

27 July 1940

A14/0/12

SECRETH.M.S. WHITSHEDE,
at Portsmouth.

25th May, 1940.

insert
addenda on
pencil from
Captain Conder to
V.A. Dover 1/6/40.

Sir,

Letter of proceedings for period Wednesday,
22nd May 1940 to Saturday, 25th May, 1940,
inclusive.KCB
14/6/40

I have the honour to report that in accordance with instructions, I proceeded during the afternoon of Wednesday, 22nd May, alongside Admiralty Pier to embark anti-tank guns etc. for Boulogne. As these did not arrive the ship shoved off and went to a buoy, proceeding alongside the same berth for the same duty at 2045. Instructions were received from the Chief of Staff, Dover, as to what were ships duties which were to embark anti-tank units and convoy a Guards Brigade, S.S. BIARRITZ and QUEEN OF THE CHANNEL, to Boulogne as soon as possible.

2. Anti-tank guns and stores were embarked in WHITSHEDE. It was understood that the Guards Brigade would be embarked at 0230. Contact was made with the Masters of the two transports, and with the Brigadier and Brigade Major and a conference was held on board WHITSHEDE as it was understood that the landing might be opposed and ships had therefore to load equipment accordingly.

3. Subsequent to the conference instructions were received for WHITSHEDE to proceed independently with anti-tank units. The advisability of this was represented to the Chief of Staff to the Vice Admiral, Dover and by him, I think, to the Director of Military Operations, and sanction given for the arrangements made by myself with the Brigadier to stand.

4. About 0200 on 22nd it was apparent that loading which had already been delayed by an air raid warning was not proceeding efficiently. The Brigadier and I therefore held a conference in the R.T.O.'s office on the Pier when it was found that the R.T.O. (Lieutenant Colonel Robinson) had underestimated requirements and that 3 or possibly 4 and not 2 transports were required. I therefore suggested to the Brigadier that the troops should be organised as a fighting unit leaving such equipment as camp cookers etc. to come on by the next transport which could be got ready and that it was better to disembark a company into that transport so as to have a reasonably efficient and mobile landing party. This was agreed to and WHITSHEDE with 2 transports sailed at 0515 with VINTARA in company as A.A. escort. Brigadier General Fox-Pitt spent long hours, usually sorting & arranging the embarkation of the equipment stores.

5. Off Cape Grisnez a German aircraft was fired at without result. This aircraft had just secured a direct hit on a unknown tanker of about 7,000 tons, which was burning furiously.

6. The ship proceeded at Speed leaving the transports so that the Brigadier and myself might appreciate the position at Boulogne before bringing them under enemy fire. The Dover tug S.S. GONDIA was met outside the harbour and ordered to follow the ship in to assist in berthing as it was dead low water springs and WHITSHEDE was drawing about a foot more than the channel was dredged to.

Continued ...

22/5

This unarmed tug was most useful. The ship berthed at No.3 berth Quai Chanzy.

7. It was obvious that the town was still in allied hands and transports were ordered to berth forthwith. VIMIERA remained outside the harbour on guard.

8. The complete chaos on the Quai and in the customs sheds is quite indescribable.

9. I landed and found the Movement Control Officer and the Principal Sea Transport Officer and obtained the latter's views and permission to represent him together with an appreciation of the state of affairs which I signalled to the Vice Admiral, Dover. I then took the Movement Control Officer's motor car and proceeded to General Headquarters at Wimereux where I at once saw General Brownrigg. I explained to him what was wanted and asked him for an officer with ability and complete authority to assist me in producing order on the Quai. This he did and we decided to remove all useless mouths so as to improve the food situation. Using General Brownrigg's telephone I rang up Vice Admiral, Dover and reported verbally to him.

10. Taking Captain Ensor, General Brownrigg's personal aide, with me I then returned to Boulogne and boarded WHITSHED. Using the loud hailing outfit and my ship's company with bayonets and aided by my officers, Captain Ensor then succeeded in rounding up the disorganised units of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, foreign refugees, English refugees and separating other military units into their component parts.

11. Meanwhile disembarkation particularly from S.S. BIARRITZ was proceeding slowly due to the state of the tide, the absence of crane drivers and defects in cranes. Torpedomen from WHITSHED assisted in driving and repairing the cranes. I again saw Captain Baker of the BIARRITZ and asked him to use every endeavour to expedite unloading and finally to instruct him and the military as to how this was to be done.

12. The Quai was cluttered up at awkward places with wooden latrines for soldiers embedded in concrete and several abandoned motor cars. The motor cars were rolled out of the way and latrines uprooted. An Officer in command of a very large R.A.M.C. contingent of some 800 men, I think, was extraordinarily helpful using his men, when they had dumped their kit, as working parties together and with the remainder of my own ship's company. We evacuated two hospital trains into S.S. BIARRITZ, together with various British casualties, into WHITSHED and QUEEN OF THE CHANNEL. To do this arrangements had to be made to shunt various trains. WHITSHED, BIARRITZ and QUEEN OF THE CHANNEL, loaded to capacity sailed about noon for Dover.

13. S.S. MONAS QUEEN arrived just beforehand with the balance of the equipment of the Brigade of Guards.

14. Among my many passengers of both sexes were 3 officers and 7 men of the German Air Force. They were landed without any accidents to them. There was also a Mrs. Johnson who I think had been the only person for some days left in the British Consulate and who had worked with great courage and ability and to exhaustion.

15.

15. In view of the signal received stating that U Boats would probably be working in the Straits of Dover I dropped a depth charge on every likely echo.

16. Ship remained alongside the East wall ^{at Dover} until 0200/23 May when she proceeded to Number 2 buoy ^{-3/5}

17. At 1045/23 May the ship slipped and proceeded to sea to escort 2 transports to Calais. On the return journey an aircraft carried out a shallow low dive attack head on. Fire was opened but when the aircraft altered course it was seen to be a Spitfire. This aircraft neither fired any recognition signals nor flashed any letter and as I knew that the enemy were using captured British aircraft and I could not see any of its I felt quite justified in having opened fire on him. (markings)

18. The ship was about to enter harbour at Dover when she was ordered to proceed to Boulogne together with H.M.S. KEITH, to report on the situation and carry out evacuation as necessary. The ship proceeded to Boulogne direct and berthed. One German army co-operation aeroplane being fired at without result. Shortly after berthing KEITH came alongside me. The situation was as follows.

19. The French had again run away, the British had no anti-tank guns left and no artillery. The Welsh Guards with the exception of a few outlying Bren gun posts were under cover of trees in a small wood on the North bank, just opposite the end of Quai Chanzy. The remainder of the Brigade were holding the Quai and customs sheds and the bridge heads. The enemy were in La Portel and on the South side of the town in the heights. Machine and rifle gun fire was incessant, 5 French destroyers outside the harbour at considerable range were bombarding the enemy positions, being apparently directed by some shore liaison near the Wireless Station. Fifth Column agents were reporting movements of troops particularly Headquarters. There were many wounded on the Quai. The Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps were a rabble and though armed had refused to fight even though the Guards had done their best to rally them as reinforcements. These Auxiliary Military Pioneers tried to rush the ship but the seaman demolition party who were on the Quai stopped them with bayonets.

20. I made a rapid estimate and informed the Captain (D) that 7 destroyers were necessary for the withdrawal, if it were to be effected. The Brigadier was also present.

21. Conflicting signals were received as to demolitions taking place or not taking place and to holding on and to withdrawal. My private view was that we could have held on.

22. I was ordered to proceed out of the harbour as soon as possible after I had embarked wounded. With some 70 stretcher cases and several walking wounded and certain oddments I proceeded some half an hour afterwards - after berthing. ^{the Guards} While slipping I observed cross firing at enemy machine gun posts in a warehouse 100 yards on my starboard beam. Two 4.7" H.E. direct impact obliterated this menace. Other likely posts on the South side of the harbour were also shelled and enemy firing ceased. I remained in the vicinity of Boulogne in V/S touch with KEITH.

23. VIMY arrived and Captain (D) ordered her to come in alongside him.

25. I observed enemy movement in a small fort on the heights commanding the harbour on the North side of the town and shelled this apparently blowing up the magazine. A military transport was also shelled and caught fire.

26. Burning troops advancing towards Wimereux were also shelled and I think unsuccessfully. About 50 of these were later seen to be clustered on the shore and eventually signalled off that they were English. This may or may not have been so but I did not shell them.

27. I picked up a French seaman off a buoy marking the end of the Northern breakwater and was shelled by field guns in doing, what I felt at the time, was a unwise action. I received no damage and was able to spot the field guns and destroy them. I dodged their second salvo by going astern. *I shelled the*

position which we saw was firing at us and silenced it. I then observed a large camouflaged object which moved & was presumably a tank as it was

at a ferry & then 28. French destroyers continued to shell enemy positions and I closed the leader and informed him by loud hailer. *as he would not answer my signals, that a British tank unit was expected from Calais and that the soldiers on the beach were probably English.*

29. All this time as reported by Captain (D) and myself the German Army co-operation aeroplane was flying round and round over the town co-ordinating most skilfully movements of the German troops which consisted of a regiment of infantry, a tank battalion and towed field guns.

30. VENETIA, VIMIERA and VENOMOUS were in the offing with me and Captain (D) reported to Vice Admiral, Dover that the situation had eased and WHITSHEED was ordered to return to Dover. I had just commenced to do this when I intercepted a signal ordering evacuation. I therefore turned and informed Captain (D) and that I was doing this with a view to assisting. The destroyers outside the harbour were now formed in order one and proceeded slow, WHITSHEED bombarding the heights on the North of the town where enemy troops were seen to be moving. Objects to be shelled were being pointed out by Second Lieutenant Reid of the Irish Guards who was on the bridge with me.

31. I knew that continuous fighter escort had been promised. I had just received a signal stating that British destroyers were frequently firing on our own aircraft. While alongside I had observed one British aircraft bomb some of our derelict transport outside Boulogne and had seen French destroyers firing at him. Fortunately I and the other Commanding Officers realised just in time that the cloud of aircraft overhead estimated at 60 were enemy and not British. They were Messerschmitts 109 and J.U.87. The French who were in formation 2 were slower to realise this and one of them received a direct hit which put her on fire while another was apparently damaged as well.

32. I do not quite know what happened during the next 10 minutes. We were close to some wrecks which fortunately showed above water and ships proceeded to take individual avoiding action at full speed. The first salvo of bombs cut my rigging which fell on the siren lanyard, causing the siren to wail until the First Lieutenant eventually cleared it. This was unfortunate as I have to use the siren as the

cease-fire

Captain's cease fire gong

cease-fire signal owing to WHITSHEED not having
~~cease-firing apparatus~~. (Which the Dockyard is now remedying).
 The steam also completely obscured the view of the two pom-poms.
 The banging of bombs was continuous and I had to shout the helm
 orders at the top of my voice down the voicepipe where the
 Coxswain very coolly carried them all out. I estimate some 15
 salvoes fell around WHITSHEED. One officer was killed and one
 officer and 12 men wounded. 4 of these being on the bridge.
 We were also machine gunned. I watched the bombers in the sky
 diving at angles of 70 and 80 degrees, sometimes doing what I
 believe is called the "falling leaf". I watched one release
 his bombs on me and he actually passed his own bombs in the air.
 Three bullets or splinters pierced parts of the bridge in my
 vicinity and I was relatively unhurt. The ship's company
 rapidly appreciated that the siren was not giving a cease-fire
 signal and all weapons fired. Two guns had to ship percussion
 locks as the leads had been shot away.

33. I saw a salvo fall in the harbour
 apparently on KEITH and I therefore proceeded at once into the
 harbour to see what would be required. The bombers had now
 cleared off and the English destroyers outside the harbour were
 relatively unhurt. From subsequent information it is apparent
 that this attack was wonderfully co-ordinated by the enemy
 observation aircraft because as the bombing started I saw the
 enemy advance over the Northern heights of the town and using
 our own anti-tank guns and machine guns opened a fierce fire on
 KEITH and VIMY and on the troops on the Quay.

not firing 34. As I was altering up to come between the piers I saw
 VIMY with a slight list, wires trailing, coming out astern. She
 was ~~on fire~~. She was being followed by KEITH who was firing at
 the heights on the North side of the town. My director had
 gone so I gave the gunlayers a point of aim and range and *currents*
 opened intense fire on these heights and then backed out of the
 harbour with the other two.

35. As soon as I was clear of the harbour KEITH informed me
 that Captain (D) 19 had been killed. I therefore ordered all
 destroyers to haul off to seaward but to keep separate
 and not in formation. However, KEITH whose Degaussing had been
 shot away and VIMY whose Captain was dying of wounds and each
 of whom had about 70 Army stretcher cases onboard went off to
 Dover as fast as they could. As the harbour was known to be
 magnetically mined, I consider that the action of the executive
 officer of KEITH was correct, but H.M.S. VIMY was undamaged.
Hms. Keith shot down one enemy aircraft into the harbour during the air attack

36. I informed Vice Admiral, Dover of the action I had taken
 and stated that I would not order destroyers into harbour to
 complete the evacuation which still had to be undertaken until
 adequate air protection arrived.

37. WILD SWAN arrived about this time I think and within
 a few minutes some 6 or 9 fighters. I informed destroyers that
 we would go in in pairs to evacuate the Army and that I would
 lead and I informed the Vice Admiral, Dover that I was
 "Going in". As soon as I started VIMIERA immediately made
 speed to follow me. I again bombarded the Northern heights and
 berthed in dead low water at the Northern corner of Quay
 Chanzy, VIMIERA taking the Southern berth of the same Quay.
 The Captain of B gun firing independently scored a direct hit on
 a machine gun nest on the Northern heights that had enfiladed
 KEITH. The Germans used a great number of Very's lights to
 signal to their aircraft with and the positions these were fired
 from formed points of aim. I again asked that this aeroplane
 might be

might be shot down by our fighters because as stated before this was the key of the German operation. No action was taken by them even after the target was indicated to them by the destroyer's gunfire.

38. All was quiet.

39. A panic stricken rabble of Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps tried to rush the ships but the seamen of the demolition party under Sub.Lt. Medlam, R.N.V.R. drove them back at the point of the bayonet. I appreciated that this was the moment to get the Welsh Guards out of their woods and round to the Quai so that they could be taken off. I spoke to the Brigade Major and asked him if he would tell the General that I thought this was the best thing to do. He said he would tell the General and also that it would be the best thing to do. I therefore ordered the Welsh Guards by megaphone to come round and this they did in complete quietness - as far as I know and saw. I heard that they had looted the Bank but they appeared to be in good order. The quiet discipline of the Irish Guards and the steady bearing of the seamen and marines was really fine. Some of the demolition party were embarked and despite Admiralty orders not to carry out demolitions I told those remaining ashore to go on with this. This necessitated some of the seamen I had already got on board going shore again and this they did without the least hesitation. When I saw them later at Dover I told them how excellent their work and conduct was. *The bearing & conduct*

Sub-Lieutenant MEDLAM were exemplary - most praiseworthy

40. WHITSHED embarked including the 70 stretcher cases already onboard, 510 officers and men. Having seen some of the officers of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps I can readily believe that what I was told by one of the officers of the Irish Guards that Belgian, French and British officers were lying about dead drunk in heaps and that officers of the Guards had been busily employed smashing all bottles. A good many of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps ranks were drunk and were carrying bottles of liquor and other loot.

at 2020

41. The ship proceeded followed by VIMIERA and the next ships went in.

42. - I got in touch with the leader of the French destroyers by V/S and asked them to remain off Boulogne and bombard until the English had all been evacuated but as I forgot to tell our own destroyers I had done so I do not know how the French were to know when they had all left.

43. Unfortunately VENETIA received severe damage and was unable to evacuate anyone. VIMIERA therefore had to return once again from Dover to Boulogne during the night to try and complete the evacuation with H.M.S. WESSEX.

44. The calm resolution and bearing of the Commanding Officer of the VIMIERA together with the way he handled his ship and fought her are extremely praiseworthy. I was also greatly impressed on this and on a previous bombing occasion by the conduct and fine seamanship of the Commanding Officer of VENEMOUS.

45. I embarked one or two survivors of the anti-tank unit I had previously taken over. They stated that one gun put 6 projectiles into a German tank. The tank's crew got out quite calmly with hand grenades and destroyed the British crews, capturing the guns. The tank being apparently undamaged.

47. The Commanding Officer, WILD SWAN, reported to me that he had destroyed 3 enemy tanks including one large one with 4.7" and pom pom fire at point blank range and the Commanding Officer, VENEMOUS that he had wiped out a battery of 7 enemy field guns.

48. It is most regrettable that in this difficult operation which I was suddenly called on to conduct the evacuation was not fully completed. HAD VENETIA been undamaged or had VIMY stayed with me or even had WESSEX managed to get into Boulogne at night with VIMIERA all would have been brought off, even though the original numbers given to me by Brigade Headquarters were very considerably underestimated.

49. It was found on return to harbour that WHITSHED's degaussing had also been partly demolished.

50. I made with the Vice Admiral, Dover, what arrangements he thought necessary for the organisation and repair of Dover destroyers and reported to him on the state of the personnel as well as all material.

51. WHITSHED Sailed at 1910 on the 24th May for Portsmouth for repairs.

52. After what has been an eventful fortnight it is estimated the ship has now had some 33 salvoes of bombs on her.

53. The whole success of the German operation to capture Boulogne can in my opinion be attributed to the perfect co-operation of all branches of their forces, air, infantry and mechanised. Had I been able to rely on obtaining the same co-operation, both inter-allied and inter-service, and direction from somebody on the spot I am more than convinced that it would have been perfectly possible to have held Boulogne and eventually to have destroyed the enemy. To have attempted to organise such co-operation on the spot was, however, out of the question. I think, and so I just carried out my orders.

54. Sub.Lieutenant P.K.Needham, R.N. although wounded in the arm and bleeding, continued to carry out his duties as gun control officer and navigator with the utmost coolness and with great ability.

55. Where every man had to more than pull his weight it is hard to mention any names but I was greatly impressed with the conduct throughout of Lieutenant S.R.le H.Lombard-Hobson, R.N. and of Ordinary Seaman Wood who although wounded in the shoulder went on with his duties as sightsetter on the director until he dropped and I lifted him clear. Leading Seaman Caplin, Leading Seaman Phillips and Able Seaman Barnard, Captains of X, Y and B guns displayed coolness ability to take charge in all their duties and great ability. Ordinary Seaman Stringer although wounded in the head and unable to stand continued to fire and reload his Lewis guns and fire at the enemy bombers. Yeoman of Signals Wilson continued to carry out his duties very coolly although he was bleeding from both hands and had a piece of shrapnel in his ankles.

56. The ship received the following damage:-

A few bullets in the hull and superstructure.
Degaussing partially out of action.
Damage to binacles, VC-VF, various electrical
circuits, main thrust block and ~~lifting~~^{steering} gear to
X gun.
Rolling paths of A and B guns warped making training
extremely difficult.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

T. R. Lumb.



COMMANDER-IN-COMMAND.

TO:-

VICE ADMIRAL DOVER.

(Copies to:- Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth.
Captain (D), 19th Destroyer Flotilla.
Captain (D), Plymouth.

II.

OF WHITSHED'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATIONS DATED MONDAY JUNE 24th, 1940.

On May 23rd despite many salvos of falling ^{Bombs} and shell fire he attended the wounded with great coolness, ability and courage, not only our own but also some 70 Army Stretcher Cases.

Whenever the ship has been bombed this officer has remained cheerful and calm, and has attended wounded under fire and yet managed to carry out his cyphering duties with remarkable expedition.

2. RATINGS.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM NATHANIEL HEAD., TORPEDO COXSWAIN, O.N. P/J.35888., throughout the whole period and in all the difficult navigational waters and harbours the ship has entered and on the several occasions of being bombed this rating has never once made a mistake with wheel or engines and has always been supremely cool and efficient and an example to all. He is a pensioner.

PETTY OFFICER WALTER HENRY HOMEWOOD., GUNNER'S MATE., O.N. P/J.111612., on May 10th seeing that the after repair party was partially cut off by fire on X Gun Deck and in the after lobby, took the pompon's crew and an additional hose to the scene of the fire. When the men showed a tendency to leave in the face of the burning cordite he rallied them and the fire was put out with great rapidity. He thus showed courage coolness and fine leadership. These qualities have been apparent on the several occasions of the ship being in action and his conduct under fire and fine influence are in the highest traditions of the Service.

ENGINE ROOM ARTIFICER FOURTH CLASS EDWARD JACOBS P/MK.51759., on May 10th was in charge of the after supply and repair party when a serious fire broke out on X Gun Deck and the after lobby. Although suffering from burns he with complete disregard for his own safety himself took a hose in to the centre of the fire and rapidly extinguished it.

This young ratings steadiness on this occasion was a remarkable exhibition of his fine sense of duty and personal courage.

ACTING YEOMAN OF SIGNALS JOHN WILSON., P/JX.132176., On May 23rd this rating was wounded by shrapnel in the ankle and in both hands and bled considerably. He exhibited a fine courage and sense of duty in remaining at his post and carrying out his duties with great coolness and ability despite further bombing.

STOKER DANIEL TILDESLEY., P/MK.94738., On May 23rd with complete disregard for flying bomb splinters and machine gunning replaced and repaired damaged hoses on deck and stood by them in case there should be an out break of fire. I consider this old stoker's conduct to have been courageous and exemplary.

ABLE SEAMAN REGINALD HARRY BARNARD., QR2., P/JX.146417., On May 23rd rapidly re-organised his guns crew with supply parties to replace casualties and kept it in action. Later although his gun could hardly be trained he scored by good

III.

OF WHITSHED'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATIONS DATED MONDAY JUNE 24th, 1940.

And careful shooting a direct hit on the machine gun post in BOULOGNE that had so damaged KEITH killing Captain (D), Nineteen. By this methodical shooting and his absolute coolness his gun also scored direct hits on other enemy positions.

This rating - who is only twenty years old - exhibited great qualities of leadership and cool courage and shows high promise.

ACTING LEADING SEAMAN HORACE ERNEST PHILLIPS., P/J.115033.,
On May 23rd by good and careful was instrumental in scoring direct hits on German gun positions. His steadiness under fire and ability to think quickly have been an inspiration to his gun's crew.

LEADING SEAMAN FREDERICK CAPLIN., P/JX.163780.,
On May 23rd during a heavy bombing attack he placed a tourniquet round the leg of one of his gun's crew thereby saving the man's life. At the same time he not only kept his gun in action but also replaced his casualties, from supply parties. Later when the elevating gear of his gun had ceased to operate he kept it in action by lifting the muzzle and then firing, his gun scoring direct hits on enemy positions.

Throughout the period this ratings resolute attitude and courage under fire have been more than exemplary, and very fine influence.

ORDINARY SEAMAN JOHN DUFF WOODS., HOSTILITIES ONLY.,
On May 23rd although badly wounded in the shoulder and side stuck to his post as Director Sight-Setter until he dropped from loss of blood.

ORDINARY SEAMAN., RNVR., NORMAN HENRY STRINGER., SDX.1423.,
On May 23rd the first salvo bombs seriously wounded this rating in the hip, stomach and side so that one leg was almost useless. He continued however to keep his Lewis gun in action reloading as necessary with great coolness and devotion to duty until the attack was over.

Both these young Ordinary Seamen's devotion to duty is most praiseworthy and they could not have done better.

ABLE SEAMAN RICHARD O'NEILL., P/JX.150241.,
On May 10th this rating who is gunlayer of the port pom-pom continued firing despite a minor wound in his shoulder and with such good effect that the attacking aircraft was hit and may not have reached home. In all actions with aircraft since that date this rating has exhibited great coolness and keenness when under fire.

IV... On May 23rd...

IV.

OF WHITSHED'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATIONS DATED MONDAY JUNE 24th, 1940.

On May 23rd I was much impressed by the coolness and courage and ability of the Commanding Officer of the H.M. Ship VENETIA while she was working under me. This Officer was the first to follow me in to BOULOGNE and throughout the operation showed a very proper courage and spirit.

On May 18th during North Goodwin Patrol and on May 23rd at BOULOGNE H.M. Ship VENOMOUS has worked directly under me. On both occasions I have been deeply impressed by the coolness, courage and resourcefulness of her Commanding Officer, in whom I think these qualities are outstanding to a remarkable degree.

I understand that when on May 23rd, in BOULOGNE, H.M. Ship VENETIA was hit and set on fire and the Commanding Officer killed, Sub-Lieutenant D.H. JONES., R.N.R., brought his ship stern first out of harbour.

Had he made a mistake H.M. Ships WILD SWAN and VENOMOUS would have been blocked in.

SECOND LIEUTENANT REID of the 2nd Battalion, the IRISH GUARDS was on the bridge assisting the G.C.O. to pick out Military targets on the North side of BOULOGNE; which the ship was bombarding on May 23rd, when she was heavily bombed. Despite the strangeness of the situation he remained entirely cool and afterwards was of further great assistance in directing gunfire on to enemy emplacements.

Mrs. MARION JOHNSON now at Farnborough Park Hotel, Farnborough, Hants., and formerly of the British Consulate, LILLE., who had come to BOULOGNE, took over the Consulate there and dealt with the refugees despite being frequently bombed, and worked at her self appointed task with courage and devotion to duty and her own complete exhaustion and very materially assisted in the evacuation.

The ship has been in action with aircraft on five or six separate occasions during the period of this report, and has had 33 or more salvos of bombs dropped on her. Casualties, amounting to about 25% in all, of the ships company occurred on May 10th and 23rd.

On May 23rd the ship fought and beat off machine guns, tanks, field guns etc., at ranges varying from 100 to 2500 yards.

The above recommendations have been reduced to the barest minimum. Sympathetic consideration of them would have a great effect not only on the morale of the ship, but in those areas where the men come from.



L. H. Smith

Commander in Command.