**War Diaries**

**Yorke Island**

**15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, RCA**

**Includes**

**85th Coast Battery**

**58th Coast Battery**

**Transcribed from Library and Archives Canada**

**Edited**

**By**

**Leon Jensen OMM CD**

As at 30 October 2020

***The 15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, RCA is proudly perpetuated by the Gunners of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment, RCA in Vancouver, B.C.***

**26 August 1939 – Vancouver**

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

**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**

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.

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

​**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 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.

​**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

​**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