

240°, 2,000 yards, which was confirmed as a submarine.

She immediately attacked, held contact up to 100 yards, and fired a 14-charge shallow pattern at 0933.

A black circular buoy with electric cable attached came to the surface after this attack; at 0945 a loud underwater explosion was heard and felt, and oil started to come to the surface. GURKHA was unable to regain contact.

LEGION, who was hunting with GURKHA, obtained contact, and attacked with a 14-charge pattern set to medium depth at 0955, regaining contact at 1001, and attacking with another 14-charge pattern set deep at 1009.

During LEGION's second attack, wreckage and oil appeared close to where her first pattern was dropped.

Among the wreckage picked up were an Italian dictionary, a mattress pillow, numerous pieces of wood, some with bright screws, and a piece of human scalp attached to a piece of wood by a splinter of metal. The interiors of the dictionary, pillow and mattress were dry.

There appears to be no reasonable cause to doubt that an Italian U-Boat was destroyed by GURKHA and LEGION.\*

163. The force entered harbour between 0700 and 0900/1.

#### *Convoy M.G.2.—Passage from Malta to Gibraltar.*

164. As stated earlier (paragraph 33) the first ship, S.S. MELBOURNE STAR, sailed from Malta at noon on 26th September (D.2).

The remaining two ships, S.S. PORT CHALMERS and S.S. CITY OF PRETORIA, left Malta at 1030 on 27th September (D.3), escorted until 1930 by GLOXINIA.

165. After an uneventful passage MELBOURNE STAR arrived at Gibraltar at 0700 on 29th September (D.5).

166. PORT CHALMERS and CITY OF PRETORIA were reported by Italian aircraft at 1200/27, shortly after leaving Malta. No enemy surface craft or aircraft were seen until 2320, when what was believed to be an E-Boat was sighted by PORT CHALMERS, who was following in the wake of CITY OF PRETORIA. The enemy craft when first sighted by PORT CHALMERS was lying stopped 3-400 yards on the port beam of CITY OF PRETORIA, who saw nothing except gunfire from her consort.

PORT CHALMERS sheered off to starboard, and 10 minutes after first sighting heard E-Boat engines approaching from the port quarter; she turned to starboard to bring the enemy astern, and opened fire with her 4-inch gun at the enemy's bow wave.

The enemy opened fire at PORT CHALMERS with her machine-gun, but scored no hits, and after PORT CHALMERS had fired six rounds of 4-inch, the enemy crossed astern and made off. PORT

CHALMERS then resumed her station astern of CITY OF PRETORIA.

This action took place 15 miles S.S.W. of Pantellaria.

167. At 0535/28 (D.4) the Commodore of the Convoy ordered PORT CHALMERS to part company. The latter then proceeded at full speed, wearing French colours.

168. An Italian reconnaissance seaplane (Cant 506) approached from the direction of the French coast and circled CITY OF PRETORIA at 0915/28, subsequently making off to the westward and paying PORT CHALMERS the same attention. Both ships were wearing French colours and had taken care to keep all service personnel out of sight. They were fully ready for action, but did not open fire as the aircraft took no offensive action.

169. At 1015/28 CITY OF PRETORIA was circled several times by a large 3-engined seaplane, with distinct French markings, which approached from Bizerta. An hour and a half later, when approaching the Galita Channel, CITY OF PRETORIA sighted an Italian twin-engined seaplane stopped on the water, five miles to the north. She lost sight of this aircraft at 1215.

170. PORT CHALMERS sighted neither of these aircraft and was left alone until 1555, when she was circled by an Italian Breda 20, which did not attack, although the Master considers she could not have been deceived by the French colours.

171. CITY OF PRETORIA was attacked at 1725/28 by three T/B aircraft. As these approached with obviously hostile intentions, British colours were hoisted and fire opened as soon as the leader came in range. There is good reason to suppose the leading aircraft was damaged.

By skilful handling, all three torpedoes were avoided. While one aircraft was machine-gunning the ship at long range, a submarine periscope was reported on the starboard quarter by two independent lookouts.

Three smoke floats and a depth charge set to 150 feet were dropped, and under cover of smoke CITY OF PRETORIA turned away.

She signalled "Help Major" at 1730, and "Major now all right" three quarters of an hour later.

172. As CITY OF PRETORIA was approaching Cape de Gata at 0200/30 (D.6) an unidentified vessel, possibly a submarine, was seen to be following. Two or three rapid shots, followed by a dull explosion, were heard. CITY OF PRETORIA made smoke and dropped smoke floats and then made close in to Almeria Bay, into territorial waters, thus shaking off her pursuer.

173. PORT CHALMERS arrived at Gibraltar at 0900/30, followed during the afternoon by CITY OF PRETORIA.

174. The able and resolute handling of both PORT CHALMERS and CITY OF PRETORIA in successfully driving off enemy attacks deserves high praise.

#### *Admiralty footnote.*

\* The destruction of this submarine, the Italian submarine ADUA, on this occasion has since been confirmed.