

28. During the day great efforts had been made to find a suitable beach for BACHA-QUERO, whose draught was 6 feet forward and 15 feet aft. A beach was eventually found close North of Red centre at the foot of Windsor Castle. The approach to this beach lay through the minefield. However, BACHA-QUERO was swept through by CROMARTY who cut 2 mines, and her cargo landed near Red Beach centre in 14 minutes.

29. Before night fell I ordered AURICULA to be abandoned by her ship's company. Destroyers and A/S corvettes were disposed for A/S patrol.

30. General Sturges arrived from the Flagship in a destroyer and after consultation in KEREN proceeded ashore. Situation reports up to the end of D.1 indicated that No. 5 Commando had captured the whole of the Andrakaka Peninsula, and that the 29th Brigade had reached a line about 3 miles South of Antsirane town, where heavy opposition had been encountered.

#### *May 6th, Day Two.*

31. After daylight LIGHTNING and LAFOREY engaged the enemy post still holding out at Windsor Castle. INDOMITABLE was asked to attack a sloop in English Bay, Diego Suarez harbour, whose fire was controlling the road to Diego Suarez North. At 0744 INDOMITABLE reported this ship, which proved to be the D'ENTRECASTEAUX, as being on fire. LAFOREY, LIGHTNING and PAKENHAM took up positions to engage targets indicated by F.O.O.s, LAFOREY bombarding D'ENTRECASTEAUX at extreme range.

32. At daylight AURICULA was observed to be lower in the water and as an emergency measure FREESIA was ordered to tow her to shallow water; the effort however was too great and AURICULA broke in half and sank at 0823.

33. H.M.S. RAMILLIES, wearing the flag of S.O.F. arrived and anchored at ZD and proceeded to fuel.

34. The landing continued at full speed, the 13th Brigade being landed on completion of the 17th Brigade. All personnel numbering approximately 10,000 men were ashore by 1700.

35. About 1600 a mine exploded in POOLE's sweep and severely wounded her First Lieutenant, who, I deeply regret to report, died of his wounds. He was buried at sea from POOLE.

36. General Sturges came on board and outlined the plan of attack on Antsirane for the night, which included the entry of H.M.S. ANTHONY in the port of Diego Suarez and the landing of H.M.S. RAMILLIES' Royal Marines at Antsirane.

#### *Day Three: 7th May.*

37. From about midnight various reports were received from GENISTA on A/S patrol, indicating that she had been in contact with a submarine, had attacked and lost contact North West of Nosi Hara. PAKENHAM, LAFOREY and corvettes proceeded to assist in the search. At 0500 an aircraft from ILLUSTRIOUS sighted the French submarine LE HEROS on the surface outside the reefs North

East of Nosi Fati and sank her by torpedo. The first news of this received in KEREN was an aircraft report at 0548 that submarine survivors were struggling in the water.

38. From 0330 onwards reports of the successful occupation of Antsirane and subsequent negotiations for the signing of a Protocol began to come in.

39. At 0930 ANTHONY arrived at the main anchorage escorting S.S. GREYSTOKE CASTLE, who had arrived from Durban with ammunition and other stores. In view of the brilliant operation carried out by ANTHONY the previous night in landing the R M s from RAMILLIES at Antsirane, I arranged for her to pass all ships at the anchorage who cleared lower decks and cheered her with great enthusiasm.

40. The landing of vehicles and stores continued. Returning landing craft conveyed casualties to the hospital ship. Arrangements were also made to convey several hundred prisoners from Red and Blue Beaches to ORONSAY, where it had been decided to accommodate all prisoners.

41. Survivors of the submarine LE HEROS were interrogated on board KEREN and a report signalled to S.O.F. No information concerning the minefields at Diego Suarez could be obtained from them. The only item of interest was that LE HEROS had left Diego Suarez on 1st May and had been patrolling ever since.

42. On receipt of a signal from S.O.F. approving my proposals to sail slow and fast convoys for Diego Suarez, preparations were made to sail the slow convoy at 1600/7th, and the fast convoy at 0500/8th. A route passing eight miles North of Cape Amber was selected and anchor berths for all ships in Scotch Bay were allocated.

43. The slow convoy, composed as for Convoy Y on passage from Durban with the addition of GREYSTOKE CASTLE, duly sailed by the swept channel shortly after 1600, escorted by D.12 and all available corvettes, EMPIRE KINGSLEY acting as Commodore as before.

#### *May 8th, Day Four.*

44. All landing craft were ordered to leave the beaches by 0300 and to be hoisted.

At 0500 the fast convoy, composed as for Convoy Z on passage from Durban, sailed by the swept channel, escorted by LAFOREY and JAVELIN. KEREN acted as Commodore.

45. I instructed POOLE, the only remaining ship at the anchorage, to recover the dan buoys marking the channel and to follow the Fleet to Diego Suarez.

46. DEVONSHIRE and additional destroyers joined the escort of the convoy when clear of the swept channel and aircraft from ILLUSTRIOUS carried out A/S reconnaissance. The route of both convoys to Diego Suarez fortunately avoided the submarine which was eventually destroyed by ACTIVE and passage was uneventful though S.E. wind force 8 was experienced from Cape Amber onwards.

47. The slow convoy entered harbour at 1000 and the fast convoy at 1330, all ships picking up their berths in Scotch Bay creditably in spite of the strong wind.