

Alternatively it should be sent by hand of officer under flag of truce to the Officer Commanding Occupying Troops.

I am, Your Excellency
E. N. SYFRET.

*Rear-Admiral and
Commander-in-Chief, British Forces.*

His Excellency,
The Governor of Diego Suarez.

ENCLOSURE I.

H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE.

13th May, 1942.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS—OPERATION
"IRONCLAD".

The Approach to the Western Anchorage.

During the greater part of the passage from Durban with convoy Y (slow convoy) DEVONSHIRE experienced favourable currents which made the problem of arriving at the right time

principally a question of delaying the advance of the convoy by the correct amount. It was essential to keep a certain amount in hand since at any moment a strong South Westerly set from the direction of Cape Amber might be experienced. During the night of Sunday, 3rd May/Monday, 4th May, a set of 0.7 knots in a direction of 090° was experienced. It was decided to hold the convoy back sufficiently for DEVONSHIRE to be within reach of position AA at 8 knots. During the forenoon of Monday, 4th May, convoy Y was manoeuvred on courses at right angles to the line of advance in order to achieve the necessary delay, but in so doing the screen became considerably disorganised.

2. At 1500 the signal "Proceed in execution of previous orders" was received and the whole force formed up. DEVONSHIRE was in station 5 miles ahead of the starboard wing of the convoy steering 058° at 9 knots by 1545.

3. Group II formed up as an A/S screen two miles ahead as shown below:—

FREESIA

CROMER

ROMNEY

CROMARTY

ANTHONY

POOLE

AURICULA

NIGELLA

DEVONSHIRE

LAFOREY

WINCHESTER CASTLE

LIGHTNING

ROYAL ULSTERMAN

4. The estimated 1800 position was passed to LAFOREY at 1603 based on the latest fix obtained at noon. At 1800, which was just before dark, LAFOREY, LIGHTNING and ANTHONY were detached. The remainder of the screen altered course to 118° to conform with DEVONSHIRE's intended alteration at 1830. It had been anticipated that DEVONSHIRE would pass through position 298° AA two miles at 1830.

5. At 1840, by which time it was quite dark, the evening star sights showed that the North Easterly set had in effect reversed during the afternoon, and DEVONSHIRE's position at 1830 was 220° AA seven miles. Course was therefore altered without signal at 1900 to 096° in order to regain the correct line of approach and to counteract this set. This alteration was not immediately noticed by the screen who got a long way out of position in consequence. However they did not lose touch and had regained their stations by 2000.

6. This last fix also indicated that the force was early. No immediate adjustment was made because the possibility of an adverse current had still to be allowed for.

7. Land echoes by R.D.F. were obtained between 2030 and 2100, but were of no value at that time. At 2100, just before moonrise, the high land on Cape San Sebastian was sighted and a reasonably good fix obtained by visual bearing and R.D.F. range. More land was sighted after moonrise, and at 2150 Windsor Castle was identified at a distance of 40 miles and a good fix obtained. At this time DEVONSHIRE was in position 298° ZB 18 miles.

8. Course was altered to 118° at 2200 and the speed reduced to 8½ knots without signal. The screen detected this alteration with less difficulty than before and was soon back in station.

9. The set now seemed to work round to the Eastward again, and speed was reduced to 8 knots at 2230 to allow for it. No reliable fixes could be obtained between 2230 and 2300 because the land was in shadow, but at 2312 another good fix was obtained putting DEVONSHIRE in position 330° ZB 6 miles, having been set about 2¼ miles to the Northward. It was evident that the sweepers and FREESIA were short of manoeuvring room, but they had to be left to work it out for themselves.

10. The first dan buoy was sighted at 2306. At 2318 DEVONSHIRE altered to 138° and later to 155°.

11. At 2338 LIGHTNING's three vertical lights were switched on, and thereafter the navigation was not difficult. At 2342 ANTHONY passed close alongside and reported that there was no set, also that the outer dan had drifted to the South West.

Tuesday, 5th May.

12. At 0001 course was altered to 109° past the first dan buoy to follow the minesweepers which could be clearly seen ahead; LIGHTNING was abeam to starboard 6 cables away at 0008 and signalled "Set 150° ½ knot." The right hand edge of Nosi Hara which had been selected as a leading mark was clearly visible bearing 114°. DEVONSHIRE had thus passed ZB 33 minutes early.

13. The passage along the swept channel was somewhat confused because it was difficult to see which sweepers were sweeping, and several of the dans broke adrift. The first or outer dan (laid by LAFOREY) had been cut and had drifted to the South West, so it was left to starboard.