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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 190 Field Regiment.R.A.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year February 1945.

Commanding Officer Lt.Col.R.J.STREATFIELD. R.A.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1		The regiment was still in its rest area in Tilburg. It was felt that something big was imminent but no one knew what it was or where it was going to take place apart from Major T.P. KEENE acting CO who had already attended conferences at HQRA. To-day the CO - Lt.Col. R.J. Streatfield returned to the Regt from UK leave.	15 Div Int Sum on OP Veritable received Folio 4.
	2.		Major Campbell acting BC of 530 Bty visited the prospective gun area for the forthcoming operation to arrange details for ammunition dumping.	
	3.		The CO attended a conference at Div HQ and the CO2 and CPOs visited the gun area in square 7357, 7457 a little way SE of NIJMEGEN. The greatest care had to be exercised to conceal the division to which they belonged so that the maximum surprise could be effected at the start of operations.	46 Bde O.O. No 18 received Folio 5
	4.		All Officers of the Division attended a briefing conference at the ENSA cinema Tilburg where they were addressed by 30 Corps Commander Lt.Gen Horrocks and the Div Comdr Maj Gen. Barber. The object of Operation Veritable was to clear the area to the west of the Rhine. 1st Canadian Army substantially reinforced by troops from British 2nd Army would draw the bulk of the enemy forces and then the American 9th Army would be unleashed over the ROER River to sweep up and catch the enemy in the rear. 15th Division was one of the divisions taking part in the initial assault. After the conference the CO gave detailed orders in the RHQ Officers Mess. In the afternoon Recce parties departed to prepare the Gun area.	46 Bde O.O. No 19 received Folio 6.
	5.		During the day preparations were completed for the regiment's move. All Div signs were covered up. At nine o'clock at night they left Tilburg and proceeded via s'Hertogenbosch and Grave to the gun area.	15 Div Op Instr No5 received Folio 7
	6.		Early in the morning the regiment arrived near the gun area but did not occupy immediately, they lay up in the woods behind the gun area. After four o'clock in the afternoon digging was started. The	

		gun area was very wet and muddy subsequent to the unexpected thaw and the outlook for future operations was very sticky.	
	7.	Digging continued and in the afternoon the guns moved into position. The CO's tactical headquarters joined 46 Bde who were to make the initial attack on the following day. A rear echelon was established at Goirle near Tilburg to despatch and receive members of the Regt going & returning from UK Leave.	
	8.	Operation Veritable began with an immense Counter battery programme which started 0515 in the morning. The actual attack which was on a five divisional front started at 10 o'clock with a monumental barrage. The leading troops of the division were supported by tanks of the 6 Gds Tank Bde and flail tanks of 79 Armd Div which cleared paths through the minefield. The divisional attack was made North of the Reichswald Forest in the direction of Cleeve. Going was extremely bad in waterlogged country and the tanks and flails had the greatest difficulty in making progress. However the infantry kept well up to the barrage and by the end of the afternoon 46 Bde had occupied Frasselt. In the course of the day, a day which probably contained more firing than any other since we landed, the shooting was remarkably accurate and the CO congratulated all ranks on their efforts. In the afternoon the CO's half-track was unfortunately blown up on a mine whilst Brigade HQ was moving fwd; happily no one was injured though certain members of the party were somewhat upset. Also in the afternoon recce parties set out to prepare a new gun area 7655 to the East of Groesbeek. In the evening 44 Bde passed through 46 Bde in continuation of the advance.	
	9.	Early in the morning fresh orders were received for recce parties who had spent the night in the new area. Then followed a quick succession of changes to plan until finally the CO, was given a fairly free hand. Eventually an area was reced east of the village of Cranenburg in square 8155. The regt moved into the new area early in the afternoon. During the day 46 Bde pushed well on and secured the Materborn feature S.W. of Cleve.	
	10.	Heavy rain was now considerably hampering operations and the gun area was slowly becoming inundated. Several troops were forced to move or to amend their layouts and the RHQ office was completely drowned. During the day 43 Div passed through to capture the northern half of Cleve. Enemy resistance was now becoming considerably stiffer as he recovered from his initial surprise and brought up fresh reserves. Meanwhile arrangements were being made to despatch "Jock" columns from 46 Bde to Emmerich and Calcar. Each	

		column would contain one battalion of infantry, a battery of artillery and a squadron of Churchill tanks.	
	11.	The Jock column due to go to Emmerich was cancelled owing to the increase of opposition. Units of 44 Bde & 227 Bde were occupied in clearing the rest of "Cleve". Meanwhile the regiment was slowly disappearing in the rising floods at Cranenburg.	
	12.	During the morning a new area was recced at Donsbruggen 8656 and the regiment moved to it in the afternoon. It was a joy after the floods, the ground was reasonably high and digging was good. The Calcar column set out; it consisted of the Seaforths and a squadron of the 4th Tank Coldstream Guards. Unluckily Capt. P.MacD. Spafford MC, Troop Comdr of "E" Tp was killed when a shell hit his tank. Progress of the column was not as good as had been hoped.	
	13.	The remainder of 46 Bde were committed in the battle towards Calcar and they advanced as far as Hasselt. The rest of the division was being held as reserve and counter attack forces. In the afternoon a new gun area was recced in the western part of Cleve 8855.	
	14.	Early in the morning the regiment moved to its new area and was greeted by a sharp attack by jet propelled planes who dropped a number of bombs in the Cleve area; no casualties were caused. During the day the 9 Cams and the 2 G.H. had some very stiff fighting in the woods west of Moyland. Several fire plans were fired in support of these operations as well as many incidental mike, uncle and victor targets. Again in the afternoon recce parties went to a new area south of Cleve at Bedburg 9254.	
	15.	Another early move was made to the new area. There was a great deal of firing throughout the day to support some of the heaviest fighting since the operation began. Late at night a large Fire plan was fired in support of the 10 HLI who attacked south of the woods west of Moyland.	
	16.	Heavy fighting continued in the woods west of Moyland. Several counter attacks of about company strength were made, but they made no progress, being broken up by heavy artillery fire. One of the chief factors holding up our troops was the marked increase in enemy gun and mortar fire.	"On Call" Tgt list in support 7 Cdn Inf Bde received. Folio 8.
	17.	Most of the firing today was in support of the Canadians in their attempt to capture the "shoe" wood S.W. of Moyland. Opposition was very heavy and little progress was made. In the afternoon recce parties prepared a new position just north of the State Forest of Cleve 9250. The object of the proposed move was to support a 44 Bde attack on the North of Goch.	46 Bde O.O. No 22 received Folio 9. Fire plan in support 4 Cdn Inf Bde received Folio 10

18.		The regt moved by btys to the new area, RHQ remaining in its old location. The 44 Bde operation was successful and the Northern part of Goch was occupied. During the evening the Canadians began to relieve 46 Bde west of Moyland.	Fire Plan in support 44 Bde Folio 11
19.		In the early hours the regiment fired a Fire plan in support of 51 (H) Div who were operating from the west towards Goch. The relief of 46 Bde was completed in the morning and they retired to rest at Cleve. At midday recce parties were ordered forward to the area 9247 near the village of Pfalzdorf. The regiment moved in later in the day.	Fire Plan in support 4 Cdn Inf Bde Folio 12
20.		Today 227 Bde with 2 GH under command planned to clear the woods east of Goch and North of the railway from Goch to Udem. The operation was highly successful and many prisoners were taken. A fire plan of large size supported the operation, and later in the day we fired a further programme in support of 51(H) Div.	Fire plan in support 227 Folio 13
21.		Throughout the day we fired a great deal on enemy batteries which were harassing the infantry. Two very probable OPs in the direction of Oden received much attention both from ourselves, 17 pounder A/Tk guns and later aircraft. In the evening the CO gave orders for the biblical 46 Bde operation due on the next day, and during this the gun area was shaken by a few erratic bombs dropped possibly by one of our own planes. In the night we supported a 227 Bde attempt to establish a base south of the railway.	46 Bde O.O. 23 Folio 14
22.		The large fire plan for the 46 Bde attack was cancelled at the last minute owing to the failure of 227 Bde to establish their base. A complete new plan was evolved and a few more limited operations were arranged and carried out in the afternoon.	Fire plan for 46 Bde Folio 15
23.		Today we supported 44 Bde who passed through 46 Bde to carry out an operation very similar to that originally planned for 46 Bde the day before. In the evening we received the monumental fire plan prepared for the 53(W) Divs attack down the Weeze on the following day.	Fire Plan for 44 Bde Folio 16
24.		In the early hours the prebombardment for 53 Div started and this was followed by a counter battery programme and a deception plan. The actual attack did not go very well and throughout the day fire plans of varying size were fired in an attempt to maintain the momentum of the attack. In the evening we received orders to dispatch parties to recce a rest area in the Tilburg district. It was not known when the regiment would move out to rest.	
25.		Most of our firing was still in support of 53 Div who were pushing on the Weeze. The recce party under the CO2 at Tilburg found that the area allotted to the regiment was the same as that occupied in our previous rest period before Operation Veritable.	

	26.		3(Br) Div completed the take over from 15 Div and the Divisional Artillery was left in a purely AGRA role. In the morning a fire plan was fired in support of the Canadian attack towards Calcar and Udem. A considerable amount of fire was directed against hostile batteries and mortars.	
	27.		The never ceasing inrush of fireplans gave the regiment no chance to think of pulling out and it was not until the evening that we heard we would move on the next day, we were by now out of range and consequently scarcely a useful element in the winning of battles.	
	28.		A quiet day from the regiment's stand point. Eventually they pulled out of their position at 2000 hrs and the end of the month found them approximately at s'Hertogenbosch on their way to a very well deserved rest at Tilburg. Probably the most outstanding feature of the operations we participated in during the month was the gigantic scale of fire support provided for the infantry. Even the Normandy concentrations were out shadowed and our regt fired approximately 7500 rounds per gun in the month. One failing however was the short notice at which many programmes were received from other formations, it did not give Command Posts staffs sufficient time to complete cross checks by H hour - all have certainly earned their rest.	