

Great Britain: Military Situation: June 1940



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~Secret.~~

June 1st, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herewith a copy
of the latest report on the military
situation. This was sent from London
yesterday evening.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Hurani

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of
America.

Washington, D.C.

Telegram despatched from London
on Evening of May 31st, 1940.

At 0600 hours May 31st, 133,878
(including 9,230 casualties) landed in England
giving total of 145,544. Weather favourable
for operation yesterday, as mist rendered enemy
bombing difficult. Only two air raids at 1530
and 1715 hours at Dunkirk, which is partially
blocked by sunk ships. Food and water were
landed. Shipping casualties on May 30th include
French destroyer and four merchant vessels sunk,
British destroyer and two merchant vessels set
on fire, and one further British destroyer, one
gun boat and one merchant vessel damaged. Exclusive
of naval vessels, 665 ships and boats were employed
in this operation.

One boom defense vessel sunk by mine
at Spithead yesterday. Portsmouth and Newhaven
are closed. On May 29th one French and one Argentine
merchant vessel sunk by submarine 20 miles south of
and 140 miles west-north-west of Cape Finisterre
respectively. Two trawlers and further unknown
ship also reported sunk in this area. British
ship sinking 150 miles southwest of Land's End.
last night, and early this morning British ship
reported being attacked 25 miles north-east of
Ushant. German submarine sunk by British sloop
last night, 3 officers and 22 ratings picked up.

Line held by British Expeditionary Force
night/

night of May 30-31 runs Bergues-Furnes-Nieuport to sea. Command of Corruna Line now absorbed into General Headquarters. All formations much reduced in strength and majority of units extremely tired. Enemy in contact along majority of front and are in possession of Nieuport. Enemy pressure maintained throughout yesterday at Bulscamp (southeast of line) culminating attack in evening. Dunkirk shelled yesterday evening.

From Montmedy to Peronne no great change, enemy have been quiet. Enemy still hold Peronne bridgehead and wide bridgehead about Amiens. At Villers Bretonneux and at Amiens bridgeheads extend two to three miles south of Somme. Germans still hold bridgeheads at Ruevisee and St. Valery, though depth of former was reduced on May 29th, and French report quantity of prisoners and material captured here.

During yesterday evening and night Blenheims and Wellingtons carried out 3 attacks on enemy troops and railway junctions east and west of Allied salient. Result not yet known. One aircraft failed to return. Hampdens also despatched last night to attack oil targets in Hamburg with alternative task enemy occupied aerodromes in Holland. All aircraft returned. No reports yet received. Fighter patrols operated constantly yesterday in area Dunkirk-Furnes. Weather conditions unfavourable and very few enemy aircraft seen. One enemy aircraft reported shot down (unconfirmed). One of our
fighters/

fighters missing.

Enemy aircraft yesterday operating in vicinity of Duncansby Head, Scapa and the Wash. Last night considerable enemy air activity reported off southeast coast from Harwick to Isle of Wight. Mine laying activities suspected and shipping reported bombed in Downs, convoy attacked off Orfordness. No interceptions made. Yesterday enemy aircraft also active along Belgian and French coasts and inland to Abbeville. Last night enemy air activity reported in vicinity of Abbeville-La Panne-Areye and shipping reported bombed in Areye locality.

Between 1800 hours May 27th and May 29th, Gladiators made low flying attacks on German troops and lorries in support of attack on Narvik. During this period Hurricanes shot down 5 aircraft, one not yet confirmed. On May 27th Bodo heavily bombed by 12 enemy aircraft. Aerodrome reported wrecked beyond repair and town badly damaged. Two Gladiators engaged enemy and shot down 4.


Telegram despatched from London
late on the evening of June 1st.

Numbers evacuated up to 1800 hours today.

British Fit 185,144 Casualties 12,347

Allied Fit 40,182

Total 237,673.

Weather conditions have been favourable at Dunkirk but bombing and howitzer fire have been heavy, and three destroyers and one corvette have been sunk.

2. Situation at Dunkirk is confused but elements of British and French divisions are holding, with assistance of inundations, general line Mardyck thence canal to Bergues thence Belgian frontier thence northwards to the sea. Strong enemy pressure against Perimeter continues.

3. In Somme region 51st Division has taken over from Pont Remy to the sea and reported no incident last night. Armoured division withdrawn into reserve.

4. Today Blenheims carried out three attacks on enemy columns and communications leading to diminishing evacuation area. Direct hits on motor transport and troops reported. All aircraft returned. Up till 1500 hours today fighter patrols over Dunkirk area shot down 40 enemy aircraft confirmed and 33 unconfirmed. Thirteen of our aircraft are missing. Two Ansons from coastal command attacked by five ME. 109's near Nieuport. Two enemy aircraft shot down and two badly damaged. Our aircraft undamaged.

5./

5. German long range bomber aircraft principally employed yesterday in Dunkirk area on Belgium coast and east and south coasts of England. Latter probably mine laying. Dive bombers attacks also made on Dunkirk harbour. Meteorological flights by bomber reconnaissance aircraft particularly in area Rouen-St.Quentin-Paris-Rouen. Appreciable increase in activity of enemy transport aircraft principally between Hanover Hamburg area and Utrecht Dortmund-Cologne area and Evere Stuttgart and Phillipville-Beaumont area. No information as to type of loads carried. Reported that losses among parachute troops and air-borne infantry in Holland were very heavy. Small minority showed resentment at ruthless method employed but most said that they appreciated its necessity. According to prisoners large stock of aviation petrol is being accumulated near Guise (east of St. Quentin).

There appears to be a movement of German naval aircraft from Baltic to Nordeney.

Telegram despatched from London
late on the evening of June 2nd.

Numbers evacuated up to 18.00 hours today
as follows:-

British	Fit	204,340
	Casualties	12,764
Allies	Fit	64,369
	Casualties	795
Total		282,268

Estimated remaining to be evacuated: British
5,000, French 20,000. This afternoon a hospital
carrier was bombed and damaged off South England, but
is proceeding to harbour under own steam.

2. German pressure against perimeter con-
tinues, and at 10.00 hours this morning enemy made
violent attack on Dunkirk from the West. No details
available. Allied line at Dunkirk approximately as
follows. Bray, Dunes-Ghyvelde-Bergues - thence along
the canals to Spycker-Mardick-Haudes Dunes.

3. In Montmedy-Aisne-Somme sector, the
Germans made early morning attack yesterday towards
Belloy and Fay, south of Peronne, which was repulsed.

4. Blenheims which attacked enemy guns
between Dunkirk and Gravelines early today obtained
hits on artillery units and on anti-aircraft battery
near Le Clipon. Hampdens and Whitleys referred to
in my immediately preceding telegram encountered

unfavourable/

unfavourable weather, but dropped bombs on marshalling yards at Hamm and Osnabruck, a mineral oil and asphalt works at Ostermoor and blast furnaces in the Ruhr area. Six hits also registered on bridge at Rheine over which a column of motor transport was proceeding at the time. Today, British patrols Dunkirk area shot down 16 enemy aircraft confirmed and 2 unconfirmed. Four of our aircraft missing.

5. Yesterday German bomber reconnaissance aircraft very active, and numerous meteorological flights carried out over the North Sea and Northern France. Increased activity of transport aircraft on May 31st maintained yesterday. Flights were mainly between Dortmund area and Evere, Cologne and Bonn areas, and Guise, and also a few to Schipol. Transport activity to Norway showed slight increase.

PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 3rd, 1940.



~~Secret~~

file →

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herewith a copy of
the latest report on the military situation.
This was sent off from London yesterday
evening.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Horan

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

*P.S. You will note the treaty ton of damages.
The damages was an also feeling of a new
upside yards.*

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The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

Telegram despatched from London on the
evening of June 2nd

Up to midnight June 1st - June 2nd total
evacuated as follows:

British, fit, 190,465, casualties 12,642;
Allies, fit, 52,136, casualties 795. Total 256,038.
Despite very heavy fighter protection throughout
June 1st Dunkirk beaches and perimeter were subjected
to constant bombing and increasingly accurate German
artillery. Enemy pressure on perimeter continued
and line appears to have contracted. Exact line of
perimeter not at present known. In the last 24 hours
at least three destroyers and three mine sweepers
sunk. At least six destroyers seriously damaged and
numerous other miscellaneous craft sunk or damaged.
Difficulty of evacuation increased by activities of
fifth column in issuing false information and false
orders to small craft some of which withdrew under
the impression that they were ordered to do so.
Eastern entrance to Dover closed by magnetic mines
and two mines have been exploded off Folkestone pier.

No material change between Montmedy and the
sea. Information regarding French activities on this
front very scant.

Yesterday evening and last night Blenheim
and Wellington aircraft attacked enemy troops and
transport in area of Hondchoote (18 miles southeast
of Dunkirk), Soex-Furnes with success. This area
full/

full of enemy troops, armoured vehicles and motor transports moving in general northerly and westerly direction. All aircraft returned. Blenheim attacked enemy guns between Dunkirk and Gravelines early today. No reports yet received. All aircraft returned. Last night Whitleys attacked marshalling yards and junctions in area Homberg-Osnabruck-Hamm and Hampdens similar targets at Coblenz, Euskirchen, Duren and Krefeld. No reports yet received. All aircraft returned. Albacore aircraft attacked three M.T.Bs 14 miles off Ostend and hit one. Throughout yesterday our fighter aircraft shot down 46 enemy aircraft confirmed and 32 unconfirmed over Dunkirk-Hoves-Ostend area. Three enemy aircraft on ground at Ostend also set on fire. Sixteen of our fighters missing.

Heavy German air raids yesterday afternoon at Marseilles, near Creil, at Compiègne and northwest of Rouen enemy aircraft active last night probably mine laying in the channel and off east coast from Yarmouth to Selsea Bill. Enemy aircraft also active off Belgium and French coasts from Flushing to Cap Takfleur and inland to St. Omer, Hazebrouck and Betune. Many interceptions were made.

One British ship reported sinking twenty miles north northwest of Kinnaird Head last night.

No material change in northern Norway. Fairly stiff enemy resistance east of Stromness.

P.S.F.
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 3rd, 1940

~~Secret~~

file

Dear Mr. President,

I have just received a telegram from the Foreign Office instructing me to inform you at once that it has been decided to bring into contraband control bases Italian ships containing cargoes of direct value to Germany for war purposes.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. S. F.

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of June 3rd.

Evacuation impossible during daylight yesterday but at night was subjected to severe air attack. Believed that whole of B. E. F. now evacuated. General Alexander left with the last ship loading at 22.30 hours last night. Latest evacuation figures are:-

British fit	209,564
Casualties	13,004
Allied fit	69,017
Casualties	<u>795</u>
Total	292,380

During last 24 hours one drifter and two trawlers sunk, two hospital carriers and two trawlers damaged. Hospital carriers were deliberately bombed and severely damaged though there was no mistake of their identity. Thought to be 25,000 French troops left in bridgehead. Yesterday morning French line was Mardick-Spycker-Bergues frontier defences. Enemy attack at Bergues yesterday. Position in this area not at present clear. Block ships have been sunk in Dunkirk but channel is not completely blocked.

Some enemy infiltration east of St. Avold where small parties have reached fort outposts and Maginot Line. No operations appear to have taken place on front of British division on lower Somme. From present known dispositions of the German armies not yet possible to deduce immediate German intentions.

Enemy/

122

Enemy troops and communications leading to bridgehead area attacked by Wellingtons last night. Result not yet available. All aircraft returned. Blenheims attacked enemy guns near Gravelines early today. All aircraft returned but no results yet available. Last night Whitleys and Hampdens attacked railways marshalling yards in Rhine-Meuse areas. All aircraft returned. Reports not yet available. During night May 31st - June 1st squadrons of advance air striking force attacked enemy road and rail communications in Meuse and Rhine areas. All aircraft returned. Our fighters operating in Dunkirk-Furnes area yesterday shot down 23 enemy aircraft confirmed and 32 unconfirmed. Ten of our aircraft missing. On June 1st fighters based in France shot down 2 Messerschmidt 109s. One Hurricane lost but pilot saved. On the same day 3 Hudsons shot down 3 enemy bombers confirmed and 4 unconfirmed off Dunkirk.

Enemy aircraft active over Channel last night probably mine laying, as Portland-Weymouth-Portsmouth and Cherbourg now closed on account of mines. Dover partly closed by mines. One raider also off Isle of Wight, passing over Sussex and Kent. Fighter action taken but no interceptions reported. German aircraft reported yesterday over Le Tréport - Le Havre - Amiens - Le Crotoy and Fécamp. No confirmation yet of press reports of further German bombing yesterday on Lyons and in Rhone valley, or of press reports that

Swiss/

Swiss fighters shot down three German heavy bombers over Swiss territory.

Heavy enemy air attacks yesterday at Narvik. Enemy still maintaining position east of Stromness. Bodo evacuated without loss on night of May 31st - June 1st.

Crew of British steamer sunk by torpedo was rescued 30 miles south of Lizard by French steamer on June 2nd.

From the British Embassy.

~~During Evacuation~~

file →

Telegram despatched from London
on the morning of June 4th.

Latest evacuation figures up to
noon today are as follows :

<u>British</u>	-	Fit	211,137
		Casualties	13,004
<u>Allies</u>	-	Fit	79,808
		Casualties	1,129
<u>Total</u>			305,078

Transport which ran ashore during
night of June 2nd-June 3rd arrived this after-
noon at Dover with troops which are not included
in above figures. Encampment at Dunkirk heavily
bombed this evening.

British forces report no incidents
last night on Somme. Air reconnaissance yesterday
showed many villages north of River Aisne occupied
by German troops. Regrouping of German forces on
Aisne front appears to be in progress and abnormal
activity is taking place behind enemy lines from
Attigny-Neufchatel. Enemy attack towards Rheims
area appears therefore likely at early date.
Probably Germans will employ air-borne troops
extensively in future attacks and they are known
to be increasing strength of their parachute troops.

Our aircraft have carried out no further
bombing operations since this morning's report.
Fighter patrols were carried out early today. Few
enemy/

enemy aircraft encountered and no enemy casualties reported. One of our aircraft missing. Attacks by Whitleys and Hampdens on railway marshalling yards referred to in my immediately preceding telegram resulted in hits on yards at Hamm, Osnabruck, Duisberg and at Soest. Oil target at Homnberg (presume Ruhr) also bombed.

Enemy transport aircraft continued active transports to Guise, Sissonne and Evere. Further enemy bombing attacks yesterday on Dunkirk and on railways in Rhone Valley and south and east of Paris. Bomber reconnaissance aircraft active in reconnaissance of shipping and harbours on south and east of coasts of England along north coast of France as far as Cherbourg.

No sign of any German withdrawal in Narvik area. Report indicates that 15,000 German troops may be concentrating in Verdalen area on Swedish frontier northeast of Trondheim with object of reinforcing Germans east of Narvik by crossing into Sweden and thence proceeding north by road and rail. Germans claim to have occupied Bodo. On June 2nd our aircraft shot down six German aircraft confirmed and eight unconfirmed. One of our aircraft missing.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

June 5th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of the latest situation report from London. It was sent off late last night.

Believe me,

dear Mr. President,

Yours very sincerely,

L. L. L.

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.


Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of June 4th.

Up to 14.15 hours today evacuation figures of B. E. F. and Allied troops are as follows:

British, fit	211,265
Casualties	13,053
Allied, fit	109,942
Casualties	<u>1,230</u>
Total	335,490

Report received from Dover states that discipline of French troops recently embarked was quite first class and our relations with them excellent.

Germans have made a local advance northeast of Strasbourg otherwise no operations reported. Enemy now established in railheads and various dumps in rear of Aisne front.

German Air Force operations on June 3rd showed increase on previous day. Twelve long-range bombers Geschwader operated, four of these on Paris area. Number of aircraft of each Geschwader operating not known but total number which attacked Paris probably not less than 200. Twelve aerodromes, four factories and railway targets were attacked, some bombs falling in Paris itself and suburbs.

Attack/

Attack also in Dunkirk area and on Somme front.
These attacks were preceded by widespread
reconnaissance over the north and northwest France
and Paris area, carried out by aircraft from bomber
reconnaissance units. Activity of transport aircraft
continues between Dortmund area Brussels and
Amsterdam and to lesser extent to Guise. Apparent
increase in mine-laying on south coast as far west
as Isle of Wight.



PSF
G.B.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~Secret.~~

June 5th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I send you herewith a copy
of the latest report on the military
situation which was despatched from
London yesterday evening.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

L. Norton

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.


Telegram despatched from London
on the evening of June 4th.

Final evacuation of French troops in Dunkirk carried out last night and operations now ceased. French Admiral who has left Dunkirk reported that Germans were in suburbs of town. Total of evacuated troops entrained in Great Britain up to midnight last night are as follows:

British, fit	211,258
Casualties	13,053
Allies, fit	84,675
Casualties	<u>1,230</u>
Total	310,216

No known casualties to naval vessels last night.

2. No change in situation since yesterday on Aisne-Somme front. Germans still hold bridge-heads at Peronne, Amiens, Abbeville and St. Valeri. Abnormal enemy activity during last 48 hours in following three areas. On and behind Attigny-Neufchatel, Amiens and to east, Abbeville-St.Valeri-Hesdin. Intense enemy fighter activity in last-named area. Majority of armoured divisions engaged in Flanders thought to be resting for a few days.

3. Last night Wellingtons successfully bombed enemy concentrations at Bergues and Gravelines. All aircraft returned safely. Wellingtons, Whitleys and Hampdens also attacked oil refinery plants in Ruhr district last night with marshalling yards as alternative targets. Explosions observed at oil refinery/

refinery at Monheim and direct hits on synthetic oil plant at Gelsenkirchen and marshalling yards at Essen. One aircraft is missing. Six motor torpedo boats attacked by our aircraft last night twenty-five miles north of Zeebrugge. No further fighter operations to record.

4. German air attacks yesterday on railways at Lyons, Marseilles and Grenoble and on airports round Paris, Le Bourget and on French Air Ministry. Twenty enemy aircraft reported shot down. French lost four aircraft destroyed (three on ground) and one missing. Le Havre heavily bombed yesterday evening. Marked enemy activity in Straits of Dover last night mostly confined to single aircraft and no interceptions made.

5. In Narvik area enemy has withdrawn slightly along the south shore of Rombaks Fjord. No air activity.

6. No attacks on shipping reported.