

over the "Vindictive's" port quarter, and taking against the wall, protected the port screw, which nevertheless hung up two or three times, being probably fouled by the debris of the brows. The "Vindictive" reached Dover soon after 8 a.m., on the 23rd.

105. Some of the proceedings of "Iris II" have been reported in connection with the storming of the Mole, and the rest may be told here. Shortly after leaving the Mole she came under a very heavy fire from the Mole and shore batteries, being hit ten times by small shell and twice by large ones. The first large shell came through the port control position and carried away the port side of the bridge, causing a very serious fire amongst the ammunition and bombs under the bridge. It mortally wounded Commander Valentine Gibbs and Major Charles E. C. Eagles, D.S.O., R.M., and seriously wounded Lieutenant George Spencer, D.S.C., R.N.R. Lieutenant Oscar Henderson ("P. 19") took a volunteer fire party with a hose on to the upper deck to quench the fire, but seeing the condition of the bridge he ran up on to it and found Commander Gibbs, as he then thought, dead, and Lieutenant Spencer seriously wounded, but still conning the ship. He took command and steadied the ship on her course, the coxswain, Petty Officer David P. Smith, sticking to his post with great gallantry, steering with one hand while holding an electric torch to the compass with the other; it is due to Lieutenant Spencer that the ship was turned away from the land. "Iris II" was again hit by three shells simultaneously, and as the men were packed very closely on the main deck the casualties were very heavy. When the ship was steadied on her course the fire was put out, Able Seaman F. E. M. Lake ("Monarch") being the first man to attack it, which he did with sand, afterwards helping Mr. Henderson to throw bombs overboard, regardless of his own life. A motor launch, No. 558, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Lionel S. Chappell, D.S.C., R.N.V.R., and with Captain Ralph Collins on board, gallantly came into the heavy fire from the enemy's guns, and throwing a smoke screen around "Iris II" enabled her to get clear, the ship being very badly damaged; she reached Dover at 2.45 p.m., some five hours after the death of her captain, who remained confident and cheerful until his very heroic spirit passed.

106. Although the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have most promptly recognised and rewarded the services of Acting Captain Carpenter by promoting him to the Post List, I should not like to end this part of my despatch without putting on record the praise which is due to him. An excellent staff officer, he rendered me invaluable assistance in the drawing up of the final operation orders, the preparations for which involved strenuous work by many officers and a vast amount of necessary detail. My account of the proceedings of the "Vindictive" outlines his personal share in the attack, but as showing the force which his example had on those under his command, I hear on all sides that the Captain's calm composure when navigating mined waters and bringing his ship alongside the Mole in darkness, and his great bravery when the ship came under heavy fire did much to encourage similar behaviour on the part of the crew, and thereby contributed greatly to the success of the operation.

#### X.—OSTEND.

107. In arranging the sections of this despatch, I have grouped proceedings of units taking part in the operations off Ostend in their appropriate places, but I submit herewith the report by Commodore Hubert Lynes, C.M.G., Senior Naval Officer at Dunkirk, to whom I am indebted for whole-hearted co-operation and loyal assistance at all times. I share his regret as to the alteration by the enemy of the position of the Stroom Bank Buoy not having been discovered, but I feel that the consequence must be accepted as one of the misfortunes of war.

108. The Lords Commissioners will notice that five French torpedo craft co-operated at Ostend with our big monitors, and four French motor launches with our small monitors. I should like to be allowed to express my gratification at this co-operation, and my thanks for the valuable assistance these vessels gave are due to Vice-Admiral Pierre Alexis, M. A. Ronarc'h, K.C.B., C.M.G., Commandant Supérieur de la Marine dans la zone des Armées du Nord, Dunkerque, and to Capitaine de Vaisseau Breart de Boisanger, D.S.O.

109. Commodore Lynes has recommended for special recognition several officers and men, and the rest their Lordships will have an opportunity of considering in the list which I am forwarding as soon as it can be prepared.

#### XI.—TORPEDO BOAT DESTROYER FORCE.

110. I desire to relate the proceedings of some of the vessels of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla under the command of Captain Wilfred Tomkinson, and the "Warwick" flying my flag, which came under my own observation, or are of special interest or merit.

111. The "Trident" and "Mansfield" after parting company from their submarines, covered the western flotilla of smoke-screening small craft. The "Whirlwind," "Myngs," "Velox," "Morris," "Moorsom," and "Melpomene" covered the eastern smoke-flotilla. The "Warwick," "Phæbe," and "North Star" cruised off the Mole to protect the assaulting craft from torpedo attack. These duties took the destroyers close in shore, and they were frequently under a heavy fire from guns of all calibres at short range. When the assaulting craft were leaving the Mole, the "Warwick" followed them for a few minutes, and then returned to assist the withdrawal of the small craft, picking up four motor launches, including No. 282, commanded by Lieutenant P. T. Dean, R.N.V.R. This launch had on board one hundred and one people from "Iphigenia" and "Intrepid," some of whom had been killed in the launch, and others who were wounded. As the motor launch was dangerously overloaded and full of wounded, I ordered them to be transferred to the "Warwick," which took more than half an hour to do. I was much struck with the gallant bearing of Lieutenant Dean and the survivors of his crew. They were all volunteers, and nearly all had been wounded and several killed.

112. While the "Warwick" was engaged as stated in the preceding paragraph, the "North Star," having lost her bearings in the smoke, emerged from the smoke screen to the south-eastward of the lighthouse. Seeing some vessels alongside the Mole, she fired all her torpedoes at them and withdrew; but coming under very heavy fire at point-blank range she