

Instructions regarding preparation of War Diaries; (which will be kept from first day of mobilization, creation or embodiment), are contained in F.S. Regs. Vol. 1.

Title pages will be prepared.

WAR DIARY OR INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required)

M.P.M 11
40/P & S/37

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. i/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
			<u>1ST BATTALION THE BLACK WATCH (RAR) OF CANADA</u>	
			From <u>1ST MARCH 1943</u> To <u>31ST MARCH 1943</u>	
			<u>EAST WITTERING, SUSSEX (BILLETS) REF SHEET 132 M.R. 229.168</u>	

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In the field	1st Mar		Arrived at our assembly area in the vicinity of LIPHOOK at approx. 0100hrs. The move was entirely uneventful and every one found their exact bivouac spots without difficulty. The men of the rifle coys were lifted in British TCVs and as there were many of them there was no crowding. The day dawned clear and cool, and time was passed by the men resting and the senior officers running off to O Groups. The main event of the evening was the arrival of the blanket lorries and issue of 1 blanket per man.	G.S.B.
	2nd Mar		Clear and cool. Still in our area but were told that we would move on in the evening. Another day of O Groups and refce parties. We finally pulled out at 1600hrs for the village of PUTTENHAM near the HOGS BACK, not far from Aldershot. Arrived at about 2400hrs, bedded down, and when we liaised with Bde. found that the Bde. Officers had arrived but that their office vehicles had not and consequently they were not ready for business.	G.S.B.
	3rd Mar		Clear and cool. Remained all day in PUTTENHAM. Coys kept patrols out all the time and an O.P. was manned. Nothing of great interest occurred since we are still a long way from the enemy. Continued O Gps at Bde and at BHQ. There were also a great many enemy army Coops planes over us watching our every movement.	G.S.B.
	4th Mar		Clear and cool. Still in PUTTENHAM area but rumours of a quick move during the day. Shortly before 1300hrs we were told that we were expected to pass Bde. Start Point at 1330hrs, so we had to move with a tremendous rush. Ran into large traffic jams in Aldershot, in which C Coy was left far behind. We finally arrived in READING about 2100hrs and found the main bridge blow. We turned off to the Wilderness and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. At about 0100hrs we found that we could get marching troops and jeeps across the bridge at SONNING so off we went to SONNING, where we established defensive positions about 0330hrs. The night passed sleeplessly.	G.S.B.
	5th Mar		Clear and cold. Our vehicles were brought up and we left SONNING about 0830, the men still marching. Our route took us through CAVERSHAM and then north to EMMER GREEN. It was a day of constant fighting and the Bn covered itself in glory although there were times when we feared all was lost. By 1700hrs we had been established in a static position for several hours beating off attacks and had ended up by liquidating a Bty of 6 in Howitzers.	G.S.B.

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	5th Mar		We were then ordered to continue our advance and at 2200hrs near KIDMORE END we annihilated a Bty of 25 pdrs capturing approx. 300 PsOW. About 2400hrs we finally stopped marching and settled for the night at BISHOPWOOD FARM.	
	6th Mar		Clear and cold. O Gp at 0600hrs and again orders to move. A long slow morning brought us to NETTLEBED where we took up a defensive position astride the road west of the town. There was much uncertainty at Bde in the afternoon and we were told that 3rd Div and then that 12 Corps would take over from us. At 1900hrs we hit the trail again and marched to STADHAMPTON where we found the bridge had been blown. It was about 0200hrs before we arrived.	G.S.B.
	7th		Clear and cold. Under orders from Bde we crossed the river to CHISLEHAMPTON at about 0600hrs this morning after some good recce work by Capt.Griffin, There was an O Gp at Bde at 0900hrs after which the day was spent in defensive positions and the usual patrols were sent out. Bde decided to establish a fortress, and moved their H.Q. just behind us. Then around midnight word was received to move on to GREAT MILTON, just a few miles further north, and away the men marched leaving about 0400hrs.	G.S.B.
	8th Mar		Arrived at our camp area just before dawn, and we allowed only a short time before we moved on toward LONG CRENDON. We were road bound most of the day because of blown bridges, but the coys were active in backing up the other Bns in the Bde. In the evening the Bde Commander decided to attack LONG CRENDON which was believed to be held in strength. There was in fact a battalion in the town which withdrew in the face of a Bde attack. The attack was successful and transport was brought up very late.	G.S.B.
	9th Mar		Clear and warm. We spent the morning counting our casualties and found that we had lost about forty more men. By this time the Calgary Highrs. and R de Mais. had been so cut up, that by their lending us some of their vehicles, we could motorize the whole brigade at its present strength. The strength of the Brigade at this point showed: R.H.C. 25 Offrs, 450 O.Rs - R de Mais. 16 Offrs, 215 O.Rs - Calg.Highrs 10 Offrs 195 O.Rs. This was done and the men had no longer to worry about marching long distances. We had been fortunate so far in that none of our senior Officers had been	G.S.B.

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	9th Mar		declared casualties. In the afternoon we made a short move to New Closes Farm near CHEARSLEY, where we adopted an anti-panzer defensive position. In our situation we had a lovely view across the valley and we could see the after effects of the battle the 4th Bde. had had with enemy tanks. There were enemy tanks operating in the area. During the night our patrols were active and captured PsO.W. and an enemy tank and m/c.	G.S.B.
	10th Mar		Clear and cold. We left New Closes early and moved in the direction of BLETCHLY and FENNY STRATFORD. We reached BLETCHLY without undue incident and adopted defensive positions. However late in the afternoon, it was decided to retire a few miles to LITTLE HORRAGE for a better defensive position. A platoon of B Coy and 2 detachments of A/Tk guns succeeded in disposing of 7 inf. lorries during the day.	G.S.B.
	11th Mar		Clear and cold. A way was found around the blown bridges and we advanced several miles beyond BLETCHLY to Milton Keynes, where we adopted temporary positions. Late in the afternoon we received word that the enemy was strongly occupying NEWPORT PAGNELL, and we received a confusion of orders about retiring. It was finally decided to move all our transport back a few miles the other side of BLETCHLY where it was brigaded. While the men marched a mile or two directly west across country to LITTLE WOOLSTAGE. It was discovered later that the enemy had retired from NEWPORT PAGNELL, so our travelling around had been unnecessary.	G.S.B.
	12th Mar		Clear and cold. Our transport and men were brought back together just after dawn. The men nearly frozen having been out all night with only their gas capes to cover them. Our orders were then to move to SALFORD and adopt new defensive positions. While enroute at just 0900hrs we received the message "Spartan-Cease fire". When the word was passed to all ranks, all remaining thunderflashes, etc., were set off in celebration, and the local inhabitants were scared out of nine days growth! In any case we proceeded to SALFORD and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. All ranks were pleased that it was all over for a while. There had been no real hardship but the discomforts had been many and the lack of any straight opportunity for sleep was beginning to affect the behaviour of every one.	G.S.B.

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	12th Mar		In the evening we received word that we would start the return journey before 0500hrs the next morning. Consequently all ranks retired early expecting to get away at dawn. Highlight of the day was a free issue of rum.	
	13th Mar		Clear and cool. Everyone up early but no time given for departure. All our casualties from NETTLEBED and LONG CRENDON showed up, together with an insufficient number of TCVs to transport the whole Bn. Matters were finally ironed out and our convoy got away without incident at 1130hrs for a straight push back to our coastal area. Our only worry was a stringent shortage of petrol and it would be chiefly through good luck that every vehicle could get back. It was about 0230hrs before the Bn reached home and it was apparent that many petrolless carriers, mc's etc. were still strewn along our route.	GFB
	14th Mar		The main part of the convoy arrived at BHQ in East Wittering at about 0230hrs and found the Greek Bn still in possession. So everyone had to make themselves as comfortable as they could under the circumstances. During the whole of the day vehicle stragglers kept coming in, and will probably be several days before everyone has returned. Meals were prepared in the cookhouses, and to everyone's horror they discovered they were still eating compe rations, and corned beef was to be the menu for several days to come. There was one blessing during the entire scheme that everyone was extremely thankful for, and that was the complete absence of rain. Our discomforts would have been real misery had we been soaked at any time.	GFB
	15th Mar		Clear and cold. The Greek Bn finally moved out at 1200hrs and we took over our operational role. We spent the day cleaning up, and formulating rules for dress and procedure in case the expected call by a D.V. should eventuate. Once before our Honorary Colonel almost visited us, and everyone was in a great dither until the whole thing fell through. We hope the same doesn't happen again. In the evening the A/O.C the Adjt and the IO, attended a meeting at Bde where problems arising from "Spartan" were discussed.	GFB
	16th Mar		Clear and warm. Day was spent chiefly in forwarding preparations for the D.V. The A./O.C. rec'd	

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	16th Mar		a spot in CHICHESTER and the Priory Park was picked for the inspection, if it ever comes off. In the evening Capt. Jarvis, who has returned to us told all the officers about the organization and running of 1st Corps H.Q. There was also a Coy Comds meeting at which future plans and promotions were discussed.	GDB
	17th Mar		Clear and cool. A great deal of time is being consumed by Courts of Inquiry, necessitated by the comparatively large losses of equipment on SPARTAN. The many moves by transport, and sudden moves at night led to the leaving behind in haystacks and the like, of unbelievable items. It will probably be some time before it is all straightened out.	GDB
	18th Mar		Clear and cool. Our days are being spent refurbishing our equipment, and getting as many men away on leave as possible. Several leaves were cancelled during SPARTAN and we now have to double up to get back to schedule. The Adjutant spent the day at the Holding Unit and at 2nd Echelon getting final particulars of the new organization ironed out.	GDB
	19th Mar		Clear and cold. In the evening a long delayed meeting of the promotion board was held. There have been no promotions of any consequence since they were originally frozen in January. Sgt. Tweedale, the present tech. sgt was to be CQMS, and to be acting RQMS, and Sgt. Mitchell is to be CQMS of Support Coy. About 20 other promotions were also discussed. Future policy was also laid down as to the handling of confirmed NCOs who are at present in the Holding Unit as reinforcements for us. Lieut. Rolland finally returned to us after a rather long stay in the hospital.	GDB
	20th Mar		Clear and cool. Capt. Wood, who left the Bn over a year ago has returned to this country and paid us a visit today and an impromptu reunion was held in BHQ mess. Capt. Brown, who has been attached to us for 3 months also received word to report back to the holding unit. He left us vowing he would shortly return as a reinforcement. We are hearing rumours that we will shortly be going back under canvas, since the 4th and 6th Bdes are reported to have received their movement orders.	GDB

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	21st Mar		<p>Clear and cool. The first church parades under our new padre were held today. H/Capt. Goforth provided us with quite a change in sermons after what we had been accustomed to. An R.C. church parade had been called but had to be cancelled at the last minute. The padre had endeared himself to the men already with his ready wit and his good humor. One night during Spartan he narrowly escaped being taken prisoner while out on a night patrol. I.O. attended a lecture at Corps HQ the morning given by the GIL of Montgomery's 8th Army.</p>	GFB
	22nd Mar		<p>Clear and cool. A dull day with preparations for promotions and generally getting back in our stride in general trg. We had had no further word as to our D.V. and consequently our equipment is being maintained in a constant state of readiness.</p>	GFB
	23rd Mar		<p>Clear and cold for the most part with a slight bit of rain during the night. Promotion parade was held in the morning and some twenty NCOs were advanced, thereby going toward filling out the new establishment. In the evening all officers heard a lecture by an Engineer officer, on the problems arising in their particular arm on Spartan. It consisted generally of a plea for self central control rather than leaving their pl and coy under command of other formations.</p>	GFB
	24th Mar		<p>Clear and cool. Another dull day. The only thing of particular interest was Lieut. Johnston, who returned to Canada about a year ago, and who has come back to this country and is spending a few days with us renewing old acquaintances.</p>	GFB
	25th Mar		<p>Rainy and cool. The first real rain in this area in over a month which pleases the agriculturalists hereabouts no end, and only makes us the more thankful that we didn't have any rain on the scheme. In the afternoon all officers attended a lecture by the Chief 2 Div umpire, Col Pawle. Our div. evidently earned plenty of kudos and were told that they were heartily to be congratulated. In the evening a second lecture by supporting arms was given by a light AA Offr, in which the mysteries of the Bofors gun were brought to light. The largest reinforcement draft in months arrived late in the afternoon. It consisted of one officer, Lieut. Chapman, and fifty nine O.Rs. This draft considerably fattens our rifle coys and really gives them a good round number of men to work with;</p>	GFB

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	26 Mar		Overcast and cool. We were threatened with a visit by the GOC but it never eventuated. Speculation still running rife as to who our new C.O. is going to be. Until he arrives things will necessarily remain more or less at a standstill.	G.S.B.
	27th Mar		Clear and cool. Things are dull and even bump is scarce. A great deal of time is spent in speculation as to when and where we will get down to our real job. There are nearly as many theories as there are men, and a lot of outlandish bets have been made. More Royal Air Force personnel were attached to us today for a week; Capt. Donald who has just arrived in this country and who had been with the Bn at Aldershot, Nova Scotia came up on attachment today.	G.S.B.
	28th Mar		Clear and cool. All ranks had been looking forward to the first Sunday of complete rest in a long time. Such hopes were destroyed since approx. 50 Offrs and NCOs had to attend a demonstration of German tactics put on by the 1st Div nr. Eastbourne. The Sunday was ruined but the show was well worth while, and we hear that our own Div will have to repeat it for the benefit of the Local Home Guard Bns.	G.S.B.
	29th Mar		The day dawned clear and cool, but became showery and blustery in the afternoon. 2 NCOs from the RCE arrived in the morning to instruct the Bn., during the forthcoming week on the laying and lifting of minefields. Final arrangements were made for the showing of trg films at Chichester tomorrow. The Adjt. suddenly has decided to take his leave tomorrow so as to be back for the arrival of the new O.C. Highlight of the day was the return of the Padre with only 8 pence left in his pocket, 2 days earlier than his leave allowed.	G.S.B.
	30th Mar		The greater part of the Bn were up betimes and coys marched independently to Chichester arriving there about 0945hrs. to see the trg films. The films were declared a success and on their completion a haversack lunch was tucked away and the return march began. The Bn arrived back at the billet area at about 1600hrs. Major Hunt of the Vics has taken over the A/Adjt job much to the joy of the I.O. In the evening the officers listened to a lecture by Lt. Col. Letourneau of the RCAMS on his branch of the service	G.S.B.

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	30th Mar		and in which he outlined the new organization for the evacuation of casualties. This lecture was followed by the A/O.Cs discussion of a forthcoming exercise in river crossing using pontoon boats.	
	31st Mar		Overcast and cool. On the whole a fairly quite day to round off an otherwise busy month. Owing to increases in leave allowances after Spartan there are at present many officers and O.Rs away. The A/O.C. held a promotion parade in the afternoon and in the evening there was a meeting at Bognor for Adjutants sponsored by 2nd Echelon. This was attended by the IO since our Adjutant is away on leave.	<p><i>GSB.</i></p> <p><i>General Rawlings Maj</i></p>