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Army Form C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 119 LAA Regt RA

~~**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**~~

(Delete heading not required).

Commanding Officer Lt Col JF Young RA

Month and Year Feb 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TILBURG -	1	1000	214250 Lt H.E. CRANE left to rejoin his present unit, 31 RHU.	
HILVARENBEEK and DIESSEN area	2	1130 1900	260309 Rev J.P. MARSDEN, Ch Cl IV left unit for attachment to HQ Second Army tps, to be replaced by 266827 Rev L.R. EARNSHAW from HQ 8 Corps. BCs briefed for forthcoming op by 2IC (CO being on UK leave).	
	3	0900	2IC and reps carried out recce of future regt area and fd gun area to which the regt is to give LAA protection in future op.	
	4	1030	All officers attended a briefing by GOC 30 Corps and GOC 15 (S) Div given to all officers of the div in TILBURG	
	5	1600	Three tps affiliated to Fd arty joined fd regts and moved with them to harbour in new deployment area early on 6 Feb ◉ Small regt residue formed to adm leave parties etc and guard unessential stores left at GOIRLE on Div Adm Gp for duration of op.	
NIJMEGEN area	6.	1845	The regt, less 3 tps, moved from HILVARENBEEK - TILBURG area in div column via S'HERTOGENBOSCH and RAVESTEIN to NIJMEGEN area ◉ Many delays on latter part of journey where route went cross-country on minor tracks ◉ Arrived in new area approx 0545 hrs, tps to harbour close to future deployment positions Information received (via RA) of the award of BEM to 6350326 Sjt KEMPSTON, for gallantry in FRANCE	
	7	-	Day of preparation for attack following day ◉ OC 392 bty in charge of 7 traffic-control WT trucks for use on gaps in minefield and anti-tank ditch ◉ One tp LAA (C tp) to take part in "PEPPERPOT", a mass of MMGs, Bofors, A tk guns, tanks, mortars, designed to neutralize selected areas of enemy FDLs for approx 5 hours before the attack ◉ Remaining five tps of this regt to deploy over fd arty areas of 15 (S) Div and of Guards Armd Div, the LAA regt of the latter being entirely committed in a ground role in the Pepperpot	

		2235	CRA 15 Div rang up with infm that 94 LAA Regt (Gds Armd Div) would not now take part in Pepperpot ☉ As many guns as possible of 119 LAA Regt would therefore fire Pepperpot tasks ☉ OC 119 LAA Regt conferred with OC 1 Mx (OC Pepperpot), ordered (1) E tp to take on tasks with one sec from present position (2) G tp to move immediately by night to new posn from which the majority of the pepperpot targets could be engaged (3) A and F tps to take on certain tasks at extreme ground range from present positions [N.B. Not possible for tractor-towed guns to move and redeploy by night under such difficult conditions] ☉ C tp to make no alteration in Pepperpot tasks already allotted to the tp	
	8	0530 1200 1300 1730	- 1015 Pepperpot tasks fired as ordered ☉ Later report by eyewitness in fwd OP stated that LAA fire appeared extremely effective and set ablaze one or more houses ☉ Approx 13500 rounds fired OC 392 reported to div HQ with LOs in jeeps fitted with WT, for traffic control duties Lieut PARTRIDGE returned from course and leave in UK having reported to 44 RHU (in UK) on <u>19</u> Jan 45 Four SP guns of C tp moved fwd with 44 (L) Inf Bde to support tanks with directional fire through gaps in minefield, but not able to reach destination owing to roads being blocked and whole area badly bogged ☉ Went into action in area BOERSTEEG where considerable numbers of AFVs were bogged down	
	9	1830 2200 -	Traffic control posts were stood down, but to be held in readiness for employment again soon ☉ Complimented on their work - 2230 Single enemy bombers flew over NIJMEGEN area, dropping flares and a few bombs probably aimed at moving tpt columns ☉ Damage not known ☉ Engaged by A, E, F, G and I tps firing approx 450 rounds ☉ No claims - During the day 1/LT HEYBROCK, attached as interpreter since 3 Oct, left to take up another appointment, and was replaced by FRANS VAN DRIEL, holding rank of sjt	
	10	1500	The 4 SP guns of C tp, deployed at BOERSTEEG, returned to original deployment position at 7457 & all tp harboured	
	11	1000 1430 2300	2IC and I.O. left to establish tac HQ with HQRA in their new location at NUTTERDEN 8455 (first entry into Germany) C tp moved into quarters in NIJMEGEN Orders received from tac HQ to warn C and G tps to stand by for possible move on 12 Feb and for Adjt to take fwd RHQ office vehs to join tac HQ.	

	12	1255	Orders from RA by RT to cancel all today's proposed moves, timings for which were being brought back by 2IC in a "WEASEL". Reason for cancellation, flooding over 3 ft deep between WYLER and KRANENBURG preventing any vehs smaller than 3-ton trucks from getting through ⊙ C E & G tps (all SP) to be prepared for possible move 13 Feb if conditions permit	
	13	1400 -	E tp, to obtain shelter and some degree of comfort for the men, allowed to move from former fd gun area [now unoccupied] to SE outskirts of NIJMEGEN, keeping one section deployed No move fwd for SP tps	
	14	1030 2130 2255	Again, warning order from RA for move of SP tps Orders received for SP tps to leave NIJMEGEN at 0600 hrs on 15th and travel via MOOK and HEKKENS to CLEVE area Orders received from Rear Div HQ for move of remainder of regt [less residue still in GOIRLE] not before 151800A Increased air activity during the day, owing to better weather ⊙ Small number of Me 262s engaged at 0830 & at 1630 hrs	
NIJMEGEN and CLEVE area	15	0600 1515 2340	Three SP tps moved to deploy around div fd arty fwd of CLEVE Orders received, no move before 161800A for remainder of regt, but 119 to be responsible for move of entire RA group still in NIJMEGEN area [incl 102 A tk regt less three btys, elements of 131, 181, 86 fd regts], in the absence of any rep of HQRA - 0100 hrs, two guns of G tp gave directional fire for attack by 46 bde	
	16	0700	- 0730 hrs, two guns groundshooting at wood 9650 RHQ, bty HQs, A, F & I tps moved by night to CLEVE area arriving 0230 - 0330 hrs at new locations	
	17	1000	OC 119 LAA ordered to be in charge of two 'pepperpots', of LAA MMGs & mortars, to fire in support of 15 (S) Div attack on GOCH early 19 Feb ⊙ Timing subsequently put fwd to p.m. 18th	See Appx J
	18	1300 2145	Pepperpots, incl C & E tps LAA firing in ground role, engaged targets as arranged ⊙ C tp engaged further targets after H hr and remained in situ when E tp returned to redeploy as part of LAA defence of CLEVE ⊙ Approx 8,000 rounds of 40 mm fired CO called to HQRA to arrange 'pepperpot' in sp of 227 bde attack p.m. 19th, to incl LAA, A tk & MMGs ⊙ Attack subsequently postponed to a.m. 20th	
	19	0800 1515	E tp/391 bty moved into fwd area, ready for 'pepperpot' groundshooting ⊙ C tp engaged ground targets, during the day, from their 'pepperpot' location	

CLEVE - BEDBURG area		1530	WO II Morton, sjt-major of F tp/391 bty, killed by shellfire while travelling through CLEVE (the town & environs being constantly under intermittent shellfire) - 1700 RHQ moved in two sections to join Div HQ in area BEDBURG	
CLEVE - GOCH area	20	1030	C & E tps fired in 'pepperpot' commanded by OC 119 LAA Regt	See Appx J
	21	-	Increased air activity (fine weather) ⊙ Raids by small groups of Me 262s at 1130 - 1145 and 1720 - 1745 hrs ⊙ Several small bombs dropped - no cas to this unit ⊙ Several hits claimed - one aircraft claimed destroyed and one severely damaged ⊙ Also, one Ju 188 engaged by moonlight at 2100 hrs - no claims ⊙ Approx 2500 rounds expended in all - CO 119 in charge of 'pepperpot' of LAA, MMG & A tk, to fire in sp 46 (H) bde attack on 22 Feb ⊙ A tk subsequently cancelled, as amn not available	See Appx J
	22	1400	'Pepperpot' fired, but in modified form, as decision had been made to reduce the depth of 46 (H) bde's attack in view of increased local enemy strength ⊙ Approx 2000 rounds 40mm HE expended ⊙ G & E tps (both SP) remained in situ after firing, available for tasks in sp of 44 (L) bde attack 23 Feb ⊙ 3 guns F tp (non-SP) which had fired in ground role from 931431 returned to original positions in fd arty area 9346	
	23	0930 1600 1825	- 1010 hrs, E & G tps fired 750 rds at area targets in sp of 44 (L) bde attack 10 rfts arrived, including 8 much-needed trained gun-numbers C tp HQ shelled ⊙ Water truck damaged but no cas	
	24	0545 1800 1845	- 0645 hrs, G & E tps fired 1675 rounds at ground targets area 930390 in sp of attack by 53 (W) Div Orders received for move on 25 Feb, less 4 tps, to area TILBURG ⊙ Three non-SP tps to remain deployed with div fd arty and to come out of action with them later, one tp (SP) to remain deployed round div HQ F tp HQ shelled ⊙ 3 gun tyres and 1 MC badly damaged ⊙ No cas	
	25	1000	Regt less 4 tps left BEDBURG for move to TILBURG area, passing SP in GOCH 1105 hrs ⊙ Some shelling in GOCH area - no cas to this unit ⊙ Arrived in harbour locations in OISTERWIJK (2334) and surrounding area approx 1615 hrs	
	26	-	- C tp left GOCH area, when Div HQ moved, and arrived to harbour in OISTERWIJK approx 1615 hrs - Remainder of the regt (less 3 tps still deployed with fd arty) began rest period to be devoted to thorough cleaning and maintenance of vehicles, equipment, etc	

	27	0900	RHQ occupied location vacated the previous evening by 92 LAA Regt (3 Brit Div), and btys and B ech adjusted their layout in the village and surroundings of OISTERWIJK	
	28	-	A F & I tps warned for move not before 2000 hrs, from GOCH - CLEVE area to OISTERWIJK, when div fd arty pulls out	