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Army Form C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 6 RSF

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year February 45

Commanding Officer Lt Col I Mackenzie DSO

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
TILBURG	1		Planning for operation VERITABLE was carried on with IO very busy making up aerial photos. Coys continued normal trg on assault lines ie trg with flails, AVREs, crocodiles.	
"	2		Coys continued their specialised assault trg. The CO briefed Coy Comds to the effect that the Bn would take part in a major operation in the near future. The Sjts held a very successful dance which was attended by all offr. s.	Appx 'J' No4
"	3		Further trg as above. The CO briefed all offr. s to the effect that the Bn would take part in a future operation.	
"	4		In the morning the Comd 30 Corps put all offr. s of the Div in the big picture, followed in afternoon by Brigadier giving his outline plan on cloth model - down to and incl Coy Comds. Recce party to Nijmegen.	
"	5		Lt Col Mackenzie DSO went on UK leave. Maj Harrison assumed comd with Maj HM Gow MC as 2 IC. Bn outline plan given out down to pl sjts and all supporting arms.	Appx E No1 Appx G No1
NIJMEGEN	6		Occupied in packing up for move. Bn moved by MT to Nijmegen at 1600 hrs and arrived shambolically at 0200 hrs.	Appx J No1
NIJMEGEN	7		Final check up of plans. 2 IC received orders for move of the Bn on the commencement of op VERITABLE. CO and IO attended final tying up of Bde plan at 1700 hrs, followed by final Bn conference.	Appx J No7
"	8		Op VERITABLE commenced at 1030 hrs. CO, IO and Capt Sullivan went fwd with Bde "R" Gp to follow the battle and watched 46 Bde attack up to FRASSELT. Remainder of Bn stood by all day, ready to move, and finally did so at 2100 hrs. Good weather conditions which had prevailed by day deteriorated at night and the Bn spent a miserable night in kangaroos.	
NUTTERDEN	9		Roads by this time were almost impassable and many vehicles were bogged. The Brigadier decided to push the 6 KOSB ahead on to our	

			objective as it was impossible to pass the Bn through them. Two coys were finally moved up on kangaroos, and two pls, Bn HQ on foot and occupied WOLFSBERG without opposition. Some PWs were taken incl one offr. Later on the same day "C" Coy took over HINKSBERG after the KOSB had moved towards MATERBORN. This was the Bn's first view of the Siegfried Line. Considerable enemy harassing fire and some air activity were encountered.	
CLEEVERBERG	10		At about 1300 hrs the CO got orders to clear wooded area NW of CLEEVE. At 1645 hrs Maj ADN Hunter MC with u/c one FOO, the Carrier Pl and one det of A Tk guns and the Bn Wasps were despatched to take the CLEEVERBERG feature as a firm base for the rest of the operation. The Bn moved off at 1900 hrs in the order D, C, Tac HQ, B, A Coys followed by elements of S Coy. On arrival at the CLEEVERBERG feature the CO found that it had been successfully cleared against considerable opposition, flame throwers having proved invaluable. D and C Coys were not to be found, but they finally arrived on their objective against only minor opposition. A and B Coys then walked on to their objective without any opposition. Bn HQ was established in the cellar of a beerhouse at KLEEVERBERG. The Bn unfortunately received a number of casualties in the operation, Maj ADN Hunter MC receiving wounds whilst leading the assault on CLEEVERBERG, from which he subsequently died. D Coy suffered some casualties from a clash with an enemy outpost. Approx 7 PW were taken.	
CLEEVERBERG	11		At first light the CLEEVERBERG feature held by the Carrier Pl was counterattacked in about coy strength. The enemy was halted by the use of the A Tk Pl dismounted, as a reserve, and finally put up the flag on the arrival of 2 tps of tanks (No 1 Sqn 4 Gren Gds). 1 officer and 35 other ranks were taken prisoner. In the course of the night and first light coys had exploited to the edge of the wood overlooking CLEEVE, D Coy meeting stiff opposition from their left flank. A Coy suffered some casualties from our own arty. Lieut Tatnell and six ORs being wounded. 227 Bde clearing the woods to the West of our posns flushed some Germans across our left flank and afforded D Coy an excellent shoot. 8 RS and 6 KOSB moved through into CLEEVE with two of our coys under command (B & C) which the CO visited when in posn that night.	
CLEEVE	12		CLEEVE was now reported clear and the rest of the Bn having been relieved by the Regina Rifles moved up into billets to the West side of the town, and proceeded to rest.	

"	13		The Bn was under short notice to move under 53 Div to the Reichswald Forest area but this move did not materialise.	
"	14		Still resting in CLEEVE. Warned that a move towards GOCH under 43 Div might come off. Considerable enemy aerial activity was experienced but no casualties were sustained.	
"	15		Future plans still uncertain and Bn still resting, retaining our excellent billets against strong opposition.	
"	16		Reverted to comd 15 (S) Div and warned for possible operation against GOCH.	
"	17		In the afternoon orders were received for the assault on GOCH by 44 Bde. CO outlined plans to Coy Comds.	Appx E No2
SE of CLEEVE	18		O Group met at 1000 hrs and Bn moved off to FAA at 1100 hrs. CO and O Group went forward to Tac Bde HQ. It was thought that there might be no enemy in GOCH and accordingly one Coy of 8 RS was sent down Carter route as a recce in force. When this met with considerable opposition the Brigadier decided to put in original attack with a modified fire plan to fit in with 51 Div attack on the right. For this operation 6 RSF were in reserve and moved off at 1730 hrs. As the opposition encountered by 8 RS was stiffer than anticipated, it was impossible to pass 6 RSF through, and they were finally halted in line of march in the order C, B, Tac HQ, A and D Coys with the leading Coy on the start line. The night of 18/19 was spent in this way.	
GOCH	19		At 0700 hrs the Bn moved along the southern route into GOCH with orders to secure the river line in the middle of GOCH. Soon after moving off the Bn came under intense shell and mortar fire from the area south of the R. Liers. Maj Harrison, acting CO, was among numerous casualties (nasty wound in the arm). The IO established Bn HQ about five hundred yards from the centre tank ditch covering GOCH, and Maj HM Gow MC came up from Rear Bn HQ to take over command. Meanwhile C and B Coys were reported by the FOO to be nearing their objective (Bn wireless communication had broken down at this period) and No 1 Sqn 4 Gren Gds did good work in keeping the left flank quiet. The CO and the IO then went up with D Coy and found the other three coys consolidating on their objectives, having met only moderate opposition from small arms, though still under heavy shell and mortar fire. Bn HQ was moved up to the area two hundred yards East of rly line in GOCH and the remainder of the day was spent in mopping up in the immediate area of Coy objectives. A night patrol of Phantoms under Sjt Rees reported enemy pockets still in the area between ourselves and 6 KOSB. The Bn continued to sustain fairly heavy casualties which	

			included Maj HL Mackinnon wounded and Lieut Coote wounded but remaining at duty (in command of C Coy). It is interesting to note that physical contact was established with 51 (Highland) Div on a partially blown bridge across the river.	
GOCH	20		Coys were allotted areas for mopping up, and B Coy in whose area Sjt Rees had reported enemy the previous night, had u/c one troop of 1 Sqn 4 Gren Gds. No one of the coys found any enemy though B Coy found signs of recent occupation where the patrol had indicated. Though all enemy were cleared on our side of the river, he appeared still to have observation from the SE end of GOCH which 51 Div had not yet cleared, and there was still sporadic SA fire from this area and the shelling and mortaring was still at times heavy. A few more casualties were sustained incl Lieut Readwin our LO from Bde who was wounded while bringing a marked map to the Bn. Lt Col Mackenzie DSO returned late in the evening and reassumed command.	
"	21		Bn HQ was moved to a more spacious cellar in the early a.m. Orders were received by the CO while on the way to meet the Corps Comd that the Bn would be relieved immediately by 2 Mons and would come u/c 227 Bde for an operation that night. The CO reported to HQ 227 Bde for orders and then proceeded on a recce with Brig Colville, sending the IO back to arrange "O" Group and the moving of the Bn. "O" Group met at 1530 hrs and the Bn moved by Coys to an FAA by 1630 hrs. The Bn objective was a bridge 800 yards south of the Schloss KOLBECK and the task of the Bn was to rush the bridge and form a bridgehead on the south side as a start line for future operations by 46 Bde. H hour was 2000 hrs. A Coy, first in the order of march, successfully rushed the bridge without encountering much opposition, but attempts by the other three Coys to extend the bridgehead met with fierce opposition both from SA and mortars. It was eventually decided that coys should dig in where they were and extend the bridgehead at first light with the assistance of tanks. Enemy shelling became intense during the night: some of this seemed to be at short range from SP guns - this was confirmed by the fact that one WASP was knocked out by an SP gun (another WASP was lost on a mine). Casualties were considerable, both from shelling and SA.	
Woods South of SCHLOSS CALBECK	22		At approx 0600 hrs the CO held an O Gp of Rifle Coy Comds plus comd of a Sqn of 4 Coldstream Gds and tp comd of SP Anti Tank guns. It was decided to enlarge the bridgehead first to the right with B Coy supported by one tp of tanks. An enemy counter attack came in on B Coy while the Coy Comd was giving out his orders and	

		<p>"O" Group suffered casualties of two pl comds wounded (one being Lieut VE BOX) and CSM Barlow killed. The tp of tanks unaware that orders had not reached the men, for 15 mins engaged some houses on the right flank and on finding that they had covering infantry withdrew. Just after news of the situation had been received by the CO, Brigadier Colville came up to Tac HQ and gave orders that the bridge was to be held at all costs and that he did not expect the Bn to extend it further. He also promised that 46 Bde would come through later in the day on a revised plan. Coys then dug in where they were with the tanks within the perimeter of the bridgehead in support. 46 Bde passed through at 1400 hrs and captured and consolidated our Bn objective against fairly heavy opposition. The Bn were relieved at 1800 hrs by the reserve Bn of 46 Bde reverting to comd 44 Bde at present in reserve. Shelling and mortaring during the day was as heavy as any encountered since GHEEL and casualties were considerable and included Lieut TAK Savage wounded.</p> <p>Maj ADLER, Maj BOCKENHAM, Lieut BINGE joined the Bn as rfts and remained at "A" Ech.</p>	
"	23	<p>44 Bde attacked through 46 Bde and the Bn was in reserve for this operation but under notice that it might have to find up to three coys (B Coy being too weak to be available) to take over ground taken by 8 RS and 6 KOSB. In the course of the day A Coy went u/c 8 RS at 1100 hrs, followed by D Coy at 1400 hrs, their moves being coordinated by the 2 IC.</p> <p>C Coy went u/c of 6 KOSB at 1800 hrs. Shelling and mortaring was still heavy in the forward areas and all the above Coys had a very unpleasant approach march and a few more casualties were suffered.</p>	Appx E No3
"	24	<p>A, C and D Coys still u/c 8 RS and 6 KOSB. Bde received a warning order that it was coming out for a rest and harbour parties left under 2 IC at 1800 hrs for TILBURG.</p>	
"	25	<p>A C and D Coys spent another uncomfortable day as above and the whole Bde was relieved by 9 Bde of 3 (Brit) Div by midnight. Coys on relief moved to conc area in the neighbourhood of Bn HQ.</p>	
VUGHT	26	<p>Bn moved off at 1800 hrs in TCVs bound for TILBURG. It was stopped just South of S'HERTOGENBOSCH by the advance party with the news that their billets which were to have been in VUGHT had received two direct hits from V1's. Accommodation for the night was found in the Monastery at STARRENDAL and harbour parties went on to TURNHOUT.</p>	Appx E No4 and 6

TURNHOUT	27		Bn moved off again at 1000 hrs for TURNHOUT and were met there by the advance party at 1230 hrs. Practically the whole Bn was housed in civvy billets.	
"	28		This day was spent in settling in and administration. The CO held a conference of all officers and WOs and gave new Bn order of battle.	I Mackenzie Lieut-Colonel, Commanding 6th Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers