

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

DECEMBER 1943.

AREA VICO EQUENSE.

- 1st Dec. 0900 hrs. Officers Day. Lecture on the German Armd. Divisions was given by Div. I.O. Officers attended guard mounting demonstration by RSM.
Training on Pln. and Coy bases for remainder of Bn. during morning.
Afternoon, sports as usual.
- 2nd Dec. 0900 hrs. Orders received for exercise "Circus" to take place 3rd Dec. Day spent in preparation.
- 3rd Dec. 1230 hrs. Exercise "Circus". 489 officers and men of the Bn. marched to CASTELLAMARE docks.
1600 hrs HQ Coy returned to billets owing to absence of L.S.I's.
1630 hrs Bn. less HQ Coy embarked on Bde. convoy moved into the Bay and remained anchored 3/4 mile offshore.
Weather cold and miserable. Conditions on L.C.I's uncomfortable.
- 4th Dec. 1400 hrs Bn. disembarked and marched back to VICO EQUENSE.
- 5th Dec. Sunday.
- 6th Dec. Activities as usual, training in mornings, sports in the afternoon.
- 7th Dec. 0900 hrs. C.O. Attended conference at Bde. regarding forthcoming move.
0930 hrs. Adjutant attended conference at Bde. regarding forthcoming move.
1430 hrs "O" Group. Information re move passed on.
2000 hrs Bn. concert party gave the first performance of its concert "1/7th Heaven" in the VICO EQUENSE cinema. The show was a great success and was played to a crowded hall.
- 8th Dec. Activities as usual.
- 9th Dec. Activities as usual. Baths at CASTELLAMARE.
1800 hrs message from Bde. that exercise. "Circus" was taking place again on 11th Dec.
- 10th Dec. Day spent in preparation for exercise "circus".
- 11th Dec. 0830 hrs. 379 officers and men of Bn. marched to CASTELLAMARE docks.
0930 hrs. Advance party left for staging area CASORIA near NAPLES consisting of two officers from Bn. one NCO and three O.R's per rifle Coy and four N.C.O's and 11 O.R's from HQ Coy.
1100 hrs embarked in three L.C.I's. Convoy pass through straits between CAPRI and mainland
Accommodation was much better than on the last trip. The weather was fine and the brief sea journey was quite enjoyable. 24 hrs Bn. disembarked at SALERNO and marched to VIETRI.
Weather had broken and march was through pouring rain.
- 12th Dec. 0130 hrs Bn. arrived at VIETRI and soon were comfortable and dry in a factory, school, and cinema.
0200 hrs Bn. vehicles arrived with food and cooking equipment.
0730 hrs. Breakfast was served.
0900 hrs. C.O. Visited Bde. HQ at VIETRI railway station.
1000 hrs Bn. "O" Group. Orders given for move back to VICO EQUENSE same night.
2030 hrs Bn. left VIETRI in 15 vehicles supplied by 10 Corps. Journey CAVA DI TIRRENI, SCAFATI, POMPEII, CASTELLAMARE.
2230 hrs Bn. arrived in billets.

- 13th Dec. 1000 hrs. Brigadier visited C.O. for conference. Ribbon for Africa star issued. Further preparations for move.
- 14th Dec. 0900 hrs. Snipers Course began organised by Sgt. SHEPPARD (I. Sec) and Sgt. LEONARD (Battle Patrol). 4 O.R's per Coy attended. During the day parties visited local places of interest including Isle of CAPRI, VESUVIUS, POMPEII. Weather fine and warm.
- 15th Dec. Maj. W.D. GRIFFITH MC awarded bar to MC. Lt. BEARD awarded MC. Sgt. LEONARD awarded MM.
- 16th Dec. Preparations for move to staging area.
- 17th Dec. Further preparations for move.
- 18th Dec. 0700 hrs. Bn. began March to CASTELLAMARE.
0900 hrs. Bn. arrived CASTELLAMARE and entrained.
1500 hrs. Bn. arrived CASORIA and marched to staging area. Housed in tents cold and damp.
- 19th Dec. 1000 hrs. C.O. and Adjutant visit quayside.

AREA CASORIA.

- 20th Dec. 0445 hrs. Bn. began March to NAPLES.
1100 hrs. Bn. boarded SS BOISSEVAIN.
1300 hrs Bn. all on board.
1600 hrs sailed.

AT SEA.

- 21st Dec. 1030 hrs. "O" Group. Appointment of officials such as Messing and Deck Officers. Lectures and discussions planned. Food fair, weather cold. Amenities included wireless in officers and men's quarters.
1130 hrs. Practise boat stations.
- 22nd Dec. 0900 hrs. Bde. discussion, subject Medical. Speakers Lt. HUDSON (1/7th Queen's), Col. FURNIVAL (131 Field Amb.) Officers of F.S.U. and A.D.S. spoke.
The progress of a casualty was traced from the time he was wounded until he arrived at a base hospital.
- 23rd Dec. 1600 hrs Convoy put into MERS EL KEBIR (ORAN).

AREA ORAN.

- 24th Dec. PT arranged on quayside and short route marches.
0900 hrs. Bn. discussion on gapping a minefield.
- 25th Dec. Christmas Day.
1000 hrs. Christmas Day service taken by Padre CASTLE was well attended. Rum was issued for celebrations. Men had Turkey for dinner. In the evening the officers bar was opened for the sale of alcohol.
2000 hrs Bde. Concert Party performed.

AT SEA.

- 26th Dec. 0300 hrs. Sailed.

Weather fine.

27th Dec. 0200 hrs. Past Gibraltar.

28th Dec. 0900 hrs. Bde. discussion on proposed new Div. Recce unit. Carrier officers of three Bn's spoke. Lt. BEARD for 1/7th Queen's.

29th Dec. 0900 hrs. Bn. discussion on the forward body.

30th Dec. 1000 hrs. Bde. lectures on supply in the field. Speakers QM (1/5th Queen's, Maj. BURNARD (Bde.) Staff Capt. (Bde). REME and BRASCO.

31st Dec. 0900 hrs. Bn. discussion on wireless communication in Bn. Bde S.O. Attended.

Lt. Col. D.S. GORDON DSO.
Commanding 1/7th Queen's Royal Regt.

31/12/1943.