The Nazi radio jubilantly proclaimed that within a few days all these British soldiers would be safely penned behind barbed wire. All over England the churches were thronged as people prayed that God would deliver their armies. The great mass of British soldiers were crowded around the French port of Dunkirk, with the German force slowly but inexorably closing in on them.

Ordinarily the English Channel is one of the roughest bodies of water in the world. I shall never forget how in 1911 my father and I crossed the English Channel from Newhaven to Dieppe. As a young boy I enjoyed the winds and the waves, and for the first five minutes I walked gleefully around the deck. By the sixth minute I was rushing in to the cabin, looking for a place to lie down. For the remaining hours of the voyage I lay on one berth and my father on another near me, neither of us caring whether he lived or died, and rather hoping for the latter fate. It was the most uncomfortable day that I have ever spent.

This seems to be the normal condition of the English Channel. If it were like this only sizable boats could be of any help in trying to rescue the British soldiers. However, for a period of several days after the invasion of France the Channel was unusually calm. People in England who had even a small boat dashed across the channel to Dunkirk and filled their boats with British soldiers.

During these days, also, however, the sky was heavily overcast with clouds. Radar was not developed to any extent at that time. The German planes could fly above the clouds, but had no way of knowing just where the boats were, or where hundreds of thousands of British soldiers were waiting crowded together on various docks. If the weather had been clear it would have been easy to drop a few bombs and destroy the soldiers on the docks or even the docks themselves, and to have made it absolutely impossible to rescue any sizable number of the soldiers. Before the clouds lifted great numbers of British soldiers were safely