

the evacuation. The attributes of this officer for initiative and resource are well known throughout the Service, but I venture to express the opinion that never in the course of his long and distinguished career have they been put to better use than during the operations for the evacuation of the Allied Armies from Dunkirk.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS OF PERSONNEL.

I have already transmitted a brief list of those recommended for immediate award or decoration (which His Majesty has been pleased to accept) and I will forward a further list at a later date when time has permitted a full examination of all the reports.

(Sgd.) B. H. RAMSAY,
Vice Admiral.

OPERATION "DYNAMO"—NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

As far as the Dover Command is concerned, the genesis of this operation took place at a War Office meeting on Sunday the 19th May, 1940, at which the Vice Admiral, Dover, was represented. This meeting discussed (1) Temporary maintenance of the B.E.F. through Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne, and (2) Evacuation of personnel through Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne. Under this last item was included, amongst other items, the problem of "the hazardous evacuation of very large Forces." This was considered "to be unlikely." (This problem ultimately became that of Operation "Dynamo").

2. The main decision of this meeting was that the control must be delegated to the Vice Admiral, Dover, and available shipping placed at his disposal.

3. Further meetings were held at Dover on the 20th May, and at the War Office on the 21st May, to consider the "emergency evacuation across the Channel of very large Forces." These meetings determined the number of personnel vessels and small craft available, and confirmed that the control of all sea movements rested with the Vice Admiral, Dover, a liaison officer from the War Office Movement Control and from the Ministry of Shipping being attached to the Vice Admiral.

4. The need for air protection of sailings, including the period of embarkation and disembarkation was recognised, and was to be arranged by the Vice Admiral, Dover, direct with the Fighter Command.

5. The reception arrangements at the points of disembarkation were provided for. At the Dover meeting it was pointed out that in the event of evacuation it would be necessary to make provision for lifting troops from beaches, and that owing to the very gradual shoaling of the beaches it would be necessary to have a large number of small boats to carry troops from the beaches to the off-shore ships. Further, it was thought extremely doubtful if the whole of the troops to be evacuated could be lifted from the beaches, and that, if at all possible, the ports must be used as well.

6. Subsequent to the Dover meeting of the 20th May, continual telephone conversations took place between Dover, the Admiralty,

Ministry of Shipping and the Commander-in-Chief, Nore, as to the provision of small craft for the final evacuation, and the provision of Naval personnel for manning the small boats required for ferrying and skoots and other small vessels taken up for transport purposes.

7. A meeting was held at the Admiralty on Sunday, the 26th May, to consider the same subject and to examine the number of craft available. The notes of this meeting were subsequently supplied to the Vice Admiral, Dover, who was not represented at the Admiralty.

8. Meantime, on the 23rd May, evacuation of Boulogne was started and completed on the 24th. The position was more complicated at Calais where evacuation was limited to non-fighting personnel; the fighting personnel having to hold on in order to assist the main B.E.F. Further, a supply ship with stores and transport had to be unloaded at Calais for this Force.

9. It was then apparent from all these events that if the B.E.F. was to be evacuated the only port available would be Dunkirk.

10. *P.M. Sunday, the 26th:* The military situation was thought to have deteriorated so rapidly that the Vice Admiral was informed by the Admiralty that it was imperative for "Dynamo" to be implemented with the greatest vigour, with a view to lifting up to 45,000 of the B.E.F. within two days, at the end of which it was probable that evacuation would be terminated by enemy action.

OPERATION "DYNAMO".

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS.

Sunday, 26th May, 1940.

Admiralty ordered Operation "Dynamo" to commence at 1857. Prior to the receipt of this order, the despatch of Personnel Vessels* to Dunkirk had already commenced at 1500. At this time a flow of two vessels every four hours had been agreed to by the B.E.F., the first of these reached Dover on the return trip at 2230 and 1,312 personnel were landed.

2. On this day the only Inshore Craft available to Vice-Admiral, Dover, were four Belgian Passenger Launches and the Naval Small Craft of the Dover Command such as Drifters, and Motor Boats from the Contraband Control Base at Ramsgate. The only ones capable of lifting personnel direct from a beach being the boats from Ramsgate. The Admiralty had been asked for the supply of small boats, especially whalers and cutters,* but there was always the difficulty of arranging for the personnel to man them. When matters became urgent, the Admiralty made a signal to the various Home Ports asking them to report how many cutters and whalers could be made available for immediate service under Vice-Admiral, Dover.

Monday, 27th May.

3. The Vice-Admiral, Dover, was informed by the Admiralty of the various steps taken to supply coasting vessels, skoots,* motor boats and other small craft including rowing boats

* Admiralty footnotes:

(i) The cutters and whalers are rowing boats carried by H.M. Ships.

(ii) A skoot is a Dutch type of coasting vessel.

(iii) The Personnel Vessels were manned almost wholly by members of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets.