

1/7th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary April 1943

APRIL 1943.

Area Z. 3914.

- 1st April. 0600 hrs. Rest period commences. Rev. 0600 hrs.
0900 hrs C.O. inspected personnel and equipment of "A", "B", and "C" Coys, Carrier and A/Tk. Plns. at 1400 hrs.
- 2nd April. "D" Coy reformed under Capt. J. Francis with Capt. E.V. ISAAC as 2I/C.
C.O. inspected remainder of HQ Coy. Bathing commenced at GABES under Coy arrangements. Capt. R. Carver and Lt. C.W.M. PLUMLEY evacuated to A.D.S.
- 3rd April. C.O., 2I/C and Coy Comdrs attended tank demonstration at Z. 1818.
Bathing at GABES continued. Mobile cinema at 131 Bde. HQ.
- 4th April. Reinforcements for the Bn arrived from I.T.D. Lts. N.A.H. MARSDEN, P. HOGGARTH, 2/Lt. R.J. ASHWORTH, Lt. P.J. ALLAN, Lt. J.B.L. AINSWORTH and Lt. V.P.T. TROUGHT joined the Bn. Maj. W.D. GRIFFITH rejoined the Bn. from C.C.S. Coy weapons tested on the firing range.
- 5th April. Firing practise under Coy arrangements on range. Court Martial proceedings took place in the Bn area. "O" Group in the Bn role in forthcoming operations with 7th Armd Div.
Weather conditions good.
- Six April. Training under Coy arrangements continued. Bn at one hrs notice to move up two 1200 hrs from this time at immediate notice.
Lt. E.G. DEVER evacuated to A.D.S.
- 7th April. 0600 hrs. Recce party left under 2I/C. 1445 hrs Bn moved in rear of 131 Bde. to area Z. 1750 and leaguered for the night, distance covered 35 miles. Weather good. The Bn had enjoyed six days well earned rest and the moral and general physical conditions of officers and men had duly benefited by this. Sgt. J. CRANGLE'S and Sgt R. ANDREWS of the A/Tk. Pln. awarded the DCM for distinguished conduct during the action on March the 6th.
- 8th April. 0745 hrs. Bn "O" Group on continuation of advance. 1500 hrs Bn moved forward in rear of 131 Bde. to area 1981, a distance of 18 miles passing through the Wadi AKRIT.

Area Z. 1981.

- 9th April. 0600 hrs. Bn. advance continued to area U. 5208 a distance of 32 miles.
Carrier Pln. this day provided a covering party for R.E's of 7 Armd. Div.
- 10th April. 0700 hrs. Bn. "O" Group. 0930 hrs. advance continued to area U. 7147 a distance of 40 miles.
The Bn. here formed part of a firm base for 7th Armd. Div. "C" Coy and A/Tk Pln. were employed on guarding vital L. of C. during the day.
- 11th April. 0900 hrs. Conference at Bde. on general situation. 1100 hrs. Bn. "O" group.

Bn. to concentrate in this area and be at 6 hr's notice to move. "C" Coy and A/Tk Pln. returned from L. of C. duties. Message from Army Comdr. read to all troops. Bn. strength 37 officers 741 O.R's.

- 12 April. Weather good. Training programmes prepared. Parties from Bn. allowed to visit SFAX under Coy arrangements. 1800 hrs. warning order to move. Lt. J.M. SKILLINGTON evacuated to A.D.S.
- 13th April. 0915 hrs. Recce parties leave under 2i/c. 1100 hrs. "O" Group on move to area P. 0918 in rear of 7th Armd. Div. 1520 hrs. Bn. moved pass S.P. as leading Bn. for the Bde. 2315 hrs. in leaguer area P. 0918, distance covered 76 miles.
- 14th April. Weather good. Day spent on maintenance of their vehicles and weapons. Coys practised battle drill. 2100 hrs. "O" Group on continuation of advance.
- 15th April. 0601 hrs. Bn. passed Bde. S.P. as leading Bn. in the Bde. 1030 hrs. Bn. arrived in concentration area P 0471, a distance of 42 miles.
1830 hrs. Bn. moved by March route into position holding a line from P. 0278 to P. 045785. Road and village inclusive. Bn. had right to left "A" Coy, "B" Coy and "C" Coy forward "D" Coy in reserve. Standing patrols put out from "A", "B" and "C" Coys.

Area P. 0377.

- 16th April. 0600 hrs. Carrier Pln. with four 6 pdr guns as A/Tk screen move to and hold feature P. 035795. Slight shelling in Bn. area during day.
Capt. W.G. EDWARDS (R.A.M.C.) M.O. awarded the Military Cross.
1900 hrs. Carrier Pln. joined by one Pln. of "D" Coy for hrs. of darkness. Standing patrols out from "A", "B" and "C" Coys.
Recce patrol to area P 0484.
- 17th April. Bn. received orders for move to new area. New concentration area recced. Intermittent shelling in the area during daylight.
Carriers & A/Tk guns remain in feature P. 035795. Pln. from "A" Coy joins Carrier Pln. for hrs. of darkness. Standing Patrols from "A" "B" & "C" Coys. Recce Patrols to 023824 and 027834.
Capt R. CARVER and Lt. H.C. RELHAN awarded the Military Cross for Services during the action of 6th March L/Cpl. W. CUTBUSH, A/Tk Pln. Pte. J. RING "A" Coy awarded the M.M. for Services during the action of March 6th. Pte. S. FAULKNER Signal Pln. awarded the M.M. for continuously mending the signal wires under heavy shell fire.
- 18th April. Recce patrols leave for concentration. Shelling in Bn. area.
Bn. moves to concentration area Pt. 171 Ref. P. 134773 in preparation for forthcoming operations.
- 19th April. A.M. Bn. still at P. 1378. Prepared for night advance. Advanced to Objective 2045 hrs. – distance of advance 2000x; all objectives reached – no casualties. "A" and "B" led attack. Bn. strength 35 Officers, 723 O.R's.
- 20th April. I.O. wounded. Bn. same location and some shelling took place in area.
- 21st April. Bn. stood to 0500 hrs. for counterattack on right: Stood down 0730 hrs. "D" Coy new area recced. Patrols from "C" Coy and "D" Coys at night. New I.O apptd. – Lt. J.B.L. AINSWORTH.

- 22nd April. Up to 1200 hrs. nothing to report but at 1330 hrs. stood to for suspected attack and stood down at 1430 hrs.
- 23rd April. A.M. Carriers patrolled on the Left Flank and contacted small parties of enemy – at the same time locating a minefield. P.M. “B” Coy supplied a patrol into area fwd. of our posns. They contacted the enemy in some strength. Lt. C.W.M. PLUMLEY and Pte. BURCHELL reported missing. A German L/Cpl. Reported to Bn. HQ (deserter) – forwarded to Bde. Patrols by night.
- 24th April. A.M. Some shelling in Bn. area. Lt. C.W.M. PLUMLEY returned.
P.M. Pt. BURCHELL returned with wound in foot and supplied considerable amount of information about enemy dispositions.
- 25th April. Increased shelling in Bn. area. Weather improved considerably – now quite hot. Patrols as usual.
- 26th April. Information from patrols now shows considerable enemy activity in Bn. Sector. One patrol ran into heavy opposition and suffered casualties – 1 killed, 3 wounded. Lt. A.C. WORRALL wounded in this patrol. Prepared to be relieved by 1/6th Queen’s but relief later cancelled.
- 27th April. During the day preparations were made for the Bn. to move to a new area. Left Pt. 171 at 2100 hrs. and proceeded to assembly area which was reached by 0215 hrs. here we leaguered for the night which was as uneventful as the rest of the day had been.
- 28th April. C.O. & I.O. went fwd. to new concentration area. Bn. moved from assembly area at 0650 hrs. and crossed start point at 0730 hrs. reaching new concentration area at 0930 hrs. move being completed by 1200 hrs. C.O. & I.O. went fwd. on a further recce but all arrangements made were cancelled. Bn. had a good nights sleep free from outside interference.
- 29th April. Visited by G.O.C. 7 Armd. Div. who spoke for long time with C.O.
Training was carried out and a good deal of recreation was indulged in. weather has been much hotter. Canteen goods arrived after a long break and everyone had an ample issue of cigarettes. C.O. gave lecture on War situation 1800 – 1845 hrs.
- 30th April. Recce parties under 2i/c to new area 1440 hrs. Bn. crossed S.P. at 1850; travelled all night to new area. Passed through some extremely hilly country.

Lt. Col. D.S. Gordon,
Comdg.
1/7th Bn. The Queen’s Royal Regiment.

30/4/1943