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Author: Robert PALMER, M.A.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF:

30th INFANTRY BRIGADE (DEFENCE OF CALAIS)

CHAPTER 5

A concise history of the 30th 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 30th Infantry Brigade and the Defence of Calais

Chapter 5. The Final Day – Sunday 26 May 1940

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Author: Robert PALMER, M.A. (copyright held by author)
Assisted by: Stephen HEAL
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Chapter 5. The Final Day – Sunday, 26 May 1940

Brigadier NICHOLSON restated that there would be no evacuation, bringing home to the troops the fate they now faced. It was a warm, clear night. There were several warships off-shore, still giving hope to the troops that they may be evacuated. Many searchlight beams shone out across the English Channel. The town of Calais itself was on fire; red, orange, and yellow flames pierced the darkness of the night. To some soldiers present, the whole thing seemed unreal.

Under these circumstances, it is of little surprise that things did not go according to plan. Second Lieutenant A. R. J. JEBEZ-SMITH, a young officer with less than twelve month's service, withdrew from Bastion 2 with his men from the Q.V.R., including several wounded. The party lost their way in the sand and ended up in a French blockhouse. At dawn, they tried to regain British lines, but ended up being surrounded and surrendering to the Germans. Another group from the Q.V.R. also suffered a similar fate, wading through weeds and mud at the edge of the Bassin des Chasses. They became very tired, lost, and ended up making for Gravelines, where the Germans captured them, and they entered captivity.

At about 02.30 hours, the Royal Navy's Principal Sea Transport Officer, Commodore W. P. GANDELL arranged for a hospital ship (which was a small yacht) to enter the port. The Regimental Aid Post was set up in a tunnel at the harbour, and here Surgeon Lieutenant WAIND of the Royal Navy, Captain CAMERON, R.A.M.C. the Medical Officer of the 1st Rifle Brigade, and Lieutenant GARTSIDE, the Medical Officer of the Q.V.R., had undertaken wonderful work in the circumstances for most of the battle. They were aided by two Padres, Captains WINGFIELD-DIGBY and HURD, who had been intensely busy for the two days and nights. The hospital ships arrived within a few hours, and it left promptly, loaded with many severely wounded. One of those on board was forty-four-year-old 9657 Lieutenant Colonel Chandos Benedict Arden HOSKYNS, the commanding officer of the 1st Bn. The Rifle Brigade. He was to die in hospital in Winchester on 18 June 1940, and now lies in a grave in the north-western part of the churchyard at Chilworth (St. Denys) Churchyard near Southampton in Hampshire.

Shortly after midnight, Lieutenant Colonel MILLER from the 2nd K.R.R.C. managed to get through to the Citadel. The place was badly damaged, with several fires burning. The brigade staff were huddled together in slit trenches on an embankment within the Citadel. Brigadier NICHOLSON was not present, as he was out visiting the 1st Bn. The Rifle Brigade. They managed to meet up at 01.30 hours and exchanged reports. NICHOLSON confirmed his orders to MILLER, which included a 'last stand' to be made in the Citadel if necessary. At about 01.00 hours, two soldiers from the 2nd K.R.R.C. were dispatched to search the saloon car shot up on the bridge, namely 6843043 Rifleman Samuel HUMBY and 6845652 Rifleman Arthur EWINGS. They found it situated about one-hundred yards from a German position.

Inside the car, they found the body of a German pioneer officer. They located some papers and managed to make their way back to the British lines. It took them over two hours to make this journey. Both men, who came from London and Middlesex respectively, were awarded the Military Medal for their exploits.



This photograph is believed to be of the Pont Freycinet referred to above, with the German car mentioned in the reports visible in the right foreground. Courtesy of the German Federal Archive

At about 03.30 hours, the first rays of light appeared on the horizon. All the British and French troops left in Calais stood to. Commodore GANDELL sent a situation report when he left Calais at about 08.00 hours. It stated:

- 1. Enemy hold greater part of northern town. They have one heavy and one light battery and plenty of ammunition. Quay and harbour under machine gun fire.*
- 2. Our troops in Citadel and round Outer Port. Troops dead beat and no tanks left.*
- 3. Water essential also food if decided to reinforce.*
- 4. Naval gunfire and air attack effective for temporary neutralisation only of artillery fire.*
- 5. Very difficult to get anything in but personnel. Personnel not impossible provided air attack and gunfire can be neutralised. Any ships drawing more than 14 feet would be aground at low water.*
- 6. French troops at Fort Risban in large numbers but quite demoralised.*
- 7. Reinforcements would have to be on a considerable scale as present garrison dead beat. They will have to compete with artillery, machine guns and tanks. Enemy are definitely weary.*
- 8. Reinforcement probably a forlorn hope and liable to heavy casualties. Ships liable to be sunk alongside thus blocking quay.*
- 9. As regards evacuation we might get off a proportion amounting at a rough estimate to three hundred by ferrying troops off in boats to waiting trawlers and destroyers. This number might well be exceeded.*
- 10. A decision essential today as to either reinforcement or evacuation.*

If anything, this report understated the position at Calais. There were no tanks or anti-tank guns left, only a few anti-tank rifles. Ammunition was very short, but so was food and water. The troops were shattered however, their fate was determined already. Winston CHURCHILL only assumed the role as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence on 10 May 1940, just a couple of weeks ago. Anthony EDEN was at the time the Secretary of State for War, with General IRONSIDE the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (i.e., the professional head of the British Army). All three had determined that there was not to be any evacuation from Calais. The main reason for this difficult decision was the belief that the longer that Calais could hold out, the longer the time the rest of the British Expeditionary Force would have to be safely evacuated from Dunkirk. The fate of the gallant defenders of Calais was sealed: there would be no evacuation.

At first light, Major ALLAN and Lieutenant Colonel ELLISON-MACARTNEY, the commanding officers of the 1st Bn. The Rifle Brigade and the 1st Bn. The Queen Victoria's Rifles, walked together to the Gare Maritime. They found Captain COURTICE with about thirty-five Royal Marines digging in across the railway lines. Major HAMILTON-RUSSELL was responsible for the defence of the Gare Maritime. He placed most of these at the signal box and level crossing at the entrance to the railway station. In addition to men from his own company, Major HAMILTON-RUSSELL had Major BRUSH and Captain PEEL with about one-hundred and twenty men from other companies under command. Between the Bassin des Chasses and the sea, Major DEIGHTON led a mixed party of men from the Royal Artillery.

Lieutenant Philip PARDOE was with his platoon from 'C' Company, 2nd Bn. K.R.R.C., when he was woken up at first light. His company commander held a platoon commander's conference at 07.00 hours, and he ordered some minor amendments to their defensive positions. Lieutenant PARDOE found his men in great heart, with the exception of Serjeant CROWTHER who was now extremely tired, having not slept properly since they landed, and this level of exhaustion had robbed him of all his initiative.

The men of the 1st Rifle Brigade spent the night catching what sleep they could, and cleaning their weapons, and pooling the little ammunition available. R.S.M. GOODEY, Serjeant PHILLIPS and Serjeant WELCH, of the new skeleton Battalion Headquarters, eked out what was left for replenishment to the best effect. The last 3" mortar rounds were fired during the morning with accurate results by Second Lieutenant 'Sandy' SANDERSON, who had, with Corporal MORTON already done good execution with a salvaged machine gun. There were no other weapons to use.

The shelling started at 07.00 hours, and steadily grew in intensity. At about 08.00 hours, the white flag appeared at some French held trenches near Fort Risban. De LAMBERTYE was at the Gare Maritime visiting Major ALLAN at the time. He went at once to the French positions and persuaded them to take down the flag. The unfortunate French were then subject of a dive-bombing attack and accurate shelling, so after De LAMBERTYE had left, the white flag appeared again. Sadly, De LAMBERTYE, the Frenchman who so gallantly led the defence of his homeland, collapsed, and died with a suspected heart attack later that morning.

The German mortars began shelling the K.R.R.C. positions at exactly 08.00 hours, and the German infantry were seen trying to advance. Their progress was cautious and hesitant, but the shelling was taking a toll on the Riflemen. In the sector held by the 2nd K.R.R.C., Lieutenant Martin WILLAN was killed by shellfire, and a rifleman who ran to assist him also died. The rest of the men of the battalion sheltered awaiting the inevitable attack that would follow. By now there was a complete breakdown in wireless communication and moving around within Calais was a dangerous affair. During this period, German mortar bombs were landing around the battalion's positions, one landing alongside Major Jack POOLE, the Commanding Officer of 'B' Company, who was blown over a wall, although otherwise he was uninjured. Major Henry SCOTT, the second-in-command of 'B' Company, was mortally wounded by a mortar round at about the same time.

Major SCOTT was cared for by Rifleman Henry Lawrence DAWKINS, who was aged just twenty-one years. DAWKINS had joined the British Army in 1938, and he had tried to join the Essex Regiment, as his father had done, but at that time the Regiment was oversubscribed, therefore, DAWKINS joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps instead. At the beginning in 1940, he found himself serving in 'B' Company, 2nd Bn. K.R.R.C., under Major POOLE. Rifleman DAWKINS fought with his company on the western sector of the perimeter, until it was withdrawn back into the inner perimeter. DAWKINS was a practicing Roman Catholic, and found the killing of people, even in war, a challenging necessity of his chosen career.

As they fell back from house to house, they took cover in one house, Major Henry SCOTT ordered the men to tidy the house up, which DAWKINS found an odd request. It was actually a sound decision, as it focused the young soldiers on a task that distracted them from the realities of their situation. Major SCOTT was seen as a father figure to many of the young soldiers, and he was well respected. SCOTT then told the men to throw the rubbish outside, and as he opened the door for the rubbish to be thrown out, a mortar bomb landed nearby. SCOTT fell back into the room, mortally wounded. Major POOLE tried to arrange for an ambulance to take SCOTT to the Regimental Aid Post, and Second Lieutenant SCOTT brought up a truck to evacuate his namesake, but when it arrived, it was fired upon, and had to pull away. Major SCOTT could not now be evacuated, and he was slipping in and out of consciousness. Riflemen DAWKINS stayed with Major SCOTT, who in his lucid moments, told DAWKINS to leave him and save himself. SCOTT slowly passed away, and Rifleman DAWKINS remained with him until he had died. This is one of the many quiet, generally unrecorded, incidents of care and compassion that occur in the time of war.¹

The Germans launched their assault at 09.15 hours. Two German infantry companies attacked the lock gates at the Arriere Bassin, while a third attacked the signal box and level crossing. Another force was attacking the canal bridge, the scene of the most severe fighting the day before. The capture of the Pont Georges Cinq and Pont Freycinet were the clear objectives. Stuka dive bombers dived in threes to deliver accurate bombing on British and French positions.

¹ See: <http://www.wakefieldfhs.org.uk/blog/2018/01/henry-dawkins-a-riflemans-war-by-guestblogger-john-dawkins/>

German Stuka dive bombers came over in waves, from about 11.00 hours, so most men took to the cellars and other forms of shelters. Lieutenant PARDOE estimated that about one-hundred German aircraft participated in the attack, and by now, the R.A.F. presence over Calais had disappeared, leaving the Germans with air superiority over the town. To the troops, it appeared that the R.A.F. had withdrawn, but the reality was that the R.A.F. was still operating over the French ports from the U.K., but they had taken major losses, and they had insufficient aircraft available to provide adequate air cover over Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk, the latter now being the priority. The Stukas brought to the conflict an added factor of fear by their tactics. They would fly around, and then, one-by-one, they would detach themselves from the main formation and dive vertically towards their target. They had sirens fitted, which had a paralysing effect on many men, and each soldier feared that the Stuka appeared to be heading for them personally. The Stuka would release their bombs from a height of only a few hundred feet, and then pull out over the troops. Up to four bombs would head down, with the explosions throwing up clouds of debris and dust that hung in the air, choking the men on the ground. Although the bombardment seemed to last for ever, it was in fact over after about half-an-hour.

The German attack from the west was concentrated on the high ground held by the 2nd K.R.R.C.. Men from the Headquarter Platoon were sent up to support the defenders, but they were steadily overwhelmed. The French positions were overrun, and a French soldier ran forward with a white flag. 6845980 Lance Corporal George Bushell MARKS shot this Frenchman, but then he and 6845410 Corporal Charles Aylmer BOOTH were blown up. Lance Corporal MARKS died instantly, but Corporal BOOTH was captured and died in a German hospital in Boulogne on 28 May. They were close friends in peacetime and had fought well together. The body of twenty-two-year-old Lance Corporal MARKS was never recovered, so he is commemorated on the Dunkirk Memorial while twenty-eight-year-old Corporal BOOTH lies in the Boulogne Eastern Cemetery. The Riflemen were overrun, with many taken prisoner and some making it back to the docks where the survivors congregated.

Mortar fire from the Germans was accurate and sustained all morning, plus artillery guns were finding their range on the roadblocks. Bastion 11 was hit especially hard. The French commander de la BLANCHARDIERE lost three officers and many men killed, but they held on. Major, The Lord CROMWELL, was defending the Place Richelieu, just over the Pont Freycinet. He was firing a Bren gun and helping to drive the Germans back. CROMWELL was hit three times by a sniper, being wounded each time. He received wounds in both arms and the head, the latter affecting his sight. By 11.30 hours, there was only Lord CROMWELL and two soldiers left alive at the roadblock, so he decided there was no alternative but to fall back towards the harbour.

The situation in Calais was now a series of isolated, individual actions involving small groups of men, fighting on their own initiative, often unaware of what was happening only yards away from them on either side in the rubble of the town. The burning oil tanks filled the air with a thick, acrid black smoke. Because of the breakdown in communications, there was no coordination, but both British and French soldiers fought on, as the Germans increased their stranglehold on Calais.

At the corner of Rue Edison and opposite the Pont Feycinet, Captain 41083 Lionel Claude BOWER was defending a barricade constructed of vehicles and sandbags. The street was raked by German machine gun fire, increasingly making the location untenable. BOWER fell at this roadblock, having been shot dead. He is commemorated on a Special Memorial at Plot J, Grave 18 in the Calais Southern Cemetery.

6844118 Rifleman Alfred MATTHEWS drove a truck across the open street, as it was too dangerous to run up. He backed into position to collect Captain BOWER, but he found him to be dead. He did collect however, some other gravely wounded men and brought them to safety. For this deed, Rifleman MATTHEWS, who came from London N.15 was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on 20 September 1945 when the full nature of his actions came to light.

At about 10.00 hours, a combined armoured and infantry attack was made across the Pont Faidherbe. They were met by Captain DUNCANSON and 6843701 Lance Corporal D. PICKETT. With just one Bren gun and one anti-tank rifle, they successfully repelled the Germans who withdrew having suffered at least six men killed. Both DUNCANSON and PICKETT were already wounded themselves. The platoon commanded by twenty-one-year-old 76102 Second Lieutenant Richard Patrick WARRE was forced to leave their positions for a short time because of the intense shellfire. As soon as the shelling stopped, they re-occupied them. Sadly, Second Lieutenant WARRE was killed shortly afterwards. He came from Kensington in London, and is buried in Plot K, Grave 22 of the Calais Southern Cemetery.

The barricades were beginning to give under the intense pressure. After Captain BOWER was killed, the Germans managed to cross the Pont Freycinet. A group of soldiers under the command of 95853 Lieutenant Albert John PERKINS, of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, who was attached to the 2nd K.R.R.C. defended the buildings overlooking the bridge. His party comprised drivers and ordnance corps personnel. The Germans literally crushed the buildings the British soldiers were defending. Lieutenant PERKINS was buried under a lot of rubble and died. His body was recovered later, and he now lies in Plot L, Grave 4 of the Calais Southern Cemetery.

Lieutenant Colonel MILLER decided to withdraw the remains of his battalion, the 2nd K. R.R.C., back to Calais-Nord to join up with the Rifle Brigade. Captain RADCLIFFE volunteered to remain in command of the troops in Bastion 11 with about eighty Riflemen and some French soldiers. This exposed position was the key to allow the rest of the battalion to withdraw safely.

The defence of this position illustrated the rapport between the British and French soldiers, and they fought together, side-by-side, with no distinction over their country of origin. The French officers, Capitaine de la BLANCHARDIERE and Capitaine de METZ fought bravely. At about 07.00 am, de METZ was killed and de la BLANCHARDIERE seriously injured. A Dominican fighting with the French, Pierre NIELLY, took command of the French troops, but he was also hit in the chest and wounded.

Bastion 11 was surrounded at about 11.00 hours, by which time hardly any soldiers, French or British, were left standing and unwounded. Their ammunition was exhausted, and they could no longer resist the German troops as they stormed the Bastion. Only seventeen French soldiers and sailors remained alive, and de la BLANCHARDIERE made the understatement: *"We have fought for the honour of France."*² Only thirty of the original eighty riflemen from the 2nd K.R.R.C. were left standing. Captain RADCLIFFE was then confronted by an angry German officer, who made a cut-throat gesture at RADCLIFFE. RADCLIFFE just laughed at him. One of his soldiers was later awarded the Military Medal. 6844817 Corporal Thomas Henry McBRIDE was awarded the decoration on 20 September 1945 for his actions at Bastion 11. He commanded one of the sections in the position for two days under heavy artillery and mortar attack. At one stage, he went two-hundred yards out under fire to collect a wounded man and bring him back to safety.

'C' Company of the 2nd K.R.R.C. managed to withdraw to a line from Fort Risban to the corner of Place d'Armes. 'B' Company were under such sustained assault, that the message to withdraw did not reach them. Lieutenant Colonel MILLER went off with twenty-year-old 95645 Second Lieutenant Richard Oswald SCOTT from 'B' Company who was with MILLER. They found Major POOLE near the canal. As SCOTT reached the company headquarters, he was shot dead by a sniper. He is buried in Plot K, Grave 25 of the Calais Southern Cemetery.

'B' Company was in a very dangerous place along the line of the canal. The area was swept by machine gun fire and accurate mortar fire. 77674 Second Lieutenant Edward Grismond Beaumont DAVIES-SCOURFIELD from Steyning in Sussex was a platoon commander. He was hit three times; once in the head, another in the arm and a third in the body. Despite being injured, DAVIES-SCOURFIELD retained command of his beleaguered platoon. He steadily lost consciousness. When he came to, it was dark and raining. He crawled into a hut and passed out again. He was woken by a German soldier who realised how badly injured he was and treated him. DAVIES-SCOURFIELD remained in captivity until May 1945, despite many escape attempts during his captivity, including from Colditz. For his gallant and distinguished services at Calais, DAVIES-SCOURFIELD was awarded the Military Cross on 20 September 1945. He survived the war and eventually retired from the Army in 1973 in the rank of Brigadier.

The Germans were still concerned by the fanatical resistance they were still facing, and the casualties they were suffering. To many, this was the fiercest fighting they had been involved in while serving with the German Army. At about 12.40 hours, GUDERIAN visited the front line, and seriously considered calling the attack off and leaving Calais to the then invincible Luftwaffe. Lieutenant General SCHAAL, the General Officer Commanding the 10th Panzer Division, remained confident that defenders of Calais would soon crack, and he was to be proved right.

² De le BLANCHARDIERE continued to fight for his country, later joining the French Resistance. He was sadly to die in the Mauthausen Concentration Camp following his torture.

The Royal Artillery soldiers were slowly being forced back, and the Q.V.R. were driven out of the Cellulose Factory. The Royal Marines under Captain COURTICE set up their Vickers heavy machine gun ready to repulse the Germans. At about 08.00 hours, on Sunday morning, Colour Sergeant REID, told his troops that he had made a cup of tea for them. As he did so, a 'ping' was heard as a sniper's bullet hit the Vickers machine gun, where until a few seconds earlier, the gun crew were sitting. On Monday morning, once he had become a prisoner of war, one of the gun crew realised that he had been hit in the leg by a piece of the bullet. Then Lieutenant SCOTT came and told the crews to stretch their legs after being in their position for three days. The Marines were told to report to Sergeant MITCHELL at the railway station, which they found to be full of French soldiers. Then a mortar round fell onto the station, and where two soldiers were seated, there was not just bits of uniform and debris. They found Sergeant MITCHELL, but he became involved in helping wounded soldiers onto a ship, and he sailed with it. The Marines were then asked to identify the 'body' of Lieutenant SCOTT, their machine gun officer. The Marines took the officer's dog tags and pay book, and later gave them to Colour Sergeant REID. Lieutenant SCOTT, however, was not dead, as later that day, two German soldiers came across him, and he was taken into hospital and survived the war in a prisoner of war camp. The remaining Royal Marines congregated on a sand hill on the Dunkirk side of the town, and it was here that they eventually surrendered.

For the 1st Rifle Brigade, the fires and smoke, plus fallen masonry and other debris, made movement difficult, as did the positions on the sand dunes themselves. From 13.00 hours, the situation in the 1st Rifle Brigade sector deteriorated under accurate and heavy German artillery and mortar fire. Individual incidents include Second Lieutenant ROLT's platoon, and that of P.S.M. James EASEN fighting with ferocity right up to the end, with P.S.M. EASEN later dying of his wounds.

At about 13.30 hours, forty-year-old Major 22389 Arthur Gustavus Lindsey HAMILTON-RUSSELL was very seriously wounded. He had been attempting to gain observation from an exposed point, and having been engaged in four days of hard fighting, he was mortally wounded. HAMILTON-RUSSELL was placed aboard a small ship in the harbour and taken back to Dover, where he died. He is buried in the north part of the Burwarton (St. Lawrence) Old Churchyard. HAMILTON-RUSSELL was the son of the Honourable Claud Eustace HAMILTON-RUSSELL, J.P. D.L.. Three of his cousins, the sons of the Gustavus William HAMILTON-RUSSELL, J.P., D.L., Ninth Viscount BOYNE were to die during the war, namely:

- 41136 Lieutenant, The Honourable Gustavus Lascelles HAMILTON-RUSSELL, killed in action on 2 June 1940 aged thirty-three years,
- 94896 Captain, The Honourable Desmond Claud HAMILTON-RUSSELL, killed in action on 19 April 1943 aged twenty-five years,
- 52641 Major, The Honourable John HAMILTON-RUSSELL, killed in action on 19 August 1943 aged thirty-two years.

Lieutenant, The Honourable Gustavus Lascelles HAMILTON-RUSSELL lies alongside his cousin in the Burwarton (St. Lawrence) Old Churchyard. A heavy sacrifice for one family; but sadly, not a unique occurrence in the First or Second World War.

Other actions include that of the Brigade Staff Captain, 725 Major John Henry COXWELL-ROGERS, who was killed on the sand dunes while firing a Bren gun at Germans on the beach behind his position. Thirty-nine-year-old Major COXWELL-ROGERS was a Regular officer in the 3rd Carabiniers (Prince of Wales's Dragoon Guards) and he was the son of Henry Annesley and Mary Georgina COXWELL-ROGERS of Rye, Sussex. He lies buried in Plot P, Grave 7 of the Calais Southern Cemetery.

Throughout the battle, Lieutenant MILLETT of the Royal Corps of Signals, with his Brigade H.Q. Signals Section, had worked hard to maintain communications with England. The last message from the British Troops in Calais was sent at about 13.56 hours. It read: *'Here is Lieutenant MILLETT, Signal Officer, I have an emergency call for you. Tell Dover to shell between Fort 888793 to Brewery 880788. Very urgent am being shelled.'* This was a request for the Royal Navy, with MILLETT mistaking the Cellulose Factory for a brewery. Just as he was about to destroy his wireless equipment, German shelling did that for him.

77699 Second Lieutenant Anthony Peter Roylance ROLT from Oxford typified the spirit of many of the defenders. Aged just twenty-one years at the time of serving in Calais, the Eton educated son of an Army officer, ROLT was serving with the 1st Bn. The Rifle Brigade. He had commanded the carrier section of the battalion with some distinction already. ROLT was at this time in charge of a group of about twenty men from the Rifle Brigade and Q.V.R., located at a road junction near the Bastion de l'Estran.

The Germans reached this road junction, so ROLT ordered a bayonet charge that drove the Germans back. Shortly afterwards, he surrendered to the Germans and handed over his two empty revolvers. He became a prisoner of war, later serving with many colleagues at Colditz. He was awarded the Military Cross on 20 September 1945, for his gallant and distinguished services at Calais. In November of that year, he was awarded a Bar to the Military Cross for his conduct whilst in captivity. After the war, Tony ROLT left the Army and became a successful racing driver, winning the 1953 Le Mans 24-hour race.

Major BRUSH and his company kept fighting in the sand dunes around the Bastion de l'Estran. The Germans broke through to his rear, but his company fought on. Captain COGHILL was forced to surrender the Bastion de l'Estran at about 15.30 hours, but the others fought on. 6907843 Rifleman Frederick 'Don' GURR, from Forest Row in Sussex, fought on until his leg was shattered.

6913400 Lance Corporal M. J. MURPHY discovered an old Lewis gun and got it back into working order. With Major BRUSH was 44341 Captain Peter PEEL from Wrexham, and 95538 Second Lieutenant John Freville Henry SURTEES from Littlestone in Kent. Both were wounded in the legs and were unable to move, however, both kept up firing at the Germans until they were inevitably taken prisoner. Twenty-six-year-old 55992 Lieutenant Jerome 'Jerry' Pender DUNCANSON stood up to continue firing at the Germans in the sand dunes, only to be seriously wounded as a result. He died two days later, and is buried in Plot N, Grave 10 of the Calais Southern Cemetery. For his gallant and distinguished services at Calais, he was Mentioned in Dispatches on 20 September 1945.

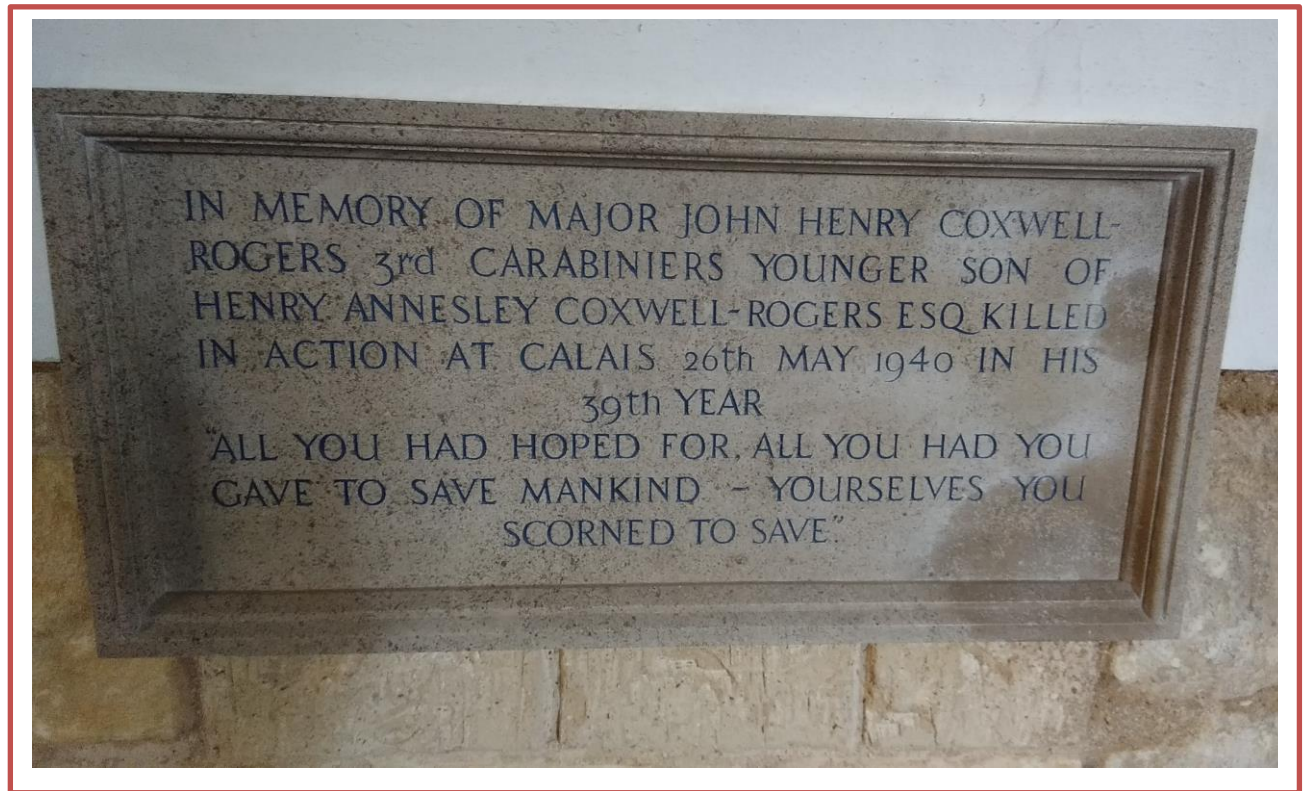
After the Germans took the Bastion de l'Estran, from where they dominated the ground around Bastion 1 and the Gare Maritime. This was the ending for the men of the Rifle Brigade, Q.V.R. and Royal Marines defending this station, they had no choice but to surrender. At about the same time, the Germans surrounded the Citadel. They brought up tanks and the end was now inevitable. The defenders had simply run out of men, ammunition, and were now absolutely exhausted. The Germans had little opposition when they entered the Citadel. The French soldiers started surrendering, and NICHOLSON was made aware that Germans were inside the Citadel. With a resigned expression on his face, Brigadier NICHOLSON and Colonel HOLLAND emerged from their headquarters with their hands up.

The end of the hostilities at Calais left confusion and many individual officers and men desperate to escape. 67185 Lieutenant Norman Lewis PHILIPS, aged twenty-four years, hid with some men from various units. At dark, he crept out with Corporal JONES and attempted to swim across the Bassin Carnot. German soldiers spotted them and opened fire. PHILIPS was hit, but he was pulled ashore. He did not survive his injuries and died on 28 May. He is buried in Plot J, Grave 17 of the Calais Southern Cemetery. Norman PHILIPS was the son of Brigadier-General L. F. PHILIPS, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O., and was married to Elizabeth.

By 16.00 hours, organised resistance was collapsing rapidly. Lieutenant Colonel MILLER gave the order *'Every man for himself'*. He advised his men to break up into small groups and to try to escape as best they could. Lieutenant PARDOE took a small group and considered where to make for. They found that German troops were now stationed on any route out of the town, so they took shelter in a house to await darkness to make an attempt to get away. By now, German troops were moving from house to house, as they conducted a methodical search of the town for any remaining British or French soldiers. Their time came, and Lieutenant PARDOE heard footsteps on the floorboards below, so to avoid a grenade being thrown in the room, he stepped out and surrendered.

'B' Company of the Q.V.R. led by Captain Geoffrey Price BOWRING tried to escape to Dunkirk. They sought shelter in the basement of a school, only to find German soldiers all around them. At about 17.00 hours, they accepted the inevitable and surrendered. They had been in constant action since the early morning on 24 May.

At 19.56 hours, a message was transmitted from Dover. It read, *'To O.C. Troops Calais. From Secretary of State. Am filled with admiration for your magnificent fight which is worthy of the highest tradition of the British Army'*. When it was sent, there was no-one in Calais able to receive it, and it was too late to make any difference. In any case, what was required was action, not words.





Bundesarchiv Bild 1.48.107 I.N.47.18

Dead British soldiers lying next to a 30 cwt British truck, taken at 13.30 hours on the 27 May 1940.

Courtesy of the German Federal Archive.