

home. The results obtained give clear proof of the very high fighting efficiency of these two boats.

43. The gallant action fought single-handed by M.G.B. 603 against six E-boats not only showed determination to lose no chance of engaging the enemy but may well have saved M.G.B. 607 from destruction.

44. Unit J (M.T.B.s 442 and 439) (Senior Officer, Lieutenant C. A. Burk, R.C.N.V.R.).—Here again good use was made of radar during the action. Considerable damage was undoubtedly done to the enemy and but for action damage a kill might well have resulted.

General.

45. This action gives general proof of a great improvement in the efficiency of the Coastal Forces particularly as regards communications and the use of radar. The small number of material breakdowns also indicates a higher standard of interest and handling by the Commanding Officers and crews of boats and reflects great credit on the maintenance officers and staffs of the bases. Furthermore, it clearly demonstrates the value and essential need of constant training and practice.

46. The dispositions and movements of forces were controlled by Commander H. A. Taylor, R.N., and the success of the operations was in large part due to his skill and extremely clever and prompt anticipation of enemy movements.

47. In addition to the successful defence of the convoy, it is considered permissible to feel a modicum of satisfaction in the number of times the E-boats were engaged. They were roughly handled six times in or near the convoy route (H.M. Ships WORCESTER and MACKAY twice, H.M.S. PYTCHLEY and Unit R once each), once by Unit V when retiring from H.M.S. WORCESTER's second action, and by Units Y and J on their homeward passage when they probably felt they were clear of our forces. Had the R.A.F. been able to attack them after daylight it would have been a strong deterrent to E-boats leaving their return to their bases till so late.

(Signed) JACK C. TOVEY,
*Admiral of the Fleet,
Commander-in-Chief.*

The following Despatch was submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on the 9th December, 1944, by Admiral Sir JOHN H. D. CUNNINGHAM, K.C.B., M.V.O., Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station

*Mediterranean,
9th December, 1944.*

ACTION REPORT—H.M. M.G.B. 662, H.M. M.T.B.s 634, 637, 638 ON THE NIGHT OF 11TH/12TH OCTOBER, 1944.

Forwarded for the information of Their Lordships, strongly concurring in paragraph 2 of the remarks of the Captain Coastal Forces, Mediterranean.

(Signed) J. H. D. CUNNINGHAM,
*Admiral,
Commander-in-Chief.*

ENCLOSURE 1 TO C.-IN-C., MEDITERRANEAN STATION'S LETTER.

FROM ... The Captain Coastal Forces, Mediterranean.

DATE ... 18th November, 1944.

To ... The Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station.

The remarks of the Commander Coastal Forces, Western Mediterranean, are fully concurred in.

2. The Senior Officer, 57th M.T.B. Flotilla has written such an excellent report and so ably summed up this prolonged action in his paragraphs 39 and 40, that little remains to be said. To the factors which made victory possible (*vide* paragraph 39 of the Action Report) must unquestionably be added brilliant and inspiring leadership, as the Commander Coastal Forces, Western Mediterranean has indeed already remarked. I have on several previous occasions remarked on Lieutenant-Commander T. J. Bligh's splendid leadership of his flotilla in action. On this occasion he set a seal on his previous performances.

3. In my letter dated 3rd October, 1944, I remarked on the brilliant success of three boats of the 56th M.T.B. Flotilla in a prolonged night action. It is a matter of great personal satisfaction to me, knowing all the officers of both flotillas and having watched the happy mixture of close co-operation and friendly rivalry existing between them, that the 57th Flotilla has now crowned its career with an equally, and possibly even more brilliant success.

(Signed) J. F. STEVENS,
Captain, R.N.

ENCLOSURE 2 TO C.-IN-C., MEDITERRANEAN STATION'S LETTER.

FROM ... The Commander Coastal Forces, Western Mediterranean.

DATE ... 23rd October, 1944.

To ... The Captain Coastal Forces, Mediterranean.

Submitted:

Forwarded:

2. This highly successful action was characterised in its initial stages by skilful anticipation of enemy movements; and later, by the manner in which prevailing conditions and available resources were turned to such good account in securing maximum opportunity for attack, but for which our boats would have undoubtedly incurred greater damage and casualties. Throughout, the engagement was carried out with skill and determination under brilliant leadership, in the face of heavy enemy fire.

(Signed) A. D. McILWRAITH,
Commander, R.N.V.R.

ENCLOSURE 3 TO C.-IN-C., MEDITERRANEAN STATION'S LETTER.

FROM ... The Senior Officer, 57th M.T.B. Flotilla.

DATE ... 15th October, 1944.

To ... The Commander Coastal Forces, Western Mediterranean.

The following report of the attack on enemy F-lighter* convoys in the Adriatic on the night of 11th/12th October, 1944, is submitted.

Admiralty footnote:—

* F-lighter—comparable to an armed tank landing craft.