

bearings obtained on South Atlantic Station and these U-Boats may well have embarked the survivors or some of them.

5. As pointed out by her Commanding Officer, H.M.S. DORSETSHIRE has done an immense amount of steaming and has spent many days searching for suspected raiders and supply ships. She has always been an efficient and reliable ship and her success on this occasion has been well earned.

6. Captain A. W. S. Agar, V.C., D.S.O., R.N., has displayed good leadership and much zeal and ingenuity in conducting these searches and I desire to bring his name to Their Lordships' notice for his services in disposing of this enemy ship.

7. As it does not appear by the terms of Admiralty letter No. C.W. 2558/41 of 7th March, 1941, that recommendations can be forwarded for immediate or operational awards, I intend to submit names in the next list of periodical recommendations due on 31st March, 1942.

(Signed) A. U. WILLIS,  
Vice-Admiral,  
Commander-in-Chief.

H.M.S. DORSETSHIRE.  
2nd December, 1941.

Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic.

I have the honour to report the following movements which led to the sinking of an enemy vessel, believed to be either a Raider or Supply Ship,\* by H.M. Ship under my command, between 1800 and 1821 on Monday, 1st December, 1941, in position:

Latitude 27 degrees 53 minutes South,

Longitude 3 degrees 55 minutes West.

All times referred to are Zone-1.

*Movements of DORSETSHIRE prior to sighting.*

2. H.M.S. DORSETSHIRE sailed from Free-town at 1300 Wednesday, 26th November in accordance with your orders, with the object of searching for enemy ships in certain localities near the relatively calm area 720 miles south and west of St. Helena.

3. At 0700 Monday, 1st December, whilst in position:

Latitude 26 degrees 45 minutes South,

Longitude 6 degrees 25 minutes West,

the Walrus aircraft was flown off on a triangular reconnaissance to the south east to a depth of 70 miles, the ship's course and speed being 162 degrees, 17 knots. Nothing was sighted and course and speed were altered at 1100 to 111 degrees, 18½ knots.

4. At 1515 the aircraft was again flown off on a similar search, with orders to commence the first leg of the search to starboard for one hour (i.e. to the southward), then at right angles to the mean line of advance of the ship for one hour, after which to rejoin. Visibility was maximum about 25 miles, sea calm with a slight swell

*Admiralty footnote —*

\* The ship was the German submarine supply ship PYTHON, a motor vessel of 3,664 tons.

*First Sighting of Enemy.*

5. At 1653, while the ship was on the port leg of a zig-zag, the lookout in DORSETSHIRE'S crow's nest reported the mast of a ship bearing 032 degrees. Although the Walrus was out of sight to the southward, I decided to close the ship at once and if necessary recall the aircraft by W/T on Low Power. Course was altered to 031 degrees and speed increased to 25 knots to investigate. It is my opinion that this was the "first sighting" and due to a very good lookout being kept.

6. Shortly afterwards, the ship sighted was observed to be making quite a lot of smoke and remained hull down until 1717, which confirmed my opinion made later, that she was stopped when sighted, and later on, sighting DORSETSHIRE, increased to full speed and altered course directly away from us.

7. Speed was increased to 30 knots to close, the ship's company ordered to their action stations, and aircraft recalled by W/T. (This recall for some reason still unexplained, did not reach the aircraft)

8. Small patches of oil were observed on the water, including one definite track which was not that of the target. These tracks all pointed to the direction in which the ship was first sighted, and gave rise at once to the suspicion that a U-Boat might be in the vicinity. A further alteration of course was in consequence made by DORSETSHIRE to starboard (i.e. to the southward).

*Sighting of Boats.*

9. At 1708, an object closely resembling the conning tower of a submarine was sighted on the port bow, distant 6 miles. Four other objects were also sighted in the same position, which later were identified as boats in tow of a power boat making a total of five or six in all. These were definitely identified by 1720. I assumed therefore that the ship in sight was an enemy, and that she was either a Raider or Supply Ship.

10. The theory that she was a genuine British ship endeavouring to escape from DORSETSHIRE—a supposed German warship—and that the boats in the water contained survivors from a ship just torpedoed by a U-Boat, could not altogether be rejected. Signals made to the ship by searchlight and flags however produced no result, neither did she break W/T silence to make a "Q" message (raider report).

*Action of Enemy After Warning Salvo*

11. At 1725, I ordered two warning shots to be fired, one right and one left of the target, at a range of twelve miles. Within two minutes a burst of white smoke appeared from the stern of the ship, which rose vertically in the almost still atmosphere. This may have been either a smoke screen made from the stern, a smoke float dropped in the water to attract a submarine, or an explosive charge to scuttle.

12. I decided in the circumstances to keep DORSETSHIRE moving at high speed, and outside a range of eight miles, so as to reduce as much as possible any risk of attack by U-Boat.\* There could therefore be no considera-

*Admiralty footnote —*

\* H.M.S. DORSETSHIRE'S suspicion that U-Boats were in the vicinity has since been confirmed. There were two, and one of them fired a torpedo at the ship but missed.