

THE SLAFORTH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA

OPERATIONAL REPORT

CAPTURE OF GRANAROLO

and

SENOIO RIVER WINTER LINE

PART I - EXERCISE "GRUMBLE"

PART II - DEFENCE OF THE SENIO RIVER

# OPERATIONAL REPORT

## SEAFORTH OF C

1 Jan 45 to 7 Jan 45

### CAPTURE OF GRANAROLO (EXERCISE "GRUMBLE")

NOTE: Marginal notes denote reference to App. "A" to this report  
"Lessons learned from months operations".

On the 1 Jan 45, the outline plan for the forthcoming operation was presented to Bn commanders at a Bde "O" Group at 0900 hrs. The following is the plan:

1. 2 Cdn Inf Bde Intention: to capture the area between GRANAROLO and the FOSSO VECCHIO with exploitation to the R Senio.
2. Method: The operation was to be in three phases:  
Phase 2. Seaforth of C to break out North from the PPCLI bridgehead to capture area W of GRANAROLO, operation to be supported by Arty concentrations, timed and on call.  
Phase 3. The L Edmn R to approach and clear GRANAROLO from due East astride road MR M 367314 - MR M 355322, which would become the Bde axis.  
"H" Hour for the attack - 1900 hrs.

#### Seaforth of C Plan

The attack was to be in four phases.

It was to commence on the C.O.'s order, after the success of the PPCLI. The fwd assembly area for one coy at a time was East of the ditch MR M 358312 to MR M 357310. First coy to be in fwd assembly area by 2000 hrs. The remainder to move forward in succession on move of the preceding coy. The unit SL - rly track MR M 354314. Axis - rd MR M 354314 to Canal crossing EATON MR M 351316, then right turn and N.E. parallel to the canal.

Phase I. D Coy to clear crossing Eaton MR M 351316 (if not already cleared by the PPCLI) and capture first objective: EATON crossing incl West bank of Canal to MR M 353320, to MR349317 (track junc) and back to EATON.

Phase II. A Coy to go through D Coy and capture woods and 1 large buildings west of GRANAROLO at MR M 353322, and if possible to capture intact, the bridge at MR M 355322.

Phase III. B Coy to go through D Coy and South of A Coy, to the FOSSO VECCHIO. Objective, house at MR M 350324 to MR M 351325, incl East Bank of FOSSO VECCHIO to MR M 348323, and back to house MR M 350324.

Phase IV. C Coy to go through D and A Coys to objective, buildings MR M 356325, incl West bank of the Canal to junc of CANALE NAVIGLIO and FOSSO VECCHIO MR M 356325. Secondary task: tp tisj sa;oemt bacl acrpss CAMA:E NAVIGLIO to cut escape road from GRANAROLO at MR M 357325.

The Tk hunting Pl to follow D Coy to their objective, go through with A Coy, and then C Coy. Final task, to cut GRANAROLO escape road to the north and protection of C Coy against tank approached from the NORTH.

Engineers (with PPCLI) to open route to EATON crossing MR M 351316. Pioneers to carry on unit axis to C Coy objective, then to clear from A Coy to B Coy.

One sec of unit 2 pr A Tk guns to C Coy area as soon as the road was open and to protect them from tank approached from the North and East.

One troop of RCA A Tk (6pr) guns - two guns each to B and C Coy, responsible for approached from North and West.

One tp of 3" M 10 SP guns to A Coy area, deploying in depth covering N and W.

Two tps of tanks to D Coy area to prepare either exploitation or counter attack role with D Coy.

Arty support on call; targets show on appended maps, the FOO was to be with D Coy.

Mortars on call, prepared to move into GRANAROLO area.

A message from 1 Cdn Inf Div HQ ordered that no first line 3" mortar ammn would be used except in an emergency and with written explanation of targets, bombs expended, and the results of the shoot.

NOTE 1

The unit interpreted this message and passed it on as applying only to first line, but stressing the necessity of economy in the use of the 800 odd bombs held in surplus to first line. Note: in spite of this, a rumour quickly spread throughout the battalion, that the 3" mortars were not to fire at anything.

(A) The operation which affected the cutting off of GRANAROLO, by the SEAF of C.

3 Jan 45

1630 hrs The first coy left for the assembly area MR M sq 3728 by TCV shuttle service.  
 1750 All coys reported complete in the assemble area and in the process of having a hot meal. BHQ was at MR M 366306.  
 1830 The CO left for Bde HQ, there to remain till the unit was committed.  
 1900 The arty programme for Phase I commenced on time.  
 2015 Reports that the PPCLI's progress was satisfactory was received: D Coy was ordered to move to the fwd assembly area.  
 2035 D Coy on the move.  
 2130 D Coy in position in the fwd assembly area. Reports from the PPCLI indicated that Teller mines were frozen into the rd at MR M 355314 and that all attempts to pull them out by man power and with carriers had failed. Instructions were issued for their demolition in the road.  
 Unit 3" mortar truck was ditched and stuck at MR M 366309, blocking the road to PPCLI vehicles and drawing fire from MR M 361318. 15 min arty HF ordered on this area.  
 PPCLI on initial obj. and were still fighting for the final objective. The CO phoned from 2 Cdn Inf Bde HQ setting the SEAF of C "H" Hour at 04 0020.  
 2340 D Coy followed by the Tk hunting Pl advanced from the fwd assemble area. 2345 hrs A Coy moved off for the fwd assembly area. Some parts of the area were under light shell fire but caused no casualties or great inconvenience.

NOTE 2

4 Jan 45 0005 B Coy, PPCLI take five more PsW, one staff car and one SP. PPCLI total PsW now 52. remainder of the mines in the road at MR M 355314 to be blown at 0030 hrs.  
 0030 D Coy out of communication by 18 set and FOO 22 set. (FOO was following in bounds behind D Coy with the set in a WEASEL)  
 A Coy passed through BHQ en route to the fwd assembly area. Hostile shelling slightly intensified from the fwd assembly area to the CANAL NAVIGLIO. Counter battery and counter mortar was ordered.



0100 The Sigs Otr with a Scout Pl escort was ordered to move forward with a 18 set, constantly in touch with BHQ until contact was made with D Coy.

0120 D Coy again came on the air reporting that they had had a sharp fire fight with the enemy MGs at EATON, and were now attacking the first big house in their objective.

0130 A Coy ordered fwd across the CANALE NAVIGLIO behind D Coy and await further orders.

0135 B Coy to move fwd to FUP.

0145 Enemy minefield trace was sent in by 2 Cdn Inf Bde.

0210 Sitrep from D Coy: Objective reached, not yet firm, one 88 mm SP captured intact and 3 PsW at EATON, own casualties 3 wounded.

0215 D Coy snug on objective. Party was sent from BHQ to collect PsW.

0250 A Coy across canal; ordered to keep on going, Phase 2

0255 B Coy ordered to move forward through fwd assembly area cross canal and wait behind D Coy.

0300 A Coy passing through D Coy - all well. Pioneers ordered fwd from BHQ to sweep roads across canal and thence to D, A and C Coys.

NOTE 3 FOO with WEASEL out of contact with BHQ and all coys, presumed to be bogged down and having set trouble.

0350 C Coy passes BHQ on the way to fwd assembly area. Netting out stations interfering with unit 18 set net and causing considerable difficulties. A Coy report one pl engaged in stiff fighting for first group of houses 2 Pls being deployed to influence the battle. "ARK" reported in position in the blow at MR M 359311 now passable to wheels beyond that point.

0415 A Coy reports all well - one pl firm and the remainder pushing on.

0430 18 set communication reached crisis when some other station using Seaf of C code sign, ordered movement of sub units. Somewhat frantic enquiry revealed that the L Edmn R were late in changing their code sign which, thus by coincidence became the same as our new one. Both units were slightly off net, thus achieving an overlap in frequency. The 3rd letter of unit call signs were different and eventually the coy sigs were instructed to use all three letters. The passing of this instruction over the air was most difficult because the coy sigs were not in possession of the third letter of the code sign.

NOTE 4

0440 ARV, armd bull dozer and fascines passed BHQ en route to rly and canal obstacles. Engineer and Pioneer recon party reported in to D Coy.

0500hrs Line communication was established with D Coy. A Coy report firm on PONTIAC MR M 355321. B Coy ordered to proceed fwd to Phase 3 objective bypassing A Coy to the south. C Coy ordered to carry on through D Coy behind B Coy, thence through A Coy and launch Phase 4.

0508 PPCLI report counter attack from their front and left

0510 A Coy report both bridges at PONTIAC blown (Actually causeways cratered). Teller mines on X rds MR M 355322

0645 The CO moved fwd on foot with a 18 set to D Coy objective MR M 352318 and established a temporary TAC HQ. Engineer work on rly and canal craters appeared to cease: equipment packed beside rd. Bde HQ was contacted for info re Engineer situation.

NOTE 5

NOTE 6 Two unit 2 prs were ordered to man handle across the CANALE NAVIGLIO. Tanks were requested to do a quick recon of blows on foot with a view to putting Churchill tanks over them. Blows were considered by the CO to be passable to tanks. Now it was evident that the road would not be open for normal traffic before daylight.

0720 B Coy had 2 pls firm on East bank of the FOSSO VECCHIO and in close contact with the enemy on the west bank.

0725 B Coy being counter attacked while digging in: fired DFs 125 and 1139. A Coy report "Now I have her beat".

0740 C Coy calls for artillery fire on enemy at MR M 359327.  
 2 pr A Tk guns led by the Adjt arrived at Tac HQ (D Coy) and were deployed temporarily covering North and west between A and C Coys and between A and B Coys  
 0850 Coys stood down to 50%.  
 0850 Our Molos arrived at BHQ and were deployed in A Coy area covering areas to the North and west.  
 0850 RAP now in position at MR M 353319, near Tac HQ.  
 0855 B Coy reported Maj A Staples severely wounded and all other officers out of action.  
 0900 B Coy heavily engaged on banks of FOSSO VECCHIO - one tp of Churchills ordered forward to assist them. Wasp section was ordered fwd to BHQ in anticipation of possible role.  
 0910 B Coy engaged target at MR M 347325 with 3" mortars. One PW was discovered in haystack in D Coy area.  
 0950 C Coy engaging target at MR M 356329 with 4.2" mortars  
 A Coy in contact with the L Edmn R Who had passed through GRANAROLO.  
 B Coy report one enemy sniper left in their area.  
 1100 Request repeat 3" mortar shoot on MR M 347325. Capt JWH Bassett, Adjt, appointed to command B Coy, went out to B Coy with the CO.  
 1120 C Coy firm on all objectives.  
 A, C, D Coys and RAP in line communication with Tac HQ at MR M 352319.  
 Enemy activity at MR M 359329 engaged by arty.  
 1150 B Coy sent a party fwd under Red Cross to bring back wounded from banks of the FOSSO VECCHIO; this brought the unit total wounded to 15.  
 1300 Arty FOO having abandoned bogged WEASSEL, had manpacked his 22 set to BHQ. He was ordered to go out to B Coy. Tanks received permission to bring in one tank at a time for re-arming.  
 1300hrs BHQ moved to new location at MR M 355322.  
 1445 Enemy counter attack approaching B Coy from North and west.  
 B Coy engaging with tanks and infantry. D and A Coys and M 10s stood to. 3" mortar fired on MR M 349323  
 4.2" mortars fired between B and D Coys.  
 1510 Enemy smoke screen developing west of B Coy.  
 1515 B Coy report no further mortar fire required in area MR M 349323; second troop of tanks sent to support left flank of B Coy.  
 1520 Request was made to Bde for Tac R to ascertain depth of enemy attack.  
 1525 RAP established at new location at MR M 356321. BHQ under heavy hostile shelling.  
 B Coy report enemy infantry now inactive.  
 1540 Report in that Air OP can see nothing but friendly tanks.  
 1542 Bde report that 9 Royal Fusiliers attacking on our left, going north, have reached NEMITZ MR M 336317  
 1545 D Coy reporting Stand down to 30%.  
 1550 A report to the effect that British tanks were close to NEMITZ came in.  
 1610 BHQ was again heavily shelled.  
 1700 Coy carriers containing rations, ammn replenishment and great coats arrived at BHQ for distribution to coys as soon as possible.  
 1705 BHQ was again under heavy shell fire. Four men were wounded by one shell in an outbuilding.  
 1905 The CO went around to all coys.  
 3" mortars set up in GRANAROLO area at MR M 35503192., and DFs registered before dark.  
 2030 C Coy recce patrol briefed to go to ROBERTS, X rds at MR M 352331 to see if enemy still occupied it. C Coy reported no opposition from URN MR M 359329  
 2305 One section RCA 6 pr A Tk guns report that they are in position at B Coy. One section reported in at C Coy.  
 This was a successful and satisfactory little attack that worked out almost entirely to plan. The success is marred only by the unfortunately high officer casualties.

NOTE 7

NOTE 8



The OC, C Coy and all the officers of B Coy became casualties. in the early stages of the battle. The NCOs who were left in charge carried on magnificently untill the relieving officers arrived to take over.

On the 5 Jan 45, the bn generally firmed up all its positions so as it could efficiently hold the ground won on the previous day. A Coy moved to new positions in the area of ROBERTS MR M 352331 and D Coy moved to new positions between C Coy and A Coy, north of the FOSSO VECCHIO. When these positions had been changed the unit settled down to hold the front in a static role with the WNSR on the right flank and the 9 Royal Fusiliers on the left.

The enemy was occupying the east bank of the R SENIO, but confined his activity to sniping and MG HF. BHQ continued to receive a considerable amount of shelling as did GRANAROLO, but the coy areas were comparatively quiet. Our own patrols were active to the east bank of the R Senio and opposition was slight when contact with the enemy was made.

Everyone had hardly time to settle down when a break in the weather made road conditions absolutely terrible. Vehicle movement was very dangerous because of the snow and icy conditions, so it was ordered by the CO that movement on the roads was to be cut to a minimum.

Fog and heavy snowfall cut visibility very low and the CO issued a warning to all coys to be on their toes in case of a counter attack. Troop movement was extremely quiet on the soft snow.

The SEAF of C remained in this static position until 8 Jan 45 when the 6 Cheshires relieved our fwd coys and our unit relieved the Lan and Ren Scot R on the static front south of FUSIGNANO.

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## OPERATIONAL REPORT

SEAF of C

1 Jan 45 to 7 Jan 45

(Exercise GRUMBLE - Capture of GRANAROLO)

### APPENDIX "A".

- Note 1 It has been found that any order respecting restriction of ammunition, spreads like wildfire through the battalion immediately, usually with false or exaggerated interpretation. It is felt that this has contributed to the dangerous **feeling** among men that they are not adequately supported. It is suggested that necessary restrictions on ammunition should be passed, in confidence to the C.O.
- Note 2 One ditched truck held up the PPCLI, luckily only for a short time. It is felt that when two Bn attack in succession over one axis road, a liaison or traffic plan must be established before hand
- Note 3 This ground was considered to be quite suitable for the "WEASEL" tracked vehicle. But the Weasel got hopelessly bogged. Thus it was established that **NO TOO vehicle can keep** close up to a coy in an attack, particularly at night.
- Note 4 The clashing of frequency and call signs between two neighbouring battalions might well have ended in disaster. It is felt that the following steps would prevent it:  
(a) Frequency allotments to be divided by a rigid line.  
(b) Knowledge of all three link signs letters by all regimental signallers.  
(c) Supervision of Unit 18 set nets by Bde Sigs Officer in case of clashes between units.
- Note 5 The Engineers moved to the main axis before finishing the primary one at "EATON". The rly and canal blows were untouched and reported impassable to traffic. As it happened, very aggressive work by unit 2 pr crews and supporting tanks managed to get support in to the battalion just at daylight. It is quite **possible** that the bridgehead would **have** been lost had this support not arrived when it did. It is strongly felt that a much closer liaison is required between Inf bns and engineers when success of the inf plans depends on completion of work by the engineers. It is suggested that to achieve this, some engineers should be in direct support of bns concerned - not merely working direct to Bde HQ on the Bde Plan.
- Note 6 In this case, the Tk comd reced fwd on foot and formed the opinion that his Churchills could cross both blows. This successful recce saved the situation. It is felt that this is a good example of the value to be derived from all sp arm comds accepting the responsibility of getting their own weapons into position as soon as possible at all costs. Too often, when some detail of the plan falls down, the support just doesn't arrive.
- Note 7 The Wasp section was brought fwd with the intention of placing it in ambush well forward, to carry out a surprise defensive task. It was learned with dismay that Wasp engines must warm up for some minutes before using their flame, so this was discarded as impossible.
- Note 8 This unit admits having taken a long time to learn the following fact:  
(1) A big, stron house for BHQ is comfortable and convenient to work in, and affords adequate protection for those inside.  
(2) A big strong house draws more shell fire than anything else making it extremely difficult to maintain telephone lines and to receive the many visitors to BHQ in one piece.

8 Jan 45 to 28 Feb 45

NOTE: Marginal notes denote reference to App"A" to this report. "Lessons learned from months operations".

On the 8 Jan, the Seaf of C relieved the Lan and Ren Scot R in the area south of FUSIGNANO with FDLs along the R SENIO. The relief was started at 1400 hrs with 3" mortars reporting ready to fire and followed by B Coy at 1410 hrs, C Coy at 1900 hrs, BHQ at 1920 hrs and D Coy at 2305 hrs. A Coy was to take over the gap between the right fwd coy and the PLDGs on the following evening. In this position, the unit was responsible for the front on the R SENIO between MR M 384438 and MR M 374427 with FDLs on the East bank of the river. BHQ was at MR M 391422.

This was the unit's first time in a static line since last winter and due to the large turn over of personnel we went into the line with men who had never experienced anything but a fast moving battle. Being confronted with the task of holding a stationary line the men were inclined to be **very** cautious as they were only 15-29' from the enemy. However, within a few days, the coys became accustomed to the situation and actually became quite bold. Their aggressiveness was very profitable, because it enabled us to dominate the enemy all along our sector.

Note 1

Some very good use of PIATs was made against enemy installations on his dyke with the result that we kept him busy ~~repairing~~ his positions and leaving him less time to concentrate on our troops. 2" mortar and EY rifles were used to good advantage because the short range made their effectiveness the maximum.

The enemy use rocket projectiles against our area, but no damage was recorded.

16 Jan 45

0930 hrs. Three enemy stretcher bearers were apprehended while they were walking along the top of our dyke. They were obviously not preoccupied with the job of collecting the wounded, and had no GENEVA cards.

This had become rather a habit with the enemy and it became necessary to correct it. Orders were issued to the effect **that stretcher bearers would not be tolerated on our dyke at all.** Leaflets and verbal instructions were the main means of passing this information to the enemy.

Note 2

Being so close to the enemy left the opportunity open for the Coys to try out any number of ideas. The two most successful inventions were the "V-2" and the "Dagwood". The "V-2" is a slingshot made from a crotch of a tree and an inner tube. The stem of the crotch is placed in the ground and allowed to turn. This gives it a 360° traverse. By putting seven second 36 grenades in the pouch and firing it the job of an EY rifle is achieved with a very good effect. The "V-2" has a range of approximately 100 yds with 36 grenades and 50 yds with 75 grenades.

The "Dagwood" is a 36 grenade sandwiched with 2 75 grenades contained in a sandbag. The sack is swung around and when released the 36 grenade is detonated, thus setting off the 75 grenades. The resulting explosion was terrific and reports state that they gave a bad moral effect on the enemy.

On 19 Jan 45, the Seaf of C were relieved by the C and YR and went into 1 Cdn Corps reserve. The change over was made in daylight and by 1330 hrs the unit was complete in the new area GODO - RUSSI with BHQ at MR M 43853588. Here the unit was responsible for part of the Corps counter attack role and recess were made of our switch line area. The three areas concerned were Silver (left and right), Grenville and Howard.



22 Jan 45. The Seaf of C relieved the 2 Bn 21 Regt CREMONA BATTLE GROUP. In the area between the R LAMONE and the FOSSO VETRO, East south east of ALFONSINE. BHQ at MR M 494465.

This was also a static position but here there was "no mans land" of approximately 800 yds absolutely void of any obstructions. The FDLs lined the VIA CONVENTELLO from MR M 483473 to MR M 467463.

Our patrols were active to the Fosso Vetro where contact with the enemy was usually encountered. Recce patrols established that the enemy held outposts on the Fosso Vetro and had his main positions on the FOSSO VECCHIO.

Upon taking over from the Italians, the CO impressed upon all coys the necessity of rebuilding the defensive positions. As a result, each coy carried on an intensive programme of preparing new and improving old positions and thousands of sandbags and camouflage nets (white mesh) were used.

Counter battery and counter mortar were used to good effect on all enemy gun installations and enemy movement was engaged by artillery and mortar fire.

At the end of the month, the unit was still in this position and enjoying a very quiet sector. Casualties on this sector were nil. One man received a badly bruised hand as a result of a 25 pr base plug hitting him while he was on a fighting patrol.

The 1 Feb 45 found the Bn still holding the static front east and south of ALFONSINE between the R LAMONE and the FOSSO VETRO. Operations in this area were strictly confined to patrolling and harassing the enemy with mortar and artillery fire. Numerous patrols confirmed the fact that the enemy were holding outposts on the east bank of the FOSSO VETRO but no fighting patrol had obtained the distinction of successfully shooting the posts up so as to clear the dyke.

On the night of 2/3 Feb a fighting patrol was sent to the house at MR M 463465 u/c Lt WMC Stone with the purpose of engaging the enemy with fire and, if feasible, of clearing the house and the immediate vicinity. The patrol turned out very successful and engaged the enemy in the house with PIATs and SA fire. The first PIAT bomb knocked out an MG which fired on the patrol from the upstairs window of the house and also blew the roof and the rear wall of the room to pieces. While the PIAT group was getting ready to fire the next bomb, the small arms shot up all the windows and doors keeping the enemy from returning the fire. The second PIAT bomb was an incendiary and went through the upstairs window setting fire to the upper part of the building. When the patrol left, the house was burning merrily and no retaliation from the enemy hindered their withdrawal.

Note 3

On 3 Feb the unit was relieved by the H and PE Regt and moved into Corps reserve in the area GODO - RUSSI. The relief was complete by 2135 hrs except for the A Tk guns which held up their relief due to the poor conditions of the road. They finally reported into the new area at 0130 hrs 4 Feb. The weather was definitely something to be contended with at this time; and the mud from the melting snow tied transport up to a critical degree.

The 4 Feb found the Bn in Corps reserve with BHQ at MR M 43853585. Here the unit was responsible for the counter attack roles "GREEN" and "BLACK AND COPPER" and the recce parties completed their individual observations of the ground which concerned them by the afternoon of the 5 Feb. On 8 Feb the unit received orders that it would relieve the C and YR on the 10 Feb. The recce party from the C and YR looked over our positions and we made preparations for a recce party to go forward the following morning.

The unit relieved the C and YR on the 10 Feb., relief being completed by 1205 hrs except for B Coy, C and YR which was left u/c until 2130 hrs when B Coy Snaf of C relieved them. Intermittent shelling and enemy vehicle movement was reported by the Coys during the night but otherwise the relief seemed to have caused no concern to the enemy. The sector was generally quiet and for the next week only limited action took place on both sides of the dyke. On one occasion the enemy attempted to surrender what was thought to be a company in strength, but unfortunately, the proceedings were stopped before anything materialized. The unit received up to the 18 Feb a total of seven prisoners.

On the 18 Feb the enemy laid down a surprisingly heavy concentration of all types of fire on our right flank, about four or five hundred yds behind our forward coy, with the outer fringes of the fire falling in A and C Coy areas. The commotion started at 0245 hrs and almost immediately, our line communication to A Coy went out. Both A and C Coys were on the alert and were ready for an attempted penetration on our right front but nothing materialized. By 0310 hrs the noise had died down and everything seemed back to normal; line communication was restored to A Coy a little later and the Coys settled down to a quiet night. 2 Cdn Inf Bde HQ reported that the enemy had penetrated into the 1 Buffs area as far as MR M 395434, but no infringement on our territory was reported.

In the afternoon of 19 Feb the fwd coys were subjected to fairly heavy shelling and it was felt that the fire was being observed from the left flank in the LUGO area. Attempts to spot the source of the trouble were unsuccessful and the shelling continued at intervals until last light. It was felt that the enemy might be registering our forward areas because the fire (bracketing) was definitely not of the harassing type.

We drew this conclusion with particular reference to a PW interrogation report which stated that before the end of the month a well organised attack would be launched on our front. A noticeable change in the aggressiveness of the enemy was now taking shape and any pressing action we took against his posts was countered almost to a tee. Teller mines were rolled over the dyke onto our positions and SA harassing fire was increased considerably.

Due to the heavy concentration that the enemy laid down a few nights previous it was felt that something should be done in retaliation, so a feint attack was planned on FUSIGNANO in which only the fire plan would be executed. This was to take place at 0445 hrs 22 Feb and to last for ten minutes. The scheme was to be called "Spite" and all supporting arms were to participate while the forward coys stood to in case of an enemy retaliation.

The scheme took place as scheduled and no enemy counter measures took place. We were now even with the Boche and the normal war continued.

Intermittent shelling of the coy areas continued for the next two days and counter battery and counter mortar worked with fair success, but the enemy was very persistent. The whole situation culminated on the evening of the 24 Feb when the enemy launched a two coy attack on our front and the right front of the L Edmn R. A detailed description of the attack follows:

1740 hrs C Coy again under persistent shellfire, believed to be SP. Air OP is investigating. PPCLI have bearing on the gun and are engaging it on their own.  
 1815 A further series of bearings in from coys, 4.2" mortars engaging the enemy positions.  
 1820 B Coy reported enemy arty was slowly demolishing their house. A very heavy stonk was coming down on our FDLs.



1825 Line communication to D Coy went out. Enemy reported behind L Edmn R Ri ht forward posn. DF brought down between ourselves and the L Edmn R. D Coy was warned to be prepared to move from reserve.

1845 3" mortars being **heavily** shelled; ordered to prepare ground defence. 10 rds on MR M 373426 was ordered from 3" mortars. L Edmn R reported the SA fire dying down somewhat.

1855 BHQ area lightly shelled.

1900 Sitrep from C Coy: Everything OK, still being shelled. This information was sent to 2 Cdn Inf Bde HQ.

1905 12 RTR fired 20 rds 75 mm on the dyke between ourselves and the L Edmn R. L Edmn R have sustained some casualties.

1925 A and B Coys reported all quiet.

1940 All coys reported areas still quiet.

2005 L Edmn R reported that the enemy were coming over in the same place between D Coy and themselves. 3" mortars again fired on MR M 373426.

2007 C Coy reported enemy between their fwd and reserve platoons. Do not want 3" mortars.

2025 C Coy positions all firm. Patrol out looking for enemy.

2030 Flames in C Coy area and the centre coy L Edmn R. MO was ordered to stand by for further orders from C Coy. 'B Coy' communication was restored. The shelling affecting our fwd posns and houses immediately in their rear was coming from the extreme left and almost parallel to the dyke.

2100 C Coy requests refill for rum bottle as it had been broken by rubble falling in the Coy HQ.

2105 D Coy was ordered to stand down to the normal state of readiness. L Edmn R say the enemy is still between the fwd and rear elements but the situation is not yet clear. The raiding force was thought to have been about 125 strong and had sustained 4 killed, several wounded and two taken PsW.

2110 Five stretcher casualties were sustained by C Coy.

2150 No word had been received from the line party sent by 3" mortars to C Coy. The latter is to send out a search party if the mortarman do not turn up very soon.

2203 Line party from 3" mortars checked in at C Coy.

2220 Sask LI requested to fire into main street of FUSIGNANO with MMGs.

2230 Small party of enemy, of unknown strength, tried to come in between A and B Coys. They were driven off and an ambush was prepared for any further attempt to penetrate our lines.

2235 PW bag was now three. Have approximately nine casualties. Twelve man patrol from D Coy u/c C Coy went out to scour area for possible stragglers. Damage to the houses in C Coy area was very severe.

2257 C Coy reports holding firm. Attack revealed to have been across the entire front. Enemy strength may well have been the 150 reported by the PsW.

2302 3" mortars were to stand down but were to be ready to fire within two minutes.

2315 The RAP jeep was ditched on the way to C Coy. Two reinforcement jeeps carrying men from D Coy to C Coy attempted to pull it out without success. It was necessary for the LAD to pull it out with a Scammel.

2325 B Coy reports that they had one NCO killed. Area between A and B Coys was now clear.

2327 The PsW of the L Edmn R was now eight (four of whom were wounded). Some enemy entered the house which had been booby trapped by the L Edmn R, the house blew up with a marvellous bang and it was thought that all the enemy had been caught in it.

25 Feb  
0100 The unidentified patrol which had been prowling around in C and B Coy areas was now inedtified to be one of our own line parties.



0300 A and B Coy line communication was again cut due to enemy shelling. The tempo of SA and arty fire was now increasing in the fwd area.

0305 C Coy asked for counter battery fire on two targets. D Coy and the mortars standing to.

0310 A and B Coys being heavily shelled. Wireless communication was again established.

0335 D Coy and arty lines went out. Sitrep from A Coy: All quiet shelling ceased.

0420 Two A Coy men who had been unaccounted for turned up at D Coy. A Coy also had two walking wounded.

0432 B Coy line communication was again restored. They had one man with a broken leg. Enemy appears to have come in on the right in some strength. Casualties inflicted are believed to have been considerable. The second shelling was considerably heavier than the first.

0450 A Coy report a total of four casualties. B Coy was given priority on the RAP vehicle as their casualty was a serious one. The mans foot had been nearly cut off by a Teller mine which the enemy rolled over the dyke into one of their posns.

0540 One of the Mortar 15 cwts, carrying seven days rations was brewed up by a shell which landed right beside the house and punctured the truck's gas tank.

This seemed to terminate the evening's activities and all the coys were now catching some well earned rest. On the whole the little fracas turned out to be quite successful for us, in as much as we turned back the enemy in every instance, causing him considerable casualties. Our own casualties totaled two officers wounded, 1 NCO killed and 14 ORs wounded. Enemy casualties in our area: 4 killed 1 prisoner and much evidence of wounded being evacuated back across the dyke.

On the 24 Feb the Adv Pty of th 1/5 Mahrattas arrived to prepare for the relief which was to take place 25 Feb. They made all the arrangements that were necessary and returned to their unit satisfied that they were taking over a fairly comfortable area. The fight that we had on the 24/25 Feb sadly wrecked their hopes of a comfortable stay whilst in our area

On the 25 Feb at 0600 hrs the Mahrattas began to effect the change over with B, C, and D Coys being relieved simultaneously. BHQ and the RAP were relieved immediately after the Coy TCVs were clear of the road; the relief was completed by 0910 hrss with the exception of A Coy which was to stay u/c of the Mahrattas till last light when they would be relieved. The relief was carried out swiftly and very successfully; with no casualties sustained by either unit.

During the afternoon of the 25 Feb A Coy found a 28 cm rocket dug into the dyke and pointed at one of their platoon houses. An attempt to blow it up with beehives was unsuccessful and three casualties were inflicted on the party that made the attempt. The rocket was finally blown up by a PIAT and the anxiety caused by the thought of losing the house was relieved. At 2000 hrs A Coy began the change over and by 2050 hrs everything was complete. The CO, Lt-col H.P. Bell- Irving DSO then led the remnants of the unit to the first staging area at CESANATICO. The Bn reported in complete at the staging area at 2300 hrs.

On the 26 Feb the unit rested and made ready for the final leg of the move to the new concentration area at OFFIDA. On the 27 Feb at 0500 hrs the Bn moved off from CESANATICO and proceeded to OFFIDA MR B sq 7582 by way of Sun route to San BENEDETTO and then straight inland to the destination. The Bn reported complete at 1400 hrs.

The end of the month found the unit enjoying what was felt to be a well earned rest and making the best of the wonderful weather. Sports and a general check up of equipment was the order of the day and all Coys made the best of the opportunity.

OPERATIONAL REPORT

SEAF of C

8 Jan 45 to 28 Feb 45

APPENDIX "A"

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MONTHS OPERATIONS

- Note 1 The enemy had made use of his rifle grenade and 5 cm mortar throughout the winter.  
Our 2" mortar training is very bad.  
Our EY rifle training is worse.  
It is felt that training, particularly in rifle grenades with EY rifle, should be encouraged as soon as possible.  
The use of a PIAT as high angle mortars has been found very useful. With shoulder pad dug in as a base plate and the mortar firmly propped up with sand bags, considerable accuracy has been achieved against buildings etc.
- Note 2 It was thought that extreme proximity to the enemy over a period of time would be both costly and wearing to the morale. Exactly the reverse has been found to be the case.  
With a fifteen foot "No mans land" on the R SENIO dyke, the strangeness soon wore off our men. They became increasingly bold until the gradually, the Canadian inability to take war seriously turned the whole thing into a joke. Improvisations ranging from grenades tied together up to bicycles and even a motor car loaded with HE have been costly to the taxpayer but probably damaging to Hun morale and undoubtably of the greatest possible value to our own. The end of the SENIO tour will find the regiment in better spirit than for a long time.
- Note 3 PIAT --- This - weapon is extremely useful on fighting patrol where known enemy posts in houses are to be engaged.
- Note 4 In winter warfare when occupation of houses is necessary for sleeping quarters and cooking, the construction of dug-outs for sleeping, cooking, etc. should be completed as soon as possible after occupation of the position. They should be made in the vicinity of the slit trenches and should be occupied immediately shelling on the house area commences.
- Note 5 Definite information should be given to all coys possibly concerned re any line mending parties sent out.
- Note 6 Evacuation of seriously wounded cases can be considerably accelerated if Coy Comdrs arrange to report, exactly as possible, the condition of any casualty so that the MO can judge to where the ambulance jeep should be first despatched.

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