

## 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Infantry Division

Headquarters, 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Infantry Division & Employment Platoon

### 164<sup>th</sup> (North Lancashire) Infantry Division (2)

Headquarters, 164<sup>th</sup> (North Lancashire) Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster) (3)

5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster) (4)

4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire) (5)

5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire) (6)

### 165<sup>th</sup> (Liverpool) Infantry Brigade (7)

Headquarters, 165<sup>th</sup> (Liverpool) Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment (Liverpool)

6<sup>th</sup> (Rifle) Bn. The King's Regiment (Liverpool) (8)

7<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment (Liverpool) (9)

10<sup>th</sup> (Liverpool Scottish) Bn. The King's Regiment (Liverpool) (10)

### 166<sup>th</sup> (South Lancashire & Cheshire) Infantry Brigade (11)

Headquarters, 166<sup>th</sup> (South Lancashire & Cheshire) Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> (Earl of Chester's) Bn. The Cheshire Regiment (12)

7<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Cheshire Regiment (12)

4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Prince of Wales's Volunteers Regiment (South Lancashire Regiment) (13)

5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Prince of Wales's Volunteers Regiment (South Lancashire Regiment) (14)

### Divisional Troops

Headquarters, 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Divisional Royal Artillery

87<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> West Lancashire) Field Brigade, Royal Artillery (15)

(H.Q., 345<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> West Lancashire), 346<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> West Lancashire), 347<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> West Lancashire) & 348<sup>th</sup> (25<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) Field Batteries, Royal Artillery)

88<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> West Lancashire) Field Brigade, Royal Artillery (16)

(H.Q., 349<sup>th</sup> (9<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire), 350<sup>th</sup> (10<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire), 351<sup>st</sup> (11<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) & 352<sup>nd</sup> (26<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) Field Batteries, Royal Artillery)

89<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> West Lancashire) Field Brigade, Royal Artillery (17)

(H.Q., 353<sup>rd</sup> (12<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire), 354<sup>th</sup> (13<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire), 355<sup>th</sup> (14<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) & 356<sup>th</sup> (27<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) Field Batteries, Royal Artillery)

Headquarters, 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Divisional Royal Engineers

252<sup>nd</sup> (West Lancashire) Field Company, Royal Engineers (18)

253<sup>rd</sup> (West Lancashire) Field Company, Royal Engineers (18)

254<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Field Company, Royal Engineers (18)

55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals (19)

Headquarters 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Divisional Royal Army Service Corps (20)

537<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

538<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

539<sup>th</sup> Company, Royal Army Service Corps

164<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps (21)

### Army Troops in the 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional Area

The Cheshire Yeomanry (Earl of Chester's) (22)

106<sup>th</sup> (Lancashire Yeomanry) Field Brigade, Royal Artillery (23)

(H.Q., 423<sup>rd</sup> (Lancashire Hussars Yeomanry) & 424<sup>th</sup> (Lancashire Hussars Yeomanry) (Howitzer) Field Batteries, Royal Artillery)

59<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> West Lancashire) Medium Brigade, Royal Artillery (24)

(H.Q., 233<sup>rd</sup> (West Lancashire), 234<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) (Howitzer), 235<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) (Howitzer) & 236<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) (Howitzer) Medium Batteries, Royal Artillery)

235<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Signal Section, Royal Corps of Signals (19)

210<sup>th</sup> Medium Artillery Signal Section, Royal Corps of Signals (19)

55<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps (25)

### Supplementary Reserve

No. 3 (West Lancashire) Company, Lines of Communication Signals, Royal Corps of Signals (19)

## NOTES:

1. This division was one of the Territorial Force divisions formed in 1908. It was numbered in 1915, and reconstituted into the Territorial Army in 1920. Between 1936 and 1938, no less than nine of the twelve infantry battalions were transferred away from the division. Two battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment and one of the North Staffordshire Regiment were posted into the division with the disbanding of the 46<sup>th</sup> (North Midland) Infantry Division. Circa 1938, the division was re-organised as a motor division, with just two brigades. It is believed the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was disbanded, with the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade comprising the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment, The Liverpool Scottish and the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The South Lancashire Regiment. The 166<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade comprised the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Bn's. The South Staffordshire Regiment and the 6<sup>th</sup> Bn. The North Staffordshire Regiment. In April 1939, the Division was ordered to form a duplicate division. The duplicate division was titled the 59<sup>th</sup> (Staffordshire) Infantry Division. The 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was reformed to come under command of the 55<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division again, with the 166<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade being re-designated as the 176<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade and forming a duplicate brigade, the 177<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. The 59<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division assumed command of the 176<sup>th</sup> and 177<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades on 15 September 1939.
2. This brigade was a Territorial Army brigade, with its headquarters based at the Drill Hall, Dallas Road, Lancaster. The 4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Own Royal Regiment was based at the Drill Hall, Victoria Road, Ulverston. The 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. of the same regiment was based at the Drill Hall, Phoenix Street, Lancaster. The 4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Loyal Regiment was based in the Drill Hall, Stanley Street, Preston, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. was based at The Barracks, Fletcher Street, Bolton. It is believed this brigade was disbanded in 1938 (see above) but was reconstituted in April 1939 when the division duplicated.
3. In 1937, this battalion transferred to 126<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 42<sup>nd</sup> (East Lancashire) Infantry Division.
4. In 1937, this battalion was converted into an artillery role, being redesignated as:-  
**56<sup>th</sup> (King's Own) Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery**  
It became the anti-tank regiment for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, later serving in Burma with the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Division.
5. In 1938, this battalion was converted into a searchlight regiment, becoming:-  
**4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire) 62<sup>nd</sup> Searchlight Regiment**  
The regiment remained part of The Loyal Regiment until being absorbed into the Royal Artillery in 1940. It served with Home Forces until May 1943, then being converted into a light anti-aircraft regiment.
6. When this formation reorganised as a motor division, this unit became the divisional reconnaissance battalion, equipped with motor cycles, and left this brigade to come under divisional command.
7. As its name suggests, the headquarters of this brigade was based in Liverpool at the St. George Building, Lime Street, Liverpool 1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment was based in St. Anne Street, Liverpool (moved to the Drill Hall, Townsend Avenue, Liverpool 11 sometime in the 1930's), the 6<sup>th</sup> (Rifle) Bn. was based at Prince's Park Barracks, Upper Warwick Street, Liverpool 8, the 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. at 99 Park Street, Bootle, Liverpool 20 and the 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. at 7 Fraser Street, Liverpool. In September 1939, the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment and The Liverpool Scottish were both still under command of this brigade.

8. In 1936, this battalion was converted into a searchlight role, becoming the:-  
38<sup>th</sup> (The King's Regiment) Anti-Aircraft Battalion, Royal Engineers  
In August 1940, this became the 38<sup>th</sup> (The King's Regiment) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery. The regiment served in the United Kingdom until January 1945, when it was converted into an infantry regiment and served in Norway.
9. In 1938, this battalion was converted into an armoured role, becoming the:-  
40<sup>th</sup> (King's) Bn. Royal Tank Corps  
Later this became the 40<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment.
10. In 1938, this battalion was transferred from The King's Regiment to The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. From then, it was re-titled as The Liverpool Scottish.
11. The headquarters of this brigade was located at the Prince of Wales's Volunteers Depot, Orford Barracks, Warrington (also known as Peninsula Barracks, O'Leary Street, Warrington). The 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Cheshire Regiment was based at the Drill Hall, Volunteer Street, in the City of Chester, with the 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. based at the Drill Hall, Bridge Street, Macclesfield. The 4<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Prince of Wales's Volunteers was based in Warrington at Bath Street, with the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. based at the Drill Hall, Mill Street, St. Helen's. In November 1938, The Prince of Wales's Volunteers Regiment (South Lancashire Regiment) was re-titled as The South Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers).
12. In 1938, these two battalions were converted to machine gun battalions, and left the command of this brigade. It is believed one of the battalions was allocated to this division, and the other to the 53<sup>rd</sup> (Welsh) Infantry Division. In September 1939, both battalions were under the command of the West Lancashire Area.
13. In 1938, it is believed this battalion transferred to the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, and by 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, it was under the command of the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.
14. In 1938, this battalion converted into a searchlight unit, becoming  
5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The South Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) (61<sup>st</sup> Searchlight Regiment)  
It remained part of the regiment until transferring to the Royal Artillery in 1940. It was based in the United Kingdom until November 1944, when it was converted into a garrison regiment. In February 1945, it became the 612<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Royal Artillery and saw service in North West Europe.
15. This regiment was formed in 1916 as the 1<sup>st</sup> West Lancashire Field Brigade. All five batteries were based in Edge Hill, Liverpool. In May 1939, this regiment formed a duplicate regiment, the 136<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment the 347<sup>th</sup> and 248<sup>th</sup> Batteries transferring to the new regiment. Both regiments were based at Edge Hill and were under command of this division at the outbreak of war. The 87<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment left the U.K. in December 1941, moving to Iraq. It served for the rest of the war in Iraq, Iran and Palestine. The 136<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment arrived in India from the U.K. in March 1943. It joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Division, with which it fought throughout the Burma campaigns of 1944 and 1945.

16. Formed in 1916 as the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Lancashire Field Brigade, the Headquarters, 349<sup>th</sup> and 352<sup>nd</sup> Batteries were based in Preston, with the 350<sup>th</sup> Battery based in Lancaster and the 351<sup>st</sup> Battery based in Blackpool. The Regiment duplicated in June 1939, to form the 137<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment. The 349<sup>th</sup> and 350<sup>th</sup> Field Batteries transferred to the new 137<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment. In September 1939, the Regiments were under command of the West Lancashire Area, and may have left the command of this Division in 1938 with the transfer in of the Staffordshire battalions and possible replacement by the 61<sup>st</sup> (North Midland) Field Regiment. Both the 88<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment and 137<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment were sent to Malaya, where they were captured in February 1942.
17. The 3<sup>rd</sup> West Lancashire Field Brigade can trace its lineage back to 1860 and the formation of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Artillery Volunteer Corps. The Headquarters, 353<sup>rd</sup> and 256<sup>th</sup> Batteries were based in Liverpool, the 354<sup>th</sup> Battery in Garston and the 355<sup>th</sup> Battery at Widnes. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1937, this field brigade was converted to an anti-aircraft brigade. It was designated as the:  
**70<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> West Lancashire) Anti-Aircraft Brigade, Royal Artillery**  
This regiment left the U.K. in March 1942 to travel to India. It served in India until August 1944. It is possible it was replaced in this division by the 61<sup>st</sup> (North Midland) Field Brigade, which was released by the disbandment of the 46<sup>th</sup> (North Midland) Infantry Division (see above).
18. The three field companies can trace their origin back to the raising of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancashire Engineer Volunteers in Liverpool. In 1908, with the creation of the Territorial Force, the West Lancashire Division Engineers was established with its Headquarters at St. Helens. The 1<sup>st</sup> (The St. Helens) West Lancashire Field Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> (The St. Helens) West Lancashire Field Company and the West Lancashire (The St. Helens) Divisional Telegraph Company were all based in St. Helens. In 1920, the 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Division Engineers was reconstituted by the St. Helens Field Companies absorbing the 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. The King's Regiment. The Headquarters Divisional Engineers was based at 59, Everton Road, Aigburth, Liverpool, with the 254<sup>th</sup> Field Company. The 252<sup>nd</sup> and 253<sup>rd</sup> Field Companies were based at Engineer Hall, Croppers Hill, St. Helens. A field park company was not formed until 1939, when the 254<sup>th</sup> Field Company was redesignated as a field park company. In 1939, the three engineer companies left the command of the division, with the 253<sup>rd</sup> Field Company being allocated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. In 1947, the 107<sup>th</sup> Field Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers, reformed, with the 252<sup>nd</sup>, 253<sup>rd</sup>, 254<sup>th</sup> Field Companies and 255<sup>th</sup> Field Park Squadron.
19. The divisional signals were based at 38, Mason Street, Edgehill, Liverpool 7. The two artillery signal sections were based at the Drill Hall, Aspinall Street, Prescot. The LoC was also based at 38, Mason Street, Edgehill, Liverpool 7.
20. The Headquarters, R.A.S.C. was based at the Drill Hall, Manchester Road, Southport, together with the 537<sup>th</sup> and 538<sup>th</sup> Companies. The 539<sup>th</sup> Company and 557<sup>th</sup> (Non-Divisional) Companies were both based at the Drill Hall, 13, Low Hill, Liverpool.
21. The field ambulance was based at the Drill Hall, Rathbone Road, Old Swan, Liverpool 15.
22. The Cheshire Yeomanry had its headquarters at 'Gilwern', Abbot's Park, Liverpool Road, Chester. The regiment remained as a cavalry unit, joining the 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade in October 1939. It travelled with the brigade and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division to Palestine in January 1940.

23. In 1922, the Lancashire Yeomanry converted into an artillery field brigade. The headquarters and both batteries were based at 75, Shaw Street, Liverpool. In November 1938, the regiment transferred to the Royal Horse Artillery. In November 1939, it came under command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, travelling with that formation to Palestine in early 1940. The regiment was placed in suspended animation in Egypt in July 1941.
24. Previously part of the Royal Garrison Artillery, this Territorial Army unit was based at The Grange, Edge Lane, Liverpool. It served with the British Expeditionary Force in France in 1940, and then served in North West Europe in 1944 and 1945.
25. The ordnance company was based at the Drill Hall, Southport Road, Ormskirk. By July 1937, the company was redesignated as the 55<sup>th</sup> (West Lancashire) Divisional, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, yet remaining with the same establishment as a company.

## SOURCES:

Primary Sources**H.M.S.O*****The Monthly Army List January 1930***Available From: Your Old Books and Maps: <http://youoldbooksandmaps.co.uk/british-army-lists-1901-1950.htm>**H.M.S.O.*****The Monthly Army List July 1937***Available From: Your Old Books and Maps <http://youoldbooksandmaps.co.uk/british-army-lists-1901-1950.htm>**H.M.S.O.*****The Half Yearly Army List for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1938***Available on-line at: <http://www.archive.org/details/armylisthalfjan1939grea>**H.M.S.O.*****The Monthly Army List April 1938***Available From: S & N Genealogy: <http://www.genealogysupplies.com/>**H.M.S.O.*****The Half Yearly Army List for the period ending 31st December 1939***Available on-line at: <http://www.archive.org/details/armylisthalfjan1940grea>**H.M.S.O.*****The Monthly Army List April 1940***Available From: S & N Genealogy: <http://www.genealogysupplies.com/>**JOSLEN, Lieut.-Col. H. F.*****Orders of Battle Second World War 1939-1945*** (London, H.M.S.O., 1960 Reprinted London, The London Stamp Exchange Ltd., 1990) [ISBN 0 948130 03 2]Secondary Sources**BELLIS, Malcolm A.*****Regiments of the British Army 1939 – 1945 (Artillery)*** (England, Military Press International, 1995) [ISBN 0 85420 110 6]**HUGHES, Major General B. P.*****The History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery – Between the Wars 1919-39*** (England, The Royal Artillery Institution 1992) [ISBN 0 08 040984 9]**MILLS, T. F.*****Land Forces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth.***Available on-line at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070607051547/http://www.regiments.org/>  
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