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**A CONCISE HISTORY OF:**

# **30<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY BRIGADE (DEFENCE OF CALAIS)**

## **CHAPTER 1**

A concise history of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade during the Second World War in 1940. The brigade defended the French town of Calais against the German forces in May 1940, where it was captured. It was not reformed.

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**A Concise History of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade and the Defence of Calais**

**Chapter 1 – The Background and Early Contact**

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## Chapter 1 – The Background and Early Contact

The story of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade is synonymous with the defence of the French port of Calais in May 1940. It also has come to symbolise the cause of sacrifice, and sadly serves to highlight the confusion that war brings to established organisations.

Despite the ebb and flow of the Second World War, from a British perspective, only a few whole formations were captured during the war. The most significant event where a complete formation surrendered was the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942. The formations in Malaya Command all went into captivity when the General Officer Commanding Malaya Command, Lieutenant General PERCIVAL, surrendered to the Japanese. This included the whole of the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which had only just arrived. Altogether, about eighty-thousand soldiers from the United Kingdom, India and Australia were taken into captivity, to add to the approximately fifty thousand killed, wounded, and captured in fighting on the mainland of the Malayan peninsula. Most of the 51<sup>st</sup> (Highland) Infantry Division surrendered at St. Valery-en-Caux on 12 June 1940, although one brigade group escaped. The 2<sup>nd</sup> South African Infantry, 11<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade, 32<sup>nd</sup> Army Tank Brigade and 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Brigade (about thirty-thousand men) were captured with the fall of Tobruk. In addition, the 150<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was destroyed in the fighting in 'The Cauldron' in Libya in Libya in June 1942, and the 234<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was captured on the Aegean Islands in October and November 1943.

However, the fate of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was different. It was different because the men of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade were sacrificed to be killed or captured, deliberately, at the highest levels of the British Government and Army.<sup>1</sup> There was a conscious decision not to evacuate the brigade in the hope that they would delay the German advance on Dunkirk where the bulk of the British Expeditionary Force were now awaiting evacuation. There would be no evacuation for the men of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, only death, or an undetermined period of captivity.

The men of this brigade, only recently formed in the United Kingdom, were sent to Calais as the German Army swept across northern France. Their task was to hold the port of Calais. This they did against great odds until defence was futile. Calais is a town in northern France, on the English Channel coast. For many centuries, it has been a port. As it is the closest French port to the English coast at Dover, it grew to be a major cross-channel ferry port between the United Kingdom and France. The town of Calais had a population of about 65,000 people, divided into two distinct parts of the town. The Old Town was contained within a series of canals, docks, and basins.<sup>2</sup> The Old Town was characterised by the narrow, irregular streets within the town. At the west of the Old Town was the Citadel, a large fort built in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> See CHURCHILL, *The Second World War*, page 257.

<sup>2</sup> The French word for basin, that is 'bassin' is used for the names of the specific basins mentioned in this document.

There were bridges over the canal and basins linking the Old Town and New Town. Two of these linking the Gare Maritime across the Bassin Carnot were swing bridges.<sup>3</sup> The New Town lay to the south and east of the Old Town, and it was laid out in a more regular form. The Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) and several hotels were located in the New Town. The whole of the town was enclosed within a defensive system of bastions and earthworks dating from the seventeenth century. Roads radiated from the New Town to Gravelines (six miles away) and Dunkirk (eighteen miles away) to the north-east; Ardres and St. Omer (thirteen miles away) to the south; and to Boulogne some eight miles to the south west. The main railway line ran to St. Omer in the south. In addition, two major canals extended from Calais, the Canal de Marck to the east, and the Canal de Calais to the south.

There was another section of the town called Calais Nord, which lay to the north and east of the town. This was a mainly industrial area leading to the docks, with a large cellulose factory dominating the landscape. Beyond Calais Nord lay the Bassin de Chasses, a large lake and sand dunes extending along the coast to Dunkirk.

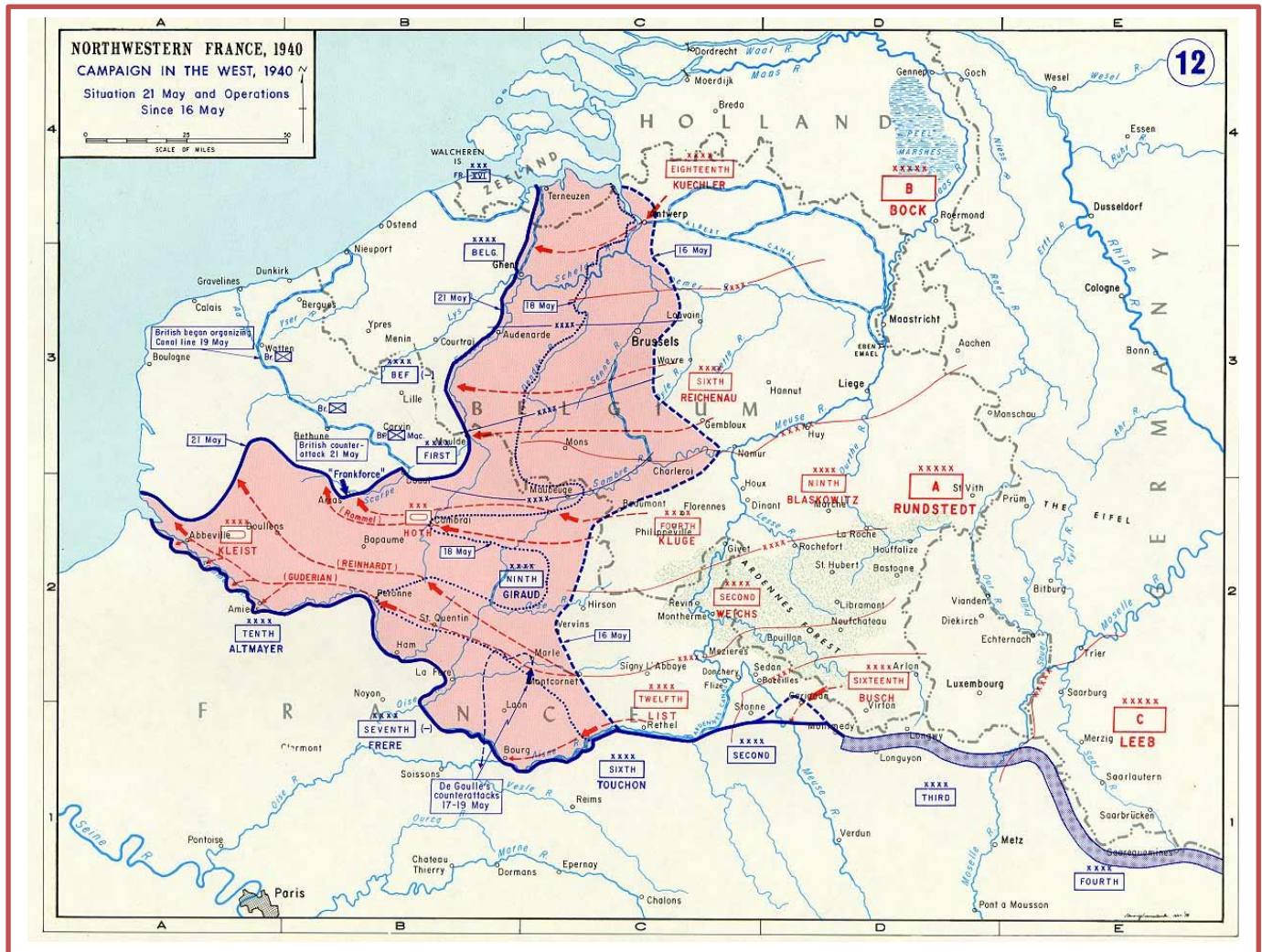
The sequence of events leading the defence of Calais started with the XIX German Army Corps crossing the border into Luxembourg on 10 May 1940, heralding the German invasion of the Low Countries and France. At this time, France was the key ally of the United Kingdom. Both countries had gone to war with Germany on the same day, ostensibly to protect the neutrality of Poland. The French Army was significantly larger than the British Army at the time, perceived to be relatively well equipped, and be led well by its officer corps. This illusion was shattered quickly by the speed of the advance of the German Army and the collapse of the resistance of the French Army. On 19 May, XIX German Army Corps (commanded by GUDERIAN) captured Amiens, and the breach in the French lines was complete.

On the same day, General GORT, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) realised that withdrawal to the ports on the English Channel might be the last option left to his force. The two ports that were favoured initially to be used for evacuation were Calais and Boulogne. The Adjutant-General of the B.E.F., Lieutenant General W. D. S. BROWNRIGG was given the task of arranging the evacuation of second line troops to England. BROWNRIGG appointed Colonel Rupert HOLLAND, D.S.O., M.C., to be the Base Commandant of Calais, which at that time had no British troops based there.<sup>4</sup> Born on 17 October 1885, HOLLAND had been commissioned in the Royal Artillery on 23 December 1903, and he had won his gallantry awards during the Great War. He reached the rank of Colonel on 1 October 1935, and at the age of fifty-three years, he was placed on retired pay on 21 January 1939. HOLLAND was recalled to Active Service at the beginning of the war and deployed to France with the B.E.F..

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<sup>3</sup> The Gare Maritime was the railway station serving the port facilities.

<sup>4</sup> His service number and full title was: 3954 Colonel Rupert Thurstan HOLLAND, D.S.O., M.C., retired pay (Reserve of Officers), *p.s.c.*



Colonel HOLLAND had returned to France on Sunday, 5 May 1940, after ten days' leave in England, to take up a new appointment as Assistant Adjutant General (Personal Services) at G.H.Q. of the B.E.F.. The offices of the Adjutant General's Branch were located at Herneville, about four miles west of Arras. On Saturday, 18 May, the Rear Headquarters of the B.E.F. were moved to the Imperial Hotel in Boulogne, and Colonel HOLLAND travelled there in the afternoon with his boss, Brigadier James WHITEHEAD, the Deputy Adjutant General, Personal Services.<sup>5</sup> The Other Ranks and stores were moved by train, and they did not reach Boulogne until the next morning.

Lieutenant General BROWNRIGG, who was the senior officer at the Rear H.Q. of the B.E.F., held a conference at the Imperial Hotel at 18.00 hours on Sunday, 19 May. As the main lines of communication of the B.E.F. were now disrupted by the German advance, the ports of Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk were to be developed as Base Ports for the B.E.F.. It was at this conference that Colonel HOLLAND was appointed as the Commandant for Calais, with 18403 Major George Douglas HILL, 7<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars, from the Labour Directorate as his Staff Officer.

<sup>5</sup> Full title – Honorary Brigadier James WHITEHEAD, C.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., *late* Indian Army



Colonel G. H. P. WHITFIELD, also from the Adjutant General's Branch of the B.E.F., was appointed the Commandant of Dunkirk at the same meeting. Lieutenant General BROWNRIGG stated that the most urgent role for the Commandants at Calais and Dunkirk was to establish bases in the ports through which forward ammunition and supplies from the U.K. could be sent to formations in the field. Both Colonel HOLLAND and Colonel WHITFIELD were to report to the Commander, Boulogne Base Sub-Area. At about 23.00 hours, the Imperial Hotel was hit by German bombs, leaving seven people dead and twelve wounded.

At about 08.00 hours on Monday, 20 May, Colonel HOLLAND and Major HILL left Boulogne for Calais. They arrived in Calais at about 10.00 hours and met with the two staff officers in Calais, Captain CALRKE and Major ATTWOOD, Royal Marines. Both were Transport Officers, responsible for organising the shipping and rail movements to and from Calais. Colonel HOLLAND found there to be about one-hundred and fifty non-combatant British troops in the town, with a platoon from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders under Second Lieutenant ROBERTSON guarding a R.A.F. radar station on the road between Calais and Dunkirk.<sup>6</sup> Two Transportation Officers (Docks and Railways) arrived later that morning, and over the next twenty-four hours, they were joined by a Supply Officer, Lieutenant H. LEUTY, R.A.S.C., and a Transport Officer, Major R. L. ATKINSON, R.A.S.C.. A Royal Signals centre existed at the civil Post and Telegraph Office in Boulevard Leon Gambetta, and this became the Signals Office for the garrison. Captain F. R. B. BUCKNALL was the Officer Commanding, and he had some men from details of the G.H.Q. Signals and Boulogne Base Sub-Area Signals, who arrived between 21 and 23 May. This Signals Office established communications with the War Office in London, Boulogne, and Dunkirk. Colonel HOLLAND established his Headquarters at a property called 'Clinique' in Boulevard Leon Gambetta.

The priority for Colonel HOLLAND was to provide an element of anti-aircraft protection for the town. The following units were ordered from Arras to make their way to Calais to come under command of Colonel HOLLAND, namely:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery,
- 6<sup>th</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery,
- 172<sup>nd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery, was a pre-war Regular Army regiment. Formed in 1922 as the 1<sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battalion, Royal Engineers, in line with all the Royal Engineers searchlight battalions, it transferred to the Royal Artillery in January 1940 to become the 1<sup>st</sup> Searchlight Regiment. By May 1940, the regiment comprised mainly pre-war soldiers from the Territorial Army and newly called up militiamen. Most of the senior non-commissioned officers were former Regular Army men called up from the Reserve. Many had served in the First World War, only some twenty-two years earlier.

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<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, this platoon was relieved by the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Queen Victoria's Rifles on 23 May, and they made their way back into Calais where they joined a party from the Royal Engineers.

The commanding officer of the regiment was Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Milward GOLDNEY, who was appointed additionally the Anti-Aircraft Defence Commander for Calais.<sup>7</sup> GOLDNEY was a Regular Army officer, who was born on 16 July 1893, so was forty-six years old at this time. He commissioned in the Royal Artillery on 19 December 1913, just prior to the outbreak of the Great War. During the war, he saw active service in France and Belgium, Gallipoli and Egypt; being mentioned in dispatches once. His post-war career had been steady rather than spectacular; being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 1 August 1939 on assuming command of this regiment. The regiment under his command consisted of two batteries: the 1<sup>st</sup> Searchlight Battery (Major H. K. HARDCASTLE), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Searchlight Battery (Major C. H. J. DEIGHTON). Altogether, GOLDNEY had thirty-four officers, and one-thousand, one hundred and ninety-six men under his command. His command was strengthened on 23 May by the arrival of two officers and two-hundred and thirty men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Searchlight Regiment based at Boulogne. As its name implies, the searchlight regiment was equipped with searchlights, not guns. The only anti-aircraft guns were from the two batteries sent to Calais.

The 172<sup>nd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was detached from the 58<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. This regiment was raised in June 1939 as a duplicate of the 54<sup>th</sup> (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The battery was trained to use the 40 mm Bofors gun, but on arrival in France it was issued with twelve, old, Vickers 2 pounder former naval guns mounted on large, wooden bases. When the orders came through to move from Lille to Calais, the gun mountings had to be left behind. On arrival at Calais, it was found that the guns could not be brought into action, so the battery took over twenty 0.303 Bren guns from the searchlight units. They were situated in and around the docks at Calais. As the Bren guns were not suitable for anti-aircraft defence, transport was arranged two days later to bring the mountings for the 2 pounder guns to Calais allowing the guns to come into action. The 6<sup>th</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery was equipped with seven 3.7" anti-aircraft guns, four of which were located at Oyez Farm on the road between Calais and Sangatte. The other battery with three guns was located at Fort Vert to the east of Calais. This was a pre-war Regular Army unit, which in September 1939 had been under command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

The French troops in Calais were under the command of Capitaine de Fregate Carlos de LAMBERTYE, an officer in the French Navy Reserve, who was based in Fort Risban at the mouth of the harbour. His resources were limited, comprising of one and half infantry companies, one machine gun company, and two 75 mm artillery guns. Calais was still being used as one of the ports of embarkation for the B.E.F. It was not until 22 May that the War Office decided whether to use the Channel ports, including Calais for evacuation, and whether to defend them or not. This was because the intention of the Germans was at that time still unclear. They could have turned south-east to head for Paris or continue to the coast.

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<sup>7</sup> His service number and full title was: 8336 Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Milward GOLDNEY, R.A.



The Royal Navy had already decided to act. On 20 May, Admiral Sir Bertram RAMSAY, Flag Officer Dover, was placed in command of all shipping in the English Channel. Contingency plans were drawn up for and emergency evacuation across the Channel from France to England. A Rest Camp was set up in an old Lace Factory near the Hotel de Ville.

General IRONSIDE, the then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, stayed in Calais overnight 21/22 May. He was with Group Captain SLESSOR, R.A.F., and IRONSIDE's Aide-De-Camp, who were on their way back to London having visited General GORT at the G.H.Q. of the B.E.F.. Colonel HOLLAND met with this group at about 21.00 hours, and he made representations to him about the defence of Calais. IRONSIDE experienced the fact that people sympathetic to the Germans were now operating in Calais, with snipers an increasing problem. The night that IRONSIDE stayed in Calais, the town was bombed, and he was thrown out of his bed at the Hotel Excelsior by the blast of a bomb exploding nearby. At about 04.30 hours on the morning of Wednesday, 22 May, Colonel HOLLAND drove around the Old Town to see for himself the scale of the damage done by the bombing. At 05.00 hours, he then saw off General IRONSIDE and his party from the hotel, as they left to return to London by air.

Following the departure of General IRONSIDE, Colonel HOLLAND visited the senior French officer in Calais, LAMBERTYE, and discussed with him the current situation. His troops were being increased by an increasing number of stragglers from various French units, including some from the French 9<sup>th</sup> Army in the Sedan area who had made their way to Calais.

The strategy for the B.E.F. was unclear; did they counter-attack to break through the German lines of communication, or fall back to the Channel ports for evacuation? A British counter-attack at Arras did take place on 21 May, but although it made some initial progress against the German forces, the 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division and 8<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division soon blunted the threat and forced the British and French back. Although the British counter-attack did not succeed in its objectives, importantly, it did leave an impression on the German commanders, and it caused them to act more cautiously. For the commander of the German XIX Panzer Corps, Lieutenant General Heinz GUDERIAN, this counter-attack reinforced his concerns about his lines of communication, now extended across France. This fear extended across the German hierarchy, and although it may have saved the troops at Dunkirk, it did not spare the men sent to Calais.

The main German formation advancing to the English Channel coast was XIX Armee Korps, which comprised the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Divisions, and supporting arms and services. It also had under command the Infantry Regiment Gros Deutschland, an elite ceremonial and combat regiment of the German Army (Heer). Each of the three Panzer divisions comprised one Panzer Brigade of two regiments, and one Rifle Brigade of two motorised infantry regiments, with artillery support. The 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division comprised the 4<sup>th</sup> Panzer Brigade of two Panzer Regiments (the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>), and the 10<sup>th</sup> Rifle Brigade of two motorised infantry regiments, the 69<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Infanterie Regiments. Troops from XIX Armeee Korps began crossing the River Meuse on 14 May, led by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Divisions, but on 17 May, the advance paused on the orders of the German High Command.

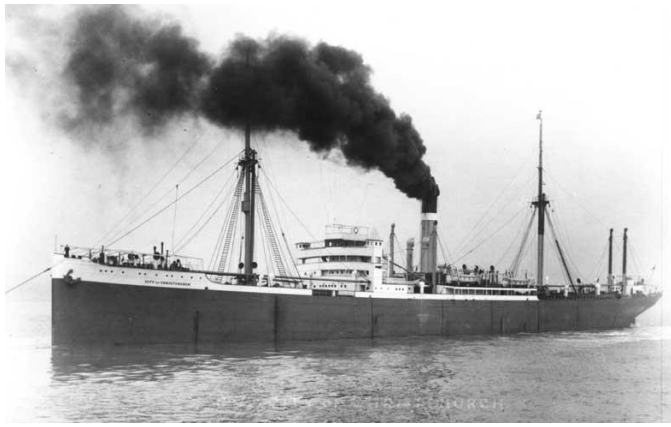
It was resumed the next day, and on 19 May, the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division crossed the River Somme, and XIX Armee Korps resumed its advance with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division in the north, the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division in the centre, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division to the south, all heading towards the English Channel coast. On 21 May, XIX Armee Korps was ordered to turn north and capture the Channel ports of Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk. The Korps Commander, GUDERIAN, intended to direct the 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division towards Dunkirk, while the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division took Calais, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division took Boulogne. XIX Korps began its advance, and on 23 May, heavy fighting with mainly French troops was taking place near Boulogne. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division became engaged in fierce fighting to take Boulogne, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division was now ordered to cross the River Aa and head towards Dunkirk. The 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division had been in reserve due to the threat of an Anglo-French attack to cut the long line of communication of the German armoured forces, but on 24 May, it was sent forward and ordered to encircle Calais.

Calais was by now in a state of confusion and rumour. Refugees were flooding into the town. There were French, Dutch, and Belgian soldiers coming in, but not in any semblance of order. Supplies of electricity and water were running out, exacerbated by the bombing damaging the supply network. Food was increasingly scarce, made worse by the number of people flooding into the area.

The War Office decided to send British forces to Calais in order to secure the port in the face of the rapid German advance. The British Expeditionary Force had no spare resources, so the garrisons for these two ports had to come from the U.K.. The War Office chose the newly formed 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of two infantry battalions to be the nucleus of the force, to which they added a Territorial Army battalion, namely the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Queen Victoria's Rifles, and an armoured regiment. The armoured regiment chosen to be sent to Calais was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment, which was detached from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armoured Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel R. C. KELLER, this was a Regular Army armoured regiment, equipped with twenty-one Vickers Mk VI light tanks (armed with machine guns), and twenty-seven cruiser tanks. The majority of the cruiser tanks were of the A9 design, armed with a 2-pounder gun and Vickers machine guns. In addition, there were a few A10 tanks, armed with a 3.7" mortar and some A13 tanks, also equipped with a 2-pounder as its main armament.

The key officers in the regiment at the time of its deployment in May 1940 included Major MAHONEY, who was the second-in-command, and Captain E. G. D. MOSS as Adjutant. Major SIMPSON commanded 'A' Squadron, with Major W. REEVES commanding 'B' Squadron and Major F. V. LYONS commanding 'C' Squadron; Captain EVERED commanded the Headquarter Squadron. The regiment was billeted in and around Fordingbridge in Hampshire in anticipation of being sent to France with the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division. The orders came though on 19 May for the regiment to move to Calais immediately. Men were recalled with non-commissioned officers going around pubs, cinemas and billets ordering the men to report immediately with their kitbags packed. Those men available commenced the task of preparing the regiment to sail for Calais. All the petrol had to be drained from the tanks, with ammunition removed and stored for the journey to France.

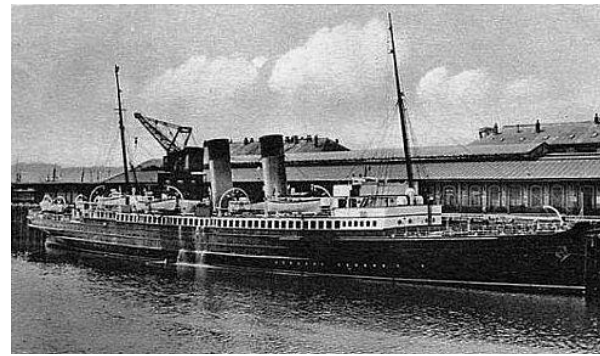
Once prepared, the tanks were taken to Southampton to be loaded onto a cargo ship, the 'City of Canterbury' of the Ellerman Lines



The City of Christchurch

<http://www.benjidog.co.uk/allen/Images/Images%20E/ELLER045.jpg>

While Major MAHONEY supervised the loading of the tanks and equipment at Southampton, the rest of the regiment left Hampshire by train at about midnight on 21 May to travel to Dover. On their arrival, they boarded the 'Maid of Orleans', a Southern Railways cross channel ferry. The ship sailed at 11.00 hours on Wednesday, 22 May 1940, in a thick mist. It arrived at Calais at 01.15 hours on Thursday, where the men were greeted by the destruction caused already by German bombing of the town and port area in particular.



The Maid of Orleans

[http://www.uboot.net/media/allies/warships/br/hms\\_maid\\_of\\_orleans.jpg](http://www.uboot.net/media/allies/warships/br/hms_maid_of_orleans.jpg)

On their arrival, the men disembarked and congregated in the sand dunes near the port area to await the arrival of the City of Christchurch and their tanks. The City of Christchurch docked at 16.00 hours on Thursday, 23 May, with Major MAHONEY supervising the unloading process. Unfortunately, the tanks had to be loaded at the bottom of the holds of the ship, with other vehicles loaded above them and on deck. There were also crates of petrol loaded onto the open deck, so all these had to be unloaded first to get to the tanks.

The other unit to arrive in Calais on 22 May was the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The Queen Victoria's Rifles. The Queen Victoria's Rifles (Q.V.R.) were a Territorial Army battalion affiliated to the King's Royal Rifles Corps. Their home was in London, the Drill Hall being at 56 Davies Street, Berkeley Square, and they had the role of the motorcycle reconnaissance battalion for the 1<sup>st</sup> London Infantry Division.

On being mobilised, they had to use requisitioned motorcycles and vehicles until early 1940, when official vehicles began to arrive. Being a motorcycle battalion, the Q.V.R. had only three companies, and numbered about five-hundred and sixty-six officers and men. Many of the senior Territorial soldiers had been posted elsewhere, to be replaced by a draft of two hundred young militiamen. The soldiers were also lightly equipped as their role demanded. There were only ten Bren guns and five Boys anti-tank rifles per company, with a third of the men being issued with revolvers instead of rifles. The battalion was not trained fully for an operational deployment, as a restriction on the availability of facilities meant that they had had limited time on ranges to learn how to use their weapons and equipment. It did not help that twenty-two scout cars issued to the battalion were taken away from them before they sailed for Calais. This meant that on their arrival at Calais, the battalion had to requisition various French vehicles to give them any mobility.

The commanding officer of the Q.V.R. was Lieutenant Colonel John Arthur Mowbray ELLISON-MacCARTNEY. He was born in March 1903 in Tasmania where his father was in government service. John was educated in Tasmania and later at Eton College. Commissioned in the Territorial Army in 1923, he had sixteen years' service in the Territorial Army and had commanded the battalion since 24 August 1939. Until he was mobilised, ELLISON-MacCARTNEY was the Bursar at Queen Mary's College in the University of London.

The other officers in the battalion at the time of landing at Calais were:

Second-in-Command	– Major 17697 Theodore Livingston TIMPSON,
Adjutant	– Captain (Acting) 72459 Peter John Emile MONICO,
Quarter-Master	– Lieutenant (Q.M.) 71561 Frederick TRENDALL,
Intelligence Officer	– Second Lieutenant S. J. SAUNDERS,
Signals Officer	– Second Lieutenant R. A. RAIKES,
Reinforcement Officer	– Second Lieutenant 129254 Reynold Alleyne HIGGINS,
Medical Officer	– Lieutenant E. GARTSIDE, R.A.M.C.,
Chaplain	– Reverend R. G. HEARD,
R.S.M.	– Warrant Officer Class I 6840450 G. E. CHAPMAN,
R.Q.M.S.	– Warrant Officer Class II HARBUTT.

#### **Headquarter Company**

Commanding Officer	– Captain (Acting) 39717 John Reginald Grylls PALMER, (Territorial Army Reserve of Officers),
Scout Platoon	– Captain (Acting) 69294 Alan Noel Latimer MUNBY,
Scout Platoon	– Second Lieutenant P. G. BARR, T.A.,
Transport Office	– Second Lieutenant T. G. FIELD-FISHER, T.A.,
C.S.M.	– Warrant Officer Class II J. W. JOHNSON,
C.Q.M.S.	– Company Quarter-Master Serjeant WALTER.

**'B' Company**

Commanding Officer	– Captain 65132 Geoffrey Price BOWRING, T.A.,
2 i/c	– Second Lieutenant 121467 John Manifold COURTENAY,
5 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant J. M. DIZER, T.A.,
6 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant 117839 George Frederick NELSON,
7 Platoon	– Warrant Officer Class III A. P. LANGLEY,
C.S.M.	– Warrant Officer Class II WORSFOLD,
C.Q.M.S.	– Company Quarter-Master-Sergeant THOMAS.

**'C' Company**

Commanding Officer	– Major 36469 John Austin BROWN, T.A.,
2 i/c	– Second Lieutenant D. P. HAMILTON,
8 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant Timothy Stoyin LUCAS,
9 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant 117859 Robert Willoughby John ALLEN,
10 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant F. B. BANBURY, T.A.,
C.S.M.	– Warrant Officer Class II AUSTIN,
C.Q.M.S.	– Company Quarter-Master Serjeant GRAINGER.

**'D' Company**

Commanding Officer	– Lieutenant 69442 Harry Victor Edwards JESSOP, T.A.,
2 i/c	– Second Lieutenant A. R. JABEZ-SMITH,
11 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant 117847 Raymond Wyndham SNOWDEN,
12 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant 117852 Everard Alexander Brennan BREWSTER,
13 Platoon	– Second Lieutenant M. H. GLAZIER,
C.S.M.	– Warrant Officer Class II GODDARD,
C.Q.M.S.	– Company Quarter-Master Serjeant PUTLAND.

The officers of the battalion when it landed in Calais illustrate the mixture of age, experience, and capability of the British Army at the time. Lieutenant Colonel ELLISON-MACARTNEY had been a Territorial Army officer his entire career and had no operational experience. To balance his lack of experience, the second-in-command, Major TIMPSON, was a pre-war Regular Army officer with the King's Royal Rifle Corps. He was born on 21 January 1901 and commissioned on 16 July 1920. He had seen active service in Palestine, and held an appointment as a Brigade Major, being promoted to the rank of Major on 1 August 1938, a Bank Holiday when several long serving officers received a promotion because of changes to the conditions of service of Army officers.

Captain PALMER had joined the battalion on 1 April 1928 from Cambridge University. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 1 April 1931, but he resigned his commission on 18 February 1935. He rejoined the Territorial Army on 8 March 1939, being promoted to the rank of Acting Captain on 16 February 1940.

Captain MUNBY, the officer commanding the Scout Platoon, was another Territorial Army officer who had joined from the Clifton College Officer Training Corps on 21 October 1936. He was promoted to the rank of Acting Captain only on 16 April 1940, i.e., shortly before the battalion sailed for Calais.

As a Motor Battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Q.V.R. had only three companies, each of three platoons. Captain BOWRING, who commanded 'B' Company, was a Territorial Army officer who joined the battalion on 15 May 1935 when he commissioned from Oxford University. Major BROWN, who joined the regiment on 12 November 1926, commanded 'C' Company and Lieutenant JESSOP, who had joined the battalion on 21 November 1936, commanded 'D' Company.

Second Lieutenants ALLEN, NELSON, SNOWDEN, and BREWSTER had all commissioned from the 167<sup>th</sup> Officer Cadet Training Unit on 11 February 1940. Second Lieutenant COURTENAY commissioned from 162<sup>nd</sup> Officer Cadet Training Unit on 24 February 1940. The most junior officers were commissioned as recently as 20 April 1940, these being Second Lieutenants HIGGINS and GLAZIER. For these young men, the fighting at Calais was to be their one, and only, experience of combat, coming so soon after their commissioning.

ELLISON-MacCARTNEY was first told to prepare for deployment to France at 19.00 hours on Tuesday, 21 May. Then the battalion was ordered to entrain at Ashford at 05.15 hours, and at 05.45 hours the next morning. There were no arrangements for the movement of the battalion's transport, so ELLISON-MacCARTNEY decided to leave it behind. The trains made their way to Dover, where there was light drizzle as they arrived. The distance boom of guns came from across the Channel added to the sense of foreboding. The battalion embarked on the 'City of Canterbury', which sailed at 11.00 hours. The City of Canterbury followed the Maid of Orleans on which the 3<sup>rd</sup> R.T.R. were embarked. The ship had to be unloaded manually and ELLISON-MacCARTNEY went to report to Colonel HOLLAND.

Colonel HOLLAND spoke with the War Office by telephone, to update them on the situation and to receive any orders. Reports were being received at Calais that enemy armoured fighting vehicles (tanks and armoured cars) had been seen in the direction of Boulogne, and south-west of Calais. Colonel HOLLAND was ordered by the War Office to evacuate 'useless mouths', i.e., those personnel who were not from the Arms, but from the Services element of the British Army. Those identified to remain, were accommodated at the Rest Camp, while those detailed to leave made their way to the port.

There were now an increasing number of refugees arriving in the Calais area, French soldiers, Belgian soldiers (unarmed), and French and Belgian civilians. Some were coming from the east, others from the west, all of them seeking a place of safety away from the German troops advancing through their countries.



Colonel HOLLAND ordered Lieutenant Colonel J. A. M. ELLISON-MacCARTNEY to deploy his battalion to address the following tasks:

1. To block all road approaches to Calais in co-operation with any troops found on the spot,
2. To patrol the beaches three miles to the east and west of Calais, as these might be good air landing grounds,
3. To guard the cable landing place at Sangatte, on the coast about four miles west of Calais,
4. To relieve Second Lieutenant ROBERTSON's platoon of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on the coastal road to Gravelines.

'C' Company disembarked first and went to cover the docks area. From here, it was sent to guard the roads towards Dunkirk. 'D' Company marched for three and half miles to cover the roads from Frethun, Guines and Ardres to the south of Calais. 'B' Company had an even longer march of six and half miles eastwards to Sangatte, with a platoon under command of Second Lieutenant DIZER going on further to secure the submarine cable to the United Kingdom. That first day in France, perhaps fortunately, the Q.V.R. did not encounter any German armed forces, but that was soon to change.

While he was waiting for the tanks to be unloaded and prepared for action, Lieutenant Colonel KELLER reported to Colonel HOLLAND, who ordered him to consolidate the regiment in the area of Baraques, but KELLER determined that this was not appropriate. One of the difficulties that KELLER faced was that he was refused entry into the Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) because he did not have a B.E.F. identity card. KELLER decided to return to the docks where he came upon Lieutenant General BROWNRIGG, together with Major General LOYD (the General Officer Commanding 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division). BROWNRIGG ordered KELLER to prepare his regiment for action and proceed into harbour at the Foret de Boulogne, about nineteen miles to the east of that port, and to report to Brigadier FOX-PITT who was in command of the Boulogne garrison.

That evening, a liaison officer from General Headquarters (G.H.Q.), British Expeditionary Force (Major BAILEY) arrived in Calais by car. BAILEY brought verbal orders from G.H.Q. for the 3<sup>rd</sup> R.T.R. to move immediately St. Omer, about twenty-miles west of Calais, to seize the crossings over the canals, in order to facilitate the evacuation of G.H.Q.. Clearly, this order contradicted that given by Lieutenant General BROWNRIGG, who had now left Calais to sail for Dover.

