

In Memory of

Private HUBERT FRANK WALLIS

**5571345, 8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment
who died age 21 on 29 May 1940**

**Son of Hubert Frank and Eva Mary Wallis
of Dauntsey, Wiltshire**

**Remembered with honour
WEST CAPPEL CHURCHYARD,
FRANCE**

West Cappel is a village 16 kilometres south-east of Dunkirk and some 6 kilometres north-east of Wormhoudt. There are now nearly 70, 1939-45 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, over 30 are unidentified.



On the 10 May 1940 two German Army Group burst Belgium and the Netherlands. After reaching the Channel the Germans swung north and trapped British and French forces around Dunkirk. The German panzer divisions then halted on 24 May 1940 to consolidate their gains. As the terrain around Dunkirk was considered unsuitable for armour, the destruction of the Allied forces was initially assigned to the Luftwaffe and the German infantry. Evacuation was ordered and from 25 to 28 May, British troops retreated about 30 miles northwest into a pocket around Dunkirk. On 27 May the German Panzer divisions resumed their attack. The Belgian army surrendered on 28 May and the trapped French forces the next day. The remaining Allied force was rapidly compressed into a 5 km wide coastal strip from De Panne through Bray-Dunes to Dunkirk. Near Bambecque, throughout 29 May, the 8th Battalion fought a tenacious rearguard action to allow others to evacuate. German tanks were now coming on in large numbers. By 1700 hours an enemy tank attack had set D Company HQ on fire. By 1800 hours A and D companies were so badly cut up as to make further resistance impossible, and the survivors, three officers and about sixty other ranks, dribbled into Battalion HQ in threes and fours to reorganize. B and C Companies had also suffered grievous loss, B Company fighting on until its ammunition was exhausted and they had no alternative but to surrender. At last darkness fell and at 2105 hours a start was made thinning out the defenders. Of a battalion of 800, 149 men were evacuated.