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ARMY FORM C.2118

**WAR DIARY**

or

Unit HQ 227 (H) INF BDE

**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**

(Delete heading not required).

Month and Year SEPT 1944

Commanding Officer Brig EC Colville, DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
MUIDS	1		At short notice 2 A & S H were placed under comd 53 (W) Inf Div and ordered to take over a bridgehead on the SOMME.	APPX "D" Folio 1
MUIDS	3		At 1100 hrs the Bde Gp, less 2 A & S H, moved to area LE TRONQUAY (5115), where they harboured for the night.	
LE TRONQUAY	4		The Bde moved to CRIQUIERS (6338)	
LE CRIQUIERS	5		The Bde Gp, less 2 Gordons marching personnel, crossed the R SOMME to BOUBERS-sur-CONCHE (0603), where 2 A & S H rejoined the Bde. A small party from Bde HQ stayed behind to make arrangements for TCVs to lift 2 Gordons.	
BOUBERS	7		<p>The Bde was now given the task of occupying COURTRAI (8558) and taking up defensive positions around the town.</p> <p>The shortage of TCVs made it impossible for 2 Gordons to be brought forward and 2 Glas H were placed under comd for this op, but at the last minute 2 Glas H were taken away to rejoin their own Bde, 46 (H) Inf Bde.</p> <p>When the Bde Gp reached a point four miles from MENIN, it was learned that the enemy were holding COURTRAI in strength. Consequently, the Bde was ordered to harbour for the night in an area East of COURTRAI.</p> <p>The Bde crossed the BELGIAN Frontier at 2100 hrs at MOUSCRON and harboured for the night in the BOSSUYT area (9547).</p> <p>The troops received a tremendous welcome from the civilians in the move fwd, but the enthusiasm shown by the people when the Bde column moved through TOURCOING and MOUSCRON was unparalleled.</p> <p>At times it was impossible for the convoy to move. The road was blocked by crowds of people who insisted on shaking hands with the troops and decorating the vehicles with flags and flowers.</p>	APPX "D" Folio 2
BOSSUYT	8		The role of 15 (S) Inf Div now was to stop any enemy movement from West to East by holding the COURTRAI - GHENT road. 227 (H) Inf Bde then started to advance to contact in the general direction GHENT,	

			<p>with 2 A &amp; S H leading, followed by 10 HLI with 2 Gordons coming up direct from BOUBERS.</p> <p>No enemy opposition was encountered, and after an uneventful advance the Bde Gp concentrated in area South of GHENT as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bde HQ - NAZARETH 0972  10 HLI - LA PINT 1474  2 Gordons - NAZARETH 0972  2 A &amp; S H - MACHELEN 0271</p>	
NAZARETH	11		<p>After three uneventful days in this area, the Bde Gp was ordered forward to the HOMBEEK area (6874), North of BRUSSELS, where the Div concentrated for ops in the ALBERT CANAL area.</p>	
HOMBEEK	12		<p>The men were given a holiday, and many of them were able to spend a few hours in BRUSSELS.</p>	
HOMBEEK	13		<p>The Bde left to take over the bridge head established by 50 Div over the ALBERT CANAL at STEELEN (0786).</p> <p>During the move forward, however, the C-in-C, Fd Marshall Montgomery visited the Div Comd and gave <del>a change of plan</del> the news that the enemy was withdrawing from the ALBERT CANAL.</p> <p>This necessitated a change of plan, and 227 (H) Inf Bde was now ordered to push forward to the ESCAUT CANAL, with 10 HLI to occupy MOLL 1791 and 2 A &amp; S H to push through to the ESCAUT Canal At DONK 1695.</p> <p>This was completed by last light with little opposition, and the Bde concentrated as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">BDE HQ - MEERHOUT (1485)  10 HLI - MOLL (1792)  2 Gordons - MEERHOUT (1485)  2 A &amp; S H - DONK (1695)</p>	
MEERHOUT	15		<p>The Bde Comd, Brig EC Colville, DSO, and other Offrs and Men of the Bde attended investiture held at HQ 15 (S) Inf Div, where he was presented with the DSO by Field Marshall Montgomery.</p> <p>During this time, 44 (L) Inf Bde had established a bridge head over the ESCAUT Canal, North of GHEEL (0888), and it was decided that 227 (H) Inf Bde should establish a second bridge head over the canal in the area West of DONK.</p> <p>The Bde Comd ordered 2 Gordons to cross first, and the crossing was to be done by means of barges and planks. 10 HLI were to follow and secure DESSCHEL (1697). 2 A &amp; S H would then cross and take up posns to the right of DESSCHEL, and 2 Gordons would occupy posns to the left of DESSCHEL.</p>	
MEERHOUT				

MEERHOUT		-	<p>During the planning air photos revealed many errors on the map, and the position chosen for the bridge head actually entailed the crossing of two canals.</p> <p>However, the first Canal was blocked with barges and it was thought that it would not prove difficult to cross this first obstacle. At 2300 hrs it was finally decided that the op would start before first light 16 Sept.</p>	
MEERHOUT	16		<p>2 Gordons started to move forward at 0130 hrs and 227 Bde Tac HQ moved to the College at MOLL (1690) at 0300 hrs.</p> <p>C Coy, 2 Gordons leading Coy, began to cross the first Canal at 0315 hrs. Bargees, who were living on the barges, assisted the leading troops by placing sacks on the boats, and the leading Coy, together with a dismounted section from the Carrier Platoon, reached the 'Island' without incident. B and D Coys also reached the 'Island' without mishap, but dawn was now beginning to break and as the leading coy moved down to the lock, where they were going to cross the Canal by planks, they were seen and fired on by a MG post.</p> <p>This post was quickly silenced by Bren, mortar and PIAT fire, but the alarm had now been raised and the enemy brought down heavy fire, including 88s and mortars, on to the 'Island'.</p> <p>It was now daylight, and 2 Gordons were pinned to the ground by the weight of the enemy fire.</p> <p>At 1200 hrs it was decided to abandon the operation and 2 Gordons pulled back into ACHTERBOSCH (1592), leaving C Coy on the 'Island' to guard the southern bank of the canal.</p> <p>Despite the fierce enemy fire put down on them, the 2 Gordons casualties were light, four being killed, including one officer, and 12 wounded.</p> <p>It was now decided that 227 (H) Inf Bde should move to the area of GHEEL (0888) and extend 44 (L) Inf Bde's bridge head.</p> <p>Consequently, 10 HLI were moved to GHEEL at 1600 hrs and given the task of taping areas and start lines for an attack by 2 Gordons and 2 A &amp; S H to widen 44 Bde's bridge head on the night 17/18 Sept.</p>	
MOLL	17		<p>C Coy, 2 Gordons, was withdrawn from the 'Island' during the night, and 227 (H) Inf Bde, less 10 HLI, moved to the area North of GHEEL with dispositions as follows:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bde HQ - 099903 10 HLI - 0888 2 Gordons - 0989</p>	APPX "D" Folio 3

		<p style="text-align: center;">2 A &amp; S H - 0789</p> <p>There was another change of plan, however, and 227 (H) Inf Bde were ordered to relieve 44 (L) Inf Bde in the bridge head during the nights 17/18 and 18/19 Sept.</p> <p>On completion of the relieve 227 Bde was to take offensive action and attempt to burst out of the bridge head while 44 (L) Inf Bde and 46 (H) Inf Bde covered the canal line.</p> <p>This change of plan was due to 15 (S) Inf Div being given the task of guarding the left flank of 53 (W) Inf Div.</p> <p>Although the enemy had the exact range of the crossing with his guns and mortars and frequently put down a concentration on the crossing, the first relief, 2 A &amp; S H taking over from 8 RS, was completed without incident.</p>	
GHEEL	18	<p>It was now decided that 2 Gordons would relieve 6 KOSBs in the bridge head to-night, and 10 HLI withdrawn into reserve in the GHEEL area.</p> <p>7 Seaforth, from 46 (H) Inf Bde, took over the task of guarding the Southern bank of the Canal from 10 HLI.</p> <p>The relief of 10 HLI by 7 Seaforth was completed by 1830 hrs. Due to heavy enemy artillery action, the relief of 6 KOSB by 2 Gordons was delayed from 2100 to 2000 hrs, but eventually the relief was completed by 0100 hrs without mishap.</p> <p>At last light, the enemy launched a counter attack of approx one Bn strength with two tanks against 2 A &amp; S H. The full weight of this attack fell on one platoon, but they fought magnificently and after reaching a point 50 yards from our forward positions the enemy fell back in disorder.</p>	
GHEEL	19	<p>After a day of constant shelling of the bridgehead the enemy launched another counter attack at last light, but this was not as strong and determined as the previous night and was quickly broken up.</p> <p>It was now decided that 10 HLI would relieve 6 RSF in the bridgehead to-night and this was carried out without incident.</p>	
GHEEL	20	<p>As the bridgehead had now served its purpose by containing large numbers of enemy troops and preventing any large scale enemy movement Eastwards towards the British Second Army 'Corridor' from EINDHOVEN to NIJMEGEN, it was decided to evacuate the bridgehead.</p> <p>The task of watching the Canal line was given to 7 Armd Div and 227 (H) Inf Bde was placed under comd of 7 Armd Div.</p>	

			<p>It was arranged to evacuate the bridgehead during the night, and due to good planning this particularly tricky operation, which started at 2215 hours, was completed by midnight without the loss of a single man.</p>	
GHEEL	21		<p>The Bde now concentrated in and to the South of GHEEL, except 10 HLI who were given the task of watching the Canal crossing and preventing any enemy infiltration across the Canal.</p> <p>The Bde was now dispositioned as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bde HQ - 101865 10 HLI - 084939 2 Gordons - 091892 2 A &amp; S H - 092859</p>	
GHEEL	22		<p>The Bde, less 10 HLI, rejoined 15 (S) Inf Div, and was ordered to concentrate in area WILHELMINA CANAL (3825) prior to attacking BEST (3726).</p> <p>10 HLI remained under comd of 7 Armd Div.</p> <p>The Bde moved at 1330 hrs, and after crossing the DUTCH Frontier in BORKEL area (3799) at 1700 hrs, harboured for the night at VELDHOVEN (3714), as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bde HQ - 375144 2 Gordons - 373148 2 A &amp; S H - 379146</p>	APPX "D" Folio 4
VELDHOVEN	23		<p>The Bde moved at 0930 hrs to area of WILHELMINA CANAL (3825), and concentrated North of EINDHOVEN as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bde HQ - 418201 2 Gordons - 423204 2 A &amp; S H - 405223</p> <p>At 1500 hrs the Army Comd, Lt Gen Dempsey, visited Bde HQ and informed the Bde Comd that 227 (H) Inf Bde was being placed under Army comd and would be used in ops in conjunction with either 15 (S) Inf Div or 50 (N) Div.</p> <p>10 HLI left 7 Armd Div and rejoined the Bde w.e.f. 1800 hrs. They arrived at EINDHOVEN at 2200 hrs and were located at 421198.</p>	APPX "D" Folio 5
EINDHOVEN	24		<p>Plans were made and re-made during the day until finally at 1700 hrs it was decided that 227 (H) Inf Bde would rejoin 15 (S) Inf Div and carry out mopping up operations in the area of BEST (3726), West and North of the Railway.</p> <p>The Bde Comd held an O Gp at 2100 hrs and gave his plan, as detailed in 227 (H) Inf Bde Op Instr No. 6</p>	APPX "D" Folio 6

EINDHOVEN	25		<p>Prior to the attack Bde HQ moved fwd to ACHT 393232.</p> <p>2 Gordons began the attack at 1000 hrs, and although they encountered heavy mortar and MG fire from well sited weapon pits, they got two coys astride the railway line.</p> <p>At this juncture the Divisional Comd visited Bde HQ and informed the Bde Comd that another change in plan had been made, and 227 (H) Inf Bde were now to advance towards LIEMDE (3632)</p> <p>2 Gordons, who had suffered heavy casualties, were told to halt and return.</p> <p>The advance on LIEMDE was to be made by 10 HLI on the right and 2 A &amp; S H on the left.</p>	APPX 'D' Folios 7 & 8
<p>ACHT</p> <p>ACHT</p>	26		<p>Starting at 0700 hrs, good progress was made by both 10 HLI and 2 A &amp; S H until they reached the woods north and West of DONDERDONK (3930).</p> <p>The enemy had strong dug in positions along the wood and air support was asked for to enable the advance to proceed.</p> <p>Rocket firing Typhoons attacked the wood, and although more than 80 prisoners were taken the enemy held the woods too strongly for the advance to continue.</p> <p>The Bde then took up defensive positions as shown on the attached trace with Bde HQ at 395289.</p>	
DE VLEUT	27 -	30	<p>During the next four days vigorous patrolling was carried out by the Bde, and in addition to taking many prisoners a detailed enemy order of battle was built up.</p> <p>During Sept 28 a propaganda effort, backed up by rocket firing Typhoons, was tried against the enemy from 10 HLI area.</p> <p>This was successful, and brought many deserters and PW. One patrol from 2 A &amp; S H consisting of two men brought in 40 PW.</p> <p>All PW during interrogation said that they were tired of fighting and were only waiting for a chance to surrender.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the enemy mortars and arty were active but caused few casualties.</p> <p>During the afternoon of 29 Sept, enemy arty and mortars got the range of Bde HQ and the HQ was moved to 407292.</p>	