

WAR DIARY

WEST I. S. R., C. A. S. F.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>		<u>Initials</u>
NORTHAMPTON	1 Jun 40	0630	<p>The M.T. move to NORTHAMPTON was completed without any serious difficulty. At one point the Carlt. & York R. broke in on our convoy and caused some confusion, and on the Oxford By-Pass, the leading car of our convoy, containing the 2 i/c and the I.O., and two carriers turned left instead of right because of a confusion of signals from the guide on point duty. The guide then signalled the rest of the convoy on to the right and the leading car and carriers had to drive very fast to regain the head of the column, as the trucks and busses were hurrying to catch us, thinking we were out of sight ahead.</p> <p>When the convoy reached NORTHAMPTON, we were guided into The County Cricket Grounds, where our cooks, who had come up on Friday, had their cookers set up and breakfast all ready --- this being the place selected by the Staff Captain on Friday. No sooner had a few of the cars and trucks entered the park than we were ordered out and the convoy was led to EAST PARK PARADE, where the convoy was parked under the trees. As the cooks had to move over here, breakfast was very late, not being completed till 0930 hrs. No breakfast for officers.</p> <p>A temporary Bn H.Q. was set up on the west side of EAST PARK PARADE. The 2 i/c scrounged two tents for us. The rest of the Bn were shown to their billets. The day was spent in finding billets and in resting.</p>	
EAST PARK PARADE (NORTHAMPTON)	2 May 40	0940	<p>Sunday morning found the Bn still sleepy, but very happy in their new situation because their brief recce of the city on Saturday had revealed to their admiring eyes the largest aggregation of feminine beauty that any of us had ever seen in one place before, even in Canada. As one member of our Bn expressed it, "I had my eye on one good looking girl coming down the street. As she passed me, I saw a better looking one coming. ## I finally discovered that I could just make a grab in the dark, as they were all good looking."</p> <p>However, we had a Church Parade this morning. Then we resumed our recce of the city.</p> <p>Still no officers' mess, the officers having to buy their food in the city.</p>	H.P.J.
		1430	<p>The 2 i/c, I.O., Scout Officer, and one Int. private and three drivers went out to make a road recce towards CLACTON-ON-SEA. We got as far as ROYSTON, making route reports on all difficult portions of the route. Then we returned and made out an interim report for Bde.</p>	G.B.J.

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EAST PARK PARADE (NORTHAMPTON)	3 Jun 40	0850	The same party, plus a Sjt from the attached tps of the R.C.E., spent the day making a road recce and route reports from ROWSTON ## to CLACTON-ON-SEA. We reached CLACTON at 1530 hrs and spent an hour resting and seeing the sights of that city. During this visit the I.O. challenged the Sniper Officer to a shooting match in an indoor rifle range, and the I.O. won by one point. We finally reached home at 2130hrs.	
			During the day an officers' mess was organized in a house on EAST PARK PARADE across from our two tents. On room in this house is the Bn Orderly Room, but no blackouts are installed as yet.	A.P.F.
		1330 1530 1900	The Bn fell in on the Cricket Ground and then practised embussing and debussing. Sports. The Bn fell in again ## and marched to Northampton Cricket Arena where they attended a very enjoyable evening of music and songs supplied by people of this city. At the end of the program, the Brig. awarded the prizes won by the W.N.S.R. in Bde sports. Also he presented our Bn with the Bde shield, which was for the winning Bn.	
"	4 Jun 40	1600	An adv party proceeded to ASHBY CASTLE to lay out a camp site for Z Gp. The Padre went to London to purchase stores for the Officers' Mess.	A.P.F.
ASHBY CASTLE	5 Jun 40	0750	The Bn was embussed and started to move to ASHBY CASTLE, which we reached without incident. The rest of the day was spent in setting up tents and making plans for a life under canvas. The men explored the adjacent villages during the evening and returned mourning the delights of Northampton. The M.O. was overlooked in informing our people of our move out of Northampton. After some trouble in securing information and transportation, he finally reached us in the new camp at noon, breathing fire and brimstone and bitterly complaining about how we had wronged him.	APPX III APPX IV A.P.F.
"	6 Jun 40	1200	By noon today we were comfortably settled ## down under canvas. An inlying and an outlying piquet were established, and the I. Sec. mapped the camp area and the surrounding country. Today the I. Sec. had its first casualty. Pte. Charles Barkhouse suffered a fractured thigh when the water cart he was guiding overturned. He was taken to Northampton General Hospital.	APPX I A.P.F.

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<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>		<u>Initials</u>
ASHBY CASTLE	6	2000	The Staff Captain came out and ordered us to strike canvass in preparation for a move tomorrow.	
	Jun 40	2330	Not a tent is standing. Everyone except the Q.M. department and the Transport are preparing for a night under the stars. Many of the men are a bit excited, as they think they are on the eve of going to the war. Singing and loud jokes were heard till midnight.	N.P.J.
			During the day, while riding his motor cycle on duty, Sgt. Whynot, R., was seriously injured and taken to Northampton General Hospital.	
GUILLEMONT BARRACKS	& 7 Jun 40	0130	The Adj woke up the Coy and group comdrs and summoned us to a conference at the officers' mess tables. There by the light of a gasoline lantern we drank a cup of cocoa and ate a sandwich, and then the C.O. informed us that we we were to move out early in the morning.	
		0445	Reveille. After Reveille the camp ground resembled an ant bed disturbed by the kick of a boot. Packing kits, shaving, loading trucks, carrying baggage and boxes, and all the activities necessary in getting embussed. The men had an early breakfast, and seemed cheerful after their decidedly chilly night under one blanket, many with only their web equipment to keep them warm.	
		0750	The embussing was carried out smoothly and the convoy was on the move towards the Bde S.P. by 0835 hrs. There was a great deal of speculation as to our destination. Some claimed we were going to Scotland, some were even optimistic to suggest France. But the weary I. Sec., who had done fatigues all night and marked the route on all the maps as soon as daylight permitted, knew that we were in fact headed towards our old stamping ground in the vicinity of the Ely Pub.	
		0900	We passed the Bde S.P. exactly on time, and received a cheery "Good Morning" from Brig. Price. The trip was carried out successfully on the whole, in spite of running into another convoy en route. The I Sec had its second casualty within twenty-four hours today. Sgt. Annis, the I. Sgt., was hit by a civilian motorcycle and suffered fractures of his right leg and right arm. He was picked up by a n ambulance and taken to Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot.	H.P.J.
		1530	We were met by Major Harris and Lt. Parker at the Sandhurst Corner on the London Road and guided to Guillemont Barracks. Our men were a disgruntled lot when they found themselves back here. To top it off, the Scots regt. which had been here during our absence had left the barracks in a terribly	

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Guillemont Barracks	7 May	1614	dirty state. One of our men aptly described ### our feelings when he said "I admire British discipline but don't think much of their sanitation". We had to set up our field kitchens in the field and feed everybody. The mess hall was too dirty to use.	H.B.F.
"	7 8 Jun	1600	<p><i>Total strength :- Officers - 21 O.Rs. - 702</i></p> <p>The big event of today was the King's inspection of the whole 3 Cdn Inf Bde. The whole Bde were lined up on three sides of Guillemont parade ground at 1450. The sun was very bright and the ground was still hotter. Finally the King arrived, and we shooed the men with water buckets off the square and stiffened up for the inspection. When, in addition to the King, we saw the Queen, then we thought we were really getting a good send-off.</p> <p>After the inspection, the C.O. told us that both the G.O.C. and the Brig. expressed satisfaction with our appearance.</p>	H.B.F.

*Total strength :- Officers - 21
O.Rs - 702 .*

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Guillemont Barracks	9 Jun 40	0745 0945 1045 1200	Church Parades. Voluntary. <i>Total strength: -</i> The C.O. attended a conference at Div. H.Q.	H.P.G. APPX V
"	10 Jun 40	0800 1300	P. T. and rest on the morning. Route marches by coys in the afternoon. <i>Total strength: - Officers - 21</i> <i>O.Rs - 702</i>	H.P.G.
"	11 Jun 40	0800 1300	P. T. and rest in the morning. Route marches by coys in the afternoon. Today Mr. Parker trained his scouts in the use of the Tommy Gun. Bde sent a warning order for Adv Party for France. Lt. Parker, P.SqM. Bullock and Sjt. Curphy were detailed by the G. <i>Total strength: Officers - 21</i> <i>O.Rs. - 669</i>	H.P.G.
"	12 Jun 40	1145 1900 2000	Details from each coy preceeded to STONY CASTLE RANGE to fire the A.Tk rifle. Bde sent a warning order for the dispatch of carriers to France. Sixty O.R.s came from Borden as reinforcements. They were fully equipped. <i>Total strength: Officers - 21</i> <i>O.Rs - 720</i>	H.P.G.
"	13 Jun 40	0830 0930 1230 1630	P. T. The morning and early afternoon was spent in packing and storing kit bage and surplus baggage. These were stored at REEVE'S DEPOSITORY, FRIMLEY ROAD, CAMBERLEY. Lt. Parker and his party reported to Bde en route to France. The I. Sec. drew maps of France from the Map Stores, Aldershot. <i>Total strength: - Officers 21</i> <i>O.Rs - 720</i>	H.P.G. APPX V APPX I

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Guilleumont Barracks	14 Jun 40	0830	The C. O. inspected the Coys.	
		1300	We heard over the radio the news of the German army army marching into Paris. It was predicted by many that the French would "fold up" now that Paris was taken.	
		1400	All transport was loaded and the afternoon devoted to pay parades and further preparations for the expected move to France.	
		1715	Received the from Bde the order for our move to France.	
		1800	Received warning order from Bde that our transport would proceed to port of embarkation tonight, and that the troops would go tomorrow. Our C. O. took no action on this warning, as he didn't believe these moves would actually occur.	H.P.F.
		1930	Bde informed us that the planned move to France was cancelled until further orders.	
			<i>Total strength :- Officers - 21 O.Rs - 721 .</i>	
"	15 Jun 40	0830	P. T.	
		0900	0900 At the C.O.'s conference, he informed us that no further orders on the move to France had been received.	
		1000	Route marches by coys.	
		2045	Lt. Parker, P.S.M. Bullock and Sjt. Curphy reported back from their abortive adv party. They spent Thursday night at a rest camp at EXETER. They refuelled Friday morning and pushed on to PLYMOUTH where they reported to the E.S.O. Their vehicle was marked by the E.S.O. and driven on the dock for loading. At 1800 hrs, while going back to the Rest Camp for supper, they were told by the R.C.R.P. that a reverse order had come and that all of the adv parties of 1 Cdn Inf Div must return to the dock to get their vehicles off the ship and take them back to the Rest Camp to await further orders. At 0800 hrs, 15 Jun, our adv party got orders from the Commandant of the Rest Camp to return to their Bn. They were to check in at the Rest Camp at EXETER on way back to learn whether any new orders had come. They started immediately for EXETER, where no orders had arrived. Lt. Parker then phoned 3 Cdn Inf Bde for instructions. The Staff Captain ordered him to bring our adv party back. Lt. Parker was disappointed at not at least setting foot ashore in France and seeing some of the signs of war.	H.P.F.
			<i>Total strength :- Officers - 21 O.Rs - 720</i>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Grimblemont Barracks	16 Jun 40	0930 1030	<p>Church parades. At the end of the Protestant church service, the Brig. Price gave us a short talk, telling us that the B.E.F. were being withdrawn from France because organized resistance by the French army was practically at an end. He also said that The Germans have been a force of troops with transport ready for the invasion of the British Isles; and that the Royal Navy cannot guarantee that no Germans can land. We are now, he said, to be part of the defense force of Britain, and must redouble our training to make use of the lessons learned in France by the B.E.F. The two lessons he mentioned were that the Germans fear the bayonet and that properly controlled and applied small arms fire were really effective against dive bombing air craft. He also said that the Germans would be unable to land any of their heavy tanks on British soil. (This opinion was received by many of us with considerable reservation). Finally, he promised us that wherever the most important part of the fighting in this war took place, there the Canadians would be sent.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Total strength: - officers - 21 O.Rs - 718.</i></p>	H.P.F.
"	17 Jun 40	0800	<p>An identification parade was held to enable a woman to search our ranks for two men whom she accused of attempting to rape her. She didn't find the guilty parties in our Bn. The boys in Bn H.Q. were sweating as she came nearer and nearer to them without having found her men in the coys.</p>	
		0900	<p>The Bn less "A" Coy marched out to the practice area East of CROWTHORNE to practise tactical exercises, paying particular attention to A.A. defence while on the march and while halted, digging slit trenches and coy attack schemes.</p>	
		1800	<p>When we arrived back in barracks, we heard that France had asked for an armistice with the Germans. Few of us were surprised at this news.</p>	
		2100	<p>We listened to Winston Churchill's speech on the news from France. During the following news broadcast we heard that fighting was still still going on in France.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Total strength: - officers - 21 O.Rs. - 718</i></p>	H.P.F.

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Guillemont Barracks	18 Jun 40	0800	The coys paraded in battle order and marched to PYESTOCK WOOD for a day of tactical exerciss. <i>Total strength :- officers - 21 O.Rs. - 716</i>	<i>W.P.G.</i>
"	19 Jun 40	0800 1330	Bayonet and other S.A.T. this morning. Sports in the afternoon. <i>Total strength :- officers - 21 O.Rs. - 715</i>	<i>W.P.G.</i>
"	20 Jun 40	0815	"D" and "H.Q." and one pl each of "A", "B" and "C" coys together with all their transport marched to assembly positions in the vicinity of WISHMOOR CROSS, where they arrived about noon. During the afternoon, they practised various tactical exercises designed to train them to deal with small groups of parachute troops. <i>Total strength :- officers - 21 O.Rs. - 715</i>	<i>W.P.G.</i>
"	21 Jun 40	0900	All troops have returned from WISHMOOR CROSS, after a night in the woods. <i>Total strength :- officers - 21 O.Rs - 715</i>	<i>W.P.G.</i>
		1000	The plan for Mobile Recce Units came today from Div. The C. O. called Lt. Parker in and offered him the command of the West N. S. R. detachment, to be which is to be known as 2 Troop of 3 Can Recce Squadron. After long and careful thought, Parker decided to accept this offer. When volunteers for this new force were called for, about 100 men volunteered. Capt. Hebb supervised the task of trying out the motor cycle riding abilities of these applicants. Only 48 could be accepted, this being the authorized strength of the troop.	<i>W.P.G.</i>

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Guillemont Barracks	22 Jun	0830	Mjr. Berringer proceeded to Bde H.Q. in order to accompany the Staff Captain on an administrative recce of the BLENHEIM PALACE grounds.	
	40	1055	An order from Div instructed us to draw twenty-two 30-str buses for the proposed M.T. move. Mjr. Beck went for these buses, and brought them back before dinner time.	H.P.G.
			Total strength: - Officers - 21 O.Rs. - 713	
"	23 Jun	0945	Church parades.	
	40	1045		
		0930	Lt. Day handed over a copy of movement table for the pending move. Day got this at Div. last night.	
		1115	The C.O. attended a conference at Bde H.Q. and received the order for the move.	
		1100	Lt. Beck went to Rushmoor Arena and got the twenty-two str buses.	H.P.G.
		1300	At a C.O.s conference in our conference room, plans were made for tomorrow's move. Meanwhile, Mjr. Berringer went on another recce of BLENHEIM PALACE area.	APPX I.
			The rest of the day was occupied with final preparations for our tomorrow's move.	
		1600	Sixty-six O.R.s arrived from 1st Line Reinforcements, and were billeted in the Gym pending allotment to coys.	APPX IV.
			Total strength: - Officers - 20. O.Rs - 664.	
		1800	Four ^{additional} sub subalterns arrived today. These are Lieuts. Millard, J.O., Hiltz, F.E., Perry, R.E. and Smeltzer, W.K.	H.P.G. APPX II and V.

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Blenheim Palace Grounds	24 Jun 40	0400	Today started with Reveille at 0400hrs, and breakfast between 0415 and 0500 hrs, at Guillemont Barracks.	
		0530	Mjr Harris and Lt Cochran started off with one N.C.O. and two men per coy to act as an adv party, their job being to allot coy areas and act as guides to <u>BLENHHEIM PALACE</u> grounds. The rest of the Bn embussed on <u>MINLEY ROAD</u> and finally got under way at 0914 as soon as M.T. of the R22eR got out of our way. We passed the Bde S.P. twelve minutes late, but made that time up before we reached <u>HENLEY-on-THAMES</u> .	
		1350	After a trip without any incident of importance, we reached our allotted space in the Castle grounds, and -- after considerable confusion not unaccompanied by some heated tempers --- we found trees to take provide ourselves and our vehicles with the necessary shade and concealment.	
		1430	The cooks provided a hot meal to everybody, and we then took up the work of digging slit trenches for air raid shelter. In some parts of the ground, rock was encountered a foot below the surface, thus making the digging very difficult. The Adj showed the greatest ingenuity in dealing with this hard digging --- he got the attached Engineers to dig his trench with their air drills.	
		2100		
		2130	Two impromptu sing-songs enlivened the evening. Moreover, although we were all C.B., the boys did not lack feminine company, for the village maidens soon discovered the location of the troops in the Palace grounds, and they swarmed over the place all evening.	<i>H.P.F.</i>
			<i>Total strength: - Officers - 24 O.Rs. - 729</i>	
	25 Jun 40	0105	Our first bit of realism in this war came with two air raid warnings §§§§§ The sirens howled for several minutes, and we could hear planes - probably British -- flying overhead. The men were wakened and stood by their new slit trenches, but no bombs dropped near. The tents, which came last night, were put up under the trees.	
		0900	The C.O. attended a conference at Bde H.Q. where the reorganization of Z-Group was established. We have the same attached §§ units as in the Z-Group of Castle Ashby days. During the morning, more work was done on the slit trenches. This time, the men worked with an unwonted vigour. Doubtless the air raid scare has improved their willingness to dig shelter for themselves.	<i>H.P.F.</i>
		1230	§§§§§ Mjr. Courtney and the I. O. went with other parties of this Bde on a recon trip North of Kidderminster.	

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Blenheim Palece Grounds	25 Jun 40	2335	Another air raid alarm. We all donned battle order and stood in the slit trenches, waiting hopefully for the air raid. <i>Total strength:— Officers — 24 O. Rs. — 729</i>	H.P.F.
"	26 Jun 40	0130	After a long cold wait wait for the raid that did not come, and for the all-clear signal which also did not come, we finally gave up waiting in the trenches, and went back to our beds. We later learned that the all-clear signal came at about 0330 hrs.	
		0600	Reveille. The rest of the day was devoted to rather leisurely training. The rations today and yesterday were very scanty, and everybody complains of being very hungry. Even the food in the officers' mess is not up to its usual quality and abundance. As the Z-Group is on four hours' notice today, the men are allowed to leave camp during the evening. <i>Total strength:— Officers — 24 O. Rs. — 727</i>	H.P.F.
"	27 Jun 40		More training by coys. Capt. Clennett and the I. O. went on a road race to WIMBORNE . ALDERSHOT. The Group is still on four hours' notice today. <i>Total strength:— Officers — 24 O. Rs. — 723</i>	H.P.F.
"	28 Jun 40		The Group is on one hour's notice today. <i>Total strength:— Officers — 24 O. Rs. — 721</i>	H.P.F.
"	29 Jun 40		No air raid warning today. As the Group is on four hours' notice today, passes were issued in the afternoon up till 1800hrs and after supper till 2200hrs. <i>Total strength:— Officers — 24 O. Rs. — 720</i>	H.P.F.

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Blenheim Palace Grounds	30 Jun 40	0830 0930 1930	<p>Church parades. The Protestant church parade of Z-Group was held in a field near Bde H.Q. Owing to the wind and constant passing of airplanes, and the size of the square of troops, most of the West N.S.R. were unable to hear the sermon.</p> <p>As the Group was on four hours' notice, passes to WOODSTOCK were again issued.</p> <p>The boys of Malvern College gave a concert in the Palace grounds. 100 members of Z-Group were chosen to attend, and greatly enjoyed the concert.</p>	
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During the last few days, many of our officers indulged in "recce flights" in the airplanes of the neighbouring airport. All these officers reported favourably on the good concealment of our camp.

Today we were warned to look out for parachutists, and all guards and sentries were ordered to bring in all suspects.

7.8.7.

Total strength: -
officers - 24
O.R.s - 719.

NOTE ON 2 TROOP, 3 CAN RECCE SQUADRON

This new Recce Sqn is designed for tactical and protective recce at the front, flanks and rear of mobile columns. "The organization is such that the Recce Squadron may be employed as a whole or self-contained troops may be decentralized to Battalion columns. The latter will be regarded as the normal method of employment."

Our delegation to this organization, 2 Tp, was officially organized at BLENHEIM PALACE camp on 24 Jun 40. At that date, the 3 Can Recce Sqn was attached to 3 Cdn Inf Bde., and Lt. Parker had to sever his official connection with this Bn. However, Parker liked our food so well that he continued to eat in the West N.S.R. officers' mess.

7.8.7.