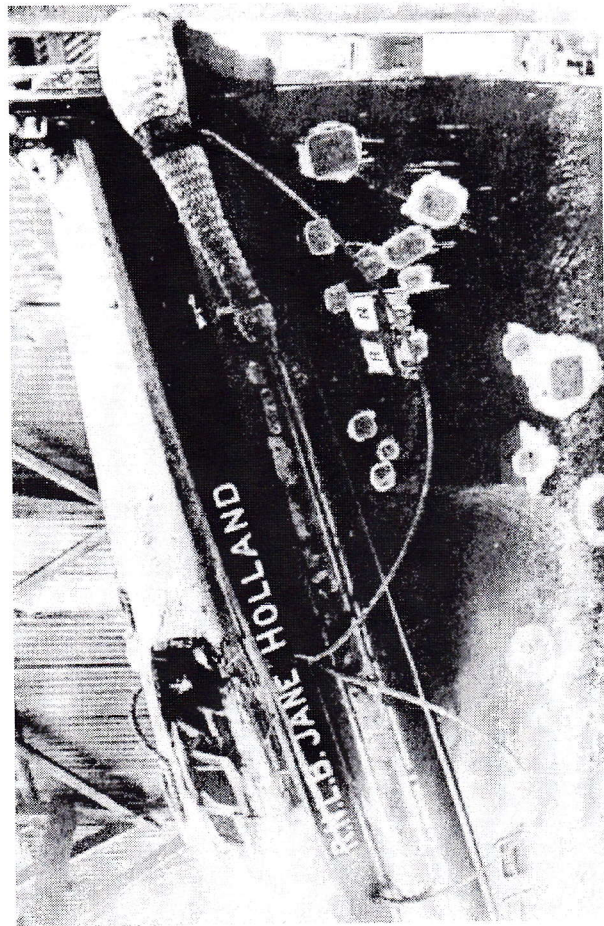


Many men and boats were lost during the evacuation. But many believe a miracle was to descend upon the scene as the water became exceptionally calm, which enabled those magnificent little ships to save over 26,000 men, some of the drifters capable of carrying 100 men, limped back with an astonishing 250 on board. On returning home they spoke little of their mission of mercy, the sights and sounds of the evacuation appearing to take away any conversation regarding their epic journey.

The lifeboat "Jane Holland" did not return and was presumed lost, but two days later she was found abandoned floating in the channel, and was towed into Dover.

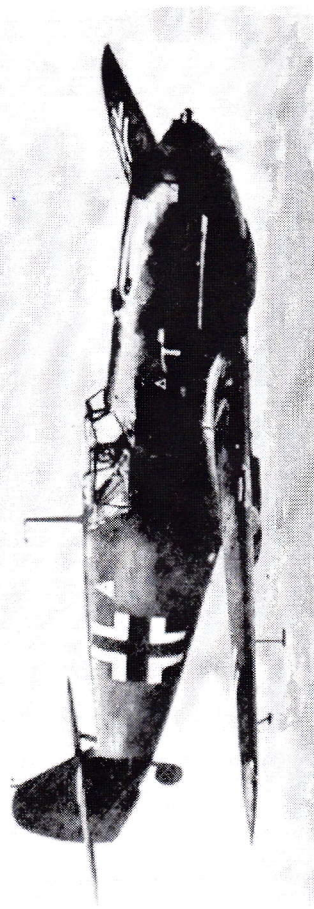
Upon her arrival she was found to have sustained substantial damage, a large gash in her starboard side and some 500-bullet holes were also found. Also the fore-end buoyancy box was crumpled. However it was not to be the end of this fine old lady for some ten months later after the completion of repairs she proudly sailed back to her station there to serve until her last launch on November 26th 1948.



*The holes and damage can be seen in this photo.*

Sadly the pleasure boat "Enchantress" did not return, for she was severely damaged and sunk whilst trying to reach the beach at St Valery where the 51st Gordon Highlanders were stranded.

"Puff" was indeed fortunate to survive a horrific wound when after dropping its bombs on the town, a single Messerschmitt 109 strafed the beach as their boat came ashore. Alf says, "we saw it coming towards us but had no time to take any evasive action, the cannon shells ploughed into the surrounding water giving the effect as if boiling". "Puff" stood in the bow shaking his fist at the fighter above when a cannon shell was to ricochet off the water hitting him just under his liver, coming out by his shoulder. But he insisted he step out of the boat unaided.



*The ME 109 was to strike fear into the hearts of many as they skimmed over the beaches and rooftops.*

Mike Grant, then a ten-year old school boy, still sees the event as if it was yesterday. "You could see the little spits of flame coming from the guns as it sped towards us, the roar of its engine was deafening, as well as frightening; I saw him hit and fall, I felt sick on seeing his wounds. Everyone did what they could for him until the arrival of local Westham doctor Stuart Hogg to administer to his wounds and seeing him into the ambulance. Which incidentally was the delivery van for the Mint House at Pevensey; driven that day by local garage proprietor Bill Battersby".

As dawn broke on the 31st August 1944 hundreds of aircraft were streaming overhead en route to the heart of the aggressor, mainly heavy bombers of USAAF.