

## 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern) Infantry Division <sup>(1)</sup>

Divisional Headquarters, 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern) Infantry Division & Employment Platoon

### 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade <sup>(2)</sup>

Headquarters, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

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

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

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

### 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade <sup>(3)</sup>

Headquarters, 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment)

6<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

7<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment

### 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade <sup>(4)</sup>

Headquarters, 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

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

6<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment

7<sup>th</sup> (Cinque Ports) Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment

### Divisional Troops

*Headquarters, 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern) Divisional Royal Artillery <sup>(6)</sup>*

*113<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery*

*114<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery*

*118<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery*

Headquarters, 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern) Divisional Royal Engineers <sup>(7)</sup>

262<sup>nd</sup> Field Company, Royal Engineers

263<sup>rd</sup> Field Company, Royal Engineers

264<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Engineers

265<sup>th</sup> Field Park Company, Royal Engineers

Detachment, 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern) Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals <sup>(8)</sup>

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

xxx Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps (8)

xx Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps (8)

Detachment, 12<sup>th</sup> (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 44<sup>th</sup> (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 the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1939, until which the units were administered by the parent division, although he had been appointed to command the division on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1939. See:  
<http://www.britishmilitaryhistory.co.uk/documents.php?aid=11&nid=2&start=0>  
The division arrived in France on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 the 20<sup>th</sup> May, the S.S. Totenkopf Motorised Division came up on the left of the 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division to further encircle Arras. After destroying the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, the 8<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division went on to Hesdin and Montreuil. The 6<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division headed for Doullens. Here they met the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) and 6<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. At about 12.00 midday on the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division moved on Albert, where it found the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Royal Sussex Regiment, with about seventy men escaping. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division reached Abbeville on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1940, effectively isolating the B.E.F. and French 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Armies. The three battalions of the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade fought against the Germans at Abbeville before evacuating the town. The remains of the division were evacuated from St. Nazaire on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1940. On its return to the U.K., the division was broken up and officially disbanded on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1940.
2. A Second Line Territorial Army brigade, it was commanded from the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1939 until the 28<sup>th</sup> 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 the 13<sup>th</sup> May when Brigadier V. L. De CORDOVA assumed command. The brigade was deployed to Abbeville, where at about 16.00 hours on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1940, units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panzer Division reached them and started to attack. On its return to the U.K. on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1940, the brigade was reconstituted. It joined the 1<sup>st</sup> London Division on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1940. On the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1940, it was redesignated as the 169<sup>th</sup> (London) Brigade, as part of the 56<sup>th</sup> (London) Division. The brigade went with the division to the Middle East and fought later 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 the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1940, the brigade was overrun by German troops, with only details escaping to return to the U.K.. On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1940, it was reconstituted with the same units. The brigade passed through many commands until it joined the newly formed 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the U.K. on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1942. The brigade served with the 78<sup>th</sup> 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. On its return from France, this formation became an independent brigade upon the disbandment of the division. On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1941, it was redesignated as the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Support Group of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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