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U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT, Operations Division: Diaries, 1942-1946

Accession A67-20 and A69-13
Processed by RS, TB
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The diaries of the Operations Division, U.S. War Department, were deposited in the Eisenhower Library in August, 1966, and September, 1968. They were received from the Modern Military Records Branch of the National Archives in Washington, D. C.

Linear feet shelf space occupied: 5.0
Approximate number of pages: 9,200
Approximate number of items: 2,000

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The documents in this collection were compiled by the Current Section of the Operations Division (OPD), War Department General Staff, and cover the years 1942 to 1946. They were sent to the Eisenhower Library from the Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C., in two shipments during 1966 and 1968. Most of the documents are carbon copies or photocopies. They are considered to be duplicate, surplus, non-record copies of official records. The original records are kept at the National Archives as part of Record Group 165: Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs.

The Current Section of the OPD specialized in collecting and disseminating the latest information available pertaining to military operations in all theaters. This included data on both high-level decisions and operational reports from overseas commands. Information was distributed to other branches of the OPD, the War Department, and the President.

The chief of the Current Section was Col. Thomas North. In March 1942, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who at that time headed the OPD, instructed North to prepare brief daily summaries of OPD actions, including major decisions by the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff. The first summary appeared on 29 March 1942; they continued until after the end of the war. (For further information on the Current Section, see Roy S. Cline, Washington Command Post: The Operations Division, pp. 130-132, published in 1951 as part of the historical series "U.S. Army in World War II.") It was first named the "1700 Report" because the daily entries were prepared at 5 p.m., or 1700 hours. The time of preparation was later changed to 6 a.m., and then to 9 a.m., so the report eventually became known as the "0600 Report" and, later, the "0900 Report."

The form of the daily entries was also changed. The earlier reports contained 3 sections. These were: "Messages Received and Action Taken;" "Other Action Taken;" and "Plans." In April 1943, the arrangement was altered to present information by theater of operation. This form was continued until after the end of the war.

At the time it was created, most of the diary was classified Secret or Top Secret. The entire diary was declassified in 1975 and is now open for research.

The diaries are arranged in two overlapping chronological subseries. The first subseries, which covers May 1942 to December 1945, consists of carbon copies of the original diary. The second subseries covers the period March 29, 1942, to May 31, 1946. The first part of this subseries, down to December 1944, consists of photocopies of the original diary. The rest of the subseries consists of carbon copies of the original diary. Thus, the period May 1942 to December 1945 is duplicated in the two subseries.

During the processing of the diary by the Library staff, an index to the entries was discovered, covering the period April 24, 1943, to December 31, 1945. It is not a separate series, but is inter-filed with the corresponding diary entries in the first subseries. This index consists of one-line summaries of each diary entry, arranged in the order in which they appear in the diary. It is an

original record and did not exist at the National Archives. A copy of the index has been made and sent to the National Archives for their files.

In addition to the diaries, two other types of records are included in this collection. The first is a set of nine pamphlets titled "Combat Lessons." These were compiled by the Operations Division and contain information on combat techniques. The second is a short narrative sketch of military operations in World War II which was compiled in mid-1943 by the Current section of the Operations Division. The volume is titled "Operations, Dec. 7, 1941-June 30, 1943."

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Box Nos. Series

1-18 I. DIARY, OPERATIONS DIVISION
March 29, 1942 – May 31, 1946

Daily reports of messages received and actions taken by the Operations Division. Arranged chronologically in two overlapping subseries.

1-5 A. 1700, 600 and 0900 Reports
May 1942 – December 1945

Carbon copies of the diary filed in folders by month. An index to the diary entries is included in each folder, starting with April 1943.

6-18 B. Diary, Operations Division
March 29, 1942 – May 31, 1946

Photocopies and carbon copies of the diary.

18 II. “COMBAT LESSONS,” Issues 1-9

Small pamphlets issued periodically by the Operations Division. Compiled from combat reports, they contain anecdotes and advice on methods of combat. They were compiled and circulated to give officers and enlisted men the benefit of the battle experiences of others.

18 III. “OPERATIONS, December 7, 1941 – June 30, 1943”

A brief narrative description of allied military operations, compiled by the Current Section of the Operations Division. The narratives are arranged by theater of operations.

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“Combat Lessons,” Issues 1-9

“Operations, Dec. 7, 1941 – June 30, 1943”

END OF CONTAINER LIST