

effort. Accordingly the following signal was made:—

“If no further evacuation possible withdraw.”

Actually the signal as reported to Commander McClintock omitted the word “if” and from that time onwards H.M.S. CALPE was unable to get into touch with him. I supposed at the time that his M.L. must have been sunk, but actually he was able to order the withdrawal of all landing craft, to a pre-arranged position, 4 miles 330° from Dieppe. Consequently A.L.Cs. 185 and 188, with H.M.S. CALPE were soon the only craft left close inshore, but owing to the low visibility, I was not aware of this at the time.

32. Throughout the whole operation, Commander H. V. P. McClintock, R.N., was of the greatest service in his capacity of “Boat Pool Officer.” He was ably seconded by Lieut.-Commander J. H. Dathan, R.N., and Lieut.-Commander C. W. McMullen, R.N. The fact that over a thousand troops were evacuated under conditions which can seldom have been equalled, must be attributed largely to the work of these officers.

33. At about 1250 I decided to close the beach again for a final personal view and keeping A.L.C.s. 185 and 188 on either bow, H.M.S. CALPE steered for the eastern end of Red Beach at the same time opening fire from the foremost guns on the breakwaters, on which machine gun posts were reported to be preventing the troops on Red Beach from reaching the water. When about 9 cables from the beach, H.M.S. CALPE came under heavy fire, and no sign of troops or landing craft other than derelicts could be seen on the beach. Accordingly, H.M.S. CALPE manoeuvred to gain the cover of smoke, and I felt convinced that any further attempt to take off troops would be unlikely to succeed. Before finally giving up, however, I proceeded to seaward to close H.M.S. LOCUST and ascertain Commander Ryder's views, as it seemed possible that with H.M.S. LOCUST'S shallow draught, he might be more aware of the situation on the beaches. Whilst this interchange of signals was in progress, however, the General informed me that the larger body of the troops on the beach had surrendered. At almost exactly the same time H.M.S. BERKELEY (Lieut. J. J. S. Yorke, R.N.) received a direct hit with a heavy bomb. The ship's back was broken, her forecastle awash, and the engine and boiler rooms were flooding. Fortunately the loss of life was small, partly owing to the promptitude with which S.G.B.8 proceeded alongside to take off her crew and partly owing to the presence of A.L.C.s. 185 and 188, who were able to pick up survivors in the water. I instructed H.M.S. ALBRIGHTON to sink her, which she did by torpedo fire.

At much the same time a fighter attack was made on H.M.S. CALPE'S bridge, causing several casualties, including Air Commodore A. Cole, C.B.E., M.C., D.F.C., R.A.A.F., who was severely wounded. The destroyers in the vicinity of H.M.S. BERKELEY then proceeded to seaward to join the main convoy of landing craft and coastal craft who had formed up in accordance with instructions, approximately 4 miles to seaward of Dieppe and were now heading slowly north.

34. H.M.S. FERNIE was instructed to take Guide, and shortly afterwards I unwisely instructed H.M.S. CALPE to proceed to the eastward to pick up a British pilot who was reported in the water. This resulted in 2 bombing attacks, by dive bombers, on H.M.S. CALPE, both of which secured near misses causing damage and casualties.

35. Subsequently H.M.S. CALPE rejoined the convoy which proceeded without incident, other than some ineffectual air attacks, through the Western swept channel, and to a position approximately 20 miles from Newhaven. At this point I was joined by Captain (D) 16 with H.M.S. MACKAY and H.M.S. BLENCATHRA and I requested him to escort the small craft into Newhaven, thus releasing H.M.S. CALPE and the other destroyers and H.M.S. LOCUST to proceed direct to Portsmouth with their wounded, who totalled over 500. The coastal craft and landing craft reached Newhaven without further incident, and the destroyers and H.M.S. LOCUST berthed alongside at Portsmouth shortly after midnight.

36. Before closing this narrative, a word of praise is due to the medical officers with the force. An exceptional strain was thrown upon them, partly by the very large proportion of casualties among the troops and partly because the organisation carefully prepared by Surgeon Commander W. B. D. Miller, D.S.C., M.B., Ch.B., R.N.V.R., was upset by the turning back of Group 12. This group, comprising four spare L.C.Ts., carried an important proportion of the available medical parties. It was a mistake on my part not to bring them on, despite the fact that they were no longer required for an evacuation as originally planned.

37. A detailed account of the work of the medical parties is reported separately, but the services performed by Surgeon Lieut. M. P. Martin, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., R.N.V.R., deserve special mention. This officer was embarked in L.C.F.(L) 2, and took charge of her when her other officers became casualties. Subsequently he was rescued from the water, after L.C.F.(L) 2 had sunk, and transferred to H.M.S. CALPE. Although himself injured, he was untiring in helping H.M.S. CALPE'S doctor, who had to compete with casualties to over a quarter of the crew plus 278 wounded soldiers.

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