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ARMY FORM C.2118

WAR DIARY

or

Unit 1 KOSB

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Delete heading not required)

Commanding Officer _____

Month and Year January 1945

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
	1		<p>The enemy celebrated the New Year by firing rifles and automatic weapons into the air. We stonked him which rather damped his enthusiasm. A good deal of movement was seen on the front during the day, mostly in 9015 area. The area of LOMM 9117 was also active though not to such a great extent. Visibility was good and a fair amount of detail was observed. Obstacles were observed on both sides of the river in the form of wire fences on the edge of the water from 901166 to 903174. This obstacle was at first thought to be continuous, but on a second examination this was found to be incorrect. Patrols had nothing of particular interest to report. Brigadier GD Renny, who was CO of the Bn from April to the end of July 1944, when he was wounded has taken over Command of 9th Brit Inf Bde.</p>	
	2		<p>A clear cold day with fair visibility. A fair amount of movement was seen in areas 9016, 9116, 9117. Movement around LOMM was especially noticeable. One or two heavy shells fall in the Bn area shortly after 1900 hrs but otherwise there was nothing of particular interest during daylight. Patrols reported suitable launching site at 90301475 but the banks on both sides were very exposed. At 2230 hrs a horse and cart were heard in area 905147, and at 0230 in the same place the noise of hammering stakes was heard. The obstacle in the river MAAS from 901166 to 903174 was found to be two separate obstacles one on either bank. On the east bank a double apron fence on the beach itself with the Western extremities actually in the water. On the West bank two barbed wire and pole fences with two strands of wire, one being just at the edge of the river and the other 10 - 15 ft from the water just underneath the bank. An Officers' Day was held in the morning. Programme at Appx "A".</p>	
	3		<p>A cold and misty day with very bad visibility. OPs observed one incident of movement at 911181 only. A quiet day spent in improving defences. However Nebelwerfers were heard at night - the first time for some weeks, in fact the beginning of December. A number of shells fall in the WANSSUM and BLITTERSWIJK areas.</p>	

	4	<p>At about 0840 hrs a flying bomb passed over the Bn area going West. Shortly afterwards it was engaged by AA fire, which turned it round and it disappeared in a South Easterly direction. Several V2s were seen going off during the early hours of the morning, but nothing much of interest happened during the hours of darkness. Visibility during the day was fair and OPs saw movement in 9018, 9118 and in the VELDEN area. Again there was Gun, Mortar and Nebelwerfer activity in the WANSSUM, BLITTERSWIJK area. One civilian was found in a house at 896153, who had just swum the MEUSE. He gave some fairly useful information about enemy positions, in HASSELT area. Shortly after 2000 hrs the Steam Tram was heard in LOMM.</p>	
	5	<p>A slight increase of shelling in areas LOTTUM, GRUBBENVORST and LOVENDAAL. During the very early hours of the morning, two German patrols came across the MEUSE from WELL, and attacked the 1st S Lan Regt in WANSSUM. The first patrol was dealt with and the second finally driven off, but the next morning the enemy were found to have reoccupied the wood to the North East of WANSSUM. During the course of the morning during daylight a short preliminary barrage put down on the wood and one pl attacked it, but without success.</p> <p>The enemy had brought up a number of guns for this operation and the DF fire was heavy. Visibility was extremely clear during the day and the Water Tower, Church Tower and Factory chimneys in STRAELEN in the Siegfried Line could be clearly seen. OPs saw movement in 9015, 9016 and 9117. The steam tram and vehicle movement were heard in LOMM at 1900 hrs.</p>	
	6	<p>During the morning all woods in the Bn area were searched and no trace of enemy found. However two Germans, thought to have been dead about a fortnight, were found at 891154. Unfortunately such documents as they had on them were in such a mutilated and frozen state as to be unfit for any intelligence purposes. During the day the enemy HQ at 914154 was engaged by Fd Arty. Visibility was somewhat restricted but OPs saw some movement in 9016. In the morning one Coy of S Lan R attacked the wood North East of WANSSUM but again without success. There was about one Coy of enemy in the wood with 4 HMGs and also in line communication with other troops in WELL.</p>	
	7	<p>During the morning 2 WARWICK relieved 2 RUR. Enemy communications at 915154 engaged by Fd Regt and 3" Mortars engaged enemy movement at 917189 and steam tram crossing at 915180. The Bn spent a comparatively quiet day. There was a certain amount of shelling and mortaring in the WANSSUM - BLITTERSWIJK area. Visibility was again poor but OPs observed an enemy working party of five men at 9016. Our Arty engaged a target some distance away and the party scattered and did not reappear.</p>	

		Instruction on Deception Plan under Appx 'B'. Sgt W Robertson was granted an immediate commission as a Lieut.	
	8	During the early hours of the morning the Suffolks attacked the wood North East of WANSSUM, with a squadron of tanks and Kangaroos. 27 POW were taken during the complete operation. Apparently as soon as the enemy heard tanks they started pulling out of the wood. As for the last two days visibility was poor but OPs saw movement in VELDEN 9014, and enemy with handcarts at 9014 and 9116. Individual enemy movement was also seen at 9016. A few shells and mortar bombs landed in the area just North of GRUBBENVORST during the day. A quiet night.	
	9	A fairly quiet day. About 12 Mortar bombs landed in the Bn area during the day. The RA engaged enemy dugouts, MG and mortar positions in the morning and afternoon. In the afternoon at 1500 the SP guns engaged a suspected enemy OP in HASSELT with delayed fuze HE. Results were satisfactory as far as could be judged. Sgts ERF Hutcheson and G Baitey were granted immediate commissions as 2nd Lieuts.	
	10	During the very early morning, the 15(Sc) Div on our right reported two boats floating down the river towards GRUBBENVORST. Shortly before 0300 the standing patrol at Ferry 902147 heard sounds of boats and withdrew. The ferry area was engaged by 3" mortar and RA between 0310 and 0330. A "D" Coy patrol engaged a small party of enemy at 896164, two of whom ran away leaving a white sheet and two Schmeissers at about 0345 hrs. At 0930 "D" Coy in GRUBBENVORST had sent out a patrol to find and destroy the enemy boats, but without success. No further trace was seen of the enemy. "D" Coy suffered two casualties (1 killed and 1 wounded). Tracked vehicles were heard during the night moving Northwards. During the day OPs saw little movement but observed footprints in the snow from two barges 903159 to a dugout at 905159, but no footprints were seen leading down to the river itself. 3" Mortars engaged LOMM 9117, house at 916183 and road junction at 91174 during the day. In the afternoon one saloon car was seen moving South in area 908147.	
	11	A quiet night except for a small disturbance caused by the 15(S) shooting at some boats sailing down the river. At 1500 hrs Bofors guns engaged the suspect HQ at 911165 and the crossing at 913166 and MMGs harassed the VELDEN area 907145. 3" mortars engaged the cross roads at 907145 in VELDEN and the road junction at 913179. Visibility was bad throughout the day but movement was observed to the South of LOMM 9117. Enemy were again seen to be in occupation of dugout 904158. A boat was seen at 903157 with a ladder and a plank over the wire in the same area. Patrols at night produced three Dutch civilians who had crossed the river in a canoe. They gave a certain amount of useful information	

		including the report of a company of enemy being VELDEN and a Coy in SCHANDELO 9215, and the position of two 7.5cm A.tk guns in 9214.	
	12	<p>A quiet morning. At 1245 one German was seen moving about and a truck was seen to stop in the area 912160. They were promptly engaged by RA. This drew a certain amount of fire on to the dummy positions at 801157. 3" Mortars engaged enemy seen digging at 908147. There was an increase in enemy shelling and mortaring particularly during the afternoon, mostly at 8918, 8816, 8915, 8917. Visibility was good up to 2000 yards and OPs saw a fair amount of movement particularly in the area VELDEN 9014.</p> <p>Between 1100 and 1200 there was continual enemy movement round house at 911149 and all day in area 912152. The enemy were seen on several occasions to be using sledges on the steam tramway. A staff car seen going from 909148 to house at 907153 in HASSELT and later going North at 916154 an hour later. Recently little movement has been seen at 9016, 9017 whereas there has been greatly increased movement in the VELDEN area and at 9115. This may be due to the attention we have paid to LOMM and 9016. This tendency seems to confirm civilian statements of one Coy in VELDEN and one in SCHANDELO.</p>	
	13	<p>A quiet night. Bad visibility sometimes as restricted as 1000 yards hindered observed shooting and the OPs. In the morning the heavy guns attempted to range on 912152, which was a suspected admin area but observation of shot was extremely difficult and they eventually gave up. Medium guns during the day did a shoot onto the Regimental Rear Admin Area just South of STRAELEN. Clouds of white smoke were seen coming from the area. The Fd Arty engaged enemy movement 916187. Some shelling at 8914 during the morning otherwise a quiet day.</p>	
	14	<p>During the night several flares were seen (green and white) coming from the area of LOMM 9017 and shortly afterwards a two stroke motor was heard in the same area. Fd Arty and MMG fire was immediately put down in the area and the noises stopped and nothing further happened. In the early morning two Dutch civilians crossed the MAAS in the GRUBBENVORST area. They had been ferried across by canoe, and unfortunately another five has been caught by the enemy on the East bank before they had time to get across. They could only produce rather vague information which included the fact that there were mines in HASSELT, just East of the perimeter wire. They also stated that the enemy were evacuating all civilians within a mile or so of the MAAS on the same day. The Bde harassing fire plan started today. Enemy mortar and gun positions were engaged during the morning and enemy movement and dugouts during the afternoon. There was less shelling and mortaring than usual. OPs saw continuous enemy movement in VELDEN throughout the day. A RAP and a</p>	

		<p>suspected HQ were located respectively at 908146 and 908143. Some enemy on the front were wearing snow camouflage suits, others were seen carrying them about. Suspected stand to positions in trenches were observed being occupied at dusk by five enemy at 908146. During the night movement of vehicles was again heard in VELDEN. OP Instr No.1 under Appx 'C'.</p>	
	15	<p>A very quiet day with very little enemy shelling indeed. During the day 4.2" mortars engaged LOMM and area of wood and track junction 915187, otherwise there was nothing of interest.</p>	
	16	<p>Another quiet day, with the enemy showing no signs of feeling the slightest bit aggressive. 33rd Fd Regt, 3" Mortars and MMGs engaged suspected Admin areas during the day which included positions at 911166 and 912152 and areas 911152, 911159 and track junction 912157. There was no appreciable reaction to this except for a slight increase in shelling at 8915 in the afternoon and evening. At 2100 one enemy aircraft flying North East dropped 3 red flares over the Bn area, otherwise a quiet night. An Offrs' Day was held in the morning. Programme under Appx 'D'.</p>	
	17	<p>During the morning 2 RUR relieved 2 Lincolns on our Left. During the day RA engaged enemy mortars at 9217 and 9216 and targets in LOMM and 9115. Poor visibility restricted vision of OPs who saw only occasional movement at 9014, 9016 and 9017. In the evening one 88mm gun fired from VELDEN area, and some slight vehicle movement seen and heard at 9015.</p>	
	18	<p>A quiet night. Occasional movement seen at 9014 otherwise very still. Enemy mortars from 914178 and 927178 were again active, and were duly engaged by our Arty. RA also engaged movement and truck seen at 920155. Shortly after 2000 hrs a demonstration was staged in the deception area 8915, which included firing of weapons and very lights and a bogus DF Task. No reaction was reported. At 1900 hrs RA engaged dugouts on East bank of River MEUSE, in rotation but there was no reaction.</p>	
	19	<p>A peaceful night followed by a quiet day. An Officers' Period was held in the morning from 1000 hrs to 1300 hrs; programme under Appx 'E'. During the day OPs saw considerable movement at 9015, 9116 and houses occupied at 9014, 9117, 9118. In the morning at 0930 the RA laid a smoke screen from 908154 to 909149 for half an hour. At 1000 hrs a fair amount of individual movement was seen in HASSELT and LOMM as if the enemy were manning stand to positions. At 1015 hrs enemy Arty started firing mostly into 'EDINBURGH', the Coy deception area at 892155, on "C" Coy fwd pl at 891165, and in the HOUTHUIZEN 8917 area. When the enemy started moving in HASSELT and LOMM the 3" Mortars shot them up, and the RA engaged retaliatory targets, when enemy guns opened up. At 1400 hrs one detachment of A.Tk shot at LOMM Church and observed two</p>	

		hits. This caused a certain amount of enemy mortar fire in the HOUTHUIZEN area.	
	20	A quiet night. As before vehicle movement was heard in the VELDEN area at 0400, and earlier one heavy tracked vehicle was heard moving N.E. from LOMM. During the day movement was seen at 9015, 9016 and one enemy section moving from barn to trenches at 9117. Little enemy Arty and mortar fire during the day.	
	21	Another quiet cold night. One patrol located enemy riflemen firing from 904172. The enemy shelled the Coy deception area 'EDINBURGH' during the morning, and at 1400 hrs there was a fair amount of enemy mortar fire. A fix was obtained by Coy bearings at 932170 and engaged by one Bty RA. The mortaring ceased, otherwise a quiet and unexciting day.	
	22	Uneventful night. At 1530 the 2 RUR on the left discovered tracks of a small party of enemy near the railway, from civilian reports. Eventually 2 white ration bags and a loaf of bread were discovered near a haystack, which looked as if it had been slept in. The track led from the river at 902158 30 yards to the North of Bn HQ and up the railway. No return tracks were found. During the afternoon the advance party of Ox & Bucks L.I. of the 6th Airlanding Bde arrived. At 2015 Sgt Ferguson took a patrol and followed the tracks down to the river, where they lay for about ten minutes, but could hear no noise. While returning by the same route, the patrol had reached 893166, when through "C" Coy fwd pl at KALDENBROEK came three men, answering the challenge with a few words of English. The patrol at once went to KALDENBROEK and eventually discovered that none of our patrols were anywhere near "C" Coy at the time, so they chased these men and followed them down to the river bank where there were marks of boats. About an hour later an enemy patrol 20 strong attacked KALDENBROEK with panzerfausts, schmeissers and grenades but were driven off, having at least two of their number wounded, one of whom was dragged back with them screaming. The other wounded man was captured and among other things disclosed his regt (1226) his coy positions and other useful information. Again movement of tpt was heard in the VELDEN area. In daylight OPs saw movement 9015, 9017, 9117.	
	23	All woods in the Bn area were searched without result. There was some shelling during the day in 'EDINBURGH'. OPs saw movement at 9015, 9016, 9116, 9117 and large truck in trees at 913161. Patrols at night heard movement of transport in HASSELT - VELDEN area. Patrol at 904182 saw a patrol of approximately 40 Germans in the area 905181 moving North. Arty engaged enemy and RUR Patrol did not contact enemy. Very little shelling in Bn area but some mortaring during the day.	

24		A very quiet day. During the afternoon the Army and Corps Commanders, General Dempsey and General Barker came into GRUBBENVORST to look South East across the river from the OPs. Less movement than usual was seen from OPs and only at 9117. Just after dark some persons were seen between the Mortar Pl and "B" Coy. They were thought at the time to be enemy, but no trace of them could be found, otherwise a quiet night. During the afternoon 2 Lincolns moved into the area to the North of 2 RUR in place of 2 WARWICKS.	
25		The hand-over to 2 Ox & Bucks of 6 Airlanding Bde started at first light and was completed by 1600 hrs. The Bn moved into the HORST 8318 - HEGELSOM area. Dispositions as follows :- Bn HQ 822169, "A" Coy 830180, "B" Coy 835181, "C" Coy 825164, "D" Coy 821158, "S" Coy 823168. A training directive, dated 18 Jan will be found under Appx 'F'. This provided for cleaning up and checking of kit on the 26th and 27th. This included an organised training programme for Coys till 2 Feb which also included a junior NCOs' Cadre under Capt LW McKay and 2/Lt G Batey.	
26		Major General Galloway, Acting Div Commander in the absence of Major General LG Whistler, visited the Bn during the afternoon and stayed for tea. The Pipe Band beat retreat at 1530 hrs. A large allotment of seats at Entertainments in HORST.	
27		Cleaning and checking of kit and stores. The NCOs' Cadre started. Programme under Appx 'G'. Operation Order No.3 which is for our counter attack role while in HEGELSOM area, was issued and can be found under Appx 'H'.	
28		Separate Services for different denominations in the Church Hall. The Corps Comd, Lieut General Barker paid the Bn a visit, was introduced to Coy Comds and stayed to lunch.	
29		An Officers' Day was held being a TEWT on our counter attack role, in the RUR area at 9020. Capt Sturrocks of 3/4 CLY attended as an advisor on the question of cooperation with tanks. Programme will be found under Appx 'J'.	
30		Entertainments as usual. Training by Coys as usual. "C" Coy held a Dance.	
31		A definite thaw making roads practically impassable. A large allotment of Entertainments as usual. "D" Coy held a Dance in HEGELSOM. Casualties during the month numbered :- <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Killed Officers Nil Other Ranks One</p> <p>Wounded Officers One</p> </div>	

			Other Ranks	Six	
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