WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

West N S R

March 1945

PORTO S. GIORGIO

1

0830

Conference held by the CO, Lt col F E Hiltz, at BnHQ and attended by 2IC, Coy Comds, Padre & IO. The CO outlined the training programme for the stay in this area. It is to be quite intensive and to consist mainly of pl exercises

Trg as per syllabus.

There was an EFI issue this afternoon, spirits for Offrs, WOs & Sgts and two bottles of beer for all ranks

Weather this date – fine in the morning turning foggy and cold in the afternoon.

2

Trg as per syllabus

Major J K Rhodes DSO former Coy Comd of D Coy arrived at this HQ today and is to be a guest of the Bn for a short period.

Picture at the Bluenose Theatre tonight was “Hail The Conquering Hero”

Weather this date fine and warm.

3

Trg as per syllabus.

Capt J F McNichol RCAMC arrived today to take over the duties of Regimental Medical Officer; Capt J R Feindel RCAMC former Medical Officer having been transferred to 9 Cdn Lt Fd Amb.

This picture at the Bluenose Theatre tonight was, Donald O’Connor and Peggy Ryan in “This Is The Life”.

Weather today fine and warm.

1000

The CO held a conference at this HQ which was attended by all Coy Comds. Main point discussed was the NCO shortage which was caused by leave parties proceeding to Canada.

1100

Protestant Church Parade was held at Bluenose Theatre, coys being paraded independently.

Weather fine but a high wind.

5

Tg as per syllabus

0700

Ten other ranks left this morning of thirty days rotational leave to Canada.

1800

A Mess Dinner was held at the Officers’ Mess. The guest of honour was Major Rutherford 1st Fd Regt RCHA, Arty Rep for this Bn. The Major gave an after-dinner talk on arty in sp of inf. It was a very good talk and as one offr put it “its [sic.] nice to listen to a man talk on an apparently complicated subject when you know damn well he knows what he is talking about”.

Picture at the Bluenose Theatre, “Half-way House”

Weather today fine and warm.

6.

Trg as per syllabus.

1015

The Bde Comd, Brig J P E Bernatchez DSO OBE, arrived at this HQ and then proceeded to the Bn trg area 8098 and 8198 to observe the trg being carried out.

1930

A picture, “The Adventures of Mark Twain” was shown in front of the Railway Station near BnHQ.

Weather today fine and warm.

7

Trg as per syllabus.

1730

The 56th British Div concert Party played at the Bluenose Theatre. This was the first show and was for other ranks only. A second showing began at 1930 hrs and was for the Officers.

Weather today fine and warm.

8

Trg as per syllabus

1900

A Sing Song was held in the K of C Building.

A picture “The Adventure of Mark Twain” was shown at the Bluenose Theatre.

Weather today fine and cool with quite a high wind.

9

Trg as per syllabus

1330

A Conference was held by the CO at BnHQ. The CO being in Comd of “C” Wave for the coming move (see movement order), held this conference, which was attended by a rep from each of the sub-units making up the wave, to go over the details of the convoy.

1900

The CO held a full Bn Conference. Details of the move were discussed.

Picture at the Bluenose Theatre tonight was, “Habitant”

10

Trg as per syllabus

0900

A short course on veh maintenance started this morning at our transport park. The CO HQ Coy Comd and 2 IC of each coy attended. Officer giving instruction was Capt Olafson, BEME 3 Cdn Inf Bde.

Confessions were held for all RCs at the K of C building fro 1745 hrs to 1845 hrs. Picture tonight at the Bluenose Theatre was, “Hail The Conquering Hero”.

Weather today fine and warm.

11

0900

An advance party under Comd Capt D I Rice, left for the first staging area, FOLIGNO, for Exercise “GOLDFLAKE”

1000

Protestant Church Service held at the Bluenose Theatre.

RC Church Service was held in the church directly opposite the Bluenose Theatre.

A picture, “This Is the Life” was shown at the Town Square near BnHQ.

Wather [sic.] today fine and warm.

12

Move as per Movement Order. Bn convoy proceeded from PORTO S. GIORGIO to destination FOLIGNO without incident.

FOLIGNO

1300

The same advance party under comd Capt DI Rice left for next staging area, PONTASSIEVE

1430

The Bn paraded under the comd of Capt G G Taylor to a NAAFI controlled cinema in the down town [sic.] section of FOLIGNO where a picture, “Double Indemnity” was shown. Officers marched down under the control of Major J R Cameron the 2 IC. To avoid breaches of security very close check had to be kept on all ranks.

1830

The CO, Lt col F E Hiltz, Wave Comd of “C” Wave held a conference at which reps of each sub-unit of the Wave were present. Details of the following day’s move were discussed.

1900

An outdoor picture, “The Trail of the Vigilantes” were began [sic.]. After a very short period sound arrangements went astray and the picture became a silent one. Late in the evening Supplement No 1 to Movement Order No 1 was issued. It contained the instructions for the following days [sic.] move.

Weather today fine and warm.

13

0655

Bn embussed and moved off as per movement order. The cook-houses left at 0630 hrs in separate convoy to an area north of AREZZO MR 2735 to prepare dinner for the noon-day halt which is in this area.

1230

Bn halted for dinner in above stated area and moved off again at 1345 hrs.

1700

Bn arrived in second staging area, PONTASSIEVE. The move proceeded without incident.

PONTASSIEVE

13

1830

The 2IC, Major F R Cameron held a conference attended by Coy Comds, Adjt, Capt Taylor and the TO. Major Cameron is convoy comd of the unit convoy and Capt Taylor is advance reporting officer. Points discussed were breaches in convoy discipline during the day and the details of tomorrow’s move. Later in the evening Supplement No 2 to Movement Order No 1, was issued to cover the remainder of the journey.

2000

A picture, “The Flame of The Barbary Coast” was shown. Once again the sound arrangement failed, not quite completely, and the picture was practically a silent one.

Note – The main body of the advance party proceeded on the No 3 staging area, HARRODS CAMP, earlier in the day. Three members of the advance party were left behind to guide coys to respective areas when they arrived. As soon as this was done they journeyed on to the third staging area.

Weather today fine and warm.

14

0900

The Wave this morning is to proceed to No 3 Staging Area in blocks of 25 vehs. Blocks being spaced 20 minutes apart. Details of blocks as per Supplement No 2 to Movement Order No 1.

1400

The first block of the Wave under comd of the Adjt, Capt A J W Dyer, arrived at HARRODS CAMP (No 3 Staging Area). Succeeding blocks followed at short intervals and the Bn was settled down and meals being served by 1600 hrs.

From 1630 hrs onwards to 1900 hrs Coys received EFI from K of C (dry EFI).

In the evening a film was shown, “Lady in the Dark”.

LIVORNO

1800

The CO, Adjt and the TO Lt G N Budreski, attend a conference held by Major Fulton DAAG 1 Cdn Inf Div, Div Movement Rep. Here rules of the camp were discussed and the general picture of the continuance of the move.

It is now common knowledge that 1 Cdn Corps is proceeding to take part in the fighting on the Western Front. Weather today was fine and warm.

15

0830

The CO held a Bn conference at which a general picture was given of future events.

1000

Fifteen other ranks under the direction of the Padre H/Capt F L Wilmot MC proceeded on an educational tour of PISA which is a few miles distant from our present location.

1330

Another party of 15 ORs under the direction of the Pioneer Officer Lt L R Kingston proceeded to PISA.

1430

The CO attended a conference at Movements to get loading lists for tomorrow.

During the afternoon EFI was issued to the troops, on the scale of one bottle of spirits for offrs, ½ bottle for WOs & Sgts and beer to all ranks.

In the evening a film was shown, “UP In Mabel’s Room”.

At various times throughout the day the CO addressed all coys putting all ranks in the picture as to the present move. A & B – 1030 hrs, C & D – 1100 hrs, Sp Coy 1130 hrs, BnHQ & HQ Coy 1400 hrs.

Weather today fine and warm.

16

0730

All vehicles and drivers proceeded to port LIVORNO where they embarked for MARSEILLES. A Sports programme was laid on under coy control for the entire day.

1030

Twenty-four Officers proceeded to PISA on an educational tour.

1430

The CO & Adjt proceeded to a conference at Movements to get details of following days [sic.] move, loading lists, etc..

1500

The CO accompanied by officers who missed the trip to PISA this morning proceeded to that city this afternoon.

A picture was shown in the evening, “The Falcon Goes West”.

Weather today fine and warm.

17

A Sports programme was laid on for the day. Competitive soft-ball games were arranged between coys.

1430

The CO and Adjt proceeded to Movements and procured loading lists for the following day. During the day the Padre conducted Padre’s Hour for the different coys. The topic for discussion was the development of religion.

Weather this date fine and cool.

18

1030

Protestant Church Service was held in the camp area.

It was learned this morning that the move scheduled for today has been cancelled for 24 hours. It is expected that this Bn will move tomorrow afternoon and go on board ship at the port of LIVORNO.

During the day a sports programme was carried out. Soft-ball and volley ball being played in respective coy areas.

Weather this date fine and warm.

19

Once again sport was the order of the day.

1430

The CO and Adjt attended conference at Movements to get loading lists etc.

1700

It had been planned that the Bn would embus for the port of LIVORNO at this time but it has now been changed to an indefinite time.

1900

At this time it was learned that BnHQ and HQ Coy only would go on board ship tonight. The remainder of the Bn to spend the night in the present staging area under the comd of Major W W Mair OC “B” Coy.

2015

BnHQ Coy proceeded by TCV to LIVORNO where they went on board ship tonight. The remainder of the Bn to spend the night in the present staging area under the comd of Major W W Mair OC “B” Coy.

2015

BnHQ and HQ Coy proceeded by TCV to LIVORNO where they went on board an LST at 2100 hrs.

20

0900

Remainder of Bn proceeded to LIVORNO and embarked in LCIs.

0945

Convoy left port of LIVORNO at this time. Bn was disposed in the following order: BnHQ and HQ Coy on an LST and the remainder of the Bn on five LCIs, one per coy.

The voyage today proceeded very smoothly with a very calm sea.

Weather today fine and warm.

21

The weather continued very favourably with a calm sea and the voyage proceeded without incident.

22

Convoy docked at the port of MARSEILLES. Shortly after docking the Bn disembarked and proceed by TCVs to a staging area several miles from the port.

1245

On arriving at the staging area the Bn found a hot meal already prepared.

Throughout the afternoon medical inspection of all ranks was held and the Paymaster exchanged French currency for Italian.

At 1830 & 2000 hrs Major J R Cameron 2 IC attended conferences at staging area HQ (Movements). Here he received details for move which is to begin early tomorrow morning.

2030

On his return from the second conference Major Cameron held Bn conference. Maps and Weather today fine and warm.

23

Reveille this morning was at 0430 hrs and breakfast was served at 0300 hrs.

MARSEILLES

23

0545

Cook-houses, under Comd Capt S B Beaton and the advance party under comd Capt D I Rice left for the first staging area.

0645

Unit convoy on the way. Unlike the move in Italy, the Bn is moving in Unit convoy instead of being part of a Wave. The 2 IC Major J R Cameron is convoy comd.

1800

Convoy arrived in staging area, St. RAMBERT, where a cooked meal was awaiting the arrival of the troops. Route as per route Card and Map. This first part of our journey through France was carried out in very pleasant weather and without incident. There was a ten minute halt on the even hour throughout the day and one hours [sic.] halt at noon for the consumption of haversack lunches which were provided at breakfast.

1830

Major J R Cameron held a conference at which the day’s convoy was discussed and detail laid on for the following day.

The picture show in the evening, was : “You Are Always In My Heart”.

Weather today fine and warm.

24

Reveille and breakfast were at a much more reasonable hour this morning being 0600 hrs and 0630 hrs respectively.

0730

Same advance party and cook-houses departed for next staging area.

0830

The main convoy crossed the start point at 0830 hrs. Route as per Route Card. The same halts etc. were observed as in yesterday’s convoy.

1530

The Bn arrived at staging area, vicinity MACON.

1630

Major Cameron, convoy comd, held a conference at which the day’s convoy was discussed and orders issued for the following day.

A picture was shown in the evening, “Two Girls And A Sailor”.

During the course of the evening the K of C catered to the troops.

Weather today fine and warm.

25

Reveille this morning was at 0430 hrs and breakfast at 0500 hrs. Same advance party left at 0530 hrs for the next staging area. The main convoy moved off at 0630 hrs, continuing under the same arrangements as for the past two days.

1700

Convoy arrived at the staging area. As soon after arrival as possible Coy Comds Adjt, TO and Tpt Sgt attended an “O” Gp held by Major J R Cameron. Once again the day’s convoy was discussed and details laid on for the following day.

In the evening a film, “Conflict” was shown.

Weather today was fine and warm in the morning with occasional showers in the afternoon and evening.

26

Reveille this morning was at 0400 hrs and breakfast at 0430 hrs. Cook-houses and advance party left at 0530 and the main body moved off at 0630 hrs. Convoy proceeded under the usual arrangements.

1500

Bn arrived at the staging area, the day’s move having been carried out without incident.

1530

Major Cameron held a conference at which today’s convoy was discussed and details of tomorrows [sic.] convoy issued.

In the evening a film, “Hail The Conquering Hero” Was Shown.

Weather this date was cool with occasional showers.

27

Reveille this morning at 0400 hrs and breakfast at 0430 hrs. Cook-houses and same advance party left at 0530 hrs and the Main Body of the Bn moved off at 0630 hrs. The move continued under the same arrangements without incident, and the Bn arrived at the staging area at 1730 hrs.

1800

Major Cameron held a conference at which tomorrow’s move was discussed generally and at 2030 hrs after attending a conference himself at Movements Office in the staging area, he held another meeting at which full details were given.

Weather today overcast and cool.

28

Reveille this morning at 0430 hrs and breakfast at 0500 hrs. Cook-houses and same advance party left at 0600 hrs and the main column passed the start point at 0700 hrs. The move was carried out in accordance with previous arrangements without incident. Bn reached billeting area BERLAER, BELGIUM, MR 8484, at 1515 hrs.

BERLAER

1930

The K of C put on a show for the troops, “The Mask of Dimitros”

2030

The CO held a conference which was attended by the 2IC, Coy Comds, Adjt, QM, MO. Main topic discussed was training in this area. The CO pointed out that the men had been idle for a period of about two weeks and steps must be taken to ensure they were kept in good physical condition. Such being the case a certain amount of hardening training would have to be carried out. Nominations were also made for leave to England and Canada.

Weather today, light showers and generally overcast.

29

Trg as per syllabus.

1200

The IO, Lt F A Embree, attended a conference at HQ 1 Cdn Inf Bde. Three Staff Office from Army HQ delivered lectures on, 1. German Order of Battle, 2. Counter Intelligence in North West Europe, 3. Enemy Equipment.

1615

Three officers and seventy-seven other ranks left on 8 day leave to the United Kingdom. Preference was given to men married in ENgland and long service in the Italian Theatre.

Weather today rainy and overcast.

30

Trg as per syllabus.

0510

One Officer, Capt G G Taylor, and three ORs proceeded on a recce of fwd assembly areas, REICHWALDE FOREST 8550.

Throughout the day the Paymaster Capt D I Greensides RCAPC carried out exchange of Belgian currency for French.

1500

The Protestant Padre held Good Friday service in the K of C Hut.

EFI was issued this afternoon on the scale of One bottle of spirits, one of champagne and one liquor to officers WOs & Sgts and two bottles of beer free issued to all ranks..

Show tonight at K of C Hut “The Mask of Dimitros”

Weather today fine and warm.

31

Trg as per syllabus.

0900

Two private soldiers from this unit proceeded to ARRAS where they will undergo a period of nine days training in preparation for a Guard of Honour being put on by the Canadian Army at VIMY on the 9th of April the Anniversary of the capture of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Army in the last War. These two were so chosen because their fathers fought at Vimy during the Great War. Throughout the day Muster Parades and Pay Parades were held. (See Part I Orders).

Show at K of C building, “Tawny Petit”

Weather today fair and cool.