



SUPPLEMENT

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THE CAPTURE OF DIEGO SUAREZ

The following Despatch was submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on the 16th June, 1942, by Rear-Admiral E. N. Syfret, C.B., Flag Officer Commanding, Force "F":—

Office of Flag Officer Commanding,
Force "F."

16th June, 1942.

Be pleased to lay before the Board the accompanying report on the capture of Diego Suarez, which covers the period when the first convoy left Durban until the entry of the Fleet into Diego Suarez on 8th and 9th May, 1942.

2. In view of the detailed nature of the operation orders and observing that the operations were carried out almost exactly as laid down therein, I have purposely phrased my report in broad terms, sufficient to give a connected and general story, and stressing certain salient factors and incidents.

3. I have not made any mention of the operations of the Army, as these will be reported by Major-General R. G. Sturges, C.B., Royal Marines, who was in command of Force 121 under me, but I wish here to place on record the excellent relations that existed throughout the operation between the Royal Navy, the Army and the South African Air Force.

Co-operation at all times between the Services was most cordial, and to this must be attributed a great measure of the success of the enterprise.

4. I also wish to record the excellent manner in which H.M. Ships, Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, and Ships of the Merchant Navy, carried out their tasks. The enthusiasm and efficiency shown by Captains, Officers and Ships' Companies were most gratifying.

Few references will be found in this report to the work performed by the Corvettes since the

nature of their duties was not so spectacular as that of other units. But throughout, and subsequent to, the operation, whether providing A/S* protection or ferrying troops and stores, they carried out their duties in fine spirit, and most efficiently.

(Signed) E. N. SYFRET,
Rear-Admiral.

SECTION I

DURBAN TO DISPERSAL FOR FINAL APPROACH TO COURRIER BAY.

The slow convoy comprising eight Motor Transport ships, tankers and the tank landing ship sailed from Durban in accordance with programme on 25th April, escorted by DEVONSHIRE (Captain R. D. Oliver), two low endurance destroyers, 14th M/S† Flotilla and 3rd Escort Group. ANTHONY, delayed by defects, sailed later to overtake the convoy, as did CITY OF HONG KONG, who had not arrived in time to sail with the convoy. She sailed the following day escorted by two corvettes.

2. The passage of the convoy proceeded according to plan, but time had to be "wasted" owing to considerable favourable currents being experienced.

3. On 28th April, the fast convoy comprising the five assault ships, and three transports carrying personnel, and escorted by RAMILLIES (wearing my Flag), ILLUSTRIOUS, HERMIONE, and six destroyers, sailed from Durban.

4. The General Officer Commanding, Major-General Sturges, Royal Marines, and three of his Staff, together with Colonel Melville, South African Air Force, and two Staff Officers, embarked in my Flagship.

Admiralty footnotes —

* A/S = anti-submarine

† M/S = minesweeping.