

W A R D I A R Y - of 5th Bn. The K.O.S.Borderers
for June, 1940.

In Lieu of A.F.R. 2118

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and References to Appendices
Kingsclere	1	0900	The main event of the day was a practice embussing scheme for the Bn. The difficulty of communications is being eased by sending cycle orderlies out to warn coys. It is found that this works more certainly than depending merely on Line. Five 39-seater buses were allotted to each rifle coy. Bicycles were taken in the personnel buses. The column had plenty time to pass the S.P. two miles off at 1030 hrs. The Transport followed behind at an interval - no Bn. transport moved in the personnel column. All men were debussed again by 1258 hrs. In the afternoon the Brigadier paid us a visit.	
Imber	2	1000	The Quartermaster and 2/Lt. K.M. McCall arrive at Imber to take over our camp for the trench schemes on 6/12 June.	
Kingsclere	3	0530	The Mobile pls. of all coys. were turned out for practice.	
"	4	--	This was the date when the Division was to be ready for war. And though for the last few days we have been GHQ. First Line Home Defence, and prepared to move to Aldershot; yet it was today we received notice to mobilize for a move overseas by 9 June. This necessitates some hectic work. We have 180 unfit category men still hanging round, a great many men lack respirators and rifles. Ammunition is short. Two carriers, two trucks and three M/C. need replacement. Men's (and officers') kits requiring cutting down to war scales. And we are nine officers short, in spite of repeated urgent application to the Depot. 130 O.Rs. are drafted down from the depot as re-placement and First Line Reserve. They need to be split up to companies and equipped. A new tactical movement table for an embussed column is drawn out by Division. The details will be found at Appendix 1. This news, of course, cancels the camp at Imber and we have been promised to remain in these billets till we move.	App. 1.
"	5		Mobilization now more or less cuts out any training. The Quartermaster is at work all day, and gets another officer to help. He has to issue most of the G.1098 stores and draw in all surplus stuff. It is difficult to find the proper distribution of tools and stores in H.Q. Coy. The War news to-day tells of a great German push on the Somme front especially on the lower Somme. This makes thoughts of immediate invasion seem rather pale. All the B.E.F. are now evacuated from Dunkirk. Our 1st Bn. would appear to have come off with fairly light casualties.	
"	6		A note to be mobilized and ready to move by tomorrow midnight, necessitates very swift moving. The vehicles have to be camouflaged, and paint is bought	

			locally. They have to be marked, with Divisional, Unit and Tactical signs. And the Embarkation sign (buff, green, buff) and number are put on all separate baggage. New capes anti-gas, respirators container, wallets anti-gas and boots are the most important present issues. It has been very difficult to obtain size 7 and 8 boots. A.Bs. 64 are to be completed.	
"	7	2000 2340	Mobilization continues at a feverish pace. A lot of stores are still short, notably respirator haversacks. Motley mountings and other stores. Tommy Guns and compasses are very short. Payment is made on A.B.64 but money is still drawn from the company bank accounts. 50 more O.Rs. arrive in a draft from the depot. 5 officers are attached to us. 2/Lts. C.R. Watson & G.L. Spence from the Gordons - 2/Lts. R.D. MacLeod, R.B.G. Gray, and A.D. Macdonald from the Camerons. They were sent here at immediate notice and arrived complete with golf clubs and other accoutrements. They will have a busy time getting fitted up for the move. A warning move order is received. A picquet requires to be turned out to deal with disorder in the village. But this is presumably only consequent upon last pay-day before embarkation.	
Kingsclere	10	0500	Coys. start seriously doing route marches with full packs in preparation for the future. Most of them take place in the early morning before the sun gets too hot, but even so tunics are discarded and "shirt order" is now general. - The whole of the Bn. Tpt. moves off under 2/Lts. A.B. Duncan, C.St.J.H. Parlby & J.H. Maxwell. The C.O. inspected them the night before and it was quite an amazing display to see all the transport on parade at once. Capt. K.H. Macalpine Leny had already gone in advance as liaison officer.	
	11		Route march practices are continued. 10 Worcesters' send their advance party to complicate matters. The final packing up, burning of papers and sorting of rubbish and stores is fairly hectic. The armourers work all night to remove numbers and regimental name from rifles end bayonets.	
Newbury Southampton	12	0815 0950 1230	The first train leaves with "B" & "D" Coys. The second train leaves with the remainder of the Bn. and baggage. About five or six men who had to march the whole way from Kingsclere fell out. Mrs. Stevens of the Y.M.C.A. canteen was there to give us tea. The second train arrives at Southampton. The men and baggage unload, and the men are drawn up on the platform. We remain there for some time until it is decided whether the boat can sail or not. It has just come in and the captain is ill. It is a Belgian boat called "Prince Baudouin". The 4th K.O.S.B. and 7/9th R.S. were already aboard their ships "Princess Astrid and Manxman" respectively, which sailed out about 1500 hrs. We eventually loaded about 1600 hrs. and sailed about 1730 hrs. joining the other two and our attendant destroyer outside in Southampton Water. The journey was uneventful. We sailed	

			immediately established in a small cafe in the main street. H.Q. Coy. and B Ech. were in the fields on either side of the lane running to HARDINVEST. B Coy. was nearby across the other side of the road TALFARET-DELASSE. D Coy. was on the right at the cross roads on the BRICQUEBEC road. C Coy. was on the left at the cross roads before DELASSE. We got settled down and spent a wet but quiet night.	
S. Martin	16	1700 1730	<p>We are now rearguard to the B.E.F. and have to cover the withdrawal of all British Forces from CHERBOURG. We are part of the NORMAN Force under General MARSHALL-GORNWALL. The rest of the Division and Brigade are to retire through us. - We still have nearly all our equipment. We burned the spare gas clothing and dumped a lot of blankets at DOMFORT. Five trucks crashed on the way owing to the drivers falling asleep, but no-one was hurt. Only three carriers arrived - the rest found the going too hard. The only men who went missing were Sgt. Brodie, and a party of six who were last seen following a convoy numbered 8 into CHERBOURG.</p> <p>Everything in CHERBOURG is packing up. The N.A.A.F.I's., the Field Cashier, the D.A.P.M. and H.Q. But civilian life proceeds as usual apart from fairly constant air raids. The civilian morale of the French seems to vary considerably, between despondency and a desire to fight to the end. The latter word is considerably enhanced by a little wine. - Brigade was established at LA DIVETTERIE and Division at TOLLVAST CHU.</p> <p>All transport that could be spared and some unessential equipment was sent off to join the 4th Bn. who were to leave tonight. 87 First reinforcements left aboard the Princess Astrid, and were shortly followed by Lt. L.B. - Cobden Ramsay.</p> <p>The padre held a service in the orchard behind H.Q. Coy. and about 150 men stayed to communicate afterwards. The night passed quietly. - Capt. Leny joined Divisional Staff as Liaison Officer, and Capt. T.D. Stephen joined us.</p>	
	17		<p>We had attached to us 30 3-ton lorries of the 529 Petrol Coy. R.A.S.C. under 2/Lt. Russell; 1 troop 216 Anti-Tank Bty. 54 Fd. Regt. R.A. under 2/Lts. White and Bevoridge and 1 sec. 554 Fd. Coy. R.E. under Lt. Rougleton and we were to receive 6 scout cars of the 3 Ard. Bde. under Lt. Ashton.</p> <p>A thorough recce was made of the inner and outer perimeters of defence. The outer perimeter meant holding the line of the river west from CARENTAN. The inner perimeter was the immediate defence of CHERBOURG, and was concerned mainly with road blocks in and around the town. (The Battalion moved at 1600 hrs. to posns. on the outer perimeter. [Full details of subsequent events will be found in "Report of operations of 5 K.O.S.B. and attached Troops".])</p>	App. 2.
S. Mere L'Eglise	18	1230	The Bn. was ordered to withdraw on CHERBOURG. By now the only passable road was the main VALOGNES road. The BRIQUEBEC road was blown and the lanes were barricaded at every turn. However, the convoy got down the road safely.	

CHERBOURG		1430	CHERBOURG was covered in a black pall of smoke from burning trucks. The French were still standing by their barricades in handfuls.	
"		1600	The main body of the Bn, was in, and the road was to be blocked finally at 1500. But D Coy gave us same anxiety as they were not in till a while later and 2 Pls. of "A" Coy. were missing. We sailed suddenly after an air bombing attack from three enemy planes. It seemed violent because of the noise of A.A. fire and Brens. The bombers came over at a great height and stick bombed the harbour three times. Every available gun was firing at them although they were well out of L.M.G. range. The bombs did no damage. There was an unfortunate accident aboard the ship when an anti-tank rifle went off, as it was being carried aboard, and killed a man, 3189266 Pte. W. Wilson of the Carrier Platoon. - We left Cherbourg with a destroyer and seaplane escort, and the quay behind us was blown up. The journey across was quick and uneventful.	
Southampton	18	2300	We docked and immediately disembarked at Southampton. As soon as the men were paraded and the baggage was unloaded we entrained and the second train was away by 0200 hrs. A great many guns and a lot of ammunition were salvaged - but a lot of kit was missing and most of our fine new G.1098 equipment was lost including all our transport.	
Ramsey, (Hunts)	19	1330	We arrive at our destination RAMSEY, HUNTS. after a fifteen mile bus journey from MARCH station. Brigade H.Q. is in HUNTINGDON and DIVISION is in CAMBRIDGE. We settle down into our billets in RAMSEY. A Coy and D Coy move out to SUTTON. All ranks are considered at Battle Stations. We are fairly well equipped as regards armament. Rifles and ammunition are up to strength. Brens are three short and so are tommy guns. (This accounted for by the missing Platoons of A Coy.) We have 8 A/Tk. Rifles over establishment. We are several 2" Mortars short and our 3" mortars were sent on with the spare stuff to the 4th Bn. and left behind with it. We have no transport and very little kit. A great deal of time is spent finding blankets. Luckily there is a company of the Essex Searchlights just one mile North of RAMSEY with an excellently equipped cookhouse and they have arranged to draw our rations and feed us until we can draw some accommodation stores. This we hope to do from the 12th R.F. who are moving out of the area, and whose posts we expect to take over.	
	20		After two air-raids running, RAMSEY provides a quiet night for us. Bn. H.Q. established at BURY and then moved to ALSOP AND DAVIS'S YARD in the Great Whyte. The day is spent in checking deficiencies and settling in.	
	21		Four Officers and three O.Rs. arrive back who were missing. Capt. K.H. Macalpine Leny who had been acting as Liaison Officer with the staff, had been on board the escorting destroyer. 2/Lt. J.H. Maxwell joined him there later after missing the boat at the quay, and so did 2/Lt. C.St.J.H. Parlby.	

			<p>Lt. Greenhalgh the M.O. had gone ashore to salvage some medical stores, and had to nail the destroyer to get aboard her. They were all landed at PORTSMOUTH, and joined us as soon as they received information of our destination.</p> <p>Our present tactical scheme is part of a Brigade Defence against an enemy thrust south from the WASH. The 7/9 R.S. are in the first line. We occupy the second line WHITTLESEA - CHATTERIS - ELY and the 4th Bn. are in reserve. We are due to take over road block positions from 12th R.F. and occupy them on the alarm.</p>	
	22	1300	<p>Coys must be re-organized owing to the continued absence and feared loss of two platoons of A Coy. Capt. Leny, 2/Lt. A.J. Jardine Paterson, 2/Lt. T.W. Kennedy Moffat and 2/Lt. J.G. Gladstone are to officer platoons from the first reinforcements and thus complete the strength.</p> <p>Orders for taking over 12th R.F. posns. are cancelled, though C Coy. are still on Guard at UPWOOD aerodrome. We are to occupy V.Ps. and embus the Bn. in 32 buses. But we are not informed what the V.Ps. are, and the buses never arrived. Capt. T.D. Stephens visited us from Division, and goes back to try to clear the matter up.</p> <p>6 men of A Coy. arrive back from Dover where another two lie wounded. Cpl. Selkirk is senior. They were in a bus with 2/Lt. G.L. Spence travelling into CHERBOURG on the BRIQUEBEC road when they were attacked with shell fire and bullets. It is not clear whether this was a German ambush, which seems improbable as they appear to be within 3 Kilos. of CHERBOURG, or whether it was an unfortunate mistake and the French were firing on them, seeing the roads were closed. They lay in a wood in hiding, and on returning to the bus found it burned with the wounded they had placed there and no sign of Spence. They were later guided to the West coast by French marines, set off in a motor boat, and were picked up by a Dutch steamer and landed in England.</p>	
	23	1900	<p>Some transport arrives for the Bn: So far we have had two M/Cs. and one hired taxi. Now we have one four seater Austin and five lorries of various shapes and sizes. One was actually towed here and dumped - another uses 1 gal. of oil in 40 miles.</p> <p>All is quiet as regards air-raids though there have been several in this district latterly. The Fifth Column here is said to be strong, and though there is no proof; evidence of its activity is not lacking. Verrey lights flash out in the Fens during the night, and there seems to be no other explanation of them.</p> <p>Early this morning France signed an armistice with Germany. Mat. Dufour has left us to join General de Gaulles in LONDON. In the short time he was with us he became a friend of all of us. We are very sorry to lose him.</p>	
	24	0830	<p>2/Lt. A. Skene our Intelligence Officer has left to take up an appointment as Brigade Intelligence Officer. 2/Lt. A.D. Macdonald has taken his place here.</p>	

			"A" Coy moved into RAMSEY from SUTTON today for re-organization and training. Capt. Leny becomes their 2nd i/c. and 2/Lt. Gray is transferred from the Pioneers.	
	25	0600 2200	<p>Last night a "Slipper" Patrol was sent out, and it was intended that we should patrol the area around RAMSEY nightly. At six o'clock this morning, however, 12th R.F. were moved from CHATTERIS. The result is that we have had to take over their defence posns. on the line ELY - CHATTERIS - WHITTLESEY. We will no longer have personnel here sufficient to provide a slipper patrol. A Coy. Cmdrs. conference was held and the Commanding Officer outlined the scheme which we have taken over from the 12 R.F. Slight changes have had to be made in it. Full details will be found in Appendix 3</p> <p>All this has led to a reshuffle of company posns. Early this morning D Coy moved from SUTTON to CHATTERIS, but as this coy will have to be responsible for road blocks at ELY, it was decided at the conference to move them there, in spite of the difficulty of securing suitable billets there. H.Q. Coy. reconstituted as a Rifle Coy. move to CHATTERIS tomorrow, and B Coy have gone to WHITTLESEY. Bn. H.Q., the bulk of the signallers, a certain number of drivers and A Coy. are to remain at RAMSEY.</p> <p>Today we sent 2 Brens, 1 A/T Rifle, together with all spare parts, magazines and ammunition on full war scale to 155 Bde A/Tk Coy.</p> <p>We have replaced our Slipper Patrol by a motor patrol, consisting of one officer, a driver, and two other ranks. Its function is to report and observe upon any suspicious activities in the neighbourhood during the night. It can cover a large area in front of our posns.</p>	App. 3
	26	2000	<p>Last night air-raid sirens sounded for the second night in succession. No bombs were dropped anywhere near here, but as on the previous night it was three hours or more before the "All Clear" was given. Air Raid Alarms during the night make very little difference to us now, for the bulk of the battalion is on duty from dusk to dawn, manning road blocks in our new posns, and so, is awake in any case. - H.Q. Coy. moved out to CHATTERIS; last night they manned their road blocks from here, but this arrangement was only temporary. The transformation of H.Q. Coy. has been simpler than might be supposed, since it has been without specialist gear since our return, and consequently has all the ingredients of a Rifle Company, and nothing more.</p>	
	27	0830	<p>A report from B Coy alluded to suspicious lights over WHITTLESEY. On further enquiry it emerged that a section on duty at a road block situated at the level crossing next to WHITTLESEY L.N.E.R. Station, saw a red and White very light fired from the direction of the town or beyond it - i.e. approx. N.W. The time then was 2325. This is interesting because about 2330 hrs. German machines were over RAMSEY (Only 'Yellow' was given).</p> <p>We were told today that 52nd Div. is to be moved nearer the East Coast. Capt. Leny carried out a preliminary recce. of a suitable site for a camp for us at</p>	

		COCKLEY CLEY near SWAFFHAM. - Further sundry transport arrived during the day, and now, although ours is a motley fleet of trucks and cars in various stages of dilapidation, the transport problem is greatly eased.	
Ramsey	28	<p>A second recce. of COCKLEY CLEY was made, there was a BDE. Conference at CHATTERIS in the afternoon, and at a Conference held here late this evening we were told that our move was imminent. In fact, an advance party under Capt. Leny and Capt. Henderson goes tomorrow. How soon the whole bn. can be moved depends upon transport and upon the arrival of Area Commanders to relieve us in our present posns.</p> <p>Yesterday's entry should have contained the news that two further members of "A" Coy have turned up. These are Sgt. McSkimmings and Corporal Selkirk. They reached England with an R.A.S.C. driver of one of the three store trucks. Sgt. McSkimmings story will be found in Appendix 2 to this Diary</p>	App. 2
	29	The Advance Party to COCKLEY CLEY went off this morning. It included the Pioneer Platoon and this involved a hasty reshuffle, since the Pioneers were part of the newly formed H.Q. Rifle Coy. Replacements from the Intelligence, Signals and Transport had to take their place at CHATTERIS at very short notice, and two officers here lost their batmen in the transaction.	
	30	<p>Rather gloomy news filters through from CLEY. There seems to be a shortage of available drinking water there, and we have no water cart ourselves. The 4th K.O.S.B. have offered us a broken down water cart, and the M.T.O. hopes to get it fixed up. Everyone here is indulging in wishful thinking.</p> <p>We are losing two more officers. 2/Lt. C.St.J.H. Parlby goes to Bde. in charge of the Carrier Platoon of the Bde. Recce. Coy. which is now being formed. 2/Lt. J.H. Maxwell is going to the same Company in charge of the Tank Hunting Platoon whose personnel comes from this Unit.</p> <p>Last night we got 24 motor buses; today seven newer reconditioned cars and in all 28 motor bicycles. Seventeen of these are for our Tank Hunting Platoon.</p>	