

CW 363
1941
ADM 1/11241

D-51. (Revised—June, 1933.)

FROM WHOM *etc Note.* DATE *31.12.40.*
7698

MARKINGS TO BOARD. *2nd Sea Lord.*
1st Lord.

SUBJECT.
Lt. J. E. James.
G. Leland, CPO, 185407.
A. J. Vinter, P.O., C/PK 131339.

FORMER
M010932/40
M010824/40

Report of meritorious conduct of
Naval Landing Party at Boulogne.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	NOTATION ONLY	
				Referred to	Date
<i>CW H.A.</i> <i>M. Gleadon</i>				<i>M25L</i> <i>CW H.A.</i> <i>205</i> <i>CW</i> <i>M2 Gleadon</i> <i>PA</i>	<i>7 MAR 241</i> <i>RECEIVED</i>
				<i>R.O.</i>	<i>15/5/44</i>
				<i>then 15 HA</i>	
				<i>R</i>	<i>16 MAY 1944</i>

The Honours and Awards Committee have carefully considered the claims to recognition of Officers and Men for gallantry and good services in the Naval Landing Party at Boulogne in May, 1940, and submit the following Awards as appropriate:-

Distinguished Service Cross

✓ Acting Lieutenant John Edward James, R.N.

Distinguished Service Medal

✓ Petty Officer Vinter, Gunner's Mate, C/JX.131339.
✓ Chief Petty Officer Luland, J.85407.

R. Gleadowe

(R. GLEADOWE)
for HEAD OF COMMISSION AND WARRANT BRANCH.
24th January, 1941.

Propose to approve.

Ch 257

Noted in

APPROVED BY FIRST LORD. + HM The King?

L. S. J. P.

NAVAL SECRETARY TO
THE FIRST LORD.

- 4 FEB 1941

Registered: p 810 2nd Sup: Ldn: Gazette 11/2/41.
with honours for CWB 12/2/41.

o.7698/316.K(1)/40.
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

MO

Co
C.W. 363
1941

Forwarded for consideration with
reference to Nore Letter No.3003/477.K/40 of
15th June, 1940.

CENTRAL
- 2 JAN 1941
R - TRY

A. Gordon Home

for ADMIRAL.

The Nore,
31st December, 1940.

Adm. Keene
P.O.
C.P.O.
E. James DSC
Vinter DSM
Lutland DSM

Subject :

LIEUTENANT JOHN EDWARD JAMES
CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GEORGE LULAND J.85407
PETTY OFFICER ARTHUR JACK VINTER, G/JX.131339

From..... THE COMMODORE, ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, CHATHAM

Date 26th December, 1940.

No. 0017

To..... THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF, THE NORE.

The attached reports, concerning the conduct of the above named at Boulogne in May, 1940 are forwarded for any action you may consider desirable.

2. Lieutenant James, who was promoted from Gunner on the 23rd July 1939 was in Hospital badly injured and unable to write a report after the completion of the operation. (This officer is still in Hospital)

3. The report of Sub.Lieutenant Medlum R.N.V.R. (submitted under cover of my letter No.0017 of the 27th May 1940) was compiled without the cooperation of any of the other members of the party, who, as a consequence, do not have the opportunity of bringing their knowledge of the conduct of this officer and these men to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

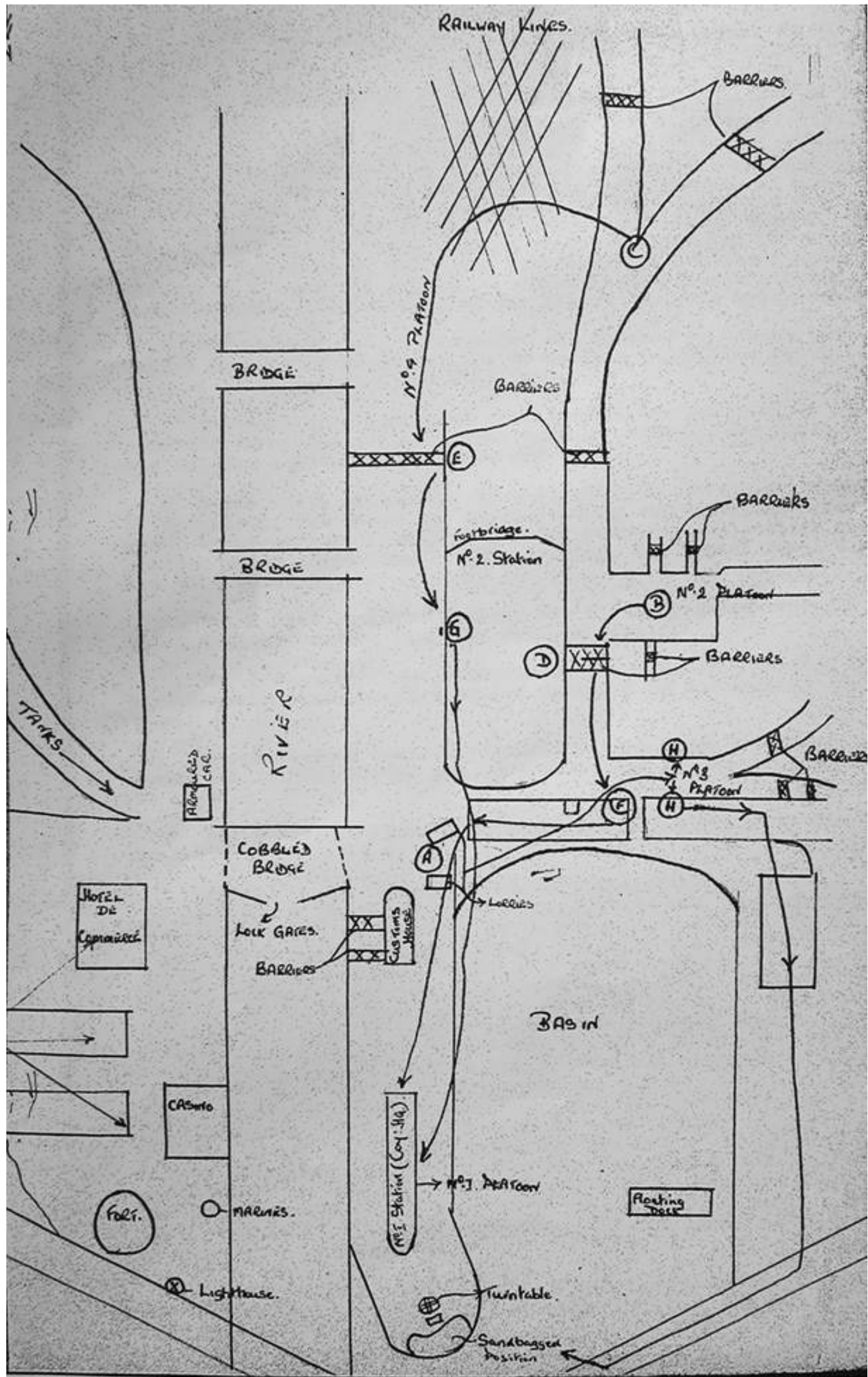


Enclosure.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. S. ...", written over a horizontal line.

COMMODORE.

II. (Over.)



page 1

No. 1. Battalion Headquarters.
R.N. Barracks,
Chatham.

20th December 1940.

Naval Landing Party at Boulogne.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report on the above-mentioned operation. The reasons for not having made it before, are that I assumed that what I knew was placed in the report and also I was not asked to prepare one. However, in view of the fact that the official report makes many omissions of fact and in no way reflects the bravery, skill and leadership of Lieutenant James R.N. and omits to make any mention of Chief Petty Officer Luland, Gunner's Mate, I am submitting the report for your consideration.

"A" Company, No. 1 Battalion was ordered in conjunction with a Company of Royal Marines to cover a Demolition Party landing at Boulogne on May 23rd 1940.

The Company's equipment consisted of ten Lewis Guns, the remainder carrying rifles. The Company strength was about one hundred and twenty Officers and men.

Immediately on landing on the jetty, we were heavily shelled by artillery, but sustained no casualties, owing to the order given by Lieutenant James "A" Company Commander to scatter and shelter under the trains. On reforming, Lieutenant James outlined his plan which was:-

No. 1 Platoon (Mr. Pilsbury Bos'n) to be in reserve in No. 1 Railway Station (Company Headquarters).

No. 2 Platoon (Sub. Lieutenant Gems R.N.V.R.) to take up a commanding position in a square marked B on the accompanying plan.

No. 3 Platoon (Sub. Lieutenant Byndon Ayres R.N.V.R.) to cover the nearest bridge and lock gates and a road running North to South.

No. 4 Platoon (Sub. Lieutenant Bevis R.N.V.R.) to cover a road junction marked C.

Lieut. James, having previously made a personal reconnaissance, then led No. 2 Platoon into position and gave them further orders to cover No. 4 Platoon's retreat, should that become necessary. Owing to enemy pressure this route became impossible, as explained in No. 4 Platoon Commander's report, but No. 2 Platoon held on at F until about 1600, when, on Lieut. James' orders, I signalled them to retire. They withdrew through the houses and returned to Company Headquarters. Before retiring, a man dressed in the uniform of a Sergeant of the Welsh Guards had attempted to lure the Platoon into manning a barricade which had been erected. Petty Officer Vinter, Gunner's Mate, however, noticed that he was carrying a Mauser pistol, with which he, Vinter was being covered when he went forward to inspect the position where the Sergeant said his men were. Petty Officer Vinter shot him, and on examining him discovered a German uniform underneath his battle-dress. By his action, Petty Officer Vinter undoubtedly saved his Platoon from falling into a trap. This same Petty Officer was wounded later, when attempting to lead some stragglers to safety.

No. 3 Platoon was posted at A until about 1400. While at this position, a Sergeant and fifteen men of the Irish Guards

joined up with me, but not requiring them, I sent them to Lieut. James, who led them out into the town and erected the barricades of lorries in the various positions as shown on the accompanying map. At 1400, Lieut. James returned and led the Platoon to H, himself acting as scout, and waving us on when safe to advance. I posted the Platoon in the houses either side of the barricade and took up a position at F with my signaller and one rating, where I could see the cross roads. The enemy now started to advance down the road from G to D, but were delayed by the barricade which had been set on fire. At the same time, the cross roads was being swept with machine gun fire from East to West. I subsequently discovered this was being directed from an armoured car the other side of the river as shown in the plan. There being a danger of my Platoon being cut off, Lieut. James, who had joined me, ordered them to retire to Company Headquarters, which I signalled them to do. We then saw some stragglers from another Platoon and the Company Commander, in spite of the enemy fire, courageously rushed out into the street to try and lead them to safety. By doing so, he was caught in the machine gun fire and his leg was smashed. These same men were responsible for P.O. Vinter being wounded later. It being impossible to move along either street, Ordinary Seaman Geis and I carried Lieut. James over the roofs to the N.E. corner of the block of houses, across square A to the Customs House, where we found some stretcher bearers. I then reported with my Platoon to Commander Welman, the Officer in charge of the Demolition Party, and we covered his party while they destroyed a drifter on some stocks and the lock gates in the West Basin.

A lull in the fighting occurred at about 1800, and I sent one half of my Platoon aboard H.M.S. "Keith" for a meal. At about 1830, a dive bombing attack by about fifty to sixty enemy planes took place, with H.M.S. "Keith" and H.M.S. "Vimy" as the principal targets. H.M.S. "Keith" cast off and returned to Dover, leaving me with half a Platoon. No. 3 Platoon then took up position on the north end of the pier, where we engaged the enemy who were sheltering in a wood across the river. The pier and the railway station were shortly afterwards shelled by the Germans from the French fort at the harbour mouth, the French having omitted to put their guns out of action before retiring.

No. 4 Platoon I only saw once, namely, after the signal to retire to Company Headquarters had been given. No. 4 Platoon Commander is submitting a report also.

I should like to draw attention to the conduct of C.P.O. Luland, Company Chief Gunner's Mate. He went ahead on reconnaissance with Lieut. James alone when the Company first landed. He also was the first to detect the enemy armoured car, the other side of the river. This armoured car had been firing across square A, and positions F and H. C.P.O. Luland borrowed an Army A/T rifle and destroyed the car. Later on, when Commander Welman split his party into four, he took command of one section and destroyed the electric power station. At about 1800 he was shot through the left arm but carried on. When the dive bombing attack at 1830 took place, he organised a party of ratings with rifles and soldiers with a Bren gun and posted them in a railway turn table at the end of the pier.

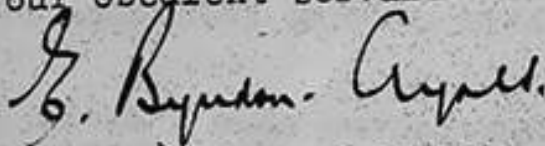
He himself had a Lewis gun which was not fitted with H.A. sights. However, he personally destroyed one Heinkel 59 float plane, and another aircraft (type unknown) whose tail he shot off and which crashed in the sea. He was then wounded in the right arm, but still carried on and shot down a third aeroplane which crashed in flames on the west arm of the break water. He then fainted, and was carried aboard H.M.S. "Keith". While being carried he was wounded again.

At about 2100, I believe, H.M.S. "Whitshed" put in and I returned in her with my half Platoon. On disembarking at Dover, I found the rest of my Platoon and returned to R.N. Barracks Chatham with the Company.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.



Sub. Lieutenant R.N.V.R.

The Commodore,
R.N. Barracks,
Chatham.

Royal Naval Barracks,
Chatham.

20th December, 1940.

The Commodore,
Royal Naval Barracks,
Chatham.

NAVAL LANDING PARTY AT BOULOGNE
23rd MAY, 1940.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit that the following report on the Naval Landing Party at Boulogne may receive consideration, in addition to the official report submitted shortly after the return of the expedition.

Certain information, of which I made verbal mention at the time, were not incorporated in the report, and as the list of awards in respect of this action has now apparently closed, I feel in justice to Lieutenant James, Royal Navy, Officer Commanding Naval Landing Party, that these informations should be brought to your notice.

The following are the facts as known to me, and are in no way meant to record the actions of the whole landing force being only an accurate account of the movements and actions of No.4 Platoon, and relative position of other Platoons thereto.

The party consisting of 4 Platoons, commanded by Lieutenant James, R.N., on landing at Boulogne was immediately dispersed according to a prepared plan agreed upon prior to disembarking, and as shown on attached plan. During this period the whole force was subjected to very heavy attack from the air, and by shelling from the hills to the South of the town. Lieutenant James thereupon led the company, personally, to their allotted defence positions, he going on ahead at a distance of about 60 yards heedless of all danger to himself, ~~and~~ thus assisting the safe passage of the men under his command, and thereby ~~earning~~ ^{earning} high praise from all present. Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Platoons having been positioned and given orders, Lieutenant James remained with No.4 Platoon, again continuing in advance to a point (C) where the platoon erected a large barricade, and rescued about 20 Belgian soldiers, 2 or 3 officers who joined with, and later rendered valuable assistance to, the platoon. The barricade was then fired (this undoubtedly prevented a German break through for several hours), and the platoon was then to retire to position B. This was impossible owing to the enemy having broken through on to the line of proposed retirement. Lieutenant James thereupon continued reconnoitering and finally, by a devious route, and under heavy machine gun fire from houses nearby, the platoon reached a front position covering a barricade and bridge at point (E). At this point Lieutenant James left the platoon leaving orders that the position was to be held at all costs until a signal to retire was received. This the platoon did to its great credit, and at about 1530 the Germans retired and the platoon was ordered to return to H.Q., this was accomplished with few casualties by about 1615.

It is my firm opinion that very great credit for the success of the expedition should go to Lieutenant James, R.N., who, by his personal courage and enterprise, spurred on and inspired Officers, Petty Officers and Men alike, most of whom he realised had never before been under fire, and set an example of which all were proud and tried to follow.

P.T.O.

Petty Officer Vinter, G.M., who was under my immediate command in the early stages of the action, deserves special mention for his words of good cheer and encouragement and the very efficient way in which he carried out his many duties during a particularly trying period.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Gordon S. Beris

Acting Lieutenant, R.N.V.R.