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ARMY FORM C.2118

**WAR DIARY**

or

Unit 15 Scottish Reconnaissance Regt.

**~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~**

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year February, 1945.

Commanding Officer Lt.Col. K.C.C. Smith

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
B.L.A.	1		Regiment located as under:- RHQ, 'B' & 'C' Sqns, LAD - Monastery, TILBURG (191305). 'A' Sqn billeted in TILBURG. 'A' & 'B' Echelons - 192304. A further wireless exercise was held today - Ex SNOGGER II. The points noted yesterday were brought out and righted.	
	2		Regt static and in same locations. Regt Harbour party sent to NIJMEGEN to recce conc area for Op VERITABLE.	
	3-5.		Regt static.	
	6		Regt moved up to conc area for Op VERITABLE. Time past SP 1900 hrs; time of arrival at NIJMEGEN - 'B' Sqn 0300 hrs, 'C' Sqn 0345 hrs, RHQ 0345 hrs, 'A' Sqn 0600 hrs.	
	7		Regt static. Maintenance and preparation for Op VERITABLE. 'C' Sqn Gap Control party join 46 & 227 Bdes at 2300 hrs ready to move off with Bde columns at 0400 hrs on 8 Feb. Full details of this Gap control organisation and how it worked, with lessons, is given at Appx 'A'.	
B.L.A.	8		Regt (less 'C' Sqn gap control party) static in NIJMEGEN. Op "VERITABLE" started. Tanks of Regt:- (i) Regt to endeavour to pass through inf and recce advance of two mobile columns - (a) Axis CLEVE - CALCAR, (b) Axis CLEVE - UDEM. (ii) Regt to recce route between CLEVE and the REICHSWALD FOREST to allow 2 HCR to pass through and recce towards GOCH - "flood the country with Armd Cars".	
	9		Regt static in NIJMEGEN, waiting for off! (a) 'B' Sqn allotted task of passing through inf and reconnoitring route through or around CLEVE and to carry on if possible as far as the rly line, and then if possible to push on towards UDEM. (b) 'A' Sqn are to be ready to pass through CLEVE and push towards CALCAR. (c) 'C' Sqn, as the majority of officers and senior NCOs were on Gap Control and it will take them some little time to re-organise once released, in reserve.	

B.L.A.		<p>The going was deplorable and the tracks cut up badly, which resulted in the attack proceeding slower than was anticipated. 'B' Sqn ordered to send an offr patrol to recce routes NIJMEGEN - KRANENBURG. Reports were as follows:-</p> <p>Northern route through WYLER under 2'6" of water - Southern route fair but very heavy traffic.</p> <p>At 1445 hrs Regt was given orders by GOC to move off, the Southern Route to be cleared for Regt's move. Order of march - 'B' Sqn, RHQ, 'A' Sqn, 'C' Sqn. 'A' Echelon to remain at NIJMEGEN.</p> <p>The Northern route was not a practicable proposition as it was 2'6" under water, and the accidents through vehs going off the road straight into flooded country-side would be considerable, and the C.O. decided the risk was not worth taking. The Southern route was still heavily congested with traffic moving in every possible direction, and this seriously delayed the fwd mov of the Regt and resulted in the leading patrol of 'B' Sqn arriving at the X Rds in NUTTERDEN at 1715 hrs. The light was beginning to fail and 'B' Sqn were ordered to push on with the greatest possible speed to make the most of what little daylight was left. Pushing SOUTH from NUTTERDEN 'B' Sqn patrols ran into tks and buffaloes returning, having placed the inf on their objectives. This made fwd mov of our patrols impossible and by 1800 hrs little or no progress had been made, and it was then dark. Div HQ were asked what was required of the Regt during the night, and we were ordered to continue in the dark in an endeavour to find routes through CLEVE and to move as far as the rly line. Mov light, i.e. searchlights, were in the area and gave a little assistance. 'B' Sqn carried on all night and gained some most valuable infm, but, of course, infm could not be guaranteed as accurate. During the night several recce parties from 43 Div called in at RHQ. These recce parties appeared to be under the impression that CLEVE was in our hands and it was merely a matter of motoring through and signposting routes without any form of protection whatsoever. The majority of these recce parties were persuaded that there were large quantities of the enemy still in the area. At approx 2330 hrs a Bn Gp of 43 Div moved up to CLEVE area with a patrol of 'B' Sqn in front of them. This Bn Gp made quite good progress, meeting a certain amount of enemy opposition, but unfortunately at about 0130 hrs they halted and made no further mov during the night, although it did not appear to our patrols that there was anything to justify their stopping. It is considered that had this Bn Gp carried on energetically, giving 'B' Sqn patrols adequate sp, it would have been possible to have been est on the rly</p>	
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			<p>line at first light. Without this Bn Gp following up it was not a fair risk of war to ask the patrols to push on alone, particularly as the opposition was beginning to stiffen.</p> <p>During the night 'B' Sqn patrols collected some 2 Offrs and 50 OR POW who had no idea of what the sit was and thought that they were arriving to reinforce the fwd defs of the SIEGFRIED line.</p> <p>The Regt, less 'B' Sqn, harboured in the area of NUTTERDEN for the night.</p>	
B.L.A.	10		<p>Sitrep at 0730 hrs, based on infm obtained by 'B' Sqn, was as follows:- "In CLEVE there only appeared to be a few disorganised enemy, but no definite conclusion should be drawn until it is lighter. The Bn Gp of 43 Div is now on the outskirts of CLEVE where they are static, and have been there for some hours without being fired at".</p> <p>At 0810 hrs 'A' Sqn was ordered to move off and pass through CLEVE and recce towards CALCAR, but at 0900 hrs 'B' Sqn reported confused fighting had broken out in the centre of CLEVE, and 'A' Sqn was stopped. During the day 'B' Sqn continued to patrol in the area on their original task of trying to get out to the SOUTH. Some pockets of enemy were encountered and some SP guns located. One Scout Car was knocked out.</p> <p>During the day 'C' Sqn Gap Control party came in by bits and pieces, having been very badly bogged down. They should have joined us as the Regt passed through KRANENBURG the evening before.</p>	
B.L.A.	11		<p>'A' Sqn relieved 'B' Sqn and continued patrolling, but found the sit was very much the same as the day before, and it would appear to be an inf task to soften up the enemy before there was any hope of us getting out, and therefore at 1200 hrs 'A' Sqn was drawn in to NUTTERDEN again.</p> <p>At 1700 hrs Div HQ ordered the Regt to send a Sqn forthwith to CLEVE and try to push out onto the CALCAR Rd as CLEVE was now firmly in our hands. 'A' Sqn was allotted this task and managed to get tps away in ¼ hr despite the fact that they had been stood down. 'A' Sqn managed to get patrols through the fwd inf in CLEVE and very shortly came under fire. As it was getting dark it was quite impossible to carry out any further recce, so 'A' Sqn was withdrawn.</p> <p>Orders were issued during the evening for a mobile column, with the Regt, less one Sqn, leading to push out in the direction of CALCAR.</p>	
B.L.A.	12		<p>At 0730 hrs 'A' Sqn moved out from CLEVE across an improvised Cl 12 br and proceeded to fan out on the far side. The Cl 40 br was not ready before 1030 hrs and so no tanks or inf in Kangaroos could pass</p>	

B.L.A.		<p>before this hour. The Regt, less one Sqn ('B' Sqn) was under comd 7 Seafortths, who were mounted in Kangaroos, with a Sqn of tks also under comd Seafortths. By 1100 hrs it was clear that the enemy were holding in some strength on the outskirts of CLEVE and that it was an inf and tk battle and not a Reconnaissance Sqn's job. On the infm given by 'A' Sqn the Force Comd decided to push his van-guard straight through and destroy the enemy which we had encountered. At approx 1230 hrs the van-guard passed through CLEVE onto the CALCAR Rd. The inf with tk sup fought their way fwd, 'A' Sqn patrols passing through whenever there was a pause, but it is becoming perfectly clear that the enemy was going to fight all the way back, and therefore our patrols were withdrawn back along the main axis to the outskirts of CLEVE. As it was getting dusk the inf reached HASSELT and had a confused battle there, and eventually withdrew to the WEST side of QUALBERG for the night. Our patrols naturally withdrew at dark.</p> <p>The Regt was now concentrated at CLEVE except for 'B' Sqn who were still in the NUTTERDEN area.</p>	
B.L.A.	13	<p>'C' Sqn relieved 'A' Sqn and carried out similar patrols. They found that the enemy had pulled back along the whole front. Mines were located at 938534 on the outskirts of HASSELT, but these were by-passed and HASSELT reached at 1100 hrs and found to be clear. A carrier tp was left to hold HASSELT until relieved by the inf. A patrol pushed fwd, but contacted enemy inf in the wood 948531. Enemy were also encountered on the southern outskirts of ROSENDALL 9452. Very hy and accurate fire was brought down on these patrols and it was necessary for them to withdraw. A further patrol was endeavouring to make for HURSBERDEN but could get no further than Rd Junc 940557, where it came under fire from SP Guns. A patrol working northwards from HASSELT could only reach the line of the rly where it also came under fire. It was quite obvious that the enemy was still prepared to fight hard.</p>	
	14	<p>'C' Sqn were ordered to repeat the patrols of the previous day to check up whether there had been any alteration during the night. Considerable flooding was found both on the CLEVE - CALCAR Rd and on the CLEVE - KELLEN rd. 'C' Sqn endeavoured to find some way round the floods keeping to the NORTH of CLEVE - CALCAR Rd as the inf were fighting SOUTH of it. They found it quite impossible; even the rly CLEVE - CALCAR was flooded to anything up to 6'. Efforts were made to test the depth of water by use of Recce boats. 'A' Sqn were moved up to BEDBURG sanatorium in case there should be a break to the SOUTH. 'B' Sqn moved up from NUTTERDEN in place of 'A' Sqn.</p>	

	15-18		<p>Locations:- RHQ, 'B' &amp; 'C' Sqns - CLEVE.  'A' Sqn - BEDBURG.  'A' Echelon, LAD, - NIJMEGEN. 'B' Echelon - GOIRLE.</p> <p>On 16 Feb 'A' Echelon were ordered up from NIJMEGEN to NUTTERDEN, but flooding was so bad that only 3-tonners could get through, and therefore 'A' Echelon was split and small vehs returned to NIJMEGEN eventually joining up on 18 Feb 45.</p>	
	19		<p>RHQ moved to BEDBURG to be close to Div HQ. 'A' Sqn were ordered to send patrols to discover the sit in GOCH and to see if there was any possibility of pushing through the town with our patrols. The fighting, however, in GOCH was still extremely hy and it was quite out of the question for any patrols to get through.</p>	
	20		<p>'A' Sqn were again ordered to send contact patrols to GOCH, but again the sit was found to be quite unsuitable for us.</p>	
B.L.A.	21		<p>The Regt was ordered to find out the posn at the Southern end of the wood 9542, which was reported to be clear of enemy by an inf patrol. 'B' Sqn were ordered to move up from CLEVE to PFALZDORF and given the job of finding out the posn at the bottom end of this wood and to est themselves there to prevent infiltration through the wood, so giving left flank protection to our inf attacking southwards. All the tracks in the area were found to be almost impassable, having been badly churned up by the tks. A tp of carriers was pushed through the inf at BUCHOLT and soon came under considerable arty and mortar fire from UDEM. This tp pushed on and came under S.A. fire from the houses in area 958431. As a result of hy Besa fire and setting a haystack on fire they collected from these houses 30 POW, incl the crew of a Panther tank. It was clearly quite impossible to get a mounted patrol down to the bottom of the wood, and therefore it was decided to get down a dismounted party during the night. The Assault Tp of 'C' Sqn was placed under comd 'B' Sqn. At about 0300 hrs 'B' Sqn was est at the X Tracks 957424.</p>	
B.L.A.	22		<p>At first light 'B' Sqn pushed out dismounted patrols to discover the exact posn at the bottom of the wood. These patrols soon ran into trouble, encountering mines and coming under fairly hy spandau fire. An SP gun also opened fire, bursting the rounds in the trees. 'C' Sqn Assault Tp Leader, who was in comd of the party decided it was not on to stay at the X Tracks and withdrew his whole party back level with the inf coys in the area 951428.</p> <p>This wood was under very hy shell-fire all day and personnel were not properly organised for a protracted stay in slit trenches. 'A' Sqn Assault Tp was therefore placed under comd 'B' Sqn to enable reliefs to take place and troops to be rested and re-organised out</p>	

			of range of this hy shelling. 'C' Sqn were moved up from CLEVE to PFALZDORF and later into GOCH, 'B' Sqn having moved across to the farm at 944445 the previous evening.	
B.L.A.	23		The inf were ordered to relieve us in the posns in the wood. Again the shelling was very hy all morning and it was not possible to commence this relief until approx 1400 hrs. During the morning 'B' Sqn filtered back by troops to GOCH, where they harboured. 'C' Sqn were ordered to send out carrier patrols to give left flank protection to 44 Bde during their attack to the SOUTH. They were in posn at 1030 hrs and were relieved by inf at 1800 hrs. They were under very hy shell fire all day, losing 1 killed and 3 wounded; 5 vehs ditched or burnt out. The going was quite impossible owing to softness of the ground, which had been cut up by tks.	
	24		Harbour parties sent to LOUVAIN. Shortly after they had left fresh orders came for harbour parties to proceed to TILBURG. Locns:- RHQ, 'A' Sqn - BEDBURG. 'B' & 'C' Sqns - GOCH. 'A' Echelon, LAD, - CLEVE.	
	25		Regt crossed SP at GOCH at 0740 hrs and reached TILBURG 1200 hrs. The Regt was accommodated in civilian billets in the town.	
	26-28		TILBURG. Maintenance and re-organisation.	