

REPORT ON BATTALION EXERCISE ON 30/1/42.

By R.C. Te Punga. 2/Lieut.  
 Date :- 31 Jan 42.  
 Time :- 1000 hrs.

PART .1.

Time.  
 0900 hrs. The Bn moved out by M.T. for manouvre Area.  
 0920 " A Coy and B Coy arrive at the Starting Line, debussed  
 and formed up in imaginary M.L.C loads.  
 0935 " The attack commenced. A Coy on left flank in the  
 vicinity of the Trig, B Coy on the right flank near the  
 Navigation mark.  
 Each Coy advanced in extended order heading for their respec-  
 - tive bridges across the canal.  
 1000 " C. Coy and D Coy leave the starting Line in the 2'nd Wave.  
 1005 " 4 Bren Carriers with Mortars mounted advanced.  
 1045 " Coys in position as indicated in Sketch. Bn H.Q. - C.C.S.  
 and R.A.P. also located.  
 Coys were consolidating.  
 1103 " Tanks approaching across C.Coy front. B and D Coys infor-  
 ed.  
 1105 " A and C Coys are over-run by Tanks. Bn HQ is quickly  
 over-run.  
 1112 " Tanks dividing into two Colns pushed forward rapidly and  
 over-ran B and D Coys. positions.  
 1115 " Action is over.  
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PART 11.

Para 1.  
LANDING

: A Coy halted short of its correct position, with the resu-  
 -t that B Coy had insufficient room to deploy in. A Coy  
 then moved to its correct position. In almost every  
 case trucks which were to act as MLCs bunched together at  
 the Starting Line. Even when Pls had debussed and formed  
 up in MLC loads they still had a tendency to edge in toward  
 one another instead of observing the correct intervals of  
 200 yds. This was particularly noticeable in view of the  
 fact that there was ample room to manouvre in. About 50 yd  
 from the water's edge there was a low ridge. Full use of  
 this cover was not made by the 1'st wave; some Pls advanced  
 and finished their 1'st bound with the men lying on top of  
 the ridge instead of just down from its crest in dead groun  
 Sections did not extend far enough in the initial stage  
 if they had, extended correctly it is possible that the men  
 would have been dispersed to at least ten paces interval.  
 There was too much hesitation. The troops should hav  
 deployed immediately on landing to present as difficult a  
 target as possible to MMG and ARTY fire.  
 The stop at the 1'st bound should have been only momen-  
 tary, long enough to get organized, and then pushed on, to  
 prevent congestion with the 2'nd wave.

Para 2.  
MOVING INTO POSITION.

As far as could be observed Coys advanced in the correc  
 manner moving in bounds and giving supporting fire.

The Bren Carriers with the Mortars mounted could have  
 been of great assistance in searching out enemy strong poin  
 In view of the marshy nature of the ground the Carriers  
 advanced in Coln of route and would probably have been  
 knocked out.

Close collaboration between the Carriers and Infantry  
 is essential.

Para 3.  
COMPANY POSITIONS :

Coy positions were sited as shown on the sketch. A s  
 C Coys were situated on the rising ground NORTH of the Wi-  
 less House commanding the road from the NORTH. B and I

## Para 3 (Cont)

Coys had good positions covering the roads to the EAST and SOUTH.

Digging in and consolidation was commenced immediately on arriving at their positions.

MORTARS

Two 3 Inch Mortars were placed just behind the Canal and two Italian mortars were further back still behind the Canal. The remaining four mortars were with the Fwd Coys.

It may have been better if four mortars behind the Canal were brought further forward nearer to BN HQ where they could have good ranges over the whole Bn position.

The C.C.S. and R.A.P were situated as shown on the sketch.

PIONEERS

The Pioneers were in charge of the bridges crossing the Canal.

BN HQ.

Bn HQ was situated immediately in the centre of the Bn position with the Rear HQ in the vicinity of Bridge "B".

It was completely unprotected and ~~fixed~~ was in the centre of a wide gap in the Bn defences.

## Para 4.

THE ATTACK :

The attack came from the NORTH and immediately across the C Coy front. The country was particularly suitable for Tanks since there were no natural tank obstacles in the direction from which the attack came and there plenty of small hollows where tanks could get in and pound our positions with only the turret and the gun showing. It is possible that mortars may have done some damage when they were in such a position. On one occasion a tank stopped and the Command put his head out of the turret. It was a sitting shot for an anti/tk gun.

In view of the manouvring capacity of tanks the need for all-round defence could be readily realized during the attack.

Anti/Tk mines would have been of assistance in providing a tank barrier.

## Para 5.

COMMUNICATION:

When the Bn is widely dispersed as it was the need for a good system of intercommunication is urgent. The use of wireless is good but if it breaks down the communication ceases. During the attack C Coy had no wireless and so was cut off and A Coy set did not work satisfactorily. Until telephone communication is complete, alternative means such as B.Rs and visual signals should be adopted. The I. Section can also be of assistance. The need for alternative methods of signalling was proved during the attack. Telephone communication was not complete, wireless was not functioning satisfactorily with the result that no means of speedy intercommunication was available, at the time when it was most required.

## Para 6.

GENERAL REMARKS:

The A.A. Pl arrived with the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave with the result that the 1<sup>st</sup> wave did not have its protection.

## Reference