

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPILATION OF WAR DIARIES (COMPILED FROM F.S.R., VOL. 1, 174).

F.S.R., Vol. 1, Sec. 174.

PARA. 1.—A war diary will be kept in duplicate from the first day of mobilisation or creation of the particular command or appointment by :—

- (i) Each branch of the staff in the headquarters of a formation, a subordinate command and area or sub-area of the L. of C.
- (ii) Unit commanders.
- (iii) Commanders of detachments of a unit.
- (iv) Officer i/c 2nd Echelon, officers holding technical appointments (Sec. 36), and personal staff.
- (v) Base, auxiliary and advanced depot commanders.
- (vi) Heads of services and their representatives, Controller of Salvage and his representatives.

NOTE A.—In the case of formations and units of the Territorial Army, war diaries will be kept from the first day of embodiment.

NOTE B.—See also A.C.I. 533 of 1941, paras. 2, 4 and 8.

NOTE C.—Any question of doubt whether or not a war diary should be kept by a unit or sub-unit will be referred, through the usual channels, to the Under-Secretary of State (S.D.3), The War Office, London, S.W.1.

PARA. 2.—A war diary is *Secret*. Its object is to furnish a historical record of operations and to provide data upon which to base future improvements in army training, equipment, organisation and administration.

It will be entered up daily, each entry initialled by the officer detailed to keep it, on A.F. C.2118. It is to be noted that the extraction and retention of appendices, maps, etc., from a war diary is an offence under the Official Secrets Acts.

NOTE.—It should be made clear that the officer who initials the entries is the commander or other person mentioned in para. 1, not the officer he details to do the clerical work.

PARA. 3.—*Omitted*.

PARA. 4.—In so far as they are applicable, the following points should be recorded when preparing a diary :—

- (i) Important orders, instructions, reports, messages or despatches received and issued, and decisions taken.
- (ii) Daily locations. Movements during the past twenty-four hours and present dispositions. March tables in the case of large units or of formations are of assistance.
- (iii) Important matters relating to the duties of each branch of the staff.

- (iv) Detailed account of operations. Exact hour of important occurrences, factors affecting operations, topographical and climatic. Clear sketches showing positions of troops at important phases.
- (v) Nature and description of field engineering works constructed, or quarters occupied.
- (vi) Changes in establishment or strength. As regards casualties the names and ranks of officers and the number of other ranks or followers and of animals should be noted. In addition in the case of units on the L. of C. changes in stores, transport, etc.
- (vii) Meteorological notes.
- (viii) Summary of important information received, whether military or political.

NOTE.—Events should be entered up, not in the order as given above but at the time they occur, or come to notice. At the close of *each* day, events (vi) and (vii) might be added.

PARA. 5.—Appendices as under will be attached to the original copy of each war diary :—

- (i) A copy of each field return (A.F. W.3008 and A.F. W.3009) and of each operation or routine order or instruction issued during the period covered by the current volume of the war diary.
- (ii) Copies of orders, or instructions, received from higher commands if no longer required for reference.
- (iii) A copy of each narrative or report on operations drawn up by a subordinate formation or unit, including any sketches or maps relating thereto, to supplement the account of operations furnished in the text of the diary (para. 4, iv above). Appendices will be numbered, and each will have a brief descriptive heading naming the author. References to appendices will be made in the last column of A.F. C.2118.

PARA. 6.—All diaries will conform to the regulations for drafting orders, reports, etc. (See F.S.R., Volume II).

PARA. 7.—(FORMATIONS AND UNITS OF EXPEDITIONARY FORCES).

Disposal will be made monthly of war diaries as follows :—

- (i) Unless otherwise ordered, the original copy of a war diary for the preceding month will be forwarded on the first day of the succeeding month direct to the officer i/c 2nd Echelon for transmission to the War Office, care being taken that all its appendices are attached.
- (ii) The duplicate copy, clearly marked as such, of a cavalry or infantry brigade or higher formation will be forwarded within a period of two months to the officer i/c 2nd Echelon for transmission to the Under-Secretary of State, The War Office. The duplicate copies of the diaries of units will be sent within a period of three months to the officer i/c 2nd Echelon to be transmitted to record offices at home for safe custody.

SPECIAL NOTE.—The time entered should be the time the information or order reaches the unit concerned. The time of the event recorded should also be given in the text, if known.