

SELF-LED ACTIVITY WRITE A MILITARY REPORT – DUNKIRK



Recommended for

KS3 and KS4 (History, English)

Learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940.
- Use sources from the time of the evacuation.
- Write using a formal report style.

Time to complete

Approx. 45 minutes



The evacuation of troops from Dunkirk in 1940 was coordinated by Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay at Dover Castle.

SUMMARY

This activity encourages students to take on the role of a service person of the Royal Navy. Using transcripts of the secret progress reports that were collated daily by the War Office, they should write a military report detailing the personnel returned during the evacuation of Dunkirk. To simplify things, students could select one or two days to report on. The best responses will demonstrate an appreciation of the returns in context, showing wider knowledge and understanding of the operation.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Following arrival in Britain, evacuated troops would be transported via train to reception areas around the country where they could rest and recuperate before being assigned to new duties. Landing control (army personnel responsible for organising the troops on arrival into ports) would count the numbers arriving, noting their units and casualties as they boarded the trains. These figures were then recorded in progress reports maintained by the War Office and updated once or twice a day. Annotations indicate where new information has come in and an amendment made. The reports provide a striking reminder of the scale of the evacuation operation and the organisation required on land as well as at sea.

Ask students to imagine they are an Army Liaison Officer who has been on duty attached to the Royal Navy Dover command in the tunnels at Dover Castle during Operation Dynamo. They need to write a summary report for the War Office based on the daily progress reports to give an update on what has happened. Time is of the essence, so it needs to be concise, formal and informative.

As well as adopting the appropriate style and tone students should write precisely about dates and times, locations, and the forces involved. Once the situation has been recounted, students may want to expand the report by adding details of events happening on particular days, and making recommendations for future action. See the situation report from 30 May 1940 on page 2 as an example of the military report style. For background information on the evacuation, see pages 21-24 of the Dover Castle Teachers' Kit. Further insight can be gained from sources 8-12 (on pages 74-75).

COPY

A situation report dated 30th May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 260/37

SECRET

S3. WOTER V SAIC 1 IMMEDIATE GR279

TO: - DIRECTOR OF MILITARY OPERATIONS FROM: - MAKOR GENERAL LOYD 30/5/40. SECRET.

SITUATION REPORT 1200 HRS 30TH MAY 1940

- 1. The port of Dunkirk was reported closed about 2030 hrs last night owing to sinking of ships in the harbour consequently no personnel ships could be loaded last night and we were deprived of the biggest passenger capacity. At about 0700 hrs this morning however, we heard that the wrecks were visible and that destroyers could still get alongside the east pier one at a time, Information about possibility of entering is still confused the Dunkirk Military Authorities are now demanding personnel ships to be sent as quickly as possible and this is being done although the Navy consider there will be grave risk. In this connection Five Personnel Ships were sunk last night.
- The beaches were worked continuously yesterday. The organization was much improved by reinforcements of Naval Beach Officers and the twelve Army Officers sent out last night are also giving valuable assistance. The latter sailed in an M.T.B. about 0100 hrs to-day.
- 3. Approximate evacuations since yesterday are as follows:- It is difficult to give accurate figures of evacuation but the following is a comparison of diver arrivals: -

Midnight	to	1000	hrs	29th May	7048
Ш		н		30th May	7987

Accurate figures of arrivals in this country are always in possession of movement control, Redhill.

4. After three days' unsuccessful wireless watch we got into communication with the Dunkirk – La Panne area last night 2000 hrs. We sent a test Cypher message but have had no reply except the acknowledgement "R". We are trying to find out by other means is this W/T station is genuine.

TOO 1245 THI 1300

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M.O.4. 30/5/40.

Progress report from May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

SECRET.

Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 26/27 to midnight 27/28 May, 1940.

	Personnel Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich					
Sheerness	8.10	1	5/1		8
Margate			C Will Lake		
Ramsgate					the second second
Dover	7	3324	300	4	
Folkestone					
Hastings				2	
Eastbourne	Alian	1			
Newhaven		101	950		
Brighton		New York	11.		~
Southampton					-
Total today	7	3324	1250	4	1 Alexandre
Total to date		25,987	6242	1538	a ser i

Q(M)2.A 28/5/40

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 27/28 to midnight 28/29 May, 1940.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich		and you	11-15-16		
Sheerness	2	581			
Margate	I A	280			1. BY
Ramsgate	2	827	A Marshall	1	
Dover	26	12360	505	57	1.1.1
Folkestone	1	493	NA T		
Hastings				S	
Eastbourne				14 Starting Stre	
Newhaven	the o	9		1. A.	and the second second
Brighton	A State of the second s	1 EACH AND	1		
Southampton			/ 1.		
Total today	32	14441	505	57	
Total to date	39	40528	6747	1595	

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, Midnight 28/29 to Midnight 29/30.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich		1 million	21-15		121111
Sheerness	2	903	111		
Margate	12	6429		No. No.	BY AND S
Ramsgate	5	2508	$M_{H_{2}} \leq 2^{10}$	5	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Dover	44	21897	791	748	
Folkestone	10	5393	W. The Y		
Hastings	e Peri	and the second	and the second s		
Eastbourne			A State State		
Newhaven	1	326	716	· · · · ·	Sec. Contraction
Brighton	Sec. S	110			1
Southampton			ALL STREET		
Total today	74	37456	1507	753	
Total to date	113	77984	8254	2348	

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Progress report from May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 29/30 to midday 30 May, 1940.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich	I.	650 549	1-15-15		
Sheerness	2.2	A State	11/2		
Margate	3	1343	21 Januar		
Ramsgate	7	2745	115335	560	
Dover	21	9920	258	1539	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Folkestone			11- 1		
Hastings	1			5	
Eastbourne				The state of the state	
Newhaven	the second	191		1. A.	
Brighton	See .	1491-518-51			
Southampton			1 1		
Total today	32	14658 14557	258	2099 2103	and the states
Total to date	145	92642	8512	4447	

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from May 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, MIDDAY 30 MAY to MIDNIGHT 30/31 MAY.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich		a contraction	1-18	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1	
Sheerness					
Margate	9	442			
Ramsgate	9	2533	N Passis	2048	
Dover	32	14938	269	2780	
Folkestone	6	667	W. T	1130	
Hastings		in the second second		5	
Eastbourne				the state of the state	
Newhaven	the s	49	449	1. A.	and the second
Brighton	A AND A				
Southampton			/ 4.		
					1
Total	56	22,629	718	5,958	
Total to date	202	115,170	9,230	10,409	

Amendments.

In last report – Harwich for 650 read 549 fit and 4 Allies. In previous reports – Ramsgate for 5 read 6 trains. Totals have been corrected in this report.

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, MIDNIGHT 30/31 to MIDDAY 31 MAY 1940.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich		and the	0-15		
Sheerness	2	990	1/1/		
Margate	7	2559 2194		529	See By Long St
Ramsgate	5	2694	N Parista		
Dover	37	18203		2334	1.00
Folkestone	4	618	W. T	1539	
Hastings		1. 201 × 1/20		K	
Eastbourne				Chi Sharan Sh	
Newhaven	11/2	178		1. A.	and the second
Brighton					
Southampton			/ 4.		
Total today	55 6	25064 24699	178	4402	and the second
Total to date	257	140234	9408	14811	

These figures include Fit 22625 Casualties 4992 Allies 1534 evacuated from midnight 19/20 May to midnight 26/27 May already published

Q(M)2.A 31/5/40

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from May and June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, Midday 31 May to Midnight 31 May/1 June.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich	4	1896	23	6	
Sheerness	2	831		82	
Margate	10	3931	11/1	603	
Ramsgate	4	2436		13	3
Dover	28	9776	592	5759	
Folkestone	8	2224		1384	
Hastings			1		a la
Eastbourne	3			n a la la	
Newhaven	Marca.	1/183	597		
Brighton	the se	24.1		1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	A Shine
Southampton	J. K.				
Section 1					
Total today	56	21094	1212	7847	30,153
Total to date	312	160963	10620	22658	194,241

The totals to date include Fit 22625 Casualties 4992 Allies 1534. Evacuated from m.n.19/20 May to m.n.26/27 May already published. Amendments.

In last report – Margate – for 7 trains read 6 and for 2559 Fit read 2194. Totals have been corrected in this report.

Q(M)2(a) 1/6/40.

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 31 May/I June to midday, I June.

	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Allies	Remarks
Harwich			r 11/5	1	
Sheerness		18	12		
Margate	8	3240		692	
Ramsgate	11	4414		1618	lister and
Dover	27	6080	1302	9211	Plus 539 Allied casualties
Folkestone	2	246	SAVE	252	
Hastings	11	Sec. Sugar		11. 51	
Eastbourne			5.11	- 19 E	
Newhaven	A. S.	196	Ш		State State State
Brighton	and the second		11111	1.000	
Southampton					11/1
Lag de la Colo				1.4.1	
Total today	48	13980	1413	11773	27166 + 539 Allied casualties
Total to date	360	174943	12033	34431	221407 + 539 Allied casualties

The totals to date include - Fit 22625, Casualties 4992, Allies 1534, Evacuated from m.n. 19/20 May to m.n. 26/27 May already published.

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, MIDDAY I JUNE TO MIDNIGHT 1/2 JUNE 1940

		British		Allies			
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks	
Harwich							
Sheerness	5	1694	1.11	594			
Margate	9	2761	1.0	2052	1 AV CONT		
Ramsgate	10	1061	5/1	4112	No.	8	
Dover	26	9513	609	6236	256		
Folkestone	14	1748		4711			
Hastings					Salle P. M.		
Eastbourne			· · · ·	A. 199. 199. 199.		1	
Newhaven	1			and the second			
Brighton	A. C.	1.1/3					
Southampton	the s	1.			1		
	A.	12/3/2/2/2/2	111	Sec. States	1111	1	
Total today	64	16,777	609	17,705	256	35,347	
Total to date	424	190,465	12,642	52,136	795	256,038	

Amendments – Report for period midnight 19/20 to 26/27 May, on 24 May Dover for 1284 read 29 and reduce total of fir by 1255 to read 21,410. Totals have been corrected in this report.

Note. The totals to date include - Fit 21,410, Casualties 4992, Allies 1534 evacuated from midnight 19/20 to midnight 26/27 May.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 1/2 June to midday, 2 June, 1940.

		Bri	tish	Allies		
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks
Harwich						
Sheerness	155 M H S		1000		1.1.2	2
Margate	6	1288		1535	1. 19	
Ramsgate	8	2154	1.11	1983		-
Dover	21	8698	122	4212		
Folkestone						10
Hastings		March 1		1		
Eastbourne			in the second	A CARLES AND		
Newhaven	the s	1.91	11.11	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	. *	1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1
Brighton	State &				01210	
Southampton	1999	1000				
			1/2010/38	and the second second		
Total today	35	12140	122	7730	-	19992
Total to date	459	202605	12764	59866	795	276030

Note. The totals to date include - Fit 21,410, Casualties 4992, Allies 1534 evacuated from midnight 19/20 to midnight 26/27 May.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, Midday 2nd June to Midnight 2nd/3rd June, 1940.

		Bri	itish	Allies			
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks	
Harwich	2	1102	1.	88			
Sheerness	1 × .	16		403		2	
Margate			a state for s	234	1 Lover		
Ramsgate	4	639		1495			
Dover	5	235	S SIV	2684	e très le st		
Folkestone				Sec. Sec. 1			
Hastings				S. S. Carlos			
Eastbourne		Self.		·		Sec.	
Newhaven	YE Y	106		41	100		
Brighton							
Southampton							
			1.				
Total today	12	2098		4711		6,809	
Total to date	471	204,703	12,764	64,577	795	282,839	

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Note : - Figures are based on check into trains and may not be quite accurate.

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D.Q.

Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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MOVEMENT CONTROL, WAR OFFICE.

Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, Midnight 2nd June/3rd June to midday 3rd June.

		British		Allies		
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks
Harwich		1 de la		States States		
Sheerness	F V	11/2	11111	403	No. 1	2
Margate	6	120		3166	334	
Ramsgate	4		14	1992		a server a
Dover	20	4388	240	7092	Sudden."	
Folkestone	10	2046	· · · · ·	2578		100
Hastings						
Eastbourne	11.				2 C	
Newhaven		1111	1			
Brighton	1 Marshall	Thirds				-
Southampton			1.00		1	
			1/200	1/1000		
Total today	41	6434	240	15231	334	22,239
Total to date	512	211,137	13,004	79,808	1,129	305,078

D.O.

D.H.D. & A.A.

Q(M)2. (a). 3/6/40

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Note : - The totals to date include - Fit 21,410, Casualties 4,992, Allies 1,534 evacuated from midnight 19/20 to midnight 26/27 May.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

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Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, Midday 3rd June to midnight 3rd/4th June.

		Bri	tish	AI	lies		
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks	
Harwich		1 Alexandre	1.				
Sheerness	2	15		960		-	
Margate		1412		2944	1 Pagen		
Ramsgate	4			1691		1.11	
Dover	5	106	49	2619	101	111111111	
Folkestone	E F						
Hastings				- 1. M. 19 1. 19			
Eastbourne		and a	14	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	. *	Sec. 1	
Newhaven	NE V	1915			777		
Brighton	1. Marsh	and the second				1	
Southampton			1.1.1.24				
1.1			623 200	10			
Total today	íi.	121	49	5270	101	5541	
Total to date	522	211,258	13,053	84,675	1,230	310,216.	

Q(M)2.a. 4/6/40.

"SEARAIL"

Note : - The totals to date include Fit 21,410, Casualties 4,992, Allies 1,534 evacuated from midnight 19th/20th May to midnight 26th/27th May.

D.Q.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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SECRET.

Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

PROGRESS REPORT, midnight 3/4 June to midday 4 June, 1940.

				14		
	1.	Bri	tish	AI	lies	
	Trains	Fit	Casualties //	Fit	Casualties	Remarks
Harwich	A CONTRACT		111			5/ 1/10
Sheerness		12	CS AND AND			
Margate	4	Sec. A.		2135	a Maria	
Ramsgate	4			2184	a series	-
Dover	17	2	j 1	9518		
Folkestone	6			2827		1
Hastings		alter of the		1. S.		
Eastbourne						
Newhaven	the o			1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1	· *	1.1
Brighton				1.		1 5
Southampton						A.
Total today	31	2	k- inner	16664		16666
Total to date	553	211260	13053	101339	1230	326882

Q(M)2.a. 4/6/40

SEARAIL.

Note : - The totals to date include Fit 21,410, Casualties 4,992, Allies 1,534 evacuated from midnight 19th/20th May to midnight 26th/27th May.

D.O.

D.H.D. & A.A.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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Progress report from June 1940, concerning the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, held at the National Archives. Catalogue ref: WO 106/1618

SECRET.

MOVEMENT CONTROL, WAR OFFICE.

Personnel returned from B.E.F. (Dynamo Plan).

FINAL PROGRESS REPORT, MIDDAY 4 JUNE to MIDNIGHT 4/5 JUNE 1940.

		Bri	tish	Allies			
	Trains	Fit	Casualties	Fit	Casualties	Remarks	
Harwich	the literation		0 1 1				
Sheerness	1	S. S. Ma	and the second second	470			
Margate	1	and a		538	1 . Mar		
Ramsgate	4	5		1516	1200		
Dover	10		t la te	5654			
Folkestone	3			1333		10	
Hastings		and the		1. S.		1990	
Eastbourne						and the second	
Newhaven	the o	All .		1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 - 1990 -		1.4	
Brighton						5	
Southampton			1 Alerta			10000	
Clacton				27			
	(200 A		k - and a	1 Contra		Region	
Total	19	5	C. S. IVA	9538	1	9,543	
Total to date	572	211,265	13,053	110,877	1,230	336,425	

Q(M)2a. 5/6/40.

SEARAIL.

Note : - The totals to date include Fit 21,410, Casualties 4,992, Allies 1,534 evacuated from midnight 19th/20th May to midnight 26th/27th May.

D.Q.

D.H.D. & A.A.

The figures are based on check into trains and may not be accurate.

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