

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

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July

Jul 1st

A quiet night.

0630: Tac HQ. One complete sub-unit of our friends are entrenched in front of Sunray's position.

1113: To CO. Sub-units will stand-to in present location until ordered to move.

1229: Carriers report fire in own area – hayrick.

1402: Bde. You may concentrate in area most suitable. Send officer to Bde with details of location, casualties, PWs and any extra information.

1501 Bde. Trace showing salvage areas will be sent out when unit locations are known. Meanwhile units will salvage present location.

1534: To Bde. Asked if this location (Main Bn HQ) will be OK for Bn concentration area.

1551: Bde. Area OK for Bn.

1736: Sunray orders all units to proceed by cross-country route to new area.

1810: Mortars and Carriers moving to new area.

1830: RAP established at this location.

2000: All Coys reported in., and reported as concentrated in new area.

Jul 2nd

14 ORs and Lt AS Richards reported ex-hospital to B Ech. Intelligence Summary No 45 received from Bde. Bn rested and waited for further orders to move.

Jul 3rd

Bde Move Order No 6 received giving warning that the Bde would relieve 12 Inf Bde on 5/6 July

Jul 4th

B Ech moved to new location in accordance with BERRC Operation Order No 1. Bde Move Order No 7 received. ESR Move Order issued to Coys etc.

Jul 5th

Bde Gp Adm Order No 16 received. Move Orders issued.

Bn moved according to Move Order No 1 dated July 4th.

1330: Bn arrived at new concentration area, and Bn HQ established at 207227.

2100: Bde 'O' Group conference held.

2245: CO's 'O' Group conference held. Orders issued for advance.

Lt EN Drake and 9 ORs (ex hospital) reported from No 1 CRU.

Jul 6th

0400: Bn at 1 hrs notice to move and carry out OO.

0645: Bn put at 3 hrs notice to move.

Capt. RG Westworth and 52 ORs reported from No 1 CRU (34 ex-

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hospital) and 18 from Surreys "Pool"). Sgt Moore, P (6142058) and 2 ORs attached to HQ Eighth Army Defence Coy for duty.

ESR Operation Order No 1 issued.

ESR Operation Order No 2 issued cancelling No 1

1900: *Operation Order for advance issued (cancels previous OO).*

2100: *Coys left their locations, and proceeded by march route to start line.*

Jul 7th

0005: *Rear Link reached location 1,000 yds 2 o'clock DORCHESTER.*

0015: *Tac HQ location is now 400 yds 5 o'clock CHITRAL.*

0020: *CO. Battle Patrol have reached "C" Coy, and CO has asked for them to go to his location.*

0105: *CO. All are moving and going OK. (passed to Bde).*

0130: *"D" Coy at CAWNPORE. "B" Coy between CAWNPORE and DARJEELING. "C" Coy are going to form a guard over tanks at a point 900 yds towards DARJEELING from CAWNPORE.*

0135: *Battle Patrol comd going to see the CO.*

0140: *CO to "C" Coy. Our pioneers to report to Sunray, and RES to meet their comd on road due East of CHITRAL.*

0142: *"A" Coy location 800 yds East of Darjeeling.*

0145: *"B" Coy between CAWNPORE and DARJEELING approaching road 400 yds East of DARJEELING. "C" Coy 200 yds North of Chitral. "D" Coy at CAWNPORE.*

0147: *Battle Patrol have now reached Tac HQ. Coys have made no contact with enemy.*

0200: *"A" Coy report that barrage is doing no good.*

0210: *CO queried ownership of DARJEELING.*

0215: *Bde say there are some enemy in houses at DARJEELING.*

Friendly patrol to there has not yet returned. (passed to CO).

0230: *Tac HQ. 9 & 10 Sunrays are to report to CO at his location, followed by their mortars and carriers.*

0400: *"B" Coy location 170294. Under Spandau and mortar fire from unlocated positions. Digging in as it is getting late. Have no mortars, no FOO and no MMGs. "A" Coy not very far behind. Position does not appear very strong, but trying to establish fire base for mortaring.*

0415: *"C" Coy are in position approx 600 yds 7 o'clock CAWNPORE."D" Coy are being instructed to move to DARJEELING.*

0500: *"B" Coy. Enemy are on three sides of them. Position very critical. Being very heavily stonked and machine-gunned.*

0515: *"B" Coy out of wireless communication. (subsequent reports show that signaller was wounded and is missing). From reports received later "B" Coy were forced to retire from this exposed position*

with heavy losses.

0645: CO reported CALCUTTA recaptured by enemy.

0840: Intercept. 2/4 Hamps positions: 1 Coy at CAWNPORE. 2 Coys 200 yds 5 o'clock SAGGER. 1 Coy at RAZMAK.

0845: Intercept. 2 Kings positions: 1 Coy at 400 yds 4 o'clock Calcutta. 1 Coy 800 yds 2 o'clock LUCKNOW. HQ at BARROW.

0950: Tac HQ. CAWNPORE stonked by high velocity gun or 88mm from 333°.

0955: Bde Comd. Location of two of Som LI's Coys: One Coy near CALCUTTA, one Coy 900 yds 4 o'clock of IMPHAL. One sub-unit of Surreys are to take CALCUTTA. CALCUTTA and DARJEELING must be taken before any further advance can possibly be conceived.

1000: Tac HQ. "A" and "B" Coys have suffered heavy casualties. New party being arranged.

1010: Tac HQ called for Jeep and four stretchers.

1015: "C" Coy asking for smoke on DARJEELING.

1016: Tac HQ. Request granted.

1035: "C" Coy progressing favourably.

1045: Received orders for "C" Coy's attack. Present Location: "A" and "B" area 408. "D" CAWNPORE. "C" 200 yds 10 o'clock CHITRAL. Plan: "C" Coy to capture Pt 484 and make feature firm. Axis – through Pt 408 and Pt 440. Arty: Smoke – DARJEELING. Concs. Ridge beyond Pt 484. Som LI support by fire as far as possible. Probable zero. 1130 hrs. Som LI tanks support by fire on opportunity targets. Plot not known for our tanks, but may try to get round Pt 484.

1050: "C" Coy progressing towards SL OK.

1110: "C" Coy have reached the track on the hill forward. Have not contacted friends yet.

1117: "C" Coy approaching SL now.

1123: "D" Coy have contacted "D" Coy 2/4 Hamps.

1125"C" Coy have reached start line and are reorganising.

1135: "C" Coy approaching "A" Coy.

1140: Tank CO to "C" Coy. Have sent two baby elephants up, and will send three more, but cannot do more.

1145: Tac HQ to "C" Coy. Shelldrake about to take action.

1155: Tac HQ. Going to reinforce "A" as they are very low in numbers, and have only a few automatics. They have also a number of casualties to be evacuated.

1156: Tac HQ. Position unchanged.

1157: "A" Coy require stretchers immediately.

1200: Tac HQ ordered carriers up to reinforce "A" Coy. Stretchers also sent.

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1212: Carriers asking "A" Coy if carriers can get up to them.

1213: "A" Coy. Carriers can get up, but they will be shelled.

1220: Tac HQ asked "A" Coy to report immediately they are stonked again.

1230: "C" Coy's Sunray has gone to contact friends on hill, and is then going to contact tanks.

1245: "C" Coy asking for smoke on DARJEELING, and high feature SW of it.

1335: Tac HQ now established in "A" Coy's area.

1340: Tac HQ. "C" Coy are going well, and should be 300 yds from their objective.

1340: Tac HQ. "C" Coy have contacted friends CALCUTTA, and their game seems to be over.

1342: Tac HQ. "D" Coy to be prepared to make a stronghold of their area.

1345: Tac HQ. "C" Coy told to establish themselves very firmly.

1400: Tac HQ. "C" Coy are definitely on CALCUTTA now.

1404: Tac HQ. RAP in CAWNPORE.

1430: "C" Coy are not completely in control of the position as there are still a couple of Spandau positions on the ridge.

1432: "A" Coy being heavily stonked again.

1434: "C" Coy report stonking of "A" Coy coming from 350°.

1530: Tac HQ. "A" and "B" Coys in position North of CALCUTTA. "D" Coy are at CAWNPORE and as yet have not been in action. "C" Coy are now on CALCUTTA. Mortars Sunray at CAWNPORE. Mortars with "A" and "B".

1545: "C" Coy have dug in well on CALCUTTA. Still troubled by two Spandaus. Hope to deal with these later with mortars. Also troubled by one section of enemy.

1630: Tac HQ. Location of Sunray is 400 yds 5 o'clock CHITRAL.

1730: "A" Coy require ambulance Jeep at once.

1740: "A" Coy report two casualties.

1805: Tac HQ. Sunray orders that three carriers at Main HQ will be loaded for "A", "B" and "C" Coys. When loaded they will not move until ordered. Mortars and "D" are sending own carriers. They also will not move until ordered.

1815-1900: Spasmodic shelling of Main HQ area.

1902-1912: 12 shells in immediate vicinity of Main HQ. 2 killed and 6 wounded of RE detachment.

2030: Received intentions for night 7/8.

Intentions for 7/8 July. Own troops. Battle Patrol to pass through "A" Coy at 2230 hrs and patrol to DARJEELING. Code: ASH – passing

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through "A" Coy, BAKER – nothing there, CHARLIE – enemy held, and patrol will withdraw to "A" Coy. Plan: "C" Coy to patrol locally. "A", "B", Mortars and carriers to remain in present location. "D" Coy to relieve Coy of Kings area Pt 440. If DARJEELING not held, be prepared to move and occupy it at once. If it is found to be held remain present location. If Battle Patrol report CHARLIE– DARJEELING will be stonked 10 minutes after report received here. Sp Arms. MGs NF. 1 PI with "C" Coy. Shoot to cover area on line CALCUTTA NE – SW. 1 PI Pt 440 and shoot up IMPHAL. Arty. HF fire laid on, heavy stonk DARJEELING if held. HF on DARJEELING prior to Battle Patrol recce. DF Tasks. 4.2" mortars. Fire plan laid on in front of CALCUTTA on and behind ridge. Add to Arty fire Stonk IMPHAL each time Coy areas are stonked by enemy. Arty. Regt on 182303 30° – Regt on 173295 270° – Regt on 176300 (stonk) 300° – Regt on 165295 345° – Regt on 165286 270° – Regt on 173295 270° – Med Regt on 158302 (stonk) 360° – SP DF COCK 168291. Note: Sub-units in area may well find friendly units with them who will stay there.

2340: Battle Patrol report ASHE.

10 Inf Bde Intelligence Summary No 17 received. Lt HA Greenwood and 2/Lt DJ Dempster reported ex-hospital with 2 ORs. Lt AS Richards, Lt A Arundel and 48 ORs from "B" Coy missing. Major AWF Paskins, Capt. RWB Mitchell, Lt DC Fuller and 20 ORs wounded and evacuated through 10 Fd Amb.

Jul 8th

0015: Enemy vehicles heard moving on our front.

0030: "D" Coy report relief of Coy of Kings complete, and that they are now digging in.

0045: Battle Patrol report CHARLIE. Heard enemy transport in DARJEELING. See Patrol report. Intervals during the night "A" and "B" Coy positions were stonked.

1100: "C" Coy. One PW (gave himself up) Identified as 756 PG Reg't. Stated that enemy is approx 1 Coy strong in front of "C" Coy.

1455: "C" Coy Sitrep. Fairly quiet except for occasional mortaring and shelling of area. At 1330 their OP observed 10 Germans some distance away in front. They were fired upon and disappeared into some scrub and returned the fire before departing. They were not seen again.

1505: Intercept. Pt 440 ("D" Coy's position) being very heavily mortared.

1510: Bde. Somersets on Pt 544 are going to patrol to Pt 520 at 167294. Intention is to make Pt 554 firm. Intentions for night 8/9. DCLI to relieve Surreys who will return to "A" Echelon area to re-

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organise, and be reinforced for relief of Hamps on night 9/10. Bedfords to relieve Somersets.

2000: Orders for relief issued. (see Move Orders for night 8/9th)

2200: Main HQ left for new location.

2215: "C" Coy heavily mortared and shelled. Heavy MG fire was directed on to their positions, and this was followed by a party of 30 – 40 enemy. They were driven off, and any subsequent attempts were broken up by heavy DF. "C" Coy suffered a number of casualties. All was quiet by 2330 hrs, and the relief was carried out.

Lt RB Myles posted to Bn from HQ 10 Inf Bde. 4 ORs posted from No 1 CRU. 2 ORs killed in action (6 wounded and evacuated – 1 died in hospital). Operation Instruction No 31 received from Bde. Notes on German CW Training Stores received from Bde. 4 killed in action, 7 wounded and evacuated (1 died in hospital) during the night of 8/9 July 1944.

Jul 9th

0500: The last of the marching troops arrived in A Echelon area. Bn was reinforced and new equipment issued. Mobile Bath Unit was utilised by as many men as was possible in the time available, which was curtailed by a heavy thunderstorm in the afternoon.

2000: Orders for relief of 2/4 Hamps. See Orders for Move OO 3.

2100: Marching troops left A Ech area.

2230: Main HQ left. Heavy rain and black night made road conditions very bad.

2300: "A" Coy completed their relief (at RAZMAK).

2330: "B" Coy completed their relief (at SAGGOR).

2350: "C" Coy completed their relief (at SAGGOR).

2359: "D" Coy completed their relief (at CAWNPORE). Main HQ arrived at new location at house 208265.

Lt DH Bryan, 2/Lt CJH Hamblin and 19 Ors posted from No 1 CRU (17 ex-hospital – 2 Surreys 'Pool'). Bde Operation Instruction No 32 received, then Operation Instruction No 33 also ESR Operations Order No 3 issued.

Jul 10th

1100: Bde Comd visited Bn HQ and he and the CO went forward to observe ground held by enemy.

1530: Patrol warnings sent to Bde.

1600: Patrol Comds briefed at Bn HQ.

1700: Verbal orders issued to "D" Coy for their relief by DCLI. "D" Coy to return to A Ech area, and carryout training programme for two days.

1800: Carriers to move to "A" Coy for night.

2115: Stand-To.

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2215: Stood-Down

For events of night 10/11 see attached telephone log.

59 ORs from No 1 CRU reported direct to Bn HQ . 9 ORs ex-hospital and 12 ex 'Pool' reported to B Ech. Int Summary No 48 & Notes re Partisan Bands received from Bde. 1 OR wounded and evacuated.

Jul 11th

0415: Stand-To.

0515: Stand-Down.

0830: Patrol reports sent to Bde. (see attached). Intermittent HF on all of rear areas all day.

1530: Patrol warnings sent to Bde (see attached)

1700: Party of civilians being brought back from "C" Coy were shelled and 4 killed and 6 wounded. Party were passing X-Roads bear RAZMAK.

2115: Stand-To.

2215: Stand-Down.

For events of night 11/12 see attached).

Notes on Employment of Partisans received from Bde. 1 OR wounded and evacuated.

Jul 12th

0830: Patrol reports sent to Bde. See telephone log att. Extra details.

1400: BM and Bde IO visited Bn HQ and then went to OP.

1530: Patrol warnings sent to Bde. See att.

1700: Orders issued for relief of "B" by "D" Coy.

Lt JWJ Davies reported ex-hospital. One Pioneer wounded while clearing mines near B Ech.

Jul 13th

0830: Patrol Reports and Sitrep to Bde.

1250: 3 shells landed in immediate vicinity of Bn HQ.

1400: Patrol warning for night 13/14 sent to Bde. See telephone log.

Intelligence Summary No 49 received. Operation 'PLASTIC' Operation Order No 1 received. Personal message from Commander 13 Corps received and read to all members of the Bn. Bde Operation Order No 11 and Operation Instruction No 13 received. Note re Evacuation of Refugees received.

Jul 14th

0830: Patrol reports 13/14 sent off to Bde.

1400: Patrol warnings night 14/15 sent to Bde.

1620: Civilian reports that enemy have laid mines (small wooden and bakelite) along track running South from ALFORD to X tracks 224298 – East to X tracks 227300 – South to Pt 243 – and then East to canal. He also reported that house with tower in Podi Casinuore 227298 is used as an OP by day. Enemy withdraw at night.

1630: NFs have laid booby-traps at Pt in RIO GRANDE at 22162778 with 75 grenades. At point from track at 22162778 on a Grid Brg of 355° for 50 yds with 36 grenades. All Coys informed.

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2115: Stand To – Heavy rain.

2215: Stand Down – Heavy rain. Bn took up positions to comply with Bde OP instruction 34, and was prepared for heavy enemy fire on our area.

Capt. LE Penn returned to unit ex-hospital. Operation 'PLASTIC' Operation Instructions No 1 and 2 issued. Bde Operation Order No 12 and Intelligence Summary No 50 received.

Jul 15th

0100: Heavy barrage opened up in support of troops on our right flanks.

0800: Lt LeGrange to take 10 ORs (Battle Patrol) to X rds at Pt 250 215305. "C" Coy to send patrol to ALENDALE. "D" Coy to send patrol to Ponte Alle Nave.

0830: Patrol Reports night 14/15 sent to Bde. (see att).

1400: Patrol intentions night 14/15 sent to Bde. (see att).

1430: OP reported large dust cloud beyond Mt Zio, and probably moving West along Route 69.

1600: OP reported dust cloud moving West in same places as before.

2030: OP report own MMGs and 4.2 mortars engaging targets as per plan.

2115: Stand To.

2215: Stand Down.

2230: Still no sign of "D" Coy's patrol of this morning.

RSM CA Smith commissioned in the East Surrey Reg't as Lt (QM) w.e.f. 5 July 1944. Lt HG Harris and 3 ORs missing from patrol.

Jul. 16th

0445: Adjt to all Coys: All Coy's warned to be at 1 hrs notice to move. Order sent to "B" Coy by DR as line is dis.

0524: OP to IO: 2 large explosions heard about 2 miles away 11° Mag. (Bde inf).

0545: "B" Coy patrol reported in by wireless. Nothing to report.

0547: Adt to "B" Coy 'Why telephone has not been working?'

0555: Bde 'Germans withdrawn on this sector'.

0600: Bde to Adj. Brigadier's Conference. Bn to be prepared to move at 1 hr's notice up main Div axis. TCVs to be here with us.

Concentrate on high ground Pt 484.

0830: Patrol Reports night 15/16 sent to Bde (see att). Bn to concentrate area Bn HQ prior to advance.

0930: "A" Coy arrive conc area.

1010: "B" Coy arrive conc area.

1015: "D" Coy arrive conc area.

1020: Bde orders to the effect that we are to remain at present locations until called for. A Pl of TCVs coming to our locations.

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1040: "C" Coy arrive conc area.

1045: Bde. 6 Armd Div report they are held up by fire from Chiani. Surreys may have to deal with it if necessary.

1430: Orders rec'd from Bde.

1500: Orders issued by CO at 'O' Group. Four code words as follows to be used: CHERRY – BANBURY, APPLE – Pt 397 208383, PLUM – BICESTER, PEAR – Pt 414 196343. "A" Coy are to cover left flank by advancing to PLUM Main Body - "C" Coy "D" Coy and "B" Coy (with tank support and Holdfast) to proceed to BANBURY where attack on APPLE and PEAR will be teed up. Main HQ to establish at Pt 254 216292. Time past Bn HQ 1630 hrs.

1550: DCLI report ALSTON clear of enemy.

1630: "C" Coy moving forward on tanks.

1640: CO told "A" Coy to wait.

1650: Tank Comd. Forward elephants are at ALLAHABAD.

1655: "C" Coy at SWAT. CO told "D" Coy to move forward.

1700: Beds report box mines on all track leading from 161284.

1715: "A" Coy moving forward.

1721: Main HQ moving forward.

1727: "D" Coy reached ALLAHABAD.

1735: RA report enemy and enemy tanks at Poggioli.

1736: Main HQ pulled off road at SWAT.

1737: "A" Coy 500 yds North of CAWNPORE. Bridge blown and impossible for wheels and tracks. (informed Bde, and asked if Holdfast can help).

1750: "A" Coy have suffered AP mine casualties, but are pushing on.

1755: "C" Coy 1,000 yds North of SAGGAR.

1800: "C" Coy asking Shelldrake to stonk POGGIOLI. They say they are being fired on from the right (inf Bde).

1801: Fire asked for by "C" Coy being fired.

1802: Adjt asked if Beds could look after "A" Coy's wounded, as they have no RAP with them.

1805: "A" Coy now at Pt 250.

1806: CO asked "C" Coy to observe fire for fire brought down for them.

1807: "C" Coy say they cannot see targets.

1815: "A" Coy report that elephants have now caught up with them.

1816: "D" Coy now at ALLAHABAD.

1818: BDE 'Beds cannot deal with casualties, and they are being dealt with by 10 Fd Amb.

1819: "A" Coy casualties being evacuated (2 dead and 4 wounded).

1820: Bde "A" Coy are not to go through minefields and incur

casualties, but are to circumvent them or let tanks go first.

1821: CO ordered Shelldrake up, and rear link up to his location at ALLAHABAD.

1822: Bde 'There are Panters in Sq 2235. They were seen by friends on the right.'

1840: Rear link left SWAT and reached ALLAHABAD in five minutes.

1845: "C" Coy are now at BEWDLEY

1847: "A" Coy are now in village before objective. Have contacted escaped French PWs who say Jerries pulled out this morning, and are going back some way.

1855: "D" Coy are now in SAGGOR, but have not contacted ACORN.

1856: CO told "D" Coy to stay where they are.

1900: "C" Coy sub-units moving to BANBURY.

1905: "A" Coy report that they have reached BICESTER.

1915: "C" Coy approaching BANBURY, want to know if "D" Coy are following behind to assist them if necessary.

1920: CO told "D" Coy to move forward to BEWDLEY and to squat there.

1935: "C" Coy report bridge at BANBURY blown, and under heavy mortar fire.

1936: "C" Coy report Sunray of Holdfast party has been wounded. Can we send amb Jeep.

1938: "C" Coy report mortar fire coming from approx 325°.

1940: "A" Coy want to know if they can leave small party on present position, and move main body back to a better position.

1950: CO told them to stay where they are in case they are needed to help advance of other Coys.

2005: CO told "C" Coy to squat where they are, and carry out usual games.

2006: CO asked Sunray "D" Coy and Sunray Tanks to meet him in BEWLEY at 2015.

2040: Rear link arrived at house 500 yds South of SAGGOR.

2050: CO to Tanks. We have been ordered to reach our objectives tonight. Will you give us covering fire as far as possible?

2052: "A" Coy report party of Boche out of 3" mortar range. (sent by DR, and Boche had gone by time he reached Bn HQ).

2100: Bde. gap in bridge at BANBURY is being worked on by Holdfast. Tanks have already got past.

2105: "C" and "D" Coys to move forward and take APPLE.

2125: "C" and "D" Coys are now moving forward.

2200: "B" Coy to send patrols of "A" Coy and Carriers to Poggioli and Ruscello. Patrol to Poggioli will leave at 2300 hrs, and will be back

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by)£)) hrs. The patrol to Ruscello will leave at 2359 hrs, and be back by 0400 hrs. Both will keep to main roads and keep off verges.

2230: All patrolling activities cancelled owing to extensive mining of verges.

2235: Two of mine-lifting party from Pioneers brought back to RAP by Res after being blown up by Schu-mines. Carriers report that they are now 300 yds 10 o'clock of BANBURY.

2236: CO told them to stay there for the night.

2315: Mortars ask if they are to lay down harassing fire.

2316: CO to Mortars 'Owing to possible situation of flanking friends no HF is to be put down. DF only as required.

2320: "D" Coy report nearly on APPLE

2325: CO told "C" and "D" Coys that they are to sit tight on APPLE when they reach it, and to send back a precise location.

2345: "C" and "D" Coys are now on APPLE and are consolidating. (to Bde).

2346: CO to "C" and "D" Coys 'Patrol to PEAR at first light. You will be joined by tanks as soon after first light as possible.'

Lt F Bruinvels, 2/Lt LV Cocker and 2 ORs reported from No 1 CRU.

Move Order issued. 1 killed in action, and 6 wounded and evacuated.

Jul 17th

0005: "D" Coy located an enemy tank at BOSCOMBE. Cn we send water in containers up to them by the tanks at first light?

0010: CO suggested a patrol to destroy tank.

0015: "D" Coy said that tank was moving North when they saw it, and consider it will be some way away by now.

0555: "D" Coy patrol reports PEAR clear of enemy. "A" Coy have no information yet regarding their patrol to MT 210.

0600: CO to Tanks 'Contact "D" Coy on APPLE, and then move forward and consolidate on PEAR'. CO to "D" Coy 'Go forward with tanks to PEAR, and consolidate it.

0610: Tanks asked "D" Coy what the ground was like between them.

0611: "D" Coy said it was OK.

0625: CO to tanks 'Your FOO is to go to "D" Coy". CO to "C" Coy 'Your FOO is to remain with you'.

0650: Bde 'We are to send our marching troops on to CHESHAM and then to CHRISTCHURCH.

0700: CO to "D" Coy 'When you reach PEAR go forward and recce a route to CHESHAM.

0710: Tanks moving forward.

0730: "B" Coy patrol is going to CHIANI.

0735: "D" Coy on way to PEAR.

0740: Tanks approaching APPLE.
0745: Bde moving to SIMLA.
0805: "C" Coy FOO is now with them on APPLE.
0830: "B" Coy report CHIANI clear of enemy.
0835: "D" Coy report going very slow.
0900: To Bde ' We now have a track for 4x4 vehicles to APPLE.
Receiving route to PEAR. 1 PW coming back. PW arrived. He was carrying 3545 lire
0915: Beds report leading sub-unit should be crossing TANGO now.
0920: "B" Coy sending back a partisan by DR.
0921: Tanks to report on route between APPLE and PEAR, and then to move forward to BURLEY and report on route.
0925: Escaped French PW arrived at Bn HQ. He had served in North Africa, and had been taken prisoner. He had escaped in Sep 43, and was picked up trying to get through the lines near Cassino. He escaped again several weeks ago. He reports that main lateral road is mined and bridges are blown.
0930: Partisan arrived from "B" Coy. He had killed a Lt Fuller and taken his papers. The papers were sent back to Bde.
0935: Tanks are 500 yds North of APPLE.
0940: Beds report held up at CALLINGTON by MG and arty fire. Shell Drake dealing with it.
1000: Mines reported at 228304 by civilians.
1015: "D" Coy report sending back 3 PWs via "C" Coy. They were found asleep.
1040: "D" Coy report firm on PEAR. "C" Coy report firm on APPLE.
"B" Coy report in BANBURY
"A" Coy on way to BOTLEY. Recce of future routes being carried out.
1110: carriers report patrolled to within 2 km of Caprioli (near Botley). Civilians say that enemy withdrew at 2100 hrs last night.
1120: Carriers report 300 yds 2 o'clock of FEAR.
1121: "A" Coy report their patrols have contacted "B" Coy.
1122: "A" Coy report their patrols are 800 yds from BOTLEY
1145: Preliminary Warning Order: Carriers and Tac HQ to conc BANBURY now. Tank Comd to be prepared to carry "D" Coy. Mortars to be prepared to move. "A", "B", "C" and "D" Coys be prepared to concentrate at BANBURY.
1150: All subunits conc now and be at BANBURY by 1330 hrs.
1220: TCVs called up to BANBURY.
1222: "C" Coy on move now.
1238: "D" Coy report tanks and ourselves on way now.
1247: "A" Coy report in conc area now.

1250: "D" Coy reports tanks and ourselves are halfway to conc area.
 1330: All subunits reported concentrated.
 1400: All subunits to embuss. Arrangements made for collection of odd vehicles which are left behind. Order of March: tanks, tracks, TCVs and odd vehicles.
 1415: Change of plan. Tanks to pull off road and vehicles to pass through, and tanks to follow.
 1420: Tank commander told of this and he complied.
 1430: Head of column (armoured car) moving to BROMWICH now.
 1435: At ALLAHABAD
 1441: At SWAT
 1443: At RAZMAK
 1450: At TIGOLETO
 1455: At DONNINGTON
 1503: At DROITWICH
 1513: At DARTMOOR (Bde informed)
 1525 At DAWLISH
 1540: Reached DURSLEY after traffic difficulties.
 1550: At MAKIN. Experienced great difficulty passing oncoming traffic on narrow tracks.
 1615: Reached AVONMOUTH
 1625: At AYLHAM
 1635: Reached BROMWICH (Pogi) and establish Bn HQ at 070337. Remainder of Bn to be concentrated in area of village as they arrive.
 1815: TCVs arrive after being held up by block on the road.
 1900: All Coys in conc area and settled in.
 B Ech moved to farm close to A Ech.

Jul 18th

0030: Orders from Bn to remain conc at 2 hrs notice to move forward as from 0700 hrs. Role: To protect left flank of DCLI on their advance on Montevarchi. To secure Perelli by 0635 hrs with Battle Patrol.
 0200: Battle Patrol set off for Perelli.
 0600: Battle Patrol report no contact with enemy in Perelli.
 0700: A patrol ("B" Coy) set off for Chudleigh.
 0900: Intercept. DCLI - No opposition but are being shelled and are 2 kms from Montevarchi.
 1000: To Bde - We are to send a recce party with tanks to area of Craven.
 1030: Intercept. 2 MGs in area of Craven.
 1035: To Bde - Ask for more information in view of the fact that we have a recce party going forward to Craven.
 1100: Tanks and our recce party left Pogi

1115: 3 PWs (Herman Goering Reg't) brought to our HQ by DCLI. One was recognised by civilians as being one of party who had wantonly damaged the houses in the village. Civilians became very excited and had to be restrained from taking violent action.

1145: Forward units of DCLI now in WIGTOWN. Some opposition, but overcoming it.

1150: To Bde. Our Holdfast representative says road running from Annan to main road is now open, but at one point is only 7 ft wide and cannot be improved.

1155: Battle Patrol report that civilian says there is an MG manned by 3 Germans North of their locations.

1156: CO told them to deal with it. Civilian to lead them.

1215: Recce Party being fired on by SP gun from 14^o Mag. Will require assistance of Holdfast as tanks are making a mess of tracks.

1300: Acorn (i/c recce party) reports route impossible further forward.

1302: CO ordered Acorn to bring his party back.

1400: Recce party returned.

1500: Bde. Bn at short notice to move to WIGTOWN.

1545: 1 PW brought back by Battle Patrol. He was one of the three they went after. One was killed and one escaped.

1600: Battle Patrol after three more enemy.

1625: Bde orders to be ready to take over WIGTOWN from DCLI by or about 1800 hrs.

2130: Intercept. DCLI are 1200 yds half past nine of CRANBROOK.

2200: Bn still in POGI at short notice to move.

A Ech moved up to area of the Bn, and B Ech moved into area evacuated by A Ech.

Jul 19th

0100: Bde. Orders for move. (see Move Order attached). Bn will move to WIGTOWN at 0530 hrs today and relieve 2 DCLI. F Ech will NOT move until ordered to do so. Order of March: "C" Coy, 1 PI "D" Coy, Tac HQ & Pioneers, Remainder of "D" Coy, "B" Coy, "A" Coy, Main HQ, RAP. The only vehicles to go forward initially will be armoured car and RAP jeep. "S" Coy and all other vehicles will await further orders. Route:- ANNAN - CHIPPING CAMPDEN - CRAVEN - WIGTOWN. Bn SP Rd and track junction 070334. Head of "C" Coy will pass SP at 0530 hrs. Remainder of column will be fed to SP by R/T control. Reveille 0400 hrs. Breakfast 0430 hrs.

0530: Bn moved off to take over from DCLI. Only transport 1 amb. Jeep and 1 armoured car..

0531: "C" Coy passing SP 070334 now.

0538: "D" Coy 1 sub-unit passed SP.
0540: "B" Coy head passing SP.
0545: "A" Coy head passing SP.
0550: Main HQ passing SP.
0615: CO asked for mine detectors to be sent forward.
0700: Mine detectors reached CO. Brig. Suggested F Ech be brought forward in bounds.
0710: Sent DR back to POGI with orders for 2 i/c to bring forward F Ech.
0815: Intercept. DCLI being heavily stonked. Their troops are getting very weary and hope that we shall be able to perform.
0825: Brig. Ordered our Bn to stop and lay up in the nullahs by the roadside between CHIPPING CAMPDEN and CRAVEN.
0830: Leading sub-unit has stopped at CRAVEN and is laying up there. Other sub-units are laying up behind.
0835: CO went to see Brigadier.
0840: Main own HQ is 029366.
0845: Sent back for all RA's vehicles, signal carrier and CO's jeep.
1025: Above vehicles arrived at Main HQ, and RA's vehicles were sent forward, and remainder kept at Main.
1120: 1 section of tanks are going forward .
1300: Information from civilian. Civilian who was forced to work digging positions (evidence – blisters on hands) gave following information: Enemy gun positions in area North of road between Terra Nuova and Tasso. These positions are back in the hills off the road. Enemy MG positions along Arno (far bank) West of Montevarchi. Pontoon bridge over river near Val D'Inferno (0836). Tanks passed this location on 17th and may have used it. Pistoia is very strongly fortified, and there are many gun positions there. (All passed to Bde and action taken by heavy Shelldrake).
1400: Civilian information. Bridge over Arno in 0342 heavily mined with Schumines (trip wires). Area of bridge also mined. From bridge to 41 Northing along river bed and banks also mined. The fields West of the river between these two points are also mined (Teller). Gun positions on reverse slope of Pt 259. There is a small gun in the region of Ricasoli (passed to Bde).
1430: Civilian information. There are a number of escaped English PWs in the area of St Clemente, Trappola and Arcedina. There is also considerable partisan activity in these areas, and there have been several clashes between them and the enemy.
1500: Bn 18 set not closed down until 2000 hrs. Everyone to get as much rest as possible.

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Jul 20th

2300: Bn still static. Orders from Bde for next day.

Sgt Baker and 4 Ors reported from No 1 CRU. Operation Order No 13 received from Bde. Move Order issued. 1 OR wounded and evacuated.

See OO No 1 dated 20th July 1944 for details of Bn's advanced

0530: Orders received from Bde to move at 0630 hrs. Plan "A" in operation.

0600: "C" and "D" Coys on move forward.

0605: Intercept. To DCLI. Occupy high ground right of MAPLE feature. Is this possible? When can you do it? DCLI reply. I am now on feature and have got one sub-unit forward ref MAPLE half past two 1200 yds.

0645: Main HQ moved to 070377.

0715: "C" and "D" Coys have reached the lateral road. "C" have married up with their tanks.

0730: CO ordered "A" and "B" Coys to position 700 yds 3 o'clock CRAVEN.

0745: "D" Coy report MAPLE, and tanks are just behind them.

0805: Brig. Reports that Big Shelldrake is successfully shelling enemy who are running away from Pt 257. Can he continue or is it endangering our forward Coys?

0807: Answer. Our left hand forward Coy are on West end of Maple, so it is OK to continue.

0810: To tanks. Let us know immediately when "C" and "D" Coys want shelling stopped.

0915: "D" Coy just moving up reverse slope of BEECH.

0916: Tanks report enemy on North slope of BEECH.

0917: "D" Coy moving forward.

0928: "D" Coy on BEECH. Told to sit tight as Shelldrake is shelling reverse slopes.

0940: "D" Coy are 300 yds short of the ridge.

0941: "D" Coy want concentration lifted 500 yds.

0942: Message passed to Shelldrake.

0945: Bde to CO Axis of advance must not get too far over to left.

0950: Tanks. Stop concentration (done).

0955: "D" Coy on BEECH

0957: "C" Coy on BEECH.

1010: CO told "C" and "D" Coys to sit tight.

1015: "B" Coy location is 018397.

1035: CO orders to "B" Coy they are to capture high ground 1000 yds 1 o'clock BEECH.

1040: To "C" and "D" Coys (for information). Big Shelldrake is shelling house 1000 yds 11 o'clock BEECH.

1041: Brig. Do not stay too long on BEECH (passed to CO).

1046: Brig. Suggests DCLI take over "B" Coy's task.

1105: "A" Coy at Tac HQ. "B" Coy at X-roads 5 o'clock MAPLE. "C" Coy on right of BEECH. "D" Coy on left of BEECH. CO has ordered "B" Coy to take second objective.

1215: Bde. Are our people 1000 yds 2 o'clock of BEECH? Shelldrake wants to know as an anti-tank gun has been reported there and he wishes to stonk it.

1216: CO. It wouldn't be safe to fire there yet as he is not certain of whereabouts of "B" Coy.

1315: Brig. Requires news of forward sub-unit who are reported to be halfway between BEECH and CACTUS. Suggests leaving only one Coy on BEECH, and cutting down movement there to the minimum. Suggests step-up set for comns. Report on state of tracks for rations tonight.

1330: CO. Flanks are causing some concern and would like information.

1335: "B" Coy have just left BEECH for CACTUS, and when they get there they are going to sit tight until flanking units conform with our advance.

1350: To CO from Brig. Ref flanks, friends on left are coming up well, and they can see right down to the river. Our friends on left have been asked to look out for any enemy or weapons on left. CO will feel less concerned when he hears this. Brig wishes CO to push forward from BEECH, and a sub-unit on to the high ground in front ref 10 o'clock 500 yds of CACTUS. Brig wishes to push forward as quickly as possible within limits of safety.

1400: Comd's tank is at MAPLE Forward elements at BEECH, but none beyond BEECH.

1410: "C" Coy. Demolitions seen 2,500 yds 60° BEECH

1413: "B" Coy at CACTUS. No opposition.

1420: CO. MMGs to be ready to move from Main HQ.

1421: Bde. Friends on left have been in CAMPBELTOWN – no enemy – heavily mined. Brig wants CO to push on. He appreciates flank worries but says it is OK.

1430: CO. Some opposition at CACTUS now. Enemy in house are being dealt with.

1445: Message to CO. Bde Cmd says Well Done! He wishes you to push on – taking full precautions – to 000431 and 997437, then to 996443 and 998441. You would then draw in at Giovanni, but Bde

Cmd does not intend you to go in there tonight. He wishes you to hold all the high ground round the town, undertake protective patrolling and get the tanks to keep a sharp look-out. Friends on left can see right down to river. 28 Bde went to CAMPBELTOWN this morning and found it unoccupied. No contact. Heavily mined. Passed by phone to CO.

1455: "B" Coy. Civilians report 50 Germans in monastery on CACTUS.

1500: "D" Coy are moving forward to a position 1,500 yds 340° BEECH

1502: "A" Coy are to be prepared to move.

1515: "B" Coy have taken a number of PWs on CACTUS.

1517: CO ordered them to send them to BEECH under a small escort.

Any nonsense must result in only one thing.

1518: Battle Patrol to fetch PWs from BEECH.

1519: Intercept. Tanks report that CREWKERNE is ours.

1520: Brig suggests sending PWs back under escort of Honey tank.

1540: CO. No of PWs taken on CACTUS was 38

1635: CO would like tanks to go to CACTUS as there is opposition on the left.

1636: CO. "D" Coy meeting opposition, and CO will consider proposed advance when this has been sorted out.

1645: "D" Coy are on Pt 250, and are firing on 20 fleeing Germans.

1650: CO. Men are very tired, but will push on as far as possible and then squat.

1755: Bde. WALNUT and two other features are going to be stonked. All are objectives. Arrange for this to be stopped when forward Coys want it stopped (passed to CO)

1756: CO. At moment "C" Coy are moving to CACTUS, and when they reach it they are going to push forward as far as possible. "D" Coy are squatting halfway between BEECH and WALNUT. (passed to Bde).

1815: PWs arrive at Main HQ, and were taken to Bde by Bde Def Pl. Majority of PWs were Herman Goering Reg't.

1900: "A" Coy. On BEECH and feature to NNE. Am patrolling road to West. Enemy believed to be occupying houses. Carriers can come up, but no Jeeps. Rations by Jeep as far as MAPLE. Arrangements will be made to get them up from there. My HQ on feature in front of BEECH. No sign of enemy except for mortar fire. Civilian reports no enemy in Giovanni. Have 2 PW.

2140: To Bde. Forward sub-unit held up by heavy shelling just West of CACTUS. They are consolidating on orders of Sunray.

2200: Bde. Orders. Protective patrolling by all sub-units.

Operation Order No 1 issued. 1 OR wounded and evacuated.

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Jul 21st

0500: Brig called at Main HQ, and said that all sub-units were to be prepared to move to the outskirts of SPRUCE, and one into SPRUCE (passed to CO).

0700: Intercept. Beds forward sub-units have reached MEDLAR

0755: Intercept. Beds sub-unit pushing on to WALNUT.

0800: Tac HQ Report that church bells are ring in Giovanni.

0805: Intercept. Beds forward sub-units are moving forward slowly – light mortaring.

0810: Intercept (Beds). Light shelling not holding them up – pushing on to WALNUT and SPRUCE.

0815: Tac HQ. 2 PWs taken by “A” Coy last night, are being sent back.

0816: C/Sgt Willett arrived back at Main HQ with 1 PW. Sent back to Bde.

0930: 2 PWs arrived from “A” Coy, and were sent back to Bde.

1015: Intercept. Enemy using a Sherman tank near PENNA sq. 0745.

1035: Bde. Our friends on immediate right held up by rifle and MG fire from houses in SPRUCE, and by a position 1,000 yds SW of SPRUCE. Another sub-unit of our friends held up and not yet on WALNUT (passed to CO).

1050: Intercept (Beds). SPRUCE much quieter now Shell Drake has done his stuff. Two sub-units are going to try to get round to left of SPRUCE (passed to CO).

1130: CO. “B” and “C” Coys are at CACTUS. “A” Coy at BEECH, and “D” Coy on Pt 250 as before. Tanks and mortars with “A” Coy. Situation: To front One friendly sub-unit just short of WALNUT. Tanks have gone up road due West to recce forward as country is very difficult.

1255: “D” Coy. No movement observed on forward slopes of WALNUT. Own airbursts seen busting over reverse slopes of WALNUT.

1330: “B” Coy. Demolitions seen believed bridge 019449 (passed to Bde)

1425: Short vicious stonk about ½ mile North of Main HQ.

1430: RAP Carrier left for Tac HQ.

1450: Mortars. 3 shells fell in area 005399 on road. Bearing of gun 33° Mag. From BEECH.

1452: “C” Coy. Enemy mortar bursts observed 009425. Bearing from BEECH 332° Mag 3000 yds.

1600: “D” Coy reports troops digging 1000 yds North of their position.

1615: Brig. Orders. Coy of Beds trying to get on to WALNUT report strong enemy MG posts on the high ground ahead of them including the general area of Pt 250 at 988444. Your leading Coys are to assist the Beds, by fire if possible and Coy observation of enemy ahead, to

reach their objective. Patrols tonight. "D" Coy will send out patrols to the West of their positions to ensure that the high ground at Pts 255, 252, 260 (all in sq 9842) are clear of enemy. 28 Inf Bde may use the road CAMPBELTOWN – KETTERING tomorrow, and do not want to be shot up from the flanks. (passed to CO).

1700: CO at Tac HQ. When ambulance Jeep returns from present missions it is to report to Tac HQ.

1755: "C" Coy report one killed during heavy stonking.

1815: Intercept. Reports river bed mined 034420. 300 enemy in SPRUCH.

1830: Brig suggests bringing back two Coys to your Coy area. (passed to CO).

1900: Brig cancels previous suggestion.

1905: Intercept. Friends on right reported at CRANBROOK. 10.30 o'clock 2,000 yds.

2200: Intercept. 17/21 Lancers and 10 R.B at 133430. Derby Yeomanry 078425 – 047412. 10 unidentified tracks coming along road from 0453.

2330: Intercept. MT and tracks passing E – W through Giovanni at 2255.

2332: "D" Coy patrol has returned. No enemy found. Civilians say enemy left two or three days ago.

1 OR killed in action, Lt Greenwood and 5 ORs wounded and evacuated. Interrogation reports received from Bde. Information received from O2E, BNAF that applications in respect of Territorial Efficiency Medal had been verified and passed to WO (AG4 medals) for the u/m personnel: 6138604 CSM Hubbard, G 6140343 Sgt Deane, J (MM) and 6145916 Cpl Martin, R.

Jul 22nd

0010: CO ordered "D" Coy to send patrol out again, but to be back not later than 0300 hrs.

0120: "B" Coy report two explosions in the direction of Terra Nuova.

0305: Beds report enemy transport going through village in front.

0415: Intercept. Enemy vehicle heard moving SPRUCE. No enemy or fire heard from SPRUCE since 0330 hrs

0420: "D" Coy report no enemy located. Vickers and Bren guns firing heard West of objective towards range of hills. (passed to CO).

0700: Coys sitting tight all day. Moving back this evening.

1800: Tac HQ. Civilian reports that there are enemy in house at Southern end of SPRUCE.

1815: Bde. Road from CAMPBELTOWN to 3 mile North of JUNIPER is OK.

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1815: Bde. Road from CAMPBELTOWN to 1 mile North of Juniper is OK.

1920: Tac HQ. Beds sub-unit have taken over CACTUS.

20000: Coys making own way to concentration area South of Ricasoli.

2115: Main HQ moved to concentration area South of Ricasoli.

2200: All Coys established in concentration area.

Bn moved to area South of Ricasoli, near Montevarchi, and spent the time resting, cleaning up and re-equipping.

Jul 23rd

Bn continued resting and cleaning up.

Jul 24th

Instructions for the visit of the C-in-C to troops in the area issued to Coys. Instructions received from Bde for use of traffic circuits in area of Montevarchi, the use of new designation for that formation "10 BRIT Inf Bde", and information that the Bn would remain in its present position, near Montevarchi, until further orders were received. Adm Instruction received from Bde. The Band of the Grenadier Guards played in the main square of Montevarchi at 1030 and 1800 hrs; permission being granted to Coys to send personnel at each performance.

Jul 25th

100 ORs of the Bn, under command of Major WG Spencer, departed in the afternoon to attend the Parade for the C-in-C's visit.

Jul 26th

Bn representatives lined part of the route the C-in-C's party would take. His Majesty the King was with the C-in-C, and was engaged in his strenuous tour of troops in the forward areas in Italy. Adm Order No 17 received.

Letter received from Bde, forwarding remarks by the General Staff 4 Brit Inf Div on the capture by this Bn of 40 PW on 20 July.

"Herewith extra copy of Div Intelligence Summary No 49 for the 1/6 Surreys. The PW which this Bn captured on 20 July have proved the most useful for a very long time. The procedure of giving a Bn a copy of Div Intelligence Summary is, of course, unorthodox, and it should therefore be ensured (a) that the Summary does not go beyond Bn HQ, and (b) that it is destroyed within 24 hrs.

Any further customers from the Surreys will always be appreciated."

Information received from the Bde that "His Majesty The King has been graciously pleased to award the following immediate decorations:

Distinguished Service Order: 18052 Brig. SN Shoosmith OBE (Comd 10 Brit Inf Bde), 30951 Lt Col ROV Thompson.

Military Cross: 105560 Major WP Plastow.

Jul 27th -- 31st

The Bn remained in its area near Montevarchi, resting and refitting,

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and during this period as much entertainment as possible was arranged – Cinema Shows and the Div Concert Party.