3 Dec.

Position Pt 727 952067 - Pt 819 950075 and the Saucer captured. Attack on MONASTERY by 2/5 Queens had failed. The Bn still at CICI, not likely to move till after 0300 hrs 4 Dec.

4 Dec.

Bn moved 0400 hrs vis S. CLEMENTE 9604 - MIELI 9505 to the base of Pt 727. We remained under the ledge of the hill and were treated to one of the worst rain storms of the campaign; it rained for 12 hours and we suffered some casualties from mortar and shells. During the morning Coldm Gds had taken without opposition their two hills 683 and 615. A contact patrol was sent and the situation there was satisfactory. 1430 hrs Tac Bde HQ was hit, Tony Inchbald acting L.O. was wounded and died at the A.D.S., 3 other officers were wounded and Brigadier Dick evacuated. Col Billy took over and I was sent for.

We spent a very wet night still under Pt 727. Meanwhile the battle was progressing slowly - the London Irish were to take FORMELLI 9407.

5 Dec.

FORMELLI taken and the D.L.Is on our left were due to attack the COCORRUZZO Spur 9206 at 2100 hrs. The Queens were to try again for the MONASTERY HILL, which they succeeded in doing, but were counter-attacked and pushed off. By night we were still under the hill, less mortar and shelling, but the position on our flanks not very secure. We did not know whether the D.L.Is attack was successful or not.

6 Dec.

0400 hrs the Bn moved from 727, 3, 4, Bn HQ, 1 to behind the Coldm Gds position 683 - 615. We had to cross our old enemy "Bare Arse" Slope and hoped we could get across in the last hours of darkness, thus we had our now familiar task of not getting caught by daylight in the open. The going was appalling and the men's loads heavy. We had two Companies equipped with Bergen Rucksacks. We carried 24 hours rations, amn and a blanket. Total weight on the back 35 lbs. The first two Coys were safely below the skyline by first light but Bn HQ and No.1 were caught going along the bare arse. This brought some mortar and shell fire. Casualtiers slight but unlucky as 2 stretcher bearers and 2 signallers were hit.

By 0900 hrs were were in our F.U.P. behind Coldm Gds. A sniper on the spur North of FORMELLI caused casualties and annoyance to us.

I went forward to recce with the Gunner and received orders for Gren Gds and S.G. to attack Pts 470 and 530. Zero was fixed for 12 noon and a concentration arranged on the intervening valley and on the objectives. M.R

I collected the Coy Comds for orders at 1030 hrs, just before this John Glyn was wounded by a mortar splinter. A bad cut in his cheek. At Zero the Bn went over the saddle between 683 and 615 with S.G. on the left. Artillery support was to last 90 minutes. The objectives were expected to be lightly held, and they could command nearly the whole line of our advance.

The going was slow over rocks and through coppice wood. Plan to advance twon up, No.4 to go for 470, No.3 for 530. Tac HQ with No.1 to establish themselves in saddle at 931082. Code words for success GRAYLING. No.4s objective Pt 470 (931086) GRAYLING 2, No3s Pt 530 928081.

There was no opposition and by 1420 hrs these words came as a welcome sound to my ears over the 38 set and this was telephoned to Bde Tac.

We suffered some casualties from mortar fire and from one of our own guns falling short. Tony Ardee wounded in the hand and 9 Other Ranks. My advance with No.1, though noisy, was uneventful except for a few casualties in No.1 I failed to shoot a woodcock with my revolver. This brave bird got up at my feet and gave a beautiful chance.

6 Dec (Cont'd).

By 1500 hrs we had consolidated at I wirelessed for the remainder of my Bn HQ, moved down by Wyndham Hackett Pain, the I.O.

By the evening we were feeling more secure. D.I.I. had taken COCURRUZZO Spur, 2/5 Queens were once more on MONASTERY HILL and the Americans on DEFENSA and MAGGIORE.

7 Dec.

The Bosche had been worried by the flank movements but now started to wake up and No.3 on 530 reported activity North of this Spur. No.4 was receiving attention form a mortar, situated somewhere in the valley to their North West.

A spandau post was located North of No.3 and a small patrol sent to get rid of it. Lieut. T. Huntington left at 1000 hrs with 3 men. The Bosche were located, one was shot. Tim Huntington called on the remainder to come out, but a third Bosche appeared and shot Tim. The rest of our patrol shot the Bosche and the post was cleared up.

It was difficult to reach Tim who had rolled down the rocks. Any movement drew fire, but at noon the M.O., Capt. McKenzie, went to Coy HQ and was told that Tim had died.

The ridge North West of 530 was a series of rocky steps, a cliff to the East and a bare slope of rock to the West. The ridge was held by a succession of apandau posts and every movement drew fire and mortar.

A Platoon of Cheshires M.G. was established with No.3. 1620 hrs activity in the valley between 3 and 4 to the North West suggested a possible counter attack. A certain amount of firing stopped this threat. I could by now be quite certain that No.3s ridge was held by at least 6 posts backing each other up. The valley S. of ROCCA was also held by spandau and mortars. Our final task was to take ROCCA on the code word SWAN.

The plan to SWAN had been made off the map and nobody but myself and the Coy Comds realized the impossibility of the task. ROCCA D'EVANDRO stands on a 100 ft cliff completely inaccessible from the South (We were not allowed to approach from the North). The valley between held by at least 4 spandau completely covering on fixed lines, as easy as shooting down a long passage.

The Spur North West of 530, a succession of steps sheer drops sometimes 10 feet, sometimes more. There successive positions each prepared. (Later we counted 20 all stocked with amn boxes) We had two tired Companies and position on our flanks vague in fact nobody either side.

1630 hrs - I received SWAN and explained the position which to my mind would have resulted in failure and 75% casualties. Following a fight on my part and back to Div by Billy Kingsmill we compromised with patrols from each Coy pushing forward.

This they did at night and drawing fire completely confirmed to higher folk what I already knew. The danger of a map and red pencil from further back was then very apparent to me.

However, honour was satisfied and good results obtained from these patrols, one from No.3 by Philip Parr and one from No.1 by Dick Stokes Roberts.

Late on this night 46 Div advanced to the West of the S.G. to CROCE Spur 9107.

During this day movement Northwards was observed from ROCCA mostly M.T. and half tracks. These were engaged by artillery. F.O.Os were with Nos.3 and 4 Coys and the B.C. with my Tac.

8 Dec.

A Coy of London Scottish was reported advancing from CAMINO 9408 towards ROCCA, keeping North of the track running to ROCCA. 0915 hrs - No.3 tried again to advance along their spur and met more spandau fire. I had to prepare a plan to carry out the SWAN order which was brewing up again. I sent a mortar detachment to Nos.3 and 4 Companies, and at 1230 hrs moved No.1 Coy to a position North West of No.4 area 928088½ This move drew spandau fire from the valley and no further movement was possible

except for small recce parties.

No.4 had been mortared again and suffered a few casualties. Pat Hanbury slightly wounded, a direct hit on the O.P. killed a Guardsman and a Gunner.

During the rest of the day there was no change except that Nos.3 and 1 Coys constantly tried to edge forward for their final task of investing ROCCA.

9 Dec.

The position for dealing with ROCCA improved. The London Scottish had reached the spur North of ROCCA, 2 Coys S.G. with one Coy Lincolns had advanced N.E. during the night and were thought to be in area 912083.

No.3 had reorganised with 2 Platoons and by 0800 hrs had advanced down their spur using their brens and mortars. The spandau had diminished and No.1 at 0900 hrs started down the valley.

Visibility was very poor owing to the low lying mist and by 1130 hrs No.1 entered ROCCA from the West. No.3 had knocked out the last spandau and were located 920094, having destroyed abandoned kit in 20 positions along their line of advance.

1200 hrs Bn HQ moved to 924093. I took the I.O. to visit No.1 Coy and found them well established. 1530 hrs I received orders to take under Command two Coys S.G. to release London Scottish and organise defence of ROCCA, with the added difficulty of fixing their food and water problem. This was completed by dark and we settled for the night. Uneventful except for a "stonk" of 24 shells around our HQ and intermittent 88 fire on ROCCA. One Guardsman of the Pioneer Platoon was killed.

10 Dec.

Bn HQ less mortars moved to ROCCA. The I.O. searched the village for equipment and a heap of equipment found. 2 letters addressed to us written by Bosche were also found, one to say, "when the Russians occupy Europe and the Americans England, what happens to us then? The other more cryptic "Much loves from an German soldier, when is the war lost for yourselves. Goodbye, Tommy" -

During the morining it was decided to relieve the Division by the 46 Div. 1430 hrs recce parties of the Companies were sent back. Orders received by me to take out Bn HQ, 3 and 4 Coys and to go back to a prepared area ORCHI and to leave No.1 under Command S.G. to come out by darkness.

0700 hrs 3, 4 and Bn HQ started their 4½ mile march and got to billets by 1630 hrs.

No.1 came out with S.G. at 1800 hrs and reached billets at 0500 hrs.

Casualties. Tony Inchbald died of wounds ?Bde L.O)
Tim Huntington Killed.
Peter Addison Wounded leg.
Tony Ardee wounded hand.
John Glyn wounded cheek.

Other Ranks.
12 killed.
70 Battle casualties.

the beaker 430-570 you notice is called ACQUEPENDOLA. It has been renamed Arthu Pennodda.

HL