

damaged the stern of THOMAS STONE, a Combat Loaded Transport of his sector, and had caused her to stop. H.M.S. SPEY was detached to stand by her and V.A.C.N.A.* was asked to send tugs. At first it was thought that a T/B† aircraft had done the damage, but the weight of evidence now indicates that a submarine was responsible. At 0706, convoy resumed course of 086°.

34. At 0954 7th November, a submarine contact was reported on the port bow. The convoy made an emergency turn of 45° to starboard. BICESTER attacked with depth charges. Course of 086° was resumed at 1000.

35. At 1130 7th November, Force "H" was manœuvring about 8 miles ahead of the convoy. Shortly afterwards SHEFFIELD and Force "R" were bearing 030°, 8 miles steering west. At 1400, H.M. Trawlers JULIET, RYSA, CAVA, HOY, OTHELLO, INCHOLM and MULL and the M.L.s 238, 273, 283, 295, 336, 338, 444, joined K.M.F.A. 1 from Force "R". M.L. 307 had joined at 1055 from eastward, and H.M. Trawler STROMA at 1545 also from eastward.

36. Hostile shadowing aircraft were in evidence at intervals during the afternoon of 7th November. From 1700-1745 considerable A.A. fire was observed from Force "H" to the northward and many aircraft passed over and astern of the convoy in that direction. Several ships opened fire but no results were obtained.

37. At 1800, the convoy was wheeled to 180° and SAMUEL CHASE (Captain C. D. Edgar, U.S.N.—S.N.O.L.(C)), LEEDSTOWN, ALMAACK, EXCELLER and DEMPO escorted by TYNWALD, COWDRAY, ZETLAND, ALGERINE, HUSSAR, SPEEDWELL, CAVA, OTHELLO and M.L.s 273 and 295, proceeded independently to C Sector.

38. At 1900, the convoy wheeled to 200° and at 1920 formation was changed to 2 columns. At 2130, the starboard column consisting of KARANJA, VICEROY OF INDIA and MARNIX escorted by POZARICA, BICESTER, BRAMHAM, ROTHER, CADMUS, RYSA, JULIET, STROMA and M.L.s 283, 336 and 338, proceeded independently to A Sector, and the course of the remainder was altered to 110° by two 45° turns to port.

39. At 2140, radar from submarine P.48 was picked up. Speed was reduced to 6 knots at 2150, and at 2154, P.48 was sighted bearing 105°.

40. At 2230, BULOLO (H.Q. Ship) and the ships of B Sector, KEREN, WINCHESTER CASTLE, OTRANTO, SOBIESKI, AWATEA, STRATHNAVER, CATHAY, escorted by PALOMARES, ACUTE, ALARM, ALBACORE, LAMERTON, WHEATLAND, WILTON, BLYSKAWICA, HOY, INCHOLM, MULL, and M.L.s 444, 238 and 307, were stopped in position 36° 52½'N., 02° 49'E.

41. At this time there was a moderate N.E. breeze, slight sea, clear sky and good visibility. Cap Caxine and all coastal lights were burning, which was a re-assuring sign for the military.

The Assault on Algiers.

42. The ships of the fast assault convoy, with the exception of U.S.S. THOMAS STONE, were at their release positions as arranged by about 2230z* on 7th November. Submarines marking the release positions were in place in all three sectors and homing arrangements worked well.

43. From the time of arrival at the release positions until the move into Algiers harbour and Bay on D+1 escorts carried out an endless chain A/S patrol round the stopped transports.

44. Minesweeping was carried out entirely to plan, except at Sector B where it was decided that sweeping was unnecessary, and it was cancelled. No mines of any kind were swept or detonated throughout the operation. Fleet minesweepers did valuable work in the A/S patrol.

45. During the period that boats were being lowered, manned and assembled, a south-westerly set caused by the N.E. wind resulted in ships drifting as much as 5 miles from their proper release positions by the end of the first 1½ hours.

The Landings.

46. *A Sector.* The landing at A Sector was carried out most satisfactorily. S.N.O.L.(A) personally supervised the transfer of the pilots from the submarine to the motor launches, and at 2349, the assault flights moved off to the A GREEN and A WHITE Beaches. A GREEN flight beached at H hour (0100z) and A WHITE flight at H hour + 8 minutes, both without incident.

47. *B Sector.* The landing at B Sector was marred by avoidable mistakes. The motor launch detailed to embark the pilot from submarine P.48 for B WHITE Beach first embarked the P.B.M.† from KEREN who assumed command of the M.L., and having failed to pick the pilot from the submarine, led a flight for B GREEN to A WHITE Beach, which was some six miles to the southward. In the meantime, as the submarine had to leave the release position for the inner beacon position, the pilot for B WHITE embarked in the nearest landing craft, which proved to be one of a flight bound for B GREEN Beach. He led in the first and second flights, and gave the order "Go" off B GREEN Beach at H hour + 3 minutes. The first flight instead of following the approach directions went some way to the east before beaching; the second flight on the pilot's suggestion went straight in and touched down first.

The only craft to beach at B WHITE before dawn (0600) were 3 L.C.P.s‡ destined for B GREEN Beach. Other craft for B WHITE landed wrongly to the south-west of Sidi Ferruch and as far west as A Sector.

The mistakes at B Sector can largely be traced to lack of training and uncertainty whether the submarine and the M.L.s had received the latest orders. This caused the S.N.O.L. to delay the M.L. until the P.B.M. could be embarked and resulted in the M.L. failing to embark the pilot from the submarine.

Admiralty footnotes:—

* V.A.C.N.A.—Vice-Admiral Commanding, North Atlantic, whose H.Q. were at Gibraltar.

† T/B—torpedo bomber.

Admiralty footnotes:—

* The suffix "z" indicates G.M.T.

† P.B.M.—Principal Beach Master.

‡ L.C.P.—Landing Craft, Personnel.