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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 15 (S) Reconnaissance Regiment, R.A.C.

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year July 1944.

Commanding Officer Lt.Col. J.A. Grant

Peterkin

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Field.	1		Regiment in Div reserve, PUTOT-EN-BESSIN. 'A' Sqn (Major Rowlands) went forward to "plug a hole" on right of 6 KOSB south of CHEUX, where they were deployed as infantry in very thick and close country. Only slight enemy activity in this area, though the enemy still insisted in making small counter attacks with tanks. A/Tk Tps went forward to join 'A' and 'C' Sqns in action. Their field of fire was normally 100 yds - hardly what they had trained for. The smell at CHEUX from dead cattle was starting to be evident in the warmer weather.	
	2.		160 Bde (53 Div) relieved 44 Inf Bde in the CHEUX sector. 'A' & 'C' Sqns relieved and returned to Regtl harbour at PUTOT, into which came at the same time, unfortunately, a battery of 155 c.m. guns.	
	3.		Maintenance at PUTOT. Div at rest after its most successful weeks actions in the "Scottish Corridor".	
	4-5.		Maintenance, baths, and cinemas. It is clear that tps are now learning how to look after themselves.	
Field.	6		Gen. Montgomery addressed all C.Os. of 15 (S) Division and gave a resume of what had been done and what he hoped would happen. Regiment still at rest.	
	7.		Regiment still resting. Inter-Tp basket ball competition won by 10 Troop, 'C' Sqn. CAEN bombed by 450 heavy bombers at 2200 hrs. Visible air support is a great moral raiser for the troops who do not understand what air support is when they can't see it.	
	8.		Regiment at rest. 'A' Sqn warned for independent role with 46 Bde.	
	9.		'A' Sqn moved up to area VERNON with 46 Bde to assist in 'mopping up' WEST of CAEN, CARPIQUET aerodrome having been taken by the Canadians. Remainder of Regiment at rest.	

<p>Field.</p> <p>Field.</p>	<p>10.</p>	<p>'A' Sqn went forward on reconnaissance role in front of 46 Bde in direction Verson - Eterville - Maltot and to reach line of R. Odon. It was thought that this area was fairly clear and 4 Arm'd Bde moved up to behind Eterville in the early afternoon.</p> <p>The enemy was in fact in great strength on the reverse slopes behind Eterville and 3 Troop (Lieut Arundel) on trying to recce forward to Maltot met heavy 88 mm fire from hull down tanks on crossing Rd Caen - Eterville. Both leading cars (Lieut Arundel and Sgt Ireland) hit and burnt. All Sgt Ireland's crew escaped, but Lieut Arundel and his driver, Tpr Griffiths, were killed, though this was not confirmed for about 10 days.</p> <p>The carriers of this troop were brought back rather hurriedly and it is presumed that the Sqn Comdr went forward to take charge. It was afterwards discovered that his L.R.C. had received a direct hit from probably a 105 c.m. gun, and for 24 hrs he was missing.</p> <p>No. 2 Troop was in close contact with the Glasgow Highlanders in Eterville where they were under very heavy fire and unable to move forward or gain any further information regarding the strength of the enemy.</p> <p>As dark fell the Sqn rallied back and harboured just south of Verson under Capt Davies. The loss of the Sqn Comdr, Lieut Arundel, Lieut Rencher and other casualties both from enemy action and battle exhaustion had a very bad effect on this Sqn in its first days action, and an uncomfortable night was spent under moderate shell and mortar fire. They did, however, produce some valuable information for HQ 46 Bde even though they were sent out on false information as regards the strength of the enemy. Lieut Blair's troop, who must have proceeded forward very well, got into the outskirts of Louvigny and caused casualties to German infantry to the north of the village. The moral effect which a Troop Comdr can have on his troop was very clear on this day.</p> <p>The remainder of the Regiment less 'A' Sqn still at rest at Putot-en-Bessin.</p>	
<p>Field.</p>	<p>11.</p>	<p>'A' Sqn placed under the orders of 214 Bde (43 Div) and carried out useful Officer patrols up to the forward Bns (Pt. 112) where a major battle was starting. The Sqn, apart from these Officer patrols, was not further engaged and were ordered on the relief of 46 Bde that night to return to rejoin the Regiment at Putot.</p>	
	<p>12-13 -14.</p>	<p>Regiment concentrated at Putot.</p>	

Field.	15.	<p>Orders for a further exploitation by 15 (S) Division for the capture of the area EVRECY - ETERVILLE - GAVRUS being worked out. No role for the Regiment was available and it was therefore decided by the Div Comdr that a Traffic Control Organisation under the Commanding Officer would be set up to ensure smooth traffic over the crossings of the R. ODON, where there were very severe bottlenecks. The Control HQ with exit and entrance parties for 5 routes (Hereford, Dundee, Quarry (2) and Coal (1 & 2)) were set up, Control HQ being in an orchard on the Verson Rd just above QUARRY route. The attack started on the evening of 14 July and considerable difficulty in passing through was experienced owing to the large number of tanks in the area and rearward traffic of other Divs. Enemy mortar fire in this area was particularly heavy.</p> <p>It was also decided for this action that all the carriers of 'A' Sqn (21) would be available for the Bdes to assist in the evacuation of casualties. They went forward and reported to the ADMS under Lieut Dalton and carried out a most useful if unorthodox role most successfully.</p>	
	16.	<p>'C' Sqn south of CARPIQUET aerodrome had the role of following up left of 227 Bde with orders to attack and capture Pt. 120 behind EVRECY once 158 Bde (53 Div), who were under command 15 (S) Div, were to capture EVRECY and the high ground just beyond. They were to exploit success down to AUNAY SUR ORNE. This attack took place late in the evening and failed to achieve any success, though 'C' Sqn moved forward at first light and waited at BARON whilst a further attack was being laid on.</p> <p>Traffic Control Organisation still functioning, though little traffic and no blocks on roads, chiefly owing to the small number of individual running through the intensity of enemy mortar fire in this area.</p> <p>Heavy bombing attack by enemy aircraft on the Verson Rd at 2230 hrs, resulting in one route being blocked, but no casualties.</p>	
	17.	<p>'C' Sqn ordered back to their original harbour as it was clear that there was to be no recce beyond EVRECY which was very strongly held and no forward movement had been made by 158 Bde. There was considerable fog of war on this day and it was never clear as to whether the enemy was being driven back or not. Traffic control organisation still set up at Verson. Remainder of the Regt moved fwd from PUTOT-EN-BESSIN to fwd harbour just south of CHEUX. Bombing attack by enemy aircraft hit 'A' Sqn harbour</p>	

			this evening and destroyed 7 vehs, all of which were completely burnt out.	
	18.		Control of Traffic routes handed over to 53 Recce Regt and control HQ returned to the Regtl Harbour south of CHEUX at 907685. 'B' Sqn (Residue) disembarked on this day.	
Field.	19.		Regt at rest. Advance Party 'B' Sqn rejoined Regt.	
	20.		'B' Sqn joined Regt in Harbour.	
	21.		In order to help 46 Bde who were still in the line to rest, the 3 Assault Tps under Major MacDiarmid went forward to LE VALTRU under comd O.C. 7 Seaforths where they took over the fwd posts and carried out for 48 hrs an inf role patrolling and sniping. Very heavy rain made this task rather unpleasant for them.	
	23.		15 (S) Div ordered to relieve 5 U.S. Div south of BALLEROY. Peace-time trg for convoy driving showed its value, though other traffic severely interfered with the column. 'C' Sqn went straight fwd into the line in support of 44 Bde as the connecting link between the right of 15 Div and 2 U.S. Div, where they took over an area from the Americans in very thick country, bocage and orchards, giving a minimum field of fire. They learnt some interesting points from our American Allies. The Assault Tps under Major MacDiarmid closed up on the Regt that night.	
Field.	24		'C' Sqn plus a Tp of A/Tk guns and a Section of the Mortar Tp carried out patrols on the right of the Div in liaison with 2 U.S. Div who made a large scale attack on this day. The remainder of the Regt concentrated at BALLEROY.	
	25.		'C' Sqn still holding the right Div area under 46 Bde, who relieved 44 Bde early this morning. Orders received for the Regt to take over BRIQUESSARD from 61 Recce Regt (50 Div). Initial recces made.	
	26.		Regt still concentrated at rest under pleasant circumstances at BALLEROY. 'C' Sqn still with 46 Bde where control of No Mans' Land was being obtained after the 'laissez faire' attitude of our Allies. 15 Div patrols took control of No Mans' Land. Late in the evening at short notice the Regt moved 600 yards across a main road in order to please the A/Q and make it easier for an Armd fmn to concentrate.	
Field.	28.		'C' Sqn returned to harbour where orders for Operation BLUECOAT (Pt 309 & St. MARTIN DES BESACES) were received. This cancelled the Regiment taking over BRIQUESSARD WOOD where complete recces had been done down to Tp Comdrs.	

	29.		Final briefing for Operation BLUECOAT in which 'A' & 'B' Sqns were to move with the Regiments of 6 Gds Tank Bde who were to exploit forward as quickly as possible to take full advantage of attacks by heavy and medium bombers. 'C' Sqn to be ready to pass through on the right flank and "attack" ST MARTIN DES BESACES. The first real Recce job that the Regt had been given.	
Field.	30.		'A' & 'B' Sqns moved forward into inf and tank F.A.A. at 0500 hrs and after heavy successful bombing by aircraft moved fwd in support of 227 Bde. 'A' Sqn, who were under command in support 7 Seaforths (46 Bde) did much useful work in mopping up enemy pockets behind the Gds Tank Bde. Considerable difficulty was encountered with vehicles owing to the thick country and mines which had been laid on the tracks. In the middle of the morning Capt Fordyce (B Sqn) in an LRC was blown up, he being wounded by S.A. fire and the remainder of his crew being killed. The attack by 15 (S) Division was very successful and orders were recd that the 11 Armd Div would carry out the clearing of ST MARTIN DE BESACES as it was clear that there was considerable enemy opposition in this area. At 1500 hrs the Divisional Comdr gave orders to the Commanding Officer that the Regiment would be at very short notice to move through 15 (S) Division and to try and get to the high ground at LE BENY BOCAGE that night. As the Regiment was still back at BALLEROY it was clear that there would be very little time in daylight for this operation to take place. Final orders were received from the Army and Corps Comdrs at 1700 hrs, by which time the Regiment was moving forward to a temporary harbour just north of CAUMONT, where final orders were given for the Regt to move to HERVIEUX, from where 'C' Sqn was to lead the "Second Army Break-out". The situation was painted in such rosy terms that it was decided that night recce should be undertaken, and it was not until about 1 hr before dark that 'C' Sqn moved fwd on unreconnoitred tracks to pass through the fwd inf at Pt 309 where they could fan out to the South. ST MARTIN DE BESACES was still held and a gap of only 1 mile was available for us to pass through. 'A' & 'B' Sqns by this time had concentrated on the main axis and were prepared for follow 'C'. Considerable difficulty was at once met with by the fwd tps as the vehicles were inextricably bogged in the small tracks and lanes, and it became clear that no large scale fwd movement would be possible unless ST MARTIN was clear. An Officer patrol from 'B' Sqn, 2 H.C.R. under the regiment was sent forward to discover if a fresh way could be found as it was clear that 11 Armd Div were not	
Field.				

		seriously contemplating clearing ST MARTIN that night. Tanks were reported in ST MARTIN and though active patrols took place all night, no way through was discovered. In fact it was very strongly held by the enemy.	
Field.	31.	At first light scout tps of 'C' Sqn succeeded in getting over Pt 309 and down as far as VAUX MARTIN 6948 where they succeeded in dominating the high ground and moved forward to LA MANCELLIERE. A major attack was staged by 11 Armd Div at ST MARTIN DE BESACES, which was not cleared until about 1500 hrs, when infm was received that the Gds Armd Div would have complete priority on roads the next day in order that they might pass through to gain the high ground at LE BENY BOCAGE. 'C' Sqn, therefore returned to a harbour just north of ST MARTIN DE BESACES. 'A' & 'B' Sqns were at short notice to move, in their harbours just south of HERVIEUX, as soon as the roads were clear.	