

2 CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

6 Jan 45 to 28 Feb 45

SENIO 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

1. On the 6 Jan 1945 2 Cdn Inf Bde commenced to perform its next role when PFCLI, now the res bn moved to BAGNACAVALLLO sector to take over the posns of the 3 left fwd sqns of the RCD opposite the SENIO R and immediately NORTH of the BAGNACAVALLLO - LUGO rly.

2. The following day the LER completed relief of the remaining RCD sqns and Bde HQ moved to BAGNACAVALLLO to take over comd of the sector. The Seaf of C remained in the GRANAROLO area under Div comd.

3. On the 8 Jan the Seaf of C who had been relieved by the 6 CHESHIREs returned to comd of 2 Cdn Inf Bde and relieved the L&RSR on the rt of the LER and opposite the enemy held town of FUSIGNANO. The PLDG located to the rt again of the Seaf of C then came under comd of 2 Cdn Inf Bde.

4. 2 Cdn Inf Bde with under comd the PLDG now controlled an area from excl the BAGNACAVALLLO - LUGO rly along the EAST bank of the SENIO R NORTH to the 45 NORTHING.

5. On the morning of 9 Jan Lt-col M.F. Bogert DSO held a conference of Bn Comds and OsC Sp Arms where he outlined the policy to be adopted by the Bde while in the present sector. The gen policy being to inflict as many cas as possible on the enemy but not necessarily implying that the Bde will be emp in any extensive raiding or patrolling programs. Each bn's posns were then discussed with a view to making them more secure as in many cases our tps are within grenade range of the enemy, especially the fwd posns of the Seaf of C.

6. The 10 Jan, one which proved to be typical of this country saw enemy patrols active, our own snipers inflicting cas, the destruction of an enemy foot br over the river on the Seaf of C front and the capturing of 2 PW. During the evening a leaflet ordering the enemy to evacuate the hosp in FUSIGNANO by 1400 hrs was drafted, printed on a local hand press and rushed to the Seaf of C. The bn had strong reasons to believe the hosp was being used as an OP and after receiving permission from HQ Eighth Army the necessary arrangements were made to carry out the plan. The leaflets were handed the next morning to a German MO. However orders were received from HQ 1 Cdn Corps prohibiting the firing on the hosp before this could be put into effect. German envoys made two trips across the dyke to Seaf of C lines protesting that the hosp was occupied by civilians only and a Seaf of C SB also investigated the hosp under white flag protection but found no signs of military occupation. However strong warning was given the enemy that if there were further signs of the hosp being used as an OP it would be fired upon immediately.

7. At 1930 hrs the left fwd posns of the PLDG near C TESSELLI mr 390440 were attacked by a strong enemy raiding party of both Germans and Italians but by 2230 hrs the sit was restored and several cas inflicted on the enemy.

8. At 2300 hrs a coy raid by the LER was launched on the buildings at mr 360409 but was over with in half an hour when no enemy could be found.

9. The PPCLI commenced an extensive mining and wiring program during the night under cover of protective patrols.

10. At first light 12 Jan the PLDG found last nights raiding party firmly in posn on the EAST bank of the river and prepared to attack. The attack, supported by tks was launched during the morning but comm difficulties delayed news of the op until 1230hrs when it was learned that the posns had been taken, lost and retaken again but owing to their exposed posns the pls were withdrawn 50 to 75 yds although still controlling the ground. The enemy counter-attacked again at 2000 hrs but were driven off and the PLDG launched a small counter-attack themselves to regain lost ground and inflict heavy cas on the enemy.

11. The bns during the day had kept up sniping and harrassing fire, tks of the 12 RTR shot up enemy posns on the river bank facing the PPCLI while 2 PW and 1 deserter were taken.

12. On the afternoon 13 Jan Lt-col M.P. Bogert DSO conferred with the GOC 1 Cdn Div, Maj-gen H.W. Foster DSO to discuss the gen sit. It was felt that owing to the large front held by the PLDG, a bn of three weak coys, a few additional tps would help considerably and as a result one rifle coy from the CYR were placed under comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde to be located in rear of the Seaf of C posns from where they could be called to help the Seaf of C or PLDG.

13. Relief of the PLDG by the WELCH Regt was completed by 2200 hrs 14 Jan and both the PLDG and the coy of CYR ceased to be under comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde. The Bde rt bdy was now only as far NORTH as the FUSIGNANO br at mr 384437 - this made the Bde front some 9,000 yds long.

14. Extensive patrolling was carried out on the EAST side of the SENIO the night 15/16 Jan while the LER commenced a mining and wiring program. To carry this out it was necessary for the bn to adv a coy to hold the EAST bank of the river during the mining ops. This was carried out successfully although the coy so emp was engaged in a hy fire fight inflicting some cas on the enemy. A "suicide squad" of 4 Germans rushed the LER posn at the house mr 369422. Two of the enemy were killed with TMC fire while the remaining two were killed in the explosion when they attempted to demolish the house. The posn was re-org following the explosion.

15. On the 16 Jan 13 ITALIAN SBs walking along the top of the dyke of the SENIO casually inspecting Seaf of C posns were taken PW. None of the SBs were in possession of Geneva Red Cross cards and it was felt by the Bde Comd that steps should be taken to prevent any repeat performance. Notices were then drafted forbidding the enemy to make further use of this practise and these were delivered by hand the following morning to an Italian MC.

16. Lt-col M.P. Bogert DSO left on the afternoon 17 Jan for FLORENCE to attend the arty exercise "UBIQUE" and Lt-col R.P. Clark, CO PPCLI, assumed temp comd of the Bde.

17. Preparations were begun to facilitate the relief of the Bde by 3 Cdn Inf Bde tomorrow when 2 Cdn Inf Bde will assume the role of Div counter-attack res.

18. By 2100 hrs 18 Jan the R.22e R had successfully relieved the PPCLI and came under comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde. The PPCLI in accordance with Div counter attack plan moved to the Sugar Factory near MEZZANO sq 4843. The plan of relief calls for the the CYR to relieve the Seaf of C the morning 19 Jan while the WNSR will complete the relief by taking over from the LER that night.
19. Relief of the Seaf of C, less one coy, by the CYR was completed by 1200 hrs 19 Jan and the bn moved to a conc area mr 438358.
20. The change of comd took place following the relief of the Seaf of C the LER remaining under comd 3 Cdn Inf Bde until relieved.
21. Bde HQ moved to GODO in the afternoon mr 463353.
22. Relief of the LER was completed by midnight and the bn moved to a res area SOUTH of RUSSI near mr 409309.
23. This completed the first phase of the "SENIO River Winter Line" and has brought out several pts viz: the use of PIAT as a snipers wpn both for morale and destructive effects. The value of grenades which were thrown on the Seaf of C front at the rate of almost a thousand daily. The advantage in this type of warfare of the periscope and the steady toll of cas inflicted by snipers. The use of the "snow suit" and lastly the laying of minefields, especially for recording purposes should be supervised by RE personnel.
24. On the morning 21 Jan orders were received from HQ 1 Cdn Div to the effect that 2 Cdn Inf Bde would move to the MEZZANO sector and take over from the 21 Regt CREMONA COMBAT GP on the night 22/23 Jan.
25. The sector to be taken over by 2 Cdn Inf Bde reaches from the MEZZANO - ALFONSINE rly NORTH between the FOSSO VETRO and the LAMONE RIVER to the 50 NORTHING covering a 4000 to 4500 yd front.
26. On the afternoon 22 Jan 2 Cdn Inf Bde HQ took up its new locn at OSTERIA mr 494464. By 2200 hrs 22 Jan the relief was complete with LER rt, the Seaf of C left and the PPCLI remaining in res at the sugar factory in MEZZANO.
27. At 0345 hrs 23 Jan a pl raid by the enemy sp by hy arty conc was directed on the centre fwd posns of the LER. The enemy were driven off by mortar and arty DF tasks with no cas suffered by the LER.
28. During the night 23/24 Jan the enemy demolished two houses in front of the FDLs; CASA TOSCHI mr 486491 and CASA RICCIBITTI mr 481490. At last light 24 Jan fwd tps noticed approx 25 enemy in the ruins of CASA RICCIBITTI. Permission was requested by the LER to attack the building with a strong fighting patrol sp by a WASP flamethrower. Brig Bogert granted permission. The raid went in at 1945 hrs but the enemy withdrew without a fight and buildings and area were left ablaze.
29. On the afternoon 25 Jan the GOC Maj-gen H.W. Foster DSO visited Bde HQ discussing the gen sit with Brig M.P. Bogert DSO. The GOC requested identification of the enemy on 2 Cdn Inf Bde front and accordingly fighting patrols



from the Seaf of C and LER were ordered to investigate known enemy occupied localities. The LER patrol was successful in capturing one PW at Casa MORINI mr 485497 and the request had been complied with.

30. During the day 26 Jan guns from the 3 Fd Regt RCA engaged small enemy parties by bouncing shells with a 231 fuze obtaining an air burst effect. Very good results were reported.

31. On the morning 27 Jan Lt-gen C. Foulkes CBE DSO, Comd 1 Cdn Corps, visited HQ 2 Cdn Inf Bde and expressed his desire that the res unit, the PPCLI should move further fwd to a posn on the WEST side of the LAMONE RIVER.

32. At last light 27 Jan the 4 rifle coys of the PPCLI moved fwd to a res area near mr 491487 and the bn was scheduled to relieve the LER the night 28/29 Jan.

33. At first light 28 Jan 2 pls of the LER put in a quick raid on the buildings C. BARONIO mr 488501. The raid was successful 10 known cas being inflicted on the enemy although the raiding pls suffered some and 3 LER men were taken PW.

34. In view of the 3 men being taken PW Brig Bogert ordered a postponement of the relief of the LER for a period of 24 hrs.

35. Orders were received from HQ 1 Cdn Div during the morning 28 Jan for 2 Cdn Inf Bde to be relieved by 1 Cdn Inf Bde on the nights 2/3 and 3/4 Feb. 2 Cdn Inf Bde will then take over the role of counter-attack force for 1 Cdn Corps area.

36. At last light 29 Jan the PPCLI relieved the LER who then became res bn and took over the posns vacated by the PPCLI.

37. During the morning 30 Jan plans were laid for a coy raid by the PPCLI on C BARONIO mr 488500. Careful recce of the area is to be made before the actual raid takes place.

38. Recce patrols were active on the nights 31 Jan/1 Feb in preparation for the raid scheduled to take place the morning 3 Feb.

39. The relief of the LER by the 48 Highrs was completed by 1730 hrs 2 Feb and 48 Highrs came under comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde. The LER proceeded to a res area in RUSSI mr 4333.

40. Two fighting patrols of the Seaf of C on the night 2/3 Feb met with considerable success setting one enemy occupied building on fire and silencing MG and SA fire from another.

41. At first light 3 Feb the PPCLI coy raid on C BARONIO mr 488500 went in and all objectives were reached without difficulty. The enemy had apparently laid one of the houses for demolition which when entered by one of the secs was demolished. The enemy then directed extremely hy mortar fire on the 2 houses inflicting very hy cas on the remainder of the party who were attempting to extricate their comrades. Hy cas were sustained before the coy could withdraw with a result of 6 ORs killed, 2 ofrs and 28 ORs wounded and 1 OR missing.

42. At 1800 hrs 3 Feb the relief commenced with the HPER relieving the Seaf of C and the RCR taking over the PPCLI sector. Upon relief the PPCLI proceeded to RUSSI while the Seaf of C moved to the area of CORTINA sq 4335. Bde HQ located in GODO mr 460354.

43. This completed another phase in the "Senio River Winter Line" which has brought out in addition to the pts found at BAGNACAVALLLO the following. The enemy's use of demolitions to deny us posns overlooking his FDLs and also the enemy's cunning in booby trapping buildings. Other psts, the Wasp flamethrower may be used effectively providing careful recce of routes has been made.

44. The 9 days spent in the GODO - RUSSI area have been emp in recce of def areas in the event of a German break through and in the preparation of a Counter Attack Plan.

45. A certain amount of re-org and re-equipping has been done as well as unit trg and lectures.

46. On 7 Feb orders were received from HQ 1 Cdn Div for 2 Cdn Inf Bde to relieve 3 Cdn Inf Bde on the 10 Feb. 3 Cdn Inf Bde is at present holding the BAGNACAVALLLO sector of the SENIO RIVER.

47. At 0900 hrs 10 Feb 3 coys of the Seaf of C relieved 3 coys of the CYR on the rt fwd sector of the Bde front opposite FUSIGNANO. The remaining coys to change over at last light.

48. At 1800 hrs 10 Feb the PPCLI took over the left fwd sector from the R 22e R while the LER took over the centre sector from the WNSR and 2 Cdn Inf Bde took over comd of the sector at 2000 hrs.

49. Bn locns are the same as those held on the previous stay in the month of Jan. The front remains unchanged with the BAGNACAVALLLO - LUGO rly the left bdy and the FUSIGNANO br mr 384437 the right bdy.

50. Activity on the 11 Feb was typical of the next two weeks to come. Sniping duels across the river, grenade throwing on the Seaf of C front, exchange of arty harrassing fire while in the LER sector tks of the 12 RTR shot up enemy posns along the EAST dyke of the river scoring several direct hits and inflicting cas. Patrolling that night was limited to contact and ambush patrols.

51. On the 13 Feb 3 deserters were taken on the PPCLI front while the Seaf of C demolished an enemy foot br across the SENIO with PIAT bombs.

52. Explosive bullets were fired on Seaf of C posns during the day 14 Feb but it is felt the enemy is not making gen use of them.

53. At 1820 hrs 14 Feb hy arty and mortar conc were directed on the left fwd Seaf of C coy and the rt fwd LER coy which was followed by an enemy fighting patrol of approx 12 men. The enemy came in on the LER coy who engaged them with SA fire while the Seaf of C coy to the rt provided sp fire and at the same time known enemy posns were engaged with mortar and arty fire.



54. By 1930 hrs the enemy were driven off and the sit restored. The LER suffered 3 slight cas while the enemy had 5 known dead and some believed wounded.

55. The Partisan Gp which had been responsible for a pl posn in the PPCLI sector for the past 6 weeks were recalled to Partisan HQ RAVENNA on 15 Feb for re-grouping.

56. Four PW were taken by the Seaf of C at 2100 hrs 15 Feb when the enemy were caught in a bend of the SENIO. Seaf of C coys by careful direction of cross fire forced the men to surrender.

57. At 0600 hrs 16 Feb 1 Cdn Inf Div sector came under comd 5 Br Corps.

58. On the 17 Feb tks of the 12 RTR carried out shoots along the EAST dyke of the SENIO R on known and suspected enemy posns. A comprehensive harassing program was also carried out by the MMGs and 4.2" Mortars of the SASK L I and arty engaged known enemy HQs. There was no retaliation on the part of the enemy and the program was carried on after darkness.

59. At noon on the 16 Feb a party of Germans estimated at sec str offered to surrender. While precautions were being taken to prevent a ruse someone in authority ordered the enemy back. However by cones of 3" and 2" mortars were directed on the area later thickened up with 4.2" Mortar and MMG fire.

60. Ops Instrs were received 19 Feb covering the relief of 1 Cdn Div by 8 Ind Div which will take place shortly. 2 Cdn Inf Bde will be relieved by 21 Ind Bde. Upon relief the Div will conc in the FERMO area as Army Gp Res.

61. On the morning 22 Feb the PPCLI noticed what appeared to be 3 gun posns, unoccupied, that had been constructed by the enemy at mrs 358406, 357400 and 356403. All three posns were on the EAST side of the river. At noon a 5.5 gun from the 3 Mod Regt RA was hauled into posn NW of BAGNACAVALLLO. The gnrs fired at less than 3000 yds range reducing their targets to rubble. One enemy posn receiving 15 direct hits.

62. At 2130 hrs 23 Feb 43 Ind Bde on the left launched an attack to establish their fwd tps along the EAST dyke of the SENIO. An increase in the enemy's MMG and arty fire was all that affected 2 Cdn Inf Bde, although 2 AP bombs were dropped in the PPCLI area from an unidentified aircraft. No cas were sustained.

63. At approx 1815 hrs 24 Feb extremely heavy mortar and shellfire came down on the rt fwd coy LER and the two left fwd coys of the Seaf of C.

64. In spite of our Mortar and Arty DF tasks 20 minutes after the enemy cones, 2 coys of German inf and a pl of pnrs attacked.

65. The attack was directed on the rt fwd LER coy and the Seaf of C left fwd and centre coy and was evidently aimed at penetration between the 2 bns to eventually seize control of the EAST bank of the river.

66. Both line and wireless comm to the fwd LER pl were disrupted and the sit remained obscure until contact was finally est by patrol.

67. At 1900 hrs enemy shelling commenced again for a period of half an hr but by this time the main body of the enemy had been driven off; however small gps were still believed to be somewhere in rear of the fwd pls. Strong fighting patrols from the LER and Seaf of C scoured the coy areas and the sit was completely restored by 2100 hrs.

68. The attacking force suffered hy cas from our SA fire, mines and booby traps and five PW were taken. Our cas were 3 killed and 16 wounded.

69. Shortly after the raid on the Seaf of C and LER the PPCLI reported an enemy patrol of 5 men attempting to penetrate between the PPCLI and LER. The enemy were driven off by SA fire and cas were believed inflicted.

70. From 0300 hrs to 0330 hrs there was again hy shelling on the Seaf of C posns followed by a second raid of approx 30 enemy. The attack was directed on A Coy Seaf of C coming in on both sides of the coy but the attack was broken up as the enemy came over the dyke. Four enemy were killed, one PW taken and a portable flamethrower captured.

71. At first light 25 Feb the 1/5 MAHRATTAS commenced to relieve the Seaf of C with the exception of the rt fwd coy which will be relieved after last light.

72. The 1/5 MAHRATTAS then came under comd 2 Cdn Inf Bde.

73. Relief of all Sp Arms was accomplished during daylight hours.

74. By 1950 hrs 25 Feb the remaining Seaf of C coy was relieved.

75. By 2110 hrs 25 Feb the PPCLI had been relieved by the 5 RWK and the LER by the 3/15 PUNJAB and the comd of the sector passed to 21 Ind Bde.

76. All units and Bde HQ moved to a staging area in CESENATICO immediately following their relief.

77. This completed the final phase for 2 Cdn Inf Bde in the "SENIO RIVER WINTER LINE".

78. On the early morning 27 Feb 2 Cdn Inf Bde moved off from CESENATICO for the conc area in S. BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO arriving there by 1400 hrs.

79. In the conc area Bde HQ and PPCLI were located in S. BENEDETTO, Seaf of C in OFFIDA and the LER in PORTO DI ASCOLI.

80. On the 28 Feb Brig M.P. Bogert DSO revealed to the Bn Comds and Bde HQ Staff future plans affecting 2 Cdn Inf Bde. 1 Cdn Corps will shortly join the 1 Cdn Army on the Western Front.

81. Ops and A & Q Staffs immediately commenced work on preparation for the move scheduled to commence 4 Mar 45.