

return to base by the reverse of their outward routes. SCEPTRE and SEANYMPH remained on patrol off Andoy.

113. THRASHER, TRUCULENT and SYRTIS arrived without incident at Lerwick on 3rd and 5th October.

114. At about 1700A on the 3rd October a weather forecast was received from the Admiralty that weather was expected to deteriorate and liable to reach gale force 8\* from the south-west in the vicinity of STUBBORN's position. Realising that darkness was approaching and that should STUBBORN, with X.10 in tow, meet this gale during the night it might be impossible to take off the crew, and that there would be little chance of regaining contact with X.10 if the tow parted, I decided that the passage crew should be embarked in STUBBORN while there was still time. I informed STUBBORN to this effect, instructing him to scuttle X.10 at his discretion, since the chances of being able to tow her the 400 miles to base without a crew on board were slight and should she break adrift she might drift into the enemy's hands.

115. STUBBORN was in fact already having trouble with her tow, for at 1230Z on the 3rd October the tow had parted in a heavy astern swell and considerable difficulty had been experienced in getting X.10 in tow again. The last wire on board was already in use and this had had to be recovered and passed again, using the still serviceable portions; and it was not until 1700Z that STUBBORN had been able to proceed, at dead slow speed as the swell showed no signs of going down. The operational Commanding Officer and First Lieutenant of X.10 had been transferred back to their craft to relieve the seaman and stoker passage crew while this operation was taking place.

116. On receipt of my signal (see paragraph 114), STUBBORN decided to sink X.10 after the crew had been recovered. The crew were embarked by 2040Z and at 2045Z X.10 sank in position 66° 13' N. 04° 02' E. STUBBORN then proceeded and arrived at Lerwick at 1330Z on the 5th October.

117. Whether X.10 could have been brought into port is doubtful. The expected gale did not materialise until the 6th October. Even so, at the slow speed at which X.10 had to be towed, STUBBORN could not have arrived at Lerwick by that time. The loss of X.10, after all she had done and all the efforts to bring her safely home, is very much regretted however.

120. The success of this operation is the culmination of many months spent in developing and perfecting the new weapon, in the intensive training of the crews for the hazardous enterprise, and in detailed and careful planning for the actual operation.

*Admiralty footnotes —*

\* Wind force 8—fresh gale (34-40 m.p.h.).

† The portion of this despatch in which consideration is given to the extent of success achieved on the information then available has been omitted in view of the Admiral (Submarines) later despatch, dated 2nd February, 1944, which is appended.

121. The officers and men under my command who have been responsible for the technical development in its early stages and for the preparation of the craft immediately prior to the operation have shown skill and perseverance in overcoming the many difficulties which have arisen. That so many of the craft were able to reach their destination in such good condition after so long a passage is a credit to all those concerned with their material and equipment. In this they have received every assistance from the Admiralty Departments concerned.

122. The operation involved the strictest and most intensive training. By his leadership and ability, Commander D. C. Ingram, D.S.C., R.N., as officer in charge of training inspired all officers and ratings alike and achieved that high standard of training and fitness which was so essential. He was responsible that the crews were at the peak of their efficiency at the time the operation began.

123. The skill and seamanship shown by the Commanding Officers of the towing submarines played a most important part in the operation, and the safe and timely arrival at the slipping positions of four X-craft of the six which set out is in no small measure due to the skill with which these officers handled the submarines under their command. I would like to pay special tribute to the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. STUBBORN, Lieutenant A. A. Duff, R.N., for the determination and fine seamanship he displayed both on the outward passage with X.7 and in the recovery of X.10 and his later efforts to bring her safely to port.

124. The part played by the passage crews of the X-craft contributed to a large extent to the final success of the operation. During the long and arduous passage these crews kept their craft in a high state of efficiency by constant care and attention, so that with one exception when the time came for the operational crews to take over, the craft were in an efficient state for the final stages of the operation. They showed fine seamanship, determination and endurance. The one exception was X.10, and her passage crew were in no way responsible for the defects which developed on passage.

125. Finally, I cannot fully express my admiration for the three Commanding Officers, Lieutenants H. Henty-Creer, R.N.V.R., D. Cameron, R.N.R. and B. C. G. Place, D.S.C., R.N., and the crews of X.5, X.6 and X.7, who pressed home their attack and who failed to return. In the full knowledge of the hazards they were to encounter, these gallant crews penetrated into a heavily defended fleet anchorage. There, with cool courage and determination and in spite of all the modern devices that ingenuity could devise for their detection and destruction, they pressed home their attack to the full and some must have penetrated to inside the A/T\* net defences surrounding the TIRPITZ. It is clear that courage and enterprise of the very highest order in the close presence of the enemy were shown by these very gallant gentlemen, whose daring attack will surely go down to history as one of the most courageous acts of all time.

(Signed) C. B. BARRY.

*Rear Admiral.*

*Admiral (Submarines).*

*Admiralty footnote —*

\* A/T—anti-torpedo