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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 2nd Bn The Gordon Highlanders

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year March 1945

Commanding Officer Lt Col RWM de Winton D.S.O.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | References to Appendices |
|------------------------|------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| TILBURG | 1 | 1130 | The Bn paraded in pouring rain for inspection by the GOC 15 (S) Division Major General C.M. Barber DSO on the quayside PIUSHAVEN, TILBURG. The General arrived about 1150 hours and after the inspection he thanked the Battalion for their achievements in the recent actions at CLEVE and SCHLOSS CALBECK, and took the march past. The Pipes and Drums of the Battalion accompanied the inspection and march past. | |
| | 2 | 1430 2100 | Trg conference Bn HQ; Coys to practice speeding up of orders and assault river crossings. Sig Officer to give lessons to officers in wireless procedure. C.O. 2IC and 3 officers attended dance in the town given by HQ 227 (H) Inf Bde. | |
| | 3 | 2000 | Bde Comd and Lt Col H.I. Bradshaw (ex C.O. of the Bn) dined at Bn HQ Officers Mess. | |
| | 4 | 1130 1500 1600 2130 | Bn Church Service in Garrison Cinema TILBURG. The address was given by Rev Davidson (A.C.G. Scottish Command). C.O. 4 Offrs and 40 ORs attended Div Church Service at the Garrison Cinema. C.O. and greater part of the Unit listened to the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Div which played in spite of the heavy rain. First news of an early move to 12 Corps area. | |
| TILBURG EYSDEN. | 5 | 0900 1500 2045 | Recce parties left for new area. Major G.H. Hutchinson in Comd. Bn embussed left TILBURG. Arrived EYSDEN K 56 (NW Europe 1/250,000 Sheet 3) a mining village in the Belgian Limbourg. The move was made somewhat awkward (1) by the absence of more than 100 of the Bn, including the 2IC and Adjutant, on Brussels leave (2) the numerous changes in the allocation of TCVs (3) the arrival at EYSDEN in pitch darkness. At EYSDEN the Bn found itself interspersed with elements of HQ 12 Corps. | |

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| | | | Bn HQ and Bn Officers Mess were est in a vacated chemists shop 570675. | |
| | 6 | | Bn settled in. Trg Conference in the afternoon. | |
| | 7 | | C.O. left for 48 hrs in Brussels. Several of the Bn listened to the HLI Band during the afternoon at the Colliery Hall, EYSDEN. 'B' Echelon rejoined the Bn. | |
| | 8 | | Offrs Wireless Cadre (two days) | |
| | 9 | | Lieut J.W. Lewis (ex Gunner) and 20 ORs arrived to join the Bn. C.O. returned from Brussels. | |
| | 10 | | C.O. attended conference at HQ 12 Corps and HQ 227 Bde ref Ex TORCHLIGHT. | |
| | 11 | | Coys practiced embarking and disembarking of storm boats. Bn team beaten at football by HQ 12 Corps - 7 Nil. | |
| | 12 | | Maj Grose and Capt Reiss recce assembly area and inf route for Ex TORCHLIGHT. | |
| EYSDEN | 13 | pm | The majority of the Officers and about 20 ORs per Coy spent the afternoon and evening at NEERITER with 1st and 5/7th Bns The Gordon Highlanders. The Mased Pipes and Drums of the three Bns played. The Bn team were beaten at football by a combined team of the other two Bns, six goals to two. | |
| | 14 | | The Bn took part in Ex BUFFALO (daylight). They left EYSDEN at 0730 hrs, crossed the MAAS just South of MAESYCK at approx 1430 hrs and returned to EYSDEN in the early evening. Air Marshall Tedder, Gen Dempsey, Lt Gen Ritchie and the GOC 15 (S) Div all watched the Bn crossing. The exercise took place in excellent weather. Major Hutchinson attached to 34 R.H.U. BOURG LEOPOLD to look after Div interests there. | |
| | 15 | | Bn took part in Ex BUFFALO (night). The Bn crossed the MAAS at the same place as on the previous day at approx 0700 hrs - there was considerable delay over the crossing owing to the greater part of the storm boats breaking down. | |
| | 16 | 1000 | Bn returned to EYSDEN. | |
| | 17 | | Further recces for Ex TORCHLIGHT. C.O. briefed Coy Comds. | |
| | 19 | | C.O. reconnoitred Assembly Area and Inf Route for TORCHLIGHT. | |
| EYSDEN | 20 | 1700/ 1800 2030 | C.O. briefed Coy Comds on model. He and four other officers went down the coal mine at EYSDEN in the afternoon. Pipes and Drums beat Retreat. The Bde Comd spoke to all officers about TORCHLIGHT. Sjt Raymaker replaced Sjt Jacobs as interpreter, the latter having volunteered for service in the Dutch East Indies. | |

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| | 21 | 0930 | The C.O. addressed the entire Bn on the subject of the Bn task in the crossing of the RHINE. He later visited the Div Battle School at WATERLOO. | |
| | 22 | 1730 | The Bn left EYSDEN. | |
| | 23 | 0400 | The Bn arrived on the Eastern edge of the HOCHWALD Forest in the Assembly Area for TORCHLIGHT. Bn HQ est SHINKEN HO 059420. | |
| | | 1100 | Bn 'O' Gp. The Bn took maximum advantage of the wonderful weather and rested during the day. | |
| | | 2330 | The Bn led by 'A' Coy and TAC HQ began to move forward to the Storm Boat Waiting Area 096456. | |
| RHINE CROSSING | 24 | 0210 | Lieut A.A. Cameron and 16 Platoon 'D' Coy who had been lent to the HLI for the operation landed on the far bank of the RHINE. They were the first to land in this sector. Lieut Cameron was slightly wounded during the crossing. The rest of the Bn, which was reserve Bn for the Op, had expected to cross at about 0400 hrs, but owing to various mishaps, 'A' Coy did not cross until 0615 hrs, and instead of taking over from 'C' Coy HLI as planned they were ordered to assist the Argylls, which involved landing about 1200 yards downstream of the point of embarkation. The Coy came under direct small arms fire from the bund on the far bank which had not yet been cleared. Lieut R.A. Patrick and three ORs were killed and ten ORs wounded. Several of the storm boats failed to reach the far bank and drifted downstream. 'B' Coy were also ordered to cross to assist the Argylls but were mortared while attempting to embark and owing to shortage of storm boats did not cross till late. | |
| | | 1000 | At 1000 hrs in bright sunshine, the airborne forces passed over the Bn. At 1030 hrs the bund was reported clear and the rest of the Bn crossed also landing however 1200 yards downstream of the point planned in order to move up behind the Argylls. The crossing took place from 104461 to 093474. | |
| | | 1030 | | |
| | | 1120 | Tac HQ crossed. The storm boat in which the C.O. travelled ran out of petrol in midstream and the paddles had to be brought out, but eventually the far bank was successfully achieved at 093474. There was virtually no shelling during the crossing. The Bn formed up on the West side of the bund 0948, still in excellent weather. 'A' Coy suffered a few casualties from mortar fire in the F.U.P. Capt GWL Smith, Lieut WIM Ankers, Lieut W McIntyre were wounded. | |

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| RHINE CROSSING | | 1715 | It was not until 1715 hrs that the Bn had been collected together and was in a position to launch an attack through the Argylls to capture HAFFEN 1149. The attack was made from the West by 'B' Coy (left) and 'C' Coy (right); the arty sp had to be called off at the last moment owing to our own tanks being reported as entering the village from the East, but the attack was successful and 71 prisoners were taken. Most of these were identified as belonging to 19 Para Regt. Lieut S.W. Telfer 'B' Coy was wounded. 'D' Coy, which had supported the attack contacted 5/7 Gordons at 095501 during the afternoon. Bn HQ est 096493. Two Secs A/Tk Pl moved up to 'B' and 'C' Coy areas during the night. | |
| | | 25 | 'D' Coy relieved the two fwd coys of the Argylls. This necessitated the ejection of a small enemy post at HOPERHOF 1050; at 1715 hrs therefore 'D' Coy attacked this farm with the support of wasps. The attack was successful and four prisoners taken. | |
| | | 26 | 1000 Information received from Dutch farmer that enemy had withdrawn from the farms North of 'D' Coy. Patrols confirmed this and at 1230 hrs 'A' Coy moved fwd to occupy the farms 106514 and at 1240. 5/7 Gordons are again contacted in this area. Weather had now deteriorated. 1630 Bn HQ est WAYERHOF 105498. 14 prisoners drifted in during the day. | |
| | | 26/27 | | Night quiet and uneventful. |
| HAFFEN | 27 | 1015 | Bde Comd warned CO that the Bn will be required to attack the wood 1352 at 0200 hrs 28 Mar, but at 1545 hrs the attack is postponed. | |
| | | 2100 | Bde 'O' Gp followed at 2200 hrs by Bn 'O' Gp preparatory to attack on wood 1352. | |
| | 28 | 1000 1430 | Bn left HAFFEN area and assembled area 1450. 'C' Coy (left) and 'D' Coy (right) crossed S.L. 142514. HLI went into the attack simultaneously on the right and two Sqns Recce Regt supported the attack by fire on the left - each of the leading Coys also had one crocodile and one gun tank in support. It was soon discovered however, that the wood had been vacated by the enemy and no opposition was encountered, though progress through the wood was greatly hampered by mines and booby traps, which had been laid both in the roads and in | |

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| | | <p>the wood. No casualties were sustained until the clearing of the wood had almost been completed, when Capt J.W. Buchanan, Lieut W. Tasker and four men of 'D' Coy were blown up on a string of 'S' Mines; Lieut Tasker died of wounds. Bn HQ 134517. Thirty Rfts arrived.</p> | |
| | 29 | <p>The Bn became non-operational and Coy locations were re-adjusted to provide maximum comfort. 'A' and 'B' Coys were accommodated in the BLAUHAUS 1252. Command Post 127523. Twenty seven Rfts arrived.</p> | |
| | 30/31 | <p>Major D.H. Duke returned to unit. Lieuts F.T. Innell, J. Warr. J.H. Pacy and A.L. Nield posted to the Bn w.e.f. 26 Mar 45.</p> | |