

CANADIAN ORIENTATION FILMS

(For further details see inside front cover.)

- Peoples of Canada.**—Racial co-operation in Canada. (24 mins.) S.S. 33.
- Atlantic Patrol.**—The life of seamen of the Canadian Navy. (10 mins.) S.S. 36.
- Battle is Our Business.**—The Canadian soldier in action. (33 mins.) S.S. 5.
- Proudly She Marches.**—The background and training of Canada's women in the army, navy and air force. (20 mins.) S.S. 40.
- Up From the Ranks.**—The rigid training of officer-candidates of the Canadian Army. (20 mins.) S.S. 25.
- Inside Fighting China.**—The growing power of China since the Jap invasion. (20 mins.) S.S. 11.
- Desert Victory.**—The British push that drove Rommel out of Africa. (60 mins.) S.S. 34.
- One Day of War.**—A single day's activity on the Russian Front. (20 mins.) S.S. 49.
- New Soldiers Are Tough.**—Commando training filmed in a general way. (20 mins.) S.S. 22.
- Battle of Britain.**—The great fight waged by the British people in 1940 against possible invasion and recurrent air attacks. (53 mins.) S.S. 23.*
- Prelude to War.**—The events contributing to the war. (50 mins.) S.S. 1.*
- Not Peace but a Sword.**—Europe's descent into war in 1939. (40 mins.) S.S. 38.
- Blitzkrieg Tactics.**—The tactics of Germany against the occupied countries. (20 mins.) C.A. 1.
- The Ramparts We Watch.**—American political and industrial difficulties since World War I. (40 mins.) S.S. 39.
- The Battle of Russia.**—German invasions of the Soviet, and the present fight of the Russians. (83 mins.) S.S. 46.*
- Divide and Conquer.**—The Fifth Column in Hitler's invasions. (52 mins.) S.S. 3.*
- Nazis Strike.**—Germany's element of surprise in the occupied Europe march. (42 mins.) S.S. 2.*
- Plan for Destruction.**—Hitler's rise with Dr. Haushofer's geopolitical theories. (20 mins.) S.S. 56.
- These Are The Men.**—Nazi flag-waving, German leaders in action. (10 mins.) S.S. 44.
- Pincers on Japan.**—Canada's place in Pacific strategy. (20 mins.) S.S. 4.
- Gates of Italy.**—Italy before and during Mussolini's reign. (20 mins.) S.S. 13.
- People's War.**—"Unity of the people" in wartime. (30 mins.) S.S. 21.
- We Refuse to Die.**—A re-enactment of the massacre of Lidice, the Czechoslovak village razed by the Nazis. (10 mins.) S.S. 35.
- War Department Report.**—German and Jap defences, and logistical problems still barring final allied victory. (45 mins.) S.S. 53.*
- Know Your Ally, Britain.**—The characteristics of the British people. (42 mins.) S.S. 57.*
- German Fortifications.**—German defences along Europe's invasion coast (6 mins.) S.S. 60.
- Everywhere in the World.**—The fight of younger United Nations to preserve freedom. (15 mins.) S.S. 32.
- The Price of Victory.**—Vice-President Wallace's speech about war and the post-war world. (10 mins.) S.S. 26.

*"Must" Films.

WAR

The Cdn. Recce Regt.

ISSUED FORTNIGHTLY BY THE

ARMY BUREAU OF CURRENT AFFAIRS



Not To Be Published

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Lines of Thought

1. Early in the War Reconnaissance Squadrons were formed in each brigade of the Canadian Overseas Divisions. In January, 1941, these brigade squadrons were united to form Reconnaissance Regiments, one in each division. These new units were allied to cavalry units in Canada and were given the titles of the parent units. Divisions which went overseas subsequently were each provided with a Reconnaissance Regiment. In the British Army a Recce Corps was formed but from their inception "Recce" units in the Canadian Army were part of the Canadian Armoured Corps and wear the distinctive black beret. As in all Corps, reinforcements wear the Corps cap badge, but upon joining a unit overseas they then wear the badge of their unit.
2. The main function of the Reconnaissance Regiment is to provide information about the enemy for the Divisional Commander. Thus, if the Division is advancing the Reconnaissance Regiment will move some way ahead of the advanced guards to give early news of the enemy opposition or obstacles, and to brush aside minor resistance. If the division is stationary, the regiment may provide a protective screen in front, or on an exposed flank.
3. Each regiment contains a Headquarters Squadron and three Reconnaissance Squadrons. Headquarters Squadron contains twelve 6-pr. anti-tank guns and six 3-inch mortars. The Reconnaissance Squadrons each have three scout troops and an assault troop.

The scout troops consist of Armoured and Light Reconnaissance Cars for fast road reconnaissance and carriers for cross country reconnaissance.

The assault troop is carried in White Scout Cars, and may be employed to overcome small pockets of enemy resistance, to reconnoitre on foot at night or beyond a vehicle obstacle, to form small defensive localities, to detect and lift mines, or in defence of squadron harbours.
4. It is not the task of the Recce to overcome any but the smallest "nuisance" opposition, nor are they equipped to do so. On meeting opposition it is their job to explore its strength, to find its flanks and to infiltrate through the enemy's screen to find his main positions. If the information gathered by the regiment is to be of value for the oncoming infantry or tank advanced guards, there must be the closest liaison between the two, otherwise, sooner or later, the advanced guards will themselves run headlong into the opposition which has already been located by the Recce.

CANADIAN ORIENTATION FILMS

A list of orientation and educational films is given on the back page. These are available from Command, District and Camp Film Libraries, and might be shown in connection with lectures and discussions on the subject matter of "The Battle of Brains." All such discussions are the responsibility of the Platoon Commander, who may, together with the Education Officer, arrange the appropriate showing of such of these films as may be available, to amplify the points under discussion.

Requests for films can be made through the Officer in charge of the Unit Film Library to the Command, District or Camp Film Library.

(1) Interview with a
Squadron Commander

No horses, so we went by train

MY Sqn. landed in Sicily some days after the rest of the Regt. By that time the position at Syracuse and Augusta had been cleared up—the main work of the Regt. had been the collecting of vast numbers of Italian prisoners—and our Div. was in position on the southern edge of the Catanian plain.

We moved round Lake Lentini out to the left flank of the Div. We had to cover about three miles of front and maintain touch with 51 (Highland) Div. on our left.

It was lovely weather. The plain was about six miles wide, cut by dried river beds, rather like nullahs, with steep hard clay sides and only occasionally in a break in the bank, where a mule track or path had been cut out to a fording place. Only the Dittaino River had any water in it. All the bridges over that river on our front had been blown.

Gave Itself Away at Once

Behind us the ground sloped upwards. On the other side of the plain we could see Etna, the foothills rising from the plain in patches of olive groves and vineyards. It was very dusty and dry, and any wheeled movement gave itself away at once.



The plain was mostly cornland, studded with white farmhouses, each with its small olive orchard and usually a prickly pear hedge. We looked at that view for 10 days.

Our two main jobs were forward patrols and the link to the left. By day the patrols were static. Our usual plan was to send a patrol out to a farmhouse by night, with a carrier and wireless reporting at regular intervals. The men would be relieved at night again, but the carrier would stay out the whole time we maintained an O.P. at that particular spot.

One Large House on the Enemy Side

By degrees the patrols became expert at collecting information by observation. They spotted in that way that one large house on the enemy side was an important H.Q., and the gunners dealt with it. After we took it we found some 15 burnt-out vehicles and trailers in the courtyard.

By night, the flank liaison patrols went out and forward patrols were pushed deep into No-man's-land. The enemy's outposts were about 1,000 yards to the north, but neither of us maintained a continuous line. These forward patrols had the job of collecting information about enemy positions and minefields, and about the state of the roads and bridges.

The enemy sent out night patrols, too. We had an occasional brush with them. They never penetrated our positions, though, probably because they didn't try hard enough.

One of our major problems was communications. The two Sqns. up were so stretched that every wireless set was in constant use by day, and at intervals by night, which meant a great strain on the battery charging arrangements and on the operators.

We had a gunner officer with us as F.O.O. for his 25-prs., so we had no need to worry about keeping them occupied. We had rather more to do with the S.P. guns. If we thought we had a decent target we would get in touch with them, and they usually lent us a tp. which came up and shot our targets. We had the best of arrangements with the gunners.

Anyhow, They Never Came

At that time it was hoped that the Germans would find out how thin we were on the ground locally and make an attack. There were a number of tanks waiting for them if they did. Maybe they smelled a rat. Anyhow, they never came.

As an illustration of how fluid things were at the start, Gerbini airfield, just in the enemy area, was covered with enemy aircraft, some usable. On several occasions an Air Force pilot would come through our patrol lines, push on as far as tpt. could safely go, then go to ground, and the next thing we saw was a ME. or a JU. leave Gerbini airfield with an R.A.F. or R.C.A.F. pilot on board. They stole the aircraft from under the Germans' noses.

Meanwhile, the situation on our left developed, and we were ordered to put in an attack over the plain. Our first bound was Motta, which the assault troop, crossing the plain the previous night, had seized. The opposition was not serious, mostly M.G. nests and mines. After that we were ordered to push on and take and hold the Paterno cross roads, an important point on the one road left as a route from Catania westwards south of Etna. We moved off in two columns.

It meant searching all side roads, and we lost several vehicles on mines. It was slow progress. The Lt. Recce cars went in front, supported by the carrier sections and the assault tp. At the first sign of opposition, the carriers would take up positions to pin the enemy down by fire, and the assault tp. would set off to outflank the Germans.

The Germans fought very skilfully. Their look-outs were excellent and very rarely did we succeed in outflanking them completely. At the first hint of the danger of being cut off they pulled out.

Never Drive Into a Pothole Again

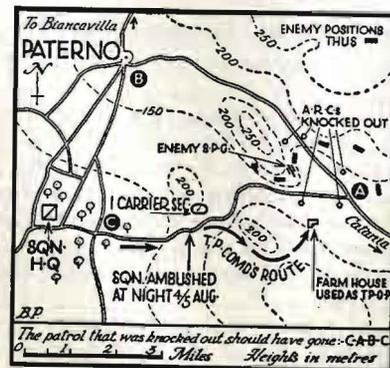
On the night before we were due to move into Paterno, my column was ambushed. We were relying on information that was not correct. We were told that an Inf. Bde. was already across the road Paterno-Catania, to our right, and we thought we were in the clear. We intended to harbour about five miles south of Paterno and go in at first light.

I was in the leading vehicle, a Lt. Recce car, proceeding with my side lights on. I was spotting for mines, sitting on the radiator and warning the driver if I saw anything suspicious in the roadway ahead.

It was rather nerve-racking. The only safe thing to do was to avoid all potholes in case one was a mine. I am sure that any driver who has driven in Sicily or Italy will never drive into a pothole again.

They Gave Us All They Had

We heard afterwards that the German sentry spotted the column when we were about a mile away, and his post, about half a company,



took up their positions. They held their fire until we were about 150 yards away, then gave us all they had. Fortunately they didn't seem to have any A.P. ammunition.

My car seemed to get most of it. It was the one they could see. They set it on fire twice. The first time we put the fire out, but some time later they got it again and this time it went.

We did not do so badly. We only lost two cars and one truck.

One patrol got badly cut up. They were given the task of making a circular patrol up one road, and back down another. At the top of one ridge, five Lt. Recce cars went on ahead, leaving a carrier section to cover and observe behind them—they went off in fine order, correctly spaced. When the last was about 1,000 yards away, a German 75 mm. opened up and got it. None of the five came back.

The Germans had lain doggo, let them all pass and then shot up all five from behind, starting with the rear car.

But two of one crew came back, with information on the area in which the German gun, an S.P. gun, was. The leader, in the carrier section, decided to stalk it, determined to write that one off, at least.

Surrender and Serve a Quick Lunch

When he was getting somewhere near where he thought it was, he came on a farmhouse, apparently deserted, and climbed to the upper floor to observe. While there he noticed a satisfying smell of cooking, and on investigating further found that the kitchen was a German officers' mess and the cook had just got lunch ready. The cook was quite prepared to surrender, and serve a quick lunch.

Having eaten most of the lunch the officer went outside with the cook, and then suddenly the cook flung himself flat on his face. So did the officer. He caught a glimpse of the muzzle of an S.P. gun looking out of its camouflage screen a very short distance away. Then it fired and got a direct hit on the house behind.

Fortunately the carrier was not on that side of the house. Before the S.P. gun could get away the officer had called up Sqn. H.Q. and the 25 prs. got the S.P. gun. Deprived of their one gun the German detachments withdrew.

If a Silent, Deserted Look

By first light the next day we were in an orchard 5 miles south of Paterno.

Here we divided, one patrol going on to the left, to contact the 51 Div., which was believed to have occupied Biancavilla. That ran into considerable opposition at Paterno, including some German Tigers at close range, but one officer got through on foot, and managed to do the job and return late that night with the required information. The rest of the Sqn. was lined up with supporting troops to move in two columns on to Catania from the west, threaten the German flank and compel their withdrawal.

We had picked up a good deal of experience in reconnoitring a village. We always got hold of the local inhabitants first. Their

information was moderately accurate if exaggerated, and we never found any place in which some people were not prepared to talk.

One can almost sense if the Germans are about from the appearance of the village. If it has a silent, deserted look, you can be sure that there are Germans in occupation. In that case I found it advisable not to send a car into the village. It is very vulnerable there and can easily be lost. In close country dismount and reconnoitre on foot, with the car, or its crew dismounted, in a position to give immediate covering fire. The car was used to get back to the nearest wireless set to pass on what information we obtained. I found it advisable never to risk a wireless set being hit. It should shadow the leading cars, keeping as far back as possible.

In one village on this patrol along the Catania road our cars went through at speed and reported it clear. Shortly afterwards some Green Howards followed up and caught the crew of a German Tiger tank brewing tea in a back yard. We had not seen the Germans, nor had they seen us.

The two columns were slow jobs. It took two days to cover 50 miles, but they were successful. The Germans once again responded to the threat to their flank and pulled out of Catania.

Always Stick to the Tarmac

One learned a good deal on how to drive over roads in mined country. The first lesson was always to stick to the tarmac, for there the excavations for mines could be seen. Never cut a corner, or pull in on to the verge. Always dismount on the offside, again on to the tarmac. Otherwise you may dismount on to an S-mine. It will not wreck the car.

We always had an R.E. section up with the Sqn. They were most useful. In Sicily they were mounted in White scout cars, but in Italy we tried out giving them our carriers and putting our carrier section in their cars. It worked better that way.

Sicily emphasised again the importance of our job of gaining and passing on information, and how much you can learn by intelligent and sustained observation. The only real trouble we ran into was caused by lack of information.

Of course you must take risks at times. If speed is important, you must push ahead in a Lt. Recce car. But limit what you are risking, that is, always arrange your spacings and leap froggings so that one car only at a time is at the worst risk and that the others can always give covering fire.

Had Dropped his Face-towel

Italy was rather different. It started off in almost a picnic spirit. Our assault troops went over on D day, and the Sqn. followed on D + 1. We crossed from the Messina shore of the Straits on an L.C.M., manned by Canadians. Half way over we suddenly put about. The crew explained that by saying that one of them had dropped his face-towel overboard. It was recovered with a boathook and we went on.

We went over at first light, got to our assembly area and were even able to arrange for a staggered Sqn. bathing parade that afternoon.

We really started work next day.

Our first job was to push ahead to Pizzo where a Bde. coming ashore had had a hot time of it and had suffered some pretty heavy casualties. We found only two demolitions on the way, and once again when we got there, on one flank, the opposition folded up.

They Had Had Ample Time

The situation in Italy was dominated by two things. First, it looked clear to us that the Germans were not really going to stand but would delay and pull out before a battle started. Next, they had had ample time to do wholesale demolitions, and had not wasted a minute of it.

The coast road on the west was not too bad for a lot of the demolitions had been left to the Italians and they had not blown the charges. But inland it was clear that, in that kind of country, steep hills, ravines, torrents in rocky valleys, it would be months before the roads were really effective for movement and supply.

None of Them were Horsemen

We had rather a picnic in capturing Cosenza airfield. It was essential to take it as early as possible to provide a landing field for fighters to get to the Salerno area, but all possible roads to it were blown. I was even reduced to trying to get horses for my men to go across country. None of them were horsemen but I thought it might save some time. Finally we went by train.

The extraordinary thing was that, owing to the confusion of the Italian collapse, the local trains were still running because no one had ordered them to stop. My Sqn. boarded the Cosenza train, not without some difficulty with the ticket collector, lay on the floor out of sight of the German patrols and Italian porters on the way to Cosenza, and duly arrived at our destination. We took the airfield without opposition.

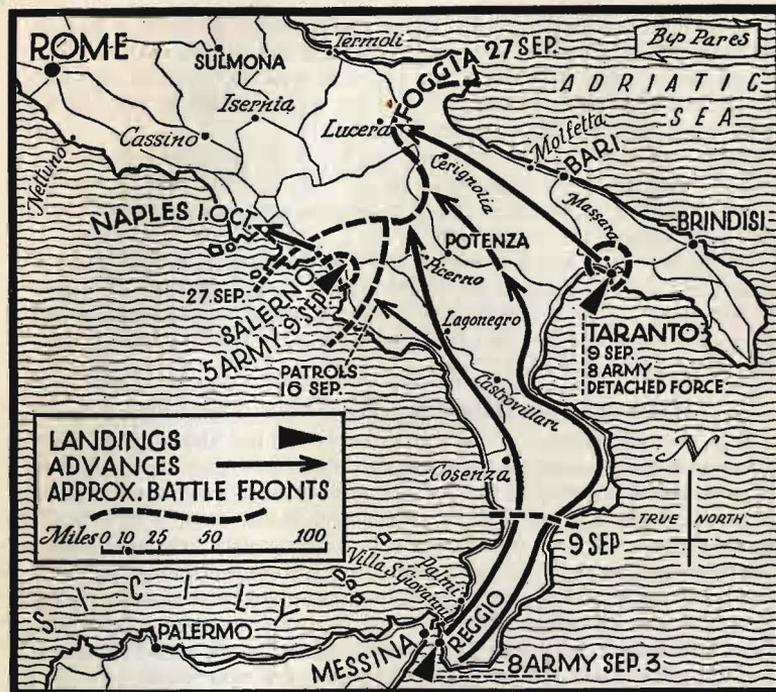
The 8th Army started to move up the coast road to link up with the 5th Army at Salerno as rapidly as possible. One Sqn. went ahead of them. The other, mine, was told to make its way inland as best it could northwards, to link up with the Canadians who were heading for Foggia and the Adriatic Coast. That we did.

Illustrates Many of Our Troubles

We had an action at Lagonegro which illustrates many of our troubles.

Lagonegro lies inland, a fair-sized, compact town which, so far as we were concerned, was on the wrong side of a ravine with rocky vertical sides. The ravine winds considerably and beyond it and the town is a series of short railway tunnels, admirable for defence.

We arrived in the vicinity of the town towards dusk. I sent forward a patrol and decided to harbour about four miles short of the town.



The road to the bridge across the ravine wound down in a long loop and was too exposed for a harbour in potentially hostile country. I expected that the town would be occupied, and when the colonel called me up in the evening, to tell me that our orders were to drive on through it as fast as possible in the morning, I told him so. I told him, too, that the patrol was not yet back and that I would call him again when they were.

I Was Still Suspicious

The patrol came in about 1 a.m. They said that the town was clear of Germans. I reported that to the colonel, and he said that the orders stood.

We moved at first light. I was still suspicious of the place, and instead of the normal order of march, I sent two Lt. Recce cars ahead, followed by the assault troop. When we got in sight of the bridge, we found it blown. That had been done after the patrol had left the night before.

The two Lt. Recce cars went cautiously down the road. As the leading car got near the bridge, small-arms fire was opened at him and the driver reversed out of it. He drove extremely well.

It is no light task to drive a Lt. Recce car in reverse at some 20 m.p.h. Unfortunately some of his spare petrol containers on the outside were hit and left a trail of petrol. He reversed past the second car and stopped and the officer in command of the advance section got out to have a word with the crew of the other car.

At that moment the Germans opened up with mortars. A mortar bomb hit the petrol in the road and in what seemed like a second the first car was ablaze and the fire flashed down the trail of split petrol and caught the second car.

That flared up so quickly that its crew were burnt in a vain attempt to get their extinguishers out. First round to the enemy. We had lost two cars. It was a valuable lesson in what may happen when spare petrol has to be carried outside, and how handy a fire extinguisher must be to be of any use.

Held Town, Hillside, Railway Tunnels

I had sent the assault troop immediately behind the car and they deployed on either side of the road and started to give covering fire.

The position seemed to be that the enemy were holding the town, and the hillside and railway tunnels above it, in some strength. I afterwards estimated it at about 300. The country was wooded.

On the right flank of the town were olive groves that gave admirable cover for defence. The tunnel mouths themselves were natural strong points and the Germans had mounted 81 m.m. mortars on trollies, on the line so that they were unpleasantly mobile. Of our two flanks the one on the right looked more promising for movement.

Not Making Much Progress

It was a hot, sunny day. By afternoon the position was that the section of the assault tp. on the left were not making much progress over the bad ground, and had failed to send any information back. Those on the right had been pinned down by M.G. fire over an open stretch of ground on their front.

They had sent a runner back, however, so I knew their position and I had pushed a carrier section out to the right. One carrier got to within 300 yards of a tunnel mouth, on the flank of the town, and was pretty well pinned there by M.G. and mortar fire.

The sergeant in that carrier had wireless and he sent back his dour but encouraging report on his plight throughout the day. I had got the mortars up and they were firing on the olive groves and on points in the town. The Regt. also had a tp. of 25 prs. and they were engaging the tunnel mouths and prepared positions in those areas; most difficult targets, as a direct hit was necessary to knock anything out.

A Stirring Evening in the Town

When darkness fell we were able to push the assault sections, now reinforced with another troop, into the town.

It must have been a stirring evening in the town. It was still held



by the Germans, and they attempted a night bayonet charge as soon as our sections reached it.

This had the effect of splitting my men up into small sections, and as far as I could discover, many of these groups spent the night in stalking Germans round the streets and gardens, very like, I should think, a film of G-men chasing gangsters.

One section sergeant got a pick-helve and ambushed German after German in the dark streets, the silence of his weapon aiding his method of attack. Towards midnight the remaining Germans in the town pulled out in their transport. It must have been well hidden, for the night patrol had missed it. That pretty well finished my Sqn.'s part in the battle. By midnight the Inf. Bde. behind had caught us up and had taken over.

Next morning they went up the slopes and winkled out the railway tunnels.

Why Isn't There an Ambush Here?

It was an interesting day. It demonstrated what delay a well sited defence can impose. Of course, it was ideal country for the Germans' tactics. All Southern Italy was.

Every minute of a recce. you were thinking not "Where will the next ambush be?" but "Why isn't there an ambush here?" The whole country might have been designed for the delaying tactics of the M.G., the mortar and the occasional 88 m.m. gun.

And, of course, it showed how important it is for any Commander of any force to have constant sitreps of everything that he can't see for himself, which is usually a great deal.

Blown Bridges, Ambushes, Cross-country Patrols

As we got up against what we imagined would be the Germans' main defence line, resistance hardened and our recce. patrols had to be content with finding out what the enemy positions were and with leaving the supporting infantry to overcome them. We came up against more mortars and S.P. guns. It was fighting an unseen

enemy. Brown bridges, ambushes, and cross-country patrols to pin-point the positions of the enemy that had fired on us.

We had one more success at Picerno, west of Potenza. One patrol up in the hills got good observation on the railway station about five miles away down in the valley. They had a Gunner F.O.O. with them and as he gave the range to the station, two German S.P. guns came down the road and turned into the station yard.

After the first salvo, one S.P. gun came out of the station yard and beat it back up the road, pursued by succeeding salvos. When the infantry took that area we went into the station yard to see what we had done. Sure enough, one S.P. gun had had a direct hit.

● *The material for this story was provided by Capt. R. W. Harris, Reconnaissance Corps.*

(2) Sergeant's Eye View

Sgt. Backhurst sums up

(Sgt. F. Backhurst, M.M., was in the North African Sicilian and Italian campaigns up to Foggia.)

Landing Ships, Tank

IN the North African landing men and vehicles were separate until the last minute, when drivers were called to the tank landing craft to land their vehicles. Crews then met their vehicles on shore. Against Sicily we used landing ships, tank. These craft are smashing. They are welded and hard to sink. They transport and land a full Sqn.—men and vehicles—together with attached troops. I suppose we'll use them in all landings from now on. They make the job a lot easier.

Section Battles

In Tunis and Italy we found ourselves mostly fighting section battles. Speed was the great thing. The first vehicle engages straight away. I used to lead my section. It's not according to the book, but, in my opinion, it worked better.

2in. Mortar

Apart from the Bren, our most useful weapon. The section commander fired it. We took the long tool-box from the observer's compartment in the left of the carrier and placed it in front, across the commander's slit. We mounted the mortar on the tool-box. The section commander manipulated the mortar through the slit. We found it worked well.

Smoke Discharger

We never used it, though the A.R.C.s did. The 2in. mortar could always do the job better. The discharger, being fixed, is difficult to fire accurately in a hurry. Besides, we would generally want the longer range.

Slit Trenches

They may be a curse to dig, but we dug them wherever possible. The alternative was less pleasant.

Wire

Experience taught us to carry one roll of Concertina per carrier. We used it a lot.

Mines

You can't emphasise enough to the boys at home that the corps has to become mine-conscious.

I was made mine-conscious in this way. My vehicle went over a Teller, which blew the bottom out of the carrier and turned it over. I went 30 yards through the air and my driver had several minutes sampling what it is like being buried alive.

Every man *must* know how to clear a minefield. Men get browned off clearing minefields. Directly you see a chap getting careless, send him away quick—he's dangerous.

Minefields are all right so long as you know the tricks and keep your head. If you have blundered into a field, how do you get out? It is obvious, but you have still got to think of it in the stress of the moment.

The German S jumping mine, full of ball-bearings that scatter at head height, is more efficient than ours. Ours is too sensitive. It goes off if a mouse steps on it. But the S mine gives a click as it jumps and you have time to *fling* yourself flat if you are *clever*. There is always an answer.

Casualties

I remember long discussions before we went out on what to do with casualties. In fact, you always keep carrying them and get them back at the first opportunity. You never leave them on the axis of advance or any book stuff like that. They're your pals. You wouldn't want to go into action with the idea of being dumped on the axis of advance.

Many times, on patrols, no one is coming behind you. Throughout Tunis, Sicily and Italy up to Foggia the Regt. suffered only 35 dead. We did this by combining dash with caution at the right time.

Hawkins Grenade

Unless very well buried, the Germans picked these up off the road like peanuts. We didn't often get time for any fancy burying. We used the grenade mainly for demolitions.

36 Grenade

We found these useful used from the carriers when assaulting

Revolvers

I took 12 rounds out and brought 13 rounds back, so I must have made one somewhere. I pointed my revolver at a lot of people and it was useful for that.

Fire Orders

"Enemy tank, 200, five rounds . . ." No, we didn't wait for that sort of thing. It was generally obvious where to fire. Your crews must be trained for quick action on their own initiative.

Field Publicity

This was first rate with the 8th Army and did a valuable job. You would go along (provided you weren't going first) and see a burnt-out vehicle, and three neat graves with a slogan saying how they got there. Next time the occasion arose, you did the opposite.

Air Attack

Presumably we won't be getting so much of this in future. "When in doubt bale out" went for us, especially during first contact in Tunisia when we hadn't the air cover and Jerry could spray us as he liked. It is sufficient to get just off the side of the road. He goes for the vehicle. We made a big point of correct baling out drill.

Tanks

We were told never to touch them. We sent back word and the 6-pdrs. took them on. At the end of the 650-mile dash into Tunisia from the North African landing, which we did in 3½ days, the 25-pdrs. were close up behind us and bagged 11 of the first tanks we met.

Royal Engineers

Everyone knows how good the Engineers are. Whenever possible we got them to come along with us in front. I was happy in my section when I had two Sappers travelling in my second carrier. They did great work and we learned from them.

Prisoners

We took their arms and gave them a jerk of the thumb in the right direction after doing our identification. Lesson: Don't take your love-letters into the front line. In a latrine we found an addressed envelope "116 Panzer Grenadiers"—just what we wanted to know. Most German N.C.O.s speak English. More useful is the ability to speak German by our own side. One of our officers could and was a great help to Intelligence further back in indicating which prisoners were the best subjects for questioning.

Petrol

There were a good many cases of petrol tins bursting through heat. We carried them outside the carrier or well away from the engine.

Food and Cooking

Compo rations are all they're cracked up to be. We cooked with sand (or earth) and petrol. The small cookers are useless in action. They clog; and step on them once in the carrier and they're finished.

Sleep

We did fairly well for sleep. When we were drawn back to harbour with the Sqn. or Regt., we were mostly not called on to do guards. These were done by H.Q. personnel or a reserve Tp. But there still was a spit and polish R.H.Q. guard mounted every night for which we were liable as our turn came round. The boys still kept one best battledress for guard and took a pride in looking smart.

Newspapers

We were better off than you might imagine. In Italy the *8th Army News* came up regularly. We saw the *Union Jack* and *Stars and Stripes*. In these papers we had news from all fronts as well as home news. Then we had our own *Tally-ho Gazette* duplicated daily, circulation two per Tp. It's surprising what a difference getting news makes, although you're making it yourself!

Junior Compressor

My driver, Tpr. Ship, was getting in some maintenance with a Junior Compressor when he spotted an enemy party of one Italian officer and six men. Covering them with the Junior Compressor, he made them lay down their arms and took them prisoner. This is what is meant by personal initiative.

Italian Attack

At Bronte, near Adrano, we were waiting for a wrecked bridge to be made passable. A number of lorries were queued up to take away the rubble. All at once a much superior force of Italians rose up from the side of a hill and bore down on us at full speed. Most of them carried attaché cases and they jumped straight into the lorries, apparently very pleased with themselves.

End of a Campaign

This is a bit of all right.