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ARMY FORM C.2118

**WAR DIARY**

or

Unit 190th Field Regiment. R.A.

**~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~**

(Delete heading not required)

Month and Year December 1944.

Commanding Officer R.J. STREATFIELD. Lt.Col.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
HOLLAND	1		Regiment were in action at MAASBREE 8408. There was very little activity on the front where the 2 G.H. patrolled to probe the German defences of BLERICK. Registration was carried out by OP's and a few selected Mike Tgts on prominent points on both sides of the MAAS kept the Huns' interest alive.	
	2.		Preparations for Op "GUILDFORD", the capture of BLERICK which is the suburb of VENLO on the West of the MAAS, started in earnest. The large trace and overprint of the Fire Plan were received. In the afternoon harassing fire was put down on likely points for enemy movement. The enemy retaliated in kind and a few casualties were incurred on the gun positions though no one was killed.	
	3.		Operation "GUILDFORD" was carried out by 44 (L) Inf Bde with 7 SEA under command and supported by 31 Armd Bde, flails and crocodiles and the Artillery of 15 Div, 53 Div, 8 Agra, 3 AGRA and 59 AGRA. The attack was preceded by an intense Counter Battery programme which silenced several troublesome German batteries for a time, though the programme had to have a repeat later in the morning as enemy fire became more intense. The initial bombardment was thickened and considerably enhanced by the Canadian Rocket Projector or Mattress a super Moaning Minnie. The operation was a model one and a great success. At H hr a barrage supported the first attack by 31 Armd Bde with flails in front to clear lanes through the thick minefields. The wide anti tank ditch was soon bridged and the first two battalions 8 RS & 6 RSF riding in Kangaroos entered BLERICK with little opposition. The 6 KOSB & 7 Sea followed up, also in kangaroos and the clearing of the suburb continued all day, and at nightfall BLERICK was entirely in our hands. The co-operation of Infantry and armour was highly successful throughout the day, and the intense Artillery fire did much to prevent casualties among the infantry from enemy DF fire. Over 250 prisoners were taken. 5500 tons of amn were fired by the supporting Artillery. The success of the day was saddened by the	

HOLLAND			death of Maj. S.M. GINN, BC 531 Bty who was killed by a shell splinter whilst sitting in the Seaforth's HQ after the attack was finished.	R Streatfield
	4.		We fired little today. The CO2 went to recce a rest area in and around ASTEN in prospect of the regiment's moving out along with 46 Bde. Later in the day we received definite orders to move out to rest on the 5th. The period of rest was to be approximately 7 days. During the evening RHQ was rudely shelled and suffered a few minor casualties.	
	5.		The regiment moved out to rest and established itself with two Batteries on the Northern and Eastern outskirts of ASTEN respectively and RHQ and one battery at HEUSDEN, one mile south of ASTEN. It appeared that each Bde Group would come out to rest for a week at a time and the Divisional front on the MAAS would be held by 2 Bdes each with two Bns in the line.	
	6.		Btys started the rest period with intensive cleaning up and maintenance, the intention being to complete all the outstanding work in the first few days. In the morning the CO2 attended a conference at HQRA about future plans. RA regiments were to rest one at a time with their brigade and CO2 was to recce a new gun area about 8107 SW of MAASBREE.	
	7.		CO2 & Sur Offr reced the proposed new area and found the tracks deeply rutted and thick with mud whilst the fields were covered in water. They contacted CO2 of 181 Field Regt and looked at other areas. On return the CO2 presented his adverse report to HQRA and was given a free hand to choose his own area. In the evening the CO returned from BRUSSELS bringing Major GMD WINGATE to join regt in place of Maj GINN.	
	8.		CO2 and Sur Offr did a further recce and finally decided on the area 8372 with two btys up and one back, and an harassing fire position in our old gun area at ROOTH. Meanwhile the regiment continued its maintenance and received several allotments for baths and shows.	
	9.		CPO's carried out the detailed recce of the new positions and survey was done.	
HOLLAND	10&11		A large bathing programme was completed and large numbers of men were sent to shows and cinemas at ASTEN, HELMOND, and DEURNE where they were constantly and repeatedly entertained by The Lady in the Dark, and Fanny by Gaslight.	R Streatfield
	12.		531 Battery moved from their mud bound rest area to the area of the Factory in ASTEN where they had more and better accommodation for the men. Entertainments continued as before.	

	13.		Recce parties from 181 arrived to study the regiments layout in the rest area. The present plan was that they would come out to rest on the 16th when 46 Bde relieved 44 Bde in the line. To-day Field Marshall Sir B.L. MONTGOMERY presented decorations to officers and men of 15 (S) Div. The CO & a small party attended. MC's were presented to Capt JFB O'SHEA Tp Comdr of "A" Tp & Capt AC HOBSON Tp Comdr "D" Tp.	
	14.		Today Capt. J.H. BRADLEY late of "C" tp took over the duties of Adjut from Capt The Hon LGB BRETT who retired to the calm of "B" tp. Entertainments contd and included a mobile cinema.	
	15.		An uneventful day until after dinner when an LO from 46 Bde brought the news to the CO of the change of plans. 46 Bde is to take over from 158 Bde of 53 (W) Div in the area HANSSUM and BUGGENUM on the MAAS. The CO went on a recce with Brigadier VILLIERS of 46 Bde to the new area and CO2 went to a CRA's Order Gp in the expectation of orders for a recce of a new gun area. No orders were received about this from the CRA. On the CO's return we learned that we were to occupy an area about 7598 next to the area of 83 Field Regt of 53(W) Div. We would use the present 83 Field area as a harassing fire position. Probable move on 17 Dec. CO2, CPO's & Sur Offr carried out the detailed recce of the gun position 7598 and liaised with 83 Field who were still in action. A most important event today was the ballot for leave in the U.K. which is to start on 1st Jan. A sad feature of the day was the despatch of 29 OR's from the regiment to Infantry. All were A1 and under 25. The CO said good bye to them before they left for England and new training.	
	16			
HOLLAND	17.		The regiment left its rest area at ASTEN and occupied its new positions just outside ROGGEEL. 529 occupied the harassing fire position. Each battery would do this in turn, the remaining two being at rest apart from urgent calls. On occupation RHQ suffered unduly, first being shelled as they entered the new position and then being bombed by 3 Stukas as they were moving to a new RHQ area. Two casualties, one fatal, resulted from the bombing.	R Streatfield
	18.		530 Bty was rudely awakened by a bomb dropped by a British plane at 0530 in the morning. No damage was caused by this accident. In the morning CO2 and Sur Offr reced a possible alternative area in 7398 in case we got shelled excessively in our present position.	
	19.		530 relieved 529 in the harassing fire position. Very little shooting was carried out owing to poor visibility. Firing was chiefly at hostile mortars. The Regiment received a draft of 32 men	

		from 124 Field Regt one of 50 Div's regiments which were returning home as skeleton training units.	
	20.	Little activity on the front. Seventeen men from disbanded regiments in 59 AGRA joined the regiment and also Capt G. THOMPSON late of 185 Field Regt who took over C troop of 530 Battery.	
	21.	During the day 531 bty relieved 530 bty in the harassing fire position. The chief activity continued to be fire against hostile mortars which were fairly active all day.	
	22.	Brigadier BOLTON the CRA today presented Certificates of good service from Field Marshall Sir B.L. MONTGOMERY to members of the regiment. The recipients were :- <u>For Gallantry</u> - Sgt WOOD AI Sigs 530 Bty. Sgt DUNSBURY AI Sigs 531 Bty. <u>For Continued Good Service</u> - Capt. V. BORRELLI. RAMC. Unit MO. RMQS. MOORE.	
HOLLAND	23.	529 Bty returned to the harassing fire position. Today an exercise "SHAMPOO" was carried out in conjunction with the infantry, the chief object being to test the communications by which the infantry could call for fire quickly and control it, if need be, in an emergency. We had our first really hard & white frost.	R Streatfield
	24.	529 bty celebrated their Christmas today. Poor visibility hampered observed shooting, but several hostile mortars were engaged.	
	25.	Christmas day was cold, clear and quiet. A mutual desire to be left alone seemed to exist in the troops on both sides of the MAAS.	
	26.	Frost continued and visibility was very poor, hampering most observed shooting. CO2 & CPO's carried out the detailed recce of a gun area in 7102 which would be used as a rear position if the enemy made an attack in strength over the MAAS.	
	27.	Today was the second anniversary of the formation of the regiment. Circumstances unfortunately prevented any general celebration. Visibility still bad.	
	28.	531 Bty went to the harassing fire position. It was still freezing hard and road surfaces were very dangerous. Transport consequently was kept to a minimum. Shooting was still chiefly against hostile mortars.	
	29.	Another quiet day with very poor visibility. Subsidiary OP's were established in the infantry areas as additional eyes and to be manned by senior NCO's. In the evening as many officers as possible attended a regimental dinner party in celebration of the second anniversary.	

	30.		Another quiet day with little shooting apart from hostile mortar tasks.	
	31.		A wonderful day for visibility, and remarkable for two shoots; firstly a Victor Tgt on some Russian guns and secondly an Uncle Tgt by the CRA. In the latter the regiment distinguished itself by producing the best result on the ground. Today was also distinguished by the fact that we dispatched our first party on home leave.	R Streatfield