

## 2/6th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary December 1944

December 1944.

- 1st Dec. Bn. relieves 44 Recce who are holding the line S. of FAENZA. We are carried up in T.C.V'S two within 300 to 400 yds of the positions and in broad daylight. It is the first time we have been able to do this as we have always fought in hilly country up till now where the Bosche has had good observation.  
"B" Coy positions - 316228, 318229, 319232.  
"D" Coy area - 325225.  
Bn. HQ at 335223.  
"C" Coy at FORLI.  
By 1715 hrs. All Coys are in position without incident and during the night the Bn. is ordered to occupy 319227.  
The Battle Patrol do this task and are in position by 2130 hrs. The Italian L.O. Went with them and sent back good civilian reports of enemy defences in FAENZA taken from people who said they had worked on them.  
One S.P. Gun pays us its first visit beyond the river and during the following night we get well acquainted. Each time he fires we send him twice as much back. He moves on to a fresh position and we past him again. He must be decidedly unpopular among their forward troops.
- 2nd Dec. Area FAENZA.  
A patrol of ours goes out soon after midnight and finds the bridge at 309229 blown. No enemy interference.  
Our O.P. reports during the morning a good deal of movement in cemetery area 302234 and a platoon of ours in BORGO report half-tracks, M/c's, and carts.  
UK party leaves.  
Cab-rank bomb cemetery area for us from 1410 to 1415 hrs.  
At 1920 hrs. the S.P. gun fires again and we have a good reception waiting "Code word SMASHER" which was brought down often during the night. We were to have shepherded a partisan over the river, but he waded out halfway and then came back. He had heard a German cock his gun on the far bank.
- 3rd Dec. Patrol goes out at 0150 hrs. with an R.E. Officer to recce bridge at 318241. It was found blown and area this side of the bridge flooded. Contact with New Zealanders was made. At 0900 hrs. we see our first German planes for some time, 2 x 109's came very low overhead.  
Visibility during the morning round the river was very bad and at times down to 50 yards. During the night all our artillery opens up starting at 1755 hrs. and we fire small arms in a Chinese attack. Bosche reactions where motoring of "B" Coys area and general harassing of our side of the river cutting all our telephone lines to forward Coys.
- 4th Dec. News comes in that 46th division have crossed the LAMONE on our left. We shell FAENZA during the morning on reports of vehicle movement from our forward Coy. Our O.P. shared with R.A's in "B" Coy area receives a direct hit and O.P. has to move to 319232. One officer and 1 NCO were wounded.  
A good deal of air activity in the early part of the morning.  
At 1600 hrs. the New Zealanders lay smoke which bring down heavy D.F. along Route 9.  
We are to occupy FAENZA as soon as the Bosche pulls out.  
Our platoon in BORGO is relieved each night and each night we make contact with New Zealanders north of Route 9 twice.
- 5th Dec. Two men of the Battle Patrol crossed the river after midnight in a rubber recce boat and find concrete emplacements unoccupied and a Spandau lying covered with a gas cape. They notice other

Bosch positions about. On crossing the river, a second time they are fired on by a Sniper. At 1100 hrs. an Italian civilian tries to cross Route 9 bridge over the river and is shot twice from the far side. 'O' Group at 1600 hrs. and another patrol laid on to cross the river in the same area as last night. UK leave is discussed.

At 1830 hrs. message from Brigade the enemy patrol may try to cross the river on our front. Occasional Spandau and mortaring during the night. Bosche patrol was a non-starter.

- 6th Dec. The C.O. Interviews all men from the Welsh Regiment which is now going to be reformed and they leave us.  
At 1610 we are told the occupation of FAENZA is off. Two seventh Queens are to cross the river and 2/5 will follow. We are to be relieved tomorrow night.
- 7th Dec. M.T. movement from FAENZA continually reported early in the morning. During the day occasional Mortar and Nebelwerfer fire on our area.
- 9th Dec. At 2130 hrs. we begin to move forward to concentration area across the LAMONE.
- 10th Dec. Bn. in concentration area. 7 casualties on the way in due to mortaring. We are under command N.Z. Brigade for the day and move back next day to FORLI.
- 12th Dec. We are told at an 'O' Group that we take over tomorrow from 2nd 10th G.R. "B" and "A" Ech. will stay in FORLI.
- 13th Dec. Bn. leaves FORLI at 0815 hrs. and reaches holding positions in the Line by 1000 hrs.. We travel in T.C.V's two within half a mile of forward Coy positions.  
Bn. HQ at 384288. The last of the Gurkhas leaves at 1415 hrs.  
Contact patrols are arranged. On reports of enemy movement from forward Coys (bearing given) HF tasks are brought down on likely lateral roads beyond the river and there is no more movement.  
About 2200 hrs. a small enemy patrol of four or five men got over the river opposite "D" Coys right forward platoon at SCALDINO DI SOTTO, who saw them off very quickly with small arms.
- 14th Dec. During the morning about 10 reinforcements arrive all men who have come back to us from hospital. The Div. Policy now is to reinforce a Bn. in the line only with men who have been in it before i.e. returning sick and wounded.  
Why wasn't that thought of years ago?  
Another Chinese attack late tonight on our sector as the New Zealanders are staging a real show the other side of FAENZA.  
For 3 hrs. starting at 1700 hrs. forward Coys report M.T. Tracked vehicles and even horse drawn transport moving N.E. beyond the river. One Coy commander even get to the stage of reporting the V.T.M. We bring down all the HF tasks within our power but I want the Div. arty. and a good deal more. It is Maddening position to be in as the Gunners are limited to far fewer shells than is normal. But we are told they are needed on the Western Front, so do not complain. Recce patrols on the river bring back detailed information. The river has 20 - 30-foot-high banks on each side which would make crossing difficult.
- 16th Dec. We carry on our task of probing the enemy across the river.  
Two of our patrols crossed the river during the night. The first a fighting patrol of one officer and 24 O.R's has the task of raiding CASA TORRE, a house just over the river where the enemy is known to be. Everything went well until the patrol bumped a sentry whom the patrol commander killed. They then met severe opposition from S.A. and rifle grenades fired on the Nebelwerfer principle (12 at a time) and finally made a successful withdrawal under cover of D.F.

The second patrol made a recce of the enemy side of the river and returned without incident.

- 17th Dec. At 1000 hrs. Cab-rank deals very effectively with CASA TORRE and gets one direct hit on the House and two near misses either side. It is only 300 yards from our forward Plns.  
We get a Y intercept of last night from 278 Fus. Bn. reporting that they were being attacked with mortar and M.G. Support at the Weir bridge. This was in fact our "B" Coy which fired 24 X 2". Mortar bombs on a German working party.  
An ambush patrol having crossed successfully in a Mk. II assault boat meets Bosche at point blank range dug in on reverse slope of riverbank and suffers 2 casualties.
- 18th Dec. One man is left by accident slightly wounded on the far bank and during the morning of the 18th we devise means of getting him back. A rope is attached to a PIAT bomb but when fired only goes a few yards finally two men cross with a strong covering party and the man is found hidden under a gas cape near the water's edge. He is brought back safely and little the worse and morale in his platoon goes right up again.
- 19th Dec. We shoot PIAT as a Mortars across the river at 376230, observed by the air O.P. He had observed 12 Germans and weapon pits in this area yesterday. He reports it causes great confusion. They dive for cover and bombs are accurate.
- 20th Dec. Air O.P. again gives us information of enemy weapon pits over the river and reports them unoccupied. Germans are still in other posns. on our front however.  
About 2100 hrs. there is a heavy barrage going where 167 brigade and the Gurkhas are attacking on our left. The plan is to roll up the enemy over the river so they will soon reach our sector.
- 21st Dec. A night of ? And the Germans sent us a Christmas present of propaganda leaflets. One batch of horror pictures which is very bad and another of some stuff which is worse. Their P.W.B. people need shaking up.
- 22nd Dec. We have to be very cautious about firing on movement over the river now as 9th R.F. are moving up on the enemy beyond the river and 2/5th Queen's front on our left has already been covered. The usual number of mortar bombs are still falling in our area and the Germans have not withdrawn yet. "C" Squadron of 44 Recce who are holding the Sector to our right takeover our front and by 1040 hrs. the takeover is complete. T.C.V'S arrive at 1400 hrs. and we move back to just outside CESENA - we hope for Christmas.
- 23rd Dec. We get settled in and begin preparations for Christmas.  
Bn. area is very scattered, but we make the best of a bad job and everyone buckles to.  
Leave party leaves for U.K.
- 25th Dec. Christmas Day. Morning services held in CESENA for the whole Bn. and then final preparations are made for midday. Each Coy runs its own dinner and the cooks have been at work most of the night. The food is excellent, and each man gets 8 bottles of beer over Christmas. The Bn. is in very good form.
- 26th Dec. Boxing Day. Football match between Officers and Sgts. has to be cancelled owing to frozen pitch and snow. In the evening there is a party in the officer's mess for all supporting arms. The cab-rank pilots from RIMINI cannot come but the air O.P. is there and the party goes well.
- 27th Dec. Two Sgts. go to visit the RAF fighter squadron at RIMINI and see and hear a lot of interesting things. Advance party leaves for new area at 1430 hours.

28th Dec. Battalion moves at 1100 hours to harbour area round REDA 380256 and we learn our role for the next few days. Op. Plans zip 1-2 and three are fixed. We are to ensure that the Germans do not repeat in Italy their breakthrough on the Western Front and we now form a defensive line to hold the LAMONE Should I attempt anything here. This can be combined with training as there is sighting of positions, mine clearing and digging to be done.

31st Dec. Coys And specialist platoons begin training. Emphasis is laid on efficiency in the handling of all weapons and there are daily rifle exercises.  
The parents of major PURDON DCM, who was killed in action in September present the battalion with 100 Guineas to be spent for the benefit of officers and men of 2/6th Queen's.  
We decide to buy a cinema projector and power unit and an officer leaves at once for A.A.I. HQ to arrange it.

Lt. Col. A J Renshaw DSO, MC.  
Comdg.  
2/6th Bn. The Queens Royal Regiment.

Officer List 30th December 1944.

Lt.-Col.	A. J. Renshaw	Queen's R.R.	C.O.		
Major	P. M. A. Taylor	Queen's R.R.	2i/c		
Major	R.P. Nangles	" "			
Major	N.O. Quinn	R. Fusiliers.			
Major	P.G. Thompson	Ox & Bucks.			
Major	W.A. Mills	Queen's R.R.			
Major	K.A. Lee Emery	Middx.			
Major	A.W. Lavender	Queen's R.R.			
Capt.	H. F. Hales	" "			
Capt.	G.E. West	" "			
Capt.	T. G. Blumson	" "	Adj.		
Capt.	G; P. Stevens	R.W.K.			
Capt.	W.M. Frost	Queen's R.R.			
Capt.	J. W. Evans	R.W.K.			
Capt.	D.R. Edwards	Queen's R.R.			
Capt.	G. B. Curtis	Queen's R.R.			
Capt.	I.T.J. Boyes	Queen's R.R.			
Capt.	J.S. Lea Wilson	R.A.C.	I.O.		
Lieut.	H.L. Bailey	Queen's			
Lieut.	P.B. Etheridge	R.A.			
Lieut.	E.M. Lawrence	R. Norfolk's			
Lieut.	S. N. Penlington	R.A.C.			
Lieut.	J.W. Common	Queen's R.R.			
Lieut.	I. P. Macgregor	R.A.C.			
Lieut.	T.P. O'Connell	Queen's R.R.			
Lieut.	R.N. Thompson	" "	Lieut.	K.A. Randell	Ox & Bucks.
Lieut.	H.W. Vipond	" "	Lieut.	B. Carney	D.L.I.
Lieut.	W. F. Nethercott	Devon's			
Lieut.	L.W. Harding	Queen's R.R.			
Lieut.	D.A. Gilla	" "	Lieut.	W. Roadnight (Q.M.)	Queen's.

Capt. A. R. Elsom,

R.A.M.C

Rev. G. B. Fairhurst

R.A.Ch.D.