

AWM52
2nd Australian Imperial Force and
Commonwealth Military Forces unit war
diaries, 1939-45 War

Item number: 8/3/70

31 Infantry Battalion & 31/51
Infantry Battalion

December 1941

W A R D I A R Y.

Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31 Bn.....

Date and Time - From.....1645 hrs. 8/12/41.....To.....11/12/41.....

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Showgrounds	8.12.41	1645	News received of Japanese attacks on American and British possessions in the Pacific. Cadre Training continues.	
do	9.12.41	1100	Conference attended by C.O. Adj. Q.M. R.S.M. I.O. when Mob orders read and discussed immediate arrangements made to go through Nominal rolls to facilitate any call up of personnel required. Many other matters discussed to enable Mob orders to be put into effect immediately orders were received.	
do	9.12.41	1400	Conference of Coy. Comdrs. and representatives from centres, discussed arrangements of a call up of personnel and disposal of equipment and furniture at centres.	
do	9.12.41	all day	Cadre Training continues.	
do	10.12.41	all day	Decisions of conference carried out during the day to enable Mob to be completed when ordered.	
do	10.12.41	all day	Cadre Training continues.	
do	11.12.41	"	Mob arrangements continue Cadre Training continues.	

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~~11/12/41~~

W A R D I A R Y.

Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31st Battalion......

Date and Time - From.....11th December, 1941..... To.....16th December, 1941......

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Show Grounds Townsville.	11/12/41.	1700	Conference with Brigadier 11th Inf. Bde., C/O, Adj. and Capt. Rickard O/c M.G. Coy, when Brigadier issued instructions to mount four (4) M.G's for Bde. Protection and Command H.Q's against air attack and ordered the four posts to be established. Arrangements were made for anti-aircraft mountings to be constructed by Capt. Rickard at the Harbour Board Works forthwith.	
"	"	1730	Three anti-aircraft posts were mounted in the Show Grounds and one on the vehicle park at Garbutt Paddock.	
"	12/12/41.	1145	Received precautionary instruction No.1 from the 11th Inf. Bde.	
"	"	1345	Conference of all officers explaining all Bde. precautionary instructions and discussing same.	
"	"	1530	Issue of Battalion precautionary instructions No. 1 - Appx. A.	Immediately on the issue of the instructions therein they were carried out by the Bn. <i>Appendix A.</i>
"	"	1900	Instructions from Bde. to set up an observation post on the top of Castle Hill with Signal communication to the Show Grounds. M.G. Post with Anti-Aircraft Mountings were established, one at Willmet Street, near Wakeford's, and two guns in Upper Denham Str.	This post was established and working by 1900 hrs.
"	13/12/41.	0030	Telegram from Milcommand as follows - "Complete your office arrangements for winter less first reinforcements stop acknowledge."	Telegram acknowledged.C.O.2 I.C., Adj. and Q.M. advised.
"	"	0800	Conference of officers when arrangements were made for mobilisation. During the day	<i>CMR</i>

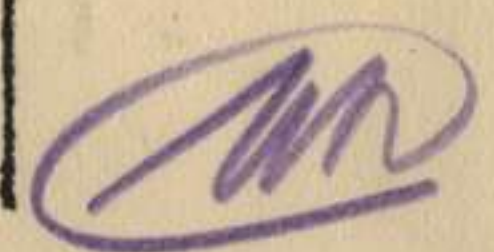
W A R D I A R Y.

Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31st Bn.

Date and Time - From.....Contd..... To.....

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Show Grounds, Townsville	13/12/41.	0800 cont.	arrangements made to pack trophies and correspondence so that they could be handed to Area Office.	
"	"	1400	Three anti-aircraft posts on Show Grounds taken over by from our Unit by 1st A/Tk. Battery.	
"	14/12/41.	1200	Received this telegram:- "Further to warning order stop action is now to be taken to call up additional personnel on full time duty to W.E. plus first reinforcement officers and less first reinforcements other ranks. stop units will arrange to complete movement as early as practicable stop no entry into camp before sixteenth December stop detailed instructions will be forwarded by fifteenth December stop Conditions of leave and department of training of men in seasonal occupations or specialised industries are to be continued as at present stop advise Area Bde. Major by 0900 hours Monday fifteenth December number of U.S.P. required to complete to W.E. less first reinforcements other ranks stop. Acknowledge." Milcommand, Brisbane.	Telegram acknowledged.
"	"	1230	Bde. issued instructions for the establishment of observation posts on Many Peaks Range and Mt. Cook on Magnetic Island.	
"	"	1400	Conference of all officers when Milcommand telegram read. Lengthy discussion as to call up of men.	
"	"	1500-1730	Recce. by C/O, Adj. Sig. Officer, Q.M. and	



PAGE 3.

W A R D I A R Y.Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31. st. Battalion/.....

Date and Time - From.....Cont. To.....Cont.

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Show Grounds, Townsville.	14/12/41.	1500- 1730 (Cont.)	I/O of Many Peaks area. Arrangements completed for establishment of O.Ps.	
"	15/12/41.		Further preparation for partial mobilisation carried out.	
"	"	1400	The Detachments for Ingham, Ayr, Home Hill, Bowen, Proserpine and Charters Towers depart during afternoon to call in personnel from respective centres immediately.	
"	16/12/41.	0900	Arrangements made to call in all Townsville personnel immediately.	
"	"	1030	Recce. party set out to find suitable position on Magnetic Island for O.Ps.	
"	"	1100	Brigadier sent for C/O 31st Bn.. Instructions issued at Brigade Conference that 31st Bn. was to remain in the Show Grounds and that the 41st Heavy Battery and 1st A/Tk. Battery were to go to Sellheim.	

W A R D I A R YArmy Form C2118
(Adapted).Unit. 31st BATTALIONDate and Time - From. 16th December To. 18th December, 1941.

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Show Grounds Townsville	16/12/41.	1900	Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 officers 363 other ranks on strength. 17.12.41.	
	17/12/41.		Calling up of men continues at all centres.	
	"	0800-	41st Battery depart for Sellheim.	
	"	1400		
	"	1200	Bn. takes over anti-aircraft posts in Show Grounds from 1st A/Tk. Battery.	
	"	1900	Telegram to Northern Command advising 31 officers and 428 other ranks on strength.	
	18/12/41.		Calling up of all personnel continues at all centres	
	"	0800	1st A/Tk. Battery depart for Sellheim.	
	"	1015- 1230	Observation test organised by Bde. carried out in conjunction with 24th Squadron R.A.A.F. to train troops in recognition of aircraft.	
		1000	Sig. Post established at Bde. H.Qs. subsequent to Bde. instructions.	
			Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 535 Other Ranks on strength.	
		1800	Recce. party return from Magnetic Island.	

W A R D I A R Y.Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31st Battalion.....

Date and Time - From.....19th December, 1941..... To.....26th December, 1941.....

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Show Grounds Townsville	19th Dec., 1941		Calling up of personnel continues at all centres. Report furnished to Bde. on O.P. at Magnetic Island. Instructions given to establish O.P. on South Eastern side of Horseshoe Bay on Hill 763. Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 596 Other Ranks on strength.	
"	20th Dec.	0800 1100 1900	Calling up of personnel continues at all centres. Party sets out to establish Watching Station at Horseshoe Bay, Magnetic Island. Sig. Station established at Pilot Hill. Watching Station at Horseshoe Bay established Hill 763. Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 706 Other Ranks on strength.	
"	21st Dec.		Officers return from centres having called up available personnel. Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 746 Other Ranks on strength.	
"	22nd Dec.		Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 785 Other Ranks on strength.	
"	23rd. Dec.		Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and Other Ranks on strength. (785).	
"	24th Dec.	1700	Instructions from Bde. to withdraw Ack/Ack. Post near Wakeford's. Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 785 Other Ranks on strength.	

W A R D I A R Y.

Army Form C2118
(Adapted).

Unit.....31 Bn.....

Date and Time - From..25/12/41 (Cont)... To.....

Place	Date.	Hour.	Summary of events and information.	Remarks and References to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Showgrounds Townsville	25/12/41	1800	Ack.Ack post at Wakeford's withdrawn. Telegram to Milcommand advising 31 Officers and 785 Other Ranks on strength.	
"	26/12/41	0800	Strength 31 Offrs. 779 O.R's. Mob training commences.	
"	27/12/41		Strength 31 Offrs. 782 O.R's. Mob training continues.	
"	28/12/41		Mob training continues. Strength 31 Offs. 782 O.R's.	
"	29/12/41		Strength 31 Offrs. 784 O.R's.	
"	30/12/41		Mob training continues. Strength 31 Officers 784 O.R's.	
"	31/12/41		Mob training continues. Strength 31 Offrs. 787 O.R's.	

Appx "A" to 31 Bn War Diary.

3 Sep 39 to Dec 1941.

Officers of 31 Bn enlisted in A.I.F. and R.A.A.F.

	Lieut H.Richards		1939.
	Lieut A.G.Suthers		1939.
	Lieut J.A.Douglas		1939.
	Lieut P.J.G.Stratford	Enlisted A.I.F.	1939.
	Capt G.Armstrong	28 Nov	1940.
	Capt P.K.Searle		1940.
	Capt A.R.White		1940.
	Lieut B.D.Strange		1940 May
	Lieut R.A.Suthers		1940 May
	" L.Snell		1940
	" T.P.Davies		1940
X	" A.Christie	R.A.A.F.	1940
	" D.Whalley	A.I.F.	1940.
	" A.H.Smith	R.A.A.F.	1940.
	" N.Anderssen	A.I.F.	1940.
	" E.McN. Christie	A.I.F.	1940.
	" W.C.Heatley	"	1940.
	" L.C.Butterworth	R.A.A.F.	1940.
	" F.Herbertson	A.I.F.	1941
	" R.H.S.Kelsey	A.I.F.	1941
	" D.B.Millican	"	1941
	" B.de Hugard	"	1941
	" A.Fraser	"	1941
	" F.Sweeney	"	1941
	" F.N.Sleeman	"	1941
	" T.Campbell	"	1941.

X Killed In England Jan 1942.

Appendix A.

SECRET.

Copy No. 42.

12.Dec.41.

31 Bn. Precautionary Instructions No. 1.

OBJECT.

1. To provide for the dispersal and protection of personnel and vehicles of 31 Bn stationed at TOWNSVILLE.

VEHICLES.

2. 31 Bn vehicles will remain in dispersed position at GARBUTT'S Paddock, with the exception of the following:-

Rifle Coy.	-	5-30 cwt. lorries.
		5-15 cwt. vans.
1 M.M.G. Sec.	-	2-15 cwt. vans.
1 Mortar Det.	-	1-15 cwt. van.
1 Sigs.	-	1-15 cwt. van.

These vehicles will be parked on Unit M.T. Lines on Triangle when not in use.

3. The following vehicles will be loaded with the required stores and kept ready at Dispersal Area.

2-15 cwt. vans with S.A.A. (Reserve).
2-15 cwt. vans with S.A.A. (M.M.Gs).
3-15 cwt. vans with M.M.G.

DUTIES.

4. Lieut. J. Amuller will arrange for guards to be placed on vehicle parks (i.e. Dispersal Area and Unit Lines).
5. Capt. J. R. McCabe will arrange a guard of 2 N.C.Os and 12 men to guard Unit Lines, etc., if the Showgrounds Area is evacuated.
6. Capt. G. A. Theodore will organise 1 Rifle Coy, supported by 1 M.M.G. Section, 1 Mortar Det., to be held in readiness for any emergency. On sounding of alarm they will assemble near Unit M.T. Lines, or in slit trenches adjacent thereto if danger is imminent.
W.O.II. S. Hackett will arrange for two stretcher squads to be attached to Capt. Theodore's Force.

ALARMS.

7. There will be two types of dispersal - wide and close.
8. For wide dispersal troops will move independently in small groups to GARBUTT'S Paddock in vicinity of dispersed M.T. Area.
9. The alarm in wide dispersal will be the usual alarm signal sounded on the bugle.
10. For close dispersal troops will immediately take shelter in nearest slit trench in 31 Bn Area.
11. The alarm for close dispersal will be a series of short sharp blows on the gong (length of ry. line suspended at A.A.S.C. H.Q.).
12. The "All Clear" signal will be a series of blows on gong at longer intervals.
13. The order to sound the alarm will be issued from Bde. H.Q.

/SLIT TRENCHES.

SLIT TRENCHES.

14. Slit trenches will be constructed 2 ft. wide, 4 ft. deep, 5 ft. long. Each trench will occupy two men. Earth will be flattened around trenches. Trenches will be staggered.

SUPPLY.

15. Messing will be carried out in Showgrounds unless prolonged dispersal is necessary, in which case further orders will be issued.
16. Reserve amn. will be kept in vans at M.T. Dispersal Area.

COAST OBSERVERS.

17. Lieut. H.M. Wooster will provide signal and coast observers in accordance with instructions already issued.

DRESS.

18. Battle dress will be worn by all ranks. Tin helmets will be worn, but not respirators.

BLACKOUT.

19. All lights and fires will be extinguished on sounding of either alarm. Smoking will be strictly prohibited. This state will remain until sounding of "All Clear."

SAFETY.

20. Sgt. Carr will arrange for all slit trenches in 31 Bn. Area to be marked by white rope and white pegs.
21. These instructions will take effect immediately.

W. H. Carr
CAPT.
ADJT. 31 BN.

This is a Secret Document.

Distribution.

C.O.	1.	B Coy	18 - 19.	11 Inf. Bde.	35 - 37.
2 i/c	2.	C Coy	20 - 23.	R.S.M.	38
Adj. t.	3.	D Coy	24 - 27.	R.Q.M.S. 31 Bn.	39
Q.M.	4.	E Coy	28 - 31.	Sgt. Needham	40
Intell. Off.	5.	41 Fd. Bty.	32.	Sgt. Carr.	41.
H.Q. Coy.	6 - 11.	2 A/Tk. Bty.	33.	<i>War Diary</i>	<i>42+43</i>
A Coy	12 - 15.	115 Res. M.T.	34.		