

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 2330 B.S.T. ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 1944

NOT TO BE BROADCAST IN THE MIDNIGHT NEWS OF JANUARY 20/21

THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING ANY MESSAGES FILED WITH THE EMBARGO

LIEUT.-COL. R. GETHEN, M.C., COMMANDED THE ROYAL SUSSEX AT AMIENS

Lieutenant-Colonel Ronald GETHEN, M.C., was the Commanding Officer of the battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment which on the 20th May, 1940, defied a German Panzer Division commanded by General ROMMEL and halted its advance for several hours.

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The story of the action, released in full on December 30, 1943 (M.O.I. Handout No. 10 of that date), revealed how the Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment stood alone in the face of the German advance near AMIENS. The Royal Sussex fought with dogged valour and refused to capitulate until late in the afternoon when they were virtually overwhelmed by enemy tanks.

Their gallant resistance proved an amazingly successful bluff for, as the Commanding Officer himself observed, if the Germans had known the real situation they could have cleared the Royal Sussex positions in five minutes. As it was the resistance offered by the battalion delayed the enemy's advance for, at least, six hours. The Commanding Officer's instructions were "Our original orders were to proceed to Lens. That is impossible, we have no orders to go back. Therefore we stay where we are".

The Panzer division which encountered this small force of British troops was commanded by General Rommel whose division had travelled 70 km. since dawn on May 20 without serious opposition until encountering the resistance of the Royal Sussex.

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MILITARY AFFAIRS