WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

FORLI AREA

1 Dec 44

0230

Bde informed this Bn that the forward marching troops must cross start line at 0630 hrs instead of 0715 hrs as per movement order; also vehicles were to cross Bailey bridge over Montone River at 0630 hrs instead of 0800 hrs as per movement order. Due to this last minute change of orders a considerable amount of confusion and loss of sleep resulted.

0430

Early breakfast in preparation for move.

0530

Marching troops left billeting area enroute to start line.

0745

Marching personnel arrived in conc area prior to relief of 4/10 Buluchs Regt. Main HQ was established at 418267, TacHQ at 424285, Coys in area 4127.

1330

“D” Coy was ordered to move to area 428286.

1500

“A” Coy ordered to move to area 434298, “D” Coy ordered to move back to former area as a Sqn of PLDG are going to move into their present area.

1925

“A” Coy ordered to move to 416273 as a Sqn of PLDG are moving into their position.

1950

“B” & “C” Coys report change over complete, posns as follow: “B” Coy Pls at 426291, 427291, 426295; “C” Coy Pls at 434294, 433297, 435296.

2150

Several rounds of arty were brought down where a number of enemy were observed on canal bank.

2200

CO, Arty Rep and IO attended an “O” Gp at Bde HQ. On their return a Bn “O” Gp was held and everyone put in the picture for the attack by this Unit tomorrow morning. Weather cold and rainy in the morning becoming fine and cool in the afternoon.

FORLI AREA

2 Dec 44

0624

“C” Coy report a large explosion apparently a demolition of some kind forward of their posns approx one mil way in direction of the bridge. At the same time the same explosion was heard by “B” Coy. Major Jones “B” Coy Comd stressed that it seemed to be the bridge at MR 426311.

0900

Arty barrage and air attack opened according to plan. “A” and “D” Coys now standing by ready to go.

0925

“B” & “C” Coys well on the way meeting no opposition.

0930

“C” Coy being strafed by own airforce [sic.] at MR 433297.

0945

“C” Coy now making good progress and have reached a point 432305 clearing houses 432298 on the way.

1045

“C” Coy having been held up by MG fire are now pushing on.

1055

“B” Coy having been held up at 432305 call down arty fire and are now able to start moving towards 434308.

1100

“C” Coy came under very heavy MG and mortar fire from both flanks and suffered some casualties.

1115

“A” Coy ordered by CO, Lt-Col A.L. Saunders, to go to 419285. They got under way at 1135 hrs and arrived there at 1145 hrs. Shortly afterwards they were ordered to push on and at 1210 hrs reported posn of forward troops as 432297. At the same time “C” Coy was being engaged from four MG posns which were only 50 to 100 yds ahead of them in the canal bank.

1220

At this time “D” Coy was in posn 424284.

1225

Five PWs were brought in to Bn HQ.

1400

Ue to heavy enemy MG and mortar fire and infiltration between ‘B” Coy and “C” Coy, “C” were forced to withdraw to an area forward of Bn HQ. At the same time “B” Coy reported enemy on near side of canal at 430307. To counteract the infiltration an arty conc was brought down and a Pl of “A” Coy sent to 430307.

1540

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

1625

At this time it was considered likely that the enemy would launch a counter-attack. “B” Coy were ordered by CO to hold at all costs. It is intended that “A” Coy will attack through “B” Coy tonight with “D” Coy following up. H hour will be 1800 hrs. “B” Coy is now sitting astride the canal SCOLO VIA CUPA with one pl on the far side.

1745

Fire plan for attack started and at 1800 hrs the coys were under way according to plan.

1812

One pl of “A” Coy are now across the canal and the second in the process of crossing. Bridge was blown at this point and the troops crossed on the rubble.

1907

“D” Coy is now passing through “B” Coy and “A” Coy are at 431312 and 431314 pushing on to 431315.

1945

“A” Coy finding progress slow due to enemy MG fire. “D” Coy are temporarily held up.

2003

Major J.H. Jones MC “B” Coy Comd arrived at this HQ. With him was one PW whom the Major claims followed him home. The personnel at TacHQ all remarked on his (PW) effeminate appearance.

2030

“A” & “D” Coys now in contact across the canal. The situation is somewhat obscure with enemy apparently in large numbers. There is much MG and tank fire.

2220

CO orders “A” & “D” Coys to withdraw to near side of canal in order to allow for clearance for arty fire which is to be brought down.

2335

Bde Comd arrives at TacHQ. “A” & “D” Coy Comds who are now at this HQ report the situation to the Brig. The Brig and the CO talked over the situation and made plans for the next attack. Weather this date was very fine and warm.

FORLI AREA

3 Dec 44

0045

A bailey bridge class 40 is under construction at 43203095. Engrs expect to have it finished before first light.

0140

“B” Coy recce patrols report several enemy in their area but no SPs or Tks. Zero hour for “A” Coy to move from their present posns is 0215.

0200

CO orders “A” Coy to move on schedule and to hold gains at all costs.

0215

“A” Coy moving forward finding progress slow due to difficulty in keeping direction. “D” Coy is following up conforming to “A” Coy’s advance.

0525

“B” Coy now moving forward. TacHQ is also in the process of moving, bailey bridge having been completed.

0555

“A” & “D” Coys are now consolidated in general area 442328.

0710

TacHQ now established at 434316.

0800

Bde informed this HQ that banks of Lamone River are mined and all bridges prepared for demolitions. Coy at this time in posns as follows: “A” Coy - 438325, “B” Coy - 441328, “C” Coy - 443317, D Coy 442320.

0815

TacHQ moved again and is now established at 443327.

0850

CO orders “D” Coy to 448353 and “B” Coy to RUSSI square 4333. They will start moving immediately.

RUSSI AREA

0900

“D” Coy at this time reported that the culvert at 442389 prepared for demolition and requested pioneers to remove it. Shortly afterwards they captured a PW and had him remove the charges.

0920

“B” Coy have reached RusSI and finding it clear of enemy are pushing on.

0930

“D” Coy are running into heavy sniper fire and request tk support

0940

“B” Coy now 600 yards short of objective 435344 and are held up by MG fire. They also request tank support.

1050

“B” Coy report locations as follows: 433339 & 432335. “B” Coy are being heavily Machine gunned from 4332342 and 434341. Their posns are also being shelled.

1100

For the past hour “D” Coy has been heavily engaged with the enemy. Their tank support is not yet available and they find arty support of little use as enemy are well dug in away from houses.

1145

“C” Coy are now moving. Their objective is rd and rly june 434340. They were held up by MG fire from 438339 but after a little delay moved on again.

1215

Brig arrived at this HQ.

1230

CO impresses on all coys that speed is essential in the attainment of their objectives.

1300

“C” Coy is having quite a difficult time with one sub-unit now pinned down by MG fire. They request tanks again and are told once more they are not available, to either get on best they can without them or withdraw to allow clearance for arty support.

1355

“D” Coy’s tanks have finally arrived. It is intended that “C” & “D” coy will advance from present posns towards 438352. The first to arrive in this area will immediately push on to 427365. “B” Coy will advance towards 433347. They are now at 433339 to fill in gap when attack goes in. “D” Coy is to be ready to move but to remain in present posn until ordered to do so

2130

“A” & “C” Coys get on the move and a few minutes report the sound of enemy vehs moving some distance to their front Both coys find progress very slow due to deep ditches and very bad visibility. So far no opposition.

2215

“B” Coy now moving forward.

2330

“A” Coy is still making progress having found area 442344 clear of enemy. “C” Coy now on objective 434344 after having met slight opposition from small arms fire. CO orders “D” Coy to move to 439359. Weather this date fine and warm, but night was very foggy – visibility nil.

RUSSI AREA

4 Dec 44

0005

“B” Coy now at 442344 and “A” Coy still pushing on meeting no opposition.

0130

“A” Coy now at 439346 reporting this area clear of enemy. CO orders fighting patrol from “C” Coy to go to two large buildings at 434341 and 432342. It is now intended that when “A” Coy is firm at 438352 they will push on to 439349. “D” Coy will move to 448353 and “B” Coy will stand down temporarily at 442344.

0250

“D” Coy moving forward now.

0300

An enemy tank at this time was creating a disturbance in “A” Coy area. A Patrol from “C” Coy returned and reported buildings 434341 and 432342 clear of enemy.

0545

Elements of CYR are now passing through “A” Coy’s posns.

0643

“D” Coy are now on their objective and have sent four PWs to HQ. Two PWs have arrived from “A” Coy and one from “C” Coy. All coys involved in the night’s action have made good progress with little opposition. “D” Coy will now move to 448353.

1045

“D” Coy have now reached 435359 and find it clear of enemy.

1115

“D” Coy passing 446352, have taken two PWs on the way.

1210

A strong patrol from “D” Coy supported by tanks have now reached 437367 and find that area clear of enemy. Three PWs arrive at TacHQ from “A” Coy.

1255

TacHQ moved forward and established at 442344.

/1430

Word has just been received that Major J.H. Jones MC has been killed. Major Jones came to SICILY with the Unit as Signal Officer, later taking command of a platoon and while serving in this capacity won the MC.

2000

A total of 35 PW have been taken by this Bn to date. Weather today fine and warm, night foggy with poor visibility.

RUSSI

5 Dec 44

0940

“B” Coy has a recce patrol on the way to 444375 and 446371.

1105

“B” Coy recce patrol report no enemy at 444372 or 446371.

1215

“B” Coy report solid on 445371 and occupying houses 444372 and 446371.

1700

Capt W.H.P. David arrived at this HQ and has been given comd of “B” Coy.

1800

CO and IO attend conference at Bde, and on their return bring news that our Padre H/Capt L.F. Wilmot has been awarded the MC. We are all very fond of our Padre and proud of this decoration which he so richly deserves. It was the second time he had been recommended for this high honor.

2000

Due to suspicions reported by “A” Coy arrangements were made with Security to send one of their staff out tomorrow to check on an Italian family in their (A Coy) area.

2130

CO, Arty Rep and IO attend “O” Gp at Bde. Weather this date was fair and cool with light showers in the early morning.

RUSSI

6 Dec 44

0015

The CO held a conference at which the preliminary stages for the next operation were arranged.

1235

“B” Coy left for new area 445346, arriving at 0230 hrs.

0830

Five Officers and ten Other ranks arrived at this HQ as rfts and were allotted to Coys.

1115

CO and IO attended “O” Gp at Bde and on return Bn “O” Gp took place.

1800

Information from Bde that next operation, crossing of Lamone, is postponed for 24 hrs. Weather today fine and warm.

RUSSI

7 Dec 44

1250

Brig J.P.E. Bernatchez DSO OBE paid a visit to this HQ.

1915

At this time Tec HQ was organized and functioning in its new posn in preparation for the crossing of the Lamone when the fateful news arrived that the operation was postponed for 24 hrs TacHQ now found itself in the unique position of being 2000 yds forward of the foremost coy with the enemy just 100 yards away on the other side of the river. It can be definitely stated that an uneasy night was enjoyed by all. Weather fine and clear but cool.

RUSSI

8 Dec 44

1030

Tac HQ moved back and set up in old posn at 443344.

2000

Recce patrols returning from river area give information that water gap is approx 20 feet wide and banks are very mushy at the edge. The past day or two Bren Guns and 2” mortars have been fired on our outpost at the Castle 418353, from across the river. They are no doubt weapons captured from the 1st Bde in the withdrawal from across the river. Weather today fine and clear.

RUSSI

9 Dec 44

1700

CO held a conference attended by Coy Comds at this HQ. Tonight “A”& “C” Coys, designated as forward coys in the crossing of the Lamone, will again patrol the river bank to determine the state of the river and the most favourable crossing places.

1745

The past half hour has seen very heavy shelling in the Bn area. Weather today fine and cool.

RUSSI

10 Dec 44

Patrols of “A” & “C” Coys returned in the early hours of the morning, both reporting that the river is four to five feet higher with little difference in width.

1410

CO, Arty Rep and IO attend “O” Gp at Bde and immediately on return Bn “O” Gp is held at which last instructions are issued for crossing of the river tonight.

1720

Tac HQ once again set up at 418353. Both “A” & “C” Coys were on the move from their FUPs at 2100 hrs. Our crossing area is from Rly bridge 418353 extending 500 yds down stream. “C” Coy on the right and “A” Coy on the left. While in the FUPs these two coys were subjected to intense mortaring, “C” Coy suffering severe casualties. “A” Coy got along very well until it came to launching Olafson bridge which capsized in mid-stream. They then sent one pl to the off-loading point to carry beats, the alternative means of crossing. At this time things were somewhat in a state of confusion with all lines out from mortar and shell fire and no word from “C” Coy since the action started.

2230

“C” Coy reports they are forced to pull back from the river due to heavy mortar fire and many casualties.

2300

At this time information was received from Bde that both 48th Highrs and CYR had made the crossing meeting little opposition. CYR are on our right and 48th Highrs are on our left.

2359

A patrol from “D” Coy tried to make a crossing on the rubble of the rly br but was unsuccessful. They found the bridge was under heavy enemy MG fire and they suffered two casualties in the attempt. Weather this date was fine and cool.

RUSSI

11 Dec 44

0055

Brig Bernatchez arrived at this HQ and goes over the situation with the CO.

0130

“B” & “D” Coys are now on the move with orders to attain their objectives through the CYR and 48th Highrs brheads respectively. “A” Coy is to follow “B” Coy through CYR.

0230

“B” Coy are now across the river and clearing their way along the bank. “A” Coy has caught up with them and between them they cleared the road and river bank to rd june 418357 taking 15 PWs and knocking out two SPs.

0620

“A” Coy are now firm on objective 415359. At 406360 they knocked out an SP gun of the type known as a “Hornet”. It is one of the Germans newest weapons of war, carrying an 88mm Gun.

0630

“B” Coy now consolidated on objective 418362.

0730?

“D” Coy having moved through “A” Coy, arrived at their objective 414362.

0940

Anti Tank guns have reached forward coys and everyone feels much happier.

1310

TacHQ moves forward and now established at 415359.

1640

Our intentions for the night are: for “A” Coy to take 403362, “D” Coy to pass through them to 398355 and then “B” Coy to go to 388347.

1940

“A” Coy on way to 403362 Which they reached without opposition at 2205 hrs. As soon as this worn (sic) reached TacHQ “D” Coy started for 398355 passing through “A” Coy on the way. Weather today cloudy with light showers

RUSSI

12 Dec 44

0355

“D” Coy report on objective 398355 and firming up. They met some opposition on the way taking 7 PWs. There is no opposition now. “B” Coy’s move to 388347 has been cancelled.

1005

TacHQ has once more moved and is now at 407359. “C” Coy has taken up a new posn at 411364.

1215

Our vehs have now arrived at TacHQ having been left behind yesterday when HQ crossed the river.

Today the Bn Area was mortared and shelled very heavily, sometimes unceasingly for an hour or more.

Weather today overcast with some rain.

RUSSI

13 Dec 44

0015

“B” Coy are on the move with the intention of passing through “A” Coy and on to a posn at 397368. At 0045 hrs “A” Coy informed this HQ that “B” Coy were passing through them then.

0155

TacHQ received word from “B” Coy that water obstacle Canal VECCHIO is about 20 feet wide and very deep. This came as somewhat of a surprise as no bridging arrangements had been made due to the fact that information received stated that it would not prove a serious obstacle.

0700

Brig Bernatchez visits this HQ.

Capt G.F. Johnston the Pnr Officer was severely wounded this morning by a Schu mine at rly br 417352.

1130

“B” Coy attempted to reach objective by attacking across rubble of blown rly br at 399380. They met heavy opposition, Capt David Coy Comd being wounded and the Coy forced to withdraw.

1621

Brig Bernatchez again visited this HQ.

Intentions for tonight: “C” Coy to cross canal at approx 400371 then turn left and clear houses at 397368. “A” Coy will then cross canal and take over “C” Coys posns. “C” Coy will then go forward and secure houses 391368, following this “A” Coy will go forward and secure houses 395369. H hour 2000 hrs.

2000

“C” Coy on move as planned, crossing canal at 2150 hrs. At first little opposition was met but moving over the railroad they came under MG and mortar fire. Weather today cloudy with occasional showers.

RUSSI

14 Dec 44

0150

“C” Coy now running into heavy opposition, leading pl forced to withdraw. The CO decides to have the Coy consolidate, two pls across canal and one this side to act as a brhead in view of a future crossing. “B” Coy now under Comd of Major D.W. McAdam, moved into “C” Coys old posn 408357.

0740

This hour in the morning found all elements of “C” Coy back this side of the canal sharing .A” Coys houses with them.

0850

The CO proceeded to Bde HQ.

1100

Arrangements were all completed this morning for the change-over with 48th Highrs of Canada but it was cancelled at the last moment.

1550

We have now been informed that we will change over tonight, two coys with the R22eR and two coys with the RCR.

Weather today foggy with light rain.

RUSSI

15 Dec 44

0055

TacHQ now moved to new location, former HQ RCR, 409389.

0620

Change-over now complete with coys in posns as follows: “A” Coy 406381, “B” Coy 402378, “C” Coy 404387, “D” Coy 398388.

0915

This Unit has now, to within the hou, been in contact with the enemy for two weeks.

1150

Brig Bernatchez paid a visit to this HQ.

1245

A report from 5th Div states that the enemy has withdrawn to a line behind the Senio River in the ir area. Due to this report it is expected that he will withdraw from this area very shortly. It is impressed on all coy comds that they must not lose contact with the enemy.

It is now whispered that we may changeover with 2nd Bde tomorrow night. Activities at the time are limited to very active patrols both fighting and recce.

Weather today clear and cold.

BAGNACAVALLO

16 Dec 44

0105

Strong fighting patrols were out from “B” & “D” Coys but had no success. Enemy is still thick on the ground and very alert.

1230

It is now quite definite that we are to relieve the Seaforth Highrs of Canada tonight.

1510

CO held an “O” Gp at which he discussed details of change-over. Until change-over is complete, elements of this Regt in 2 CIB area will be under comd 2 CIB.

2350

TacHQ situated new pposn at 400400. Change-Over not yet complete.

Weather today fair and warm.

BAGNACAVALLO

17 Dec 44

0320

Change-over now complete with coys in posn at: “A” Coy 394399, “B” Coy 401401, “C” Coy 394403, “D” Coy 398401.

1445

Up until this time the day has been very uneventful with the exception of recce patrols from “A” & “C” Coys which determine the presence of enemy in near vicinity of coy area.

1750

Contact patrols from “B” Coy will contact “A” Coy of the CYR at 2200 hrs, 0200 hrs & 0600 hrs.

2045

“C” Coy patrol which left at 1930 hrs has now returned. They were fired on by enemy MG from 394407 and 395407. An ambush patrol from “A” Coy had no success.

2215

On returning from a conference at Bde, CO held an “O” Gp.

Weather this date was fine and warm with fair visibility.

BAGNACAVALLO

18 Dec 44

0320

A fighting patrol from “C” Coy has now returned. Their objective was houses at rd june 386408. They reached a point 386406 before returning and were fired on several times from houses (objective).

Our activities now seem to be limited to patrolling. “A” & “C” Coys are each sending two recce patrols throughout the day one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

1600

Brig Bernatchez visited this HQ.

All recce patrols are now back and confirm that enemy is still holding his posns on our section of the front.

Patrol intentions for tonight: “C” Coy strong fighting patrol to go to cross rds 394406 and clear enemy from that posn, if no enemy is contacted they are to proceed to 395408. “A” Coy will send a strong fighting patrol to houses 390408. “B” Coy will supply contact patrols to CYR at 1800hrs, 2200 hrs, 0200 hrs and 0600 hrs.

2050

“C” Coy patrol returned with information that they were fired on when only 50 feet from enemy posns at cross rds 394406. Enemy withdraw and patrol returned to coy. Another patrol one and fifteen in strength was immediately sent out to establish an outpost at this point. This patrol returned at 2250 hrs having been fired on from three different posns, suffering three casualties – two misisng, one missing, believed killed.

Weather today was cloudy with poor visibility

BAGNACAVALLO

19 Dec 44

0040

“A” Coy patrol returned at this time reporting objective very heavily held, suffering one man killed.

0930

Patrol intentions: Two recce patrols from “C” Coy one this morning and one this afternoon. First one to recce area 390406 and the second one cross rds 394406. “A” Coy to send two recce patrols, one to area 390400 and the other to 392402.

All patrols on their return confirm that enemy still occupying area to our immediate front.

Weather today cloudy and cool, poor visibility.

BAGNACAVALLO

20 Dec 44

To date in the present operation this Unit has taken 70 PW.

1110

It is intended that “D” Coy will establish one pl in houses at 389400. H hour is set for 1215 hrs.

1300

“D” Coy patrol, strength one pl, was forced to withdraw from their attack on houses 389400. As they were right in on this posn one Mark VI Tiger emerged from a haystack and fired on them with MG and 88 m. It was only due to the prompt action of tanks working with “A” Coy who laid down a very effective smoke screen the patrol was able to withdraw without suffering severe casualties. Casualties suffered were – one killed and two wounded. On the strength of this information 7.2 arty fire was brought down in the area of houses. Shortly after this tanks were heard to move off. Patrol comd estimated enemy killed was four to five.

1700

The entire Bn area has been under mortar and shell fire since early morning.

Weather this date fine and reasonably warm.

BAGNACAVALLO

21 Dec 44

0200

Two PW were brought in to this HQ from “C” Coy.

0400

“C” Coy sent out a fighting patrol to 384401. They did not contact the enemy. Remainder of coy was then moved to this area and were consolidated by 0535 hrs. “C” Coy sent a recce patrol to 378404 and reported no enemy at this point. “C” Coy posns at this time: Pls at – 38484011, 38494020 & 38584015.

0835

One PW sent to this HQ from “C” Coy, who came into posns and gave himself up.

1110

Bde Comd informed this HQ that our rear coys can now stand down and take things a little easier. Rear Coys are “B” and “D”.

1750

Twenty rfts arrived at this HQ and were allotted to coys.

Weather today overcast but no rain. Situation very quiet. It now appears that enemy has withdrawn to far side of Senio river. Total PWs take to date – 73.

BAGNACAVALLO

22 Dec 44

0745

Bde informed this HQ that it is expected enemy may attempt a sea-borne landing in the area RIMINI - PESARO.

0750

Paymaster arrived at TacHQ and began to pay coys at 0830 hrs. He was closely followed y Auxiliary Services with EFI supplies.

1200

Mail has just arrived at this HQ that has been held since the Unit was committed to action.

1300

Recce party proceeded to 4334 to recce billets.

1330

Two officers and thirteen other ranks proceeded to ROME on leave. One Officer and seven other ranks proceeded to FLORENCE on leave.

1945

It was necessary to send another recce party to an area laid on by Bde HQ as former 4334 was not suitable. This HQ was informed that as from 0800 hrs 23 Dec 44 Bn would be on one hours [sic.] notice to move.

Weather today fine and warm, poor visibility towards night.

All in all it was a big day for the troops. All coys were paid, there was a rum and EFI issue and all Christmas parcels were delivered.

BAGNACAVALLO

23 Dec 44

0930

Bn moved to new area by TCVs, movement complete by 1100 hrs.

Bn HQ established at 492366 with coys at – “A” Coy 494372, “B” Coy 499371, “C” Coy 494368 and “D” Coy at 484378.

Weather cool and cloudy with snow flurries.

BAGNACAVALLO

24 Dec 44

0900

Lt-Col A.L. Saunders proceed to ROME on leave. Major F.E. Hiltz assumed command of the Unit.

1800

Four other ranks arrived as rfts and were allotted to coys.

Weather fine and warm.

BAGNACAVALLO

25 Dec 44

0830

A very generous EFI issue was distributed to the troops.

C of E Church services were held at 0900, 1000 and 1100 hrs.

1230

A very fine Christmas dinner was enjoyed by all ranks of the unit.

1300

Nineteen other ranks arrived as rfts and were allotted to coys.

1600

All Coy Comds are on one hours notice as from first light to proceed on tactical recce party. Remainder of Bn on three hours notice to moe as from 0900 hrs 26 Dec 44.

Weather this date fine and cool.

S. MICHELE

26 Dec 44

Major J.K. Rhodes, wounded earlier in this operation, returned to the Bn today and has taken over comd of “A” Coy. Capt D.I. Rice former commander of “A” Coy is now acting as Battle Adjutant.

1600

It is now considered most unlikely that we will move tonight.

2000

Movement Order received from 3 CIB HQ. We are to be prepared to move as from 1030 hrs 27 DEc 44. At 2200 hrs a contradictory order was received – the move will be postponed for 24 hours.

Weather this date fine and cold.

S. MICHELE

27 Dec 44

0930

OC, Major F.E. Hiltz and the IO attended “O” Gp at 3 CIB HQ. It is now known that this Unit will be relieving 48 Highrs of Canada and will be under comd of 1 CIB until Bde change-over is complete.

1430

Recce party arrived from 48th Highrs to recce billets now occupied by this Unit which they will be taking over when we leave.

1700

Troops embussed TOVs for move to new area. At 1730 TacHQ was established at 378320.

2030

Relief of 48th Highrs of Canada now complete Coy dispositions as follows: “A” Coy - 372322, “B” Coy - 379320, “C” Coy - 379316, “D” Coy 376321. Change-over was completed without incident. Word has been received from 1 CIB that “D” Coy West NSR will relieve 1 Coy of RCR. Recce party to leave at first light 28 Dec 44.

2220

Contact patrol to Royal Fusiliers on left have nothing to report.

Weather this date very cool and cloudy.

S. MICHELE

28 Dec 44

0145

“D” Coy sent a recce patrol to 386334 – nothing to report.

1330

OC, Major F.E. Hiltz, left for 3 CIB HQ. Enroute he met the Bde Comd who was on his way to this HQ and returned here with him.

1530

Own aircraft straffing [sic.] “D” Coys posns.

1905

A Fighting patrol from “D” Coy returned. Time out was 1800 hrs. They reached a point approx 150 yds from canal in front of coy posn when they came under MG fire. They suffered no casualties but one 38 set was knocked out.

2143

Fighting patrol from “A” Coy to 336324 returned. They went out through “A” Coys FDLs and reached a point 36773328. Here they came under MG and mortar fire. They returned by way of the same route, suffering no casualties.

Weather this date fine and quite cool. The night is very clear.

GRANAROLA

29 Dec 44

0030

Olafson bridging has arrived at his HQ, the object of the bridging is to get A Tk guns across the canal FOSSO CANTRIGHELLA.

0145

“B” Coy fighting patrol returns from 36203170. They went out through fwd pl posn of 6 Cheshire Regt (friends on our left) and reached point stated, when they came under heavy MG fire from along bank of canal. They returned the fire and shortly after heavy mortar fire came down on them. Patrol Comd and one OR was wounded, Pl Comd ordering the patrol to return. Casualties were evacuated with the aid of the 6th Cheshire Regt.

1005

Major Hiltz paid a visit to 3 CIB HQ.

1420

One of our supporting tanks, mounting a 95 mm gun, firing from 37463130 engaged factory at 35733215. Also from 37003160 engaged a church 355319. They scored 20 hits on the factory and 5 hits on church tower. Lack of amn prevented them from knocking down the church tower.

1700

Pl Comds were briefed by Major Hiltz for tonights patrols.

1800

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

2040

“A” Coy fighting patrol returns. They reached a point approx 75 yds from canal 36903242 where they were fired on by automatic weapons and rifle grenades.

Casualties – one wounded.

2250

Fighting patrol from “D” Coy went to point 369330 where they were challenged by the enemy who opened up on them with MMGs, wounding the patrol NCO. The patrol went to ground and in the fire fight the patrol suffered three more casualties. Enemy mortars opened up and patrol comd ordered patrol back. Three of the wounded were brought back, it being found impossible to bring back the fourth.

Weather today cold and clear.

CANTRIGHELLA

30 Dec 44

0015

Fighting patrol from “C” Coy reported back. They reached a point 3193167 where they came under MG fire from vicinity of buildings 36083179 and 362318. They were also fired on by small mortar or rifle grenades. Patrol comd called down arty and MG DFs and patrol withdrew back through fwd platoon posns. No casualties.

0320

“B” Coy contacted 6 Cheshires – nothing to report.

1050

A recce patrol from “A” Coy proceed to area 369323 where they came under fire from rifle grenades and were forced to return. “D” Coy recce patrol went to a point 372330 from where they observed five or six enemy in area 369330. They also observed several slit trenches that were unoccupied.

1215

One of the Churchill tanks under Comd of this Bn engaged the church at 354320 and the factory at 357322. The shoot was not very successful due to some in-accuracy in the gun.

1220

Our own 3” mortar engaged area occupied by enemy reported by “D” Coy recce patrol. This fire was observed to fall in the exact area and should have been quite effective.

1430

Recce patrol from “B” Coy went out through the 6th Cheshire Regt to a point 357313. Here they came under heavy MG fire and had to return. Also at 0430 hrs a recce patrol from “B” Coy proceeded to 361218 but could observe no enemy movement.

1515

“A” Coy has been under continuous shell fire all afternoon. Several direct hits being made on the houses they occupy. Arty engaged suspected enemy mortar and gun posns, how effectively is uncertain because the fall of shot could not be observed.

1725

Nine rfts arrived at this HQ and were allotted to coys.

1800

A recce patrol from “D” Coy proceed out through their left forward post to a point 371329, at this point they were engaged by rifle fire but could not pinpoint any posns. They did not return the fire and suffered no casualties.

1945

“B” & “D” Coys have now changed over.

2040

“C” & “A” Coys have now changed over. This change-over is to give “A” & “D” Coys a much needed rest.

2100

A recce patrol from “D” Coy went out through left pl posn to a point 37243300 from here they could distinguish enemy voices to their front. Patrol remained in this area for twenty minutes and was not fired on. They returned by same route.

2200

“A” Coy recce patrol went out through right Pl posn across country to a point 36853250. Here they had two hand grenades thrown at them from an unknown posn. Except for this incident no movement was seen or heard and the patrol returned by same route.

2215

Another recce patrol from “D” Coy went out through their left forward pl posn to a point back by the same route and were not fired on.

2320

A recce patrol went out from “A” Coy through their right pl posn 372323 and reached a point 36853251. They were engaged with hand grenades but could see no movement. They returned by the same route.

Today Major F.E. Hiltz was officially appointed to Command the West NSR with the rank of Lt col, Lt col A.L. Saunders having ceased to Command with effect 29 Dec 44.

Weather today clear and cold

GRANAROLA

31 Dec 44

0130

A recce patrol from “B” Coy went out through the left forward pl of 6 Cheshires to a point 362314 where they were engaged by enemy MG fire. They ascertained that the enemy was still holding 362318. They also found that the enemy were harassing area from 364315 to bridge 362318 by MG fire.

0405

At this time this morning “C” Coy missed a golden opportunity of procuring prisoners without going after them. An enemy patrol, four men strong, came to within 20 yards of their sentries [sic.] posn. The sentry pressed the trigger of his Bren and nothing happened – the Gun had jammed! The enemy patrol fired on the posn and beat a hasty retreat, making a clean getaway.

1430

Lt J.C. Jordan and Lt A.C. MacKenzie are attending a short course on counter battery work at Bde.

Lt col F.E. Hiltz left this afternoon for RAVENNA to attend a Corps comds meeting.

1700

All together today there were six recce patrols sallied forth into no mans land to check on the enemy. It was determined that the enemy was still very much on the belligerent side and most reluctant to give up his positions. There were no casualties suffered on these patrols.

1815

“D” Coy are now in a new position, location as follows: Coy HQ 381532253, Pls at - 3853253, 38003242 and 38203275.

2120

A recce patrol from “B” Coy went out through pl posn 37703313 to a point on the canal at 37153320. They could hear a great deal of activity across the canal at 37103331 music, singing, vehicular movement, etc. It sounded as though New Year’s celebrations were in full swing. Patrol returned by the same route. Due to this report the area 371333 was engaged by arty, 4.2 & 3” Mortars and MMG.

2230

A recce patrol from “D” Coy proceeded out through forward pl of 6 Cheshires 365315 to a point 364318. They could hear enemy activity at houses 362318 also from across canal from a point 367325. It was a bright moonlight night and they observed a strong enemy patrol 15 to 20 in strength coming in their direction. Our patrol withdrew back to the 6 Cheshire posn and notified the Pl Comd of that Bn which directed mortar and arty on the enemy patrol and dispersed it. Our own patrol then returned.

Weather today was very fine and night very clear.

2400

On the exact point of midnight a heavy salvo of arty fire reverberated across the countryside. The arty rep at Bde stated it was his New Year’s present to the Infantry.