

**APPENDIX 'A'**  
**CAPTAIN J.N.W. GWYNNES UNIT DIARY MAY 1940**

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year May, 1940.

**WAR DIARY**  
*or*  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**  
*(Erase heading not required)*

Unit 53rd A.Tk Regt.,

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. E.J. Meade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendix
Noyelles Godault.	1 - 9 May.		Training continued. Men supplied for R.E. fatigue party in connection with the construction of an aerodrome surface at Esquichin.	
	3 May.		Regimental Sports held at the Stadium, Henin Lietard. Result:- 1st. 210, 2nd 209 Bty., 3rd 212 Bty., 4th 211 Bty.	
	6 May.		Regimental Cross Country Run. Winner 210 Bty.	
	10 May.		Belgium invaded.	
	10 - 30 May.		For the purpose of the move into Belgium the Regiment was given the task of protecting one of the routes of advance of the 1st Corps against attacks by low-flying aircraft and by marauding tanks. Seventy miles of road had to be protected and it was a pretty problem to do this with but 50 guns. As a matter of fact German attacks were not heavy, but the Gunners succeeded in bringing down six German aeroplanes and bringing to book several parachutists. The forward concentration of the Corps was completed in about 5 days and the Regt. was ordered to assemble in an area close to the ancient field of Waterloo. Scarcely had the Regiment arrived in its new area when orders were received for two Batteries to join with 145 Inf. Bde to form a flank guard to protect the withdrawal of the Corps while the remaining Battery with Regimental Headquarters was to form another flank guard on its own, prolonging the line to the west. These flank positions.	

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year May, 1940.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**  
(Erase heading not required).

Unit 53rd A. Tk. Regt., R.A.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. R.J.M. Ley, C.

Army Form C.

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendices
	10 - 30 May.		<p>which were actually on the field of Waterloo itself were successfully held until 2 o'clock the next afternoon while the Corps withdrew behind the River at Hal; and by night-fall the Regiment was assembled again in rear of the line. Here the Regiment was joined by Z Battery from 1 Div., which operated with it during the remainder of the fighting in Belgium. Hardly had the troops settled in when orders for a further withdrawal to the line of the River Dendre came in. Two Batteries, 210 and 211, were to join Infantry rearguards, while the remainder of the Regiment was to go back independently. The initial stages of the march took place in darkness and units got very split up. But collecting posts were established at various points behind the river and by night-fall most of the parties had been collected. Plans were immediately put in hand to deploy the Batteries for defence of the river line, but about 8 p.m. the next evening a further retirement to the line of the River Scheldt was decided upon. The flank was to be protected by The Armoured Reconnaissance Group, to which one Battery, 209, was to be attached; and the rearguard was to be carried out by a Cavalry Regiment with two <del>or</del> more Batteries, 210 and 211, under command. It sounded a sticky business and it was with great relief that that the Regimental Commander found his Batteries safe behind the River next day. It was hoped that it would be possible to make a protracted defence on this line and immediate steps were taken to make the necessary dispositions. The guns of Z Battery were placed right forward to defeat any attempt by the enemy to pass tanks over the river crossings; 210 and 211</p>	

For

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year May, 1940.

WAR DIARY  
or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 53rd A.Tk Regt., R.A. Army Form C.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col E. J. M. W.ley,

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendices
	10 - 30 May.		<p>were assembled in the area of the forward Infantry Brigades and 209 was held in reserve so as to be ready to deploy to the flank if necessary. During the next two or three days a good deal of fighting took place on the river line and Z Battery had a bad time. The detachments behaved most gallantly and the guns maintained their forward positions until the crossings were secure. Meanwhile, the rest of the Regiment was deployed so as to form a co-ordinated anti-tank defence on the whole Divisional front. We thought we had moved pretty fast and far up to date, but it was nothing to what was to come. After we had stood on the Scheldt for about 3 days, orders were suddenly received at 6 o'clock in the evening that the Division was to withdraw to the prepared line behind the Belgian frontier so as to shorten the line. Z Battery was to go back to 1 Div.; the Batteries, 210 and 211, were to continue in support of the Infantry Brigades; while 209 Battery was to hold a gap, more or less on its own, on the right of the Division. At the last moment a rearguard had to be formed on the left of the Division as well, and a troop was taken from 209 as it was on its way up and sent scuttling off to this last task. Everything went off amazingly smoothly, in spite of the darkness, and this speaks volumes for the efficiency of the Battery Commanders and of their men, who were all very tired and short of sleep. A certain amount of co-ordination was, of course, required in the morning but everything was quickly in order and all ranks were extraordinarily cheerful and full of spirits. Scarcely had Regimental and Battery Staffs finished their work of co-ordination when they were on the move again. The German</p>	

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence  
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I.  
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages  
will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year May, 1940.

# WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required).

Unit 53rd A.Tk Regt., R.A.

Army Form C.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. E. J. M. [unclear]

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendix
	10 - 30 May.		<p>armoured divisions were threatening the Channel Ports and a force of guns had to be improvised to support the very weak detachments which were protecting the flank of the B.E.F. on the line of LA Bassee Canal. The Divisional C.R.A. was told to take as many anti-tank guns and field guns as possible and to march to LA Bassee with all speed. The 209 Battery, which was filling a vital gap, was left in action under command of 145 Infantry Brigade; but the rest of the Regiment collected as fast as possible. It wasn't very fast, because the Batteries were spread out by single guns over a front of about six miles; but they were ready before dark and the march began. As dawn broke they arrived in front of LA Bassee Town and lay up in a small village below the Aubers ridge, while the Regimental and Battery Staffs went out to make contact with the Infantry <del>and</del> on the Canal and to make preparations for bringing the guns into action. That afternoon the guns went along roads which were packed with French troops and reached their allotted positions after considerable difficulty; but scarcely had they arrived before they were off again. News was received that German tanks had broken through the line of LA Bassee Canal at St. Omer and the Regimental Commander was told to collect his guns and to take them, together with half the Divisional Machine Gun Battalion, to Dunkerque as a guard for the town. The order was received at 6 p.m. and the column was supposed to start at 8 p.m.; but by that time only the Machine Guns and 211 Bty. had assembled. There were no signs of 210, and it was not until after midnight that the messengers which had been sent to them returned saying that they could not get through because the traffic was so dense. There was nothing to do but to start without them, and so off went the</p>	

By For  
(4)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. 1 and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year May, 1940.

WAR DIARY  
WAR DIARY  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

INTEL (Erase heading not required)

Unit 53rd A.Tk Regt., R.A. Army

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. F. J. Medley, O.B.  
MC.

Place Date Hour

Summary of Events and Information

References to Appendix

10 - 30  
May.

column, marching by way of Ypres and Poperinghe so as to avoid marauding tanks. Meanwhile, 145 Inf. Bde, with 309 Battery, who, it will be remembered, had been left on the Belgian frontier, were ordered, to Cassel where they were to hold the town.

The march of the regimental column passed off with little interference. It arrived at its destination during the morning feeling slightly bedraggled, and took up defensive positions. However, just as the Regimental Commander was stepping from his car, he was met by a Staff Officer who said that Dunkerque was after all, to be held by the French, that the troops were to be collected and parked in any convenient field nearby, and that the Regimental Commander himself was to report for orders at a place some 20 miles up the road. The place up the road produced an omelette and beer and has remained a blissful memory. So have the orders. The Division was to form a flank guard for the B.E.F. and was to hold a series of localities from Dunkerque to Hazebrough. The Anti Tank Regt. was to be distributed to the localities in accordance with the needs of situation. The Regimental Commander went round the localities to discuss the matter with the Commanders of the Infantry garrisons, and when he arrived at Wormhoudt early in the morning he found that 144 Inf Bde, who were holding the village had collected 210 Battery. This Battery had received the orders to withdraw from LA Bassee on the morning after the Regiment had left. It had withdrawn its guns under considerable fire from machine guns, and after many and various wanderings had found the Brigade Commander and attached themselves to him. Eventually the Regiment was disposed with 209 in Cassel with 145 Inf. Bde., 210 in Wormhoudt. with 144 Inf. Bde., a troop of 212 in Baignes

ry for  
(A)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence  
Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs., Vol. I  
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages  
will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year: May, 1940.

# WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase bending not required).

Unit 53rd A. Tk Regt., R.A.

Army Form C. 211

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. E. J. Medley, OBE,  
MC.

Place.	Date.	Hour.	Summary of Events and Information.	References to Appendices.
	10 - 30 May.		<p>with Usherforce, and 211 in reserve. The Division had to maintain these positions at all costs and fighting was continuous. At first it was an affair of outposts. Cutting out expeditions of a few Bm carriers and a section or troop of anti tank guns were sent out to engage odd detachments of German tanks; outpost companies, accompanied by anti tank guns, were sent forward from the main positions in an attempt to establish a continuous chain of posts in front of the Dunkerque-Hazebrouch road. But gradually the Germans closed in with a greatly superior force As the pressure increased and as the casualties mounted up, the anti-tank guns in reserve were sent out to strengthen the defences. Two troops of 211 went to Cassell and the remaining troop to Wormhoudt, and nothing was left in hand. This isn't the place to tell the detailed story of the defence of Beignes, Wormhoudt, and Cassell. Many gallant actions were performed and the amazing power of the anti-tank gun was fully proved. The German troops must have received a rude buffeting, for there was no active pursuit after the defences had fallen. The Regiment went alone accounted for round about 100 enemy tanks of all sizes. And finally came the melancholy retreat to Dunkerque beach. I say melancholy because the thought of a retreat to the beach had never entered into our minds and the order "to abandon our equipment and depart" came as a great shock to us all. We were furious about it. So we did our best to show our contempt for the Bosch. We collected rifles and anti-tank rifles to replace our guns, put on our best clothes and cleaned our buttons and so started the long march to the shore. Mention must be made of 212 Battery before ending this story. It was detached under command of 2 Div. early in the operations and it did not rejoin the Regiment until they were over. It served many masters and won praise from</p>	

