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Army Form C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Unit 102 (Northumberland Hussars)
Anti-Tank Regt RA.

Commanding Officer Lt-Col R.W. JELF OBE RA

Month and Year March 1945.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1.		Regt gets large allotment of 48 hours BRUSSELS leave. It is hoped to get everyone through in a week.	
	2.		Rest, maintenance, Brussels leave. C.O. visits 1 Cdn Army to arrange release for M.14s.	
	3.		Rest, maintenance, Brussels leave.	
	4.		Maintenance still in full swing. Massed pipes and drums of the Div play in TILBURG. Wet day, of course.	
	5.		Information received in the early hours that 289 Bty are moving with 227 Bde to area LEUTH 602628. 289 Bty move off to new area with 227 Bde at 1545 hrs. Recce parties from Regt go to new area. Major G.W. DUNKERLEY MC RA having at last succeeded in breaking out of England arrives back in the Regt to take over 107 Bty. Major DUNKERLEY was wounded in the early NORMANDY days. He has been fit to return for some months but could not break loose. He tells us that Major J.M. PUMPHREY is also on his way back to join us. Tpt is immediately despatched to pick up Major PUMPHREY but as he is an ex-P.O.W. and not ex-B.L.A. he is not allowed to rejoin until the necessary forms have been filled in and the truck returns empty.	
	6.		107 Bty move to LOXBERGEN near DIEST. RHQ move to MOLL (near BOURG LEOPOLD). 99 Bty move with RHQ.	
	7.		289 Bty have to vacate present area and recce party goes to area of NEERHARAN. Regt gets down to re-equipping and try with new equipment as it becomes available. Carriers have to be handed in and all 6-prs. Regt has to re-organise on the new W.E. 17-prs and M.14s have to be drawn and also 6 Valentine SPs.	

		<p>All this is accompanied by the usual order and counter order - availability and non-availability.</p> <p>The Regt is well concentrated for just such work being scattered over about 300 square miles of BELGIUM!! Communication except by D.R. is practically out of the question.</p> <p>Major J.M. PUMPHREY rejoins the Regt. Major PUMPHREY was taken prisoner at MSUS Western Desert in 1942 and escaped from ITALY last year.</p>	
	8.	<p>289 Bty move to NEERHARAN.</p> <p>17-prs begin to arrive and are issued to Btys.</p> <p>C.O. carries out a detailed inspection of 99 Bty.</p>	
	9.	<p>Major G.W. DUNKERLEY MC RA goes to 107 Bty and assumes comd.</p> <p>99 Bty having drawn an additional 6 SP Valentines now begin intensive training, instructors being provided by the old SP tp of the Bty.</p>	
	10.	<p>C.O. C.O.2 and B.Cs attend a briefing conference at 12 Corp HQ.</p> <p>Subject - forthcoming operations.</p> <p>Training continues.</p>	
	11.	<p>B.Cs conference at MOLL.</p> <p>C.O. goes through the new establishment with B.Cs and appointments and promotions are brought up to date. Shortage of tpt in the Regt is a source of worry. We are six 3-tonners short. Workshops main pre-occupation seems to be rather more inclined to the trade of clerks than that of engineering and all our vehicles seem to be "Beyond local repair" although all that is wanted in most cases is the fitting of a new engine. It is decided that amount of 1st line amn carried can be reduced from 90 rds per gun to 60 rds per gun for towed 17-prs and 90 for SPs.</p>	
	12.	<p>289 Bty practice boating drill on the Meuse with M.14s and 17-prs.</p> <p>Lieut H.W. SMITH comes to RHQ from 107 Bty as I.O.</p> <p>Lieut J.D. MARRIOTT goes to 289 Bty from RHQ as L.O.</p>	
	13.	<p>Boating exercise on the Meuse. Regt supplies a composite tp of three 17-prs towed by M.14s and-three SP Valentines. The detachments are made up by personnel from all Btys so as to spread the knowledge. Lieut J. LANE who has been attached to the Regt from 31 RHU is absorbed into W.E. and is posted from 288 Bty to 107 Bty as L.O.</p>	
	14.	<p>Boating exercise continues and regtl composite tps under comd OC 289 Bty get on board Cl 50/60 rafts and are ferried over the Meuse.</p>	
	15.	<p>Night exercise cancelled for composite tps.</p>	

		Lieut SAUNDERS is posted from 289 Bty to 107 Bty and takes over 17-pr tp.	
	16.	Maintenance and painting of new vehicles and guns. Major G.R. BALFOUR MC comes to RHQ from 288 Bty where he has been relieved by Major J.M. PUMPHREY. Major BALFOUR who has more than four years of actual fighting service to his credit is being posted to Home Establishment.	
	17.	Practice shoot at LOMMEL for all Btys. Towed 17-pr detachments use 288 Bty's guns. Performance of 288 Bty's guns brings up need for zeroing. Recce parties depart for area of SONSBECK to recce concentration area prior to Regt taking part in assault across RHINE.	
	18.	All Btys (less SP Bty) take their 17-prs to LOMMEL range and zero. BC's conference at RHQ at MOLL. C.O. puts BCs in the picture regarding the next operation which is to be the assault crossing of the RHINE. We are the assaulting Div of 12 Corps with the Highland Division (30 Corps) on our left assaulting REES and the Commando Bde assaulting WESEL on our right. 15 (S) Div assault is to take place between BISLICH (1342) and VYNEN (0845). It is not anticipated that any A Tk guns will be across before D plus 2. It is decided to press for much earlier priority for at least one Bty which it is decided will be 99 Bty (SPs). The operation is to be carried out according to "12 Corps Assault Crossing Technique" which is no doubt an excellent and bulky volume. The Regt however is quite confident it will be able to compete and the pamphlet is not indented for. Lieut McGREGOR who has volunteered for airborne ops is posted from 107 Bty to 99 Bty while awaiting the result of his application.	
	19.	Orders are received that the Regt will be required to provide 2 offrs and 20 O.Rs to take over the job of running the Vehicle Marshalling Areas (SUN and STAR) which are to be established between the MAAS and the RHINE and through which all vehicles will pass and assemble on their way to the ferries. Capt E.J. BONSALE MM and Capt R.E. WHEATLEY are the officers who are to take on these jobs. SP 17-prs of Regt are to take part in the fire plan for next operation and gun posns are reced by C.O.2.	
	20.	Capt C.S. SPENCE goes up to new area (SONSBECK) to arrange for the deployment of SPs in their gun area for the PEPPERPOT shoot. SP Tps move off to new area. They are concentrating in area South of SONSBECK. Route is via MAESEYCK, VENLO, GELDERN to SONSBECK.	

21.		<p>Regt less SP Tps moves to concentration area South of SONSBECK. Leave MOLL at 2130 hrs with 288 Bty joining in column at BOURG LEOPOLD. 107 Bty at HECHTEL and 289 Bty at MAESYCK. Arrive in new area at 0600 hrs.</p> <p>Locations :- RHQ - 048341 99 Bty - 047341 288 Bty - 049344 107 Bty - 0734 289 Bty - 0734</p>	
22.		<p>Capt BONSTALL MM and Capt WHEATLEY go off to Div HQ to fix up the Marshalling area job. It now transpires that each of these officers requires a party of one subaltern and 30 O.Rs including cooks, DRs, wireless operators etc. Capt ROBERTS of 107 Bty is required to report to CRE with 12 M.14s and 24 men for the purpose of towing sledges containing raft bldg material from Rear down to fwd Bdes and thence on night of D-1/D Day to the river bank for assembly.</p> <p>It now looks as if all the initial A Tk work will be done by SPs. We have had and are having a lot of trouble with the Valentines - chiefly burnt out clutches. Unfortunately the Div Workshops are not able to effect repairs and when one goes to Div Workshops it is necessary for us to send in Craftsmen from our own L.A.D. The position at the moment is that 99 Bty are complete and all on the road. 107 Bty are one deficient in Workshops and have lent one complete with crew to 288 Bty. 289 Bty have two off the road and have lent one complete with detachment to 288 Bty who have two off the road. 288 Bty can therefore put a complete troop of three in the field but 107 and 289 have only a one-gun SP Tp each. In any case as the Marshalling Area parties have been found by 107 and 289 and also the M.14 sledge party 107 and 289 are out of the battle.</p>	
23.		<p>This is D-1 and the assault is due to start at 2130 hrs tonight. It is now arranged that 99 Bty's SP guns will cross on first priority on the Cl 50/60 rafts. It is hoped to start getting them across about H + 10 hrs and not on D + 2 as originally estimated.</p>	
24.		<p>289 Bty get one of their SPs back on the road and it is ordered to report to 107 Bty.</p> <p>SPs return to Bty areas after taking part in fire plan.</p> <p>H Hour for 15 (S) Div is 0200 hrs.</p> <p>Assaulting Bdes are 44 and 227 Bdes.</p> <p>At 0930 hrs the Airborne forces sail overhead and the sky is filled with aircraft all day. About 8 are seen coming down in flames from RHQ area.</p> <p>At 1100 hrs BC of 99 Bty and L.O. cross the RHINE.</p>	

		See Appx "A" for account of 99 Bty's part in the RHINE battle.	
	25.	<p>Orders are received from Tac that the Regt will move over the RHINE probably tomorrow.</p> <p>107 Bty will concentrate on the other side in area of BERGEN with RHQ. 288 Bty will report to 44 Bde, 99 Bty echelon to 46 Bde and 289 Bty to 227 Bde.</p> <p>A Residue will be left to deal with U.K. leave personnel and L.A.D. will concentrate Bty sections in present Regtl area where they will finish the work in hand and rejoin Regt later. Regt is to cross the RHINE over a Cl 12 Br.</p>	
	26.	<p>Regtl column consisting of 107, 288, 289 Btys, RHQ and 99 Bty echelon move off at 1100 hrs.</p> <p>RHINE crossed between 1600 and 1700 hrs. Column got split up on the move and the Cl 12 br turned out to be a Cl 9 so the Regt had to cross at a different place over a Cl 40.</p> <p>107 Bty goes off in sp of 157 Bde of 52 (L) Div. This Bde was put under comd 15 (S) Div and arrived without its supporting arms.</p> <p>289 Bty location MR 122477</p> <p>RHQ location BERGEN 1445 (Tac and Main join up again).</p> <p>289 Bty SP Tp made up with an SP from 288 Bty which had been in L.A.D. move up from SONSBECK.</p> <p>288 Bty location area 1147.</p>	
	27.	<p>289 Bty maintenance and preparation to sp a 227 Bde attack laid on for tomorrow.</p> <p>289 Bty SP Tp Sgt reports to RHQ that his Tp have bedded down at side of road on this side of RHINE for night.</p> <p>Lt SMITH sent out to contact Tp Comd of 289 Tp SP and to tell him to join his Bty at first light.</p> <p>288 Bty assist 44 Bde to clear woods at 170505. Day of fierce close quarter fighting and heavy mortaring and SP shelling on Bde front.</p>	
	28.	<p>289 Bty move to area MR 143497. SP Tp from 107 Bty joins 289 Bty. 227 Bde attack at 1400 hrs after 46 Bde had secured their objectives.</p> <p>227 Bde on their objectives by 1800 hrs.</p> <p>107 Bty take over from 99 Bty with 44 Bde in area NE of HAMMENKELN.</p> <p>Relief completed and all guns in action before dark.</p>	
	29.	107 Bty SPs return from 289 Bty to 107 Bty.	
	30.	New Valentine SP issued to 289 Bty bringing their SP Tp up to strength. 289 Bty concentrate in 227 Bde area 1449.	
	31.	No change. Nothing to report.	

