

GRAFTON she was in danger of being torpedoed. At that moment, 0250, GRAFTON was torpedoed, COMFORT was lifted in the air, and Captain of WAKEFUL washed overboard. COMFORT was going full speed and as she came round in a circle LYDD and GRAFTON opened fire on her, evidently thinking she was an enemy ship. It is believed that COMFORT crew, except one, and WAKEFUL survivors, except four, were killed. LYDD then bore down on COMFORT, rammed and sank her.

Previously GRAFTON, who was proceeding to Dover with troops, had observed a ship torpedoed, and lowered her boats to pick up survivors, subsequently ascertained by signal to LYDD to be WAKEFUL. A small darkened vessel, thought to be a drifter, was signalled and told to pick up survivors. Within a few seconds of this, GRAFTON was torpedoed. The bridge was also hit, either by a shell or grenade, and the Captain killed instantly. LYDD then tried to come alongside but after hitting starboard side sheered off, and appeared to ram a vessel on port quarter. This was COMFORT. GRAFTON opened fire under the impression LYDD had rammed the M.T.B. Target was then shifted to another vessel further away on port quarter, and vessel was observed to blow up with a bright flash. This may well have been the enemy M.T.B.

28. During the forenoon JAGUAR, GALLANT and GRENADE were dispatched via the new Middle Route X to test the opposition by shore batteries prior to introducing this route as an alternative to the long Northern route. GRENADE arrived Dunkirk, reported no fire from shore batteries, but that she had experienced heavy bombing. These three destroyers were attacked by dive bombers when approaching Dunkirk at about noon, and GALLANT was damaged. At least six attacks were carried out, one enemy aircraft was brought down by gunfire and others by fighters. An hour later MALCOLM reported Dunkirk heavily bombed with a large number of aircraft and during the afternoon this bombing extended up the coast to ships off Bray. During the afternoon the Middle Route X was brought into use for destroyers, but small ships were still routed round the Northern route to Zuydecoote Pass. LOCUST and MOSQUITO joined Dover Command and were dispatched to work on the beaches during the afternoon. Shortly after noon enemy shore batteries near Nieuport began to bring Zuydecoote Pass under spasmodic gunfire and the state was being reached whereby the new Middle Route would become the only practicable daylight approach to Dunkirk and the beaches. At noon, CALCUTTA, who was able to get across to La Panne beach to receive troops by small boats, embarked 1,200 troops from the minesweepers and then sailed for Sheerness, the minesweepers remaining to load up again. At 1606, the New Route X having been fully swept, all ships were ordered by the Vice Admiral to use Route X, exercising navigational caution, and those from Dover were instructed to proceed by Route Z, the South route, provided the passage between Calais Bell Buoy and Dunkirk be made in darkness.

Route X passed some 26 miles to the South-Westward of the extreme N.E. point of the Northern Route Y, the locality in which enemy M.T.B. attack threatened, and was shielded by

the French minefields in the Ruytingen and Dyck channels. It appears that the enemy M.T.B. command failed to appreciate the withdrawal of traffic to the S.W. and did not follow up.

In the evening it was reported that there was no congestion anywhere on the coast, except at La Panne. The force at La Panne was accordingly reinforced as ships became available.

29. An additional beach party of seven officers and a number of ratings under Captain J. Howson was sailed in SABRE at 1600 for Dunkirk, and Captain E. Bush, who had already visited Dunkirk and was aware of the general conditions, was sent to HEBE as S.N.O. afloat off the beaches. An M.T.B. was placed at the disposal of the S.N.O. on the coast.

30. At about 1600 a heavy air attack commenced on the East Mole Pier, Dunkirk harbour, mainly by dive bombing, which lasted continuously for more than two hours. At the same time, other air attacks took place on ships lying off Bray. Attacks were renewed from time to time up till after 2000, not only on Dunkirk, but on ships off Bray, in the Zuydecoote Pass and those in the Southern end of X Route. These attacks were to have a disastrous result on the evacuation arrangements at Dunkirk. There were present alongside the inner side of the Eastern Arm two destroyers GRENADE and JAGUAR, three trawlers ahead of the GRENADE and JAGUAR, three more trawlers ahead of them with CANTERBURY in the next berth, and a French destroyer ahead of the CANTERBURY. Outside the harbour on the outside of the Eastern Arm the Transport FENELLA was berthed opposite the GRENADE and JAGUAR and the CRESTED EAGLE opposite the six trawlers. In addition, the MALCOLM and VERITY were also in the harbour but further inside. This presented a very good target and the ships were soon hit and embarkation of troops ceased for the time being. CANTERBURY, accompanied by JAGUAR, succeeded in leaving harbour, but both were hit by bombs and damaged. Both succeeded in reaching Dover, though JAGUAR had to be towed part of the way and was subjected to many attacks on passage. CANTERBURY reached harbour at 2115 and disembarked 1,950 troops but was sufficiently damaged to prevent her being used again in these operations. To return to Dunkirk, FENELLA was lying alongside on the outside of the pier, and was hit and sunk. GRENADE and one of the trawlers on the East side were hit and the trawler sank in the fairway. GRENADE sinking and on fire had to be abandoned and appeared to be about to sink in the fairway. A trawler was detailed to tow her clear. VERITY, who witnessed this occurrence, was continuously straddled by bombs for 35 minutes. Passage all along the pier having ceased, she cast off, and skirting the burning GRENADE and trawler, proceeded out of harbour, grounding slightly on a sunk drifter in the entrance. At about 1800 KING ORRY arrived to find the harbour occupied only by burning and sinking ships, with no sign of any one on the pier nor any boat moving in the harbour. She was immediately subjected to heavy bombing attacks, having previously had her steering gear put out of action by a dive bombing attack when about half mile