

6th Armoured Division at Lakenheath on the first anniversary of its formation.

In October the battalion moved into billets for the winter, headquarters being at St. Neots, near Bedford, and the companies in four villages nearby. Changes were then made in the establishment of armoured divisions, and support battalions were abolished. This was the beginning of the end as far as the battalion's regimental connections were concerned, for at a conference at the War Office on April 27, 1942, Colonel Macklin was informed that it was to be converted into an Armoured Car Regiment. Officers and N.C.O.s were sent on courses at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School at Tidworth, and some of the personnel were posted to the 4th Battalion, which was then preparing to go overseas. On July 28, 1942, the 9th Battalion officially became the 162nd Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.

A year later 162nd Regiment was itself disbanded to supply reinforcements for the Reconnaissance Regiments of Infantry Divisions in 21st Army Group. In this way it came about that many of the members of the 9th Battalion took part in the landings in Normandy in June 1944. Colonel Macklin was given command of a battalion of the East Surrey Regiment.

3. *The 10th Battalion*

The 10th Battalion had its origin in the 14th Holding Battalion. This was formed at Tonbridge in January 1940, and consisted of one company of The Buffs, one company of The Royal Fusiliers and one company of The Queen's Own. At the end of May 1940, this battalion was disbanded. The Queen's Own company moved to the Citadel Barracks at Dover, and from it was formed the 50th Holding Battalion The Queen's Own, with Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. Pigou in command. Drafts were received from 224 I.T.C., at Maidstone; but before the end of June upwards of 500 men had been sent to the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions as replacements for the casualties they had lost in France.

Owing to the threat of invasion the function of the 50th Holding Battalion was then changed, and it adopted a role similar to that of the 9th Battalion. Three large batches of militiamen, mainly of the twenty-four age group and excellent material, arrived straight from civil life. Officers and Instructors to train them came for the most part from 224 I.T.C. and, as the recruits were mainly from the Kentish suburbs of London, the county associations were strong.

Whilst at Dover this new battalion saw plenty of hostile action. From the beginning it was under cross-Channel artillery fire, and it witnessed the dive-bombing of Dover Harbour on July 12, 1940. Working parties were several times machine-gunned from the air. A detachment carried out rescue work when the Grand Hotel was bombed. At first the recruits manned the entire perimeter of the defences of Dover. Later, while retaining the western sector which included Shakespeare Cliff and the Folkestone Road, they manned some beach posts near the harbour. During the General Alarm, which began on September 7, the battalion remained dressed and under arms for ten days.

In October 1940, the title of the unit was changed to the 10th Battalion The Queen's Own. Organised as a normal rifle battalion, it moved to the Isle of Sheppey in November and had its headquarters at Minster and companies at Sheerness, Eastchurch, King's Ferry Bridge and Pigtail Corner. It was brigaded with the 7th King's Shropshire Light Infantry and the 11th Gloucesters in 221st Brigade with the role of coast defence, and its experiences during that severe winter were similar to those of the 4th and 5th Battalions, which were also defending a sector of the coast of Kent at that time.

Another move was made in February 1941, when the battalion went with 221st Brigade to join the newly formed Yorkshire County Division. Its role was still that of coast defence, and during that spring and summer it defended a sector from Atwick to Aūburn Home and later manned defences at Albrough, Mapleton and Hornsea, headquarters being at The Dell, Hornsea. While there it manned a number of 6-pounder naval guns mounted for anti-tank tasks, and was armed with both .303 and .300 Vickers guns. From August to November the battalion was relieved of all its duties in order to carry out training from Leven Camp and later from Victoria Barracks at Beverly. Training was much curtailed, owing to many of the troops being away assisting the farmers to harvest the crops. At one time in fact the entire battalion was employed on digging potatoes.

On November 24, 1941, the battalion became responsible for the defence of the aerodromes at Leconfield, Driffield, Lissett, Catfoss and Hutton Cranswick. It was then armed with both types of Vickers gun, some old Lewis guns and some Blacker Bombard Spigot Mortars. Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. P. Craven assumed command in December, but early in the New Year orders were received that the battalion was to be converted. On February 1, 1942, it officially became 119 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, as part of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

For this reorganisation the battalion went to Chester. The initial