

Gamle Bruflat bru. Foto ca. 1910. - Old Bruflat bridge. Photo ca. 1910.



Gardsbruket Sletten lå på østsiden av Etnedalsvegen vegen, rett nord for gamlebrua ved Bruflat. Huset ble truffet av tysk artilleri.

The farm Sletten, located on the eatstern side of the road, just north of the old Bruflat bridge, was hit by German artillery.

Valdres, 1940

German units began their first advance towards Valdres from Hønefoss through Begnadalen on 14th April, 1940. Their intention was to push forward through Bagn and Dokka in order to outflank the Norwegian units deployed in the Brandbu—Jevnaker area. The attempt failed however, and on 20th April the Germans pulled back from Bagn, all the way to Hønefoss. The Norwegian 4th Brigade, having crossed over the mountains from Voss in the west, was now positioned in Valdres with 4,500 troops. On Monday, 22nd April, the German 163rd Division once again turned their attention to Valdres. This time the main force advanced through Dokka. On Wednesday, 24th April, heavy fighting broke out at Høljarast Bridge between Major Daubert's battalion (Gruppe III/IR 159) and Major Sæter's battalion (II/IR10). The day ended with the Norwegians pulling back. On the same evening, the German advance continued towards Tonsåsen, and farther up along the river Etna towards Bruflat.

The defensive position at Bruflat

Major Arne Laudal's battalion consisted of Captain Ragnvald Seim's and Captain Sigurd Ula's rifle companies. During the night of Wednesday 24th April, he called off the objective assigned by 4th Brigade to attack German units facing the Norwegian positions at Høljarast Bridge. A little more than 12 hours later Laudal's companies arrived at Bruflat. Captain Seim's mission was to halt any further German advance towards Tonsåsen through Fjellsbygda from positions in the hills west of Bruflat Church. Captain Ula's company was to prevent the Germans from working their way up into North Etnedal. The company took up positions north of the bridge across the river Etna. After destroying the bridge, Major Laudal then proceeded north into Etnedal and did not return to Bruflat any time later.

The German advance from Høljarast

Following the breach at Høljarast, the commander of the Germans' forward battalion, Major Henning Daubert, ordered Lieutenant Reinecke's 11th Company to proceed on to Bruflat. The company was supported by a tank platoon with three armoured vehicles. The remainder of the battalion continued along the classified road towards Tonsåsen. Reinecke's orders were to push forward to Bruflat and Fjellsbygda on the way to Tonsåsen, in order to carry out a possible flank attack on the Norwegian units positioned there. This force was temporarily halted at Lundebrua, however. Reinecke spent the night at Lunde farm, but dispatched a reconnaissance platoon led by Sergeant Szepan to continue farther on ahead. At 1900 hours on 24th April, the reconnaissance platoon ran into skirmishing contact with the Norwegian companies at Bruflat.

German attack at Bruflat

During the morning of 25th April, Lieutenant Reinecke's 11th Company arrived at Bruflat. The tanks remained behind at Lunde Bridge and awaited its repair. At Bruflat Reinecke got his support weapons into position on the right side of the road crossing where the Kyrkjevegen turns off from Etnedalsvegen. At the same time he commenced armed reconnaissance probes on both flanks. Company Sergeant Richartz was fatally wounded during the reconnaissance of the right flank. The rifle platoons prepared to attack.

With fire support from a 37 mm infantry gun and light mortars, 11th Company's men advanced through the village center and attacked Captain Seim's positions on the hillside west of the church. Several buildings in the center of the village were hit and caught on fire. From their positions on the northern side of the village center, Ula's company were unable to provide support for Seim's men. Sometime later, Seim's troops pulled back. The road continuing on to Fjellsbygda and Tonsåsen now lay open to the Germans. Lieutenant Reinecke led his company up to Plassane in Fjellsbygda, and bivouacked there. During the same night, the three tanks made their way up and rejoined the company. On the following morning the force continued their advance towards Tonsåsen. That was to have fatal consequences for the Norwegian defences there.

