711

0740: "C" Coy reported MG 34 fire in front, believed to be well out in front.

0820: "B" Coy reported MG 34 fire on right, possibly 2 DCLI area.

0930: Mortar OP reported visibility nil.

1045: CO visited "D" Coy.

1140 - 1320: Mortar bombs fell on "A" Coy HQ, and near left hand forward Pl. Approximately 50 shells or mortar bombs on "A" Coy area. (Casualties were L/C Brookes – stretcher case, died in ADS, and Potter walking wounded).

1145: Mortars and gunners informed. They watched Siola for enemy mortar positions.

1245: Col Nicholls called in person.

1300: Shell fire reported by "B" Coy – possibly from Mont Maio.

1320: "A" Coy heard explosion of mortar estimated at 270° from positions and range of 1,000 yds.

1340: Mortars fired on 274° at 1200 yds on instructions from "A" Coy.

1430: Confirmed it was definitely shelling, and came from between Castelforte and M. Cechito.

1555: 16 shells fell on "A" Coy area. (4 casualties- 3 shell-shock, 1 slightly wounded)

1600: A few shells fell along front of "B" and "D" Coys, and one fell on edge of Cheshire dump.

1655: Mortars reported that, as a result of their shoot, the fire at 1555 was brought down on "A" Coy in retaliation. Mortars ceased firing when requested to do so by "A" Coy.

1705 – 1710: Shelling of area Cheshire, "B" and "D" Coys. No casualties.

1810 – 1925: Shelling of area "C" Coy, approx 30 shells. No casualties.

2045: MGs reported TSMG fire from the direction of Ornito.

2100: "A" Coy reported Vickers MG fire from area 711.

2150: Intermittent shelling of "C" Coy.

A quiet day in which sudden fall of mist prevented aggressive patrolling. The night was on the whole quieter than last night although shelling of Ornito and Cerasola was continuous.

Mar 2nd

0100 – 0300: Intermittent shelling otherwise very quiet.

0540 – 0700: Intermittent shelling. No casualties. "A", "B", "C" and "D" Coys' patrols report no contact and nothing to report.

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1000: Enemy shelling from Mariano di Sopra at 8697 very accurate on left of "D" Coy.

1020: Enemy shelling switches to Sujo.

1540: 2 mortar bombs fell on Bn HQ. No casualties.

2145: Mortars report firing from direction Castelforte.

2220: "A" Coy patrol left.

2350: "A" Coy patrol returned and reported that Constanza Farm was unoccupied. On the whole a quiet day with shelling and mortaring of positions at Cerasola and Ornito on a lighter scale than previous days. A fairly uneventful night with shelling not continuous as it had been on previous nights, but fairly heavy to heavy between 0400 hrs and 0600 hrs on Ornito and Cerasola.

Mar. 3rd

Patrol Serial 31 to houses 862020 reported that they were found unoccupied.

1110: Mortars stood down having fired a shoot of about 9 rounds on Constanza Farm.

0910 – 1100: Intermittent shelling of "A", "B" and "C" Coys.

1320: Mortars reported visibility nil.

1345: Mist cleared.

1405: "A" Coy mortared in area hill 400 with intermittent shelling.

1422: "A" Coy stood to. Visibility nil

1515: Mortars report visibility still nil.

1635: "A" Coy report our own RA firing on their position. Gunners informed.

1904: "C" Coy report quite intense shelling for 15 minutes on to point 800 yds NE of their positions – shells coming from NW. SA fire from unit on right directed forward.

2100: Intermittent shelling on "C" and "B" Coys. No casualties. The day was comparatively quiet and shelling of the hill less sustained. During the day Pts 711 and 759 were subject to mortaring when the mist came down to prevent all observation. Movement was heard area Pt 759 during this period. When the mist cleared the mortaring ceased. Patrol to buildings at 864022 and 862020 found them unoccupied.

Mar 4th

0240: "B" Coy patrol returned and reported no enemy contacted.

0855: "A" Coy reported 20 shells landed in their area from direction Damiano. No casualties

0920: Mortars report visibility nil.

1032: "D" Coy reported presence of Recce party Hants in their area – liaising in case they have to take over the positions in a counter-attack role.

1319: Mortars ranged on farm 855022 and then switched 4^o right, using smoke.

1430: Mortars report all on target 856024.

1445: Heavy mortar fire on Pt 711 and M2 mortar task.

1450: Mortars report they now know from what direction the enemy fire is coming.

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1525: Informed Bde that we could find no trace of 3 men reported seen in "A" Coy's area walking around at 1310 hrs.

1540: Mortars report Pt 711 being mortared again from Task 5 – 853017. Bde informed – they ordered mortars to engage.

1700: Intermittent shelling on Pt 711.

1800: Mortars carried out shoot on Constanza Farm as ordered by Bde Comd.

2150: "C" Coy reported patrol just leaving.

The day was a quiet one with visibility bad throughout, with little enemy shelling or mortaring.

Mar 5th

0400: "C" Coy report patrol returned, having seen or heard no movement.

1122: Beds & Herts asked if the Padre would conduct a Burial Service for them.

1315: Mortars, "A" and "B" Coys report several shells from NW direction.

1330: "A" Coy report shells coming from bearing 290° from their forward position, from 863026.

1410: MMG were informed that red and green signals were only a warning, and they were not to fire on seeing them. Informed Bde that the path from Bn HQ down to Bde at Cheshire Dump was in view of the enemy.

1505: "A" Coy reported that 12 mortar bombs landed 100 yds from MG position.

1740: No results could be observed of the mortar fire directed on area 854017 where there was a suspected enemy mortar position.

2045: "C" Coy reported heavy mortaring on Ornito.

2359: "D" Coy reported return of patrol. No enemy located in farm. No casualties. "A" and "B" Coy patrols – nothing to report.

On the whole a quiet day although shelling and mortaring of Pt 711 and the top of Ornito took place intermittently.

During the night snow fell heavily, and visibility was extremely bad.

Slight shelling of the rear of Ornito and area "C" Coy took place during the night, but there were no casualties. All patrols were hampered by the carpet of snow on the ground and by the bad visibility. Patrol took place as arranged to Costanza Farm. Found the farm unoccupied and saw no enemy. Details of damage to farm caused by concentration of 4 March not known.

Mar 6th

0750: Bde Major informed Adjutant that sappers would be sent up if possible to make up the mule track, and requested that the Coy liaise with the Gren Gds reference counter-attack role.

1020: Details of "A" Coy's patrol changed to 861026.

1110: "A" Coy informed of changes.

1135: Staff captain informed that we should take over the same RAP from DCLI when relieving them.

1330: Mortars stated that they had ranged, but were out of range of target M1, so RA were contacted in the matter.

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1435: Bde Major confirmed "A" Coy's patrol.
1710 – 1900: Intermittent shelling of mortar OP ("A" Coy), "B" Coy MG section on Turlito and on side of Rotunda. No casualties.
Another quiet day. During the afternoon there was intermittent shelling and mortaring on a light scale.
The night was uneventful, and broken only by light shelling of area Tuga and Turlito between 0400 hrs and 0500 hrs. Patrols returned with the following reports:
Serial 46: Standing 861026 – nothing seen or heard. Brought back some British equipment found in area.
Serial 47: Strong standing patrol to Constanza Farm. No sign of recent occupation. Three enemy dead found. No identification so far. Farm heavily damaged by shelling. No signs of any use of track, and no sangars found. Gully behind clear of enemy. Altogether a very quiet night.

Mar 7th

0430: "B" Coy report shells in 2 DCLI mortar position and in their own area.
0450: "B" Coy report return of patrol – reached Farm – no evidence of recent occupation – 3 dead bodies found – no enemy seen or heard.
0515: "B" Coy report three men (Ptes Butler, Friday and James) killed as a result of a direct hit on the sangar in which they were sleeping when shells fell at 0430 hrs.
0520: Intermittent shelling of Harrogate area.
0615: Informed ADS of death of these three men – they arranged to have graves ready by 1100 hrs.
0815: 57 four-engined bombers seen flying in a westerly direction. 2 Beds & Herts relieved 6 Surreys in the Tuga sector during the day, with the exception of the forward Coy ("A" Coy) which had to be relieved after dark. On relief 6 Surreys relieved 2 DCLI in the Ornito sector.
AM: Recce parties 2 Beds & Herts joined 6 Surreys in the Tuga sector. Recce parties 6 Surreys joined 2 DCLI in the Ornito sector.
PM: Three Coys Beds & Herts relieved "B", "C", "D" Coys 6 Surreys. Mortar and MMSs Beds & Herts took over mortars and MMGs of 6 Surreys. Bn HQ Beds & Herts relieved 6 Surreys and command of sector passed at 1500 hrs. "D" Coy 6 Surreys relieved "B" Coy 2 DCLI by sections at 10 minute intervals. Remainder of 6 Surreys (less "A", "C" and "D" Coys) laid up in area 872019 until 1830 hrs. Remaining Coy of 2 Beds & Herts relieved "A" Coy 6 Surreys. 6 Surreys (less "C" and "D" Coys) moved to Ornito and relieved 2 DCLI (less "B" Coy). 6 Surreys took over mortars and MMGs of 2 DCLI.
1815: "D" Coy took over positions from 2 DCLI.
2100: "C" Coy took over positions from 2 DCLI.
2205: "B" Coy took over positions from 2 DCLI.
2340: "A" Coy took over positions from 2 DCLI.
Relief successfully completed by 2340 hrs, and command of the Ornito sector passed to 6 Surreys. Blankets had been carried forward

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to Ornito during 7 Mar by porters, and dropped in rear of Coy areas. Rations, water and ammunition were drawn by units for 8 Mar, and left in position in unit areas for the incoming units.

2255: "B" Coy reports shelling on Gren Gds believed from direction NE of Castelforte, and flares and small arms fire on Gren Gds.

2300: "D" reports sounds of machine carbine and grenades on Cerasola with a heavy machine gun concentration. Also bursts in valley in area of Gren Gds mortars.

Mar 8th

2345 – 0415: Approximately 200 shells fell in 'Happy Valley' below Ornito position during their period. All fell in floor of valley – no casualties or damage to positions on the side of the hill.

0945: Lt Col Musson, DCLI reported that they had one casualty only for the night 7/8.

1130: Gren Gds asked us to bury a body about 15 yds in front of their mortar OP.

1155: "B" Coy reported that mortar fire from Gren Gds had been keeping enemy down in positions.

1545: "B" Coy report mortar bursts in Gren Gds area. Bearing to mortar 345° magnetic. Time of flight believed to be 10 to 12 seconds.

1600: "D" Coy reported mortaring and shelling in Gds area, falling on three areas:- (1) on spur below "D" Coy OP, (2) on opposite side of valley below "D" Coy position. (3) near Welsh Gds area Rough bearing to enemy 320°.

1930: "D" Coy reports mortar and small arms fire in Gds area.

2000: "B" reported one Verey light north of their positions at 19554 – Gds and enemy exchanged mortar fire.

2010: "C" Coy reported seeing three men on Castelforte at 1845 hrs.

2315: "B" Coy patrol returned.

2355: "D" Coy reported that from 2235 to 2305 18 shells fell near Pately Bridge bearing 280° – 300°.

A very quiet day indeed. There was slight mortaring of Pt 711 at 1430 hrs, but it caused no casualties. Area Tugo – Turlito received a few shells during the afternoon, and a few shells hit the crest of Turlito.

Night: No shelling on area 10 Inf Bde reported during night. Patrols of 6 Surreys made the following reports: (a) "B" Coy patrol along ridge NW of Pt 759. Enemy in sangars along wall at 85050350 (photo reference). The patrol operated in bright moonlight, and estimated number of men seen was 20. It is thought that the position found may be a night position of the equivalent of a platoon. (b) "C" Coy patrol along wall running east and west to 853029. The patrol first entered the cultivated patch 859029 and, finding no enemy, moved west into the edge of the scrub 858029. No enemy were found here either, but on the right of the patrol at 858032, on the ridge, sounds of sangar construction were heard and 4 men were seen. Standing patrols nothing to report.

Mar 9th

0020: "C" Coy reported their patrol had left.

0300: Lt Arundel, Lt Heaton, Mortars (2 NCOs), "A" Coy (1 NCO) were

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warned for course.

0410: "C" Coy patrol returned.

0830: "B" Coy report a quiet night. No enemy encountered by standing patrols.

0900: "C" Coy reported seeing a bluish column of smoke at 0850Hrs from a farm building approximately 2 miles away on a bearing of 231° from Pt 711. Bde and gunners informed.

1000: Enemy located at 85800250 centre of stretch of wall running SE. Four sangars. Three enemy seen moving about. Position on top of a hill. Good field of fire. Possible section position.

1100: One mortar burst in area 'Happy Valley'.

1130: Mortar bursts on Pt 711 and "C" Coy area.

1210: Mortars fired 48 rounds on enemy position at 858025. At least one direct hit observed.

1220: Very heavy mortar bursts on "C" Coy – one direct hit on sangar, in which Major JC Strode MC was killed. (6 ORs wounded – 2 stretcher cases, 4 walking wounded).

1415: OP reported bearing to position from which enemy mortar fires on Pt 711 to be approx 260°.

1515: "B" Coy observed 6 enemy cleaning wagons at 863037 and 864037.

2015: MG fire, including tracer, to left of "C" Coy on Pt 711 at approx 800 yds.

2335: "B" Coy fighting patrol left.

2359: "B" Coy reported that Major Nash (leader of patrol) had been shot by sentry. Wound under right shoulder. Evacuated to RAP. Rest of patrol returned, but advanced elements still out.

Mar 10th

0050: "C" Coy reports that recce patrol was fired on by MGs. Lt Pendry sent back one man to report, and remained with one OR. He then ordered "C" Coy's standing patrol to withdraw.

0115: "B" Coy sent runner out to fetch in recce patrol. Major Nash had been shot by Pte Morgan who was on standing patrol, and failed to hear a reply to his challenge. Incident witnessed by Lt Richards.

0120: "C" Coy reported that Lt Pendry had ordered four of his men and the standing patrol to withdraw because of numbers in vicinity of enemy. Noises suggesting building of sangars heard. CO order standing patrol to go out again – not so far – and listen and observe.

0125 – 0130: "C" and "D" Coy report small arms fire (tracer) down valley between positions and Tuga.

0130: "B" Coy reported all recce patrol had returned.

0150: Bde enquired about "B" Coy's fighting patrol, and were informed of the position.

000: Sgt Moore, leader of "B" Coy recce patrol reported that he went within 25 yds of sangar to be attacked. It was unoccupied. He went further down valley to a shack. A man appeared, and was challenged by a concealed sentry and allowed to proceed. Later Sgt Moore saw a patrol of 7 enemy proceeding in direction of Pt 711. He then saw

three men whom he at first mistook for our own troops. When within a few yds of them he discovered they were enemy sentries. CO ordered Sgt Moore to take out a small patrol later to capture PW. "C" Coy warned of possible enemy patrol in their area.

0220: Bde informed of pre-arranged plans for patrol.

0325: Sgt Moore reported ready to take out patrol "65A".

0450: Patrol returned. No enemy encountered.

0600: One member of patrol No 63 returned. Lt Pendry not yet back.

Detailed patrol reports were as follows:

Serial 63 – After this patrol had proceeded 300 yds from position they were fired on from the NW by MGs. They laid up for a time, and leader ordered three to withdraw to give the impression the whole patrol had withdrawn. The leader and 1 then went forward, and saw smoke coming from a sangar. Leader threw a grenade and went in. There were no enemy, but a bowl of hot water was found. The leader then advanced, leaving the runner at the sangar. The runner receded the area, and was fired on from the NW at approx 10 yds. (30 rounds SMG). He withdrew, and was again fired on. He saw another sangar on his right occupied by enemy, and heard sound of building.

Estimated strength of enemy 1 platoon. He laid up until just before first light and returned.

Remarks: Runner cannot identify accurately where position was, but estimates it 300 yds West of Pt 711. Patrol Leader Lt Pendry did not return.

Serial 64 – Reached firm base 1940 hrs and went to within 25 yds of sangar to be attacked by fighting patrol (65) 861034, and found unoccupied. Proceeded across valley to within 25 yds of house about area 860033 (not located air photo)... A man approached and was challenged by hidden sentry, and allowed to pass to house. Patrol of 7 enemy seen proceeding in direction of Pt 711. Two enemy and grey dog seen area big sangar 861034. This sangar was occupied at midnight. Later three enemy were seen in same area. Leader was ordered to take 5 ORs out to area at 0330 hrs to get PW. No enemy located, returned 0450 hrs. Throughout the night the enemy were extremely alert.

1230: The main event in an otherwise extremely quiet day was the sudden appearance almost inside "B" Coy area on Pt 759 of 5 Boche Red Cross personnel at 1230 hrs. They were carrying the body of a long-dead British soldier on a stretcher, and had with them a note in English "This english soldier was found on the high 759". As they had seen quite enough of our position they were made PW and evacuated. The identification of their unit was No 2 Coy/171 Med Bn (ie Med Unit of 71 Inf Div). Apart from this and slight mortaring of Ornito at 1615 hrs, there was nothing to report. Advance party of 6 Black watch (13 Inf Bde) arrived during the morning. About 1500 hrs the 6 BW started to take over, and "A" and "B" Coys were relieved and proceeded back to rest area Valle di Sujo by sections. Main portion of Bn HQ handed over by 1800 hrs. Forward Coys relieved immediately

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after first dark. Command of sector passed at 2300 hrs on completion of relief by 6 BW. All Coys were accommodated in farm buildings and houses at HARROGATE.

General administration period and clean up for everybody – change of clothes brought up from “B” Echelon in large packs, and dirty clothing returned for washing.

VALLE DI SUJO (REST AREA)

- Mar 11th NAAFI supplies issued. Coys resting.
- Mar 12th Administration continued. New BD issued in exchange for old and worn articles. General check-over of all stores and equipment, and repairs or replacements effected where necessary. Voluntary Church Service held by Unit Padre (Rev GHT Blake).
Night: After almost 48 hrs of complete dry weather the rain again fell heavily from about 0300 to 0615 hrs.
- Mar 13th Rain continued at intervals throughout most of the day. Administration and general training continued during the day. A Div Concert Party gave a show during the evening, but this was interrupted by shelling of the area Valle di Sujo.
- Mar 14th General training continued. Orders received during the day to prepare to move back into the line to take over posns held by 2 Beds & Herts.
- Mar 15th Preparations completed for move to 2 Beds & Herts positions. Advance party moved to '400' Sector. The Bn left at approx 1200 hrs to take over the posn of 2 Beds & Herts at HALFWAY HOUSE and ROTUNDA. Enemy shelling was of a strictly harassing nature. Bn HQ at HARROGATE was shelled whilst the process of occupying it by 2 Beds & Herts was taking place. The Second in Command's batman (Pte Horsman) was wounded whilst remaining as rear party, and was evacuated. Many squadrons of planes were soon passing overhead during the morning on their way to bomb Cassino and the surrounding area. Results of the bombing could not be observed.
Night: The relief of 2 Beds & Herts by 6 Surreys was successfully completed by 0035.
- Mar. 16th 0035: Command of Sector passed, and 2 Beds & Herts moved in to the reserve area at Valle di Sujo. Only three Coys now holding the position. “A” Coy to come under command of 1 Gds Bde on the night 16/17 when it relieves “A” Coy 2/4 Hamps on the right of the Gds Bde Sector.
Locations: HQ 871011. “A” Valle di Sujo. “B” 867012. “C” Coy – Pls at 871008, 874007, 875004. “D” 862008.
Rain fell nearly throughout the night, and snow from time to time causing great difficulty to all patrols. All patrols returned having seen nothing of the enemy along their routes, but the extreme weather conditions hampered them unduly.

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0800: Major Robins reported arrival of reinforcements for Coys – Rum ration authorised.

1540: "D" Coy reported seeing two bivouacs and one man at 85959990.

1850: More enemy seen during observation period 1815 to 1845 hrs. Ref point wall at 859997. Approximately 50 yds NE of ref pt bivouac area – 2 men and fire seen. Approximately 50 yds SW of ref point sangars area. Three men seen to walk from bivouac area to sangars area, and three returned. Five men seen in terrace area 861999.

1930: Grenades thrown or fired into "D" Coy forward positions. No casualties.

2030: Fuller report on grenade incident reported at 1930. Lt Drage was taking his forward section of four men to their night position over ridge in front of position when they heard movement in undergrowth. Section was put in position, and Lt Drage returned to warn his platoon. As he did so grenades fell between him and the forward position. He believed they were fired and not thrown. The enemy who fired the grenades on "D" Coy are most likely to have been a patrol as it is not considered that any enemy ever occupied position on spur forward of "D" Coy's positions.

2100: The standing patrol forward of "B" Coy at approx 862020 was attacked by a small enemy patrol. Some grenades were thrown, and the enemy was driven off by small arms fire.

Night: No enemy harassing fire was reported in the sector during the night. Patrols reported as follows:

Serial 93 – Reached 859004. While there, from a pt 75 yds NW, grenades were seen to be fired into their own "D" Coy area. Between where the patrol was lying up and the pt from which the grenades were fired, movement of one or two men in a Westerly direction was later heard. South of the patrol in area 85999 sounds of voices and of stones being knocked together were heard. This patrol went out again later (2305 hrs) and, making a wider detour, came on to the spur forward of "D" Coy, and this time found no enemy there.

Serial 94 – Reached 861003 and from there heard sounds of mortar bombs bursting, and one grenade being thrown South of their position. The patrol moved on to 859002 and report as follows: In area 859999 voices were heard, and what appeared to be orders being given. Noise of stones being moved was also heard. Patrol considers 6 men in the area. Also also from the NE slopes of Siola – possibly from area 857003 – sounds of picks and shovels was heard, and muttering of a number of men.

Serial 95 – Reached 054013 and saw no enemy.

1 Gds Bde. Slight shelling of sector throughout the day. By night movement and sangar construction was heard on Girofano by patrol Colds Gds. "A" Coy 6 Surreys completed relief of "A" Coy 2/4 Hamps by 2300 hrs. "A" Coy location 889045.

Mar 17th

0805: 80 rounds 3" mortar and 20 rds 25 pdr in area 859998.

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1100: Mortar OP reported air burst over Damiano from Easterly direction.

1115 -1130: Mortar OP reported 11 shells of large calibre fallen on Sugo from NW. Bearing to enemy guns shelling Sugo reported as 315° - Bde and gunners informed.

1330: 5 mortar bombs on "D" Coy forward positions. No casualties. Bearing of mortars 225°. Bde and gunners informed.

1455: SP fired 50 rounds into Castelforte and gully.

1456: 3 men seen on Pt 150 – 2 near sangar on ridge, and 1 in bivouac area.

1750: 2 men seen on Pt 150 – One crouching behind wall observing Sugo area. Sangar apparently well-constructed, partly concealed in scrub.

1830: 5 men seen on 150.

1900: Enemy green light seen – grenades and tommygun fire on "D" Coy forward area, also mortaring. Sharp mortaring on "D" Coy, "C" Coy's forward position and ridge above "B". "D" Coy report 5 casualties. Stretcher parties sent from Bn HQ and "B" to assist "D" Coy. Artillery asked for assistance. 100 rounds SP on Castelforte. At 1900 hrs Lt Drage took forward his patrol (No 99) from the forward positions of "D" Coy, and about 30 yds forward of these positions saw a Boche patrol about 9 men approx approaching. Fire was opened on the Boche with TSMG and grenades, and the enemy retired quickly, one of their number screaming as if he had been badly hit. During this withdrawal the enemy put up two green flares which appeared to be the signal for the heavy mortar fire which came down on "D" Coy positions. This fire lasted for 15 minutes, and then switched to "C" Coy, finishing up in "B" Coy area at 2000 hrs. Own arty and 4.2" mortars replied on Castelforte area. In view of the casualties to "D" Coy (and the fact that the leader of serial 100 was wounded himself) neither patrol 99 or 100 went out. Serial 101 travelled by planned route to 854013, but saw no sign of enemy. Standing patrols forward of "D" Coy later reported no sign of enemy on ridge SW of "D" Coy positions.

2040: 4.2" mortars put down 24 rounds on Castelforte area.

2100: Informed "B" Coy that Capt Johnson would take out his patrols as arranged – to go later if necessary.

2125: Full report from "D" Coy of raid at 1900 hrs. Patrol 99 broke up enemy with tommy guns and grenades. Confirmed 7 casualties "D" Coy. Bde informed of the position.

2150: Two white flares seen left of "D" Coy's forward position, and small arms firing heard in valley. "D" Coy sent out 3 standing patrols.

2210 – 2215: "C" Coy report red flare seen approximately 800 yds forward of their positions, with shooting and then a red flare.

2250: MMG report 4 green Verey lights and MMG fire from a Southerly direction beyond "D" Coy.

2320: Major Harding informed that Bde had approved the promotion of Capt PM Plastow to Major.

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2220: Major Maggs reported return of patrol of 3 from 864014 (U371). Enemy patrol approached their position from right to left. Our patrol opened fire with Bren, and nothing further was seen or heard.

1 Gds Bde. "A" Coy heard enemy on ridge 881043, and engaged with small arms. From a patrol of this Coy two men failed to return. (For full story see reports received from 1 Gds Bde, which are attached as App J1 to April War Diary.

Mar 18th

0030: "B" and "C" Coys report white flare and small arms fire from left of forward platoon of "D" Coy.

0145: Capt Johnson reported return of "B" Coy patrol.

0400: Grenade throwing and carbines heard by "D" Coy from direction Hill 150 and to the right.

0445: Verrey light and small arms fire (tracer) seen on SE slopes of Siola by "C" and "D" Coys.

0600: Two deserters came into the area "B" Coy positions and were captured. They were identified as members of 4 Coy 191 Gren Regt – a new identification – the last Inf Bn of 71 Inf Div left to be identified on this front. They stated that 71 Inf Div were holding the line from Cassino to the coast, also that the valley in front of the Bn was heavily mined. Bde informed.

0620: Prisoners sent to Bde.

1030: Gunner OP reports fire in sangar area 859998. Bde informed.

1040: Heavy Artillery inform us that they are going to shell suspected enemy OP at 857996.

1100: Intelligence OP reports suspected movement in enemy OP on Ceschito 845015. Bde informed.

1150: "D" Coy reported two men seen on Pt 150. One chopping wood – the other disappeared over ridge.

1205: "D" Coy reported that enemy appeared to be taking down and rolling up bivouacs on Pt 150.

1210: 2 Shells (1 dud) landed in gully between "D" and "C" forward positions.

1400: "D" Coy reports shelling (own guns) on Oak Tree Ridge. Nearest shell 400 yds. Some shrapnel fell in "D" Coy area. Bde informed and investigating.

1800: Mortars fired on 858005.

2000: "B" Coy reports 3 fires about ¾ mile away on bearing 250°, 255°, 260°.

2040: "B" Coy reported yet another fire on a bearing of 177°.

2143: Arranged with Som LI to send up wireless and telephones with them when they come up on March 19 at 1600 hrs.

2145: Gds Bde informed us that they had arranged to remove their tentage from their position and would arrange for ours also.

2147: R.A. reported that strong German jamming station blotted out their frequency – they are altering frequency but, in the meantime, we can get them by phone to call down fire tasks if necessary.

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2210: R.A reported that wireless now OK.
A quiet night except for flares seen at intervals throughout the night.

Mar 19th 0435: Bde informed that "D" Coy had heard shots 859002 at 0405 hrs.
0900: 6 men seen on 150. Instructions for Operation 'Stonkwell' issued (see App A).
0915: 24 mortar rounds on Pt 150. Enemy seen running away – one bomb in their area.
1010: One man seen running on Pt 150.
1130: "D" Coy report bearing of gun shelling Sujo area 305°. Bde informed.
1155: Shelling of Sujo becoming more accurate and more intense.
1205: Bearing of enemy gun from Intelligence OP 295°
1430: Shells were seen to burst on the road across the river (Suntrack?) bearing 294°
1720: Shells on Turlito, whistling by "B" Coy parallel with Oak Tree Ridge.
1730: Mortar OP reported bearing to gun shelling Sujo - 290°, and "D" Coy suggested that it is in area 850006.
1845: "D" Coy saw three men at 863014 and 2 men on Pt 150.
1855: Burst of MMG fire heard in direction Castelforte.
2000: Operation 'Stonkwell' commenced according to plan.
2000 – 2005: "B", "C" Coys and MMGs report various Verey lights from right of Siola.
2027: MG fire from region of 150 towards left of "D" Coy. MG and grenades from direction of "C" Coy's patrol. MG fire left of "D" Coy and towards MMG positions.
2038: Grenades, tommy gun, discharger cup, MG 34 heard in gully below 150.
2040: Bren and TSMG firing on Pt 150. Also grenades heard.
2055: SOS tasks fired on Pt 150 by 1/6 Surreys – 80 rds 3" mortar, 2 DCLI – 37 rds 3" mortar. 117 rds total.
2100: Rifle fire heard on Siola.
2100: Lt Matthew reported return of "C" Coy's patrol having heard sounds of tree-cutting in the gully. MGs reported a fire in gully near "D" Coy.
2115: Fire spreading left. "D" Coy reported fire on other side of Siola.
2125: All guns laid on Mike 2 task. "D" Coy reported sound of diesel engine other side of Castelforte.
2127: "C" Coy reported that all the patrol had returned.
2150: Casualties reported by "B" Coy. 48 mortar bombs put down on Pt 150. MG fire on Pt 150.
2200: Our MMGs ordered to lift 3° and fire over Siola – harassing fire. Two of "B" Coy's patrol back – one wounded.
2210: Harassing fire by MMG on Pt 150. Further wounded of "B" Coy patrol reported 700 yds from Coy position. Mortars and RA put harassing fire on Siola while wounded are brought in.

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Appendix

2215: RA harassing fire and 20 rounds Mortar on Siola.
2221: More harassing fire by MMGs on Pt 150.
2225: Bde asked to put 4.2" mortars on to tasks C1 and C5 – harassing fire. 77 Field Regt slow rate of fire on to Siola.
2235: Shells fell on Sujo.
2236: One stretcher case, one walking wounded reported on way back from "B" Coy to RAP.
2240: 4.2" mortars asked to stop harassing fire.
2250: "B" Coy reports one white flare every 10 minutes on a bearing of 240° – 255°.
2305: Enemy mortar bombs fell on MMGs and "D" Coy – bearing 300°.
2335: 1 stretcher case, 1 walking wounded evacuated to ADS.

Mar 20th

0035: Cpl Crooks (RAP) – stretcher case brought in. He was wounded on his way out with first stretcher party, and died later in CCS.
0045: Major Maggs and Sgt Moore returned to "B" Coy positions. Wounded member of patrol 300 yds from Coy lines. Major Maggs arranged for another stretcher party.
0345: "B" Coy reported that their wounded were back, but that one man (Pte Wright) was seriously wounded when a few yds from the German positions, and it was found impossible to reach him to render assistance, or attempt to bring him back¹.
0400: 5 men seen by "D" Coy area sangar on Pt 150.
0635: "D" Coy report that the noise of pneumatic drill was heard in gully at foot of Siola, and the sound of digging at 2300 hrs.
A very quiet day, during which advance parties from 2 Som LI arrived to recce positions. Relief commenced about 1400 hrs with the arrival of the first Companies of 2 Som LI who commenced to relieve the forward Coys of 6 Surreys. B Echelon 6 Surreys moved to Guigliano during the afternoon, and prepared billets for the arrival of the Bn.
Night: Command of the sector passed to 2 Som LI, and the Bn marched to San Carlos where tea and cakes were issued as each Coy arrived. The Bn then embussed in TCVs, and proceed to Guigliano, arriving between 0430 and 0500 hrs.

VILLARICA AND CAVAZZO (REST AREA)

Mar 21st

The Bn was concentrated in Villarica and Cavazzo by 0900 hrs. All troops were in billets. Capt Paskins, RQMS Smart, and 2 Ors per Coy proceeded to Lucera to recce bivouac area for Bn. Bn ordered to move on 22nd by transport. The CO attended a conference at Bde HQ at 0800 hrs, and was given the task of the Bn. Move was cancelled at 2000 hrs, and the message recalling the advance party was sent off immediately. Bn rested, cleaned up and bathed.

Mar 22nd

Administration continued. Warning Order issued from Bde for another advance party to recce billeting area at Baia Latina. Capt

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Paskins and advance party returned at 2359 hrs.

Mar 23rd Capt Johnson and advance party left at 0800 hrs. CO visited No 1 IRTD. Orders received from Bde at 2300 hrs for move next day. CO issued verbal orders for move. Capt Paskins resumed the appointment and duties of Adjutant.

BAIA LATINA

Mar 24th Bn moved by transport to Baia Latina, and were concentrated there in billets by 1600 hrs. Bde Comd visited the Bn to inspect billeting area. Bn settle in.

Mar 25th Bn continued with administration, and settled minor 'A' and 'G' matters. Short route marches and weapon training.

Mar 26th Church Parade held by Padre Wilson (2 DCLI). Administration continued.

Mar 27th CO attended conference at Bde at 1100 hrs, and returned with Warning Order for move. Platoon training.

Mar 28th CO attended Bde Conference at Venafro at 0800 hrs. Returned 1200 hrs with Move Order on 29th. Orders issued at 1430 hrs (Move Order App D att). CO held conference at 1500 hrs and explained orders, and role of Bn. CO admitted to No 2 General Hospital at 1700 hrs with suspected malaria relapse. Major WWH Robins assumed command, Major GG Maggs MC duties of 2 i/c. Bn packed for operational role.

ACQUAFONDATA AREA

Mar 29th Bn left Baia Latina approx 1200 hrs, and proceeded by TCV to Acquafondata area. Troops debussed and marched to Inferno area, arriving at 0100 hrs after the guide had lost his way. Unit transport arrived at 2315 hrs. Major Robins and "O" Group proceeded to HQ 3 RTA.

Mar 30th Bn rested and proceeded by march route to Bn HQ at 844267, led by French Guides. Unit transport proceeded to Jeephead 84527399, off-loaded and returned to Inferno. Coys led from Bn HQ to Coy positions. Essential supplies, amm, and blankets sent from Jeephead to Coys. General impression that the French were most efficient and helpful.