

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Army Form C.2118

WAR DIARY

OF

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

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required)

Month and Year December 1944

Commanding Officer Lieut-Colonel R.W. JELF RA

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices															
	1.		<p>1000 hrs. RHQ moved from OOSTERHOUT to the Barracks in NIJMEGEN to join 99 Bty preparatory to the move to DEURNE area. At 0930 hrs Lt F. MOORE L.O. at HQ RA 50 Div arrived at RHQ with the last instructions to the Regt from them. Everyone is feeling rather sad. The C.O. leaves at 0945 hrs to contact HQ 97 A Tk Regt RA and HQ RA of our new Division. 2000 hrs. Column consisting of RHQ and 99 Bty leave NIJMEGEN for new area. Fine moonlight night. Arrive area LIEROP 5715 at 0115 hrs. Good journey down. Park vehicles round farm buildings and settle for the night. Men in barns. Area does not seem too bad and the hot tea waiting for us cheers everyone up. Good work by Major BARNETT, Lt QM HUTCHINSON and RHQ B Echelon.</p>																
	2.		<p>Changeover with 97 A Tk Regt has been postponed for 24 hrs. So there is little to do except remain in our incredibly uncomfortable concentration area, apart from recce of the areas occupied by 97 A Tk Regt. Filthy wet day. Everyone is naturally rather depressed including 97 A Tk Regt. It is always sad when necessities of war make it imperative for moves which have recently come about to take place. Attached Appx gives account of the recent changes. Major-General BARBER DSO Commanding 15 (S) Div paid an informal visit with his AQ - Lt-Col LETHBRIDGE.</p>																
	3.		<p>RHQ moves from area LIEROP 571156 to DEURNE and is located at 650199. 97 A Tk Regt pulled out of Div area at 0900 hrs today. 288 Bty move from area LIEROP to area Locations are as follows :-</p> <table> <tr> <td>RHQ Main/B Ech/LAD</td> <td>...</td> <td>650199</td> </tr> <tr> <td>99 Bty</td> <td>...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>107 Bty</td> <td>...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>288 Bty</td> <td>...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>289 Bty</td> <td>...</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	RHQ Main/B Ech/LAD	...	650199	99 Bty	...		107 Bty	...		288 Bty	...		289 Bty	...		
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		<p>The Regt is at the moment concentrated in these areas. Troops are all under cover but areas are not comfortable. 44 (L) Bde is today clearing BLERICK and up to R. MAAS at VENLO. The Regt is not taking part in the battle as the area is waterlogged and not at all suitable for employment of tanks. Tank threat is nil. HQ 15 (S) Div is situated at PANNINGEN 7704.</p> <p>It is a very long time since the Regt was in a Division having a battle which it was not in, it is doubtful if it ever happened before. It is nearly as long since RHQ was as far from Div HQ (18 miles) during operations.</p> <p>Today has been spent settling in and trying to find out the workings of our new division. Much running about has been entailed for everyone and there is not a lot to show for it.</p> <p>Filthy wet day - with very odd bright intervals.</p>	
	4.	<p>Today has been taken up in settling in and getting to know the form in our new Division - 15 (S) Div. Already we have noted many differences from 50 (N) Div, which is only natural.</p> <p>It has not been decided yet what area the Regt is to occupy but the general form for the next few weeks seems to be that the Regt will remain in the rear of the Divisional area to rest and train. 288 Bty set up an Officers and Sgts Mess for the first time since landing (almost six months to the day).</p>	
	5.	<p>288 Bty find themselves concentrated and able for the first time since landing to lay on a Bty parade and to see all the men and vehicles in one place at one time. An orgy of maintenance and re-drilling is begun.</p>	
	6.	<p>C.O. visits range near BOURG LEOPOLD and sees Valentine SP Tp of 107 Bty shoot. OC 107 Bty and Capt F.R. ROBERTS accompany C.O. Maintenance in full swing.</p>	
	7.	<p>Nothing fresh to report. Second-in-Comd still trying to find an area for the Regt where we will have a roof over our heads and be able to do some training. So far the search has been exhaustive and fruitless.</p> <p>C.O. spends day co-ordinating B.Cs answers to the SP questionnaire preparatory to discussing the matter with representatives from Army tomorrow. For questionnaire and answers see Appx "A".</p> <p>Raining today.</p>	
	8.	<p>C.O. endeavouring to make arrangements for at least two Btys and Cadre Class to be accommodated in the Dutch Refugee Camp between LIESEL and DEURNE. This is an excellent camp and if we can get it we will be able to settle down in comparative comfort to training.</p>	

		<p>Accommodation is terribly short in the whole Div area and up to date the 2 i/c, I.O. and even the C.O. himself have spent the best part of five days recceing the area and having meetings with the AQ and his Staff in an endeavour to reach a solution.</p> <p>Lt-Col KING visits C.O. and the questionnaire on SP eqpts is discussed.</p> <p>Brig L. BOLTON (CRA 15 (S) Div) also attends.</p> <p>288 Bty M.10 Tp depart for Re-organisation Centre at BOURG LEOPOLD for change-over to Valentines.</p>	
	9.	<p>It is now decided that the following moves will take place tomorrow. RHQ will move from present location in DEURNE to nearer HQ RA at PANNINGEN and 289 Bty will move from present location to RHQ's present location at DEURNE. L.A.D. will move from DEURNE into what we call the wilderness in area 7508.</p> <p>A bit of a crisis has also arisen in 99 Bty's area. The 15 (S) Recce Regt have to pull into that area and so we shall have to move 99 Bty and also 107 Bty. It is decided to move 99 Bty to the wilderness on 11 Dec and to try and find a place to put 107 Bty. C.O. visits AQ and is given the area of VOSBERG. It is decided to put 107 Bty in VOSBERG but meantime on a previous arrangement Osc 107 Bty and 289 Bty are out today looking at areas outside the Div area as also is Lieut MARRIOTT. After all these officers have done their recces they are to report to RHQ this evening at 1700 hrs. 1700 hrs. B.C's Conference about moves. Both Majors TRIPPIER and STALLARD have found excellent places for their Btys outside the Div area and Lieut MARRIOTT has found billets and good accommodation for whole Regt in VALKENSWAARD. However, we must not now go outside the Div area.</p> <p>It is finally fixed up 289 Bty move to DEURNE tomorrow. RHQ move to PANNINGEN and on 11th 99 Bty will move to wilderness and 107 Bty to VOSBERG.</p> <p>288 Bty remain in present location during all this.</p> <p>After these moves have taken place it is still not firm that we will remain in these areas.</p>	
	10.	<p>RHQ move from DEURNE to PANNINGEN 781050.</p> <p>289 Bty move to DEURNE 650198.</p> <p>LAD move to wilderness area 7508.</p> <p>There is a lot of work to be done in both RHQ and LAD's new areas as there are no lights and no heating. If there were lights there is no blackout!! Everyone now concentrates on getting stores of every description out of ADOS, AQ, EME etc.</p>	

11.		<p>99 Bty move to wilderness (751086). 107 Bty move to VOSBERG (7706). Both areas are pretty bloody and there is a lot of work to be done to make them "liveable in".</p> <p>C.O. is still working on the Dutch Camp idea and sees innumerable AQ people to find out whether or not we are to have the Camp. It is a case of one day "Yes", another day "No", next day "Part".</p> <p>Nothing is definite in this world we know, but !</p>																
12.		<p>Major-General BARBER DSO, Cdg 15 (S) Div does an informal tour of the Btys accompanied by CRA (Brig L. BOLTON) and C.O.</p> <p>The General addresses the men in each Bty and welcomes the Regt to the Div adding that he expects us shortly to be wearing tam-o-shaners !</p> <p>Shape of things to come.</p> <p>New Div signs for our arms arrive - 7¼d per pr ! These new signs become quite expensive as this is the fourth Div the Regt has been with.</p> <table> <tr> <td>Greece 1941</td> <td>...</td> <td>2 Armd Div</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Western Desert 1941-42</td> <td></td> <td>7 Armd Div</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Western Desert/Tunisia</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sicily/Europe 1942-44</td> <td></td> <td>50 (N) Div</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Europe 1944</td> <td></td> <td>15 (S) Div</td> </tr> </table> <p>288 Bty can add more being with 4 Indian Div for a time as well and also for a very short time with 1 Armd Div, to mention two.</p> <p>We received news today that Major R. TAYLOR DSO MC who commanded 288 Bty has been promoted Lt-Col and is assuming comd of 8 Corps A Tk Regt which is being re-formed.</p> <p>Regt paints out its TTs and adopts the 15 (S) Div sign - Scottish Lion.</p>	Greece 1941	...	2 Armd Div	Western Desert 1941-42		7 Armd Div	Western Desert/Tunisia			Sicily/Europe 1942-44		50 (N) Div	Europe 1944		15 (S) Div	
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13.		<p>Field-Marshal Sir B.L. MONTGOMERY held a presentation today at ZOMEREN. Sgt WHERRELL R.J. of 99 Bty received the M.M. for the BEMMEL party. C-in-C's Certificates arrived by post for the C.O. to present to Lieut GARNER, (289 Bty), S/Sgt BATES (RHQ) and L/Bdr GIFFORD (288 Bty).</p> <p>The C-in-C addressed officers of the DIV down to Second - in - Comd after the presentation.</p> <p>C.O. still endeavouring to get an answer about the Dutch Camp. Arrangements are made to go ahead and put the Cadre Class into the accommodation in the camp which is spare at the moment.</p> <p>C.O. is invited to spend the night with Lt.General BARBER at 8 Corps HQ near HELMOND.</p>																

	14		C.O. goes straight from 8 Corps HQ to BOURG LEOPOLD to spend day with 288 Btys M.10. Troop which is at the RA Reorganisation Centre being reorganised into a troop of 3 SP 17 pdr Valentines. B.C. 107 Bty accompanied by Capt. E.R. ROBERTS visits Brigadier of 44 Bde.	
	15		Positions remain unchanged. C.O. Major G.R. BALFOUR MC and Capt. W.S. BRAMELD DSO visit 288 Bty SP troop at BOURG LEOPOLD and watch practice shoot with Valentines. B.C.'s conference at RHQ 1730 hrs on subject "Blighty" Leave. Officers ballot for leave.	
	16		Owing to general manpower shortage Regt has to post off as Inf reinforcements 29 men. These men must be A.1 and under 30 and must not hold a campaign medal. They will probably be replaced by A.2 personnel over 30. Draw for "Blighty" Leave.	
	17		Good deal of Air Activity over DIV area. DEURNE bombed. 289 Bty suffer a casualty and have a couple of vehicles damaged (A.P. bomb splinters). 289 Bty recce an area in LIESEL as they may have to move into that area.	
	18		It is now thought DIV will move from this area and concentrate 10/15 miles North of ANTWERP in V 1 & V 2 alley and fair ground.	
	19		Regtl Recce parties under Major R.A. BARNETT MC RA proceed to recce area North of ANTWERP. B.C. of 107 Bty and Capt ROBERTS do a recce in BLERICK area prior to shooting up two houses on other side of river suspected of being occupied by enemy HQ's. Fairly heavy shelling in BLERICK. 289 Bty moved to LIESEL 6714.	
	20		Regtl recce parties report on new area is very depressing. Buildings very badly damaged and not a pane of glass to be found anywhere. Heating arrangements nil. Major BARNETT MC RA was constrained to say a few pertinent words to a local Town Major who found that "troops coming out of the line did not mind what sort of area they occupied as any change was usually for the better".	
	21		Inf A/Tk plns of 46 Bde visit 288 Bty and arrangements made for them to use Miniature Range. All Btys now have a miniature range going.	
	22		Dull Foggy day. Slight drizzle.	

		<p>C.O. visits HQ RA at 1200 hrs to discuss local defence with Lt-Col YOUNG and BMRA.</p> <p>Officers i/c Bty Recce parties visit RHQ and report result of their Recce's North of ANTWERP to 2i/c.</p> <p>2i/c makes a trace of area and writes a description of the billets which is forwarded to HQ RA.</p> <p>Move to area North of ANTWERP now considered to be fairly definitely off. DIV taking over a bit more frontage. This is no doubt due to RUNSTEDTs unexpected and large counter offensive against the 1st American Army in the ARDENNES. It is rumoured that C-in-C 21 Army Group has now taken over Command of all operations in the threatened area and things are beginning to happen on a large scale.</p>	
	23	<p>C.O. leaves RHQ with Capt. C.S. SPENCE to see the Valentines of 99 Bty do their shooting.</p> <p>Major BARNETT goes to see CRA at 1000 hrs. DIV are worried about enemy patrols crossing the river and infiltrating. A mild flap.</p> <p>Major BARNETT sees OsC 99, 288 & 289 Btys and gives them areas to recce in case of enemy infiltration. Btys are to keep a Duty Troop with necessary tpt at short notice to move out in an Inf role. SP Troops are to be held available for special jobs and crews of SP's not to be used for the Inf role of the Duty troop.</p> <p>CRA visited and addressed the senior NCOs Cadre Class accompanied by Major R.A. BARNETT MC RA. A good show was put on and CRA expressed his pleasure. The following Officers arrived to be attached to the Regt.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Major. TURNBULL MC) Capt . LANE) both late 97 A/Tk Regt RA.</p> <p>The idea behind the attachment is to keep them from rotting in RHUs. They will also be useful when leave starts. We are now considerably over-strength in Officers as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">99 Bty 2 Subalterns 107 Bty 1 " 288 Bty 1 Captain 289 Bty 1 Subaltern</p> <p>and we understand still another Capt is on his way. Major. K. TURNBULL MC goes to 107 Bty and takes over from Major. A.T.F. STALLARD posted to 190 Fld Regt.</p>	
	24	<p>Cadre Class breaks up. Btys preparing for Xmas celebration. 1500 hrs. CRA thinks the enemy may definitely try something on over the festive season and it is decided by DIV that we had</p>	

		<p>better have at least the equivalent of 2 full strength Plns per Bty standing by at short notice to move.</p> <p>1700 hrs. BC's conference and C.O. lays on the plot with Bty Cmdrs.</p> <p>C.O. inspects 289 Bty.</p> <p>289 Bty play LIESEL at soccer and win 9 - 0.</p>	
	25	<p>C.O. visits Christmas dinners of 289 & 288 Btys.</p> <p>Major RA BARNETT MC visits Christmas dinners of RHQ 99 & 107 Btys.</p> <p>Rations are excellent.</p>	
	26	<p>Training carries on as usual.</p> <p>No change in location.</p>	
	27	<p>Second senior NCO's Cadre Class assembles in Maria School ASTEN.</p> <p>Other Training goes on as usual.</p> <p>Foggy frosty weather continues.</p>	
	28	<p>Division are still worried about the thinness of the Infantry on the ground. DIV front covers some 30,000 yards from 899148 (GRUBBENVORE) to 777942 (BUGGENUM). Positions are to be recced in the 3 Bde fronts for the Regtl or individual Bty (platoons) to take up and hold in event of a flap. BCs are to do recces and contact the Bde Cmdrs. Major BARNETT is to tie up the day after BC's have done their recces.</p>	
	29	<p>BC's conference 0930. Defensive positions for Regtl or Bty Plns have been recced in 46 Bde Area (288 Bty) and 227 Bde area (289 Bty). BCs point out areas which are in squares 7496 & 7397 for 46 Bde and squares 8001 and 8405 for 227 Bde.</p> <p>Brig. of 44 Bde does not allot areas as he does not know definitely where threat will come from nor definitely that we will be available and in what strength if a threat does come.</p>	
	30	<p>C.O. visits A/Tk Range in LOMMEL near BOURG LEOPOLD and arranges for the Regts shoot on 4, 5, 6 and 7th of Jan.</p> <p>289 Btys M.10 Troop (the last in the Regt for reorganization) is at the RA reorganization centre.</p> <p>Lt. MARRIOTT finds billets to be occupied by the Btys during the forthcoming practice camp.</p> <p>Second-in-Command recces Regtl defensive localities with B.C. 288 Bty in the morning and B.C. 289 Bty in the afternoon.</p>	
	31	<p>C.C.R.A. is going to visit Regt tomorrow at 1415 hrs to present C-in-C's Certificates.</p> <p>Regtl parade of 42 OR's per Bty and 12 from RHQ is laid on to take place on the Football ground at PANNINGEN at 780047.</p> <p>Shells continue to land in the general PANNINGEN area at the usual daily rate of about 12.</p>	

		<p>We are gradually finding our feet in our new surroundings but it is going to take us a while to get used to the new administrative ideas.</p> <p>The amount of paper seems to be terrific and peace time accounting the rule rather than the exception.</p> <p>This hits us particularly hard after Regts long period away from England. The six months in England prior to the invasion were rather too busy to learn up all multifarious orders, instructions, systems on administration and we just could not compete, so we really are hardly equipped to compete now.</p>	
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