

executing a series of round trips without intermission for several days under navigation conditions of extreme difficulty and in the face of unparalleled air attack.

The Vice Admiral accordingly represented to the Admiralty that the continuance of the demands made by evacuation would subject a number of officers and men to a test which might be beyond the limit of human endurance, and requesting that fresh forces should be used if evacuation had to be continued after the coming night, with the acceptance of any consequent delay.

87. The evacuation plan was communicated to Units taking part at 1440 and was briefly as follows:—

Commence 2230/3, withdraw 0230/4. From East Pier evacuation by Personnel Vessels, Destroyers and Paddle Minesweepers. From West Pier, new outer port, by other Minesweepers, Corvettes, Skoots and French vessels. Drifters and smaller craft into the inner harbour, LOCUST remaining outside entrance receiving loads ferried out by small boats. Tugs available outside entrance to assist ships in berthing and in leaving.

88. In the evening the Vice Admiral was informed by the B.N.L.O. Marceau that it was estimated 30,000 French remained and that the French Admiralty agree that evacuation should be terminated that night if possible. Force used was to consist of nine Personnel Vessels with one in reserve, nine Destroyers (maximum number available), four Paddle Minesweepers, seven Fleet Minesweepers, nine Drifters, LOCUST, two Corvettes, four French Destroyers and a number of organised motor boat flotillas including lifeboats from Ramsgate and Dover, together with a large number of French and Belgian fishing vessels. The lifting capacity of this force, if used to the full, was more than 30,000 but it was certain that the facilities within Dunkirk could not permit more than about 25,000 to be embarked in the time available, and this number only if the French troops moved with the greatest rapidity at all points of embarkation. This point was impressed upon the French Liaison Officers and a number of French officers and ratings added to the augmented pier parties which were despatched to Dunkirk at 2200 in advance of the evacuation force.

89. The movements commenced according to plan. The weather conditions at Dunkirk, although favourable as regards tide were adverse with a north easterly wind tending to blow Personnel Vessels and Destroyers off the vital East Pier making berthing difficult. The MANXMAN, the seventh Personnel Ship due to sail failed to sail, and her place was taken by the ROYAL SOVEREIGN.

*Tuesday, 4th June.*

90. At midnight when the earlier vessels had commenced the return voyage fog was reported in mid-channel and off the Thanet coast and a number of ships had to anchor before entering harbour. The EXPRESS and SHIKARI were the last ships to leave Dunkirk at 0318 and 0340 and carried approximately 1,000 troops and the British pier parties. Except for an air attack on SHIKARI this final passage was made without interruption by the

enemy and though the fog made navigation extremely difficult it undoubtedly served to shield the Armada from enemy aircraft.

91. When the count was taken later in the day it was ascertained that 27,000 troops had been evacuated as a result of the night's operation and Admiral Nord agreed that the operation should be considered as completed, observing that all ammunition at Dunkirk had been expended and that the numbers left behind were small consisting principally of non-combatant troops. This decision was agreed to by the French Admiralty at 1100, and the operation "Dynamo" terminated by Admiralty Message 1423/4.

92. It was realised that in all probability there might be a number of open boats, barges, etc., drifting about in the Channel with troops on board. It was accordingly decided to have an air reconnaissance over the Channel.

It was reported that a Transport was lying on its side between Dunkirk and Gravelines and also a barge east of the Goodwins with survivors on board.

C. in C. Nore despatched 2 M.T.B.s to find the transport with no avail. On the 5th the R.A.F. speedboat did a sweep south of a line Goodwin/Boulogne and recovered 33 French troops and two Naval ratings. In addition French troops were picked up by patrols and brought in to Dover, Margate and Ramsgate. Troops also arrived in French and Belgian Trawlers totalling in all some additional 1,100.

Air reconnaissance was also carried out on the morning of the 5th but nothing was reported.

#### REMARKS ON THE INSHORE FLOTILLAS AND NAVAL SHORE PARTIES.

93. About 400 small craft, ranging from Dutch Skoots to 30 ft. Motor boats, set out at various times to the Flanders Coast. In addition scores of pulling boats, merchant ship lifeboats, Naval cutters and whalers, were sent off in tow. Only a proportion—particularly of the pulling boats—succeeded in reaching the coast and taking active part in the evacuation. Fewer still were able to remain off the coast for more than one period. Nevertheless, these small craft, in conjunction with the pulling and power boats of H.M. Ships off the coast, were responsible for lifting more than 100,000 Allied troops direct off a stretch of open beach in shoal waters between 1600/27/5 and 0400/2/6. Further, a large number of the power boats operated within Dunkirk Harbour on the last three nights, working principally in the inner harbour, which was continually under artillery fire, ferrying a further large uncounted number out to the comparative safety of ships lying off.

94. Throughout the period all these craft of the inshore flotillas were subjected at one time or another to intense attack from the air, both by bombing and machine gun, and a large proportion also to sporadic bombardment by German artillery. Under this fire no case occurred of boats ceasing work as long as troops were in sight on shore, and movements of boats westward away from the fire zone only occurred as dictated by the military situation ashore.