

4. We all hoped to get well in undetected and to bluff the enemy for just sufficient time to achieve our object. We had to realise, however, that though we might get in unseen and by bluff, there was no question of doing so on the way out. For this purpose we hoped that smoke would help.

5. The accompanying narrative will I hope show that all ranks and ratings under my orders endeavoured to their utmost to carry the plan through.

6. As far as can be ascertained the principal objective which was allotted to the CAMPBELTOWN and the troops she carried, was entirely successful. The landing carried out at the Old Entrance may have been partially successful but our assault on the Old Mole was repulsed with heavy loss, and it was not possible to re-embark the troops we had landed.

NARRATIVE REPORT ON OPERATION "CHARIOT"

In accordance with the Operational Orders for "Chariot," the 10th A/S Striking Force, consisting of M.G.B. 314 (Headquarters Boat), M.L.s 192, 262, 267, 268, 156, 177, 270 and 160 constituting the 1st Flotilla, M.L.s 447, 341, 457, 307, 443, 306, 446 and 298 constituting the 2nd Flotilla, M.T.B. 74, H.M.S. CAMPBELTOWN (Block ship) and H.M.S.s TYNEDALE and ATHERSTONE (Escorting Destroyers), sailed from Falmouth at 1400/26/3/42. M.L.s were sailed in advance so as to form up outside.

2. The Naval Force Commander took passage in H.M.S. ATHERSTONE with M.G.B. 314 (Flotilla No. O) in tow and left in company with H.M.S. CAMPBELTOWN towing M.T.B. 74 (Flotilla No. 17) and H.M.S. TYNEDALE.

3. The force formed up in Cruising Order No. 2 off D buoy and proceeded down the outward track as laid down by the Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth, at 13 knots. Wind—east north east force 4* with considerable haze.

4. At about 0230 on 27th March the haze cleared and surface visibility was extreme when dawn broke. At dawn German ensigns were hoisted in the destroyers, and White Ensigns hauled down in the ships.

5. At 0700, in position C, course was altered to 112°, and as we had time in hand speed was reduced to 8 knots. This, it was hoped, would reduce our chances of being spotted from the air.

6. At 0720, in position 46° 34' North 05° 41' West, TYNEDALE reported an object bearing 002° which appeared to be either a submarine conning tower or a trawler. TYNEDALE was ordered to investigate and reported a few minutes later that it was a submarine. It appeared to be steering 070°.

At 0736 CAMPBELTOWN was ordered to take charge of the M.L.s in my absence, and ATHERSTONE, slipping M.G.B. 314, proceeded to join TYNEDALE. At 0740, 2 trawlers were sighted to starboard of the submarine. It was my intention to close the trawlers while TYNEDALE dealt with the submarine as it appeared probable that the submarine had a rendezvous with the trawlers, and that we would be reported by W/T. When

TYNEDALE was about 5 miles from the submarine the latter fired a recognition signal of a sort of Very light which burst into 5 or 6 silver stars and spread out in an umbrella shape. After this the submarine continued on the surface, and apparently on the same course. When TYNEDALE had closed to about 4,000 yards she hoisted the White Ensign and opened fire. The submarine crash dived. TYNEDALE subsequently fired a pattern of depth charges. After the first charge the submarine's conning tower broke surface and was immediately engaged by the short-range weapons of TYNEDALE. The conning tower was not visible for more than 20 seconds, but TYNEDALE states that one of his charges exploded within 70 feet of the conning tower and that she was also possibly hit by gunfire.

7. By this time it seemed clear that the trawlers were merely French fishing trawlers without any armament. In any case, it appeared more important to hunt for the submarine with TYNEDALE so I altered towards the position in which she had last been seen. Contact was obtained with a good echo in about the correct position but this faded out at about 1,000 yards. TYNEDALE's asdics were then reported as being out of action and I agreed to a search around the position of last sighting the conning tower, but without obtaining any echoes that could be contacted.

8. At 0920 we broke off the hunt and proceeded to regain the force by an indirect route, steering southwest for 7 miles. The sky became covered with low cloud greatly reducing the prospect of detection from the air. In breaking off the hunt for this U-boat I took into account that within two hours she might surface and make an enemy report. I considered, however, that the U-boat had not sighted the M.L.s and that we would simply be reported as two destroyers steering southwest. I decided therefore to continue.

9. At 1135 TYNEDALE was ordered to investigate a trawler which appeared to be coming across our track from the northward. This trawler was boarded by TYNEDALE, the crew taken off and the ship sunk. The trawler was French, flying a French flag superior to a white triangular flag and carried a German fishing licence.

10. At about 1200 another trawler was sighted fine on our starboard bow. This one I considered my bird, and slipped M.G.B. 314, ordering her to take off all the crew, all the papers, charts, etc., that they could find. I then sank this trawler, which like the other, was French. The whole crew appeared friendly and professed to be keen to come to England. The Captain seemed particularly friendly and quite a good sort. He stated, amongst other things, that they always fished in groups of three just inside the 100 fathom line in about latitude 47°. The Captain also stated that he had swept up some mines, some of which exploded, in position 47° 05' North, 07° 30' West. It seemed quite clear from these two trawlers that none of them carried radio, so I did not consider it necessary to investigate any of the large number that were subsequently seen.

11. At 1240 I received Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth's signal timed 1111/27 stating that

* Admiralty footnote: Wind force 4 = moderate breeze, 11-15 m.p.h.