

*Westward Passage of Force X from Malta, 28th/29th September (D.4/5).*

145. After fuelling, FARNDALE and HEYTHROP sailed from the Grand Harbour at 1500, followed at 1615 by KENYA, EDINBURGH and ORIBI. The remainder of Force X sailed at 1830.

146. At 1745, the Rear-Admiral Commanding, 18th Cruiser Squadron was detached in EDINBURGH with ORIBI in company, to search for two enemy destroyers reported north-west of Gozo, steering 180°.

Nothing was seen, and at 2035 these ships joined the Rear-Admiral Commanding, 10th Cruiser Squadron in KENYA. It is probable that these two destroyers were FARNDALE and HEYTHROP.

147. Force X proceeded on a course to make the Tunisian coast, and thence to Cape Bon, keeping close to the coast.

The night was uneventful.

148. FARNDALE and HEYTHROP joined the Vice-Admiral, 2nd-in-Command at 0835/29, and by 1030 the remainder of Force X had rejoined.

*Passage of NELSON to Gibraltar, 29th/30th September (D.5/6).*

149. At 0700/29 I informed the Vice-Admiral Commanding, North Atlantic Station of NELSON's position, course and speed, and requested additional A/S vessels and escort. This message was purposely delayed until this time, in order to give no indication that NELSON was proceeding independently.

150. A Catalina flying-boat joined at 0730 and a Hudson as fighter escort at 1000. Later in the day a second Catalina joined, and this air escort was maintained until dusk.

151. PIORUN obtained a doubtful A/S contact at 1110 and dropped one depth charge.

A French merchant vessel was sighted at 1415, and observed to alter course away to the south.

152. During the day NELSON ranged bower and sheet cables aft and flooded certain after compartments in order to reduce the draught forward to the 39 feet required for entering harbour.

Clocks were put back one hour to Z-1 at 1800; times in paragraphs 153 to 156 are Zone-1.

153. DUNCAN obtained a doubtful contact at 1809 and dropped one depth charge.

154. The first additional A/S vessel, ROCKINGHAM, joined at 1845; she was followed by SAMPHIRE at 2020, JONQUIL at 2040, FLEUR DE LYS ten minutes later, and ARBUTUS at 2240. NELSON's screen now consisted of 4 destroyers and 4 corvettes.

155. SAMPHIRE and ARBUTUS obtained an A/S contact and dropped depth charges at 0030/30 without result; the contact was probably non-sub. Air escort of one Hudson and one Catalina joined at daylight.

156. At 1100/30 NELSON entered Gibraltar harbour. Tugs were used ahead and astern as the ship was sluggish under helm especially at low speed.

*Passage of Forces A and X to the Westward, 29th September (D.5).*

157. After Force X had joined Force A at 1030/29 (*vide* paragraph 148), course was shaped to the westward, keeping 40 miles clear of the African coast.

158. At 1645, LIVELY, in position D, Screening Diagram No. 9, sighted an object, resembling a ship's lifeboat with mast stepped well forward, bearing 281°, distant about 1,000 yards. LIVELY identified this as a submarine periscope and conning tower, momentarily breaking surface, and estimated the course of the submarine as 220°. LIVELY, already under wheel to alter course to 281° in accordance with the zig-zag, increased speed to 24 knots and altered course to 260°. Two torpedo tracks, course 010°, were sighted soon afterwards which confirmed the course of the submarine. The tracks indicated that the submarine was moving at speed, so course was altered to 250° and a counter-attacking 14-charge pattern set to shallow depth was fired at 1650. LEGION on the starboard beam of LIVELY and on a parallel course fired a 5-charge shallow pattern about a minute and a half earlier. Action to avoid the torpedoes was taken by the fleet. LEGION then stationed LIVELY on her starboard beam and both ships hunted the submarine.

LIVELY obtained a definite A/S contact on a submarine at 1700, and attacked with a 14-charge pattern set medium five minutes later. After opening to 1,000 yards, LIVELY turned towards the point at which charges had been fired, and regained contact at 1715, the plot showing the submarine's speed was about 1 knot.

Contact was lost at 400 yards, and not regained. The hunt was abandoned at 1745 in order to rejoin the screen at 1900 as ordered by the Rear-Admiral Commanding, 18th Cruiser Squadron.

159. PRINCE OF WALES, KENYA, SHEFFIELD, LAFOREY, LIGHTNING, ORIBI, FORESIGHT, FORESTER and FURY parted company from the remainder of the force at 1930 and proceeded ahead in order to arrive at Gibraltar p.m. 30th September.

The Rear-Admiral Commanding, 18th Cruiser Squadron took charge of the remainder of the ships of Force X and proceeded towards Gibraltar at 17 knots.

*Return of Units under Vice-Admiral Commanding, 2nd-in-Command, Home Fleet to Gibraltar, 30th September (D.6).*

160. During the night 29th/30th September, between 0325 and 0408, R.D.F. gave echoes suggesting a U-Boat, and several explosions, assumed to have been torpedoes exploding at the end of run, were heard.

161. No further incidents occurred, and the force arrived at Gibraltar at 1800.

*Return of Units under Rear-Admiral Commanding, 18th Cruiser Squadron to Gibraltar, 30th September/1st October (D.6/7).*

162. At 0928/30 in position 37° 10' N., 00° 56' E., GURKHA obtained an echo bearing