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Army Form C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 6 RSF

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year Mar 45

Commanding Officer Lt Col I Mackenzie DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TILBURG	1		Bn trg in the morning including a drill parade. Recreation in the afternoon.	
	2		Same programme as previous day. The Bn is sending large number on 48 hrs leave to BRUSSELS.	
	3		RSM's parade, which was a rehearsal for the GOC's visit to the Bn. Still large numbers in BRUSSELS.	
	4		Church Parade Bde HQ in the morning. In the afternoon the CO, 2 IC, MO and a representative party under comd of Lieut Binge attended a Div Memorial Service in TILBURG. Massed Pipe Bands of the Div beat Retreat after the Service.	
	5		GOC inspected the Bn. He thanked all ranks for their excellent performance in recent fighting. Harbour parties under 2 IC left for HERCK LA VILLE (South of DIEST). An officers' dance was held at Bde HQ.	
HERCK LA VILLE	6		Bn moved in TCVs to HERCK LA VILLE.	
	7		Coys at Coy Comds disposal for settling in and adm. CO went on 48 hrs leave to BRUSSELS. 2 IC attended a conference at Bde and received outline plans for rehearsals for a large river crossing operation, also an indication of the Order of Battle for the RHINE crossing.	
	8		2 IC saw RE Fd Coy Comd regarding mock-ups (Class 9 Rafts) for practising drivers. Bn employed in testing and zeroing weapons.	
	9		A Buffalo arrived in Bn area. Coys still mainly occupied in zeroing. CO returned from BRUSSELS.	
	10		Coys allotted periods for practising getting on and off Buffalos. MT and Sp Coy practised driving on and off the Buffalo. The Bn held a trial football match in order to pick a team to play the 6 KOSB. CO outlined coming events to Coy Comds.	
	11		I Sec busy with maps for coming exercises. Church Service held in Convent, where B and C Coys were billeted.	

	12		MT loading trials were held by 2 IC with a view to crossing a large river with limited MT. C Coy held a dance in a neighbouring village.	
	13		The day was mainly spent in briefing on all levels for coming exercise to cross the MEUSE from West to East just South of MALSZYCH.	
	14		Bn left in TCVs for assembly area at 0700 hrs. Order of Battle for crossing was 44 (L) Inf Bde Right, 227 Bde Left. Within the Bde, 6 RSF Right, 8 RS Left, 6 KOSB in reserve. The two assaulting Bns crossed in Buffalos. The reserve Bn in storm boats. The exercise went well and many useful lessons were learnt. Unfortunately the CO's Buffalo broke down and he never got across the river. The Bn was back in billets by 1930 hrs.	
	15		The Bn left in TCVs at 1500 hrs to repeat the above exercise by night. Again the CO's Buffalo broke down, but a duplicate 22 Set reached the far bank and made communications possible. The Bn was back in billets by 1000 hrs.	
	16		The Bn was mainly occupied in resting and cleaning up. Maps and photographs for the RHINE crossing started coming in.	
	17		I Sec preparing maps etc for exercise TORCHLIGHT.	
	18		CO briefed Coy Comds on model and air photographs. Advance parties under OC S Coy left for assembly area on the RHINE.	
	19		The model was allotted to each Coy in turn for briefing of Pl Comds. Activity in the I Sec had now reached feverish proportions.	
	20		CO gave outline of coming operation to all NCOs. The Adjutant and RSM of the 2nd RSF came over to lunch, having arrived in BELGIUM from ITALY a few days before.	
	21		Viscount Lord Trenchard, Colonel of the Regiment, visited the Bn. In addressing the Bn he said that wherever he went he heard praise for the great deeds the Bn had performed. In the afternoon the CO and Rifle Coy Comds left for the assembly area.	
	22		The CO and Coy Comds spent the day on recces and tying-up the operation for crossing the RHINE. Meanwhile, the Bn left in TCVs under the 2IC at 1800 hrs.	
SEELENHOFF	23		The Bn arrived at first light in the assembly area. Troops rested in the morning and were briefed and did recces in the afternoon. H hour was fixed for 0200 hrs on the 24th. At midnight the Bn moved off in Buffalos.	
THE RHINE And	24		At 0200 hrs the Bn hit the river opposite Xanten. The Bn crossed three Coys up, "D" Right, "C" Centre, "B" Left.	

BISLICH		<p>The second wave, consisting of the CO, A Coy, Supporting Arms Comds and various pre-loaded vehs followed.</p> <p>By 0220 hrs the three leading Coys were on their preliminary objectives, which were all on the bund some 250 yards on from the actual bank of the river. The Carrier Pl dismounted had a stiffish fight to capture a house which had been booked for the RAP. They sustained several casualties from AP mines as well as small arms fire. However, the house, after some hand to hand fighting, yielded 40 prisoners.</p> <p>In another 15 mins the three leading Coys were on their first objectives. (B Coy halfway up the village of BISLICH, C Coy at Xrds just to the East of the town and D Coy a row of houses along the bund to the East of C Coy). Bn HQ was set up in D Coy's area. By 0330 hrs first objectives were cleared and consolidated and the CO gave orders for Coys to continue to their second objectives, which entailed C Coy expanding North, D Coy East and A Coy further East into the area of a large factory. "D" Coy unfortunately received two of our own shells in the middle of them while preparing to continue their advance. They sustained about twenty casualties, including all Pl Comds, Lieuts Murphy and Binge among them. Prisoners were now coming in fast. By 0415 hrs Coys were on their second objective, and vehs were coming over the river. Shelling and mortaring had been light throughout and casualties surprisingly small. At 1000 hrs the airborne operations commenced. This was an awe inspiring sight, and any scattered resistance on our immediate front collapsed, when they saw our airborne troops coming down in hundreds to their rear. The whole Bn then expanded further to the East against negligible opposition, and spent a remarkably peaceful night for the first across the RHINE. A large number of prisoners were taken during the day.</p>	
HORSTER	25	<p>At 1000 hrs 44 Bde set out in an advance to contact formation in the order: 6 KOSB, 6 RSF, 8 RS to make contact with our airborne troops in the woods to the North of BISLICH. This was achieved without serious opposition, and the Bns received the warmest of welcomes from our airborne troops. The Bn took up a defensive position in the area of HORSTER. Coys sustained some fairly heavy and accurate shelling. Lieut Tait (A Coy) was slightly wounded and spent the night in the RAP, but returned to duty the next day. A small enemy convoy apparently unaware of our presence ran right into B Coy's area, who captured one veh and several prisoners.</p>	

			Copy of letter received from the Prime Minister is attached at Appendix J.	
Bridge West of DINGDEN	26		<p>During the night the KOSB had been advancing with a bridge across the river ISSEL as their objective. The KOSB encountered considerable opposition and by daylight were still held up short of the bridge and had not discovered whether the bridge was blown or not. The Brigadier decided to put 6 RSF through to capture the bridge or the site of it. The Bn was allotted kangaroos and a Sqn of the 4th Armd Bde in support. At 1400 hrs D Coy moved off to capture a small wooded feature on this side of the river as a preliminary to the main operation. "D" achieved this successfully against only slight opposition, and took about 60 prisoners. "D" Coy established the fact that the bridge had been blown. The plan for the remainder of the Bn was that "C" on the right of the bridge and "A" on the left should leave their kangaroos on the near bank and covered by fire from tanks get over the obstacle each to a small wood some 200 yds over the river. This "A" and "C" Coys successfully achieved but not without considerable opposition. One kangaroo being blown up by a Bazooka. "B" Coy then crossed and held the immediate area of the bridge site. Shelling and mortaring by this time had become intense and attempt to put a scissors bridge over the river failed, when the bridge was hit by a shell. Coys received considerable casualties and the CO asked the Brigadier for more infantry to hold the bridgehead until a Class 40 bridge could be erected by the REs. At about 1800 hrs a Coy of the 8 RS arrived to come under comd. This Coy relieved C Coy on the right. C Coy Comd Maj Adler, who had been wounded some hours earlier, only allowed himself to be evacuated after this move was completed. After dark a thunderstorm and heavy rain made it impossible to get any transport except Weasels even as far as Bn HQ, which was near D Coy three-quarters of a mile on the near side of the river.</p>	
	27		<p>In the early hours of the morning the Coys somehow collected a meal from weasels, and at 0300 hrs the Engineers commenced to build a Class 40 bridge under a noise cover plan from arty MGs and mortars. To their great credit the Engineers completed the bridge by 0600 hrs, although most parts of the Bn area were heavily shelled all night. As soon as the bridge was completed the Bn's 6-pdrs and two troops of SP guns crossed the river and were in position before it was fully light. Shelling continued heavy all day. At about 1500 hrs the 8 RS Coy on the right were counter-attacked in some strength. This interfered with 160 Bde</p>	

		(53 Div) who were due to launch an attack through us at 1600 hrs. However, 6 RSF were able to borrow two tps of tanks from the Bn of the Welch Regt who should have gone through. The posn on the right was finally stabilised at about 1800 hrs. Meanwhile the 6 RSF had been given two Coys of 6 KOSB under comd, and these were used to extend slightly and strengthen the bridgehead as a really firm base for 160 Bde. The Bn of the Welch Regt finally passed through at midnight. The MO, Capt Pooley and Capt Mann were among the casualties from shelling.	
	28	The night had produced a remarkable change and the shelling had almost ceased. During the day more and more of 53 Div went through and 6 RSF were able to stand down and get some well earned rest. Bn HQ moved across the river early in the morning, and the Coys of the KOSB and RS returned to their own comd.	
	29	By this date, the Bn ceased to have any operational role and spent the day making itself comfortable and in getting better billets.	
	30	The troops spent the day cleaning up themselves and their new billets. The CO and Coy Comds on promotions and re-organising. General Barber, his CRA and GII, came to tea.	
	31	A salvage drive for enemy equipment and jerricans was put into action. The BM came to tea. The Brigadier and Lt Col Richardson 6 KOSB came to dinner.	I Mackenzie Lieut-Colonel, Commanding 6th Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers