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<td>Capt. (Late Chaplain 4th Class)</td>
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1/8th Bn. The Lancashire Fusiliers.

(Date of Despatch)
9th May, 1940

10th May, 1940. Only hrs Air raid warning "Red" received. German planes seen approaching from Belgium. AA. fire heard from direction of N. AAWD. Plan by on the advance into Belgium and the setting of the N. DITE. Learned from wireless reports that both Holland and Belgium had been invaded by Germany. Day spent in preparation for the advance. Leading troops of 2 Div passed through area at 1200 hrs. 2330 hrs at night party left with Bde. No. 2 Coy. Crossing the frontier at 2415 hrs.

11th May, 1940

8 L.T. crossed start line which was the frontier at 0600 hrs. Marching personnel in Bn. D.L.I. G.S. vehicles, heavy BRENNER, MIERLING, ANFLECK, AHM, BRENNER, BAG. DUFFIELD, WHITE, YOUNGER, 1 Bn. on N. DITE about 3 miles N. of Bailleul. 1 Bn. at this time was acting as vanguard to 3 Div so 1 Bn. was deployed on a long front with all Coy in line, leaving 5th Coy who was relieving an outpost line on the high ground E. of the N. DITE. In spent the remainder of the day improving some in timbered area constructed by the Belgians.

12th May, 1940

Contact was made by 2nd Coy with 6 L.T. on our left who had arrived during the night. Owing to further arrival of our own troops the Bn. was able to shorten its front considerably, establishing at Bailleul and holding in depth. A front of about 1,500 yds with the D.L.I. on our left and the B. L.I. on our right. 2 Coy sent into Bde. reserve. Final positions of Coy were: 1st Coy at Somme, 2nd Coy on D.L.I.'s left in rather exposed position. 3rd Coy behind, 4th and 5th Coy still in outpost positions. Information concerning the situation in front was very obscure though the roads were full of refugees amongst whom were quite a number of Belgian troops. Some minor bridges were blown up in this area during the day. No contact was made with enemy. Instructions were received in the evening to stand to the main bridge to Bailleul and to blow it if necessary and to cross. All transport was sent back to Bailleul. Considerable air activity.

13th May, 1940

Digging and wiring continued. Very little air activity, French A.T. is seen going forward. Still no information about the enemy. Some Belgian troops seen withdrawing, presumably to re-form on N. side of Brussels. Only one bridge left intact in Bailleul.

14th May, 1940

Instructions received in early morning to blow remaining bridge which was done. 1st Coy were withdrawn from their outposts and further instructions were received to send a Pl. to observe any enemy movement from the high ground on our left flank. Pl. under 1st Irregular was sent out. About 2000 hrs enemy Artillery opened fire, and there was much ranging fire on both sides. Outpost Pl. withdrawn and reported enemy armoured and Artillery troops advancing from N.W. About 2000 hrs enemy launched attack in an attempt to cross the river. The Pl. put down defensive fire and the attack was repulsed by 7th L.G. on fixed lines. Major D.G.F. Staines, Worcestershire Regt., took over command of the Bn.

15th May, 1940

One Pl. of 2nd Coy were sent down in the early morning to assist 5th Coy, as it was thought that enemy elements were infiltrating into the villages. Report from 6th Coy that Germans had actually crossed the River but had been driven back by heavy N. G. There was no attack on the in front during the day but the French on our right and the L.I. on our left were having a bad time of it. Information received that the enemy had broken through on the D.L.I. and 5th Coy were sent in, N.W. of Bailleul, to hold the high ground and form a defensive flank. On arrival it was learned that the D.L.I. had launched a counter attack which was successful. The Coy was withdrawn less one Pl. taking up its old position. Shelling continued during the day and woods and buildings in the N. sector were set on fire. It was learned that the enemy had put in an attack between the French and the British. As the French had already left line of the DITE.
15th May, 1940

The Pl. found itself very short of ammunition, but it was learnt during the morning that there were about 6000 rounds on the other side of the river. J/l Dr. Crasland, a Carrier Officer, took a party of men and managed to recover it. The enemy did not appear until the afternoon and did not attack. There was slight aerial activity, and three of our recce planes were seen to be brought down. "J" Coy shot a parasolite in uniform. There was sniping from the rear, but French stragglers passed through on our right. They attributed the break-through to the enemy's use of five-bangers. At 1730 hrs orders were received to once again withdraw. One Pl. of "C" Coy and the Carrier Pl. were left to cover our withdrawal which they did without loss, in spite of heavy enemy fire. The Pl. reached the F.R. at FORT DE SCHOF where in the darkness men and vehicles got all mixed up together, and many got lost owing to the inaccuracy of the maps.

17th May, 1940

The Pl finally arrived at BERGENHEIM having covered about 75 miles. The Pl. had a good meal and rest and about 1200 hrs the Pl. proceeded to GROENHOUT past snipers being heavily shelled on road. The Pl. finally reached GROENHOUT and went into billets for night's rest.

18th May, 1940

At 0500 hrs orders were received to take up positions on the river RHONE. The Pl. found itself in 3rd reserve and was deployed in and around a small village near the main BRIGADE's road. One interesting incident has since come to light: an ex-civilian who was well known to the Pl. and who was stationed with a small unit of 21st Pl. was reported to have volunteered to destroy it. 30 pl. were fired from a distance of 50 yds, 37 hits were registered and the bridge was demolished. The rest of the day was quiet and no contact was made with the enemy.

19th May, 1940

About 1800 hrs Coy was concentrated at Pl. H.Q. about GROENHOUT. At 0200 hrs shelling was heard to our front, the Pl. withdrew by T.O.P. & Carrier Pl., which by now had been Brigaded, being left behind as rear guards. During the move we were very considerably hampered by the enemy and a certain amount of looting, in consequence of which many vehicles got detached from the column. In addition we had to contend with the fact that at least 3 divisions were moving down the same road.

The Pl. eventually arrived at RAVENHOUT, via ENNEZET. The enemy had a heavy line of fire to direct the Pl. to the rear as it had been practically raked to the ground by enemy bombing. On arrival at RAVENHOUT, the Pl. went into billets. Coy cleaned up generally, both weapons and personnel, and retired for a good night's sleep, their first since going into Belgium. The Transport lines were broken during the evening, but nothing was hit.

Orders were received that we were to relieved a Pl. of the Harwichshire Regt. on the RHINE BRIDGE. The C.O., and all Coy Commanders were ordered to receive a peace with Brigadier from the A.D.H.Q., but owing to the rapid advance of the enemy the recce, was impossible. The Pl. moved up that evening by road to GERWALD on the river bank expecting to be shelled any minute but we were fortunate and received no casualties. The Pl. was in position by 2130 hrs, the dispositions being: "B" Coy in GERWALD with the Norfolk on their left; "A" Coy on the right; "C" Coy about 100 yds in rear of "B" and "C" behind "A". H.Q. was behind GERWALD on the main Br. ADELAIDE-PORTLAND road.

21st May, 1940

Enemy attacked at 0445 hrs, the A.D.H.Q. being fired by the Norfolk on our left. Both Pl. were subjected throughout the day to heavy fire, both from mortars and light guns. About 0610 hrs one Coy of the Norfolk were seen advancing to reinforce their Pl. Forword Coy.
22nd May 1940

Things were quiet in the morning and both companies carried out improvements and repairs to their positions. Later, shelling and mortar fire continued and there were 50 casualties at 1100 h. At 1500 hrs, the 1st Pln. were ordered to withdraw to be in action on the "Front" Line. They got out safely and marched the 11 miles back to the Frontier. For once, the roads were not heavily congested.

23rd May 1940

On arrival at Balclutha, the 1st Pln. marched to Blackwood, then the Frontier. This was only a temporary position and during the afternoon and evening, we were relieved by the French Bn. of Dussurs. About 2000 hrs the 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action about 3 miles North of the Vieux Canol de la Ronce. On the morning of the 24th May, the 1st Pln. were in position at Balclutha to be in action about 3 miles South of the Ronce. We were ordered to be in action about 3 miles North of the Ronce.

24th May 1940

Orders were received to be prepared to take up a position at CHERT - ST MAUDE and the 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 1st Pln. were ordered to go to the position. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk.

25th May 1940

Orders were received to be prepared to take up a position at CHERT - ST MAUDE and the 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 1st Pln. were ordered to go to the position. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk.

26th May 1940

Orders were received to be prepared to take up a position at CHERT - ST MAUDE and the 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 1st Pln. were ordered to go to the position. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The 2nd Pln. were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk. The situation in front appeared to be untenable, as no detailed reports, were possible, and consequently, we were ordered to be in action immediately to help the Norfolk.
27th May 1940

From 0500 hrs to 0800 hrs the Bn reported frequently on progress of the enemy. All line communications had been by now owing to heavy shelling. Most C Coy had got out from H.Q. by 0745 hrs but they were still holding on. At 0755 hrs Lieut Col Stagmar reported that he was cut off from all C Coy except one. At 0815 hrs enemy tanks were seen on the aerodrome at Bde. H.Q. which was situated at Ettelbruck. Fire was brought to bear on them by 11 FZ of GR Coy which was acting as Bde. Guard, but as they were 600 yards away, no results could be seen. Shortly afterwards enemy troops carrying aircraft landed on the aerodrome and machine gun fire was opened on Bde. H.Q. 0930 hrs Bde. H.Q. was withdrawn to Leudens. The Bde Guard being left behind plus a small percentage of the H.Q. Coy under Capt. Churchill, 2nd Hampshire, and a few stragglers, at 1210 hrs Major Dalton, the adjutant, reported that Bn H.Q. had been set on fire and they had to move to another house. Shortly afterwards he reported that GR H.Q. was also on fire and that the H.Q. was only hanging on with difficulty. From this moment no further messages were received from the Bde. H.Q. could Bn get in touch with them. It was clear by now that the Bn was surrounded and it was decided by the Bde Commander that it was too dangerous to attempt a daylight withdrawal. A message was sent through that the Bn was to withdraw that night, but as the Bde. H.Q. was too far away the message had not been heard of above, it is presumed the order never got through. Meanwhile the detachment at the old Bde. H.Q. at Ettelbruck, were heavily embattled with enemy motorised units. There were about 40 men there all told. Luckily Capt. Churchill had salvaged a H.Q. which caused many casualties. The enemy were held off until about 2220 hrs when orders to withdraw were given by Capt. Churchill. BATTLES was given as 115. 70 men managed to escape under cover of the smoke from enemy mortar fire, but in the confusion of crossing the river at Leudens, the party got very much split up.

28th May 1940

Most of them managed to make their way back to Dunkirk by way of Rotterdam. It was now realised that the Bde. H.Q. was in serious danger. Bde. H.Q. was eventually found at Rotterdam where 9 officers and 23 O.N.S of the Bde. were discovered, amongst them was 2nd Lieut. L.T. Drews. 1st/7th Mbs. The Lancashire Fusiliers.

The Bde. had orders to defend the "Bass ditch" - the canal about 1 mile from the coast, but owing to the shortage of men it was realised that this would be impossible.

29th May 1940

Bde. H.Q. retained an established and skirmishing made to the beach, remnants of Brights Beach on a beach holiday. It packed line sardines and the sea filled with ships of every shape and size. The whole area of the beaches were dotted with all kinds of equipment, cars and vehicles. DUNKER was frequently bombed and soon all tanks and part of the town was shelled, spreading a huge pall of smoke over the sky.

30th May 1940

The day was spent in awaiting orders to embark and also trying to collect salvage, but as the French were looking left and right, this was very difficult. The numbers of the Bde. embarked that night, receiving attention from enemy ships mainly directed against the male. The Div arrived in England on the 1st May.
Lt.-Col. D.J.P. Stephenson
Major A.H. Gardiner
Maj. R.G. Barton, Adjutant
Capt. A.G. Sowerby
Capt. F.C.R. Lockyer
Capt. H.G. Haig
Capt. A.J. Moon
Capt. E.G.W. Styles
Liet. A.L. Martin
2/Lt. G.G. Holden
2/Lt. J.H. Blayney
2/Lt. M.G. Hard
2/Lt. P.D. Verity
2/Lt. A.A. Brown
2/Lt. L.T. Carmichael
2/Lt. G.G. Taylor
2/Lt. A.J. Youceon
2/Lt. D.R. Smith
2/Lt. P.P. Henty
2/Lt. S.M. Hummery
2/Lt. J.E. Broadhead
2/Lt. C.T. Walton
2/Lt. N.G. Clarke
2/Lt. C.J. Wilson
2/Lt. J.J. Crossland
Lt. & Q.M. J.L. Christie

ATTACHED:
Rev. W.J. Passmore, R.A. Ch.D.
Liet. W. Sillar, A.A.M.C.

With unit,
Missing.