

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2119. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Unit 279, Field Coy. R.E.

Month and Year JUNE '44.

Commanding Officer Major. P.T. WOOD M.C.R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Storrington.	6	0900	Invasion of EUROPE begins.	
	7	1500	Lt. Bennett and adv party move off to embark.	
	8.	2230	All ranks confined to camp.	
	10.	1500	Visited by Special Cashier No. B/85/0 to exchange Sterling into currency. Rate of Exchange 200 F.	
	11.	2200	Received warning order to move.	
	12.	0230 0530 1030 1810	Received movement order form, Movement Control. Moved off bound for Southampton. Arrived SOUTHAMPTON. Coy embarked on T.L.C. V.64.	
At Sea.	13		Laid off PORTSMOUTH all day.	
" "	14		SAILED in CONVOY.	
" "		1830	Sighted coast of FRANCE.	
" "		2100	Anchored off coast of FRANCE.	
COURSEULLES SUR MER. BRECY.	16	1330 1700	First landings of Coy took place. Owing to deep mud on the beach, landing delayed, only 16 vehicles landed. Harboured by road side 872790	PT Wood
"	17		Quiet day. Lt. Bennett on Road Recce.	
"	20	0800	Started construction & marking of Tank Track from St. GABRIEL to TAILLEVILLE.	
"		1800	Lt. Bennett off to Recce new harbour area.	
"	21	1000 1200 1400	Lt. Bennett returns from harbour Recce. Tank track completed. Lt. Bennett off to Recce Bde Water Point in new area.	
"	22	0800	1 Pln off to mark Tank Track from FONTAIN HENRY - TAILLEVILLE.	
"		0800	2 Pln off to construct water point at 919748.	
"			3 Pln off to mark Tank Track from PIERREPONT to FONTAIN HENRY.	
"		0830	O.C. off to Bde "O" Group.	
BRECY		1030	O.C. returns.	PT Wood
	23		Quiet day.	

"	24	0830	Orders received to move to Conc. at SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN for Operation Epsom.	44 Bde O.O. No.2
"		1100	O.C. and 2 i/c to Briefing Conf. at H.Q.R.E.	" " Move Order No.1.
"		2245	Move to Conc. Area.	R.E. 15(S)Div O.O. No.1.
SECQUEVILLE- EN-BESSIN			Arrive in Conc. Area 920747.	279, Fd Coy. Move Order No.1.
	25	0845	O.C. off to 44 Bde. Briefing Conference.	
		1000	O.C. returns.	
		1000	O.C. & 2 i/c off to C.R.E.s conference.	
		1300	O.C. briefs Pln. Comds.	
		1900	O.C. to C.R.E. for final briefing.	279, Fd. Coy. O.O. No.1.
	26	0610	O.C. off to join Brigadier R. Group.	
		0721	BARRAGE begins.	
		0730	Epsom begins.	
		0900	H.Q. moved to BRETTEVILLE.	
SECQUEVILLE- EN-BESSIN			2 Pln received baptism of fire, were under heavy shell and mortar fire. Luckily no cas.	PT Wood
			1 Pln very busy time, sniped at, no cas.	
			3 Pln out all night.	
		2220	Move to 899703 LES SAULLETS.	
LES SAULLETS	27	0600	3 Pln rejoin Coy. Coy in Conc. Area resting.	
		0945	2 Pln off to recce and construct water point.	
		1015	2 Secs 2 Pln. to clear minefield (TELLER) at 906691.	
		1700	2 Pln return having lifted minefield containing 240 T.M.1.	
			6 "S" Mines and 6 Bodies which had been killed by "S" mines.	
			All bodies friendly.	PT Wood
"		2359	End of a quiet day.	
"	28		Still conc. in reserve very quiet.	
	29	2200	Enemy reported to have broken through just South of Coy position.	
			Coy prepared to make stand and stood to.	
		2350	C.R.E. visited unit reported situation restored.	
	30	0010	Coy stood down, but maintained strong picquets to watch for suspicious movement.	
		1200	Moved to 915660. 3 Pln repaired road. 2 Pln established water point.	
			1 Pln Rest.	
		1820	Arrived back at Les Saullets.	PT Wood

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279, Field Coy. R.E.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year JULY '44.

Commanding Officer Major.P.T. WOOD M.C.R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Mesnil Patry.	1 Jul		2 Pln established Water Point at CHEUX. 1 Pln maintained Rd at CHEUX under spasmodic shellfire. Very wet day.	
SECQUEVILLE	2 Jul	0500 1000 1415 1530 2230	1 Pln laid defensive minefield of 431 Mk.V mines at 898652. Coy handed over all commitments to 244, Fd. Coy R.E. 53, DIV. Coy moved to rest area in SECQUEVILLE Arrived at SECQUEVILLE. Visited by C.R.E.	
"	3 Jul 7 "		Rest period, taken up with general cleaning and checking of stores, baths etc.	
	8 "	1900	One sec of 1 Pln placed under Comd of 44(L) Inf. Bde.	
	9 "		Still at rest, very quiet. News that CAEN has fallen.	
SECQUEVILLE	10 "	0745 1700 1900	No.3 Pln off to ST AUBIN-SUR-MER 022846 to construct Rest Camp. D.R. reported that L/Sjt Rogers, L/Cpl Knox, and Spr. Robb of 3 Pln had been wounded by an "S" Mine whilst mine clearing at ST AUBIN-SUR-MER. Cas confirmed.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	11 "	1900	3 Pln relieved of their commitment, rejoin Coy.	
	12 "		Quiet day. Church service.	
	13 "	0600 0800 0800 0930 1330	Priority Residue rejoin Coy. 2 Pln out to construct track for tanks from 932632 to 929642. 3 Pln out to construct 20' FBE Class 9 Br. Lt. K.W. Bennett off to O Gp at 44 (L) Inf. Bde 1 Sec of 1 Pln out to mark minefield in area LES VILAINS 9262.	
	14 "	0800 0950 1000 1200 1300 1800 1900	3 Pln out to improve tank track 932632. Lt. Bennett off to recce Harbour area at ST MAUVIEU. O.C. to 44 (L) Inf. Bde for O Group Lt. Bennett returns. O.C. returns. Coy move to harbour area ST MAUVIEU 928682 Coy arrive at harbour area.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

ST MAUVIEU	15Jul	1800 1800 2145	Nos. 1 & 3 Plns & recce party under Lt. Scanlon move to Conc Area 934634. Coy in Sp of 44 Bde for Op GREENLINE. OP GREENLINE COMMENCED	44(L)Inf.Bde Op "GREENLINE" order dtd 14 Jul. (1) RE 15(S)Div O.O.No.2 dtd 14 Jul.44 (2)
	16Jul	1015 1720 1940	3 Pln returns. Report 2 cas. Narrative of ops attached. Lt. Scanlon returns from recce, on 3 Pln transport, having been "unhorsed". Spr. Mabon wounded in stomach, but all stores were recovered. Narrative of Lt. Scanlon attached. 2 Pln set out to relieve 1 Pln at 1800 hrs at 934634. 1 Pln return report 5 cas all wounded.	Appx (3) Appx. (4)
	17 "	1145 1820 1920	1 & 3 Pln off to assist 2 Pln in collection of local materials and construction of overhead cover for 44(L) Inf. Bde. 2 Pln return to Coy location, report 1 cas - shell shock. 1 Pln return to Coy location.	
	18 "	0200 1020 1630 1800 2000 2050 2100 2230	Come under Comd C.R.E. 53(W) DIV. Lt. Bennett out to Rd. Recce. Lt. Bennett returns. No.1 Pln relieved No.3 Pln who reported 2 cas wounded. O.C. attends conference at C.R.E.s HQ. Visit by C.R.E. 15(S) Div. No.1 & 2 Pln committed to clearing mines in LES VILAINS area. O.C. returns to Bde HQ. Work commenced on Minefield Serials A8 and A9.	RE 53(W) Div Op No.1. (5) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	19 "	2400 0025 0215 1145 1300 1400 1430 1700 1730 1800 1910	Minefield serials A.11 and A.12 completed. Serials B.1 and B.2 cannot be located as no distances were given on chart, permission requested from C.R.E. to defer lifting until first light. Permission granted. Serial A.8 and A.9 completed. Serial B2 completed. 15 O.R.s from 3 Pln sent to reinforce 2 Pln. Remainder of 3 Pln sent off to area 9165 to Blow holes to bury dead animals. 2 Pln return. 15 men of 3 Pln return from assisting 2 Pln. 3 Pln return. Revert to Comd C.R.E. 15(S) Div. Move to new harbour area 908687.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
908687.	20Jul	1200 1300 1500	Lt. Haines detained in hospital with slight injuries received on mine clearance. 1 Offr and 3 men off to Corps rest camp. Coy committed to road maint. as in Op Instn. No.2. dated 20.	RE Op Instn. No.2 (6)

	21 "	0800	No.3 Pln road maint. in CHEUX. Tropical rain all day. Quiet day.	
	22 "	0800	No.1 Pln Road main. in CHEUX. Quiet day.	
MOLANDIN	23 "	0800 0805 0820 1400 1725	Residue arrived. Coy now complete. RE 15(S) Div Op Inst. No.4 and RE 15(S) Div Movement Order No. received. Coy prepare to move to new location. Lt. Bennett off to recce new location. Left harbour and moved to new location. Arrived at new harbour area 864866. Lt. du Vivier and 3 men rejoin unit from Rest Camp.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	24 "	1340	Lt. Haines rejoined unit from 30 Gen Hosp.	
	25 "	1430	1 N.C.O. and 12 O.R.s Reinforcements arrived.	
	26 "	1300	2 Offrs and 10 O.R.s off to the Rest Camp at ST AUBIN-SUR-MER for 48 hrs rest.	
	27 "	1120 1350 1400 1850 2020	O.C. and Lt. Bennett out to recce tank track. 2 secs of 3 Pln under Lt. McNaught out to construct Comd Post for 44(L) Inf. Bde. 1 Pln under Lt. du Vivier off to construct and mark tank track. 1 O.R. reinforcement arrived. Lt. Bennett returns.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	28 "		Very quiet day, weather changeable.	
	29 "	0630 0730 0900 1430 1810 1910 1925 2100 2110 2130	O.C. off to C.R.E.s "O" Gp. No.1 Pln to clear route 6 No.2 Pln " " " 5 No.3 Pln " " " 1,2,3,4. Plns off to carry out tasks. Lt. Haines & Lt. Scanlon return from Rest Camp. No.3 Pln return. No.1 Pln return. No.2 Pln return. Coy O Gp ref 227 (H) Inf Bde Op Instn. Coy. Intention to open & maintain IRON route. Method Lt. Bennett with recce party up with loading transport 9 Cams. 3 Plns move with H.L.I. Tasks. 2 Pln open & maintain route for wheels, 3 Pln open & maintain route for tracks. 1 Pln in reserve. Lt. Bennett off to join 9 Cams. 227(H)Inf.Bde O.O. despatched to CRE	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	30 "	0415 0655 1000 1005	O.C. & 3 Plns off to join up with HLI. OP BLUECOAT begins. Lt. Bennetts Recce car blown up on scattered U.S.A. mines at 699584. No cas. Harbour recce party despatched to find harbour in LA TRINGALE area 7060.	

LA TRINGALE.		1200 Recce party return having found harbour at 706602 1600 Arrived at new harbour area. 1930 Visit by CRE. 1935 No.1 Pln arrive for food. 2015 No.1 Pln off to open bye pass at LE BOURG. 2040 No.3 Pln return. 2050 No.2 Pln return. 2100 Lt. Bennett returns on captured enemy vehicle, complete with S.P gun, having taken 14 prisoners. 2150 O.C. returns 2210 O.C. off to Bde.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	31Jul	0100 1 Pln return. 0900 No.2 Pln off to make diversion for tanks at LE BOURG. 0900 No.3 Pln off to make diversion for wheels at LE BOURG. 1050 Lt. McNaught O.i/c 3 Pln trod on mine and lost a foot. 1055 Lt. Bennett sent out to take over 3 Pln. 1100 Lt. Scanlon off to recce water pt at CAUMONT 1145 Lt. Scanlon returns. 1200 1 Sec of 1 Pln off to construct water pt at CAUMONT. Remainder off to open Route FLINT for tracks. 1230 Visit by C.R.E. 1430 Visited by Chester Wilmot of B.B.C. 2235 3 Pln return to harbour. 2310 2 Pln return. 2350 1 Pln return to harbour.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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WAR DIARY

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Unit 279, Field Coy. R.E.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year AUGUST

Commanding Officer Maj.P.T. WOOD M.C.R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
La TRINGALE	1	0900 0930 1900 1930 1950	No.2 & 3 Plns off to complete their tasks. Change of Comd in Plns affected due to Cas of Lt. McNaught. Subalterns posted as follows:- O.C. 1 Pln - Lt. P. du Vivier. O.C. 2 Pln - Lt. K.W. Bennett. O.C. 3 Pln - Lt. C.E. Scanlon. R.O.1. - Lt. NGW Haines. 1 Pln return. 2 Pln return. 3 Pln return. A day of gruelling tedious work in constructing & marking tank tracks & wheel tracks. Several scattered minefields & booby trapped locns checked & mkd. Day started off very misty but improved into brilliant sunshine towards midday. Several large calibre enemy shells landed in Coy harbour area, one landed within 12 yds of Coy Office. No Cas.	
HERVIEUX	2	0900 1700 1730 1810 1930 2100	Plns out to continue improving & marking tracks & rds. 3 Pln return. 2 Pln return. 1 Pln return. Coy move to new harbour area. Coy arrive at new locn 693547. Another tiring day on rds and tracks in broiling sunshine.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	3	0800 0900 1700	Visited by C.R.E. Plns out on rd Maintenance All Plns back at Coy harbour. Brilliant sunshine all day.	
	4	0810 1400 1700 1800 2350	Visited by C.R.E. Recce party off to find new harbour area in new locality. Recce party return having found Harbour Area at 687467. Plns move off to new area. Lt. BOARDMAN arrived as reinforcement to replace Lt. MacNaught.	
	5	0300 1100	Movement order arrives. Coy HQ left harbour.	PT Wood Major R.E.

LE BRESSI		1240	Arrive new harbour area. Very hot all day.	O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	6	1140 1515 1520 1720 2040	2 pln off to MONTCHARIVEL to improve rd. Lt. Haines off to recce new harbour area in 7044 area. 2 Pln return. 7 Reinforcements arrived. O.C. off to Bde at 776424. 3 pln off to Bde at 776424.	
	7	0715 0750 1000 1400 2215 2235 2240 2350	Lt. Haines off to Bde for Route Recce Lt. Boardman with Stella Pump & Water Supply Equipment off to M.R. 724434 where 3 Pln are to open and maintain Water point. Lt. Boardman returns after delivering Water Supply Equipment to 3 Pln. Lt. Haines returns having completed his job. C.R.E. arrives and gives orders for 1 & 2 Plns to join 3 Pln. Message received from 3 Pln confirming C.R.E.s order 1 & 2 Plns move off to join 3 Pln. 1 & 2 Plns arrive at 3 Pln locn.	44(L) Inf.Bde Op Instn 3 dtd. 7 Aug. (1) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
LENAUDIÈRE	8	0645 0700 0740 0805 1030 1100 1145 1220	1 Pln completed their task which was a tank track from S of Montchamp to Estry the last ½ mile being in front of our FDLs. 2 Pln completed tank track from S of Montchamp to Estry experienced heavy mortar fire but no Cas. 1 Pln return. 2 Pln return. Orders received to move remainder of Coy to 3 Pln area. Visit by C.R.E. Move off to new area. Arrive new locn 738429.	
	9		Quiet day. 150 men managed to get to St Martin to see the pictures. Hot sun all day. O.C. returned from Bde at 1230 hrs.	
	10	0500 0505 0830 1500 1520 2100	1 Sec of No.1 Pln off in sp of 8 R.S. Lt. Haines and Recce party off to 8 R.S. O.C. off to Bde. 1 Sec of 1 Pln return. Lt. Haines returns. 3 Reinforcements arrive. Brilliant sunshine all day.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	11	1030 1110 1210 1300 1320	O.C. returns. O.C. to Bde. Orders recd. to despatch Recce party & No.1 Pln to join 8 R.S. at M.R. 735394. Orders recd. to remove remainder of Coy to MONTCHAMP area. Lt. Haines off to marry up with 8 R.S. Lt. Boardman off to recce new harbour	

MONTCHAMP		1400 1430 1510 1600 1830	No.1 Pln off to marry up with 8 R.S. Remainder of Coy moved off. Coy arrived at new locn 713406. Visited by C.R.E. No. 1 Pln & Lt. Haines return from 8 R.S.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	12		Very quiet day. No.2 Pln occupied in burying dead animals in the MONTCHAMP area.	
	13	2245	Movement orders recd.	
LES CRIQUETS	14	0500 0900 0930 1000 1230	No.2 Pln move off to new locn. No.1 Pln moved off to new locn. No.3 Pln " " " " " Coy HQ " " " " " Coy arrive at new locn 963594.	
	15	0800 1000 1030 2200	Lt. Boardman off to recce R ORNE for Bridge site for Cl. 9 F.B.E. Site found at 984577. Gap 200', approaches poor due to site having been heavily bombed and shelled. 1 Pln commence work on East bank approaches. 3 Pln " " " West " " Bridge opened for traffic.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	16.	1705	Visited by Comd. 15(S) Div. Brig. Barber.	
	17.		Very hot day.	
	18	1225 1330	Coy move off to new harbour area Coy arrive at new harbour 990487.	
ESPINS	19	2035	R.E. O.O. No. recd.	R.E. 15(S)Div O.O. No.5 (2)
	20	0600 0900 1340 1800	Coy at 1 hrs notice to move. O.C. to Bde "O" Group No.1 Pln off to marry up with 8 R.S. No. 1 Pln return. Op cancelled.	44(L) Bde No. (3)
GLATIGNY	21	0930 1030 1430	Coy move off to new harbour. Coy arrive at new harbour area 120406. No.2 & 3 Pln out to mark & improve tank track from FALAISE to TRUN.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	22	2330	Work continued on tank track. Orders recd for Op Gallop.	R.E. 15(S)Div Op.Instn 10. (4)
LA HOGUETTE	23	1500 1630 1915 2130	Coy move off to new locn to marry up with 15 Recce Regt. Arrived new location 174349 O.C. to "O" group at HQ Recce. Coy O Group. 3 Pln placed under Comd C Sqn. Remainder of Coy under Comd A Sqn. Distribution of bridging & stores as per 15(S) Div Op Instn.	

		2140	3 Pln off to marry up with C Sqdn.	
FRESNAY LE SAMSON	24	0725 1800 2220	Move off on Op GALLOP. Bridging Pln left. Rds forward to harbour area choked Coy pulled off road & harboured 494598.	
ROMILLY LA PUTHENAYE	25	0630 1100 1105 1700 1730 2145 2240	Left harbour & moved along MOON in search of A Sqdn Recce. Recd Information that A Sqdn Recce harboured at LES ANTHIEUX 9870. Set off in pursuit. Despatched M.T. truck to BOGLIE to get 500 gals of petrol. Coy arrive at harbour area 982692. M.T. truck arrives. Recd orders to take over Bailey Br at ORVILLE from CANADIANS. 2 Secs of 2 Pln despatched to take over ORVILLE Br.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
SCANDENVILLE LE CAMPAGNE	26	0030 0630 0830 0830 0910 1010 1020 1100 1130 1220 1230 1300 1530 1645	Orders recd to open water pt by 0900 hrs. 1 Sec of 1 Pln off to construct water pt at 930764 Water pt est. Lt Haines off to 44 Bde. Lt. du Vivier off to H.Q.R.E. as L.O. Lt. Boardman returns. Orders recd to clear rd block at 010799 2 Secs of 1 Pln under L/Sjt Boyle despatched to clear rd block. Lt. Boardman sent off on harbour recce ref RE Move order attached. 1 Sec 1 Pln under Lt. du Vivier off to dismantle 20' br at BERNAY & replace with culvert. Lt. Boardman returns having found harbour at 983809 L/Sjt Boyle with 2 Secs 1 Pln return Lt. Bennett & 2 Secs 2 Pln return. Coy left harbour and proceeded to new harbour. Arrived new harbour 983809	(5) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
LOUVIERS	27	1050 1110 1400 1405 1410 1430 1620 1625 1800 1810 1900	Orders recd to move to new harbour area. Lt. Haines despatched to recce new area. Orders recd over the air to cancel move, and send officer rep to HQRE. Coy to move to Rd. junc 137890. Lt. Boardman off to HQRE. Lt. Haines returned from recce having left guard on new harbour. Coy move off. Intend to pick up harbour guard on route. Arrived at rd. junc 208884, met Lt. Boardman who had orders from C.R.E. as attached. O.C. off to Bde. Orders recd to move immediately to 252926. Coy moved off followed by 2 F.B.E. Secs under comd Coy arrived at harbour.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. (6)

		2000	Coy "O" group, Verbal. No.1 Pln to row 1st wave of Inf across river. Then assist in ferrying. No.2 & 3 Pln build Class 9 Shore loading raft. Then ferry.	
		2010	O.C., Pln Comds, Pln Sgts, Pln L/Sgts & Lt. Haines proceed to R. SEINE to look at site.	PT Wood Major R.E.
		2145	Plns move off to br site at PORTJOIE	O.C. 279th Field Company
		2345	No.1 Pln row leading tps of 44 Bde across R. SEINE.	R.E.
	28	0015	2 & 3 Plns commence building rafts.	
		0720	First Veh of Bde across. Torrential rain with resultant slippery conditions, held up work. 3 O.R.s wounded by M.G. bullets.	
		1400	Rafting taken over by Corps Tps with Close Support Raft.	
		1410	No.2 Pln commenced dismantling F.B.E. Ferry.	
		1900	Recd orders from Bde to be prepared to move forward by 2000 hrs.	
		2000	Dismantling of ferry completed.	
		2220	Recd orders from Bde via Lt. Haines to move forward to 286903 area at 2255	
		2255	Coy moved off to new area.	
		2359	Coy crossed R. SEINE by Bailey Br. at St. PIERRE DU VAUNRAY 267906	
ANDE	29	0015	Coy arrived in new harbour area 286903	PT Wood Major R.E.
		0630	Lt. Boardman out to recce with 8 R.S.	O.C. 279th Field Company
		0830	No.2 Pln off to set up water point.	R.E.
		1400	Water point established at VATTEVILLE DAUBEUF 326941	
		2000	New allotment of R.E. tasks recd.	O11 (7)
	30	0800	No.3 Pln take over DUKW crossing at PORTEJOIE. No.1 Pln take over Close sp rafting. No.2 Pln open & maintain rd.	

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WAR DIARY

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Unit 279, Field Coy. R.E.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year SEPT. 1944

Commanding Officer Maj.P.T. WOOD M.C.R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ANDE	1	2100 2300	Day of orders & counter-orders. Weather showery with bright spells Lt. Haines off to CRE to receive briefing on route recce Lt. Haines returns	
	2	0830 1230 1800	Lt. Haines with 1 Sec of 3 Pln off on Route Recce 1 Sec of 1 Pln off to H.Q.R.E. to Recce new harbour for H.Q.R.E. Lt. Haines returns having completed half of task & reported result to C.R.E.	
FEUILLY	3	0530 0830 1055 2030 2100	Lt. Haines with 1 N.C.O. & 6 men from 3 Pln off to do further Rd. Recce. Coy move off to new area under Cmd for move 44(L) Inf. Bde Arrived at harbour 482155 Orders recd to move to new area 2100hrs Coy move off.	44(L) Inf. Bde Move order 10 (1)
WANNEL	4	0125 0800	Coy arrive at new harbour. Take over maintenance of Cl.18 br. at LONG.	
LIGNY	5	0300 0830 0920 0930 1220 2315	Move orders recd from C.R.E. Coy move off to new harbour area Crossed R. SEINE 1 Pln handed over mce of LONG br. to 70, Fd Coy RE. Arrived at new locn 099017. O.C. off to Bde "O" Group	05 (2) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
RONQ	6	0250 0840 2010 2345	O.C. returns with Bde Movement order. O.C. off to Bde. Arrived at temporary harbour 758487 O.C. to Bde "O" Group	44 Bde Move order No. 13 (3)
	7	0130 0600	O.C. returns, Coy "O" Group. Verbal. Intention 279, Fd.Coy.RE to take up defensive position on R. LYS from br 757541 incl to Rly br 742536. Method No.1 Pln. No.2 Pln. No.3 Pln. All tps to be in position by 0700 hrs. Plns left to take up defensive posn in MENIN	

		0650 0700 1000 2200	O.C. off to see Plns. Lt. Haines off to C.R.E. as L.O. Lt. Haines returns. Plns withdrawn from defensive posn having seen no enemy all day. Verbal orders from 44 Bde to conc at Coy HQ locn for the night & move to BELLEGHEM at 0930 hrs on 8 Sep.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
BELLEGHEM DESSELGHEM	8	0930 0941	Coy move off to new area Crossed frontier into BELGIUM Arrived locn 852514. Moved off to new locn. Arrived at new locn 931610.	
	9		Day of rest. Fine day but rather cold.	
MALINES	10	0010 0815 1010 1610	Move order recd. Lt. Boardman off to recce new harbour Coy left for new area. Coy arrives at harbour 680732	44 Bde Move order No. 14 (4)
	11		Very quiet day, sunshine but a little chilly.	
WESTERLOO	12	0300 1200 1440 1800	Orders recd to move to Albert Canal area Left for new area Arrived at new locn 030800 No.2 Pln off to take over mtce of Cl. 9 F.B.E. br at 071843 from 233, Fd. Coy. R.E. Nos.1 & 3 Plns off to take over protection of br.	H.Q.R.E. 150/RE (5) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
GHEEL	13	1345 1610 1650 1720 2300	Orders recd to move forward. Coy moved forward. Crossed ALBERT CANAL. Arrived at harbour area 073868 K Pln F.B.E. arrive under Cmd.	
	14	0600 2000 2220	1 & 2 Plns off to 44 Bde with FBE Pln to assist in forcing crossing over JUNCTION CANAL. FBE raft constructed at 075927. In between concentrated enemy shelling 2 A/Tk guns ferried across Ferrying discontinued as 8 R.S. did not require further vehs across. Day of very tiring & trying work. Under shell & mortar fire the whole time.	
	15	0020 0200	A Pln of 278 under Cmd of Lt. Murray placed under Comd. Following discussion with Brig. 44 Bde, it was decided to increase the ferrying facilities. Pln of 278 was therefore ordered to construct Cl.9 Shore loading raft 10 yds upstream of existing raft. FBE ferries brought down & unloading commenced. Slow progress owing to heavy shellfire	

		<p>0500 No.3 Pln relieved by No.1 Pln.</p> <p>0545 Heavy enemy conc. tank attack penetrated to canal bank. Situation very confused. It was decided to temporarily abandon constn of addition raft as site was swept by MG fire from flanks. Defence posns were taken up covering raft site. Continuous heavy shellfire brought down on site.</p> <p>0720 C.O. 6 RSF arrived at site to recce possible means of crossing to reinforce 8 R.S. After discussion with Brig. it was decided to bring up more assault boats to enable 6 RSF to cross canal.</p> <p>0830 Enemy put in counter attack under cover of heavy shellfire from the flanks. Much confused fighting on other side of canal, with interchanges of automatic fire across the canal.</p> <p>0840 Enemy snipers established themselves in a granary on far side of canal & warm time was had by all.</p> <p>1200 Attack put in by 6 RSF supported by 6 K.O.S.B.</p> <p>1400 It was decided to abandon the idea of dual ferry and to attempt to bridge. Meantime additional raft was connected to original raft making raft 120ft long.</p> <p>1800 Ferrying carried out all afternoon.</p> <p>2000 All essential veh across canal.</p> <p>2030 Two additional F.B. units brought down & operations commenced to develop raft into br.</p> <p>2100 1 F.B. unit unloaded and boats put on to waters edge, progress very slow due to spasmodic but extremely accurate shellfire.</p> <p>2110 Pln of 278 reverted to Comd own unit.</p> <p>2130 Raft which was now reduced to 100 ft due to 1 raft being hit & boats damaged again hit causing serious damage to far end.</p> <p>2150 1 Sec of 3 Pln arrive to reinforce other 2 Sec of 3 Pln who by now were reduced to 3 N.C.O.s & 10 O.R.s effective.</p> <p>2205 Attempt to turn raft round to repair damage broken up by half hour of concentrated shellfire thought to be 105 mm. Raft recd 4 direct hits in rapid succession badly damaging superstructure and boats, boats also damaged by near misses.</p> <p>2215 Raft completely out of action & message to Bde regulating point to this effect. Salvage ops impracticable 'til daylight. Men withdrawn to cellar of house 20 yds from canal bank leaving 1 look-out at assault boat ferry to communicate if services reqd.</p> <p>2345 O.C. arrived at site with orders to withdraw 3 Pln leaving 1 N.C.O. & 3 men to man the assault boat ferry.</p>	<p>PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p> <p>PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>
	16	<p>0015 3 Pln withdrawn.</p> <p>0615 1 Pln off to ferry site to salvage as much eqpt as possible.</p>	

		0815	4 Assault boat ferrys opened & maintained salvage ops not very successful 2 half floaters were disconnected whereupon the remaining 60ft of raft sank in approx. 2½ fathoms.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
		1700	Ferry service operated all afternoon. Handed over responsibility to 278 Fd. Coy. R.E.	
	17	0915	O.C. off to O Group to C.R.E. HQ	
		1240	O.C. returns.	
		1740	Church service held in camp. Day of rest & checking of stores.	
	18	1000	O.C. off to Bde.	
	19		Very quiet day of rest.	
	20	1115	1 Pln off to canal site to construct Cl.9 ferry to ferry 44 Bde vehs back	
		1215	Unloading commenced	
		1400	Ferry completed 1 Pln hand over to 2 Pln under Lt. NGW Haines	
		1700	No.2 Pln return having ferried 25 carriers back	
		1730	No.3 Pln off to continue ferry	
	21	0130	No.3 Pln return having ferried back 11 carriers plus guns. Tps also ferried there being no bridgehead left raft abandoned after salvaging ½ Floating Bay.	
		0530	44 (L) Inf. Bde Op Inst No.6 recd.	44 Bde Op Inst No.6 (5)
		1000	Coy moved off	
		1150	Coy arrived at conc area 182920	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
		1810	Moved off. Hold up due to large priority convoys on rd. Whole Bde group delayed for 3 Hrs.	
GINDEBUITEN LOMMELSCHEHUT 311989		2000	Crossed Belgium-Dutch frontier into Holland - very heavy traffic on rds.	
		2200	Advance abandoned due to very heavy traffic on rds. Bde dispersed & Coy harboured at WAALWIJK 348088. A quiet night.	
WAALWIJK	22	0030	Orders recd from 44 Bde for continuation of advance. K.O.S.B. to lead in advance to contact formation, ready to move 22 1200, Coy to be at 30 mins notice from 22 1200.	
		0815	Orders recd from 44 Bde - advance may commence 22 1100.	
		0930	O.C. departs for O Group at 44 Bde HQ.	
		1030	O.C. returns. Lt. Scanlon & recce pty depart for K.O.S.B.	
		1230	C.S.M. Fahy & harbour recce pty depart for new locn. Capt. Ramsay R.E. leaves for hospital with complaint of back trouble & temperature. Lt. K.W. Bennett assumed duties of 2i/c.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
		1330	Orders recd to move immediately - O.C. departs for Bde.	
		1430	Coy leaves harbour and proceeds to S.P. STEEHSEL 3411	
EINDHOVEN		1600	Coy arrives new locn 411199.	
		2300	44 Bde O.O. No.7 recd.	O.O. No.7. (7)

	23	0630 1200 1500 2200 2330	C.S.M. Fahy & recce pty depart to join 6 R.S.F. Coy at 30 mins notice to move from 0800 hrs. Take over mtce of Cl. 40 br over canal at 390250. 1 Pln arrives on site. Close imprest account in Belgium currency and exchange for Dutch money. 2 Pln take over mtce of Cl. 40 br. Br area being subjected to spasmodic & inaccurate shelling. C.S.M. Fahy returns. 15(S) Inf.Div Op.Instn. No.28 recd.	15(S) Inf.Div.Op.Instn. No.28 (8)
	24	0400 0900 1100 1600	3 Pln take over mce of Cl. 40 br. Wear deck of Cl. 40 br completed & br handed over to 280 Fd Coy R.E. 3 Pln returns. Lt. P. du Vivier & recce party leave for R.S. Lt. P. du Vivier & pty return - no work to do. Raining heavily. Coy prepares for a very wet night.	
	25	0800 1330	It rained very heavily & approx 60% of Coy soaked. Rum issue authorised at 2330 (reached us 0045 - too late to be of use). O.C. wants to find dry billet for the men. General move commences to billet in Phillips factory building which is just across the rd. Here, at least, we shall be dry. Still having heavy periods of rain.	
	26	0900 1500 1630 2100	Rained heavily last night - management & personnel of Phillips factory have been most kind and co-operative & have spared no pains to help us. Visited by C.R.E. O.C. & 1 Sec of 3 Pln depart to remove a few trees from rd in area of 44 Bde HQ. O.C. & sec of 3 Pln return - no work necessary. Receive orders from C.R.E. to give close protection to Best Cl 40 & Cl.9 Brs. (Letter 159/RE attached).	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. Letter 159/RE (9)
	27	0730 0915 1230	Personnel move out to take on protection of bridges. Method :- 2 Pln rly br - relief by 3 Pln at 6hr intervals. Local protection of Cl.40 & Cl.9 brs by 1 Pln - 2 secs up at a time. Visited by Lt. Work who brought news of slight change of plan. Lt Work left to contact O.C. at Cl.40 Br. 3 Pln depart to take up reserve posns in BATA factory. Plan now becomes 2 Pln close protection of Rly br with posts on NORTH bank of Canal and 3 Pln in reserve, with 1 Pln still giving close protection to Cl.40 B.B & Cl.9 br. The posn on our L flank (Westerly) seems a little vague & there appear to be no tps to the West or S.W. of us.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	28	0800	A quiet night at the br sites. Weather getting much colder at nights & showers & heavy rain frequent. The occasional shell	

		<p>still drops between the Rly br and the Cl. 40 B.B. German Tps can be seen moving about 2000 yards away. The gunners have a go at them and movement is not so obvious.</p> <p>1600 Most of the Coy had a bath today at the MUNICIPAL BATHS EINDHOVEN. Apparently we are the only British Tps between Jerry & Div.HQ. I understand Div HQ is a little perturbed</p> <p>1930 O.C. departs to be on site during the night</p>	
	29	<p>0900 Report from 1 Pln to say nothing to report</p> <p>1000 O.C. returns</p> <p>1300 Lt. Boardman departs to recce br over R. DOMMEL at 399321</p> <p>1515 Lt. Boardman returns - 2 assault boats reqd by RSF to ferry supplies</p> <p>1700 Assault boats arrived from 624 Fd Pk Coy & Lt. Boardman takes them to the site.</p> <p>1930 O.C. departs for site of defensive posns.</p>	<p>PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>
	30	<p>0800 Report from 1 Pln nothing to report</p> <p>0930 O.C. returns. Lt. Boardman departs to classify br over R. DOMMEL at 408822</p> <p>1100 Lt. Boardman returns. Br Cl.5 15ft span (4 No.) ⊙ Timber beams on pile bents 10ft(w)</p> <p>1945 O.C. departs for defensive posn.</p>	<p>PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I.
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages
will be prepared in manuscript.

ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Unit 279 Field Company, R.E.

Month and Year Oct 1944.

Commanding Officer Major P.T. WOOD M.C.,
R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
EINDHOVEN.	1	0630 1000 1230 1300 1800 1930 1130	O.C. returns from site of defensive positions WEST of BEST. Lt. BOARDMAN departs to recce new harbour. O.C. departs to see C.R.E. and 44 Bde. Lt. BOARDMAN returns from recce in area BEEK. O.C. returns. Fairly heavy shelling of br area but no damage done. O.C. departs for Br positions. Very bright moonlight - slight enemy air activity - flares dropped. Today has been fine and cold with occasional slight rain.	
STIPHOUT (NEAR HELMOND 5321)	2	0830 1030 1230 1245 1600 1640 1745	O.C. returns from site of defensive positions. Lt. BOARDMAN again departs to look for new harbour. Receive orders to hand over defence of brs to 278 Field Coy, R.E. w.e.f. 1600 hrs to-day and to move to new area. Lt. BOARDMAN returns. Harbour in brickworks in area 5321, Nr. HELMOND. Movement order received from C.R.E. Hand over protection of bridges to 278 Field Coy, R.E. completed. Move commenced to new harbour. Wireless silence commences. Arrived new harbour - brickworks at 538221. Weather fine but cold. Accommodation sufficient for 6-700 men in kilns etc.	Message O.6 of 2 Oct 44 from C.R.E. (1) Message O.9 of 2 Oct 44 from C.R.E. (2)
	3	1200	Bright moonlight last night and very cold. Showery and wet this morning.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	4	0800 2100	Message 157/RE (Road Maintenance) received. Message received from C.R.E. that G.O.C., 15 (S) Div will visit R.E. on 5 Oct 44.	Letter 157/RE. (3)
	5	1630	A day of training with C/5 Raft and Storm Boats. G.O.C. did not appear. A fine sunny day but cold at night.	
	6	1000 1600	O.C. departs for "O" Group to C.R.E. Receives Op. Order No. 12 All officers attended address by Comdr 15 (S) Div at HELMOND.	Div. R.E. Op. Instr. No. 12. (4)

	7	1630	Lt. B.E. FIELD joined from 26 Div. Br. Pl.	
	8	1100	Address to Div R.E. at 279 Coy Location by Comdr 15 (S) Div.	
	9	1100 1730	Lt. B.W. THOMAS joined from 105 C.R.E. Lt. K.W. BENNETT evacuated with Battle Exhaustion. Recce of Cl. 30 Br site 566196, Lt. BOARDMAN and O.C.	
	10	0900 1100 1730	2 Platoon commence work on Cl. 30 Br at HELMOND. Baths at 624 Location. Road Patrol on our section. Old bridge removed; Bank Seats 80% completed. Fair Day.	
	11	0830 1130 1730	8 men to Court Martial at GEMMERT. 18 O.Rs Reinforcements arrived from 33 R.H.U. All but 2 good men. 1 and 3 Platoon on Road Maintenance - 2 Platoon on Cl. 30 Bridge. Mild day.	
	12	0800 0900 1500 1900	Lt. FIELD to C.R.E. for briefing re Recce. 2 Platoon on Cl. 30 Br., 1 and 3 Platoons roads and preparation for Exercise ANTIDOTE. Mild day but not bright. Cl. 30 completed. Ex. ANTIDOTE - O.C., 1 and 3 Platoons.	
	13	0900 0930 1800 2000	Lt. FIELD wounded in stomach and thigh, evacuated 12 Oct (Night) Coy on road maintenance and training - Cl. 5 Raft and Kapok. O.C. to Lt. FIELD - Recce of Canal near WEERT. Lt. HAINES to C.R.E. "O" Group. Lt. THOMAS replaces Lt. FIELD on Recce. O.C. returns and to C.R.E. Mild, cloudy day.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	14	0900 1800	2 O.Rs. for Court Martial at 8 R.S. 2 Platoon on Cl. 5 rafts. Other works - road maintenance. Fair day - some rain, still mild.	
	15	0900 1800	O.C. to C.R.E. with Lt. BOARDMAN - recce road. 2 Platoon on roads. Other work - repairing kapok. O.C. departs to "O" Group C.R.E. Mild day with rain.	
	16	0900 1800	Coy checking kapok and Cl. 5 Raft equipment. O.C. to C.R.E. Weather mild - poor visibility.	
	17	0900 1400 1900	Coy baths and A.B.C.A. O.C. to C.R.E. Gusty day, fresh wind. Lt. THOMAS returns from recce.	
	18	1800	Mild, cloudy day.	
	19	1400	Cl. 30 Bridge surfaced by 2 Platoon. Wet, miserable day.	
	20	1430	Capt. J.P. BLOCKET, 203436, joined from 621 Field Squadron, 7 Armoured Div as 2 i/c.	
	21		All platoons bathed.	
	22		Three blankets per man changed by A.D.O.S.	

	23	1300	Orders from C.R.E. to make up 60 of 12' x 18" fascines and 60 of 6' x 18" from 2" x 4" timber. All platoons out cutting trees; 30% completed by last light. Orders from C.R.E. for 24 Oct, App. 5.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. C.R.E. Orders (5)
EAST of BEST 385267.	24	0900 1030 1100 1315 1330 1500 1530 1600 1830 1845 1915 2030 2115 2240 2300 2330	O.C. with all Platoon Comdrs left to Recce BEST bridges and track. 1 Platoon left for bridges. 2 Platoon left for track. O.C. and 2 i/c to C.R.E. and 44 Bde. Intercepted Op. Order from C.R.E. - App. 6 - and movement order from Bde. Above orders reached Coy H.Q. Lt. THOMAS left to meet Staff Capt. to fix leaguer area. O.C. and 2 i/c back at Coy H.Q. 3 Platoon started to move. H.Q. started to move. "Q" left on ground fitting out truck. 3 Platoon and H.Q. all into new leaguer near BEST 385267. O.C. to C.R.E. O.C. back with orders for bridge, Cl. 40 at 285275. See App. 7. Preliminary Report from Div Recce Regt. 3 Platoon to do job with 1 Platoon if necessary. Equipment going to 1 Platoon Location at 402227 to await collecting. Working light asked for, no moon. Lt. SCANLON off to Recce site. O.C. at Bde "O" Group to fix protection. 1 Platoon warned to stand by. O.C. asks over blower for predetermined lorries. 1 Tp ordered to tee up lorries and then stand down. Lt. HAINES to 1 Platoon to collect lorries and deliver to Lt. SCANLON in OIRSCHOT. O.C. back at Coy H.Q. E.T.C. 0200 sent to C.R.E. Orders for 25 Oct received from C.R.E. - App. 8. O.C. informed of main items over blower.	O/15 C.R.E. Orders (6) Recce Report. (7) R.E. 15 (S) Inf Div. Op. Instr. 14 (8)
EAST of BEST 385267 OIRSCHOT 305255	25	0100 0300 0330 0830 0930 1400	Building started. Lt. HAINES back at Coy H.Q. E.T.C. now 0300 sent to C.R.E. Bridge complete. C.R.E. notified. O.C. and 3 Platoon back at Coy H.Q. Lt. HAINES left to join K.O.S.B. as R.E. Recce. 2 Platoon left to replace Lt. HAINES. Tasks - to advance along NORTH BANK of WILHELMINA CANAL towards TILBURG and to recce at BIEST for Cl. 40 Bridge. 1 Tp took over maintenance of Bridge at 285275 from 3 Platoon. 3 Platoon, followed by H.Q. moved to OIRSCHOT 305255 to site recced by C.S.M.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

		1700	Lt. HAINES in with information re bridge at BIEST. Probably 110 feet Treble Single. 2 Platoon preparing bankseats. E.T.C. last light.	
		1745	1 Platoon joined Coy H.Q.	
		1800	O.C. in. Bridge to be 80 ft. Double Single on existing bankseats.	
		1815	Lt. HAINES left for 624 Fd Pk Coy to collect lorries and take to site.	
		1820	O.C. to C.R.E.	
	26	0630	Lt. HAINES with bridging R.V. with Lt. du Vivier with 1 Platoon and proceeded to BIEST 206276 where 1 Platoon off-loaded bridging.	
		0730	3 Platoon and bulldozer clearing towpath NORTH of CANAL. Completed midday.	
		1245	80 ft. Double Single with flat approaches opened. (No ramps used)	
		1315	Message from O.C. 80' of 2' ARMCO required 1½ miles SOUTH of Bridge - I have lifted mines - we can tackle job with our bulldozer.	
		1320	C.R.E. ordered 624 to send culverting to Coy H.Q. Guide waiting to take it on.	
		1350	Message from O.C. "I can make a Cl. 9 Diversion with Bailey Spares in 1½ hours." C.R.E. informed. Cl. 9 from stringers and decking.	
		1530	Message from O.C. "Cl. 9 finished, Cl. 40 for tracks by 1800. Permanent job in 2 or 3 hours." 2 Platoon making fascine crossing for Cl. 40.	PT Wood Major R.E.
		1830	Sec of 3 Platoon left to maintain BIEST BAILEY.	O.C. 279th Field Company
		2030	Message from O.C. "Tracks and wheels now passing over permanent job. Earth bulldozed into culverting."	R.E.
		2100	2 Platoon into Company Leaguer.	
		2200	O.C. to Bde "O" Group, then to C.R.E.	
		2345	O.C. back with tomorrow's orders - 2 Platoon to support K.O.S.B. with Lt. BOARDMAN as Recce Officer; Lt. THOMAS Recce Officer with R.S.F. with Sec 1 Platoon on call; Coy to move 0830 to 1827; 20 Field Coy to take over all our bridges at 0800; 6 Assault Sqn R.E. u/cmd 279."	
4 MILES SSE OF TILBURG. 188271.	27	0700	O.C. at Bde "O" Group.	
		0730	Lt. BOARDMAN at K.O.S.B. "O" Group.	
		0800	3 Platoon to BIEST.	
		0830	Coy moved to 188271 (.) 1 and 2 Platoons complete to 182287. Arrived 0945.	
		1030	Bulldozer to 1 Platoon Location.	

		<p>1130 2 Bridgelayers reached 1 Platoon location.</p> <p>1420 Bridge laid 178296 after some preparation of site by Assault Squadron. Started dealing with 30' crater but eventually laid bridge over this also.</p> <p>1600 3rd Bridge laid at 177297 and C.R.E. informed of position. Traffic streaming through.</p> <p>1530 Lt. THOMAS reported back, having led advance into outskirts of TILBURG with Pioneer Platoon of R.S.F. Enthusiastic welcome. Swing Br at 175317 Cl. 40 and R.C. Br at 177318 Cl. 70 both intact and not prepared for demolition. C.R.E. informed. No mines found.</p> <p>1630 Written order from C.R.E. - App. 9. Coy to assist 278 Coy by clearing WEST approaches for their bridge at 178327.</p> <p>1700 Lt. SCANLON left with 2 Secs of 3 Platoon to do this.</p> <p>1620 C.R.E. notified we require 50' Bailey to replace bridgelayers. Lt. HAINES to C.R.E. with details for orders.</p> <p>1800 Lt. HAINES reached Coy Location with 50' Bailey, tippers following. C.R.E. directs that O.C. must contact Brigadier 227 Bde before closing road. Lamps sent forward to do job by.</p> <p>1810 Major GILLINGTON (O.C. 20 Field Coy) visited Coy H.Q. Major Wood also in. Officer of Platoon from 20 Coy to assist us. Not fixed definitely. Brig. 227 reported on bridges personally directing traffic, Major Wood to see him. Estimate of 3 hours to replace bridges by night.</p> <p>1900 O.C. to C.R.E. Lt. JONES, R.E., joined Coy.</p> <p>1930 O.C. in. Bridges to be replaced tonight, 1 Platoon on SOUTH one, 2 Secs 3 Platoon and Sec from Coy H.Q. under Lt. THOMAS to fill centre crater, 2 Platoon to replace NORTH one. Brigadier approves bridges closed at 2000 hrs.</p> <p>2000 Work began. Tanks dragged their bridges away. Tank on NORTH site broke down, being overdue for maintenance. Tank on South side had difficulty owing to bridge having tilted and bedded itself in. Raining steadily and a miserable job on soggy mud. No moon.</p>	C.R.E. Orders (9)
	28	<p>0330 Job complete. C.R.E. informed.</p> <p>0730 Capt. BLOCKLEY to inspect jobs. Soggy crater holding up traffic. First Aid rendered with all available timber by conscripted DUTCHMEN and C.M.P. Sec of 3 Platoon under Lt. HAINES despatched to cope with situation. Light stuff crossing O.K. but tanks breaking it up. The water has seeped in again during night and filling is spongy.</p> <p>0815 Capt. BLOCKLEY reported to O.C. Plan made for 2 Platoon to lay sandbag mat with corduroy road from dump of cut fir trees on top.</p>	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

<p>TILBURG 167305</p>		<p>0830 1045 1215 1600 1630 1800 1900 2030</p>	<p>Also to pump out hole at side of road and attempt to drain out water from below surface. See sketch at App. 9A for stages of whole job. Lt. SCANLON left to continue preparing approaches for 278 Coy. Ready to move behind 159 A/Tk Bty. Moved to PHILLIPS RADIO FACTORY, TILBURG. Location 167305 (.) Reported 10,000 ft. timber suitable for decking in factory. Manager gave away 150 squeeze torches free. Spr. CLOCK trod on SCHU mine while filling slit trench. Ankle shattered. Sjt. PARSONS, when pulling clear a length of wire, set off R-mine; one eardrum broken. Warning order - probably Bde Gp moving at first light. Order from C.R.E. - prepare to move from midnight. Don R. sent to call in 1 and 3 Platoons, each less one section. E.T.C. for both jobs 30 1200. Order from Bde - App. 10. Lt. HAINES briefed as Leaguer representative. Everyone in bed.</p>	<p>Progress sketches. (9A)</p> <p>Bde Warning Order. (10) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>
<p>DEURNE 645195</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>0430 0830</p>	<p>Reveille - moved MIDDELBEERS - VESSEM - EINDHOVEN - DEURNE collecting sections from 1 & 2 Plns en route. Leaguered 645195. Positions chosen for close defence of DEURNE. Enemy attacking from East being halted about 3 miles away.</p>	
	<p>30</p>		<p>3 Pln bathed. 1 & 2 Plns repairing & draining road DEURNE - ASTEN - LIESEL.</p>	
	<p>31</p>		<p>2 Pln bathed. Road repair continued by 1 & 3 Plns.</p>	<p>PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2119. If this is not available, and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279, Fd. Coy. R.E

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year NOV. 1944.

Commanding Officer Maj.P.T. Wood D.S.O., M.C.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
DEURNE	1		2 Pln draining rd DEURNE - ASTEN. Recce ordered of prepared rd demolitions in wood area 6512. Lt. Haines & Thomas in scout cars. Lt. Thomas blew up in Humber scout car at 668134. No one hurt. Many tanks had previously passed along the track. 14 TM; 42 lifted, some with track marks over them. Prepared demolitions NOT found. Water point opened 602127 for 44(L) Bde.	
	2	1340 1350 1450 1800	44(L) Bde attack. S.L. LIESEL objective MOOSTDIJK. Lt. Haines with left hand Bn. Lt. du Vivier with Right. Task to open up routes fwd behind leading Bns. Report from du Vivier - scattered mines area 692113, am marking. O.C. orders up 3 secs 1 Pln with minimum transport to R.V. 682128 for verge clearing. Then 2 Pln shortly after. 1450 hrs Sjt. Parr, L/Sjt. Taylor, Dvr. Dixon, all of 2 Pln, killed in accident at LIESEL. They were carrying T.Mi 42s still fuzed from a wall where they had been laid out to a truck. An explosion took place, all the mines going off. No more details are known. Verges of main rd swept 682128-694113. No mines found. The general scattered mines in fields were found during the attack, knocking out some tanks. Notification received - Capt. J.P. Blockley (late 621, Fd Sqdn 7 Armd Div) awarded immediate M.C.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	3		Coy deployed on rd maintenance DEURNE-ASTEN-LIESEL-HEITRAK. Mine clearing at 692113 disclosed odd Teller mines. At 690111 3 rows of Tmi 42 discovered, clearing proceeded. A few were found with no cover caps & Z 43 igniters. Policy now is to pull every mine with signal cable into a central dump and then blow up the lot.	
	4		Maintenance rd SLOT-HEITRAK. Mine clearing as for 3 Nov continued. L/Cpl. Bethell patrolled with K.O.S.B. but unable to reach track to be examined.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	5		44(L) Bde attack - objective MEIJEL - made no headway. Mines & soft going both a hindrance. Verges checked as far as BROEK. Pln 278 Fd Coy RE u/cmd but not employed in operation.	

		3 Pln left for Tilburg to set out in order monastery to be used as Div rest centre. Jobs - hot water system - cooking ranges - Blackouts for 400 windows - rock repairs - bar	
	6	Further mine clearing same area in morning. Afternoon "make and mend" O.C. left on visit to 3 Pln in TILBURG.	
	7	O.C. returned in morning. Mine clearing continued area 69112. Only 3 Tmi found in mornings work. Many reports now coming in of mines, both A/Tk and A/P. In this boggy country they are employed at their best on the comparatively few possible lines of advance. Further maintenance rd LIESEL-MOOSTDIJK.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	8	Sewage drain of house 609142 repaired at request of 44(L) Bde who had smashed it while moving in. Rd ASTEN-LIESEL now our responsibility again. Verges going, making 2 way traffic difficult.	
	9	1157 check. Maintenance rds ASTEN-LIESEL-HEITRAK. O.C. & 2i/c visited 3 Div. SCHU mines demonstration in afternoon. No really satisfactory answer yet. Rain.	
	10	Rd maintenance. Rain, all rds needing draining.	
	11	4 cross routes reced to join rd ASTEN-MIESEL to rd LIESEL-HEITRAK in order to make a circuit and allow rd ASTEN-LIESEL to become one way. All routes unsatisfactory, requiring up to 3 weeks work comprising hard core top dressing or corduroy construction over greater part of length. O.C. again visited 3 Pln at TILBURG. Work in main building complete. Hot water system delivering well.	Appx (1)
	12	Warned to put on SCHU mine demonstration on 15th. Site chosen and dummy figure made. 2 Pln cut and delivered 60 12 ft poles (from young firs) to 20 Fd Coy RE.	
	13	Lt. Thomas with Sec 2 Pln lifted SCHU mines in 3 Div area. 15 complete plus 10 without igniters all located by careful prodding with 4' single prodders. Spr. Hills killed whilst doing something to a dump of R mines. No one knows what. Preparations for demonstration proceeded. 2 strands of Cordtex fired with PIAT bomb travel 60 feet. 4 strands 45 feet.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	14	12 more SCHU mines lifted. One set off by careless prodder who sustained injury to his eye. He had been wearing goggles but had pushed them up onto his forehead. No other injuries. Demonstration area taped out.	
	15	SCHU mine demonstration put on in afternoon. Attended by Div Comd, C.E. and reps from all units in Div. Appx.2 Road & verges cleared down to HOF. 60 Tmi 42 2 Tmi 35 steel, 28 "S" mines lifted. Smashed tanks cleared from rd at 709081. All T mines are now pulled clear & blown up.	Appx. (2)

	16		1 Pln cleared Rd & verges down to 712067 and then to 715067. Teller & S mines. 2 Pln cleared tracks 708074-709075-714072-720071 using prodding & compressor nozzle. T mines & SCHU mines found. All tracks taped off. They are for the fwd Inf. Coys. Cpl. Chisholm & Spr. Picinni on recce patrol at night to canal at 727075. Infm reqd. What is depth of water. Is site suitable for KAPOK. What is slope of bank. What is size of floodbank. Answers 6" water over soft mud. KAPOK would just float. Bank slopes gently. Floodbank abt 5'. The plan is to do an assault crossing by day at this point, supported by fire from tanks and crocodiles against the enemy on the far bank, and then to make a cl. 9 crossing - probably by culverting & bulldozing. Plan NOT yet firm & operation will be very difficult if opposed with determination.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	17		1 Pln maintained rd MOOSTDIJK-MIESEL. 2 Pln further track clearing, 40 SCHU mines, 20 Teller mines found mostly by eye, rest by detector & prodding.	
	18	0830 1230	Rd drained as far as 713078 by 1 Pln. 2 Pln lifted over 500 SCHU mines in 2½ hrs. Located by eye & prodding between 716076 & 717077. Various tracks in wood cleared & marked. Lane cleared by compressor jet. -1630 O.C. at TILBURG visiting job at RED LION CLUB. Capt. Blockley to C.R.E. conference. Plan now in for 51 (H) Div to come round behind the enemy on canal position and then for Cl. 9 & Cl. 40 to be built at 728065 (MIESEL EAST), Cl. 9 to be job of 279 Fd Coy. Timing uncertain yet. 1 Pln to be u/cmd of 278 for br at HOOGEBRUG. Operation laid on but did not take place on Nov 18.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	19	1130 1515 1930	O.C. returned from C.R.E. O Gp. Operation to begin at once. 2 & 3 Plns & 3 D 7 bulldozers moved out to site and started bulldozing 1400. Capt. Blockley as step up to C.R.E. Capt. Blockley attended Div mine warfare conference. Reporting of mines found was tied up. Crossing opened. See Appx 3A for trace of Div routes.	Appx (3A)
	20	1400	MIESEL EAST widened & causeway heightened whole traffic crossed. Rubble cleared from MIESEL village. In refs App. 3a 3 Pln less small party ret'd from Red Lion Club job in TILBURG & took over on MIESEL EAST.	Appx. (3A) " 4
	21		O.C. to Brussels for leave. 2 Pln in support of 6 RSF checked track Lateral B 754070 -739001 with 2 secs. 3 Pln continued on MEIJEL EAST. 1 Pln u/cmd 278 Fd Coy on HELENAVEEN br. Lt. Thomas rec'd North end on lateral B 739001 - 740018. 16' ditch needs filling at 741016. Rain all day again.	Appx. (5)

	22	2000 1630	2 Pln moved out to school 749086 complete. 2 Pln worked filling 16' ditch at 741016 dragging away Cl. 5 timber br & bulldozer. Finished by hand as B dozer became bogged. Route opened. 3 Pln continued improving MEIJEL EAST & then went u/cmd 20 Fd Coy laying Summerfeld on SKY route. 1 Pln again u/cmd 278 laying Summerfeld on AYR route. All rds in shocking state thro' days of hy rain & heavy traffic. Leaguer for HQ & 1 Pln found at 739111. HQ moved. Arrived 1800 hrs having had to go round old MEIJEL EAST. Large empty house. 3 Pln joined 2 Pln at 749086 in School.	Appx. (6) PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
HELENAVEEN	23	1800	1 Pln joined HQ at 739111 & then worked again under 278 Fd Coy. 3 Pln again u/cmd of 20 Fd Coy. 2 Pln improved B lateral which is cracking up on NORTH side. Ditch crossing also finished off. Capt. Blockley to CRE to report. MEIJEL EAST becoming soft. Decision taken to lay corduroy 2 way over crossing. Another foul day.	App (7)
	24	0930	O.C. retd from leave to Brussels. Whole Coy fully committed. 1 Pln still u/cmd 278. 3 Pln still u/cmd 20 on the 2 fwd Div routes. Both Plns laying Summerfeld to make routes passable. 2 Pln laid corduroy over MEIJEL EAST with 2 secs and Inf carrying party. Lt. Haines supervised Inf loading party in ASTEN. 2 secs of 2 Pln checked unloading area beside lateral B for BUFFALOES. HQ Pln put every available man into putting hardcore on lateral B and also maintained the water point at ASTEN. Many Infantry working on rds which were just kept open. The two fwd routes had no foundation and became a sea of mud and impassable except over logs or Summerfeld. More Rain.	App. (8) PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	25		SKYE route maintained also lateral B. 2 Pln continued 2 way corduroy over MEIJEL EAST.	App. (9)
	26		MEIJEL EAST finished. All excellent job. Plns had day for general sort out which was very necessary after the week's hard slogging in the mud.	
	27		Small mtce party on lateral B.	
	28		Ground checked at SLOT for R.E.M.E. to recover tanks. MEIJEL EAST maintained. Water point at ASTEN closed.	
	29		Notification recd Major P.T. Wood M.C.R.E. (O.C.) awarded immediate D.S.O. L/Sjt. O'Shea awarded immediate M.M.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	30		Lateral B maintained. All officers attended cloth model exercise for next operation by 44 Bde.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279 Field Company, R.E

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year Dec 44

Commanding Officer Major P.T. WOOD, DSO, MC,
RE

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
HELENAVEEN 739111	1		Preparations for operation GUILDFORD to clear enemy from pocket WEST of MAAS in front of VENLO (.) Assembly area for 6 K.O.S.B. checked for mines (.) Preliminary task:- Build three small bridges at 864096 (.) Not possible by day (.) Unnecessary stores offloaded at Field Park (.) Necessary stores offloaded at site by night (.) Ground soft and some trucks bogged (.) All pulled out eventually (.)	
	2		Tying up for operation to-morrow, see Appendix 1 and 2 for orders (.) At night three 30-ft Baileys built at 864096.	App. 1 and 2.
	3		Operation GUILDFORD (.) Jobs:- 2 Platoon to advance in Kangaroos behind flails and mark right edges of gaps by means of long poles with gap marking signs on top (.) 6 gaps each numbered from right (.) 2 Platoon to remain at A/Tk Ditch and maintain bridges laid by Churchills A.V.R.E. (.) 1 Platoon to go up when 2 Platoon Kangaroos returned and mark left edge of gap (.) 3 Platoon to do any jobs required in BLERICK (.) Recce Officer with each of four Battalions (.) Operation was most successful (.) Some misgivings had been felt as to whether the Bridge Layers and Kangaroos would bog on the soft fields but the operation went almost exactly according to plan (.) 5 of the 6 bridges were eventually laid and there were never less than three routes open at any time (.) 2 Platoon, who had the job of maintaining bridge approaches, had eight casualties from shelling, one serious (.) Of the three little bridges laid the previous night only one was in use at the end of the day, the approaches to the other two having become impassable (.) When this happens there is no method known to us of quickly making them passable again. Corduroy has proved the only method.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

	4		Plan now to open up two permanent routes into BLERICK, yesterday's objective. 3 Platoon worked on OBAN, which is exposed and was shelled at intervals through the day.	
	5		Maintenance of TAY-OBAN routes. See Trace A. A Party of P.O.W. were taken into the minefields, where they cheerfully lifted tellers with alacrity. They had laid them during the two nights preceding our attack. All T.Mi. 35 (uncommon these days) and none booby trapped. 140 from area 883096 and 80 from 882097. Lt. Haines and Sjt. Cooke began eight day course on mines and explosives for new pioneer platoons of 44 (L) Bde at HELMOND.	Trace A.
	6		O.C. to 2nd Army Mines Conference. Ordered to make Cl. 40 crossing at 889123. O.C. had done preliminary recce previous day. Enemy-observed by day. Probably 70' Double single. Plan: Lt. BOARDMAN bridge Commander. His Platoon (2) to lay out on night 6/7 and build, assisted by 2 sections 3 Platoon night 7/8. 1 Platoon to unload night 6/7. Div Bailey Platoon to be Used	
		1630	Capt. BLOCKLEY and Lt. BOARDMAN on site. No preliminary clearing necessary, old R.C. bridge had been blown clean away and both abutments demolished.	
		1700	Setting out began.	
		1830	1 Platoon arrived and began unloading. An hour late owing to a breakdown.	
		2245	Unloading finished. Near baseplates and rollers in position. Far bankseat 70% dug out.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
KIRKEN KUILEN 765130	7		Lt. SCANLON with 2 sections 3 Platoon began dismantling our laboriously constructed Red Lion Club at TILBURG, the town having now been taken over by 1 Canadian Army. On reaching the Bridge Site in the evening, it was found that one baseplate had collapsed through the day's heavy rainfall having run down the hill and through a crack in the tarmac and so washed out the bankseat. Building was therefore held up while a transverse drain was dug to prevent this re-occurring and a grillage was put down. Bridge was opened at 0230 hrs. During the day company moved to former Dutch Reformatory at 765132. A hutted camp in good order. Water supply the only problem, no electricity for the pump.	
	9		See Appendix 3 for Div Plan. North road to BLERICK now clear, 12 R-mines lifted 892093. 1 Platoon working to link Corduroy with road as on trace A. Road 889123-893101 cleared of mines and small trees but not possible to open it owing	Appendix 3. Trace A.

		to 18 interlaced trees forming block at 893109 which cannot be moved without mechanical equipment which will provoke shelling. There is also crater at 894107 and 894105 where A/Tk ditch crosses road (.) Route not needed however (.)	
	10	ARMCO crossing at 839081 begun for R.A. 50% completed (.) More work on corduroy road 865094 (.) Many mines previously lifted were blown up.	
	11	ARMCO crossing at 839081 80% (.) Corduroy 20% (.) Lt. Wilkinson joined company.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	12	Crossing finished (.) Corduroy 30% (.) Horse went up on mine on track 843088 - 838087 from which 6 T.Mi. 35 steel were subsequently lifted (.) It is only through some such occurrence as this that minefields off the beaten track can be located (.) It is difficult sometimes to make commanders realise that it is impossible for the R.E. to guarantee an area clear without days or weeks of methodical searching which is not, of course, possible. Track beside railway 838146 - BLERICK made passable.	
	13	C. in C. visited Division and decorated Major Wood, M.C., D.S.O., Capt. Blockley (M.C.), L/Sjt. O'Shea (M.M.). Estimated time of completion for corduroy 18 Dec (.) Draining and hard standings in camp improved (.) It was all mud and with the recent rain was becoming bog (.)	
	14	Work continued on Corduroy and hard standings (.)	
	15	" " " " " " " (.)	
	16	Further work on corduroy and hard standings (.) All pipes in camp lagged (.) Lt. HERBERT joined company (.) Div R.E. home leave ballot (.) Company did well apart from Serjeants, who were unlucky (.)	
	17	By driving the small pump off the back wheel of a motor-bike, enough water was pumped to operate the camp showers for an hour. Corduroy will be opened to-morrow evening (.)	
	18	Corduroy - all logs laid but needs sanding on top (.) Recce done by O.C. and Lt. WATKINSON for A/Tks minefield to be laid by night, area 893082 (.)	
	19	Sanding of corduroy continued (.) Lt. WATKINSON and party from 3 Platoon laid 83 Schu mines and wired them at night 19/20 (.)	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	20	Sanding of Corduroy completed. Hard frost at night.	
	21	R-mines and T-mines collected from MEIJEL area for laying in a practice minefield for 44 (L) Bde. Recce by O.C. and Lt. HERBERT for	

		minefield to be laid area 896129 where enemy are suspected to be crossing MAAS. Night 21/22. 2 short belts of S-mines laid, at end of wood. Another night of frost.	
	22	Maintenance of NORTH route. Sjt. Cooke killed in accident while blowing up damaged R-mines, exact cause unknown. R-mine had been run over by truck with safety nail in place and igniter pin was nearly out.	
	23	Road maintenance. Lt. du Vivier and Haines with 1 Platoon laid perimeter fence in area 8902, night 23/24. No A/Pers mines available except British Shrapnel mines. These mines are NOT considered suitable for laying by night just in front of Jerry's nose.	
	24	No work apart from mines (No. 5 British A/Pers) laid within last night's perimeter wire after dark. Platoon Commander was misled by stupid infantryman and set off 2 trip flares.	
	25	No work. A good Christmas dinner was appreciated by all ranks. Frosty day with bright sun.	
	26	No work. Carol service in morning. Company assembled in afternoon while O.C. read out Christmas message and C.S.M. explained Home Leave Scheme. Another frosty, sunny day. General feeling about Christmas - "We didn't do too badly."	
	27	Day spent cleaning up Christmas mess.	
	28	At 859135 45 T.Mi.35s and T.Mi.35 blown up. Stores check begun. Roads very slippery from 10 days frost.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	29	Track swept 885114 - 888114. Platoons marched to SEVENUM to inspect our defensive positions there in the event of an attack. G.O.C. inspected camp and had tea in Officers' Mess.	
	30	House at 895121 booby-trapped. Superiority of German over British equipment for this job most apparent.	
	31	Showers at SEVENUM improved with screens. Black-outs for Bde. Recreation Room completed. New Year seen in with skirl of bagpipes.	PT Wood Capt. Maj. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279, Fd.Coy.RE

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year Jan.45

Commanding Officer Maj.PT.Wood.DSO MC RE

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Sevenum Holland.	1		Coy still in hutted camp in middle of a peat bog, the former reformatory has been made comfortable, brick fireplaces and ovens ensure adequate heating & cooking.	
	2		Lt. P.A. Watkinson & Spr. Cowan injured in eyes when a prodded SCHU mine exploded. Lt. C.E. Scanlon to hospital with jaundice. Lt. Haines in hospital with tonsillitis. Corduroy road to BLERICK sanded, 2 of the 3 40' Bailey Bridges built for the attack on BLERICK dismantled. Transomes had to be jacked up to free them from the frozen ground.	
	4		Party attended training films and VIPER demonstration.	
	5		Lt. Haines returned from hospital. Corduroy road to BLERICK still being sanded.	
	6		Coy checking G.1098 stores overhauling M.T. & generally making use of slack period.	
	7		CofE service well attended by majority of Coy.	
	8		Enemy laid anti-tyre mines near jerrican bridge, sample sent to CRE.	
	9		3 Tonner & snow plough covered our Sects of rd, but snow is mostly frozen and plough will not do much good.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	10		4 nissen huts taken to HELMOND for 46 Bde REME unit.	
	11		Erection of Nissens begins, 20 men from 2 Pln & 3 Pln billeted in HELMOND for this work.	
	13		Two huts complete, remainder of coy to baths.	
	14		Br on road East of SEVENUM dismantled. Culverts are to replace it so making a two way crossing. Permission obtained from parish priest to remove rubble from SEVENUM church for culvert job.	
	15		Hutting at HELMOND complete, party returns.	
	17		SEVENUM culvert job giving trouble as swift stream washes away fill. Decided that 7 culverts in parallel reqd. C.E. visited job and agreed to supply extra ARMCO. Major P.T. Wood acting C.R.E. while Col. Miller on leave.	

	18		SEVENUM culvert - concrete block demolished with explosives, weather - turning to gale.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	19		Thaw precaution - gale with snow. O.C. R.O.1 R.O.2 to site RED LION BRIDGE on recce.	
	20	1000	O.C. Lt. Haines. Lt. Herbert to H.Q.R.E. for instn by Capt. Nicolay R.E. re Cl. 40 br to be built. Weather clear, Sky - our heavies over.	
	21		Lt. Haines off to recce new area near TURNOUT Lt. du Vivier off on U.K. leave.	Appx. (1)
	22		Word received that plan altered and Div to move to TILBURG area. Lt. Haines proceeds to recce new harbour area.	
	23.		SEVENUM culvert job 90% complete, pipes laid and covered with brick rubble. Austin snow plough handed over to 249 Fd Coy RE whose advance party has been with us for 2 days under Capt. Clive. Lt. Herbert and 84 men proceeded under comd of 20 Fd Coy RE to build treble double Bailey for RED LION Bridge.	Appx (2)
	24		O.C. to TILBURG to see new accommodation. Coy billeted in private houses. Tpt in large factory with cookhouses also in factory.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	25	0945	Coy moves out of hutted camp SEVENUM via EINDHOVEN - BEST for TILBURG.	
TILBURG 175315	26		Recce for W.P. at 244343. Start on making blackout for Rear Div.	
	27		W.P. est but frost so severe that STELLA could not be kept going and water froze in S tank.	
	28		W.P. dismantled. Blackouts & glass for Rear Div 70%. Some minor plumbing done for mobile Bath Unit.	
	29		Gas Eqpt checked. Blackouts for Rear Div finished.	
	31		Thaw. 3 dully pillboxes built & trenches dug for K.O.S.B. for use in demonstration of Pillbox assaulting. Sjt. Tapp began short course for 8 R.S. pioneers.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279 Field Coy. R.E.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year Feb.45

Commanding Officer Maj. P.T. Wood, D.S.O. M.C.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TILBURG 175315	1		Coy still in private billets, with large factory for officers, messing, and vehicles. 6 R.S.F. require maximum numbers instructing on A/Per mines. 4 Instructors taking continuous classes.	
	2		Lt. Haines & C.S.M. recce for new area, assembly area for operation "Veritable". Lt. Haines returned leaving C.S.M. & 2 Sprs to try to improve cramped accommodation. Officers briefed by O.C. for "Veritable". Mines instruction continued.	App. (1)(1A)(1B)
	3		Mines instruction completed. 200 Inf. shown A/Per mines. Party dispatched to assist Assault R.E. assemble bridges.	
	4	1930	Corps & Div Cmndrs addressed all Div Offrs on op "Veritable". Div signs on vehicles and tunics covered. Began move to NIJMEGEN.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
NIJMEGEN 705628	5	0140	Arrived NIJMEGEN. Very crowded billet. Capt. Blockley with C.R.E. recce routes fwd. Contacted Assault R.E. Small party to assist them to assemble A.V.R.E. bridges.	App. (2)
	6		Began transporting logs to sledges and loading them. 3 Sherdozers & 1 Kangaroo joined us. N.C.O.s briefed by A/O.C. & Pln Commanders. Party maintaining road BURGEM DAC - GROESBEEK. Some of Coy first set foot in Germany.	
	7	1000 2300	Loading of sledges completed late evening owing to late arrival of 4 Sledges. Whole Coy briefed by A/OC. 2/Lt. Black joined Coy. Remainder of Kangaroos arrived and loaded. Fourth Sherdozer arrived and put u/cmnd 6 R.S.F. Capt. Blockley to final coordinating conference, Bde HQ. Tried marrying up of Kangaroo crews with Armoured column and movt of 2 Pl in 3 Half Tracks with 1 Sherdozer. 9 Kangaroos and 2 Sherdozers joined Armd Column ready to move off next day. Preparations complete.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	8	0930	O.C., Lt. Black, 2 Pl & 1 sherdozer to Bde HQ to get into Column. Moved off 1100 hrs.	

		1030	1 & 3 Platoons in kangaroos with Armd Col. From now until after midnight this column moved slowly forward and eventually up to start line. 2 sherdozers with it. Lt. HAINES (A/2 i/c) to near GROESBEEK with 3 Armd D. 7 bulldozers to be slipped into tail of Armd Col in passing. During morning 46 & 227 Bde attacks went well though some of their flails bogged. Opposition sporadic, rather overwhelmed by terrific Artillery barrage.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
		1530	C.R.E. on M/c recced routes with O.C. Route for wheels proved as far as forward infantry. 2 Platoon set to fill small holes while held up in convoy.	
		1630	A 2 Platoon ½-track blew up on mine. Road had been cleared by preceding Fd Coy. Another 2 trucks also blew up. Without doubt mines very deep and there is no known way of locating these. A favourite German practice in Africa - not met much in N.W. Europe. Trucks at once bulldozed into ditch.	
		1800	O.C. with Lt. BLACK and 2 Platoon get out to recce F.U.P. Bulldozer and 1 ½-track bogged. Remainder went on and had a look at start line. No shooting. 2 Platoon began marking while O.C. went back to send forward bogged trucks. Recce car got squirted accidentally by flame thrower. Stuff did not ignite but not comfortable among blazing houses. Then Recce Car stuck in slit trench. O.C. walked back, sent up 2 bogged vehicles - to collect Lt. BLACK en route.	
		2000	O.C. at Bde. Tank track for Armd Col unpassable. C.R.E. arrived, having found a way round and personally cleared up to start line with bulldozer, pushing trees & R-mines off road.	
		2030	Brigadiers orders - O.C. to light approach road for Armd Col and take personal command of columns allotted for lanes 4 & 5 now to be concentrated on opening AYR route. Lanes 1, 2 & 3 as before.	
		2115	O.C. reported to Bde - route lit. Awaiting Armd Col. Called up Lt. BLACK & 2 Platoon and told them new plan. All waited at top of start line.	
	9	0200	Armd Col began to arrive. Only 2 A.V.R.E. bridges and not full complement of flails. All A.V.R.E. officers who had been recceing ahead had vanished. Columns 1, 2 & 3 sent off to starting point with 2 A.V.R.E. bridges. Zero hour now fixed for 0400. Gordons arrived and took 2 Platoon to begin clearing PEARL BLACK. Still no shooting.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
		0330	O.C. gave out orders to NORTH force. 2 flails to flail up to ditch along road which was in fact only a track. Sprs in Kangaroos to follow. 2 sherdozers and one Armd D. 7 to be	

819552		<p>prepared to fill in crossing over ditch. 3 flails then to cross and go on to objective followed by sprs.</p> <p>0400 Crossed start line, heralded by brief and highly dangerous fusillade of tracer from our tanks further south. Stopped this. Advance proceeded uneventfully until 6 cowed Germans bobbed up out of a hedge and surrendered.</p> <p>0515 Reached A/Tk ditch. Bulldozers began work on half demolished earth causeway.</p> <p>0545 Flails able to cross and flailed on to objective. No mines had been met at all. No opposition. Meanwhile sprs were laying a mat of logs spiked together over the bulldozed causeway and finishing the marking of the gap</p> <p>0700 Gap declared open. Bde informed over wireless. Began collecting up funnies, some of which had temporarily ditched themselves. As it grew light began moving funnies back out of sight behind houses and - after being told nothing would be coming through for a while - eventually back to start line. Spr party left near crossing until battalion had passed through at about 1130. Everyone collected up then at the top of the start line, we found a fairly undamaged house, and began sorting out. Meanwhile on lanes 1, 2 & 3 further south progress had been as follows:- No. 1 gap was abandoned almost at once as everything got bogged. No. 2 gap was put through almost as planned except that the A.V.R.E. laid his bridge badly and the second A.V.R.E. bridge was called into gap 2 and laid to the left of the first. On gap 3 the approach to the ditch was poor & after a bulldozer had made a crossing the first half of the route was not used. After a while the A.V.R.E. bridge became impassable and traffic came up gap 2, crossed the ditch at gap 3 and returned to gap 2. Routes opened 0720 hrs. Personnel returned to top of start line. 2 Platoon with Lt. BLACK had opened road with Gordons up to their objective.</p>	<p>JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p> <p>(Some mortar fire on (these 3 gaps, only (casualty one flail (commander later on.</p> <p>JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p> <p>App. 3A.</p>
	10	<p>Whole Coy on road maintenance. Tasks - AYR route - Pearl Black as far forward as possible - making railway fit for wheels from 818552 to 802558. Method - to fill between north set of rails to cover sleepers with 2 of ballast. Excellent track then. Track 851562 to 857557 cleared of mines. NOT fit for through route.</p> <p>1700 A/O.C. to C.R.E. conference at NIJMEGEN. C.R.E. back. Major Wood returned to Coy. Tasks for to-morrow - road maintenance. Only PEARL BLACK is good road, it is a struggle to</p>	<p>App. 3</p>

			keep all others open. 43 Div passing through 15 (S) with difficulty. Traffic control strict. Road at KRANENBORG becoming flooded by Rhine floods.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	11	0130 1000 1700	Major P.T. Wood, D.S.O., M.C., received immediate posting order to become C.R.E. 2 Army Troops, after commanding the Coy since Spring 1941. Left after breakfast. Capt. J.P. BLOCKLEY, M.C., again A/O.C. Lt. BLACK joined 8 R.S. to get a look at water obstacle in CLEVE as soon as possible. Not possible all day. Road maintenance as yesterday. All other available men on railway. O.C. at Bde. No jobs yet other than roads. Major W.F. INGLIS arrived, new O.C., from 8 Corps. Tasks for tomorrow as at App. 4.	App. 4
	12	1900	Road maintenance as App. 4. Tank track marked but expected to be boggy. Everywhere sodden. Deep mud. Angledozer on AYR. Major INGLIS toured jobs with Capt. BLOCKLEY all day. Major INGLIS to hospital for few days with poisoned foot.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	13		Road maintenance continued. All routes still passable for all traffic and can just about be kept open by all the Coy.	
	14		Road maintenance continued. Drying up nicely now.	
	15		Roads mostly O.K. now. Most of Coy bathed in magnificent improvised bath. Road maintenance continued.	
	16		Road maintenance as before plus pot-hole filling on PEARL BLOCK.	
	17	1430 1830	Recces for Leaguer Area south of CLEVE. Coy moved after lunch into very good billets. O.C. at Bde conference on Op Spider. O group. For Bde Plan see App. 5. Coy Plan:- Recce L/Sjt with each of 2 leading Bns to remove charges from river bridges if captured. 2 & 3 Platoons to move into assembly area - tasks:- 1. Open main road (CARTER) for wheels into GOCH. 2. Mark flailed gaps if necessary. 3. Assist in maintaining ditch crossings made by Assault R.E. U/Cmd.:- 2 sherdozers, 1 Armd D. 7, 1 D. 4, 12 tippers, 3 lorries culverting.	App. 5. JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	18	1100 1300	O.C. & Lt. BLACK moved up with Bde H.Q. 2 & 3 Pl followed. O.C. & Lt. BLACK forward to look at crossings over PHOENIX made by 43 Div night 17/18. Reported to C.R.E. CARTER crossing undamaged, HIKER next best of the 4 others.	Wireless as at App 6.

		<p>1400 C.R.E. visited. Put him in picture. Opposition apparently slight so 8 R.S. attempting to go straight on. 1 Pl ordered to join us on C.R.E. instructions. 279 may have to build bridge in GOCH.</p> <p>1430 8 R.S. up to . Assault R.E. laying bridge. 2 Pl with 1 sherdozer sent up to PHOENIX to be ready to make solid crossing.</p> <p>1500 O.C. at PHOENIX. Heavy small arms fire on Do Do and shelling on PHOENIX. Obviously work impossible for some time so ordered 2 Pln to move back and improve rd behind PHOENIX.</p> <p>1600 AVRE bridge on HIKER unsatisfactory. 2 Sherdozers sent up to bulldoze solid crossing. On arrival however they found br O.K. so returned. Got bogged en route & were stuck 'til morning of 19th. HIKER now impassable and full of bogged tanks.</p> <p>1700 O.C. to Bde. 6 KOSB now on CARTER unable to get over Do Do. Bridge laid but tank unable to disengage and under direct Spandau fire. O.C. to see O.C Assault RE. Nothing can be done till dark & then tank crew will demolish coupling with HE. 8 RS pushing on over HIKER having cut across from CARTER. Bridging of R. NIERS obviously not possible tonight & unlikely tomorrow. 51 Div entering GOCH from SOUTH. Captured br 904441.</p> <p>1815 2 & 3 Plns sent back for night. Plan made with Assault RE to make fascine & bulldozed crossing over do do by side of Br on CARTER. This was being tied up from 2100 till 2330. Armd D7 u/comd 2 AVRE fascine tks for job. Assault R.Es job.</p> <p>2200 Everyone to bed except Lt. Black (who was marrying up bulldozer) & O.C.</p> <p>2359 Crossing party moved off.</p>	<p>JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p> <p>JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>
	19	<p>0230 O.C. on site. Work just beginning. Sporadic Spandauer but no more shelling.</p> <p>0430 O.C. back & to bed. Bde infd. Bridge O.K. for wheels.</p> <p>0630 Crossing completed. Bde informed. Rd mtce during day. Rd 909448-910433 checked. Several UXB (British). B.D. Sec sent for.</p> <p>1600 Maj. Inglis returned from hospital.</p> <p>1700 Lt. Herbert reported Br 910433 needs 100ft. Bailey. Abutments appear to be in good shape but NOT passable carry out detailed Recce because of snipers. All Officers had had orders to get a look at any bridge across R. NIERS as early as possible. C.R.E. informed. No work tonight. Recce of other bridge arranged for early tomorrow in conjunction with Infantry.</p>	
	20	<p>0900 Reports in about Bridges. 908435 Cl. 40 intact. 907434 needs 60ft. Bailey. 904441 intact apart from 2 big holes in decking.</p>	<p>JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>

		1100	C.R.E. at Coy H.Q. Long and fairly useless discussions to what Cl. bridge at 904441 was, only one officer present having seen it. After further details had been acquired decision taken to make this bridge into a certain cl. 40 by bridging holes on decking with Bailey. To start 1900. Bridge subjected to shelling by observation by day. 1 Pln attempted to fill bomb craters 913439 but shelling too heavy. Crater filled 906442.	
		1900	Bailey began.	
	21	0130	Job complete. One bridge vehicle blew up on mine. Rd mtce. Allotted part of SKYE circuit. Tippers and mud-shovelling.	
	22		Bailey at 904441 slightly damaged by shelling. Damaged parts replaced. Recce attempted of Rly 9442 but impossible to get near enough. Whole Coy together at 931477.	
	23		SKYE route maintained. Bde attack down into woods EAST of R. NIERS. Recce Sjts with 2 fwd Bns. One took the Sjt, the other didn't. No work for them anyhow. 2 Pln standing by all day. Lt. Boardman back from U.K. leave.	Appx (8)
	24		Maj. W.F. Inglis posted to 1 Corps. Rd mtce. All mech eqpt ret'd to Fd Pk preparatory to Div moving out for a rest.	App. (9)
	25	1700	3 Pln rd mtce. 1 & 2 Pln check'd & mkd Assembly areas in which Bde Gp intended to form up before moving off. Just completed when area was changed. 278 & 279 Fd Coys ordered to stop on another 48hrs to make good a stretch of rd vital for Corps plan.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	26		Coy deployed on rd. To be cl. 40 one way but for a few days may be used as 2 way. Jobs- shovelling off loose mud. Revetting banks for short stretches & making rubble berms. Surfacing sharp corner with rubble & cutting down tree. Cutting away banks at narrow stretch. All Plns working in morning. Then 3 Pln had afternoon off & worked thro' night.	
	27	1730	1 & 2 Pln finished rd job. Job complete & good. Coy worked extremely well.	
	28		Moved to s'Hertogenbosh for rest period. Quartered in 3 schools. Maj. W.M. Inglis arrived to take command of Coy.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

W A R D I A R Y.

In lieu A.F. C.2118

Unit. 279, Fd. Coy. RE

Comdg. Offr: Maj. W.M. INGLIS, R.E.

Month. & Year: March 45.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events & Infm	Refs to Appendices
S'Hertogenbosch	1		Coy billeted in 3 schools resting after Siegfried Line battles. Checking stores and issuing replacements. Half Coy bathed.	
	2		Half Coy bathed. Liberty trucks to TILBURG - EINDHOVEN.	
	3		2 60 to BRUSSELS for 48 hrs. Intention to get through whole Div during rest period. This was all but done.	
GEET-BETZ	6		Coy moved with Bde Gp into BELGIUM to GEET-BETZ. First Troops to be quartered there. Most of Coy found private billets with welcoming inhabitants.	
	7-8		Continued sorting out and re-equipping.	
	9		Training started for river crossing operation. Mock up close sp rafts made for Bns.	
	10		Training with stormboat engines.	
	11		Drivers practiced driving onto rafts on R. MAAS. O.C. to bed with tonsillitis. Coy held dance in village.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
GEET-BETZ	12		Capt. BLOCKLEY M.C. to Bde conference. Briefed for Op TORCHLIGHT. Begin planning.	
	13		Planning continued. Pl commanders told Bde plan but not place. Capt. BLOCKLEY M.C. to Bde conference on tomorrow's exercise.	
	14		Exercise BUFFALO on R. Maas. Most of those who will be on operation went down but the R.E. side was only done on skeleton and most of Coy were spectators. See App.2 for first plan. Lt. Du Vivier loaned to 11 AGRE for period of operation.	App (1) App (2)
	15		Conference at Bde to discuss day Exercise. Night exercise at full scale. Went with a swing and was instructive. Slight changes in plans.	
	16		Day off.	
065410	17		Coy moved in independent blocks of 5 vehicles up to marshalling area for operation. All arrived by last light. Mostly sleeping in dugouts and bivouacs. Fine spring weather.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
065410	18		Began working under CRE 52 Div. Job to make up LVT track for right battalion. All Pls deployed on this.	

	19		Completed LVT track.	
	20		1 Pln strengthened small bridge. 2 Pln widened crossroads. 3 Pln day off. Capt. BLOCKLEY M.C. & Lt. BOARDMAN studied far bank of river from excellent O.P. at XANTEN church tower. Impressions very favourable. Weather still dry and warm. Lt. Black posted to 53 DIV. O.C. back and took over again.	
	21		OC & 2ic to fwd O.P. but too much smoke to see much. Final coordinating conference with CRE 15 GHQ Tps who commands us for initial phases of operation. Coy told RE plan in detail.	
	22		Plans crystallised - App. (3). 4 prs. trackways collected.	App.(3)
	23		Final check up. Wireless operators briefed. Drivers briefed. All necessary stores distributed and loaded. All preparations are complete.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
BISLICH 138430	24	0200 0245 0400 0530 0715 0900 1200 1230 1800 2130	H Hour. For Company plan see appendix. First serial of vehicles called to waiting area. Message received 3 Pln married up with rafting Coys. Maj. INGLIS wounded on thigh (our only casualty). Set on far bank opened up. Reception poor. 3 Pln relaying messages. All Plns landed - things quiet now - 2i.c. to be ready to come over at short notice. 2i.c. called across. 2ic. landed. Work had gone as planned. No difficulty over buffalo landing places or over ways over bund. Our 3 preselected routes all o.k. Some hastily laid SCHU & T.M. 35 on Right cleared by 2 Pln. Rafting beginning. All 3 exits open. Lt. HERBERT started bulldozing way down from Bund on east side. D4 worked skilfully on awkward cut. Our work on beaches virtually finished. 3 Pln laid some chesspale at raft landing sites. Laterals marked between all 3 routes out. Pl of 202 Coy took over from us. Our vehicles began to arrive and CSM began concentrating Coy in RE rally area. Moved into houses 138430. 50% vehicles arrived. Conference at Bde. Plan for 44 Bde to move out of bridgehead at first light and capture br over R. ISSEL at 203530. Lt. HAINES & Sec 3 Pl briefed for this. To remove leads from charges and then to prepare Br for demolition by us.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	25		All Pls on rd opening for CRE. 30' crater 17441-8 deviation made. 3 Pl followed 44 Bde improving their axis. Culverting put down 167493. Much information about roads and tracks passed back to CRE mainly by OC. Wireless net worked well and saved a lot of time. We have not hitherto used it as much as we might have done.	App.(4) JP Blockley Maj. R.E.

			<p>6 KOSB leading Bde advance had trouble clearing through woods and the final attack on the bridge failed.</p> <p>During this period Spr. ANGEL in the scout car put up a very fine performance using his Bren to good effect and being largely instrumental in halting the enemy close on the heels of C Coy's withdrawal.</p>	O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	26	<p>0900 OC to meet CRE. Coy to bridge at 203530 when possible. Bridging allotted for this not yet across RHINE. Lt. SCANLON appointed Bridge Commander with orders to get a look at site as soon as situation allowed. 6 RSF made small bridgehead during the day but recce of site not possible.</p> <p>Lt. BOARDMAN to recce new Harbour area, about 1849.</p> <p>3 Pl to work on new Bde axis.</p> <p>1400 O.C. visits CRE 53 Div whose bridging we were to use. CRE had heard gap was a culvert & bulldozer job. Armd D7 and culvert lorry ordered up.</p> <p>1430 Coy moved to 187497.</p> <p>1600 OC met CRE at Div.</p> <p>In view of CRE 53 Div report that bridging would not start to cross RHINE until midnight and that anyhow the gap was small it was decided to allot 279 ½ the Bailey Platoon allotted to 20 Fd Coy who had another bridge to do upstream.</p> <p>2i/c informed by wireless and lorries collected.</p> <p>1800 O.C. at Bde. Bridge urgently required. O.Cs wireless broke down. Half way up to site car bogged so O.C. proceeded on foot considering that it would be quicker to do recce himself than to get his subalterns onto it.</p> <p>2000 O.C. reached RSF Bn HQ. With 3 sniper guides proceeded across country on to site. All quiet. Bridgehead 400 yards deep. Measured gap with fence wire. 70 foot Bailey needed. All previous reports hopelessly misleading. Lesson - you must have an RE officer to see it himself.</p> <p>2245 OC at Bde. All routes up to bridge impassable except main rd from HAMMINKELN. G3 laying this on while O.C. returned to Coy, having ordered stand by over the air.</p> <p>2315 OC at Coy. All pls to go up and to unload and build as quickly as possible. If not finished by first light smoke to be fixed. Lorries to be back down main road anyhow before first light. Lt. SCANLON to tie up at Bde with KOSB patrol.</p>	<p>JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p> <p>JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.</p>	
	27	<p>0015 Convoy moved off. Got split immediately through insufficient controlling. Married up eventually after much hard work.</p> <p>0230 KOSB reported to Bde rd clear. Convoy darted through.</p>		

		0245 0545 1000	Work began. Bridge complete. A first class bit of work though not technically perfect. All trucks had left by first light. Coy congratulated by G.O.C. Brig. & C.R.E. Lt. to Bde and then to see if bridge was all right. Unable to get up to bridge as an S.P. was knocking out each truck as it passed up the road. But R.S.F. on the spot reported it was all right.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	28	1000 1630	Lt. Herbert and sec 1 Pl to bridge. Found that 53 (W) Div had taken over maint and were repacking far end. It seemed foolish for 53 Div to take over a bridge in our area as they were advancing, so O.C. asked CRE if we should continue to maintain it. This was approved. Lt. BOARDMAN with Sec 2 Pl to KOSB to lift R and SCHU mines. 20 R mines lifted. One casualty on SCHU mine when a spr was carrying R mines into a field to destroy them. We are still too casual in areas known to be mined.	
	29		Bridge & Road maintenance.	
	30		Capt. BLOCKLEY M.C. & Lt. Du Vivier with small party to BEST where Army Commander formally opened the all weather BAILEY and thanked all RE units involved in the Rhine crossings. Lt. Haines reced 4 sites for waterpoints. Coy on rd maint and salvaging own & enemy equipment.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	31		Water point set up 203529. Rd maint & salvage continued.	JP Blockley Maj. R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279 Fd. Coy. R.E.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year Apr. 45

Commanding Officer Maj. Carver R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1		Coy living in 3 farms on EAST side of R. IJSSEL. Whole Coy did an hour's drill in preparation for G.O.C. Inspection tomorrow. Maj. Carver arrived as new O.C.	
	2		Div R.E. paraded for G.O.C. Inspection, address, and march past to pipe band. Mtce party on our water point 203530.	
	3		Roads maintained round HAMMINKELN. Timber culvert at 217497 started but abandoned on receiving order to move. Rd blocks removed in HAMMINKELN - DINGDEN.	
	4		Standing by to move all day but didn't.	
735917	5	0530 1145	Moved off in Div Convoy. Arrived. Took over houses and a cafe.	
	6		Short informal visit from C. in C. All ready to move on in evening but move postponed.	
878242 646245	7		Moved again. Long halt in middle of day. OC to see RE 11 Armd Div who were attempting to bridge R. WESER at STOLZENAU. Enemy fire too heavy. Coy to be ready to assist 11 Armd Div if required. 11 Armd Div in fact had another attempt by themselves but fire was too heavy and the site was abandoned.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
878242 878242	8		OC & Lt. Du Vivier made recce of new site at SCHLUSSELBERG. Good site good approaches straightforward job. Lt. Du Vivier reced tank track on both sides of river. Coy moved to 878242. Plan made to bridge at 916233. Lt. Boardman bridge commander. Br to be 2 x 110' T.S. landing bays 2 x 40' E.F.B. 2 x 40' F.B. Pln 278 Coy & Pl 20 Coy u/cmd. Pl 278 to build far L.B. Vehicles to go round by bridge 10 miles upstream. Pl 20 Coy to finish slightly damaged EFB at SHOLTENAN and bring it up to new site. Telephone communications - civilian - with far bank destroyed. 11 Armd Div RE suspected civilians of having called down fire on their site by telephone. Work began 1800 and continued till last light 2200.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	9		Work continued from first light. Bridge opened 1705 hrs. No snags.	

	10		Salvage carried out at 11 Armd Div site. 222 Fd Coy put down wearing surface.	
904363	11		Moving all day.	
436431	12		Moved on in morning. Work on main road into CELLE. Strengthening and widening culverts 450450 523472. Level crossing in CELLE improved. 1 Pl assisting 20 Fd Coy with T.S. Bailey in CELLE.	
ESCHEDE	13		1 Pl rejoined. Moved twice during day.	
ESCHEDE	14		Time bombs on main road caused long delay. B.D. eventually arrived but could do no more than blow them up. They exploded at intervals through the day. 1 & 3 Pls working with bulldozers widening diversion through woods. 2 Pl built 60' D.S. 785705. Coy moved again in evening.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
825810	15		3 Pl continued work on track 750697 - 7667150.	
	16		Work on tracks as yesterday. Autopatrol assisted. Practice stand to.	
	17		Pls concentrated for attack on VELZEN. 44 Bde to do right hook. Eng. tasks to recce and work on secondary roads entering town from EAST. Attack went well. KOSB with Lt. Du Vivier rushed and captured main bridge in VELZEN.	
912862	18		1 Pl building cl 5 at 918902 with 10" poles between existing damaged R.S.Js. 2 Pl strengthened culvert 916902 and bridged 8' gap with timbers 915903.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
902955	19		Moved on.	
891209	20		Moved on to WENDHAUSEN. Bde preparing for assault crossing over R. Elbe.	
	21		All officers on recce of approaches to South bank of ELBE for possible LVT tracks. Lt. Haines made a series of thorough reconnaissances down to the banks in very open country. Water point opened 927227.	
	22		Lt. Du Vivier designed Cl 40 timber bridge to be built at 780322 - BARUM.	App A.
	23		Approaches for new bridge cleared. All materials located.	
	24		All wreckage removed from BARUM bridge site, bankseats 100% and 50%. 4 trestle bents built.	
	25		Trestle bents all built. One pier ready for placing.	
	26		Difficulty experienced in placing piers owing to uneven bottom.	
	27		All piers placed.	
	28		Coy moved into marshalling area for ELBE crossing. Plan similar to RHINE crossing so no rehearsing had been done. Coy plan was for Lt. Haines & Lt. Du Vivier to cross with assaulting infantry in	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

			buffaloes each with a section and for the rest of 1 & 2 Plns to be ready to cross for work. 3 Pln reserve and for any work on home bank. Task - to open up beach exits. At ARTLENBERG the point of assault there were two narrow roads leading up steep cuttings in 100 ft cliffs above the ferry site. 3 Pln completed BARUM bridge.	
	29	0200	Assault by 44(L) Bde across R. Elbe. Both beach exits found blocked but cleared by energetic action by Lt. Haines with our own sappers and German prisoners. Fire fairly heavy at times. 3 casualties. During the day 1 & 2 Pls worked on the roads leading up from the beach.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
845358	30	1500 1700	Most of Coy vehicles crossed by Bailey Bridge. Heavy stonk right among 1 & 2 Pl trucks. Two Sprs wounded. 10 trucks burned out. Our biggest loss of the campaign. Coy established in SCHNAKENBECK.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 279 Fd. Coy RE

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year May 45

Commanding Officer Maj. R.O.H. Carver

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
SCHNAKENBEK 845358	1		Coy harbour just across R. Elbe after assault crossings. Road block cleared in GULZOW. Miscellaneous German vehicles collected to offset the 10 which we lost two days ago through shelling.	
818495	2		Road reces carried out forward. Lt. Haines & Lt. du Vivier with leading Bns reporting on bridges etc. Culvert strengthened from cl 9 to cl 40 at 786526. Coy moved up.	
	3		Further work on culvert. Bomb craters at 771559 repaired.	
723682	4		Coy moved. No work.	
OSTENDORF	5		All resistance ceased on 21 Army Group front. Coy parade. Postal voting forms filled up. About two thirds of the Company sufficiently interested. OC and 2i/c to celebrating party at Bde HQ.	JP Blockley Capt. R.E. For O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	6 & 7		Nothing doing. Officers & Sgts celebrated on 7th.	
	8		V.E. Day. Gymkana in afternoon. 5 aside football. Beer & liquers, bonfire.	
710790	9		Coy moved into fine house at RUMPEL.	
	10		2 i/c began 18 days P.T. course to train N.C.Os as P.T. instructors. Lt. Boardman began a German course. O.C. addressed Coy on plans for the period of occupation. Brig. the Hon H.C.H. Cumming Bruce D.S.O. of 44 (L) Bde came to bid farewell to 279 Fd. Coy on the occasion of the breaking up of the Bde Group.	
	11-12		Sorting ourselves out.	
	13		Thanksgiving service attended by whole Coy.	
	14-18		D & M course added to those already running. Lt. Scanlon as unit education officer collected data from which to work out the various courses to be run. Most of the Coy are interested, exclusively in trade training. Recce of Kreis Segeberg begun under Lt. Haines. Every type of information about engineer plant stocks and resources required by	JP Blockley Capt.

			C.E. Two water points set up for distant PW and PWX camps. All administration on the civilian side has simply collapsed.	
693975	19		Coy moved to BAD SEGEBERG.	
	20-31		Recess of Kreis continued. Some supervision of PW working on roads. Drill & P.T. periods carried out daily. Numerous liberty trucks to Hamburg & Lubeck. Our own unit club "the fifty club" opened under Sgt. Devereux. Trade Training started.	JP Blockley Capt.