WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT

WWII WAR DIARY

Place

Date

Time

Entry

MAY 1943

CRIEFF, SCOTLAND

0430

The Bn arrived at Crieff. Some trouble was had in finding the Coy locations due to the fact that the advance party had not as yet arrived, however the tps got straightened away and had a hot meal prepared for the advance party which duly arrived at 1600 hrs. Today and Sunday spent in getting settled in the new area.

2

1700

The unit M.T. arrived.

3

0900

All officers and senior N.C.O.s of the unit assembled at H.Q. Coy mess hall to witness a demonstration of how the Mor Pl will take their weapons into action in Mountainous country. In view of the fact that the weapons and ammunition plus the mens’ kit will be carried on the man, using Everest carriers, no one envies them their role in that type of warfare. P.T. exercises designed to limber the muscles used in mountain climbing were also demonstrated by Capt King of the Instructional Staff.

1020

All officers and N.C.O.s paraded to the Hydropathic to attend a lecture on “Fighting and Tactics in Hill Country”.

Pay parades as per.

4

0800

A half hour of P.T. as demonstrated by Capt King.

0900

Bn move off on a 14 mile march through the hills. For many this was their first go at mountain climbing. Despite the heat and rough going the distance was covered in nine hrs which wasn’t at all bad in view of the rugged nature of the country.

Lectures and training as per.

5

0800

Training started today with a lecture by one of the instructional staff on the use of the compass in moving in the hills. Following this an exercise was carried out in which each Pl was given a series of points to march on using the compass in conjunction with the map.

1800

All officers and senior N.C.O.s paraded to the Hydro to a lecture on “Hill Tactics”. A reinforcement draft of four officers, Lieut E.N. Doane, Lieut N.B. MacNab, Lieut G.C. Romkey and Lieut D.L. Rice, and 14 O.R.s joined the unit today.

6

Trg today consisted of cliff scaling practise for the entire Bn.

A unit M/C course started this A.M..

The senior officers are very busy working on G1098 establishments and loading tables.

CRIEFF

7

0600

The Bn start on a two day hike over the hills. This was in the nature of an endurance test. The Bn proceeded in two parties, one half covering A route and he second half going over B which was A in reverse. The weather today was not too bad on the whole, but snow was encountered at 1500 ft and squalls of almost blizzard intensity from there to the top of Ben Mor (the highest point of the climb, 4000 ft). The tps enjoyed this on the whole, being a change from the regular routine, also the climate was much like that of our own Nova Scotia winter.

8

0700

The hike continues but the weather is much worse today. The peaks are shrouded in cloud and snow, while the gale fairly picks the men off their feet. At 1000 hrs the Instructional Staff decided the weather was too rough and the march was finished over a route through the valleys. But it was far from pleasant here as the snow changed to a driving rain as one came down out of the hills. This was one of those rare occasions when the tps were really glad to see the Pro Sgt who had the M.T. at the R.V. an hour earlier than was laid down

2000

Lt-Col R.D. King and Capt C.B. Higgins attends a conference at Bde H.Q. re W.E.

9

No church parades today.

Pay parades as per.

Officers and N.C.O.s attended a demonstration of how to load a mule or pack horse. No mule or horse was available for this purpose so a table was used instead.

Twenty four N.C.O.s took a short course as instructors on the Piat bomb.

Officers lectures as per.

The A Tk Pl rejoined the unit today along with their new 6 pdr guns.

CRIEFF

10

0900

Conference at Bn H.Q. re exercise to be carried out today and tomorrow.

1130

Bn march eight miles to a concentration area approximately 2 miles South of Comrie, arriving at 1530 hrs. On this exercise the tps carry all weapons plus one blanket, greatcoat, change of underwear and spare pr of serge trousers besides their normal battle order less helmets. The Sig Pl are the unlucky ones in this case as half must carry double packs while the other half carry equipment. A Pl of C Coy was detailed to help the Mor Pl with their weapons. Heavy equipment and double packs were carried on the Everest carriers. This is an ingenious device with which a man can take the load of a mule, or almost.

1530

Capt C.B. Higgins and Capt C.F. Whynacht attend a conference at Bde H.Q. to discuss the general points arising out of our training here.

1630

Bn O gp. The Bn will push off at 1800 hrs, cross the River of Rockhill and proceed along the track on the North side of the river to a wood at 1938 where they will halt for supper. This was Compo ration and prepared by the man in his mess-tin.

11

1100

The Bn move to put in a left-flanking attack on enemy posns on the high ground around the village of Lochearnhead. The distance to be covered is ten miles, no track worthy of the name can be followed to the objectives. The weather is very bad, snowing and raining alternately. Direction can only be maintained by busing the compass. However the tps got over the route in good order and arrived on the objectives on time, 0800 hrs.

After consolidating on the posns the tps had breakfast, again prepared from Compo ratio.

1400

The Bn proceed by M.T. back to the billet area. Every one [sic.] very tired and all agree it was a very tough little exercise.

The vehicles are being brought up to War Establishment.

The first practise shoot carried out with the new 6 pdrs proved quite satisfactory.

The health of the tps remains very goodl

12

Coys busy zeroing weapons today less C Coy which started to carry out a fd firing practise but had to cancel it due to the extremely foggy weather.

1800

All Pl comdrs attend a conference at which the C.O. discussed the standard of trg.

13

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1500

Capt C.B. Higgins and Capt C.F. Whynacht attend a Q conference at Hamilton.

2130

Lt-Col R.D. King, D.S.O. attended a conference at Bde H.Q.

14

0800

C Coy put on a demonstration of mine-lifting as it will be carried out by the Inf. Each of the other Coys attended this in turn. First of all Lieut Riley of the R.C.E. gave a lecture on the general layout of minefields as used by the enemy. This was followed by C Coy plus a detachment of R.C.E. putting in a daylight attack across an uncleared mine field [sic.]. Two methods of clearing these mines were demonstrated ( a ) short arm detector method, ( b ) prodding.

Field Return

CRIEFF

15

0800

Coys zeroing weapons and doing mine lifting exercise as per syllabus.

Forty-eight hr leaves granted for this week-end only, all personnel must be back with the unit by 18 May 43.

16

Church parades as per

The local Bn of Home Guard had a busy day, doing several parades and march-pasts. The skirl of the pipes was a pleasant sound to the West Novies.

17

0800

Coys on range and seeing film “Next of Kin” alternately as per syllabus.

Pay parades and dental inspection as per

18

0700

An advance party of approximately 45 all ranks proceeded by M.T. to Camp Shire, Inveraray, arriving at 1700 hrs.

Remainder of Bn trg as per syllabus.

19

Bn move to Inveraray by rail as per

2100

Lt-Col R.D. King D.S.O. to Bde H.Q. to receive instructions re trg to be carried out during the period of our stay here.

2230

Bn conf re trg.

20

Rifle Coys carry out trg as per syllabus.

1700

The C.O. and Coy comdrs recce an area suitable for the trg to be carried out to-morrow.

2130

Bn 0 gp re trg for tomorrow.

21

0900

Three drivers report to Town Camp for a short waterproofing course.

1000

100 al ranks attend a lecture given by an R.A.S.C. officer on supply and rations in the field. IN the course of this lecture he showed the contents of the various ration packs and offered several suggestions on how to prepare same.

1330

Bn stretcher bearers and 10 O.R.s of C. Coy take part in a medical exercise.

1400

A and B Coy carry out assault landing practise. C and D Coys do a fd firing exercise at which Lt-Gen A.G.L. MacNauhton was present for a short time.

1500

Lt-Col Stillman and Maj Anderson of the Regt Funds Board visited the unit on duty.

2030

The C.O. held a short trg conference.

Field Return.

CRIEFF

22

0730

Coys trg as per syllabus.

1400

0 gp re Exercise Eagle 2. Remainder of the afternoon spent in preparation for same.

1900

The assaulting serials embark at Inveraray Pier to go aboard S.S. Duke of Argyll.

23

Exercise Eagle was in the nature of an assault landing. Enemy was supplied by another unit of the Bde Gp. At 0300 hrs the tps landed on Ardna Slaite and pushed on to capture and consolidate on the high ground beyond Cease fire at 0730 hrs. In the afternoon A, B and D Coys do L.C.I. trg.

1800

Lt-Col R.D. King D.S.O. proceeded to London on duty..

24

0700

C, H.Q. and Sup Coys carry out L.C.I. trg.

Bn move back to Crieff as per App 4. This concludes a very successful period of trg which went off without incident.

25

0800

Trg as per syllabus. Weapons that have not, as yet been zeroed are being done today. Eight new sniper rifles with telescopic sights issued today.

26

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26

0800

Trg as per syllabus.

The C.O. returned from London today.

1100

Conference at Bde H.Q. re administrative matters.

27

0800

Official photographers were on the ground to get some pictures of the tps carrying out trg which consisted of a hike through the hills today.

28

0800

Trg as per syllabus.

1100

Brig M.F. Gregg V.C., M.C., called on the unit today and spent the balance of the day visiting officers and O.R.s.

Field Return.

29

0800

Training as per syllabus. Loading of light scale vehicles completed today.

1700

Brig Penhale visited the unit.

CRIEFF

30

Church parades as per

1330

Conference re trg for the coming week at Bn H.Q.

2030

Conference at Bde H.Q. attended by Lt-Col R.D. King, Capt C.B. Higgins and Capt C.F. Whynacht.

31

0800

Training as per syllabus.

1300

A demonstration of the 4.2” Mor attended by all officers and senior N.C.O.s.