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CONFIDENTIAL

F R 1-0 Ops

18 Oct 44

REPORT ON PERTH REGIMENTAL OPERATIONS

23 Sep 44 - 10 Oct 44

Ref Maps:- Italy 1/100,000 Sheets Nos 100, 101

General Narrative

1. Our Division received 4 Br Inf Div in the S GIUSTINA area (7898 Sheet 101) at 0700 hrs 23 Sep. The Div intention was to establish crossings over the USO at S. VITO (7600) and to push on and seize a bridgehead over the RUBICONE (FIUMICINO) in the neighbourhood of the village of FIUMICINI (7104 Sheet 100). The initial phase was to be carried out by 12 Cdn Inf Bde with one Arm'd Regt and two anti-tank batteries under comd. Our Brigade was to be in reserve.
2. During the afternoon of the 23rd we moved up into reserve positions on the reverse slope of the VERGIANO ridge (8095) just short of the MARECCHIA. We remained here under intermittent shellfire until 26 Sep when we moved up to S GIUSTINA. By this time 12 Bde had succeeded in establishing crossings over the USO both left and right of S VITO and 11 Bde were to pass through them the night of 26/27 Sep. 11 Bde took over comd of the sector at 0045 hrs 27 Sep with the CB Highrs relieving the Westar R on the right and the Ir RC relieving the 89/109 Inf Bn in the centre, while the 4 PIDsGs came u/c 11 Cdn Inf Bde and remained in position protecting the left flank. We were still in reserve and remained in the S GIUSTINA area until 0715 hrs on the 27th when we moved up to a position about 100 yds NE of S VITO. Our intention now was to consolidate the bridgehead which the CB Highrs were to establish over the SALTO. This was accomplished shortly after first light on the 28th by which time the leading elts of the CB Highrs had reached VILLADRAIPA (7304) where they were meeting heavy opposition. That afternoon we were ordered to move forward and take up positions on the right of the CB Highrs in area 7205. On our way up we were subjected to intense shelling and mortaring but met no Inf opposition beyond a few snipers. The CCHGs had been

milling about this area and the greater part of the enemy had pulled back across the river.

3. It rained heavy all during the afternoon and evening of the 28th. The roads, which were badly cratered, became impassable to all vehicles and supplies and men had all to be man-handled the last mile. We spent the evening consolidating our positions, all the while subjected to intense and accurate shelling, mortaring and MG fire from across the river. About 1800 hrs a platoon of "A" Coy occupied a house. One of their number set off a booby-trap and the pl suffered twenty casualties. Later in the evening two officers were killed and another wounded while going about checking their positions. Incidental casualties brought the nights total up to twenty-seven.

4. The Brigade plan at this time was to establish a bridgehead over the RUBICONE with the Perth Regt right and the CB Highrs left. The Ir RC were then to pass through and seize a crossing over the SCOLO RIGOSNO NW of S. ANGELO (7105). This plan was several times postponed and finally modified so that S ANGELO was the limit of the advance. However, neither of these plans was ever carried out due to the weather which remained extremely wet and caused the rivers to swell and rendered all roads except the coastal highway impassable to vehicles.

5. Daylight patrols on the 29th reced crossings of the RUBICONE at 725071 and 722053. That on the right contacted no enemy but found the swollen river to be an obstacle to all vehicles though not an Inf obstacle. The patrols on the left bumped enemy on our side of the river and, although they managed to reach the crossing, they were unable to carry out a through recce due to the intensity of the enemy fire. The 29th and 30th uneventful but for extremely heavy shelling and mortaring of the whole battalion area and MG and sniper fire in the forward positions. An "C" Gp was held at Bde that evening and we learned that the plan was somewhat altered. However, our part remained much the same

6. The night of 30 Sep/1 Oct there was considerable confusion. It started off with an extremely heavy concentration of shelling and mortaring. Then "A" Coy's wireless failed and we were out of communication with them for the greater part of the night. They managed to get a runner through to us, but he was shell-shocked and unable to give any coherent information. Next, the whole area was strafed by the Luftwaffe and an SP gun on the enemy side of the river succeeded in knocking down one of "A" Coys houses inflicting about six cas. "D" Coy, in an effort to improve their positions to meet an expected counter-attack, occupied a booby-trapped house and also suffered about six casualties. Various reports came in during the course of the night of enemy inf and tanks operating on our side of the river. Not until morning did the situation clarify itself. A patrol reached "A" Coy and found them quite OK. It later became apparent that no organized counter-attack had been put in, although enemy patrols and MG detachments had been across onto our side and SPs had done a considerable amount of firing from the enemy side of the narrow river.

7. The 1st and 2nd Oct were uneventful and at last light on the 2nd we were relieved by the New Zealanders. The 4 PLDGs relieved the CB Highrs and our brigade pulled back to the S GUISTINA area to rest and re-fit. Although there had been no organized "battle", our casualties had been moderately high amounting to approximately 100 all ranks - and everyone was pretty worn out by the incessant shelling and the great labour of bringing up supplies on foot.

8. On the night 5/6 Oct the CB Highrs (right) and the Ir RC (left) with ourselves in reserve, relieved the PLDGs on the reduced brigade front prior to forcing the bridgehead the night of 6/7. This had to be called off, however, due to rain, mud, swollen rivers and impassable roads. On the 7th we learned that the attack would go in the night of 8/9 Oct with reduced objectives and regardless of weather. However heavy rain fell during the night 7/8 and continued

the greater part of the 8th. About 1630 hrs we learned that the attack would not go in and at 1730 hrs we pulled back to S GIUSTINA area. We remained here until 10 Oct when we learned that the entire Army plan had been changed and that 5 Cdn Armd Div was to be relieved by the New Zealanders. By last light on the 10th our Regt was complete in the Corps Rest Area on the coast road between RICCIONE and RIMINI.