

The Black Watch comes to defend the Newfoundland Airport

By Robert G Pelley, 2020-05-27)
bobsganderhistory.com

A meeting of the Canadian War Cabinet on 05 June 1941 looked at the situation in Gander. A joint Canadian-American reconnaissance party examining the situation at the Newfoundland Airport had concluded that further ground troops would be needed.

There was a need to protect notably the runway complex, the transmitting and receiving facilities, key points such as the Administration building and control tower, the water supply and in particular the petrol dumps.

It was expected, in those days before the RAF Ferry Command was envisaged, that there would be about 3400 US Air Corps and 500 RCAF personnel. It was feared that if Canada did not provide the ground troops, the US would furnish troops of her own.

The following is an extract from the minutes of the meeting of 05 June 40:

25. MR. KING agreed that all steps necessary should be taken to keep Newfoundland within the Canadian orbit. In the circumstances described, a further Canadian infantry battalion for the protection of the airport should be provided.

26. The Committee, thereupon, approved the employment of a further Canadian infantry battalion in Newfoundland, as recommended.

Eleven days later, orders were sent by the Chief of National Defence Headquarters to the commander of the 1st Battalion of the Black Watch, which was then training in Camp Valcartier, north of Quebec City, about 20 miles by rail.

110.

DND HQS 7410

Le chef d'état-major général au commandant de district, Québec

Chief of the General Staff to District Officer Commanding, Québec

TELEGRAM G.S. 0371

Ottawa, June 16, 1940

MOST IMMEDIATE. RUSIL. SECRET. Following for Officer Commanding Black Watch from Chief of General Staff. You will command army detachment proceeding Newfoundland. Detachment R.C.E. proceeding separately will come under your command when it arrives Newfoundland. Your task will be protection Newfoundland Airport and Botwood Seaplane Base against sabotage and or ground attack by enemy armed forces. You will also provide small arm anti-aircraft defence to above localities. You will be provided with National Defence cipher by D.O.C. M.D. Five. This cipher will be used all messages. On arrival contact Newfoundland authority and arrange telegraphic address notify N.D.H.Q. same when arranged. N.D.H.Q. telegraphic address Defensor. Pending receipt telegraphic address communication with you will be through External Affairs Ottawa and Newfoundland authorities. Separate instructions regarding your relation Newfoundland authorities will be sent later.

The battalion quickly took a steamer from Quebec City. On 22 June, the SS *Antonina* docked at Botwood and disembarked 900 men, under the command of Lt.-Colonel K. Blackadder. Two companies, comprising close to two hundred and fifty men, under Major Ibbotson remained to protect Botwood, while the balance of the battalion under L-Col Blackadder entrained for Gander.

Every military unit in an operational context does the best it can under the circumstances to maintain an account, day by day, of everything that might be of interest.

For those who may be inquisitive about this unit's days in Gander, before going to England, their daily war diary is shown in the following pages. (Items concerning only Botwod have been excluded.)

(NB ; You may need to use your zoom for a number of sections.)

Part 1 -
June 1940

M.F.M.LL.

ORIGINAL.

SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

OF

Est. BN. THE BLACK WATCH (RHR) OF CANADA.

C.A.S.F.

From 1st. June 1940 To 30th. June 1940.

Volume 7.

WAR DIARY.

Valcartier,
Que. 16.6.40. 0600
0600

The Battalion received orders before dawn to move, to an unnamed destination. With the Commanding Officer and Adjutant away on embarkation leave the bulk of the work fell on the shoulders of the 2 i/c Major I.L. Ibbotson and A/Adjutant, Capt. B.R. Ritchie. The move was considerably complicated by the fact that over two hundred officers and men were on leave and had to be recalled, with the additional difficulty attendant on the issue of complete new equipment, great-coats, ground sheets and gas-masks. However the fact that they were at last, after almost ten months of waiting, about to move caused all ranks to work with tremendous enthusiasm. Special praise was merited by the way in which Quartermaster issued new stores and took in old, while to the layman's eye a very harassed Quartermaster seemed to be surrounded by tremendous mounds of military weapons and haberdashery nevertheless it was a masterpiece of impromptu organization. All ranks worked far into the night. The unfortunate fact that ~~it was not until~~ while it appears that ~~the necessary~~ the necessary equipment was available it was left until the eleventh hour before the Battalion was supplied necessitated considerable work and delay in movement which might easily have been avoided, the time in which the Battalion did move was entirely due to the hard work and cheerfulness of all ranks.

No Increase or Decrease of strength.

WAR DIARY.

Valcartier,
Que. 17.6.40. 0600
0600

After Reveille at 0500 hrs and an early breakfast, the Battalion completed its preparation for departure. Reinforced by the members returning from embarkation leave the Battalion paraded at 1030 hours, marched to Valcartier Camp railway station and entrained for Quebec Harbour. At the Harbour embarkation proceeded in a most efficient and orderly manner which was later remarked upon by the Master of the ship, the S.S. Antonia, in a most complimentary manner. At 1640 hours the ship pulled away for its destination, this must have revived memories in the hearts of any of those members who remembered the departure of the original 13th Battalion in 1914, as its descendant the 1st Battalion was leaving Canada to carry on its duty to the Empire in a recurrence of the fight against the old enemy, but this time the Black Watch wore the "battle-dress" a garb hardly in keeping with the honoured and traditional dress of the Royal Highland Regiment. It was indeed sad to say farewell to the dark tartan of "Am Freachadan Dubh" as had the Battalion the day before departure but modern warfare has little respect for honoured things, however all ranks still sport with pride the red hackle. As the ship was still in home waters there was no black-out and most of the men spent the evening on deck admiring the scenic St. Lawrence. Quarters were somewhat cramped and many men had to sleep on deck or in the public rooms but this was accepted gladly, why not, the Battalion was on the move abroad at last. Previous to leaving Quebec there was a considerable decrease in strength due to the fact that men on furlough were not easily located and others were hospitalized or posted to depot for various reasons.

App. 4
Movement
orders.

Strength increase 16, decrease 114.

WAR DIARY.

At Sea. 18.6.40.
0600
0600

With the exception of boat-drill, posting of A.A.L.M.G's and lookouts there were no parades and all ranks were allowed plenty of latitude to enjoy or suffer, as the case may be, the sea voyage which to many was quite a new experience. The meals were exceptionally good and a very nice gesture was made by the some two hundred Newfoundlanders on board who were going to England to enlist in the Royal Navy, these men volunteered to serve the men of the Black Watch at all meals and so made it much easier for all concerned. Total black-out was instituted at night, no lights being allowed nor smoking on or between decks.

No increase or decrease of strength. *DBB*

At Sea. 19.6.40.
0600
0600

All ranks learnt their destination, Newfoundland, and while it had been generally hoped that they were bound for England such disappointment was more than outweighed by the fact that they were at least bound on a mission as trusted and trained troops and that ~~the days of waiting in training centres were now over.~~ the days of waiting in training centres were now over.

No increase or decrease of strength. *DBB*

WAR DIARY.

At Sea. 20.6.40.
0600
0600

The day was extremely foggy and at times the ship was hardly making way. Quite a number of the troops were feeling the effects of the long Atlantic roll but the great majority were thoroughly enjoying their sea cruise. Much amusement was caused by the lunch menu for the Sergeants as the dessert was "Balmoral Pudding" and previously a somewhat stronger gust of wind than usual had carried Major Routledge's Balmoral to a watery grave.

No increase or decrease of strength. *DBB*

At Sea. 21.6.40.
0600
0600

After a foggy start the sun came out and at lunch time land was sighted. The ship reached Botwood Harbour in the Bay of Exploits at approximately 1700 hrs. The order for disembarkation was D Coy as defense Coy, H.Q. and Bn.Hq. details, B Coy to unload at the docks, C Coy to pitch camp, E Coy, A Coy to unload Antonia and as clean-up party with provision of A.A. defense. However as the ship was unable to moor alongside the wharf due to her heavy cargo and no tender was present; all ranks remained aboard. Lt.Col. Blackader, the 2 i/c and the Adjutant went ashore for a brief reconnaissance.

No increase or decrease of strength. *DBB*

Botwood,
Mfld. 22.6.40. 0600
0600

The Newfoundland Government tender "Clyde" had arrived over night and the disembarkation commenced, in the order given the previous afternoon, at 0800 hours. Getting the men ashore was a simple and orderly task but the large amount of stores, equipment, food, not to mention two army trucks, nicknamed the "Fuddle Jumpers", presented a much more difficult problem. All ranks worked extremely hard at their respective tasks and when night fell the best part of the job had been done; E Coy and the bulk of H.Q. Coy and Bn.H.Q. left by train at night for the airport near Gander Lake, they will be followed by B and A Coys as soon as their tasks are completed. D and C Coys will remain in Botwood with detachments from the Signals Platoon, Transport, Pioneers and all the Intelligence Section. All those who had not left for the airport continued to work at unloading "Antonia" throughout the night.

No increase or decrease of strength.

M.F.M.II.

WAR DIARY.

Mfld. Airport. 23.6.40, 0600
0600

The force for this ~~sector~~ ^{sector} under the command of Lt. Col. K.G. Blackader, arrived by train from Botwood in the morning and immediately proceeded to unload the train. In the afternoon the weather again failed, rain poured down and before the troops could erect the tents all were soaking wet, in addition this prevented the provision of proper meals. Altogether a thoroughly miserable day but considering the previous hours of hard work at Botwood and an uncomfortable train journey at night the spirit and good humour of the men was splendid.

" " 24.6.40, 0600
0600

Work on the camp site continued in clear and fine weather but even this change was a mixed blessing as myriads of black flies and mosquitoes appeared and played havoc amongst all ranks. If this is a regular occurrence the provision of fly oil will become an urgent necessity. Defense posts were placed at the Transmitting and Receiving Stations and at Gander Lake. Radio Stations are of primary importance and Gander Lake, two miles to the south and out of sight from the Airport, would provide an excellent place for hostile seaplanes to alight.

WAR DIARY.

Nfld. Airport. 25.6.40, 0600
0600

A general reconnaissance of the Airport was made and weapon pits sited. It was decided to have these manned from one hour before dawn until 2200 hours daily, except in foggy weather when, on the advice of Sqn. Leader Carscallen, R.S.A.F., this will not be necessary. The sanitary conditions in the camp are very bad but it is hoped they will be improved shortly. Lieut. G. Jefferson, 2 Sergeants and 23 other ranks of the R.C.E. were attached for duty W.E.F. 22.6.40 and were posted to H.Q. Coy for duty, 1 Sergeant and 9 O.R.'s of this attachment left for duty with the Botwood force.

" " 26.6.40 0600
0600

H.Q. Coy, commenced weapon pits on the airport and a further reconnaissance was made on the west flank inclusive of railroad. It is apparent that the number of men are inadequate for this task as the posts are spread over a considerable area due to the immensity of the landing ground and these are also insufficient to provide a proper reserve.

The density of the woods and underbrush may be judged from the fact that PSM Bleasdale and Sjt Broadhurst, who had had gone on a fishing trip on the afternoon of 25.6.40, were to-day found at Gander Lake at 1430 hours completely lost and very exhausted from hours of wandering yet at no time were they more than three-quarters of a mile from the nearest outpost.

" " 27.6.40 0600
0600

The Commanding Officer and Major Molson proceeded to Botwood to inspect the area there. Aircraft took off for the first time since the arrival of the Black Watch but returned before lunch because of fog. The weather also caused withdrawal of crews from defense posts. Rain in the afternoon soon filled the drainage trenches dug around the tents and seeped into them, however most of the men have constructed beds for themselves from odd bits of lumber and were undismayed

WAR DIARY.

Nfld. Airport, 27.6.40. (Cont'd.)

by the miniature flood. A consignment of food arrived from Botwood which helped to relieve this rather precarious situation.

" " 28.6.40. 0600
0600

Wing Commander Reid R.C.A.F. arrived by plane from Halifax in the course of a routine inspection of all airports. He toured the defensive positions and seemed quite satisfied with the precautions taken but took away a great many suggestions with him. The C.O. left for St. John's to visit the Gov't and expects to be away until Monday, it is hoped that this will clean up the status of the Battalion, produce some signs of what the future may hold. At 2030 hours a terrific downpour of rain inundated the camp.

" " 29.6.40. 0600
0600

Major F.J. Smith arrived at 0130 hours with 44 O.R.'s who had been away on week end leave when the Battalion left Valcartier. In addition the first mail from Canada arrived some 7 large bags. L/Cpl. Mercier, the Battalion post-man worked from 0001 hours until 0600 hours to sort it. As the men have worked unceasingly for two weeks it was the considered opinion of the officers that the coming Church Parade be made voluntary, while this may annoy the Padre the work the men have done under incredibly bad conditions merited a day free from Parades or fatigues.

Strength increase 44, decrease nil.

WAR DIARY.

Nfld. Airport. 30.6.40. 0600
0600

There were no parades or fatigues other than the necessary daily duties. The Church Service held was voluntary as had been previously arranged. A number of men hopped a freight train going west and M.P's were sent after them in the Bud car, eight were brought back and placed in detention. It appears that men, no doubt due to the isolated and desolate area they now occupy in contrast to their previous quarters in Montreal, Toronto, and Valcartier, are getting the urge to wander and strong measures will have to be taken to counteract it. Quite a number of men went fishing and judging by the resultant catch the fish were biting well. The Commanding Officer telephoned and will not be back until Tuesday night. It has been proposed to have the Officer's mess located in the Club House but this cannot be decided upon until the Commanding Officer returns.

CR

No increase or decrease of strength.

Total strength;- 916 all ranks.

Blackader
W.P.

Part 2-
July 1940

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.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 3118
1000-1128 (1939)
H.Q. 1772-48-18

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 |
|-----------------------|------|------|--|--|
| Newfoundland Airport. | 1.7. | 0600 | Work is being carried out on the improvement of the Gander Lake, Transmission, and Receiving posts. Hutments will be constructed to accommodate approximately thirty men each, and will greatly add to the men's comfort. "B" Coy has been kept in the camp area because of the lack of men available for fatigue duty. As soon as possible they will be returned to their normal training schedule. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 2.7. | 0600 | D-81119, Pte. Kennedy, J.F. capsized in Gander Lake while making a trip to the opposite shore, 2500 yards away. Two hours later he was found, by members of his company, in a state of complete exhaustion. Immediate medical attention prevented what might otherwise have been a more tragic ending. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 3.7. | 0600 | The weather is improving slightly and native Newfoundlanders say that summer is almost here, good weather is a necessity in getting the work done speedily because of the condition of the ground. As stated before, it is of a solid, hard packed clay and shale composition and consequently, no natural seepage or drainage of water takes place. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 4.7. | 0600 | Lt. Col. K.G. Blackader returned by train from St. Johns at 0400 hours. While at St. Johns he discussed the problem of defense with the Commission of Government and an intense study of the entire scheme and the forces available will be made during the next few days. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |

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A.F.C. 3118
1000-1128 (1939)
H.Q. 1772-48-18

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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|-----------------------|------|------|---|--|
| Newfoundland Airport. | 5.7. | 0600 | Kit inspection was held by "A" Coy to determine the amount of equipment missing since the departure from Valcartier. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 6.7. | 0600 | As the only means of approaching the airport by land is the railway, Lt. Col. Blackader conferred with Mr. Ross, chief engineer of the A.N.D.Co., to discuss the advisability of mining the track in both directions from camp. Both of these blocks will be covered by fire from especially prepared L.M.G. posts. The posts themselves will be camouflaged from air and ground observation and will be capable of all-round defense. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 7.7. | 0600 | Two officers of the Black Watch made a reconnaissance of Newfoundland coast line from Cape Race to Bona Vista Bay, including Harbour Grace Airport. Their decision was, that because of the innumerable inlets and bays which characterize the Newfoundland coast, complete defense of the island is an impossibility with the size force at our disposal. The Newfoundland Airport proper was studied with the idea in mind of breaking up all cleared areas, runways, and roads and destroying gas dumps in the event of a forced withdrawal. Divine Service was held by the Padre at 1030 hrs. There was a good attendance. No increase or decrease of strength. | Appendix 5. C.O.'s report. S.S.T.C. |

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WAR DIARY
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M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1111
1907-1128 (1908)
H.Q. 1777-45-13

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. 1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--|--|
| Newfoundland Airport. | 8.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | The weather has been excellent for the past three days enabling the men to complete a large number of the carpentry jobs underway. The pay office staff are now well settled in their new building, leaving the marquee they had been placed in temporarily, free for a company mess. A Battalion parade was held on runway number two at 0915 hrs. After a brief talk by Lt.Col.Blackader, the men on duty were dismissed to carry on their work and the remainder indulged in a spot of drill. After supper a limited number of men were sold tickets to a moving picture held in the dining room of the Administration Bldg. The picture, "Of Mice and Men" was rather depressing, and all who saw it decided that even a grade "B" comedy would have been a better choice. No increase or decrease of strength. | Appendix 6 Standing Orders. S.S.T.C |
| " | 9.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | A meeting of the N.C.O.'s was held in the Sgt's Mess at 2000 hrs. Col.Blackader spoke, complimenting all ranks on the Toronto - Valcartier and Valeartier - Newfoundland trips. The excellent conduct of the troops while on board ship was mentioned and the fine way in which officers and men co-operated to make the camp more habitable under the most adverse conditions. All N.C.O.s were cautioned on the importance of keeping in close touch with the camp in the event of an alarm being sounded. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 10.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | "B" Coy. held kit inspection. Work continued on the posts in spite of heavy winds and rain. The lesson learned at Valcartier was evidently a good one, as no tents lost their moorings during the blow. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |

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M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1111
1907-1128 (1908)
H.Q. 1777-45-13

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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|---|---|
| Newfoundland Airport. | 11.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | Canada's base post office forwarded 15 letters to the Black Watch and thereby established a new low in mail received by the Battalion. The importance of the effect of mail from home on the morale of the men cannot be stressed too much, and it is hoped, that in the future, delays in postal service will be cut to a minimum. The Fox Moth which has been kept in the hangar here, was equipped with pontoons in preparation for a flight to Botwood, its new headquarters. No increase or decrease of strength. | Appendix 7 Pipe Band Standing Orders. S.S.T.C |
| " | 12.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | The Minister of Justice and Defense E.L.Emerson, and the Commissioner of Public Works, Sir Wilfred Woods inspected the Airport area with Lt.Col.Blackader and discussed plans for the general defense of the Island of Newfoundland. After supper at the Officer's Mess, they returned by train to St.Johns apparently well pleased with the work being done here. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C |
| " | 13.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | A leave party left for Grand Falls at 1400 hrs. The men have been so well treated at this town, that passes are much in demand. The majority of men remaining in camp, excepting those on duty, spent the afternoon swimming in Dead Man's Pond. The water there is a good bit warmer than Gander Lake, making it an ideal spot for a bath parade. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C |
| " | 14.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | A voluntary Church Parade was held this morning at 1030 hrs. in the Motor Vehicle Bldg. A number of the men and a few of the civilians stationed at the airport attended the services. No increase or decrease of strength. | S.S.T.C. |

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WAR DIARY
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
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M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1118
1008-1124 (2020)
H.Q. 1774-11

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. 1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and Initials |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport. | 15.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | The leave party returned from Grand Falls in the early hours of the morning. The men were exceptionally well treated by the townspeople, and in many cases were invited to spend the night in private homes. "A" Coy., "B" Coy., and Bn. HQ were paid. This resulted in a general rush on the canteen and the government store. To make a perfect day more so, the mail, 19 bags full, arrived from home and brought the long awaited duty-free cigarettes. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 16.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | No increase or decrease of strength. A weapon, for use against the only enemy we have as yet encountered, was issued today. Friends of the Battalion in St. Johns made a gift of Flit Mosquito Repellent to each man. Also received, and no less welcome, were 120 Black Fly Masks from the Womens Division of the Black Watch in Montreal. Work on the posts continued as usual. "E" Coy. carried on with their training xxxx schedule and in a burst of enthusiasm volunteered to do first task on the alternate trenches west of the Administration Bldg. As the earth here is particularly hard, the job was not finished until 2200 hrs. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 17.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | No increase or decrease of strength. "E" Coy. held their kit inspection this morning. The airport was xxxx visited by Squadron Leader Dwight Ross and Flying Officer David Price. They arrived by planes from Halifax and St. Johns, respectively, and are making a survey of the Northern Newfoundland Coast for the establishment of a seaplane base. Upon leaving here, they will continue on to Botwood where facilities for the landing and servicing of seaplanes are already available. | S.S.T.C. |

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WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required)

M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1118
1008-1124 (2020)
H.Q. 1774-11

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. 1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and Initials |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport. | 18.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | A touch of realism was added to the alarm practice this morning when two of the Douglas Bombers stationed here staged a sham battle after troops had taken up their emergency stations. At an altitude of about 200 feet they criss-crossed the field "Straffing" and Bombing" the area in a very thorough manner. Luncheon was half an hour late because of the time taken by the practice. The master map of the area was brought up to date with all posts and and trenches having been plotted on it. One of the men applied his gift of Flit internally. The desired affect was attained, but on amazing proportions to the size of the bottle which only holds 2 ozs. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 19.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | No increase or decrease of strength. The C.O.'s parade was held this morning instead of on Monday as originally planned. It was announced that at least one alarm drill per week would be held, thereby enabling all companies to take part. The men at Gander Lake and the Receiving Station were able to move into more comfortable quarters today. A shortage of lumber longer than 21 feet and the wharfing of that which was on hand delayed the building at Gander for almost two days. | S.S.T.C. |
| " | 20.7. 40. | 0600 0600 | No increase or decrease of strength. At the request of the air force, we are supplying them with tracer bullets which will be used in the destruction of their gasoline dumps if the necessity arises. Work was begun by the engineers on a new R.A.P. The building will be forty feet by twenty and have accommodations for twenty-two men, six staff and fourteen patients. Short of amusement as we are up here, the lighting of the landing field was a four star hit. The field was lit as a guide for Flying Boat ONA/908 which alighted at Gander Lake. | S.S.T.C. |

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M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1111
100-1134 1000
H.Q. 1774-18

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. 1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|------------------------|-------|------|--|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport. | 21.7. | 0600 | Governor Sir Humphrey Walwyn, Governor of Newfoundland, and Lady Walwyn stopped here on their way to the coast. Sir Humphrey intends spending ten days fishing and will formally inspect the camp upon his return. A royal guard of 100 men will be turned out. The Governor entertained Col. Blackader and Capt. Cantlie at dinner aboard his private train and expressed his wish to talk with the men individually when he returns on the 6th. of August. A Battalion Church parade was held at 0945 hrs on the recreation field. The Padre, Capt. D. B. MacKay, spoke on the necessity of putting aside petty quarrels and concentrating on the job to be done. The sermon was interrupted several times by low-flying planes. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 22.7. | 0600 | Bn. HQ held kit inspection. HQ Coy spent the day putting their light machine guns in order after a week on the outposts. E Coy began lectures and instruction in distance judging. The course will be held at the west end of runway number 2 and prominent objects ranging in distance from 100 to 800 yards have been plotted on a range card for the use of the instructors. D-81535, Pte. Calderwood has been tentatively diagnosed as having sunstroke. He was sent to Grand Falls Hospital by train at 2200 hrs due to the seriousness of his condition. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 23.7. | 0600 | Because of the doubtful condition of many of the hired trucks in use here, drivers are not permitted past the quarry on the Gander Lake road. The hill from the quarry to the lake is so steep as to be a definite hazard to safe driving, one truck having met with a slight accident already. A second case, having much the same symptoms as that of Pte. Calderwood's, is being cared for by the Medical Section. It is now known that Sunstroke is not the cause, consequently the entire airport has been put under quarantine as a safety precaution. The Sgts., played the Officers this evening in a softball game. The final score was 18-12 in favour of the Sgts. who spent the remainder of the evening celebrating their victory. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |

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Title pages will be prepared.

WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required)

M.F.M. 11
A.F.C. 1111
100-1134 1000
H.Q. 1774-18

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O. 1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|------------------------|-------|------|--|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport. | 24.7. | 0600 | Another practice drill for the general alarm was carried out at 1400 hrs. All positions were taken up in a remarkably short time. "A" Coy's scouts have done a very creditable piece of work on a map enlargement of the area. Working with almost no instruments, one pair of dividers, a protractor, and a pencil, the finished product was neat and accurate. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 25.7. | 0600 | Major General T. V. Anderson, Inspector General of Canada, and Major A. B. Garrow arrived by Flying Boat ONA/908 at 2200 hrs. today. They are here for the purpose of discussing the defense of the airport and of Botwood and to inspect the dispositions already made by the defense unit. Both the General and the Major were satisfied with the way in which all posts were dug and suggested the use of fish nets on poles as a means of camouflage from the air. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 26.7. | 0600 | The Battalion parade in the morning was taken by Major Rutledge in the absence of Lt. Col. Blackader. The Colonel and Major General T. V. Anderson left for Botwood in the Stranraer Flying Boat to inspect the area there. "H.Q." Coy held kit inspection in the afternoon. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 27.7. | 0600 | The news for which the entire Battalion has so long awaited arrived by code telegram at 2300 hrs., instructions to proceed overseas on the 10th. of August. | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |

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This pages will be prepared.

WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
(Erase heading not required)

M.F.M. 11.
A.F.C. 111E
1000-11.10 (1949)
H.Q. 117741-11

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 |
|------------------------|-------|------|--|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport. | 28.7. | 0600 | <p>After the announcement of the proposed move, a buzz of excitement hovered around the camp all day, and the evening was properly celebrated in the men's canteen until lights out was sounded. The men spent most of the night trying to guess our destination and the exact date of embarkation. A voluntary Church Parade was held on the recreation field.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No increase or decrease of strength.</p> | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 29.7. | 0600 | <p>All kit bags, boxes and cases which will be taken by the Battalion were stenciled with divisional colors and xxxxxx serial number 186. This entails a good bit of work and is being done by the engineers, assisted by one or two members of the pipe band. An extra push was put into work on the posts in order that they may be in the best of condition when the relief takes over. Now that they have something definite to look forward to, the men are really doing their work with a will.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No increase or decrease of strength.</p> | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 30.7. | 0600 | <p>Major Molson, Major Hamer, Capt. Cantlie, Sgt. MacKay, and four other ranks proceeded to Botwood where a check up was made on all forms M.F.M.14. "C" Coy, "D" Coy., and those men of H.Q. Coy and Bn. HQ stationed at Botwood were paid during the afternoon.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No increase or decrease of strength.</p> | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 31.7. | 0600 | <p>Pay Parade, and the check up on assigned pay took up the greater part of the day. The usual rush took place on canteen and store and a great many of the men stocked up on chocolate and tobacco in view of the impending move.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No increase or decrease of strength.</p> | S.S.T.C. |
| | 40. | 0600 | | |

[Handwritten Signature]

Part 3 -
August 1940

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Title pages will be prepared.

WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
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M.F.M. 11.
A.P.C. 3118
1000-11-24 (1920)
H.Q. 1172-41-13

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O.1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|
| Newfoundland, Airport, Nfld. | 1.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | Due to inclement weather the Companies carried out training programs in the Company Marquees. A cold wind accompanied the rain leaving the Battalion to wonder, "If August is like this what are the winters like!" "E" Coy however braved the elements and spent the afternoon at the ranges. It was the first opportunity a good many of these men had to fire their rifles and in spite of the conditions under which they had to fire, some very fine scores were turned in. No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |
| " | 2.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | A Commanding Officers parade was held at 0900 hrs. The Battalion was complimented by Lt. Col. K.G. Blackader on their conduct while in Newfoundland. "It has been of the highest calibre". The wind and rain that was so annoying yesterday continued until noon to-day when the sun put in a very welcome appearance. Taking advantage of this break in the weather "E" Coy went back to the ranges. A Court of Inquiry headed by Capt. C. Petch turned in a verdict of "Accidental" in the case of D-81182 Pte. Whittack who was wounded in the hand while cleaning a L.M.G. No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |
| " | 3.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | The last leave party left at 1400 hrs. for Grand Falls, Earlier in the day at 0900 hrs "HQ" Coy took over "A" Coy at the Gander Lake Posts and "B" Coy took over the Airport defenses. Relieved No increase or decrease of strength. | XXXXXXXXXXXX <i>MB</i> |
| " | 4.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | A voluntary Protestant Church parade was called at 1030 hrs. The Service was held in the Motor Vehicle Building. The Battalion then settled back to a day of rest. No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |

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WAR DIARY
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M.F.M. 11.
A.P.C. 3118
1000-11-24 (1920)
H.Q. 1172-41-13

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to O.1/c 2nd Echelon for disposal.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|---|--|
| Nfld. Airport, Nfld. | 5.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | The Battalion leave party returned from Grand Falls at 0200 hrs. (Practically intact.) "A" Coy drew kilts and tunics from stores today today in preparation for the Governor's impending visit, being the only company in the camp this week, they have been chosen as Guard of Honor. "E" Coy carried on at the ranges No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |
| " | 6.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | "A" Coy had a dress rehearsal for the Governor's inspection. The kilts, or the sight of them brought many of the men to realize how great was our loss when our kilts were taken from us. A few of the men, acting on a desire for one more fling, hopped on a freight train and gave the guard their liveliest day in camp. No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |
| " | 7.8. 40. | 0600 0600 | The Governor of Newfoundland Sir Humphry Walwyn arrived and Lady Walwyn arrived at the Airport at 1100 hrs and was met by the Guard of Honor. After the inspection Sir Humphrey inspected the remainder of the Battalion Guard of Honor. Sir Humphrey complimented the men on their fine work and professed a liking for their "Hard bitten appearance". Later in the day at 2000 hrs in the Motor Vehicle Building an amateur show was held. Lady Walwyn attended and expressed great delight regarding the performances. Sgt. Tessier of A Coy won a radio in a raffle held by the Canadian War Legion. He returned it to the Legion to be used for the men coming here in the future. No increase or decrease of strength. | <i>MB</i> |

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WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
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M.F.M. 11.
A.F.C. 1118
1000-1128 (2128)
H.Q. 17748-11

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

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks, references to Appendices and initials |
|---------------|-------|------|---|--|
| Nfld. Airport | 8.8. | 0600 | At 0515 hrs. five officers, two N.C.O.'s and eighteen other ranks of the 1st. Bn. Queens Own Rifles of Canada arrived at the Airport from Port Au Basque. "A" and "E" Coys carried on with their xxxx training. No increase or decrease of strength. | BFB |
| Nfld. | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 9.8. | 0600 | The Queens Own Rifles advance party made a tour of the outposts at the airport and the three posts at the Receiving & Transmission stations and at Gander Lake. No increase or decrease of strength. | BFB |
| " | 40. | 0600 | | |
| " | 10.8. | 0600 | The balance of the Q.O.R's airport force arrived at the airport at 1430 hrs. the first detachment of the Black Watch consisting of Bn. HQ, A and E Coys. immediately entrained for Botwood. Upon arrival at Botwood the detachment proceeded to the Government Wharf where they boarded the Duchess of Richmond by means of a Harbour Control Launch. The Second detachment; - HQ and B Coys left the airport at 1830 hrs and boarded ship upon their arrival in Botwood. There were considerable supplies to be unloaded for the Q.O.R's so the departure of the Battalion was delayed until 1230 hrs on Sunday August the 11th. One of the more prominent members of our Medical Section had trouble boarding the ship due to the well wishes of a local Barkeeper. No increase or decrease of strength. | BFB |
| " | 40. | 0600 | | |



En route to the train station.