

79th Armoured Division ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, 79th Armoured Division & Headquarters Squadron
90th Field Security Section, Intelligence Corps

30th Armoured Brigade ⁽²⁾

Headquarters, 30th Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

22nd Dragoons

2nd County of London Yeomanry (Westminster Dragoons)

1st Lothians and Border Horse

141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps ⁽³⁾

1st Tank Brigade ⁽⁴⁾

Headquarters, 1st Tank Brigade & Signal Section

11th Royal Tank Regiment

42nd Royal Tank Regiment

49th Royal Tank Regiment

1st Assault Brigade and Assault Park Squadron, Royal Engineers ⁽⁵⁾

Headquarters, 1st Assault Brigade, Royal Engineers & Signal Section

5th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

6th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

42nd Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

Divisional Troops

No. 264 Special Delivery Squadron, Royal Armoured Corps

79th Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

Headquarters, 79th Armoured Divisional Royal Army Service Corps ⁽⁵⁾

502nd Armoured Brigade Company, Royal Army Service Corps

75th Armoured Brigade Company, Royal Army Service Corps

109th Divisional Troops Company, Royal Army Service Corps

16th Light Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

Headquarters, 11th Armoured Divisional Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (6)

30th Armoured Brigade Workshops, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

1st Tank Brigade Workshops, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

1st Assault Brigade Workshops, Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers

79th Armoured Divisional Ordnance Field Park, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

79th Armoured Divisional Postal Unit, Royal Engineers

79th Armoured Divisional Provost Company, Corps of Military Police

NOTES:

1. This division was formed on 14 August 1942, with the then current establishment of one armoured brigade (the 27th Armoured Brigade), and one infantry brigade (the 185th Infantry Brigade). Major General Percy Cleghorn Stanley HOBART, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., *p.s.c.*, assumed command of the division in October 1942, and was instrumental in the changing the focus of the division's purpose. In April 1943, the division was reorganised and the composition changed. The role of the formation became the development of all specialised armour, techniques for their use and advising on their role. Major General HOBART was knighted on 2 June 1943. The division came under the direct command of the 21st Army Group on 23 May 1944, with formations being placed under the command of other units for specific operations. This is the order of battle for the division on 6 June 1944 (D-Day).
2. Originally formed on 27 December 1940 in the United Kingdom, the brigade joined this division on 17 October 1943. Brigadier (Acting) Nigel William DUNCAN commanded this brigade throughout the campaign in North-West Europe, being awarded a C.B.E. and D.S.O.. The brigade reorganised for operations with specialist armour, becoming the flail brigade for the division. The Westminster Dragoons landed on Gold beach on D-Day, with 'B' and 'C' Squadrons supporting the assault by the 50th Infantry Division. 'A' Squadron of the 22nd Dragoons landed on Sword beach in support of the 3rd Infantry Division, with 'B' Squadron landing on Juno beach in support of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division.
3. This regiment was equipped with Crocodile (Flame Thrower) Churchill tanks. On D-Day, it was unattached and under the command of 21st Army Group. It was attached to the brigade from 2 July 1944 until 4 September 1944.
4. The 1st Army Tank Brigade was a pre-war Regular Army formation, which was based in the U.K. It was sent to France in April 1940, and from June 1941, it fought in Egypt and Libya. It returned to the U.K. in April 1944, to come under command of this division. Brigadier (Temporary) Thomas Reginald PRICE, D.S.O., M.C.*, commanded this brigade during its period as part of this division. During October 1944, the brigade was dismembered to provide reinforcements for other formations in North-West Europe. The role of the brigade was to use the Grant Canal Defence Light (C.D.L.) tanks, a standard Lee/Grant tank with a large searchlight installed on the top of the turret. The concept was to light up and blind enemy positions, and to act as marked for advancing troops. In practice, the tanks were little used, and the brigade was broken up in October 1944.
5. On 26 November 1944, the Brigade Headquarters was formed by the redesignation and reorganisation of Headquarters, Engineer Assault Troops. The brigade came under the command of the 79th Armoured Division on the same date, under the command of Brigadier (Acting) Geoffrey Lionel WATKINSON, D.S.O., M.C.. The brigade was equipped with specialist tanks, with all the personnel being from the Corps of Royal Engineers. 149th Assault Park Squadron was combined with the brigade headquarters on 10 May 1944, when the designation changed to this title. On D-Day, 77th and 79th Squadrons from 5th Assault Regiment landed on Sword beach to support the 3rd Infantry Division, with 25th and 80th Squadrons landing on Juno beach in support of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. 81st and 82nd Squadrons from the 6th Assault Regiment landed on Gold beach to support the 50th Infantry Division. Brigadier (Temporary) Philip Saint Barbe SYDENHAM, C.B.E., *p.s.c.*, assumed command of the brigade on 18 February 1945, with Brigadier WATKINSON having departed on 12 February.

6. The Commander, R.A.S.C., had a separate headquarters, and commanded the R.A.S.C. assets of the formation.
7. The Commander R.E.M.E. had command of the two brigade workshops, twelve Light Aid Detachments (L.A.D.), and the Light Anti-Aircraft Workshop. There were two, Type 'B' L.A.Ds., were attached to the Divisional Headquarters and Divisional Signals. The three Type 'C' L.A.Ds. were attached to the three armoured regiments, and the Assault Field Park. Three Special Type L.A.Ds. were attached to the three tank regiments, and three Special L.A.Ds to the three assault regiments, R.E.

79th Armoured Division ⁽¹⁾

30th Armoured Brigade

22nd Dragoons

2nd County of London Yeomanry (Westminster Dragoons)

1st Lothians and Border Horse

1st Assault Brigade and Assault Park Squadron, Royal Engineers

5th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

6th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

42nd Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

1st Tank Brigade ⁽²⁾

11th Royal Tank Regiment

42nd Royal Tank Regiment

49th Royal Tank Regiment

31st Tank Brigade ⁽³⁾

141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps

1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry ⁽⁴⁾

11th Royal Tank Regiment ⁽⁴⁾

49th Armoured Personnel Regiment ⁽⁵⁾

1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Regiment ⁽⁵⁾

Divisional Troops

79th Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

NOTES:

1. This is the order for battle on 17 September 1944, at the beginning of Operation Market Garden. The division was not heavily involved in that battle, but was involved in the battles for the Channel ports, such as Le Havre and Ostend.
2. A Regular Army brigade formed in 1939. The brigade served in France and Belgium in 1940, later serving in Egypt and Libya. It returned to the United Kingdom on 22 April 1944, joining this division in North West Europe on 10 August 1944, despite coming under command of this division on 7 May 1944. The brigade had re-equipped with Grant Canal Defence Light tanks, but there was little use for them in the campaign. During October 1944, the brigade was dismembered to provide reinforcements for other units in the theatre. On 18 November 1944, the brigade headquarters was officially placed in suspended animation. The 11th R.T.R. was re-equipped with Buffalo's, and became divisional troops. The 42nd R.T.R. was disbanded in November 1944. The 49th R.T.R. was re-equipped with Kangaroo's (Armoured Personnel Carriers) and joined the 31st Tank Brigade.
3. Formed in the United Kingdom on 15 January 1941, this brigade joined the division on 4 September 1944 after serving as an independent brigade in North West Europe. On joining the division, the brigade had only one unit under command, the 141st Regiment, R.A.C.. Brigadier (Acting) Gordon Sherwin KNIGHT commanded the formation throughout most of the campaign in North-West Europe, being awarded the D.S.O. and Bar for his leadership of the brigade. The brigade was redesignated as the 31st Armoured Brigade with effect from 2 February 1945. Brigadier (Acting) Alan Ward BROWN, D.S.O., assumed command of the brigade from Brigadier KNIGHT on 18 April 1945, just before the end of hostilities on 5 May.
4. These regiments joined the brigade on 2 November 1944, the 11th Royal Tank Regiment having been divisional troops since 2 October 1944. Both regiments were equipped with Churchill Crocodile tanks, which were fitted with flamethrowers. The 11th Royal Tank Regiment left the brigade on 22 December 1944 transferring to the 30th Armoured Brigade.
5. Both regiments joined the division on 22 December 1944, and were equipped on Kangaroos armoured personnel carriers. The 49th A.P.C. Regiment was formed by the conversion of the 49th Royal Tank Regiment.

79th Armoured Division ⁽¹⁾

30th Armoured Brigade

22nd Dragoons

2nd County of London Yeomanry (Westminster Dragoons)

1st Lothians and Border Horse

31st Armoured Brigade ⁽³⁾

1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry

7th Royal Tank Regiment

141st Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps

49th Armoured Personnel Regiment

1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Regiment

33rd Armoured Brigade ⁽⁴⁾

1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry

1st East Riding Yeomanry ⁽⁵⁾

4th Royal Tank Regiment ⁽⁶⁾

11th Royal Tank Regiment

1st Assault Brigade, Royal Engineers ⁽²⁾

5th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

6th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

42nd Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers

149th Assault Park Squadron, Royal Engineers

557th Assault Training Establishment, Royal Engineers

Divisional Troops

The Staffordshire Yeomanry (Queen's Own Royal Regiment)

79th Armoured Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

NOTES:

1. This is the order of battle for the division on 23 March 1945, which was the commencement of the crossing of the River Rhine and the beginning of the final advance into Germany. The establishment of the division had grown as the requirement for specialised armour increased.
2. The designation of this brigade was changed on 17 January 1945 to this title. The 149th Assault Park Squadron separated from the brigade headquarters, and became an unit in its own right. On 23 April 1945, the designation of the brigade was changed again, becoming the 1st Armoured Engineer Brigade, with the units changing to be armoured engineer regiments. The brigade headquarters disbanded on 30 July 1945.
3. This brigade was redesignated from 31st Tank to 31st Armoured Brigade on 2 February 1945.
4. The 33rd Tank Brigade was redesignated to become the 33rd Armoured Brigade on 17 March 1944. As an independent armoured brigade, it arrived in Normandy on 13 June 1944. It came under command of the division on 18 January 1945, re-equipping with specialist armour. It reverted to its normal role on 9 April 1945, but again re-equipped with specialist armour on 24 April 1945. Brigadier (Acting) Henry Balfour SCOTT, D.S.O.*, commanded this brigade throughout the campaign in North-West Europe. The brigade disbanded on 22 August 1945 in North West Europe, after the cessation of hostilities.
5. The regiment left the brigade on 23 April 1945.
6. This regiment was formed by the redesignation of the 144th Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps on 1 March 1945.

SOURCES:

Specific Sources

1. Anon *The Story of the 79 Armoured Division* (Uckfield, Naval & Military Press, reprint of original from circa 1945) [ISBN 978-1-78331-039-5]
2. FLETCHER, David *Vanguard Victory – The 79th Armoured Division* (London, H.M.S.O., 1984) [ISBN 0 11 290422 X]

Orders of Battle

3. 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]
4. BELLIS Malcolm A. *Divisions of the British Army 1939 – 1945* (Published BELLIS 2nd Edition, 2000) [ISBN 0-9529693-1-9]
5. BELLIS Malcolm A. *Commonwealth Divisions 1939 – 1945* (England, BELLIS, 1999) [ISBN 0-9529693-0-0]
6. BELLIS, Malcolm A. *The British Army Overseas 1945 – 1970* (England, BELLIS, 2001) [ISBN 0-9529693-2-7]
7. BELLIS, Malcolm A. *British Tanks and Formations 1939 – 45* (England, BELLIS, Second Edition 1987) [ISBN 0 9512126 2 1]
8. BELLIS, Malcolm A. *Divisions of the British Army 1939 – 45* (England, BELLIS, 1986) [ISBN 0 9512126 0 5]
9. BELLIS, Malcolm A. *Brigades of the British Army 1939 – 45* (England, BELLIS, 1986) [ISBN 0 9512126 1 3]
10. BEVIS, Mark *British and Commonwealth Armies 1939-43* (U.K. Helion and Company, 2001) [ISBN 1 874622 80 9]
11. BEVIS, Mark *British and Commonwealth Armies 1944-45* (U.K., Helion and Company, 2001) [ISBN 1 874622 90 6]
12. BEVIS, Mark *British and Commonwealth Armies 1939-45 Supplement Volume 1* (U.K., Helion and Company, 2005) [ISBN 1 874622 18 3]

13. BEVIS, Mark *British and Commonwealth Armies 1939-45 Supplement Volume 2* (U.K., Helion and Company, 2005) [ISBN 1 874622 38 8]

Websites

14. *World War II Armed Forces – Orders of Battle and Organization*
Available on-line at: www.niehorster.org
[Accessed 22 June 2016]
15. *Land Forces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth.*
Author: T. F. MILLS Available on-line at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070622075214/http://www.regiments.org>
[Accessed 22 June 2016]

General

16. BARKER, A. J. *British and American Infantry Weapons of World War 2* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1973) [ISBN 85368 489 8]
17. BRERETON, J. M. *A Guide to the Regiments and Corps of the British Army on the Regular Establishment* (London, The Bodley Head, 1985) [ISBN 0-370-30578-7]
18. BRAYLEY, Martin & INGRAM, Richard *The World War II Tommy – British Army Uniforms European Theatre 1939-45 in Colour Photographs* (Marlborough, The Crowood Press Ltd., 1998) [ISBN 1 86126 190 X]
19. CROW, Duncan *British and Commonwealth Armoured Formations (1919-46)* (Windsor, Profile Publications Limited, 1972) [ISBN 85383 081 9]
20. DOHERTY, Richard *British Armoured Divisions and their Commanders 1939 – 1945* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2013) [ISBN 978-1-84884-838-2]
21. DOYLE, Peter & EVANS, Paul *The British Soldier in Europe 1939 – 1945* (Marlborough, The Crowood Press Ltd., 2009) [ISBN 978 1 84797 102 9]
22. ELLIS, Chris & CHAMBERLAIN, Peter (ed.) *Handbook of the British Army 1943* (The Military Book Society, 1975. Original edition, 1943).
23. FLETCHER, David *The Great Tank Scandal – British Armour in the Second World War Part 1* (London, H.M.S.O., 1989) [ISBN 0 11 290460 2]
24. FLETCHER, David *The Great Tank Scandal – British Armour in the Second World War Part 2* (London, H.M.S.O., 1993) [ISBN 0 11 290534 X]
25. FLETCHER, David & HARLEY *Cromwell Cruiser Tank 1942 – 50* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 2006) [ISBN 1 84176 814 6]
26. FORTY, George *British Army Handbook 1939-1945* (Chancellor Press, Second Edition, 2000) [ISBN 0-75370-332-7]
27. FRENCH, David *Raising Churchill's Army – The British Army and the War against Germany 1919-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000) [ISBN 978-0-19-924630-4]
28. GANDER, Terry *Tanks in Detail – Sherman & Firefly Medium Tank M4* (Hersham, Ian Allen Publishing, 2003) [ISBN 0 7110 2989 X]
29. JAMES, Brigadier E. A. *British Regiments 1914 – 1918* (Uckfield, Naval and Military Press Ltd as combined volume 5th Edition, 1998) [ISBN 0 906304 03 2]
30. MARTEL, Lt Gen Sir Giffard *Our Armoured Forces* (London, Faber & Faber, n.d.)
31. WHITE, Arthur S., *A Bibliography of Regimental Histories of the British Army* (Sussex, The Naval and Military Press Ltd., 1992) [ISBN 1 897632 25 8]
32. The Tank Museum *Churchill Tank – Vehicle History and Specification* (London, H.M.S.O., 1983) [ISBN 0 11 290404 1]
33. The Tank Museum *The Cromwell Tank – Vehicle History and Specification* (London, H.M.S.O., 1983) [ISBN 0 11 290403 3]