

**Second World War Unit War Diary – 124 Field Regt. Royal Artillery- Peter Thomas Gidley
Withycombe**

The following is from the National Archives WO 169/9515

PART D.—NOMINAL ROLL OF OFFICERS ON STRENGTH.

(I) Officers posted to Unit (Total to agree with column 2 of Part A).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Substantive Rank.	Higher acting or temporary rank, if held.	Name and Initials.	Corps.	Whether present with Unit (Insert Yes or No.)	If not present with Unit, state how employed.
Major.	Lt. Col.	G.E. TRO.	R.A.	Yes.	
Major.	-	P. WILLIAMS.	"	"	
Capt.	T/Major.	P. PARSONS M.C.	"	"	
Capt.	A/Major.	J.J.S. BURL.	"	"	
Capt.	A/Major.	T.G. BROWN.	"	"	
Capt.	-	A.G. BROWN.	"	No.	Att. Corps.
Lieut.	T/Capt.	G.J.S. TUNNELL.	"	No.	Leave.
Lieut.	T/Capt.	J.H. DOWNSHILL.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	E.T.S. WINTERBONE.	"	"	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	A.S. CLARK.	"	"	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	H.D. BAILY.	"	"	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	H.S. LINDLADE D.C.	"	"	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	T. GAY SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	T/Capt.	H.S. BAILEY.	"	"	
Lieut.	A/Capt.	S.H. SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	E. WOODMAN.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	J. ST. VERNON.	"	No.	Leave.
Lieut.	-	D.S. TONKIN.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	-	H. J. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	R.M. CLARK.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	B.R.R. JEWITT.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	J.T. RASBURY.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	A. HILLIS.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H. J. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	L.C. BAPTISTE.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H. J. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	J.H. DATES.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H.E. PETERS.	"	No.	Leave.
Lieut.	-	H.C. MAGEY.	"	Yes.	
Lieut.	-	H.C. IRVIE.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	G.C. SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H.S. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H.L. LAFORET-SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H.A. CHURCH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	T.H. GARDNER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	G. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	J.J. SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H.J. SMITH.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H. J. BAKER.	"	"	
Lieut.	-	H. J. BAKER.	"	"	
S/Lieut.	-	S.T. HILLIER.	"	"	
Lieut (W)	-	J. BAKER.	"	"	

(II) OFFICERS ATTACHED FROM OTHER CORPS.

Substantive Rank.	Higher acting or temporary rank, if held.	Name and Initials.	Corps.	Date of attachment.	Nature of attachment.
Lieut.	-	G. J. BAKER.	R.A.	1.8.43.	S.C.
Chaplain 4th Class.	-	G. J. BAKER.	R.A.Ch.D.	1.11.43.	Redre.
Lieut.	-	G. J. BAKER.	Sigs.	1.11.43.	Sigs. Corp.

124 Field Bt. R.A. (S) S.A. (Unit.)

14.6.43 (Date of Despatch.)

C. J. Lord
(Signature of Commander.)

50 (S) Division.
(Bde., Divn., Area, etc., with which Unit is serving.)

124 Field Regiment R.A. (H) T.A. JULY 1943.

WAR DIARY

14 OCT. 1943

MIDDLE EAST

Army Form 22113

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

OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Hour, Date, Place.	Summary of Events and Information.	Remarks and references to appendices.
PORT SAID July 1.	Moved through SUEZ CANAL to PORT SAID.	
2. 1030.	GOC 50 Div visited R.M.T. ORONTAS. Addressed all ranks on future operation.	
3.	ON SHIP.	
4.	ON SHIP.	
5. 0830.	Left port.	
1100.	Announcement over ship's wireless by Captain. Our destination SIRACUSA SICILY, arrive a.m. 8. TURDAY.	
6.)	Briefing. Map exercise course started.	
7.)		
8.)		
9.)		
10. 1930.	RE. STNA observed.	
11. 0015.	Ship anchored approx 10 miles out from coast.	
0200.	Last meal on ship. SIRACUSA heavily bombed.	
0330.	Priority I personnel called to dress. No news through from beach.	
0700 app.	Ship gradually approached shore.	
0800.	Ship anchored approx 1 mile from beach.	
AVOLA. 0815.	G.O. Recce party landed. Everything in bridgehead quiet and under control.	
1100.	AVOLA reported clear. Reconnaissance area S. of AVOLA made on foot. No M.T. landed yet.	
1515.	All arty reverted to command G.R.A.	
1520.	69 Bde with 124 in support ordered North to CASABILE. Positions to be occupied by last light - as yet no guns ashore.	
1555.	Shipping offshore attacked by JUNKERS 88 escorted by M.B. 109's. Excellent barrage put up by Ships and Beach brick.	
WARNING.	Small raids by odd planes - no ships hit. After dark 1 gun each from 288 and 441 in action S.W. SIRACUSA area J 0623 and 0723.	
2400.	Final gun state:- 489 - 8) 441 - 2) 15. 288 - 3)	
12.	Night move to J 0527. No contact with enemy for 4000 yds on Bde front.	

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124 Field Regiment R.A. (H) T.A. JULY 1943. sheet 2. WAR DIARY

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AVOLA. JULY 12. 0530	Odd packets of slight resistance N.W. of SOLARINO.	
J 0527.	Area FLORIDIA harried by 77 mm guns.	
afternoon	Mobile Column 5 R.Yorkshires supported by 489 Battery ordered to advance and capture SORTINO. Final area likely to be 9733.	
	441 Bty Moved to area J 0330 J 0430.	
	R.H.C. " " " J 033004.	
	489 Bty " " " J 037809. One composite Troop of 5 guns.	
	All load carrying trucks ordered to F.H.C. to help R.A.S.C.	
	bring up supplies.	
2000	B.O.P. 288 Bty 014364. R.Yorkshires at 9737 on road.	
2005	R.Yorkshires 953 287 meeting no opposition. Recce parties 9537. Operation	
2015	R.H.C. 288 and 441 prepare to move. The B.C.T. advancing along road had become separated - a gap of 1500 yds existed between the leading and rear 2 coys. No effort had been made to shift possible Italian resistance from the high flanking ground. They were thus caught in a U of fire with some enemy mortars and M2s between the 2 groups of infantry. For this reason no arty fire could be used in their support.	
	L/Bdr. WEBB killed.	
2400.	Both groups formed separate night leagues. Active though limited patrols were carried out.	
13. 0530.	Bulk of resistance departed. Some POW taken included Germans.	
	Mopping up carried out.	
0830.	Plan made for 6 G.Howards, supported by 124 Field Regt, to assault SORTINO. 288 bty fed with Major Burr, 489 bty with Bn Comdr.	
	Attack found SORTINO not occupied by enemy.	
	Advance on LENTINI continued. Regt ordered fed to:-	
	RHQ 913442)	
	288 907437) LOCATIONS.	
	441 913437)	
	489 912445)	
1600.	2 Italian offrs. and 1 G.R. surrendered to 441 Bty as they occupied	

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July 13.	above posn. tks 441 engaged 3 A55, 4 MGs. and 30 inf 3, 9145. Locations OPs:- 288 H 915455. 441 H 908445. 489 H 905450.	
1645.	Carriers cleared road block 910455, 3 German POW captured. 441 G.F. captured 3 German POW. The 3 MGs reported confirmed as half tracked carriers.	
1715.	Rd reported clear between 46 & 48 Northing grids. High ground sqs 9248 and 9249 occupied. 3, 8946 cleared. Sq 8250. Fired cones on 9050 H. PAROLI in support inf attack on small ridge to S.E. Objective taken easily.	
1720.	Attack by 7 G. Howards supp. Div. Art. to secure M. PAROLI. Successful German POW taken. Advance down road continued by reserve coy. 1 F.O.O. from 489 accompanied.	
1800.	441 bty advanced to 905485.	
1815.	288 bty advanced to same area.	
1805.	489 bty engaged 10 tks at 900589 - disappeared into CARLENTINI.	
1840.	3 M 109 strafed road. Several vehicles burnt out including 3 carriers by the same bomb.	
1400.	G.O. recon entered CARLENTINI 8953 and then LENTINI 8854. Great welcome from local population.	
CARLENTINI 8953.	Right recon pty led by Major P. Farquary M.C. to area 9054. Slight resistance offered by some Italians and Germans in pillboxes and caves built into wadi - same area. Major P. Farquary M.C. and Capt. Withcombe took 3 P.O.W. and continued recon. Both killed and 2 G.O.s. died of wounds from explosion. 2 German and 20 Italian G.O.s. taken prisoner. Engagement with Italian mobile column consisting of 11 - 47/xx 58 Semovanti, 50 m/cs, 6 trucks, numerous light automatics and 2 small pack Howitzers. These all captured. Capt. H.S. Langlands DSO killed. Lt. H. Irwin wounded. 2 G.O.s. wounded.	J.I.
2000 to 2400.	Regt in action area 9054. Regt recon pty RV 912583.	
15.	0530. 0900.	

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9. 9853. July 15. 1130.	S/Lt. C.T. Mildrup & 2 G.O.s wounded by air strafing attack. Regt advanced to incl. area. RHR 918632. 288 (790140 360340) (790275 360715) 441 911595 & 908347) 489 903583 & 911382)	
1400.	Regt in action.	
1500.	Pocket of 2 tks and 40 inf 900574.	
1900.	151 bde to attack bridge over SIM TO river.	
2100.	STAND TO - parachutists reported landing area 9253.	
16. 0100.	Fire plan shot.	
0115.	Infantry attacking pocket of resistance 9057.	
0230.	Task completed.	
0335.	Success signal observed. Slight resistance R. flank.	
0400.	Much noise low-flying aircraft. Bombing taking place on both sides. Parachutists.	
0520.	Bridge O.K. for trucks but not wheels due to S.A. fire. Bridgehead positions being established and mopping up proceeding. 1st and 2nd waves through.	
0450.	Trucks across bridge.	
0715.	489 FOO. 872547. 441 F.O. 892559.	
0830.	288 tgt - wooded area - strongpoint.	
0900.	DLI held up 1/2 mile N of bridge. Gun 788 mm shelling down road. OPs 872547; 915439; 933945; 900554; 942643.	
1200.	489 report capture 6 parachutists - they landed 3 days previously.	
1215.	489 bty G troop claim 1 M 109 shot down by Bren gun.	
1600.	100 rds surplus to echelon to be dumped on gun position.	
1630.	489 GP. 942578. MTR.	
1720.	D.F. MARTIN 94298894 - 2 rds G.F.	
	DURING afternoon the Germans made audacious attempt to move fwd mortars and men by transport down main road. G.F. moved them down and burned up several vehicles. Counter attack made by enemy to W of bridgehead halted by M.G. and gunfire.	
1950.	G.O. to H.Q.R.A. for orders re tonight's barrage 100 rds per gun. Furious	