

Dynamo 115.

H.M.S. "WORCESTER"
AT TILBURY.

7. 6. 1940.

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Sir,

I have the honour to submit the attached report of operations off Dunkirk, 28th May to 1st June inclusive.

The documents include:-

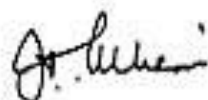
1. Narrative.
2. Appendix A - Time Table of journeys.
3. Appendix B - Expenditure of ammunition.
4. Medical Report.

Recommendation for Officers and men are being forwarded separately.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



COMMANDER R.N.

The Vice Admiral Dover.

Copy of reports forwarded
to F.O. i/c London.



ADM199788

REPORT OF OPERATIONS OFF DUNKIRK.

Having proceeded at maximum speed (26 1/2 knots) with fuel available from a position about 120 miles north of Lands End, Worcester arrived off Dover at 0715 on the 28th May. Then on account of reduced fuel I was forced to make the passage to Dunkirk by "Y" Channel at a speed of 18 knots.

A summary of journeys made is shown on the attached Appendix A.

On Journey 1 attempts were made to refuel from "Anthony" but only 10 tons was taken on board. The return journey was made at 15 knots leaving less than 5 tons on board on arrival at Dover. Numerous enemy aircraft made towards the ship during the afternoon but all were driven off by gunfire. Destroyers astern were seen to be bombed. Attached possible s/m off West Hinder light buoy. 1 pattern of depth charges. Result - wreckage but no oil.

Fuel was taken in before Journey 2 (Route X both ways) which took place without incident except for a heavy bombing attack on East Pier while embarking troops. The continuation of this attack subsequently sunk the Grenade 10 minutes after leaving the pier.

Journey 3. (Route X both ways) Troops were embarked from boats off Bray. All ships boats were left behind. Very few enemy aircraft approached the ship on this trip and any that looked dangerous were driven off by gunfire.

Journey 4. Sailed on route Z but altered back to route X on receiving information of enemy shelling on Z. It was expected to embark troops from the beaches again but was ordered to carry R.A. Dover and Staff until dawn. A full load was taken from boats at Bray after his departure.

LAPANNE and

On return X channel was taken at dead low water and owing to rounding No.5 Buoy Dunkirk roads too close, grounded on a shoal 337° 2.5 cables from that buoy. When the ship was refloated it was discovered that 18 - 20 knots was the maximum safe speed.

Occasional firing was carried out on enemy aircraft in the vicinity during the evening of the 30th May.

Journey 5. As soon as ship had refuelled and had the propellers examined by divers a passage was made at 18 knots to the beaches which were reached at dusk on the 31st May.

East pier was full at this time and it was evident that difficulty was being experienced in getting men to the minesweepers already at the beaches. I visited all the beaches in turn finally anchoring at LAPANNE. The minesweepers further inshore were getting small loads but none came the greater distance to WORCESTER. At dawn WORCESTER came under shell fire from shore batteries and I decided to slip the cable and proceed to East pier where a full load of troops was embarked.

Journey 6. June 1st. On approaching X channel about 1500 in the vicinity of No.5 buoy, two recent wrecks of transports were sighted; small craft and destroyers were picking up survivors. A few survivors were picked up. At this time a signal was received from V.A.Dover to return to harbour forthwith. It seemed however not worth while to return so close from Dunkirk and so I continued my course through the roads where some French soldiers were picked up from an open boat and the crew of a small service motor launch which had broken down.

On arrival at Dunkirk I was ordered to go to West pier. I deemed this inadvisable and said so. Also it was suggested that I should pick up French soldiers from the beach inside the harbour. Without boats this was impracticable.

Alongside East pier a full load was taken but not before I had cast off and returned owing to a misunderstanding. While alongside a hulk two cables east from the pier was heavily bombed by two waves of dive bombers. The second attack was in progress as I left the pier and aircraft were engaged by the entire armament.

Dive bomber attacks on leaving Dunkirk.

During the next half hour the ship was attacked by successive waves of dive bombers consisting of three or four squadrons of about nine each.

The first attack took place in Dunkirk roads where avoiding action was not possible. The maximum available speed was 19 knots. In this attack about half the bombs dropped were time delay and the nearest appeared to be about 50 yards away. Although the ship was lifted in the water a number of times no structural damage was done.

Succeeding attacks took place in the channel leading northward from No.5 buoy. In these attacks the majority of the bombs burst on impact with the water and caused great damage to personnel. Some of these dropped as near as 10 yards.

In all it is estimated that over 100 bombs were dropped near the ship.

Attacks were pressed well home even down to 200 or 300 feet and it can be said that the bombing was

accurate, only a miracle preventing the ship being struck. After releasing bombs the aircraft fired their front guns, but it seemed without great accuracy.

Throughout these attacks the behaviour of the gun crews was magnificent. A heavy volume of fire was kept up all the time except at short intervals when death or wounds prevented a crew from functioning.

Two aircraft were certainly shot down and probably three.

Six Bren guns were found to be a useful addition to the armament.

By my order men were told to lie down when ever possible and on the bridge this was done whenever bombs were seen to be released until after they had exploded. The only man killed on the bridge was Sub.Lieut. Humphreys who was standing up firing a Bren gun.

A number of casualties occurred when an H.E. shell in the rack was detonated by a splinter outside the sickbay.

As a result of this action there were 46 dead and 180 injured on board and numbers of splinter holes all over the ship. Those in oil fuel tanks subsequently stopped the ship about five miles from the North Goodwin light vessel. Others wrecked electrical circuits including the D.C. gear, and the gyro compass. Only three holes were found below the water line.

Five miles from the North Goodwin water in the fuel tanks caused stoppage of main engines and the Tug St. Olave was signalled to take us in tow. However after three quarters of an hour engines were reported ready and course was shaped for Dover.

Entering the inner harbour about 2030

Worcester collided with S.S. Maid of Orleans on the way out.

I attribute this largely to the loss of manoeuvring power both of screws and rudder from damaged sustained in recent operations.

J. Allen
Commander RN
7.6.40.

ADM198786

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APPENDIX A.

DATE.	JOURNEY NO.	DOVER.		DUNKIRK.		APPROX. No. OF TROOPS EMBARKED.
		Arrive.	Depart.	Arrive.	Depart.	
28.5.40.	1.	0715.	0715.	1200.	1325.	450.
29.5.40. (after fuelling)	2.	1720.	0700.	1040.	1320.	800.
30.5.40.) 31.5.40.)	3.	1045.	1925.	0130.	0740.	800.
31.5.40.	4.	0725.	1234.	1700.	0200.	750.
1. 6.40. (After fuelling.)	5.	0825.	1608.	2100.	0430.	650.
1. 6.40.	6.	2100.	1300.	1600.	1630.	900.

TOTAL 4350.

J. Allen