

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

September 1944.

1st Sept.

1st page missing.

Path through the minefield so that the column behind can pass round. They left three Italian box mines and in 20 mins. the column is on the move again.

1030 hrs. Troops and tanks in position just forward of point 374/928738 ready for the assault.

The C.O. Gives "D" Coy the task and Major TAYLOR completely surprises by moving his Coy to the summit of CAPELLA without artillery support in a series of sectional and individual Stalks. "C" Coy follows about an hour later and is heavily engaged by Spandau post tucked away in trees, in farm houses at several points up the Ridge. Major ALEXANDER DOUGLAS GRANT DALLAS, MC 108150 although hit in the chest and throat continued to lead his Coy until he collapsed afterwards dying of wounds.

While "C" Coy is still being engaged Tac goes on a recce down the track at 926737 to follow up the attack and find a route for vehicles onto the CAPELLA feature. We go about a mile down the road and on the way back are heavily engaged by an enemy's Spandau and Sniper nest situated on one of the Western spurs of the Ridge. Luckily we have two detachments of mortars and the squadron commanders tank with us so we pull in behind a house for cover and make things decidedly hot for the enemy for 5 minutes with H.E. from our mortars and the tank gun then pull out from behind our house and head across country straight for the enemy position to the lower slopes of CAPELLA arriving there without mishap.

1600 hrs. Tack established a few yards South of "C" Coy head HQ and about 200 yards short of the Crest of Capella.

'O' Gp. "B" Coy attacks hill 914752 at 2000 hrs with mortar MMG and arty. support. "A" Coy counterattack force immediately behind Tac HQ.

The first batch of prisoners comes in from "C" Coy they belong to 98 Div. and took over the line from 278 Div. only yesterday evening.

This no doubt accounts for the fact that we have met much stiffer opposition than 139 Bde. did on the same sector.

Guiding of "A" and "B" Coys to be arranged meeting of Maine HQ's M.M.G's, Mortars all moving up from the other Ridge South of MONDAINO and I climb and re climb mount CAPELLO most of the afternoon and evening.

2nd Sept.

"B" Coy attack successful Major CAMPBELL wounded in the arm but carries on with his Coy.

During the night 2/5th passes through us attacking northwards.

At 0330 hrs 24 hour's rations and ammunition arrived by mule and are guided straight out to Coys.

0600 hrs 2/5th were being counter attacked and have had to come back a little off the feature they occupied.

0900 hrs 2/5th attack again with tanks and artillery in support. The tanks take a pounding from bazookas and artillery fire and we mentally check up on our own tanks and find that a surprisingly large number were casualties for one reason or another four with tracks off owing to bad going one on the minefield at SAN and at least two brewed up by shellfire on Capello.

A day of enemy sniping and odd bursts of Spandau fire as far as we are concerned. Our Snipers kill two of the enemy dodging in and out of a house only a few hundred yds. away. "B" Coy get a heavy stonking during the afternoon probably owing to the fact that the tanks are hull down posns. on their objective.

1800 hrs. 2/5th Queen's withdrawing back to B Echelon 2/7th are coming through and attacking tonight.

2000 hrs. we withdraw to the Southern slopes of CAPELLO and spend the night there while 2/7 passes through along the track into action. Enemy shelling sets fire to a concentration of ammo vehicles on the slopes opposite and they blaze furiously during the night.

- 3rd Sept. 0800 hrs. Breakfast brought up from B Echelon and at 0900 hrs. we begin to march back for a spell of rest. The action although short has been exhausting with rapid advance over very steep hilly country.
2/7th report that the enemy is again withdrawing and they have reached the river at 780773 without opposition.
In the evening a German plane comes over with anti-personnel bombs presumably aimed at the gunners who are laid out thickly in the area and who were firing a heavy stonk at the time.
Our casualties are 4 killed and 27 wounded and total casualties in the area amount to no less than 120.
In the last action the Bn. lost 1 Officer and 7 O.R's killed and 25 O.R's wounded. At a conservative estimate we accounted for 34 Germans probably killed and 17 taken prisoner.
- 4th Sept. Maj. SHEIL DSO assumes comd. of the 1st Bn. of the Duke of Wellington Regt. and leaves us today. Capt SMITH, Capt. MILLS and Capt. PURDON all get their majority and Comd. "C", "A", and "D" Coys respectively. Maj. TAYLOR MC and Bar taking over 2i/c of the Bn.
1100 hrs. 'O' Gp. – clean up and issue of equipment.
- 5th Sept. Latest news is that the GOTHIC LINE has gone for good with the Cdns. At RICCIONE on the coast and 46 Div. at CORIANO also well N. of the CONCA RIVER swinging W. 56 Div. is to pursue with two Bde's. up 167 left, 168 right an the axis GEMMANO-MONTE SCUDO- SERRAVILLE onto the main lateral rd. and N.W. to BOLOGNA. After the RIVER MARANO the 7th Armd. Bde. is to lead. 167, 168 & Div. HQ move today. 169 is in Reserve and time of move not yet known but presumably very shortly.
Bn. in particularly good spirit over the news that our Western Invasion Armies have crossed the borders of Holland and ? possibly of Germany itself as well.
- 6th Sept. N.T.R.
- 7th Sept. 1230 hrs. Bn. moves to MONTEFIORE area. It is raining hard. The Ox & Bucks are fighting on the GEMMANO feature. We are to go through them tonight and take MONTESCUDO.
2000 hrs. No move tonight as Ox & Bucks have not taken GEMMANO.
- 8th Sept. Bn. leaves to attack features S. and W. of GEMMANO. 2/7 Bn. Queen's are to take GERMANO. We meet very heavy mortar D.F. on the route up. Casualties are heavy – "C" Coy take POGGLIO 864804 encounter very confusing Spandau fire which seems to come from all directions. Maj. GEORGE EDWARD SMITH 124704 is killed in the action – Tac HQ which is just behind them suffers casualties – Lt. ALAN ERNEST SANFTLEBEN 235347 I.O. is killed – Maj. AITCHISON and the R.A. F.O.O. are wounded by the same shell.
The HQ established itself with "C" Coy at POGGLIO which is illuminated by burning hayricks (very useful for enemy Snipers who are still around). Posn. of 2/7 is not clear and "D", "B" & "A" Coy Comdrs. wait at Tac HQ for more definite news before going on to their objectives.
"D" Coy leave during the night to take "SOLDIER" 856804. The feature is taken and MAJOR R K PURDON 1165V (South African Armoured Corps Attached.) killed. The posn. is heavily counter attacked by the enemy and "A" & "B" Coys leave to reinforce the posn. but were caught in very heavy D.F. Maj. MILLS is wounded and the 2 Coys come under one Comd. They surprise a German

column of wheel barrows and mules and shoot it up collecting 35 P.O.W's from a house on their way back.

"D" Coy which is now almost cut off is ordered to fight its way out.

- 9th Sept. Area GEMMANO.
After a hard and confusing night we now have two composite Coys at 8680 with "D" Coy at 864802. 45 P.O.W's were taken during the night by us. The Battle Patrol are sent fwd. to "SOLDIER" and report it is now clear of enemy.
One Pln. of "B" Coy is sent with Battle Patrol to occupy the feature.
Enemy are observed to be on "SAILOR" 853797 and still in local houses.
These houses are bottled up by our mortars, arty & M.M.G's.
2/5th are reported to be moving round on our left and are being troubled with Spandau's.
Our troops on "SOLDIER" are forced to retire when the feature is stonked by our own arty.
Another Pln. is sent up and 10th K.O.Y.L.I. relieve it at 0100 hrs.
Bn. all out by 0300 hrs. at SERRA 905795 for a rest. (under the noses of 25 pdrs.).
Butterfly bombs dropped during the night – knocked out some of our transport.
- 11th Sept. 1000 hrs. C.O. to Bde.
1200 hrs. 'O' Gp. We are to relieve the Welch on CROCE and hold ground for Army attack.
1600 hrs. C.O. at Welch HQ TREBBIO 873826.
1850 hrs. Coy Comdrs. arrive at Welch HQ. There is heavy stonking of rds. leading to TREBBIO which is under direct observation from MONTSECUDO.
- 12th Sept. Bn. all in position.
H.Q. 871826 – 2 Coys at CROCE 87526 – Coy at 870828 with Pln. fwd. at 858829.
Posns. mortared during the night. "D" Coy pick up one POW. who wanders into our lines.
There is no movement by day as posns. are under observation.
- 13th Sept. Motoring of our positions during the day, cab rank is called for and is down within 20 minutes on wadis in front of our positions.
1500 hrs. Bde. 'O' Gp.
Bn. to hold firm base for 2/5 & 2/7 to attack. We will take PALLAZO 861833 and hold MENDIONE.
2200 hrs. Tac HQ moves fwd. to GROCE. The big barrage for the Army attack has started. The noise is terrific. "B" Coy take up posns. around CROCE and our posn. at MENDIONE is bolstered up with "D" Coy. the fighting is very confusing. There are reports of Spandau fire in Main HQ at TREBBIO and "C" Coy bump several enemy posts on their way to take PALLAZO.
There is heavy fighting at PALLAZO but "C" Coy take it and hang on. They are subjected to much mortaring and their HQ has direct hit. Capt. CURTIS is wounded, Capt. STEVENS is also a casualty after being with "C" Coy with his Carrier Pln.
- 14th Sept. 2/5 and tks. are moving through us. The tks. bring down a heavy stonk on us. There are hundreds on P.O.W's streaming in.
Brig. G.H.G. SMITH-DORRION DSO, MC is reported killed.
2/5 move up to MENDIONE and our D Coy go to PALLAZO and assist "C" Coy who are taking much mortaring. Welch are reported at PALLAZO and attacking fwd. of it. Many P.O.W's come back during the day and gradually enemy fire dies down. Good reports come in about the attack and our Coys move back to TREBBIO and start moving to B Echelon 9382 at 2030 hrs.
All out safely except Main HQ which gets stonked on cross rds. at TREBBIO. Some casualties.
- 16th Sept. Bn. all in and resting. Lt. Col. RENSHAW to be acting Brigadier.

Maj. Taylor M.C. to be acting C.O. of 2/6.

- 17th Sept. Lt. Col. RENSHAW returns to Bn. Brigadier Stratton having taken over (ex B.G.S. 8th Army). Old friends "Cats Whiskers" performs for us. Bn. now on three Coy bases.
- 18th Sept. Bn. is under 2 hrs notice to move, recce groups leave at 1500. Reminder of Bn. do not leave until 2200 hrs. The rds. are blocked with transport.
- 19th Sept. Bn. moves to 838858 where we remain all day. 2100 hrs. Bn. moves off to attack and CERIANO Ridge. The sky is lit up with searchlights which are very effective. Main HQ moves to FELICIANO 796890 and wait for news of "B" Coy who takes PALLALO 786897 without much opposition. Tac HQ moves up to them next morning. "C" and "D" Coys have gone fwd. during the night too CERIANO Ridge, meet opposition at church 765901 and take up positions there. They are stonked with Nebelwerfer and have difficult job locating Spandau posts which are well hidden in their area. O.P. at track observes 30 Bosche moving at 782905 and a pln. of "B" Coy are sent to meet them. The Bosche are routed, "B" Coy accounting for 7 of them. Our tks. go fwd. with one pln. of "B" Coy to CERIANO Ridge, they bring down much enemy stonking but account for many Spandau posts.
- 20th Sept. No sign of enemy patrols to flanks and fwd. make no contact. Tac moves to CERIANO. 1615 hrs. Bn. ordered to "bum on" with tanks. "D" Coy lead astride tanks, the rest marching. They find bridge at 760932 intact and move on to lateral Rd. where they take up positions. Tac is established at 760932 with "C" Coy. Our patrols to move to river during night, hear sounds of vehicles on the other side. Tac HQ has some near misses during the day. The country is flat and movement by day almost impossible. The nebelwerfer seems to be working overtime lately and Coys get it down on them but casualties are few.
- 22nd Sept. Bn. moves back to CERIANO.
- 23rd Sept. Reinforcements from the Ox and Bucks arrive.
- 24th Sept. Bn. under 24 hrs notice to move.
- 25th Sept. 0800 hrs. Bn. under 2 hrs. notice to move. 2/5 & 2/7 are to attack SAVIGNANO 7101. We are in Reserve. 1930 hrs. Bn. leaves for conc. area at COPPPOLO 7594. It is raining heavily.
- 26th Sept. Good progress is reported from 2/5 & 2/7th. 1230 hrs. We are under ½ hrs. notice to move.
- 27th Sept. Bn. moves to SANTARCANGELO 7598. We are to do a night attack on CASTLEVECCHIO and bridge at SAVIGNANO. A start line is laid and at 2300 hrs. the arty. barrage opens and Coys move fwd. We now have another Coy which is composed of A/A gunners. They are left in Reserve on the Strat Line. 2300 hrs. "D" Coy report they are near objective. 2/5 report they are having sticky time on our left.

28th Sept. 0005 hrs. "C" Coy strike a minefield and held up with some casualties. "B" Coy which is to take bridge in the town contact the enemy and send back 7 POWs the Bosche had blown Rd at 724009 and evacuation of casualties is held up by this. There are odd Spandau's still firing in this area and the Battle Patrol are sent to the bridge to protect the Sappers who are repairing it.
0145 hrs. "B" Coy report they have met further enemy and have wounded three of them but they are being Nebelwerfered .
0215 hrs. "B" Coy report there are across river within 20 yards of the enemy. They cannot speak loudly over the air.
"C" & "D" Coys are held up at the foot of their objective enemy tanks are firing from the town.
Bravo Coy are by now surrounded in the town; report they are sniping enemy mortars.

29th Sept. 0730 hrs. "C" and "D" Coys move back to area of the blown bridge. Enemy are reported to be digging in in front of them. There is no more news of "B" Coy. Battle Patrol leave at 2000 hrs. to try and contact them but are held up by Spandau fire.
A.A. Coy posns. are flooded out.
S.P. guns are firing from the mosque and enemy have O.P. in church on the Ridge.
0820 hrs. The Coys come under heavy never worth a fire and casualties are heavy.
0930 hrs. "A" Coy get direct hit. More reports of enemy tanks in SAVIGNANO.
Patrol this morning saw A.F.V. behind church.
1045 hrs. "D" Coy heavily mortar. News that 167 Bde. patrol is trying to contact our "B" Coy.
1200 hrs. Bde. 'O' Gp.
S.P. gun is still firing at "A" Coy.
1225 hrs. Down to Coy being stonked by mortars.
Our snipers who have gone forward are shot at from the church and report they have heard tanks.
1720 hrs. "D" Coy shelled again.
1930 hrs. One pln. of "B" Coy have made their way back. They report that bridge was blown this morning. They have been cut off from rest of Coy and report German withdrawals from town during the day.
They were lying low in town but one of our stonks forced the Bosche to take cover in their house. They have no news of the rest of "B" Coy but say they saw 12 English soldiers being doubled away by the Germans during the morning.
2100 hrs. Battle Patrol and Snipers are sent to the bridge – Coys are to follow up on success and take up posns. around bridge. Patrol to go fwd. 1200 yds. to gulley S. GIOVANNI.

30th Sept. 0215 hrs. Patrol reach their objective – have sent one N.C.O. and six men on to S. GIOVANNI.
0230 hrs. "A" & "D" Coys move fwd. to take up posns. and are in posn. by first light.
Main and Tac move up into SAVIGNANO just as the enemy start to shell it. Establish at 718016 in Police Station – there is heavy shelling of the town.
Patrol to S. GIOVANNI met the enemy 400 yds. across bridge and were forced back.
1230 hrs. 'O' Gp. at 2/7th HQ. Very heavy shelling of the town throughout the morning.
1830 hrs. Direct fire on HQ from S.P. Guns – several direct hits – I. Office has it & R.E. Recce Car is caught alight.
There is much Spandau fire but hard to pin point where it is coming from.
2040 hrs. Relieving Coy of London Scottish arrive at "D" Coy.
2120 hrs. "D" Coy patrol reports they cannot find friends on left.
2150 hrs. First news of Maj. CAMPBELL (B Coy Comdr) found wounded by 2/5 and evacuated.
2200 hrs. Main HQ area stonked again.
2225 hrs. "D" Coy report tks. in front of them firing direct.

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

Officer List 9th September 1944.

Lt.-Col.	A. J. Renshaw	Queen's R.R.	
Major	F. P. St. M. Sheil	S.W.B.	
Major	P. M. A. Taylor	Queen's R.R.	
Major	R.M. Campbell MC	Black Watch	
Capt.	H. F. Hales	Queen's R.R.	
Capt.	G.E. West	" "	
Capt.	T. G. Blumson	" "	
Capt.	G; P. Stevens	R.W.K.	
Capt.	W.M. Frost	Queen's R.R.	
Capt.	J. W. Evans	R.W.K.	
Capt.	G. B. Curtis	Queen's R.R.	
Capt.	H. L. Bailey	Queen's R.R.	
Capt.	H.W. Vipond	" "	
Lieut.	E.M. Lawrence	R. Norfolk's	
Lieut.	N.H. Eldridge	R. Warwicks	
Lieut.	M. Metcalf	Queen's R.R.	
Lieut.	S. N. Penlington	R.A.C.	
Lieut.	I.T.J. Boyes	Queen's R.R.	
Lieut.	T.P. O'Connell	" "	
Lieut.	I. P. Macgregor	R.A.C.	
Lieut.	A.J. Tremethick	Queen's R.R.	
Lieut.	R.N. Thompson	" "	
Lieut.	W. F. Nethercott	Devon's	
Lieut.	S.D. Lawton	U.D.F.	
Lieut.	V.H. Lambert	R. Berks.	D.L.I.
Lieut.	L.W. Harding	Queen's R.R.	
Lieut.	W. Roadnight (Q.M.)	Queen's R.R.	
Capt.	A. R. Elsom,	R.A.M.C	
Rev.	G. B. Fairhurst	R.A.Ch.D.	