

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

Item number: 8/3/78

39 Infantry Battalion
July – December 1942

17 JUL 1942

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

PAGE 1.

Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 1 Jul. '42. To 4 Jul '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	1 Jul. '42.		Training continued within Bn area with exception of B Coy which continued training in ILOLO area while awaiting orders to commence march to KOKODA. W.O. WILKINSON of A.N.G.A.U. (Australian New Guinea Administration) was attached to B Coy to act as medical orderly. Unit)	
	2 Jul. '42.		Training and completion of S.C. Posns in Bn area. B Coy were still at ILOLO training and making arrangements for their march.	
	3 Jul. '42.		Comd. B Coy (Capt. S.V. TEMPLETON) marched to UBURI to recce. first stage of route, and reported that the track was in good order and that living quarters etc for tps at UBURI were good. Conference of Coy Comds was held at Bn. H.Q. to discuss health of tps with special reference to anti-malarial precautions. Coy Comds were informed that tps having attacks of malaria must on no account try and treat themselves by use of quinine, but were to report to R.M.O. for proper treatment or evacuation to hospital. The question of enlistment of Bn. personnel in the A.I.F., or alternately, their willingness to serve any where, but still as a Militia Unit was also discussed.	
	4 Jul. '42.		B Coy were reported by Capt. TEMPLETON to be training in full marching order and shaping well. Remaining Coys continued normal training and digging of posns. Schooner GILI GILI sailed from PORT MORSBY for BUNA with B Coy stores. Personnel accompanying stores were C.Q.M.S. and storaman of B Coy, two A.S.C. personnel, one O.R. each from Pay and Postal Units and one for Canteen.	

July '42

R. Honner Lt.-col.

Comd 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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PAGE 2.

Army Form C.2118
(adapt)

Unit... 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 5 Jul. '42. To 8 Jul '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	5 Jul. '42.		Lt. Col. OWEN arrived at PORT MORESBY to take command of 39 Bn and spent the night at H.Q. 30 Aust. Inf. Bde.	
			ENEMY Aircraft carried out a hy raid on SEVEN MILE 'drome. Many bombs missed target, but did NOT fall in Bn area, but caused some damage in adjacent area. (55 Aust. Inf. Bn.)	
			R.C. Church Parade was held at Bn. H.Q.	
	6 Jul. '42.		Lt. Col. OWEN paid his first visit to Bn and after lunch on at Bn. H.Q., visited B Coy. He was accompanied by Major FINDLAY.	
	7 Jul. '42.		Lt. Col. OWEN joined Unit and spent day inspecting Bn. area. He was accompanied by Major FINDLAY, and the I.O. B Coy marched from ILOLO to UBURI. It was decided that native carriers should carry packs over remaining stages. Three O.R.'s dropped out en route.	
	8 Jul. '42.		Capt. HILMAN relinquished duties as R.Q.M. and left for evacuation depot en route for AUSTRALIA, as result of MEDICAL BOARD'S decision. Range practice (Table Y, Part 2) was carried out by B Coy, A. C. and P. Coys—did small arms trg and smartening exercises. B Coy marched from UBURI to TORIBAIWA. The Coy was accompanied by Lieut. KEINZEL of A.N.G.A.U. It was arranged that he should act as guide as far as KAGI when the party would be met by Lieut. BREWER. Two O.R.'s unfit to march were left at UBURI.	

D.315/12.20.—C.4788.

R. Honner Lt.-col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY PAGE 3.

Army Form C2118
(adapted)

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 9 Jul.'42.

To 18 Jul.'42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	9 Jul.'42.		B Coy marched from IORIBAIWA to NAURU. Remainder carried on normal training.	
	10 Jul.'42.		B Coy rested for day at NAURU.	
	11 Jul.'42.		B Coy marched from NAURU to WOGI. While other Coys continued training, O's C. judged S.C. Posts in their respective areas, for Bd. competition.	
	12 Jul.'42.		B Coy marched from WOGI to KAGI.	
	13 Jul.'42.		B Coy marched from KAGI to BORA CREEK CROSSING. During this part of the journey the actual OWEN-STANLEY RANGE was crossed at a height of 7,000 feet above sea level.	
	14 Jul.'42.		B Coy reached KOKODA with a strength of 5 Offrs and 103 O.R's.	
	15 Jul.'42.		B Coy commenced intensive weapon, s.c. and patrol training. On Pl. took up posn for 'drome defence, a second was at pt near crossing of main track over YODDA RIVER and the third in YODDA Valley sometimes going as far as YODDA.	
	18 Jul.'42.		C.O. (Lt. Col. OWEN) was called to Bd. H.Q. during morning and ordered to move Bn. except M.G. Coy, M.T., Carriers and Mortars, to KOKODA. Move to commence 19 Jul. At Coy Comds' conference at 1400 hrs. he gave orders for C-Coy to move on 19 Jul. with A and B Coys following on successive days. C.O. and IO were to proceed to KOKODA by 'plane and meet Bn. there.	

D.315/2.25—C4783

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY PAGE 4.

Army Form C 2118
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(Erase heading not required).

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 19 Jul. '42 To 23 Jul '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	19 Jul '42.		C Coy (Capt. A.C. DEAN) moved to ILOLO by M.T. Remaining boys preparing to move. Orders to postpone move received in the evening. GILI GILI arrived at BUNA and discharging of B Coy's stores commenced at once.	
	20 Jul '42.		C Coy ordered to remain at ILOLO and carry out training pending further orders. A and D Coys were likewise ordered to remain in existing locations and continue training.	
	21 Jul '42.		ENEMY made landing at GONA. By this time, last of stores which had been unloaded from the ship at BUNA were on the way to KOKODA by native carrier. Capt. TEMPLETON accompanied by one O.R. arrived in BUNA to receive area, and to see that unloading of stores was completed. Hearing of the ENEMY landing, he hurried back to AWALA.	
	22 Jul '42.		Capt. TEMPLETON arrived at AWALA and immediately sent for 11 Pl to come forward to AWALA.	
	23 Jul '42.		Capt. TEMPLETON sent orders for 12 Pl. also to move forward where both Pls would join P.I.B. commanded by Maj. WATSON. Capt. ST. VERNON, 2 i/c B Coy, was ordered to accompany 12 Pl, 10 Pl remained at KOKODA for 'Drom Defence. Capt. TEMPLETON returned to KOKODA to contact Lt. Col. OWAN who was expected to arrive by plane. 12 Pl camped GORARI for the night while 11 Pl reached AWALA at 1515 hrs. Major WATSON then had under his command two European Offs, three European O.R's and thirty-five natives - and 11 Pl. In the meantime ENEMY had occupied BUNA and advanced along track towards AWALA. They were engaged by Major WATSON'S (MAROUBRA) Force - approx 1000 yds EAST of AWALA at hrs. Owing to superior numerical strength of the	(over)

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R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd, 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 23 Jul '42.

To 25 Jul '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	23 Jul '42.	(cont'd)	<p>ENEMY, our troops were obliged to withdraw to WAIROPI after a brief exchange of fire.</p> <p>C Coy accompanied by R.M.O. (Capt. SHERRA), Chaplain EARL, I.O. (Lieut. McNAMARA), and Sig Off. (Lieut. DUVAL) marched from ILOLO to UBURI.</p>	
	24 Jul '42.		<p>By 0630 hrs. 11 Pl and remainder of P.I.B. were in posn on eastern side of River KUMUSI. At 0800 hrs. they had demolished the bridge at WAIROPI. Wireless and other gear was sent back to KOKODA at 0900 hrs. Following orders to fight a rearguard action, the force moved back to another posn WEST of WAIROPI at 1030 hrs. At 1430 hrs ENEMY patrol appeared at River. Our tps opened fire and then withdrew to GORARI where they arrived at 1705 hrs. At 1930 hrs, 12 Pl took up a posn half-an-hour fwd of 11 Pl.</p> <p>Lt. Col. OWEN arrived at KOKODA by plane at 1700 hrs, having made an unsuccessful attempt to land on the previous day.</p> <p>C Coy marched from UBURI to IORIBAIWA.</p> <p>A Coy moved by M.T. to Base area.</p>	
	25 Jul '42.		<p>Lt. Col. OWEN and Capt. TEMPLETON then proceeded to AWALA and arrived at 0130 hrs. It was then decided to make a stand at dawn and posns were occupied accordingly, - 800 yards EAST of GORARI. 11 and 12 Pls on main track with P.I.B. details on flanks in the bush. Lewis guns were sited to fire along track while TSMG's were for the most part to be used in jungle.</p> <p>Lt. Col. OWEN left for KOKODA at 1000 hrs to contact further troops due to arrive by air.</p>	

D.M.S. 75.10—C.4788.

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C-2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 25 Jul '42. To 26 Jul '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	25 Jul. '42	(Cont'd)	<p>ENEMY patrol advanced along track at 1145 hrs. Fire was held until they had passed our flanking posns, and when fire was opened, fifteen ENEMY were killed. Our force then withdrew to a posn West of bridge and approx. 60 yards East of GERARI. Tps were in posn by 1230 hrs. Two shots, believed to be a signal, were heard at 1645, and were followed immediately by heavy ENEMY fire, including M.G. and Mortars. Our force withdrew to OIVI Pass and completed the move by 1930 hrs - and defensive posns taken up.</p> <p>Tps, by this time were very tired, and approx six men were missing. Capt. STEVENSON was sent to KOKODA to report situation to Lt. Col. OWEN, arriving back at OIVI at 2200 hrs. Supplies were sent forward by forty native carriers, who returned to KOKODA with packs which were not required.</p> <p>Lt. Col. OWEN ordered OIVI to be held at all costs - unless the force was surrounded.</p> <p>C Coy arrived at NAURU and A Coy arrived UBERI.</p>	
	26 Jul. '42.		<p>10^{pl} (Lieut. GARLAND) withdrew from KOKODA to DENKI with orders to hold the main track back to PORT MORESBY. At 1000 hrs. Lieut. McClean and fourteen O.R.'s from 16 Pl (D Coy) arrived at KOKODA by plane. The plane immediately returned to PORT MORESBY and at 1130 hrs landed a further 15 O.R.'s of 16 Pl. Both parties left for OIVI immediately after arrival.</p> <p>First party from 16 Pl. arrived at OIVI at 1430 hrs. The remainder were approaching OIVI at approx 1730 hrs, and were misinformed by personnel met on track, who claimed that the whole force was surrounded and lost. H.C.O. in charge therefore decided to return to KOKODA.</p> <p>ENEMY approached along track at 1445 hrs. and at 1450 hrs more were seen to be coming round on the flanks.</p>	

DAIR/CNO-C4788

R. Hammer, Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 26 Jul '42 To _____

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Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 27 Jul. '42. To 29 Jul '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	27 Jul. '42.		<p>Lt. Col. OWEN, after the destruction of all possible stores, material and buildings at KOKODA, withdrew with all tps then in that area - to DENEKI. As it was impossible to get all packs etc, out of KOKODA, the entire force was without blankets or groundsheets.</p> <p>C Coy moved to EFOGI and A Coy to NAURU.</p> <p>M.G. Coy, Bn H.Q. and Sig Pl marched to UBERI.</p> <p>O C D Coy (Capt. BIDSTRUP), Adj (Lieut. K.H. LOVETT), and thirty - two O.R.'s from D Coy left for KOKODA by air - but were unable to land as the drome was NOT clear, and returned to PORT MORESBY.</p>	<p>Appx B</p>
	28 Jul '42.		<p>Some tps, previously thought to be missing, arrived at DENEKI. They had slept in KOKODA on the previous night, as the ENEMY had NOT occupied KOKODA. Lt. Col. OWEN decided to do so. This occupation was completed at 1330 hrs. A perimeter defence was adopted around the 'drome - and a patrol was sent forward - half an hour along the track to OIVI. At 1330 hrs ENEMY tps were seen running across the track and moving out on to our flanks. One of our tps reported movement up escarpment towards our posn at 1930 hrs. There were NO further reports of ENEMY movements until 0230 hrs in the morning.</p> <p>C Coy, having received a message as to the urgency of the situation, pushed on from EFOGI to EORA CROSSING. A Coy moved on to EFOGI and M.G. Coy arrived at IORIBAIWA, where they were overtaken by the 2 i/c (Major NEWMAN) and the Adj. From here Major NEWMAN was unable to continue the journey. D Coy less one Pl and the AA Pl moved to UBERI.</p>	
	29 Jul 42		<p>At 0230 ENEMY were reported to be advancing on our posns from the NORTH. Lt. Col. OWEN personally took command of this section - and it was while standing firing a rifle down the</p>	(over)

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form 2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 29 Jul. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.																																								
	29 Jul. '42	(cont'd)	<p>escarpment that he was hit just above the right eye by an ENEMY sniper. He was dragged from his posn and carried to a nearby building - where he was attended by the M.O. attached to the P.I.B. (Capt. VERNON). By this time (0320 hrs) the ENEMY were firing from our rear and closing in on the flanks. Our tps then commenced to withdraw in fairly good order despite the difficulty of distinguishing friend from foe in the darkness. While this movement was in progress ENEMY mortar fire was brought to bear on our rear and flanks. Our line then broke completely and orders were given for a hasty withdrawal through the rubber. The ENEMY created considerable noise by singing out and were using hand grenades captured at OIVI. The fire was heavy and consistent and his attack determined.</p> <p>The last to leave KOKODA area were Major WATSON, Capt. STEVENSON, Capt. VERNON and Lieut. BREWER (A.N.G.A.U.).</p> <p>Lieut. Col. OWEN was still alive, but unconscious at this time, and had to be left at R.A.P. from which our force was cut off. It was obvious, moreover, that he would only remain alive for a matter of minutes.</p> <p>Our tps retired to DENEKI where they again took up defensive posns. They were very tired and morale was low. Twenty O.R's were reported missing, probably deserted.</p> <p>The strength of Pls at this time was as follows:-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>10 Pl.</td><td>1</td><td>Off</td><td>19</td><td>O.R's.</td></tr> <tr> <td>11 Pl.</td><td>1</td><td>"</td><td>8</td><td>"</td></tr> <tr> <td>12 Pl.</td><td>1</td><td>"</td><td>16</td><td>"</td></tr> <tr> <td>16 Pl.</td><td>1</td><td>"</td><td>15</td><td>"</td></tr> <tr> <td>B Coy HQ</td><td>1</td><td>"</td><td>9</td><td>"</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5"><hr/></td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>5</td><td>"</td><td>67</td><td>"</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5"><hr/></td></tr> </table>	10 Pl.	1	Off	19	O.R's.	11 Pl.	1	"	8	"	12 Pl.	1	"	16	"	16 Pl.	1	"	15	"	B Coy HQ	1	"	9	"	<hr/>					Total	5	"	67	"	<hr/>					
10 Pl.	1	Off	19	O.R's.																																								
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R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C 118
(adap)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 29 Jul. '42. To 31 Jul '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	29 Jul '42.	(cont'd)	O.C. C Coy, R.M.O., and Sig. Off left EORA CROSSING at 1000 hrs with one sec and moved to ISURAVA. Here - there were many conflicting reports as to situation forward. The I.O. and the sec commanded by Cpl McWHA R.R. was sent forward to ascertain exact situation. The party arrived at DENEKI at 1800 hrs, and the Sec was immediately placed in posn to strengthen the meagre defences. The I.O. advised Capt. DEAN by W/T of the intention to hold DENEKI and forwarded Major WATSON'S request that C Coy come forward as soon as possible. The main body of C Coy, having been equipped from stores which had come forward by native carriers, had moved on to ISURAVA during the day under Command of the 2 i/c (Capt. K.R. JACOB). A Coy moved up to KAGI, M.G. Coy to NAURU and D Coy, less one Pl to IORIBAIWA.	
	30 Jul '42.		C Coy arrived at DENEKI at approx 1200 hrs. Capt DEAN then took command of all 39 Bn troops in area and became 2 i/c to Major WATSON (Comd MAROUBRA FORCE). The Coy was immediately disposed as follows:- 13 Pl astride main track to KOKODA ten minutes walk forward of DENEKI, 14 Pl along main track in rear of DENEKI, 16 Pl on right of DENEKI. A Coy moved to EORA CROSSING, M.G. Coy to EFOGI. D Coy less one Pl to NAURU.	
	31 Jul '42.		ENEMY were NOT seen throughout day. Our tps patrolled in vicinity of our posns. A Coy moved forward to ISURAVA. M.G. Coy arrived at KAGI and two Pls D Coy arrived at EFOGI.	

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Page 1

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 1 AUG. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	1 AUG. '42		<p>Lt-col. R. HONNER, M.C. was appointed C.O. 39 Bn.</p> <p>(A Coy) Capt. SYMINGTON arrived at DENEKI. Tps already there consisted of C Coy, one Pl. B Coy, part of one Pl. D Coy and some P.I.B. Details. Maj. WATSON, Comd. P.I.B. was in comd of all tps in DENEKI and Capt. SYMINGTON took comd of 39 Bn tps. Prior to the arrival of A Coy, Maj. WATSON and Capt. DEAN had made arrangements for a horseshoe perimeter defence of DENEKI which would be possible with the additional Coy. This was implemented immediately on arrival of A Coy. Tps were disposed as follows:— A Coy on left, C Coy in centre, and Pl D Coy on right. B Coy went back to ISURAVA to take up a posn.</p> <p>An intercepted W/T message from PURIBAIWA to O i/c L of C revealed that Major CAMERON had arrived at PURIBAIWA 31 Jul.</p> <p>Following a report from a reliable P.I.B. native who had made his way from AWALA, that there was a big enemy supply dump at OIVI, a request that OIVI be bombed by aircraft was signalled to N.G.F.</p> <p>An ENEMY scout was seen by one of our patrols on main track to KOKODA, well fwd of our posns.</p> <p>D Coy, less one Pl. rested at EFOGI under instructions of Major CAMERON.</p> <p>M.G. Coy at KAGI under orders to move on to EORA CROSSING 2 Aug.</p>	
				Appx A — copy of messages.
				Appx B — Report fr from Major CAMERON

P.3118/1.2.39.—C.4783.

R. Honner Lt.col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Aug '42.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Page 2

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 2 Aug. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	2 Aug. '42.	0645 hrs.	A native was shot by a sentry at the W/T Sta twenty min in rear of DnNgKI. This native had failed to halt when challenged. He was subsequently identified by Capt. JESSER of the P.I.B. as a BIAS Village Boy.	
			V125527 Pt. HUGHES J. while returning from patrol was mortally wounded under similar circumstances and died soon after. He was challenged three times, but failed to answer.	
			At 0720 hrs a further request was made to N.G.F. for aerial bombardment of OIVI.	
			A Coy reported that during the night one of their men fired on four enemy. Marks on the ground seen at daylight confirmed this. There were NO casualties on either side.	
			During the morning, four Allied Fighter A/C attacked KOKODA. Each dropped one bomb in the BIG RUBBER and then proceeded to carry out intensive machine gunning, paying particular attention to 'Drome area. Fires were started in native built houses. The main fire was in a building identified as the former P.I.B. Barracks	
			Lieut. WHILAN and one Ssg. patrolled along the main track to KOKODA and encountered an enemy party, estimated at twenty, at the river crossing. Our patrol held its fire and allowed the enemy to approach very close and were thereby successful in killing nine. The remainder of the enemy party withdrew hurriedly without returning fire. It was then seen that a further enemy party, estimated at thirty, was forming up on high ground in rear of first party apparently for encircling movement, and our patrol withdrew, returning to DnNgKI at 1330 hrs.	

11.115/1.150—C.4788

R. Horner, Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Page 3

Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 2 Aug. '42.

To

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D. 318; *R.* 59;—*C.* 4783.

R. Honner 1st Col.
Comd. 39 1st Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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PAGE 4

Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 3 Aug. '42.

To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	3 Aug. '42.		<p>Adj.)Lieut. K.H. LOVETT) and one O.R. arrived at DENEKI at 1100 hrs.</p> <p>At 1540 hrs. two native police boys returned from patrol across the valley on the right in the direction of MANAGARI Village, and reported NMS.</p> <p>15 Pl. (Lieut. S. JOHNSTON) which had left in the morning to patrol through jungle to YODDA RIVER returned at 1630 hrs. Lieut. JOHNSTON reported that the jungle on the course taken was too dense for the party to reach the river in the time allotted. NMS.. He reported the existence of a track leading around our right flank.</p> <p>At 1645 hrs A Coy reported that a patrol had returned from the track leading through their most forward post. It was previously thought that this track led to KOKODA 'drome, but it was found by the patrol that it petered out before even reaching the river. This patrol also reported NMS.</p> <p>Following repeated requests for aerial support, four Allied Fighter aircraft attacked OIVI and KOKODA areas from 1605 hrs until 1615 hrs. Six fires were observed in KOKODA as a result. Five of these were identified as buildings by Lieut. BREWER, who had previously resided there as Assistant District Officer. The sixth fire was at the North end of the 'drome and was thought to be a dump as there was a great deal of heavy black smoke and fourteen explosions.</p> <p>During the past week experiments had been made in dropping supplies for the Force from aircraft at EFOGI and KAGI. This was being done to obviate the difficulties entailed in having everything carried by natives from UBERI. These experiments had only met with partial success as a great deal of stores were lost in the jungle. Lieut. KEINZEL of A.N.G.A.U. therefore inspected the dry lakes at MYOLA which is EAST of KAGI -</p>	(over)

D.3121/1.20.—C.4783

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Page. 5

Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 3 Aug. '42. To 4 Aug '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	3 Aug. '42. (cont'd)		and reported the area as being very satisfactory for dropping of cargo, and that in his opinion, small planes could land there. The regular carriage of amm and rations to this point by air and the subsequent comparatively short carry by natives would ensure adequate and regular supplies for the Force. Major CAMERON arrived EORA CROSSING at 1315 hrs.	<u>Appt</u>
	4 Aug. '42.		Sgt. EVENSEN (P.I.B.) returned at 1250 hrs from a patrol lasting 20 hrs in the vicinity of MANAGARI and other villages on the opposite side of the valley. He encountered NO ENEMY and found that natives would not sleep in villages although they would be about them in the day time. This they said was due to the fact that they were afraid the Japanese might come. Tracks up the valley showed NO signs of having been used by the ENEMY. The main track along the EASTERN side of the valley (the opposite side to DENEKI), joins the track KOKODA - OIVI at a point about one hour from KOKODA. W.O.I. McWATERS (PIB) returned from the same area about three hours later and reported having met several native carriers deserting from PORT MORESBY. One of these he brought back with him, but the remainder dispersed into the jungle. on being told that the ENEMY were in possession of AWALA and KOKODA, were their destinations. Telephone communication with ILOLO was established at 1441 hrs. This was a result of excellent work on the part of Base Sigs. Prior to this, the only means of communication between MAROUBRA and N.G.F. was W/T and there were long delays entailed by wireless blackouts which occurred regularly from 2200 hrs to 0600 hrs approx. The set used was an A.W.A. one of a type used by the civil administration and although too weak to transmit during these periods of blackout, was generally found	(over)

D. 1455/1.10.—C.4782

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 5 Aug. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	5 Aug. '42		<p>There was some activity in KOKODA area indicated by movements of small working parties. Work which appeared to be construction of an M.G. posn was observed to be in progress in SW corner of small rubber plantation.</p> <p>Maj. ELLIOT - SMITH (A.N.G.A.U.) arrived on inspection of carrier route.</p> <p>Three recce patrols were sent out in the early morning as under:-</p> <p>(i) Capt. JESSER (P.I.B.) was to proceed to the outskirts of KOKODA on the left to ascertain the extent of ENEMY activity outside the actual KOKODA area and the disposns of ENEMY defences. He returned at 1800 hrs without having made any contact, but had had the opportunity of seeing working parties digging defensive posns along the Western side of the rubber plantation.</p> <p>(ii) Lieut. SORENSEN (A Coy) and Lieut. BREWER (A.N.G.A.U.) were to recce a track alleged to be the old track PORT MORESBY-KOKODA with a view to ascertaining whether it would provide an effective route into KOKODA from the right - and to what extent it was guarded by the ENEMY. On returning at about 1830 hrs they reported that the track led along the EORA VALLEY and joined the track OIVI - KOKODA at a point near where it crosses a creek - just before entering KOKODA. They also reported that they had NOT contacted any ENEMY, although they had proceeded to a point from which they were able to see the junc with OIVI - KOKODA - up to which point it was NOT guarded and did NOT show signs of having been patrolled.</p> <p>(iii). The I.O., accompanied by Sgt. EVENSEN (P.I.B.), was to find a good ambush point on the track OIVI-KOKODA, but was NOT due to report back until the following day.</p>	

H. 3118/1-50.—C. 4788.

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 6 Aug. '42. To 7 Aug '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	6 Aug '42.		<p>Remainder of D Coy arrived at DENIKI at 1500 hrs and took up posn on track DENEKI - ISURAVA, in rear of Force H.Q.</p> <p>Force Comd ordered Adj to return to Rear H.Q at EORA CROSSING, where it was considered he could do more useful work in ensuring that supplies came forward.</p> <p>Although activity was observed to be continuing in KOKODA area, NO ENEMY patrol activity was seen.</p> <p>At 1100 hrs the I.O. - with Sgt. EVENSEN (P.I.B.) and a Sec from A Coy returned, having reached a point on the track OIVI - KOKODA, half an hour's march beyond KOMANDO. He reported friendly natives in the villages en route. The point at which the main track was contacted, he reported as an excellent site for an ambush. While concealed some little distance from the track, he and Sgt. EVENSEN had seen fifty-eight Japanese and five natives carrying stores in the direction of KOKODA. This party also reced a route to by-pass the junction of the track followed - with that to the track KOKODA- OIVI via PIRIVI, which according to natives, was occupied by the ENEMY. The object of the recce was to obviate the possibility of tps which might be sent to carry out an ambush being detected before reaching their objective.</p>	
	7 Aug. '42		<p>It was decided to attack KOKODA on 8 Aug. and the day was largely spent in preparation. Final orders were verbally issued to Coy Comds at 1400 hrs. C Coy was ordered to attack on the left and A Coy on the right, while D Coy was to ambush ENEMY on Rd KOKODA - OIVI and to prevent further infiltration of ENEMY from OIVI. A skeleton force was to be left in DENIKI u/c Capt. JACOBS 2 i/c C Coy.</p> <p>Lieut. JOHNSTON and two O.R.'s patrolled to DENIKI to make final check of ENEMY disposns in the locality of the</p>	<p>vide Appx A Appendix</p>

R Honner 1 Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 7 Aug. '42. To 8 Aug. '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	7 Aug. '42	(cont'd)	KOKODA drome, but was NOT able to return with his information until the following morning. A patrol of A Coy encountered ENEMY patrol. The result of the encounter was ENEMY estimated casualties - eight killed, four wounded, - our casualties - one wounded. Patrols so far had NOT been able to estimate strength of ENEMY in KOKODA area owing to their wide dispersal.	
	8 Aug. '42		Coys moved out from DENEKI as follows:- D Coy - 0630 hrs for junc on track OIVI - KOKODA, one hour from KOKODA and in the vicinity of PIRIVI. A Coy - 0700 hrs for f.u.p. on the EAST side of KOKODA. C Coy 0800 hrs to WEST side of KOKODA along main track.	
			A Coy were first to reach their f.u.p. having encountered NO opposition en route. At 1200 hrs they moved into the LARGE RUBBER on to the start line, with 8 Pl on the right and 7 Pl on the left. 9 Pl. and Coy H.Q. were in the rear. The Coy moved in extended line in a NORTHERLY direction for 450 yards. At this point the ENEMY were encountered. Their strength was estimated at forty and they were routed by our tps who then proceeded to exploit the KOKODA Settlement area.	
			At 1400 hrs 7 and 8 Pls moved off the WESTERN side of the plateau to the NORTH end of the aerodrome and exploited that area. At 1600 hrs these Pls returned to the settlement area. At nightfall the casualties inflicted on the ENEMY were estimated at five killed whereas those of A Coy were NIL. In addition ENEMY equipment, including mortar and bombs, medical gear	(over)

D.2118/1.20.—C.4782.

R. Horner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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(adapted.)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Aug. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	8 Aug. '42	(cont'd)	<p>a bicycle, and a set of full marching equipment was captured from their H.Q.. In addition, a traced map showing routes to PORT MORESBY and a manuscript book (possibly a war diary) were taken from the H.Q.</p> <p>After the return of 7 and 8 Pls the Coy dug in for the night. In the meantime C and D Coys had met some opposition in reaching their objectives.</p> <p>C Coy moved down the main track DENEKI - KOKODA with Bn H.Q. in the rear. At a point two hundred yards in advance of the F.D.L's as held in perimeter defence scheme the rear elements of the Coy and Bn H.Q. were fired upon by an ENEMY patrol concealed in the jungle in the valley on the right. The fire was returned, and although it effectively silenced the ENEMY it is NOT known what casualties were inflicted. Our tps suffered NO casualties as the result of the encounter and proceeded on their way. Between this point and the river Lieut. JOHNSTON and his patrol were met. This patrol had been out since 0600 hrs on the previous morning. Lieut. JOHNSTON reported ENEMY posns being dug on SW corner of LARGE RUBBER. He estimated that posns would accomodate one Sec. More posns were seen to be situated towards NW corner, but it was NOT possible to obtain detailed information. Further posns were being dug further NORTH. These appeared to include mortar posns. As they moved on to the main track on their return they encountered an ENEMY patrol of eleven. ENEMY opened fire, but our patrol was able to elude it. It was considered that as this patrol's presence had become known to the ENEMY, the ENEMY patrol already encountered had been sent out to prevent Lieut. JOHNSTON from returning to our lines.</p>	

D 115 / 1.10.—C 4789

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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(adapted)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Aug. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	8 Aug '42	(cont'd)	<p>At the river the advance of the Coy was held up by M.G. fire. 13 Pl. (Lieut. SALMON) was ordered round to the right to try and silence the gun, and two secs were sent round to the left to test the possibility of crossing the river there. It was found that this could be done just as the ENEMY withdrew, so that the Coy was able to cross at the normal crossing. Opposition, - first by the patrol encountered early in the march, and secondly, by this M.G. fire at the river - had delayed the advance considerably - so that the river was NOT crossed till 1200 hrs, at which time the Coy had been expected to commence its attack on KOKODA.</p> <p>Soon after crossing the river and before he had moved fifty yards onwards along the track Capt. A.C. DEAN (O.C.C Coy) was hit in the stomach by a sniper's bullet. The R.M.O. (Capt. SHERA) came forward immediately, but Capt. DEAN had died before he arrived. Lieut. McNamara was appointed to command C Coy for the remainder of the days operations.</p> <p>The Coy had become dispersed at the crossing and contact with some of the Pls had become very difficult owing to the thick nature of the jungle. It was therefore decided to re-form. After re-forming the main body with 13 Pl, followed by 14 and 15 Pls, endeavoured to push forward along the track towards KOKODA, passing the bodies of two of the ENEMY who had been killed, and some abandoned arms and equipment including an L.M.G. and some rifles. The advance was again held up by M.G. fire at a bend in the track about 400 yards from the river. Two Secs were sent out on either flank to reconnoitre another route, and if possible, to silence the guns. At 1600 hrs the advance was still held up - the Secs NOT having succeeded.</p>	

R. Honner Lt.-col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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(adapted)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Aug. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	8 Aug'42	(cont'd).	<p>As it was considered impossible to reach KOKODA before night-fall, orders were given to withdraw. The withdrawal took place along the main track, - the Coy resuming its original posns at DENIKI.</p> <p>D Coy, after leaving DENIKI progressed according to plan, but struck opposition at PIRIVI and consequently did NOT get to the point decided upon for the ambush at 1100 hrs as arranged. At PIRIVI Pte. BALFOUR was killed and Lieut. CRAWFORD, L/Cpl HOSKINS and Pte HANLON were wounded. Pte HANLON died at DENIKI next morning as a result. A RABAUL native who had been used as a carrier by the ENEMY was captured. After PIRIVI had been cleaned up, the Coy was moved forward along the track to junc with track OIVI-KOKODA. Here a posn was taken up for ambush of ENEMY using track OIVI-KOKODA and resulted in ENEMY casualties amounting to 40/50 killed and 50 wounded.</p> <p>At 1430 hrs the O.C Coy decided to withdraw to PIRIVI and from there to make his way to a point on the track OIVI-KOKODA nearer to OIVI with a view to another ambush. However - on trying to contact 17 Pl - which was in a posn one hundred yards EAST of the main body; it was found that it had been cut off by an ENEMY force which had penetrated the bush on either side - and two runners who had been sent with the order did NOT return. The remainder of the Coy therefore remained in posn till 1700 hrs - endeavouring to make contact with 17 Pl and finally withdrew, beating off a determined ENEMY attack from front and left flank during the retirement. Prior to the action, 17 Pl had been ordered - that if cut off - they were to take to the bush and make their own way back to DENIKI.</p>	

D.3187/5.10.—C.4788.

R. Honner. Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Aug. '42.

To

D 3485 / D 39 — C 4783

R Honner, 1st Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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(adapted)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 9 Aug. '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	9 Aug'42.		<p>At 0745 hrs, the ENEMY again attacked on our front. It was NOT possible to ascertain the strength of their force owing to the cover which the jungle provided for them. Ample indication of their presence was given by intermittent small arms and M.G. fire, which continued throughout the morning. A and D Coys had NOT yet returned from operations of the previous day and the posn of C Coy and Bn H.Q. appeared to be precarious. C Coy occupied their previous posns and posts were maintained on the flanks and in the rear of Bn. H.Q. by P.I.B. Officers, N.C.O's and natives - together with all available personnel from B.H.Q.</p> <p>A small advance party from D Coy arrived at 1000 hrs - reporting that the Coy was returning and would probably arrive at about midday. This party brought with it a RABAUL native boy captured when the ENEMY was driven out of PIRIVI. It was decided that he should be sent back to H.Q. as soon as possible and Major ELLIOT-SMITH left for PORT MORESBY immediately, taking the native and captured equipment with him.</p> <p>At midday - a report was brought from A Coy by Cpl SANOPA, a native policeman, with respect to activities of the previous day. This Cpl and his companion, another Police Boy, left almost immediately with a small supply of tea and sugar. Both of them proved to be notably useful and reliable throughout the campaign.</p> <p>In the meantime - A Coy had remained at KOKODA, having had NO contact during the night. At 0630 hrs, a patrol was sent to NORTH end of drome by 7 Pl and reported that area clear of ENEMY, and at 0800 hrs the body of Lt. Col. OWEN which had been discovered in a trench was buried at a spot ten yards EAST of the building known as GRAHAM'S HOUSE.</p>	

D.2118 (5.7.42)—C.4783

R. Honner
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 9 Aug.'42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	9 Aug'42	(cont'd).	<p>The ENEMY were NOT sighted by A Coy till 1100 hrs, when a force estimated at 100 was seen well back in the SMALL RUBBER. The first elements of this force attacked the Coy's left flank with L.M.G's and rifles at 1430 hrs. This attack was repulsed and at 1200 hrs a further attack with mortars, grenades, L.M.G's and rifles, was made and this was also repulsed. The attack was repeated at 1300 hrs and finally the ENEMY took up posns fifty yards in front of our posns and proceeded to snipe with rifle and L.M.G.</p> <p>A further attack was made at 1600 hrs, - this time with a force estimated at two hundred. As this was NOT successful, pressure was brought to bear on the Coy's other flank.</p> <p>Persistent attacks of this nature continued until dark, but were unsuccessful. At 1900 hrs endeavours to infiltrate with aid of grenades was made by the ENEMY. Unsuccessful attempts at these tactics continued until 2130 hrs. After this, intermittent exchange of shots continued throughout the night.</p> <p>D Coy having sent their advance patrol to DENIKI at 0600 hrs, a further patrol comprising Lieut. FRENCH and six O.R'S was sent to ensure that the crossing over EORA CREEK was clear. Shortly after this firing was heard, and on receipt of information from Lieut. FRENCH that this came from the vicinity of DENIKI, the O.C. of the Coy (Capt. BIDSTRUP) decided to return with his tps immediately. Forward elements of the Coy arrived at 1330 hrs, while rear elements and wounded arrived at 1700 hrs. In the meantime, 17 Pl had made for ISURAVA and did NOT arrive at DENIKI till eighteen hrs after the main body of the Coy.</p> <p>Between 1300 and 1400 hrs Capt. JESSER (P.I.B.), who was helping to man one of the posts protecting Bn H.Q. saw a native leading a small patrol of ENEMY round to the rear of H.Q.</p>	

R. Honner, Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 9 Aug. '42

To 10 Aug. '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	9 Aug. '42	(cont'd)	<p>He shot the native, but before he could take any further action was wounded by a bullet in the left forearm and the ENEMY escaped. It was necessary for him to be evacuated.</p> <p>During the afternoon, the ENEMY force withdrew from our front and the remainder of the afternoon and the night were quiet at DENIKI with the exception of the intermittent fighting which could be heard in the KOKODA area. By nightfall, both C and D Coys were occupying the posns which they had held prior to the attack on KOKODA.</p> <p>Throughout the day it was NOT possible to provide sufficient men for the assistance for A Coy and urgent requests to N.G.F. for reinforcements were made.</p> <p>As it was suggested in A Coy's report which had been signalled to N.G.F. that food be dropped for them by plane, N.G.F. intimated that an endeavour to do so would be made on the following day, despite expressed opinion of Comd MAROUBRA that the posn was too precarious to give any assurance that our tps would still be there to receive it, but that careful aerial recce would greatly assist.</p>	
	10 Aug '42		<p>ENEMY did NOT return to attack DENIKI during day. A Coy continued fighting at KOKODA and patrols from DENIKI made some unsuccessful attempts to establish contact.</p> <p>At 1000 hrs ENEMY launched an attack on A Coy with a force estimated at two hundred. This was repulsed and a second attack took place at 1200 hrs. This also was unsuccessful. A heavier attack took place at 1730 hrs. This time the ENEMY force was estimated at three hundred, and mortars firing smoke and H.E. bombs, heavy and L.M.G's, grenades and rifles were brought into action. This attack was held off until 1930 hrs.</p>	

D.110/7.10.—C.4789

R. Honner, Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 10 Aug. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	10 Aug '42	(cont'd).	<p>At 1900 hrs. 7 Pl withdrew, taking all captured equipment that could be carried. 8 Pl. and Coy H.Q. followed at 1902 hrs taking wounded. The main body of 9 Pl commenced to withdraw, the remainder fighting a delaying action. The Coy withdrew down the WEST side of the plateau, across the creek and then across the aerodrome to the thick timber 800 yards SOUTH of the aerodrome. On checking the Coy at this point it was found that one party of twenty under Sgt. GUEST was missing. A search in the immediate vicinity was made but was unsuccessful. However, as it was known that Sgt. GUEST was aware of the plan of withdrawal, it was decided to move on.</p> <p>Apart from sounds of firing which could be heard in KOKODA area, the force at DENIKI was ignorant of the activities of A Coy. Requests were therefore sent for close aerial recce to gain information of the KOKODA situation. One attempt was made during the morning, but without satisfactory result. As Air Force were unable definitely to locate A Coy, our request for bombing and strafing of ENEMY posns was NOT acted upon, nor were supplies dropped. It was finally decided that supplies for A Coy would be dropped on KOKODA plateau on the following morning in the hope that A Coy would be able to get them.</p> <p>A patrol in the vicinity of DENIKI F.D.L.'s during the morning encountered small ENEMY patrol, killing one and returning with a light shovel, small camouflage net and small tool kit.</p> <p>In order to ascertain if ENEMY were in the valley on the right of DENIKI posn, a patrol of one sec strength under Lieut DALBY was provided by M.G. Coy and sent out from ISURAVA NMS.</p> <p>Advice was received that one Coy 53 Bn was coming to join 39Bn. Lieut. CRAWFORD, previously reported wounded had NOT returned, and was accordingly posted missing.</p>	

11.312 (1.3.39)—C.4782

R. Honner, Lt.-col.
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 11 Aug. '42 To 12 Aug. '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	11 Aug. '42		<p>Force Comd was unaware that A Coy had withdrawn from KOKODA and two patrols were sent out early, one of them having orders to contact A Coy, but were NOT able to do so. Late in the morning, Cpl. BAXTER of A Coy reported at H.Q. stating that he had been separated from his Pl while it was still in KOKODA and had made his way back. He was NOT aware of the withdrawal. He said that A Coy was cooking native food. A message received from N.G.F. intimated that supplies would definitely be dropped at KOKODA the following morning, unless weather did NOT permit or advice was received that A Coy had moved out.</p> <p>Delays were still being experienced in passing of messages over the signal system and recommendations were made to N.G.F. for improvement of the system.</p>	
	12 Aug '42		<p>A native runner arrived from A Coy at 0930 hrs bringing a message to the effect that the Coy had withdrawn from KOKODA, together with some details of the attack and occupation of that area. The Coy was moving back in two parties. With the O.C. were four officers, one of whom (Lieut. BREWER of ANGAU) was very sick with malaria, forty O.R's and a native police boy. The other party consisted of twenty O.R's. The O.C. expressed the opinion that there might be from 1000 to 2000 ENEMY in the YODDA Valley. The Coy was very much in need of rest.</p> <p>In order to gain knowledge of ENEMY movements, small patrols of P.I.B. native tps were sent out to the MANAGARI - PIRIVI area and to villages on the range on the far side of the valley of the EORA CREEK to contact natives. These were sent out from ISURAVA by Capt. JESSER who had been evacuated to there after he was wounded.</p> <p>Allied aircraft were seen to drop small quantities of supplies in KOKODA, word of A Coy's withdrawal NOT having</p>	

D.318/1.00.—C.4789

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn

Date and Time.—From 12 Aug. '42 To 13 Aug 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	12 Aug'42	(cont'd)	<p>been received in sufficient time to prevent it.</p> <p>As it was obvious that A Coy badly needed rest, it was decided that when they reached our lines they would be sent back to EORA CREEK, and that M.G. Coy should come forward to occupy A Coy's former posns, while B Coy would replace M.G. Coy at ISURAVA. Orders were signalled to B and M.G. Coys at 1245 hrs to move immediately.</p> <p>During the afternoon ENEMY tps were seen from DENIKI to be marching out of KOKODA towards the main track to DENIKI, indicating that our posns were to be attacked, and all tps were therefore ordered to stand to.</p> <p>M.G. Coy did NOT arrive at DENIKI till after 1700 hrs and consequently, many of their posns were taken up in the dark and no recces could be made of their area.</p> <p>Careful watch was kept throughout the night, but the ENEMY remained quiet and NO attack materialised.</p> <p>Heavy rain fell during the night and very few of the tps were able to keep dry.</p> <p>It was notified that a further Coy of 53 Bn was being sent forward and that Brig. S.H.W.C. PORTER D.S.O. (Comd 30 Aust. Inf. Bde) was also coming forward to command MAROUBRA FORCE. The first advice to BN. H.Q. was also received - with respect to the appointment of Lt. Col. R. HONNER M.C. to command 39 Bn. The appointment was actually made on 1 Aug. Lt. Col. HONNER left Base in the morning.</p>	
	13 Aug'42		<p>The ENEMY attack on DENIKI commenced at 0950 hrs when rifle and M.G. fire started all along our front and from our flanks. This was considered to be a preliminary endeavour to ascertain our posns by drawing our fire in return, before concentrating upon any special point for the main attack.</p>	

P. 115/1500.—C.4788.

R. Honner Lt. Col.
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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required).

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 13 Aug.'42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	13 Aug'42		<p>Our tps held their fire well, reserving it for definite visible targets. Our tps were still in posns originally held when they first came to DENIKI with the exception that M.G.Coy was in the posn originally held by A Coy.</p> <p>During the remainder of the day a sustained attempt was made to push in our front with heaviest pressure on the sector held by M.G. Coy. The attack was held off with M.G. fire from our tps with exception of a forward posn of M.G. Coy where the entire Sec was put out of action by mortar fire, five O.R's being wounded. Later - a counter attack was made and the posn recovered, two enemy M.G's being put out of action by our grenades.</p> <p>Arrangements were made for aerial support and N.G.F. was advised of location of targets. This however, did NOT eventuate.</p> <p>At 1600 hrs rain and fog limited visibility, and continuing throughout the greater part of the night added greatly to the tps discomfort.</p> <p>At 1800 hrs our tps consolidated for the night throughout which spasmodic ENEMY fire was maintained. During lulls between heavier firing, single rifle shots continued to be fired at short intervals with NO apparent object than keeping our tps in a state of tension.</p> <p>Forty members of A Coy, including the O.C. arrived at ISURAVA. Ten of the party were sick. A further party of twenty-three was still on its way in. A Coy's casualties were ten O.R's killed and eleven wounded, while it was estimated that they caused ENEMY casualties amounting to 150 killed and wounded. A Coy tps were very tired and hungry when they arrived at ISURAVA.</p>	

R. Honner
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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 13 Aug. '42. To

Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form 18
(adapted)

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 14 Aug. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	14 Aug '42		<p>There was a lull between 0500 and 0530 hrs, after which the attack was vigorously resumed. The heaviest pressure was on the left of our front, which was occupied by M.G. Coy. One Pl from this Coy was forced to withdraw to the creek which had previously been half way between its posn and Coy H.Q. At 0800 hrs. ENEMY mortar fire was brought down on C Coy posns and fighting became fiercer. At the same time it was reported that one Pl of M.G. Coy had been out-flanked and cut off.</p> <p>At 0830 hrs. it was decided to withdraw the force in the direction of ISURAVA as we were considerably outnumbered and the ENEMY were beginning to break through our perimeter. It was considered that if the force was withdrawn intact there was a possibility of being able to carry out the primary role of blocking the track to PORT MORESBY, whereas, by remaining at DENIKI, there was the risk that it would be broken up leaving the track open to the ENEMY.</p> <p>17 Pl (D COY) moved back to the WIRELESS STATION twenty minutes in rear of DENIKI. At the same time M.G. Coy, less the Pl. which had been cut off moved along the track from Coy H.Q. to the main track at rear of DENIKI and withdrew through 16 and 18 Pls (D Coy) towards ISURAVA. C Coy followed from DENIKI whilst 16 Pl. had moved from its posn on the right flank by a direct track to rejoin D Coy. After the rest of the Bn had passed through their posn, D Coy moved back to the WIRELESS STATION where the Coy (less 17 Pl.) took up a posn and prepared to ambush the ENEMY as it advanced. The Coy Comd had orders to remain in the posn until contact was made and to inflict as many casualties as possible before withdrawing to another posn further in rear, but NOT to make a stand. NO contact was made throughout the remainder of the day or during night.</p> <p>A Composite Coy composed of remnants of A and B Coys had taken up posns in the ISURAVA area. One Pl. occupied a posn</p>	

D.315/11.20.—C.4788

R. Honner, Lt. Col.
Comd. 3rd Bde 1st Div.

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 14 Aug. '42 To

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D. 3187/1.30.—C 4788

R. Honner
Comd. 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

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Army Form C2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Sat. Aug 15 '42 To Sun. Aug 16 '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	15 Aug '42.		<p>The force comd. and the I.O. left ALOLA at 0630 hrs to make a recce of the ISURAVA area. The coys followed between 1000 and 1100 hrs and the Bn took up a posn. astride the main track, south of the creek crossing the track at a point about 200 yds NORTH of the junction of the track into ISURAVA.</p> <p>The coys were disposed for perimeter defence as follows: MG and C coys holding the proposed FDLs on the southern side of the creek with B coy on the left flank and A coy with 17 pl in the rear.</p> <p>16 & 18 pls were still between DENIKI and ISURAVA. Their first contact with the enemy subsequent to the withdrawal from DENIKI occurred at 1000 hrs when an enemy patrol ten strong and carrying two LMG were ambushed. The two men carrying the LMGs were shot by Cpl BOLAND and six others were killed by TSMG and LMG fire. They then withdrew to another posn. further along the track, thirty minutes to the rear.</p> <p>19 pl (Lieut DALBY) which had been cut off at DENIKI arrived at ISURAVA having escaped from encirclement and making a wide detour round DENIKI joined the main track at D coy's posn.</p>	
	16 Aug '42.	1200	<p>Lt-Col HONNER (C.O. 39 Bn and Comd. MAROUBRA FORCE) arrived at ALOLA followed by B coy 53 Bn with C coy 53 Bn one day's march to the rear. As Brig. Porter (Comd. 30 Bde) was on his way across the mountains Lt.-col HONNER decided to keep a fresh uncommitted reserve for him, and to maintain forward contact with 39 Bn. After conferring with Maj. WATSON he left P.I.B. and 53 Bn elements at ALOLA with the task of patrolling the tracks (lying west and east respectively of the north-south track DENIKI - ISURAVA - ALOLA) converging on ALOLA from NARO and from across the EORA valley.</p>	
		1330	<p>Lt.-col HONNER reached ISURAVA and took over from Maj. CAMERON.</p>	

R Honner
Lt.-col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Sun. Aug 16 '42 To Mon. Aug 17 '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	16 Aug '42.	1630	Lieut PENTLAND, who, like Lieut DALBY, had been left behind at DENIKI, returned to the bn. having made his way back along the bottom pf EORA valley.	
	17 Aug '42.	0800	Lt.-col HONNER inspected the defensive positions at ISURAVA and made minor adjustments for mutual support between pls in C coy and between left pl of E coy and right pl of B coy. Maj CAMERON recommended that B coy should be disbanded and its personnel distributed among other coys, because, in his opinion, on account of their low morale, they were finished as a fighting force. Lt.-col. HONNER appointed Lieut FRENCH to command B coy and pointed out that he now had the more dangerous flank to hold, as the enemy would be almost certain to attack from the high ground west of B coy's position.	
		1300	C.O. went forward to D coy (16 and 18 pls) standing patrol which had been reported as being only 50 minutes south of DENIKI (3 hrs from ISURAVA) and found that its position was only 40 - 50 minutes north of ISURAVA. He decided that its task could be carried out by one pl and it was relieved by a pl from C coy. Five more men missing from KOKODA or DENIKI withdrawals arrived at ISURAVA. Maj. CAMERON (B.M. 30 Bde) went back to ALOLA to await the arrival of Bde. Comd. C.O. rearranged Bn H.Q. and administration in two echelons. Adjt. who had been stationed at ALOLA and Chaplain who had been resting there were brought forward to ISURAVA where I.O. had been acting as Adjt. Maj. ANDERSON (acting 2 i/c) with a small staff, incl. clerk and war diary keeper, was sent back to ALOLA to set up rear echelon there. Q.M. who had been stationed one stage back on L of C at EORA CREEK was ordered forward to ALOLA.	

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Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

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Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Mon. Aug 17'42 To Fri. 21 Aug'42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	17 Aug'42		D coy took up its positions closing the perimeter between A and B coys, and commenced digging in, like the other coys using bully beef tins and steel helmets, the Bn. now having no tools.	Appx B.
	18 Aug'42		One pl. from B coy relieved fwd. standing patrol. C.O. went back to ALOLA to confer with Brig PORTER who arrived there to assume cmd. of MAROUBRA FORCE.	
	19 Aug'42		Pl from A coy relieved fwd. standing patrol. Bde Comd. visited ISURAVA and, accompanied by C.O. inspected defences and fwd patrol. Six missing A coy personnel returned through fwd. patrol. Loud explosions heard in the direction of KOKODA, morning and afternoon—probably blasting for improvement of track.	
	20 Aug'42		E Coy pl relieved fwd. standing patrol, and, in a skirmish with an enemy patrol between 1045 hrs and 1145 hrs, sustained two casualties, one killed and one wounded. Known enemy casualties were two killed. Chaplain Earl who had found a spade, shouldered it and marched out through the patrol to bury Pte Hourigan who had been killed at a listening post forward of the patrol posn. He completed his task in no man's land though the enemy were still about and reopened fire at 1315 hrs. and were sighted 100 yds. fwd of the patrol.	
	21 Aug'42		D Coy pl relieved fwd. standing patrol. Patrols lightly equipped for 24 hrs tour of duty, were now changed during first hour of light, when morning mist made visibility bad, and enemy, owing to difficulty of night movement were unlikely to attack so far forward of DENIKI base. Role of patrols was to deny the enemy use of the track and thus delay enemy reconnaissance of our main position at ISURAVA. To hold as much ground forward of ISURAVA as possible, there had been no further withdrawals since 15 Aug.	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn. Fri. 21 Aug '42

Tues. 25 Aug '42

Date and Time.—From

To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	21 Aug '42		and patrols were ordered not to withdraw unless forced to do so. To give defence in depth and a ready reserve at the time when an enemy attack was most likely (mid-morning), each patrol, when relieved, moved back to the next delaying position about 200 yds to the rear and remained there till 1130 hrs, then returning to ISURAVA. The platoon next for duty stood ready equipped for instant action for 24 hrs before taking over the standing patrol, ready to move to the support of the fwd patrol if needed. In the afternoon before taking over, the patrol comd., 2 i/c, and sec. comds. and 2 i/cs, reced the track forward to the standing patrol, the standing patrol area, and the delaying position to the rear.	
	22 Aug '42.		C coy pl relieved forward standing patrol. Lieuts CLARKE and SWORD arrived from rear but no OR reinforcements arrived came with them.	
	23 Aug '42.		B coy pl relieved forward standing patrol. Special recce patrol sent NW to NARO ridge and through NARO to obtain panoramic sketch of KOKODA area from that direction for use of Force H.Q.	
	24 Aug '42.	1530	A coy pl relieved forward standing patrol. Special recce patrol returned from NARO with sketch of KOKODA.	
	25 Aug '42	0700	E coy Pl (Lieut. Simonson) relieved forward patrol. Before midday enemy attacked the forward patrol in strength. The Pl. standing by (D coy Pl. - Lieut. Sword) quickly reinforced the forward platoon, and a C coy pl under Lieut. Clarke stood by as next for patrol duty. Simultaneously with the attack on the forward patrol the enemy used mountain artillery or long range mortar to bombard the bn. area at ISURAVA and inflicted two fatal casualties at 1300 hrs. After a five hour skirmish the	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Tues 25 Aug'42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	25 Aug'42		reinforced forward patrol repulsed the enemy attack. Lieut. Simonson then pushed forward 200 yds along the track towards DENIKI in an endeavour to locate and destroy the enemy mortar but reported that it was at least 300 yds further on. As he could make no further headway he returned to his patrol position.	
		1530	The mortar fire which died down early in the afternoon reopened on the bn. positions at ISURAVA at 1530 hrs and continued till 1700 hrs	
		1700	At 1700 hrs the sentry of listening post 100 yds forward of our FDLs at the junction of the northern track to DENIKI and the western track to NARO ridge ambushed a bunched enemy patrol coming down the NARO track through a native garden on the DENIKI track. Emptying his tommy-gun magazine into them at a range of two or three yards, and finding a larger force swarming down the track, he crashed over the hill side into the creek, regaining C coy lines next morning. The other two members of the listening post stationed, to keep him in view, some distance farther south, withdrew along the track and over the creek crossing which was soon covered by fire from the enemy force in the native garden.	
		1730	Lieut Clarke, returning with his "next for duty" recce party from the forward patrol area, contacted the enemy at the DENIKI - NARO track junction. The enemy were routed and Lieut. Clarke's men hunted them down while there was still light. Lieut Clarke and one of his men killed eight enemy in the native garden. At dusk the recce party returned intact across the creek.	
			During the night 25-26 Aug an enemy ^{force} attacked the forward patrol and suffered some losses. Our casualties, a few wounded, incl. Lieut Simonson, returned to ISURAVA. the track having been	

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Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From Tues. 25 Aug. '42 To Wed. 26 Aug. 42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	25 Aug 42.		cleared by Lieut Clarke's Success in the garden.	
	26 Aug 42.		<p>At first light enemy reoccupied the garden area and other high ground north of the creek opposite E coy positions. It was impossible for Lieut Clarke's patrol to cross the creek in the face of enemy fire to relieve the forward patrol. Lieut Sword reported the two forward platoons in good heart, and he was ordered to maintain his delaying position until it was untenable.</p> <p>Lieut Pentlands pl of C coy under orders from Brig Potts, (comd 21 Bde and MAROUBRA FORCE) left for the junction of the westerly track from the native garden north of the ISURAVA FDEs and the north-south track along the top of NARO ridge to prevent enemy penetration or recce along the track NARO-ALOLA. The pl did not attempt to fight its way through the native garden but left through B coy's lines, crossed the creek higher up and swung round behind the besieging enemy on to the east-west track to the top of NARO ridge - a three hour climb.</p> <p>C.O. now decided to withdraw Lieut Sword's patrol by way of the EORA valley, but before he could give the order the signal line was cut. Later in the day Lieut Sword led his two pls west to the NARO ridge and joined Lieut PENTLAND there - later pushing on to ALOLA where the three pls reported in on 29 Aug.</p> <p>With three pls out of contact beyond the enemy lines and the remainder of the bn greatly weakened by dysentery, malaria, and lack of food, sleep, and shelter, the arrival before midday of the first troops of 2/14 Bn - C coy, comd Capt Dickinson - was most welcome. They relieved C coy 39 Bn, of which the fittest men were already out on the NARO ridge with Lieut Pentland. A platoon of the fittest remaining, under Sgt Kerslake, was placed in E coy's reserve position, vacated by one of the platoons out with Lieut Sword.</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Wed. 26 Aug. 42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	26 Aug '42.		<p>The remainder, under Lieut Johnston, were sent to strengthen bn rear echelon which Major Anderson had now established at ISURAVA REST HOUSE between ALOLA and ISURAVA to relieve the congestion round Force H.Q. at ALOLA.</p> <p>Orders were received in the afternoon that a pl from C coy 2/14 Bn should relieve Lieut Pentland's patrol on NARO ridge, and Sgt Buchecker (Int. Sgt 39 Bn) guided the pl out through B Coy lines to follow Lieut Pentland's route. The enemy were encountered in force and the pl tried to fight its way through. Sgt Buchecker received a serious wound in the thigh, the pl comd was wounded and missing, and the pl was forced to return.</p> <p>When the fighting flared up the R.M.O. (Capt Shera) and Chaplain Earl took out a stretcher, picked up Sgt Buchecker and carried him back through the jungle and across the creek to our lines.</p> <p>Later in the afternoon B coy 2/14 Bn (comd Capt Nye) arrived with orders to relieve Lieut Pentland's patrol. After conferring with Lt.-col Honner, Capt Nye decided to cut his way to the west from the creek south of the ISURAVA position.</p> <p>Shortly afterwards, at 1600 hrs, the enemy bombardment was intensified. Mortar fire and machine gun fire crashed and rattled unceasingly and we sustained no casualties. Then came the unexpected attack which was pressed in with determination on B and E coys.</p> <p>B coys fwd pls were pressed back on to a better line prepared slightly to the rear, and held there, fighting magnificently. The enemy came on in waves over a short stretch of open ground, regardless of casualties.</p> <p>The enemy broke through E coy's defences, cut off the left platoon and a section of the right platoon, and from the rear forced them out of their positions. Through the gap came other troops threatening the rear of E coys right platoon.</p> <p>Two quick counter-attacks completely restored E coy's</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From Wed. 26 Aug. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>position. Sgt Kerslake's platoon from C coy drove out the enemy breaking through and closed the gap. Sgt Murray's platoon from A coy was rushed up to knock out the enemy who had occupied the left platoon position and was immediately successful. Contact was later established with the missing platoon under Lieut Dalby which had carried on the fight.</p> <p>In the meantime pressure was increasingly on B coy on the left flank and there was also a threat to C coy 2/14 Bn on the right. With no adequate reserves available, Lt.-col HONNER recalled B coy 2/14 Bn which, laboriously cutting its way through the jungle, had not made much progress towards NARO ridge.</p> <p>Just before it returned, Lieut Garland 2 i/c B coy reported that B coy was unlikely to hold much longer unless reinforced. He was given a message to Lieut French O.C. B coy that he had to hold - there was only Bn. H.Q. behind him.</p> <p>When B coy 2/14 Bn arrived the first platoon was sent to strengthen E Coy's left, the second D coy's right, to close the pincers from either side on the enemy facing B coy, and the pressure had already eased when the third platoon was placed under comd B coy.</p> <p>It was already dark when the three strengthened coys consolidated their positions, and firing died down for the night.</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 27 Aug '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	27 Aug '42		<p>The bn had eagerly awaited the relief by the A.I.F. promised for 21 Aug but delayed by supply problems. There was a fresh confidence now that strong reinforcements had arrived after 39 bn, reduced to a couple of hundred sick and weary men had for two days withstood the attack of an enemy force including the 1st and 3rd bns of the 144th regiment, mountain artillery, and engineers.</p> <p>D coy 2/14 Bn had marched in during the night 26-27 Aug and took over E coy's front with E coy's two remaining pls on its left linking with B coy. The three pls of B coy 2/14 Bn which had been under comd of E, D, and B coys 39 Bn overnight, were reunited under their own coy comd who took over the front held by B coy 39 Bn, which now took over the right flank of D coy in place of that coy's missing pl.</p> <p>A coy 2/14 Bn and elements of H.Q. Coy 2/14 Bn arrived and were held in reserve by Lt.-col. HONNER who now had his front and flanks held by four times as many men as he had had the previous two mornings.</p> <p>New weapons were also available, to reply to the enemys guns and mortars. 2/14 Bn carried 2" mortars, and the first 3" mortar (39 Bn) arrived. The latter was mounted on a hill in D coy's area and commanded by Lieut French who kept it continuously in action against the enemy concentrations and gun positions.</p> <p>Enemy attacks were repeated throughout the day but were held on all sides. The last serious attack was the customary 1700 hrs attack apparently made with the object of holding ground gained until darkness and then rushing in reinforcements to consolidate. No ground was gained. The usual patrolling, raiding, and skirmishing continued on into the night.</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 28 Aug '42 To 29 Aug '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	28 Aug 42.	1200	<p>Lt.-col Key comd 2/14 Bn arrived with his bn H.Q. and took comd of ISURAVA defence.</p> <p>Enemy attacks which had previously been mainly on E coy and B coy fronts (now held principally by D coy and B coy 2/14 Bn) became stronger on C coy front held by C coy 2/14 Bn which was forced back in its left pl area.</p> <p>The daily 1700 hrs attack was again directed principally against B coy's front, the enemy again losing heavily.</p>	
	29 Aug 42.		<p>Enemy attacks continued. Pressure on D coy 2/14 Bn and C coy 2/14 Bn increased and Lt.-col Key was forced to use all his reserves - A coy 2/14 Bn, H.Q. coy 2/14 Bn, and E coy 39 Bn - to hold enemy thrusts along the main track. The enemy had now secured a firm foothold astride the track south of the creek which had been the northern line of the F.D.Ls. A determined afternoon attack on C coy 2/14 Bn and A coy 39 Bn was repulsed.</p> <p>The three platoons of E, D, and C coy which had been cut off on the DENIKI and NARO tracks since 26 Aug reached ALOLA. The position was now so serious that they came straight forward to ISURAVA, footsore, weary, sick and half-starved. Lt.-col Key again had a reserve.</p> <p>39 Bn rear echelon also heard that every man was needed at ISURAVA and Lieut Johnston led the volunteers- the fittest of the unfit - back to ISURAVA to report for duty, passing on the way the leading elements of C coy 53 Bn straggling forward as a reinforcement.</p> <p>In the last light an enemy attack on B coy 2/14 Bn front penetrated seriously and the Japanese quickly reinforced and consolidated their gains. They repulsed a counter-attack, and the position they held so threatened the security of the ISURAVA force that Lt.-col Key decided to withdraw to the ridge south of ISURAVA REST HOUSE about half a mile to the rear.</p>	

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Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 29 Aug '42

To 30 Aug '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>Lt.-col Honner went back from ISURAVA to recce the new position and to allot coy sectors to sub-units as they arrived. He found C coy 53 Bn (sent forward in the afternoon as reinforcements to ISURAVA) already sleeping in the area in large numbers and placed them west of the track on the northern perimeter, with B and C coys 2/14 Bn on their left and part of 2/16 Bn which had just arrived from ALOLA on the left (western) flank. 39 Bn held the right and rear with A coy in front on the east of the track, E and D coys to its rear, C coy astride the track on the south of the perimeter and B coy west of it to link up with 2/16 Bn troops. The reserve, sited round Bn H.Q. in the centre consisted of A, D, and H.Q. Coys of 2/14 Bn.</p> <p>The withdrawal of the force from ISURAVA was apparently not detected by the enemy.</p>	
	30 Aug 42	0200	<p>All troops were in new positions at ISURAVA REST HOUSE by 0200 hrs.</p> <p>In the morning Lt.-col Key replaced the right forward coy (A coy 39 Bn) by A coy 2/14 Bn, and changed the position of his bn H.Q. No further changes were made in the dispositions and when 2/16 Bn troops were withdrawn to ALOLA during the morning a large gap was left in the western flank.</p> <p>At midday the most unfit of 39 Bn were detailed to go to the rear en route to MYOLA. This left 39 Bn with 150 fighting men.</p> <p>Shortly afterwards the enemy moving round on the high ground to the west attacked our left rear. B coy, then 13 strong took the first shock of the attack. With nothing on their flanks the forward posts were overrun, but the enemy were then held by the remainder of the coy and by A coy which had been hurriedly called up to strengthen the position. 2/14 Bn now took a hand and the pioneer pl came up on the right of</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 30 Aug '42

To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>B and A coys (39 Bn) to hold the enemy.</p> <p>Brig Potts (comd MAROUBRA FORCE) had now decided to withdraw his force to the south of ALOLA and sent for Lt.-col Honner who left at 1600 hrs with the wounded, escorted by D coy 39 Bn. As the enemy attacking B coy commanded the track to the rear, Lt.-col Honner's party cut across rough country to reach ALOLA turn-off shortly before dark.</p> <p>In the meantime a pl from 2/16 Bn had moved quickly from ALOLA to attack the enemy in the rear. They came storming through the enemy line and 39 Bn troops had anxious moments avoiding their fire before 2/16 troops discovered they had contacted our force. The fighting had not been very heavy but 39 Bn lost 6 men (killed or died of wounds) this day.</p> <p>Lt.-col. Key organised the force for withdrawal and coys were preparing to move when enemy infiltration from the west threatened bn H.Q. C coy 2/14 Bn was called on to relieve the the pressure, and under Capt Dickinson made a charge which carried all before it, - not only the enemy but also Bn H.Q. and troops waiting on the track to withdraw. Lt.-col Key, with his adjt., L.O., and R.S.M., disappeared over the side of the hill, and the withdrawal was precipitated by the wall of fire coming through the jungle with C coy's charge. The enemy had been cleared, but our withdrawing troops ran through the positions of C and A coys (39 Bn) astride the track to the rear, kicking over Bren guns in their haste. The withdrawal proceeded with a certain amount of disorganization.</p> <p>At ALOLA orders were received from Brig. Potts to move back to a delaying position then being prepared by 2/16 Bn. It was decided to hold the delaying position with 2/16 and 2/14 Bns while 39 and 53 Bns pushed on to EORA CREEK. The difficult night march continued and 39 Bn posts were established in the dark on the northern approaches to EORA CREEK.</p>	

R Honner
Lt.-col.
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(adapted,)

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn/

Date and Time.—From 31 Aug '42 To _____

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	31 Aug 42.		As 53 Bn had not arrived Lt.-col Honner prepared EORA CREEK for defence by 39 Bn alone, now, on account of low numbers, organised into two companys. No 2 coy (D and E coys) took up positions on the edge of the village covering the creek approaches from the direction of ALOLA. No 1 coy (A, B and C coys) with 3" mortar occupied the high ground astride the track to TEMPLETON'S CROSSING to repel attack by any enemy by-passing the fwd troops and coming up the eastern side of EORA valley. Bn rear echelon, with sick and wounded, moved on to MYOLA.	
		1600	Lt.-col Honner recced an area along the track to TEMPLETON'S CROSSING for occupation by 2/14 Bn.	
		1800	2/14 Bn and 21 Bde H.Q. occupied positions in rear of 39 Bn.	
				Appendices
				A Sketch Map of Kokoda Area
				B Diagram of Dispositions of 39 Bn at Isurava
				C Extracts from Japanese Diary captured at Menari
				D Extracts from Japanese Diary captured Templeton's Crossing
				E I Strength and composition of Original Japanese Force
				F II Chronology of Operations
				G III Extracts from Japanese Diaries.

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Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY Page 1

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H. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 1 Sep '42 To 2 Sept '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	1 Sep 42.	0700	No 1 Coy left the high ground, moved down through No 2 Coy round the village, crossed the creek and took up an extricating position on the ALOLA approaches to cover the withdrawal of 2/16 Bn and to prevent enemy occupation of any position from which fire could be brought to bear on the creek crossings.	
		0800	2/16 Bn started to come through the village and enemy closed in on No 1 Coy.	
		0830	2/16 Bn were all safely through the village and occupied the high ground vacated by No 1 Coy 39 Bn.	
		0900	No 2 Coy at the village, covering the withdrawal across the creek of No 1 Coy, which had only one man wounded, came under enemy fire. This fire became intense and No 2 Coy withdrew from its exposed positions as soon as No 1 Coy was clear.	
		1000	Brig Potts ordered 39 Bn to proceed to KAGI at 1730 hrs and hold it till relieved by 2/27 Bn. Lt.-col. Honner sent a message to rear echelon at MYOLA to muster all men capable of marching and meet him at KAGI. At 1330 hrs rear echelon personnel left MYOLA and arrived at KAGI at 1730 hrs. The main body proceeded by way of TEMPLETON'S CROSSING, where it stopped for lunch, and, making a forced march over the top of the OWEN STANLEY RANGE, occupied a night position about two miles from KAGI.	
	2 Sept '42		At first light No 2 Coy moved on to KAGI leaving No 1 Coy as standing patrol one hours march from KAGI to ambush and destroy enemy advancing from SEREGINA or TEMPLETON'S CROSSING.	
			At KAGI No 2 Coy, strengthened by rear echelon personnel and convalescents from MYOLA took up defensive positions covering all tracks leading into the village.	Appx A Sketch of Kagi

Sept '42

R. Honner Lt.-col.
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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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H. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 3 SEPT '42 To 9 Sept '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	3 Sept '42		Four allied planes dive-bombed KAGI. No casualties.	
	4 Sept '42		2/27 Bn. arrived. 39 Bn. was ordered to remain at KAGI.	
	5 Sept '42		During the night 4-5 Sept orders were received for the evacuation of KAGI and Lt-col Honner and Lt-col Cooper were ordered to recce a defensive position on the high ground south of EFFOGI. 39 Bn. moved first. Lt-col Honner made his recce for both battalions and reported 39 Bn's position before midday. 2/27 Bn, at about 1330 hrs, commenced taking over 39 Bn's positions with all 39 Bn's automatic weapons, grenades, rations, blankets, signal stores and medical supplies. In the afternoon 39 Bn. marched to MENARI.	
	6 Sept '42		The Bn. was paraded and the ex C O delivered a message of appreciation from Brig. Potts for the splendid service the Bn. had given while under comd 21 Bde. During this parade a cinematograph film was taken to record the return from action of the first militia unit to meet the enemy. This film was subsequently included in Damien Parer's "The Road to Kokoda" From the parade the bn marched off to NAR NAORO.	
	7 Sept '42		39 Bn. moved to IORABAIWA.	
	8 Sept '42		39 Bn. moved to UBERTI.	
	9 Sept '42		39 Bn. moved to 30 I.T.B. area.	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 10 Sep '42

To 18 Sep '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	10 Sep '42		Parcel mail and comforts were issued and tps were paid.	
	11 Sep '42		CO and party left the Bn to join HONNER FORCE. Maj. A.J. ANDERSON became acting CO. Capt. N.M. SYMINGTON acting 2 i/c and Lieut. R.L. McNAMARA acting Adj. At 1400 hrs the unit commenced to move to its new area at the LALOKI PUMPING STATION. The move was not completed until 1800 hrs as tpt was very limited. Coy areas were disposed along the bank of the LALOKI with C coy on the left, then B and D and A coys, with Bn H Q area between D and A coys. Hq Coy being 300 yds in rear. Guards for the pumping station were supplied by D coy. The reason for the concentration of the unit in this area was for rest, refitting and tng. The tactical role which would be assumed in case of emergency was to resist ENEMY Advance from the NORTH, the LALOKI being the line of FDLs.	Appx B. 39 Bn Dispositions Laloki Pumping Station
	12 Sep '42		The day was mainly devoted to settling in, erection of tents and other camp works.	
	14 Sep '42		The Bn was placed on AIF establishment. E (MG) coy was thereby disbanded and the few personnel on its strength at the time were distributed among the coys. Tng was commenced, main attention being directed to weapon tng.	
	17 Sep '42		Orders received for Bn to move to BASE AREA on the morning of 18 Sep when it would come under comd. 7 Aust Div. 300 reinforcements were marched in from Australia. All personnel were fully equipped and fully armed during the night.	
	18 Sep 42		Acting CO, coy comds. and acting adj arrived at appointed rv. at 0800 and there met Comd. and BM 14 Aust Inf Bde under comd of which the Bn was placed. The role allotted to the Bn was to patrol areas NORTH of BITSITABU and HOMBROM BLUFF, the EILOGO area and the area SOUTH OF BASE AREA with a view to preventing	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 18 Sep '42

To 30 Sep '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>ENEMY infiltration through these areas.</p> <p>Bn HQ was established on the UBERI RD. NORTH of BASE AREA (Map.ref.151145 MORESBY SPECIAL 1"). A and B coys were located at the beginning of the HOMBROM BLUFF feature on the track from BITSITABU to the BLUFF; C coy on the high ground SOUTH of BASE AREA; and D Coy in the DONADABU area on the EILOGO RD. In the Bn HQ area were Protective Pl. Pnr Pl., and adv. Q-store and a limited amount of MT. The remainder of HQ Coy forming a B ech remained in PUMPING STATION AREA.</p> <p>Patrolling with necessarily limited amount of weapon tng. and range practice was continued till 27 Sep '42. On 21 sep a patrol working northward in the Mt. VETURA area were successful in contacting rear elements of HONNER FORCE.</p>	<p>Appx C MORESBY SPECIAL 1"</p> <p>Appx D 39 Bn Dispositions Base Area</p>
	27 Sep '42		<p>The Bn was relieved by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and moved on to HOMBROM BLUFF. Bn HQ were re-established in the vicinity of the first native village along the feature from BITSITABU. The role assigned to the unit was to patrol the area NORTH of HOMBROM BLUFF with a view to intercept any ENEMY that might appear in that area. A tng. syllabus was put into operation.</p>	<p>Appx E 39 Bn Dispositions Hombrom Bluff.</p>
	30 Sep '42		<p>Maj.Gen A.S. ALLEN (Comd. 7 Aust Div) called at Bn HQ expressly expressly to ask the CO to convey to all ranks his congratulations on the splendid work they did in the unit's first action, some of which he considered outstanding.</p>	

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Army Form 2118
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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 1 Oct. '42

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To 15 Oct. '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	1 Oct '42		The posn. on HOMBROM BLUFF was still being occupied by the Bn and the tng. and reorganisation were continued.	
			CO (Lt. Col. H. Honner, M.C.) and Adj. (Lieut. K. H. Lovett) returned from HONNER FORCE and resumed duty in the unit and simultaneously Maj. A. J. ANDERSON who had been acting CO became 2 i/c; Capt. SYMINGTON relinquished duties of 2 i/c to become comd. H Q Coy and Lieut. R. L. MCNAMARA acting adj. resumed former duties (IO)	
	3 Oct. '42		Bn moved to area further WEST along BLUFF near head of the MULE TRACK leading down to main rd. MORESBY-ROUNA, where tng. was continued.	Appx A — Traverse of Mule Track
	9 Oct '42		In accordance with Bde Syllabus an exercise was carried out in which 39 Bn attacked 49 Bn at creek half-way down MULE TRACK. Maj.-Gen. VASEY (Comd. 6 Aust. Div) was present during this exercise.	Appx A 2
	12 Oct '42		CO and Adj attended a TEWT conducted by the Bde Comd in PYRAMID POINT area.	
	13 Oct '42		CO conducted a TEWT for Coy Comds. in above area, into which it was intended that the Bde should move and establish posns. which would be used as battle stations in the event of attempted ENEMY landing.	
	15 Oct '42		The Bn marched out of HOMBROM area by way of MULE TRACK at 1300 hrs. to LALOKI River where all ranks had a swim and evening meal. The march was then continued to RIGO turn-off where the Bn bivouacked for the night.	Appx G

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 16 Oct. '42 To 29 Oct. '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	16 Oct '42		At 0400 hrs the Bn moved off to march to FLAGSTAFF area near BOOTLESS INLET, first elements arriving at 0930 hrs. Tents were erected and camps established in Coy areas. All Offs with exception of 2 i/c, I O, and one subaltern per Coy had arrived by 11 on the previous evening and made a recce of the area as the area had been altered since the TEWTS conducted on 12 and 13 Oct.	Appx B Map Pyramid Area showing 39 Bn dispositions
	17 Oct '42		Digging of defensive posns. was commenced	
	18 Oct 42		Bde Comd made inspection of Coy areas. He was accompanied by CO, 2 i/c, I O and Coy Comds.	
	20 Oct 42		In view of an anticipated visit of the C.-in-M. Coys devoted some time to smartening drill.	
	21 Oct 42		In the afternoon there was a Bde rehearsal for C-in-C's inspection. As the Mobile Cinema was in 49 Bn area tps were permitted to break off from the march home to attend. However heavy rain prevented the pictures from being shown.	
	22 Oct 42		Bde was inspected by C-in-C Allied Land Forces SW PACIFIC Area (Gen. Sir Thomas BLAMEY) who, after having addressed the tps, took the salute at a march past.	Appx C
	25 Oct 42		R. C. Church Parade took place at H Q Coy lines and a parade for other Denominations was held on the parade ground near D Coy area. This parade was attended by Maj. Gen. VASEY (Comd 8 Aust Div)	
	29 Oct 42		Mobile Cinema show took place near D Coy area.	

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From

.....*To*

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>Concluding remarks:--</p> <p>With the exception of time taken for parades in connection with C-in-C's visit, digging was carried on steadily and good progress had been made in very hard and rocky ground by the end of the month.</p>	<p><u>Appx D - Log Reports</u></p> <p><u>" E - Routine Orders</u></p> <p><u>" F - Field Returns</u></p> <p><u>" G - Map of PYRAMID AREA</u></p>

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 1 Nov. '42

To 7 Nov. '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			At the beginning of the month the Bn was still in the FLAGSTAFF area, continuing with digging of posns which were commenced in OCT.	
	1 Nov 42		R.C. Church parade was held in HQ Coy lines and parade for other denominations took place on the Bn parade ground near D Coy lines. Brig. WOOTTEN D.S.O. (Adm. comd. 6 Aust. Div) paid a brief visit to the area.	
	3 Nov '42		Digging continued by all Coys with the exception of A Coy which conducted practices on the Bde Rifle Range in MURRAY BARRACKS area.	
	3 Nov '42		Range practice by B Coy.	
	4 Nov '42		Range practice by C Coy.	
	5 Nov '42		Range practice by D Coy	
	6 Nov 42		Range practice by C Coy	
	7 Nov 42		Practice 3" Mortar shoot on targets in B Coy area took place in the morning. In the afternoon the Bn was inspected at a parade held on Bn Parade ground by Lt. Gen E. W. HERRING D.S.O (Comd. 1 Aust Corps and N. G. Force). He was accompanied by Brig. G. F. WOOTTEN, D.S.O. (Adm. comd. 6 Aust Div) and Bde. Comd. (Brig. S. H. W. C. PORTER, D.S.O.) Two compressor units with drills were brought into area. These had been found necessary for the completion of digging of posns. owing to the rocky nature of much of the ground.	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Nov '42

To 24 Nov '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	8 Nov 42		C of E Communion service and Mass for RC's. C O and Coy Comds inspected Juniors Leaders' school being conducted by 30 Bde.	
	9 Nov 42		C O and 2 i/c/ attended TEWT conducted by Bde Comd.	
	11 Nov 42		Practice Mortar shoot on targets in A Coy area. 2/1 Aust. Fld. Regt. ceased to man OP's in Bn area.	
	13 Nov '42		Tps attended show by Mobile Cinema in 49 Bn area.	
	14 Nov '42		With exception of minor details, digging and camouflaging of Bn Battle posns was completed.	
	15 Nov '42		Bde Church parade followed by march past Bde Comd. Usual R.C. Church parade. Heavy rain in early morning caused many tents in low-lying areas to be washed out.	
	16 Nov 42		A & D Coys commenced digging of two Coy posns in area formerly occupied by 53 Aust Inf Bn. C Coy moved to new bivouac area as mosquitoes had become very troublesome following the rain	
	21 Nov '42		Maj. Gen A.S. ALLEN, D.S.O., (Comd. 6 Aust Div) inspected defensive area.	
	22 Nov. '42		The usual R.C. Church parade was held, but otherwise Sunday was not observed, as it was necessary in order to complete work in 53 Bn area by the time prescribed by Bde.	
	24 Nov '42		Mobile Cinema showed in 49 Bn area for all tps in 30Bde	

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 27 Nov '42 To 29 Nov '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	27 Nov '42		In order that the living conditions in the recently completed posns. and communications might be tested, all ranks went to their battle stations at 0400 hrs and remained there throughout the day and following night. During this period the communications were tested and all cooking was carried out in the trenches and dug-outs.	
	28 Nov '42		Tps. were ordered to leave their battle stations at 0800 hrs. The posns. were generally found to be satisfactory if somewhat cramped. The main fault throughout was that communication trenches were too narrow. At 1000 hrs. a Bn sports meeting was commenced and continued until 1700 hrs. when a two-mile cross country run took place. This meeting was arranged by the 2 i/c/ (Maj. A. J. ANDERSON) received the enthusiastic support of all ranks. In the evening the Mobile Cinema gave a further programme in the 49 Bn area.	
	29 Nov '42		A C of E Communion Service and R.C. Mass were followed by a Bde Church Parade. After the latter the ADMS 6 Aust Div (Col. FISHER) addressed tps. with respect to health and hygiene. Warning order received at 1600 hrs. for movement of Bn. At 1730 hrs Maj. Gen. A.S. ALLEN (Comd. 6 Aust. Div) addressed all Officers at Bde HQ with respect to their duties and obligations on going into action. Throughout the night packing and re-equipping proceeded. All ranks were issued with green clothing and American style gaiters, and deficiencies in all equipment were rectified. The amount of gear which higher formations ordered to be carried by each man was far in excess of what was found to be necessary or practicable in the Bns previous experience of mobile jungle warfare. This included extra set of shirt and trousers, mosquito nets, felt hat and packs.	

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Unit 39 Aust. Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 30 Nov. '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	30 Nov.42		<p>First party including CO, IO, RMO, left Bn area at 0630 hrs by MT for WARD'S DROME. Here there was some confusion on the part of emplaning authorities with the result that the component plane loads of the Bn personnel did not follow in proper sequence. After flying to POPENDITA tps marched to SOPUTA area where they bivouacked for the night. The number of tps. moved during the day was as under:- Bn HQ, 300 off, 1 OR; HQ Coy, 1 Off 18 OR's; part C Coy and part D Coy.</p>	<p>0630</p> <p>Appx A Admin Instruction</p> <p>" B Programme for Sports Meeting</p> <p>" C Routine Orders</p> <p>" D Field Returns</p>

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Army Form C 2118
(adapted)

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 1 Dec. 1942

To 3 Dec '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	1 Dec '42		Remainder of C and D coys, Bn HQ personnel and some details of HQ Coy arrived at DOBODURA landing strip from MORESBY area at 0930 hrs and marched to the Bn HQ area on track SOPUTA-JUMBORA. Considerable difficulty was occasioned throughout the movement of the Bn from MORESBY as the emplaning authorities did not adhere to the original programme with the result that coys arrived piecemeal, and for some days the services of the QM or his staff were not available.	APPX A. BUNA (PROVISIONAL)
	2 Dec '42		At 0500 hrs, CO, IO, and all personnel except those who had only arrived on the previous day left for GONA. On arrival arrangements were made to relieve 2/31 Bn. This was however changed and the Bn was placed u/c 21 Aust Inf Bde and with Bde HQ proceeded to a village EAST of GONA where posns were taken up to prevent possible landings of ENEMY reinforcements. At 1600 Adj with remainder of personnell left the former Bn area and bivouacked on track about 12 hrs march from GONA.	
	3 Dec '42		Adj's party moved up to join CO's arriving at 0955. Shortly after this a Beaufighter of the RAAF flew low over Bn posn and apparently mistaking tps for those of the ENEMY, strafed the beach area wounding one Offr. and 4 ORs and one native carrier. At 1130 hrs the Bn. (less A & B coys) together with HQ 21 Bde moved further EAST to ^{GONA} an unnamed village on the eastern shore of a tongue of land stretching out in the direction of MANGROVE ISLAND. A coy & B Coy remained at the previous posn. to maintain the beach defence. In the locality of the village to which the Bn moved there were several ENEMY dead, killed as result of a former engagement. These had been dead for some time and were buried by our troops. At 1450 hrs. ENEMY bombers with fighter escort flew over the posn but did not drop bombs. They flew in direction of BUNA. Some tps. claimed having seen parachutes presumably with supplies	APPX B. GONA LOCALITY

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Unit 39 Aust Inf. Bn.

Date and Time.—From 3 Dec '42

To 4 Dec. '42

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 4 Dec '42

To 5 Dec. '42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>was swampy jungle though not sufficiently difficult to prevent the ENEMY from escaping at night. The majority of the posns of A coy were in similar type of country and this fact that there was considerable stench arising from dead forward of their posns caused the tps great hardship.</p> <p>The Pnr Pl. was placed u/c A coy as th Coy had been obliged to take over an area which had previously been held by rather more tps.</p> <p>Two 3 " mortars situated at 162280 and 163280 were taken over from 25 Bde tps by Mortar Pl. These were fired on ENEMY posns at intervals during the night.</p> <p>A B echelon area was established at a site previously used by 2/33 Bn for the same purpose at approx 166261. Capt SYMINGTON Oc HQ Coy was in charge. Arrangements were made for three hot meals and tea to be prepared here and carried fwd. to coys.</p>	
	5 Dec 42		<p>18 pl. (Lieut. MOORE) was detached from D coy and placed u/c Lieut WATTS (2/16 Bn) to augment his force on the KIKIRA area and relieved the standing patrol on the coast.</p> <p>There was little activity on the front throughout the day and A and B coy each reported one ENEMY killed. Preparations were made for an attack on the following day.</p> <p>At approx. 2330 hrs a report was received from 18 pl that two ENEMY landing barges suddenly appeared on the beach in their immediate locality. A voice from the barge called "Give us a light George", apparently with the intention of confusing watchers. Unfortunately the pl. had been disposed purely to deal with possible attacks from the land and it was not able to act quickly enough as almost immediately the barges which did not appear to be carrying tps pulled out again and beached at a point about 500 yds EAST from which posn. they soon pulled out and disappeared. This all fitted in with the theory ENEMY were evacuating wounded and obtaining small quantities of supplies</p>	

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Army Form C. 2118
(adapted)

M. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 5 Dec '42 To 6 Dec '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			by way of a wrecked Japanese merchant ship on a reef off GONA MISSION at approx 170300. It was believed that the wreck was linked with distant bases by submarine.	
	6 Dec '42		One platoon of A coy was ordered to attack the mission school while D coy less 18 pl attacked on the left through B coy's position.	
		0500	D coy moved out of its previous position which was occupied by a pl from C coy.	
		0545	The attack commenced when our 3" mortars put down a barrage on enemy F.D.Ls. Then under cover of smoke D coy assaulted the enemy line. The smoke only added to the disadvantages of the half light. The enemy could see the attackers looming up but our troops could not see the enemy, who occupied well constructed and sited dug-in positions, and individuals who were not in positions like the elaborately constructed M.G. posts were disposed in innumerable one or two-man holes.	
			Intensive crossfire from L and MMG prevented any substantial penetration of enemy defences, and the company was able to capture only fifty yards of ground at a cost of 12 dead and 46 wounded. D coy went into reserve behind A coy with one platoon occupying a position near an O.P. on the left of 2/16 Bn, vacated by a C coy pl.	
			Over on the right Lieut Nelson had led his platoon in the early morning attack on the mission school. He had been caught by enemy fire in a sage swamp, shoulder deep in slime, and was wounded. The platoon was unable to force its way forward and rejoined the Coy.	
			Lieut Tuckey led a patrol to attack an enemy post which had caused some of the trouble and engaged it in a fire fight.	
			Meanwhile Cpl Edgell with a section from C coy detailed for D coy's right flank protection, broke through the enemy's defences in D coy's attack. He carried on in the semi-darkness	

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Army Form C. 2/18
(adapted)

H. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 6 Dec '42. To 8 Dec '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			through a network of enemy posts and much wild shooting until he reached the objective - the line of timber on the outskirts of the mission village. Finding his section was the only one there, Edgell decided to lead it back to A coy's lines.	
			On the way he came in with a surprise flank ^{attack} on the post engaged by Lieut Tuckey. With his Owen gun and the assistance of his bren gunner, Edgell killed between 10 and 12 of the enemy in that post before pushing through to A coy.	
	7 Dec 42		Following a report that a small enemy force had landed farther west and that the standing patrol out there was in danger of encirclement 21 Bde Comd (Brig Dougherty) sent a patrol of 1 Offr and 50 ORs to that locality. These tps were drawn from	
			CHAFORCE (elements of 21 Bde units) and were not placed under comd. 39 Bn thus relieving the Bn of all responsibility west of GONA MISSION area with the exception of the containing force at KIKIRA.	
			During the morning, preparations (including the movement fwd of C coy's third platoon) were made for a heavier attack along the front by A and C coys, preceded by an axis aerial	
			bombardment which commenced at 1230 hrs. The bombing was most inaccurate and could not have had any adverse effect upon the enemy. On the aircrafts' signal that bombing was completed A and C coys moved fwd to attack but the C.O. cancelled the attack and the fwd coys merely reoccupied their F.D.Ls.	
			Patrolling and grenading by both sides went on during the night.	
	8 Dec '42.	1130	Arty and 3" Mortars commenced ranging in preparation for the for the barrage to precede the attack by A and C coys.	
		1230	Mortars commenced 15 minutes bombardment 25 pounders commenced firing 200 rounds at 3 x r.p.g. per minute - timed to finish at 1247.	
		1245	Infantry attacked. At the same time 2/16 Bn (greatly reduced in numbers) attacked from the east along the beach as part of	

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H. 100H

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 8 Dec '42 To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
		1312	<p>the Bde plan. In a few minutes C.O. 2/16 Bn reported that his bn had not made little progress and could not get forward - the attack, as far as 2/16 Bn was concerned, was finished.</p> <p>'C' Coy 39 Bn reported that it was unable to break through, having encountered the same heavy cross fire met by D coy in the previous attack on the same position. C coy's losses were heavy and it was replaced by B coy.</p> <p>The bn attack had been planned with zero at 1245 to give the infantry one minute to reach the enemy line and another minute among the enemy posts before the artillery barrage ceased.</p> <p>A coy troops were so keen that they crept right up on the enemy posts by 1245 and with two minutes of shell fire still dropping amongst them rushed the enemy while they were still confused and reeling from the effects of the shell-bursts - about 1½ feet below ground where they had the deadliest effect on the enemy in their pits.</p> <p>Lieut DALBY commanded the left platoon of A coy and was first in the rush on the first post where he killed the gunner manning a MMG and 7 other Japanese. His platoon racing in with him killed 38 enemy in that post and captured a MMG and 3 LMGs. Cpl. ELLIS outstrapped the platoon to wipe out the next four posts single-handed.</p> <p>The right platoon in its rush forward led by Lieut KELLY suffered some casualties including three or four killed by enemy fire from pits round the mission school. Pte WILKINSON was a member of a reserve section whose task was right flank protection of the right platoon. In spite of the sweeping fire he moved out into the open to obtain observation of the enemy positions, mounted his bren gun on a post about four feet high, and standing in full view of the enemy, raked them with fire until he silenced all opposition in that vicinity.</p> <p>D and C coys were thrust through the breach made by A coy, and all through the afternoon and into the night the three coys</p>	

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N. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn/

Date and Time.—From 8 Dec '42. To 9 Dec 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			fought on. Half the enemy perimeter and the centre of the defended area was in 39 Bn's hands.	
			The enemy realized the end was near. Many of them died in desperate attempts to fight their way out through our lines. A hundred others were killed trying to escape in the darkness through the gap between 39 and 2/16 Bns, most of them falling into the hands of 2/16 Bn.	
	9 Dec '42.		In the early morning 39 Bn held all the jungle south of the mission and east of the GONA-JUMBORA track. Lieut SWORD'S pl (A coy) occupied the huts in the mission area and cleared the pits around them. To link up with 2/16 parties moving west along the coast to mop up the remnants of the enemy resistance there, Lieut Sword pressed on clearing out pockets of the enemy until he reached the beach where he was killed. His death was quickly avenged.	
			As soon as A coy's telephone came up to the mission area C.O. 39 Bn sent back to 21 Bde the long-awaited message "Gona's gone".	
			In the afternoon C coy cleared the tangled timber west of the track from the sea on the north to B coy's holding line on the south. This drove an enemy party commanded by an officer through B coy's lines where it inflicted some casualties before making its way to the rear through Kunai graaa. Lieut PLATER hunted down the enemy and single handed killed the six men left with grenades and Owen gun, taking the dead officer's sword as a trophy.	
			It was the first of three he captured from officers he killed. Between twenty and thirty officers' swords were thus captured by the Bn in the GONA campaign.	
		1600	C.O. was called to Bde H.Q., congratulated on the capture of the mission and ordered west next morning to destroy enemy between GONA MISSION and GONA VILLAGE three miles to the west. 39 Bn troops were then withdrawn from the mission area to	

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H. 100M

Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 9 Dec '42

To 11 Dec 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			reserve coy positions for a comfortable night during which only a few stray enemy parties had to be disposed of.	
	10 Dec '42	0730	One Japanese captain was killed by Pte Wills at breakfast time. The burial parties were on their second days work at the end of which they had buried 638 Japanese in the mission area.	
		0800	39 Bn carrying six days rations, ten miles of signal wire and much ammunition moved west from Bde H.Q. area. The going was slow as creeks had to be crossed and in places a fresh track cut through the jungle.	
			The bn spent its first comfortable night for a week in a native garden.	
	11 Dec '42	0700	The march was resumed.	
		1000	The bn crossed the river flowing north to enter the sea west of GONA village.	
		1030	The guides, not sure where they were, wanted to go farther west, but C.O. ordered a halt and a recce of a track running north-east, which he was satisfied would lead into GONA.	
		1220	After an early lunch the bn pushed on, B coy, which had missed the heavier fighting at GONA MISSION, leading. When the bn re-crossed the river farther north D coy was left to guard the crossing and give rear protection.	
			Nearing the village the C.O. went forward with the leading scouts and then ordered B coy to push on.	
		1400	A few minutes later the leading scouts and a guide killed a Japanese Lt.-col and two other officers, and the forward section pushed straight on down the track to secure a foothold across the line of swamp protecting the enemy's southern F.D.Ls. An enemy machine-gun opened up and the section leader (Cpl Edgell who had already distinguished himself at GONA MISSION) received	AppX D Extracts from Documents taken from Lt.-col and other officers.

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 11 Dec '42 To

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			two bullet wounds in his right arm. He immediately rushed the machine gun post and changing his Owen gun to his left hand killed the three Japanese manning the gun. Two of Edgell's section had also been wounded by the machine gun and he assisted in their evacuation and reported the situation before going to the R.A.P. for attention to his own wounds.	
			The attack from an unexpected direction - the S.W. track leading back to their own bases - had surprised the enemy in the first few minutes but now the garrison was fully roused as B coy pushed on past the swamp.	
			Lieut Plater's platoon carried on the attack along the main track. It struck strong resistance but pressed on, leaving a trail of enemy dead to mark its progress, until it was held up by a strong post on its right. Lieut Plater stalked this post single-handed, killed the two officers and four other Japanese manning it, and captured their machine-gun and five bomb throwers.	
			For the next four hours he did led his platoon in one attack after another on enemy posts, forcing a passage himself with grenades and Owen gun, and, when he was able to move a section forward, personally placing them in position.	
			Shortly before nightfall he was manoeuvring a section into Position to strike at a machine gun post when the section commander was wounded beside him. He was dressing the section-leader's wound when he was himself shot through the shoulder blade. However Plater took the section in hand, led it forward and destroyed the enemy post. After consolidating his position he staggered back to B coy H.Q. to report the situation and had to be carried out on a stretcher to the R.A.P.	
			As soon as Lieut Plater's platoon had struck opposition, Lieut Mortimore's platoon had swung round to its right and Lieut Gartner's platoon to its left. Lieut Gartner, who had been	

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Unit..... 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 11 Dec '42 To 12 Dec 42

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			our busiest tree-top sniper at GONA MISSION, pressed home his attack against strong opposition, and after four hours' hard fighting gained a glimpse of huts in the village. By this time his platoon was reduced by casualties to section strength and was relieved by C coy. Lieut Gartner's ten men under Sgt Meani were sent out to the right of Lieut Mortimore's platoon to give it flank protection and Lieut Gartner took command of Plater's now leaderless platoon in the centre.	
			C coy, only 25 strong after their efforts at GONA MISSION, tried to advance on the left but were held up by heavy fire from two MMGs. The coy dug in for the night, and about midnight the enemy counter-attacked at close quarters overrunning one platoon position from which a few wounded survivors came in next morning.	
			Bn H.Q. was established 100 yds to the rear of fwd coys with A coy in reserve sited for its protection.	
			Telephone communication with 21 Bde was established by 1510 hrs.	
			Throughout the night rain fell. Weapon pits, latrines, tracks, in fact all the ground held by our troops was under water from inches to feet deep. The enemy held higher and drier ground.	
	12 Dec '42.		By examination of enemy dead and equipment found it was found that the enemy were apparently part of a freshly landed force, well fed and well armed and equipped; and it was estimated that their numbers were approximately equal to ours. Though their prepared defensive positions gave them an advantage we had the initiative. With insufficient troops to surround the position the C.O. decided to push around the left flank to the sea to cut the enemy off L of C to the west and thereby prevent the garrison from receiving reinforcements from that direction.	
			A coy was moved to the left of C coy and 18 pl of D coy (lieut Moore) which had patrolled to the river mouth a week	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 12 Dec '42 To 14 Dec 42

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			earlier from KIKIRA and knew the ground at the west end of the village pushed north beyond A coy. The remaining two pls of D coy moved to Bn H.Q. in forward reserve and were replaced at the river crossing to the rear by H.Q. coy (3,5 and 6 pls) under Capt Symington, all available men from rear echelon being brought out for this task.	
			All forward coys made ground during the day, advancing only a few yards at a time as enemy fire was used very effectively. Three enemy were killed making for our positions, but most of them died from a fanatical and very often pointless determination to remain in their posts until they were killed. One prisoner (walking wounded) was captured.	
	13 Dec '42		Steady infiltration was continued and small gains were made. B coy captured an enemy MG. Strong resistance continued in the centre sector which was under intense enemy automatic fire, particularly from unlocated MMGs. Cpl Graham's section (C coy) was pinned down by an enemy machine gun post hidden in the thick jungle. Cpl Graham located the post, led his section into a position to assault and captured the post.	
			D coy (less 18 pl) went forward to join 18 pl on the long line now extending round the left flank.	
			2 pl remained in reserve round Bn H.Q.	
			The detachment of CHAFORCE west of GONA MISSION came under comd 39 Bn and used 3" mortars to harass the enemy in the village, observation being provided by 39 Bn fwd coys, the bn being in communication with CHAFORCE by signal line through 21 Bde. To get the extra range augmented charges had to be used and this made shooting so inaccurate that it was as great a danger to us as to the enemy and had to be discontinued.	
	14 Dec '42.		F00 decided on a suitable tree for his O.P. and brought down	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 14 Dec '42. To 16 Dec '42.

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			shell fire on enemy rear area in the village. Observation of actual enemy positions was impossible. One shell wounded two of our troops.	
			Pressure was maintained throughout the day by fwd tps and steady advances were made, the edge of the jungle being visible by our troops on the right and left flanks.	
			The enemy detachment which had held up the advance of CHAFORCE had withdrawn presumably to reinforce the village, and during the day CHAFORCE moved west to within a quarter of a mile of the village without striking any opposition.	
	15 Dec '42		Enemy guns holding up the progress of C coy the right of A coy and left of B coy were surrounded and knocked out.	
			On the right Lieut Mortimore's pl (B coy) made contact with CHAFORCE which had moved up the beach to the east end of the village, thus closing that exit.	
			On the left D coy knocked out a further enemy posn. 18 pl took up a position overlooking the beach at the west of the village and during the night cut enemy telephone communication to the west.	
			5 pl (Pioneer) came forward to fill the gap in D coy's lengthening line.	
	16 Dec '42		Ever since taking over from Lieut Plater five days earlier, Lieut Gartner had fought his new platoon forward under the nose of the enemy along the strongly held main track which was continually swept by fire from a series of posts in depth. He dashed untiringly from section to section, checking their positions and leading them forward into new positions, and in between times making grenade sorties on the enemy.	
			The jungle in front of other parts of our attacking line was too thick to move through without first cutting a path, and often too high for hand grenades to be thrown. In Lieut	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 16 Dec '42. To

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			Gartner's "track area" was the only open ground suitable for bombarding enemy positions. For hours each day he pounded the enemy with 2" mortar bombs and rifle grenades from a shallow hole in the open. The enemy posts along the track turned all their weapons on him during these sessions, but with his ears packed to deaden the sound of the bullets cracking past them, he coolly sat and fired bomb after bomb to help the battalion forward.	
			This day at 0900 hrs he was sniping at the enemy when he was hit by a burst of machine gun fire. The bullets went in the front and out the back inside the top of his left hip. He applied field dressings and carried on. Forty yards his platoon pushed on through the jungle in the next six hours and 35 dead enemy in the ground they captured showed how bitterly the enemy fought to hold every yard of it. At 1500 hrs Lieut Gartner could do no more. His left leg was useless, even for crawling and he had to be carried from his post.	
			On the right Lieut Mortimore's platoon pushed on against similar opposition over the dead bodies of a similar number of the enemy, and after dark seized positions under huts in the south east corner of the village, giving daylight observation of most of the village.	
			C coy also used darkness to advance a little.	
			In the night thirty enemy troops carrying shovels, grenade dischargers, and other equipment came from the west, crossed the sandbar at the mouth of the river and attempted to join the force in the village. They were ambushed by the left platoon of D coy and at daylight fifteen enemy bodies (including that of an officer) were found there.	
			Earlier in the day it was suspected that some attempt might be made to reinforce from that direction and fifty rounds of arty fire were brought down on huts where some enemy troops were seen on the west of the creek.	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 17 Dec '42. To 18 Dec 42

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Unit.....39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 18 Dec '42. To 19 Dec '42.

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			Between 0800 and 0900 hrs Cpl Heraud located the MMG he had been looking for during the night. It was in a strong post in the jungle a few yards in front of his section which wiped out the post and captured the gun.	
			A and C coys moved forward in the face of heavy fire to the edge of the jungle. From there the final assault was made. Lieut Dalby (A coy) who had taken the first enemy post in the capture of GONA MISSION led the attack on this occasion. As before, his dash carried him right into the enemy ahead of his men. Again he made a MMG his objective and killed the gunner and six other men. Then A coy wiped out the post which had been manned by about thirty enemy with two MMGs and several LMGs.	
			At this all four coys swarmed over the village blotting out the remaining pockets of resistance. One prisoner was taken.	
			Captured diaries revealed that enemy wounded in the first few days plus enemy known to be killed in the following days outnumbered the dead Japanese in the village. The wounded had obviously been evacuated across the sand-bar or by barges which called in the night.	
			The Japanese dead, buried in the village by 39 Bn numbered 170 and there were 20 fresh graves across the creek to the west.	
			Bn went into defensive positions for the night.	
	19 Dec '42.		Defenses were improved.	
			39 Bn handed over the village to 2/16 Bn.	
			Bn moved at 1430 hrs along the beach but did not reach	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 19 Dec. '42 To 22 Dec '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			GONA MISSION till 1630 hrs. Progress was slow owing to sickness and fatigue following upon the severe conditions under which tps had existed since arrival in the GONA area. Coys. were dispersed for beach defence though every advantage was taken to rest the tps.	
	20 Dec '42		Church parades both for RCs and other denominations were held in the morning. The remainder of the day was taken up with minor reorganisation, washing and bathing.	
	21 Dec 42		Orders were received in the morning for the movement of the Bn to SOPUTA area from where it would move to a posn on SANANANDA RD. CO reported to 21 Bde HQ at 1100 hrs and proceeded with the Bde Comd to 7 Aust Div HQ for detailed orders. The Bn under Maj ANDERSON moved at 1215 hrs again making slow progress, as the majority of the tps were sick. In addition the track was very muddy and difficult. On arrival at the bivouac area at which the leading elements of the unit had slept on the first night after arrival from MORESEY, hot food was made available by 21 Bde HQ	
	22 Dec '42		After breakfast which was provided by 21 Bde cooks at 0700 hrs. the Comd of 7 Aust Div (Maj.Gen. VASEY) visited the unit and spent some time with the tps. He was accompanied by ADMS 7 Aust. Div (Col.Norris) CO was evacuated to MDS WITH Malaria and Maj.ANDERSON took temporary command. Bn with personnel HQ 21 Bde moved off at 1015 hrs along the SANANANDA RD. to HQ 30 Aust Inf Bde where hot tea was provided for all ranks. From here, a track leading to the right through the jungle was followed to an area known as HUGGINS RD. BLOCK. This was part of a clearing astride the track SOPUTA-SANANANDA. The ENEMY opposed by units of 30 Bde held a line	Appx E Diagram HUGGINS RD BLOCK

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From Dec 1942

To 23 Dec 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>across the track between HUGGINS and SOPUTA. This was bypassed by the Bn as it came fwd. Between three and five hundred yards in the direction of SANANANDA another position was held astride the track by 2/7 Aust Cav. Reg. while ENEMY held the track between the two points. ENEMY L of C was therefore cut in two places and they were forced to supply their fwd tps by a longer and much more difficult track on our left. The HUGGINS area was contained within a perimeter (oval) one hundred and fifty yards at its widest part. The unit arrived at 1630 hrs after passing a hut with about twelve long-dead ENEMY in the vicinity. The situation within the perimeter at time of arrival appeared to be chaotic. American tps, whom the Bn was relieving, details from 2/7 Cav. collecting rations, and natives carriers wandered all over the area. The Bn was dispersed to posns on the perimeter with such speed as circumstances permitted, after which the other tps departed, except a Cav. squadron which was to move up to its unit the following morning. HQ 21 Bde with Bn HQ a few yards from it, occupied a posn approximately in the centre of the area with the coys disposed around the perimeter to ensure all round defence of the area. A small inner perimeter was provided by Protective pl, BHQ personnel and some Bde HQ personnel. The relative posns of tps is shown in appx. While final adjustments were being made to defensive posns. Lieut WHELAN was killed and one wounded by a sniper who had approached the area under cover of the jungle.</p> <p>At 1800 hours some advanced ENEMY opened fire from further up the road. Our tps replied and intense automatic fire continued for thirty or forty minutes. The night was quiet except for our arty which were shelling ENEMY posns further fwd.</p> <p>Although the general situation permitted, it was not possible to extend the perimeter to any appreciable extent owing to depleted strength. As it was, cooks and other personnel normally out of</p>	
	23 Dec '42			

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 23 Dec '42

To 25 Dec 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>battle were in front line posns. This together with the fact that a large proportion of the sec. leaders and more highly trained men had become battle casualties, the possibility of successful offensive action was somewhat remote. Difficulty was even experienced in providing sufficient suitable patrols to properly carry out the defensive role to which the unit was assigned.</p> <p>A standing patrol was established at a point 600 yards WEST on a track connecting with ENEMY L of C.</p> <p>Lieut CAMPBELL led a patrol of ORs fwd after dark to locate ENEMY posns along main track. They succeeded in grenading a MG posn. Other ENEMY posts brought down by S A fire which was kept up from 2320 to 2340 hrs. The patrol withdrew without casualties.</p>	
	24 Dec '42		<p>Three daylight patrols were sent out but all reported NMS on their return. One followed the main track for one thousand yards in the direction of SOPUTA, the second went into the jungle NW of the Bn posn and the third went out on the right front where a complicated system of trip wires was discovered, although at the time there was no sign of ENEMY presence in the area. It was suspected, however that it was occupied at night and consequently Lieut CAMPBELL and a fighting patrol of ORs went out at 2100 hrs. They successfully penetrated for some distance past the wire and ran into ENEMY MG fire and grenades. They withdrew after two of the party were wounded.</p>	
	25 Dec '42		<p>This proved to be the dreariest christmas experienced by any member of the unit. Although many had received letters from Australia, no parcels of any sort were able to be distributed. The only addition to the rations was one tin of ACF boiled sweets and one American Ration C (B unit only) for each man.</p> <p>There was some intermittent sniping, but there were NO casualties.</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 25 Dec '42

To 26 Dec 42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
			<p>Maj. Gen VASEY accompanied by the ADMS made a thorough inspection of the area.</p> <p>A further patrol went to recce. the area NW of the posn investigating a track running NORTH from the standing patrol on the LEFT. NMS.</p> <p>A Coy reported that some arty ranging on the right front had caused scurrying in the bush. It was considered therefore that the arty fire in the area after dark may cause the ENEMY to move across to the left, behind the trip wires. At 2100 hrs twenty rds were fired into the area and after allowing sufficient time for any such movement twenty rds. were fired by 3 "/m mortar into trip wire area.</p>	
	26 Dec '42		<p>D Coy reported an ENEMY LMG 300 yds fwd of their front and on a bearing of 375 deg. from Coy HQ. As the jungle in this front was very dense the accuracy of the location was in some doubt. A patrol was therefore sent out to check the report and deal with the gun. It was not successful however. Another patrol went out along the track leading out from the left to its intersection with ENEMY L of C with a view to establishing an ambush. The track was very difficult as the greater part of it led through swamp in parts of which the water was waist deep. The only ENEMY seen was a small working party cutting palms. These were not however attacked as it was thought that any such noise would warn ration or supply parties passed by during the time the patrol was in posn.</p> <p>During the early part of the night a patrol of 20 2/7 Cav made its way into our lines, having been surrounded for some days fwd of our posns. It is possible that it was this party which our patrol of 23 Dec had attacked with grenades as they reported having been grenaded but were fortunate enough not to have suffered casualties.</p>	

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn.

Date and Time.—From 27 Dec '42

To 28 Dec '42

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	27 Dec '42		<p>A patrol of one offr. and twenty men set out to make further attempt at the location of the ENEMY MG. In its initial attempt it took a wrong course and moved parallel and dangerously close to D Coys sector of the perimeter, at the same time being surprised by an ENEMY sniper. Three of the patrol were wounded. The party then returned in order to make a fresh start and waited till our LMG had dealt with the sniper. The procedure followed on such occasion was to spray the snipers area with automatic fire as owing to the density of the jungle it was impossible to ascertain his exact location. By this means he was either killed or made sufficiently uncomfortable to make him withdraw for it constantly proved an effective method in dealing with snipers.</p> <p>Although the patrol was not able to locate the MG ENEMY dug posns were discovered on the left of the main track 300 yds fwd of our posn.</p> <p>The ambush patrol again went to ENEMY Lbr C. Unfortunately two ENEMY tps. appeared before our tps could take up proper posns. The disposal of these seems to have served as a warning to others for no further ENEMY were seen.</p> <p>At 2200 hrs a recce patrol took up a posn to observe the trip wire area when a flare was fired from a 2" mortar. The results were disappointing, no movement being seen. This may have been partly due to the fact that the wind carried the flare away from the area.</p> <p>Lt. Col HONNER returned from MDS abd resumed comd.</p>	
	28 Dec '42		<p>Lieut MOORE with 22 Ors relieved a 2/7 Cav standing patrol on the L of C connecting Bn area with the Cav posn. The removal of this party from the area necessarily restricted our activities with respect to recce patrolling. It was necessary however that the Cav. personnel be released for projected operations in their own area.</p>	

R. Honner Lt. Col.
Comd. 39 Aust Inf Bn.

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Army Form C.2118
(adapt)

(Erase heading not required)

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Unit 39 Aust Inf Bn

Date and Time.—From 28 Dec '42. To

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
	29 Dec 42		A report was received to the effect that an ENEMY raiding party had succeeded in reaching our gun posns fwd of SOPUTA and completely disabling one gun. The Bn was ordered to send a small patrol to intercept the raiders. This did not meet with success as the patrol was unable to reach the appointed ambush posn in sufficient time.	
	30 Dec '42		A composite Coy was selected and commanded by Lieut FRENCH (OC B COY) and attacked ENEMY posns in the trip wire area on the right front. The ENEMY offered strong opposition, with automatic fire and the attack was not successful. The Coy withdrew leaving two standing patrols fwd of B Coy.	
	31 Dec '42		Comd of a U S Regt with staff officers made recce of area and consulted with Maj. Gen VASEY and Comd. 21 Bde (Brig DOUGHERTY) Tps from this Regt would be relieving 39 Bn within next few days Three minor patrols were sent out to check information of previous patrols.	
				<p>Appx A - Strength Status 10/19 Dec</p> <p>" B - General notes from Captured ENEMY Documents</p> <p>" C GONA LOCALITY 1" to 1 mile map</p> <p>" D AVNA (Provisional) 1" map</p> <p>" E Sketch of GONA MISSION Area</p> <p>" F HUGGINS AREA (Sketch)</p>

R. H. Huggins
Comd. 39 Aust Inf. Bn.