1/6th Bn. The Queens Royal Regiment (West Surrey) War Diary November 1943

NOVEMBER 1943.

1st Nov. Area. 9179.

Whilst the 1/5th were attacking in the area round CICOLI B Coy passed through and advanced along the Ridge directed on a White House and PT. 289 map ref. 899825 there they contacted elements of A Coy of the 1/5th Bn. The C.O. was in touch with "B" Coy by 38 set and could watch their progress from 908806. In the afternoon the Bde. commander ordered the relief of the forward Coys of the 1/5th Bn. by the 6th Bn.
"A" Coy were therefore directed along the main rd. to rd. junction and small feature at 879820. "C" Coy followed on the same access branching off right to secure the saddle between CICOLI and M. ANNA. "A" Coy came under heavy S.A. and shell fire. They sent out two patrols both of which made contact a force estimated at 25 to 30 Germans.

2nd Nov. At 0600 hrs. "A" Coy advanced and occupied objective without opposition. They then sent patrols to 877839. "C" Coy meanwhile sent a section with a 38 set up to the house on the top of the CICOLI feature. "B" Coy were relieved by "A" Coy of the R.B.S. and came down on the plain to rest. They spent an arduous night without blankets, great coats or rations. 40 Italians were conscripted as a carrying party the previous evening but only half arrived at "B" Coy in the morning. The food was by then inedible.

3rd Nov. Bn. HQ was moved to 909803 and subsequently to 901813. At 1430 hrs 1/7th Bn. were ordered to relieve 1/6th Bn.. The Coy meanwhile had been directed onto the road and river crossing at 877839 and "C" Coy to the north slopes of CICOLI. South of the RIO di LIMATO. The handover was completed by 2000 hrs and Coys marched back independently to a Bn. rest area. centred on the Road junction east of S. NICOLA.

4th Nov. The Bn. now situated in its rest area spent a quiet day.
1000 hrs. a Church Service was held in "C" area.
1100 hrs. all personnel were medically examined 2 men from "C" Coy being returned for re grading.
Weather remained fine throughout the day.

5th Nov. 1000 hrs. This proved to be a great day in the Bn. history.
The Bn. was paraded for an address by the C.O. In his speech he thanked all ranks for their loyalty and devotion to him during the recent fighting. Towards the end he said "there exists in this Bn. a unity of such strength that wherever we may go or whatever we may be called upon to do we shall not fail". on such words Bn. marched off and later dismissed.
1400 hrs. once again the Bn. was assembled for further address by the C.O. He brought with him a letter from the Div. Comdr. Maj. Gen. ERSKINE which he read to the assembly. The letter stated that the 7th Armd. Div. was to be placed on the Imperial Strategic Reserve. It further stated that a Canadian Div. would relieve us and take over all our equipment and transport.
As soon as this transfer was completed the division was to be embarked for the United Kingdom. Before the Bn. dismissed the 2 I/C Major J MASON informed them that the C.O. had been awarded the D.S.O. This announcement was greeted with cheers from all ranks. The Bn. then dismissed.

Nov. 6th Area 922790. 0600 hrs. Rev.
0615 all ranks PT until 0645.
0900 hrs. Officers, WO's and NCO's were paraded for an address by the Bde. Comdr Brig. L G WHISTLER DSO. He expressed his appreciation and admiration to the assembly in no mean words referring to them as the backbone of the Bn. after this short but highly complementary speech

the Brigadier left with the C.O. and the parade dismissed. Weather remained fine throughout the day.

7th Nov. 0615 PT. During morning there arrived back to the Bn. 15 O. Rs who had previously left as casualties.
They were attached to Coys. The Div. Comdr. Major General ERSKINE paid a visit to the C.O. at 1100 hrs. Bn. continued to improve amenities through the day.
Today the C.O. issued a training instruction no. 1 in which he laid down the principles to be adopted in the training period to come. East of Div. access to incl MONTE CROCE and MONTE MASSICO towards FALCIANO where the training area allotted to the Bn. from 131 Bde. Whether rain storm at night.

8th Nov. 0600 hrs.
0615 PT. At 0700 An advanced party left the Bn. for the new area South of NAPLES. The party included Major JACK Capt. BDG MILLER and the IO.
0840 hrs. Training commenced within the Bn.. Transport took leave parties to NAPLES.
1300 hrs. Transport took parties on local leave to AVERSA. Usual maintenance was carried out through the day. Whether fine.

9th Nov. 0600 hrs. Rev.
0615 PT. 0900 hrs. Leave party left for NAPLES.
0910 hrs. C.O's inspected the Bn. area. Training went as usual.
1330 hrs. local leave parties left for AVERSA. Whether fine.

10th Nov. Routine Same. Day spent in training and general maintenance.
I.O. returned from new area. Leave parties left for NAPLES and AVERSA. Weather turning cold.

11th Nov. Training continued. Both the Mortar and Anti-tank Plns did some shooting on the field firing range. Leave party left as usual returning at 1800 hrs. number 12 training

12th Nov. Training and maintenance continue as usual. Activity was scene within the M.T. Section many vehicles having been handed over "Q" was busy in preparation for the coming handover of Stores and Equipment. In the morning the Mortar platoon staged a mock battle for the U.S. film unit that was operating in our area. This was a great success. A high wind swept the area all day.

13th Nov. Training and general maintenance cont. within the Bn.
1000 hrs. All G1098 stores handed into the Q.M. At the same time ammo returns were rendered.
During the morning 8 reinforcements rejoined the Bn. from hospital.
The Bn. concert commenced at 1930 hrs. and acclaimed by all as a great success came to conclusion act 2230 hrs.
A high wind coupled with spasmodic rain raged throughout the night.

14th Nov. At 0700 hrs. the I.O. Left for the new area VICO EQUENSE 360290.
A C of E Church Parade was held at 1045 and a R.C. Church Parade was held at 0945. Both Services took place in the cinema.

15th Nov. A party of the Cape Breton Highlanders (1st Canadian Div.) arrived to take over the Bn. stores and equipment. This handover of all equipment etc. occupied the whole of the day all that the Bn. retained was 2x 3 tonners 5x P.U's, C.O's Jeep and 1x M/C.
All maps less those of the new area were handed into Bde.
Bn. was warned to move on the following day and conferences were held in all departments to give orders for the move.

16th Nov. Bn. moved off at 0700 hrs. in T.C.V's each vehicle carried an A.A. gunner Bren and look out man. Route taken was as follows.
MONDRAGONE, CANCELLO, VILLA LITERNO, ALBANOVA, AVERSA, NAPLES TORRE ANNUNZIATA, CASTELL a MARE di STABIA and so to VICO EQUENSE. Bn. arrived at 11:05. The advance and billeting party was there to meet us and all departments were soon directed to their respective places. Reminder of the day was spent in settling down to the new conditions and billet.
It rained all day.

17th Nov. Area 3629.
The Bn. was now in its embarkation area. Personnel were informed that the stay would be for approx. 4 weeks but it was not yet known to be definite. Conferences were held in all departments to disclose the C.O's orders concerning the training standing orders etc to be adopted within the new area.
The Bn. patrol and pioneer platoon was disbanded and sent to Coys.
All drivers now without their vehicles were sent to Coys for infantry training.
Rain which had fallen all day yesterday and throughout the night made no effort to cease a continual downpour being experienced all day.

18th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs.
1030 hrs. all the officers of the Bn. attended a talk given by the Corps Comdr (Lt. Gen. MACREERY). This was given in AVERSA and was followed by a talk by the Div. Comdr.
The best part of the day was spent on scrubbing equipment and generally cleaning up.
The early part of the morning showed promise of good weather but changed its mind and from 1000 hrs. onwards it started to rain and continued to do so throughout the day.

19th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs
Bn. did some training in the morning and preparations continued for the training and courses that were to start in earnest on Monday the 22nd of Nov.
0900 hrs. commenced he's inspection of the Bn. area. The C.O.
An information office was set up in the town where under the supervision of the "I" section personnel of the Bn. could come and obtain the latest news of world events. 10 people rejoined the Bn. from Con. depot.
Weather remained fine throughout the day.

20th Nov. Rev 0630. Normal routine training and maintenance was carried out during the morning. A W.O. and Sgts club was opened on the hill to the rear of "C" Coy. M.T. painted out all Div. and Bn. signs on the Bn's vehicles. Weather remained fine throughout the day.

21st Nov. Rev 0630 0900 hrs. a draught of 83 men left the Bn.
It contained of all those who had joined the Bn. since its initial landing in Italy all those who had not served a year abroad. It is believed that they were to join the 46 Div. Church parade was held in the 1/5th restroom. Weather early morning fine rest of the day rain.

22nd Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. At 0830 today the Bn. commenced training in earnest according to programme.
The following Cadres were started.
(1) clerks course (RSM).
(2) Sanitary course (L/Cpl. HOLMES).
(3) Water Duties course (L/Cpl. KILLINGBOCK).
(4) Senior Cadre Course (Major GOODRIDGE).
(5) Junior Cardre Course (Lt. ALDRIDGE).
0930 hrs. The Bde. Comdr. Brig. A.G. WHISTLER DSO inspected the Bn. area.
The C.O. went on leave and Major E. KILSHAW took over command of the Bn. Weather raining

23rd Nov. Training continued according to programme. The Coys did a 10 mile route March. I sand table was constructed by the "I" Section for the use of the senior Cadre of course. Torrential rain fell for the best part of the day.

24th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. Training continued according to programme.
The local cinema which had formerly housed Italian sailors was taken over by the Bn. with concerts and cinema shows. Forming part of the recreation.
weather rainy periods.

25th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. Training continued according to programme. Weather rainy

25th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. Training continued according to programme. Weather rain.

27th Nov. Rev. 630 hrs. Training continued according to programme.
1400 hrs. C.O. returned from leave.

28th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. Both a R.C. and C of E Church Parades were held in the town. Weather was sunny but rather cold.

29th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. The Intelligence Cadre which had been frequently postponed started at 0830 hrs. Remainder of Bn. cont. training accordingly to programme.

30th Nov. Rev. 0630 hrs. Training continued according to programme.
Personnel from B.H.Q went firing on the range during the morning. Weather unsettled.

Lt. Colonel M. Forrester, DSO, MC,
Commanding,
1/6th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

30th November 1943.