WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

West N S R

October 1944

CATTOLICA

1

0930

RC and Protestant church parades under Bde arrangement.

1900

A Dinner was held by the Warrant Officers and Sergeants in the Sgts Mess

Weather this date was cloudy and cool.

2

0800

Bn ceremonial parade and an inspection by the CO, Lt col A L Saunders.

Weather this date was very rainy and a TEWT scheduled for 1400 hrs had to be cancelled.

3

0800

Bn parade and inspection by the CO.

1000

A TEWT was held by the CO and offrs of the Bn at 9686.

1600

Bn held last rehearsal for Bde Comds inspection and march past on the following day.

1830

Thirty-four reinforcements arrived and were allotted to coys. In the evening a film was shown “Beautiful Cheat” in the Bde Cinema.

Weather this date cloudy and cool

4

0830

Ceremonial Parade. The Bn was inspected by Bde Comd, Brig J P E Bernatchez DSO OBE, followed by a march past in which the Bde Comd took the salute Afterwards when the Bn formed up again on the parade ground, the Bde Comd congratulated the Bn on the very fine turnout. The RCE band was in attendance.

1400

BnHQ, HQ Coy and D Coy were given a lecture in the Bde Cinema on Rehabilitation in Canada for returned service men after the war.

In the evening a film was shown in Bde Cinema, “Beautiful Cheat”.

Lt R E McDermott RC Sigs arrived at this HQ to take over the duties of Bn Signal Officer.

Weather fine and warm.

5

0800

The IO, Capt R E Campbell, left this morning for FANO on a three day exchange of offrs with the Desert Air Force.

1330

An educational picture on VD was shown to the Bn at the Bde Cinema.

48 hour leaves to RICCIONE have again commenced.

1800

A Warning Order was issued to the effect that exercise “River Crossing” is to be carried out 6 Oct 44 by “A” and “D” Coys with the balance of the Bn attending the exercise as spectators.

Weather this date was cloudy and cool with frequent showers.

Trg this date as per syllabus

6

Trg as per syllabus.

0845

Bn “0” Group for exercise “River Crossing” on River CONCA, was held at 968878 and attended by all Sp and Rifle Coy offrs.

1230

“A” & “D” Coys together with detailed party of Signallers, stretcherbearers [sic.] and pioneers, move to assembly area 964879 for exercise “River Crossing”, 18 paddlers being supply by “B” Coy.

1400

Balance of the Bn, under coy arrangements, march to spectators stand on east bank Conca River at 974877 where Pl Comds gave a running commentary as exercise progressed.

1900

A meeting was held in the Officers’ Mess of all offrs except those on duty at BnHQ.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

7.

Trg as per syllabus.

1100

The GOC 1 Cdn Corps, Lt-Gen E L M Burns DSO OBE, gave a short talk to the officers WOs and NCOs of this Bn at the Bde Cinema. The General expressed his thanks to the officers and men for the very fine work they did in the Breaking of the Gothic Line and driving the enemy back into the Lombardy plains. He stated that in the fighting that was to come in the very near future the men of 1 Cdn Div would play a very important part.

1330

A TEWT, Exercise “ATTACK” was held (RV X-rds 976867) and attended by all offrs, WOs and Sgts.

The 7th Victory Loan campaign started today, and was received with great enthusiasm, by all ranks.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

8

1000

RC Church Parade at Bde Adm building, and Protestant Church Service in the Bde cinema.

1800

A film was shown in the Bde cinema, “Man Hunt”.

The weather is still very unsettled after severe thunder storms during last night.

9

Trg as per syllabus.

1430

The “Bandoliers” Concert Party put on two performances for this unit in the camp theatre. This concert was the best that the boys had attended for some time.

1530

The IO, Capt R E Campbell returned from the DAF at FANO where he had been for the past four days.

Weather this date was cloudy and cool.

10

Trg as per syllabus. Seven days to Rome and Florence have again started, 30 vacancies being allotted to this Bn.

It has just been noted in Part II Orders that Lt C H Smith of the Carrier Pl has qualified “Q1” after attending a course from 5 Sep to 20 Sep 44 on “Mule Management”.

Fifty-five reinforcements arrived at this HQ and were allotted to coys.

1900

The 2IC, Major F E Hiltz returned to the unit after spending the past week visiting hospitals.

The weather this date was rainy.

11

Trg as per syllabus.

1600

There was a meeting at Bde HQ, attended by CO, 2IC and Coy Comds.

The 7th Victory Loan campaign is now in full swing with every indication that the Bn will over suscribe [sic.] its objective.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

12

Trg as per syllabus.

1400

After receiving very short notice Bn moved to area 9687. BnHQ was established at 965873. All sub-units were reported in posn by 1630 hrs. Tps are under canvas in the new area.

Weather this date was fine and warm.

13

Trg as per syllabus.

The weather this date fine and warm.

14

Trg as per syllabus.

The CO, Lt col A L Saunders was today awarded The Order of Aristian Andres, (Greek Order of Valour) by C in C Greek Forces in Italy. It is believed this was in recognition of his co-operation as a GSO 1 at Div HQ, with 1 Greek Mtn Bde during the battle before Rimini. A former CO of the unit, Lt col M P Bogert DSO was also awarded this decoration. The Unit therefore becomes the first Canadian Unit to have two Greek Decorations of high distinction in its records.

In the evening a film was shown at the Bde Cinema, “Princess O’Rourke”

Weather this date fine and warm.

15

0830

CO and Coy Comds attended a TEWT on “Attack”.

1000

RC and Protestant Church Parades were held in Bde area.

1330

The 2IC and 2ICs of Coys held a TEWT of “Attack”.

In the evening a film was shown, “Miracle of Morgan’s Creek”.

Weather this date was fine and warm.

16

Trg as per syllabus.

1500

EFI issue and as usual one-half bottle of beer per man.

In the evening a film was shown, “Who Done It”.

On this date the Carrier and A Tk Platoons is being disbanded and personnel being allotted to “C” Coy to get the Coy up to strength.

Weather this date was cloudy and cool.

17

Bn Exercise, “Bn in Attack” was held in area 9488 - 9588 - 9487 - 9587

Two officers and twenty-eight arrived as reinforcements and were allotted to coys.

1630

Recce party left for area SAVIGNANO 7101.

2030

Bn received notice to be ready to move early in the morning.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

18

0630

Bn moved to area 7001. Move as per Movement Order.

0930

Coys reported in positions area 7001, Tac HQ established at 709010.

1000

CO, Major Cameron, IO and Battle Adjt, went fwd to recce 48th Highrs of Canada posns area 6204 as this Bn was to take over that area night 18/19 Oct 44.

1700

Marching personnel started to move forward.

1730

The CO, IO, Battle Adjt and other personnel of BnHQ started forward. Tac HQ was established at 627037.

2300

All sub-units reported in posns and change-over complete without incident.

Positions of Coys being, “A” Coy - 627047, “B” Coy - 627037, “C” Coy - 630046 and “D” Coy at 623046.

The weather this date was cloudy and cool.

CESENA

19

0700

The CO ordered “A” & “D” Coys to move forward and secure the line of the road 617060-614050.

0830

Tac HQ moves and established at 632051.

0930

“A” & “D” Coys reported consolidated on objective without opposition.

1200

The Bn was now entirely surrounded by friends, the British having cut across our front and the R22[c]R having come up on our right flank.

The weather this date was fine and warm.

20

1200

Bn received word that they are on one hours notice to move as from 1200 hrs.

At 1600 hrs Bde informed the Bn that there would be no move before the morning.

There was light shelling in Bn area but no casualties were reported.

The weather this date was fine and warm.

21

0630

The CO held Bn “O” Group and it was laid on that the Bn would start moving at 0800 hrs.

0800

Marching personnel started to move fwd.

0830

Tac HQ moved fwd and at 0900 hrs established at 601075.

1515

Lt col A L Saunders was called to Bde to attend a meeting.

Light shelling in the Bn area during night due to attack of the 2nd Bde on our right.

Weather this date fine and warm.

22

1600

The Bn mortars were ordered into posn at 594076 to support the 12th British Bde who are going to put in an attack on the left.

1830

Bde ordered the Bn to be ready to move at once to area 5912 where we were to come under command of 2 Cdn Inf Bde.

1900

The CO, and IO left for HQ 2 CIB where the Bde Comd Lt col M P Bogert SO informed the CO of the nights [sic.] intentions. The Bn with “D” Coy PPOLI under Comd was to form a bridgehead across the SAVIO River at 588123 thus allowing the engrs to construct a bridge over which supplies and supporting arms could be sent to the remainder of the 2nd Bde who formed a bridgehead farther south.

2000

The CO and IO returned from HQ 2 CIB to “B” Coy HQ where a Bn “O” Gp was held.

“D” Coy PPOLI was to cross river at 590123 and form a shallow bridgehead. “D” Coy WNSR under Major J K Rhodes to use same crossing then go to area 585125. “A” Coy under Maj R G Thexton to cross next and swing left to area 587122. “B” Coy under Capt J H Jones MC to remain at river crossing and provide local protection for the engrs.

2200

Tps started fwd by march route and Tac HQ established at 596121.

23

0030

“D” Coy PPOLI move to river 590123 and contacted an enemy standing patrol which they engaged taking three prisoners, the remainder retreating across the river.

0200

“D” Coy PPOLI had only been able to get one platoon across river by means of rope and swift. At 0230 hrs “D” Coy PPOLI reported consolidated area house 588123.

0300

“D” Coy WNSR started to cross river against MG opposition.

0345

“D” Coy had one platoon across river and were pushing forward toward their objective meeting heavy opposition, which included at least one tank.

0400

“D” Coy was across river and fighting their way to objective at 585125, taking prisoners and meeting rather stiff opposition.

0415

“A” Coy start across river and meet opposition on the far bank but continue advancing. Information about “D” Coy PPOLI at this time is just about nil because there was no communications with fwd platoons. River Crossing was being heavily engaged by enemy mortars.

0500

The Engrs returned and report that a bridge at this point is impossible due to rising water and the condition of the banks of the river.

0535

“D” Coy report on objective after having fought for every inch of the ground to get there.

0600

“D” Coy report being heavily machine gunned by enemy tanks. “A” Coy is having a rough time on their left reporting several enemy tanks in their vicinity.

0650

“D” Coy report being heavily shelled by enemy tanks, and “A” Coy report enemy tanks impossible to get anymore infantry across the river.

0720

“A” Coy report heavy counter attacks by tanks and infantry and they are forced to withdraw back across the river. “D” Coy PPOLI having been fiercely counter attacked called for arty DF but are forced to withdraw across the river where it was found that there was one offr and twenty-eight other ranks missing.

0830

A tp of MIOs were placed in support of the Bn and the CO immediately despatched a fighting patrol from “B” Coy to recce a route fwd to the river with the object of enabling the MIOs to reach the river and engage enemy AFVs on the opposite bank. An enemy SP gun was observed bogged down on further side of the river. An MIO later KO’d this SP which was mounted on a Mk 4 chassis and also shot up some buildings where enemy were seen to enter. Later two enemy hal track rec cross vehicles arrived and each apparently obtained a load.

1050

“D” Coy was ordered to withdraw under cover of smoke. Up until this time they were counter attacked many times but were able to hold their posns and inflict losses on the enemy.

1000

The CO went to Bde to tie in the nights activity.

1130

“D” Coy now back across the river and it was found that two ORs were missing. So far PWs in excess of fifty and it is estimated that fifty enemy were killed, and a hit was obtained on a Mk 4 tank by a PIAT.

1900

One officer and ten ORs and one casualty badly wounded of the PPOLI reported back to this HQ. They had spent the day on the further side of the river in enemy territory.

2000

“C” Coy supplied one platoon for a working party to go to and assist the PPOLI in their crossing of the SAVIO.

2045

A fighting patrol of one and ten, Lt C H Smith, crossed the river at 590123 by means of assault boats and proceeded to cross-roads 576121, searching buildings and enemy posns, but did not contact enemy. This indicated that the enemy had made a very swift withdrawal in this area.

The weather on this date was cloudy and cool.

24

1030

The GOC, Maj-Gen C Vokes CBE DSO, paid a visit to the Bn and congratulated Lt col A L Saunders on the show the Bn put on night 22/23 Oct 44.

1115

2nd Bde HQ informs the Bn that we are now under command 3 Cdn Inf Bde.

1430

Two ORs from “D” Coy with one OR from PPOLI reported to this HQ. They had been left behind when their coys had been withdrawn across the river and spent the day and night in enemy territory.

Casualties to date, on officer missing, one OR killed and 7 ORs wounded. “D” Coy had no casualties at all.

1900

A standing patrol from “A” Coy was ordered to 593117 and a standing patrol from “B” Coy to 593129.

The weather this date was fine and warm.

25

0900

The IO proceeded to HQ 3 CIB, to find out the situation.

1130

Bn received word that we were now on one hours [sic.] notice as from 1200 hrs to move to area 5510.

1300

Bn ordered to move to area 5510.

1315

Troops moved off by march route.

1330

Tac HQ moved fwd.

1530

Coys reported in posns, “A” Coy - 557101, “B” Coy - 551105, “C” Coy - 554108, “D” Coy - 564108. Tac HQ established at 548104.

1930

Bde orders to Bn to get ready and move immediately to area 5311.

2115

Tac HQ established at 533118

2300

Coys reported in posns, “A” Coy - 533116, “B” Coy - 516126, “C” Coy - 529126, “D” Coy - 537122.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

26

0900

Bde informed this HQ that the 12th Lancers would be relieving us either today or tomorrow.

1340

Tac HQ moves and established at 548104.

The weather this date was rainy and very disagreeable.

27

A recce party, one representative from each coy under Major J R Cameron left for CATTOLICA to recce billets which the Bn was to move back to.

The weather this date was again rainy and very disagreeable.

28

0100

Bde informed the Bn that there would be no move to new area today.

1100

The CO visits all Coys.

1400

The CO attended a trg conference at Bde HQ.

The IO, Capt R E Campbell was today appointed Commander of HQ Coy.

2100

Movement order was received for move to CATTOLICA 9887.

Weather today was very rainy and cold.

29

0700

The CO, Lt col A L Saunders and Battle Adjt Capt C F Spence proceeded to TORREE [sic. TORRE] del MORO 5707 to meet TCVs.

0930

Bn embussed and moved to new area as per MOvement Order.

1230

Bn arrives in new area 9887 and BnHQ established at 985870. The remainder of the day was spent settling down in the new billets.

Weather this date fine and warm.

CATTOLICA

30

1130

The Bde Comd, Brig J P E Bernatchez DSO OBE, paid a casual visit to this HQ.

0800

Pay parades at BnHQ, each coy being paid in turn.

1600

EFI issue, one bottle of beer per man.

Weather this date was cloudy and cool.

31

Trg as per syllabus.

1100

Bn Muster Parade was held.

1730

The CO, Lt col A L Saunders, gave a short talk to the WOs & Sgts in the Sgts Mess. He spoke about the good work they did in the last action and also on the trg to come in the present area.

Since moving into this area the K of C have opened a men’s canteen and recreation and reading room.

Weather this date was fine and warm.