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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit HQ 44 (L) Inf Bde & Def Pl

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year OCT 1944

Commanding Officer Brigadier JC COCKBURN, MBE

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
ST ODENRODE HOLLAND	1	1958 2045 2230 2308	The Bde was holding the area some four miles WEST of ST ODENRODE, with the remainder of 15 (S) Div on its LEFT. Preparations were made today for relief by 153 Bde of 51 (H) Div. 'C' Coy 1 MX relief reported complete. 6 KOSB relief reported complete. 6 RSF relief complete. 8 RS relief reported complete.	
	2	0050	Bde HQ handed over to 153 Bde HQ and moved to GEMERT, with 8 RS and 6 RSF in GEMERT and 6 KOSB at BOEKEL (E53). Orders were that the Bde should rest for five days. This was the first real rest the Bde had had since NORMANDY, having been in contact with the enemy for 27 days and previously on the move across FRANCE, BELGIUM and HOLLAND. Trg with assault boats across canals was to be given priority.	
GEMERT	3		Bde resting.	
	4		Bde resting. Assault boat trg carried out.	
	5		Bde resting. Assault boat trg carried out.	
	6	0900 1430 1800	Bde Comd and BM attended Div 'A' Conference at Div HQ, which developed into a Div 'O' Gp at 1000 hrs. Div Comd addressed all offrs of the Div at HELMOND. This was followed by a Massed Pipes and Drums display by the Div bands through the streets of HELMOND to HELMOND CASTLE, where the Burgomaster and local worthies were received by GOC 15 (S) Div. Lt Gen Sir RICHARD O'CONNOR, Comd 8 Corps, also attended. <u>44 (L) Inf Bde Mov Table No 1 issued - Op "GATWICK" (later cancelled).</u>	Folio 3
GEMERT	7	1345	At the Div 'O' Gp a plan was divulged for an attack by 15 (S) Div and 3 (BRIT) Div SE into GERMANY in area REICHSWALD FOREST. Bde 'R' Gps went off this morning to recce the area and the Bde Gp was to have moved up this evening. G1 15 Div rang up to say NO move of 44 Bde today.	

		1620	Standfast order given. Recce parties returned to GEMERT and the whole project was finally cancelled.	
		1700	Comd 8 Corps spoke to Bn Comds and 2sIC at Bde HQ.	
	8		Bde again resting at GEMERT.	
		1400	6 KOSB gave demonstration of "Fighting Patrol" at BOEKEL.	
	9	1240	Bn Trg Programmes called for.	
	10	1000	General DEMPSEY, Comd SECOND ARMY, visited Bde HQ and saw Comds of Bde Gp.	
		1800	Bde Comd attended discussion and 'O' Gp at Div HQ.	
		2030	COs conference held at Bde HQ. A plan was explained for making a crossing over the canal SOUTH of WEERT by 15 (S) Div. 44 Bde were to make the brhead near MILLERT K6496. This area of the front was held by 7 US Armd Div and recce parties from bns were to be sent off immediately to live with 7 US Armd Div and patrol the area.	
	11		Recce parties went to 7 US Armd Div. Bde Comd went round area of crossing, with BM and Bde IO. Patrolling of the canal bank was carried out by bns at night. Some excellent infm was obtained.	
	12		Recce of MILLERT still going on.	
		2200	Bde canal-crossing exercise carried out near GEMERT, to give bns practice in handling assault boats and Kapok bridging.	
GEMERT	13	1000	COs conference, when plan for MILLERT canal-crossing was discussed. Patrol activity on canal in MILLERT area continued.	
	14	0930	Another COs conference held at Bde HQ.	
	15	1100	Bde Comd attended GOC's conference at Div HQ.	
		1800	COs attended conference at Bde HQ - again planning the MILLERT op.	
	16	0800	Sig office at Bde HQ was destroyed by fire started accidentally.	
		1630	<u>44 (L) Inf Bde OO No.1 issued - Op "SIRIUS" (later cancelled)</u> Preparations for the MILLERT op were in full swing today but at 2002 hrs message was received from Div HQ to say that this op had been indefinitely postponed and that all preparations would cease immediately, including the return of recce parties to bns. This was disappointing after so much work had been done, and so much excellent infm had been obtained by patrolling.	Folio 4
	17	1510	Orders received from Div ordering a move for Bde Gp tomorrow to take over the line NW of VEGHEL from 131 Bde of 7 Armd Div. This order was later cancelled and instead 8 RS were ordered to move to area VEGHEL and come under comd 131 Bde - remainder of 44 Bde remaining in GEMERT area.	
	18		Nothing to report.	
	19	1340	8 RS moved to VEGHEL, coming under comd 131 Bde.	

	20	1430	Bde Comd attended Div Comd's conference at Div HQ on forthcoming ops.	
	21		Nothing to report.	
GEMERT	22		Nothing to report.	
	23	1000	Bde Comd and BM attended conference with GOC at 227 Bde HQ, at which orders were given for the move of the Bde Gp tomorrow into area BEST - ST ODENRODE preparatory to attacking westwards towards TILBURG, under comd 12 Corps.	
	24	1100 1730 2115	Div 'O' Gp at Div HQ, attended by Bde Comd and BM. 6 RSF and 6 KOSB were ordered to conc area BEST. Bns moved immediately and Bde HQ followed to area VLEUT. 6 RSF moved fwd through BEST and reached OIRSCHOT by 1800 hrs, riding on tks of 4 GREN GDS, who were in sp. 'O' Gp at Bde HQ giving orders for tomorrow.	
VLEUT nr BEST	25	0600 0800 0850 1300 1500 1730 2030	6 KOSB started pushing along NORTH of canal through OIRSCHOT and on to BIEST. 8 RS started pushing along tracks NORTH of main rd to OIRSCHOT. 46 Bde, with KANGAROOS, pushed along BEST - OIRSCHOT rd towards MOORGESTEL, which they reached by midday. Bde HQ moved to farm near OIRSCHOT 326262. 6 KOSB patrol contacted 2 GLAS H of 46 Bde at MOORGESTEL. Bde Comd and BM went to Div 'O' Gp at Div HQ when orders for tomorrow were given out. 44 (L) Inf Bde OO No. 1 issued - Op "ERIC".	Folio 5
nr OIRSCHOT	26	0715 1300 1500	44 Bde Gp started moving to conc area between MOORGESTEL and BIEST (on canal). 44 Bde HQ est at 226277. The br at BIEST was ready and the Bde Gp was to have passed over to the SOUTH in order to attack TILBURG from the SOUTH, but Bde recce parties met mines and the mov was postponed. Bde Gp was est SOUTH of canal in area HILVARENBEK - BIEST. Bde HQ at 213263.	
nr OIRSCHOT	26	1900 2300	Bde Comd and Bde IO went to Div 'O' Gp at OIRSCHOT. Bde 'O' Gp at which orders were given for the attack on TILBURG.	
nr HILVARENBEK	27	0900 1305 1400 1430	Bde HQ moved to hutted camp in woods SOUTH of TILBURG. The attack on TILBURG began at 1100 hrs with 6 RSF pushing through the woods on the RIGHT beside the Canal. This phase went slowly. ZERO for Phase II - attack by 6 RSF RIGHT and 6 KOSB LEFT on TILBURG itself. 6 KOSB reached first objective. 6 RSF reported they had broken into TILBURG and were pushing into the centre of the city.	

		1500	6 KOSB reached their final objectives and the city of TILBURG was considered to have been liberated. The excitement and joy of the citizens was immense and the men of the Bde were mobbed.	
		1600	8 RS followed 6 RSF into the city.	
		1730	Bde Comd and Bde IO entered the city and received a stirring welcome.	
			44 (L) Inf Bde Adm Order No 5 issued.	Folio 6
Outside TILBURG	28	0900	Bde Comd drove through TILBURG.	
		1100	Bde HQ moved into TILBURG to a large ho at 172323. The rest of the day was given over to liberation scenes in the streets of TILBURG, which were as exciting as any in FRANCE and BELGIUM. Pipe band of 6 RSF contributed to the gaiety and there was singing and dancing in the streets which went on until a late hr. This was perhaps the most gratifying day 44 Bde has experienced since the landing in NORMANDY, as the battle for TILBURG was won by 15 (S) Div only and mainly by 44 Bde, who were the first BRITISH tps to enter the city.	
		1620	Warning Order from Div that Bde Gp might be required to move overnight.	
		1820	Warning Order issued to Bde Gp to prepare to move at 0230 hrs. The situation in area MEIJEL - LIESEL, EAST of HELMOND, was serious as 9 PZ Div and 15 PZ GREN Div, had crossed the MEIJEL - DEURNE Canal and had driven in through elements of 7 US Armd Div.	
Outside TILBURG		2400	Adv parties left to recce area DEURNE.	
TILBURG moving to DEURNE	29	0300	Bde Gp moved from TILBURG.	
		0800	Bde Gp began to arrive at DEURNE. The situation was still more menacing, as the GERMAN tks were driving up the rd beyond LIESEL within five miles of DEURNE, with nothing to stop them but 1 E YORKS of 3 Div and 15/19 HUSSARS of 11 Armd Div. 44 Bde drove straight into def posn covering DEURNE.	
		1100	All bns were in posn. The situation was precarious in view of shortage of sp arms, who were still on rd from TILBURG. The enemy tks got within three miles of DEURNE but did NOT press fwd and gradually the situation eased, as more of 15 (S) Div arrived.	
		1300	6 KOSB moved fwd two miles SOUTH of DEURNE to a def posn covering rd in wood 6516.	
		1500	GOC 15 (S) Div ordered 44 Bde less 6 KOSB but with 2 GLAS H under comd to relieve CCB of 7 US Armd in area LIESEL astride rd LIESEL - ASTEN, while 46 Bde took over posn covering DEURNE.	
		1600	Bde Comd visited CCB 7 US Armd Div nr ASTEN and found that the situation was very confused, as the enemy appeared to be in behind the US CCB in area LIESEL and it was impossible to relieve them. 44 Bde accordingly took up def posn in woods WEST of LIESEL astride rd	

		1755	LIESEL - ASTEN with 2 GLAS H on RIGHT, 6 RSF on LEFT and 8 RS behind. CCB 7 US Armd came out after dark as best they could. Bde HQ moved to ASTEN 610130. This was a lively night with hy shelling and mortaring of bns. Enemy were holding LIESEL and pushing WEST.	
ASTEN	30	0930 1100 1120 1300 1545 1700 1740 2050	Enemy in area SLOT appeared to be attempting to push WEST into the big wood held by 2 GLAS H. 6 RSF reported one of their coys had infiltrated into western end of LIESEL, but enemy still held centre of village. 2 GLAS H reported enemy infiltration attacks into wood 668138. These attacks continued all day and at one time enemy were reported to have infiltrated almost through the wood. Two coys of 8 RS were moved up behind 2 GLAS H as additional def in the wood. 46 Bde started pushing SOUTH towards LIESEL and linked up with 6 RSF NORTH of LIESEL. The enemy were still in LIESEL but the threat to DEURNE seemed definitely to have been checked. 6 RSF started pushing EAST into LIESEL. 2 GLAS H completed clearing of the wood in their area. Counter-attack by enemy from EAST of LIESEL was dispersed by arty. 2 GLAS H beat off counter-attack. The enemy were still in LIESEL tonight.	
	31	0815 0900 1015 1545 1545	2 GLAS H carried out wood clearing op SOUTH from their posns sp by sqn of 4 Tk GREN GDS. 46 Bde adv SOUTH to clear LIESEL. On LEFT of rd they were successful, but on RIGHT, progress was slow, LIESEL only being cleared by 1500 hrs. 8 RS ordered to occupy SOUTH area of large wood 665122. 8 RS moved to carry out this order and got into posn all right. 6 KOSB moved down rd and captured SLOT. They destroyed two GERMAN Mk IV tks at 674137. The enemy threat was now removed and he was already removing 9 PZ Div and 15 PZ GREN Div, replacing them by Para Regt HUBNER, which had been holding the line in this area for weeks.	