

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

6 Jan 45 to 28 Feb 45

SENOIO RIVER WINTER LINE

Ref Maps - ITALY

1/25,000	88	- II	NE
1/25,000	88	- II	SE
1/25,000	89	- III	NW
1/25,000	89	- III	SW
1/25,000	89	- III	NE
1/25,000	89	- IV	SE
1/25,000	89	- IV	SW

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PFCLI had just completed a short but very successful action SOUTH of GRANAROLO where a bridge was formed across the NAVIGLIO CANAL. On the 5 Jan they were taken out of action for only a day, EAST of the LANONE RIVER, and on the afternoon of 6 Jan prepared to take over from the RCD WEST of BAGNACAVELLO. At this time the line was static and the role a holding one along the SENIO RIVER.

The take over from the RCD was completed quickly and without trouble, by 2100 hrs PFCLI were firmly established on the ground. The next few days were busy ones as preparations had to be made for wiring and the laying of mines for local protection. Due to the fact that the RCD were a recon Bn and therefore more heavily armed, it was necessary to make a number of changes in the disposition of coys and pls. These changes were carried out under cover of darkness and in two or three days PFCLI were very secure on the ground.

Activity on this sector was confined to patrolling. Recon patrols were out nearly every night followed by fighting patrols the next night with a view of occupying a number of buildings closer to the river bank; in this way positions were considerably strengthened. The enemy were quite active during the stay in this area coys had brisk scraps with enemy patrols. Casualties were inflicted on the enemy every day by sniping, shelling and mortaring; PFCLI were fortunate however in having only three men killed and three wounded. POW taken were three, all POLISH deserters who had decided they had had enough of the war.

PFCLI were in this area for twelve days and were relieved on the night of 18 Jan by the R 22e R. This change over was carried out smoothly and without incident.

The Bn then moved by TCVs to the area of GODO where they remained for one night and then moved again to the general area of MEZZANO on the 19 Jan. Billets in this area were good and although the unit was in a semi-operational role, the troops had some opportunity to rest and clean up. Plans for various counter attack roles kept all officers busy for two or three days; then on the 22 Jan 2 BDE were again put in the line, this time taking over from 22 BDE CREMONA GROUP. PFCLI were recon Bn and fortunately did not have to change position.

On 27 Jan they were notified that they would take over from the LER on the night of 28 Jan. However when the CO visited the LER on 28 Jan it was decided to postpone the take over for 24 hrs as the LER had lost several men taken POW the previous night, and there was thought to be some chance that plans for the changeover might have become compromised.

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On the night of 29 Jan relief of the LER was completed without incident; PPCLI soon had command of the new area. It was found to be a very quiet sector. Mines had been laid and wire strung across the bn front, and there was little need for changes in disposns.

A recon patrol was sent to CASA BARONIO on the night of 31 Jan with a view to making a coy raid on this enemy held posn on the night of 2/3 Feb.

"C" Coy in reserve at this time, was selected for the raid on CASA BARONIO. A good plan was made and at 0200 hrs the night of 2/3 Feb the coy went in under a brief but effective arty barrage. The raid went well until the coy actually started the clearing up of the buildings. A prepared charge had been laid in one house by the enemy and as one of our secs was in the act of searching it the charge was set off and the entire sec buried in the rubble. Other men from the coy rushed in to aid their comrades and were caught on the rubble pile by a well placed mortar crump. PPCLI suffered many cas and found this little task rather expensive, losses totalling 2 Offrs wounded, 28 ORs wounded, 6 ORs killed and one missing.

The night of 3 Feb found another change-over in progress. This time the RCR relieved us and by 2040 hrs the relief was completed. No trouble was met although the 4 Tk guns had considerable difficulty getting out over narrow muddy roads in the pitch black night. The bn moved by TCVs to RUSSI where it remained in rest area until the night of 10 Feb when it relieved the R 22e R WEST of BAGNACAVALLLO in the same area that had been occupied from 6 Jan to 18 Jan. This change-over was also completed without incident and by 2145 hrs PPCLI were firmly established on familiar ground.

The stay in this sector was a very quiet one. Bns on our right and left flanks were raided on several occasions but PPCLI were left strictly alone. A few moments excitement were experienced when the enemy demolished a couple of houses on this side of the SENIO but nothing came of the incident; actually it served to improve the Unit's field of fire. For the first time in many weeks an enemy aircraft was spotted during the day - on 15 Feb an OP flew over PPCLI and subjected the arty gun lines to a rather severe shelling. PPCLI were more unfortunate with cas this time in this sector suffering a total of 4 killed and 11 wounded for the period 10 Feb to 25 Feb.

On the night of 25 Feb the bn was relieved by the ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT and one coy of the JAIPUR Bn, 21 IND BDE; at 2100 hrs the change-over was complete. PPCLI embussed in TCVs and moved off to area CESENATICO prior to the move to SAN DENEDETTO on 27 Feb; remained there for several days making ready for the journey that was to take them out of ITALY and into a new theatre of war.