

WAR DIARY

In lieu of A.F. C 2118.

Month and Year:- February, 1945

Unit:- 2nd Bn The Gordon Highlanders.
Commanding Officer:- Lieut.-Colonel R.W.M. de Winton, D.S.O.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1		Bn still in area 9714 (Sheet 3, ANTWERP 1/100000)	
	2		Trg (Breaching minefield, assault on pillboxes and A/Tk defences) continues.	
	3		Trg - Pipes and Drums play Retreat.	
	4		All officers attend an address by the Corps and Div Comds at TILBURG.	
	5	1430	Bn column left at 1430 hrs for NIJMEGEN (Bde Movement Order att) led by 2 IC. Route was 'Maple Route Up' but many diversions owing to state of the road - Road surface very bad in parts. Order of March - Bn HQ, "A", "B", "C", "D" & Sp Coys.	
	6.	0230	Bn arrives at its billets in a large school in NIJMEGEN. Remainder of the day spent in preparation for coming action.	
	7		Final preparations and 'O' Group for Op 'VERITABLE'. Six shells land in A.2 Ech area but no military damage done.	
	8	0700	Bn moves off at 0700 hrs for assembly area (movement order att) with rifle coys on foot. Routes SKYE and GLEN proved to be little better than mud tracks running through the gun areas. The guns (25 prs, medium and heavies) were putting down a terrific barrage which had started at 0500 hrs while Bofors, M.M.Gs., etc., were 'peppercotting'. In spite of the depth of mud on the roads the Bn column reached its assembly area (7557) a wooded area North of GROESBEEK, complete at 1000 hrs. There the Bn remained all day with the barrage continuing unceasingly and with no apparent reply on the part of the enemy.	
	9.	0200	At 0200 hrs the Bn moved forward, the marching personnel, "A", "B", "C", "D" Coys and Carrier Pl, going by the more direct route onto the NIJMEGEN - KRANNENBURG road while vehicles were routed via GROESBEEK and the lateral road running N.E. to join the main road short of WYLER. The marching personnel had an uneventful approach to KRANNENBURG reaching the R.V. (Rd Junc 805563 on the Western entrance to KRANNENBURG) at 0330 hrs where the 2 IC, who had gone on in advance had set up a	

		<p>control post. Meanwhile the vehicle column had met with several delays on the lateral GROESBEEK - WYLER road. These took the form of (1) Two abandoned three ton trucks across the road (one with its engine still running) (2) Two sets of trenches dug right across the roads into the first of which the I.O's Jeep, which was leading, fell and had to be pulled out by the Bty Comd's half track (3) Mines and finally (4) felled trees across the road. These obstructions delayed the column which finally met up with the rifle coys at the R.V. at 0430 hrs.</p> <p>It was during this approach that the Bn crossed the frontier into Germany at the road Junction on the NIJMEGEN - KRANNENBURG road just south of WYLER.</p> <p>As soon as the vehicle column arrived at the R.V. Phase III (see Op Order att) commenced. Tac Bn HQ moving up to the East side of KRANNENBURG. Within half an hour "A" Coy had reported that the main road bridge over the A/Tk ditch was intact and the opposition very slight. Phases IV, V and VI were put into execution in quick succession and by 1000 hrs the Bn was through the Siegfried Line and had taken NUTTERDEN with Tac HQ at farm 837557. Mopping up continued during the morning bringing the total P.O.W. for the day to 135 which included 30 taken by "D" Coy from one of the Siegfried 'Bunkers'. There was a little spasmodic shelling of the NUTTERDEN area by one enemy gun during the evening and at about 2000 hrs the Comd Post received a direct hit, killing 11 including Major A.W. Parish (Sp Coy) and Lieut T.N. Salter (S.O.) (Died of Wounds) and wounding 5 including Captain J.H. Thompson (I.O.)</p>	
	10	<p>Bn ready to move off at 0930 hrs but the plan was changed and at 1330 hrs coys moved down the NUTTERDEN - DONSBRUGGEN road and took up positions astride the road "A" Coy in advance and "B" & "C" Coys in the wooded area to the South East of the road. Tac HQ at 848561.</p>	
	11	<p>At 0930 hrs the Bn moved off with CLEVE as its objective with special reference to the canal bridge in the centre of the town. By 1100 hrs "A" Coy was beyond DONSBRUGGEN and "B" Coy had passed through while "D" Coy with the help of the Carrier Pl (dismounted) cleared the high wooded area running immediately South of the road, a troop of Left Flank Sqd, 3 Scots Guards going through the woods in support of them. By 1430 hrs Tac HQ was in a large shoe factory on the outskirts of CLEVE (M.R. 889566) with "C" and "A" Coys well into the</p>	

			<p>town making for the canal. At 1530 hrs "C" Coy reported one of the bridges damaged beyond immediate repair but the other was made serviceable with the help of the trackways carried by the R.E. party attached to the Bn. By nightfall "A" & "C" Coys were finally established in their areas astride the canal with "B" Coy in the area of Tac HQ and "D" Coy on the high wooded ground to the rear. Some shelling from a heavy gun was experienced during the afternoon but ground opposition had proved slight with 46 P.O.W. taken. Our own casualties since the start of Op 'VERITABLE' being K.I.A. one officer and four O.Rs. D.O.W. one officer and three O.Rs. W.I.A. one officer and ten O.Rs.</p> <p>Lieut J.A. Rankin joined the Bn as Mortar Officer.</p>	
	12		<p>During the morning a Bn from the 6 Cdn Bde took over from "A" & "C" Coys and the Bn concentrated with "A" Coy in the shoe factory, Tac HQ having moved to a row of houses at 892567, "B" Coy in its original position around the rd junc 893564 and "C" & "D" Coys back along the DONSRUGGEN road at 883569.</p>	
	13		<p>Bn still in same position with floods in the Tac HQ area gradually rising.</p>	
	14.		<p>The Commanding Officer proceeded on leave to the U.K. and Major R. Henderson took over command.</p> <p>Captain H.C.S. Chilman and Lieut T. Horsnby joined the Bn.</p>	
CLEVE	15		<p>Bn ready move by 1030 hrs the plan being an advance down the CALCAR road but this was cancelled.</p> <p>Captain S.C. Reiss and Lieut A.R. Bruce joined the Bn as I.O. and S.O. respectively. Lieut A.R. Speak also joined the Bn from the London Scottish.</p>	
	16		<p>Bn still conc area 893564. Slight shelling from heavy gun North of the RHINE 1015 hrs.</p>	
		1100	<p>Bde Comd informed C.O. of projected attack on GOCH.</p>	
	17	0900	<p>Bde 'O' Group. Seizure of GOCH planned. 1400 hrs Bn 'O' Group. 1430 hrs operation cancelled owing to progress of 43 Div, given to 44 Bde.</p>	
		1600	<p>Bde Comd indicated possible new Bde task to make an advance to contact from GOCH to WEEZE.</p> <p>Captain I.O.S. Munro and Lieut D. Smith joined the Bn.</p>	
	18		<p>Still no move.</p>	
		1700	<p>Bde 'O' Group; the Bde less 10 H.L.I. to 'crash' the woods area 9443.</p>	
		2100	<p>Bn 'O' Group. Coy objectives allocated.</p>	
		2230	<p>Information from Bde of probable further change of plan.</p>	

	19	0930 1000 1245 1400 1700	Bn moved off by march route to assembly area 9147. C.O. met Bde Comd at 504498 and went to recce fwd areas. Bn HQ est at 914475. Bde 'O' Group. The Bde now to receive the support of 2 Glasgow Highlanders and the woods in 9443 were now to be cleared. Bn 'O' Group. Coy Comds given their new objectives. The Bn to receive, apart from an enormous arty programme, the support of a Sqd of the Coldstream Guards and half a sqd of CROCODILES and to be carried in KANGAROOS. "D" Coy right and "C" Coy left to lead the attack followed by "B" & "A" Coys who were to pass through them.	
On the move SCHLOSS CALBECK	20	0930 1230 1400 1445 1600 1630 1930	Bn left assembly area 9147. Heavy drizzle. 2 A & S.H. and 2 Glas H. having captured their objectives, 2 Gordons advance from its F.U.P. 939449 and attacked the woods. Heavy drizzle and rain continued. "D" Coy captured its objective SCHLOSS CALBECK 9442 and took 70 prisoners. "C" Coy on its objective 950426, 20 prisoners. "B" Coy on objective 946425, 15 prisoners. "A" Coy on objective 943424, 8 prisoners. Comd Post est at the SCHLOSS 9442. The enemy infantry which comprised the remnants of the much battered 84 Div gave very half hearted resistance but he responded vehemently with his guns and mortars. The thickness of the woods and the extreme softness of the ground made the going very difficult and it was well after dark before the Bn was properly consolidated. The main tracks were found to be blocked by felled trees and camouflnets, but very few mines were encountered. Owing to the heavy shelling it was decided not to bring up other than the most essential sups. Own casualties during this operation were one killed and seven wounded.	
	21	0100	"A" Coy supported by 131 Regt R.A. attacked the wood 941421 with a view to securing a bridgehead over the canal but heavy opposition was encountered from elements of 7 Para Regt and the coy was forced to withdraw to the North of the canal though still retaining command of the approaches to the bridge at 941423. Two prisoners were taken. "A" Coy lost thirteen men including Lieut Paterson wounded, one killed and one missing.	

		2000	<p>During the day enemy shelling continued to be heavy and seemed to arrive not merely from the East but from the South, S.W. and N.E. Own cas were 3 killed, 14 wounded.</p> <p>The greater part of Rear Bn HQ under Comd Major D. Duke remained at 914475 though Major Duke himself moved fwd to 932457 to keep in wireless comm with Tac HQ.</p> <p>6 R.S.F. passed through the Bn and captured the wood 940420.</p>	
	22	<p>0200 "B" Sqd, 15 Recce Regt passed through "C" Coy to 957424 but subsequently withdrew under pressure to "C" Coy's immediate flank.</p> <p>1400 9 Cams passed through the Bn to area 946416.</p> <p>1415 "C" Coy attacked the buildings 947423. This attack was only partly successful but heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and 15 prisoners taken. In this action Major T.A. Gloster was killed by a shell splinter. One further man was killed and 17 wounded.</p> <p>1630 7 Seaforths passed through moving South.</p> <p>1715 "B" Coy attacked through "C" Coy and captured PLEESENHOF 9442. During the day enemy shelling and mortaring continued to be heavy and about seven vehicles incl coy carriers standing at SCHLOSS CALBECK were set alight.</p> <p>Casualties during the day were 3 killed, 31 wounded. Lieut Harvey ("A" Coy) and Lieut MacFarlane ("D" Coy) were wounded.</p>		
	23	<p>1000 44 Inf Bde passed through the Bn moving South.</p> <p>1100 An incipient enemy counter-attack on "B" & "C" Coys was broken up and heavy casualties inflicted. One of "B" Coy's PIATs knocked out a half track inf gun. 68 enemy dead were counted in this area during the two days fighting.</p> <p>Our losses during the day were 10 killed, 20 wounded incl Lieut Hornsby ("C" Coy), 2 missing.</p> <p>2300 9 Cams captured a fortified house 945422 which it was believed had been directing enemy arty fire.</p>		
SCHLOSS CALBECK	24	<p>Major Campbell R.A. directed our arty with considerable effect against an enemy S.P. gun and infantry which had been troubling "B" & "C" Coys from the East.</p> <p>1600 C.O., 2 R.U.R. (3 Div) visited Comd Post prior to taking over Bn area.</p> <p>2300 - 0145 2 Gordons relieved by 2 R.U.R. and spent the night area 928436.</p> <p>Total casualties during the period 20 Feb to 24 Feb were</p> <p>"A" Coy 1 killed 1 missing 25 wounded</p> <p>"B" Coy 6 do 1 do 9 do.</p>		

			"C" Coy 2 do. 1 do 29 do. "D" Coy 6 do. 13 do. HQ Coy 2 do. 3 do. Sp Coy 1 do. 6 do. P.O.W. captured during the period 20 Feb to 24 Feb were:- "A" Coy - 20, "B" Coy - 25, "C" Coy - 42, "D" Coy - 75. During the period 21 Feb - 24 Feb while other units were passing through, the Bn gave considerable assistance to them in the clearing of cas and P.W. an in marking routes.	
On the move	25	0810 1400	Bn left area 928436 in T.C.Vs. Arrived TILBURG. Bn HQ est 172313. The whole Bn billeted in private houses.	
TILBURG	26		Adm and rehabilitation.	
	27		Lt.-Col R.W.M. de Winton DSO returned from leave and resumed comd of the Bn.	
	28	1100	Bn parade - practice for Div Comd's inspection 1 Mar 45.	