

THE PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY

REPORT ON OPS

7 APR 45 - 23 APR 45

ASSAULT OF RIVER IJSSEL

PURSUIT TO BARNEVELD

SITUATION

The PPCLI had been conc in a rather dismal area in the REICHSWALD FOREST after a very pleasant pause in BELGIUM. On the morning of Apr 7 this wet and muddy camp was left behind and the Bn moved to the area of BAAK here to wait for further developments.

The enemy had been pushed back along the line of the IJssel River as far as ZUTPHEN at this time and 3 Cdn Inf Div were busy clearing the town and preparing to clear the city of DEVENTER. When this task was completed then we could carry on with our part, that of forming a brhd over the IJssel River. The 3rd Div were making good progress so on Apr 9, the 2 Bde moved to a conc area NORTH of ZUTPHEN with the PPCLI in the gen area at sq 9702. Here more complete details of the coming action were received and we made final preparations for "another river crossing". During the period in the conc area all ranks were thoroughly briefed. Recces down to Sec Comds were made by all Coys.

Infm on the enemy was not complete but we were prepared to meet the 6 Para Div along with various odds and sods such as Trg Bns, Engr Bns, Battle Gps and GAF Tps. Little was known of enemy arty or of the armour that he possessed. It was known however that he did have a goodly share of AA and A Tk 88 mm guns and that his tanks were mainly Mk III and IV with 75's mounted.

Our own tps were in excellent condition. Keen and eager to get into action in a new theatre and prove themselves.

The Div plan was given to us and the 2 Bde were given the task of forming a brhd to allow the 1 and 3 Bdes to pass through and push on to APELDOORN. Within the Bde the PPCLI and the Seaf of C would est the brhd with the LER in res.

The terrain presented no serious difficulties for the country is flat, slightly wooded, the ground firm and although the river is fairly wide there are good approaches and good landing areas.

PLAN

The Bde plan was a good one with PPCLI right, Seaf of C left and the LER in res. BUFFALOES would be used to force the crossing and once this was done the Bn would move fwd in three stages to make a very secure brhd. Phase I would carry us across the river and make a tight but very secure brhd. Phase II a thrust inland to enlarge the brhd and Phase III a fanning out to afford left flanking protection for the other two Bdes who would then pass through us.

Our own plan was made, "C" and "D" Coys would be first over with "C" Coy left and "D" Coy right to secure WINNIPEG (936024) and NESS (935031) respectively. When these were secure "A" and "B" Coys would pass through, "A" Coy to WATROUS (914038) and "B" Coy to LOMBARD (928030) and exploit to BYRON (925031). "D" Coy would then move to WINCHESTER (920036), "C" Coy would then take over from "B" Coy who would push to CHAMPLAIN (917037) and finally "C" Coy to LEGION (913032). This would complete Phase III and allow 3 Bde to pass through. An excellent Arty plan was laid on, smoke being used from H-30 to H. At H-10 HE would cover the river

bank and the first objective, then from H to H plus 30 a fire plan to soften up resistance further back. H Hour set for 1630 hrs 11 Apr. Comn by 18 set to Tac HQ and tele and 22 Set to Bde.

COURSE OF BATTLE

At 1600 hrs the Arty shoot started and the area was well smoked in a very few mins. At 1620 the HE fire plan went into effect and the two leading Coys "C" and "D" moved off for the river in their BUFFALOES hitting the water practically at 1630 hrs. Very lt resistance was met and at 1643 hrs "C" Coy reported from WINNIPEG having had no serious trouble whatever. "D" Coy however were not quite so fortunate and were slowed up by hy MG fire from NESS. A tank was giving them considerable trouble but a few well place PIAT bombs soon dealt with this and by 1720 hrs NESS was reported snug. "B" Coy was ordered to cross and at 1735 hrs were over the river and moving through "C" Coy. At 1750 hrs "A" Coy were ordered to move across through "D" Coy at NESS. The smoke on the right was beginning to thin out so "A" Coy called for more smoke which came down in a very few mins and covered the approach to WATROUS. "B" Coy were making excellent progress - opposn was very lt and at 1758 reported LOMBARD firm and were exploiting to BYRON. "A" Coy were meeting considerable resistance and had to clear MG posts as they adv. At 1930 hrs "A" Coy were on WATROUS but hidden MGs and snipers gave them much trouble in the little village so houses had to be cleared one by one. This was a rather slow and tricky business and not until 2100 hrs did "A" Coy report firm. A Tk guns were rushed across in the meantime and too up posns in "D" Coy area to give protection to the right flank. Tac HQ moved across at 2100 hrs to WINNIPEG. "D" Coy were now moved and passing through "B" Coy, pushed on to WINCHESTER (920036) while "C" Coy fanned out to take over "D" Coy posns at NESS and to give protection to the Engrs who were working on a br across the river.

Progress was a little slower now due to increasing resistance by the enemy and it was not until 0200 hrs that "D" Coy reported on WINCHESTER. "C" Coy then moved to LOMBARD and BYRON to relieve "B" Coy who pushed through to CHAMPLAIN (917037). At 0300 hrs Tac HQ again moved and set up in a root cellar at NESS. Counter attacks were launched against "D" and "A" Coys and for some time they were rather hard pressed being attacked by inf and tks. This attack was however successfully driven off due largely to "B" Coy who were in a posn to strike the enemy from the flank. Many PsW were taken by the Coy and the enemy were completely disorg by an attack from this unexpected quarter. Three tks were added to the Bn bag of knocked out vehs and eqpt. Two were Mk III, the other a Mk IV mounting a 75 mm gun. These were knocked out by PIATs. By 0600 hrs the posns were firm having A Tk guns, wasps and a tp of tks with the leading Coys. "A" Coy at WATROUS - "B" Coy at CHA PLAIN - "C" Coy at LOMBARD and BYRON - "D" Coy at WINCHESTER - Tac HQ at NESS.

Soon after 0700 hrs Lt-col McKenzie, OC 48th Highlanders of Canada arrived at Tac with recce parties to recce their FUP. Patrols were sent out by "B" Coy to SHELLEY (921029) and by "A" Coy to the Cement Works (929046). In the meantime the remainder of "B" Coy were busy checking through the village and during the battle took over 80 PsW who were hiding and gathered many enemy vehs incl three Staff cars, and a 3 ton lorry that was knocked out.

The 48th Highlanders launched their attack at 1045 hrs and pushed NORTH and WEST from our brhd. "C" Coy were ordered to LEGION under a very hy conc of airbursts, where more PsW were added to the Bn bag. When "C" Coy were snug the Seaf of C on our left attacked PLACID and "C" Coy were able to sp this attack by SA fire and inflicted many cas as the enemy fled from the wood. At 1730 hrs a Coy of the Carleton and Yorks relieved "C" Coy who returned to the area of BYRON.

The remainder of the day was quiet and at 2230 hrs orders were issued for the plan of attack the next day. The Bn would conc in area 9201 at 0500 hrs. H Hour was set at 0600 hrs with "A" Coy right, "C" Coy left with objectives set as "A" Coy to MENTHOL (903013) and "C" Coy to BURNS (902006). When these were firm "D" Coy would push through to BAKER (894005) and "B" Coy to KOOL (895010).

At 0600 hrs, 13 Apr the arty fire plan started and at 0610 hrs the two leading Coys went over the SL (line of dyke at 912009) with a tp of tks supporting. The tks were held up by a mine fd but the Coys pushed on and reached their objectives at 0650 hrs having met no opposn. The CO here changed his plan and ordered the Coys to push on to the final objectives at once. "A" Coy to KOOL - "C" Coy to BAKER. The minefd holding up the tks had been cleared by our pns and with tk sp the Coys moved to their objectives and both reported firm by 0820 hrs. Little opposn had been met and several PsW taken. During this adv six 88 mm AA guns were overrun. Apparently they had been knocked out by our arty.

In the meantime "B" and "D" Coys were moved up to MENTHOL and BURNS respectively. A Tk guns were rushed to "A" and "C" Coys to make the posns more secure.

The S and S Pl was brought into play and given the task of clearing the wood from STRAND NORTH. At 1050 hrs they reported many enemy in the wood and estimated their numbers at nearly 100. A plan was made to clear this wood. Flame throwers - SLI carriers with Vickers mounted and our own bren carriers would fan out in three thrusts and clear the wood as they went. Objectives were set. Gp 1 as 885012 - Gp 2 878003 and Gp 3 877994. At 1430 this strong striking force moved off through the wood. Gp 1 were first to reach their objective having met little opposn and "A" Coy were rushed into posn as soon as this was clear. At 1530 hrs Gp 2 were also making excellent progress and reported on posn at 1535 hrs and to this place "B" Coy was moved. Gp 3 were having a little difficulty and had encountered quite stiff resistance. This was overcome by use of the flame throwers and the Vickers mounted on carriers. The enemy were driven from the wood into open country and were cut down by the MMGs. "D" Coy then moved to this third objective at 1600 hrs. Many PsW had been taken from the wood and cas among the enemy were very hy.

The remainder of the day and the following day were spent very quietly. At 2100 hrs, the CO attended a conference at Bde where the next phase of the action was discussed.

On the morning of the 15th at 0800 hrs the Bde Comd held his "O" Gp and the CO gave his orders at 1000 hrs. The Bn would move at 1200 hrs to conc area in sq 9194. A swanning out scheme was laid down - the Carrier Pl would feel out the country and Coys would take up posns as the carriers worked fwd. We were unable to move however until the LER and the Seaf of C had secured the areas around ROTTING. At 1230 hrs our recce parties were able to move off and the Bn convoy followed shortly after leaving "D" Coy behind under comd of the Seaf of C. The carriers were again brought into

play and at 1400 hrs they moved off to feel out the area around sq 9093. Four objectives were detailed 909939 - 905937 - 902993 - 912934. "C" Coy were on the move and when at 1430 the Carriers reported 909939 clear, "C" Coy moved in and made the posn secure. The other three objectives followed in quick succession and "A" and "B" Coys moved up to firm up with "A" Coy at 905937 and "B" Coy at 912934. The Carriers sent out patrols to the WEST to try and contact the enemy but all patrols returned with the same story that the enemy had withdrawn. At the same time as the patrols were working WEST other secs of Carriers were working SOUTH to the next objectives and at 1515 hrs VERTEBRAE (909918) was cleared and "C" Coy moved up to here. Speed was essential and the Carriers probed further SOUTH to DAFFODIL (909901) and CLEMATIS (912916). "B" Coy moved to CLEMATIS and firmed up here at 1635 while "A" Coy moved to DAFFODIL, arriving at 1845 hrs. Tac HQ in the meantime had moved to 908920. Coys were now located "A" Coy 909901 - "B" Coy 912916 - "C" Coy 909918.

A quiet night was spent here and at 1000 hrs of the 16th the Bn moved to a new area in sqs 8993 and 9093. The move was a very short one and the stay there for only a few hours when another move was ordered to an area near KLARENBEKK. Coys were moved by running a TCV shuttle service. Coy areas were now Tac HQ 908932 - "A" Coy 854949 - "B" Coy 844963 - "C" Coy 848969 - "D" Coy 863959. "D" Coy had been relieved from Seaf of C comd and rejoined the Bn here. We were to move that night across the APELDOORN CANAL - Recce parties and "C" Coy were sent in adv to recce the area. A class 40 br was constr across the canal at 839950 and by 2300 hrs this was opened for t/c. Coys moved by MARCH ROUTE to their new areas. By 0230 hrs of the 17th all Coys were in posn. Tac HQ at AUSTER (804953) - "A" Coy at AUSTER - "B" Coy at 801966 - "C" Coy at CLEAR (796962) - "D" Coy at ABDULLAH (815959). We had the task of clearing a large wood and to do this it was divided into areas - each of which would be cleared in turn. The Carriers sent out patrols and at 1000 hrs reported area "A" clear - "C" Coy moved to CHAUSER (783967) - "B", "A" and "D" Coys moved off at 1020 hrs and took up posns with "B" Coy at 772962 - "A" Coy at 778958 - "D" Coy at 772954. The Carriers had moved on immediately to the next area "C", cleared this and then pushed on to "E". Shortly after noon "E" was reported clear by the Carriers and the Coys were ordered to move at once to this area. By 1645 hrs "C" Coy was on its objective at 734959 followed by the other Coys with "A" Coy at 726952 - "B" Coy at 738962 - "D" Coy at 734953. Prisoners were streaming in and Tac HQ at 735949 was nearly swamped by the influx. At 1730 hrs all Coys were warned to be ready for a quick move to the next area which was being cleared by the Carriers. At 1740 hrs the Carriers reported clear and the Coys moved up again taking up posns with "A" Coy at 716953 - "B" Coy at 718958 - "C" Coy at 708954 - "D" Coy at 712957 and Tac HQ at 708954. At this pt the LER passed through and pushed on. Our stay here was very short and at 2030 hrs we were ordered to move to HARSKAMP. Recce parties left at once followed shortly by the Coys in TCVs.

By 0015 hrs of the 18 Apr all Coys were snug taking up posns around the village with "A" Coy at 638954 - "B" Coy at 642943 - "C" Coy at 635957 - "D" Coy at 641955 - Tac HQ at 641946. A very quiet night was spent and at noon the Bn again moved by TCV to the village of BARNEVELD where we relieved the LER and took over their posns protecting the left flank. "A" Coy 524959 - "B" Coy 516940 - "C" Coy 513952 - "D" Coy 523953 - Tac HQ 525955. The following day was rather quiet. Active patrolling was started by the Carriers. Patrols went out to ACHTERVELD, where small forces of the enemy were

contacted and 9 PsW taken. Patrols also went to GLINDHORST which was reported clear of enemy. On the morning of the 21 Apr the Seaf of C moved through us and took up posns on our left flank. Patrols were out again feeling Southward toward the river. This patrol bumped trouble at 494895 and here we had several cas in the MMG Pl of the SLI. Our own flame throwers warmed up the enemy posn. Patrols also went out the ACHTERVELD and "D" Coy were moved into the village where they were to remain. Enemy patrols came in on "D" Coy during the night and were very successfully ambushed by the Coy. Prisoners were taken and several cas inflicted on the enemy. The village was shelled the next morning early and "D" Coy unfortunately suffered some cas having two men killed. The following day, the 22 Apr, a recce party from "A" Coy went to ACHTERVELD and that evening "A" Coy moved to JANNENDORP. The night was quiet and on 23 Apr "B" and "C" Coys moved to the area of ACHTERVELD to firm up the village. "D" Coy were in the village; "C" Coy right fwd in area 456960; "B" Coy on the left at 458947; and "A" Coy on the right at JANNENDORP. Tac HQ was at 472953.

Enemy capt captured and knocked out

- 1 - 37mm A Tk gun.
- 1 - 45mm A Tk gun.
- 1 - Jeep
- 3 - MCs.
- 2 - Panel trucks.
- 3 - Staff Cars.
- 1 - 60 cwt Truck.
- 2 - 81 mm Mortars.
- 1 - French Tk. (PIAT)
- 1 - Mk IV Tk with 75mm gun. (PIAT)
- 2 - Mk III Tks with 75mm gun. (PIAT)
- 1 - 88mm A Tk gun.

Prisoners captured

7 Offrs
654 ORs.
50 (approx) through med channels)

Own Casualties

From 11 Apr to 23 Apr

	<u>Offrs</u>	<u>ORs</u>
Killed		5
Wounded	1	33
Missing		3
Total	<u>1</u>	<u>41</u>

LESSONS LEARNED

The Carrier Battle Gp:

1. When a Battle Gp composed of carriers, MMGs, flame throwers, mortars etc are engaged in a "Swanning" action it is imperative that the Comd of the Force has under his immediate control a 100% res of flame-thrower fuel. It is suggested that this be carried in an armd veh.
2. The Comd of the a/m Gp should est his HQ at the nearest route junc connecting the various objectives.
3. It is suggested that the "WASPS" be supplied with a suitable LMG (ie BROWNING .300) mounted on the veh.
4. Each Sec, it is suggested should be equipped with radio comn. A No 22 is suggested as the ideal for this purpose.
5. In fluid warfare flame-throwers were found to be extremely useful in flushing enemy in close country or buildings. It was found that they would not surrender to the flame-throwers - therefore mopping-up tps must work in close conjunction with the flame-thrower.
6. The PIAT was again found to be extremely lethal when employed against AFVs if properly sited and boldly used in close country.
7. It is further suggested that when a Bn is performing a fluid role - ie pursuit or approach - that "A" Ech be placed under control of the Comd - ie Bn or Coy.