

20-m.m. that is normally associated with flak-lighters. The flak-lighter had more armament than this and may have been the one bombarding Mulat the previous night.

38. Partisans on Ist reported four beached vessels the following morning. L.R.D.G. on Rivanj reported three. Royal Air Force reconnaissance on the morning of the 13th, reported three aground, two still burning. Also, Partisans reported a northbound convoy going through the Pasman Channel earlier on the evening of the 11th.

Most of the enemy vessels were laden, at least one with petrol, and one F-lighter with ammunition.

A report just received indicates that there was a southbound convoy that night going from Trieste to Split and it was probable that this was one of the convoys attacked.

Strategic or Tactical Conclusions.

39. This was the first really decisive victory of D-boats* over the old enemy, F-lighters, and was made possible due to low visibility, land background, uncertainty of identification, absurdly close ranges, excellent gunnery and admirable coolness on the part of the three following Commanding Officers. In fact D-boats are not suited to a "snap" torpedo attack and the fact that H.M.M.T.B.634 was having to manoeuvre on inner engines made her slower on the turn than usual. This kept the

three M.T.B.s well behind the Senior Officer. As it turned out, no tactic could have been more successful. H.M.M.G.B.662 drew all the enemy's fire and attention away from the body of the unit, and the smoke from the guns drifted across the line of sight of the enemy so that they were able to get into within one hundred yards without ever being fired on. The first that the enemy knew of there being any ships there other than H.M.M.G.B.662 was the full broadsides of three "Ds" from under one hundred yards away. This contributed materially to the success of an action which in its results surpasses anything this flotilla has yet done, for the cost of very few casualties and very slight damage.

There is little to say about the second and third attacks, as intuition is incapable of analysis.

40. I would not, on the strength of this action, recommend that units of D-boats can take on units of F-lighters, unless the action can, as it were, be fought on a site of the D-boats' choosing. On this particular occasion the enemy was firing at us with very much heavier armament than we possess, and if the visibility had been a hundred yards or so better I cannot but feel that we would have lost at least one boat. What is certain, though, is that once the action is joined, and both sides are firing, the enemy will be the first to become erratic.

(Signed) T. J. BLIGH,

Lieutenant-Commander, R.N.V.R.

Admiralty footnote:

* D-boat—a "Fairmile" type of M.T.B. and M.G.B.

LONDON

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