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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Unit 2nd Bn A. & S.H.

Commanding Officer Lt/Col D.R. Morgan, M.C.

Month and Year Mar 45.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TILBURG	1	1130	Bn paraded for General's inspection. General Barber inspected the bn and then addressed them. He thanked them for the splendid work they had done in some very fierce battles and passed on messages of congratulations from both Corps and Army comds. After the address the bn marched past and the General took the salute. The weather was very bad and the rain did its best to spoil the occasion. Brussels leave started and 60 men per day were sent for 48 hours leave.	
do	2		The morning was spent in training and the afternoon in sports.	
do	3		Bn on training. Weather very bad, and rain fell all day.	
do	4		Church parades were held for all denominations, the Pipes and Drums playing the Presbyterians to church. Later in the day came the order to move.	
RECKHEIM 5760	5		Harbour party left at 0800 hours, and the bn packed very hastily and prepared to move, which started at 1415 hours and the bn arrived in RECKHEIM (5760) at about 1915 hours.	
RECKHEIM	6		Bn spent day preparing for training, which was to include crossing water obstacles. Trg areas were recced and a 30 yard range was fixed up. Major Goodwyn left to be A/Q Control Commission and Major McElwee took over 2ic.	
do	7		Coys carried out trg and Major A.C.S. Troup joined the bn and took comd of "A" coy. CO and IO returned from Brussels leave.	
	8		Bn continued trg in good weather.	
do	9		Trg went on as usual, and in the evening the bn did exercise "Imagination" (see Appendix) MT drivers attended a rafting demonstration.	(J2)
do	10		Coys continued trg. Weather quite good.	
do	11		Church parades were held and after lunch coys went on with trg. The CO and IO visited Corps HQ to see a model for the next operation.	
do	12		Coys still trg. Weather fine.	

do	13		Coy comds went on a recce for the exercise to be held tomorrow.	
do	14		Div exercise. (see appendix) As far as the bn was concerned the exercise went as planned. The only Buffalo which did not make the far side easily was the Comd's. It took from 1300 - 1600 hours to reach the other side. Bn conference was held at 2030 hours when all points were thrashed out.	
do	15		During the morning the bn prepared for a night exercise - a repeat of the previous day's. The troops left for the conc area at 1600 hours and waited there for H hour which was 0400 hours on the 16th.	
do	16		The exercise went off moderately well as a whole. "C" coy unfortunately took about 1¼ hours to reach their objective. The CO's carrier crossed in twenty minutes this time, but later when it reached the FAA for vehicles it refused to start and had to be towed back. The bn arrived back in RECKHEIM at about 1000 hours.	
do	17		The CO briefed all coy comds at Bn HQ at 1000 hours and later they went to Corps HQ to see the model for the forthcoming op.	
do	18		Quiet day. Church parades for Pres and C of E.	
	19		Pl comds were briefed for forthcoming op and spent a considerable amount of time in the planning room looking at photographs and maps. A model from 21st Army Group of the crossing place was available for the morning and the CO briefed key personnel on it. Coys continued training in good weather. Capt Kempston went to Bde to take part in a deception plan for the forthcoming op.	
	20		Harbour party left for conc area. CO, 2ic, coy comds Sigs Offr and IO went on a recce to conc area and studied the crossing place with the sqdn comd of the Buffaloes. Bn received 4 Weasels for use on ops.	
	21		The 21st Army Gp model was again available and pl sjts were briefed. CO received a Dingo scout car to replace his carrier but was later allowed to retain both.	
056447	22		Bn packed and moved to conc area at 056447. Tracks left early in the morning to travel by a more devious route. Wheels moved at 1630 hrs and arrived at conc area early next day. The move was organised and although there was a huge volume of traffic on the road there was a minimum of delay.	
	23		Bn arrived at conc area at about 0200 hours and was situated in N.E. corner of the HOCHWOLD FOREST 056447. Everyone bedded down and reveille was 1030 hrs. CO held his final O gp. Coys spent day making final arrangements for the RHINE crossing. The plan was so big that one felt that it couldn't go wrong.	

	24	<p>The bn moved to the LVT pre-loading area just after midnight. As usual the Buffalo No 31 which was supposed to carry the CO's carrier refused to work and several anxious minutes were spent while a replacement vehicle was found. The move down to the river was uneventful as far as enemy reaction was concerned. The route was lit and the concentration and pepperpot barrage was terrific. A, B, and D coys were due to cross and land together as far as possible, A coy loading at 092472, B coy at 093470 and D coy going up the creek to 093475. The R.M. Commandos had patrolled the previous night to the mouth of the creek in order to find out what the landing places were like. They reported that there was an obstacle across the entrance. When the time came it was found that the only place for getting ashore was on the west of the creek at 092472 and that there was no obstruction across the creek entrance. One platoon of D coy did in fact land on the east point of the creek at 093473. The third platoon landed with the rest of the bn. On our previous recce from the west side of the river the banks looked perfect but it was found that they were very muddy and very sticky and not at all good for the heavy landing craft. It was only after great effort and towing by individual Buffaloes that vehs were got ashore. The second flights which consisted of the reserve coy, Bn HQ and the essential sp arms vehs was due to enter the river about 20 minutes after the leading coys flights. In the meantime, A and B coys were pushing inland and reached their initial objective without trouble. (A coy 089484 B coy 093483 to 097483). D coy initially were less successful. They had the bad luck to lose, wounded, Major J.D.C. Graham just before landing and one of their pls was put ashore in the wrong place and as a result went astray. Capt Toppin with the remaining two pls quickly found the houses and woods at HUBSCH 0947 were strongly held (approx 50 men) and were too big an objective for his small force. The reserve coy (C coy under Major F.G. Graham) duly landed and like everyone else trekked around the creek and sent its fighting patrol of Lt Davidson's pl up the bund running parallel to the river. The pl went as far as its objectives which was just past the sluice gates at 104466. It met with no opposition but failed to contact the HLI as arranged. On the return journey they received some trouble and suffered cas from the spandau posts which had come to life after the barrage. It rejoined C coy which was concentrated behind the bund at HUBSCH in the area 094475. During the remaining period of darkness both C and D coys reorganised and were joined by their sp arms and by the D coy missing pl. There was some very close and</p>	Appendix "E"
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	25	<p>bitter fighting during which there were several cas among which we lost Lt Stewart killed. By first light D coy completed the clearing of HUBSCH. Bn HQ after the initial wait while it collected the rest of its bits and pieces from other craft moved up the west side of the creek and temporarily est itself at 092478 since the original selected comd post was in the centre of the confused fighting at HUBSCH. It now seemed unlikely to the CO that the right hand coy would be able to take their first objectives before first light and he attempted to stop A and B coys from leaving their first objectives so as to keep the bn conc until the situation had cleared up on the right. Before the W/T message got through however A and B coys had already moved towards their final objectives and a 2500 yards gap had opened between the two halves of the bn. To bridge this and to avoid losing W/T contact comd post was moved to the buildings at 093484. First light, however, found the Bn with its HQ somewhat isolated with A and B coys in possession of their final objectives except for HOVERHOF 107503 and with C and D coys consolidated at HUBSCH. D coy on trying to push on to their second objective came under heavy fire both from the farm houses on their objective and from the bund which Lt Davidson's patrol had cleared earlier. Presumably the enemy had returned into the cellars of the houses during the bombardment and had come out and reoccupied their slits before it got light. At about this time C coy of the 2 Gordons arrived; they had suffered hy cas coming down the river in storm boats from the reoccupied German posns in the bund. Major F.G. Graham went up to see the CO at about 0630 hrs and was told that he must clear the LOHR area at all costs as this was a vital prelim to the starting of the ferrying and rafting. He was given, under comd, besides his own coy D coy A&SH, C coy 2 Gordons, one pl MMG and two dets of 3" mortars. A fire plan was arranged for the sp arms. During this attack it was not possible to sp it with arty or smoke because of the A/Borne landing which was due to take place at 1000 hrs. H hr was 0815 hrs. The plan was to send 2nd Lt Drummond's pl to clean the bund if possible as far as the sluice gates 104467. It was from there it was to cover the main attack of D coy into the nearest houses. This pl did the most gallant work and cleared as far as ordered but suffered fairly hy cas and then ran out of amn. Lt Drummond therefore decided to pull back to a posn on the bund from which he could keep the part of the bund cleared, under fire and so prevent the enemy from reoccupying their posns. The rest of D coy under Capt Toppin succeeded in occupying HAGENSHOF farm 103475, but were pinned down by hy fire from the farm immediately</p>	
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in front of it, SISWICKHOF 104472. This was cleared by a pl of C coy of the 2 Gordons. Major F.G. Graham sent a further patrol from his own coy along the bund and it was at last reported finally clear at about 1200 hrs. The final objective was cleared at 1300 hrs by which time we had been joined by some DD tanks who, however, arrived too late for the battle. To return to our other coys. When A and B coys first landed they met some SA fire and B coy passed through a Schu minefield. One man lost a foot in it. The opposition was soon dealt with in the beach area and about 10 PsW were taken. The objectives of the first phase of the attack were as follows:
B coy:- AUF DEM GRINDT 0948 - Houses 093483.
A coy:- The bund and a small shack at 093483 - a large grass covered mound at approx 090487. What this mound consisted of was not known but at the worst it was thought to be possibly a big concrete emplacement. Limitations of the speed of the adv were imposed by the arty fire plan, no move being allowed from the startline - the line running due east and west across the northern end of the creek at 090477 - until the arty had lifted. During the attack, opposition was met with in the mound on the left of A coy where the enemy was well dug in, in slit trenches.

SECOND PHASE

Objectives:- B Coy. Houses at 104495, 105495, 104498.

A Coy:- (a) LOCKERHOF 106499, (b) farm at 104500, (c) the group of houses at HOPERHOF 106503.

B coys objective and A coys (a) objective could be attacked at H + 60 (H hr being at 0200 hrs), but it was found that no move forward of these preliminary objectives of A coy was possible until H +90. The plan for A coy was to pass 8 pl through 9 pl and attack LOCKERHOF from the West at the same time as B coy was putting in its attack from the South. 7 pl at H + 90 was to capture the farm at 104500 and on its success 9 pl with 7 pl as reserve was to attack the group of houses at LOVERHOF, coy HQ taking over the occupation and protection of the farm at 104500. Unfortunately it did not plan out quite so easily. 8 pl failed to make its objective and lost touch through the wireless not working. As a result 7 pl was directed on to its final objective and 9 pl was directed on to the objective of 8 pl. At 0500 hrs the missing 8 pl arrived and was ordered to its final objective at HOVERHOF 107503. By this time it was approaching dawn and as they approached, 3 German MG posts upset the plan. One section had been sent round to the right to give covering fire and was caught in the open less than 10 yards

		<p>from the enemy MG post, and instead of rushing it, went to ground with the result that two men were killed and three taken prisoner. The rest of the pl was ordered to withdraw to the farm at 104500 where 7 pl and coy HQ were already established, in order that a new recce could be made. It was then seen when it became light that HOVERHOF was a strongpoint which would require a coy attack together with a full fire plan. It was also decided that the coy would carry out its task of left flank protection equally well from its present posns. It was therefore decided to hold those posns for the rest of the day. A coy comd in searching the buildings near his HQ put 7 men in the bag himself. The day of the 24th was spent in the above mentioned posns. Any movement by own men brought mortar and SA fire. One man was killed by a direct hit of a mortar bomb. Later in the day the Coy comd decided that the layout was too cramped and as soon as it was dark the coy was altered slightly. 8 pl and coy HQ was moved back to WOYERHOF. B coy in the meantime had collected nearly 100 PsW since taking up their final posns, as just before dawn on D day they reported a counter-attack forming up. The area was well and truly stonked by arty and they all came running in, inc 3 offr. At midday on the 25th of March 12 pl of B coy was relieved by a pl of the 2 Gordons and in the evening, the 2 Gordons put in an attack on HOVERHOF. This attack gained the first farm, but no further progress was made. The coy of the 2 Gordons withdrew at dark and took over the posns occupied by A coy 2 A & SH. This relief was completed by 2230 hrs 25 Mar. It was a wonderful sight to see the two A/B divs going over at approx 1000 hrs on D day the 24th Mar. From the comd post it was possible to see two Dakotas and one Halifax come down in flames. Two wounded pilots from one 'plane were rescued and sent back by the MO. On Sunday 25th, the Bn less A coy moved under comd of 46 Bde. The IO went and reced the route to BERGEN 157470 in the morning. The Bn had their first hot meal at HUBSCH as they came by. They were then lifted by 3 tonners to the RV at rd junc 157470. Capt Toppin collapsed while the Bn was waiting to form up and was evacuated through medical channels. The Bn's task was to pass through the 3 Bde and clear the wood East of the lake LANGE REUNE, with the Glasgow Hrs. The right flank of the Bn was to be screened by smoke. When the Bn reached the rd junc 153478 the word was passed round that the enemy were counter-attacking which stopped the Bn from getting on to its startline. As a result we never really caught up with the barrage. Our task was to clear the right hand part of the wood and clear South to North. The wood was very tough going and we eventually reached the track</p>	
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139494		<p>junc 139494 as it was almost dark. D coy had fallen back, C coy and Bn HQ went to the wood at 143497 and B coy went to farms at 139497. D coy arrived eventually and went to the area of 139493. The RA vehs, CO's carrier and MO jeeps eventually came up. There was some very confused and wild firing on both sides while the Bn dug in. B coy had two counter-attacks during the night. One as they moved in. It was stopped at point-blank range. The second one took place just before dawn and the house around which they were est was burnt down. C coy had a small counter-attack as soon as they got into the wood and were digging in, but it did not materialise. The rest of 46 Bde attacked either side of us and came to the North towards HALDERN WOOD to clear the East of the main road to the East of us. It was there that the Bn had a real taste of what it is to be shelled by our own guns. We had about 15 minutes solid. It appeared that our wood had been included in the fire plan and it took some time to stop but not before it had had time to lift and come back again on us. By the grace of God no one was hurt. The Bn then conc in the wood. A coy moved up in the morning as it had been released during the previous night by the 2 Gordons.</p>	
do	26	The Bn remained in the same location as the previous day.	
do	27	There was no enemy activity in front of us as 46 Bde were well est. We returned to the comd of 227 Bde in the morning and were told that we would attack and clear the wood at 1352 having taken over from 9 Cams who were on our left. This was later cancelled as we were told that we were under comd of 46 Bde and would help to clear the woods at 1452. The CO and IO attended an "O" gp at 46 Bde HQ at 1900 hrs. It was very late before they returned to the Bn, and there was no move for the Bn before 0700 hrs the following morning.	
154503	28	<p>The Bn moved at 0745 hrs to a FAA at 154503 preparatory to clearing the woods in the area of 1552. The op was in 3 phases.</p> <p><u>Phase 1.</u> 7 Seaforths to clear the enemy from wood at 162514 to wood 160515, - DICKHOF 155516 and as far West as CLASENHO 146516, the attack going in from East to West. <u>Phase 2.</u> A two Bn attack Northwards, right 6 HLI (52 Div) and left 2 A. & S. Hrs.</p> <p><u>Startline</u> for us in area of buildings 152515.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u> 1st objective, line of track 158528 - cross tracks at 158527 - West edge of wood 143525. 2nd objective, N.E. corner of wood at 156531 - ring contour 149532 thence line of road as far as road junc 140532. <u>Bdys.</u> dividing line, incl 2 A & S. Hrs - tracks 155514 - cross tracks 152519 - crosstracks 150527 - incl 6 HLI ring contour 149532. <u>Left</u> 2 A. & S. Hrs bdy track junc 149515 - 143525 - 139532.</p>	

		<p><u>Phase 1</u> took place and went according to plan. Our Y hr was 1100 hrs.</p> <p><u>Phase 2</u> started after a very shaky beginning as the startline was hard to find. No enemy were encountered so after the Bn's first objective had been reached the message came from 46 Bde that the fire plan had been cancelled. The Bn moved up nearly to its final objective and Bn HQ moved up the centre track and had just passed the cross tracks at 148526 when we received a nasty stonk, again from our own arty this time killing one man and wounding 5 ORs, including 1 Royal Corps of Sigs operator and Cpl Monk of our signals pl. The CO did all that was possible to get it stopped. It was most unpleasant and lasted for about 20 minutes. It appeared that from the beginning the arty plan had been made up before the inf plan. In the first place it was decided against having a barrage and there were to be a series of concs up the wood. A major catastrophe was averted by Major Cornwall, our gunner officer, who was given the arty fire plan about an hour before the battle was due to begin. He found that the arty were due to stonk the startline at the time the Bn was there forming up. He reported to the CO that he could not be responsible for the safety of the inf. It was later discovered that when the fire plan was cancelled the 4.2in mortars had not been informed and they were due to stonk the final objectives at the time the fwd coys were arriving there. This was avoided by mere chance. It is probable that the many channels through which the infm had to pass caused a time lag and the inf moved before the Gunners realised it. An inquiry was immediately ordered by the CRA but so far no explanation has been given except that it was the 25 pdrs from the div which did the damage. The Bn's final posns were as follows:- A coy - 144532, B coy - 140533, C coy - 143538, D coy - 144533 Bn HQ - 145528. By this time the battle had moved ahead and we were left in peace.</p>	
145528 140543	29	No move during the morning and it was not until late afternoon that we were given permission to move to a built-up area. The move took place about 1600 hrs and the Bn was disposed as follows:- A coy - 141549, B coy - 142546, C coy - 143544, D coy - 143545, Sp coy - 141543. Bn HQ - 140543.	
do	30	Day was spent cleaning up kit and on maintenance of vehs.	
do	31	No move. Day spent as yesterday. Weather good.	