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Army Form C.2118

**WAR DIARY**

~~OF~~

**~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~**

(Delete heading not required)

Unit 102 (Northumberland Hussars)  
Anti-Tank Regt RA.

Month and Year January 1945.

Commanding Officer Lieut-Colonel R.W. JELF RA

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1.		<p>Considerable enemy air activity over Div area. 119 LAA Regt have a goodish day and get five certainties. Three of them quite near our HQ from which a good view was obtained.</p> <p>Major GR BALFOUR MC RA of 288 Bty is evacuated with malaria. This is his third attack. We are all hoping he will be back soon.</p> <p>CCRA 8 Corps, accompanied by Brig BOLTON CRA 15 (S) Div, visits Regt.</p> <p>A ceremonial parade of 4 offrs and 42 ORs per bty is laid on on the football ground in PANNINGEN. CCRA inspects the parade and presents C-in-C's Certificates to 980513 S/Sgt BATES CE and 1091029 L/Bdr GIFFORD JRC. Parade was at 1415 hrs and was a great success, the 'Noodles' living up to their reputation for "putting something on".</p> <p>Three Valentine SPs of 107 Bty were on parade for the CCRA to look at, which he did with interest.</p> <p>RHQ turned out 24 chaps and 4 officers including CO.</p> <p>CRA and HMRA visit RHQ Mess for dinner at 1915. Very pleasant and happy evening spent.</p>	
	2.		<p>Major RA BARNETT MC RA with Lieut JD MARRIOTT go off to LOMMEL (near BOURG LEOPOLD) to watch 289 Bty's SP Tp shoot their Valentines.</p> <p>Lieut QM goes off to BRUSSELS to do many routine jobs and pick up some welfare goods, boot polish etc. He takes with him the second deserter of 97 A Tk Regt and hopes to get rid of him to his own RHQ.</p> <p>G.1 rings up and signifies his intention of calling on C.O. at 1415 hrs. A Capt from Battle Research Section 21 Army Group to see the C.O. who was not available. He came to ask the following questions. How many tanks had been knocked out by the Regt in this campaign and what guns did the knocking out? What were our casualties in guns, vehicles and personnel? How many guns were deployed on the floor at the time of the battle?</p>	

		He was given Appx 'A' to read and told as regards the last question that battles were so seldom set-piece that it was impossible to answer, and even more so months after. He was referred to the War Office records of the Battle of MEDENINE for answers to the last question.	
	3.	CRA visits NCOs Cadre Class at ASTEN. 288 Bty depart for MOLL for practice camp. C.O. departs for MOLL. Div Comd rings up and signifies his intention of visiting the range practice on 5 Jan. Thaw precautions instituted.	
	4.	289 Bty depart for MOLL. Foggy day. No shooting. Arrangements altered. 288 Bty with 46 Bde are now going to shoot on 5 Jan. 289 Bty with 227 Bde are going to shoot on 6 Jan. 107 Bty with 44 Bde are going to shoot on 7 Jan. 99 Bty are to try and shoot their 6-prs on the same day as Valentines are to shoot, i.e. 9 Jan. Recce Regt shoot cancelled. Great flap on because owing to thaw precautions being instituted we should not have allowed any tracked vehicles or 3-tonners on the road. Unfortunately one of 289 Bty's Carriers towing a 6-pr got lost and rolled into 8 Corps HQ to ask the way!!	
	5.	288 Bty and 46 Bde get their shooting in. Div Comd and CRA visit the range and watch the shooting. Brig of 46 Bde also visits range. Major BARNETT goes down to see how things are going. Move down of 107 Bty and 44 Bde guns is postponed 24 hours.	
	6.	107 Bty and 44 Bde move down to ranges at LOMMEL.	
	7.	107 Bty and 227 Bde shoot on ranges at LOMMEL.	
	8.	99 Bty moves down to LOMMEL.	
	9.	99 Bty shoots on ranges.	
	10.	Adjt and T/Adjt leave for rear areas to collect bits and bodies. C.O. returns lunch-time from MOLL and LOMMEL. The shooting has been quite successful in spite of snow, frost and fog, and the A/Tk pls of inf bns, as well as all our own detachments, had a shoot. In the absence of the CRA on leave, the CO is acting CRA. C.O. and 2 i/c dine with 2 Gordons.	
	11.	A four days course for all the subalterns of the Regt assembles at ASTEN.	
	12.	C.O. spends most of the day at Junior Offrs Course at ASTEN.	
	13.	Adjt and T/Adjt return, bringing with them L/Bdr Cox RHQ, who was wounded on 3 Sept. C.O. lunches at 227 Bde and meets Corps Comd.	

14.		<p>C.O.2 visits 44 Bde to discuss Regts emergency infantry role.  B.C's Conferene at 289 Bty HQ : the following were discussed :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The deployment of four guns. An SS Bde is coming to relieve each Bde in turn. It has no A Tk guns of its own. It is decided to deploy two half troops with it as under :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>99 Bty ... 18 - 25 Jan            288 Bty ... 1 - 8 Feb</li> <li>107 Bty ... 25 Jan - 1 Feb    289 Bty ... 8 - 15 Feb</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) Training in indirect fire with 17-pr Valentines. It is decided to ask Fd Regts to assist.</li> <li>(c) Future NCOs Cadre Classes. It is decided to hold another 14 Day course, assembling at ASTEN on 17 Jan.</li> <li>(d) Other domestic matters.</li> </ul> <p>Lieut. M. DAVIES (288 Bty) falls on ice and breaks his ankle and evacuated. Lieut J. MARRIOTT returns from leave.</p>	
15.		<p>Cold weather continues. Roads most treacherous.  C.O. lectures to all W.Os and Sgts of the Regt on all duties required from them, then proceeds to Junior Officers Course, which is a great success.  AQ coming to meet C.O. at 1730 hrs, later cancelled.  Regt informed that the Inspectorate of Army Equipment will pay a visit in the near future.  Demonstration of 17-pr SABOT at LOMMEL ranges postponed owing to weather.</p>	
16.		<p>C.O. meets AQ at HQ RA.  Major BARNETT holds conference with Capts Q and EME to discuss the visit of the Inspectorate of Army Equipment.  C.O. is visited by Lt-Col STUART CO 131 Fd Regt and 2 i/c of Recce Regt.  C.O., Major BARNETT and a number of other officers from the Regt, attended a lecture given by Lt-Col ANDERSON DSO on the eqpt of 79 Div.  Lt-Col BAKER-BAKER comes to lunch.</p>	
17.		<p>Weather continues bad after thaw of previous afternoon, sharp frost takes place, roads a sheet of glass.  The A.S.H. cancel the arrangements regarding our instructors being loaned to them, reason their A Tk personnel being used as inf.  Capts MASTERS and SPENCE call in RHQ to see C O. after making a recce of the front of 227 Bde. They state impossible to do anything with four guns - need at least a Bty.  C.O. and Capt SPENCE go to see G.1. Arrangements made for the Valentine Tp to be moved further up in case of emergency.</p>	

			Suggested 289 Bty go under care of 107 Bty at their location. 288 Bty to 99 Bty - same rule.	
	18.		C.O. with Col YOUNG and BM RA go to LOMMEL ranges to watch demonstration of VT Fuze in ground role - very successful. Major BARNETT visits 44 Bde. Leave allotment for U.K. first 14 days Feb disgraceful. 2 Offrs and 35 ORs. 50% cut on Jan figures - everyone mystified. Lieut K. JARVIS to be despatched to 33 RHU. 289 Bty report no accommodation for SP Tp in the area of 107 Bty. Start of NCOs Cadre Class.	
	19.		First day cancellation of leave to U.K. owing to gale in Straits of Dover. Bad weather continues, gale with sleet and snow. C.O. visited by Lt-Col FITZ-LEIGH and Lt-Col BATESON. 289 Bty's SP Tp move to accommodation in 99 Bty area. Leave for second part of Feb is 2 Offrs 31 ORs - receive long letter from HQ RA explaining why so few. NCOs Cadre have moved from ASTEN on AQ orders, go to billets vacated by 289 Bty SP Tp.	
	20.		C.O. visits CRA to glean any news of Major PUMPHREY and Major DUNKERLEY whose return would be a great help to the Regt. Learned that the former has passed medical board and has been instructed now to spend two months on A Tk course in U.K. before joining Regt. It is very mysterious trying to fathom out how the "Back Boys" in England work out such instructions. No news of Major DUNKERLEY. C.O. visits 289 Bty to see Lieut WILLIAMS and also to see Cadre Class in new accommodation. 288 Bty SP Tp now not to move. Rumours of move.	
	21.		Move now certain. The whole Regt less two SP Tps to move 22 Jan - rather short notice. Recce parties set off for BOOM 20 miles North of BRUSSELS. Instructors for inf cancelled. Artillery course cancelled. Cadre Class postponed. Considering the amount of re-fitting of vehicles, move in one is impossible. C.O.'s conference in connection with move with the following results :- Regt will move at 0730 hrs. Two SP Tps who remain behind under comd Lt O'NEILL. Route for move - MEIJEL - NEDERWEERT - DIEST - BOSCH - HAMONT - LOMMEL - MOLL - GHEEL - LIERRE - MECHLIN - WILLOEBROCK - BOOM. Order of march - 99 Bty, 107 Bty, RHQ, 288 Bty, 289 Bty.	

		<p>First amendment arrives at 2130 hrs move postponed for 1¼ hours. Route changed, delete HAMONT, LOMMEL read HECHTEL, BOURG LEOPOLD.</p>	
	22.	<p>Duty Officer phones at 0400 hrs - plan once again changed. Major BARNETT who is at BOOM to report to Div Check Pt at HEINTHALS at 1530 hrs. Lt QM despatched to BOOM with this information. Regt moves at 0845 hrs, conditions bloody, roads like glass, will be tough going for carriers and SP guns have to be towed behind wheeled vehicles. We pass many vehicles in ditch, expect to have many vehicle casualties on arrival. March of Regt excellent, arrive at 1545 hrs, distance covered 96 miles, good going under conditions.</p> <p>Casualties to vehicles (RHQ Nil 99 Bty 2 carriers; 107 Bty 1 Carrier 1 15-cwt; 288 Bty 1 SP Gun 1 Carrier; 289 Bty 1 Slave. All Regt in BOOM, people of town excellent, everyone knows by past experience that Regt could not stop in such a spot for many days. Message from Major BARNETT who is attending Div Conference, Bty Comds to be at new Mess at 2000 hrs. Later, Div Conference now at 2100 hrs instead of 1530 hrs - Bty Comds to be at RHQ at 2300 hrs. Never has there been such a C.M.F.U. Major BARNETT arrives back at 2330 hrs, details as follows :- Btys will go with Bdes, 99 Bty and RHQ at HILVARENBEEK; 107 and 288 Btys at TILBURG; 289 Bty at POPPEL. Recce parties for new positions off at 0800 hrs on 23 Jan.</p>	
	23.	<p>Major BARNETT off to recce at 0800 hrs, a very trying and tiring four days for him. 99 Bty recce away at 0830 hrs. 107 and 288 Btys away at 0600 hrs. 289 Bty away at 0700. Major BALFOUR visits RHQ for information. Major BARNETT holds B.C's Conference at 2100 hrs, we shall perhaps move on the night of 24th. Considering state of roads this would be most difficult. An officer to be sent to TILBURG for details of move. Div say at Conference that rations are to be drawn at TILBURG - 70 miles away. Arrangements trying to be made to draw at ANTWERP. EME goes back to sort out vehicles left at PANNINGEN.</p>	
	24.	<p>Lieut JONES goes to Div Conference, returns at 1400 hrs. No move now before 26th. Good baths at 99 Bty location - all Regt got through. We draw 2 days rations and petrol from ANTWERP. Div cannot understand how we manage to get rations not going through them. We also manage to get one ton of coal - good work by 2 i/c and Lt QM.</p>	

		<p>Big scare in RHQ - one of our billets is occupied by girls returned from Germany with V.D. Officers' Mess is once again in a collaborator's house - pity we don't want any Mess equipment. Lot of work caused by changing money back into Belgian francs, bearing in mind that we shall need Guilders again in a couple of days.</p> <p>Two or three days lost through the fear of having to move any day. Recce parties are left at new area, getting everything squared up for move. No news of the two SP Tps we left behind.</p>	
	25.	<p>No fear of moving so the Regt got down to some real work. Still without news of the C.O.</p> <p>At 1830 the bomb falls, L.O. arrives at RHQ from Div, carrying enough bump to sink a battleship, and also the orders for move, which were :-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Regt will move in Bty gps starting at 0830 hrs on 26 Jan. Most personnel were enjoying well-earned entertainment, so once again Major BARNETT was loaded with tons of work.</p>	
	26.	<p>Regt moves to new location, route ANTWERP, BREDA, TILBURG, HILVARENBEK. Order of march: RHQ, 288, 99, 107, 289 Btys. Good progress was made and the first party arrived at 1230 hrs. Excellent organisation by recce parties, all personnel in civvy billets, which are very good.</p> <p>Btys with Bdes: 107 Bty with 44 Bde: 288 Bty with 46 Bde: 289 Bty with 227 Bde: 99 Bty in reserve with RHQ.</p> <p>Locations: RHQ and 99 Bty at HILVARENBEK: 107 Bty at TILBURG: 288 Bty at TILBURG: 289 Bty 143283. C.O. at new location on arrival. The two SP Tps are on the way to us. SP Tps arrive plus 4 M/Cs left behind by RHQ.</p>	
	27.	<p>C.O. attends secret conference at Div. Orders received for disposal of Lieut JACKSON. At last we are in touch with Div with line although they are 30 miles away.</p> <p>All personnel very cold - Lt QM unable to supply any fuel. C.O. and the C.O. of 119 LAA Regt return to RHQ after conference. Everyone greatly impressed by Russian progress, a lot of money being laid on the end of the war.</p> <p>T/Adjt busy with Accident Reports owing to our long marches on bad roads. Lieut WILLIAMS sees G.O.C.</p>	
	28.	<p>C.O.'s conference on future operations. Subjects discussed :- Getting prepared for future operations. Dumping of M/Cs which are useless on these roads.</p>	

		<p>Have we to dump any more kit? Bty Comds think we can move in one. C.O. gets the changing of 6-pr Tps for 17-prs 'put off' for time being.</p> <p>We are supposed to receive 9 Valentines for BCs and Tp Comds. Impossible to cope with these at this stage.</p> <p>New W.E. discussed and we put in for amendment.</p> <p>C.O. goes to HQ RA, returns in good spirits, told he will fly home on 30 Jan.</p> <p>Lieut WILLIAMS sees the C.O. for compassionate leave and is sent to Second Army.</p>	
	29.	<p>C.O. goes on leave. Major RA BARNETT MC RA takes over comd. Div trying to take L.A.D. 15-cwt from us. Impossible to move without it so we put up a fight, many of our vehicles having been in wksps for many weeks and we are below W.E.</p> <p>Acting C.O. goes to HQ RA.</p>	
	30.	<p>Major WARD reports to RHQ to assist while the C.O. is away. Capt ROBERTS visits RHQ for maps etc for coming operations. Maps not yet received. The amount of 'bumph' being received is terrific, orders coming in one day to be amended or cancelled the next results in a lot of unnecessary and hard work.</p> <p>Bdes putting their Btys in full picture for coming events.</p> <p>EME and T/Adjt chasing new engines etc to get all vehicles on the road.</p> <p>RSM ROCKETT and BSM McCREEDY attend demonstration of blanket drying in 3-ton lorry.</p>	
	31.	<p>Complete change in weather, raining and nearly all the snow disappears. Major BARNETT goes to HQ RA for a ruling on a TOP SECRET letter, returns just the same in the dark, the reason being the staff could not explain their own letters.</p> <p>C.O.'s conference on future operations. Subjects discussed were what personnel and vehicles could L.O.B. in next operations.</p> <p>Lt QM collects three Tabbys, which are TOP SECRET, something to do with lighting in the dark.</p> <p>289 Bty unable to attend conference as they are at a Bde Conference.</p> <p>Major BARNETT attends bottle party given by G.O.C. at TILBURG.</p>	