

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

June 1944.

- 1st Jun. PORT SAID appears on the skyline about 1400 hrs. and at half past three we dock just short of the entrance to the canal. Disembark at 7 and after a long wait in the lighters while baggage is loaded arrive at the railyard quay well after dark.
Char served up on the train from NAAFI van and at about ten o'clock we leave the station for another nights travelling.
- 2nd Jun. Arrive at MENA camp 9:00 breakfast then organisation of tentage etc. Camp already laid out very adequately by Smith. Pyramids are quite close and surprisingly much larger than they look in photographs.
- 3rd Jun. To call arrow to get photographs for battalion information rooms from the Ministry of Information. Scrounge successful. 150 reinforcements from R.A. Join us in the afternoon. Heat is tremendous and spend most of the day dripping in an I.P. More reinforcements also disbanded EA personnel expected shortly.
Baggage still has not arrived maps clothes and bed are all with Bailey and we champ our teeth for it to come.
- 4th Jun. Church parade. C.O. addresses the old 2/6 Queen's as such for the last time. Refers pungently to the good work we have done together and appeals for every man to do his best in helping reinforcements settle in and become a part of us.
- 5th Jun. 3/4 of the old 2/6 Queen's go to Cairo on leave. Baggage arrives at last and with only two men left in the section we have a hectic morning getting an information room going. News of the fall of Rome received with great delight particularly good news for this battalion having seen as we did a great deal of the preparatory unpleasantness at ANZIO.
- 6th Jun. At 9:15 the first breath of news that the invasion has begun. From then on a rush of news bulletins and map marking all day.
After a wave of scepticism between the 1st news bulletin and the second people in the lines are dancing about waving their arms in the air. King's Speech at 7 G.M.T. Decidedly extraordinary.
- 7th Jun. 103 in the shade with a scorching wind off the desert that parches your throat in a few minutes. We work stripped to the waist mopping the sweat off with towels and even at midnight it's still very hot.
- 9th Jun. First party returns from leave and 2nd party goes.
C.O. attends "o" group at brigade remove to Palestine.
- 10th Jun. Move to Palestine cancelled. The target date for the division to be ready for action again has been advanced and we now only have 3 1/2 weeks in which to do training. Moving to HELWAN for this where there are slightly more hills.
- 12th Jun. Advance party leaves for HELWAN under Major SHEIL.
- 13th Jun. C.O. and Coy Commanders to HELWAN to recce the new area.

- 14th Jun. Some tentage sent onto the advanced party so office established at table in the open-air next door to a pile of luggage. Sandstorms hinder operations and not a lot done during the day.
- 15th Jun. Battalion moves from MENA to HELWAN leaving "R" Coy behind to do 3 weeks recruits training while the battalion does intensive training of a more advanced nature. The new camp seems hotter than the old and is certainly a long way from anywhere although there are cinemas, swimming pools and N.A.A.F.I. inside the command.
Scorching afternoon identifying training areas in the desert from arbitrary lines drawn on a 10 year old map.
- 16th to 30th June.
Period of intensive training. Rivelli at 0530 hrs. and working hrs. from 0630 to 1230 with breakfast in the field followed by an evening period from 1700 to 1830 hrs.. Training includes infantry and tank cooperation a battalion in night attack exercise and Coy test schemes. 1/3 afternoon a week with transport to CAIRO arranged. Weather very hot and showers in the evening one of the days main enjoyments.
Divisional public relations officer borrows the VIS diary and writes up a rather lame account of our stay there so inadequate that I try my own hand and send Ms. to GHQ Cairo for censorship.
- Lt. Col. A.J. Renshaw DSO, MC.
Comdg.
2/6th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment.