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ARMY FORM C.2118

**WAR DIARY**

or

Unit HQ 44 (L) Inf Bde incorporating Def Pl att

**~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~**

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year MAR 45

Commanding Officer Brig the Hon HCHT CUMMING-BRUCE DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TURNHOUT	1		44 Bde was resting at TURNHOUT after Operation "VERITABLE", with Bde HQ 6 RSF and 6 KOSB at TURNHOUT, and 8 RS at VOSSELAER, just outside TURNHOUT. There is little to report for the first few days. 15 (S) Inf Div had many vacancies on BRUSSELS leave and large numbers of the Bde spent 48 hrs there.	
	5	1500 2000	Divisional Pipers and Drums gave a performance in the Square at TURNHOUT, which was rather spoiled by rain. There was a big Bde party at TURNHOUT, attended by officers of Bde HQ, all battalions, and many guests.	
	6	1200	Bde moved to area HAELEN - HERK-LA-VILLE, just EAST of DIEST. First warning was given that 15 (S) Inf Div was to be an assaulting Division in the crossing of the RHINE and the move was designed to afford trg facilities on the R MAAS, between MAESYCK and MAASTRICHT. Bde HQ set up in a hutted camp at HAELEN.	
HAELEN, nr DIEST	8	0930 1430	Conferences on future trg held at Bde HQ - attended by Bde Comd, Bde IO, GSO 3, Bn COs and Comd 279 Fd Coy. Trg with river crossing eqpt was discussed. Bde Comd and Bde IO visited 11 R Tks (who were to be our Buffalo Bn for the RHINE crossing), and 33 Armd Bde HQ near EYSDEN re trg.	
	9		Buffalo and Storm boat trg began in bns.	
	10	1000 1830	Bde Comd, BM and GSO 3 attended conference at 12 Corps HQ. Conference at Bde HQ for COs on RHINE crossing (Operation TORCHLIGHT).	
	12		BM, Bde IO and DAA & QMG with bn recce parties carried out all day recce in XANTEN area for Operation "TORCHLIGHT".	
	14		Exercise "BUFFALO I" - river crossing exercise on R MAAS near EYSDEN and lasted all day. Bde IO spent night with 155 Bde HQ near XANTEN carrying out recce of RHINE crossing area.	

	15	1900	<u>Exercise "BUFFALO II"</u> - night repeat of Exercise "BUFFALO I". Bde Gp conc in area EYSDEN.	
	16	0300	Exercise really began and ended about 0800 hrs. It was followed by a conference.	
	17	1900	Bde Comd flew to XANTEN area in Air OP and carried out recce, with Bde IO, Comd of 8 RS and Comd of 6 RSF, Comd 11 R Tks and CRE 15 (K) AGRE. Bde Comd attended conference at Div HQ.	
	18		Nothing to report.	
	19		GSO 3 and Sig Offr carried out recces for Crossing Control and Bde Tac HQ, Bde Main HQ, Marshalling Area HQ etc in XANTEN area. Bde IO went to stay with 155 Bde HQ until 44 Bde HQ moved up.	
	20	1800	Preparation for move continued. 44 (L) Inf Bde OO No 9 issued with Addendum No 1	Folio 4
nr XANTEN	21		Bde HQ filtered up during afternoon to Marshalling Area behind XANTEN. 44 (L) Inf Bde Adm Order No 24 issued.	Folio 9
	22	1800	Preparations for Operation "TORCHLIGHT" continued. <u>Notes on Operation "TORCHLIGHT"</u> issued.	Folio 5
		2100	Bns moved up during the evening to their new areas, in the Marshalling Area. Intelligence summary issued.	Folio 6
	23	1400 1646 1800 2100 2200 2230	Bde final co-ordinating conference held at Bde HQ. Message from Div that operation was definitely on. The weather was set fair, with settled outlook. Bde Tac HQ established at LUTTINGEN 116427 for the battle. There was great activity by War Correspondents, Film Cameramen and BBC commentators. (The crossing of the RHINE is very fully described in the CV1 Log and in more general terms in the "Story of the Brigade Crossing" which is attached. Details are not given here). 51 (H) Div began to cross at REES. 1 Commando Bde began to cross at WESEL. Heavy bombers raided WESEL, which was clearly visible from Bde Tac HQ.	
LUTTINGEN 116427	24	0200 0310 0420 0700	44 (L) Inf Bde and 227 (H) Inf Bde crossed the RHINE. Progress was steady and all first objectives were captured by 0305 hrs. 6 KOSB ordered to cross. 6 KOSB all across. Bde Comd and Bde IO crossed RHINE and saw Bn Comds. Progress was still good.	

LUTTINGEN 116427		1000 1450 1510 1535 1545 1800 2200 2230 2300	<p>The airborne landing of 6 BRIT Airborne Div and 17 US Airborne Div was made a few miles in front, the aircraft passing directly over the heads of 44 Bde. Enemy opposition began to collapse, as the Airborne forces dropped in their gun areas. Steady progress continued and many prisoners were taken.</p> <p>6 KOSB reported they had linked up with 17 US Airborne Div near DIERSFORDT at 1400 hrs.</p> <p>6 RSF reported they had contacted US Para Bn.</p> <p>8 RS reported the bridge (which was their final objective) intact and they had contacted 6 BRIT Airborne Div.</p> <p>Bde Comd and Comd 8 RS drove up to HQ of 3 Para Bde and were given a rousing reception by the parachutists.</p> <p>6 KOSB ordered to conc near BERGEN with a view to operating NE tomorrow.</p> <p>Bde HQ crossed RHINE and established at BISLICH.</p> <p>Bde Comd held 'O' Gp at Bde HQ.</p> <p>Total prisoners taken on 24 Mar - 1000.</p> <p>44 (L) Inf Bde OO No 10 issued.</p>	Folio 7
BISLICH	25	0850	<p>There was some delay at first lt owing to non-arrival of Recce.</p> <p>6 KOSB moved off. Their route was NE through 6 Airborne Div and their objective a bridge over R ISSEL. The remainder of the Bde followed them. There was a lot of contact with the enemy throughout the day and 6 KOSB pushed on nearly to the autobahn. Bde HQ moved first to BERGEN and later to house in woods at 167477.</p> <p>In the evening there was a halt while 8 RS moved up to take over on the autobahn while 6 KOSB went fwd by night to attack the bridge at 204530. Their attack was unsuccessful, the bridge being destroyed.</p>	
Woods 167477	26	0600 1630 1645 1815	<p>A heavy counter attack developed on 6 KOSB as they were preparing to attack the bridge and the situation was confused for a time.</p> <p>Bde Comd left to visit 6 KOSB and found the situation confused but clearing itself up. 3/4 CLY arrived to help, being under command.</p> <p>6 RSF after relief by 2 KRRC, moved up to attack the ISSEL bridge.</p> <p>6 RSF attack went in across R ISSEL and three coys were established in the bridgehead by dark - 360 PW being taken.</p> <p>Bde HQ established at 199499.</p> <p>Bde Comd's <u>Operation Instruction</u> issued.</p> <p>The problem during the night was to get the br built at 204530. This was eventually accomplished by the 3-ton bridging lorries running the gauntlet up the main rd parallel to the R ISSEL, and the bridge was built by first lt.</p> <p>8 RS were also counter-attacked all night but held their ground.</p>	Folio 8

nr HAMMINKELN 199499	27	1730	<p>The 3/4 CLY were taken away this morning from command. This was a tense day, as counter attacks were perpetually threatened and tank sp was NOT available.</p> <p>Preparations were made for 53 Div to come through and adv NORTH towards BOCHOLT.</p> <p>A heavy counter attack came in on 6 RSF bridgehead. Some penetration of the woods in the area 205534 was made, but this was later cleared. Two coys of 6 KOSB went into bridgehead under comd 6 RSF.</p> <p>The counter attack eventually collapsed and 158 Bde attacked through 44 Bde at 2400 hrs. By morning the advance was well to the NORTH and the battle was over.</p> <p>Total number of PW taken during the Operation was 2000.</p>	
	28		Various readjustments of coys were made.	
	29 30 31	) ) )	The battle quickly receded from the Bde and the Bde enjoyed some rest and a general clean up. Bde HQ remained at the same location.	