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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 1st Bn. Middlesex Regt (D.C.O.)

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year August 1944

Commanding Officer Lt Col J.P. Hall

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
Bn HQ FOULOGNES	1	1800 1000 1200	4 & 5 Pls 'A' Coy are in location on Hill 309 MR 6951 - 3 Pl at 692514. Pls are subjected to heavy shell and mortar fire and numerous casualties are sustained. 5 Pl fire direct on enemy inf who are mounted on tks endeavouring to escape from BOIS DU HOMME. Many casualties are inflicted on enemy. 'C' Coy are located at LE MANOU 706536. No 9 Pl engage northern edge of wood and road 7051 - 7151. This Pl is still under comd of 8 RS. 'C' Coy Comd is ordered to co-ordinate DF & CM plan of MMGs and 3" mortars after KOSB has attacked and taken up posn SOUTH of BARELIERE 7052. 'B' Coy remains in same location. All pls of 'D' Coy are subjected to heavy shell fire during which Cpl Rowley and Ptes Armitage & Shimell receive serious wounds.	
	2	1530	6 Pl move fwd with 2 A & SH and take up posns at 689492. 7 Pl with 2 Gordons at 694477. 8 Pl with 10 HLI at 683484. 46 Bde regroup and 'C' Coy move fwd to area ST LAURE - 9 Pl under comd 6 RSF, 11 Pl under comd 6 KOSB. 'D' Coy less one Pl are now in posns as under :- Coy HQ with 227 Bde HQ at 686496. 12 Pl at 686487 and 13 & 15 Pls at 685485.	
ST LAURE	3	1010 1700 1900	'C' Coy Comd informed by BM 44 Bde that a counter attack is being made by enemy on to CATHOLLES 7444. 6 RSF Bn Gp is moved up to area and No 9 Pl comes under comd operationally. Coy Adv HQ moves fwd to 680446. Nos 9 & 11 Pls to 700466 to sp attack on LA COUR. 14 Pl move with 46 Bde to 711453.	
	4		'A' Coy move to ST PIERRE TARENTIN and Pls take up posns as follows:- 3 Pl - 716412, 4 Pl - 713424, 5 Pl - 710435. Coy HQ - 707460.	

		0600	Maj D.A. Phillips is evacuated (Sick) to 193 Fd Amb. Capt H.D. Euren assumes comd - Lt K.B. Torrens-Spence takes over 2 IC.	
	5	0700	'B' Coy move fwd and pls take up the following posns:- 6 Pl - 748427 in sp 2 A & SH. 7 Pl - 767408 in sp 2 Gordons. 8 Pl - 772413 in sp 10 HLI.	
		0730	9 & 11 Pls 'C' Coy take up posns SOUTH of MONTCHARIVEL.	
		0900	'D' Coy less 14 Pl move to MONTCHARIVEL area. Coy HQ with 227 Bde - 758437. 12 Pl - 747423. 13 & 15 Pls 768414, and are allotted counter-mortar tasks.	
			14 Pl move to 709445 with 46 Bde.	
		1400	7 Pl ('B' Coy) who have moved with 2 Gordons are subjected to heavy shelling from which 1 OR is killed and 6 wounded.	
		2000	6 Pl report 2 casualties wounded.	
		2100	8 Pl " 1 " "	
			4 Pl ('A' Coy) moves into FAA of 9 Cams prior to Bde attaining BOIS DES MONTS - Pts 108 - 232, LASSY & LA ROCQUE	
	6	0700	12, 13 & 15 Pls ('D' Coy) are ordered to be on truck ready to move to LE THEIL on its capture by 10 HLI - thence to engage targets southwards. However 227 Bde's attack does not go according to plan and orders are issued for 2 of these 3 pls to sp 2 A & SH. Shortly afterwards these orders are cancelled and pls are again ordered on trucks and later occupy posns as under :- 12 Pl (in sp of 2 Gordons & 10 HLI) 748380. 13 & 15 Pls (in sp of 2 A & SH) 764405.	
		1330	'A' Coy Comd is called fwd to location 795412 to COs 'O' Gp and during his absence Coy area is heavily shelled, resulting in high casualties and damaging M/C belonging to 4 Pl. 'O' Gp decides that Coy will support an attack on high ground area 795405, by rapid map shoot at 785410 from 1415 - 1430 hrs on to LA CHEVALIERE and GURNEY and from 1430-1445 hrs on to pts 232 and 180. The shoot is quite successful - but immediately firing ceased a heavy concentration of shells fall in gun line - 4 guns are rendered inoperative. Sgt Ellison & Pte Barlow are killed and L/Sgts Edwards & Mullings, L/Cpl Johnson and Ptes Davis, Bourne & Cheadle are wounded. 9 Cams withdraw to area LA DRURIE 7641 and pl remains in this area constantly under enemy shelling. 4 Pl is reduced to one section on wheels with 3 tasks - (1) Firing from area 7 Seaforths to CAUERIE X-rds. (2) Firing WEST. (3) Firing NORTH from area Glas H.	
		1600	Adv Coy HQ move to 767427 with 44 Bde Tac HQ.	
		1700	'C' Coy move in the "Advance to Contact" with the RS. The original intention being a move to VASSY (7932) but the coln is halted by a	

		2100	<p>very strong pocket of resistance at LASSY (7939) where for the first time a Bde of the 15th Scottish reluctantly has to withdraw (if only for a few yards) to the high ground pts 7840 - 7940 - 7980. A defensive posn is now taken up and 227 Bde comes through to the right and advances successfully on ESTRY. 25 Pdrs pave the way with a terrific weight of fire. Heavy mist obscured the targets. Typhoons, Thunderbolts & Spitfires helped the attack. Message received at 'B' Coy HQ reporting that Lt L.T. ATKIN has been killed.</p>	
	7	<p>0015 0300 0830 1200 1300</p>	<p>O.C. 'B' Coy who, on receipt of message, had gone fwd to confirm the tragic news, returns with the information that Lt ATKIN has been killed by enemy SA fire whilst fwd on a recce. 7 Pl ('B' Coy) covers withdrawal of 46 Bde and then withdraws to high ground NORTH of AU CORNU with 2 Glas H. 9 Pl move from R Scots area to LA MOTTE area. 11 Pl joins the KOSB in the low ground but as the country is of a very close nature returns to LA MOTTE. Sgt Waite (8 Pl 'B' Coy) takes over comd of 6 Pl. 6 Pl take 3 prisoners, occupants of a car who were taking a meal to the enemy and had taken a wrong turning.</p>	
Bn HQ ST PIERRE TARENTIN 704454	8	<p>0900 1130 1230 1300 0900 1700</p>	<p>7 Pl ('B' Coy) move fwd and take posn at 745410 and 8 Pl at 748393. 5 Pl reports a small counter attack - enemy inf and 2 tks are seen in area 770400. The tks adv to 769405 and receive direct hits from our 17 pdr. The Pl opens up on inf around this location. The attack by 44 Bde on ESTRY commences and is supported by 12, 13 & 15 Pls from 1140 to 1330. 800 bombs are fired on targets of known enemy posns SOUTH & SE of ESTRY. Whilst going back to collect more bombs, which had been dumped in yesterday's posns, 3 carriers of 13 pl encountered some enemy Mk IV tanks situated on the X-rds 769405 and approx 768399. The carriers are fired on from both directions and all three receive at least 3 direct hits from the tanks 75 mm guns, killing Sgt Godfrey and Pte Gleave, and wounding L/Cpl Tatt. Bn HQ move to new location at ST PIERRE TARENTIN 704454. 9 & 11 Pls move to 745400 to carry out indirect shoot on L'ARTHIEL in sp of 44 Bde's attack on ESTRY. We now have expended 134 belts since opening fire at 1230.</p>	
	9	1200	<p>The farmer at Bn HQ's location reports that there is a "Bosche" in hiding in his barn. This is doubted as we are quite a distance behind the front. Nevertheless an extensive search is made and does not bear any results. The farmer still insists that the German is in hiding and in order to pacify him we again search. This time with</p>	

			<p>the aid of a dog. It is incredible that a man could be hiding in the barn but sure enough he is, for Pte Turner's attention is attracted to the dog who is sniffing at a certain board on the barn floor. The German is underneath and is dragged out by the Provost Sgt & stripped. A guard is then placed over him. One of our fellows knows a smattering of German and with some little difficulty we glean that he is 23 years old and is a telephone operator. He had been living on raw eggs for two days. A camera was found near him and one film had been exposed. This together with the German is taken to the nearest PW Cage.</p> <p>1015 'B' Coy HQ move to 744424.</p> <p>1130 Maj W.D. Ellis returns fighting fit and takes over comd of Coy from T/Maj J.B. Redman.</p> <p>1800 Coy HQ ('C') move to MONTCHAMP.</p> <p>As the Division is now ordered to defend the posns they hold, counter mortar activity becomes very much more prominent and during the day and night 'D' Coy is kept busy with counter mortar shoots.</p>	
	10		<p>Maj Redman takes over comd of 'C' Coy vice Maj Phillips who is evacuated owing to sickness.</p> <p>Coys remain in same locations and occasional c/m fire is called for.</p>	
	11		Nothing of interest to record.	
	12		It is now agreed that MMG Coy Comds are not in a posn to do A/CMOS duties.	
	13	0500 1430 1700	<p>'A' Coy move to harbour area at Orchard 9860.</p> <p>'C' Coy concentrate at ST PIERRE TARENTIN 707750.</p> <p>'D' Coy move to area in which Bn HQ is situated.</p> <p>No 9 Pl ('C' Coy) report incident of Polish deserter surrendering on gun line. On being questioned he said that five of them had deserted during our artillery bombardment. These Poles are continually looking for Allied tps to surrender to and they are completely unarmed.</p>	
	14		Bn HQ and 'D' Coy proceed to new location on CAEN Sector - MAIZET 948576. The Division has come under comd of 12 Corps.	
	15		<p>'A' Coy move to new location 005495.</p> <p>Bn is not at the moment partaking in any operational role.</p>	
	17	2100	Bn HQ, HQ & 'D' Coys move to CINGAL 026481.	
	18		CRA opens series of lectures and demonstrations with 'D' Coy with the object of bringing mortars on to their lines of fire with greater accuracy. 3 RA officers are att to Coy for instruction purposes.	
	19 - 25		Bn takes up defensive role during this period, and advances 5 - 6 miles each 2 or 3 days.	

FALAISE	25		<p>Bn HQ, HQ & D Coy prepare to "Go as far fwd as they can". 'A' Coy with 46 Bde - 'B' - 227 Bde - 'C' with 44 Bde. This policy is used throughout the Div. After a day of slow movement in convoy Bn HQ, HQ & D Coys pass through BERNAY where their vehicles are bedecked with flowers and the troops are given cider. There is much fraternising as the enemy had only been gone that same day. Bn harbours for the night just beyond BERNAY.</p>	
	26	1100	<p>Bn HQ, HQ & D Coys move fwd to COMBON. The Division is now given the role of forming a bridgehead over the R SEINE, with certain objectives. When these are taken 12 Corps will come through and break out of the bridgehead.</p>	
LOUVIERS 258920	27	1830	<p>Bn move to LOUVIERS in preparation for the crossing. We are almost overlooking the river and are located on the road running parallel with the SEINE. The enemy has been seen across the river, and in the afternoon all Coys take up posns on the side of the hill, 36 MGs open up and fire across the valley to the high ground over the river. They are firing as fast as they can. They are also supported by the mortars. An attempt is made to cross the river by infantry and after a while a crossing is made with very few casualties.</p>	
	28		<p>All Pls are now across the SEINE and the enemy is in full flight.</p>	
	29		<p>Lieut Gerrard, 'D' Coy organises a small party comprising his OP personnel to investigate the wood at 314955. 3 men of the SS Adolf Hitler Div are captured after a short action during which a grenade is thrown at Lieut Gerrard which fortunately fails to explode.</p>	
	31		<p>The objectives are taken with comparatively small opposition and a bridgehead established over the SEINE. Corps has started to come through and the Bn is given the role of Bridge maintenance troops.</p>	