WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

West N S R

January 1945

GRANAROLA

1

0100

A recce patrol of one NCO and two men from “C” Coy returned after reaching point 370326. They heard enemy movement along the railway and on the other side of the canal. They could also hear mortar firing from 365324 and what sounded to be enemy fire orders.

0200

At this time there seems to be a feeling at higher level that an enemy attack across the Senio is impending. Bde informed this Bn, stand to will be 100%.

0905

Brig J P E Bernatchez DSO OBE paid a New Year’s visit to this HQ. He also made a tour of the coys, the CO having left on the same journey prior to his arrival.

1105

The CO left for 3 CIB HQ to visit the Brigadier and is then going on to attend a Div Comds “at home” from 1100 to 1300 hrs.

1305

It has just been learned that Capt C F Whynacht, unit QM, has been awarded the MBE. Capt Whynacht came overseas with the West Nova Scotia Regiment in 1939 as CQMS of “A” Coy, later winning his commission, at which time he took over as Quartermaster and has served in this capacity until the present time.

1440

“C” Coy recce patrol of 1 NCO and two men have returned after receiving to a point 3700256. They observed two enemy in a trench on the canal bank, whom they watched for a period of twenty minutes. They then moved to another posn where they could observe the railway crossing the canal 36873220. They could see no enemy movement at this point.

1515

Recce patrol from “B” Coy has returned after reaching a point 372332. They observed building 37073332, where they saw several enemy moving in and out of the building. As they were moving back five enemy ran out of the building to the nearby trenches. It appeared quite evident that they were discovered and the enemy were preparing for them.

1745

A recce patrol from C” Coy of 1 NCO and 1 man has returned after reaching a point 36933240, where they saw one of the enemy on near side of the canal moving in the direction of the railway. They stayed at this posn until last light.

1935

A recce patrol left from “B” Coy to recce area 369330 but returned a few minutes later reporting enemy digging in, in canal. 5in mortar and medium arty fire was brought down and patrol then went out to finish recce.

2245

“B” Coy recce patrol returned after having recce’d to a point 369330. They stayed their [sic.] for 10 minutes and heard no sound or enemy movements. Bridge at 369330 is definitely

2255

CO orders a patrol of 1 NCO and 5 Men to go to 369330 with an 18 set. If they reach this point without opposition they are to consolidate and the remainder of the pl will be sent up.

Weather this date reasonably warm. The night was quiet with very little shelling and mortaring.

2

0050

“B” Coy recce patrol reported back to Coy HQ. They went out through right fwd posns and reached a point 368338. As they were crossing over the bank they came under heavy MG fire, the patrol comd being wounded. There was a heavy exchange of fire and the patrol was forced to withdraw leaving patrol comd, Lt H S Kennedy, and two ORs behind. The 18 set was also lost in the fire fight. A party was immediately sent out to try and bring back the wounded men but had no success.

0120

Recce patrol from “C” Coy of 1 NCO & 2 men reached a point 36903250. At this point they were fired on by MGs from vicinity of house 36833224. Patrol started back and were fired on by another MG from house 36603220. They reached their coy posn suffer no casualties.

0130

A recce patrol of 1 NCO & 6 men from “D” Coy passed out through 6 Cheshire Regt and recce’d to a point 362318. They could hear a great deal of enemy activity and were fired on by several grenades. On the way back they were fired on by an MG from an undetermined posn. They suffered no casualties.

0240

The two Ors who were missing from “B” Coy’s patrol have reported back to the Coy.

0500

In accordance with a Sham Battle staged by Div Arty our 3” Mortars engaged targets in the enemy area for 15 minutes.

0615

Bn was subjected to heavy mortar fire throughout the night.

1020

The CO, Lt col F E Hiltz left for Bde HQ.

1235

“C” Coy recce patrol of 1 NCO & 2 Men returned after recce’ing to a point 369325. They observed one enemy who was carrying binoculars on the other side of the canal. Several rifle shots were fired at the patrol from an undetermined posn, no other activity was observed.

1645

A recce patrol of 1 NCO & 2 men from “C” Coy has returned after having reached a point 3690320. They were fired on from a posn on the canal bank 368335. On way back patrol were fired on by rifle grenades and Schmeiser.

1725

An enemy SP or heavy mortar firing into “B” Coy posn from 369330 has been engaged by 4.2 Mortars.

1810

One offr and 23 ORs have arrived at this HQ as rfts and were allotted to coys.

2245

Contact patrol from “A” Coy on returning from 6 Cheshire Regt passes on information that it is suspected that enemy are in area dressed in British battle dress.

2245

A Recce patrol from “C” Coy of 1 NCO and 2 men reached a point 369320. From this point they could hear enemy vehicular movement on far side of canal and troop movement around house 366324.

2335

A recce patrol from “B” Coy proceed to a point 369330. They also report enemy vehicular movement on far side of canal.

Weather this date fine and cold. Very little enemy mortaring or shelling on front during the day.

3

0045

Light mortaring on “C” Coy posns and Light shelling and mortaring on BnHQ area.

0630

“B” Coy OP observed enemy SP firing directly opposite them on further side of canal. This was engaged by arty and the fire was observed to fall in the area of the SP.

0845

The CO and Major J K Rhodes left for HQ 3 CIB.

0900

Two ORs from each rifle coy, one from Sp Coy and one from BnHQ left for 48 hr leave in Riccione.

1130

Sherman tanks engaged houses 366323 and 367323. They scored six direct hits.

1130

The IO proceeded to Bde to get fire plan for the coming show.

1240

“C” Coy engaged by heavy enemy mortar fire, shortly afterwards “B” Coy report heavy mortaring in their area.

1430

CO held an “O” Gp at this HQ where plans for future operation were discussed.

3 Cdn Inf Bde is to close up to Canal Naviglio when 2 Cdn Inf Bde have occupied Granarola 3532. The objectives of this unit are areas 367331, 364325, 363334, and 359329. 2 Cdn Inf Bde is to put in their attack tonight.

2225

Recce patrol from”C” Coy reached a point 50 yds from building 36623220. They heard enemy movement and voices within the building. The Patrol Comd did not think there were many enemy in the building.

2255

“B” Coy recce patrol proceeded to 369329, they heard enemy movement and voices slightly beyond this point.

3

Weather this date was fine and cold.

4

0100

“C” Coy area under heavy mortar fire, the coy suffering three casualties. “B” Coy also heavily mortared, suffering two casualties.

0105

A recce patrol from “C” Coy reached a point 36653220 and reported enemy still there. They were fired on by MG but suffered no casualties.

0150

Due to the heavy enemy mortar fire on B” & “C” Coy areas, a counter-mortar fire plan is being carried out. This was later reported by “C” Coy to be satisfactory.

0400

“B” Coy are under shell fire from tank or SP from area 369330. Medium arty fire is brought down on area.

0645

“D” Coy is ordered to move to 367314 as soon as morning meal is served, with “C” Coy sending a recce patrol to houses at 36623220 and “B” Coy sending recce patrol to 36973300.

0815

“C” Coy recce patrol reached a point 36623220 where they observed enemy movement.

0830

“B” Coy recce patrol is now back and they report that point 369330 is strongly held by enemy. Patrol suffered one fatal casualty.

0845

“D” Coy are now moving forward with support of arty fire 3” and 4.2” mortar.

0930

“D” Coy are now at 363328 and are digging in, having met some opposition.

“A” Coy are to go to 362317 and as soon as “D” Coy are firm, are to proceed to 359329.

1155

“D” Coy report their locations as follows: Coy HQ 363325, sub-units at : 36143258, 36083250 and 36343245.

1245

Cab Rank has been operating at 1215, 1245 and 1325 hrs. One of our own pilots bailed out of his plane and was last seen drifting towards our FDLs. “C” & “B” Coys are notified to be on the watch for him. At this time “D” Coy are in the area of buildings 357323 and will contact to the left as soon as the shelling quiets down.

1300

“A” Coy are on objective 362312 with casualties – four wounded.

1308

“D” Coy are now ordered to occupy buildings 36123268.

1345

“A” Coys posns are very indefinite, CO goes forward to rectify the situation.

1400

“A” Coy has been forced to withdraw due to the very heavy MG fire Posns are as follows: 368327, 367328, 365324.

1550

The Bde Comd and Major Brown (Bde Arty Rep) arrive at this HQ and plans for tonight’s attack were discussed.

1730

The MO advised this HQ that battle casualties for today are 14, five of which were fatal.

1830

The CO held an “O” Gp at “C” Coy HQ, attended by “A”, “B” & “D” Coys.

1910

H Hour for tonights show which was previously set for 2000 hrs has been postponed to 2030 hrs.

This afternoon “D” Coy knocked out an enemy MG with a PIAT, killing two enemy.

1930

CO held an “O” Gp at this HQ attended by “B” Coy and all supporting arms.

2000

INtentions for tonight: Two coy attack, “A” Coy objective is to clear road half-way to 362354 and consolidate; “C” Coy is to clear remainder and consolidate around 362334. “D” Coy is to stay where they are, pulling back their outpost posn while arty is firing.

2030

Arty programme away on schedule.

2112

“A” Coy report sub-units on objective.

2120

“C” Coy report sub-units on objective

2135

CO orders “D” Coy to send a pl forward to 359329. They are to take a phone with them and send word back when they arrive. “D” Coy will also send a contact patrol to the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

2155

“C” Coy report locations as follows: HQ 36400335 pls at: 36303330, 36453332 & 3638332

2225

“A” Coy report locations as follows: HQ & 1 Pl 367331, 366322 & 368321.

2305

Receive word from 3 CIB HQ that 359329 is clear. In light of this information “D” Coy is ordered to go there immediately.

2350

TacHQ moves forward and established at 372322. “C” Coy have contacted CYR on the right NTR.

Weather this date fair and cool.

5

0010

A recce patrol from “C” Coy reached a point 359336 without contacting enemy.

0030

“D” Coy are to protect bridge at 36233340, CO suggests they send one sub-unit fwd.

“D” Coy are now at 359327 and recce patrol across Naviglio Canal report houses clear of enemy.

0130

“D” Coy find bridge at 35803264 partly blown. They are also sending recce patrol to 35743282. This patrol returned without contacting enemy.

0225

“D” Coy locations as follows: HQ 35893270, Pls at: 35893220, 35963276 & 35983290.

0245

“C” Coy patrol contact enemy at 35703364.

0755

“D” Coy reports that road on far side of canal is heavily mined in places. There is a blow in the road at 35953270 and some of the bridges are charged for demolition.

0950

CO left this HQ to visit all coys.

1110

On instructions from 3 CIB one coy of this Bn will occupy la Palazzo 358336.

1310

A patrol from “C” Coy found railway bridge over road at 35773360 blown. They started through the blow but were fired on by schmeiser. The railway banks are approx 25ft high and there were several slit trenches on embankment not occupied. From this posn banks of river Senio appear to be about 30 ft high. They could see no enemy movement but could hear digging to their front.

1505

The Bde Comd paid a visit to this HQ.

1715

“C” Coy have occupied area la Palazzo 358336 reporting posns as follows: HQ and 1 Pl at 36083338, 35893345, & 35893364.

1925

The CO ordered a fighting patrol of 1 & 10 to go to bridge 362347.

1935

Intentions: “B” Coy are to go forward and occupy posns astride road 362333, 367341.

2030

A recce patrol from “C” Coy has left to recce house on left of road at 357337.

22[illegibe]0

“B” Coy are now moving forward.

2330

“C” Coy recce patrol to 357337 report much enemy activity around and near buildings

Weather this date fair and cool. A very quiet day with little mortaring or shelling.

COTIGNOLA

6

0003

Enemy has blown houses across track at 357336.

0035

“B” Coy have now consolidated in new posn, locations as follows: HQ & 1 Pl 36473372, 36393372, 36533380.

0100

Recce patrol from “C” Coy of 1 NCO & 3 men reached a point 357335, heard enemy movement from direction of houses 357337.

0835

CO left this HQ for Main BnHQ

1250

A recce patrol from D” Coy reached the point 357336 and found the houses blown. It is believed the houses were blown in order to provide the enemy with a better field of fire from banks of the river Senio.

1345

The CO proceeded to HQ 3 CIB.

1535

Bde informed this HQ that our “D” Coy will relieve “C” Coy CYR at 1800 hrs. A recce party is to be sent to recce posns of “C” Coy CYR.

1555

“C” Coy ordered by CO to have standing patrol occupy buildings 357336 during the hours of darkness. Strength of the patrol is to be six or seven men.

1900

“D” Coy have taken up new posns, locations as follows: 36453432, 36553406, 36653428.

2030

“C” Coy report that a standing patrol is not possible at 357336 as enemy are still in that area.

2150

Enemy have blown house at 357338.

One pl of “B” Coy is to take up posns in area 362339. One sec is to go fwd and dig in while being covered by the other two. “B” Coy must also establish an outpost at 357341.

2300

In accordance with requirements laid down by 3 CIB several changes had to be made in pl posns of the Coys. “C” Coy moved one pl to 359331. “D” Coy have changed posns. They are as follows: 36403446, 36303446, 36503430 and 36483423.

Weather this date was very disagreeable with rain, sleet and snow.

7

0035

At first “B” Coy found it impossible to establish posn 362339 due to very heavy enemy mortar fire. By 0135 hrs they were in this posn and in the process of consolidating.

0215

“D” Coy are now consolidated in new area.

0230

Posns of coys at this time are as follows: “A” Coy - 36573316, 36663306, 36803307. “B” Coy - 36203399, 36383371, & 36553380. “C” Coy - 35883356, 36083338 & 35993310. “D” Coy - 36403446, 36303446 & 36503430 & 36483423.

0300

“B” Coy outpost is now established on river bank at 358341.

0955

CO leaves for Main BnHQ.

1103

“B” Coy report that houses at 360343 are clear of enemy.

1135

CO leaves for forward coys.

1425

An SP firing in “D” Coy area scored two hits on Coy HQ house. There were no casualties.

1705

“B” Coy suffered one casualty wounded from enemy mortar fire. “D” Coy is still being shelled by an SP.

1750

A recce patrol from “D” Coy of 1 NCO & 2 men reached a point 36163440. They did not contact enemy but ran into enemy wire with mine signs on it. Patrol returned without interference, suffering no casualties.

1805

A recce patrol from “C” Coy to 358339 found area unoccupied.

1930

An engineering party proceeded to “B” & “D” Coys to carry out a wiring and mining programme in front of their posns as laid on by Bde.

2000

“B” Coy outpost has started to tunnel through dyke at 358341.

2230

“B” Coy outpost at 358341 hear much enemy activity and vehicular movement on and behind opposite bank.

2230

“D” Coy have now established an outpost at 361344. The CO has ordered a recce patrol to proceed to the river Senio to find out if there are any mines or wire on the river bank and also to see if there are any bridges within their view.

2359

Weather today cloudy with snow in the morning. A very quiet day with light mortaring and shelling in the forward area.

8

0105

“C” Coys patrol which was to establish an outpost at 357339 were forced to return before reaching objective due to enemy occupying immediate area. The patrol will make another attempt as ordered by the CO. They will be accompanied by a fighting patrol of 10 men which will provide covering fire while outpost is being dug in.

0210

The RCE offr reported to this HQ that mining job at “B” Coy had been completed.

0615

“B” Coy patrol which recce’d to river Senio in front of their posns, report water gap 30 to 45 feet wide, slow running and that no obstacle such as wire or mines could be seen.

0715

“C” Coy now have a standing patrol established a dug in at 358339. Enemy is dug in on opposite side of near bank.

0920

“D. Coy have observed six enemy dugouts on far bank 360344 which appear to be manned.

1325

For the past hour “D” Coy has been heavily mortared. ARty has been brought down on suspected enemy mortar posns.

1510

“B” Coy is under fire from enemy SP or tk from an undetermined posn.

1920

An enemy fighting patrol or raiding party of estimated strength 25 to 30 came in on “C” Coy outpost at 35813396 overpowering and taking prisoner six men and killing one. Following is the official report of the action as turned in to 3 CIB: Report on Action at outpost 35813396, sent to 3 CIB at 0700 hrs 9 Jan 45. “The object of this outpost was to command the railway bridge 357339 and to act as a warning post for “C” Coy. The outpost consisted of six weapon pits dug in, in the dyke. The outpost was manned by six men in the actual posns armed with 2 Bren Guns and 20 mags four TSMGs and 20 mags. Included in the six men was the section commander, a Cpl. In charge of the post was a Sgt who remained in the house 35843394 with the phone. Change-over took place every four hours at night with one sec manning it throughout the day. In this case the change-Over took place at 1800 hrs. The first inkling that this HQ had that an action was taking place was at 1920 hrs when a report was received from “C” Coy that a fighting patrol had come in on their outpost, details to be sent later. All the warning that the coy received that an attack was taking place was a short conversation over the phone with the Sgt. The conversation, “Sgt: “we are being attacked.” Coy Comd – “Do your best to drive them off. Sgt – “They are coming in from all sides we are surrounded” After the last sentence the phone went dead. In the house in addition to the Sgt was one man with a flame-thrower and three men of the next relief. All six men in the outpost were taken prisoner plus the operator of the flame-thrower and his weapon. The Sgt and the other three men in the house escaped. This was the Sgts story: “It was’nt [sic.] long after the change-over. The Bren gun opened fire with a couple of bursts from the dyke. I sent the flame-thrower up to the coy posn and reported to coy HQ that we were being attacked. In a few minutes they were coming in from all sides firing rifle grenades and automatic weapons. There were 25 or 30 o them and they were wearing parkas. They were yelling phrases such as “hands up”, “you’re surrounded”, “come out there is no use fighting”. The Sgt made his escape by jumping out of an upstairs window and out among the vines, the other three made their escape in a similar manner through back doors and windows. There [sic.] stories run on a similar line to the Sgt’s and confirm his statements. Following this action a pl was sent from “A” Coy to “C” Coy area as rfts in the event that the attack should develop into something on a larger scale. At 2345 hrs a fighting patrol of one & ten was sent out to 35813396 followed by a standing patrol. Personnel were supplied by “A” Coy. They went through fwd pl to dyke clearing houses at 358339 which were unoccupied. They proceeded along dyke to railway bridge with standing patrol following in bounds. They reached a point where the railway crosses dyke when fired on by MG from werckage [sic.] of bridge. Simultaneously they were fired on by MG and rifle grenades from across the river. In addition the enemy put up several flares. Both patrols moved back in a direct route to the fwd pl. The casualties were first reported as three “missing”, one of the missing men turned up later reporting the other two had been wounded, one he thought quite seriously. It was intended that the standing patrol would re-occupy the outpost posn but the NCO in charge was not staisfied [sic.] with the posn and intended to dig a new one nearer to the bridge. They were caught in the fire that engaged the fighting patrol and withdrew with them. No further attempt was made to establish an outpost on the dyke.

2155

An enemy patrol fo approx 10 men came in on “C” Coy posns, they were engaged by Bren Gun fire and went to ground. They were not seen again.

2240

An enemy patrol of approx 10 men came in on “C” Coy posns, they were engaged by Bren Gun fire and went to ground. They were not seen again.

2240

CO proceeded to “C” Coy.

2345

Mining at “D” Coy outpost 361344 now complete.

Weather this date – snow, rain and sleet.

9

0055

A recce patrol from “D” Coy recce’d buildings 362346 and found them unoccupied but badly damaged.

0530

Contact patrol to the 6 Cheshire’s have nothing to report.

0830

Major J R Cameron proceeded on a recce to area 431348 which is the area this Bn is expected to move to on being relieved.

0955

“C” Coy are being engaged by enemy mortars.

1140

“C” Coy recce patrol reached a point 358336 when they were fired on by enemy from 357336 and forced to return. This posn was then engaged by PIATs.

1150

The Brig and Bde IO have arrived at this HQ and are discussing with the CO, plans for the re-establishment of the outpost at 35813396.

1430

A relief has now been completed between “A” & “B” Coys.

1915

“A” Coy now have an outpost consolidated at blown in railway 35783360 and have searched buildings at 35783360 and found them unoccupied.

2320

Bde Comd paid a visit to this HQ.

Throughout the day a considerable amount of enemy vehicular movement could be heard in and around the town of COTIGNOLA which is directly opposite our rt forward coy. Weather today fine and cool, becoming quite cold towards evening.

10

0130

The wiring and mining of “A” Coy outpost has been completed. Mines were also laid in fornt [sic.] of “B” & “D” Coy posns on the far side of the rear bank. Great credit is due to the Pioneer Offr and his Sgt who carried out this difficult task under the very nose of the enemy.

0225

A recce patrol from “A” Coy of one NCO and 4 men, recce’d to a point 358339. They heard much enemy movement around the house.

1015

A recce party from the 48th Highrs of Canada arrived at this HQ to recce the Bn area. It is expected that they will relieve us within the next few days.

1105

The CO accompanied by the Battle Adjt of the 48th Highrs made a tour of all coys.

1250

“A” Coy recce patrol returned reporting buildings left of blow in railway 357336 clear of enemy.

1355

“A” Coy outpost are being being [sic.] troubled by snipers firing from river bank. So far they have suffered no casualties.

1545

Own aircraft are now bombing and straffing [sic.] COTIGNOLA.

1820

This HQ has been informed by 3 CIB that relief of this unit by 48th Highrs of Canada would begin tomorrow evening at 1730 hrs.

1830

32 reinforcements arrived at this HQ and have been allotted to coys.

1830

After arty, mortar and MG preparation a strong fighting patrol from “A” Coy reached a point 357339. They started up the dyke at this point and came under heavy mortar and small arms fire. They suffered two casualties and were forced to withdraw. The enemy was dug in all along the top of the dyke.

2225

Contact patrol from 2/6 Queens contacted “A” Coy, NTR.

2310

Contact patrol from CYR contacted our “D” Coy, NTR.

Weather this date was fair and cold.

11

0210

Contact patrols from friends on left and right have nothing to report.

0530

Due to enemy mortar fire it was necessary to suspend the wiring programme at “B” Coy for a short while. Two of the bombs were phosphorous.

1030

“B” Coy observed five men on reverse slope on near bank of river at 358339. It is suspected to be an enemy mortar posn and our own 3” mortars are engaging it.

1600

“D” Coy have been under fire from a heavy mortar from an unknown pos across the river.

1830

Relief of this Unit by 48th Highrs is now under way [sic.].

2300

Relief of this Unit by 48th Highrs of Canada is now completed. The TCVs that brought up the 48th Highrs conveyed our troops back to the new area.

Weather today was fine and quite cool.

RUSSI

12

0200

Bn is now settled down in new area, locations as follows: BnHQ 431348, “A” Coy 419353, “B” Coy 419353, “C” Coy 423351, “D” Coy 425349, Sp Coy 427349.

0830

Pay parades were held at BnHQ, coys being paid in the following order, B, C, D, A, Sp, HQ & BnHQ.

1400

A picture show, “It Happened Tomorrow” was shown at GODO at 1400 hrs, 1730 hrs & 1930 hrs. 75 vacancies were allotted to this Bn. Also tonight a picture, “Calling Dr. Gilispie” [sic., Gillespie] was shown at RUSSI at 1400 hrs, 1730 hrs & 1930 hrs. 66 vacancies were allotted to this Bn. There was an EFI issue this afternoon

1745

40 Other ranks arrived at this HQ as rfts and were allotted to coys.

2100

Notification was received from Bde that this Bn would move to a new area tomorrow 13 Jan 45.

Weather fine but very cold.

13

0830

Bn got under way to carry out move to new area.

1100

Move is now complete, Bn deployed in following posns: BnHQ 403316, “A” Coy 404311, “B” Coy 395327, “C” Coy 402326, “D” Coy 397316, Sp Coy 404316.

The remainder of the day was spent getting settled in the new area.

Weather this date was cloudy with rain.

14

0930

RC Church Parade was held in the church at BnHQ 403316.

1400

The Battle Adjt, Capt D I Rice proceeded on a recce of the concentration area at MEZZANO for Phase 3 of the Counter-Attack role as laid down by 3 CIB for this Bn.

1500

A “Director of Trg” Offr arrived at this HQ from Army HQ.

1800

CO held a complete “O” Gp which was attended by all supporting arms. The three phases of the counter-attack role were explained to all concerned.

Weather this date was rainy and very disagreeable.

15

Trg as per syllabus

0900

Coy Comds carried out recce of counter-attack posns Phase I & II. They were accompanied by Unit MG, A Tk & Mor Pl comds. This evening a film is being shown at both GODO and RUSSI for personnel of this Bn.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

16

0800

Trg as per syllabus

The CO, & Battle Adjt proceeded to area of MEZZANO to recce posns for (NORTH SWITCH LINE) a phase in the counter-attack role.

1000

All coy comds proceeded to area MEZZANO where they joined the CO & Battle Adjt to recce their respective coy posns in the counter-attack phase “North Switch Line” They were accompanied by the tk rep, arty rep, arty A/Tk rep, SLI MG rep and own supporting arms reps.

1400

The CO met the acting Bde Comd Lt col H P Bell-Irving DSO at MEZZANO where they discussed plans concerning the counter-attack role.

1630

3 offrs 1 CSM and 4 dvrs with jeeps from the INdependent Jewish Brigade reported to this HQ. They are on attachment to this Bn for a period of from 5 to 7 days. The task is to observe and learn how an inf bn operates in the field.

In the evening a film was shown at both RUSSI and GOGO for personnel of this Bn.

Weather this date was cloudy and cold, there were light snow flurries in the early evening.

17

Trg as per syllabus

0900

Capt C E Bent, Sp Coy Comd, proceeded on a recce of concentration area for “North Switch Line” square 4942.

1015

CO proceeded to Bde HQ.

1415

It has just been learned that Major J K Rhodes has been awarded the DSO. He received this award for outstanding service in the Savio River action in the latter part of October 1944.

1430

The CO proceeded on a recce of a new phase in the counter-attack role for this Bn

1530

24 Other ranks arrived at this HQ as rfts and were allotted to coys.

Weather this date fine and cool.

18

Trg as per syllabus.

0830

A recce party consisting of: Coy Comds, Battle Adjt and IO proceeded to the Loyal Edmonton Regt area 3840. It is expected that this Bn will relieve the LER on the night 19/20 Jan 45.

Weather this date was fine and cold.

19

0900

Trg as per syllabus.

CO held an “O” Gp at Bn HQ at which plans for the move tonight were discussed.

1730

The Bn embussed in TCVs for new areal.

1830

TacHQ are now established in new posn at 38554040.

2145

Change-over complete, locations as follows: “A” Coy 36804142, “B” Coy 37224204, “C” Coy 36674057, “D” Coy 37874071.

2325

“B” Coy heard considerable enemy movement to their immediate front. 3” Mortar brought down and was highly satisfactory.

Weather this date cloudy with rain and sleet.

BAGNACAVALLO

20

0200

“C” Coy heard a party of enemy digging along river 361412. 3” mortar fire was brought down and no further activity was heard.

0830

Own aircraft bombing Bn area, one bomb falling about 400yds from BnHQ.

0900

CO visits all coys in the following rotations, D, C, A, B & Sp.

1030

The Bde Comd paid a visit to this HQ.

1630

Our own aircraft are bombing enemy area fwd of our own posns.

1700

A piece of the tail-fin of a bomb dropped near BnHQ this morning was from a 500 lb bomb of Allied manufacture.

2010

A recce patrol from “C” Coy of 1 NCO & 3 men reached a point within 20 yds of CATALINI 36124088. Here they came under heavy MG fire from 36054095 and were forced into the ditch alongside the road. Enemy seemed quite thick in that area and patrol was forced to withdraw. They suffered no casualties.

2040

A recce patrol from “B” Coy reached a point 37124255. They were fired on by rifle, MG and rifle grenades from several enemy posns and were forced to return to Coy area.

2215

An enemy patrol of three to four men came down the road towards a pl of “C” Coy at 363407. There was a small fire fight and patrol retreated.

2230

“B” & “C” Coy areas are being covered by very heavy MG fire.

2300

A recce patrol from “A” Coy, recce’d to a point 36504147 where they came under MG fire from an enemy posn 36464162. They were also engaged by two other MG posns at 36354150 and 36504170. Patrol returned without casualties.

2355

Contact patrol to friends on the left, NTR.

Weather this date was fine and cool.

21

0020

A small party of enemy were observed approaching fwd pl of “A” Coy 36764161. The pl held their fire waiting for them to come within sure killing range. It appeared that the enemy suspected an ambush, as they withdrew.

0148

“B” Coy have had several direct hits on one of their pl houses by enemy mortar bombs. No casualties.

0325

Contact patrol to friends on left, R22R, has returned – NTR.

0500

Considerable enemy movement was heard by “B” Coy throughout night at house 369422.

1325

An officer from the South African Airforce [sic.] arrived at this HQ on a three day attachment.

1745

A very successful tk shoot was carried out this afternoon on CASA BARONI 35724122. 30 to 40 hits were made on the house itself and on buildings nearby. Enemy were observed evacuating the buildings when the fire first started. A number of direct hits were made on other buildings in the area as well.

1945

A sniper working with “A” Coy today got two probable kills.

2100

“A” Coys right pl posn are under MG fire and rifle grenades from river bank 365417.

2205

Own sentries on bank at 369421 engaged enemy on reverse side with hand grenades. From sound made by enemy at least one casualty was inflicted.

Weather this date was fine and warm.

22

0115

“C” Coy observed an enemy patrol of 4 to 5 men approaching their posn. Sentries let them get to within 50 yds and then opened fire. Enemy went to ground and crawled away. No casualties were inflicted.

0215

Contact patrols to the left tonight have nothing to report.

0430

A fighting patrol from “A” Coy of 1 & 10 reached a point 36704186. Here they heard movement and coughing which was coming from 100 yds to their right. Patrol spread out and approached this posn, an unoccupied weapon pit, occupants having apparently withdrawn on approach of patrol. Patrol returned to coy without suffering any casualties.

0705

“C” Coy now have an outpost established “7 men strong” at CASA CATELINI 36114087.

0800

Capt W E Garber, “D” Coy Comd, left thismorning for 1 Cdn Corps HQ to attend a demonstration on the latest type of eqpt for winter and mountain warfare.

1150

“B” Coy observed an enemy working party at 367421. Area was engaged with 3” mortar fire.

1755

“A”, “B” & “C” Coys all report sound of enemy activity (constructional noises) at 358409 and 364417. These targets were engaged by our own 3” Mortars.

1950

Due to enemy bazooka and MG fire, “C” Coy find it necessary to abandon their outpost 36114087.

2143

During the past half hour the enemy has used a great number of flares, some multi coloured ones.

Contact patrol to friends on left has returned – NTR.

One of our snipers working from 363408 obtained on positive kill and two possibles throughout the day. Another sniper at 366412 also scored a certain kill.

Weather this date fine and cool.

23

0300

“C” Coy contact patrol to friends on the left has returned – NTR.

0410

“C” Coy attempted to re-establish outpost posn 36114087 with no success. They reached the outpost and were in the process of digging in when they were attacked by the enemy in strength and had to withdraw. 3” & 4.2” Mortar and MMG fire was brought down on the area after the patrol withdrew.

0640

“C” Coy again sent out a patrol to establish the outpost 36114087. This time they were successful and shortly afterwards were in contact with “C” Coy HQ by line.

0650

“B” Coy fighting patrol of 1 & 10 reached a point 369422. Here it was fired on by two MGs from 367420 and 372424. They withdrew back to their coy suffering no casualties.

1120

“B” Coy recce patrol of two men reached ruined buildings 36854215 and found them unoccupied, also dugouts at 36954222 were unoccupied and showed no signs of recent occupation. Enemy movement could be heard on other side of the bank.

1345

CO proceeded to 3 CIB HQ.

1355

“A” Coy observed 12 enemy going over the dyke towards opposite side of river directly in front of their posns. They had greatcoats on and were carrying packs.

1800

“B” Coy have one sec established at 36823214. This posn will be manned as an outpost. They have with them a phone and a 38 set for communication to Coy HQ.

1925

“B” Coy outpost at 36824214 was heavily engaged by handgrenades [sic.] thrown from other side of dyke. They withdrew to the coy area.

2030

Bde Comd arrives at this HQ.

2220

“C” Coy contact patrol to friends on the left has returned – NTR.

2300

Our own snipers today working with the fwd coys scored three kills and three probables.

Weather this date fine and cold.

24

0005

“A” Coy heard enemy movement near the wire in front of their posns. They fired a few bursts of Bren. This fire was immediately returned by a Schmeiser and after an exchange of fire the enemy withdrew.

0230

“C” Coy contact patrol to friends on the left returned – NTR.

0405

“B” Coy have now re-established the outpost at 36824214. They have comn back to Coy HQ by line.

0430

A fighting patrol from “A” Coy reached area near CASA GUERRA 36384150. Here they came under heavy MG fire from five different posns and were forced to withdraw. Same patrol will go out later in the morning.

0630

A second patrol from “A” Coy proceeded to CASA GUERRA 36384150 where they came under heavy MG fire from the same posns as on previous patrol. This time they encountered mines extending from the left of the house to an unknown distance. They suffered one casualty from blast of mine which was set off by a trip wire [sic.].

0730

“D” Coy proceeded to BAGNACAVALLO this morning on a recreational trip.

A grenade duel took place this morning at “B” Coy outpost with enemy on opposite of the bank. The exchange of grenades lasted well over an hour.

“A” Coy observed 17 enemy leave CASA GUERRA and go over river bank. Arty fire was immediately brought down on the area.

During the past few days the enemy has been using a rocket propelled projectile which is new to this sector of the front. These have a tremendous blast effect, several having fallen in this area.

1230

A recce patrol of 1 NCO and 3 men from “A” Coy reached a point 36744192, from here they could hear digging all along opposite side of dyke. They were fired on several times by rifle fire but got back without suffering casualties.

1300

At this time a large explosion was heard at this HQ which appears to come from our right fwd sector of the front. A few minutes later “B” Coy notified BnHQ that the explosion had come from their outpost 36824214 and that the outpost had withdrawn. Shortly before the explosion “B” Coy’s outpost was heavily mortared. The explosion caused a large crater in the road and blew down a wall of the house. This was followed by a large number of rifle grenades, hand grenades, mortar bombs and small arms fire. The Sgt in charge of the outpost was killed by a sniper and the Cpl and two others wounded by shrapnel from mortar or grenades.

1856

Enemy sent over yellow flares into “A” Coy area.

2225

Two large calibre phosphorous [sic.] shells landed in “B” Coy area but caused no casualties or material damage.

Weather this date fine and cool.

25

0015

“C” Coy contact patrol returned after having contacted friends on the left – NTR.

0415

“A” Coy recce patrol of 1 NCO & 3 men recce’d to a point 3650 4171, from here they could hear enemy movement on other side of dyke. It is apparent that he is holding all along the dyke in that sector. The enemy are very alert and threw grenades at the patrol. One man was wounded and one dazed by shock.

0440

“C” Coy contact patrol returned from contacting friends of the left /NTR.

1025

Bde Comd paid a visit to this HQ.

1130

CO made a tour of all coys.

1600

A German stretcher Bearer came in through the right fwd pl of “B” Coy with a white flag. HQ was immediately sent to Bde HQ where it was found that he was carrying a message in regard to stretcher bearers working in the dyke area. He was brought back from Bde later and sent back to his own lines with a message that no enemy stretcher bearers would be allowed on this side of the river. Note: A blind-fold was used on the enemy stretcher from fwd coy to rear area and back.

1945

“D” Coy has now relieved “B” Coy, pl posns being the same. Change-over was completed without incident.

2250

“A” Coy have been under heavy MG fire for the past twenty minutes, believed to come from 36704192. This posn was engaged by 3” mortar and MMG and was very effective. Weather throughout the day was fair and cool, some snow during the night.

26

0225

A large enemy patrol, strength 15 to 20 men, attacked “C” Coy outpost 36114087. They were wearing white camouflage suits and were not noticed until they were very close in on the posn. One of the enemy a Cpl reached the door of the building and was shot dead there. In the fire fight that resulted the outpost was forced to withdraw back to the Coy area. Arty and MMG fire was then laid down on the outpost posn. It is certain that some of the enemy other than the Cpl must have been killed or wounded.

0315

A fighting patrol from “A” Coy reached a point on the dyke 367419. They attacked two enemy slit trenches killing two enemy in one by hand grenades and the occupants of the other made their escape. At the same time patrol observed ten or twelve enemy approaching in their direction from left. A fire fight resulted and it is quite certain several other casualties were inflicted on the enemy. Patrol made its way back to the coy area without suffering a single casualty.

0710

“C” Coy outpost at 36114087 was re-established without difficulty. One enemy dead was found at the post.

0800

Personnel of last nights [sic.] fighting patrol from “A” Coy proceeded to BAGNACAVALLO for a day of recreation.

1005

Bde Comd paid a short visit to this HQ.

1130

One of our snipers working in “D” Coy area scored a kill at 368421.

1745

It has just been learned that F5187 Pte Minard A K has been awarded the Military Medal. Pte Minard is one of the Regimental Signallers and has been awarded this medal for gallantry in the Savio River action, in the latter part of October 1944.

1930

“D” Coy at this time are being heavily mortared, one bomb hitting the house and causing a fire in the upper story. The fire was extinguished and there was [sic.] no casualties. Our own 3” mortars put down fire on a suspected enemy mortar posn across the river.

2025

“D” Coy is still being heavily morared, suffering one casualty.

2230

An enemy MG firing from 36474170 is causing trouble with “A” Coy wiring party MMG and mortar fire have been brought down and appears to be very effective.

Weather this date warm, with rain.

27

0010

Contact patrol to friends on left from “C” Coy has returned – NTR.

One of the pioneers has been wounded by mortar fire while working in “A” Coy area.

0050

An enemy working party was observed at 364414 by “A” Coy. MMG harassing fire is being brought down in that area for the next half hour.

0240

Due to the brightness of the moon “A” Coy’s wiring party had to discontinue their work.

0320

Pioneer offr has been wounded in “A” Coy area while supervising mining and wiring.

0630

An ambush patrol from “D” Coy has returned, having seen no enemy all night.

“C” Coy fighting patrol had to be postponed for 24 hrs due to the fact that the brightness of the moon made it impossible to move about without being seen.

0800

“B” Coy proceeded to BAGNACAVALLO on a recreational trip and will return at 1700 hrs this evening.

0840

Own aircraft very active against enemy occupied buildings on far side of the river.

1205

The Acting Bde Comd Lt col H P Bell-Irving DSO paid a short visit to this HQ.

1425

“A” Coy killed one enemy in trench on dyke out in front of their posns. Shortly afterwards four other enemy were observed to come over the dyke and carry him away.

1550

“D” Coys outpost has been under a heavy barrage of hand grenades from the other side of the dyke. They are returning the compliments thickened up by 2” mortar bombs.

1800

This HQ has been informed that Lt H D MacHattie, pioneer offr, who was wounded last night while on a working party with “A” Coy, has died as a result of his wounds.

2050

A fighting patrol from “C” Coy went out through the outpost at 361409. They observed several enemy at 360409 whom they engaged. Enemy moved off quickly in direction of the river and the patrol came under very heavy MG fire, withdrawing back to Coy Area.

2230

A second patrol went out from “C” Coy but were unable to get further than 50 yds from the outpost when they were fired on by heavy MG fire. All attempts to move fwd brought down MG fire and patrol had to return.

Weather this date cloudy and cold, sky overcast until late evening, becoming quite clear throughout the night.

28

0255

A working party from “D” Coy had to suspend work due to heavy enemy MG fire.

0530

Contact patrols to friends on left during the night had nothing to report.

0845

“D” Coy observed an enemy periscope down to the right of their right fwd pl on the dyke.

During the past few days periscopes have been seen very ofter [sic.] at various places and times of the day along the Bn front.

1005

The acting Bde Comd arrived at this HQ for a short visit.

1200

Throughout the morning both “C” and “D” Coys were subjected to light enemy mortar and shell fire.

1440

A recce patrol from “D” Coy went along river bank to a trench at 37264250. By using a periscope they could observe the river. They could see two ropes across the river one above the other, apparently used as a substitute for a bridge.

1815

An active enemy MG at 36444157 observed by “A” Coy has been successfully engaged by MG fire.

2015

A recce patrol from “D” Coy to ruins at 369421 found no enemy in area. There were no signs that area had been occupied recently.

2055

A recce patrol from “A” Coy reached a point within 35 yards of CASA GUERRA 36384150. They found no mines or wire but could hear enemy movement in the house. Patrol was fired on by rifle grenades on the way back.

2150

A working party from “D” Coy suspended their work due to enemy MG fire in the area.

2205

“C” Coy contact patrol to friends on the left have returned – NTR.

2240

A second recce patrol from “A” Coy went out in the same area as the previous one. They had little success, being engaged by enemy MG as they approached the bank.

The patrol comd had the fore grip shot off of his TSMG. Patrol returned suffering no casualties.

2335

Another grenade duel took place at “D” Coy outpost. We suffered no casualties. Weather this date clear and cold.

29

0235

“C” Coy contact patrol to friends on left have returned – NTR.

0730

“C” Coy proceeded on recreational trip to BAGNACAVALLO for the day.

0900

One third of the personnel of BnHQ and Sp Coy proceeded on recreational trip to BAGNACAVALLO.

0915

Own airforce [sic.] carried out a bombing attack on the tower at 362424. The tower was not hit and appeared to be undamaged after the bombing.

0945

One of the snipers shot a dog forward of “D” Coy this morning. During the past few days several of these animals have been observed at different points along the river bank. It is believed that they are being used by the enemy to carry messages, locate mine fields, foot paths, etc.

1800

During the afternoon “C” & “D” Coy areas were quite heavily mortared. “D” Coy had two hits on their rt fwd pl building. No casualties.

1925

A recce patrol from “A” Coy reached a point 35 yds from bend in river 367419. Here they heard enemy movements on river bend. Patrol was fired on by MG from top of bank at 36484169. They returned without suffering any casualties.

1930

A recce patrol from “D” Coy reached a point 36874213. They found no enemy in buildings but heard movement on the bank directly behind the house.

1955

“A” Coy heard an enemy horse-drawn vehicle in the area 363416. 3” mortar fire was brought down with unknown results. This same movement has been heard from the same area at approx the same time for the past few days.

2025

“C” Coy fighting patrol returned after having reached 36254110 without contacting the enemy. There was considerable mortar in the area and the night was very bright. The patrol comd did not thing [sic.] it advisable to continue further as the area was very open and offered no cover whatsoever. Considerable enemy movement and voices were heard from direction of the river directly to their front.

2245

An active enemy MG at CASA GUERRA 364414 was engaged by our own MGs. Results were satisfactory and the MG silenced.

Weather this date cloudy and cool.

30

0120

A wiring party from “D” Coy found it impossible to carry on work due to enemy MG fire from dyke.

0324

“B” Coy was contacted by a patrol from our friends on our left who told them an enemy patrol earlier in the evening came in on one of their posns and was beaten off.

0915

Own aircraft bombed and straffed [sic.] tower on other side of river 362423 but with no success.

1505

An enemy rifleman is making things very unpleasant for anyone moving around in “D” Coy area. His suspected posn has been engaged by 3” mortar fire.

1530

A dog was shot at “D” Coy at 37184240. This makes the second dog killed in as many days.

2000

Just before last light a party of enemy came over the dyke and attempted to dig in 50 yds to the left of “D” Coy’s right fwd pl. They were immediately engaged by this pl and beat a hasty retreat back over the dyke. It is uncertain whether or not casualties were inflicted.

2130

A recce patrol from “A” Coy reached a posn 36384150, 30 yds from CASA GUERRA.

They stayed in this posn for one hour, and heard no movement or sounds from the house itself. There was no wire or mines in the area. They then moved to within 30 yds of the dyke where they stayed for a half hour. They could hear talking and movement from the bank to the left of the building. On the way back the patrol came under enemy mortar fire, suffering no casualties.

WEather this date fine and cool.

31

0235

Both contact patrols to friends on left during the night had nothing to report.

0905

12 to 14 enemy were observed behind dyke at 371422. They were engaged with 2” mortar by “D” Coy and disappeared from view.

1230

Own planed bombed and straffed [sic.] enemy posns on other side of the river.

1430

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

2010

A fighting patrol 1 & 6 from “D” Coy reached a point 37114234. Here they engaged slit trenches with hand grenades and TSMG. Enemy retaliated with hand grenades and flares went up. Patrol returned hawing [sic.] suffered no casualties.

Weather today fine and clear.