

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

Area PETRULO.

- 1st Feb. "A" Coy arrives in billets.
Reorganising, mobile baths, cinema, ENSA shows, and Div. Concert Party filled much of the first four days here. "B" Coy. made up to strength (O.C. Maj. Campbell) and Charlie Coy became reserve Coy 83 reinforcements received, making a total of 160 odd for the position 10 days ago. List of promotions and new appointments.
- 3rd Feb. Div. Comdr. calls and warns C.O. of our next task.
- 4th Feb. The first rain for 10 days.
1800 hrs. Bde. "O" Group.
- 5th Feb. 0800 hrs Bn. "O" Group.
1015 hrs C.O. and Coy Comdrs leave on recce of new area, DAMIANO, Right Sector.
1630 hrs Bn. leaves PETRULO under Comd. Capt. BLUMSON.
Main HQ established in locality of Ox and Bucks main HQ at 845960 from whom we were taking over the area.

Area DAMIANO 841985.

- 6th Feb. 0015. Area of Ox and Bucks taken over. Tak HQ established.
0430 hrs. Coys stand to as line communications failed, slight enemy activity during night.
0830 hrs. Brigadier line visits Bn. area.
"D" Coy prove enemy present on 411 by drawing fire on their forward positions. "A" Coy were immediately to their rear and "B" Coy 350 yards to the West.
1300 hrs. Slight shelling of area "A" Coy 9 R. Fusiliers on .275 under our Comd and which Maj. POOLE (113 Regt. Battery Comdr) was wounded.
1700 hrs throughout the afternoon intermittent shelling of gully supply route immediately South of Tac HQ.
"B" Coy receive considerable mortar fire 1 man killed.
2000 hrs. "A" Coy 9 R. F. Relieved by "A" Coy 11 K.R.R.C. who came under command.
2359 hrs. patrols located enemy sangers east of .411 on spur 844994.
- 7th Feb. 0900 hrs. "O" Group at Bde. HQ.
1010 hrs. Our mortars shoot up enemy on .411 being directed by Gunners aircraft O.P.
1110 hrs. Visit by Bde. and Divisional Comdrs.
1700 hrs. Quiet day with slight shelling.
1800 hrs patrol organisation 38 strong advanced to obtain POW in area copse 843991 but enemy not in occupation and patrol unsuccessful.
- 8th Feb. 1030 hrs. Our mortars again shoot 411.
1200 hrs. Bde. "O" Group.
1440 hrs. "A" Coy being heavily mortared.
1445 hrs Shell in Tac HQ area kills three and wounds 2 of "B" Coy.
1500 hrs. Bn. "O" Group plans for Bn's. part in next attack primarily to hold a firm base on DAMIANO.
19 44 hrs. "A" and "D" Coys complete their change round.
- 9th Feb. 0700 hrs intermittent shelling of gully by enemy. Patrols from "B" Coy confirm enemies continued presence.

1200 hrs very quiet morning.

1300 hrs. Our mortars fire on enemy near "B" Coy under direction from O.P. 2/5th Queen's.

1400 hrs. Enemy mortaring of forward Coys one wounded.

10th Feb. Patrol by "A" Coy K.R.R.C. Copes 843992 located enemy in house and trip wired S mines.
1100 hrs very slight shelling. Some rain. Planned attack cancelled. E1

11th Feb. 0130 hrs. Heavy rain throughout the night. One shell on R.A.P. Killing one and wounding 3.
0300 hrs Recce party arrive from 2nd Cameroonians 13th Bde. 5th Div.
0700 hrs. Heavy mortaring, rain all night has caused much flooding in valley below.
0800 hrs. C.O. attends conference at Bde. HQ.
1100 hrs. Bn. "O" Group orders for our move from this area.
1200 hrs. Visit by Bde. Comdr. and Comdrs of 13 Bde. and 5th Div.
1300 hrs. Visit by Lt. Gen. McCreary Corps Comdr.
1700 hrs. Rain stops, very cold and everything soaking wet.
2200 hrs. 2nd Cameronians begin to arrive.

12th Feb. 0100 hrs. Positions handed over to Cameronian's and Bn. marches to route 7 via class 30 bridge 859944.
0600 hrs. Bn. all in village at FONTANELLE. Billet's rather crowded and disappointing. The last six days here have been very exhausting especially for rifle Coys with very cold weather slight snows and getting very wet they have had no cover from the elements and at least two Plns were unable to move in daylight owing to enemy snipers. Silent patrols have been almost impossible owing to rocky terrain hence the difficulty in obtaining the ever needed prisoners. Limited supplies all had to be brought up by porters, our own and also a Coy of Mauritians.
The rest of this day spent in resting.

13th Feb. About 60 reinforcements received, Lt. Col. Renshaw MC reorganise Coys.

14th 16th Feb. This period spent in resting and reorganising. Weather cold (snow on the ground one morning) but mainly fine.

17th Feb. 0900 hrs. Bde. Comdr. (Brig. Lyne) lectures to all officers in of the Bde. at SESSA.
Recce party (C.O., I.O. and 2 O.R's leave for NAPLES, spend night in grounds of Duke of Aosta's Palace.

18th Feb. 0200 hrs Bn. Leave for Naples in transport arriving at palace ground 0530 hrs.

Area NAPLES.

1000 hrs. Recce party leave with Bde. HQ to embark on L.S.T. at POZZUOLI.
1400 hrs. Bn. leave in transport for Posey for embarkation.
1800 hrs. Recce party L.S.T. Departs for ANZIO having an uneventful trip arriving at ANZIO 0700 hrs 19th Feb.
Thence proceeded to disposal area 2 await arrival of Bn..

1800 hrs. Bn. embarks, transport on L.S.T. Marching troops on L.S.I's. had uneventful trip to ANZIO, troops marching to disposal area which they reached at 1200 hrs Feb 19.

19th Feb. 0600 hrs. L.S.I. With transport assisted in recovering survivors of Light cruiser HMS Penelope off ANZIO.
1600 hrs Returning to Naples with naval personnel.
2100 hrs. L.S.T. Sails from Naples.

20th Feb. 1200 hrs. L.S.T. Arrives ANZIO and transport proceeds to disposal area.

Area ANZIO 830216.

1400 hrs. "O" Group Bn. HQ.

1700 hrs. Bn. Marches out in single file up coast road to point 792282 thence by tracks eastwards to dispersal area. London Scottish Bn. HQ 35283

2300 hrs Bn. O group

21st Feb. 0400 hrs. Bn. marches by tracks to dispersal area 845887.

1000 hrs Bn. Dig in. Our role at this stage was in reserve for possible counterattack.

2100 hrs. Recce patrol provided from forward American positions at fly over Rd junction at 863786, who preceded 800 yards northwards up Rome Rd to enemy positions, they found that road through littered with this derelict transport, was clear for tanks. One man wounded by Americans firing in Error.

22nd Feb. 1400 hrs Bn. area straddled by enemy shell fire 4 wounded including two officers who subsequently died of wounds, left Lt. Rowe (Mortars) and our gallant Italian "Freddy". Throughout our stay in this area the enemy regularly shelled the ???????? country and the lateral Rd to the north but only on this one occasion straddled our disposal area.

The weather continued fine since our landing, our area being amongst thick brushwood was fairly well concealed from aerial reconnaissance.

1900 hrs "A" Coy plus one pln. "B" Coy under Comd. Maj. Peet leave as protection party to carrier train carrying Rations to 2/7th Queen's situated square 8531. at area of "T" crossing "Shepherds Bush" 850292 party came under very heavy enemy artillery D.F. Fire.

Many casualties and general disorganisation caused but main body manage to reach area PONTONI 858304 where they were joined by jeep train. Enemy opposition found to be too great for much further progress. Major Peet wounded.

23rd Feb. 0130 hrs. Orders given for depleted supply party to withdraw to our area which was eventually accomplished.

The failure of this operation was due primarily to enemy D.F. fire. The heaviest this Bn. has encountered and the level ????? route to be taken. By the time the order to withdraw was given shelling & enemy small arms had reduced the number of carriers (mainly 2/7th assisted by 2/6th Queen's) as to make further progress impossible.

1000 hrs. Bn. reorganised on three Coy basis, "A" Coy being merged under "C" Coy Comd.

1500 hrs. Bn. "O" Group to plan new Coy positions.

2200 hrs. Following reports that evening "C" Coy to wadi area 854308 and "D" Coy to depression area 853306. Route chosen via ADS House 841895, thence Eastwards across country to avoid "Shepherds Bush".

24th Feb. 0400 hrs. "C" & "D" together with Tac HQ were enthralled spectators from a distance of 250 yds. of Maj. Campbell of "B" Coy driving the party of Boche from their objective.

It was difficult not to cheer & applaud what was such fantastic entertainment.

"B" Coy take objective with small arms and hand to hand fighting killing 5 & capturing 12 with the loss of one man slightly wounded.

"D" Coy fought their way past patrols & M.G. posts to their objective which they found occupied by one Coy of enemy. This party was literally caught napping & showed very poor defensive ??????. Many enemy were killed whilst their hysterical commanding officer endeavoured to rouse his force.

First Light.

Dawn breaking however prevented "D" Coy from occupying their objective & were forced to withdraw to area PONTONI owing to superior enemy numbers. They returned with 5 POW's.

"C" Coy with difficulty had reached positions in wadi 200 yds. South of objective area.

Tac HQ established in wadi found with growing light that they were overlooked from enemy positions to the East. Small arms & accurate shell fire caused rapid move to deep wadi further South, adjacent to Irish Guards, Tac HQ where they were joined by two Plns of "D" Coy whose remaining Plns remained with "B" Coy.

1400 hrs. battery Comdr. accidentally wounded.

1500 hrs. Capt. MacManus, Gunner O.P. Officer reaches Tac HQ .

1830 hrs. enemy reported forming up opposite "B" & "C" Coys but were dispersed by shell fire.

During the day Bn. HQ ??? but suffered no casualties. The previous night & morning had seen no movement & fighting by subunits in difficult country that it was impossible to estimate casualties suffered or inflicted. Stragglers continued to report in to subunits for the next two days.

"C" Coy found that although overlooked by enemy on the railway line above the Boche also made area ideal Snipers targets and many casualties were inflicted. "B" Coy with A/Tk (R.A.) & Cheshire's M.G's. under Comd. suffered much shelling during the day & were caused considerable casualties.

1900 hrs. Tac HQ having no observation moved out to old area 845287 suffering several casualties from D.F. fire on route. "D" Coy remain STET.

2300 hrs. Tac HQ established. 845787?

During the day "B" Coy successfully directed arty. Fire on to a number of targets.

During the night "D" Coy supplied protective patrols around "B" Coy.

- 25th Feb. Rain? Continued from previous day. Continued direction of Arty. Fire by "B" & "C" Coys. Supply train of porters successfully reaches forward Coys.
- 26th Feb. Heavy shelling of "B" Coy area during the day A.P. & H.E.
2400 hrs. Recce party from 2/7 Queen's accompany C.O. on visit to "B" Coy area.
- 27th Feb. Further accurate shelling observation by forward Coys.
1200 hrs. "B" Coy in addition to normal shelling receive several rounds of 210 mm.
1400 hrs. Visit from Comdr. of 18th Bde. 1st Armd. Div.
2000 hrs. Advance party arrives from Sherwood Forrester's 1st Div.
Hand over of complete positions took place this night.
- 28th Feb. 0800 hrs. Bn. less 1 Pln. "C" Coy (unrelieved) arrive back in rest area. (already prepared by B Echelon) at 843886.
1030 hrs. Bn. "O" Group.
Everyone tired and exhausted. Heavy rain. Bn. held in immediate Reserve.
Last night the last Pln. of "C" Coy were relieved and despatched? for a rest at B Echelon.
- 29th Feb. 1230 hrs. Bn. "O" Group, we relieve the Royal Berks. That night.
2030 hrs. Bn. leave for new positions. Squares 8930 & 8929, 48 hrs. rations were carried, Some casualties suffered on route from enemy harassing fire.

F.P. St. Maur Sheil, Major. (from 1/2/1944 until 18/2/1944)

Lt. Col. A.J. Renshaw, (from 18/2/1944 until 29/2/1944)

Comdg.

2/6th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regt.

29/2/1944