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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Unit 279 Field Company, R.E.

Month and Year Oct 1944.

Commanding Officer Major P.T. WOOD M.C.,
R.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
EINDHOVEN.	1	0630 1000 1230 1300 1800 1930 1130	O.C. returns from site of defensive positions WEST of BEST. Lt. BOARDMAN departs to recce new harbour. O.C. departs to see C.R.E. and 44 Bde. Lt. BOARDMAN returns from recce in area BEEK. O.C. returns. Fairly heavy shelling of br area but no damage done. O.C. departs for Br positions. Very bright moonlight - slight enemy air activity - flares dropped. Today has been fine and cold with occasional slight rain.	
STIPHOUT (NEAR HELMOND 5321)	2	0830 1030 1230 1245 1640 1745	O.C. returns from site of defensive positions. Lt. BOARDMAN again departs to look for new harbour. Receive orders to hand over defence of brs to 278 Field Coy, R.E. w.e.f. 1600 hrs to-day and to move to new area. Lt. BOARDMAN returns. Harbour in brickworks in area 5321, Nr. HELMOND. Movement order received from C.R.E. Hand over protection of bridges to 278 Field Coy, R.E. completed. Move commenced to new harbour. Wireless silence commences. Arrived new harbour - brickworks at 538221. Weather fine but cold. Accommodation sufficient for 6-700 men in kilns etc.	Message O.6 of 2 Oct 44 from C.R.E. (1) Message O.9 of 2 Oct 44 from C.R.E. (2)
	3	1200	Bright moonlight last night and very cold. Showery and wet this morning.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	4	0800 2100	Message 157/RE (Road Maintenance) received. Message received from C.R.E. that G.O.C., 15 (S) Div will visit R.E. on 5 Oct 44.	Letter 157/RE. (3)
	5	1630	A day of training with C/5 Raft and Storm Boats. G.O.C. did not appear. A fine sunny day but cold at night.	
	6	1000 1600	O.C. departs for "O" Group to C.R.E. Receives Op. Order No. 12 All officers attended address by Comdr 15 (S) Div at HELMOND.	Div. R.E. Op. Instr. No. 12. (4)

	7	1630	Lt. B.E. FIELD joined from 26 Div. Br. Pl.	
	8	1100	Address to Div R.E. at 279 Coy Location by Comdr 15 (S) Div.	
	9	1100 1730	Lt. B.W. THOMAS joined from 105 C.R.E. Lt. K.W. BENNETT evacuated with Battle Exhaustion. Recce of Cl. 30 Br site 566196, Lt. BOARDMAN and O.C.	
	10	0900 1100 1730	2 Platoon commence work on Cl. 30 Br at HELMOND. Baths at 624 Location. Road Patrol on our section. Old bridge removed; Bank Seats 80% completed. Fair Day.	
	11	0830 1130 1730	8 men to Court Martial at GEMMERT. 18 O.Rs Reinforcements arrived from 33 R.H.U. All but 2 good men. 1 and 3 Platoon on Road Maintenance - 2 Platoon on Cl. 30 Bridge. Mild day.	
	12	0800 0900 1500 1900	Lt. FIELD to C.R.E. for briefing re Recce. 2 Platoon on Cl. 30 Br., 1 and 3 Platoons roads and preparation for Exercise ANTIDOTE. Mild day but not bright. Cl. 30 completed. Ex. ANTIDOTE - O.C., 1 and 3 Platoons.	
	13	0900 0930 1800 2000	Lt. FIELD wounded in stomach and thigh, evacuated 12 Oct (Night) Coy on road maintenance and training - Cl. 5 Raft and Kapok. O.C. to Lt. FIELD - Recce of Canal near WEERT. Lt. HAINES to C.R.E. "O" Group. Lt. THOMAS replaces Lt. FIELD on Recce. O.C. returns and to C.R.E. Mild, cloudy day.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
	14	0900 1800	2 O.Rs. for Court Martial at 8 R.S. 2 Platoon on Cl. 5 rafts. Other works - road maintenance. Fair day - some rain, still mild.	
	15	0900 1800	O.C. to C.R.E. with Lt. BOARDMAN - recce road. 2 Platoon on roads. Other work - repairing kapok. O.C. departs to "O" Group C.R.E. Mild day with rain.	
	16	0900 1800	Coy checking kapok and Cl. 5 Raft equipment. O.C. to C.R.E. Weather mild - poor visibility.	
	17	0900 1400 1900	Coy baths and A.B.C.A. O.C. to C.R.E. Gusty day, fresh wind. Lt. THOMAS returns from recce.	
	18	1800	Mild, cloudy day.	
	19	1400	Cl. 30 Bridge surfaced by 2 Platoon. Wet, miserable day.	
	20	1430	Capt. J.P. BLOCKET, 203436, joined from 621 Field Squadron, 7 Armoured Div as 2 i/c.	
	21		All platoons bathed.	
	22		Three blankets per man changed by A.D.O.S.	

	23	1300	Orders from C.R.E. to make up 60 of 12' x 18" fascines and 60 of 6' x 18" from 2" x 4" timber. All platoons out cutting trees; 30% completed by last light. Orders from C.R.E. for 24 Oct, App. 5.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E. C.R.E. Orders (5)
EAST of BEST 385267.	24	0900 1030 1100 1315 1330 1500 1530 1600 1830 1845 1915 2030 2115 2240 2300 2330	O.C. with all Platoon Comdrs left to Recce BEST bridges and track. 1 Platoon left for bridges. 2 Platoon left for track. O.C. and 2 i/c to C.R.E. and 44 Bde. Intercepted Op. Order from C.R.E. - App. 6 - and movement order from Bde. Above orders reached Coy H.Q. Lt. THOMAS left to meet Staff Capt. to fix leaguer area. O.C. and 2 i/c back at Coy H.Q. 3 Platoon started to move. H.Q. started to move. "Q" left on ground fitting out truck. 3 Platoon and H.Q. all into new leaguer near BEST 385267. O.C. to C.R.E. O.C. back with orders for bridge, Cl. 40 at 285275. See App. 7. Preliminary Report from Div Recce Regt. 3 Platoon to do job with 1 Platoon if necessary. Equipment going to 1 Platoon Location at 402227 to await collecting. Working light asked for, no moon. Lt. SCANLON off to Recce site. O.C. at Bde "O" Group to fix protection. 1 Platoon warned to stand by. O.C. asks over blower for predetermined lorries. 1 Tp ordered to tee up lorries and then stand down. Lt. HAINES to 1 Platoon to collect lorries and deliver to Lt. SCANLON in OIRSCHOT. O.C. back at Coy H.Q. E.T.C. 0200 sent to C.R.E. Orders for 25 Oct received from C.R.E. - App. 8. O.C. informed of main items over blower.	O/15 C.R.E. Orders (6) Recce Report. (7) R.E. 15 (S) Inf Div. Op. Instr. 14 (8)
EAST of BEST 385267 OIRSCHOT 305255	25	0100 0300 0330 0830 0930 1400	Building started. Lt. HAINES back at Coy H.Q. E.T.C. now 0300 sent to C.R.E. Bridge complete. C.R.E. notified. O.C. and 3 Platoon back at Coy H.Q. Lt. HAINES left to join K.O.S.B. as R.E. Recce. 2 Platoon left to replace Lt. HAINES. Tasks - to advance along NORTH BANK of WILHELMINA CANAL towards TILBURG and to recce at BIEST for Cl. 40 Bridge. 1 Tp took over maintenance of Bridge at 285275 from 3 Platoon. 3 Platoon, followed by H.Q. moved to OIRSCHOT 305255 to site reced by C.S.M.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

		1700	Lt. HAINES in with information re bridge at BIEST. Probably 110 feet Treble Single. 2 Platoon preparing bankseats. E.T.C. last light.	
		1745	1 Platoon joined Coy H.Q.	
		1800	O.C. in. Bridge to be 80 ft. Double Single on existing bankseats.	
		1815	Lt. HAINES left for 624 Fd Pk Coy to collect lorries and take to site.	
		1820	O.C. to C.R.E.	
	26	0630	Lt. HAINES with bridging R.V. with Lt. du Vivier with 1 Platoon and proceeded to BIEST 206276 where 1 Platoon off-loaded bridging.	
		0730	3 Platoon and bulldozer clearing towpath NORTH of CANAL. Completed midday.	
		1245	80 ft. Double Single with flat approaches opened. (No ramps used)	
		1315	Message from O.C. 80' of 2' ARMCO required 1½ miles SOUTH of Bridge - I have lifted mines - we can tackle job with our bulldozer.	
		1320	C.R.E. ordered 624 to send culverting to Coy H.Q. Guide waiting to take it on.	
		1350	Message from O.C. "I can make a Cl. 9 Diversion with Bailey Spares in 1½ hours." C.R.E. informed. Cl. 9 from stringers and decking.	
		1530	Message from O.C. "Cl. 9 finished, Cl. 40 for tracks by 1800. Permanent job in 2 or 3 hours." 2 Platoon making fascine crossing for Cl. 40.	PT Wood Major R.E.
		1830	Sec of 3 Platoon left to maintain BIEST BAILEY.	O.C. 279th Field Company
		2030	Message from O.C. "Tracks and wheels now passing over permanent job. Earth bulldozed into culverting."	R.E.
		2100	2 Platoon into Company Leaguer.	
		2200	O.C. to Bde "O" Group, then to C.R.E.	
		2345	O.C. back with tomorrow's orders - 2 Platoon to support K.O.S.B. with Lt. BOARDMAN as Recce Officer; Lt. THOMAS Recce Officer with R.S.F. with Sec 1 Platoon on call; Coy to move 0830 to 1827; 20 Field Coy to take over all our bridges at 0800; 6 Assault Sqn R.E. u/cmd 279."	
4 MILES SSE OF TILBURG. 188271.	27	0700	O.C. at Bde "O" Group.	
		0730	Lt. BOARDMAN at K.O.S.B. "O" Group.	
		0800	3 Platoon to BIEST.	
		0830	Coy moved to 188271 (.) 1 and 2 Platoons complete to 182287. Arrived 0945.	
		1030	Bulldozer to 1 Platoon Location.	

		<p>1130 2 Bridgelayers reached 1 Platoon location.</p> <p>1420 Bridge laid 178296 after some preparation of site by Assault Squadron. Started dealing with 30' crater but eventually laid bridge over this also.</p> <p>1600 3rd Bridge laid at 177297 and C.R.E. informed of position. Traffic streaming through.</p> <p>1530 Lt. THOMAS reported back, having led advance into outskirts of TILBURG with Pioneer Platoon of R.S.F. Enthusiastic welcome. Swing Br at 175317 Cl. 40 and R.C. Br at 177318 Cl. 70 both intact and not prepared for demolition. C.R.E. informed. No mines found.</p> <p>1630 Written order from C.R.E. - App. 9. Coy to assist 278 Coy by clearing WEST approaches for their bridge at 178327.</p> <p>1700 Lt. SCANLON left with 2 Secs of 3 Platoon to do this.</p> <p>1620 C.R.E. notified we require 50' Bailey to replace bridgelayers. Lt. HAINES to C.R.E. with details for orders.</p> <p>1800 Lt. HAINES reached Coy Location with 50' Bailey, tippers following. C.R.E. directs that O.C. must contact Brigadier 227 Bde before closing road. Lamps sent forward to do job by.</p> <p>1810 Major GILLINGTON (O.C. 20 Field Coy) visited Coy H.Q. Major Wood also in. Officer of Platoon from 20 Coy to assist us. Not fixed definitely. Brig. 227 reported on bridges personally directing traffic, Major Wood to see him. Estimate of 3 hours to replace bridges by night.</p> <p>1900 O.C. to C.R.E. Lt. JONES, R.E., joined Coy.</p> <p>1930 O.C. in. Bridges to be replaced tonight, 1 Platoon on SOUTH one, 2 Secs 3 Platoon and Sec from Coy H.Q. under Lt. THOMAS to fill centre crater, 2 Platoon to replace NORTH one. Brigadier approves bridges closed at 2000 hrs.</p> <p>2000 Work began. Tanks dragged their bridges away. Tank on NORTH site broke down, being overdue for maintenance. Tank on South side had difficulty owing to bridge having tilted and bedded itself in. Raining steadily and a miserable job on soggy mud. No moon.</p>	C.R.E. Orders (9)
	28	<p>0330 Job complete. C.R.E. informed.</p> <p>0730 Capt. BLOCKLEY to inspect jobs. Soggy crater holding up traffic. First Aid rendered with all available timber by conscripted DUTCHMEN and C.M.P. Sec of 3 Platoon under Lt. HAINES despatched to cope with situation. Light stuff crossing O.K. but tanks breaking it up. The water has seeped in again during night and filling is spongy.</p> <p>0815 Capt. BLOCKLEY reported to O.C. Plan made for 2 Platoon to lay sandbag mat with corduroy road from dump of cut fir trees on top.</p>	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.

TILBURG 167305		0830 1045 1215 1600 1630 1800 1900 2030	Also to pump out hole at side of road and attempt to drain out water from below surface. See sketch at App. 9A for stages of whole job. Lt. SCANLON left to continue preparing approaches for 278 Coy. Ready to move behind 159 A/Tk Bty. Moved to PHILLIPS RADIO FACTORY, TILBURG. Location 167305 (.) Reported 10,000 ft. timber suitable for decking in factory. Manager gave away 150 squeeze torches free. Spr. CLOCK trod on SCHU mine while filling slit trench. Ankle shattered. Sjt. PARSONS, when pulling clear a length of wire, set off R-mine; one eardrum broken. Warning order - probably Bde Gp moving at first light. Order from C.R.E. - prepare to move from midnight. Don R. sent to call in 1 and 3 Platoons, each less one section. E.T.C. for both jobs 30 1200. Order from Bde - App. 10. Lt. HAINES briefed as Leaguer representative. Everyone in bed.	Progress sketches. (9A) Bde Warning Order. (10) PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.
DEURNE 645195	29	0430 0830	Reveille - moved MIDDELBEERS - VESSEM - EINDHOVEN - DEURNE collecting sections from 1 & 2 Plns en route. Leaguered 645195. Positions chosen for close defence of DEURNE. Enemy attacking from East being halted about 3 miles away.	
	30		3 Pln bathed. 1 & 2 Plns repairing & draining road DEURNE - ASTEN - LIESEL.	
	31		2 Pln bathed. Road repair continued by 1 & 3 Plns.	PT Wood Major R.E. O.C. 279th Field Company R.E.