

12th (Eastern) Infantry Division ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, 12th (Eastern) Infantry Division & Employment Platoon

35th Infantry Brigade ⁽²⁾

Headquarters, 35th Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

2nd/5th Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)

2nd/6th (Bermondsey) Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)

2nd/7th (Southwark) Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)

36th Infantry Brigade ⁽³⁾

Headquarters, 36th Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

5th Bn. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment)

6th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

7th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

37th Infantry Brigade ⁽⁴⁾

Headquarters, 37th Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

2nd/6th Bn. The East Surrey Regiment ⁽⁵⁾

6th Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment

7th (Cinque Ports) Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment

Divisional Troops

Headquarters, 12th (Eastern) Divisional Royal Artillery ⁽⁶⁾

113th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

114th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

118th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

Headquarters, 12th (Eastern) Divisional Royal Engineers ⁽⁷⁾

262nd Field Company, Royal Engineers

263rd Field Company, Royal Engineers

264th Field Company, Royal Engineers

265th Field Park Company, Royal Engineers

Detachment, 12th (Eastern) Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals (8)

One echelon, Divisional Supply Column, Royal Army Service Corps (8)

182nd Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps (8)

31st Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps (8)

Detachment, 12th (Eastern) Divisional Provost Company, Corps of Military Police (8)

NOTES:

1. This formation was a Second Line Territorial Army division, raised as a duplicate of the 44th (Home Counties) Infantry Division. Major General Roderic Loraine PETRE, D.S.O., M.C., *p.s.c.* assumed command of the division with effect from 7 October 1939, until which the units were administered by the parent division, although he had been appointed to command the division on 25 August 1939. The division arrived in France on 22 April 1940 to join the B.E.F. on training and labour duties. It was not considered fully equipped nor properly trained for operational deployment, with all the Royal Artillery units, the bulk of the Divisional Signals and some Administrative Units remaining in the United Kingdom. It was allocated to Line of Communication B.E.F., however, the division was engaged on the River Somme and virtually destroyed as a formation. In the evening of 20 May, the S.S. Totenkopf Motorised Division came up on the left of the 7th Panzer Division to further encircle Arras. After destroying the 70th Infantry Brigade, the 8th Panzer Division went on to Hesdin and Montreuil. The 6th Panzer Division headed for Doullens. Here they met the 5th Bn. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) and 6th Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. At about 12.00 midday on 20 May, the German armoured forces cut into the British positions at Doullens. Both British battalions were overwhelmed with only a few men managing to escape. The War Diary of the 8th Panzer Division records how the British troops fought tenaciously and it took two and half hours to subdue the British resistance. Once again, the British troops had no real means to defend themselves against well organised armoured forces. The 1st Panzer Division moved on Albert, where it found the 7th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. The story was the same, with the British troops offering resistance but by 07.30 hours, the battalion was effectively destroyed. Only about eighty men managed to escape and eventually reach Boulogne. The division secured a bridgehead across the River Somme and moved on to Amiens where it destroyed the 7th Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment, with about seventy men escaping. The 2nd Panzer Division reached Abbeville on 20 May 1940, effectively isolating the B.E.F. and French 1st and 7th Armies. The three battalions of the 35th Infantry Brigade fought against the Germans at Abbeville before evacuating the town. The remains of the division were evacuated from St. Nazaire on 7 June 1940. On its return to the U.K., the division was broken up and was disbanded on 10 July 1940.
2. A Second Line Territorial Army brigade, it was commanded from 7 October 1939 until 28 April 1940 by Brigadier (Temporary) Euston Edward Francis BAKER, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.*, T.D., a Territorial Army who had served in the Great War with distinction. Lieutenant Colonel A. F. F. YOUNG officiated until 13 May when Brigadier V. L. De CORDOVA assumed command. The brigade was deployed to Abbeville, where at about 16.00 hours on 20 May 1940, units of the 2nd Panzer Division reached them and started to attack. On its return to the U.K. on 7 June 1940, the brigade was reconstituted. It joined the 1st London Division on 2 July 1940. On 28 November 1940, it was redesignated as the 169th (London) Brigade, as part of the 56th (London) Division. The brigade went with the division to the Middle East and fought in Italy.

3. This formation was also a Second Line Territorial Army brigade, raised in 1939. Brigadier (Temporary) G. R. P. ROUPELL, V.C., *p.s.c.*, who was aged forty-eight years in May 1940, commanded the brigade throughout the campaign. On 20 May 1940, the brigade was located at Doullens, south of Arras, with the 7th Bn. The Royal West Kent Regiment located at Albert, north of Amiens. Doullens lay in the path of the 6th Panzer Division, and Albert was in the path of the 2nd Panzer Division as it made for Abbeville, with Albert being secured by the 1st Panzer Division as it made for Amiens. The brigade was overrun on 20 May, with only details escaping to return to the U.K.. On 8 June 1940, it was reconstituted with the same units. The brigade passed through many commands until it joined the newly formed 78th Infantry Division in the U.K. on 22 June 1942. The brigade served with the 78th Division in North Africa (Tunisia) and Italy until the end of the war.
4. This brigade was commanded by Brigadier (Temporary) R. J. P. WYATT, M.C., a Territorial Army officer who was born in 1892. This brigade was located at Amiens on 20 May 1940, as the German advance cut through the area between Arras and the River Somme. The brigade was attacked by the 1st Panzer Division, and forced from Amiens. The remnants of the brigade were either incorporated into the Beauman Division, or evacuated from Le Havre and other ports on the French Atlantic coast. On its return from France, this formation became an independent brigade upon the disbandment of the division. On 8 December 1941, it was redesignated as the 7th Infantry Brigade. The brigade served in the U.K. for the rest of the war.
5. During May 1940, this battalion was detached from the brigade and served with the 1st Support Group of the 1st Armoured Division. It returned to the command of the brigade on its return from France.
6. None of the artillery regiments were in a position in respect of equipment or training to be deployed to France. The Commander Royal Artillery remained in the U.K. in command of the rear echelon units that did not travel to France.
7. The Royal Engineer units were on a modified reduced establishment for deployment to France.
8. All the supporting services sent to France with this division were operating on a modified establishment during the campaign. The Divisional Signals took only some dispatch riders, with no telephone line or radio personnel or equipment, so communication had to be by runners or use of the civilian telephone network. The commanding officer of the field ambulance acted as the Assistant Director of Medical Services for the division. The Provost unit comprised a headquarters and three sections instead of the usual six.

SOURCES:

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