



SUPPLEMENT

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ACTIONS AGAINST RAIDERS

REPORT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF ENEMY RAIDER No. 16 BY H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE

The following Despatch was submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on the 8th December, 1941, by Vice-Admiral A. U. Willis, C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic Station.

*South Atlantic.
8th December, 1941.*

Forwarded for the information of Their Lordships.

2. The action taken by the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE, is considered to have been correct throughout.

A successful operation well carried out.

(Signed) A. U. WILLIS,
Vice-Admiral,
Commander-in-Chief.

H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE
26th November, 1941.

Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic.

The following report on the events leading to the sinking of German Raider No. 16 is submitted.*

2. Following the usual practice in suitable weather of carrying out a dawn reconnaissance, the Walrus aircraft took off at 0520 on Saturday, 22nd November, to carry out an A/S patrol and long range search ahead of the ship. In these circumstances W/T silence is preserved unless an enemy warship is

sighted. On recovery at 0710 the observer reported having sighted a merchant ship in approximate position 04 degs. 20 mins. South, 18 degs. 50 mins. West, and course was immediately altered to close this position at 25 knots. The description given contained the grounds of a suspicion that she might be a German raider.

3. The masts of a ship were sighted at 0809 bearing 160 degs. in position 04 degs. 12 mins. South, 18 degs. 42 mins. West. Wind south east, force four. Sky partly cloudy. Visibility ten miles. Slight sea, short slow swell. Course was altered to 090 degs. to fly off aircraft. The Walrus was again catapulted at 0820 to carry out further investigation and for this purpose had been provided with photographs of known German raiders.

4. My suspicions were immediately aroused by the manoeuvres and appearance of the ship which closely resembled the description of Raider No. 16 given in the supplement to Weekly Intelligence Report No. 64 and the American periodical "Life" of 23rd June, 1941, with the exception of removable characteristics such as ventilators and Samson posts.

5. DEVONSHIRE was manoeuvred to keep between 18,000 and 12,000 yards from the merchant ship—speed 26 knots—making frequent alterations of course to frustrate torpedo attack. Immediately after the Walrus took off the enemy made a complete circle to starboard and thereafter made a great many alterations of course and speed. Her general tendency was to the south east and she was careful to prevent me getting a clear view of her stern. The signal "NNJ" was made by light but no reply was received. She hoisted "L" flag in international code meaning "Stop—I have something to communicate" and later "MT" meaning "My engines are stopped." Apart from this she refused to answer any signals.

Admiralty footnote —

* The raider was the ATLANTIS (ex S S GOLDENFELS) 7,862 tons, seven 5.9 in guns. After sinking a number of ships since leaving Kiel in March, 1940, she acted as a submarine supply ship, and was so employed, in fact about to fuel a submarine alongside her, when she sighted DEVONSHIRE'S aircraft