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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 15 (S) Reconnaissance Regiment.

~~**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year August, 1944.

Commanding Officer Lt.Col. J.A. Grant Peterkin

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B.L.A.	1		The Regiment situated just behind ST MARTIN DES BESACES, which contrary to expectations was strongly held by the enemy, who were only driven out after a full day's battle. This held up our reconnaissance forward and shortly afterwards the Gds Armd Div was given priority on all roads. 'B' Sqn in support of 46 Bde late this evening were given the task of clearing up the area GALET - LA MARCELLIERE which was held by pockets of the enemy. This was successfully carried out, though Lieut CAREY and 4 O.R's lost their lives in this action. Dust was the chief problem this day.	
	2.		Regiment moved forward about 1000 hrs to protect left flank of the Div, R.H.Q. moving to LA BRESSI, which was overlooked by the high feature of MONTAGNY. 'C' Sqn moved to left flank to link up with 43 Div who were advancing from Pt 361. 'A' & 'B' Sqns were in reserve. Area of R.H.Q. was repeatedly shelled all evening from MONTAGNY, the enemy having seen the tpt moving about.	
B.L.A.	3		'A' Sqn were placed under command Gds Armd Div and sent at 0700 hrs to help the Motor Grenadier Gds at St PIERRE VASCUTIN, where they spent a most unpleasant day under continuous artillery and mortar fire. They assisted in repelling many heavy counter attacks. They were relieved at 2000 hrs and returned to BRESSI. 'C' Sqn spent the day actively patrolling the left flank and had one or two good shoots; in one case 100 Germans were seen concentrating in an avenue of trees and were effectively dispersed by our artillery.	
	4		Good progress was made by 'C' Sqn on this day, and they occupied MONTAGNY, from where the enemy had withdrawn the previous night.	
	5		R.H.Q., 'B' & 'C' Sqns moved up and harboured near MONT CHARIVEL.	
	6		Battle of ESTRY. Based on false information regarding the strength of the enemy, the Regiment was ordered to reconnoitre the advance of the Div from MONTCHARIVEL area SOUTH on 3 routes to VASSY. It was soon discovered that ESTRY was very heavily held and that the main road South to LE THEIL was also held and mined and covered by tanks	

			and MGs. 'C' Sqn with 9 Troop got into ESTRY and discovered much information regarding the strength of the enemy, but it was soon obvious that a full scale major attack would have to be made to get past this town. 9 Tp under Lieut ROYLE withdrew and stood off and continued to harass the enemy and passed valuable information to the infantry who made little progress throughout the day. On the other route, 10 Tp under Lieut RIESCO moved down the road towards LE THEIL but found area 788390 heavily covered by fire, and in view of vehicle casualties were ordered to withdraw to LA CAVERIE. The leading infantry got no further on this day and the troops of 'C' Sqn were ordered to withdraw back to harbour at 1700 hrs. On the left flank 'B' Sqn tried to patrol down to LASSY but again they found that the enemy was in strength, and with the bad condition of tracks made little or no progress.	
B.L.A.	7.		'A' Sqn moved out to give left flank protection on the left of 46 Bde on the Bdy between 15 Div and 43 Div. They moved out to the AU CORNU X Rds with mortars under command and captured the high ground Pt 226 without incident. Considerable enemy movement was seen on the far slopes but no attack was made on them. The remainder of the Regiment remained concentrated at MONTCHARIVEL.	
	8		In view of the large area 'A' Sqn were keeping, the Assault Tps of 'B' & 'C' Sqns were placed under command 'A' Sqn who were actively patrolling this area on the left flank. The Mortar section had their first real opportunity this day to fire at the enemy.	
	9		The Regiment still in the MONTCHARIVEL area. 'B' Sqn took over the position on the left flank from 'A' Sqn, who returned to rest.	
B.L.A.	10		Situation still static. 'B' Sqn still holding left flank where they managed to get patrols down as far as the river line in front of them. Indications were received this day to make it possible that the enemy were starting to withdraw in this area, and orders were given for the "ESTRY operation" to be laid on again should the enemy retire. Late that afternoon a Sqn of the Inns of Court (30 Corps Armd Car Regt) were ordered up to relieve 'B' Sqn. The reactions of an Armd Car Regt taking over from an Inf Div were interesting, and it was agreed to leave mortars and A/Tk guns with them so as to strengthen them.	
	11		The Div resting waiting for the enemy to withdraw as it was now the policy not to rush the "ESTRY Operation" whilst the enemy were holding their strong positions. All Orders were issued for this advance should the enemy withdraw.	
	12.		Regiment still concentrated in harbour at MONTCHARIVEL. Orders rec'd at about 1800 hrs that the Div would move early next day to an area	

B.L.A.		between the R. ORNE and LEIZE (CAEN Sector). About 2 hrs later and about ½ hr before dark orders were received on the wireless for the Operation ESTRY to be put into operation, although it was clear that nothing could be done in the remaining few minutes of daylight. Troops prepared, and in certain cases moved out of harbour, but fortunately this order was then rescinded, particularly as once again the information on which the order was based proved later to be faulty. The Orders to move the following day to the CAEN Sector were re-issued.	
	13.	The Regiment moved at mid-day to AMAYE-SUR-ORNE, the route passing through much of the previous battle areas including VILLERS BOCAGE (which was completely flat), Pt 112, and the area of our previous battles round Verson. We returned to the real battle-field area where the stink of war still remained.	
	14.	An inactive day owing to the road situation, other formations having priority; the main relief being some excellent bathing in the ORNE.	
	15.	Same location. The day was memorable for the visit of the first Canteen, a good ENSA show, and insects.	
B.L.A.	16.	Maj.Gen C.M. BARBER, DSO, who took over the Division on 8 Aug when Gen MacMILLAN was wounded, visited the Regiment and spoke to each Sqn to introduce himself, not that this was necessary as he had previously commanded 46 Bde, and to say that he felt that perhaps the Regiment was not always given credit for the work that was done by Senior Commanders who normally visited the Inf Bdes after the Division had done well in battle.	
	17.	Same Location. Nothing to report.	
	18.	Regiment moved to LA FRESNIL LA BIEUX. By this time we were practically in Army Base Sub-area and it was getting a bit depressing to be so far behind the enemy.	
	19	Orders were received for the movement Eastwards once the FALAISE gap was finally cleaned up, but no time or date of move could be given.	
	20.	Still waiting to move and still getting further into the L of C area, the Army installations actually being set up in front of the Regiment.	
B.L.A.	21.	'A' Sqn were placed under command of the "Royals" (12 Corps Armd Car Regt) and moved to LE TREPREL where they waited to get a flying start for Exercise 'GALLOP' (the move Eastwards to the R. SEINE). A report was received via various channels by 'A' Sqn this afternoon that there were 40 enemy SW of FALAISE. This was investigated by O.C. 'A' Sqn and it turned out that the location was Tac HQ 2nd Army, the first enemy to be seen being the Army Commander driving in in his Jeep!	

	22.		Still waiting for orders to go. 'A' Sqn ceased to be under command of the "Royals" but remained at their forward location of LE TREPREL.	
	23.		Final preparations for the move. Regiment moved at 1800 hrs to LA HOUGETTE preparatory for an early move next day, the FALAISE GAP having been finally cleaned up.	
B.L.A.	24.		The Regiment moved off at first light on what was really route reconnaissance eastwards, passing through the FALAISE battle area where the destruction by our aircraft and armour was obvious. Each Sqn had under command large parties of Engineers with bulldozers, and progress was very slow owing to other traffic and the enemy vehicles demolished on the road. Forward Sqns reached the line LE SAP - BRENAI that night.	
	25.		The Regiment continued its movement the following day with the object of crossing the River EAST of LE BEAUMONT DE ROGER. No contact was made but considerable reconnaissance had to be done in order to find crossing places over the many streams and rivers where the bridges had been well demolished by the Germans. The Regiment reached the line of LE NEURBOURG - BARQUET.	
	26.		Reconnaissance for the crossing of the R. SEINE started. 'C' Sqn moved forward through LOUVIERS and reached the high ground WEST of the SEINE without incident and commenced to find out as much as they could regarding the river line. Patrols were sent to the left and right and a Patrol Report (Appx 'A') was sent to Division that night.	Appx A.
B.L.A.	27.		<p>The Regiment moved forward to just WEST of LOUVIERS and the active reconnaissance of the river line was undertaken. Though not expressly ordered, members of the Regiment were the first of the Division to cross this major obstacle. Patrols had for a long time reconnoitred the whole bank and shot up enemy on the far side, when a report was received that Lieut WHEELER and 2 N.C.O's had found a boat, crossed the SEINE and had reconnoitred PORT JOIE, which they found very nearly empty. On the right flank Lieut SHIRLEY had crossed in an Assault Boat to an island and from there to the far side, and had reconnoitred MUIDS, where it was proposed a Class 9 bridge be put down.</p> <p>Very full and accurate reports were sent in this day and a full Recce Patrol Report (Appx 'B') was made up and sent to the Div Comdr that night.</p> <p>As a result of these reports it was decided that a rush crossing should be made by 227 Bde that afternoon, much earlier than had at one time been anticipated. All the reports which these patrols had</p>	Appx B

B.L.A.		given were confirmed when this crossing was successfully made by 227 Bde. Very useful work had been done by the patrols of the Regiment, particularly 'C' Sqn, on these two days and they were largely responsible for the early crossing of the R. SEINE.	
	28.	<p>As a result of representations made, Armd Car patrols of 'A' & 'C' Sqns were ferried across at first light next morning so that if there was little opposition as expected these patrols could get the maximum information for the infantry. These patrols, acting very boldly, reached a considerable way inland and were able to give very valuable information regarding the small posts of the enemy to the infantry, who were able to achieve their objectives without any difficulty.</p> <p>As soon as the bridges were built - Class 9 at MUIDS and Class 40 at St PIERRE, the remainder of 'A' & 'B' Sqns were to cross the river and continue to patrol actively eastwards. These patrols produced a very great amount of valuable information this day. Serious opposition was met on the right by 'A' Sqn at LE THUIT, FRETTEVILLE and LES ANDELYS, whilst 'D' Sqn also on the left ran into various enemy pockets.</p>	
B.L.A.	29.	<p>Owing to the bridges taking longer than was expected, the Regiment harboured for the night 28/29 Aug just short of the river and moved across at 0530 hrs and joined up with the Armd Cars EAST of the SEINE, and 'A' & 'B' Sqns continued on their task of reconnoitring in front of the Division, 'A' Sqn having crossed the bridge at MUIDS, the remainder of the Regiment crossing at St PIERRE VAUDRAY. On the right, 'A' Sqn found very considerable opposition at FRETTEVILLE and LE THUIT where they undertook a very successful action, destroying many of the enemy.</p> <p>Of the Scout Troops under Lieuts BLOUNT, KERRIDGE and DALTON, the former was responsible for the liberation of LES ANDELYS from which the enemy had evacuated that morning. On the left 'B' Sqn reached the line of the Army Bdy up to ECOUIS where they harboured for the night, having carried out their role very well. 'C' Sqn were released at mid-day when it was clear that a breakthrough was possible and moved between 'A' & 'B' Sqns to get as far as SAUSSY where they came up against strong enemy posts and made contact with the left flank of 11 Armd Div, who were starting their run which took them to BRUSSELS. RHQ moved up to LE LANDE. That night we were informed, much to our disgust, that 53 Div were to pass through 15 (S) Div next day and that we were to clear the roads for them.</p>	
B.L.A.			

	30		53 Div passed through 15 (S) Div, and the only action we were allowed to take was to patrol to our flanks and mop up certain enemy pockets in the woods nearby where the MACQUIS were very active.	
B.L.A.	31.		The Regiment concentrated in the area ECOUIS - MUSSEGROS. A letter was received by the Commanding Officer from the Divisional Commander congratulating the Regiment on its work in the past few days, and a Special Order of the Day was published and is attached at Appx 'C'. It was thought that morning that we were likely to rest for 4 or 5 days, but at 1440 hrs orders were received for the Regiment to come under command of 53 Div for flank protection of 7 Armd Div who were advancing on AMIENS and ARRAS. The Commanding Officer received orders from G.O.C. 53 Div to move at first light next morning to FRY 5223.	Appx C.