



**War Diaries**  
**85<sup>th</sup> Heavy Battery**  
**Royal Canadian Artillery**

A sub-unit of  
**15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade**  
**Royal Canadian Artillery**  
**Canadian Active Service Force**

Transcribed from Library and Archives Canada material

*The 85<sup>th</sup> Heavy Battery is proudly perpetuated by the Gunners of the  
15th Field Artillery Regiment, RCA in Vancouver, B.C.*

## Foreword

Canada did not officially declare war on Germany until 10 September 1939, however the 85th Heavy Battery, 15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, RCA received their warning order at 0400 on 26 August 1939. At 0800 the Battery was given 72 hours to prepare for the move to Yorke Island.

Yorke Island is a small islet located off of the north end of Hardwicke Island in the south end of Johnstone Strait. It occupies a choke point in the Johnstone Strait where all vessels travelling from the north to Vancouver must pass. The island consists of 39 hectares of wooded hilly terrain with a maximum height of about 30 meters. Considered the back door invasion route to Vancouver during World War II, Major B.C.D. Treatt, Royal Artillery, included a coastal artillery installation on the island in his report after his tour in 1936.

Treatt's recommendation was adopted by the Canadian government in 1936 and work was initiated in late 1937. By July 1938, two Quick Firing (Q.F.) 4.7-inch guns had been mounted and test firing carried out. Due to restraints in the purchase of new weapons, these guns were taken from Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they had last been calibrated for wear of their barrels in April 1914.

By July 1938 two Quick Firing (Q.F.) 4.7-inch guns had been mounted and test firing carried out. Once installed, the guns were secured and maintained by a small detachment of Permanent Force gunners from Esquimalt on a six-month tour of duty. On the evening of the 28th, Capt. F.W. Guernsey, three other officers and fifty-two men boarded the H.M.C.S. Comox, which slipped its lines at 2100 hours. At 1000 hours the next morning, the ship arrived dockside at Yorke Island.

The following War Diary records the days spent on Yorke Island until 1945 when the final soldiers departed and the Department of National Defence began the dismantling of the guns and accomadation. In addition to the War Diary items I hav also included transcripts of messages, reports and photographs from our Regimental Museum and Archives.

Enjoy the read!

Leon Jensen OMM CD  
President  
Vancouver Artillery Association  
[www.vancouvergunners.ca](http://www.vancouvergunners.ca)

## Organization

The 15<sup>th</sup> (Vancouver) Coast Artillery Brigade, RCA consisted of three batteries – the 31st Heavy Battery, 58th Heavy Battery and the 85th Heavy Battery. The 31st was responsible for the Stanley Park Fort at Ferguson point; the 58th manned the guns at Point Grey and the 85th were sent to Yorke Island.

Yorke Island was also home to elements of the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, 10th Fortress Signals Company; "C" Coy 2nd (MG) Battalion Canadian Scottish Regiment and the 5th Troop 3 Searchlight Battery.

Members of the Battery were rotated with the soldiers of the other Batteries in Vancouver. This was done on an individual basis to avoid the administrative work of transferring the battery from one location to another.

Command of the Battery was vested in the Battery Commander, a Major. There was discussion as to if that command authority extended to the other elements, such as the Naval communicators, on the island.

## Ordnance

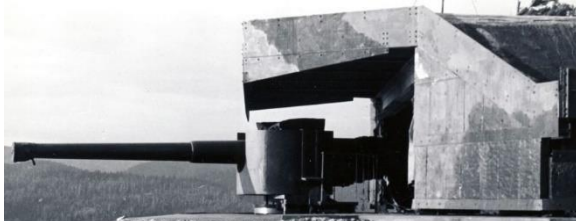
### 4.7-Inch Quick Firing Mark IV "B" Gun on Mark III Garrison Carriage



Two of these guns were originally mounted at Yorke Island at the beginning of World War II and subsequently traded with the 6" guns at Stanley Park. Their history goes back even further than that, as they were originally mounted at Halifax Nova Scotia and were given to Canada on the handover of the Halifax Fortress in 1905. Their rate of fire was ten

rounds per minute by day and eight by night. Maximum range was 11,800 yards although the effective range with automatic sights was usually half of that.

### 6-Inch Breach Loading Mark VII Guns on Mark II(L) Garrison Mounting



At the beginning of World War II, three of these guns were mounted at Point Grey and two were at Stanley Park. These guns were deemed obsolete by the late thirties but there was little prospect of receiving upgrades in the near future so they were quickly moved out from Halifax and from Quebec City where

they had been installed since the World War I.

The maximum range was 12,000 yards and the weight of the shell was 100 lbs

**26 August 1939 - Vancouver, BC**

0400 – Precautionary period Notified.

Volunteers for active service called out and mobilized under Section 63 Militia Act.

0800 – Battery ordered to be ready to move to York Island with 72 hrs Notice. 3 Officers and 50 O.R.s required for original detachment. Day spent notifying members. 11th A.A. Bty. asked to supply volunteers to make up 50 O.R.s

1400 – Brigade Parade for men volunteering for Active Service.

Weather: Fair.

1st Heavy Battery, R.C.A. C.F.E.  
Daily Strength  
Vancouver, B.C. Saturday Aug 26/39

	Officers	O.R.s	Total
85th Hvy. Bty R.C.A.	4	25	29

**27 August 1939 – Vancouver**

0800 – Medical inspection of all O.R.s called up; uniforms issued, recruits attested; and Transfers arranged. No definite order received to move. Capt. Guernsey attached to 85th Bty. In lieu of Major Bradley, as M.O. would not pass defect in his left eye.

Weather: Raining.

**28 August 1939 – Vancouver, BC**

Men given time off to clear up private affairs.

1800 – Battery parade for volunteers proceeding to York Island.

Parade consisted of Capt. Guernsey, Capt. Jorgensen, 2/Lt. Mulhern, 50 O.R.s 85th Hvy. Bty. And 2 O.R.s 10th Fort. Sig. Coy.

Major. H.H. Pitts, RCAMC, was detailed as Medical Officer.



*Oh, What a night! On HMCS Comox headed for Yorke Isle. John Layton (Stoke), Bert Parrott, Dick Jenkins (behind Pipe), Don Atkins, (Fritz) without hat, Bud Parker.*



*HMCS Comox*

1830 – Inspection by Lt.Col. G.Y.L. Crossley

1900 – Inspection by Col. H.F.G. Letson

2000 – Embussed in two busses, and proceeded to Ballantyne Pier.

2030 – Embarked on H.M.C.S. Comox – Loaded baggage and small stores and lunches.

Friends, relatives came to wharf for farewells.

2100 – H.M.C.S. Comox, Lt. Comdr. Soulsby, sailed from Vancouver Harbour en route to York Island.

Troops slept on deck and below deck.

Weather: Raining.

#### Manifest list of Army Supplies for York Island

125. BOXES SHELLS 4.7	1. BDL. ROPE	1. BDL. TENT POLES
7. BOXES SHELLS	1. BDL. PULLEYS AND ROPE	1. SACK SODA
5. BOXES FUSES	1. IRON STAND	1. BOILER
49. BOXES CARTRIDGES	3. BALES PILLOWS	1. SAW
1. BOX TUBES VENT ELEC	1. BOX TOOLS	1. BDL. BROOMS
3 ½. BOXES TUBES V.S. PERCUSSION	1. GYN. 6 PIECES COMPLETE	2. BDLS BUCKETS
15. BOXES GUN PARTS	1. BALE SUPPLIES	1. BDL. SKUTTLE & TUBS
1. BOX GUN PARTS	53. IRON COTS	1. BDL. HOES AND MOPSTICKS
1. BDL. SPRING	53. MATTRESSES	1. BDL. BUCKETS LATRINE
1. BDL. (2PCS) IRON PARTS	15. TABLES FOLDING	1. BDL. OLD CLOTH
2. SACKS PARTS	30. BENCHES FOLDING	1. BDL MOP STICKS & WASHER
1. BDL. (2PCS) PARTS	7. CASES SUPPLIES	1. WHEELBARROW
1. BDL. (3PCS) PARTS	3. DRESSERS	1. SACKS TENTS
1. BDL PARTS	2. BDLS FOLDING CHAIRS	1. RANGE
1. BDL PARTS	12. VALISES BLANKETS	1. GARBAGE PAIL OF SUPPLIES
2. CRATES PARTS	3. FOLDING COTS H.P.	

List of supplies for engineering dept.

5. FOLDING COTS	1. VALISE BLANKETS	1. TOOLBOX
5. MATTRESSES	2. BOXES SUPPLIES	2. PCS. LUMBER

#### 29 August 1939 – York Island

1000 – Arrived off York Island. Passage to wharf carefully sounded.

1100 – Landed at wharf and unloaded baggage and stores

1200 – S.S. “Border Prince” arrived and landed large quantities of miscellaneous stores and supplies (see Appendix “F”)

Master-Gunner Blake, Sgt. Instructor, 2 Ordnance Artificers and a Signals Sgt. Major arrived on the “Border Prince”.

Officers reconnoitered the Island and surveyed available accommodation which consisted of the



*HMCS Comox at wharf first day on Yorke Is. Police boat alongside, tall figure on dock is Q.M. Lorne Woodward*



Caretakers Quarters, a 5 room bungalow; a bunkhouse, 18 x 50; a mess hut 22 by 45; a small hut, 16 x 16; also a radio station hut, 10 x 14.

The caretakers house was found to be occupied by two District Gunners of 5th Hvy. Bty and a signalman of No. 11 Det. RCCS.

A Cold lunch was prepared as no stove pipe was sent with the camp stove. The launch "York" was sent to Kelsey Bay for various supplies, including stove pipe and kerosene for the lanterns.

The men worked hard in pouring rain sorting out stores and carrying them away from the wharf. The tractor delivered was useless, as it refused to start.

34 men were quartered in the bunkhouse, 9 N.C.O.s in the small hut. 4 N.C.O.s in the empty w/t station at the Fort, 2 O.R.s in the launch "York", 4 O.R.s in the Mess Hut, 4 O.R.s in the basement of the caretakers quarters, 2 O.R.s in the Radio Station, and the 4 Officers in the Caretakers Quarters.



*Bombardier Bud Garrett onboard York*



*Lance Bombardier Charlie Snow Bombardier George Darby, Mel Cooper and Bob Spring*

85<sup>TH</sup> HEAVY BATTERY R.C.A.

YORK ISLAND

PART 1 ORDERS

#1 29<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1939

BY

MAJOR F. W. GUERNSEY

1. DUTIES.

To be orderly officer	29/8/39	2/Lt G.A. Mulhern.
To be orderly sergeant	29/8/39	Sgt. Cox S. D.
Next for duty		Sgt. Davidson G.
To be O. Tptr. Gnr	Willoughby H.W.	next Gnr. O'Malley C.
To be medical orderly	Gnr. Schofield	
To be cooks	Bdr Gosse J.	
	Bdr. Cuddiford. T.	
To be clerks	Bdr. Cox N.G.	
	Gnr. Engelen A. L. D.	
To be batmen and	Bdr. JaMeson I. N.	
messwaiters	Gnr. Layton J. H.	
To be in charge of		
Launch "York"	Gnr. Cockburn P. L.	

2. FATIGUES FOR WED. 30/8/39.

i. Kitchen Fatigue

Gnr. Cooper M.  
" Cheney R. H.  
" Cuddeford L.  
" Connor R.

ii. SANITARY FATIGUE

Bdr. Darby G.  
Gnr. Adgiex D.  
" Anderson R.  
" Atkins D.A.  
" Buchan F.  
" Cooper. F.

ii. Q. M. STORES AND FUEL.

Bdr. Mills W.J.  
Gnr. Chelowsky W.  
" Fischer G.W.  
" Foote J.H.  
" Fox P.  
" Ricke J.D.  
" Jenkins F.R.  
" Jordison R. J.

**30 August 1939 – York Island**

Spent day cutting wood, moving stores and ammunition. A “Cat Driver” from the Salmon River Logging Co., was engaged to start and operate the tractor. More ammunition was sent up by tractor in the afternoon.

Weather: Raining.



**31 August 1939 – York Island**

Continual fatigues. Foreman and 4 helpers arrived to build fence around Fort and construct a sleeping hut.

Weather: Fair.

**1 September 1939 – York Island**

Completed carrying Gun Stores to Fort. Wire fencing transported to Fort.

Weather: Cloudy.

**2 September 1939 – York Island**

Work Continued. “Border Prince” called to pick up tractor. Mr. Gunner Blake returned to Vancouver. Tractor retained.

**3 September 1939 – York Island**

S.S. “Salvor” delivered sand, gravel, cement, roofing paper, etc.

Progress Report (See App. “G”)

Examination service instituted

Work continued on huts and on Guns.

Weather: Showers.

Naval Message

To: O.C. York Island XB

From: C.O. Comox

I have received orders to institute Examination Service forthwith.

Until your guns are ready I will do my own ‘bringing to’ but you should be ready to fire at hostile vessels.

Therefore until we agree further on what action we take you need only pay attention to the ‘8 Pendant’ and 8s on whistle & lamp and the GREEN Very’s light by night.

‘Instructions for Examination Service’

The regular well know coastal ships will be allowed to pass without being stopped normally & will not have the special signals flying.

Comox will endeavour to remain on the York Island side of ships and astern of them.

The Special Signal given in pencil in the ‘Instructions’ will be used until further orders. The night special signal will be used in rotation.



DEPARTMENT NATIONAL DEFENCE  
YORK ISLAND

File No. E2  
3 Sept 1939

HEADQUARTERS.  
M. D. XI  
ESQUIMALT, B. C.

PROGRESS REPORT

1. ACCOMADTION.

On Thursday Aug 31 civilian engineers started on a hut 20X40. To date this is about 2/3 completed with foundation, flooring and side walls up. The roof is not yet completed.

Bell tent for Hospital has been erected and floor constructed.

2. GUN STORES

All gun stores are at the Gun Position and the ammunition in the magazine.

3. TRAINING

No training, other than signal training, has been carried out. Personnel have been busy moving and storing equipment. Training will start on Monday Sept. 4.

4. STATE OF DEFENSE

The first consideration in regard to this has been putting the guns in firing order. The artificer reports that #1 will be ready for action at Autosights 4/9/39.

Range Indicator has yet to be marked.

#2. can be fired with Clinometer laying only. Cam has to be adjusted.

Front accentric is broken and must be replaced.

Range indicator has to be marked when cam adjusted.

5. B. R. F.

Base plate will be in position 5/9/39.

6. DATUM POINTS

None established.

7. GUN SHELTERS

None erected -- this will be started with salvaged lumber 4/9/39.

8. GUN PLATFORM RAILINGS

Being installed today.

REQUIRED

(1) both guns require: - readers and clamps for levers adjusting cams.

(2) Tidal scale is marked for 4' rise and fall

Mean tides are about 7' rise and fall.

(3) Error of the Day Drum are for Trunnion Height 83' 2" whereas Bty. Trunnion Height is 182' 8".

(4) Cams for ammunition other than to 2CRH shell are not available.

5. COMMUNICATION

Magnetotelephones have been installed at B.C. Post, Orderly Room and Radio House. Lines to Power House and Lights will be comp. 5/9/39.

Radio has been retuned and overhauled.

32' pole with 8' cross ties has been prepared for using International Code Flag Signals. Suitable blocks and haliards are required, and must be fitted before raising.

ALDIS LAMP. Bulb was not furnished. This is been obtained from H.M.C.S. Comox on loan.

Batteries received dry - - no acid furnished.

2 batteries here been obtained H.M.C.S. Comox and charged by our generator charger.

It is recommended that authority be given to send our batteries to Vancouver to be put in service as charging them here would be too great a drain.

6. RIFLE PRACTICE

There is no suitable location for rifle range on York Island. May authority be given to have targets erected for rifle practice on

- (a) the rock ledge South of York Island, range approximately 250 yards or
- (b) the shore of Hardwick Island approximately 400 yards South East of York Island.  
or
- (c) shore of Fanny Island approximately 400 yards West of York Island.

(signed) R.A. Jorgensen Capt  
For O.C. 85th HEAVY BATTERY  
RCA

**4 September 1939 – York Island**

No. 1 Gun ready for action.

Started to erect temporary wooden shelter for watch on duty.

Report re Water Supply, Accommodation, etc. (See App. "F")

Tractor found to need several new parts.

Weather: Showers.

*Excerpt from PART I ORDERS #7 4/9/39*

4. STANDING ORDERS.

Attention is called to para no. 5 Bounds.

Generator Room as well as the Radio House is out of bounds. to all ranks other than those authorized.

5. CANTEEN

All empty soft drink bottles MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CANTEEN.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
YORK ISLAND.

AREA FORTRESS COMMANDER  
ESQUIMALT, B. C.

File No. E3  
4 Sept .1939.

YORK ISLAND.

In respect to the manning of York island during hostilities when a detachment of approximately twenty-six men are required, the following suggestions are put forward. These suggestions have been the result of considerable thought on my part during the week which the battery has occupied the island.

1. WATER SUPPLY.

The present water supply is inadequate. A tank of 5000 gallons, dependant on rain is all the water available. This water is available to the officers quarters only, but a hose has been connected from the house to the men's kitchen which helps considerably. The gas boat "York" has tanks of 208 gals capacity and these are filled by hand from a creek on Hardwick Island. This requires considerable men and time. The only way that the water can be conveyed from the launch to the house is by a small hand pump and hose. It is apparent that if a period of dry weather prevails, the island would be untenable for any length of time, since each man requires a minimum of 5 gals per day in for permanent residents in barracks 20 gals. There is no water at the Gun Position.

SUGGESTIONS

The first consideration is to have a 3/4" inch pipe line from the officers quarters to the mess house and ablution tables. I realize that this will not help the water supply and will probably increase consumption, but will add to the sanitary condition of the camp, and the comfort of the men.

For a permanent camp on the Island, my only suggestion is a range catch basin constructed on the South end of the island with a large reservoir at the base from which water may be drawn. It is impossible estimate the cost of a properly constructed basin nor have I made any survey, except a superficial reconnaissance from the boat. I do not know whether drilling for a spring was attempted during construction but it is unlikely that this would be successful at the present time.

2. POWER

At the present time the only electric powers of small 500 watt O.N.A.N. motor generator. This is used for the transmitter and receiver and for lighting the officers quarters. During transmission, the lights must be turned out.

During the last four days when the radio has been on duty 24 hrs. the motor generator has run continuously. Since the unit is meant for light-duty only there is an increasing danger of a breakdown.

SUGGESTIONS

Until the power house on the island is equipped, I suggest that another unit similar and if possible, larger, be kept in reserve.

3. ACCOMMODATION

At the present time there is one hut approx 28X50 being used to house about 40 men. The other hut is used for a mess house in which a certain number of men sleep. The remainder of the detachment including five civilian engineers are scattered over the remainder of the huts including the radio shack at the Gun Position and the basement of the officers quarters. A 20X40 hut is under construction near the mess house and a gun shelter 20X20 will be erected at the gun position. These will relieve the situation considerably but if the detachment is increased more accommodation will be necessary. In connection with this, the Salmon River Logging Co. have two floating huts which will house about 30 men each. These I understand

can be purchased quite cheaply and might be used. They lack windows and other fittings. They could be tied to the inside of the wharf.

4. GUN POSITION

No comment is necessary here except that no ammunition recesses have been provided

ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTION.

Since the island is small, heavily timbered and rocky, there are absolutely no recreational facilities available. An examination service is tedious and the detachments are often idle some form of exercise in the way of competitive sports is necessary.

Taking this fact and the water situation into consideration the following, in my opinion is the best solution:

1. Establish a proper military camp at Sayward. There is ample fresh water and other facilities there and more opportunities for recreation. Since this area I understand calls for two examination vessels – one to patrol Sunderland Channel and the other Johnston Straits, one vessel could be relieved of her duties for an hour a day to transport the detachment on duty to York Island and relieve the manning detachment. Each detachment would be on duty twenty four hours. The other two detachments would be at the base camp at Sayward. POfficer personnel might have to be augmented by one of two subalterns. Signal personnel would have to be increased as well but as far as I can see with my limited knowledge of coast defense very few other changes will be necessary.

F.W. Guernsey.  
O.C. York Island.

O.C. R.C.A.  
ESQUIMALT

YORK ISLAND  
4 SEPT

17 PROGRESS REPORT STOP NUMBER ONE READY FOR ACTION STOP D.R.F. WILL BE INSTALLED TUESDAY STOP NUMBER ONE MANNED 24 HOURS STOP GUN DRILL DAILY STOP GUN SHELTER TWENTY BY FORTY STARTED AT POSITION STOP WATER SUPPLY FOR THOUSAND GALS

O.C. YORK ISLAND.

**5 September 1939 – York island**

Set up 32 foot pole for International Signalling  
Weather: Clear Strong wind



O.C. R.C.A.  
ESQUIMALT

YORK ISLAND  
5 SEPT

20 PROGRESS REPORT STOP THIRTY FOUR MEN DUTY TWELVE MEN FATIGUES STOP BALANCE CONSTRUCTION AND ? STOP WATER SUPPLY THREE THOUSAND GALS STOP LOGGER REPAIRING TRACTOR STOP WILL REPORT LATER.

O.C. YORK ISLAND.



*Bob Luney & Don Adzick*

O.C. R.C.A. ESQUIMALT	YORK ISLAND 5 SEPT
21 RE TRACTOR STOP LOGGER REPORTS FUEL JETS BADLY BURNED AND DAMAGED STOP ESTIMATING NINETY DOLLARS TO REPAIR STOP AM GOING AHEAD UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED STOP WRITTEN REPORT FOLLOWS.	
O.C. YORK ISLAND.	

O.C. R.C.A. ESQUIMALT	YORK ISLAND 5 SEPT
25 PROGRESS REPORT WIRE FENCE AROUND POSITION STARTED STOP NUMBER ONE MANNED TWENTY FOUR HOURS STOP NUMBER TWO READY SATURDAY STOP WATER SUPPLY TWO THOUSAND GALS.	
O.C. YORK ISLAND.	

**6 September 1939 – York Island**

Report on tractor (See App. "F")

Work continued. M.O. called for a sea bathing parade. Water was very cold.

Weather: Fair.



*Feb 40 Gunners Gosbey and Gibbons*



*Mar 40 Gnr Gosbey*

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
YORK ISLAND.

September 6/39.  
File No. E5

HEADQUARTERS, M. D. II  
ESQUIMALT, B. C.

REPORT ON TRACTOR R.C.E.T. 9.  
AT YORK ISLAND.

The marginally noted tractor was unloaded from S.S. Border Prince on Tuesday August 29. The tractor is a McCormack Deering, model T. D. 40 using diesel oil. It is started on gasoline with electric ignition and switched to Diesel when started.

Since no operator was provided, a man from the battery who claimed to have experienced was detailed to get it started. All attempts failed, so the next morning a logger was sent for from the Salmon River Logging Co. In the meantime, Sgt. Maj. Hatfield of the R.C.C.S. (P.F.), by cleaning the fuel line got it started on gasoline. When the logger W Armstrong, arrived by making adjustments he got it running on diesel oil. He reported on a superficial examination that it was badly in need of overhauling since it emitted dark clouds of smoke from the exhaust and had comparatively little power.

As the ammunition and gun stores for lying on the dog covered with a tent, I considered it essential that those be hauled to the gun position as soon as possible. Armstrong therefore, operated the tractor Wednesday afternoon Aug 30 and the morning of Aug 31, until the necessary stores were at the position.

As the tractor was ordered back on the S.S. Border Prince on Saturday, Sept. 2, I ordered Cpl. Manuel, 11th Div Sigs. to operate the tractor and haul up the rolls of wire fencing that we're lying on the dock. This was completed but I had word that cement, sand, and gravel were due to arrive on Sunday, Sept 3, for the wire fence. I therefore held the tractor.

It stopped on the dock and refused to start. The cylinders had seized up. I asked W. Armstrong to come over and find out what the trouble was. He took the head and base off and reported that the nozzles had at some time been badly burned and metal had actually fallen onto the pistons. The fuel was not being consumed properly and actually washing the lubricating off the cylinder walls so that the pistons eventually seized up. I've ordered four new nozzles, one head gasket and one base gasket from the International Harvester Co., Vancouver and advised you by wire. Armstrong reports said it will be in first class working order when he is finished. I consider this tractor was an exceedingly poor shape when it arrived.

F.W. Guernsey  
O.C. York Island.

**7 September 1939 – York Island**

H.M.C.S. Comox proceeded to Esquimalt. H.M.C.S. Amentiers, Lt. McDuff, R.C.N.R. arrived. A/Lt. Jackson, R.C.N.R. appointed C.X.O.

Radio Station progress report (See App. "G")

Lt. Col. G. Turner, H.Q. M.D. XI phoned

Letter re progress reports (see App. "G")

Weather: Dull – Showers.



*Excerpt from PART I ORDERS #10 7/9/39*

5. MILITIA ACT. SECTION 64 – Calling up for Service Under

On instructions received from Area H.Q. all ranks called up for service under Section 63 of the Militia Act are now called up for service under Section 64 of the Militia Act.

O.C. YORK ISLAND

VICTORIA

SEPT 7

776 REFERENCE YOUR REPORT 4th SEPTEMBER STOP PROPOSED ERECT ADDITIONAL HUT FOR ACCOMMODATION STOP REGARDING RECREATION SUGGESTED THAT MEN BE ALLOWED OFF FOR A DAY IN ROTATION AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT AND BE CONVEYED TO AND FROM MAINLAND IN GAS BOAT YORK STOP WATER SUPPLY PROBLEM UNDER CONSIDERATION AND NAVY HAVE STATED THEY WILL HELP YOU OUT IN EMERGENCY IF YOU APPLY TO THEM LOCALLY STOP ACKNOWLEDGE

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

YORK ISLAND

File No. V2Z

September 7, 1939

H.Q. 15th VANCOUVER COAST BRIGADE R.C.A.  
BESSBOROUGH ARMOURIES  
VANCOUVER, B.C.

PROGRESS REPORT.

In reference to your letter No. 20 of 3rd of September, I have been instructed to wire progress reports to Victoria daily. This has been done.

F.W. Guernsey, Major,  
O.C. York Island.

York, Island B.C.,  
7th September 1939

Officer Commanding.  
W.F.E., R.C. Signals,  
Esquimalt, B.C.

Progress Report - Radio Station York Island.

1. C.S.M. Hadfield and two other ranks of the 9th Frt. Signals, Cpl. E. Manuel and Signm. T. E. Turner, arrived at York island via H.M.C.S. Comox on 29th August. Signm Turner being a good operator was detailed to the Radio Station for duty where he has been maintaining watch with Signm. Ainsley. Corp. Manuel is not a good operator and has been assisting in the construction of telephone lines on the island and will be available for maintenance work. He will require considerable practice before being able to take over watch at the Radio Station. A third operator will probably be required for this station as the two operators are at present doing shifts of 6 hours on duty and 6 hours off duty. They state that they are able to carry on these shifts with no difficulty.
2. Signm Ainsley who was drawing Subsistence allowance, has been attached to the 85th Bty. R.C.A. for rations since the caretakers quarters were taken over for the Orderly Room and

Officers Quarters. C.S.M. Hatfield is also attached for rations. Since the R.C.A. and the R.C.O.C. are being paid Subsistence Allowance may I be advised if the attachment of C.S.M. Hadfield and Sigm. Ainsley is correct or if they should draw the Subsistence allowance and repay the Battery mess for rations. This is the procedure the R.C.O.C. expect to follow.

3. Telephones and Lines - Lines were laid and three necessary telephones connecting B.O.P., Radio Station and Orderly Room were installed on 31st August. Lines were completed to the Power House and three E.L.E.I's on 5th September and can be cut in on the B.O.P. – Orderly Room party line as required. All lines were laid using the main road and tractor trails so that a minimum amount of clearing was necessary. Approximately 5000 ft. of twisted wire, nine Forestry type insulators and 25 porcelain knobs remain.

4. Signal Station (BOP) - The Battery Signalers are operating the Signal Station from the B.O.P. to H.M.C.S. Comox using Aldis Lamp by day and Lucas Lamp by night. The Signallers have constructed a 32 ft. mast with a 10 ft. yard. This was rigged with halyards and two blocks, one from the Comox and one from the Radio Station, and erected against the back wall of the BOP going guyed with D.3 cable. This mast can only be temporary arrangement and if to be used for any length of time should be replaced by a properly guyed and rigged mast which will withstand the high winds at the BOP. The Battery Signallers are able to communicate with the Comox by raising their pennant half-mast after which the Lamp is used. The Comox procedure is similar. If required International code signal flags are available.

5. Radio Station - The transmitter has been re-tuned and relays adjusted so that MCW and Phone are now available. The transmitter unit has been examined and although the circuits appear correct it does not function normally. The Crystal stage for "B" frequency can be brought into oscillation but when the output is applied to the P.A. stage the oscillations will in most cases stop and the circuit will require re-tuning. Attempts to resonate the P.A. tank or vary the Aerial coupling or vary the Ae.Loading coil produces similar effects so that to put the transmitter on the air necessitates retuning the Crystal stage for a change in each succeeding stage. The Crystal stage then has to be slightly detuned to produce a clear note. The addition of the second Crystal for "A" frequency necessitates retuning the whole circuit for "B" frequency so that it has not been possible to pre-tune both frequencies for quick change-over. The transmitter can be kept operating satisfactorily on 5460 Kcs. for the present but is strongly recommended that it be shipped out for a complete examination to correct the faults. The Marconi Co. branch in Vancouver could possibly do this work with an elapsed time from this station of one week. An A.T.R. transmitter could possibly be supplied to provide the necessary communication to Victoria.

The "Onan" motor generator set has had very long running hours during the past two weeks with the running time varying from 12 to 24 hours daily. Four six volt batteries from the Comox have been charged which accounts for some of the running time. These batteries are used for the Aldis Lamps and one set is used by the Comox and the other by the Battery Signallers. The batteries for the York Island lamp were shipped dry. The Motor Generator is running very well at present but will shortly require an overhaul. It is thought that if the transmitter could be shipped for a check-over the motor could be overhauled during the period it is away and put together in sufficient time to keep the necessary batteries charged.

6. May I be advised as to further construction work to be carried out at this station, my duties on completion of this work and the possible date of my departure, please.

(E.J. Hatfield) C.S. M. (W.O. II)  
R.C. Signals

**8 September 1939 – York Island**

C.A.S.F. Slate of Officers (See App. "F")

Dead cat discovered in Water Tank, and much consternation ensued. H.M.C.S. Armentiers delivered 300 gallons by using a hand pump for 10 hours.

1 O.R. transferred to 11th A.A. Battery R.C.A.

1 O.R. proceeded on compassionate leave.

O. C. 85th HEAVY BATTERY R.C.A. YORK ISLAND 791 REFERENCE YOUR E2 DATED THIRD SEPT CONSIDERED CONCERNING ORDINANCE SERVICES STOP SERGEANT MAJOR COCKBURN BEING COMMUNICATED WITH BY D.O.M. CONCERNING ARMAMENTS STOP KINDLY SUBMIT INDENT FOR ORDNANCE REQUIREMENTS D.O.O	VICTORIA SEPT 8
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H.Q. ESQUIMALT 29 ARMENTIERES NOW PUMPING WATER INTO RESERVE TANK STOP CAN ONLY SPARE EIGHT HUNDRED GALS STOP SKIPPER ESTIMATES FIVE HOURS TO FILL RESERVE TANK WITH PRESENT ARRANGEMENT STOP WILL REPORT LATER O.C. YORK ISLAND	YORK ISLAND SEPT 8
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H.Q. ESQUIMALT 30 ARMENTIERES ASK PERMISSION TO GO TO ALERT BAY TO REPLENISH WATER STOP NOTIFYING NAVAL AUTHORITIES AND REPORT BACK O.C. YORK ISLAND	YORK ISLAND SEPT 8
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H.Q. ESQUIMALT 31 ARMENTIERES PUMPS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO PUMP WATER TO RESERVE TANK STOP HAND PUMP BEING USED STOP IF POWER PUMP IS CONSIDERED SUGGEST PORTABLE PUMP WITH HOSE THAT MAY BE USED TO FILL YORK FROM CREEK O.C. YORK ISLAND	YORK ISLAND SEPT 8
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OC YORK ISLAND 837 REFERENCE CONVERSATION ARMENTIERES ORDERED TO HELP YOU OUT REGARDING WATER STOP PENDING COMPLETE ARRANGEMENTS NOW IN HAND HERE WILL BE NECESSARY FOR YOU TO RESTRICT CONSUMPTION TO WHAT YOU CAN HAUL ON THE YORK AND WHAT YOU CAN GET FROM ARMENTIERES USING YOUR SMALL TANK FOR STORAGE STOP REPORT EARLY AS POSSIBLE DISTANCE FROM WHARF TO LARGE TANK AND DIFFERENCE IN ELEVATION BETWEEN WHARF AND TOP LARGE TANK THIS INFORMATION REQUIRED IN CONNECTION ARRANGEMENT PUMPING FROM BOAT TO TANK	VICTORIA SEPT 8
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H.Q. ESQUIMALT	YORK ISLAND SEPT 8
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32 REFERENCE 837 STOP DISTANCE FROM TANK TO END WHARF INCLUDING OFFSET THREE HUNDRED FIVE FEET STOP HEIGHT FROM DECK OF WHARF TO TANK TWENTY TWO FEET STOP HEIGHT FROM LOW TIDE TO TANK APPROXIMATELY FORTY SEVEN FEET

O.C. YORK ISLAND

OC YORK ISLAND VICTORIA  
900 LT GARSHARN R.C.A. M.C. PROCEEDING YORK ISLAND AS M.O. TROOPS MAJOR PITTS CAN LEAVE  
YORK ISLAND MONDAY NIGHT BOAT

D.M.O.

York Island,  
Kelsey Bay, B.C.  
8th Sept. 1939

CONFIDENTIAL

Officer Commanding  
15th (Van) Coast Bde. RCA  
Vancouver, B.C.

C. A. S. F. Battery  
Officers

In reference to your communication re the marginally noted, the following is a slate of officers suggested by Capt. Jorgenson.

Battery Commander	-----
“ Captain	Capt. R.H. Jorgenson
Subalterns	Lt. D. Courbold
	2/Lt. G. Mulheron

You will notice that the B.C. has not been suggested. I presume this depends on whether Maj. Bradley or Maj. Piercey will take over.

You will also notice that 2 subalterns are listed. The opinion of Capt. Jorgenson and myself, and I understand Maj. Bradley feels the same, that one more subs are required to carry out this service under these conditions. Regarding N.C.O.s both Jorgenson and myself feel that since the battery is split, this could best be done in Vancouver. The 85 detachment up here will all volunteer. The A.A. personnel all desire to rejoin their regiment and should therefore not be included. I would therefore suggest that Maj. Bradley draw up the N.C.O. slate both from the Vancouver detachment and the Y.I. detachment of the 85<sup>th</sup>.

F.W. Guernsey  
O.C. York Island

HQ ESQUIMALT  
28 PROGRESS REPORT NUMBER TWO READY TODAY ON LANYARD STOP PISTOL GRIP TO BE  
RETURNED TO ORDNANCE STOP HUT READY FOR OCCUPATION STOP WATER REPORT FOLLOWS

O.C. YORK ISLAND

**9 September 1939 – York Island**

Both Guns now ready for action. No. 2 at percussion only, as pistol grip has to be returned to Ordnance for completion.

Submarine reported in Gulf of Georgia heading north.



5. BDE.DETAILS.  
ADMINISTRATION AND DISCIPLINE.

All O.R.'s on reporting for service under Sec. 64, Militia Act are attached to 85<sup>th</sup> Heavy Battery for Administration and Discipline until reporting to their respective Bde. Units.

6. COMPLIMENTS.

Officers commanding detachments will instruct all ranks as to the proper compliment to be paid to Officers by Junior Officers, O.R.'s, guards and sentries and will see that the regulations regarding same are observed without fail.

Attention is drawn to K.R. (Can) 1939, peras 1377 to 1389 inclusive.

7. TRAINING.

The attention of Officers Commanding Detachments is drawn to Vancouver and Fraser Valley Area Order No. 11, dated 6 Sept 39, para 4, in part as follows:

“Training will be carried out to the fullest extent during the period of mobilization  
..... Units actually manning Coast defenses will train to the fullest extent that facilities permit in their own area.

8. ARMY ACT. CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS.

Officers Commanding Detachments should avail themselves of the first opportunity to impress on all ranks the fact that they are subject to Military Law and to read to their detachments those sections of the Army Act dealing with crime and punishments.

Attention is drawn to Army Act Sections 4 to 44 inclusive and to K.R. (Can) 1939 para 430.

9. INFORMATION.

A state of War exists between Canada and Germany



### Abbreviations

2/Lt – Second Lieutenant

A.A. – Anti - Aircraft

App. - Appendix

Bde. - Brigade

Bdl. - Bundle

Bdr. - Bombardier

Bty. - Battery

Capt. - Captain

CASF – Canadian Active Service Force

Cmdr. - Commander

CXO - Company Executive Officer

F. Sig. Coy. – Fortress Signal Company

Gnr. - Gunner

GO – General Officer

GSO – General Staff Officer

HMCS – His Majesty Canadian Ship

Hvy. - Heavy

L/Bdr – Lance Bombardier

Lt. - Lieutenant

Lt. Col. – Lieutenant Colonel

M.O. – Medical Officer

Mr. Gunner – Master Gunner

M.V.- Motor Vessel

N.C.O. – Non Commissioned Officer

No. - Number

OR – Other Rank

Q.M. – Quarter Master

RCA – Royal Canadian Artillery

RCAMC – Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps

R.C.A.S.C. – Royal Canadian Army Service Corps

RCE – Royal Canadian Engineers

RCN – Royal Canadian Navy

RCNR – Royal Canadian Naval Reserve

RQMS – Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant

Sgmn - Signalman

Sgt. - Sergeant

S/L – Search Light

SOS – Struck Off Strength

S.S. – Steam Ship

w/t – Wireless Tower