

outside of the entrance. She remained in sole occupation of the harbour until shortly after midnight 29th/30th, when her Captain rightly decided to take the ship out of harbour before she also was sunk, thus freeing the berth and safeguarding the channel from being blocked.

Little information of these disasters filtered through to Dover, except that it was known that Dunkirk was under heavy air bombardment and that the destroyers there were being hit soon after 1600.

31. At 1906 the Vice Admiral promulgated the plan for the night by signal as follows: "Evacuation of British troops to continue at maximum speed during the night. If adequate supply of personnel vessels cannot be maintained to Dunkirk East Pier, destroyers will be sent there as well. All other craft except hospital carriers to embark from beach which is extended from one mile East of Dunkirk to one mile East of La Panne. Whole length is divided into three equal parts referred to as La Panne, Bray, Malo, from East to West with a mile gap between each part. La Panne and Bray have troop concentration points each end and in middle, Malo at each end. These points should be tended by inshore craft. Pass the message by V/S to ships not equipped W/T as opportunity offers."

32. About 1900 a telephone message was received from La Panne Military Headquarters through the War Office and the Admiralty to the effect that Dunkirk Harbour was blocked by damaged ships, and that all evacuation must therefore be effected from the beaches.

About the same time a corrupt message from S.N.O. Dunkirk, was received stating continuous bombing, one destroyer sinking, one transport with troops on board damaged and impossible at present to embark more troops, though pier undamaged.

33. In this confused situation the Vice Admiral, Dover, at 2128, ordered all ships approaching Dunkirk not to close the harbour, but instead to remain off the Eastern beach to collect troops from the shore, and the drifters and minesweepers which were about to be despatched to Dunkirk Harbour were also diverted to the beaches.

It appeared, therefore, at this time that the use of Dunkirk Harbour would be denied to us except possibly to the small ships.

Signals addressed to S.N.O. Dunkirk, HEBE, VERITY, who were known to be in the vicinity of Dunkirk, were sent requiring information as to the accessibility of the Eastern pier for personnel vessels. Admiral Nord was also informed that Dover was out of touch with Captain Tennant, and asked whether it was still possible for transports to enter the harbour and berth alongside.

No reply to these enquiries could be expected until after midnight.

34. In the event only four trawlers and a yacht entered Dunkirk during the hours of darkness, and as enemy activity was much reduced only two bombing attacks being made, it subsequently transpired that a good opportunity had been missed. It is probable that ships to lift some 8,000 to 10,000 troops could have been made available for Dunkirk during the night at little loss to embarkation from the beaches.

35. Rear Admiral Wake-Walker proceeded from Dover in ESK at about 1900 for passage to HEBE off the coast where he was to carry out the duties of S.N.O. Dunkirk in charge of all embarkation arrangements, taking over from Captain Bush who had been working in HEBE under the orders of S.N.O., Dunkirk. He expected to arrive at Dunkirk at 2330.

36. As a result of the heavy casualties and losses amongst the destroyer force, particularly the misfortunes which befell those of the larger and more modern types, a consultation was held between the Admiralty and the Vice Admiral which led to a decision to withdraw destroyers of the "H", "I" and "J" Classes from "Dynamo". All destroyers of the "G" Class were already out of action.

There remained available for "Dynamo" 15 destroyers:—

ESK	WORCESTER
EXPRESS	WINDSOR
ANTHONY	VERITY
KEITH	VANQUISHER
CODRINGTON	SABRE
MALCOLM	SCIMITAR
WHITEHALL	SHIKARI
WINCHELSEA	

Excluding any casualties, this number of destroyers might be expected to maintain a flow of one destroyer per hour to the coast and would lift 17,000 troops in 24 hours.

37. The day closed with a formidable list of ships lost or damaged, a marked reduction in the number of destroyers available and with failure to achieve the high rate of evacuation hoped for. Some 38,000 were landed in England during the 24 hours, but the effect of the day's occurrences was to be more marked next day when instead of some 50,000 to 60,000 which had been calculated as the probable achievement only 48,000 odd were in fact transported.

Thursday, 30th May.

38. As an example of the difficulty of any one man appreciating the situation at Dunkirk and the beaches during the night, at 0300/30 the S.N.O. on the French Coast reported that he had no destroyers. In fact, at that time, all available destroyers, namely 10, in the Dover Command, were either on, or on passage to or from, the coast, and the remaining five were at Dover discharging troops, embarking ammunition, fuelling, etc. and were to sail within the next four hours.

Simultaneously the V.C.I.G.S. reported that the beaches were well organised, the troops in good heart, and there had been no bombing since dark, but that there was still a great shortage of small craft, urgently required. This last fact was well known to the Vice Admiral, Dover.

39. Commander-in-Chief, Nore, was requested to send as much towing hawser as possible to Ramsgate, as quickly as possible, for supplying the skoots, to haul boats off the beaches, thus speeding up the boat work to compensate for the shortage of boats, which would continue for at least another 24 hours.

40. At 0500 the seven modern destroyers remaining with Vice Admiral, Dover—ICARUS, IMPULSIVE, INTREPID, IVANHOE, HARVESTER, HAVANT and JAVELIN—sailed to Sheerness in accordance with Admiralty instructions. The MONTROSE and MACKAY sailed for repairs.