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CANCELLED
~~RESTRICTED~~

R E P O R T NO. 66
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)
ARMY HEADQUARTERS

DECLASSIFIED
AUTHORITY: DHD 3-12
BY: *OK* FOR DHIST NDHO
DATE: **NOV 12 1986**

12 Jan 54

Training of First Cdn Army (Less 3 Cdn Inf Div
and 2 Cdn Armd Bde), December 1943 - May 1944

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1. This is an account of the final training of First Cdn Army for its initial follow-up role in North-West Europe. It covers the period December 1943 - May 1944.
2. In October 1943, 5 Cdn Armd Div had followed 1 Cdn Inf Div to the Mediterranean, and within two months 3 Cdn Inf Div* was placed under 1 (Brit) Corps for operational direction and training in connection with the forthcoming assault on Normandy. This left only two overseas divisions fully under Canadian command -- 2 Cdn Inf Div and 4 Cdn Armd Div, both of 2 Cdn Corps.
3. Separate sections of this Report deal with the training of 4 Cdn Armd Div, certain special training of R.C.E. units of First Cdn Army, and a series of amphibious exercises by 2 Cdn Inf Div. Attached as Appendix "A" is a table showing major exercises carried out by formations of First Cdn Army during the period under review. (After May 1944 activities consisted mainly of preparations -- other than training -- for future operations and of routine, administrative matters (C.M.H.Q. file 4/Progress/11/2: G.O.C.-in-C, First Cdn Army to C. of S., C.M.H.Q. (S.D. & T.), 23 May 44).) References to training in the War Diaries of one armoured regiment of 4 Cdn Armd Div (21 Cdn Armd Regt (G.G.F.G.)) and one infantry battalion of 2 Cdn Inf Div (S. Sask R.) follow as Appendices "B" and "C".

TRAINING OF 4 CDN ARMD DIV, DECEMBER 1943 - MAY 1944

4. First Cdn Army Training Directive No. 18,** 15 Dec 43, significantly began:

... it must be realized by all unit comds that this will be their last opportunity to make the men of their units fighting fit, and fit to fight....

*The training of this and 2 Cdn Armd Bde is covered in A.H.Q. Historical Report No. 54.

**See W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn. Army, December: 1943: Appx No. 16.

Individual training was to receive top priority. Collective training was to proceed up to platoon level in January 1944 and to company and battalion levels in February and March, except in the case of 4 Cdn Armd Div, which would "continue with bde and div trg". Both before and after the turn of the year, however, in 4 Cdn Armd Div -- as well as in First Cdn Army as a whole -- the emphasis was on individual training, notably range work, specialist training under unit arrangements, and anti-gas training. Preparations for ceremonial parades, occasioned by a series of visits and inspections, accounted for additional training hours. Sports and recreation also received considerable attention. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div, December 1943 - February 1944: Appendices, "Highlights of Training". See also Appx "B" to this Report, W.D., 21 Cdn Armd Regt, December 1943 - May 1944 (Extracts).)

5. In the latter part of January and early in February, infantry units of 4 Cdn Armd Div practised street fighting in Eastbourne. This was followed immediately by "STAMMER", a three-day field firing exercise in which 10 Cdn Inf Bde and the divisional artillery took part. In mid-February the units of 10 Cdn Inf Bde proceeded to Inveraray, Scotland, for a week's training in following up an amphibious assault.* ("4 Cdn Armd Div Highlights of Training" for weeks ending 30 Jan - 20 Feb 44. W.Ds., Units of 10 Cdn Inf Bde, 25 Jan - 7 Feb and 14-22 Feb 44) Towards the end of April, squadrons of 4 Cdn Armd Div's three armoured regiments were attached to 2 Cdn Inf Div for infantry cum tank training. During both April and May the remaining armour and 4 Cdn Armd Div's own infantry underwent considerable joint training, and the artillery and infantry practised setting up anti-tank screens. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, April and May 1944: Appendices, "Weekly Progress Reports to Canada" for weeks ending 30 Apr - 21 May)

ENGINEER TRAINING FOR OPERATION "AXEHEAD"

6. At the beginning of March 1944, H.Q. 21 A. Gp had issued to First Cdn Army a directive stating:

...The role of First Canadian Army will be to land [in Normandy] after Second British Army...

After taking over the left-hand sector of the bridgehead it is probable that First Canadian Army will be required to advance Eastwards and capture the ports of WHITSTABLE and CLARENCE...

The operation for seizing these ports will be called 'AXEHEAD'...

The crossing of the River DILTON, River MALTON, River BEXLEY and of the River DURRUS below CLARENCE are highly specialized Engineer operations for which it may be assumed that specially trained Engineers from

*Certain units of 2 Cdn Inf Div had undergone similar training there in December and January.

G.H.Q. Troops will be available; Engineer units under your command, however, should undergo special training as early as possible....

((Hist) 212C1.013 (D4), 21 A. Gp Directives to First Cdn Army, March 1944: "NEPTUNE" Directive, 1 Mar, paras 2, 3, 4 (b) and 7)

The ports of "WHITSTABLE" and "CLARENCE" were Le Havre and Rouen, respectively. The River "DURRUS" was the Seine; "DILTON", "MALTON" and "BEXLEY" were the Dives, the Tonques and the Risle. ((Hist) 215C1.98 (D 328), Security - Code Words and Pass Words: "'NEPTUNE' - Place-Name Code-Words" (H.Q. 21 A. Gp, 17 Feb 44))

7. Engineer planning in connection with Operation "AXEHEAD" apparently began on the same day as the 21 A. Gp directive was issued. Units of Army Troops R.C.E. -- then being reorganized into 1 and 2 Cdn A. Tps Engrs -- received early warning of a move to the area of Goole, Yorks, for special training (W.D., C.E. First Cdn Army, 1, 2 and 4 Mar 44). The immediate object of such training was to prepare for an exercise in assaulting across a tidal estuary, to begin late in April, with 1 Cdn A. Tps Engineers, 2 Cdn Inf Div and certain other troops taking part (*ibid*: Appx No. 6, "First Cdn Army Engineer Training Directive No. 6", 17 Mar 44. W.D., G.S. H.Q. First Cdn Army, April 1944: Appx No. 10, Directive to 2 Cdn Corps, 11 Apr 44, "Exercise - Assault crossing of a tidal estuary"). This exercise was to be known as "KATE" (Krossing A Tidal Estuary).

8. Not represented on Exercise "KATE" -- except, in certain cases, by small elements -- were the R.C.E. of 2 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Cdn Armd Div and Corps Troops. These units, beginning with 2 Inf Div R.C.E. in mid-April, practised tidal bridging on the River Medway, in Kent, though tidal conditions there differed from those anticipated in Operation "AXEHEAD" (W.D., C.E. 2 Cdn Corps, April, May 1944: Appx No. 1, Weekly Progress Reports, 14 Apr - 20 May 44. W.D., C.E. First Cdn Army, 30 May 44).

9. On 28/29 Mar, C.Es. First Cdn Army and 2 Cdn Corps (Brigadiers A.T. MacLean and G. Walsh, respectively), C.R.E. 1 Cdn A. Tps Engrs (Lt-Col N.I. Fraser) and certain other R.C.E. officers watched 46 (H) Inf Bde and R.E. units on "OYSTER III", an exercise similar to the forthcoming "KATE". This took place on the River Ouse, in Yorkshire, whereas the site subsequently chosen for Exercise "KATE" was on the Trent, in the area of Scunthorpe, Lincs. (W.Ds., C.E. First Cdn Army and C.E. 2 Cdn Corps, 28 Mar 44. (Hist) 212C1 (D64), Exercise "OYSTER III": Notes on Exercise (writer not identified). W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn A. Tps Engrs, 28 Mar, 26 Apr 44)

10. By the end of March 1 A. Tps Engrs, having settled down in the Goole area, were taking preliminary instruction in watermanship. During the first three weeks of April, under Lt-Col Fraser's direction, field companies of both 1 and 2 Cdn A. Tps Engrs practised assault rafting

and bridging and familiarized themselves with "storm boats". (W.D., 1 Cdn A. Tps Engrs, March 1944: Appx VIII, "Weekly Progress Reports". Ibid, April: Appx VII) The basic item of special equipment to be used on "KATE", the storm boat was a power-driven plywood vessel 20 feet long, with capacity for 12 armed passengers or 3000 pounds of freight ((Hist) 232C2 (D79), Exercise "KATE": "Joint Report by Comd 2 Cdn Inf Div and CE 2 Cdn Corps", 24 May 44: Appx "R", "The Ferry Service", para 2).

11. After Exercise "KATE" -- a brief account of which is given below -- 1 and 2 Cdn A. Tps Engrs followed 2 Cdn Corps R.C.E. in tidal bridging on the Medway (C.E. 2 Cdn Corps "Weekly Progress Report", 20 May 44. W.Ds., H.Q. 1 and 2 Cdn A. Tps Engrs, 22 and 19 May 44).

2 CDN INF DIV EXERCISE "KATE", 28 APR - 19 MAY 44

12. The 21 A. Gp directive concerning Operation "AXEHEAD" (see para 6, above) was reflected in First Cdn Army Training Directive No. 20*, 15 Apr 44, which stated:

1 I [Brigadier C.C. Mann, C. of S.] am directed to instruct that the following subjects should be studied through the chain of comd as far as the time remaining at disposal permits. No interference with the completion of present exercises is contemplated by this instr.

2 SUBJECTS:-

A A "break-out" battle followed by a fighting adv to a topographical objective some 40 miles distant.

Emphasis should be given to the necessity of seizing and maintaining the initiative.

B Assault crossings of rivers, small and large, and the engr problems involved.

C The emp of airborne fmns and amphibious (AFVs and other types).

D The rapid org of forces, and of a locality to withstand a determined enemy counter-offensive launched in str, and the resumption of our own offensive.

At about the same time, it may be recalled, H.Q. First Cdn Army issued to 2 Cdn Corps the directive for Exercise "KATE".

13. On 16 Apr H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div prescribed preliminary training in the handling of storm boats by companies of 4 and 5 Cdn Inf Bdes; this was to take place

*See W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, April 1944: Appx No. 13. Training Directive No. 19 is attached as Appx "K" to the March Diary.

on the Medway, where (as we have seen) 2 Cdn Inf Div R.C.E. were already practising tidal bridging (W.D., G.S., 2 Cdn Inf Div, April 1944: Appx No. 8, Training Instruction No. 22, "Storm Boat Trg"). Accordingly, between 17 and 22 Apr, infantry companies of the two brigades carried out a programme of "adapting the storm boat to the use of a rifle coy in the assault crossing of a tidal estuary" ((Hist) 145.2R15033 (D1), R.H.C. Report on Storm Boat Training by Maj F.P. Griffin, para 1. W.D., R.H.C., 19, 22 Apr 44).

14. Exercise "KATE", which began on the River Trent on 28 Apr, was not a single, divisional exercise, but rather a series of brigade and battalion exercises. Troops taking part included, besides those R.C.E. units already mentioned, R. Regt C., R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, R.H.C. and Calg Highrs, and the following supporting arms and services:

Elements of 2 A Tk Regt R.C.A.
Elements of Tor Scot R. (M.G.)
5 Inf Bde Coy R.C.A.S.C.
45 Gen Tpt Coy R.C.A.S.C. (Army Troops)
Three platoons of 85 Br Coy R.C.A.S.C.
(Army Troops)

("Joint Report by Comd 2 Cdn Inf Div and CE 2 Cdn Corps": Appx "A", "List of Tps Taking Part". W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 May). Air Support, in the form of smoke, was provided by Typhoons of 266 Sqn R.A.F. ("Joint Report" para 14 and Appx "O", "Smoke").

15. Problems to receive special attention by formation headquarters included tactical and technical organization, the allotment of boats, traffic control, and intercommunication. Among the special problems of the infantry were manhandling weapons and equipment, boarding 6-pounder guns on storm boats, and "wallowing in mud with eqpt" ((Hist) 212C1 (D61), Exercise "KATE": 2 Cdn Inf Div Preliminary Instructions, 17 Apr 44: Appx "C", "Problems for Consideration and Trg"). With a view to working out a common drill for all such endeavours, various river crossing techniques were to be tried (*ibid*: Notes on G.O.C. 2 Cdn Inf Div Conferences, 25 and 26 Apr 44).

16. Exercise "KATE I" began at mid-morning on 28 Apr, with Calg Highrs (of 5 Cdn Inf Bde) assaulting from the east bank of the Trent, opposite the village of Amcotts, and R.H.C. following up. The exercise ended early next afternoon. On 1 May R.H.C. carried out "KATE II" in the same area. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 28 Apr, 1 May 44) "KATE III" took place on the morning of 3 May, Essex Scot crossing from the area of Burton-upon-Strather (W.D., Essex Scot, May 1944: Appx No. 5, "Comd Diary Exercise KATE", Serial No. 35). Exercise "KATE IV" began the following morning, with R. Regt C. crossing at 0420 hours and Essex Scot two hours later, and ended at noon on 5 May (*ibid*, Serial No. 39. W.D., R. Regt C., 4 May 44).

17. Two days after "KATE IV" H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div returned to its regular location near Dover. By 12 May the G.O.C. (Maj-Gen C. Foulkes) and Brigadier Walsh had completed an interim report on the training. (W.D., G.S.,

H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Div, 7, 12 May 44) In the meantime, on 6 May, R.H.L.I. and R. de Mais had come to the Scunthorpe area to join their respective brigades (4 and 5 Cdn Inf Bdes). The newly arrived units and the majority of those which had taken part in the various exercises on the Trent then became "KATE Force", under Comd 4 Cdn Inf Bde (Brigadier Sherwood Lett). (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 May and Appx I, "KATE" File: sub-Appx, "KATE Force Order of Battle and Location State" (date 7 May inserted in pencil). W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 May 44)

18. Between 7 and 19 May further river crossing exercises were carried out at battalion level, including "KATE V" by R.H.L.I. On 20 and 21 May 4 and 5 Cdn Inf Bdes rejoined 2 Inf Div in the Dover-Folkstone area. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 and 5 Cdn Inf Bdes, 7-21 May, and R.H.L.I., 16 May 44)

19. Maj-Gen Foulkes and Brigadier Walsh recommended, in their "Joint Report", that tidal river crossing operations be mounted on a front of two brigades, each with two battalions up. Each battalion should be allotted 40 storm boats and 12 spare engines for same. Four trackways should be constructed on each battalion's front immediately following the assault wave. The construction of these trackways and the ferrying of jeeps and 6-pounders should be the responsibility of engineers under command of the assaulting brigades. Infantry and engineers should receive at least nine days' combined training, using all the necessary equipment. Good progress had been made in establishing a common doctrine, especially in matters of terminology, assault scales and standard loads for storm boats; and a basic drill for handling storm boats was still evolving. ("Joint Report", para 22)

OPERATION "AXEHEAD" CANCELLED

20. Before the end of May C.E. Branch, H.Q. First Cdn Army, had decided that:

[Engineer intelligence] work produced for 2 Cdn Corps for AXEHEAD is much in excess to what we could produce for a normal op. We cannot produce cross secs of river asked for without prejudice to work on rivers leading up to the AXEHEAD site... no work on AXEHEAD after D Day until all work on areas traversed before AXEHEAD is completed....

(W.D., C.E. First Cdn Army,
27 May 44)

By the beginning of June, engineer planning for Operation "AXEHEAD" at Corps and Army levels appeared complete; nevertheless both engineer intelligence work and general engineer planning in that connection continued well into the month (ibid, 1-6, 12-15, 20 Jun 44).

21. By 7 Aug the 21 A. Gp plan for the Seine crossing had changed, the proposed site of the operation being moved upstream. That the enemy would, or could,

strongly resist the crossing was so doubtful that within three days the occasion for mounting "AXEHEAD" had become the least of three possibilities. The other two were a "hasty scramble - almost unopposed" and a "broad front assault by four corps - moderate resistance". (Ibid, 7 Aug 44 and Appx No. 10, Notes on C.E. 21 A. Gp conference re Seine crossing, 10 Aug 44) As it happened, the latter possibility was the more nearly realized. Finally, on 21 Aug 44, C. of S. First Cdn Army informed G.O.C. 2 Cdn Corps:

...The AXEHEAD operation ... is definitely off.....

((Hist) 215C1.019 (D3), Photostats of G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army Files: First Cdn Army Directive to G.O.C. 2 Cdn Corps, 21 Aug 44, para 3 (a)).

22.
McGuire.

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Major Exercises Carried Out by Formations of First Cdn Army
(Less 3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde), December 1943 - May 1944

DATES	CODE NAME	TROOPS	NATURE OF EXERCISE
7-15 Dec 43	"ALLWAYS"	2 Cdn Inf Div (on bde gp basis)	Advance to contact - attack on unfortified position - defence
24 Jan - 9 Feb 44	"SWEETKISS"	Army Tps R.C.E. and R.C.A.S.C.	Bridging
2 Mar - 1 Apr	"SPAN"	Corps and Div Tps R.C.E.	Bridging, mine clearing, route maintenance
1-7 Apr	"STEP"	2 Cdn Inf Div	Breaking out from bridgehead - advance on single thrust line - river crossing - assault using live ammunition
10-20 Apr	"SOD"	2 Cdn AGRA	Movement and deployment of troops - coordination of fire
13-19 Apr	"LAST"	Fmn HQs and Sigs, 2 Cdn Corps	Intercommunication and control during breakout
20 Apr - 19 May	"KATE"	4 and 5 Cdn Inf Bdes and Army Tps R.C.E.	Crossing a tidal estuary
5-11 May	"FLIT"	HQ First Cdn Army (in conjunction with 84 Gp R.A.F.)	Setting up and operating headquarters in the field

Note: These exercises have been selected according to numbers of troops taking part, duration, and general significance.

W.D., 21 Cdn Armd Regt (G.G.F.G.), December 1943 -
May 1944 (Extracts - References to Training)

Place	Date	
Maresfield Camp, Sussex,	1 Dec 43	The men ... spent the day in the maintenance of the vehicles....
	4 Dec 43	...the men were busy on their vehicles throughout the day.
	7 Dec 43	To-day being a Gas Number 2 state Day, all ranks were prepared to meet any type of a Gas Attack. Two alarms were sounded through the day, each with a duration of $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.
	8 Dec 43	Training was under Sqn arrangements throughout the day, and most of the men were engaged on vehicle maintenance... Wireless, gunnery and driving schools continued as usual under Regimental instruction... The officers of this unit...assembled in the Sgts mess for a lecture... "the attack of an Armd Regt with fd regt Arty support"....
	14 Dec 43	...all men were engaged in the maintenance of vehicles....
	15 Dec 43	...Certain personnel attended the Regt'l Wireless and Gunnery Schools, while still others were engaged with the maintenance of their vehicles....
	18 Dec 43	Tank crews were kept busy during the day in preparation for the MT inspection.
	24 Dec 43	The Regiment was formed up and marched to the football field to see the elimination cross-country race of four miles to those who would qualify for the Regimental Team for the Div meet.
	27 Dec 43	Sqn parades were formed up and the different Regt'l Schools, wireless, gunnery and driving were started after the holiday recess. There was a discussion on the Motor Bn in the Officers' Mess, conducted by Sqn. 2 i/c's.
	29 Dec 43	The mine-laying and handling course was started using our Regimental instructors.
	30 Dec 43	Sqn parades were formed up after which the candidates for the various Regt'l Schools and courses, wireless, gunnery, driving, and mine handling were dismissed to their various instructions.
	4-1-44	Today being Gas No. 2 State, the men paraded with their respirators.
	8-1-44	Sqn. parades were held in the huts as the men stood by their beds on account of the weather prevailing. Special attention was

- given to the men's boots in preparation for the special Mustard Gas Trng, which everyone in the Regt. must go through shortly. Sqn. parades were formed up for sports afternoon and the men were broken up into various groups to play their particular sport for the remainder of the afternoon.
- 11-1-44 ...special gas trng....
- 13-1-44 ...all personnel of the Regt. excepting those on essential duties went out for a three mile run....
- 14-1-44 The final class on Mine Handling and Laying was started and was for a period of two days.
- 15-1-44 Sqn parades were formed up and rolls were called after that the men were dismissed to their various duties, those on the different courses reported the same, while the others carried out maintenance on their vehicles; this being a gasless day... Sports parades were held and the men broken off in numerous groups to participate in whatever sport they chose....
- 17-1-44 Sqn. parades were formed after which the men were broken off to carry on with maintenance... A study period was held for all officers in the Mess. The topic for the evening's discussion was "Motor Battalion"....
- 18-1-44 This being Gas State II Day the respirators were carried by all personnel... A study period was held for all officers... on "A A. in Arm'd Regts."
- 21-1-44 Sqn. parades were formed and rolls were checked, the men then tested on T.O.E.T's.
- 22-1-44 ...lectures were held by sqns. on Malaria... Trng. Films on Mines & Booby Traps also Armd. Warfare were shown in the N.A.A.F.I. Sqn. sports parades....
- 27-1-44 ...individual trng. was carried out....
- 29-1-44 ...vehicle maintenance. Regt'l Sport parade....
- 31-1-44 ...Veh. maintenance was carried out....
- 2 Feb 44 A party of approx 50 O.Rs. were transported to Haywards Technical School, for a lecture on Aircraft Recognition....
- 3 Feb 44 ...the men broke off to remove their outer clothing, to participate in a period of P.T. which consisted of a 3 mile cross country run....
- 4 Feb 44 ...individual training and duties....

- 19 Feb 44 ... the men were dismissed after Sqn Parades to carry out vehicle maintenance, for the remainder of the morning....
An Inter-Sqn competition was held on TOETs on the following subjects; Map Using, Gas, Physical Training and Aircraft Recognition.
- 22 Feb 44 ... the Squadrons moved out of the harbour area to carry on troop and Sqn manouvers....
- 23 Feb 44 The same procedure and training was carried out as on the previous day. In the afternoon the spare drivers were given extra driving instructions on the tanks to familiarize them with their tasks in case of an emergency.
- 24 Feb 44 Sqn training was again carried out with the following training completed,
1. Troop battle run against enemy A/Tk positions.
2. Practising of taking up "hull down" positions and range finding.
3. Squadron drill...
A demonstration was put on by Lieut R.A. Smith showing how to blow holes in the ground for the purpose of making "Hull down" positions for the tanks where no other cover is available....
- 25 Feb 44 In the forenoon a demonstration was put on in the training area by the 21 C.A.R. (GGFG) showing the action of the leading troop of a Sqn against scattered enemy positions...
Immediately following this another demonstration was put on by the 28 C.A.R. (BCR) of a two phased Sqn attack against enemy A/Tk guns located on a forward slope H.E. and smoke were fired....
- 1 Mar 44 ...thirty specially assigned other ranks from each Sqn were paraded to SSMS Harrington and Brown, for special training of ceremonial drill.
The remainder of the men were broken off to their various duties and individual training....
- 4 Mar 44 This being a gasless day, immediately following Sqn parades, the men were dismissed to carry out maintenance on their vehicles.
Sports parade was held and the men were split up in various groups to participate in their favourite sport.
- 9 Mar 44 ... Inspection by His Majesty, King George VI....
- 10 Mar 44 ... Nos 1 and 2 Sqns carried out firing of such personal weapons as Stens, Bren, Pistol and Grenade and also carried out Tank driving and Troop Tactics during the day....
- 11 Mar 44 In the training area, No. 1 Sqn practised Infantry co-operation, with "A" Coy of the Lake Sup Regt (M).
No. 2 Sqn carried out Tank driving and Troop Tactics while HQ Sqn and "A" Echelon personnel practised harbouring in the field.

- 12 Mar 44 Nos. 1 and 2 Sqns carried out Tank driving and Troop Tactics training....
- 15 Mar 44 The personnel of HQ Sqn were split into two groups and proceeded to the ranges to fire Bren Gun practices.
- 17 Mar 44 Turret crews from Nos. 1 and 2 Sqns left by transport for Lydd ranges under command of Major H.F. Baker to carry out advanced training. Turret crews from No. 3 Sqn under command of Major E.M. Smith left by transport for Lydd Ranges.
- 18 Mar 44 All available personnel... to carry out vehicle maintenance for the remainder of the morning....
- 20 Mar 44 ... individual training....
- 21 Mar 44 "B" Echelon vehicles ... to participate in Exercise "Rolem II". Appx 9
- 22 Mar 44 No. 3 Sqn spent the day on Rifle and Bren gun shooting at the Old Lodge Rifle Range... Waterproofing instruction was given in the unit Tk Park on A & B Vehicles... The new reinforcements from the Royal Montreal Rifles sic were given an introduction to the Sherman Tk and to Tk gunnery....
- 23 Mar 44 There is only No. 3 Sqn and 1/3 of H.Q. Sqn in camp. Very little training is going on as No. 3 Sqn is doing the duties.
- 27 Mar 44 A D & M School under Lieut. Finlayson has been organized for the R.M.R. reinforcements along with a Gunnery School under Lieut. E.P. Finn. The reinforcements from the R.M.R. have had no tk training and everything possible is being done to advance them.
- 28 Mar 44 4 Tks left for the 28 Cdn Armd Regt lines to be put on transporters to go to Dundonald for a waterproofing course. After Sqn parades the Gunnery and D. & M. Schools got under way as usual.
- 29 Mar 44 30 all ranks left to attend a demonstration of street fighting put on at the Eastborne street fighting school by the Lake Sup Regt (M)....
- 30 Mar 44 35 all ranks left to attend a demonstration of Enemy Armour at the school of tk technology, Cobbum.
- 2 Apr 44 ... the afternoon was spent by the Sqns. in troop training with the new establishment of four tanks each troop per sqns....
- 3 Apr 44 Sqns. arrived at Plumpton Plain to take part in Exercise "Stiletto".

- 4 Apr 44 ... the sqns formed up and moved out to the training area to do Sqn. Tactical Drill. The four troops of four tks. each have changed Sqn. drill somewhat and considerable practice in movement is needed....
- 6 Apr 44 ... the Regt. moved across the training area and encountered enemy centres of resistance at various stages. This was done to practice the operation of a Regt'l. wireless net.... Sqns. carried on with Sqn. formation drill for the afternoon....
- 8 Apr 44 Sqn parades were formed after which the men were broken off to carry out vehicle maintenance for the remainder of the morning. A party from H.Q. Sqn. under Lt. J.J.C. Reid left the Unit lines by transport for Eridge Park Ranges to fire the Sten Gun Practices.
- 9 Apr 44 During the day a party of re-inforcements left for #3 C.A.C.R.U. to take a Gunner-Operators course, which was to last for 5 or 6 weeks.
- 10 Apr 44 A party of Echelon personnel from all Sqns. journeyed to Hawkenbury Range under Command of Capt. G.M. Alexander, to fire the rifle and bren gun practices.
- 11 Apr 44 A party of Ech personnel left the Unit lines by transport for Hawkenbury Ranges. to fire rifle practices.... A number of Sqn. personnel went on a route march of approx. 12 miles which consisted of compass work, map using and minor tactic training. There was a lecture given to all Officers in the Officers' Mess by Lt-Col M.J. Scott. The subject was "Points brought out during the 2nd Cdn. Corps. Study Week".
- 12 Apr 44 H.Q. Sqn. left for a 51 mile wheeled convoy. This convoy was for the purpose of training some new drivers in road discipline and spacing.
- 17 Apr 44 The Regt'l A.A. Troop in charge of Lt. J.W. Devitt left by transport for Worthing where they will do advanced training in their special work. They will be attached to the Scots Greys Regt. and are expected to be away from the Regt. for approx. one week.
- 20 Apr 44 All Officers of the Regt and the Lake Sup Regt (M) attended a lecture in the K of C Reading Room... The topic of the lecture was the Air organization and the wireless set up for air cooperation in the 21st Army Group.... During the day Mr. James a representative of the Ford Motor Co. Ltd. visited the Regt. and held discussions with the fitters and motor mechanics of our Regt. along with Mr. Elliott a representative of The General Motors Co. Ltd.

- 21 Apr 44 The Regt'l Recce Tp. under com'd. of Lt. R.A. Smith held a night exercise on commando tactics and clearing a breach in a mine field.
- 24 Apr 44 Capt. McConnel of 1st Cdn. Army gave a lecture to all the officers...on troop leading....
- 25 Apr 44 After Sqn. parade H.Q. Sqn. left on a 14 mile cross country march which included compass using, Map reading and minor tactics. Capt. McConnel of 1st Cdn. Army gave a lecture to all the N.C.O's. in the regt. on troop and crew cmd. and control.
- 27 Apr 44 No. 3 Sqn. left in convoy for Broome Park to take part in an exercise with 6 Cdn. Inf. Bde. which will last for two weeks. All officers of the unit attended a Bde. Study Exercise at the 22nd Cdn. Armd. Regt. (C.G.G.). It was a continuation of the last study night and tactics and gunnery were the main topics. No. 1 Sqn. left on an all night reconnaissance exercise. The Recce. Troop of the Regt. acted as the enemy.
- 28 Apr 44 H.Q. Sqn. trucks left on a map reading and road convoy exercise which lasted the whole afternoon.
- 30 Apr 44 There was a short concentrated course on Sherman Tank maintenance for Troop Leaders....
- 1 May 44 The A.A. Tp left for NEWHAVEN to do firing practices with Oerlikon guns. They are doing this in conjunction with the Royal Navy and it is expected that they will be firing every day until Thursday. The unit waterproofing school which was started 29 Apr 44 in the tank park for AFV's continued as usual today.
- 2 May 44 #2 Sqn less its "B" Echelon vehicles left for Ashdown training area to harbour in the field and carry on training. H.Q. Sqn held a cross country march which was approx 15 miles in length. It entailed compass work, map reading and minor tactics.
- 3 May 44 Lt.-Col. M.J. Scott, E.D. left to visit #3 Sqn who are at present harboured in Broome Park on an exercise with 2 Cdn Div. Also at this time H.Q. Sqn left on a "B" Vehicle convoy which lasted all afternoon. The unit wheeled convoy control and road discipline is still not up to the mark and considerable training is still necessary.
- 5 May 44 The Comd Officer and the four Sqn Comdrs left to take part in Exercise "SCREEN". The exercise was on a tk screen developed by the Lake Sup Regt (M) with supporting arms. The waterproofing school which has been in progress for the past week dipped its tanks.

- 8 May 44 Sqn "B" vehicle waterproofing classes started this morning for all drivers. 3 Sqn began a short Gunnery and a D & M refresher course also today.
- 9 May 44 An exercise was held in the Ashdown trg area, to show co-operation between four arms of the service.
- 10 May 44 Three trucks of personnel for Hawkenbury Ranges left under Capt E.F. Henry. The party fired rifle and bren gun at the range and returned at 1830 hrs.
- 11 May 44 There was a practise for the DV which is scheduled for next Wednesday. #1 and #2 Sqs waded the "B" vehicles which they have been waterproofing for the last few days. The unit sports eliminations started at this time in the Maresfield Recreation Ground.
- 12 May 44 The Comd Offr and I.O. left to take part in exercise "SCREEN II". #1 Sqn with a few tanks from #2 Sqn, to make up a complete sqn, also took part in the exercise. It was an exercise to practice the regts in forming an anti tank screen. A unit sports meet was held in the Maresfield recreational grounds. Capt. McLean of 4 Cdn Armd Div Sigs lectured to the officers in the offr's mess on signal security. Following this the Int Offr gave a lecture on air photo gridding and the trg in air photos which the unit will be doing in the future.
- 15 May 44 #3 Sqn started a "B" vehicle waterproofing school. As they were away on an exercise with 2 Cdn Div at the time of our other waterproofing schools, they are behind the other sqns in this respect.
- 17 May 44 "F" Echelon crossed the start point in convoy to take part in an inspection and demonstration with the 4 Cdn Armd Div. The Distinguished Visitor was the Right Honourable William Lyon MacKenzie King....
- 20 May 44 The Div Track and Field meet started at this time at Neville Cricket Grounds Tunbridge Wells... All available personnel from the unit attended.... All the Sherman tanks of the unit spent the day at Seaford Ranges, firing 75 mm AP, and returned to the unit lines in the evening. The 2nd Cdn Corps Track Field meet was held at Maidstone today and approx 90 all ranks were transported by 10 Inf Bde RCASC to the affair... Exercise "SPANDAU" was held today. It was a CW exercise....
- 26 May 44 Firing at Lydd Ranges was held up on account of fog and did not start until late afternoon....

- 29 May 44 ...visit and inspection by Gen Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander....
- 30 May 44 Today was the first time a number of the personnel of the Regt had training in firing the new PIAT - Anti-tank weapon.
- 31 May 44 Transport was supplied for personnel going to the Hundred Acre Range, where they fired the Sten Gun practices throughout the day, returning at 1645 hrs.
A number of drivers and other personnel who use LMGs and Rifles, were transported to the Broadwater Forest Rifle Range where qualifying practices were held throughout the day.
Commencing at this hour, a series of special lectures were given by a representative of the Chrysler Motors at various times throughout the day to Officers, Mech Sgts, Fitters and Driver Mechs of the Regt in the NAFFI Theatre.

W.D., S. Sask. R., December 1943 -
May 1944 (Extracts - References to Training)

- Worthing
- 1 Dec 43 Pls from Sp Coys of Bde on Cross Country Run on Bde cross country track... Remainder of coys trg as per syllabus. APPX 4
- 2 Dec 43 B Coy firing rifles at Chalk Pits, Trg area D. Remainder of coys trg as per syllabus. Lecture... all offr. ...on consolidation and Defence....
- 3 Dec 43 BHQ & HQ Coy had 1 hrs smartening up drill... Remainder of coys trg as per syllabus....
- 6 Dec 43 ... all offr, WOs and Sgts left at 1200 hrs for Harrow Hill... to see a demonstration of a Bn daylight attack on a hastily organized defensive position....
- 7 Dec 43 Exercise "Adv to Contact" by A & C Coys.
- 11 Dec 43 Today the 6 Cdn Inf Bde started on Exercise Always. APPX 5
- 13 Dec 43 ... at 1345 hrs the order to Cease Fire came through....
- 14 Dec 43 Lt W.G.A. Lane and 48 ORs of Mortar Pl left today on a Div mortar concentration School. Lt-Col F.A. Clift was out during the day watching the coys trg in Trg area 7. Capt A.H. Stephenson... left at 0745 hrs on Exercise Adam. This exercise was about Administration of B Ech.
- 15 Dec 43 Brig G.S.N. Gostling put the Bde gp through a rehearsal for the coming visit of Col. Ralston... on 17 Dec 43... Officers drill period from 1630 hrs to 1700 hrs....
- 16 Dec 43 The bn formed up on Milton St at 0900 hrs and then marched to Broadwater Green with the band in attendance... The afternoon was spent in smartening up drills under coy arrangements....
- 17 Dec 43 Lt-Col F A Clift turned the bde over to Brig G S N Gostling and at 1030 hrs Col Ralston... arrived....
- 18 Dec 43 Coys on interior economy and inspections under coy arrangements.
- 20 Dec 43 Coys on smartening up drill during the afternoon.
- 21 Dec 43 Trg as per syllabus. APPX 4
- 22 Dec 43 Major J R Mather, Lts Fairgrieve, Grayson, Robertson, and McKay were out during the day on Alfriston Ranges trg with the arty in directing shoots. In the Bde sports the S Sask R and Fus MR took part.

- 23 Dec 43 ... 3" mortar demonstration... by 2 Cdn Div Mortar School....
- 24 Dec 43 Exercise Crescendo was done by the S Sask R APPX 7 today...
- 27 Dec 43 Trg carried out by the coys as per syllabus. APPX 4 Administration order for Ex Frosty came out and APPX 9 coys began preparations for the move.
- 28 Dec 43 Coys trg as per syllabus... APPX 4 A Coy... was visited at 1400 hrs by Lt-Gen E W Sansom... He watched while A Coy carried on normal trg doing a hasty attack as practised on Ex Crescendo and an attack on a pill box....
- 3 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty... Plan "B" was carried out. All coys attended lectures on films in the camp lecture huts and NAAFI....
- 4 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty. Coys trg as per syllabus. APPX 5
- 5 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty. Trg as per syllabus.
- 6 Jan 44 Exercise Kedge was postponed due to adverse weather conditions. Coys carried on with close order drill and trained soldier periods. In the afternoon the weather cleared considerably, and trg was carried out as per syllabus, which consisted of Exercise "Ramp"...loading into LCVs....
- 7 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty, Coys trg as per syllabus. Exercise Kedge, as shown on the syllabus, was commenced at 0830 hrs....
- 8 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty.
- 9 Jan 44 Exercise Frosty.
- 10 Jan 44 A hot meal was served to the troops aboard the LSI at 0230 hrs and they embarked at 0415 hrs into LCVs... At 1030 hrs Brig. A.H. Lee MC gave the order, Ex Trident Cease Fire....
- WORTHING 13 Jan 44 Coys on interior economy and training under coys arrangements.
- 14 Jan 44 During the morning the bn marched to the Odeon Theatre by coys to watch the showing of trg films at 1000 hrs.
- 15 Jan 44 During the day the Carrier pl were out on Trg area 7 doing section drills on fd firing.
- 16 Jan 44 Rifle coys were out on trg Area 7 doing firing exercises under coy arrangements.
- 21 Jan 44 During the afternoon the officers were out on Salvington Hill doing T.E.W.T. on a pl in a quick attack.

- 24 Jan 44 WOs and Sgts left at 1400 hrs for Salvington Hill where... they held a TEWT on a Pl in a quick Attack. Offrs attended a lecture...on Patrols and Outposts....
- 25 Jan 44 The bn, less "D" Coy were out on Kingley Vale during the day doing field firing.
- 26 Jan 44 The bn is preparing for the team to represent them in the forthcoming Bde Cross Country Run. Every individual in the bn is to run at least two miles each day...
During the afternoon a team from each pl and one from BHQ consisting of 6 players held a volleyball tournament... In the Bde Sports the S Sask R team won the cross country run....
- 27 Jan 44 Bn training as per syllabus with the exception of pls doing battle rehearsal "S ZIP"... which consisted of a pl advancing to combat enemy troops....
- 28 Jan 44 Pls which had not done Battle Rehearsal "ZIP"... on the 27 Jan did it today....
- 31 Jan 44 Coys trg as per syllabus with special attention being paid to cross country running in preparation for the bn cross country run finals.
- 2 Feb 44 The bn formed up at 0930 hrs and marched to the Odeon Theatre, Worthing, where they were shown a trg film on Gas First Aid.
Bde sports were held during the afternoon...
The bn held a cross country race during the afternoon....
- 3 Feb 44 The bn formed up on Thorn Road... upon arrival there they formed a hollow square with the remainder of the 6 Cdn Inf Bde Gp.
At 1130 hrs Lt-Gen Simonds... arrived....
- 6 Feb 44 17 Signallers and one assistant instructor left on a weeks signal course at 2 Cdn Inf Div HQ.
- 7 Feb 44 Today 7, 14, and 18 pls started on the 48 hrs pl self contained schemes which is under pl arrangements. Sp coy carried out trg in Parlam Park.
APPX 4
- 8 Feb 44 During the morning all available personnel attended the showing of the trg film on Unarmed Combat and Waterproofing of Vehicles in the Odeon Theatre, Worthing... During the afternoon part of BHQ and HQ Coys were on a ten mile route march under Capt. GS Haslett. During the march personnel had Gas Trg which included the wearing of the respirator for a period of a half hour....
- 9 Feb 44 During the morning personnel of BHQ and HQ Coy who were not on the route march on 8 Feb 44 were out on a 10 mile route march...
The A/Tk pl left at 1000 hrs to come under cmd of 2 Cdn A/Tk regt for movement and trg at Lydd Ranges. 12 Pl, B Coy, represented the S Sask R in the bde cross country run during the afternoon....

- 11 Feb 44 ...Personnel were also picked for fd firing which took place during the afternoon....
- 13 Feb 44 Dry runs for Battle Rehearsal "SOCKEM" started at 0900 hrs on trg area No 7.
- 14 Feb 44 A & B coys left on a five day scheme.
- 17 Feb 44 HQ coy left at 0800 hrs on a ten mile route march.
- 18 Feb 44 A and B coys returned from their schemes at 2230 hrs.
- 21 Feb 44 B and C coys left at 0715 hrs to take part in Battle Refresher "Sockem"....
- 22 Feb 44 All offrs from Sp, A, B, C and D coys left from the B O R at 1330 hrs to take part in a "Pl In Def" TEWT.
- 23 Feb 44 C coy will be stationed in London on a course on Street Fighting at Lime House Street Fighting Area.
Ede Sports were held during the afternoon.
- 24 Feb 44 The bn formed up at 0915 hrs on Thorn Road and left at 0930 hrs for Broadwater Green with the regt band leading... At 1045 hrs General Maurice Mathenet of the French Forces arrived... Sp and D coy left during the afternoon on an exercise under coy arrangements....
- 28 Feb 44 Coys were on smartening up drills during the day under coy arrangements in preparation for the forthcoming inspection by Gen Sir B L Montgomery....
- 29 Feb 44 ... training was carried out under coy arrangements with emphasis on cleaning equipment and smartening up drills.
During the afternoon the divisional finals in the cross country run took place....
- 2 Mar 44 310 personnel from all coys... for Ash Ranges.... At 1900 hrs all available officers of the bn attended a lecture in B Coy lecture room... subject was the organization of American Staff and the organization of an American Inf Div....
- 5 Mar 44 During the day B & C Coys were out on the trg area No 7 on a coy scheme.
- 6 Mar 44 A & D Coys were out on trg area no 7 during the day on a coy scheme "Digging in a Def Posn with sp arms".
- 7 Mar 44 Personnel on Ex Plot commenced the exercise for the day at 0730 hrs when the head of the Fus M.R. crossed the S.P. APPX 5
All available personnel in the bn formed up on Thorn Road at 0930 hrs. They then marched to the Odeon Theatre, Worthing, with the band leading. Upon arrival there they were shown the trg films....
- 8 Mar 44 During the day coys were on smartening up drill and interior economy under coy arrangements for the inspection on 9 Mar 44, by a MDV.

Broome Park
MR 662668
Sh 117A

22 Apr 44 Exercise "FOIBLE".

24 Apr 44 Trg was carried out under coy arrangements.

27 Apr 44 "B" Sqn, BCRs came under comd for trg with the Regt today.

28 Apr 44 One tp of tks was att to each of A, B, C and Sp Coys for the days trg, which was in fact a day of "Get to know one another".

29 Apr 44 Bn inspection was held this morning.

1 May 44 During the day all coys were training with tks on the NONINGTON TRG AREA.

2 May 44 Coys still trg with tks.

3 May 44 Today all coys did a coy attack supported by a sqn of tks.

4 May 44 The regular bn sports afternoon was held this day. ... HQ coy went to the ranges where rifle and sten practices were fired....

5 May 44 During the morning Bn HQ and HQ Coy ran their sports eliminations and in the afternoon took over the duties, allowing sp coy to run their eliminations. Coys were training as per syllabus.

6 May 44 The regimental sports day was held this day....

8 May 44 Today all coys practised their embussing and debussing drills.

9 May 44 ... Coys trg as per syllabus....

11 May 44 Today all coys practised the fmns to be tried in the night attack.

12 May 44 The Bde sports were held today with eliminations during the morning and the competitions during the afternoon.

13 May 44 ...all coys... spent the morning laying minefds, and wiring....

14 May 44 Today the regt moved in preparation for Ex Spes... The day was spent in digging in, and wiring, and booby traps were laid.... APPX 5

17 May 44 At 0930 hrs all coys sent parties to pick up the mines laid the previous Saturday. They reported back at approx 1145 hrs. Those remaining in camp spent the morning on interior economy. At 1900 hrs All offr, WOs and Sgts attended a lecture given by personnel of the 11 Fd Coy RCA.

18 May 44 Coys were trg all day in the laying of a hasty mine fd and becoming accustomed to booby trap mechanisms.

19 May 44 All coys carried out mine trg....

- 20 May 44 This morning an interesting experiment was carried out. A grappling iron was fired over a section of a minefd....
- 23 May 44 A rehearsal for the Empire Day Service was held today.
- 24 May 44 ...The 1st Cdn Army Sports were held today in Maidstone... C & D coys today did an Adv to Contact scheme along the rd from KINGSTON....
- 25 May 44 Today coys were practising the attack with tks in sp.
- 27 May 44 A bn inspection was held in preparation for the forthcoming DV inspection. ...
- 29 May 44 ... Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower... took the General Salute from the 6 Cdn Inf Bde Gp....
- 30 May 44 During the morning offr and Sgts attended a lecture and demonstration in camouflage given by the Corps Camouflage offr. In the afternoon they were flown over the work done previously, in Air OP planes.
- 31 May 44 During the evening BHQ and HQ coys were on the miniature range with rifles.