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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required).

Unit HQ 227 (H) Inf Bde

Month and Year APRIL 1945

Commanding Officer Brig EC Colville, DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
HALDERN	1	-	The Bde Gp was resting in the HALDERN (1253) area	
HALDERN	2	-	Bde Comd and OC 2 Gordons attended the funeral of Maj Gen TG Rennie, GOC 51 (H) Inf Bde.	
HALDERN	3	-	The Bde Gp was ordered to move to concentration area south of the DORTMUND-EMS Canal opposite IBBUREN (9010) with the intention of relieving 155 Inf Bde in their bridgehead. Harbour parties under DAAQMG left in the morning and the Bde Comd left at midday to contact 52 (L) Inf Div at HEEK (6595). However, there was a change of plan. 15 Div was to come under comd 8 Corps with the general intention of following 11 Armd Div and clearing up behind them. Bde Gp was to concentrate in the area GREVEN (9188) but meanwhile the Bde Comd and harbour parties established themselves at HEEK for the night, and the Bde Gp moved there the following morning.	
HEEK	4	-	The Bde Gp harbour parties left HEEK at 0400 hrs for the GREVEN (9188) area, but a further change of plan involved concentrating in the EMSDETTEN (8597) area and to the South of the town. The Bde Gp left at approx 0900 hrs and arrived in the EMSDETTEN area at 1700 hrs. The plan for the following day was the clearing of the woods between LENGERICH (0898) and OSNABRUCK on a two Bn front, 10 HLI right and 2 Gordons left.	
EMSDETTEN	5	-	Bns moved off on TCVs at 0700 hrs. 2 A & S H were left with the residue of the two clearing Bns to be picked up when TCVs became available. Only a few enemy stragglers were encountered and at the end of the day the Bde Gp concentrated in the area of NAHRENDORF (0613) when Bde HQ at 086105. - 2 Gordons found a French Sjt who showed them where a few Germans were intending to hold out with arms and ammunition hidden in a house and where the local Gauleiter lived. Both parties were rounded up successfully.	

NAHRENDORF	6	-	Bde Comd attended an 'O' Gp at Div HQ at 1030 hrs and received orders for the Bde Gp to concentrate in the area BOHNHORST 7326 and WAKMSEN 7529. All Bde Gp vehicles and supporting arms moved at 1800 hrs, but marching personnel had to wait the arrival of TCVs from 46 Bde the following morning. Bde HQ was est that night in BOHNHORST at 760290.	
BOHNHORST	7-9	-	The Bde Gp remained in the Bohnhorst area for the next three days and during this period cleared all the woods in the area taking many prisoners.	
BOHNHORST	10	-	The Bde Gp left Bohnhorst to concentrate in the area WUNSDORF (1527) prior to continuing the advance to the ELBE. Bde HQ arrived at 1800 hrs but the arrival of the Bns was delayed due to bad roads.	
WUNSDORF	11	-	Bde Gp left at 0700 hrs to advance to CELLE (5951). Opposition was very patchy, but 20 Fd Coy RE had one bulldozer knocked out by bazooka fire when filling in a crater. By last light leading troops of 10 HLI were less than two miles from CELLE, but it was decided to wait until the following morning before going into the town. The column spent the night on the road.	
	12	-	By first light 10 HLI entered the town and although all bridges in the town were blown, 10 HLI managed to get two coys over the railway bridge which was passable to foot traffic. - 2 Gordons then rushed a coy to the southern outskirts of the town to seize a light wooden bridge which had been reported intact. This was accomplished and, although the bridge eventually collapsed, most of the Bn had reached the far bank of the river. 2 A & S H also got across the river successfully and pushed out two or three miles from Celle before nightfall. The REs worked hard on building a class 40 bridge in the centre of the town and completed it by 2000 hrs. Bde HQ crossed at 2005 hrs and was est on the East bank.	
CELLE	13 and	14	SEE SPECIAL ACCOUNT ATTACHED	
HOLDENSTEDT	15		At 0300 hrs the Bde attack on UELZEN began. 10 HLI, left, were to take the suburbs of VEERSSEN (8888) and the wood to the south of it at 8887. 2 Gordons, right, moving on the main HOLDESNSTEDT - UELZEN road were to clear as much of the town as possible and seize the bridge over the river ILMENAU, while two coys of 2 A & S H crossed the river in the area 899869 and secure the high ground on the East bank overlooking the town. The opposition was strong and fanatical troops, some of which had recently come from DENMARK, supported by SP guns, and almost all armed with bazookas, put up very stubborn resistance.	

			<p>10 HLI soon reached their objectives, but there were still many pockets of enemy to be mopped up and at least two SP guns in the area.</p> <p>The leading tank with 2 Gordons was hit by a bazooka on the edge of the town, where there was a strong point near the main road, and while the tank was burning, it was impossible to move forward without being silhouetted.</p> <p>2 A & S H had great difficulty in getting their boats through the woods West of the river and the crossing was considerably delayed. By first light, however, the coys were dug in at 904875 and 904873.</p> <p>At first light the Bde Comd visited OC 2 Gordons and spoke to OC 10 HLI. At 0730 hrs the GOC came to see the Bde Comd and it was decided that the Bde should consolidate and not attempt to go further.</p>	
HOLDENSTEDT	16		<p>The Bns remained in position and sent recce parties to prepare billets for the Bns coming out during the night. The Bde was relieved that night by 46 Bde and the relief took place without incident. The Bns then concentrated as follows: 10 HLI and 2 A & S H in HOLDENSTEDT and 2 Gordons at BORNE 8883.</p> <p>During the afternoon Capt. N. McLean, who was Bde Signal Officer until being captured at BARON in Normandy in July, visited Bde HQ for tea after his camp near BRUNSWICK had been overrun by the Americans.</p>	
HOLDENSTEDT	17		<p>44 Bde after capturing several villages to the East of Uelzen reached the town East of the river. During the evening and night 46 Bde cleared the town from which the enemy had withdrawn as 11 Armd Div and 6 AB Div had almost linked up on the main road to the North of it.</p>	
HOLDENSTEDT	18		<p>At first light the Bde Gp, with 2 A & S H leading, advanced through Uelzen, and moving via BIENENBUTTEL (8408), had by mid-day reached the area of VASTORF (8815). As 2 A & S H leading vehicles were moving out of Uelzen they were strafed by enemy aircraft, but had no casualties. The Gp prepared to harbour in VASTORF, but GSO 1 brought orders for the concentration of the Gp in the area SCHARNEBECK (8525) from which all bridges over the NEETZE Canal were to be guarded. By 1600 hrs the Bde Gp was in this area and had contacted units of 29 Armd Bde. 2 A & S H pushed on to HITTBERGEN (9031) and 2 Gordons to LUDERSBERG (9828).</p>	
SCHARNEBECK	19	-	<p>The Bde Comd met the Div Comd at HQ 1 Cdo Bde at 0930 hrs. 2 Gordons moved to BARUM (7831), 10 HLI to LUDERSHAUSEN (8131) and</p>	

			<p>Bde HQ to BRIETLINGEN (8029). It was not possible to move fighting vehicles forward of Barum and Ludershausen as the bridges over the many small streams and "Sees" were blown. Sappers worked hard under intermittent fire from 88 mms to build the bridge at 823323. However, coys of 2 Gordons pushed on to BUTLINGEN (7834) and a coy of 10 HLI to farm buildings 8233, where they made contact with an enemy patrol from ARTLENBURG (8334), where the enemy was still defending a bridgehead. An attack by 10 HLI, supported by artillery, started at midnight and by first light the following morning Artlenburg and AVONDORF (8135) had been cleared and approximately 150 prisoners taken. 2 A & S H patrolled into HOHNSTORF (8733).</p>	
BRIETLINGEN	20	-	<p>Bns established OPs and manned them until April 28, during which time a picture of the enemy defences was obtained which was later of value to 44 and 1 Cdo Bdes. In addition several line crossers provided an enemy order of battle.</p> <p>The entire Bde area was very flat and exposed, particularly as it was overlooked by high ground along the North bank of the Elbe. For three days there was intermittent shelling in the forward villages, but this had stopped almost completely by the 25th.</p>	
BRIETLINGEN	27	-	<p>The Bde Comd attended final co-ordinating conference at Div for operation ENTERPRISE (crossing of the Elbe)</p>	
BRIETLINGEN	28	-	<p>Bde Comd held his final conference at Bde HQ at 1000 hrs and at 1100 hrs briefed all officers of the Bde.</p> <p>Bde Tac HQ left at 2200 hrs for AVONDORF (8135), and was established close to the river without incident.</p>	
AVONDORF	29	-	<p>At 0200 hrs Operation Enterprise started, and 44 Bde very quickly established a bridgehead at 8335. Opposition was fairly light and shelling was moderate due to the fact that the enemy began to withdraw his guns into reserve positions immediately the operation began. 44 Bde soon made contact with 1 Cdo Bde who crossed West of LAUENBURG (8734), and at 0930 hrs 10 HLI started to cross and were followed by 2 Gordons.</p> <p>The operation went exactly as planned (see Appx 'D', Folio 4) and approximately 900 prisoners were taken.</p> <p>Immediately the enemy had readjusted his gun positions, the bottle neck at 840350 was constantly shelled and there were several casualties. 2 A & S H, while under comd 44 Bde but not committed, were particularly unlucky, receiving several direct hits while concentrated in the quarry at 831354.</p> <p>Very stiff opposition was met by 2 Gordons in TESPERHUDE (8037), but by last light all Bns had consolidated on their objectives ---</p>	

AVONDORF			<p>- 10 HLI holding HASENTHAL (7940) and the high ground to the West, 2 Gordons in Tesperhude and the railway buildings at 7837 and leading troops of 2 A & S H holding the line of the track running South from GRUNJAGER (7839).</p> <p>LO 2, who was control duty near the crossing site, was almost buried when a bomb exploded ten yards away from his trench wrecking his jeep. There was constant air activity over the bridgehead.</p> <p>2 Gordons captured two swimmers ("Frogmen") who were making a recce of the bridge sites.</p>	
AVONDORF	30	-	<p>Bde Tac HQ moved across the river via the Class 9 bridge at LAUENBURG (8734) and by 1100 hrs were established in GRUNHOF (803382). Main Bde HQ moved across the Class 40 bridge at ARTLENBURG (8334) and joined Tac HQ at 1900 hrs.</p> <p>The Bde Comd crossed the river at 0800 hrs and visited Bns</p> <p>In the afternoon 2 Gordons were ordered to move to HAMWARDE (7843). 10 HLI patrolled into this village from WIERSHOP (8041) and had reported opposition, but a sudden display of white flags was investigated and the village was occupied by 2 Gordons without a fight. 2 A & S H then readjusted their positions to fill in the gap created by the move of 2 Gordons. 10 HLI had to maintain a guard on a large camp for Russian workers at 794400.</p> <p>Shelling of the bridgehead still continued to be heavy and 2 Gordons were unlucky in losing all their cooking utensils when the cooks trucks were hit during the afternoon. However, the DAAQMG quickly mustered a complete set of cooking stores from units in the Bde Gp and 2 Gordons were able to have a cooked meal that night.</p>	

The Advance of 227 (H) Inf Bde Gp from Celle to Uelzen

13/14 Apr 45

By midnight of April 12th 1945 227 (H) Inf Bde Group were firmly in occupation of Celle on the R ALLER, and a Class 40 bridge had been completed in the centre of the town.

The Brigadier at an 'O' Group earlier in the evening had issued orders for the advance to be continued with all speed to Uelzen, the leading battalion to leave Celle at 0800 hrs on Friday 13th April. Refuelling and replenishment of supplies went on during the night and at 0800 hrs 10 HLI left the town with their coys riding on the Churchills of 3 Scots Guards. Following them came the Brigadier's Tac HQ with the COs of 2 GORDONS, 2 A & S H, 3 SG, 131 Fd Regt RA and 20 Fd Coy RE, and the remainder of the Brigade Group extending along 7 miles of road.

The advance continued without incident until 10 HLI were within a few miles of ESCHEDÉ, 10 miles NORTH EAST of Celle, where a blown bridge caused a halt while recce parties were sent out to find an alternative route. Within half an hour the column was on the move again by a route which made a detour to the South East returning into ESCHEDÉ from the South. During the whole of this time small parties of prisoners, mainly youths from disorganised GAF units, were brought in and sent marching down the column to the rear.

Friday the 13th seemed to be living up to form however and a few miles further on 10 HLI were brought to a halt by a 20 foot wide crater across the road in a swampy area where a detour was impossible. To add to the difficulty two SP guns and some small arms were covering the crater, causing some delay until they were dealt with. The SP guns retired down the road, and it was thought that they were covering a mobile demolition group operating from one to two miles ahead of our leading troops.

When the opposition had been silenced, the Scots Guards laid a tank bridge over the crater and the advance was resumed, but only for a mile or so. When the leading tanks of 10 HLI were a mile short of the village of Weyhausen they reported yet another crater, the largest yet, which would in the opinion of the OC 20 Fd Coy require a 40 foot Bailey bridge. This crater was too under small arms and bazooka fire, and one RA halftrack was hit by a bazooka, but only slightly damaged. After some time a time-bomb exploded in the road near the crater, destroying one RE Vehicle and causing eleven casualties to the RE recce party which had come forward up the column. Further investigation showed eight more of these time-bombs, so the area was taped off and a deviation to the North was reced.

It was now 1800 hrs and the rate of advance had averaged two miles an hour, when the column set off again through a thick forest to the North of the main road to try to re-enter the main road at Weyhausen. Just as it was beginning to grow dark and the HLI were approaching the village from the North the inevitable happened - another huge crater was reported. In addition, during the previous two hours, ominous explosions had been heard further along the main road, indicating that more craters lay ahead.

The Brigadier went forward to see the CO of 10 HLI and at 2100 hrs ordered as much of the column as possible to move up and park in a ride in the forest which fortunately could accommodate three lines of vehicles and was nearly a mile long, and with the vehicles nose to tail in this ride, petrol and food was brought up.

Orders were given out that at 0100 hrs the column would resume the advance along a track running North East through the forest almost parallel with the main road two miles away.

The night was black, but searchlights had been brought up to the edge of the forest, and gave invaluable light on an enterprise which without them would have been extremely difficult. As it was, the column set off at 0100 hrs, and having left Friday the 13th behind, very quickly proceeded to leave the forest behind too. The leading vehicles kept up a cracking speed and the rest of the column kept pace, along a track which in daylight would have been considered third class. The vehicles rumbled through the forest with branches whipping the faces of the vehicles commanders as they peered forward through the thick cloud of dust to try to catch a glimpse of the vehicles in front.

By now the light of the searchlights was left behind and with no vehicle showing any lights the fact that the column kept up and lost very few vehicles points to a very high standard of driving in all the drivers taking part.

The HLI "had their whips out" now, and tore straight through the villages of Hesserungen, Suderburg and Holxen, shooting up one enemy staff car and various other vehicles en route. The majority of the enemy in these villages however were still in their beds as the tanks rumbled through, and were too confused and bewildered to do anything but surrender when the dawn came.

At 0530 hrs on the 14th 10 HLI had reached the southern outskirts of Uelzen and had bumped into stiff opposition, and the tanks in Brigade Tac HQ were having a short encounter with a small party of enemy in Holdenstedt, two miles to the South. Further to the south in the villages along the route dazed prisoners were being collected by the unit which happened to be on the spot. In one instance a party of three from the Field Regt collected instead of the eggs they went out for, several dozen prisoners. The total bag for the whole night was approximately eight hundred.

The opposition in the south and south western outskirts of Uelzen was strong and 2 GORDONS and 2 A & S H were brought forward to attack. Some ground was gained and the 2 A & S H made some progress to the North East, crossing a stream and establishing two coy positions on our right flank. As all three battalions by now were very tired, having been on the move in all for four days, with only two short night rests, the positions gained were consolidated, and eventually the Brigade Group was relieved by 46 (H) Inf Bde for a well earned rest.