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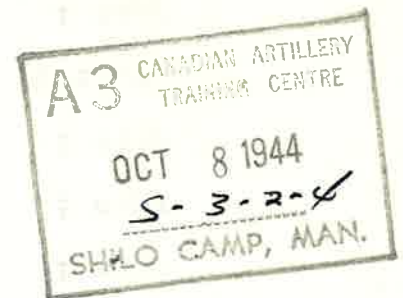
4 Oct 44

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Canadian Ops - Mediterranean Area
Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda (Series 26)

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2. These extracts are forwarded for gen infm only and opinions stated are not to be considered as necessarily expressions of official doctrine.
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M. P. Johnston
for Chief of the General Staff.

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24/MI/1/5 (Hist)

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14 Sep 44

CANADIAN OPERATIONS - MEDITERRANEAN AREA
Extracts From War Diaries and Memoranda - (Series 26)

1. Further to my 24/MI/1/5 (Hist), dated 16 Aug 44, attached are further extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda dealing with the operations of Canadian formations and units in the Mediterranean Area.
2. These extracts are circulated for general information only, and opinions stated are not to be considered as necessarily expressions of official doctrine.

(K. Stuart) Lieut.-General,
 Chief of Staff,
MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

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24/AAI/1/5 (Hist)

CANADIAN OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

MAY - JUNE 1944

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARIES AND MEMORANDA

(SERIES 26)

1. EXTRACT FROM A REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF 11 C.A.R. (ONT R)
DURING THE PERIOD 17 - 29 MAY 44, COMPILED BY THE HISTORICAL
OFFICER, 5 CDN ARMD DIV.
REF MAPS - ITALY 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 160.

THE ADVANCE TO AND BREAKING OF THE HITLER LINE.

On the 17 May 44 our Regt ceased to be under command 8th Ind Div. We remained in the SANVITTORE area until the 18th busily refitting and re-equipping. Reinforcements and replacements were brought up. At 1630 hrs on the 18th we moved up to the area of GERUNDA (8118) arriving at 2000 hrs. Our Bde was now under command 78 Br Div and was to be employed in a counter-attack role. At 2130 hrs we received information that a breakthrough had been made in the Hitler Line at AQUINO and that the town was no longer occupied. (This, we subsequently learned to our cost, was quite false). We were ordered to move at once to an assembly area South of AQUINO Air Port preparatory to crossing the Forme d'AQUINO at first light on the 19th.

By 0200 hrs on the 19th we had reached our assembly area and at the same time an Orders Group was held at Bn HQ of the 5 Buffs. A plan had been laid on by the Comd 26 Armd Bde for an Armoured breakthrough to be made at AQUINO by 26 Armd Bde with under command the 10 R.B., the Derby Yeomanry and others. In case the Armd breakthrough did not meet with success 36 Inf Bde with in support 11 CAR were to be prepared to go in to seize and hold a bridgehead. This plan was modified so that 36 Inf Bde and 11 CAR would go in to establish their bridgehead at the same time as the Armd breakthrough was going in so that we should not lose the barrage. One condition, however, that our tanks would not cross until all the tanks of 26 Armd Bde had gone through still existed.

Sqn Comds were briefed by the CO at 5 Buffs RHQ. "B" Sqn were to support the 5 Buffs in establishing the bridgehead while "A" Sqn gave covering fire and neutralized targets on the exposed right flanks. "C" Sqn was to be in reserve. Sqn Comds made necessary arrangements for marrying up with the Inf. At 0500 hrs the orders group was completed and at 0515 hrs the attack was underway.

"B" Sqn moved to an FUP with the Inf in area 761213. The road from the airport at 761213 to main lateral at 752218 was our axis of advance. A Tp were to support a Coy on the right side of the road and another tp with a Coy on the left side of the road. "A" Sqn moved to the north edge of the Airport to 764216. On the left of 5 Buffs, 8 A & SH and 6 RWK were prepared to move in to mop up AQUINO. The heavy morning fog restricted visibility so that the initial advance was delayed for some time.

At 0700 hrs the fog was still being a nuisance and the Inf on the right were being held up by heavy machine gun fire from the Cemetery 758215. On the left of the road the vineyards provided some cover to 755216 and but for holding up to wait for the people on the right, good progress was made to this point.

"B" Sqn had one tank knocked out by an ATK gun at 0745 hrs and by this time "A" Sqn was sending one tp to cross the railroad track with a view to coming into the town from the north and shooting up anything in front of our forward troops. At 0800 hrs the "B" Sqn tp on the left of the axis of advance had moved beyond the cover and was approaching the town. An ATK gun on the left was engaged and silenced when a well camouflaged gun from a Pill Box opened up from the right. The tanks by this time were only 300 yds from the town and at point blank range to the pill box. The three tanks were hit at least twice but the crews remained until the tanks brewed up, and all escaped save one man (missing).

As "A" Sqn started to move north to come in on the town from that direction, "C" Sqn were sent to take on the right flank. By this time the fog had lifted and the smoke cover on the hills to the right had thinned with the result that all our force was under direct observation of the enemy. The Inf were still held up by extremely heavy fire from the cemetery. Their CO and entire Signals Sec had been killed with the result that communication with the Inf was lost causing no end of confusion as our tanks could not engage targets in the immediate area for fear of shooting up our own people. Contact was never re-established with the Inf. They could not even be reached through their own Bde HQ.

The 26 Armd Bde attack never developed at all so that for the remainder of the day our people, who were ordered to hold their ground unsupported, sat under the nose of intense enemy fire. The remarkable assistance from the 98 Field Regt SP who were in support of our Regt helped to ease the situation tremendously by keeping an almost constant smoke screen on the right flank. On several occasions smoke ran thin and then it was that our attached Engineers in a Honey took all available smoke canisters and set them out around the Airport. Our people stayed until dusk that night, subjected to brutal fire from three sides. When they were finally withdrawn under cover of smoke to a harbour area south of the Airport, 12 tanks had been knocked out and of the remainder scarcely one had escaped being hit. The Regt had destroyed most of the enemies outposts forward of Forme d'AQUINO and "B" Sqn had knocked out one tank and accounted for several ATK guns. "A" Sqn got one SP and several more ATK guns.

During the 20th, the Regt refitted and carried out maintenance in area 765203 in spite of heavy shell fire. RHQ moved from 78 Div TAC HQ to 774195. At 1800 hrs we were instructed to move to area 802183, where we remained all the next day and caught up with our sleep despite the heavy shelling.

By 22 May further plans had been made for cracking the HITLER LINE. The CO was informed at Brigade that we would support 38 Br Inf Bde in their follow up role after 11 Br Inf Bde with under command 14 CAR had forced a crossing at AQUINO and formed a bridge-head. He then visited Brig Scott of 38 Bde and made arrangements for Sqn Offrs to liaise directly with their respective battalions.

"A" Sqn to be in support	6 Inniskillings
"B" Sqn " " " "	2 London Irish Rifles
"C" Sqn " " " "	1 Royal Irish Fusiliers.

On the 22nd and 23rd plans were changing so frequently that there was no keeping track of them. It finally developed that the attack on the 13 Corps front was not to go in at all and the Hitler Line was to be breached by 1st Cdn Corps in area 7318 and 7419. To support this attack, 12 CAR were placed under command 1 Cdn Corps. It was anticipated that, when the Line had been breached North of PONTECORVO, the enemy would withdraw from the AQUINO area. The plan was for 78 Br Div with under command 1 Cdn Armd Bde less 1 Regt, 98 Field Regt, 165 Field Regt and 66 Med Regt to pursue the retreating enemy on axis Highway 6 excl CEPANO. 6 Br Armd Div were to be prepared to pass through 78 Div on orders from 13 Corps, and 8 Ind Div to seize CASTROCIELO (7425) and ROCCASECCA (7228) and then to send a mobile force to ATINA (8335).

By the 24 May the situation was somewhat clarified. The Hitler Line had been breached by 1 Cdn Div and by midday 5 Cdn Armd Div had penetrated as far as the MELFA. However, indications were that AQUINO was still held, fire being still easily provoked from the outlying houses. At 1900 hrs the CO went to see our own Bde Comdr and received further orders for the attack on the 25th. The plan was for 11 CAR to move over to the 1 Cdn Corps area and lie up just the other side of the Forne d'AQUINO in Sq 7419. We were to guide 38 Bde into this same area and then push on NW to the MELFA. "A" Sqn were to tie up with 56 Recce and support them into CASTROCIELO and ROCCASECCA.

By 0545 hrs 25 May we had cleared our harbour area with "B" Sqn leading. At 0710 hrs it was reported that AQUINO had been taken by 11 Br Inf Bde. About 0800 hrs when "B" Sqn had just reported having crossed the Forne d'AQUINO by the bridge at 754192, the plan was changed and we were ordered to turn back and assemble immediately South of AQUINO Airport with the exception of "A" Sqn which was to assist 56 Recce as previously ordered. This group moved off about 1000 hrs, were temporarily held up by a blow at 752229, but a crossing was quickly thrown over the gap and they proceeded on their way. RHQ and "C" Sqn returned to our assembly area but "B" Sqn was unable to get back due to the heavy traffic. An "O" Gp was held at RHQ at 1330 hrs and we were informed that the Regt had again been ordered up to the MELFA. We were now to recce crossings incl that on highway 6 at 706260. We were to proceed via tracks parallel to and south of Highway 6 and harbour in an area just left of No 6 and about 1500 yds short of the MELFA (715249). "B" Sqn was to tie in en route at 748216 and we were to advance on a two Sqn front with the Inf Bde bringing up the rear. Due to the traffic congestion "B" Sqn was unable to tie in and rejoined the Regt in its new area at 1800 hrs. At 1900 hrs 38 Inf Bde notified us that they would not arrive until the following morning.

"A" Sqn rejoined the Regt at 2000 hrs having successfully carried out its task with 56 Recce. They had skirted CASTROCIELO where nothing was encountered and had engaged enemy MG fire in ROCCASECCA. Two enemy MK IV tanks were found abandoned in area 725251. The new harbour area was subjected to severe shelling and on the night of the 25/26 May we were heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe but suffered only two casualties.

At 0800 hrs on the 26th our Recce Offr reported on the MELFA crossings North of Highway 6. Bridge at 710269 open but under enemy observation. Enemy reported along line 706270 - 701261 - 689254 - Sniping from area 704205. 38 Inf Bde now moved into our new area and our LO with that Bde reported the new proposed plan was to move fwd to establish a bridgehead over the LIRI North of CEPANO. At 2000 hrs Brig Scott held an "O" Group at 38 Inf Bde HQ.

The road to ARCE had been reported clear but the information was unreliable. The plan was for one Tp of 56 Recce, "C" Sqn 11 CAR and the RIF to form an advance guard. This was to be followed up by the other two Sqns and the remainder of the Bde.

At 0520 hrs the 27th it was reported that the start time would be delayed for three hrs, and at 0830 hrs "C" Sqn was underway as planned with the RIF, but since no Recce Tp was available 2 Tps of "C" Sqn with the Unit Recce element were leading the vanguard. On reaching area 675267 the 2 fwd Tps of "C" Sqn were ordered to find a route forward across country. This they did with remarkable success, since they were confronted by almost insurmountable obstacles and extremely close country.

"B" Sqn moved with 2 LIR at 1500 hrs to area 675272 at this time "C" Sqn had pushed and blasted their way to 642270. At 1700 hrs RHQ and 38 Bde HQ moved to 672264 followed by "A" Sqn and 6 Innisks at 1800 hrs. "C" Sqn and the RIFs eventually consolidated in area 624273, covering the main rd. "B" Sqn and the LIRs in area 650271 and "A" Sqn with 6 Innisks in area 662272. 38 Inf Bde Comd and the CO went fwd to "C" Sqn to discuss plan for move to CEPRANO and the bridgehead across the LIRI North of CEPRANO. At 2100 hrs we were notified that we would be relieved by a Unit from 9 Armd Bde, the following day.

At 0930 hrs 28th "C" Sqn with RIF moved off to cross the LIRI at 602269 - move North through CEPRANO to establish bridgehead in area 5928. The move was impeded by the rough terrain and minefields and at 1145 hrs was halted because of a counter-attack on the right in which the enemy regained Mt GRANDE and Mt PICCOLO. "A" and "B" Sqn had been relieved complete by 1000 hrs and were ordered to stand by for a possible armd sweep to clear the right flank. At 2000 hrs "A" and "B" Sqns were still standing by while "C" Sqn with the RIFs were moving on to their objective. Mines were exceedingly heavy in their path. The entire route had to be swept. By 2100 hrs "C" Sqn had crossed the LIRI and had met the Inf who had gone on ahead. They consolidated on the high ground in area 592276.

At 1130 hrs 29 May 44 "C" Sqn was relieved by 3 Hussars and ordered to move to RHQ area. Bde ordered the Unit to move to area 7223. At 1530 hrs "A" and "B" Sqn commenced to move and arrived in new area at 1700 hrs. "C" Sqn were unable to move beyond 604264 because of heavy traffic so remained there for the night. At 0500 hrs 30th "C" Sqn began the move back and the Regt was complete in area 7223 by 0830 hrs.

2. EXTRACT FROM A REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF 12 C.A.R. (T.R.R.)
DURING THE PERIOD 21 JUN 44 - 1 JUL 44, COMPILED BY THE HISTORICAL
OFFICER, 5 CDN ARMD DIV.

REF MAPS - ITALY 1:100,000 SHEETS NOS. 121, 122, 130, 137,
144, 150, 151, 160.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE TRASIMENO

On 21 June we received word that our Bde was to come under command 4 Br Inf Div who were to go into the Line west of LAKE TRASIMENO between the South Africans (left) and 78 Br Div (right). At 1000 hrs the 23rd the Regt moved off to a conc area about a mile wouth of STRADA (3786 Sheet 122) where we harboured that night.

We were to support 28 Br Inf Bde in an attack on a one battalion front. This brigade has recently come from three years garrison duty in GIBRALTAR. The initial thrust was to be made by "B" Sqn and 2 Kings. At dawn on the 24th of June the Div Arty of 4 and 78 Divs and No 1 AGRA opened up to support an attack by 78 Div on our right. At 0945 hrs a considerable amount of it was switched to our front, and "B" Sqn and 2 Kings pushed off. Their objective was the high ground 378887. Our tanks quickly got ahead of the inf. The latter were proceeding very slowly and were going to ground every time they came under enemy fire. We were opposed by elements of 1 Para Div. As our tanks approached their objective, some of them hid and let us pass through them. They then brought fire to bear on the inf who went to ground and stayed there. "B" Sqn HQ and two tps got on to the forward slope just beyond VAIANO and two tps half way up the next slope nearly on the objective. The inf never did get up to them and they were "out on a limb" until 2000 hrs when they withdrew to 384874.

"B" Sqn's losses for the engagement were eight casualties, and five PW lost and one tank brewed up. The last mentioned had had track trouble and had been unable to withdraw with the two forward tps. The crew were left behind to protect the tank and an inf patrol was ordered out to reinforce them. When the latter arrived the crew had disappeared and the tank was burning. Presumably an enemy patrol got there first. "B" Sqn had accounted for about 50 enemy inf killed.

At 0945 hrs on the 25th "C" Sqn with 2/4 Hants passed through "B" Sqn, proceeded to VAIANO and swung left about 1500 yds to 356874. They met only light opposition up to this point. They were beginning to consolidate when the paratroops counter-attacked with mortars, small arms and "Offenrohrs" (the German equivalent to our Piat). The counter-attack was repelled with heavy loss to the enemy and the posn was consolidated before evening.

The ground here was entirely unsuitable for tanks. The small steep hillsides were terraced and the visibility was terribly hampered by the orchard-vineyards. During this days advance, "C" Sqn lost seven tanks of which only one was lost to enemy fire. Two of the remainder went up on mines and four threw tracks on the steep slopes and terraces.

At 0200 hrs on the 26th another counter-attack came in and we lost one tank brewed up by an Offenrohr. The inf lost 12 PW and had 8 or 10 casualties.

In the meantime, on the morning of the 25th, "B" Sqn and 2 Kings had moved up and consolidated VAIANO and the high ground some 1200 yds forward of it. They gained the latter, which had been their previous days objective, without opposition and picked up five or six PW who were sleeping in the houses - apparently desirous of being captured. "B" Sqn helped consolidate this posn and remained there until the morning of the 27th.

By 1100 hrs the 26th LOPI (3590) was in our hands and we were pushing on the GIOIELLA (3491). As they approached the town they were met by heavy fire from SPANDAUS and OFFENROHRS. We lost one tank. That evening the town was secured.

During the night 26/27 June, 28 Bde was relieved by 10 Bde, and we passed under command the latter. At 1100 hrs on the 27th "B" Sqn, now with the DOLI, moved off and by nightfall had reached high ground 356918. Here the inf were pinned by MG fire from the cemetery 359923. Two tps went forward and brought fire to bear on the cemetery from a hollow a few hundred yards short of it. After this the enemy fire was much less heavy. We lost two tanks bogged in a little stream at 356920. That night "C" Sqn moved up to the area of the cemetery.

The objective for the 28th was the main road running from POZZUOLO to CASTIGLIONE. "C" Sqn and the Bed/Herts Regt were to attack at 0530 hrs. Our tanks moved off and had exposed themselves before they were informed by an L O from 10 Br Bde that "zero" had been set back an hour. We pulled back and pushed off again with the inf at 0630. In the meantime, of course, the enemy had had ample warning that an attack was coming in. We had to fight our way to the Start Line and from there we managed to smash our way forward to the track running east and west about 1000 yards short of the objective. About 1200 hrs "B" Sqn moved up on the right of "C" Sqn. At this time enemy inf were observed moving up a valley from the NW. "B" Sqn tanks took them on with HE and they threw up a white flag. Our inf went up and brought back 17 P. Suddenly when they had been sitting on the ridge for twenty minutes, the Battle Capt's and 2 s/c's tanks were SP'd and brewed up, leaving a Troop Leader in command of the sqn. The remainder of "B" Sqn tanks took up hull down posns and remained there, their guns taking on targets on the right flank.

"C" Sqn had by this time battered their way on to the intermediate objective hill feature and track 350935 - 353934, but losses were very heavy. German ATk guns and Panthers let our tanks pass part way through, then took them on from all sides. Only three tanks arrived on the objective, one of which was only half fit. In spite of this handicap, they repelled two German counter-attacks with armour, and held the ground. In the evening "A" Sqn and 1/6 Surreys moved up and captured the town of CASTIGLIONE. During the whole days fighting we had been opposed by Panthers and SPs and a very determined inf. Our losses were 6 tanks, 5 of which were "brew ups". Our personnel casualties were 4 offrs and 10 ORs. We accounted for many enemy inf killed and wounded and one SP ATk gun destroyed.

At first light on the 29th we pushed on to the main lateral without opposition, then swung left and entered POZZUOLO (3394) which was not held. The bag for the day was several small pockets of enemy wiped out or captured. Our next objective was PETERIGIANO (3398, Sheet 121). We moved off again at 1100 hrs 30 June and had proceeded about 1000 yds when we were held up by heavy ATk fire from the cemetery at 330972. By 1630 hrs the enemy had been driven from the cemetery and the ridge beyond, and the entire crew of an ATk gun had been captured. That evening PETERIGIANO was in our hands and completely cleared of the enemy.

At 0730 hrs the following morning 1 Jul we were relieved by 11 CAR who, with 28 Bde, were relieving ourselves and 10 Bde. We pulled back to conc area at MARDELLI (3594 Sheet 122) where the Regt was complete by the night of 1 Jul. Our losses for this phase of the campaign were 94 personnel casualties and 26 tanks. By the end of six days we were up to strength in both personnel and equipment. During this operation the Regt had seen its heaviest fighting since landing in Sicily.

3. LESSONS LEARNED IN THE GUSTAV AND HITLER OPERATIONS

A Selection of Remarks by Sqn Comds of the 12 C.A.R. (T.R.R.)

The Inf-cum-Tank co-operation was, on the whole, very good. Inf must precede tanks in close country and must keep up with the tanks at all times.

Inf-tank phone extension worked very well.

The Air was very crowded during engagements. A Sqn Battle Frequency is much to be desired.

The 38 Set was never used successfully and was generally not required in the 18 Set in the Sqn Leaders tank was working.

The system of carrying inf into battle on tanks worked very well if shelling not too heavy.

Even in very close country, tanks can be useful for blasting houses or machine gunning enemy posns, or likely posns.

Inf should be more careful in examining roads and tracks for mines and reporting same back to tanks.

The camouflaging of tanks with branches wired on was most successful and provides good protection against A Tk Grenades. Branches must be renewed at least once daily to ensure that foliage is fresh.

Defence Overprints were excellent, being nearly always accurate.

The bringing up of supplies by Honey Tanks worked very well, but sqns must always send a guide to meet them to avoid wastage of time.

Constant changing of position, particularly of Sqn HQs, cuts down tremendously on casualties from HE observed fire.

Night firing on the whole impractical.

FOOs forward with sqns absolutely invaluable for bringing down quick fire.

Most of our tanks water supply went to the inf who had none of their own.

Most of our casualties are suffered when personnel are outside their tanks. Some of this unnecessary.

Leager Drill by sqns should be practised, as over-night stays with inf are common in this type of country.

When supply vehicles meet tanks there are often too many vehicles concentrated in one spot. They should service one Sub-Unit at a time, well spread out.

Enemy AFV recognition by most inf is poor as is target identification, Inf should be instructed in the correct use of the Very Pistol and in the accurate indication of targets by pointing with the arm. Many of them also do not know how to use the telephone at the rear of the tank and attempt to attract the Crew Comd's attention by shouting.

/LRG

-3-

Crew Comds cannot normally accept the opinion of inf when crossing doubtful ground and have to make their own recess on foot.

Tank Comds must insist on inf providing guides up to FUPs.

Half-down positions must be changed every few minutes, especially in this close country.

Not enough use is made of MG fire by Sqn reserve tanks to cover their own forward armour. This should be done as often as the situation permits.

Our own Fd Arty could easily lift practically on top of advancing armour. This could develop a "steam roller" effect which would be invaluable in overcoming a tough pocket of resistance. Inf must be quick to exploit the initial success thus gained.

Night move should be led by a pilot tank with tanks well closed up. This reduces the risk from mines.

There still seems to be too much traffic on the air which is not essential to the course of the battle.

Armour, without inf support, meeting A Tk opposition should (1) seek a flank and engage, (2) call down an Arty Shoot.

Inf should be kept away from roads being used by tanks, the dust from which invariably causes shelling and mortaring.

Ambulances should be kept under Sqn Leaders control and inf RAP. Frequently our casualties were evacuated by Inf Stretcher Bearers, and by remaining at Inf RAP our ambulances can perform useful work by moving on wireless call from either inf or tanks.

Information of flanking troops is still not satisfactory. Opportunities of shooting up the enemy are often missed as we do not know where our own people are.

There is often considerable delay in bringing up the Technical Group due to traffic congestion. It is suggested that they move with A-1 Ech or between A-1 Ech and Sqn, possibly using a scout car for wireless communication and the rapid bringing up of supplies.

Ph recess references were very useful.

Crew Comds require training in observation and maintenance of direction.

4. EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY OF H.Q. R.C.E., 5 CDN ARMD DIV, 2 JUN 44.
NOTES ON ENGR OPS - 20 MAY - 31 MAY 44.

PHASE I - Planning.

This phase includes the period up to 23 May when Tac HQ moved fwd across the AQUINO. The early stages of slipping units fwd through the massive traffic behind the GARI was common to all arms and led to some confusion and stretching of comms. Wireless silence was in effect during the period and did not help matters any.

Many mines were reported across the GARI and so the first move we made was to establish a mine report centre consisting of one tp across the river where units could go for help. Innumerable requests to check unit harbour areas were referred to the centre. The surprising result was that very few people bothered to take advantage of the offer. The same stunt was tried again at the crossing of the LIRI where mines were known to be abundant. The results were exactly the same and show that the first thought that people have when mines are reported is "Get the Sappers". It likewise shows that most units are quite capable of looking after themselves which they did rather than go to the trouble of sending for help at the Mine Report Centre.

Very early on, the Engrs started work on rd maint. The Div was operating along HEART, one of the Corps up routes. Traffic was paralytic, with a result, we decided to open up a SPEEDWAY parallel to the main route to clear local traffic. This move was popular with everyone but Corps, who claimed that it brought back traffic at the wrong point. However this practice of opening a SPEEDWAY for back traffic was continued throughout and I believe was largely responsible for the fact that we did get the Div fwd - a bit of a schemozzle at times - but they did get fwd.

As the eventful day of our break through the HITLER Line approached, changes in plan became so frequent that in order to get anything done and keep men on the job, it was necessary for us to run the risk of being caught off balance with our tps and eqpt out on the job. As things worked out however, we were lucky and made the right guesses. Routes were fairly tidy as the Div moved across the AQUINO.

Throughout the entire operation every effort was made to stick to the original Engr plan. With a few minor exceptions this was accomplished. It is our belief that our Engr plan will work as long as it is carried through to a conclusion. Failure is caused chiefly by frequent changes in plan.

PHASE II - Break through the HITLER Line

Here the Engr appreciation was found somewhat lacking. We had expected 1 Div to make a clear route through but on the off chance that things would not be tidy, a tp was positioned well fwd, clear up along our axis. As events worked out one tp was not enough and we had a very nasty obstacle in the RIO S MARTINO to cope with before the Div could pass through. A whole Sqn was therefore committed before the Div itself even got under way. The armoured battle ensued up to the MELFA, was very open and while the leading Sqn did succeed in opening routes fwd and getting crossings on the MELFA, it is felt that we were too involved with the fight with the tks. The carriers we had were recce, and while better than nothing were quite inadequate.

On advice from 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, Sprs had been placed in Honey Tks moving with the recce elements. This did very little good and suffered very hy cas and the practice is now considered to be an exception rather than the rule. The MELFA crossing was not too difficult and went off quite well from an Engr point of view.

PHASE III - MELFA to the LIRI.

In this phase our troubles really started. The plan was that the leading Sqn should stay leading and move over with the Inf Bde. This change over was successfully completed. During the night the Fd Pk Sqn suffered fairly hy cas in personnel and eqpt in a bombing raid and br had to be hurried fwd from Corps area. However things were fairly tidy in the morning when the Inf Bde Gp passed over the MELFA. Two routes were opened up but there was some doubt as to which one would be developed as our main axis. We are still not clear on that point. During the night plans were made for an attack on the LIRI at CEPRANO. Unfortunately, the Engrs were not told of this plan, with the result recce parties did not move fwd with the Inf. However we finally managed to find a good spot and laid on the op which involved a 120 ft DD Bailey. Due to the fact that the br-head did not move over quickly enough, snipers and MG fire held up the adv parties. Further mortar fire and traffic congestions prevented the job from getting underway until almost midnight. Things progressed very well during the night, and a time of completion was given as 0900 hrs. About 0830 hrs word was received that the launching nose had buckled and the br would be open at 1130 hrs. The next estimate was 1500 hrs - 1630 hrs and then 1800 hrs. Actually it did open at 1730 hrs. These changes in time made it impossible for the GOC to make a firm change in plan as the only alternative involved a long re-routing problem. The failure of the br on investigation proved to be due to the fact that rakers were not put on the launching nose and sufficient links were not used to clear the far bank. This episode proved to be a very serious blow to the Army plan and individual Sprs all felt that the cause had been let down very badly.

PHASE IV - the LIRI to CECCANO.

By the time that the LIRI was completed, both Sqns were completely 'done out'. However, in interest of carrying out the original plan the Sqn who had just done 36 hrs work on the br was given three or four hrs rest and pushed across with the Armd Bde. This proved to be a very wise move and things went very much according to our plan.

Corps meantime had relented and after several verbal and written requests, had put a Corps Fd Coy under comd. This saved the day for us as we were able to use them to take over the route up to CECCANO, through which 1 Div eventually passed.

LESSONS FROM THE OPS.

1. A third Sqn is absolutely essential. The policy of Corps to follow up closely behind just does not work.
2. TC is required at all diversions and it is recommended that a sec of Pro be placed under comd of the CRE to:
 - (a) Police diversions.
 - (b) Assist in priority of eqpt, bull-dozer, br etc.
 - (c) Preliminary marking of routes.

They shouldn't be involved in movement centres as in traffic control and should be relieved as soon as possible by the main Pro effort.

3. All arms must accept their all arms Engr responsibility - i.e. rafting, mine clearance, repair of craters and maint of rds. This could have been done without over taxing anyone's resources throughout the whole show. There were far too many requests for Sprs and bull-dozers to do jobs that could easily have been done by hand with a little initiative. It is suggested that the Pn Pls trained in each unit be used as such and should become an identity in the use rather than just an odd man from here and there. The jobs they can do are innumerable even to TC on stretches of rd passing unit area.

4. Co-operation while in sup of the Armd Bde was very good indeed. Several instances occurred when working in sup of the Inf Bde which might have led to serious delays in getting ahead. Direct orders were issued to the Sprs to do jobs which were nice for the Inf Bde but which were to the hindrance of the Div plan of opening main routes fwd.

5. A mob dump was est for the op consisting of some fifteen RCASC lorries, one Pl of BB and our Div set of the Br. This worked extremely well and stores were always well fwd and on the job in time. The original plan was that Corps would deliver stores to our mob dump as this involves changing loads from Corps to Div vehs, we adopted the practice of going back to Corps to pick up loads. Fortunately, Sigs were able to provide us with three additional wireless sets, one for the OC of the unit, one for the stores tp and one for the main body of the unit. Without these we would not have been able to function. The question of ops to man these sets is still a problem.

6. Many times throughout the op, bull-dozers, Engr stores and personnel were held up in the traffic. At times it almost looked as if we had come to a dead stand still. It is felt that within the limits of reason, all Engr vehs and eqpt in fwd areas should have automatic priority.

7. Throughout the ops no Engr infm was received through other than our own channels. Air OPs did report the odd br blown. Our resources are very limited and it is everyone's responsibility to get this infm back.

8. Since arrival in Italy our CREs HQ has been operating as an independent frn HQ similar to that of an Inf Div. It just cannot operate any other way and it is felt it should be on the same est as an Inf Div.

9. The six carriers per Sqn now held in lieu of the White Scout Cars, while useful at times did not fill the bill. It is considered the White Half-tracks are even a better answer than Honey Tks. Failing in this, White Scout Cars should replace the carriers, leaving possibly one carrier per sqn.

5. EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY OF THE HAST & P.E.R.(a) THE BATTLE OF THE WOODS - 17 MAY 44.Observation.

At this period and also during the approach march it was found impossible to bring any wheeled vehicles fwd due to bad roads and traffic congestion. Two dets of 3" mortars and amn were taken. The reserve Coy was for the greater period of this time, some 72 hours, burdened with Res amn, wireless sets and batteries.

Good OPs presented a problem in this close country. FOO & Mortar Reps had to be right up with the fwd Coys - in some cases with the fwd Pl. his wireless set dug in a bank or shell hole. The 38 set worked very well with 3" Mortars.

In the main it was an infantryman's battle. Best results were obtained by Coys driving fwd on a narrow front to the dominating ground, consolidating, fighting and mopping up. Patrols up to a pl in strength operated from this firm base. There is always a hesitancy on the part of our infantryman when fired on, particularly by a MG 34 or 42 to lie doggo and do nothing about it and for some time Jerry happens to have the initiative. Such fire must be returned with interest - and promptly. It shuts him off, then men are more easily encouraged to "Close with him". Additional trg and more aggressiveness on the part of Junior Leaders will overcome this.

36 and 77 grenades were found very useful in this type of fighting. Picks and shovels proved invaluable. Men needed no prompting or encouragement to dig. 'Thinning out' averted many casualties.

(D.C. Cameron) Lt.-Col.
Commanding

The Hastings and Prince Edward
Regt.
C.M.F.

(b) ASSAULT ON THE ADOLF HITLER LINE -
23 MAY 44.Observations.

When operations of this type are anticipated, in future, the Pioneer Pl will carry a quantity of prepared bangalore explosive. This is easily concealed in the tall grass and can be blown just prior to the attack going in.

While he had well sited pillboxes, strangely, only one instance was found of him using them. Instead he preferred to fight from well concealed and camouflaged slit trenches. Search and mop as you go. In a number of cases men were shot in the back from a slit they had overlooked.

A stalemate occurred once when inf could not get fwd owing to heavy well directed SA fire. Tanks were slow to take the initiative owing to the likelihood of concealed "Faustpatronen" in the tall grass. As it turned out the inf then waded fwd firing from the hip and took some casualties. The tanks then followed. There must be a clearer understanding in such cases. Tanks must be prepared to press on and accept the risks involved in such close country. Even

It was found the best method of Arty Sp was well registered, short sharp and intense concentration preceded by a 'softening up' period. During the attack these concentrations came down every two or three minutes on his SP localities. As a result, in a great number of cases, almost whole pls were found still taking shelter in deep dugouts. Time was spent previously, though, in searching out and registering these posns in. Mortars both 4.2 & 3" very effectively engaged hostile mortar areas and we suffered few casualties from mortar fire.

(D.C. Cameron) Lt.-Col.

Commanding,

The Hastings and Prince Edward Regt.
C.M.F.

6. EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY OF 1 CDN DIV SIGS - 2 JUN 44.

Copy of a letter from CSO Eight Army.

Subject: Sabotage and Booby-Trapping of Lines.

The following examples of sabotage and booby-trapping of lines in forward areas have been received from 2 Polish Corps. The methods employed should be brought to the attention of Signal Units concerned.

On 30 Apr 44 on the line between Main H.Q. 3 Carpathian Div and S. MICHELE at G917202, a grenade was found with the safety pin straightened out. One end of a disconnected wire was attached to the pin. Pulling on the wire would have extracted the pin and caused the grenade to explode.

On 4 May 44 at G986165 on the line between Main H.Q. 2 Polish Corps and H.Q. 3 Carpathian Div an electrically operated booby trap was found. The line was cut in two places 50 metres apart. A battery and an electrically detonated grenade were connected to the line in such a way that one of the breaks served as a switch which would detonate the booby trap as soon as the broken ends were connected together.

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On 5 May at G996165 a booby trap connected to a telephone line exploded without causing any injury. A grenade had been placed in a hole in the trunk of a tree. The disconnected end of a field cable had been attached to the pin of the grenade so that when the cable was pulled by the lineman the pin was withdrawn and the grenade exploded.

7. EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY OF H.Q. R.C.A. - 1 CDN INF DIV - MAY 44

The question of providing close support at all times in a moving battle was one which provoked a great deal of thought during the month.

When a brigade was moving forward, and it became necessary to move its affiliated regiment also, it was obviously impracticable to substitute reps and FOOs from another field regiment for a period never more than twelve hours.

The method employed was to have another regiment put a set on the moving regiment's net and take care of calls for fire, during the period of the move. It has the advantage of necessitating NO changes in FOOs and reps and NO re-netting of several sets on a new frequency.

At first there was naturally some confusion arising from the very newness of the idea, but difficulties were soon ironed out and it was working smoothly after a few days. Points to be remembered were:

- (i) As much notice as possible must of necessity be given to all concerned before the change in the supporting regiment is made.
- (ii) It is quite impracticable to pass records of troop, battery or even regimental targets to the new supporting regiment; consequently reps and FOOs must be warned that during the period their own regiment is on the move, targets must be given as map reference targets. DF tasks would be no problem as all regiments are prepared to engage them.

During the month the work of 'A' Flt 654 Sqn RAF (Air OP) was outstanding in both engagement of targets and supplying information.

A continuous patrol was held from dawn to dusk each day of the battle with the Flt comd and each pilot on the CRA's net. It meant a very crowded net; an advantage as far as distribution of information was concerned, but a disadvantage when fire orders were being passed.

The latter disadvantage was very real and as a result it was decided that when firing was the primary purpose of the Air OP, the pilots should each be netted to a regiment with only the Flt Comd on the CRA's net. When information sorties were the primary function of the moment, then the pilots could be netted on CRA's net to the advantage of all stations.

8. EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARIES OF UNITS VISITED BY THE CDN ARMY SHOW.

(a) 2 LT FD AMB R.C.A.M.C. - 2 JUN 44.

The Cdn Army Show arrived and put on a most excellent show which was enthusiastically received. The four Cdn girls in the show made a great impression on the men. The girls - Cpl Raymonde Miranda of Montreal, Alfreda Philips of Winnipeg, Mary Monahan of Regina and Ethel Hendry of Windsor were typical Canadian girls - excellent types who made us all rather nostalgic.

(b) H.Q. 5 CDN ARMD BDE - 6 JUN 44.

No.1 Detachment of the Canadian Army Show put on two performances for the bde in a field close by the 8NBH lines. There were four CWAC members and 29 men including a 12 piece swing orchestra in the cast. They put on a very lively and pleasing show. After the evening performance the cast put on an impromptu show for about half an hour until it was time for the King's speech which they then broadcast over their P.A. system

(c) 5 CDN ARMD DIV TPS COY R.C.A.S.C. - 8 JUN 44.

A Canadian mixed concert party held today for Div Tps units at 1430 and 1830 hrs. At each showing we were allowed up to 50% of personnel to attend. It was greatly enjoyed by all. Such concert parties are much more appreciated than the movies we get, as the only movies are old ones that most have seen before (in some cases in civilian life), are usually very poor with frequent interruptions due to films or machine.