

1/7 Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary December 1942

December 1942

- 1st BENGHASI. Weather good. 1400 hrs. Bn. O Group, Bn. to be responsible for guarding approaches from SOUTH & SOUTH EAST. (i) "C" Coy from incl. road BENGHASI – GHEMINES to incl. road and track junc. 958712 with under command 1 Tp. A/Tk Pln. (ii) "B" Coy from incl. rd and track junc. 958712 to 1001. to incl. X rds. 982716 with under command 1 Sec. A/Tk Pln. (iii) "A" Coy (employed as anti-sabotage guard landing ground no, 2) NORTH side of landing ground No.2 to excl. Rd. BENGHASI – GHEMINES. (vi) A/Tk. Pln. less 1 Tp. and 1 Sec. Mobile Reserve at Bn. HQ. (v) Mortar Pln. Carrier Pln. Mobile Reserve at Bn. HQ.
Sentries will be posted by day and 2 by night on exits from perimeter on Bn. front (op. Inst. No. 2).
- 2nd Weather good. Battle Dress issued to tps. "A" Coy moves to landing ground No. 2.
- 3rd Weather good. Guards and Working parties continue. 2/Lt. H.F. Burdett evacuated to hospl. "OFFICERS' DAY" lectures by C.O. on "Battle Procedure" Capt. Kemp "Signal Procedure", Major Griffiths "Regt History, Capt. Jessup "Map Ref. Code", Junior N.C.O's Cadre Course commenced under RSM. 4-day I. Course commenced under Bde arrangements.
- 4th Weather good. Personnel supplied for dock labour also food and petrol dumps, Bde leaves 7th Armd. Div. and comes into 30 Corps.
- 5th Weather good. Bn. informed that Capt. Leach and Capt. Sarah, L.O.B. Personnel, had been evacuated to hospl.
- 6th Weather good. "A" Coy relieved of landing ground No.2 guard, and moves to Bn. H.Q. area to be used as Mobile Reserve Coy. Coy Comds conference. C.O. reviewed the general situation, Considerations with regard to the reforming of the "Battle Patrol" and promotions of N.C.O's was discussed. Lt. King posted to Bde w.e.f. 4/10/42 to Lt. Corbett posted to Bde. w.e.f. 5.11.42. Bn. strength 23 officers 604 O.R's.
- 7th Weather good. 0610 hrs. Air raid on BENGHASI no Bn. casualties, guards and working parties continue, Battle Patrol formed under Lt. Lugg and attached to HQ Coy. Congratulatory message from Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery to the 7 Armd. Div. read to Tps.
- 8th Westher good. Bn. working Parties and guards continue. Lt. J. Francis, Lt. Freeman and 3 O.R's posted to the Bn. from I.T.D. the former assumed the duties of I.O.(vice Lt. H.C. Relhan) the latter O.C. "C" Coy (vice Capt. Sandys). Capt. Sandys assumes command of A/Tk Pln. Major Kaulback posted as C.O. 1/6 Queen's and struck off strength.
- 9th Weather good. Carrier Pln (7-carriers in all) moved from BENGHASI and placed under comd 51 (Highland) Div. 2230 hrs. orders received for Bn. Advance Party to leave at 0830 hrs next morning to proceed to area SOUTH OF AGEDABA to recce Bn. concentration area.
- 10th Weather good. Advance party left. "Officers' Day". Discussion held on "Infantry attack with tanks" and "Infantry night attack", TEWT arranged for the afternoon was cancelled owing to personnel proceeding on Advance Party. Warning order for the Bn. to move first light 12 Dec. received. Following officers posted to Bn. from I.T.D. T/Capt. E.V. L Isaac, A/Capt. D.L. Pennell. Lt. J.M. Skillington, 2/Lt. L.H. Cockroft.
- 11th 1000 hrs Bn. O Group received orders for move. The day was spent preparing for next day's move. Guards and duties were taken from this Bn. by 1/5 Queen's. Lt. E.S. Corbett. posted to Bn.
- 12th 0650 hrs. Head of Bn. coln crossed S.P. on leaving BENGHASI. R and O Gp having gone ahead to meet Bde Comdr. at HQ 7 Armd Div. R and O Gps then moved to H.Q 153 Inf. Bde prior to

relief of that Bde no recce was carried out owing to ops - this Bn. was to relieve 1 Gordons. Bn. staged for night S.W. of AGEDABIA (in Area XO0)

- 13th S.W. AGEDABIA 1 Gordon area reced (B. 6259) during morning but at 1300 hrs relief was cancelled owing to enemy withdrawal. Bn. moved up to Appx Cat area 6665 and staged there for night. Bn. ordered to be ready to move first light next morning.
- 14th Bn. moved at 0930 hrs following 7 Armd. Div. axis. Bn. R and O Gps called forward at 1400 hrs and reced "firm base" posn in area B 3453. Bn. arrived this area at 1715 hrs and took up posns. 1 Coy 1/6 Queen's on right - remainder of Bde not yet having reach posn. Bn. warned to be ready to move first light next morning.
- 15th R. Gp at H.Q 7 Armd Div. at 0730 hrs. Bn. moved at 0830 hrs on bearing of 230 degrees and then moved astride rd. running S.W. off AGHEILA arriving area A 9968 at 1530 hrs. R and O Gps forward at 1300 hrs to Bde Comd. Two possible tasks: 1. hold defensive posn. area A 9868 or ii. night attack on enemy posn. at A 9072 dependent on whether Armd. units could dislodge enemy before dark. Recce for both these tasks carried out. 1645 hrs Bn. ordered to carry out task ii crossing start line at 1830 hrs with 1/6 Queen's on right, C.O's Orders at 1700 hrs. Bn. to advance on one Coy front "A" Coy leading - "C" Coy right, "B" Coy left with Sp. Gp under 2i/c in centre rear. The distance to the objective was 9000x and was to be covered in bounds of approx. 2000x each. Bn. crossed start line at 1910 hrs being late owing to the shortness of time allowed 1/6-Queen's on right did not start advancing until 2100 hrs. Two fwd. Regts less one Bty were in Sp. fire to be called for by F.O.O. or verey signal. The advance went without incident until within approx. 1500x of the objective when tracer bullets were fired across the Bn. front from the right followed by explosions, which later proved to be the enemy blowing culverts in the rd. The Bn, continued the advance across an A/Tk ditch round the posn. and was on the objective by 2300 hrs, no opposition having been encountered as the enemy apparently withdrew as the Bn. approached. Defensive posn. was immediately taken up 5 O.R casualties from mines were suffered during the advance.
- 16th Tpt. moved up to Bn. during early morning and Bn. was put at half an hour's notice to move. Owing to armd. units having priority on rd. Bn. did not move until 1410 hrs. and then advanced in desert formation SOUTH of rd and leaguered for night at 6879 having covered 14 miles.
- 17th Bn. moved off at 0700 hrs. and stopped for breakfast at 0800 hrs at 10 hrs at A 5985. R and O Gps called forward at 0930 hrs to Pt 700x WEST of MARBLE ARCE (A 5490). Orders received to take up defensive posn. covering MARBLE ARCH landing ground. 1/7 Queen's on high ground NORTH of coast rd. area A 5393. 1/6 Queen's centre with 1/5 Queen's on left. Bn. moved into posn. at 1400 hrs and occupied it with two Coys forward ("A" & "B") with "D" Coy echeloned back eastwards. One Tp. A/tk guns and One Pln M.G. in Sp. Digging of posns started Immediately on arrival.
- 18th The day was devoted to cleaning, maintenance and continuation of digging all ranks were allowed to bathe. Officers discussion on "Taking up of a defensive posn" in afternoon. 0930 hrs R Gp at Bde where warned to move forward to new posn further WEST the following day.
- 19th R and O Gps met Bde Comd. at Widi MATRATIN (V30) at 1200 hrs. Orders for new defensive posn issued. 1/7 Queen's right NORTH of coast rd 1/6 Queen's centre and 1/5 Queen's left. During the afternoon Rear H.Q. 30 Corps occupied the ground to be held by this Bn. and as a result it was decided to put the Bn, in a camp area a few miles to the EAST ready to move into posn if and when required.

20th	Gen. Sir B.L. Montgomery K.C.B. D.S.O. G.O.C. Eighth Army inspected all ranks and was introduced to the officers. He remarked that the Bn. looked very fit and were a "good tough body of men". 0900 hrs Bn. moved by march route to area V3803 and went into encampment.
21st	Bn, started training, all Coys concentrating on Pln. training. N.C.O. cadre course was continued. 1700 hrs warning order for move to area WEST of NOFILIA. 2010 hrs warning order for move cancelled, further orders to follow.
22nd	Lt. Gen. Oliver Lees C.B. D.S.O. G.O.C. 30 Corps visited Bde. H.Q. and C.O's were introduced to him there. "C" Coy was sent off to RAS EL AALI for Coys to help unload barges. Training continued -during morning a demonstration of the firing of all arms was given.
23rd	Warning orders received for move to relieve 5 N.Z. Bde. WEST of NOFILIA on 26 Dec. - advance parties to proceed 25 Dec.
24th	Officers Day talk by C.O. on "Future operations", practice R.T. procedure, lecture "Desert Navigation by Bde I.O. and demonstration of Mortar Drill, followed by sand model discussion on "Forming A/Tk. screen.
25th	In accordance with Gen. Montgomery's wish this day was as far as possible observed as a "holiday". Xmas fare, incl. pork, Xmas pudding rum and beer was available for all ranks and church services were held during the morning, 0900 hrs O Grp for next day's move. Route to SULTAN (Z.16) reced by I.O.
	Appx D attd.
26th	Bn. moved to SULTAN passing Bde. S.P. at 0830 hrs. Whilst on move Bde Comd. ordered Bn, not to take up defensive posn but to leaguer SOUTH of rd. Head of Bn. coln, arrived leaguer area SOUTH OF SULTAN at 1640 hrs having covered 91 miles.
27th SULTAN.	Liaison with N.Z. Div. Cav. Regt who had patrol line WEST of SULTAN who withdrew later in the day. Close touch kept with 21 Fd. Sqn. R.E. who were clearing rd to SIRTE. 1400 hrs C.O. want to Bde where warning order for move to area West of SIRTE on following was received. C.O. and I.O. reced. SIRTE area during afternoon. 1800 hrs. orders received for move to SIRTE.
28th	Bn. moved to area Y 5573 WEST OF SIRTE Crossing S.P. at 0830 hrs. O Gp. ahead to recce defensive posn. Head of Bn, coln. arrived in posn. by 1200 hrs. Posn taken up SOUTH of rd with two Coys up, 1/5 Queen's on right and Coy of N.F. on left, 1/6 Queen's in Reserve Digging started on arrival, Mileage covered 53.
29th West of SIRTE.	0815 hrs. R Gp. meets Bde. Comd. Proceed to arna TAMET Y 27 where orders received for posn. to be taken up on following day, 1/5 Queen's right, 1/6 Queen's left, 1/7 Queen's in reserve. 1430 hrs O Gp. received orders for move following day. "C" Coy returned to Bn. from unloading duties. Lt. N.J.P. Hawken, Lt. P.R.H. Kealy arrived to Bn. from I.T.D.
30th	1000 hrs. Bn. passed S.P. on move to new area, O Gp. having gone ahead. 1310 hrs. Bn. arrives in new area and posns. taken up with two Coys ("A" & "B") up. "C" in Reserve. Out-post posn occupied by Carrier and A/T Plns. on western slopes of WADI CHEBIR working in conjunction with same Plns. of two other Bns. in Bde. Enemy recce planes over area during day.
31st December	Digging of posn. continued. Further recce planes over area.

Lt. Col. R.H. Senior DSO, TD
 Comdg. Officer. 1/7th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment.
 December 1942.

Nominal Roll of Officers on Strength 26th December 1942.

T/Lieut.-Colonel	R. H.	Senior, DSO	Queen's	
T/Major	W. D.	Griffiths, M.C.	" "	
T/Capt.	R.	Carver	" "	
T/Capt.	A. S. S.	Playfoot	" "	
T/Capt	E. V.	Isaac	" "	
T/Capt.	P. C.	Freeman	" "	
T/Capt.	K. A.	Jessup	" "	
A/Capt.	D. L.	Fennell	" "	
A/Capt.	E. G.	Sandys	" "	
A/Capt.	T. A.	Kemp	" "	
A/Capt.	P. Z.	Henderson	" "	
A/Capt.	J.	Fracis	" "	
Lieut.	W.G.	Davis	" "	
Lieut.	A. C.	Worrall	" "	
Lieut.	D. T.	Hodson	" "	L.O.B.
Lieut.	G. H.	Courchee	" "	
Lieut.	R. A.	Burton	" "	
Lieut.	S. E.	Brown	" "	
Lieut.	E. S.	Corbett	" "	
Lieut.	A. R.	Lugg	" "	
Lieut.	J.M.	Skillington	" "	
Lieut.	G. W.	Bevan	" "	
Lieut.	C. R.	Clarke	" "	L.O.B.
Lieut.	T.C.	Godfrey	" "	L.O.B.
Lieut,	H.C.	Relhan	" "	
Lieut.	E.G.	Dever	" "	
Lieut.	I.G.	Hughes	" "	
Lieut.	B.G.	Meara	" "	
2/Lieut.	L.H.	Cockcroft.	" "	
Rev.	W.		Metson	Padre
Capt.	W.G.	Edwards	R.A.M.C.	