

a number of flotillas under Commodore A. H. Taylor and Captain the Hon. G. Frazer were reorganised for the night's effort.

69. General Alexander was informed at 0951 that on the likely assumption that complete evacuation would be ordered that night, the problem of transport made it essential to use the beach adjacent to Dunkirk as well as the harbour facilities and that the Vice Admiral was planning evacuation to start at 2200.

70. At 1841 the following signal was received from C.I.G.S. for the Senior Military Commander: "We do not order any fixed moment for evacuation. You are to hold on as long as possible in order that the maximum number of French and British may be evacuated. Impossible from here to judge local situation. In close co-operation with Admiral Abrial. You must act in this matter on your own judgment."

71. S.N.O. Dunkirk, was informed that drifters and other small craft would be sent into the inner harbour at Dunkirk to take troops from the Felix Faure Quay, North Quay, in the shipyard, and the quay in the new outer harbour.

72. The plan for the night provided for all minesweepers including paddlers, skoots and all small craft, except certain special flotillas especially organised, to go to the beach stretching eastward $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Dunkirk. Dunkirk Harbour was to be served by up to seven personnel ships, eight destroyers, and the inner harbour nine drifters and special power boats organised from Ramsgate. The French vessels were to serve the Quay in the new outer harbour and private small boats, the Quay Felix Faure, and in addition about 100 French small beach fishing craft and drifters for the beach immediately east of Dunkirk. It was estimated that the British vessels could lift about 17,000 between 2100/1 and 0300/2, probably in the proportion 50 per cent. British and 50 per cent. French. The plan was set in motion without incident until 2200, when it was reported that a number of towing craft and small boats were returning empty from the coast. All ships were warned to look out for these and to send them back to their duty on the coast.

Subsequent investigation gives reason to believe that this defection was due to false information being passed between ships on the coast and believed to originate from a non-identified skoot.

73. Commander G. O. Maund proceeded to the mouth of the harbour in a motor boat commanded by a Dutch Naval Officer with a Dutch naval crew and led all ships into harbour to their berths. The Rear Admiral, Dover, was also afloat in a M.T.B. supervising traffic control.

By 2300 the night was very dark, sometimes as many as 6 or 7 vessels were entering the port of Dunkirk at once whilst yet others were leaving. All were without lights and displayed the highest degree of seamanship in these difficult and fateful circumstances.

74. At 2315 the S.N.O. Dunkirk signalled "Withdrawal now proceeding according to plan. Shall have certain reserves here tomorrow to assist French. Intend to complete evacuation tomorrow by midnight."

Remarks.

75. The outstanding feature of the day was the series of events leading to the abandonment of daylight evacuation. Increasing enemy air attack, which the R.A.F. were unable to smother with the means at their disposal, caused serious loss of ships, and continual interruption of embarkation on the beaches and in Dunkirk. Further, the sole remaining cross channel route was now under fairly heavy and accurate shore artillery fire.

In these circumstances, it was apparent that continuation of the operation by day must cause losses of ships and personnel out of all proportion to the number of troops evacuated, and if persisted in, the momentum of evacuation would automatically and rapidly decrease.

Sunday, 2nd June.

76. The arrangements to set in motion the night's evacuation had proceeded smoothly as far as could be ascertained at Dover. During the early hours, reports of sailings from Dunkirk indicated that destroyers at least were doing well.

At about 0200, however, a signal was received from LYDD, who was off the Dunkirk beach, as follows:

"Brigadier tells me that C.-in-C. says it is essential that rearguard B.E.F. embarks from the beaches east of Mole on account of French congestion on Mole. Considerable number British troops still on Mole. Military are expecting further arrivals there. Rear-guard expects to arrive at beach by 0230."

The Vice Admiral accordingly ordered all ships known to be outside Dunkirk Harbour to endeavour to embark the rearguard from the beach, remaining after 0300 if necessary. Owing to the time in transit and coding it was feared that this signal would reach few ships still on the coast, unless they had remained on their own initiative after 0300, the previously ordered time of withdrawal.

At 0200, authority was received from the Admiralty to continue evacuation by destroyers from Dunkirk Harbour until 0700, transports to leave Dunkirk at 0300.

77. During the early hours there was considerable haze and smoke off Dunkirk Harbour, Dunkirk East Beach, Dunkirk Roads and the entrance therefrom to X Route. For this reason some of the smaller vessels, including minesweepers, failed to make either Dunkirk Harbour or Dunkirk East Beach, but on the whole it appears that evacuation, both from the beach and from the harbour had proceeded satisfactorily with the resources available.

Between 0200 and 0900, 6 personnel vessels reached United Kingdom from Dunkirk Harbour with about 5,500 troops. Two others had been turned back before reaching Dunkirk by two unknown destroyers, and one had been in collision before reaching Dunkirk and had to return.

78. Considerable doubt existed during the forenoon as to the numbers remaining to be evacuated in Dunkirk. It was thought that 2,000, plus the 4,000 rearguard British troops, might well be found in Dunkirk. The number of French troops remaining was increasing from the 25,000 quoted the previous evening to figures in the region of 50,000 to 60,000.