

## 1st/6th BATTALION, EAST SURREY REGIMENT

1945

Appendix

March

**ATHENS, GREECE**

- Mar 1st  
0700: Recce party left on first stage to new area.  
1030: Brig. SN Shoemith, CBE DSO, addressed the Bn. Delivered a parting speech, in which he thanked all ranks for their loyal co-operation and ready response at all times, and praised the Bn very highly.
- Mar 2nd  
Bn left Athens on first stage of journey to new area, travelling via Thebes to Thermopilae (Map Sheet 1/100,000 T 7 – 396419), arriving very dusty and tired after travelling all day over very bad roads. The majority of the Bn, however, to advantage of the opportunity to bathe in the hot sulphur springs which, in conjunction with a hot meal which had been prepared with commendable speed, they found most beneficial and conducive to slumber, despite the fact that the billets were far from ideal. The once-famous spa was disused, and many of the buildings were derelict.
- Mar. 3rd  
Resumed journey via Lamia – Levadhia to Farsala (Y 3098 – Sheet H7) arriving at 1400 hrs. Bn proceeded to Stavros (T 0321) but, as routes to Sophades were impassable, was then ordered to proceed via Larissa to Zarkon (T 1034 – Sheet Z6)
- Mar 4th  
Bn remained in Zarkon. Bn HQ established at T 107347. Population in general showed no hostility, but it was obvious at first that many of them resented our presence in their midst.
- Mar 5th  
“C” visited village of Grizanon on goodwill mission.  
“D” moved to Kandritsa S 9009 (sheet H 6) by rail. Roads still impassable.
- Mar 6th  
“B” left on goodwill mission to Palamas T 0519. Cmd Off and Adjt went out on road recce in armoured car.
- Mar 7th  
Instructions for visit of Bde Comd 8 March issued. “B” ordered to return from Palamas.
- Mar 8th  
New Bde Commander, Brig JA McKenzie, DSO MC visited Bn and inspected whole area and billets, stores, offices etc. “B” Returned from Palamas. Two performances of film show in “B” Coy’s billet in afternoon and evening; features being “The Hard Way” and “True to Life”. Well attended and generally judged as an excellent programme.
- Mar 9th  
“S” moved to Yeorganadhes 9930.
- Mar 10th  
Lt Col LGH Culverhouse reported and assumed command of the Bn. Major PW Plastow MC resumed appointment of Bn 2 i/c. “S” returned to Bn area.
- Mar 11th  
Church Parade held at 1030 hrs in village church attended by all Officers and 20 OR per Coy, conducted by Rev GHT Blake. RC Mass in

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same church at 1130 hrs. CO, 2i/c and IO visited Bde HQ at Trikkala, then proceeded to "B" Coy at Kardhitsa. Conference held at Bn HQ at 1700 hrs. Orders for Advance Party issued.

Mar 12th First section of Advance Party, under Capt. Brown, moved off by road to Trykkala, thence by rail to Kardhitsa. Second section of Advance Party, under command Maj. CM Plastow MC moved off by road to Kardhitsa. Move Order No 4 issued. CO inspected "B" Coy

Mar 13th "C" Coy moved off to Farsala by march route. Bn packed and prepared to move. Film show in evening – 'Meet the People'.

### **KARDITSA, GREECE**

Mar 14th Bn. less "B", "C" and "D" Coys, moved to Kardhitsa by road and rail. "C" Coy proceeded to Sophades T 0504. "B" Coy proceeded by march route to Farsala. A2 Echelon established Trikkala under command MTO. Bn HQ established S 907088.

Mar 15th Details of specialist courses issued by 2 i/c.  
1400: Comd Off held conference. "B" Coy arrived Kardhitsa.

Mar. 16th Details of Bde Comds' visit on 17<sup>th</sup> issued. Jeeps off the road – copy of Bde letter circulated. Particulars of Bde Rifle Meeting circulated.

Mar 17th 1000: Cmd Off inspected "S" Coy. Offrs played ORs in evening at rugby, and won 6 points to nil.

Mar 18th "A" Coy formed out of last draft and voluntary transfers from other Coys. Major WE Bruce-Jones assumed command of "A" Coy. Personnel for unit courses attached "HQ" and "B" Coys. Football match in evening. Bn v Kardhitsa Olympic was won by Bn 5 – 3. Intentions for week 19 – 25 March to Bde.

Mar 19th Details of scheme for leave in Athens issued. "B" Coy met "S" Coy DCLI in Bde football competition. Match resulted in a 3-goal draw. "HQ" Coy goodwill party to Koumades.

Mar 20th Warning Order for move of Bn issued. Information re personnel from Athens.

Mar 21st Accommodation return forwarded to Bde. Comd Off and Adjt visited Bde in afternoon. In two football matches during the day Bn team beat 149 Bn Gk Nat Gd 6 – 0. "S" Coy beat "S" Coy DCLI in replayed match of Bde Competitions 4 – 2 and entered semi-final.

Mar 22nd Leave party of 2 Offrs and 25 OR proceeded to Athens.

Mar 23rd 5 OR despatched to Bde for onward routing on LIAP. RSM's Drill Parade. Details of Advance Party issued.

Mar 24th Advance Party moved off under command Major PM Plastow MC at 0900 hrs. Invitation received in connections with celebrations taking

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place on Greek Independence Day (25<sup>th</sup>) – See translation at Instructions for Greek Independence Dy issued including copy of letter from Bde.

1800: Procession of school-children marched through streets and past Bn HQ to crown the statue of G Karaiskake.

- Mar 25th Reports on arms said to be concealed in villages of Rizovouni and Agnanderon forwarded to Bde. Greek Independence Day. Comd Offr attended services at Cathedral, march past of school-children and Greek national Guard as per invitation. Two shots fired early in evening, but no further disturbance occurred. Bn played Greek team Anmogensis, and won 2 – 1. Line was thronged with excited civilians who saw a keen, even game. Before the match an official of the opposing club presented Bn team captain with bouquet and pennant bearing their colours and initials, and then offered very good wishes for the welfare of his English visitors, and expressed the hope that they would soon return home. The speech was interpreted by a Greek civilian. A photograph was taken of the two teams together.
- Mar 26th Offrs held dance in their Mess in the evening. Move Order No 5 issued. 10 Bde Admn Order No 7 received.
- Mar 27th Social held in Sgts' Mess in evening. Admn Order No 2 issued.
- Mar 28th OR Dance held in the evening
- Mar 29th 1000: Bn moved embussed from Kardhitsa to tented area at Mt T1734, arriving at 1350 hrs. Bivouacs all laid out in Coy areas by Advance Party. Bde Comd visited unit area in afternoon.
- Mar 30th Good Friday. Weapon cleaning and settling in. Voluntary church service for all denominations in Bn area conducted by Rev. GHT Blake. Bde Comd. Accompanied by Bde Major and DAA & QMG visited the camp. Orders received to supply guard at DMA. Leave party of two officers and 28 OR left for Athens, also Major Ward who was to assume command of Rest Camp, vice Capt. Westworth. Tortoises were plentiful in the area, so in the evening a course was laid out with seven tracks, and tortoise races were held, with entries submitted in each race representing A, B, C, D, S and HQ Coys and Bn Hq.
- Mar 31st Resumed normal parades. Incidence of a fever, NYD, in Bn. 13 cases evacuated in 2 days. Camp Standing Orders and Fire Orders issued. Orders received to supply guard at Bde. Capt. JE Hatt-Cook, M.C. appointed A/Major. T/Major GW Ward relinquished appointments, and reverted to the rank of Capt.