

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

1944

Intelligence Summary (italics)

Appendix

November

FORLI

The Battalion made the crossing of the Ronco river on 31st October, and the first days of November were spent in attempting to continue the advance on Forli. This was found to be impracticable without a full-scale attack on the airfield buildings, which were very strongly held and formed the mainstay of the enemy defences before Forli. A programme of vigorous patrolling by day and night was carried out while the main attack was planned. The whole of the Bn area across the Ronco was subject to heavy concentrations by guns, Nebels., and other mortars at intervals by day and night, and MGs fired on fixed lines, harassing supply routes. Known enemy positions were subjected to artillery concs. whenever guns or mortars opened up, and 'Cab ranks' were operated against the airport buildings with great effect. For full details see Appendix 'B1' (Intelligence Log).

Nov 1st

0035: To Bde :- No patrols going beyond the Fossi before 0530 hrs. After that "D" Coy are going to POLICEMAN, and "B" Coy to RATCATCHER. Two 2 pdrs are over river, and in position with "B" Coy.

0315: Carriers :- Report intermittent shelling – otherwise quiet.

0345: One 2 pdr at "B" Coy firing NW. One 2 pdr moving from "B" to "D" Coy to fire across aerodrome. One 6 pdr behind Carrier Pl. One 6 pdr going from Tp HQ to "B" Coy. Tp HQ – farm 469124.

0425: Carriers :- Report single green Verrey light 700 yds West of their position.

0515: To Bde:- Fossi is 8' deep, 8' wide at top and 6' at bottom. Impossible to all except infantry. PIRATE has been shelled all night, as has area of FLYMAN. Bridge over river has not been shelled. Bde:- Beds and Herts are crossing by the bridge shortly, and are going forward on your left. Send guides to bridge.

0530: To Carriers:- Send 2 guides to meet friends at bridge.

0545: "C" Coy:- Our buildings are being plastered by 88mm or SP only 400 yds to the N of our positions (Passed to gunners).

0600: 2:- Nebelwerfered from bearing of 335°.

0605: Beds and Herts CO arrived at Tac HQ, and Bn passing along to the river

0610: "C" Coy:- Gunners have already performed further North, and are now going to bring fire nearer your positions. Correct if it is too close.

0615: To A Ech:- No vehicles are to move forward without orders from CO.

0630: "C" Coy:- Report tanks 300 yds N of their position moving North.

0635: Our tanks moving down to river now.

0640: Tanks passing Tac HQ (To Bde).

0645: "C" Coy:- Shelling and Spandau have stopped. Our shelling very effective.

0700: Sitrep to Bde:- "B" and "D" Coys were subject to rather heavy

shelling and nebellung until midnight, when occasional shelling was reported from the forward Coys. Spandaus from North to South fired at frequent intervals onto "D" Coy positions all through the night. Position of one Spandau located 472153, and two Spandau positions 434126. By 2130 hrs one 2 pdr squeeze gun was across the river; by 2300 hrs a second gun was over. At 0115 "B" Coy sent patrol along dyke 466134 to 461125, and found it to be approx 8' wide about 6' deep, 1' of water with 6" mud and a fair amount of undergrowth on the sides. House 463127 not entered, but appeared to be clear of enemy. Location of sub-units – no change from last light positions. Patrols are patrolling to POLICEMAN and RATCATCHER. By 0700 hrs six tanks were across the river.

0705: To "A" Coy:- You are not to move until tanks reach you.

0800: To Bde:- 3 tanks with "D" Coy and 2 at FLYMAN. Patrol to POLICEMAN could make no headway at all. Patrol to RATCATCHER suffered 2 casualties from Spandau fire. They were in close contact with gunners, and brought fire down which neutralised Spandau. Are going to push on if possible.

0815: To "C" Coy:- Watch aerodrome and report any enemy DF.

0820: "A" Coy:- Patrol is returning and taking up old positions. Opposition at house 463137 was too strong and ground too open for advancing.

0825: CO to Bde:- Reported above. Also that 4.2" mortars are harassing COMEDIAN and FARRIER. RATCATCHER to BEEKEEPER is our future intention to be done in conjunction with Beds and Herts who are working up on our left. Bde:- Guns are being put on house 463137 and 'Cab Rank'on far side of 'drome as soon as possible.

0850: "A" Coy:- Patrol has returned and taken up old positions.

0900: RAP moving forward to FLYMAN.

0905: "C" Coy:- Have reced Fossi, and found it impassable to tanks.

0935: "C" Coy:- Report that some of houses in their area have in them stick-grenades with wires attached.

0940: CO:- Pioneers are to check verges from crossing places over river to FLYMAN and on to PIRATE. Also investigate booby traps in "D" Coy's houses.

0950: "A" Coy:- No stonking and no Spandaus. Sgt White, Lt Nichols and Tank CO have contacted them.

1030: CO to "B" Coy:- Send a strong patrol to RATCATCHER. They are to pass through "B" Coy at 1130 hrs (Passed to Bde). To Bde:- Full report on Fossi will be sent on return of RE from recce. So far it is understood that there are major technical difficulties.

1045: "A" Coy:- RAP carrier has arrived. It was held up at bridge as repairs were being carried out.

1115: "B" Coy:- Patrol has left Coy area. "A" Coy:- RAP established 200 yds SE of our position.

1200: CO went forward to establish Tac HQ.

1215: CO at new location.

Bn HQ moved to 469127 at 1215 hrs. Casualties: 1 killed and 3 OR

wounded and evacuated. 3 slightly wounded not evacuated. Lt CJH Hamblin admitted to hospital (exhaustion).

1220: *To Bde:- No chance of crossing Fossi near PIRATE without bridging equipment. Recce party are going to right towards POLICEMAN to see if there is a way round. Heavy shelling in PIRATE area now.*

1245: *CO to Adj:- DR on way to fetch you here.*

1255: *DR arrived and armoured car moved forward to CO.*

1310: *Arrived at new location and established Tac HQ at 469127.*

1330: *To Bde:- Patrols now withdrawn. "D" Coy Comd thinks that enemy are in considerable strength 300 – 400 yds from his positions. Patrols come under fire from Spandaus and rifle grenades, and suffered one killed who had to be left.*

1335: *DR sent back for Mortar Commander*

1400: *"C" Coy:- Cannot contact our tanks.*

1415: *CO to "C" Coy:- Tanks moved back because of stonking, but are now moving forward again and their tp comd will contact you.*

1420: *"C" Coy:- Require tanks right up with us. Co:- Arrange this with your tp leader when he contacts you.*

1425: *"A" Coy:- Have some of "C" patrol's wounded and require ambulance jeep. CO:- Sending carrier.*

1455: *"C" Coy:- Shellrep: A Constant ; C 467135; D 468133 – 467135; E 88mm; F HE; H 290° Mag; I Firing for effect; K 7/8 secs. (Passed to Shelldrake).*

1505: *Intercept:- Beds and Herts being fired on from houses on NW corner of airfield.*

1515: *To Mortars:- Stay on your side of the river until your Pl Comd returns after doing recce.*

1520: *A number of "C" Coy's patrol reported to Tac HQ and were directed back to "C" Coy.*

1530: *Squadron and assault tp comds arrived to recce "D" Coy's area preparatory to taking over tonight.*

1531: *To "C" Coy:- Send guide to this location.*

1545: *Your guide has arrived OK, and is now on way back with recce party.*

1550: *Mortars:- Our Pl. Comd has returned.*

1550: *Intercept:- Tiger tank 447133. It is about 400 yds in front of Beds forward sub-unit.*

1605: *Intercept:- Position of leading infantry is 400 yds NW of CROONER. Carriers:- Very heavy stonk 400 yds NW of their location. Nebels.*

1616: *"C" Coy:- A/Tk gun firing from RATCATCHER (Shelldrake engaging).*

1645 – 1700: *Tac HQ severely stonked. very close.*

1710 – 1725: *Tac HQ stonked again.*

1730: *6:- Nebels in area Tac HQ.*

1810: *"B" Coy:- Now 400 yds 1 o'clock at BARBERSOL.*

1900: *Sitrep to Bde:- The day was confined to patrols on our part,*

and some heavy shelling and nebellng by the enemy. At 0800 hrs patrol from "B" Coy endeavouring to reach POLICEMAN was held up by Spandau fire from buildings 463137. Buildings shot up by FOO "B" Coy who was in contact with patrol leader by wireless. Recce by tank and engineer representatives decided that the tank crossing of Fossi was not possible without Arks. Patrol from "C" Coy due to leave PIRATE at 1300 was unable to do so owing to Spandau fire from 463137. Shelldrake engaged building with air burst and HE from 1340 hrs to 1400 hrs. Patrol had one man wounded, and were unable to bring him out. Got him in at 1530 hrs under cover of fire from tanks. This patrol was trying to make RATCATCHER. Two more patrols on attempting to move to RATCATCHER were opened up by Spandaus. Booby traps found in houses "D" and "B" Coys – grenades (stick) attached to trip wires. Bn moved location to 469127 at 1215 hrs At 1645 hrs Bn HQ heavily shelled by Mediums and Field Guns (approx) 40 shells in area. Carrier Platoon shelled and nebellng at same time. Casualties suffered during day: 1 killed and 3 wounded on patrols. 3 slightly wounded by shelling.

2015: "A" Coy, "B" Coy, Carriers:- Nothing to report. Intercept:- There is an enemy patrol in Beds area. Can also hear tracks on extreme edge of 'drome.

2020: Mortars:- are now with Carriers and are getting into position.

2130: Mortars:- Report in position and ready to fire on RATCATCHER.

2135: "C" Coy:- Report Spandau fire on their right and 500 yds to the North.

2145: "C" Coy:- Report considerable Spandau fire 300 yds to their N and NW.

2150: CO to "A" Coy and Carriers:- Send out protective patrols and also contact patrols.

2200: Intentions for 1 – 2 Nov.

2215: Bde:- Class 9 bridge is being taken down as river is rising. Our Pioneers are to go down to river and put rope across again.

2230: To Main:- Send Coy jeeps back over the river and tell them to park near "C" Coy.

2315: CO's "O" Group. Discussed Intentions. "C" Coy to go first to CHARLES. "D" to follow and "B" to follow through from reserve position (where they are now) and take CUTLER. "C" to marry up with tanks near Bde HQ. They will send guides to FLYMAN to pick up tanks. No move anticipated before 0600 hrs ie. before Beds have taken their objective.

Nov 2nd

0015 – 0100: Intense Spandau fire sweeping Bn area.

0200: Bridge swept away. Only wireless communication with Bde.

0500: Carriers:- Report 3-tonner completely blocking road near FLYMAN. Filling of crater has been swept away.

0630: CO to "A" Coy, "B" Coy, "C" Coy and Carriers:- No move before further orders. Make use of all available cover and keep dry.

0800: Still no communications (other than wireless) with the other

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side of river. Beds are sitting tight.

0900: Line party reached river, and found it a raging torrent about 75 yds wide. Line OK to river. No sign of anyone on opposite bank.

0930: "D" Coy:- Report 3 enemy in front of their area (Warned "A" Coy).

0945: SO and RSM of Beds reported to Adjt, and then proceeded with Sgt Taylor (Sigs) to recce Bde supply dump.

1030: Brig:- Everything is OK behind you. Good show. Indians are doing well. 4 Recce Squadron come under your command. Means of communication over river are being arranged.

1115: "C" Coy:- Gun firing on Beds from bearing 316° grid.

1140: CO decided to try airbursts on houses N of PIRATE from where Spandaus were firing last night. CO to "D" Coy:- Have you anyone N of PIRATE?

1145: "D" Coy:- Nobody N of PIRATE. CO:- Keep under cover as Shelldrake is performing.

1315: Beds forward Coy report enemy tank on the airfield and until more is known patrol to CUTLER will not proceed.

1330: Beds:- Say tank was seen early this morning, and news had trickled back by devious means. They now consider the incident closed.

1500: CO:- "A" Coy and Carriers are to carry out protective and contact patrols as last night. Carriers are to provide a carrying party to fetch our share of Bde dump from FLYMAN to this location.

2000 – 2200: Issued Bde emergency food supplies to Coys. This is to last 2 days. Usual Spandaus swept the area during the night.

Lt DC Fuller reported to the Bn from No 2 CRU

Nov 3rd

0730: Beds:- Report that their patrol to CUTLER saw double sentries at road junc. Spandau manned, and heard an 81mm 300 yds beyond. Also heard tank being maintained. (MMGs now harassing CUTLER).

0800: CO to Brig:- I visited Recce this morning and found them in fine fettle. Immediately in front of them is large expanse of water and mud which prevents movement either way. Their patrol last night could not find a way over the Fossi, but found a place which could be exploited with ladders etc., and they hope to get a patrol over tonight and try to sort out Spandau nests. Meanwhile we are going to flatten the house with Mediums and also use phosphorus to roast them out. Recce are under good cover, but approaches very exposed. "B" Coy have a good view forward, and are also under good cover. Their protective patrol found a ladder over the Fossi, and they booby-trapped it. So far no result. All the aforementioned areas plus that of Bn HQ are swept by Spandau fire on fixed lines, and are also constantly shelled and nebelled. "C" and "D" Coys are under cover, and so far their area has not been shelled. On the whole everything is under control. Brig:- Suggests relieving two Beds Coys with "C" and "D" tonight, but not moving Bn HQ. There are no bridges over the Ronco on our front, but the flying ferry is now working. During the

morning the suspected Spandau positions and White House North of PIRATE were subjected to stonks comprised of HE, phosphorus smoke and airbursts.

1200: "D" Coy:- Report much quieter since we shelled the area North of their position.

1500: 4.2" mortar reports that their mortar positions are being Spandau'd

1515: CO to "A" Coy and Carriers:- Patrols will be the same as last night. Heavy shelling of area of "A" Coy and Bn HQ.

1520: "A" Coy:- 1 casualty in shelling. Send amb. jeep. CO:- Will send it immediately local shelling eases.

1530: Bde:- Intentions: "C" and "D" Coys are relieving 2 Coys of Beds and Herts, and will come under their command. "B" Coy of Beds are moving up West of CROONER this afternoon to make a two-Coy front. "C" Coy Surreys will occupy "B" Coy Beds' positions. "D" Coy Beds will relieve "A" Coy Beds and Herts, who will then withdraw and occupy location vacated by "C" and "D" Surreys. "D" Coy Surreys will take over "D" Coy Beds positions.

1520: Intercept:- Beds report leading Pls in push on left of CROONER are on objectives, but situation is rather obscure. Great deal of Spandau fire. Enemy tanks reported at 441132.

1525: "C" Coy:- Morep A 1522, B 1523, C 498118, F Nebelwerfer, H 340° (Passed to Bde).

1600 – 1620: Enemy violently rebelled the area in front of "B" Coy. Obviously a reaction to the Beds attack.

1625: Beds:- Leading Pls on objectives. Position still obscure.

1630: Beds:- We are running short of 3" mortar amm. Can you help us out?

1635: To Beds:- Yes. We can spare you 100 rounds which you can collect from FLYMAN.

1645: Sitrep:- Light shelling and Spandau fire during the afternoon.

462137 is location of Spandau and possible site of light mortar (Gunnery engaging).

"C" Coy came under command of 2 Beds and Herts.

1700: Beds:- "C" Coy Surreys have arrived and taken over "B" Coy Beds' positions. "D" Coy Surreys will not be required as "A" Coy are not being relieved.

1702: To "C" Coy:- You will not be required as originally planned. You will stay where you are.

1705: "B" Coy:- Very heavy stuff landing between the airfield and our positions.

1715: "D" Coy:- Report smoke in the area of ROSCO.

1745: CO to "D" Coy:- You are to patrol over the Fossi if possible.

1830: Bde:- Some vehicles can come over the river tonight – what do you require? CO:- Send Coys' carriers and jeeps, and direct them into "D" Coy's area.

1855: "D" Coy:- Can hear 3 tanks moving on airfield from left to right. Bearing 297° from PIRATE (RHA engaged).

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2035: "D" Coy:- Spandaus firing from houses North of Pirate. RHA called for RONCO. RONCO brings down a mixture of HE, smoke and airburst on to the houses North of PIRATE

2115: "D" Coy:- Torches seen flashing on airfield at approx 459141. Probably tanks (Action taken by 22 Field Regt. - HE, and 142 RHA – phos smoke.

2145: Intentions for night 3-4.

2200: Bde:- "B" Coy are to be prepared to go under command Beds by 0800 hrs tomorrow.

2205: CO warned D" Coy of Bde's order.

2300: Carriers:- 12 Nebels in area forward of FLYMAN.

Major PM Plastow, MC posted to Bn ex-hospital. Casualties: 2 OR wounded and evacuated.

Nov 4th

0030: "D" Coy:- Report 2 Spandaus firing at closer range than before (Engaged by 142 RHA with air burst).

0045: "D" Coy:- Report shoot in area.

0100: Carriers:- Patrol has returned – NTR.

0145: "A" Coy & "D" Coy:- Report shelling of their area.

0230: "B" Coy:- Patrol has left to recce a crossing place of the Fossi. Pioneer has accompanied them.

0300: "C" Coy:- NTR

0400: "B" Coy:- Patrol report. Crossing place at 464135. Water about 1' deep – very muddy. Passable for infantry but nothing else.

0545: Recce patrol reported in. He said that the Spandaus open up every time our Vickers fired, and that it was most intense between 0300 and 0500 hrs. They were unable to carry out their mission because of this fire. He suggested that they try to work along the river bank in daylight. CO agreed to this.

0600: 18 Nebels in area between Bn HQ and FLYMAN.

0930: Bde Comd arrived at Bn HQ, accompanied by Bde Major and Staff captain.

1030: Div Comd visited CO.

1430: "A" Coy:- Report mortar fire on SE edge of minefield. Bearing 313° Mag from this location.

1445: "D" Coy:- 4 bursts of Spandau fire and rifle grenades on PIRATE.

1500: 18 Nebels in area of Bn HQ and "B" Coy.

1730: Bde Comd:- Div Comd wants to test the reaction of the enemy to a Div-scale barrage. Would like to lay it on at 1900 hrs. Finally arranged for six in the morning as our relief "B" by "D" Coys) is going on tonight, and patrols will be out all night. (Warned Recce and "D" Coy. All patrols to be in, and everyone under cover).

1835: "D" Coy:- 1 Spandau firing from NNW of White House, and 1 from the White House North of PIRATE.(RHA engaging with RONCO).

1845: Relief of B" by "D" complete.

1850: "D" Coy:- Report stonk satisfactory, but have had to stop observing as they were being stonked themselves.

1935: Intentions night 4-5 Nov.

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1940: "A" Coy:- Report all in at "C" Coy's old location.
1955: "D" Coy:- Spandau firing from a point 150 yds West of the White House (RHA engaged with RONCO).
2050: "D" Coy:- Patrol has returned. See morning Sitrep 05830A from Bde which includes detail of Serial 31 patrol.
2055: Intercept Beds:- Small enemy patrol in our rear engaged and dispersed.
2100: Browning MG manned by Ark crew is firing from carriers' location at airfield buildings.
2115: RA Rep:- The three guns reported by Recce patrol confirmed by cross-bearing (meds engaging).
2130: "D" Coy:- Report "D" Coy Spandaus firing on area PIRATE.
2140: "D" Coy:- Spandau located at 463137.
Major WE Brown admitted to hospital (sick). Casualties: 1 OR wounded and evacuated.

Nov 5th

10 Inf Bde Op Instr No 39 received from Bde. Heavy enemy shelling and mortaring during the night. Direct hit on Bn HQ and adjoining house occupied by RA party but no casualties. There were also several hits in the yard. "Cab rank" operated during the day over airfield buildings, scoring direct hit on control tower. Later the control tower was demolished.
0500: Bde:- Div arty shoot has been cancelled as it would probably excite the enemy into intense retaliation.
0600: Nebels and shells all round Bn HQ and "D" Coy.
0715: To "D" Coy:- The 'cab rank' is performing at 0800 hrs, 0830 hrs and 0900 hrs on the airfield, so keep your men under cover.
0720: Bde Comd:- Discuss the possibility of having an M10 shoot up the airport buildings (It was decided to shoot from other side of river).
0730: CO warned MGs to be on the alert to shoot up any Germans trying to escape from the bombing.
0810: 'Cab rank' operating.
0830: "C" Coy:- Report a hit on the control tower by bombers. Strafing was right on target. Bde:- Morning Sitrep from Bde includes patrol reports (see attached)
0850: 'Cab rank' operating over airfield buildings.
0920: 'Cab rank' operating over airfield buildings.
0930: Officer from KRRC with some partisans reported to CO. He is on way towards POLICEMAN to look for traces of their missing personnel.
1130: Bde:- Intentions. DCLI are to relieve Beds & Herts. "C" Coy Surreys will be relieved and go back to their old location.
1400: Heavy concentration of Nebels in area Bn HQ.
1415: A spitfire engaging airfield buildings was seen to disintegrate as it was banking.
1430: CO and ADJT left for Bde, and Major Plastow assumed command of the Bn during the absence of CO.
1435: A/Tk report:- Report that 17 pdr have fired six rounds at the

tower on airfield buildings. They had six hits (2 HE and 4 AP). Gun is being moved to fire at left hand building.

1530: Bombing of control tower. 1 tower demolished.

1630: Capt Hatt-Cook reported to Bn HQ that he had been on a recce patrol. Route FLYMAN – 463129 – 457128. No enemy seen. 40 civilians found in house 461128. They say that Germans left their place four days ago. 3 civilians in house 459127 report same. No enemy movement seen in airfield buildings. At 1530 hrs enemy shelled area 456130. (Passed to Bde).

1835: "D" Coy:- Report usual two Spandaus firing on to their area. Six shells in their area.

1840: Bde:- Supply covering party for a recce party along Fossi.

1900: "D" Coy:- Report a very accurate stonk of their area. Bearing 340° 350° Mag.

1905: 12:- Nebels in our area.

1945: CO from Bde:- Tp of Recce is being relieved tonight by another of their tps.

2000: To "D" Coy:- Warning that tank personnel will be coming along road to PIRATE. They are examining track between road and Fossi.

2040: Tank recce party left.

2045: Warned "D" Coy that patrol was on way.

2050: From Bde:- Evening Sitrep and patrol intentions night 5/6.

2120: "D" Coy:- Tank recce party has arrived.

2200: "D" Coy:- Report that rifle grenades are coming from area of wadi, which is where the recce party wished to go. They are waiting 'till all is quiet.

2210: To Bde:- Report of patrol to BOXER. Floods have subsided, but ground is very soft. The houses at BOXER are very badly damaged. No sign of enemy. 2 civilians said that Germans who left four days ago boasted of having taken 500 PW.

2215: "C" Coy passed under command of 2 DCLI on the relief of 2 Beds and Herts by DCLI. "C" Coy remains same location.

2220: Arrange stonk on houses reported enemy-held by patrol to RONCO (see patrol report).

2225: Warned DCLI of contact patrol from our carriers leaving at 2300 hrs.

2235: "C" Coy:- Report Spandau from position directly in front of them.

2245: Tank recce patrol returned after being fired on as they came down from the road. 2310: Report to relief complete. Tanks heard moving near airport buildings.

Nov 6th

0015: Carriers:- Reported contacting DCLI.

0100: "D" Coy:- Patrol has left (Serial 38).

0215: "D" Coy:- Patrol returned for details.

0340: "C" Coy:- Sitrep. Quiet except for occasional slight shelling. Some Schmeisser fire from across Fossi.

0400: 12:- Nebels in area Bn HQ.

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0530: Nebels in area Bn HQ. "C" Coy:- Smoke laid in front of Coy positions – probably to cover withdrawal from Schmeisser position.

0750: Bombing and strafing of airfield commenced.

10 Inf Bde O O No 16 received. "Cab rank" operated during the morning, and right-hand tower of airfield buildings was demolished by bombs.

0920: "C" Coy:- Report that right-hand tower of airfield buildings has just been demolished by bombs. Other bombs dropped behind the woods. There is still a rather open large windowed tower still standing, unsuitable for an OP.

1100: "D" Coy personnel commenced digging slit trenches in area of Bn HQ for protection of Coys whilst at FUP.

1540: 5 rockets fired by plane at airfield buildings.

1545: "D" Coy:- Enemy seen carrying a stretcher case from off the airfield, stretcher party of 2 with 3 following. They came from 455136, and took the casualty into ruined hangar building.

1640: "D" Coy:- Report airburst on Eastern edge of airfield, also enemy shells in groups of twos and threes along line of Fossi.

1700: Intercept:- DCLI have had a house flattened by a very accurate stonk, and the infantry were buried.

1840: "D" Coy:- Enemy gun firing from a bearing of 346° Mag on to Route 9.

1920: "C" Coy:- 12 Nebels in area from bearing of 337° Mag. Spandaus also spraying the area.

2135: "D" Coy:- Noise of enemy tanks in area of RONCO village (RHA engaged).

2140: Bde:- Report that operated against DCLI was wearing British steel helmets (Coy informed).

2220: "D" Coy:- Spandau firing from area airfield buildings (22 Fd engaged)

2300: 12:- Nebels in area Bn HQ

2320: "D" Coy:- Noise of diesel engine having difficulty in starting heard coming from halfway between the White House and RONCO village.

2325: "D" Coy:- Nebels in area PIRATE from bearing 334° Mag (Passed to RA).

2345: Light mist developing.

2350: "D" Coy:- Report two casualties from direct hit on house. Casualties: 2 wounded and evacuated.

Nov 7th

0001 – 0200: Occasional heavy shell and intermittent bursts of Spandau fire in Bn area.

0240: "D" Coy:- Serial 42 returned at 0240 hrs – time out 0130 – crossed the Fossi and out across the airfield. At 466134 they were met by Spandau fire from houses at 467137, and also from direction of aerodrome buildings. They took cover under some earthworks and every time they moved they were sniped at. They were unable to proceed any further, and returned in pairs. They state that the ground

on the far side of Fossi is very rough but passable for infantry.

Amendments to Bde O O No 16 received.

0700: "C" Coy reverted to command of the Bn.

1000: Coy Comds. attended a short conference held at Bn HQ.

1000 – 1200: 2 waves (86) of medium bombers operated over Forli. Spitfires shot up airfield buildings at intervals during the day.

1330: "D" Coy:- One officer just shot by a sniper.

1430: CO held "O" Group conference at Bn HQ. Casualties: 1 OR wounded and evacuated. Operation Order No 1 issued. Attack carried through as planned with no serious opposition. For complete details of enemy dispositions and the plan of attack see App J5 issued by Bde on 11 Nov, and Int Log App B1.

1730: Intermittent shelling of area commenced.

1800: "A" Coy:- Italian civilian brought in from Recce positions. He has been into enemy lines twice on the pretext of fetching a chair and bottle of vino from his house near RONCO village. After he returned the first time Recce officer was sniped, he returned to enemy lines on the pretext he had forgotten the vino. On his return he was questioned (sent back to Bde).

1800: Capt. Hatt-Cook reported in at Bn HQ, and said that the corner of the road near PIRATE was being plastered by small mortar, and every shot was on the mark.

1835: "C" Coy:- Sitrep NTR.

1850: 18 Nebels in area of Bn HQ followed by 24 shells. One small fire started but was soon extinguished. One tank hit by Nebel but no damage done.

2130: "C" Coy:- Their protective patrol has gone out to position near the junction of the ditch and Fossi. Their task is to protect the start line.

2137: "A" Coy:- Have left their location and are now on way to FUP.

2150: "B" Coy:- Moving into FUP now.

2200: "A" Coy:- In FUP.

2220: "A" Coy & "B" Coy:- have left FUP.

2230: "B" Coy:- Reached road.

2245: Neighbouring barrage opened up.

2250: All quiet on our front.

2254: "A" Coy:- Crossing the Fossi now. Preparing to advance.

2256: "B" Coy:- Report TOP Bde informed.

2256: "A" Coy:- Report TOP Bde informed.

2258: CO to "A" and "B" Coys:- Well done. Go ahead.

2300: "B" Coy:- Going well.

2306: "A" Coy:- Pushing forward. Going well.

2308: OP (in "D" Coy's house):- Report few bursts of Spandau fire and possibly tommy gun. far side of airfield is being heavily shelled.

2314: "C" Coy:- Standing patrol has returned OK, and has nothing to report.

2315: CO to Carriers:- Occupy your buildings as per plan.

2318: "D" Coy:- Report that it has been very quiet despite the fact

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that they have been firing all their Brens. Have only had a few mortars in return.

2319: "A" Coy:- HAT (Bde informed).

2321: OP:- Report flashes seen from airfield buildings.

2327: To "A" Coy:- Shelldrake report on way to you now.

2340: To Bde:- No report of opposition. Getting well into the buildings.

2346: "A" Coy:- There is some opposition, but we are winking them out.

2349: "A" Coy:- Winking out will be a slow process because control is very difficult. There is no serious opposition.

2359: "D" Coy:- 17 pdr in position at PIRATE.

Nov 8th

0002: To Bde:- Coys have met some opposition. Control is difficult. They seem to be together somewhere in Eastern edge of buildings.

0011: "A" Coy:- Shell drake rep has arrived OK.

0012: Carriers:- Report that they are on their objective.

0013: "A" Coy & "B" Coy:- We are setting up a joint HQ.

"B" and "C" Coys consolidated on the airfield.

0015: CO gave OK for RE officer to proceed with bulldozer and clear a way over the Fossi for A/Tk guns.

0022: OP:- Report Spandau fire from RATCATCHER firing South West.

0034: "A" Coy:- Called for defensive fire. Targets 100 and 101 which is a line 500 yds North of buildings.

0044: "B" Coy:- Report Spandau fire from North and North East that is from area where target has been called for.

0047: OP:- Report two blazes of light in area of buildings believed to be 77 Grenades.

0048: From Bde:- German intercept. English have broken through in airfield area – we are arranging a counter-attack with the help of KURT.

0051: OP:- Nebels in their own area.

0055: OP:- Report quite a lot of Spandau fire from North and North West going over the airfield.

0104: OP:- 4 shells very close to us. A lot of Spandaus firing now from RATCATCHER onto buildings on airfield.

0108: "A" Coy:- Spandaus from North and North East. 1 sub-unit is missing for time being (RAs informed of Spandau fire, and the area is being engaged).

0112: OP:- 2 white Verrey lights seen at several minutes interval.

0114: To Bde:- 2 white Verrey lights seen at several minutes interval. Considerable Spandau fire, some mortaring on airfield buildings.

Carry on with targets 100 and 101.

0115: RE officer returned as Spandau fire was too fierce for bulldozer party.

0118: OP:- Still considerable Spandau fire.

0120: 4.2" mortar rep:_ Reported that he was laying his mortars on RATCATCHER.

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0133: *From Bde:- From a German intercept. Bn on the airfield is out of touch with their higher formation as their line is out. We anticipate the danger coming from PIRATE (warned "D" Coy and Carriers to be on the alert).*

0141: *OP:- Intermittent Spandau fire still continues, and also some shells in area of OP. Shells also landed near airfield buildings (our own).*

0145: *From Bde:- Move the Beds carrier pl up near PIRATE. CO ordered Carrier Pl Comd to move to BOXER immediately.*

0155: *"A" Coy:- Sitrep. Spasmodic Spandau fire coming from RATCATCHER.*

0157: *To Bde:- Sitrep as above. Am bringing up Beds carrier pl to BOXER in order to reinforce Recce if needed. There is no room for them at PIRATE.*

0202: *"A" Coy:- Some light HE and spasmodic Spandau on buildings.*

0215: *"C" Coy:- Have got Lt Glendinning at our location. He is badly wounded and needs medical help (jeep sent)*

0230: *Beds carrier pl:- Report on the move now.*

0320: *"C" Coy:- Report that Lt Bruinvels has been carried back wounded, and had about 20 of his platoon with him. Ambulance jeep was sent.*

0305: *"A" Coy:- They are at present in right-hand building, and are moving into the next one. Shelldrake rep is with them. Opposition is between them and a sub-unit of "B" Coy.*

0315: *An NCO from Lt Bruinvels' platoon reported to Bn HQ, and told CO that there was some confusion on the Start Line, and they lost contact with the Company. They were the left-hand platoon. They pushed on until they came under enfiladed Spandau fire and had to take cover in a large bomb crater. They suffered some casualties in trying to get out to advance. They finally escaped to the rear, and worked their way round and carried on the advance until they came up against the left-hand end of the buildings. Here they came under Spandau fire, and had grenades thrown at them. They also came under our own shell fire, and after Lt Bruinvels was wounded they withdrew, and carried him back to "D" Coy) the NCO who told this is going to take stretcher bearers out to try and find the three wounded men they had to leave in the bomb crater).*

0325: *To Bde:- "B" Coy are firm, and "A" Coy are working round to the right, and clearing opposition between them and "B" Coy. 1 platoon got lost and had casualties from Spandau. They went too far over to left and came under our own barrage, so must have been near RATCATCHER. When they came up against the buildings they came under Spandau fire, and grenades were thrown at them from the top of the ruins. Then Lt Bruinvels was wounded, and they were forced to retire, carrying him back.*

0335: *"A" Coy:- NTR*

0340: *A/Tk battery are having 2 pdrs towed by tanks, and 6 pdrs towed by carriers.*

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0345: 22 (Beds Carrier Pl):- Report that they are at BOXER.

0355: "B" Coy:- There are no positions in our area for Elephants.

0400: FOD with "A" Coy:- We are firm in right-hand building. Between our positions and SHIMMY there is an enemy position in a house which cannot be dealt with because of cross-fire. Position on left is obscure.

0405: "A" Coy:- Position unchanged. We have been blinded by dust from the rubble. There is very little cover for tanks.

0415: "A" Coy:- Tanks moving off from area of Bn HQ. Two Tps going up.

0430: To Bde:- Two Tps of tanks are moving up, and third Tp will meet them at FLYMAN. There will be two Tps up with the Coys. Two 2 pdrs are being towed by the tanks, and one 6 pdr by a carrier.

0445: Sgt Watts of 1, after being unable to locate his Coy HQ, reported back to Bn HQ. He reported that he had left his platoon well established in the Northern building South East of CUCURACHA, On the way he passed Lt Glendinning's platoon well dug in behind LANDLER. CO informed him of the location of "A" Coy's HQ, and he prepared to take back with him the members of the party which had brought in Lt Bruinvels.

0450: "A" Coy:- Attack on enemy-occupied house failed, and position is unchanged. We are awaiting arrival of tanks before renewing the attack.

0500: Sgt Watts left with his party (warned "A" Coy they were on their way).

0505: "A" Coy:- We are in SE buildings and are looking out for our sub-unit. Do not follow the tape as it is laid wrong (warned Sgt' Watt's party)

0513: OP:- Report that things seem pretty quiet in area of aerodrome buildings. Some Spandau fire from right to left.

0520: From Tanks:- Tanks are at common RV awaiting guides (told Coys).

0525: "A" Coy:- Am sending guides now.

0526: "A" Coy:- Have contacted one tank.

0527: To Bde:- Coys seem quite firm and at least one tank has married up with them.

0530: CO to Carriers:- Remainder of your platoon are to be ready to move to PIRATE.

0550: From tanks:- One Tp has contacted one Coy Comd, and the other Tp has contacted some members of the other Coy.

0545: "A" Coy:- One 2 pdr A/Tk gun is now in position near buildings.

0600: CO:- Remainder of Carriers to move now.

0605: CO to Carriers:- You are to proceed to airfield buildings as soon as possible.

0615: CO to "A" Coy:- Try to take SHIMMY before it gets light.

0620: CO to Mortars:- Be prepared to engage target North and North West of PIRATE.

0630: "A" Coy:- Sitrep. Have got 5 PW. We are now well established

with two sub-units well dug in. Have got tanks and anti-tank guns with us now. There is some opposition from Spandau and mortars which is being dealt with.

0650: 22 (Beds carrier pl):- CO ordered them to go to PIRATE as a thickener, not as a replacement.

0700: Sitrep to Bde:- "B" and "C" Coys crossed SL at 2258 hrs, and advanced to the double towards airfield buildings. Spandaus were firing on fixed lines from the right, but casualties were light owing to darkness and the speed of our advance. Leading tps reached the buildings 2319 meeting opposition from Spandaus, and grenades were thrown from top rooms. Fighting became rather confused with heavy Spandau fire from area RATCATCHER and from area to West of airfield buildings. Buildings are now being cleared. 23 PW taken so far, no identification yet. Two tps of tanks and special 2 pdrs are up with "B" and "C" Coys. Tp M 10s area building 452132, 17 pdrs at 467133 and 462128. Carrier platoon moving up to airfield buildings, and carrier platoon Beds Herts to PIRATE.

0715: "A" Coy:- We are clearing some houses.

0715: "A" Coy:- Report SHIMMY.

0720: "A" Coy:- 5 more PW.

0735: "A" Coy:- 2 more PW taken from area CUCURACHA which is now clear.

0740: Intercept:- Kings have taken PWs between FARRIER and CUTLER. Hamps are now 400 yds SW of CAKEWALK.

0741: Carriers:- Held up on tarmac by Spandau.

0745: "A" Coy:- We have cleared all the buildings and are now firmly established on North and North West extremities.

0748: Carriers:- Spandau is in hedge 200 yds East of SHIMMY.

0752: Carriers:- Have had to return to old location as we could not get through Spandau fire. Am arranging for it to be dealt with.

0800: Intercept:- Enemy tanks reported at CUTLER. "A" Coy:- 'Cab rank' must be stopped immediately as they are bombing CUCHIRACH which we now hold (passed to Bde).

0810: "A" Coy:- Aircraft not bombing now.

0813: "A" Coy:- Want starlight carrier now (despatched).

0815: "A" Coy:- 12 PWs are being sent back now.

0830: Intercept:- One platoon of Kings in houses 449138 not firm on CUTLER. One platoon SOM LI on STOMP.

0845: Carriers to "A" Coy:- Have located Spandau, and are going to deal with it with smoke cover on right.

0846: "B" Coy:- Party from us covered by tanks proceeding to Carriers along gully.

0850: RAs putting down covering smoke for Carriers.

0855: Carriers:- RAP carrier held up the same as we are, and is with us.

0857: LO:- Reported to CO that our air support is stopping until 1000 hrs.

0900: "D" Coy:- Mortar firing on us from 257° Mag

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0901: "A" Coy:- 24 PWs are on way back now, and are marching across aerodrome.

0908: To Carriers:- Smoke going down now.

0914: 24 PWs arrived at this location. Most of them identified as 994 GR (includes 1 CSM).

0925: to 22:- You are to move to your new position now.

0927: Nebels in area of road.

0955: From Carriers: Have arrived at aerodrome buildings. Capt Hatt-Cook stalked and captured a Spandau crew which was holding them up.

1025: 2 wounded Germans brought in from aerodrome (total now 28)

1057: 22:- Have arrived at PIRATE and are now in position.

1228: Considerable movement seen on RONCO road. Enemy seen moving troops under Red Cross flag. Engaged by 142 Fd Regt and 4.2" mortars.

1300: "C" Coy:- Report that 20 men have run from 450136 to shelter at 447136. Unable to identify.

1327: Intercept:- Kings reported at 448141.

1340: "D" Coy:- Patrol has gone up road towards RONCO village.

1341: "A" Coy:- Patrol has left for LASSAN.

1345: Intercept:- Enemy tanks reported at 452142.

1350: "C" Coy:- Heavy shelling of our area.

1410: "C" Coy:- 12 Germans observed at 454134 proceeding in direction of SW corner of aerodrome.

1425: "D" Coy:- Patrol has returned and reported that the White House now clear and they drew no fire.

1545: "A" Coy:- The two 2 pdrs with us have been damaged by shellfire. CO replied that they will be replaced by 6 pdrs tonight.

1725: "A" Coy:- An SP is firing from area RATCATCHER to CUTLER. There is a fire burning 300 yds NW of LANDLER.

1730: OP:- SP at RATCACHER is firing at airfield buildings(tanks having heavies put on it).

1745: To Major Paskins:- Patrol warning as in message timed 081915A. Send four guides to thus HQ by first dark to guide friends who are passing through. They will probably want to know routes to LASSAN and RATCATCHER.

1755: "A" Coy:- Track activity near RICCI. A tank fired 15 rounds from C RICCI in direction of our buildings, and then went off in a Northerly direction (RHA engaged).

1840: "D" Coy:- Report that it is much quieter, and no Spandaus have been heard so far.

1910: "D" Coy:- Report a gun firing on route 9 from 332° Mag (passed to RAs).

1925: Intentions for night 8/9 and 9 Nov received from Bde.

1945: "D" Coy:- Report of heavy engine moving West up Route 9 from RONCO village (artillery engaged area).

2050: "A" Coy:- Spandau firing from the North at very long range,

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otherwise all quiet.

2110: "D" Coy:- Patrol has just gone out.

Casualties: 4 killed and 6 wounded and evacuated. Lt S Bruinvels and Lt TM Glendinning (UDF) , MC seriously wounded and evacuated.

Move Order No 1 issued.

CESENA

Nov 9th

0600: Patrol reports to Bde. Serial 49 - Patrol went to RATCATCHER, clearing all buildings on the way. Serial 50 – Proceeded to LASSAN and found it occupied by enemy. They attacked the enemy post, killing one, wounding one, and taking 5 PW. Our casualties one man slightly wounded. After this all houses in LASSAN area were searched and found clear. 3 trucks on the road near LASSAN were seen to be ablaze. Serial 51 – When the patrol first went out at 2100 hrs they found that enemy's normal FDLs were unoccupied, but when they reached area 468140 movement was heard ahead. One man was seen, and a Spandau was firing from a house at 467142 towards the river. Single shots were heard between that location and RONCO village. This patrol returned to report, and was sent out again at 0100 hrs. They went as far as RONCO village, and found it unoccupied.

0930: Bn marched back to embussing point at road junction 493133, 1000: Bn HQ vehicles left for embussing point.

1120: Marching personnel arrived at embussing area.

1200: Head of column passed SP.

1230: Bn HQ established in house at 601069, with all coys in immediate neighbourhood.

Congratulatory messages received. Lt SWH Drage posted from 2 CRU. Lt JL Johnson posted to "X" Transit Camp for transfer to Middle East as Instructor.

Nov 10th

BBC representative visited Bn. Sgt Gibbs made a recording describing the attack on Forli airfield. This was broadcast from London later. See App J11.

Nov 11th

Instructions on Dress – OR issued to Coys. Notes re Booby Traps and Mines issued. Invitations to Social Evening in Officers' Mess issued.. 10 Inf Bde Infn Summary No 3 received giving complete story of the attack on Forli airfield. Captain HG Westworth admitted hospital (sick).

Nov 12th

Warning re water supplies issued. Exchange of messages.

Nov 13th

Bde Comd addressed the Bn at the Opera House, Cesena. Move order received from Bde. Warning Order for move issued to Coys. Move Order No 1 and supplement issued to Coys. Instructions for division of A Echelon issued.

Nov 14th

Bn prepared to move to Forli.

Leading vehicle passed SP as per Op Order at 1100 hrs, and arrived at

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Forli 1145 hrs.

1330: Bn HQ established 43751645 with Coys close by in the town. "B" Coy 43851658. "C" Coy 43821652. "D" Coy 43771648. Full instructions for Home Leave received from Bde, and copies issued to Coys.

Nov 15th

NTR. Bde 'O' Group was postponed.

Home Leave Party despatched. Lt ACL White & 13 ORs. Lt HG Theobald posted from 2 CRU.

Nov. 16th

NTR

Lt MJ Corcoran posted from 2 CRU.

Nov 17th

No move today

10 Inf Bde Op Instr No 40 received.

1400: CO attended conference at Bde. Lt. BW Aldis and Lt RA Brissended posted from 2 CRU. Captain LE Matthew (UDF) admitted hospital (sick

Nov 18th

0430: 10 Inf Bde Adm Order received. Adm Order No 1 issued. Op Instr No 1 issued to Coys. Bn prepared to move to a concentration area.

1545: Bn left location and proceeded as per Op Instr.

1600: Leading vehicle passed SP.

1615: Bn HQ established conc. area 404187. Coys (marching personnel) left old locations during the evening, and reported in at new locations between 2100 and 2200 hrs.

2100: "A" Coy:- Reported all in at new location 402188.

2113: "B" Coy:- Reported all in at new location C MAMBELLI 408184.

2130: "C" Coy:- Reported all in at new location 399189, 396191, 396188.

2145: Carriers:- Reported all in at new location 411183.

2205: Lt Street reported to Bn HQ that he was not allowed to accompany Beds herts patrol because the Boche are on this side of the river, and the patrol has been cut down to the minimum. He then returned to his company.

2330: "C" Coy:- Report shelling forward of their area. Bearing 335° Mag from 199389 (Bde informed)

Nov 19th

0200: From Bde:- There will be a co-ordinating conference at this HQ at 1200 hrs. IO not required to attend.

0430: Op Order received from Bde.

1030: From Bde:- Carrier platoon to move to 418178 (Carriers informed).

1200: "C" Coy:- 4 shells area MULLIGATAWNY. Casualties 1 killed / civilian seriously wounded.

1500: Carriers:- Reported move complete

1800: B Sqn 51 R Tks arrived area Bn HQ.

1900: Sitrep to Bde:- A fairly quiet day. Intermittent shelling and mortaring of area forward of "D" Coys location. At 1130 hrs several

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shells landed in area of "D" Coy platoon at X-roads 395189. One killed. Carrier pl moved and their location is now 418178. All other locations unchanged. B Sqn 51 R Tks are now complete in area of this HQ.

2045: CMPL (Counter Mortar Listening Post) reports being Spandau'd. Location 38791942. Have sent in 15 shellreps during day.

Casualties: 1 OR killed by shelling in "D" Coy area.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE

Advance Party of 2 Officers and 35 ORs warned to stand to to proceed to an unknown destination as from 20th November 1944. Major AWF Paskins was in charge of the Bn Party, with Capt CW Deayton-Groom.

Nov 20th

0700: Sitrep to Bde. NTR.

1000: CO attended conference at Bde.

1400: CO held "O" Group conference at Bn HQ.

1430: Div Comd visited Bn HQ, and wished everyone good luck.

1900: Adjutant moved forward and established new Tac HQ 398206.

1930: Op Order No 1 issued, and Admn Order No 2 issued.

2200: Spandau fire round Tac HQ.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE

Time of departure postponed from 2245 hrs to 0145 hrs 21 Nov.

Nov 21st

Coys moved as per Op Order without incident.

0030: CO and party arrived Tac HQ.

0200: Wireless silence ended. Barrage opened.

0225: Wireless communication established with 1 and 2. Intermittent and bad.

At 0150 hrs "B" and "C" Coys crossed the SL. "B" Coy followed up the barrage closely. There was a little enemy shelling, and several casualties were sustained. Two Pls were forward and when they were about 150 yards from the river bank they ran into an anti-personnel minefield, and a number of casualties were sustained from mines set off by trip wires. Those who penetrated some distance found a wire strand fence with 'Minen' notices on it. At this stage two Spandaus covering the minefield opened up and the Coy were forced to withdraw 200-250 yards and to dig in at about 0245 hrs. They could hear two tanks moving on the far bank, and machine-gunning the area. The Coy remained dug in until they were ordered to withdraw at 0610 hrs. "C" Coy followed up the barrage and when they were about 200 yards short of the river, two Pls and Coy HQ lay up while the third Pl went forward to clear the house at 388212 (on the river bank at the end of the track). While they were lying up a very heavy mortar accounted for practically the whole of Lt Stephenson's Pl. Lt Stephenson was wounded at this time. Coy HQ was hit, the No 18 wireless set being knocked out, and Major Spencer (Coy Comd) killed. Lt Corcoran was also killed with a number of others. Lt Street gathered together the remainder, and took them back a short distance and then round to the right in an attempt to cross the river near the MONTONE-CORSINA junction. He also ran into a minefield

before reaching the river and suffered casualties. He then withdrew to C GEORGI and lay up there until he was contacted and ordered to withdraw at approx. 0730 hrs.

0244: "A" Coy:- *Want stretcher bearers immediately – have 16 wounded.*

0253: "A" Coy:- *Have withdrawn a short distance and dug in. Situation very confused. (to Bde).*

0305: "A" Coy:- *Report tracked vehicles on opposite side of river on bearing 304° Mag.*

0307: *Runner from 2 reported at Bn HQ and said company had suffered 50% casualties. They had been heavily mortared whilst lying up and waiting for a platoon to occupy a house on the river crossing 388212.*

0325: "A" Coy:- *Held up short of the river. Have suffered casualties from mines, Spandaus, shelling.*

0345: "A" Coy:- *Are digging in. Have you any instructions? C):- No instructions at the moment.*

0350: *L/Cpl Pexton and Lt Stevenson (wounded) reported to Bn HQ. They said that company had suffered very heavy casualties from mortaring and mines. Coy HQ had suffered a hit, wounding the majority of them. A number of wounded were laying up in a ditch, and L/Cpl Pexton wanted stretcher bearers to go back with him.*

0400: *CO to Bde:- "B" Coy report heavy casualties, and "C" Coy can be written off as company was caught in mortar stonk whilst waiting for pl to occupy house on river bank. Can I pass "D" Coy over the river where the DCLI have crossed?*

0405: "A" Coy:- *Report that minefield in front of them is covered by Spandaus, and enemy tanks are patrolling the other side of the river.*

0430: *Lt Dempster reported to Bn HQ Said that "B" Coy got within a hundred yards of the river and ran into a minefield. There were mine notices and tripwires, and casualties were sustained through contacting tripwires. Company has withdrawn about 250 yds, and are getting dug in. We can hear two tanks patrolling the far bank. Are not being seriously stonked now. Lt Dempster then returned to "B" Coy.*

0435: *To "C" Coy:- Be ready to move to area of other crossing.*

0440: *To "A" Coy:- Patrol to right, and confirm that none of 2 are over the river (Bde want stonk on lateral junction across river).*

0445: *Bde:- 1 troop of tanks to move to area of river crossing to cover Shermadosers and Arks.*

0515: "A" Coy:- *Being heavily stonked by Nebels and mortars.*

0545: "A" Coy:- *being shelled by our own guns (RA is stopping).*

0550: *Bde:- Coys to make an orderly return to area Bn HQ.*

0555: *To "A" Coy:- Return to this location. Contact as many of 2 as you can and bring them back with you. It must be an orderly withdrawal. Start walking at W – 50.*

0612: *CO to "C" Coy:- Send your Sunray here.*

0613: "A" Coy:- *Moving now. Patrol to 2 not back yet.*

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0615: CO to Carriers:- Send Sunray Minor and 4 OR to this location now.

0616: CO to "A" Coy:- Leave someone behind to send back patrol when it returns.

0630: Runner from 2:- Said that Lt Street and 29 OR are laid up near the river. They have a number of stretcher cases with them. CO sent runner back to fetch in Lt Street and party (Carriers's patrol cancelled).

0635: 2:- Arrived at our location and told to rest.

0635: CO told Sunray "C" Coy to move into houses along the lateral road short of the river.

0700: "C" Coy:- In position along lateral road.

0800: "B" Coy:- Have arrived back in area of "A" Coy's new location which is near the RAP. Strength: Lt Street and about 35 – 40).

1020: Lt Dempster reported that most of their wounded have been collected, and that a number of the Carrier platoon were fetching 2's wounded.

1030 – 1230: Intermittent shelling and mortaring continued in Bn area. Aircraft bombed and strafed enemy positions.

1145: "C" Coy:- Report Spandau firing from ICECREAM towards bend in river

1150: Tanks at COCCALINA report that there are some Germans stalking them. (CO warned "C" Coy to keep sharp look out).

1155: It is now reported that the tanks being stalked are those of the DCLI.

1220: "C" Coy:- Report that tanks with them are quite OK, and are firing towards C TRADI. Spandau fire is very close to their house.

1415: Nebels in area of Bn HQ.

1430: Adjutant went to Bde HQ and at 1500 hrs telephoned to CO to say that Bn, less "D" Coy, would return to Forli. "D" Coy to remain under command 44 Recce Regt.

1515: CO gave orders to RSM for movement of Main HQ.

1600: Adjutant returned from Bde.

1745: Adjt and party left for Forli.

1845: Bn HQ established at 434167 in Forli.

1930: "B" and "C" Coys arrived at Forli (same location), and combined to form "B" Coy.

2330: Main HQ arrived.

Casualties: 4 killed, 63 wounded and evacuated, 8 wounded but not evacuated. Major WG Spencer and Lt MT Corcoran killed, and Lt H Stephenson wounded and evacuated.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE

0200: Party left B Ech area at Forli in unit transport as Bde convoy.

0300: Arrived Cesena. Div Signs on transport painted out by Div Pro Sec. Bn party joined remainder of Div convoy. Orders issued by DAAG 4 Div for MT move to Ancona at 0500 hrs.

0430: The cook with Bn party made a quick 'brew up' before departure.

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0500: Div convoy left Cesena.

0845: Div convoy arrived Ancona. 'Brew Up' and breakfast at 1000 hrs.

1230: Baggage party left for docks.

1530: Remainder of party left for docks, and embarked at 1600 hrs on the troopship 'Hai Lee (a Norwegian vessel).

1700: Tea and a sandwich from own rations.

1830: Dinner issued from the galley. Disorganisation in allocation of mess decks – very crowded, but all Surreys settled in by 1800 hrs. A heavy thunderstorm with terrific lightning flashes broke over Ancona during the period 1630 – 1700, but the rainfall was comparatively light. Three barrage balloons were struck by lightning, one falling on the town and causing a small fire, while the other two fell into the sea. Ship weighed anchor, and made for the open sea at 1900 hrs, turning South along the Adriatic coast.

Nov 22nd

"Eighth Army News" dated 22 Nov published the broadcast "The Attack on Forli Airfield" made by Sgt Gibbs of "B" Coy on 10 Nov.

1700: CO attended "O" Group conference at Bde. Op Instr No 2 issued. "D" Coy came under command of 2 Beds & Herts. "B" Coy came under command of 2 DCLI.

2000: Intentions 22/23 and 23 Nov received from Bde.

2100: Warning Order for very early move issued to Coys.

2130: Intermittent shelling of Northern end of Forli.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE - AT SEA

An uneventful night.

0730: Breakfast.

1300: Arrived Brindisi.

1530: Disembarked Brindisi

1530: Marched to station. Large packs, bedding and all stores conveyed to station by tpt.

1615: Arrived at station, and Bn party settled in one wagon.

1630: Brew-up beside railway line while waiting to move.

1700: Departed Brindisi station.

2339: Arrived Taranto station. Detrained, and remained on platform.

Nov 23rd

0600: Heavy shelling of our area in Forli.

0610: Move postponed

0800: Carriers left for new location

1100: Bn HQ moved off with "B" Coy.

1130: Bn HQ established with new location 404187. "B" Coy 402188.

Carriers and Pioneers came under command of 44 Recce Regt, and crossed the river with them at Surrey crossing. There was no opposition and carriers passed through in the form of two patrols (one pioneer assault section with each), and advanced to CORLETTO without opposition and established themselves there. Took 3 PW while patrolling forward with that unit. Casualties: 3 slightly wounded not evacuated.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

Intelligence Summary (italics)

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Appendix

- 0030: First truckload with baggage and half the personnel left the station for 186 Transit Camp.
0115: Remainder of party left for Transit Camp.
0145: Bn Party complete in 186 Transit Camp, and tented accommodation allocated.
0230: Hot meal for whole Div party.
0830: Breakfast for whole Div party.
Bn Party spent the morning cleaning up kit etc., and passes were issued to Taranto for everybody from 1400 to 2200 hrs.
- Nov 24th “B”, “D” Coys, Carriers and Pioneers still detached. Bn HQ remained in present location. *For details of Coys activities see Sitreps 2 42030 A.*
ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)
0715: Breakfast. Baggage sorted over during the morning, checked and marked up with unit serial number. Detachment found duties, fatigues and guards for Bde Gp.
1400: Pay Parade. Free issue of cigarettes and Air Mails. Passes for those not on duty.
- Nov 25th 10 Inf Bde Op Instr No 4 received.
1400: Orders received from Bde for Bn HQ to move back to Forli. *Coys to follow early.*
1630: Bn HQ left location and arrived Forli 1700 hrs and was established at 437166. Carriers and Pioneers reverted to command of the Bn and in Bde Reserve. Captain EK Mansfield and Lt HA Greenwood posted from 2 CRU.
1700: Coy billets allotted in immediate area.
ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)
NTR. Passes to Taranto
- Nov 26th *0700: “B” and “D” Coys embussed to move back to Forli.*
0730: “B” and “D” Coys reverted to command of Bn and arrived at Forli. Moved into billets already allotted. Adm Orders no 1 and 2 issued.
ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)
NTR. Passes to Taranto
- Nov 27th 0500: Advance party under Captain Edwards moved off. Admn Order No 3 and amendments to No 3 issued to Coys. Admn Order no 4 issued. 2/Lt LV Cooker posted to Bn ex-hospital.
ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)
Instructions issued for final packing and details of move to boat and embarkation. One man (Pte Baker FF 5673114) admitted to hospital at Bari (98 General?). Passes issued in afternoon.
- Nov 28th Bn moved off at 0045 hrs, and arrived at Dis P 0900 hrs, staging the night at Porto Civitanova. Captain LE Matthew (UDF) posted to Bn ex-hospital. Admn Order No 5 issued to Coys.
ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)

1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

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Appendix

Pack up in morning – blankets rolled in bundles of 12s and stacked with remainder of baggage.

1130: Lunch, all troops clear of tentage.

1200: Advance party from 5 Div arrived in Transit Camp ex troopship.

1300: Baggage parties commenced loading trucks.

1430: Party moved off to docks in portees.

1500: Party embarked on troopship 'PRINCESS KATHLEEN', and remained on mess decks while remainder of Div parties embarked.

1830: Dinner issued from the galley.

CHIETI

Nov 29th Bn left Porto Civitanova at 0600 hrs, arriving at Chieti, near Ortona, at 1000 hrs.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (TARANTO)

Emergency Stations Drill practised after Ship's Captain and OC Troops had made inspection of mess decks with all troops seated at mess tables.

1500: Ship weighed anchor and made out to sea.

1630: Boat stations practised. Ship was flat-bottomed, and as a result was pitching and rolling very heavily – most of the troops were seasick for two days. Bde found Fire Piquet of 1 Sgt l/c and 57 ORs, Bn party of 1 Cpl and 18 mounting at 1800 hrs (2nd shift)

Nov 30th Admn Order No 6 issued. Personal message from Corps Comd received and read to all ranks.

ADVANCE PARTY TO PALESTINE (AT SEA)

NTR. Bn party on fire piquet dismounted at 1600 hrs.