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2 ODN INF BDE
from the
METAURO to the MARECCHIA
by
COMD 2 ODN INF BDE

LIST OF CONTENTS

SECTION I	A SUMMER'S IDYLL
SECTION II	FLORENTINE INTERLUDE
SECTION III	PLANS AND PREPARATIONS
SECTION IV	CROSSING OF THE METAURO
SECTION V	THE GOTHIC LINE

2 CDN INF BDESECTION 1 A SUMMER'S IDYLL

1. The rest and trg period from 8 Jun to 28 Jul was spent in ideal surroundings around PIEDIMONTE D'ALIFE. Here 2 Cdn Inf Bde enjoyed leaves and parties, swimming and dancing but as the weeks went by a number of excellent exercises were done and a successful bde ceremonial parade was held. Thus the bde carried out the order of the GOC 1 Cdn Div who spoke to all units in turn on 10 Jul advising them to "work hard and play hard".
2. Progressive trg commenced 12 Jul and was done in the mornings leaving the hot afternoons for rest and recreation. A bde NCO's School was commenced on 15 Jul 44. The first major trg exercise was Exercise DERBY, an inf-cum-tk exercise which was carried out successively by all bns under div arrangements in the order: PPCLI, SEAF OF C, LER. Tk and inf movement and comms were stressed and lessons from the HITLER LINE action were applied. On this trg bn first met 21 Tk Bde with whom the bde later fought.
3. During this period all bns devoted time to ceremonial drill in preparation for a bde ceremonial parade to be held at S ANGELO air strip MR 109055, on DOMINION DAY. At 0900 hrs 1 Jul the bde moved by tpt to the parade ground. At 1045 hrs the bns, each parading 500 strong, marched on to the parade ground. The Bde HQ was represented by a composite det of LORNE SCOTS and RCSigs personnel. The bns looked very smart indeed with uniforms pressed, new flashes up, clean webbing and brass sparkling. The Cdn Inf Corps band and the SEAF OF C pipe band paraded. Many senior offrs and old friends of the bde flanked Lt Gen E.L.M. Burns, DSO OBE MC, who inspected the bns and took the salute on the March Past, the bde first marching past in coln of coys and then in coln of route. Among the spectators were many convalescent men of all bns recovering from HITLER LINE action wounds. The 'fair sex' was very pleasantly represented by Cdn and NZ nursing sisters. The ceremony went smoothly and was followed by an offrs luncheon held in a large marquee on the flying f... Special smokers were held for the men in unit areas.
4. On 3 Jul the bde was ordered to commence intensive trg in Mtn Warfare. Unit trg was done with mule trains and man packs. Each bn carried out an exercise and a bde exercise HILLBILLY was planned to cap this type of trg.
5. Another inf-cum-tk exercise was planned for, commencing 4 Jul. This exercise known as VULCAN was arranged by 1 Cdn Div with 21 Tk Bde co-operating. It was to be done over very rugged ground with inf, arty, and tks firing live amm. The exercise concentrated upon perfecting co-op by establishing sound 'drills' for inf and tks, sp each other over heights and water obstacles. The LER and PPCLI went successfully through the exercise 7 Jul. SEAF OF C acted as spectators.

6. In common with other bdes of the div, 2 Cdn Inf Bde next participated in a 1 Cdn Corps movement exercise namely TIMEOUT. It involved a move of token veh of each unit, incl bnHQ veh, and Bde HQ moved less A & Q reps. The bde moved from PIEDEMONTE to the landing strip near Corps HQ where 1 Bde deployed right, 2 Bde deployed left and took up posns on the axis of the rd down which the adv was made. Then elements of 5 Cdn Armd Div passed thru the posns and continued the adv. Problems of traffic control were those chiefly studied.

7. On 15 Jul, 2 Cdn Inf Bde issued the Op Order for exercise HILLBILLY which commenced 20 Jul. Its object was to study the adv of the bde through hilly or mountainous country where minimum tpt could be used and cliff scaling and man or mule packing of amn and sups would be required. The ground chosen was very suitable and had been fought over some months before. Part of the rd to be negotiated had once been spanned by brs which the German had blown and the brs had not been repaired or replaced. SEAF OF C and FPCLI actually carried out the adv. LER (with det RCDs under cmd) provided the 'enemy' opposition. The bde moved 'two-up'. SEAF OF C moved along the axis of the main rd but put a 'Gum' coy on either side of the steep gorge through which the rd led. FPCLI were directed over mountainous country on the right flank. The bn objectives were hills strongly held by the enemy which commanded the rd at a pt 5 miles NORTH of the conc area where the rd ran in a wide and fertile valley. On the right FPCLI had hard going and could get no veh all the way up the route. Mule and man packing were practised as was stretcher bearer evacuation of casualties. On SEAF OF C axis the two blows on the rd could NOT be bridged. Pnrs of LER blew and dug a diversion at the first blow and SEAF OF C pnrs used explosive and picks and shovels to make the second blow passable. Neither blow hampered the inf but it was 7 hrs after the attack began before jeeps could move up the axis rd and no heavier veh could get fwd with med sups and amn food and water. The inf advanced slowly often deploying when fired on by rockets of enemy and did a good deal of climbing as well as a great deal of marching. The enemy were also well exercised and many lessons were driven home and were published as exercise comments dealing with the conc, recce and planning, the adv and the assault on the final objectives.

8. HILLBILLY proved to be the climax of trg for the Bde in PIEDEMONTE for the exercise ended on 22 Jul and on 28 Jul the bde was again on the move to the Eighth Army area.

2 CDN INF BDESECTION 11 FLORENTINE INTERLUDE

1. 2 Cdn Inf Bde moved on the night 28/29 Jul 44 to conc in Eighth Army area near TREVI 980731 (sheet 131 FOLIGNO). The bde staged 20 miles SOUTH of ROME on the bare flats and by LAGO TRASIMENO on the 1 Aug. Many of the bde used this large alkaline lake to wash away the coated dust of the long journey. On 2 Aug the bde settled into a conc area NE of SIENA on wooded hills. Considerable attention was paid to camouflage as the movement was made in the greatest secrecy and it was hoped to escape the notice of German air recce. Most stringent security regs were enforced to hide our identity from the natives.
2. On 4 Aug the bde comd discussed with comd 2 NZ DIV the takeover which was ordered. The bde was to replace the 2 NZ DIV in posns SW of FLORENCE reaching to the SOUTH bank of the river ARNO. Most of FLORENCE lies to the NORTH of the river, and was held by the Germans in unknown strength. Arrangements were made by the comds and approved by their respective divs.
3. On 5 Aug the takeover was carried out smoothly and without attracting added enemy fire. The LER relieved 28 Bn (Macri) in the SW part of FLORENCE; the PPCLI relieved elements of the NZ DIV CAV and then chose posns over a very large area; the Seaf of C were also well fwd and took over from 23 NZ Bn and then dispersed widely. That night all bns patrolled vigorously. The PPCLI and Seaf of C patrolled to the ARNO without engaging enemy but a patrol from the LER which crossed into the city fought a sharp action and suffered casualties.
4. On 6 Aug, Brig T.G. Gibson ordered PPCLI and Seaf of C fwd some one thousand yds to posns close to the ARNO and these they took up under intermittent sniping from enemy arty. In the night 6 Aug the LER were relieved in Florence by the HPER of 1 Cdn Inf Bde and took up posns giving the bde depth for the first time since the very long front had become the Bde responsibility. The building that housed Bde HQ was large and richly appointed and as it stood upon a high hill, made an excellent OP. German arty bracketed the building for the remainder of the bde stay but only the Brig's jeep was a casualty. Engr recce provided the infm from which a route trace of one and two way rds in the bde area was issued. In the area blows were numerous and liberally mined and sound traffic movement plan was essential. Partisans were helpful in warning tps of mined rds and lifting mines. Patrols went out again that night.
5. 7 Aug was very hot. The night patrols had crossed the ARNO on recce and engr had found a possible fording site for tks near SIGNA br at 6669. Three German patrols which infiltrated during the night were driven off and two of the enemy were killed and identified as being from the 1/8 PG Regt. In the evening the bde was infm that the FLORENTINE fighting would end for 2 Cdn Inf Bde on 8 Aug when 17 Ind Inf Bde would relieve. The Bde was to move to a staging area near SIENA. German patrols were again active on the bde front in the night but were driven off.
6. On 8 Aug recce parties proceeded to the SIENA staging area. In the FLORENCE area plans were made for the handover to 17 Ind Bde. From a staff viewpt the method of the takeover left much to be desired. 17 IND INF BDE had not got from 'Q' Moves 1 Cdn Div a correct conception of the rd situation in the area and had planned to move in by rds which were often narrow or were under enemy observation.

2 Cdn Inf Bde had to plan carefully in order to withdraw bde tpt on the remaining rds. The comds of the incoming bns liaised directly with unit COs and later the comd 17 IND INF BDE saw Brig T. G. Gibson. In effect the relieving bde made a rough plan for the relief before seeing the comd of 2 Cdn Inf Bde or his staff. In the late afternoon the IND BDE marched down the hills toward our posns. The sun was on them and many of the rds could be clearly seen from the hills behind FLORENCE. Enemy shelling increased and inflicted more than 20 casualties upon the relieving bde. There were also casualties at HQ 17 IND INF BDE. The relief of marching personnel was complete by 2035 hrs, but bde tpt was filtered back at open spacing gradually and it was 2400 hrs before all vehs were ready for the move out.

7. It transpired that the div move to FLORENCE was part of a cover plan to screen the real operational intentions of the Eighth Army. It must have given the German 'I' Staff a headache. The Brief action provided many new soldiers of 2 CDN INF BDE with an opportunity to get a little 'battle inoculation'.

2 CDN INF BDESECTION III PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

1. On 9 Aug the 2 Cdn Inf Bde moved into an area on the TIBER just SOUTH of PERUGIA area 715829. 10 Aug was spent in settling down in the new area. Cleaning, polishing and bathing were first priority. The vehs and personnel from X area arrived to add to the comfort of the period.
2. Plans for improving the staff efficiency of the bde were made and to this end the BM called unit 'I' Offrs, 'I' Sgts and Scout Offrs to a meeting where Intreps, Sitreps and patrol reports were discussed and a uniform policy was agreed upon for rendering such infm.
3. On 13 Aug by direction of the Bde Comd a questionnaire was issued to all arms of the bde on the subject of River Crossings. The 'I' Sec built a large sand model of an area of hilly country intersected by a river. Although only bde staff were then aware of the fact the model was a faithful reproduction of the area NORTH of the river METAURO in the battle outposts to the GOTHIC LINE where bde ops were to begin. The discussions were to begin at 0800 hrs Tue 15 Aug.
4. On 14 Aug each bn carried out a River Crossing Exercise at a different spot on the TIBER. Not only did inf take small wpns across but unit pnrs blew approaches and exits by means of which A tk guns were dragged across the obstacle. Lt Gen E.L.M. Burns and the div comd visited the trg.
5. The River Crossing discussion was delayed until the afternoon of 15 Aug as Lt Gen Sir Oliver Leese, Bt CBE DSO addressed a gp of offrs and men from this bde and other bns of 1 Cdn Inf Div at 1040 hrs. Soon after this address the great news came through that Allied Forces had made successful landings on the SOUTH coast of FRANCE.
6. The River Crossing Discussion was dealt with in three phases:
 - (i) Initial Crossing and Forming Brhead.
 - (ii) Consolidation of Crossing Places.
 - (iii) The Adv from the Brhead.

The discussion was lively and practical and continued all day Wed 16 Aug.

7. On 17 Aug 'Discussion Highlights' were issued by bde. By this time the bde knew that on night 18/19 Aug the div would move to JESI area S3837 to conc for the type of op which 2 Cdn Inf Bde had studied and practised. It was then felt and was to be later proven, that the techniques thought out during this brief preparatory trg period were of great practical value to 2 Cdn Inf Bde. In this week a bde Traffic Control Pl was formed, consisting of 1 Offr and 23 ORs, drawn from the bns and the SASK LI. This force will be att to Bde HQ and will receive pro trg.

8. 19 Aug found the bde conc in pleasant hilly country near the town of BARBARA not far SOUTH of the R METAURO. The bde was conc below that very portion of the METAURO def line which had been studied on the sand table. OPs were now organized and good air photos of the river area were closely studied.

9. By 23 Aug the fwd assembly area had been cleared of enemy and at 1800 hrs marching tps of the three bns began the move to this area followed after dark by F ech tpt. It was now known that the div plan was to cross the R METAURO on a two bde front, two bns up on each bde front. The op was to be in two phases - first a silent river crossing to the line of the VIA FLAMINIA and then an adv from this rd to brhead objectives with arty sp in the form of violent cones to sweep the lanes of attack.

2 CDN INF BDE

SECTION IV CROSSING OF THE METAURO

1. On the night 25/26 Aug the attack was to be launched. On 24 Aug all of 2 Cdn Inf Bde with sp arms was in posn and Bde HQ issued 'Notes on Traffic Control at METAURO RIVER Crossing'. In this document it was specified which of the two crossings (named 'G' and 'E') would be used by all bde vehs. Control pts were established to ensure the orderly progression of tpt to the crossings and the Staff Capt was in control of these assisted by an offr of 1 Cdn Div Pro Coy. At one river crossing, the Traffic Control offr was in charge; at the other crossing, a Bde LO was in charge. These offr's were linked to the SC's control post by line and each had a DR with him for additional comn. Tpt was called fwd from unit veh harbour areas when the crossings were opened and those vehs with higher priority had crossed over.

2. Also on the night 24/25 Aug parties of inf, sprs and tk reps made a recce of the crossing places 'G' and 'E' which had been tentatively chosen from engr infm. These they found satisfactory.

3. H hr was set at 2300 hrs 25 Aug. The bde attacked with PPCLI right, LER left. SEAF OF C were held back for the role of exploiting from the brhead and thrusting fwd toward the main GOTHIC LINE. At 2235 hrs the PPCLI crossing the R METAURO and LER crossed thirty mins later. Neither met opposition as the coys moved silently toward the VIA FLAMINIA where the arty fire was scheduled to begin. Everything went according to plan. Bn objectives were secured. Mines were cleared from the axis of adv and the sprs got the two crossings in good contition by 0445 hrs 26 Aug, allowing the armour and all F ech to cross the obstacle. Unit pnrs did excellent work in sweeping mines from each bn adv axis.

4. Soon after daylight 26 Aug the SEAF OF C moved out of the brhead and made good spped over the hills. The bn first encountered real resistance in the area of the CONVENTO BEATO SANTI 083674, SOUTH of MOMBAROCIO. This was the main objective of the SEAF OF C. The attack was mounted at 1140 hrs and the hill overlooking the CONVENT pt 479 077667, was secured by noon. Here, SEAF OF C encountered fire from the CONVENT area and from MONTECICCARDO, 0470. During the evening LER were ordered to proceed fwd and take MONTEMARINO 0668. This was done by 2035 hrs. During the attack one coy of LER got in between two coy of the enemy catching them by surprise. The enemy were awakened at the pt of a bayonet and many casualties were inflicted, PW taken. Booty incl horses, carts, maps and a wireless set.

5. During the night 26/27 Aug, PPCLI were ordered to march by night to the vicinity of MONTE ALTIERO 0865, and from there to adv at first lt to secure the high ground 0468 EAST of MONTE S MARIA. The adv began at 0600 hrs. By 1330 hrs PPCLI reported that the leading coys were on the objective. They were then ordered to pass on to MONTE CARBONI 0270. Meanwhile 1 Cdn Inf Bde had occupied CONVENTO BEATO SANTI thus securing the right flank. SEAF OF C scouts were sent to MOMBAROCCHIO. Delay during the day occurred owing to a misunderstanding about the inter-bde bdy, for both RCR and LER were planning an attack on the same place - MONTECICCARDO. The GOC ordered RCR to swing right of MONTECICCARDO and LER to take the town. The mounting of this attack was delayed owing to enemy opposition and re-grouping within the bn. PPCLI had pushed on swinging left and took MONTE CROCE 0468 and by 2000 hrs MONTE S MARIA 0368 after a stiff fight.

6. In the early morning of 28 Aug, LER had tps in the area of MONTECICCARDO but had to withdraw them following a sharp engagement in which the coy cmd, Capt Roxborough, was killed. By 0540 hrs word was received from LER that opposition was very stiff and that tk sp was needed. The bde cmd moved fwd with Tac HQ to 073684, an excellent vantage pt from which to see the MONTECICCARDO feature. Bde Cmd and Lt Col Strickland, OC 145 Regt RAC, went to see Lt Col Thompson and ordered the SEAF OF C to move fwd on the right of LER. At 0845 hrs they were established on the high ground 0769 to sp the LER attack with fire. By 1045 hrs LER had moved up with the tks for the attack on MONTECICCARDO, the time to be notified later. It was decided that the PPCLI, established in MONTE S MARIA should hold up their adv to MONTE CARBONI 0270 until the LER situation had been cleared up. The LER assault started at 1310 hrs after a beneficial arty treatment. By 1400 hrs fwd elements were in the town. At 2145 hrs LER reported that they had consolidated in the town thus overlooking the FOGLIO river. The SEAF OF C made a long night march to secure the high ground on this side of the FOGLIO, slightly EAST of GENISTRETO 0571.

7. During the afternoon of 28 Aug it was learned that 11 Cdn Inf Bde would take over from 2 Cdn Inf Bde which would be withdrawn into res. At that time the final high ground had not been secured - LER being in the midst of their MONTECICCARDO attack and the SEAF OF C moving NORTH to the high ground overlooking the river, so 11 Cdn Inf Bde waited until 2 Bde had finished the job. As soon as MONTECICCARDO was secured the relief began. PPCLI and LER were relieved in succession by IRC and PERTH Regt. Not until first lt on 29 Aug did the SEAF OF C report that GENISTRETO 0471 was secure. Relief of the SEAF OF C was complete by noon.

8. During the three day action the bde had adv a distance of approx ten miles, capturing over 90 PsW and inflicting fairly hy casualties. Our losses were comparatively lt, 2 offrs killed and 2 wounded with OR casualties totalling 19 killed, 117 wounded, and 13 missing.

2 CDN INF BDESECTION V THE GOTHIC LINE

1. As the Corps reached the R FOGLIA patrols at once probed across the river and in places met with no opposition. Hence on 30 Aug the attack plan was made. Both divs were to attack and of 1 Cdn Div, 3 Cdn Inf Bde and 2 Cdn Inf Bde would attack on a one bn front. PPCLI were to lead 2 Cdn Inf Bde and make a bde brhead. At 1600 hrs the WNSR put in a bn attack across the FOGLIA and at 1800 hrs comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde was ordered to have a bn cross the FOGLIA that night and est posns on the line of the rd running parallel with the river about a mile NORTH of it. It was along this rd that the first hy belt of German defs were known to be.
2. At first lt PPCLI reported phase I of the bn op completed with two coys in posn on the line of the rd and two others deployed on the river flat on the enemy side of R FOGLIA. It was learned that on the left, the PERTH Regt were consolidated on the same rd. PPCLI were ordered, as phase II of the bn op, to exploit beyond the rd, widening the initial brhead and seize two heights right and left of the brhead. Despite Shu mines which caused casualties and tk mines which temporarily delayed a sqn of 48 RTR who were in sp of PPCLI the adv was successfully accomplished. By 1300 hrs two coys were well beyond the rd and the right fwd coy by wheeling right were behind enemy posns which had pinned the WNSR down. A considerable number of enemy were killed by the inf and tks and 210 prisoners were taken, many from 1 Para Div.
3. The div comd decided at this time that an armed break through of the GOTHIC LINE was a distinct possibility and for this phase of the action 2 Cdn Inf Bde were put in sp of 21 Tk Bde. 145 Regt RAC with SEAF OF C in sp were ordered across the FOGLIA on the crossings developed by 3 Cdn Inf Bde. By dusk this force had crossed, swung through the breach created by PPCLI and had penetrated to the outskirts of POZZO ALTO.
4. During the night 31 Aug, 3 Cdn Inf Bde had made progress on the right and the open flank of 2 Cdn Inf Bde was being closed in. Both bdes were meeting stiff opposition. The 145 Regt RAC and SEAF OF C attacked POZZO ALTO and consolidated it by 0915 hrs taking 18 Psw. At 0900 hrs comd 21 Tk Bde ordered 12 RTR over the FOGLIA by means of the three 3 Cdn Inf Bde crossings. The LER in sp rode on the tks and the force was across by 1030 hrs and on the move to pt 145 in 0279, which faced up to the dominating local feature MONTE LURO 0180. On the left 11 Cdn Inf Bde had got well fwd capturing TOMBA DI PESARO 9979 by 1350 hrs. The LER attack on MONTE LURO was not put in until 1900 hrs following a hy pounding of the hill by arty and fighter bombers. The attack succeeded and two local counter attacks were repulsed. This victory gave the bde control of the most important height in the area.

5. In the night ITCLI were ordered up on the right flank of MONTE LURO and then on to a posn at 031830 where enemy coming NW along the coast might be intercepted. ITCLI reached this area by 0600 hrs. There was, however, no movement of enemy to the NW so apparently the enemy withdrew earlier from the coastal def that had been outflanked by the adv of 2 Cdn Inf Bde to the MONTE LURO area. The force of 48 RTR less one sqn with one coy R22R had been ordered to push fwd to GRADARA but had been halted by enemy fire. It was later decided to by-pass this feature, leaving the R22R and the 48 RTR to contain it.
6. During the morning SEAF OF C and 145 Regt RAC swung to the left of FANANO (pt 102 998847). The LER were ordered to take FANANO so the left hook was delayed until this attack could be mounted. The LER attacked at 1645 hrs and took FANANO after a brisk action. On this height were six 3" naval guns. The RCD were directed left to S GIOVANNI (9684) and reached the town meeting very little opposition at 1720 hrs.
7. The LER and ITCLI were ordered to consolidate that evening and patrol to the coast and to GRADARA. No opposition was encountered. The SEAF OF C adv in the night to rd juno 977854 within 3000 yds of the R CONCA and the coast town of CATTOLICA. At this stage 1 Cdn Inf Bde passed through 2 Cdn Inf Bde which with 21 Tk Bde re-grouped close to CATTOLICA for a period of re-org.
8. In the 10 day period while 2 Cdn Inf Bde were out of action 1 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Cdn Inf Bde and the Greek Mtn Bde progressed from the river CONCA to the river MARANO. The fighting was severe, and the enemy used more arty than in any previous battles. Between 10 Sep and 15 Sep it had been possible for 2 Cdn Inf Bde to study, in detail, the tentative role of the bde in the break through to the PO VALLEY. To the SW of RIMINI were two features with the river AUSA running down the intervening valley. The larger feature further NORTH was known as the SAN FORTUNATO feature. It commanded the approaches to RIMINI and was the key to the door onto the flats above the R MARECCHIA. It was this latter feature which 2 Cdn Inf Bde were first to secure and as phase two of the op, the bde was ordered to thrust a bn with tk sp across the R MARECCHIA and est a brhead cutting the highway out of RIMINI in the same op. The bde plan was made with SEAF OF C right and ITCLI left in phase I with LER sp by C sqn 145 Regt RAC crossing R MARECCHIA in phase II.
9. During the night 15/16 Sep ITCLI and SEAF OF C moved across the R MARANO with orders to take over from R22R in the NE end of the S MARTINO ridge, ITCLI to move to left flank of SEAF OF C. There the bns were to prepare for the attack on S FORTUNATO doing fwd recces as soon as possible.

10. The KESTREL area, S MARTINO, proved to be very stubbornly held by tps of the Para Div. Many days later when the battle there was over, a huge concret MG emplacement was found at the spot. This post had been a major source of trouble - All day there was intense enemy shelling of the ridge. At 1700 hrs 16 Sep, the div cmd ordered that the attack on S FORT-UNATO be delayed until 18 Sep to permit the 1 Br Div to firm up the high ground on it's front. That night at 2230 hrs SEAF OF C put in a one coy attack on S MARTINO but were driven off by tks and MG fire. The enemy had tks in the vicinity and these were being used despite darkness. Despite a two coy attack at 0300 hrs the unit could not capture KESTREL. In the night FPCLI had moved a coy on to the spur called WHIPCORD where a much weakened coy of R22R was also in posn.

11. On 17 Sep, KESTREL was still the obstacle to prevent further progress and the div cmd approved a set-piece attack with SEAF OF C capturing the feature while 48 HIGHRS moved fwd on their right to posns parallel with KESTREL. This attack was coord by comds 1 and 2 Cdn Inf Bdes and was made at 1330 hrs following by arty fire on KESTREL. The SEAF OF C got into the area but violent enemy arty and mortar fire and MG fire stopped the inf while the sp tks were knocked out by guns which they never saw. Some SEAF OF C got into the buildings but enemy counter attacks drove them out. None of our tks reached the buildings and six were knocked out. The 48 HIGHRS had no success in their adv on the flank.

12. In the late afternoon the GOC ordered a new plan. The SEAF OF C were to conc on S MARTINO with the two coys which had not been in the afternoon fight and next morning the LER would take the place of SEAF OF C in the assault on S FORTUNATO. The GOC placed HPER under cmd 2 Cdn Inf Bde. The SL of FPCLI was satisfactory but it was evident that if SEAF OF C could not take S MARTINO then the LER would have to fight for their SL. In the night SEAF OF C again failed to dislodge the enemy from S MARTINO.

13. The attack toward S FORTUNATO started early on the 18 Sep with LER moving off at 0430 hrs intent on getting S MARTINO with the leading coys who would pause there and re-org while the other two pushed fwd. The LER were stopped too by the KESTREL def. FPCLI met steady opposition but did get fwd as planned. CYR further left were also getting ahead steadily. In these circumstances the bde cmd re-directed the res LER coys and the tks with them to the left by the route FPCLI had used. By 1030 hrs the fwd coys of FPCLI were on the line of the rly, 8593, having suffered quite a number of inf and tk casualties.

14. The fwd elements of 2 Cdn Inf Bde were now on ground commanded by the enemy from the front and from both flanks. The bde comd had still a sqn of tks and two fresh coys of both PFCLI and LER and the HPER who had come under comd the night before, and were available for the final thrust over the MARECCHIA. It was decided that the next thrust would be made from the CYR area where the least opposition had been encountered. The new plan gave 2 Cdn Inf Bde a very temporary holding role and a short breather. 3 Cdn Inf Bde with HPER under comd were to make a brhead across the AUSA and exploit to the S FORTUNATO feature.

15. On night 18/19 Sep, 3 Cdn Inf Bde attack began and progressed well. The dawn found WNSR and HPER on the lower slopes of the feature but they were not ordered to press fwd. The feature was known to be strongly defended and again the German was using arty very effectively. On the same night the 48 HIGHRS had put patrols into S MARTINO had reported that the enemy had withdrawn so that situation was straightened out. The two fwd coys of PFCLI held their posns near the rly through the day protecting the right flank of 3 Cdn Inf Bde. The rest of the bde was re-organizing.

16. 2 Cdn Inf Bde were ordered to take the S FORTUNATO feature by a night attack on night 19/20 Sep. The plan was: (i) LER to make a silent infiltration in darkness pushing through the enemy posns of the feature to a spur on the rear side of it. (ii) SEAF OF C were to follow up when the LER reached this spur and were to swing right to three objectives closer to the RIMINI edge of the feature. The arty plan took the form of numbered block cone planned so that they straddled the axis of each bn adv and could be called off or repeated as desired. The attack went extremely well and at first it the enemy were in the posn of having Cdns in front and behind them. On the left the R22R were also over-running much of the feature and taking scores of prisoners. There was hy hand to hand fighting in the dark and the early morning. A Tiger tk was knocked out by Hawkins grenades and PIATs of the LER. Germans surrendered in large numbers. Two counter attacks were mounted but arty fire and the fire of tks which had got fwd soon after it dispersed these forces and by 0930 hrs although fighting was still going on the feature was definitely ours.

17. Rain had fallen and was complicating fwd movement. The PFCLI were moved up in the early afternoon of 20 Sep to the fwd side of S FORTUNATO and were ordered to est a brhead over the R MARECCHIA. The start was delayed by Tiger tks and inf located in the area of X rds at 823964 - NYLON. The CO of the PFCLI had great comm difficulties and the planned adv did not begin until late in the night when it proceeded with slight enemy opposition. At 0530 hrs PFCLI were on the

first objective, the rd junc on the lateral rd from RIMINI, fronting the MARECCHIA (818973). By 0845 hrs ITCLI reported the fwd coys across the MARECCHIA with lt resistance only being met although shelling was hy. The fords were easily passable. The LER were moved up behind the brhead in the area fwd of NYLON to be in posn either to enlarge the brhead or protect the ITCLI from any counter attack from the RIMINI area. ITCLI were ordered to send a coy from the brhead area along the lateral rd to rd junc 828994 to link up with 1 Bde who had by this time passed, pushed elements through RIMINI and over the MARECCHIA. By 1400 hrs the sps reported rds and crossings improved for all traffic.

18. At 1600 hrs 21 Sep, 5 NZ Inf Bde were ordered to pass through the brhead held by ITCLI and all Cdn traffic was cleared from the rds which were narrow and muddy. ITCLI were the only bn of the bde still engaged with the enemy although the LER area was subjected to some shelling. Word was received that on 22 Sep the bde would pull back into a res posn at CATTOLICA, the Div having gone into Corps res.

19. With the receipt of the order putting the bde into res, 2 Cdn Inf Bde ended a very active four week period. The bde came a long way between 25 Aug and 22 Sep and in hand to hand fighting, never failed to soundly trounce the German soldier. It is quite clear that the enemy had hoped and intended to hold the GOTHIC LINE near RIMINI and had put his best tps, the 1 Para Div, in to stiffen this line. Bde losses were considerable, particularly after crossing the MARANO, but must be measured by the good results obtained. The men came out tired but with lots of fight still in them and could feel with justification that the traditions of the bde had been worthily upheld.

ARMY COMMANDER'S OFFICE

24 Oct 44

HEADQUARTERS,
EIGHTH ARMY,
C.M.F.

Dear Bogert

My very best congratulations to you and all your Officers and Men for the splendid fight you have carried out to capture and hold your important bridgehead over the SAVIO. I am convinced that your battle has been the most important factor in forcing the enemy to withdraw, and your bridgehead has been of the greatest assistance to 5 Corps. The way your Brigade secured a big bridgehead, smashed all enemy counter attacks, and surmounted all the difficulties of having no bridge behind, was magnificent. The fighting spirit, determination and enterprise of everyone were outstanding, and great endurance was shown. The battle has been a great example of how determined, well trained infantry can destroy enemy tanks with their own weapons. I congratulate too your supporting artillery which must have done fine work in helping to defend the bridgehead. You have inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, and have captured a large number of prisoners from one of his best Divisions.

Well done indeed. All good luck.

Yours sincerely

R.L. McCreery