

SECRET.

MESSAGE.

1824/15th March.

IN.

From S.O.(I) Gibraltar.

Date 16.3.41.

Recd. 1630.

NAVAL CYPHER (X) BY CABLE.

RECIRCULATION AT REQUEST OF D.N.I.

Addressed D.N.I.

1. Following information graded B2 repetition B.2. Unless otherwise stated obtained from five Scandinavian seamen who escaped Port Lyautey March 10th arrived Gibraltar March 13th.

2. Following ships are detained at Port Lyautey. Greek ships ELISE and POLEMIS, Norwegian ships KARI, ORIA, VIGOR, GRAN, NYHORN, BATAVIA, ex Danish Ships BIRGIT, BELGIEN, CYRIL, HILDE, British ships HEBE, STORKA, Dutch ship EXPORT, Italian ship FORTUNATA.

3. Following are at Casablanca, British ships PENGREEP, TOUSSIKA, Belgian ship FREDERIC, ex Danish ship VIOLA.

4. Norwegian ship JASPIS sailed from Casablanca about January 10th destination not known. British ship SALMO has French crew on board wears French colours and is renamed, first part of new name being CAP. Ship sailed from Port Lyautey March 1st after part loading with cargo, destination believed Casablanca to complete loading. Italian FORTUNATA is used as guard ship Port Lyautey and has machine guns mounted. Most of her cargo has been discharged. Some of it was believed to have been Gasolene.

Danish BIRGIT wears French colours has been renamed ST.DIENNE but carries her Danish crew. All ships at Port Lyautey have only ten to fifteen tons bunkers on board. Remainder was off-loaded and probably used ashore for railway purposes.

5. French Authorities are making arrangements to repatriate Scandinavian members of crews of all these ships, and it is common knowledge that they are to be replaced by French crews and ships used by French under Vichy colours and renamed. A list of such ships compiled by the French Authorities giving the present name and the new name that will be assumed when under French colours was seen by Master of British HEBE, 11. Believed that GRAN, NYHORN and HILDE would be the ships first taken over at Port Lyautey and March 13th mentioned as date this would be likely to occur. This paragraph C.3. repetition C.3.

1824/15.

- A.C.N.S. (T).
- D.N.I. (4).
- Ops. (4).
- O.D. (5).
- D. of P. (3).
- D.T.D. (4).
- M. (8) for Foreign Office.
- O.I.C. (2).
- D.S.D. 9.
- W.D.
- I.P. (3).
- D. of S.T.
- D.E.W.D. (3).

War Diary.15. 3. 1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic Contd.Ships detained
by Vichy
French.

At Port Lyautey and Casablanca, and intentions of French re: using them (S.O.(i) Gib. 1824/15.). See Lion Copy only.

Naval A/C
rescued by
CABO BUENA
ESPERANZA.

Airmen provisionally interned by order of British C.G. on instructions from Madrid plane in charge of G.H.Q. Authorities. We have been asked to (corrupt group) make strong protest and demand release. No distinct time granted for repairs by experts. Provisional internment is same procedure as followed with Air Force personnel later liberated who made forced landing on East Coast of Spain recently. Please inform N.A. (A.N.A. Madrid 1838/15, to V.A. Gibraltar.).

Your 0938/13, understood Spaniards prepared to release aircraft and crew if necessary arrangements can be made within certain time limit. Legal position is not settled. Precedents in World War.

If Spaniards are willing of their own accord to release plane and crew every effort should be made to get them away. We do not accept Spanish analogy between belligerent military aircraft and belligerent warships (V.C.N.S. 2058/15 to F.O.C.N.A.).

MADRID
(German.)

Sailed from Las Palmas on 11/12/40. No further information of her movements. (D.D.I.C. 2329/15, to N.S.O.(I) Monte Video.)

ATLAS
(German.)14/3 arrival Gandia (Valencia T.H.I.2400/15).
ATLAS.

War Diary.15. 3. 41.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic.DALIA.

DALIA DE BRAZZA escorting DALIA due to leave Durban P.M./15, but this is contrary to Adty., 1832/6, and C. in C. S.A. 0001/14. (F.O.I.C. Simonstown, 1025/15, to C. in C. E.I.). *See also next page.*

DUNKELD.
DALGOMA.

Overdue shipping my 1006/11 DUNKELD arrived Capetown DALGOMA due Capetown 11/3 from U.K. not arrived.

(S.O.(I) Capetown 1034B/15.).

MADRID.

S.O.(I) Montevideo's 1839/13/3 is passed to you. Please inform him ship sailed from Las Palmas 11/12/1940. (S.O.(i) Freetown 1036/15 to Adty.). It is reported that German ship MADRID is taking a cargo of German merchandise to Uruguay. Vessel last reported sailing Northwards from Las Palmas on 11.12.40. (D.D.I.C. 2330/15, to C. in C. S.A. R.A. S.A.D. NEWCASTLE, ASTURIAS, QUEEN OF BERMUDA.)

CILTVAIRA.

Latvian ship CILTVAIRA which left Norfolk 8/2, for Rio de Janeiro has not arrived. (S.O.(i) Freetown 1116/15.).

AINDERBY.

Cancel my 1258/14. AINDERBY arrived Freetown 15/3. (S.O.(I) Freetown 1232/15.).

Crew of
LECH. Ships
at Santos.

Special Condor plane left Rio de Janeiro 0630/15 for Para. with 12 members of crew of German LECH probably join NORDERNEY at Para. B one NORDERNEY will probably sail Monday. N.S.O.(I) Freetown pass to C. in C. S.A. (N.A. Rio de Janeiro 1508/15.).

/My 1508.....

War Diary.15. 3. 41.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic Contd.Crew of
LECH. Ships
at Santos.

My 1508/15, since crew of LECH left for Para have warned ~~SAVORGNAN~~ to keep careful watch over German ships there, since possible move north may be bluff for getting away south. S.O. (I) Freetown pass to C. in C. S.A. (N.A. Rio de Janeiro 1645/15.).

L.L. Corvettes
for Meditn.

"L.L." Corvettes DELPHINIUM, SNAPDRAGON, ERICA and PRIMULA are being sailed for service in Mediterranean. Dates of leaving etc.

6. C's in C. concerned arrange onward passage. (A.C.N.S.(F) 1835/15.).

Orders for
SAVORGNAN
DE BRAZZA.

Re C. in C., E.I. 1242 Z/15. Sail SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA as soon as possible to contact and escort DALIA as far as O21 S., and in accordance with route instructions given in C. in C. E.I., 0650/15 and return immediately to Durban on completion of this duty. She will be required to escort FORT BINGER thereafter in company with COMMANDANT DUBOC. (F.O.I.C. Simonstown 2130 B/15 to N.L.O. Durban.).
Your 1242 Z/15. Have you not received Adty 1832/6? Consider ship can escort both units. See my 2130 B/15 to (?N.L.O.) Durban directing him to sail SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA accordingly. (F.O.I.C. Simonstown 2132 B/15 to C. in C. E.I.).
In view of C.in C., E.I. 1856 Z/15 postpone sailing of SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA. (F.O.I.C. Simonstown 2355 B/15.).

Mediterranean.Force Z.

Request report when Force Z. have arrived at Port Said. (1 S.L. 0051/15 to S.B.N.O. Suez Canal.).

/ILLUSTRIOUS.....

War Diary.15.3.41.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean. Contd.ILLUSTRIOUS.

Your 0109/11 and my 1403/12. Structural strength considered sufficient for passage except in abnormal conditions. Two aircraft, preferably Walrus, can be stowed on flight deck and operate from deck in wind speed 10 knots or over. Consider A/C can land with controlled landing. (ILLUSTRIOUS 1133/15 to Adty.).

Convoy U.S.9.

Convoy U.S.9. arrived Suez A.M./15. (S.B.N.O. Suez Canal Area 1201/15.).

Mining of Suez Canal.

Possibility of using seismographs to detect mines. (C. in C. Med. 1545/15.).

Convoy G.A.5.

(ii) 1400/11. Ships. (N.C.S.O. Piraeus 1607/15.).

Air raid on Malta.

Combined services report Malta up to 1600 hours 15/3. All times G.M.T. Of 4 Wellingtons from U.K. 1 failed to arrive. Signalled at 0545 being attacked. Single Ju.88 dropped 4 bombs on Hal Far aerodrome causing no damage or casualties. Part 2. R/C's. Glenn Martin from U.K. reported seeing at 0750 hours a convoy of about 20 M/V's and Naval Units midway between Pantellaria and Cape Bon. Unable to identify ships or give any indication of course or speed owing to clouds and haze. R/C. Trapani. (H.Q. R.A.F. Malta 1655/15.).

Convoy A.G.5.

Arrived Piraeus 1000/15 except MARIE MAERSK delayed by weather. (N.C.S.O. Piraeus 1930/15.).

/Mining.....

War Diary.15. 3. 41.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean Contd.Mining
of
Suez Canal.

Situation 2030/15. Mines at Km.28 exploded by S/A sweeper at 0830. Sweeper damaged and towed to Port Said. No casualties. Traffic resumed between Port Said and Geneiffe. Nine Merchant vessels proceeded South of Timsah. ILLUSTRIOUS and ROVER arrived at Lake Timsah. No change in Southern sector. Continued strong wind and bad visibility for diving. (S.B.N.O. Suez Canal Area 2041/15.).

East Indies.CAPETOWN
to rejoin
patrol.

CAPETOWN after fuelling at Aden is to rejoin patrol so as to arrive there A.M./23. (C. in C. E.I. 0702/15.).

Convoy
B.N.22.

ANTENOR is to escort convoy B.N.22. to Aden, leaving Bombay 20/3. (C. in C. E.I. 0734Z/15.).

Contravention
of bunkering
policy.

C. in C. E.I. 0812Z/15.

Raider
Intelligence.

My 1132/13/ Para. One C. Request nature of cargo in BRITISH ADVOCATE which left Abadan on 6/2. This information may serve as a check on reliability of prisoner. (C. in C. E.I. 0820/Z/15 to Adty.)

Nets for
Suez Canal.

Further to my 1136/11. (C. in C. E.I. 0830/15.).

SAVORGNAN
DE BRAZZA.

Your 1025/15. I do not know the programme of the French ship. Is there time for French Sloop SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA to do both escorts. (C. in C. E.I. 1242z/15, to N.O.I.C. Simonstown.).
Cancel my 1242/15 in view of my 1428/15/. (C. in C. E.I. 1856Z/15.).

Operation
"Appearance".
(Berbera)

Departure GLASGOW, CALEDON, KINGSTON for operation "~~Appearance~~". (N.O.I.C. Aden 1350Z/15.). See also p. 476.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.China.TAMESIS.

Your 0947/14 concur that ship is not to proceed north of Hong Kong.
(C.in C. China, 0439Z/15 to Com. Hong Kong.)

Protection of Shipping.

Your 1837/13. I am now allowing ships of over 4000 tons as far as Shanghai vide my 0329Z/13.
(C.in C. China, 0443Z/15).

Sighting of Warship.

S.O.(I) Wellington 2038Z/14. C.in C. N.E.I. States vessel could not repetition not have been TROMP.
(C.O.I.S. Singapore, 1339Z/15).

RAMB 2.

C.in C. N.E.I. reports Italian ship RAMB 2 black hull grey super structure sighted 0930Z/12 position 1° 35' S., 124° 51'E. steering 70°. Source not yet ascertained. Vessel last reported Massawa 21/2. C.in C. E.I. N.B. Melbourne, N.Z.N.B. S.O.(I) Hong Kong S.O.(I) Shanghai informed.
(C. of I.S. Far East, 1601Z/15).

DELHI.

Return to Simonstown at best speed preparatory to refit in U.S.A.
(V.C.N.S.(F) 2350/15 to DELHI).

America and West Indies.U/B's in Neutrality Zone.

A.M. 2316/14. Helpful if you could ascertain unofficially what U.S.A. reaction would be if a U/Boat commenced operating in the neutrality zone particularly in that section between 40° North and the Northern limit.
(D.C.D.(H) 0030/15 to N.A.Washington).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)THUNDERBOLT.THUNDERBOLT is to return to Halifax.
(B.S.3. 0743/15).RAMILLIES.My 1701/11, arrangements have been made to dock RAMILLIES at St. John N.B. arriving about 17/3. Hope time required for repair will not exceed 14 days.
(B.S.3. 1047/15.)PUNE.*? PUNGUE.
(Port.)*Following from Yarmouth Radio Begins: Intercepted from PUNE sent in Portuguese 1405 G.M.T. S.C.S. Abandoning ship position 39° 58'N., 43° 19'W. Static very bad no bearing possible.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1316/15).S.S. SAN CASIMIRO.
SIMNIA
ATHELFOAM
NEWBROUGH
attacked by
raider.*See also p. 695*Following has been read from SAN CASIMIRO. QQQQ Merchant ship Raider 39 R 58 N 43 R 19W suspicious accompanied by jamming Q.G.Spark. (Portishead Radio 1415/15).
NOTE: Passed to C.in C. A.W.I. Halifax W/T for RODNEY as T.C.O. 1655/15. Passed F.C.S.
Following received begins at 1920 G.M.T. intercepted from Cape Race Radio Station begins: RRRR (?048°) 28'N., 043° 30'W. SIMNIAshelled 18 (group omitted) 15th ends.
(C.C.A.C. Halifax, 1600/15). Passed F.O.(S)
Following intercepted by Cape Race at 1920 G.M.T. Begins RRRR 040° 28'N., 043° 30'W. SIMNIAshelled 1815 ends. Originator probably SIMNIA.
(C.in C. A.W.I. 1752/15 to RODNEY, THUNDERBOLT, Force M.)
Reference SAN CASIMIRO Merchant Raider distress signal 1415/15. Detach one Armed M.C. and THUNDERBOLT to search area and protect independently routed ships. List of such ships is in vicinity follows. A.M.C. detached will be addressed as Force M to avoid your breaking W/T silence.
(V.C.N.S. 1737/15 to RODNEY).

/My 1737/15.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)SAN CASIMIRO etc:
attacked by Raider
Cont: -

My 1737/15. The following 14 ships of which 10 are tankers are reckoned to be within 150 miles of the position of the attack. All vessels outward bound from U.K.
(V.C.N.S.1759/15 to RODNEY, THUNDERBOLT, Force M).
To C.O.A.C. Begins: 2038 G.M.T. RRRR intercepted from Cape Race Radio
ATHELFOAM 4200 N., 4325W being shelled
Ends.
(Halifax, N.S. T.H.I. 1810/15, C.in C. A.W.I. 2022/15, to RODNEY, THUNDERBOLT, C.in C. S.A. Force M, X, Ships etc. A.W.I.) Received 0201/16.
The following has been read. RRRR
40 R 28 N., 43 R 30 W. SIMNIA shelled
no other details. (Burnham on Sea Radio, 1842/15). Passed F.O.(S).
(1) Reference SAN CASIMIRO distress message. Merchant raider reported in position 39° 58'N., 43° 19'W at 1415/15 may now be retiring towards central area.
(2) If near enough you may at your discretion operate against raider instead of proceeding to area ordered.
(3) Arrival at Freetown must not repetition not be delayed.
(V.C.N.S. 1903/25 to Force X, THUNDERBOLT). Merchant ship raider reported by S.S. SAN CASIMIRO in 39° 58' N., 43° 19'W. at 1415/15.
(D.D.I.C. 1925/15 to C.in C. H.F. Ships and Authorities A.W.I. N.A. W.A. S.A.)
NOTE: CASIMIRO's signal was re broadcast to all ships and authorities on receipt. Ref: Admty(1157/15).
(?1737/15 intended) have at present no serviceable ships in harbour to send to this (?ship). (? SALOPIAN) could be spared if necessary. KING GEORGE V could be ready to sail tomorrow but would not then be available for H.X.115.
(B.S.3. 1941/15 to C.in C. A.W.I.)
Your 0743/15. THUNDERBOLT is to act in accordance with A.M. 1737/15.
(D.D.O.D.(H) 1949/15 to R.A.3.)
Cape Race reports RRRR 2038 G.M.T. ATHELFOAM 4200N., 4325W., being shelled ends. - and further - QQQQ 2040 G.M.T. NEWBROUGH 3900N., 4844W. suspicious vessel closing - ends.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 2005/15 Bermuda, 2024/15). Passed F.O.(S).

/Enemy.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)SAN CASIMIRO etc:Attacked by RaiderCont:-

Enemy surface Raider in position
40° 28'N., 43° 30'W at 1915 G.M.T./15.
(D.D.I.C. 2106/15 to All British
Merchant Ships in Areas 1 & 7.)

Following intercepted
Begins: RRRR 40° 28'N., 43° 30'W. A
SIMNA shelled. Ends.

(D.D.I.C. 2157/15 to C.in C. H.F.
Ships and Authorities A.W.I., W.A.,
N.A., S.A., THUNDERBOLT, Force X,
Force M.).

In view of warship raider report in my
2157/15 Force M and THUNDERBOLT are to
R/V as ordered by Force M and operate
in company.

(V.C.N.S. 2210/15 to Force M,
THUNDERBOLT).

Cape Race reports - 2119/15 QQQQ
NEWBROUGH 3900 N 4844 W being followed
for past two hours by four masted ship
now closing rapidly - Ends.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa. 2215/15).

KING GEORGE V.

Halifax arrival 15/3. KING GEORGE V.
(S.O.(I) Halifax. 1515/15).

Transport of
R.C.A.F.
personnel.

N.S.H.Q. Ottawa 1752/15 see Operations
Volume.

Patrol of
focal
area.

In view of the concentration of West
bound shipping passing between points
Z and A, request you will consider
detailing a cruiser to patrol this
focal area.

2. It is hoped that circumstances may
shortly allow H.M.Gov., to release
DIOMEDE from her present commitment.
(V.C.N.S. 2323/15 to C.in C. A.W.I.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.IXION.British 10,263 tons, in Convoy
H.X.112 SSSS De ZMVI 59.52 N., 16.02 W.
chased.(Wick Radio 0829/15, read from
Portsmouth Radio).Course steering 270° 12 knots. *
(IXION 0833/15 to All Ships).Submarine last seen on surface steering
to intercept IXION.

(IXION 0925/15 to any British Warship).

Ship being chased by U/Boat 059° 52'N.,
016° 02'W. at 0931 steering east 12
knots.(C.in C. W.A. 0944/15 to VANOC,
HELIOTROPE, MALLOW, VIOLET, ARABIS).

Following has been read.

061° 02'N., 018° 00'W. ship torpedoed.
(WALKER 2330/15).

* Being chased by U/Boat.

?

ERODONA →

S. Atlantic.

1408.

A.F. message. Position 11° 10'N., 19°
50'W. (C.in C. S.A. 1408/15).

1528.

About 52°-54° N., 20° W. or further
W. Very indefinite. (D.S.558).

1935.

53° - 55° N., 25° W. very indefinite.
(Italian) (D.S.558).

2308.

About 61° N., 18° - 20° W. indefinite.
(D.S. 558).

2212.

About 48° N., 32° W. very indefinite.
(D.S. 558).

1821.

11.40 N., 20.12 W. 300' S.E. of
Cape Verde Is. Sighted by H.M.Ship.
(D.S. 558).Submarines
Reported.H.X.112
reported
(See 16/3).An enemy submarine has made a first
sighting report of a convoy or important
unit.

(D.D.I.C. 2327/15).

/My 2327/15.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.15.3.1941.
Saturday.U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.

My 2327/15. It is probable that formation reported was H.X.112 or S.C. 24 convoy.
(D.D.I.C. 2340/15).

Submarines
Attacked.By TORRENT.

If you are satisfied that TORRENTS contact is non-sub request you will discontinue the hunt and instruct RUBY to proceed to Milford Haven.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1150/15).

MOST SECRETWar Diary16.3.1941.
SundaySITUATION REPORTHome Commands

Fog still continues on the East Coast and in the Channel and movements are affected. Harwich was closed during most of the forenoon.

Western Channel Patrol.

KELLY, KELVIN and JACKAL patrolled last night between the longitudes of Wolf Rock and Eddystone, to cover shipping sailing westward from Plymouth.

ADMIRAL
HIPPER
(Cruiser.)

Air R/C today showed that the ^{ADMIRAL} HIPPER (cruiser) had left Brest.

U-Boat
Campaign.
3 U-Boats
sunk in
Attack on
H. X. 112
47 ships
Torpedoed.

SS VENETIA, FERM, FRANCHE COMTE and J.B. WHITE in Convoy H.X. 112, and apparently a fifth ship also, *SS KORSHAMN were torpedoed today on the Northern Approach route. WALKER and VANOC, escorting the convoy, sunk 2 or 3 submarines, U 99, U 100 and probably U 29. VANOC is holed forward from ramming one of the submarines. It was stated by survivors that 5 U-Boats were operating together. * SS KORSHAMN was torpedoed & sunk by s/m in 61° 09' N, 12° 20' W. 17/3. See BR. 1337. Page 193.

It appears that Norwegian tanker BEDUIN and British tanker ERODONA were also torpedoed in this convoy.

War Diary16.3.1941.
SundaySITUATION REPORTBritish Air Activity

27 aircraft of Bomber Command attacked Lorient last night.

Fog caused the majority of patrols today to be cancelled, though patrols were flown S.W. of the Faeroes, north of the Shetlands and by Iceland aircraft in Denmark Strait. A daylight patrol was flown in the Bay of Biscay for the HIPPER class cruiser and a coastwise patrol in the afternoon from Brest to La Rochelle.

Enemy Air Activity

A/S trawler LADY LILIAN was bombed and sunk today in the N.W. Approaches, H.M. Trawler KING SOL and ST APOLLO were in company with LADY LILIAN, and the former was damaged.

MiningOperation
B.S. 51.

This operation has been postponed on account of fog.

Norwegian SS ELNA E was mined off Lundy Island early this morning. Mines were detonated today in the Humber.

The Clyde was opened to navigation for outward traffic with sweepers ahead from 1300/16. Part of Birkenhead Docks was reopened. The river will be closed to traffic between 0730 and 1200 daily for sweeping. A mine which exploded today in Princes Dock has permanently put one berth out of action and prevents flooding all 3 docks at Gofan. Liverpool was opened at 1400 until $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset and is to be reopened daily at 1100 until $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset.

War Diary16.3.1941.
SundaySITUATION REPORTSouth Atlantic

MALAYA, escorting Convoy S.L. 68 reports that a ship was sunk this afternoon, presumably torpedoed, in 13° 12' N., 20° 24' W., (S.W. of the Cape Verde Is.) 10 miles west of the convoy.

MediterraneanAir Raid
on Malta

About 12 enemy aircraft attacked Malta last night, Searchlights were doused and the raiders had difficulty in locating targets. Most of the bombs fell in the sea and no damage or casualties occurred.

F.A.A. attack
Valona

3 F.A.A. Swordfish last night attacked shipping in Valona harbour with torpedoes Results were not observed.

East IndiesOperation
"Appearance"

Berbera was recaptured this morning by a combined operation by the Navy, Army and Air Force.

MOST SECRETWar Diary16.3.1941.
SundaySITUATION REPORTAmerica & West Indies

ATHELFOAM
and ^{so}
NEWBURGH
DEMETERTON
SOUTHGATE
CHILEAN REEFER
Attacked

Further reports of raider activities continued to come in today. At 0201 a message was received at the Admiralty that the tanker ATHELFOAM (outward bound in ballast) was being shelled by a warship at 2038/15 G.M.T. in 42° N., 43° 25' W., (about 90 miles north of SIMNIA's position) and at 0514 a message came in that at 2040 SS NEWBROUGH reported a merchant ship raider closing her in position 39° N., 48° 44' W.

15/3
 As it seemed possible the attacks on SIMNIA (15/2) and ATHELFOAM were carried out by SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU, Force M was ordered to return to her convoy, THUNDERBOLT continuing to search. KING GEORGE V which had arrived at Halifax at 1515/15 was ordered to fuel and proceed with all despatch to the area concerned, and TALISMAN, en route to Halifax, was also ordered to operate to the limit of her endurance before continuing her passage. KING GEORGE V left Halifax at 1225/16 (local time) Two aircraft left Newfoundland at 1045 G.M.T. to sweep ahead of convoys H.X. 114 and S.Ø. 175.

At 2116 a warship raider signal timed 1855 was received, from DEMETERTON in 45° 58' N., 44° W. The signal was jammed by the raider. At 1800Z SOUTHGATE made a similar signal from 46° 19' N., 45° 48' W. A warship raider signal timed 1539 G.M.T. details unreadable owing to jamming, was received at the Admiralty at 1953. CHILEAN REEFER reported being shelled by a warship raider at 2020 in 46° 13' N., 44° 45' W.

/At 2129Z.....

War Diary

16.3.1941.
Sunday

SITUATION REPORT

America & West Indies-Contd.

At 2129Z RODNEY reported an unknown vessel 15 miles off steering ~~40°~~ in 46° 16' N., 8' W. The vessel which was almost certainly a warship disappeared in the darkness, as did also another large ship, presumed to be a tanker. RODNEY then rejoined Convoy H.X. 114, picking up the Captain and another officer of the CHILEAN REEFER who stated that their attacker was the GNEISENAU and that she was observed signaling to another vessel, probably the tanker.

This was GNEISENAU.

46°?

WAR DIARY.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

TROUBADOUR.
EVADNE.

Intend as a temporary expedient to augment South Irish Sea escorts by employing TROUBADOUR and EVADNE based on Holyhead. Request you report when EVADNE will be available.
(C.in C. W.A. 1821/16 to F.O.I.C. Liverpool).

Iceland Base
facilities.

Your 1931/11. Re conference to be held.
(A.C.N.S.(T) 1908/16 to F.O.I.C.Iceland).

Oerlikon
Guns in Wairs
W.A/R.S. and
HUNT-class
destroyers.

Recent reports of engagements with "E" boats shew the imperative necessity for ahead fire and the indication given in C.A.F.C. that there is likely to be delay in supplying Oerlikon guns to "Hunt" class Destroyers is viewed with grave concern.
Remarks.

Request favourable consideration to the following proposals for fitting both HUNTS and WAIRS employed on East Coast Convoy Duty.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 2305/16).

Movements.

HOOD.

HOOD screened by 3 destroyers is to sail passing May Island at 2000/18 speed of advance 18 knots and Dunnet Head at 0630/19 to carry out full power trials and firing to West of Orkneys. On completion HOOD is to enter Scapa for degaussing range proceeding to berth on completion.
(F.O.C. 1st B.S. 1015/16 to HOOD).

UNDAUNTED.
STURGEON.

A. UNDAUNTED is to leave Zone C.3. after dark 18th and return to base as routed by Captain (S) 9.

B. STURGEON is to proceed into Zone C.4. after dark 17th. thence into Zone C.3. after dark 18th thence operating in Zones C.1 and C.2. from 20th to 22nd. Leave patrol after dark/22nd and return to base as routed by Captain (S), 6.
(F.O.S. 1144/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Movements.QUORN.

My position 8 C Buoy proceeding South by Q.Z.S. 172.
(QUORN 1315/16).
Return Harwich.
(C.in C. Nore, 1411/16 to QUORN).

D.5.

Cancel my 1928 and 1933. Keep steam at one hour's notice.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 2010/16 to D.5.)

REGISTAN.

Your 1416/12. Not decyphered until today. Insufficient oil to reach Clyde reference my 1830/11. Request instructions.
(REGISTAN 1400/16 to F.O.C.N.P.)

Portsmouth.

My 1503/16. All movements postponed 24 hours owing to fog.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 1757/16).

O.24.
WHITE BEAR.

WHITE BEAR unable to proceed owing to fog. Anchor as convenient and proceed to Methil when fog clears.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 1821/16 to O.24.)

Operations.

Rosemary and
Lousy Banks.
A/S Patrol.

WINDERMERE sailed to relieve WASTWATER and to patrol in accordance with C.in C. W.A. 1831/9.
(N.C.I.C. Stornoway, 0803/16).

NELSON
NIGERIA.

NELSON and NIGERIA will be operating to southward of Iceland until 0900Z/17
~~.....~~
 preparatory to covering operation S.N.69.
(C.in C. H.F. 0948Z/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations. (Contd.)Patrol O.

Patrol O by 21st D.F. tonight is cancelled. WORCESTER and WHITSHEED are to remain outside Harwich for the present. Instructions for the night will be signalled to them according to circumstances.
(C.in C. Nore, 1229/16).

Western Channel Patrol.

Arrived 1100 KELLY, 1135 KELVIN, 1240 JACKAL.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1320/16).

Interception of M/V.

One large M.V. reported ten degrees North of Ile De Vierge at 1610 course East. KELLY and JACKAL proceed to intercept off Cape De La Hague, returning to Plymouth by 0900.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1933/16 to D.5.)

British Air Activity.Patrols.

My 1848/15. Patrol R 2 and R 1 cannot take off before daylight owing to weather.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 0330/16).
My 1848/15. Patrol R One is not being flown.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 1109/16).
2 Battle Aircraft left at 1116 to carry out patrol Denmark Straits.
(F.C.I.C. Iceland, 1120/16).
Aircraft on weather flight from Trondheim this afternoon has covered area to 63° 30'N., 10° W. and extended flight to 64° 30'N., 15° W.
(D.D.I.C. 1145/16).

/Your 2100/4.

WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity. (Contd.)Patrols.
(Contd.)

Your 2100/4. Carry out further patrol 17/3 as well as 16/3. (War Office 163 0/15 to G.O.C.Iceland).
 My 1120/16. Aircraft returned having completed patrol between 1300 and 1500. Nothing to report. (F.O.Iceland, 1828/16).
 Your 56412 (M.O.8) of 14/3. Patrol carried out over Denmark Strait today despite bad weather conditions. Details. Will carry out further patrol tomorrow if weather permits but gale blowing and visibility poor at present. (G.O.C. Iceland Force, 2025/16).
 X.3370 A.35 16/3. Following area of Denmark Straits operationally patrolled today by 2 Battle Aircraft. Patrols of 6 hours and 4 hours respectively one machine and Akureyri. (98 Squadron, 2110/16 to 18 Group).

Cover for SALAMANDER.

Cover arranged until arrival at Scapa. Code word ~~ADAPT.~~ "Adapt". (C.in C. Rosyth, 0420/16 to SALAMANDER).

Iceland.
Functions of Hudson A/C.

Your 1053/10. Some information is contained in Air Ministry 1145/11 and 1930/11 to G.O.C. Iceland. Air Ministry are making a further signal covering general policy. (A.C.N.S.(H) 1243/16 to F.O.I.C.Iceland).

Enemy Air Activity.F.W.
Aircraft.

1 A/C course 360° height 1000 ft. Position 26 miles 201° 55° N., 12° W. (BULLDOG 0830/16).

KING SOL.

SOS 54° 30' N., 12° 15' W. help OBA. (KING SOL 0918/16).

WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)Portland.
Air Raid,
14/3.

Air raid on night of 14/3 resulted in considerable amount of broken glass at ATTACK and some damage to plaster work of Dormer windows.

(O.C.W. Portland, 1015/16).

Glasgow
Area. Air Raid
Night 14/15.
Oil-Tanks
damaged.
CERVEZA
(Motor Boat)
damaged.

My 2200/15. The second night of enemy action (14/15 March) extended the damage from five tanks to eighteen as shewn below.

(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 1945/16).

Motor Boat CERVEZA of Clyde River Patrol damaged by D.A.Bomb without serious casualty. (F.O.I.C. Glasgow 2129/16).

Manchester
Air Raid on
Night 11/12.STELLA (Swedish 1189 tons) Sunk.
Following 9 ships damaged.
HARDWICKE GRANGE (British 9005 tons).
CORDILLERA (British 6865 tons).
CLIFTON HALL (British 5063 tons).
QUEEN MAUD (British 4976 tons).
CONTRACTOR (British 6004 tons).
o/NAVELIST (British 6133 tons).
MARKHOR (British 7917 tons).
SILVERELM (British 4351 tons).
LONDON II (British 1260 tons).
(D.C.L. 16/3).Liverpool.
Air Raid on
Night 14/15.Following ships damaged.
MINEGARTH (Tug)
SCOTTISH CHIEF (British 7006 tons).
ORWELL (British 7920 tons).
(D.C.L. 16/3).Mining.ELNA E.(Norwegian 1174 tons). C.G.Bude reports:-
Cardiff to Plymouth. Struck mine N. of
Ludy at 0100.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth, 1021/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Mining. (Contd.)ELNA E. cont:

My 1021/16. ELNA E. struck mine approx. 0105/16 S.W. Lundy Island 18 miles approx. 7 to 8 miles from shore. Crew landed at Crackington Haven, Master and 16 men including 2 gunners. Steward missing.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth, 1338/16).

SAMLANES.
(Mined 13/3).

My 1818/13 and 1220/14. Belgian trawler picked up raft marked SAMLANES in 49° 55'N., 5° 31'W. on 15/3.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth, 1022/16).

B.S.51.

Operation B.S.51 has been postponed owing to fog. Am anchored in vicinity of 20 C Buoy.
(TEVIOT BANK 1236/16).

Clyde.

My 0429/15/3. River Clyde open to navigation for outward traffic with Sweepers ahead from 1300/16.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 1301/16).

Birkenhead.

My 1130/15. Birkenhead Docks opened for essential traffic only except western portion of west float.
(F.O.I.C. Liverpool, 1321/16).

Liverpool.

Port of Liverpool opened until half an hour after sunset. Intend reopening each day at 1100 until half an hour after sunset until further notice.

Vessels may continue to enter QZS 211 at daylight and adjust speed so as not to arrive at Rock Light before 1100.
(F.O.I.C. Liverpool, 1400/16.)

Clyde.

River will remain open until further notice being closed to traffic between 0730 and noon daily for sweeping.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 1656/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Mining. (Contd.)Humber.
2 Mines detonated.

Two mines detonated this afternoon by SA/LL Trawler near 59 buoy. (F.O.Humber, 1934/16).

Operation
GU.Particulars. (C.in C. Plymouth, 2033/16). See Operations Volume.Clyde Air
Raid of
Night 14/15.
WARRIOR
(Tug)
damaged.My 2200/15 and my 1945/16.
1 Number of mines landed in river now proved to be nine as follows.

2. River has been continuously swept by S.A. and L.L. Drifters. River has been opened to traffic and HERMIONE and SUTLEJ and about five merchant ships passed down to Tail of Bank. ASSINIBOINE and a cattle ship brought up river.

3. On 15/3 as a result of a mine explosion tug WARRIOR belonging to Messrs. Steel and Rennie was damaged and later beached at Renfrew, without serious casualties. (F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 2129/16).

HERPORT
(Mined 14/3)

Am transferring 11 British male survivors from Steamship HERPORT to VERSATILE A.M. tomorrow Monday for passage to Sheerness. None is injured. (EGLINTON, 2141/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Intelligence.Surface
Craft
off Beachy
Head.

There are indications of three or more surface craft in 091° Beachy Head 14½ miles, steering 264° 7 knots at 2359. (V.A.Dover, 0019/16 to S.O. 1st M/S F.)

M/V off
Ile
Vierge.

P.R.U. Preliminary report states one large merchant vessel 10 miles, North of Ile Vierge course East at 1610. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1752/16).

Denmark.
S/M's and
T/B's and
Shipbuilding.
Norway -
TARONGA.

(3). Norway. My telegram 1730/28/2. German crew embarked TARONGA at Akers yard 2/3. TARONGA reported expecting to leave for Larvik 3/3 B.2. (N.A.Stockholm, 1841/15).

Para.3. TARONGA which has been fitted out as an A.M.C. was reported to be still at Oslo on 12/3 having guns mounted.

N.I.D.I. 16.3.1941.

Suspicious
Vessel.

Suspicious vessel in sight 55° N., 6° W. (NOTTS COUNTY, Recd. 2200/16).

Miscellaneous.Harwich.Port of Harwich closed due to fog. (F.O.I.C. Harwich, 0801/16).
Cancel my 0801.
(F.O.I.C. Harwich, 1145/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys.General.A/A Defence,
Loch Ewe.

Your 2009/12. (To assist in A.A. defence of shipping in Loch Ewe arrange for 4 merchant ships present any one time to act as A/A guardships at immediate notice.) Necessary action has been taken.
(N.O.I.C. Aultbea, 1528/16 to C.in C. W.A.)

Zigzagging
and Evasive
steering.

Proposed to make the following signals:-
From Admiralty. Only convoys of over 11 knots and independently sailed ships are to zig-zag. B.R.248 contains a choice of 42 different zig-zag diagrams and instructions as to when each zig-zag is suitable.

2. Evasive steering may be carried out by convoys by night or by day, in waters where enemy submarines may be expected, subject to following instructions.

3. When to westward of 12° W. if evasive steering is not being employed all convoys in a submarine danger zone are to make a drastic alteration of course at dusk to displace the convoy laterally some 20 miles.

4. When a warship escort is present it is the responsibility of the S.O. of escort to decide whether or not convoy is to carry out evasive steering subject to Commodore's agreement that decision is compatible with the safe handling of the convoy in prevailing conditions.

5. Admty. 1907/28/9/40 and 1734/9/10/40 and C.B. 4100 Sect. F. Part III are cancelled.

Request your remarks.
(D.T.D. 2332/16 to C.in C. W.A.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys. (Contd.)Military
Convoys.
Iceland
Ferry
Service.

Admiralty's 1616/12.
NEWARK and WELLS are allocated to
17th Division, under the Command of
R.A.M. who will be required to provide
escorts for the Iceland Ferry Service.

2. Re working up.

3. Propose that first Ferry Service
to Iceland will be undertaken by
ROYAL ULSTERMAN and ROYAL SCOTSMAN
leaving the Clyde on 2/4.
(A.C.N.S.(H) 1148/16).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.16.3.1941.
Sunday.CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.FISHER
QUEEN.

(Patrol Drifter) Aground on Kerrera opposite Dunollie Light. Request urgent assistance. (Salvage) (N.O.I.C. Oban, 0730/16).

BALTARA
(Broke
down 5/3).

Passing Inistrahull. Expect to arrive Rothesay Bay at Daylight tomorrow. BALTARA has crew aboard and also all lifeboats. No list, draught 14 by 17 feet.
(THAMES 0918/16).

MILTRAP.

(British 320 tons). Aground at Fifeness in thick fog. Hopes to refloat at high water 1730 today. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1011/16).

CAMELIA.

(Corvette) arrived with A/S defects which have been taken in hand. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1414/16).

M.L.123.

M.L.123 badly damaged in collision. (R.A.C.F. 1602/16).

ANGLE.

(A/S Trawler). Sailed tug TENACITY from Campbeltown to assist ANGLE in tow of KING SOL in 54° 19' N., 12° W. at 1400 today. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1636/16).

LORNASTON.

(British 4934 tons). Returned Oban having been in collision. (N.C.S.O. Oban, 1915/16).

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic.A/C at
Teneriffe.

Admty. 2058/15 and my 1234/15. Aircraft should be embarked in British ship at first opportunity.

(F.O.I.C. Gib., 0320/16, to Consul, Teneriffe).

U.S. of S. for For. Aff. last night who promised to order release of crew but stated on advice of legal advisers plane would be interned, citing a Dutch precedent.

Minister will consult Embassy legal adviser. (A.N.A., Madrid, 1242/16, to F.O.C.N.A.).

*Reply page 627.*MADRAS CITY,
suspicious ship.Your 1725/15. (Sent W.R. requesting check and repeat of reference quoted.) Reference in my 1400/14 (Report from Master of MADRAS CITY re challenge made to her) should have been to Admiralty's 1523/12. (Requesting investigation into non recognition by ships when challenged). (N.C.S.O. Lagos, 0915/16, to Admty.). *See page 575.*ASAKA I.

A.T. 2354/13. ASAKA now expected to leave Bilbao 16/3. Destination unknown but given as Yokohama. (D.O.D.(F) 1227/16 to N.A. Stn.).

Japanese ship ASAKA leaves Bilbao (Portugalete) 16/3 passing through following positions.

Ship is not to be interfered with.

(Description) (F.O.(S) 1551/16, 1552/16 to OTUS).

PANDORA
OLYMPUS
→OTUS

Position of submarines at 1200/17 PANDORA with O.G.55 OLYMPUS with H.G.56, OTUS 040° N. 010° 45' W. proceeding through 038° 20' N. 010° 45' W. and 036° 40' N. 009° 30' W. to Gibraltar, may be on the surface. (F.O.C.N.A., 1243/16).

French
Convoy.

Gibraltar 1235/16 French Minesweeper ENGAGEANTE escorting 2 French Merchant ships FELIX HENRI light and CAPITAINE PRIEUR laden passing eastbound. (S.O.I., Gib., 1515/16).

Enemy Unit.

D/F at 1410/16 G.M.T. (Bearings). Traffic 36 groups of 4 letter code, German T.O.O. 1546 (F.O.C.N.A. 1940/16, to N.A.Stn.)

→OTUS.

P. c. and s. 039° 50' N. 010° 13' W. 194° until arrival position E then as necessary to arrive position F at 0700/18. (OTUS, 2359/16, to F.O.C.N.A.).

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

DELHI

In view of Admty. 2350/15 submit for early decision that Adty. 111/27/11/40 be reconsidered. Suggest port propellers now be changed at Simonstown, etc. (DELHI, 0952/16, to Admty.)

ISIS
ENCOUNTER

Simonstown departure 1000/16 ISIS and ENCOUNTER for Durban. E.T.A. 0800/18. Onward route from Durban will be in accordance with C.in C. East Indies 1144Z/12. (N.O.I.C. Simonstown 1003/16, to Admty. etc.)

ELENI

Overdue shipping, my 0928/14, Greek ship ELENI arrived Capetown. (S.O.I., Capetown, 1035/16).

MADRID

German, ungraded report received that MADRID, which left Las Palmas on 11/12, is expected in Uruguay with German merchandise. (D.S. 558).

S.L.68.

My 0522/16 and Admty. 1050/16. Three Corvettes will remain with SL 68 till p.m. /18. Endeavour is being made to arrange A/S escort by Sunderlands which arrive Bathurst 17/3 while convoy is within range. (C.in C. S.A., 1335N/16, to Admty.).

Fuel at
Bathurst.

My 1335/16. Situation emphasises importance of fuel at Bathurst. My 2355/18/2 refers. Lighters at St. Vincent hold 240 tons only pending erection of tank referred to in Admty. 1653/13, which will take time. Consider it important that arrangement be made at Bathurst, either by (A) three 420 ton lighters from St. Vincent or (B) small tanker of about 2000 ton capacity. (C.in C. S.A. 1441/16, to Admty.).

U-Boat
Activity.

U/B sighted by MALAYA, and ship sunk in 13.12 N., 20.24 W. (See U-Boat Campaign).

REPULSE,
FURIOUS
at Freetown.

Arrivals 1600/16, REPULSE, FURIOUS, FOXHOUND, and DUNCAN. (S.O.I. Freetown, 1647/16).

Routes and dates for
EMPIRE SONG, ROCHESTER
CASTLE, DOMINION MONARCH
ALMKERK. ...

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

Routes and dates
for EMPIRE SONG,
ROCHESTER CASTLE,
DOMINION MONARCH,
ALMKERK.

N.C.S.O. Capetown 1707/14. Your 1318/11 was received at Freetown and was subsequently passed when N.C.S.O. Capetown reported non-receipt. Investigation at Freetown shows your 1818/27/1 through error was not passed to Capetown. It has now been passed. (C.in C. S.A. 2104/16 to Adty.).

W.S.6.

My 0201/26/2. Estimated fuel requirements for separate ships of W.S.6 at Capetown and Durban are as follows (D.S.T., 2118/16 to N.O.I.C.'s).

A/C Lost
from FORMIDABLE.

Brit. V. Consul, Bissau, Portuguese Guinea, in letter 7/3 reports two Greek subjects informed him British plane supposed to be from an aircraft made a forced landing near Coba some six weeks ago. Crew of two were taken to Konakri and then sent to Dakar. Plane was shipped to Dakar by motor vessel EDEA on 9/2 (Ends.). Appears possible that A/C referred to is Fulmar N 1914 lost by FORMIDABLE on 4/1 in vicinity of position 009° 44' N. 016° 20' W. S.O. Force K, R. of P. No. 27/k 682 31/1 refers. (C.in C. S.A. 2345N/16, to Admty.).

Mediterranean.

Yugoslavia.

At a moment when Yugo Slav action carries so much, I would like to stress their fear of isolation. Any Naval action by mines torpedoes or surface craft which would remove obsession that Adriatic is closed to them would, judging locally, have a great effect. (N.A. Athens, 1110/16, to C.in C. Med.).

Valona
shipping
attacked.

Operational Summary No. 279 up to 1200 hours 16/3. Night March 14/15. Three Swordfish F.A.A. attacked shipping Valona torpedoes registering one hit. (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 1134/16). According to Italian Press, this was the hospital ship PO, with the Contessa Ciano, daughter of Mussolini, on board as a nurse, and ship was sunk. (D.S. 559).

/ MARIANNINA

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

MARIANNINA

1262 tons, has left Cartagena for Barcelona and Genoa. (D.S. 559).

AUDACE
PEGLI
VERTUNNO

1459 tons,) Reported ready to sail at
1593 tons,) Susa, Tunisia, on 12/3 loaded
3159 tons) with phosphates. (D.S. 559).

German CORDELIA,
YALOVA

Arrival Istanbul.
(Galata, 1146/16).

Canal
Mining.

Your 1949/27/2. Para. 1 and 2.
Both suggestions are considered impracticable for use in Suez Canal. Investigations are being carried out with automatic sound ranging outfit. (D.T.M. 12⁰⁸/16 to C.in C. Med.).

Salonika
Shipping.

Fully concur in B.N.A. Athens 1105/14.
(1305/14) (C.in C. Med., 1437/16).

Malta Air
Report.

To 1600 hours 16/3 all times G.M.T.
10.30 to 12.30 Glenn Martin patrolled between Cape Bon and Sicily for shipping information for submarines. Only shipping seen one M/V 4000 tons leaving Linosa heading Lampedusa at 1200.
Night 15/16, about 12 enemy aircraft carried out individual attacks. Raiders had difficulty locating targets. Many bombs released, majority fell in sea. No casualties or damage.
0600/16, about 12 enemy aircraft ME 100 and ME 109 apparently on patrol West of Island. Four Hurricanes up chased attackers off.
15/3. Magnetic mine set off in Grand Harbour by Gozo fishing boat. Casualties three killed, four seriously and three slightly injured, boat total loss.
(H.Q., Malta, 1615/16).

Mine
explosion.

UPRIGHT
R. of P.

UPRIGHT reports nothing sighted 7/3 to 9/3 in Sector 030° to 090° from Tripoli (Libya). In Sector 320° to 030° Southbound convoy 4 6000 tons merchant ships, escorted 2 Oriani 2 Navigatori and 3 aircraft, sighted 0930/10, 041° probably detected since managed to avoid action rendering attack futile. 1300 same day 2 southbound merchant ships with air escort passed out of range, both convoys Kerkenah position A direct.

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

UPRIGHT
R. of P.
(Contd.)

1700/12 smoke of northbound convoy with (?air escort) sighted proceeding A to Lampedusa route. 2020 Northbound convoy two merchant ships and two destroyers A Kerkenah route unsuccessfully attacked. 2000/14 single Northbound merchant ship on A to Lampedusa route. Destroyer appeared to leave Tripoli (Libya) to R.V. with convoy at dawn. (Comdr. S.1, 1705/16, to Capt. S.1).

Convoy.

A.N. arrived Piraeus 1000/16.
(N.C.S.D. Piraeus, 1800/16).

Oil Supply,
pipe line
Suez to
Port Said.

In view of Vulnerability of Suez Canal and Haifa refinery, an oil pipe line from Suez to Port Said considered essential. Army preparing to carry out the work. Request immediate approval. Ownership of pipe line after War to be a matter for negotiation with Egyptian Government and Canal Company. (C.in C. Med., 1950/16, to Admty.).

Suez Canal.

Situation 2000/16. Mining situation unchanged. ILLUSTRIOUS and ROVER arrived Great Bitter Lake, 4 M.V's transmitted Port Said to Bitter Lake. (S.B.N.O. Suez Canal, 1951/16).

Delayed Action
Mines, Malta.

15/3 one mine inside Grand Harbour detonated under Gozo boat which was taking unauthorized short cut between 6 and 6A buoy. 3 killed and one missing. 16/3 one mine near floating dock detonated by Kango hammer in drifter. Appears these mines had delaying action of about 14 days, as these areas had been swept over by Kango hammer on 13/3 and subsequently with magnetic sweep 14/3. (V.A. Malta, 2211/16).

TETRARCH

You are required to patrol Adriatic. Details, route. (Capt. S.1, 2205/16, to TETRARCH).

TRUANT.

My 1855/2 (N.T. in W.R.) Endeavour to examine anchorage at Burat on 18/3. If unable to attack shipping by torpedo, advertise your presence by use of gun against shipping or any other military target that can be identified. Gun action should only take place shortly before dark. Leave patrol p.m./18. (route). (Capt. S.1, 2223/16 to TRUANT).

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

Operation "Appearance" Successful landings carried out East and West of Berbera a.m./16.
"APPEARANCE" Some artillery and machine gun opposition during dark hours. This was silenced by moderate bombardment from H.M. Ships.
 (C.in C. E.I., 0502/16, to Admty. etc.).

Berbera captured.

My 0502/16, re operation "Appearance".
 At 0900/16 G.M.T. the British Flag again flew over Berbera. (C.in C. E.I., 1150/16, to Admty. etc.).
 (W.D. Note - Berbera was evacuated by the British on 19/8/1940.).

Italian Warships sunk.

From letters captured at Kismayu following warships are said to be sunk (list of 16). Consider information of doubtful reliability. (C.in C. E.I., 0614Z/16) See Summaries Folder.

RAMB II.

3685 tons, reported seen in 01.35 S., 124.05E., steering 70° on 12/3. Ship was previously at Massawa. (D.S. 559).

EMPRESS OF JAPAN CAPETOWN

C.in C. South Atlantic 0239/15 Request EMPRESS OF JAPAN be sailed for Capetown so as to arrive 10/4. CAPETOWN is to escort to vicinity of Mombasa where escort will be changed. 0800Z/16.

SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA

Your 2132/15/3 first sentence. Yes, but dates of sailing from Capetown and Durban are not yet known to me. (C.in C. E.I. 0806/16, to N.O.I.C. Simonstown).

HELGA MOLLER

British ship, left Lourenco Marques 15/3 for Kilindini. Sustained damage at first reported by explosion, later stated by grounding on Danae Shoal. Now beached Chefine Island. (S.O.I. Capetown, 1200/16 to Admty. etc.).

Raider attacked by CARNARVON CASTLE 5/12/40.

My 1152/14. Following also from Wolff (a) Raider 16 was in action with CARNARVON CASTLE while on way back to Germany. (b) As a result of damage sustained below waterline she returned probably to Kerguelen and undertook repairs lasting six weeks working day and night. (c) Maximum speed in fair weather does not now exceed 18 knots.

War Diary.

16.3.1941.

Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies. (Contd.).

Raider attacked
by CARNARVON
CASTLE 5/12/40
(Contd.)

(D) ship unable to face rough sea owing to weight of cement put in forward. Therefore unlikely to attempt return Germany.
 (2) Above information volunteered by Wolff leaves sinkings MAIMOQA, PORT BRISBANE, ~~NOWSHEER~~ and PORT WELLINGTON unaccounted for. Considered possible that Raider EDWARD was responsible. No evidence of this.
 (3) If so Raider EDWARDS has now left Indian Ocean area as Wolff states only 16 and ~~ASHEER~~ SCHEER were in Indian Ocean area at time of CANADIAN CRUISER sinking.
 (C.in C. E.I., 1432/16).

Air Report,
Berbera.

Blenheims, in co-operation with successful military and naval operation which captured Berbera 0620 G.M.T.
 (A.H.Q. Aden, 2116/16).

China.

Suspicious
Warship.
Dispositions.

C.in C. Netherlands E.I. reports warship sighted 11/3 position 013° 09' S. 123° 30' E. flying Portuguese flag, one funnel 2 masts 2 double turrets forward 2 double turrets aft, clipper bows. Same ship sighted 12/3 Dilli Roads by air patrol. Governor Selanger states no Portuguese warship in vicinity. Hong Kong reports Portuguese Sloop GONCALO VELHO left Macao 15/3.
 Special disposition from 14/3. 4 Destroyers, Submarines O 19 and O 20 vicinity of Halmarera. Netherlands Cruisers DE RUYTER and JAVA to vicinity of Amboina, special air reconnaissance vicinity of Timor.
 (Capt. O.S., Singapore, 0541Z/16).

Suspicious
Ships.

Following reliable report received. At 1000Z/13, 16 large ships in 2 lines sighted between Keppel Island and Vavau burning navigation lights and using Masthead Flash lamps. Course S.S.W. (S.O.I. Wellington, 0329Z/16, to Adnty., C.in C. China etc.). S.O.(I) Wellington 0329/16 Warships assumed to be American. C.in C. Netherlands E.I. informed accordingly.
 (C.O.I.S. Singapore, 1710Z/16).

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies.MADRAS CITY.
suspicious
warship.

Following report from Master of MADRAS CITY Just before daylight 18/2 challenged by a ship flashing "What ship". He turned away and flashed his signal letters GBPB, challenger thereafter continued flashing "what ship" and he replied GBPB on each occasion until daybreak when warship closed MADRAS CITY and could read name on bows.

Appears possible that warship referred to may have been LACONIA.

3. Request report whether anything is known of this incident. Master of MADRAS CITY appears to have acted correctly. (D.O.D.(M) 0031/16 to R.A. 3 B.S.). *See Page 538.*

ANTEO)
RAPALLO)

Italian tanker, reported may sail soon from Cartagena, Colombia (D.S. 558).

VOLTAIRE.

My 1801/13 VOLTAIRE returned to harbour with fractured main steam pipe from No.6 boiler. Expect ship to sail 0900Q/18. (B.S. 3 1156/16 to C.in C. S.A.).

Ice Routes.

Your 1933/16/1. Suggestion to enable ships from U.K. bound for Halifax to avoid field ice by passing South of Sable Island. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1259/16, to Admty.).

T.C.10.

Your 1043/12 and 1843/14 Beatty informed that in the circumstances it is undesirable to dock in a U.S. Port. Desired that ship be stored for voyage of two months after T.C.10 for 2000 all ranks and crew. (D.S.T., 1513/16, to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa.).

CALIFORNIA

F.O.C. N.P.'s 2224/15, ocean escort for H.X.115, CALIFORNIA who has been ordered to leave convoy in 025° W. and to proceed to Reykjavik reporting E.T.A. when well clear of convoy. Desirable CALIFORNIA visit Iceland to disembark provisions. Ship would be available for patrol if CIRCASSIA is delayed and for conveyance of any personnel awaiting passage to Halifax. (F.O. 3 B.S. 1642/16, to Admty.).

PRINCE DAVID
DUNEDIN

Your 2323/15 (patrol of focal area) Intended to detail PRINCE DAVID for this duty leaving Bermuda about 20/3. Request early return of DUNEDIN be again considered in view of state of CARADOC's turbines and her unsuitability for operating in bad weather. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1701/16, to Admty.).

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)Shipping Attacked by Raiders.

Following distress messages were intercepted today:-

1640	Unknown ship 45.42 N., 45.00 W. Message jammed, reported by ARAKAKA.
1900	SOUTHGATE 4862. 46.19 N., 45.48 W.
1958	DEMETERTON, 5251. 45.58 N., 44.00 W.
2120	CHILEAN REEFER, Danish , 1831. 46.13 N., 44.40 W. Survivors rescued by RODNEY.

These ships were ex-Convoy O.B.294.
Position about 300' E. of Newfoundland.
(D.O.R. 16/3).

ATHELF OAM

Reports being shelled by Warship Raider in position 42° 00' N. 43° 25' W. at 2038/15 G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 0308/16 to C.in C. H.F., etc.).

Warship Raider in position 42° 00' N. 43° 25' W. at 2038/15 G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 0321/16 to All British M.S. in Areas 1 & 7.).

Force M,
THUNDERBOLT

Force M is to return to her convoy. THUNDERBOLT is to proceed in search of enemy raiders. (V.C.N.S. 0322/16 to RODNEY, THUNDERBOLT, Force M.).

KING GEORGE V.

Ref. raider reports from SIMNIA, ATHELF OAM SAN CASIMIRO, NEWBURGH.
KING GEORGE V is to fuel and proceed with all despatch to area concerned.
Further instructions about H.X.118 will follow.
Pass my 1737/15, 1759/15, 1903/15 1911/15 and 0322/16 to KING GEORGE V.
(D.C. for V.C.N.S. 0353/16 to R.A.3.).

Possibly
SCHARNHORST,
GNEISENAU.

My 2157/15 and 0308/16. It is possible that these attacks were carried out by SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU.
(D.D.I.C. 0430/16 to C.in C. H.F. etc.).

/ TALISMAN.

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)Shipping Attacked by Raiders. (Contd.)TALISMAN

Operate against enemy raiders reported in position 40° 28' N. 43° 30' W. at 1842/15 G.M.T. and 42° 00' N. 43° 25' W. at 2038/15 G.M.T. to limit of your endurance before proceeding Halifax. K.G.5 "X" SEVERN (addressed as Force X) THUNDERBOLT also operating in vicinity. (V.C.N.S. 0510/16 to TALISMAN).

Force X.

My 1903/15.

Steer to northward and operate until further instructions against enemy raiders on assumption that they proceed in S.W. direction.

You will probably return to Halifax instead of proceeding to Freetown.

(V.C.N.S. 0511/16 to Force X)

(Note - This was cancelled by 0012/17).

KING GEORGE V.

Your 0353/16. KING GEORGE V sails 1130 Q/16 ordered to proceed with all despatch to 041° 12' 049° 00' thence with all convenient despatch to 042° 40' 045° 20' subsequently sweeping to South Eastward unless further information is received. KING GEORGE V has been ordered to decode signals under North Atlantic Escort Force delivery group. (F.O. 3 B.S. 1102/16 to Admty.). Halifax departure KING GEORGE V. (S.O.(I) Halifax, 1225/16).

"R" signal,
Cape Race.

Following received from Cape Race, Newfoundland, 2030 G.M.T. G M Z D. R R R R, position unknown interference by believed two raiders sending spark signal jammed continuously. One raider congratulated the other using words Oconnel my best congratulations, other ship replying O K. Bearing on jamming signal 88 approximately, signed officer in charge (Ends.).

(C.O.A.C. Halifax 1155/16 to C.in C. A.WI.).

D/F bearing enemy surface unit heard jamming distress signal at 1539 G.M.T. was approx. 102½° from Cape Race. (R.A.3. 1443/16, to North Atlantic Escort Force, Force X, KING GEORGE V, TALISMAN, RODNEY.)

DEMETERTON,
"R" report.

(Begins) RRRR 45.58 N. 44.00 W. DEMETERTON Raider 1855/16. Raider jamming signal (ends.) (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 1512/16, Navycom, Bermuda No T.O.O. Rec. 2251, to Admty.).

/ DEMETERTON

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)Shipping Attacked by Raiders. (Contd.)DEMETERTON,
"R" report.
(Contd.)

DEMETERTON made RRRR 045° 58' N. 044° 00' W. at 1855Z/16. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1652/16, to North Atlantic Escort Force, Force X, THUNDERBOLT, TALISMAN, RODNEY, Admiralty).

Rescue work.

Please concert any action possible to save life from ships sunk by raiders S.E. of Newfoundland. (D.O.D.(H) for 1st S.L. 1512/16 to R.A.3, C.in C. A.W.I.). Admty. 1512/16. Request you will undertake this using any available North Atlantic escort force of ships at your discretion including SALOPIAN now being sailed for Halifax. BUXTON ready to proceed 1600Q/17. Consider it unlikely superior forces will be met in areas already attacked. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1611/16, to R.A. 3 B.S.).

SOUTHGATE Report.

Unidentified RRRR and Jamming signal bearing approx. 102½° from Cape Race at 1539Z/16. SOUTHGATE reported RRRR 046° 19' N. 045° 48' W. at 1800Z/16. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1521/16, to North Atlantic Escort Force, Force X, THUNDERBOLT, TALISMAN, RODNEY, Admiralty, N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, C.O.A.C. Halifax, R A 3 B S.)

Cape Race Report.

1539 G.M.T. unidentified RRRR signal unreadable, deliberate interference Power Quench Gap. Bearing on Jamming Signal 102 1/2 approximately. No bearing possible on vessel sending RRRR owing interference. No details readable through interference. RRRR sent only once. (O. i/c Cape Race 1542/16, to Admty.).

A/C Reconnaissance.

Following received. 2 aircraft departed from Newfoundland Air Port at 1045 G.M.T./16 to intercept convoy H.X.114 and S.C.25 and sweep ahead to distance 120 miles then return to air port. 1118/16. (C.O.A.C. Halifax 1710/16 to C.in C. A.W.I.).

ARAKAKA report.

045° 42' N. 045° W. at 1540 G.M.T. jamming by raider, true bearing 020° using spark and I C W strength 5. (ARAKAKA, Via Portishead radio, 1630/16 to Admiralty, Admiral Plymouth.).

/ Following

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)Shipping Attacked by Raiders. (Contd.)ARAKAKA
report.
(Contd.)

Following message has been received.
RRRR de ZMXA (ARAKAKA). Following intercepted
RRRR 46 19 N. 45 48 W. SOUTHGATE closing.
(Portishead Radio, 1800/16, to Admty.).
Admiralty, London, Admiral Plymouth No. 10
Group R.A.F. Rudloe. Received 1836 G.M.T.
125000 kc/s de ZMXA (ARAKAKA). RRRR following
intercepted RRRR 46.19 N. 45.48 W. SOUTHGATE
closing 1800/16. (Portishead Radio, 1826/16).
Following intercepted RRRR (Warship Raider)
45.48 N., 44.1 W. from DEMERTON. (ARAKAKA,
1858/16. T.O.R. 1915/16).
Received 1918 G.M.T. 12500 KCS DE ZMXA
(MBGV ARAKAKA) Following intercepted RRRR
45.58 N. 44.0 W. DEMETERTON, Raider.
(Portishead Radio, 1858/16, 1915/16, to
Admty. etc.).
Following received from DEMETERTON at 1858/16
G.M.T. RRRR 45° 58' N. 44° W.
(D.D.I.C. 2056/16 to C.in C. H.F. etc.).

SOUTHGATE

Following received from SOUTHGATE at 1800/16
G.M.T. RRRR 46° 19' N. 45° 48' W.
(D.D.I.C. 2027/16 to C.in C. H.F., etc.).

PRESIDENTE
TERRA
report.

Following received from Canso radio (begins).
Ref. jamming RRRR signal 2028 G.M.T. by
PRESIDENTE TERRA at Cape Race, bearing from
Canso 79½, signed radio station (ends).
(C.O.A.C. Halifax, 2040/16, to C. in C. A.W.I.,
Admty.).

CHILEAN REEFER.

Following intercepted RRRR 46° 13' N. 44.45' W.
CHILEAN REEFER shelled 2020/16. (ARAKAKA,
2055/16).
Following received from CHILEAN REEFER, RRRR
46° 13' N. 44° 40' W. at 2020 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 2221/16 to C.in C. H.F. etc.).

RODNEY
report.

One unknown vessel bearing 125° distance 15
miles course 040° position 46° 16' N., 08' W.,
based on a fix at 1500. (RODNEY, 2129Z/16, to
Louisberg, Nova Scotia).
RODNEY was escorting Convoy H.X.114.
ROYAL SOVEREIGN, returning to Halifax from
H.X.113, was with H.X.114 during the absence
of RODNEY chasing enemy (D.O.R. 16/3).

/ My 2129Z/16.

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)Shipping attacked by Raiders. (Contd.)RODNEY
report
(Contd.)

My 2129Z/16. Enemy almost certainly warship disappeared to north eastward in darkness. One large vessel presumed tanker also seen but disappeared during chase. Am rejoining HX 114. (RODNEY, 2159/16, to F.O. (S), Admiralty.).

KING GEORGE V.

My 2027/16 and 2056/16. Act in accordance with latest reports of raiders. (1st S.L. 2157/16 to KING GEORGE V).

A/C Search.

Two aircraft proceeded 118° true from base 390 miles away. 1415 G.M.T., Tanker sighted 045° 50' N. 046° 20' W. 031° true, 10 knots, also A.M.C. 6000 tons bearing same course. A.M.C. asked for convoy position but convoy had not been located. It reported a ship being shelled no position given. A/C commenced square search. Cruiser 4000 tons one funnel black Orange superstructure sighted at 1545 G.M.T. position 046° 45' N. 045° 12' W., course 230° true, 8 knots. 1628 G.M.T. convoy 42 ships sighted 046° 04' N. 046° 12' W. 031° true, NELSON class escorting. A/C then proceeded on parallel track search on bearing 031° true to distance 80 miles. Setting course base due to fog ridge. No enemy ship sighted. 2100 G.M.T./16. (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 2234/16).

Cape Race
Report.

The following has been received from Cape Race (Begins) 2140 G.M.T. again recognised raider signals bearing Cape Race 86 approximately signal Hill 100. This undoubtedly same raider that caused interference previously. Using Quench Gap also I C W very powerful sending series of fake messages usually begins N R one C K 19 Master CUBA then series of dashes repeated many times. No R R R R signals heard at 2140 G.M.T. 2345/16. (ends.). (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 2235/16, to C.in C. A.W.I.).

CHILEAN REEFER
survivors rescued
by RODNEY.

My 2129z. Captain and Chief of CHILEAN REEFER picked up with 24 survivors, both stating quite clearly enemy warship was GNEISENAU. Also state she altered course to south-eastward after initial retirement to N.E. Ship was observed by survivors signalling with red and green lights in front bridge to another vessel thought to be tanker referred to in my 2154z. (RODNEY, 2355Z/16, to Admty.).

War Diary.

16.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

New Zealand.

Fiji.

Ships bound for any port in Fiji are to be informed that they must first call at the Examination Area at Suva for identification and necessary orders.
(D.T.D. 1147/16).

Suspicious
Ships.

S.O.I., Wellington, 0329Z/16. See China.

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.

Following 4 ships of Convoy H.X.112. reported torpedoed between 2200 and 2359/16, about 240 miles N.W. of Butt of Lewis. (D.S.559.).

VENETIA.

British tanker 5728 tons. Sunk.

FERM.

Norwegian tanker 6593 tons. Still afloat. British charter.

FRANCHE COMTE.

British tanker. 9314 tons. Still afloat.

J.B.WHITE.

British 6869 tons. Sunk.

H.X.112.

→ My 2326. 3rd Ship torpedoed at 2359. (WALKER, 0002/16, to Admty.).

SARPEDON.

Following has been read: SSSS de YMTA Submarine Raider 55. 18 N., 6.00 W. (SARPEDON, 0020/16.).
Following has been read. SSSS de MKAY. Ref. my 0020/16. Sighted S/M on surface 55 18 N., 6-00 W., which submerged quickly. (SARPEDON, 0117/16.).

Ship of S.L.68.

Ship sunk in position 013° 12' N., 020° 24' W., 10 miles west of convoy, presumably torpedoed. (MALAYA, 1601/16, to C. in C. S.A.).

?

Ship of Convoy torpedoed in position 060° 59' N., 012° 36' W. (SARDONYX, 2205/16, to Admty.).

Ship torpedoed position 061° 11' N., 12° 19' W. (WALKER, 2210/16, to Admty.).

→ My 2210 16th. 2nd ship torpedoed at 2324. (WALKER, 2326/16 to Admty.).

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported.

2313/15.

On 5660 kc/s at 2213 G.M.T. German U/B reported convoy or naval units, possibly H.G. 56. (Bearings). (D.D.I.C. 0002/16 to C.in C. S.A., F.O.C.N.A. etc.).

At 2213 G.M.T. German U-Boat reported convoy or Naval units possibly H.G. 56. (F.O.C.N.A. 0153/16 to Capt. D.8). My 0002/16.

Further bearings give alternative positions in vicinity of H.G. 56 and S.E. of Cape Verde Islands.

U/B made further reporting signal at 0118/G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 0438/16).

Your 0438/16. Submarine sighted on surface by MALAYA approx. position $011^{\circ} 40' N$.

$020^{\circ} 12' W$. at 1821/15.

(C.in C. S.A., 0522/16, to Admty.).

My 0002/16 and 0438/16.

Further signal at 0907/16 G.M.T.

indicates that U/B may be shadowing either H.G.56 or SL.68.

(D.D.I.C. 1050/16 to C.in C. S.A., F.O.C.N.A. etc.).

0015.

Sight of U boat four miles S.E. of Fair Isle course N.E. at 0015. Graded C.3. (A.C.O.S. 0043/16).

2330/15.

Admty. message A.F. Position $61^{\circ} 02' N$; $18^{\circ} W$. at 2230/15 G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 0201/16 to G.B.M.S. Area 1).

0315/15.

My 2340/15. D/F at 0315/15 indicate that convoy HX 112 is still being shadowed. (D.D.I.C. 0437/16 to WINCHELSEA, WALKER, H.Q.C.C. etc.).

1122.

D/F indicates U/B may be in your vicinity at 1122/16. (D.D.I.C. 1259/16 to SHEFFIELD, FOLKESTONE, C.in C. W.A. H.Q.C.C.). Cancel my 1259/16. (D.D.I.C. 1438/16 to FOLKESTONE).

D/F gave indications of a U/B in your vicinity at 1122/16. (D.D.I.C. 1437/16 to ARETHUSA and SCARBOROUGH).

/ 0218.

War Diary.16.3.1941.
Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported. (Contd.)

0218. About 300 miles S.E. of Cape Verde Is.
Very indefinite. (D.S. 558).
0314. About 53° N., W. of 20° W. Indefinite
(D.S.558).
- 0315)
0506) About 61° N., 16° W. Indefinite (D.S. 558).
0020. 55.18 N., 6° W., reported by unknown ship,
B.3. (D.S. 558).
0015. 4' S.E. of Fair Isle, co. N.E. graded C.3.
(D.S.558).
1639. 61° - 62° N., 16° W., indefinite (D.S. 559).
1032. 59.40 N., 15.30 W., indefinite. (D.S. 559).
2125. 55° N., W. of 20° W. very indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 559).
2040. Between Shetland and Faroes. (D.S. 559).

Submarines Attacked.

1900. Submarine sighted on surface.
(WALKER, 1900/16, to Admty.).
Submarine sighted on the surface. My p.c. and
s. 061° 16' N. 012° 56' W. 086° 8 knots.
(WALKER, 1920/16 to Admty.).

War Diary.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Home Commands.

E Boats.

Seven E boats were sighted by aircraft at 1655 to-day in 52° 28' N. 3° 45' E, proceeding west at full speed in formation. (Re. night engagements with E boats see 18/3).

British Air Activity.

Coastal Command carried out no operations last night on account of the weather.

*watch for
german
battleships.*

Aircraft patrol to-day in the Denmark Strait was cancelled on account of weather. *Special patrols were flown between the Faroes and Iceland.*

21 aircraft of Bomber Command attacked the Deutsche Shipbuilding Yard at Bremen last night.

War Diary.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Enemy Air Activity.

It is reported that the aircraft which attacked Convoy C.W. 28 in the Straits of Dover during the night 9/10 March approached from the English coast, burning navigation lights.

TEVIOT BANK and escort were attacked this afternoon off the Tyne on return from Operation B.S. 51. No damage is reported.

A/S Yacht MOLLUSK^c was bombed and sunk this afternoon off Blyth.

Convoy F.N. 434 was attacked off Sheringham this afternoon and S.S. CORMEAD was damaged.

Convoy F.N. 33 was unsuccessfully attacked this afternoon off Harwich.

~~Norwegian S.S. EINA JARL was sunk at 2050 today in the N.W. Approached by aerial torpedo, in 62° 18' N 20' W.~~

Four waterborne balloons were shot down to-day at Dover.

War Diary.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mining.

Operations
B.S. 51.

TEVIOT BANK, escorted by KITTIWAKE and LA MELPOMENE reported the laying of mines in the East Coast Barrier completed this afternoon.

ZME. 24.

This operation was postponed owing to fog.

S.N. 69.

R.A.(M) left Port ZA at 1915 with 1st MLS escorted by 4 destroyers, to lay mines between Faroes and Iceland. C. in C. H.F. is covering the operation in NELSON with NIGERIA and A/S air escort and fighter protection have been arranged.

Two mines, said to be British exploded this morning in SHEFFIELD's P/V at the entrance to the North Channel. The only damage is that her endurance is reduced 12% by leakage in damaged oil fuel tanks.

Mining of
Thames
Estuary.

Some 25 acoustic mines were detonated today by sweepers in the area between Shoeburyness and Sheppey. Nevertheless, traffic was enabled to proceed as usual and no damage was incurred by any of the 125 ships in convoy or by the various destroyers which entered and left the Thames to-day.

M.G.B. 42 was damaged by mine explosion when crossing Mount's Bay.

~~An unknown ship was mined or torpedoed at 2055 in 56° 18' N. 2° 20' W. (off Pipe Ness).~~

Blyth was opened this afternoon.

SS EINAR JARL was sunk today in Convoy EN 86A in 56° 17' N 2° 18' W, apparently by floating mine.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.SITUATION REPORT.South Atlantic.

A second ship, Dutch TAPANOELI in Convoy S.L.68 was torpedoed last night about 110 miles E. of Cape Verde Is. There were indications this morning that the convoy was being shadowed by U/Boat. *SS ANDALUSIAN was torpedoed this morning SE of Cape Verde Is.*

Mediterranean.

Six Wellingtons bombed Tripoli harbour last night.

Naval Unit
torpedoed
at Valona.

One Swordfish last night attacked shipping at Valona and torpedoed a cruiser or destroyer. 4 Swordfish attacked shipping at Durazzo registering 2 hits and 2 probable hits.

Benghazi was bombed at dawn today. No damage or casualties were caused.

Situation
Report.

A situation report (C.in C. Med., 0945/17) covering the period 4/3 to 17/3 has been received at the Admiralty. All forces are at present engaged in covering "Lustre" and Aegean convoys. Since 4/3 16000 troops have been transported

Supplies to the Western Desert force are being maintained via Mersa Tobruk, Derna, is used for patrols. PEDNY and Fleet Tug ST. ISSEY were unsuccessfully attacked by T.B. when trying to tow off KNIGHT OF MALTA which was aground north of Bardia on 3/3.

Fleet fighter aircraft are attacking Albania ports and providing fighter protection for convoys when near Crete.

/With

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean. (Contd.)Situation
Report.
(Contd.)

With regard to the S.O.S. by S.S. CAPO VITA and ATTILIO DEFENU on 9/3. UTMOST attacked these vessels in Gulf of Hammamet and considers she sank one of them. They were laden with troops. UNIQUE considers she sank S.S. FENICIA fully laden in escorted convoy, who made S.O.S. on 10/3 on the Naples, Tripoli route.

*Copy sent
18/3/41*U-Boat Campaign.

U.99 and U.100 were sunk, and another U/B probably sunk* by WALKER and VANOC today.

* No other U-boat sunk

MOST SECRET.War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Policy.WELLS.
NEWARK.

Adty. 1148/16. Request if possible WELLS and NEWARK may join my flag at Port ZA by 31/3. (R.A.M. 0908/17 to C.in C. W.A.). Secretary of Air Defence has asked for any information available as to British or German mines between Greenland or Iceland. (N.A. Washington 1045/17 to D.N.I.).

Iceland.
Ship
repairing
facilities.

Reference 20(?)4/15 from C.in C. W.A. to PETUNIA. Details of facilities. (F.O. Iceland 1112/17).

Incendiary
ammunition
for Ships.

Your 2102/13. A limited supply of .303 inch incendiary has been released to Naval service to assist in trade defence, and will be sent to Capts. D, Londonderry, Liverpool, Greenock for use in convoy escort vessels only. (A.C.N.S.(T) 1329/17 to C.in C. W.A.).

Oerlikon
Guns.

C.in C. Rosyth 2305/16. I support most strongly these recommendations. They apply equally to ships of the 21st and 16th flotillas who are employed on anti E-boat patrols and reinforcement of convoy escorts in the E-boat area. (C.in C. Nore 1540/17).

Star Shells.
Importance of
supply in
Nore Command.

S.A.S.O. Upnor states all all available stocks of four inch star shells have been transferred to Liverpool by Admiralty Order. Encounter with E boats on East Coast are now a nightly occurrence except when weather is too bad for these pests to operate. Our defensive measures against them are meagre. Any success so far achieved in driving off or damage to them has been dependent on adequately illuminating them. This can normally be achieved only with star shells. VANESSA requires Replenishment of four inch Q.F. Mark five star shells after encounter with E boats cannot be supplied, and consequently cannot proceed on anti E boat patrol today. Continual expenditure of four inch and 4.7 star shells is to be expected by all destroyers in The Nore Command so long as convoys continue to run. Experience has shown that burning searchlight causes A.S.V. to cease functioning due to drop in voltage. (C.in C. Nore 1714/17).

/ PATIA.
EMPIRE AUDACITY.

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Policy. (Contd.)PATIA.
EMPIRE
AUDACITY.

Reply to Prime Minister's directions contained in A.M. 1329/15:-
 PATIA can be completed in approx. 4 weeks from date of delivery as following:
 If Type 79 M can be dispensed with PATIA can be completed approx. 31/3, ex trials.
 EMPIRE AUDACITY. Approx date of completion is mid-June provided as follows.
 This date is ex trials. Have assumed that extreme priority mentioned in A.M. 1329/15 means Priority 1 A.
 (F.O.I.C. Tyne 1911/17).

Defence of U.K.Scapa
A/A Defences.

Your 1330/15. The sooner the better. Request I may be given date, names, and numbers so that accommodation can be arranged. (A.C.O.S. 1141/17).

Movements.KENYA.

Admiralty 0139/17. KENYA is to pass gate at 1600 today.
 (C.in C. Plymouth 0954/17).

HOOD.
NESTOR.
WHADDON.
ERIDGE.

NESTOR with WHADDON, ERIDGE, proceed passing Switha 2100 today to arrive off May Island 0900/18. Thence proceed to Rosyth at a speed not exceeding 9 knots.
 2. You will be required to provide Escort to Pentland Firth for HOOD who is passing May Island 2000/18.
 3. On arrival in Pentland Firth WHADDON, ERIDGE will be relieved by two Destroyers and are then to return to Scapa. Subsequently HOOD will carry out full power trial and firings West of Orkneys before entering Harbour. (R.A.D. 1010/17 to NESTOR).

EXETER.

Your 1617/14. Request you will sail EXETER at your discretion at earliest possible date. (A.C.N.S(H) 1640/17 to C.in C. Plymouth.).

S/M's

The following submarines may be met during the night. (C.in C. W.A. 1802/17 to HAVELOCK, etc.).

L.26.

Following movements may affect you. (S.9. 1953/17 to L.26.).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations.Northern
Patrol.

Failing other instructions from Adty., NORFOLK is to sail from Scapa 18/3 and proceed Reykjavik. After refuelling NORFOLK is to operate in support of Denmark Straits patrol line refuelling Reykjavik when necessary. NORFOLK (?may) from this duty proceed with (corrupt group) continuing during dark hours southward and westward (C.in C. H.F. 0904/17).

ARGUS.
Operation
"Winch".

Adty. 1346/12. Disembarkation of training aircraft completed P.M./16. Understand aircraft for embarkation have not yet arrived Abbotsinch. (ARGUS 1144/17).

Anti E-Boat
Patrol.

Remain with F.N.*34 until arrival at 6 buoy, then establish anti-E.boat patrol in 40 Q Z S between 5 buoy and Smiths Knoll zig-zagging at 20 knots if conditions permit. A/P vessels north of 5 buoy have been withdrawn. F.N.*33 due 5 buoy 2207/7. No F.S. convoy tonight. Return to Harbour with D.21. (C.in C. Nore 1411/17 to COTTESMORE, VESPER)

British Air Activity.Patrols.

Weather permitting patrols R 1, R 2, and ~~P 1~~ will be flown today by 18 group A/C. (C.in C. Rosyth 0421/17).

My 0421/17 now in operation.

(C.in C. Rosyth 0805/17).

Following air patrols now in operation ~~STAB STAB STAB STAB~~ (C.in C. Rosyth 1000/17).

Aircraft patrol Denmark Strait today is cancelled on account of weather.

(F.O.Iceland 1026/17).

Aircraft from 16 Group will patrol off Dutch Coast from 1800 to 1930 to-day, also along Meridian of 3° E. South of 53° N. from 2000/17. Flares may be dropped.

(C.in C. Nore, 1719/17).

/ A/S Escort and
/ Fighter Protection.

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity. (Contd.)A/S Escort
and Fighter
Protection.

Operation S.N.69. (i) A/S air escort will be flown by Hudsons throughout daylight 18/3 and from 1400 until last light on 20/3 and by Sunderlands on 19/3 and until 1400 on 20/3. (ii) Fighter protection will be provided by two Blenheims at immediate readiness until 1500 on 18/3 and by two Blenheims from 1500 on 20/3.
(C.in C. Rosyth 1430/17).

Air Decoys
in Northern
Ireland.

Re practicability of installation of decoys for Naval interests in Northern Ireland. This examination is purely exploratory.
(D. of L.D. 2003/17).

Air Decoys
in Scotland.

It is under consideration to appoint an Officer to advise on all matters in connection with decoy in the whole of Scotland, including Orkney. Detail of proposals. Request your views.
(D. of L.D. 2003/17).

Enemy Air Activity.Portsmouth
bombed.

At 2045^{1/4} a stick of small H.E. bombs was dropped at COLLINGWOOD. Slight damage. No casualties. There was a dense fog at the time. (C.in C. Portsmouth 0246/17).

Enemy A/C
burning
Navigation
Lights during
Raid of Night
9/10.

Commander A A Guard reports that leading seaman of guard in SYLVIA BEALE has reported that during attack on C.W.28 on night of 9/3 A/C approached from English coast burning navigation lights and flying fairly low. No offensive action was taken by other ships including escort although AA guard of SYLVIA BEALE opened fire prior to bombing attack during which she received one hit. O.C. guard aboard s.s. LAMWORTH confirms that planes were low and burning lights and that no balloons were flying. A A guard have been warned to expect enemy aircraft to burn navigation lights. Suggest that escorts should be so informed.
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1227/17).

Convoy W.N.
Odd.

Fighters are being sent to assist convoy.
(Lyness W/T 1407/17).

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)TEVIOT BANK.

1 minelayer and escort being attacked by enemy aircraft in 55° 34' N. 1° 27' W. (Rosyth W/T 1435/17).

Convoy F.N.
Even. (F.N. 434)
CORMEAD
damaged.

One aircraft shadowing convoy course 180° distance 2 miles, position 51° 50' N. 1° 35' E. (COTTESMORE 1435/17).
Enemy bombing Convoy. Position 52° 57' N. 1° 15' E. (PYTCHLEY 1723/17).
Enemy bombing Convoy in 52° 15' N. 1° 57' E. (VERSATILE 1739/17).
My 1739. 2 D.A. bombs no damage. (VERSATILE 1800/17).
(British, 2848 tons) in F.N. 434. Damaged by bomb and making for Lowestoft may be overtaken after dark. Tugs leaving Lowestoft to assist.
(C.in C. Nore 1941/17 to Capt. D.21).
2 tugs coming to assist CORMEAD.
(C.in C. Nore 1943/17 to PYTCHLEY).

STRINDA
Engagement of
Enemy A/C.
Night 10/11.

Master of Norwegian STRINDA reports, while off Milford Haven to assemble in Convoy O.B.297, at about 2130 on 10/3/41, relays of aircraft appeared. Vessel began firing with Hotchkiss .303 bullets and continued until 0030/11. In all 600 rounds were fired. Master believes 3 aircraft were struck by the bullets. 1 aircraft was observed to lose altitude rapidly then take a heavy list and finally disappear flying just above the sea apparently out of control. (S.C.I. Greenock 1457/17).

LADY LILIAN
sunk 16/3.

(A/S Trawler). Arrived ST. APOLLO with 29 survivors from LADY LILIAN 3 slightly wounded. (Capt. D. Londonderry 1545/17).
H.M. trawler LADY LILIAN sunk by enemy action. (Capt. D. Londonderry 1723/17).

Convoy F.N.
Odd.

Being attacked by enemy aircraft in 51° 42' N. 1° 20' E. (HASTINGS 1736/17).
My 1736. One Dornier disappeared to eastward. (HASTINGS 1746/17).
Aircraft despatched to assist. (Cleethorpes Radio 1742/17).

/ MOLLUSC

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)MOLLUSC.

(A/S Yacht) Sank at 1457/17 in about 115°
Blyth Port War Signal station 2½ miles due
to two near misses from enemy bombs.
No casualties. (N.C.I.C. Blyth 1750/17).

BRITOMART
(Bombed 15/3)

M.S.1 1653/15 and 0940/16.
Preliminary inspection of bomb damage to
BRITOMART as follows. No underwater leaks.
Temporary repairs in hand. Vessel is safe
in present position. Repairs will take
several days.
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1917/17).

Dover
4 Balloons
shot down.

At 1619 today in conditions of low cloud
an enemy aircraft shot down four waterborne
balloons. (V.A. Dover 2005/17).

Glasgow Area.
Air Attack
of Night 13/14.
TREVARRACK
(British,
5270 tons)
sunk in
Basin.
ATHENE
(Norwegian
Tanker, 4681
tons) damaged.
CLERMISTON
(British 1448
tons) sunk in
dock.

My 1945/16, 2129/16.
No further enemy action last night. Situation
at Old Kilpatrick oil tanks has improved, only
one tank No.31 remains alight and will burn
until a.m. Wednesday. Tank No.29 a full tank,
was saved.
One seaman has been reported as missing from
Polish Destroyer since night 13/3.
Reports from affected yards are as follows.
Two further U.S.B's or U.X. P.M's reported on
south bank of river, below high water mark,
but approx. 300 ft. off the Channel.
River still open to traffic.
Further reports of damage to shipping on the
night of 13th March have been received.
S.S. TREVARRACK sunk in Dalmuir Basin by H.E.
bomb is listing against J.1359 (ATHENE) also
damaged by the same bomb, but only slightly.
S.S. CLERMISTON was set on fire by bomb and
sank in Rothesay Dock. (F.O.I.C. Glasgow
2116/17).

Clyde.
Air Raid 14/15.

My 2129/16/3. Mine which exploded yesterday
morning in Princes Dock has permanently put
one berth out of action and has done damage
which prevents flooding all three docks at
Govan. Temporary repairs to flooding
arrangements should be completed by A.M./19th.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow 2329/17).

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Mining.S.N.69.

In view of situation in Western Atlantic and possibility of early return of German men of war great importance is attached to timely completion of Operation S.N.69. (1st S.L. 0013/17).

Departure Port ZA.R.A. (M) in SOUTHERN PRINCE, MENESTHEUS, PORT QUEBEC, AGAMEMNON, CASTLETON, ST. MARYS, LANCASTER, and CHARLESTON to carry out S.N.69. (TRELAWNEY 1915/17).

SHEFFIELD
2 Minesexploded
in Paravanes.

Mines exploded in Paravane 0600 and 0616 in 055° 32' N. 006° 55' W. and 065° 33' N. 007° 04' W. Ship undamaged.

(SHEFFIELD 0622/17).

My 0622/17. One switch horn and large pieces of mine casing have been picked up on board which should definitely identify type of mine. Paravanes were set to 30 feet. Speed 19 knots.

(SHEFFIELD 0701/17).

My 0701/17. Ratings with mining experience identified switch horn as British mark XVII type mine. (SHEFFIELD 0824/17 and 1910/17).

My 0622/17. Ship is fit for any service with an endurance reduced by 12 per cent by leakage in damaged oil fuel tanks.

(SHEFFIELD 2001/17).

Thames Estuary.

Approximately 23 acoustic mines detonated by Sheerness sweepers today in area between Shoeburyness and Sheppey. Details.

(Capt. M/S Sheerness 0927/17, 1600/17, 1713/17, 2740/17, 2250/17. C.in C. Nore 2140/17).

Humber.

My 1934/16. 3 Red mines exploded on 16/3 by L.E. Sweepers. Details.

(F.O. Humber 1007/17).

Z.M.E.24.

Intend leaving Milford Haven, 1630 today for Z.M.E.24 to lay at midnight returning on completion about 0800 tomorrow.

(PLOVER 1010/17).

Movement in PLOVER's 1010/17 postponed 24 hours due to fog. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1529/17).

Your 1529/17. Owing to the necessity for stopping traffic operation is to be postponed to night of 19/20 March.

(C.in C. Plymouth 1940/17 to F.O.I.C. Milford Haven).

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Mining. (Contd.)B.S.51.Operation B.S.51 completed.
(TEVIOT BANK 1440/17).Blyth.

Port of Blyth open. (N.O.I.C. Blyth 1455/17).

Milford Haven
on 10/3.Master of Norwegian STRINDA reports Parachute
Mines being dropped from A/C off Milford
Haven at about 2130/10/3. (S.O.I. Greenock
1457/17 to Adty.).S.N.4.Propose to sail for S.N.4 A.M./25 and lay
between 060° 45' N. 006° 34' W. and 060° 21' N.
005° 53' W. on 26th, returning to Port Z.A.
A.M./27th.
Request C.in C. H.F. will say if Cover will be
available. (R.A.M.L. 1531/17).Aultbea
Loop Minefield.Loop mine field laid and in operation.
(N.O.I.C. Aultbea 1613/17).Southampton
Observation
Minefield.F.O.I/C Southampton 1451/12/1. Observation
minefield at Southampton is now in operation.
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1633/17).Dungeness.
Clearance Sweep.M/S F.1 will leave Newhaven at 0630/18, sweeping
in the neighbourhood of Dungeness. Fighter
escort is requested. SPEEDY is remaining at
Newhaven for boiler cleaning.
(N.O.I.C. Newhaven 1730/17).
You should continue sweeping operations tomorrow
in accordance with my 1309/15.
Movements should be reported 24 hours in
advance if possible for air escort to be
arranged. Anchorage is only to be taken up in
low visibility or bad flying weather and
should not be in the same position on
consecutive nights. (V.A. Dover 1752/17 to
M.S.1.).M.G.B.42.Damaged by mine explosion when crossing Mounts
Bay. Vessel damaged but brought to Newlyn and
beached. One rating slightly injured.
After compartment flooded but total damage
unknown. (R.N.O. Penzance 1945/17).
My 1945/17. Explosion occurred in about 50° 5'
37" N. 5° 31' W.
(R.N.O. Penzance 2045/17).Unknown Ship
mined off
St. Andrews.For information. Ship either mined or
torpedoed in 056° 18' N., 002° 20' W. at 2055.
(C.in C. Rosyth 2224/17 to SPEEDWELL).
Keep 5 miles to eastward of position where
ship was reported mined at 2055.
(C.in C. Rosyth 2306/17 to SPEEDWELL, etc.).

WAR DIARY.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

E/Boats.

7 E/Boats reported in 052° 28'N., 003° 45'E. at 1700 steering West at high speed. (C.in C. Nore, 1907/17).

One enemy war motor boat bearing 180° distance 1 Mile course 240° my position 050° Lowestoft 7 miles. (COTTESMORE, 2113/17).

My 2113. 2 enemy war motor boats. (COTTESMORE 2115/17.).

Miscellaneous.

Strike at
R.N.Torpedo
Factory.

Further to my T.F.73/61/120 dated 14/3/41. Apprentices have gone on strike as from P.M. today. (Supt: R.N.Factory, 1450/17).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.

17.3.1941.

Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys.General.Evasive
steering.

Your 2332/16. In view of your 1843/15 I am now of opinion that evasive steering should not be carried out by any convoy whether with or without escort. Instructions in para.3 of your 2332/16 should however invariably be carried out subject to the proviso in para.4. This is to provide for two contingencies (named). Consider most important that passage through W.Approaches should be carried out with the minimum of delay. (C.in C. W.A. 1948/17 to Admty).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.

17.3.1941.

Monday.CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

ANGLE
(A/S
Trawler).

Effected repairs and now towing ANGLE
265° 14 miles from Tory Island speed
10 knots.
(TENACITY 1450/17).

BARRHEAD
(Grounded
29/12/40).

My 1737/18/2. Efforts to salve BARRHEAD
not successful. Hull engines and boilers
remain sound. Communication with ship
involves 70 miles by pony through snow
and flooded rivers. Propose to turn over
ship to Icelandic Salvage party.
(F.O.Iceland, 1147/17).

AUBRIETIA.

Sustained collision damage above and
below water line.
Requires docking. Can proceed under own
power. Request instructions.
(C.in C. W.A. 1331/17).

KILMUN
(Cable ship)
FYLLA
(British 792
tons)
damaged.

FYLLA was in collision with Cable ^{Ship} Club
KILMUN a.m./16th. FYLLA beached off
Yarmouth. Damage consists of vertical
split port side amid ships engine and
boiler rooms flooded. KILMUN has bow
sleeves damaged and is useless for cable
work until repairs now being undertaken
in Dockyard are completed. Date of
completion uncertain.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 1726/17).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic.KENYA
RENOWN
ARK ROYAL
S.L.67.

Request you sail KENYA to R/V with RENOWN and ARK ROYAL at 1000 G.M.T./19 in estimated position 046° N., 23° 30'W, course 006° speed 6½ knots and relieve them as ocean escort for S.L.67.

RENOWN and ARK ROYAL will be leaving convoy at dusk/19 to return to Gibraltar.
(D.O.D.(H) 0139/17 to C.in C. Plymouth).OTUS.Adjust speed to pass through position F at 0700/18 and 330 Cape Spartel 10 at 0700/19 thence proceeding unescorted to Gibraltar. Report if unable to comply within 2 hours of time stated.
(Capt: S.8., 0946/17 to OTUS).VERBENA.My 1240/13. Detach VERBENA as requisite to arrive Gibraltar a.m./22.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1532/17 to FOLKESTONE).ASAKAJapanese, will leave Bilbao about 1800/17.
(Bilbao 1701/17 to D.N.I.)Sighting of
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU
8/3.Your 1203/15 crew are convinced first vessel in approach was not dummy but as regards second they are not so certain. Film will give all possible details. No other information available at present.
(Consul Teneriffe 1520/17).MONSELET
French.Arrived 153 from Bilbao.
(V. Consul, Gijon, T.H.I. 1900/17).Germans in
MARQUES DE
COMILLAS.Your 1802/15. In view of later reports about Spanish MARQUES DE COMILLAS no action required, vide W.P.P.S. 216.
(D.E.W.D. 1936/17 to F.O.C.N.A.).Port
Lyautey.1600/17. Escort vessel and 2 submarines entering Port Lyautey from South.
(S.O.(I) Gib., 2041/17 to Admty).

WAR DIARY.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

SIAM II.

Overdue shipping. SIAM II due Capetown 13/3 from U.K. not arrived. (S.C.(I) Capetown, 1051B/17).

MARGARET JOHNSON.

Following for N.C.S.C. Your 1035/14. Report whether Swedish MARGARET JOHNSON was routed via Skopen Fiord. (D.E.W.D. 1207/17 to Consul, Bahia). Your 1207/17. No. Master would not undertake to follow route to Kirkwall and sailed at his own risk without any route. (N.C.S.C. Bahia, 1215/17).

Japanese Oil Supplies.

Osaka S.S. company endeavouring to obtain increased supplies of fuel in Montevideo for Japanese ships. (details). Reason given is that delays are experienced at Capetown where it is not now intended they should fuel. (S.C.(I) Montevideo 1221/17 to D.N.I.)

Shipping Cape Verde.

Unless the surface raider situation does not admit of alteration suggest shipping should be diverted to West of Cape Verde Islands now. Your 1905/6/1 refers. (C.in C. S.A. 1229N/17 to Admty).

GERUSALEMME.

And German ships at Lourenco Marques. Re possibility of enemy cutting them out or damaging. (C.G. Lourenco Marques 1235/17).

Fuelling at Bathurst.

My 1251/16 not to Admiralty. Arrangements made to fuel Corvettes at Bathurst. Corvettes are to remain with convoy until necessary to return to Bathurst. (C.in C. S.A. 1711/17 to MALAYA).

DRAGON FURIOUS.

Your 1303/5. DRAGON will accompany FURIOUS to Takoradi, will fuel destroyers there but will have to fuel Lagos herself before return. Intend DRAGON shall follow FURIOUS as closely as possible on return but FURIOUS shall not wait unless situation requires. (C.in C. S.A. 1731/17 to Admty).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (Contd.)W.S.7.

Ocean escort for W.S.7. from Freetown is to be provided as follows:-
Freetown to Cape - REPULSE. Cape to Durban and onwards - two cruisers as arranged by C.in C. E.I. Red Sea - as ordered by C.in C. E.I.
(D.O.D.(F) 1747/17 to C.in C. E.I., C.in C. S.A.)

Suspicious Portuguese tanker.

In position 037° 32' N., 023° 09' W. at 2112 observed small Portuguese tanker GORGULHO bound Ponta Delgada from Lisbon acting suspiciously. Strong all round masthead light. Flashing letters of alphabet and exhibiting flares throwing stars. Did not board owing to possibility of R/V with U/Boat.
(BULOLO, 2112/17 to C.in C. S.A.)

See pages 664 & 990."Q" Report TEKOA.

Following has been read.
QQQQ de GJF. Disguised Merchant Raider 03.37 N., 10.09W. TEKOA suspicious. Signal ceased abruptly.
(Sumburgh, Aerogonio 2325/17).

Mediterranean.Situation report.

Covers Operation "Lustre"; supply of Western Desert Force, unsuccessful attack by T.B. on PEONY and Fleet tug ST. ISSEY when trying to tow off KNIGHT OF MALTA which ran aground north of Bardia on 3/3; work of F.A.A; sinking of either S.S. CAPO VITA or DEFENU 9/3 by UTMOST in Gulf of Hammamet; sinking of S.S. FENICIA by UNIQUE 10/3 on Naples - Tripoli route; sinking on 2/3 by TRIUMPH of two loaded ships of about 25,000 tons each anchored off Meliti, 5 miles S.E. of Cape Dellarini. (C.in C. Med. 0945/17). See Lion copy only.

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MOST SECRET

MESSAGE 0945/17.March.

IN

Date. 20.3.41.

From C. in C. Mediterranean.

Recd. 0622,

NAVAL CYPHER (D) by cable.

Addressed Admiralty, Repeated V.A.Malta, S.B.N.O.Suez, Canal Area, F.O.Force H.

668. Situation report.

All Forces at present engaged on covering ~~LUSTRE~~ ^{"Lustre"} and Aegean Convoys. Covering operations have included sweep in Dodecanese by cruisers and destroyers but these have had no success and sighted nothing until H.M.S. NUBIAN saw three E boats North East of Kaso Strait at 2300/13. A certain amount of bombing has taken place from Rhodes but so far without damage to any ship.

Since 4th March six convoys have gone North consisting of 47 ships and four convoys South consisting of 27 ships. In addition 11 thousand troops have been transported in H.M.Ships and about 5000 in other ships.

2. Battle Squadron has been working from Suda Bay during this period and returns to Alexandria 17 March prior to operation covering passagetoMalta of convoy M W 6.

3. Western Desert. Supplies being maintained via Mersa Tobruk whose unloading rate is about 1000 tons daily. Derna being used for patrol. A A and C D defence are now more satisfactory. Benghazi only lightly defended. Considerable enemy air activity along coast with mines. All ports are however usable except Benghazi. Attacks by large German aircraft which range along coast are a nuisance. H.M.S. PEONY and Fleet Tug ST.ISSEY unsuccessfully attacked by T/B when trying to tow off H.M.S. KNIGHT OF MALTA which was on Government charter and which ran aground North of Bardia on 3rd March. Ship is likely to be total loss. It has been necessary drastically to reduce Force "I" to provide escorts for ~~LUSTRE~~ "Lustre"

? Paranythia (p. 100 "Ker's Air Arm")

4. Fleet fighter aircraft working from Parmythis are attacking ? Albania port. One ? ship hit in Valona on night 13/14 details not known. F.A.A. are also working from Benina to attack small supply ships reported to be using Burat El HA(?A)N. F.A.A. squadron at Maleme has been providing fighter protection for convoys when near Crete.

5. Malta. Raids continue daily details reported separately. Moonlight anti-convoy restarted with few Swordfish remaining. Few sighted so far.

6. Canal area. On first day Canal was open 42 ships were passed through Northbound as well as H.M.S. FORMIDABLE H.M.S. CARLISLE, H.M.S. GRIMSBY, and 2 convoys. Canal again mined a.m.11 and situation is as in reference 2041/15 from S.B.N.O.Suez Canal Area.

7. Following submarine action reported recently (a) H.M.S. UTMOST attacked 2 deeply laden Southbound escorted merchant vessels on 9th March in position 036 degs. 10' N 011 degs. 12' E.

/3.....

- 2 -

3 torpedoes fired at one merchant vessel carrying troops. One violent explosion and one normal torpedo detonation heard. Ship with troops considered sunk. S.O.S. from CAPOVITO and ATTILIO DEEENU were re-broadcast by Italian stations just after the time and in position of the attack. (b) H.M.S. UNIQUE considers she sank Italian FENICIA in position 034 degs. 19' N 012 degs. 40' E March 10th. Ship was fully laden in escorted convoy S.O.S. from this ship was also intercepted. (c) H.M.S. TRIUMPH sank March 2nd two loaded ships of about 2500 tons each which had anchored off Moliti 5 miles South East of Cape Dell'armi.

0945/17.

Advance copy 1st Lord, A.C.N.S.(F), C.S.O. to 1st S.I.
Duty Capt., D.C.D.(F), D.D.I.C., D.P.D.

1st Lord.
1st S.I.
2nd S.L.
3rd S.L.
4th S.L.
5th S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S.(H).
A.C.N.S.(F).
A.C.N.S.(T).
C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
D. of P.(2).
D.O.D.(H).
D.D.C.D.(H).
D.O.D.(F).
D.D.O.D.(F).
D.N.I.(4).
D.S.D.
D.N.A.D.
D. of L.D.
D.A/S.W.
D.M.S.
I.P.
M.D.
Duty Capt.
Head of M.
D.T.S.D.
D.D.I.C.
E.P.S.
D.T.D.
N.I.D.10 Paym.Cdr.Wilson.
D.P.D.

WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean. (Contd.)A.N.F.20.Arrived Piraeus 1800/17.
(N.C.S.O. Piraeus 0945/17).Shipping
Tripoli.Day 16³ Blenheim reconnaissances reported
ships in Tripoli, and off Buerat Elhsun.Valona
shipping
attacked.15/16 March. 3 Swordfish F.A.A. attacked
shipping Valona Harbour with torpedoes.
Results unobserved.
(H.Q. R.A.F. M.E. 1211/17).DERNA.
(Italian).17/3. arrived from Genoa.
(Barcelona 1254/17).Canal
area
Shipping.In view of enemy mining activities in
Canal Area it is essential that all
signals including Vesca telegrams indicate
clearly positions of ships reported i.e.
at Suez Port Said or intermediately.
Port Said and Suez should be treated as
separate ports and arrivals and departures
reported accordingly.
(D.T.D. 1414/17 to S.B.N.O. Suez Canal).Landing
Craft.Cancel my 1936/13/11, 1039/10/12,
1820/30/1 and 1236/3/2 and S.B.N.O.
Suez Canal's 1615/12. Following is
revised arrival programme for Landing
Craft Carriers, Raiding Craft and
personnel in Middle East.
(Head of M., 1517/17, 2200/18 to C.in C. Med).Convoy G.A.5.

Arrived. (N.C.S.O. Alexandria, 1930/17).

Malta Air
Report.0730 to 1215. Glenn Martin photo R/C
Naples Harbour. Convoys sighted. (Details)
Enemy activity over Malta. Small enemy
formations approached the Island on 2
occasions 17/3 but turned away without
crossing the coast line.
(H.Q. R.A.F. Med., 1600/17).Convoy B.N.19.Arrived at Suez 17/3.
(S.B.N.O. Suez Canal, 1703/17).

WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean. (Contd.)PARTHIAN.

Leave patrol p.m./19 for Alexandria
(route) .
(Capt: S.l. 1829/17 to PARTHIAN).

A.N.F.(?20).

Arrived Piraeus, 1800/17.
(N.C.S.O. Piraeus 1945/17 to C.in C. Med).

SPARTA
SULLBERG
(German).

15/3 arrival SPARTA, departure SULLBERG
for Genoa.
(Consul, Valencia, T.H.I. 2004/17).

Naples -
W. Sicily
S/M
Patrol.

Reconnaissance Naples 17/3 (details)
In view of above and my 1855/15 consider
putting a large submarine on patrol on
route Naples to West Sicily should be
profitable.
(V.A.Malta, 2015/17 to C.in C. Med.)

Spanish
S/M's in
Strait of
Gibraltar.

Your 1726/14. Spanish Govt., have not
repudiated agreement which should be
regarded as still in force.
(Head of M. 2048/17 to C.in C. Med.)

TETRARCH.

(Defects). Consider may develop beyond
advisable running limit before end of
patrol.
(TETRARCH, 2100/17 to Capt: S.l.)

Enemy M/V's
Burat.

Aircraft R/C today reports one large 3
medium and 4 small merchant ships anchored
off Burat. Also 2 camps of 50 tents
along road.
(Capt: S.l. 2151/17 to TRUANT).

NORBERG)
YALOVA.)

German have been lying up at Braila
owing to silting of mouth of Danube, but
YALOVA was about to leave on 16/3 and
proceeded to Istanbul. (D.S.560).

See
Page
531.

CORDELIA.

German Arrived Istanbul, 16/3.
(D.S.560).

WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies.Raider 16.
("E")

For Raider EDWARD my 1432/16
(condition etc. of Raider 16.) see
A.M. 1951/4/1.
(C.in C. E.I. 0414Z/17 to A.C.N.B. etc.)
See also 1806/17.

B.N.20.

17/3 0240Z. Departure AUCKLAND with
B.N.20.
(N.O.I.C. Aden, 0420Z/17). List (27
ships) and cargoes.
(N.C.S.O. Aden, 0735Z/17).

DELHI.

Your 2350/15. DELHI could not have
reached Durban with more than ten per
cent fuel remaining. I have therefore
ordered her to replenish at Mauritius
where she will arrive 0400 G.M.T./18.
(C.in C. E.I. 0444Z/17 to Admty).

Shipping
Aden.

Your 1630/13. concur, but consider
Ports on South Coast Gulf Aden should be
responsibility of S.T.O. Aden.
(C.in C. E.I. 0736Z/17 to D. of S.T.)

W.S.6.

N.O.I.C. Simonstown's 1245/13 and
C.in C. S.A.'s 2031/14. As the five
ships mentioned in para.1 of my 0644/13
will arrive Durban by 30/3, request that
departure of W.S.6. from Durban be
delayed to enable these ships to be
included in the convoy. Considered
most undesirable that these ships
should be left behind at Durban until
escort can be provided which would in
any case have to be a weaker escort
than that accompanying W.S.6.
(C.in C. E.I. 0744Z/17 to C.in C. S.A.)

B.M.5.

Bombay departure 17/3. HECTOR with
B.M.5. (S.O.(I) Bombay, 0811Z/17 to Admty
etc.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies. (Contd.)Capture of
Berbera.

It is believed there were 1500 Italian troops in Berbera night of 15/16. Most of these left when most effective bombardment by cruisers and destroyers opened up. H.M. Ships disembarked troops and tows. Landings were intermittently shelled by four or six guns of about 4" calibre. Also slight machine gun fire. Fortunately only one slight casualty.
(C.in C. E.I. 0934Z/17 to Admty etc.)

M.T.B's.
India.

Asking whether any M.T.B's up to 8 can be spared for India and if so the approx. date they could be made available.
(F.O.C.R.I.N. 1042Z/17 to Admty).

Use of
mines
by M/V's.

Your 0941/27. The dropping of floating mines by merchant ships has been considered on previous occasions and has not been taken up for the following reasons:- Large numbers required compared with probability of achieving results. Danger to friendly ships. Handling and maintenance difficulties both on board and at terminal ports.
(Head of M., 1437/17 to F.O.C.R.I.N.)

HELGA MOLLER.

My 1200/16. Consular shipping adviser, Laurence Marques reports ship is beached East side of island on even keel and in no danger. Salvage anticipated crew remains on board.
(S.O.(I) Capetown, 1522/17 to Admty etc.)

Norwegian
NIDARLAND,
KATTEGAT.

Your 1817/14. KATTEGAT arrived Colachel 27/2, departed 5/3 for Capetown and U.S.A. NIDARLAND arrived Colachel 3/3 departed 10/3 for same destination.
(S.O.(I) Colombo, 1606Z/17 to Admty).

WAR DIARY.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

Raiders
16 and 21.

Your 1432Z/16. Raider 16 commanded by Rogge sank AUTOMEDON 11/11. At 15 knots she could then have reached CARNARVON CASTLE's position, but could not have remained with 12-knot OLE JACOB till 16/11. After engagement she could have reached Kerguelen at 15 knots by 21/12 but if she remained there 6 weeks could not have reached Seychelles by 24/1. Suggest as Wolff meanwhile at Kismayu he is muddled and that CARNARVON CASTLE's raider may have previously sunk BRITISH COMMANDER etc. and is possibly No.21, which after repairing damage is returning to Germany with whalers captured by No.33.
(D.D.I.C. 1806/17 to C.in C. E.I.)

German
Prisoners.

Ref: Mauritius, (N.O.I.C.) 0424Z/11, 0637Z/11 and 0613/11 to Admiralty. * Please ascertain whether KETTY BROVIG and COBURG were the vessels of origin of personnel detained and whether these or other vessels of origin were merchant vessels or armed raiders, also whether personnel concerned are members of the German Armed Forces or Merchant Seamen.
(W.O. 2110/17 to O.C. Troops, Mauritius).
* (Re German prisoners of war received into Military custody at Mauritius).

War Diary

17.3.1941.
Monday

FOREIGN STATIONS

China

Italian
CARIGNANO

Left Kobe 15/3. (Capt. O.S., Singapore 0342Z/17 to Admty. etc.) Cancelled, see 0818/19) *page 633.*

HALDIS
NARWHAL

HALDIS (A) 20 miles W. of Greatsayer
Melampus (D) 010° S. H.M.S. NARWHAL (I)
014° S. 160° E (K) 013° S. 174° ?E (M)
006° 161°. (S.O.I. Singapore 0407Z/17
to Admty. Capt. O.S. Singapore.)

** No trace -*

Warship sighted
11/3.

Capt. O.S. Singapore 0541/16 is being
passed to you. (O.I.C. 2012/17 to A.C.N.B)

Australia

Troop
Convoy

HOBART Flying the flag of F.O.C. Aust.
Sqn., AUSTRALIA, SYDNEY departed
Fremantle 0100Z/17 escorting H.M's
transports MAURETANIA and NIEUW AMSTERDAM.
(A.C.N.B. 2125/Z/17)

War Diary.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America & West Indies.

Force X,
operations
against
raiders.

Cancel Admty. 1903/15 and 0511/16. SEVERN is to proceed to Freetown in accordance with previous instructions, covering as much of the area you were to search as practicable. (1st. S.L., 0012/17. to Force X.).

Raiders may
return North
Sea, orders
to K.G.V.

RODNEY's 2129z/16. We are inclined to think that the ships which have been raiding in the Newfoundland area are returning to North Sea. If this is so there is a danger that they may come across a wave of ships originally belonging to Convoy O.B.295 but now proceeding independently. These ships were probably within 100 miles of 56° N., 35° W., at 1200/16. Mean course 210°. Failing any further information regarding the raider you are to proceed at best speed to cover these ships assuming that you will ultimately proceed to Scapa. (1st. S.L. 0056/17, to KING GEORGE V.).

Enemy
Tanker.

My 2154Z/16. Tanker resembled ALTMARK and may have been BRMLAND (corrupt group) ROYAL SOVEREIGN took over H X 114 during absence of RODNEY. (RODNEY, 0135Z/17, to Admty.).

DIOMEDE.

My 1228/21/2. DIOMEDE need no longer be retained in Pacific and is at your disposal. (1 S.L. 0140/17, to C. in C. A.W.I.).

A/C Search.

Your 1841/3. Weather permitting aircraft search being carried out 17/3, covering H.X.114 and S.C.25 commencing 1400 G.M.T. (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 0225/17, to C. in C. A.W.I.).

/My 0225/17....

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America & West Indies Contd.A/C Search.

My 0225/17, flight cancelled due to unfavourable weather. (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 1050/17.)

A/S. Defences
Halifax.

Your 2244/14 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa. (Re extension of U-Boat warfare to Western side of Atlantic.). Would be of great assistance in strengthening A/S defences at Halifax if BUXTON could be retained by R.A. 3rd R.S. for the present. (C. in C. A.W.I., 1001/17, to Admty.).

Protection
of Convoys.

Request approx. position and date of dispersal of outward bound convoys may be passed to me to facilitate appreciation of waves of westbound shipping and provision of cover in N.W. Atlantic when forces permit. (C. in C. A.W.I., 1212/17, to Admty.).

Vessels
sighted by
A/C.

Your 2234/16. (A/C search). Can you identify 6000 ton A.M.C. and tanker as British? Was 4000 ton ship cruiser or A.M.C? If enemy cruiser state number of turrets and any details. (D.D.I.C. 1214/17 to C.O.A. C. Halifax.).

H.X.115.

Your 1235/17. (H.X.115 to be sailed today.). Regret no submarine available for H.X.115. Ocean escort is CALIFORNIA. (F.O.3.B.S. 1224/17 to Admty.).

Vessels
available
for anti-
U-boat
operations.

Your 2244/14. Ref. para. (A), One ^{"Tiger"} ~~"Puma"~~ class destroyer and four corvettes immediately available. Two ~~"Puma"~~ ^{"Tiger"} Class refitting available early in May. SKEENA and ST. LAURENT complete refit mid May. Three more Corvettes available mid-April from West Coast and eight additional by mid-May. A few A/S equipped Auxiliary patrol vessels of doubtful effectiveness.

/Air Force.....

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America & West Indies Contd.Vessels available
for anti-U/B
ops: cont:-

Air Force have 3 Digby aircraft at Newfoundland Airport, 10 Digby, 9 Stranraer and 15 Hudsons at Halifax. Ref. Para.(b) Consider minimum forces required to ensure adequate A/S protection approach to Halifax are 9 destroyers and 15 corvettes. We accordingly require at least 4 more destroyers to ensure having 9 in operation by mid-May. Request four "~~Stranraer~~" Class Canadian destroyers now operating in U.K. be sent to make up this deficiency. Corvette situation will be satisfactory by mid-May but 10 R.C.N. crews now serving in R.N. Corvettes may return to Canada by end of April. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1501/17, to Admty.).

Overdue
Ships.

Following ships have not arrived: Your 1717/23 Norwegian SVEIN JARL. Your un-numbered /23 British SIRIKISHNA. Your 1244/4, British RIMUTAKA. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1632/17.).

A.M.C.'s
for
transport
of Service
personnel.

Admty. 2251/28. Decided to put this scheme into operation with first sailing to Reykjavik from Clyde on 2/4, and from Halifax with first A.M.C. due Reykjavik on or after 1/4.

Responsibilities for Operation.
R.A. 3rd B.S. 1846/4 and C. in C. A.W.I., 1232/8. Object of an A.M.C. carrying personnel when acting as ocean escort to a convoy must still remain the safety of the convoy. If other surface forces form part of the ocean escort, the actual employment of the A.M.C. in defence of the convoy must be at the discretion of the S.O. of the escort. Approved to fit all A.M.Cs, employed on this service to carry maximum number of personnel in their present condition. (A.C.N.S.(H) 1931/17, to R.A. 3.B.S., etc.).

ORINOCO.

Tampico report (B 2). Captain German ship ORINOCO 16/3, advised crew to be ready to sail at any time. Possible (corrupt group) destination Guatemala Port. Cylinder head not arrived but ship can proceed. (S.O.(I) Kingston, 2043/17.).

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.

FRANCHE COMTE
J.B. WHITE
FERM
VENETIAN
 (torpedoed
 16/3).

(HX.112)

Am standing by FRANCHE COMTE and FERM. Both ships badly damaged. Possibility of salvage (i) good (ii) fair. Please send tugs. My position is 060° 40' N. 012° 50' W. (BLUEBELL, 0355/17, to C.in C. W.A.). Have 12 survivors from FRANCHE COMTE 5 from VENETIAN and 1 from FERM. Standing by FRANCHE COMTE & VENETIAN in 060° 57' N. 012° 27' W. to consider possibility of salvage in daylight. (NORTHERN FOAM, 0520/17, to S.O.T.N.P.). Survivors from following ships have been picked up VENETIA, FERM, FRANCHE COMTE, and J.B. WHITE. BLUEBELL is standing by FRANCHE COMTE which is salvable in position 061° N. 012° W. WALKER and VANOC are with survivors from 2 German submarines sunk. VANOC is holed forward from ramming submarine but is seaworthy. SCIMITAR, SARDONYX, and HYDRANGEA are with convoy. (WALKER, 0649/17, to C.in C. W.A.). Proceed forthwith to assist. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0838/17, to BRIGAND, 0845/17 to PRUDENT, ZWARTE ZEE). Your 0355/17. Tugs are being sent to remain with torpedoed ships. (C.in C. W.A., 1007/17, to BLUEBELL). Sailed Tugs PRUDENT and ZWARTE ZEE from Campbeltown and BRIGAND from Loch Ewe to assist at 0527/17. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1058/17, to Admty.). Return to HX 112 and continue to escort convoy. (C.in C. W.A., 1228/17, to VANOC, WALKER). Escorting FRANCHE COMTE proceeding under her own power, course and speed 132° five. FERM abandoned still afloat position 061° 04' N. 011° 35' W. (BLUEBELL, 1300/17). Air R/C indicates that there are two disabled ships with escort vessels standing by in 61° 01' N. 12° 44' W. at 1235/17. Another trawler is standing by FERM whilst FRANCHE COMTE and escort are making good 3 knots in approx. similar position. (C.in C. W.A., 1445/17, to F.O.I.C. Greenock). My 0520/17. All survivors on board FRANCHE COMTE and ship proceeding escorted by BLUEBELL. Tanker FERM abandoned 061° 12' N. 012° 11' W. observed drifting N.N.W. Ship appears to be salvable. (NORTHERN FOAM, 1520/17, to S.O.T.N.P.). Proceed to 60° 01' N. 12° 44' W., where FERM and two other disabled ships were reported by aircraft at 1233. FRANCHE COMTE making good 3 knots. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1530/17, to PRUDENT, ZWARTE ZEE, BRIGAND).

/ Request you will sail PETUNIA..

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked. (Contd.)FRANCHE COMTE
J.B. WHITE
FERM
VENETIAN
(torpedoed
16/3).
(Contd.)Request you will sail PETUNIA when ready
061° N. 012° W. to search for damaged ships
ex H.X.112. She may be required to escort
any ship taken in tow back to Minches.
(C.in C. W.A., 2345/17, to F.O.I.C. Iceland.RUNSWICK
(chased by
S/M, 12/3).Ministry of Shipping's 1753/3 and my 1009/12,
RUNSWICK has not arrived Halifax.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 0950/17, to Admty.).
Cancel my 0950/17. RUNSWICK has now arrived.
Master reports Submarine gave chase, turning
away when SSSS Broadcast.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1825/17, to Admty.)
W.D. Note. - S/M was PORPOISE, see 1755/18.GAIRSOPPA
(torpedoed
? 15/2)*N.T. in W.D.*
Your 1730/14. (Survivor GAIRSOPPA fit to be
interrogated) Cause, Time, date and position
of sinking. No other known survivors.
(D.T.D. 1738/17, to F.O.I.C. Falmouth).KORSHAMNHave picked up 11 survivors from Swedish ship
KORSHAMN. (6673 tons).
(NORTHERN FOAM, 1810/17, to S.O.T.N.P.)
KORSHAMN was in Convoy H.X.112, bound from
New York to Liverpool with cargo of steel,
general and special. Believed to have been
torpedoed. (D.S. 560).TAPANOELIFollowing has been read.
SSS 15. 56 N., 20. 49 W. TAPANOELI torpedoed.
(Freetown, T.O.R. 2042N/17) TAPANOELI, Dutch,
7031 tons, was in convoy S.L.68, bound from
Batavia to Clyde with general cargo. Position
about 110' E. of Cape Verde Is. (D.S. 560).

War Diary.

17.3.1941.
Monday.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Submarines Reported.

0223.	About 60° N., 12° W., indefinite position (D.S. 559).
0034.	52° N., 27° W. indefinite position (Italian) (D.S. 559).
0925.	58° - 59° N., 23° - 25° W. indefinite position (Italian) (D.S. 559).
0729.	41° N., 17° W., very indefinite (Italian) (D.S. 559).
0920.	53.30 N., 18° W., indefinite (Italian) (D.S. 559).
0347.	Vicinity of Canary Islands, very indefinite (D.S. 559).
1114) 1412)	53° - 54° N., 18° - 20° W., indefinite (Italian) (D.S. 560).
2334	55° - 56° N., 20° 22° W., indefinite (Italian) (D.S. 560).
2126) 2155) 2317)	Cape Verde Islands area, very indefinite (German) (D.S. 560).
1707.	189° N., 10° W., indefinite (German) (D.S. 560).

Iceland.

Ref. my 0.637, 16/3.
Patches of oil not seen at mouth of Isafjordurdjup.
Patches observed 65° 17' N., 23° 40' W. and 65° 28' N., 24° 22' W.
(G.O.C., Iceland Force, 1000/17, to W.O.).

Canary Is.

D/F bearings indicate a second U Boat may be operating S.W. of Canary Islands.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1105/17, to N.A. Stn.).

1420.

Enemy S/M sighted bearing 233° distance 8 miles from 15.15 N., 21.03 W. endeavouring to escape on surface course 230°.
(CROCUS, 1420/17, to C.in C. S.A.).
Ref. Admty. Message A.F. 015° 15' N. 022° 03' W. 1420/17.
(C.in C. S.A., 2322/17, to G.B.M.S. 6A)
Note: According to CROCUS 1420/17, position should be 21.03 W., not 22.03.

War Diary.17.3.1941.
Monday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported. (Contd.)

1707.

By D/F at 1707/17 position of enemy submarine 49° N. 10° W. indefinite fix. Probably returning to base. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1833/17, to KENYA) (F.O.S., 1934/17 to L.27).

2126.

D/F at 2026 G.M.T. indicate SL 68 or HG 56 is being shadowed by U/B. (Bearings) (D.D.I.C. 2206/17, to F.O.C.N.A. C.in C. S.A., MALAYA, FOLKESTONE).

Estimated U/B dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1422/17).

Submarines Attacked.By WALKER.

Unknown number of ships of H.L. (corrupt group) have been torpedoed. Have attacked submarine which was sighted on surface and submerged 100 (? group missing) ahead of me. Heavy explosions accompanied by a red flash occurred 2½ minutes after last charge was dropped. Am remaining in vicinity until daylight. (WALKER, 0157/17, to C.in C. W.A.).

By VANOC.

Rammed and sunk submarine. (VANOC, 0332/17, to C.in C. W.A.).

U/B Survivors in WALKER and VANOC. (WALKER, 0649/17 - see Ships Attacked). My 0620 (? 0649/17 intended) From prisoners account it now seems possible they represent survivors of three submarines sunk. (WALKER, 0840/17, to C.in C. W.A.). Report without delay name or number of submarine sunk, if known. (C.in C. W.A. 0942/17 to VANOC, WALKER). Your 0942/17. U 100, U 99 and one other, probably U 29. (WALKER, 1115/17, to C.in C. W.A.) Congratulating WALKER and VANOC on destruction of U-boats. (D. A/S W., 1416/17, 1417/17).

Details of WALKER and VANOC attacks, see p. 638 A

MOST SECRETWar Diary18.3.1941.
TuesdaySITUATION REPORTHome CommandsE-Boats

E-Boats were reported near Convoy F.N. 434 off the Suffolk and Norfolk Coasts between 2113/17 and 0106/18 and were engaged by the convoy escorts.
At 0226/18 SS DAPHNE II (^{British}French) was torpedoed off Cromer.

Watch for
German
Battle Cruisers

NELSON and NIGERIA were S.W. of the Faeroes this afternoon, moving north-westward. It is assumed that SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU are returning to the North Sea and that BISMARCK (whose whereabouts is at present not known) is to escort them in and that the Germans know the whereabouts of RODNEY and to a lesser extent of KING GEORGE V. The latter was yesterday ordered to proceed at best speed to cover a wave of ships originally belonging to Convoy O.B. 295 but now proceeding independently mean course 210° from within 100 miles of 56° N., 35° W., at 1200/16.

HOOD is to cancel her full power trial and if necessary, her full calibre shoot and with QUEEN ELIZABETH (who completed full power trials and firing practices today) and NORFOLK in company is to proceed to 60° N., 11° W., with destroyer escort.

At 0213 today D/F analysis (unreliable) indicated a unit, probably ^{American} SCHEER in 26° N., 19° W., and at 1310 a unit in 50° N., longitude indefinite possibly 23° W. THUNDERBOLT is joining H.X. 115 for as long as possible before returning to Halifax, and KING GEORGE V is also to join H.X. 115 if possible, on her way to Scapa.

U-Boat Campaign.

SS CLAN MACIVER was unsuccessfully attacked today in the N.W. Approaches.

A U-Boat was reported by an aircraft at 1826 near No 5 Buoy (2 miles East of Yarmouth) A German aircraft was near at hand.

War Diary18.3.1941.
TuesdaySITUATION REPORTBritish Air ActivityWatch for
German
Battle Cruisers

Two aircraft from Iceland today carried out extended patrols in Denmark Strait.

Beauforts of Coastal Command sank by torpedo a 5000 ton ship in a convoy off Borkum today.

Bomber Command aircraft last night attacked the Naval shipyards at Bremen and other targets.

Enemy Air Activity

Warning has been given to shipping that enemy aircraft when attacking may burn navigation lights.

Dutch ~~tanker~~ IRIS was attacked today west of Bardsay Island and was set on fire.

Mining

The clearance sweep between Dungeness and Beachy Head had been completed.

~~Belgium M.V., EMINENT was mined and sunk this afternoon in the Bristol Channel.~~

Further S.A. mines were detonated today in the Thames Estuary off Spurn Point.

The Clyde above Greenock is closed from sunset today to 1300 tomorrow, except for short local moves after 0730 when sweepers have passed.

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

SITUATION REPORT

South Atlantic

Routeing of
Shipping

Until further orders merchant vessels are to be routed to the westward of the Cape Verde Is., owing to the raider situation.

Today's merchant ship plot shows that between 14° S and 20° S there are 14 ships proceeding to the Cape in a definite 60 milewide lane. In future, ships in this area are to be spread over a belt of at least 500 miles.

Operation
"Summer"

FURIOUS and DRAGON left Freetown this morning with DUNCAN and FOXHOUND to fly off aircraft to Takoradi.

Convoy
S.L. 68.

It still appears that Convoy S.L. 68 is being shadowed by U-Boat. CLAN MACNAB in this convoy was sunk today in collision E.N.E. of Cape Verde Is.

Mediterranean

F.A.A. Sink
a ship

Three F.A.A. Albacores attacked with torpedoes last night shipping at Buerat El Hsun and sank a ship of 1500 tons.

Air Attack on
Durazzo

Seven Wellingtons last night dropped 17,250 lbs of bombs on Durazzo docks.

^A
ROSURA (Armed Boarding Vessel) was sunk by mine p.m. today when leaving Mersa Tobruk.

East Indies

Vizagapatam is being made a defended port.

WAR DIARY.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

MAPLIN.

Your 1328/15. Every effort will be made to advance completion of J.3997 to 3rd May provided as follows.
(F.C.I.C. Liverpool, 1126/18).

Movements.

HOLDERNESS.
VANESSA.

Slip as soon as ready and proceed to Dover by (route).
(C.in C. Nore, 1534/18 to HOLDERNESS).
Destroyers are to sail by Edinburgh Channel adjusting speed where mines are suspect.
1st M.S.F. is to meet destroyers at No.10 Buoy and sweep them through 313 QZX.
After passing longitude 0° 00'W., destroyers should pass through 50° 30'N., 0° 20'W., thence to Portsmouth by 169 QZS.
(A.C.N.S.(H) 1601/18 to C.in C. Nore).
My 1534. After passing Dover proceed by QZS 208 to arrive No.10 buoy at 2215, where fleet sweepers meet you and sweep you through 313 WZX. Thence proceed to pass through following positions, to Portsmouth by QZS 169 and 111. Adjust speed to arrive Nab Tower 0630.
(C.in C. Nore, 1720/18 to HOLDERNESS)
(A.C.N.S.(H) 2355/18).
C.in C. Nore's 1720/18. Amend Route as follows to arrive Nab Tower 0630.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 2243/18 to HOLDERNESS).

Sailing of
3rd M.L.F.
to Gibraltar.

My 1146/15. For 21st March read 26th March.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1804/18).

FERNIE
CLEVELAND.

You are to pass through position 180° Portland 20 miles thence 180° Anvil 06 miles and enter by Needles 0730. Information of own forces likely to be met.
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1853/18 to FERNIE).

WAR DIARY.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

DAPHNE II.
(Convoy F.N.#34)
torpedoed
by E/Boat.

(British, 1970 tons). Torpedoed and sinking at 59 buoy. Trawler KINGSTON OLIVINE attempting to tow to Humber. Chance to salvage goods. 26 survivors, to date.
(VERSATILE 0226/18).
Torpedoed by E/Boat near 59 Buoy at about 0220 today. Now in tow of Trawler KINGSTON OLIVINE proceeding Humber. 26 survivors in Trawler, one injured on board VERSATILE, 1 wounded, man trapped below. (C.in C. Nore, 0801/18, VERSATILE, 0857/18).
Tug HEADMAN departed Hull 0920 to assist DAPHNE II.
(F.O. Humber, 0935/18).
Ship is being beached in Humber. (Grimsby Base, 1828/18 Lt. Pearson, Grimsby), (2230/18).
Re survivors.
(N.O.I.C. Hartlepool, 1645/18, Grimsby Base, 2236/18).

Boat
ANNA.

Following 1940/17 received from PYTCHLEY. Have picked up 7 Dutchmen who sailed from Holland in their boat ANNA. Have retained survivors on board. Trawler is taking boat to Yarmouth. (C.in C. Nore, 0753/18).

M.G.B's
with
Patrol O.

Weather permitting available M.G.B's are to operate with patrol O tonight as ordered by D.16. (C.in C. Nore, 1101/18 to BEEHIVE).

Patrol O.

Patrol O. With all available M.G.B's is to be at Sheringham light buoy at 2200 today and thence proceed to No.5 buoy by QZS 52 and 40 manœuvring so as to cover passage of F.S.#38 and endeavouring to intercept possible E/Boats.

After passing No.5. buoy patrol O is to cover F.S.38 until arrival at Aldeburgh Light Float. (C.in C. Nore, 1106/18 to D.16).

WAR DIARY.18.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations. (Contd.)Patrol O
Cont:-

C.in C. Nore's 1106/18. Intend to sail WORCESTER and WHITSHED at 1630 to R/V with M.G.B. 60 and 64 at 52 buoy at 1815. Speed 25 knots. Request fighter protection. (Capt: D.16 1253/18).

ARGUS.
(Operation
"Winch").

Admiralty 1346/12 and my 1144/17. Two Skuas and four Hurricanes only have so far arrived Abbots Inch for embarkation in ARGUS. Understand remaining aircraft are unlikely to reach Abbots Inch 18/3, owing to unfavourable weather. (ARGUS, 1136/18).

STEGEHOLM.

Swedish STEGEHOLM leaves Goteborg for New York at 1200/19 routed as follows.

2. Ship should not be molested but should be stopped and examined at Skopenfiord. (D.O.D.(H) 1852/18).

Convoys
F.N.33.
and
F.N.34.
CATTISTOCK
COTTESMORE
VESPER
engagements
with
E/Boats
on 17/3.

Following receiver begins:- Addressed C.in C. Nore from D.21.
A. At 2305, CATTISTOCK in 52° 40' N., 2° 03' E., zig-zagging at 24 knots 3 miles ahead of convoy F.N.33 sighted 3 E/Boats which were stopped at 1200 yards range. E/Boats retired making smoke and were engaged with pom-pom as soon as star-shell became effective. Contacts lost at Hearty Knoll after range had been opened to 6,000 yards and all forward star-shell (40 rounds) had been expended. No result of gunfire observed.

B. COTTESMORE and VESPER unsuccessfully engaged 2 E/Boats from 2110 to 2123. 1 E/Boat had been sighted 11 miles North of No.5. Buoy and this retired to Eastward. During chase second E/Boat was sighted also retiring.

C. CAMPBELL zig-zagging in the rear of the convoy at high speed had no sightings. 1650/18 Ends.

Signals received from PYTCHLEY and VERSATILE

/show

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.18.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations(Cond.)

Convoys
F.N.#33
and
F.N.#34.
CATTISTOCK
COTTESMORE
VESPER
engagements
with
E/Boats
on 17/3.
(Contd.)

show that other E/Boats attacked F.N.#34,
torpedoing ~~French~~ S.S. DAPHNE near ^
number 59 buoy about 0200/18.
(C.in C. Nore, 1920/18).

Western
Channel
Patrol.

Sailed KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1958/18).

Bay of
Biscay.
Temporary
Submarine
Patrol
Zone.

Cancel my 1512/9/12/40.

A. With a view to intercepting enemy vessels the morning after they leave or the evening before they arrive at Biscay ports, the following temporary patrol zones are established. It must be particularly noted that part of these zones is outside the area in which ships may be attacked without warning.

B. Bay of Biscay North. Limits. Between Latitudes 46° 30'N., 47° 48'N., and East of 08° W.

Bay of Biscay South. Limits. South of latitude 46° 30'N., and east of a line joining 46° 30'N., 08° W. and 43° 25'N., 02° 55'W.

C. Spanish territorial waters are under no circumstances to be violated.
(F.O.S. 2019/18 to S.3. S.5.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.18.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations. (Contd.)Interception
of
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.

- A. Assuming SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU are returning to North Sea.
- B. We have lost sight of BISMARCK and though W/T traffic on Norwegian Coast has not been abnormal it is possible BISMARCK may be used to escort SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU past Iceland.
- C. Germans know whereabouts of RODNEY and to a lesser degree, of KING GEORGE V.
- D. HOOD is to cancel full power trial and if necessary the full calibre shoot.
- E. Subject to any orders received from C.in C. H.F. HOOD, QUEEN ELIZABETH and NORFOLK are to proceed in company to 60° N., 11° W. B.C. One to inform C.in C. H.F. time at which this position will be reached.
- F. C.S.18 to detail destroyers escort for HOOD and QUEEN ELIZABETH.
(1st S.L. 2337/18).

War Diary.18. 3. 41.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity.Patrols.

Air patrols today Tuesday:-

~~"Hornet" "Pilot" "Squad" "One".~~

(C. in C. Rosyth 0854/18.).

Patrol ~~"Pirate"~~ (Anti E-Boat) "Pirate One".

Four A/C of 235 sqdn. are to take departure from Lowestoft. To take up positions at 1630 on an endless chain patrol through the following four points:-

Patrol to be flown for 1½ hours in a clockwise direction No. 1 aircraft starting at the first named position the remaining three at equal distances round the patrol.

"Pirate Two".

Four A/C of 59 Squadron are to take departure from Lowestoft to take up positions at 1800 on a similar endless chain patrol for two hours through the following four points. (Chatham 1050/18.).

Request 98 Squadron maintain continuous patrol from Kaldardanaes through 63° 30' N., 25° W., to 30° West W.E.F. daylight 19/3. Object to intercept enemy raiders.

(H.Q.C.C. 1220/18, to Air Ministry.).

(War Office 1230/18 to G.O.C. Iceland.).

Air Patrol arranged to cover Denmark Strait tomorrow is as follows:-

Line patrol leaving Kaldardanes at daylight passing through; 63° 30' N., 25° 00' W., thence due West to 30° W. This Patrol will be flown until dusk. (A.C.N.S.H.

1559/18, to C. in C. H.F.).

Your 56997 (M.O.8). of 18/3.

Request information type of enemy raider 98 Squadron is to search for. Of six available aircraft one now out of action at Melgerdi in north one crashed taking off for patrol on 17/3. Two of these carried out very extended patrols today in Denmark Straits. Nothing to report. Subject to weather conditions and condition of runway I will try to carry out two patrols tomorrow over area indicated. Probable time over area 0800 - 1200 hours and 1300 - 1600 hours. (G.O.C. Iceland 1608/18. to War Office.).

Carry out further patrol on 18/3.

(War Office, desp. 1640/17 to G.O.C. Iceland.)

Patrol R.3 will be flown throughout daylight 19th and patrol R.1 from daylight for about five hours. (C. in C. Rosyth 1742/18.).

War Diary.

18. 3. 41.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity Contd.

Patrols.

My 1559/18. Patrol will be flown from 0900 to 1200 and 1300 to 1600 only. (A.C.N.S.H. 2010/18 to C. in C. H.F.). Enemy warships probably battle-cruisers. Wire whether times of patrols are Iceland time or G.M.T. (War Office 2050/18 to G.O.C. Iceland.). Following is a repetition of my 1728/18, begins: F.O. Iceland from C. in C. Rosyth. Following patrol known as R 3 has been instituted, Cross over by Sunderland aircraft between following positions 062° 01' N., 014 49' W. 063° 12' N. 015° 47' W. 063° 19' N., 015° 10' W. 062° 08' N., 014 10' W. Signal will be made when it is flown. It is being flown tomorrow Wednesday. Ends. (C. in C. Rosyth 2310/18 to F.O. Iceland.).

Escorts.

Escorting Blenheim returned owing to weather. Will return to you if weather improves. (C. in C. Rosyth 0956/18 to 5th M/S. F.). Request Escort for 1 capital ship, 3 destroyers, 1700/18 till dark /18. D. Inchkeith to May Island passing May Island 2000/18. northward. (C. in C. Rosyth 1530/18 to H.Q.F.C.). My 1430/17. No air escort available tomorrow. (C. in C. Rosyth 1720/18, to R.A.M.L.).

Air Decoys.

Your 2003/17/3. Concur.
(A.C.O.S. 1139/18, to Adty.).

Identification
of A/C by
Ships.

Following instructions to come into force at 0001/19. (C. in C. W.A. 1226/18.).
See Lion Copy.

/Iceland.....

586 A

A

SECRET

MESSAGE

1226/18th March

IN

Date: 18.3.41.

From: C. in C. Western Approaches.

Recd: 1425

P/L by T/P

Addressed: Admiralty, Air Ministry, H.Q.C.C., All Ships and
Authorities Western Approaches Command (5) 15 Group
18 Group 19 Group.

IMMEDIATE

668. The following instructions on A/C ship recognition are to come into force at 0001/19.

- (1) Limit of approach of unidentified A/C to ships escorting or escorted is to be 5000 yards.
- (2) Method of identification should always include present procedure with cartridges and lamp and also R/T except in the case of certain A/C in 18 group not fitted with R/T yet.
- (3) R/T method of identification is to take the following form 'Whitley A/C approaching from 320 degs. bearing in all cases is from centre of convoy.'
- (4) Identified A/C are not to approach within 1500 yards.
- (5) Ships suspicious of identity of A/C are to open fire, hoist large black flag and say to remaining escort by R/T 'Suspicious A/C on bearing indicated'.
- (6) Ship identifying A/C as friendly is to say to remaining escort by R/T 'A/C bearing indicated is friendly.'
- (7) At night or in low visibility A/C are to use R/T as in paragraph 3 if A S V contact is made before sighting.
A/C should have all three methods of identification ready for unexpected sighting of ships and at night or in low visibility are to endeavour to remain outside 5000 yards.

1226/18

Advance copy sent D.S.O. D.S.D.

- 1st Lord.
- 1st S.L.
- 5th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (T)
- Naval Sec.
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Ops. (4)
- O.D. (5)
- D.N.I. (4)
- O.I.C. (2)
- D.S.D. 9
- D.S.D. (2)
- D. of L.D. (2)

- D.N.A.D.
- Air.
- M. (2)
- D.T.D. (4)
- D.T.D. (M)
- I.P. (3)
- W.D.

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War Diary.

18.3.41.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity Contd.

Iceland.
Operation
Areas
for No.30
Wing.

AP865 18/3 reference establishment of No.30 Wing in Iceland proposed. Provisional areas for operation of aircraft of this wing under 18 Group are as follows. These boundaries will be subject to revision in conformity with trade protection requirements when flying boat unit is located at Reyjavik. (H.Q.C.C. 1240/18 to 18 Group.).

Operation
G.U.

My 2033/16 and 1334/18. Request bombing restrictions. (C. in C. Plymouth 1404/18 to H.Q.C.C.).

LUDLOW
ROXBOROUGH
ST. CLAIR.

Regret unable to locate or get into W/T touch with the three ~~class~~ class destroyers after a 90 minute flight. (N.A.S.Roborough 1510/18 to Capt.D.).

Air Search.

Hudson A/C leaves Wick at first light for 61° 15' N., 11° 45' W., to search vicinity and then in N.N.E. direction for 3 M/Vs torpedoed night of 16/17. (C. in C. Rosyth 1946/18.).

Bremen.
Wilhelmshaven.
Rotterdam
Emden.
Texel.
Flushing.
Helder

Day 17/3. Nine Blenheims set out to attack shipping off the Frisian Islands and Dutch Coast, but targets were not located largely due to fog. One aircraft using cloud cover attacked petrol storage at Flushing. Night 17/18 March. Twenty one Wellingtons, 3 Whitleys and 16 Hampdens attacked Deutsche Werke Shipyard. Attacked by one Blenheim. Two Blenheims attacked docks at Emden and aerodrome at Texel. Two Whitleys attacked docks at Den Helder and Emden. (H.Q.B.C. 2000/18.).

War Diary.

18.3.41.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

REYKJABORG.

There is strong evidence that Icelandic Trawler REYKJABORG 685 tons has been sunk by enemy action. Ship now 6 days overdue and bullet ridden raft clearly marked REYKJABORG has been picked up off Hebrides by Icelandic Trawler LAVORDUR. (F.O.I.C. Iceland 1258/18.).

No trace in Lloyd's.

Convoys
E.N.Odd,
ROCKY "Rocky".
LAVORDUR "Lavordur".

I Enemy A/C shadowing Convoy. My position 57° 4' N. 1° 51' W. (FOWEY, 1350/18). Fighters are being sent to Convoy Odd numbered E.N. Convoy and ~~ROCKY~~ "Rocky". (Nore W/T 1415/18).

Fighters are being sent to assistance of odd numbered E.N. Convoy and to call sign ~~LAVORDUR~~. (C.in C. Rosyth 1550/18 to FOWEY).

Lights on
A/C's

Warning re enemy a/c's burning navigation lights when attacking merchant ships and therefore regarded as friendly.
(D.T.D. 1353/18)

See Shipping and Convoys.

IRIS.

(~~Dutch Tanker, 3887 tons~~^{909 tons.}) S.O.S. in about 52° 45' N. 5° W. Fire on board. Time bomb on board. Chief Mate seriously injured. (Plymouth W/T 1624/18). Position Bardsey Tower 82° about 6 miles. Please send assistance for wounded chief mate. (Plymouth W/T 1658/18). Time bomb overboard. (Plymouth W/T 1701/18). Steaming toward Bardsey Isles. (Plymouth W/T 1706/18). Following received begins. S.S. IRIS from Seaforth Radio. Assistance is being sent. 1827 ends. (SUFFOLK 1954/18 to F.O.I.C. Greenock).

EINAR JARL

(Norwegian, 1858 tons) Sunk by Aerial torpedo at 2050/17 in 56° 17 1/2 N. 2° 18' W. Crew landed Aberdeen one Greek lost. (N.C.S.O. Aberdeen 1625/18).

Assisted to floating mine. p. 656.

MELMORE HEAD
(bombed 26/2)

589

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

MELMORE HEAD
(Bombed 26/2)

Intend sailing damaged MELMORE HEAD in tow of tug SUPERMAN for Belfast at 1800/19 to arrive about 0900/20.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1745/18).

LADY LILIAN

(A/S Trawler) Arrived ST. APOLLO with 26 survivors from LADY LILIAN.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1930/18).
LADY LILIAN sunk at 1000/16 in 54° 18' N. 12° 10' W. Details of the two attacks by probable F.W. H.M. Trawlers KING SOL and ST. APOLLO in company, former attacked and damaged. (Capt. D. Greenock 2210/18).

Clyde
Air Raid
Damage.

My 2116/17. Present situation.
River open to traffic at stated times only to allow of sweeping operations.
No further damage to shipping reported.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow 2235/18). See also 2315/19. (p 620)

WAR DIARY.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

Operation
G.U.

(Minelaying off
the De Bas.)

My 1313/18. Sailed. INTREPID, ICARUS, IMPULSIVE.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 0152/18).
My 2033/16. Amendment. Forces taking part 20th D.F. Position amended.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1020/18).
See Operations Volume.
Operation Orders. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1334/18, and D.20, 1411/18). See Operations Volume.
Your 1411/18. Concur.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 1716/18 to D.20).
Your 1411/18. Concur.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 2038/18 to D.20).

Thames
Estuary.

Six S.A. Mines detonated today as follows. Details.
(Capt: M/S Sheerness 0941/18), (1550/18, 1902/18).

Iceland.
British Mines
dealt with.

My 1900/16 and my 1725/28/2.
Confirmation now obtained that mine exploded 9/2. One mine ashore, another sighted, three mines sunk. Positions. All the mines British Mark X X except first unknown.
(F.O.I.C. Iceland, 1800/18).

Clyde.

River above Great Harbour Greenock closed to navigation from sunset/18 to 1300/19, except for short local moves after 0730 when sweepers have passed.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 1805/18).

Spurn
Point.

The following mine was exploded by L.L. Trawlers at 1109/18.
(F.O. Humber, 1837/18).

Dungeness
Clearance
Sweep.

Area given in Admiralty 2003/11 cleared from Northern limit to line joining the following positions. One mine cut in approximate position 50° 45' 54"N., 000° 45' 33" E. at 1540/18. One sweep parted with very strong indication of Static cutter two cables south of this position.
(S.O. 1st M/S.F. 1927/18 and 2203/18).

WAR DIARY.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

Operation
B.S.52.

Particulars. To be carried out by
TEVIOT BANK, on date arranged by
C.in C. Nore.
(V.C.N.S. 1241/18).

Enemy Intelligence.

E/Boats.

One enemy War Motor Boat bearing 240,
distance one mile, course unknown, my
position 080 Lowestoft HD 12 miles.
(COTTESMORE, 0106/18).
Two enemy war motor boats position
53° 59'N., 1° 19'E.
(PYTCHLEY 0231/18).
My 0231 Enemy's course 180 degrees.
(PYTCHLEY 0246/18).
Suspected E/Boat vicinity Sunk Light Vessel,
steering, northwards 2200.
(C.in C. Nore, 2211/18).

Unknown
ship
in
Iceland.
Faroes
Passage.

Unidentified ship in 063° 37'N., 011°
18'W. at 1215 steering 070° Black funnel
with broad white bands. Light grey
hull. Two masts. Finland Flag on
side.
(SCOTT 1218/18).

German
Main
Units.
BREMEN
EUROPA.

PRU Sortie H573 (at 1335/18) shows in
Kiel BISMARCK no longer present. Now
present one Hipper cruiser alongside.
LEIPZIG dry docked, LÜTZOW at entrance to
construction basin. TIRPITZ still absent
from Wilhelmshaven and no other major
naval units present. No major units
Brunsbuttel or Cuxhaven. Bremerhaven liner
BREMEN smoking at positions near bow and
stern and probably burnt out amidships
between funnels. Fire probably under
control. Also burning is partially
dismantled hull in Kaiser Haven. Liner
EUROPA still present as well as two
destroyers and one T/B.
(PRU Benson, 1920/18).

WAR DIARY.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence. (Contd.)

German Main
Units cont:-

Result of reconnaissance today.
Kiel. HIPPER class cruiser alongside.
LEIPZIG in dock.
LÜTZOW alongside.
BISMARCK Class Battleship has left
Kiel since 13/3. Wilhelmshaven. No main
units present.
(D.D.I.C. 2145/18).

E/Boats
etc.)

In 52° 28'N., 3° 45'E at 1655/17. 7 "E"
Boats course due West at full speed, 1
leader and two lines of 3 astern. Off
Texel, 0528/18 hours, a large convoy of
25 ships steady course south west 8/10
knots, Convoy preceded by two ships of
about 5,000 tons line abreast with lights
on stern. Remainder of convoy scattered.
Juist, 5 miles North 0434/18 and also
5 miles North of Norderney 0511/18 6/7
ships moving slowly East in scattered
formation of oval shape.
(H.Q.B.C. 2000/18).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.18.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys.General.Route.

Route ^{"Ruby"}~~RUBY~~ (West of Cape Verde)
D.T.D. 0009/18 and 1914/18 to G.B.M.S.1,
6A, and 9). W.R. Note. Read in
conjunction with C.in C. South Atlantic,
1231/18).

Route W.
of Cape
Verde.

My 1905/6/1. Following signal has been
made by G.B.M.S. to ships in areas 1,
6a and 9. (Begins) Route ~~RUBY~~ (Ends)
Until further orders route to be followed
is to be westward of Cape Verde Islands.
(D.T.D. 0011/18 to H.G.47 etc.)

Enemy A/C's
burning
lights.

In recent night air attacks on merchant
ships aircraft have been burning navigation
lights. This has been regarded in ships
as an indication that the aircraft were
friendly. Attention of Masters is to be
drawn to A.M.S.I.229 para.9.
(D.T.D. 1353/18 to A.I.G. 47).

Destinations.

Primary cause of two recent disasters
to ships was that ports at which they
called for onward routeing were ignorant
of their destinations. While entering
port to wait for routes ships unnecessarily
traversed dangerous waters. This risk
cannot be avoided unless the onward
destination of a ship is ascertained in
advance of arrival. Any case of doubt
should be referred to Trade Division.
These instructions apply particularly
to Barry, Milford Haven, Oban, Aultbea and
Methil.
(D.T.D. 1354/18 to A.I.G. 47).

Routeing.

Today's Merchant ship plot shows that
between 14° S. and 20° S. there are 14
ships proceeding to the Cape in a
definite sixty mile wide lane. This
unimaginative routeing, especially
dangerous at present, is to cease forthwith
and ships in this area spread over a
belt of at least 500 miles.
(D.T.D. 1700/18 to N.C.S.O's Oban and Clyde)

18.3.1941. 594
Tuesday.

WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys. (Contd.)

General.
(Contd.)

Irish Sea
Independent
ships.

Cancel my 1710/14 and substitute. Independently routed ships proceeding South through Irish Sea at less than 15 knots and bound South of Liverpool are to signal by W/T to ~~C. in C. Plymouth~~ and C. in C. Plymouth in P.L. their estimated time of crossing 53° 46' N. This signal should be made when passing the Mull of Cantire in the form "Crossing parallel" followed by estimated time (B.S.T.). Object of this procedure is to facilitate provision of A/A escort.

(D.T.D. 1822/18 to C. in C's etc. ~~amended~~)

0008/14/4.

*and
Admiralty*

Prohibited
area,
W. Atlantic.

Cancel my 1933/16/1, and substitute. Westbound shipping is to be routed outside a prohibited area enclosed by lines joining the following positions. A. 42.00N., 60.00W. B. 43.10 N., 60.00W. Y. 42.30N., 50.00W. Z. 40.40N., 50.00W. Ships bound for St. John (N.B.) and U.S. ports are to be routed South of this area. Ships for Halifax should be routed North of this area but South of Sable Is. to avoid field ice.

Amend N.C.S.I. 167.

(D.T.D. 2236/18 to C. in C's W.A. Portsmouth etc.)

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

595

WAR DIARY.

CASUALTIES and DEFECTS.

STIRLINGSHIRE.

Steam Trawler HELGI reported at 1400/17 that she has on board a dinghy marked **STIRLINGSHIRE**, Glasgow found 46 miles N. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. from Barrow Head. (F.O.Iceland 1137/18).

BARRHEAD.

Your 1147/17 approved. (D. of Salvage 1533/18 to F.O.Iceland).

BONNY HEATHER.

(Harbour Service Motor Boat). Destroyed by fire and sunk last night. (F.O.I.C. Harwich, 1635/18).

PANOPE.

(Balloon Barrage Yacht). Not arrived from Inverness. (N.O.I.C. Methil, 1650/18).

War Diary18.3.1941.
TuesdayFOREIGN STATIONSNorth Atlantic

Spanish
MARQUES DE COMILLES Cancel my 1802/15. No action required
vide W P P S 216. (F.O.C.N.A. 0822/18
to N.A. Station)

ANTARKTIS

German tanker sailed during last night.
(Consul, Vigo 0950/18)
Informing authorities concerned.
(D.D.I.C., 2214/18 to C. in C., W.A., etc.)

ASAKA

My 1227/16. Bilbao reported due to sail
1800/17. (D.D.I.C. 1030/18 to N.A. Station)
ASAKA was in approx. 44° N., 08° W.
at 1527/18. (D.D.I.C., 1824/18 to N.A. Stn.)

French
Warship

One French Cruiser ^{LE}FANTASQUE class p.c. and
s 038° 49' N., 009° 32' W., 000° 20 knots
(ALOUETTE 1520/18, to Admty etc.)

Operation
"Ration"

Re date (F.O.C.N.A. 1650/18) See Operations
Volume.

French
Convoy

Passed French ships ARIZONA, CEVENNES,
PLUTON escorted by French destroyers TEMPETE
L'ALCYON, French Submarine Parent Ship
JULES VERNE, and one submarine REQUIN class in
031° 22' N., 010° 02' W., 1600/18 south-
bound. (MARSDALE 1800/18 to F.O.C.N.A.)

RUDOLF ALBRECHT
German

A.1. report states preparing to leave
Teneriffe almost immediately. (F.O.C.N.A.
2112/18 to N.A. Station)

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic

"Q" Report
TEKOA

Ref. QQQQ message from TEKOA. Cancellation as received by Lands End Radio appears to be genuine. (D.C. 0150/18 to C. in C. S.A.)

Operation
"Summer"

Sailed 0600/18. FURIOUS, DRAGON, DUNCAN and FOXHOUND for operation "Summer". (S.O.I., Freetown, 0727/18 to Admty.)

DALGOMA

Overdue shipping, my 1034/15. DALGOMA arrived Capetown. (S.O.I. Capetown 0945B/18)

SIAM II

Your 1051/17. (Overdue Shipping) SIAM II at Freetown effecting repairs. Hopes to sail 21/3. (S.O.I. Freetown 1142/18)

Shipping
Diversion

My 1229/17. (Diversion of shipping due to raider situation) Your 0009/18 (See Shipping and Convoys) refers to ships in area 9 only. Is this the only action it is intended to take. (C. in C., S.A., 1231/18 to Admty.)
Your 1231/18 A.M. 0009/18 was addressed to ships in Areas 1, 6a and 9. (D.T.D. 2227/18 to C. in C., S.A.)

DELHI
Repairs

DELHI's 0952/16. Request you will arrange for port propeller to be changed at Simonstown before proceeding to U.S.A. Defective propeller is to be repaired and retained as spare for S.A. Station. (D.O.D. (F) 1302/18 to C. in C., S.A.) See also America and W. Indies.

REPULSE,
operation.

REPULSE is to be ready by 0600Z/19 to proceed to Gibraltar for special operation. Further signal will be made. (D.O.D. (F) 1349/18 to C. in C., S.A.) Your 1349/18 REPULSE ready 0600Z/19 will be sailed on receipt of further instructions. (C. in C., S.A. 2031N/18 to Admty. Cancel my 1349/18 (D.O.D. (F) 2315/18)

/S.L. 68.....

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic-Contd.

S.L. 68

Re U-Boat in touch with (C. in C., S.A., 2353/N/18) See U-Boat Campaign.

CLAN MACNAB

Following has been read. S.O.S. from CLAN MACNAB 17.13 N., 21. 22 W. Taking boats. (Bissau Radio, 1500/18) CLAN MACNAB, British, 6076 tons, in Convoy S.L. 68, bound from Bombay to Clyde. (D.S. 561)

W.S. 7.
Water

Following is repetition of my 1709/17 (received undecypherable) Your 1933/15 If requirements for W.S. 7 do not exceed 6000 tons water can be supplied from local resources on this occasion. Do not consider satisfactory to employ tanker DAGEID unless absolutely necessary. (C. in C., S.A., 2301/18 to Admty.)

Mediterranean

TETRARCH
Defect

My 1227/25/2, 1601/27/2 and 0929/17/3 TETRARCH on patrol reports further defect. Ship has been recalled and should arrive Alexandria about 22nd/3. (Capt. S. 0243/18 to Admty.) Your 2100/17 (Re fracture in starboard engine) Return to Alexandria immediately through following positions. (Capt. S. 1. 0257/18, to TETRARCH)

S.U. 2.

0700 G.M.T./18. 10 ships (list)
(S.B.N.O. Suez Canal, 0909/18)

A.N. 21

Port Said Section, 1030/18. 4 M.V.'s all for Piraeus. (S.B.N.O., Suez Canal, 1103/18)
Alexandria Section 1600/18. 11 ships
(N.C.S.O. Alexandria 1625/18)

REGENT
Adriatic
Patrol

Commander (S) 1 1209/16. You are required to patrol Adriatic passing through Straits of Otranto night of 21/22-3. (Route) (Capt. S. 1. 1209/18 to REGENT)

/German....

599.

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean-Contd.

German NORBURG

Arrived Istanbul 17/3. (Galata, 1253/18)

A.S. 20.

1200/18 (5 ships, 2 Port Said, remainder Alexandria. (N.C.S.O. Piraeus, 1310/18)

Tripoli Bombed

Night 16/17. Six Wellingtons dropped 11750 lbs bombs on Tripoli Harbour. Results. 17/3. Enemy bombed Benghazi at dawn. No damage or casualties.

Valona, Enemy warship hit.

Night 16/17. 1 Swordfish attacked shipping Valona with torpedo, hitting cruiser or destroyer with resulting large explosion.

Durazzo Shipping raided.

Further Swordfish attacked large quantity shipping Durazzo registering two hits and two probable hits. (H.Q., R.A.F., M.E., 1314/18)

A.G. 7.

1400/18. 8 M.V's. FIONA and CHAKLA, Military stores, All Piraeus. (N.C.S.O. Alexandria, 1515/18)

F.A.A. Attacks Valona and Durazzo, 12/3 to 17/3.

My 0945/17. Following are results of attack by Swordfish of 815 Squadron from ~~Piraeus~~. Night 12-13/3. Attack on Valona by 5 aircraft, one hit on 8000 ton ship, 2 hits not confirmed. One Swordfish lost. Lieut. Com. Jago and Lieut. Dare missing believed to be prisoners as Italians reported taking 2 prisoners. Night 14-15/3, 3 aircraft attacked Valona, one hit on liner of about 20,000 tons. Other torpedoes not observed but thought successful. Night 15-16/3, 3 aircraft on Valona, result not observed, one aircraft force landed on return. Night 16-17/3, Valona direct hit on cruiser or destroyer, large explosion. 4 aircraft on Durazzo, 2 confirmed hits 2 probable. Initial reconnaissance showed large number of ships in Valona, they now appear to have moved to Durazzo. Highly important to prevent enemy knowing whence these attacks are launched; consider therefore no communique should be issued. (C. in C., Med. 1520/18 to Admty.)

See also p. 631.

Aircraft Torpedoes

Asking for more so as to build up a reserve. (C. in C., Med. 1538/18)

/Malta.....

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean-Contd.

Malta
Report

Enemy reconnaissance by fighter patrols active throughout the day round Malta. One probable fighter patrol from Sicily searched area on route, S.E. of Malta. Bad weather interfered with interceptions outside the island. (H.Q.R.A.F., Med. 1620/18)

Crews for
Turkish S/M's
and Destroyers
under construction.

Turks intend to sail Turkish ship with crews for all submarines and destroyers from Iskanderun approx. 1/4. (N.A. Ankara, 1856/18)

Canal
Situation

At 2000/18. Now considered probable only one live mine in Canal and that at km. 139.5 towards Asia Bank. Three motor vessels have arrived Great Bitter Lake from Suez. Intended to resume traffic both ways throughout length of Canal at daylight/19. Ships being swept past suspected mines. (S.B.N.O., Suez, 1935/18)

Suez Canal
Mining.

Your 1949/27 and Admty. 1208/16. Disadvantages of underwater television (specified) Your 1252/14 and 1545/15, experiments with seismographs are already in hand. Further signal will be made if results of enquiries are promising. (D.T.M. 2120/18 to C. in C., Med.)

TRUANT
PARTHIAN
TETRARCH
RORQUAL

} Orders. (Capt. S.1. 2315/18)

War Diary

18.3.1941. 601
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

East Indies

Visagapatam

Being made a defended port. Precautionary measures will be a Naval liability. (F.O.C.R.I.N., 0632Z/18 to Admty. amended 0625Z/19)

EMERALD
HECTOR
DURBAN
B.M. 5.

My 1126/3 and N.C.S.O. Bombay's 0903/17. EMERALD is to leave Colombo at 0200Z/20 and is to proceed to R.V. with HECTOR and B.M. 5 in 006° 30'N.077° 35'W at 1030Z/20 EMERALD will relieve HECTOR as escort in above position. On relief HECTOR is to proceed to Colombo so as to arrive 0230Z/21.

EMERALD is to escort B.M. 5 until dark/23 and is then to proceed to Trincomalee so as to arrive A.M./25.

C. in C., China 0507/18. DURBAN will R.V. with EMERALD and B.M. 5 in 007° 10'N.084° 55'E at 0200Z/22 and will escort to Singapore. (C. in C., E.I., 1052/Z/18 to EMERALD, HECTOR)

Mogadishu

My 0538/13. One gun and rangefinder now ready for use. Two more guns will be ready in near future. (C. in C., E.I., 1100/18 to Admty.)

Shipping,
Guardafui
Socotra Channel

My 2006/1. With a view to speeding up shipping, cancel para. 6 and substitute. Passage of Guardafui Socotra Channel. Selected ships sailing independently in either direction between Gulf of Aden and East Africa or Cape may be routed through this channel subject to Master agreeing. British ships should be governed by urgency passage and suitability of ship for navigating the channel particularly in S.W. Monsoon. (Ends)

The restriction that ships be routed within 120 miles E of Coast of Italian Somaliland is withdrawn.

My 1416/2. Insert para 1 (c) Ships using Guardafui Socotra Channel are to burn dimmed navigation lights N. of 010° 30'. (C. in C., E.I., 1126Z/18)

/Scuttling.....

War Diary

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

East Indies-Contd.

Scuttling of
Italian Ships

Your 0520/12. Not considered desirable to approach Italian Authorities and any mention of a guarantee should be avoided. Other methods of propaganda with same object are being employed. (Hd. of M. 1201/18 to C. in C., E.I.)

B.S. 20.

1500 G.M.T./18. 7 M.V's for Aden, Colombo Abadan, Durban, Lourenco Marques and Detroit. (S.B.N.O., Suez Canal 1705/18)

MANON

Your 0808/10. (Proposal to use ex Italian MANON for permanent supply work for supply work for Eritrea) Use of MANON agreed. (D.S.T. 2047/18 to C. in C., E.I.)

China

B.M. 4.

Convoy B.M. 4 arrived less Penang portion detached. (N.C.S.O. Singapore, 0437Z/18)

?RAMB II

By D/F fix Italian unit call sign one Y.R. in ? 020° N., 131° E., IIII G.M.T./17 Possibly Italian ship RAMB II (Capt. O.S. Singapore, 0501Z/18)

War Diary

18.3. 1941.
Tuesday

FOREIGN STATIONS

America & West Indies

DELHI

Will leave Simonstown for U.S.A. about 23/3 for refit and rearming with five 5" U.S.A. A/A. Principal defects. Please inform ship direct regarding port of refit. (D. of D., Bath, 0445/18 to N.A. Washington for Adm. French)

Vessels for
Anti-U-Boat
Operations

My 1501/17. Estimated adequate protection for convoys 3 additional long range flying boat squadrons of 12 aircraft each based Halifax Sydney and Botwood (N.F). None of additional requirements are available from Canada until late 1941 and amount that can then be supplied cannot be determined at present. Meantime would be grateful for further consideration to C.N.S. Canada's 1626/11/12/40 to Admty. (1st S.L.) (N.S.H.Q., Ottawa, 0948/18 to Admty.)

TALISMAN

Proceed forthwith to Halifax by following route. Keep good look out for survivors of ships sunk on 15/3. (C. in C., A.W.I., 1002/18 to TALISMAN)

Escorts for
H.X. and S.C.
Convoys

Your 0011/15. PORPOISE available for S.C. 26 but no S/M for H.X. 116. ROYAL SOVEREIGN is due to arrive Halifax 19/3. Subject to ship having no urgent defect propose she escorts H.X. 116 and S.C. 26 leaving Halifax a.m./22 and overtaking. Expect TRIBUNE to be available for H.X. 117 and possibly SURCOUF if 2 S/Ms are required in absence of capital ship. (B.S. 3 1217/18 to Admty.)

THUNDERBOLT

To join H.X. 115 and remain as long as possible, reporting before she joins the convoy her intentions. R.A.(3) requested to inform THUNDERBOLT of probable movements of convoy. (1st S.L. 1359/18 to THUNDERBOLT, R.A. 3)

See de op 605

/KING GEORGE V.....

War Diary18.3.1941.
TuesdayFOREIGN STATIONSAmerica & West IndiesKING GEORGE V

Subject to no enemy information being received proceed to Scapa but you may refuel at Hvalfiord, Iceland, if necessary. On above basis it is desired you should first join H.X. 115 and escort convoy towards U.K. If you cannot join H.X. 115 report accordingly and join C. in C., H.F. as directed by him. (1st S.L. 1400/18 to K.G.V.)

RODNEY

Your 19452/12. RODNEY should part company with H.X. 114 on passing approx. 27° W., or earlier if fuel considerations so demand.

After fuelling at Hvalfiord RODNEY is to return to Halifax for further escort duty. (D.O.D., (H) 1401/18 to RODNEY)

VOLTAIRE

My 1156/16 (VOLTAIRE returned to harbour with fractured main steam pipe) Expect VOLTAIRE to arrive Trinidad at 1700 Q/24 (R.A. 3. B.S. 1451/18 to N.O.I.C. Trinidad)

Enemy Units

D/F analysis. Unreliable. (A) at 0213/18 unit in 26° N., 19° W., probably SCHEER reported in my 1516/17 (No trace in W.R.) (B) unit in 50° N., longitude indefinite possible 23° W., at 1300/18. (N.S.H.Q., Ottawa 1611/18)

H.X. 115

Admty. 1359/18. and 1400/18 H.X. 115 escorted by CALIFORNIA should pass through 042° 50' N. 056° 12' W. at 1200Z/19 on a course 097° (Route) (R.A. 3 B.S. 1619/18 to THUNDERBOLT, KING GEORGE V)

Dispersal of O.B. Convoys

Your 1212/17. In view of variation in dispersal longitude it is proposed to advise you of date and position immediately after dispersal taking place. (D.T.D. 1705/18 to C. in C., A.W.I.)

/S.C. 26....

605

18.3.1941.
Tuesday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

America & West Indies

S.C. 26
Escorts

Intend to sail WORCESTERSHIRE and PORPOISE on 20/3 as ocean escorts to convoy S.C. 26, both subsequently returning to Halifax. (F.O. 3 B.S. 1730/18 to Admty.)

PORPOISE

Encountered SS BRUNSWICK 12/3 (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa 1755/18) See U-Boat Campaign.

SS BRUNSWICK
chased by
Submarine 12/3

My 1825/17. Submarine encountered was British PORPOISE. (N.S.H.Q., Ottawa 1755/18 to Admty.)

See p. 416 & 574.

THUNDERBOLT

A.M. 1359/18. If fuel does not permit your completing normal escort and returning direct to Halifax you should proceed to Reykjavik, Iceland, where fuel is available. (D.O.D. (H) 2014/18 to THUNDERBOLT)

606

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

War Diary.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships Attacked.

J.B. WHITE
(torpedoed
16/3)

Your 1058/17. Crew of J.B. WHITE state they saw ship sink. (WALKER 0956/18).

H.X.112.

C.in C. W.A. 0107/18 (Request for destroyer to rendezvous with NORTHERN FOAM)
NORTHERN FOAM not in position given. Intend searching and then rejoining convoy by dusk. Am unable to get in W/T touch with NORTHERN FOAM. (SHIKARI, 1152/18).
Your 1150/12 latest position of NORTHERN FOAM 061° 12' N. 012° 11' W. drifting N.N.W. (C.in C. W.A., 1452/18, to SHIKARI).
AMSTERDAM sailed in accordance with C.in C. W.A.'s 2345/17 (To search for damaged ships ex H.X.112). (F.O.I.C. Iceland 1655/18).

BEDUIN

Norwegian 8136 tons, request you will sail Tug ST. OLAVES forthwith to assistance of stern half of Tanker BEDUIN in position 61° 02' N. 11° 53' W. at 1015 today.
H.M.T. NORTHERN SKY standing by.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1820/18, to N.O.I.C. Aultbea).

SCOTTISH
STANDARD,
(torpedoed 22/2)

Ref. report of interview with Captain Ward of SCOTTISH STANDARD dated 3/3/1941, request report from C.O. MONTGOMERY why no attempt was made to salve SCOTTISH STANDARD, observing a tanker in ballast is not easily sunk. (D.T.D. 1955/18 to C.in C. W.A.).

FERM
(torpedoed 16/3)

No trace of Tanker at position indicated. Now dark. Resuming search at daybreak. (BRIGAND, 2120/18 to N.O.I.C. Greenock).

CLAN
MACIVER

Following received from Revolution Is. 2307 G.M.T. S.S. CLANMACIVER 58.01 N., 24.25 W. torpedoed 2300 G.M.T., strong signals bearing 087° uncalibrated (Ends).
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 2123/18).
(W.R. Note:- Information already recd.).
Following has been read.
SSSS. CLAN MACIVER 58, 05 N. 24, 22 W. Torpedoed. (Lands End Radio, 2300/18).
British, 4500 tons, had been in Convoy O.B.297. Bound from Glasgow to Table Bay with general cargo. (D.S. 561).

War Diary.18.3.1941.
Tuesday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported.

0020.)
1042.) 53° - 54° N., 18° - 20° W., indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 560).
0037. 59.30 N., to 61° N., 20° - 22° W., indefinite
(German) (D.S. 560).
0419. Western Atlantic, very indefinite (German)
(D.S.560).
0222. Cape Verde Islands Area, very indefinite
(German) (D.S. 560).
1826. 52° 29' N., 2° 5' E., U/B escorted by M.E.110
sighted by a/c. Possibly a rescue float.
(D.S. 561).
1434. 53° N., 22° to 23° W., indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 561).
2022. 58° N., 23° to 25° W. indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 561).
- 2142/17. Admty. message AF position 15° 56' N. 20°
49' W. at 2042/17 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 0028/18 to G.B.M.S. Areas 6A and 1)
- 0001 Bearings indicate U Boat may be shadowing
H.G.56 in approx. 035° N. 014° W. 0001/18.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0757/18, to EGRET) (D.C., 1107/18
to FOLKESTONE).
Your 1107/18. My 0757/18 was made as result
of your 2206/17 and not as result of a bearing
from Gibraltar. The position indicated was
estimated position of H.G.56 at 0001/18.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1203/18, to Admty.).
0530. Following from Navy Dept. Bearings obtained
at 0530 G.C.T./18 on a transmission 5660
kilocycles which from type of despatch and
frequency is identified as a German submarine
giving fix 32.00 N. 44.20 W. Fix determined
by 2 bearings 13° Nayagansett and
Chelcrauliege stations.
(N.A. Washington, 1840/18, to Admty. etc.).
1826. U/Boat reported by a/c vicinity No.5 buoy at
1826 A/S trawler PETER HENDRIKS carrying out
search. (C.in C. Nore, 2033/18, to N.O.I.C.
Yarmouth).
C.in C. Nore. 2033. Am proceeding now from
Yarmouth Road to search. (SHEARWATER, 2140/18).

War Diary.

18.3.1941.
Tuesday.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Submarines Reported. (Contd.)

1440. Following bearings of German U Boat at 1340/18 G.M.T. (F.O.C.N.A. 2036/18 to N.A. Station).

S.L.68. My 1335/16 and my 1711/17. U-Boat still appears to be in touch with S.L.68. Corvettes can now remain with convoy until about 0600/20 but no longer. Sunderlands (?could not) escort having to do engine overhaul. (C.in C. S.A., 2353N/18, to Admty.).

2125. Following bearings obtained German U Boat 2025/18 G.M.T. (F.O.C.N.A. 2358/18 to N.A. Station).

Estimated
U/B
dispositions.

There may be more U/B's at sea than have been located. (D.D.I.C. 1406/18).

Submarines Attacked.

By WALKER
17/3.

Your 1115/17. Is there any further evidence that you have three U-Boats' crews? (1st S.L. 1019/18, to WALKER).

Your 1019/18. Destruction of three U boats almost certain. Two U Boats were seen on the surface disabled after VANOC had rammed another. One sank alongside WALKER the other not seen to sink. Crews are very reticent. Information was obtained that five U Boats were operating together. (WALKER, 1256/18).

Your 1019/18. It is now established that survivors from 2 U Boats only have been picked up. It is still probable that 3 U Boats were destroyed. (WALKER 1616/18).

Mediterranean.

By VENDETTA

VENDETTA attacking firm contact in 037° 29' N. 024° 05' E. (CALCUTTA, 1715/18 to N.A. Athens) (Sunderland co-operated. See H.Q. R.A.F., M.E. 1151/19).

War Diary.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.SITUATION REPORT.Home Commands.

Bearings indicating a German surface craft Halifax O37/1 were obtained at 1723 G.M.T. today.

HILARY and CORINTHIAN were this evening ordered to patrol to intercept captured Norwegian Whale Factory ships or tankers which may be returning to French West ports. (OLE WEGGER, PELAGOS, SOLGLIMT and tanker SANDEFJORD). *See page 616.*

E/Boats were reported off the East Coast tonight, but up to midnight no interceptions by our ships occurred, though at 1906 an aircraft on patrol dropped a stick of bombs, on 4 E/Boats 36 miles East of Orfordness, without obtaining any hits.

British Air Activity.Watch for
German
Battle
Cruisers.

G.O.C. Iceland maintained continuous patrol of the Denmark Straits during daylight today. Only four of his 6 available aircraft are fit to fly; Air patrol between Iceland and Scotland was also carried out today.

Bomber Command last night attacked the Petroleum Harbour, at Rotterdam, and shore targets at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven.

The daily patrol over Stavanger Aerodrome (see 22/2/41) has been discontinued.

Air escort was provided for convoys in the N.W. Approaches during daylight. A/S and A/A patrols were flown in the Irish Sea and off the west coast of Scotland.

Urgent steps are being taken to increase the aircraft covering the N.W. Approaches.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.SITUATION REPORT.Enemy Air Activity.Air Raid
on London.HELVELLYN (Small A/A ship) was sunk on even keel by air attack at 2300^h in Surrey Commercial Dock.

Convoy O.B.298 was attacked this morning about 130 miles W.N.W. of Blacksod Bay. S.S. BENVORLICH was sunk and TEMPLE INN and Dutch tanker MAMURA were damaged but continued with the convoy.

S.S. LEO (Norwegian) was bombed and apparently sunk this morning in 59° N., 7° 29' W. after parting company with Convoy E.N.86A.

Mining.Operation
S.N.69.

No air escort was available today for the forces returning from this operation. R.A.M.L. reported the operation completed at 1410/19.

Mining of
Thames
Estuary.

Heavy objects possibly mines were dropped by aircraft in the Thames Estuary today. Several mines were detonated. S.S. TOTTENHAM and PARRACOMBE were damaged in Southend Anchorage by mines being swept up by mine sweepers.

Mine laying by enemy aircraft last night was suspected off the East Coast between Norfolk and Flamborough Head.

The Humber was closed at 1220 and reopened after sweeping at 1735.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.SITUATION REPORT.South Atlantic.U/Boat
attacks on
convoy
S.L.68.

Dutch S.S. MANDALIKA in Convoy S.L.68 was torpedoed at 0140 120 miles N.E. of Sal (Cape Verde Islands); CALENDULA, one of the escorting vessels fired at a submarine on the surface about noon. The convoy was ordered to make a drastic alteration of course tonight; there are indications that a U/Boat is reporting, the position of the convoy.

Mediterranean.R.A.F.
and
F.A.A.
Attack
Tripoli.

Wellingtons bombed Tripoli last night Nine Swordfish of F.A.A. attacked Tripoli from 0140 to 0145 today, dropping 5500 lbs of bombs and 5 mines. Damage was caused ashore and a direct hit was scored on a merchant vessel in harbour. One bomber Swordfish failed to return.

Suez Canal.

The Canal was reopened today.

Six aircraft bombed the landing ground at Benghazi before dawn today. No damage was caused.

War Diary

19.3.1941
Wednesday

HOME COMMANDS

Policy

^K
REYJABORG
Probably sunk
and her Visa
in enemy hands.

Your 1258/18. Suggest colour of visa be changed. (D.T.D. 1244/19 to F.O.I.C. Iceland.
Icelandic trawler REYKJABORG probably sunk and identifying certificate number 316 with visa number 608 issued 8/3 may be in enemy hands. (F.O.C.N.P. 1453/19)

H.G. Convoy
Escorts

My 0932/4 para (a) Propose to add "S/M will hoist red flag on mast 15 minutes before diving". OLYMPUS has been so directed. (S. 8 1612/19 to F.O.S.) No objection (F.O.S., 1239/20)

With holding
A/A Fire by
M/V's in Convoy

Your 1119/19. Following is repetition text my secret postagram 1249/14 begins:-
A.A. Guard report that at convoy conference at Southend Masters are being advised to with hold fire until escort vessels open fire. This does not seem right. A.A. Guard also report two cases of aircraft attacking with navigation lights burning. Ends. (EXCELLENT 1649/19)

Aircraft
for N.W.
Approaches

Urgent steps being taken to increase aircraft covering North-Western Approaches so units in Iceland are being augmented as early as possible. New Squadrons will be under Coastal Command for Operations. In event of invasion of Iceland all Air Forces available may be employed as necessary in furtherance of your Defence Plans. (W.O. 1925/19 to G.O.C., Iceland)

URD.
(Norwegian)

N.O.I.C Aberdeen's 1927/19 is passed to you for information. F.O.S. and N.O.'s I/C Rosyth Command have been instructed to arrest this vessel should she arrive in any of their ports. (C. in C., Rosyth 2137/19 to D.N.I.)
Scottish Command suggests URD should be arrested if identified URD presumed to have left Norway 17/2 or after with Pro Nazi Norwegians bent on sabotage in this country. URD ex MARS according to Lloyds is Swedish 1008 tons a.m. 19/3.
(N.O.I.C., Aberdeen 1927/19)

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSDefence of U.K.Nore.

Reference Nore No 1234/0803.J.7/1 of 17/3 paras 6 and 7. It is now learnt that the battalion in the Isle of Sheppey is being withdrawn and its place taken by the battalion now in the Hoo Area. No replacement is at present forthcoming for the battalion at Hoo so that the situation is worse than as originally reported. (C. in C., Nore, 1040/19)

MovementsHOLDERNESS
VANESSA

Cancel my 2355. C. in C. Portsmouth's 2243 is to stand. (D.M.S. 0046/19)

RESOLUTION

Admty's 2052/13.
1. It is anticipated that RESOLUTION will be ready to leave dockyard hands on 28/3
2. The following programme is then intended.
(A.C.N.S. (H.) 1321/19)

EDINBURGH

Intend to sail from Scapa in EDINBURGH with SOMALI, BEDOUIN, MATABELE and MASHONA at 1100/20 for Greenock. Speed of advance 18 knots. E.T.A. of destroyers 0730/21. (F.O.C., 18th C.S. 2155/19)

OperationsOperation "Barbaric".
BARBARIC

This operation may be carried out when weather conditions permit. (1st S.L. 0006/19 to V.A. Dover)
Cancel my 1507. (V.A. Dover 1612/19 to A.O. C. in C. CC.)
Operation ~~BARBARIC~~ is cancelled and orders concerning it are to be destroyed by fire. (V.A. Dover 1628/19)

/Interception..

MOST SECRETWar Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSOperationsInterception of
GNEISENAU and
SCHARNHORST

→ A.M. 2337/18. Delete all reference to NORFOLK. (A.C.N.S. (H) 0100/19 to B.C. 1.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH and six destroyers will R/V with HOOD 4 miles 360° from Dunnet Head at 0630/19. Request LONDON be detached to Scapa on completion of R.D./F test. NORFOLK sailed from Scapa at 2200/18 → for Reykjavik. (F.O.C. 18th C.S. 0100/19 to F.O.C. 1st C.S.)

Scapa departure QUEEN ELIZABETH, INGLEFIELD, ELECTRA, ARROW, ECHO, ECLIPSE and ESKIMO. (A.C.O.S. 0545/19)

Intend patrolling to southwards of Iceland during night 19/20 March, passing through position (a) 063° 30' N., 014° W., at 0700Z/20 and (b) 062° 50' N., 014° 40' W., at 1000Z/20.

2. R/V with me in position (b)
(C. in C., H.F. 1359/19 to B.C.S. 1.)

→ Scapa departure C.S. 1 in NORFOLK. E.T.A Reykjavik 0900Z/20. (A.C.O.S. 2138/18)

Western Channel
Patrol

Arrivals 0745/19. KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL.
(C. in C., Plymouth 0755/19)

TIGRIS

(A) With a view to intercepting enemy ships the morning after they leave or the evening before they arrive Bay of Biscay Ports, the Western Limits of your Patrol Zone have been extended to a line passing through the following positions, 047° 20' 008° 00' W., 046° 30' N 008° 00' W., 045° 30' N., 006° 18' W.

(B) It must be particularly noted that part of your Zone is outside area in which ships may be attacked without warning.
(Capt. S.3. 1025/19 to TIGRIS)

/ARGUS.....

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSOperations-Contd.ARGUS
(Operation
"Winch")

Your 1057/18. A.M. 1045/15 and ARGUS 1136/18. Seven Hurricanes not yet arrived Abbotsinch, time of arrival indefinite. Considered improbable ship will be ready to sail today. Request instructions. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1206/19)

East Coast
Patrol

On completion of lay return to 5 Buoy, then patrol between 5 Buoy and 55A Buoy in 40 Q.Z.S. until 0600/20. Keep well clear of F.S.439 due 5 Buoy about 0001/20. A/P Trawlers FRANKLIN and SEMNOS on patrol North of 5 Buoy have been informed. (C. in C., Nore, 1220/19 to SHELDRAKE, PUFFIN and 1223/19 to WALLACE, EGLINTON)

E-Boats on
East Coast

Tonight E-Boats should not be chased further East that 002° 15' E., between latitude 052° 45' and 052° 20' N. (C. in C., Nore 1447/19 to WALLACE etc.)

Operation G.W.

C. in C., Plymouth 1825/19 see Operations Volume.

Patrol of
Rosemary and
Lousy Banks

My 1831/9. Patrol is to be maintained in this area by ships of 10th A/S group, ships spending about 60% of time at sea. (C. in C., W.A. 1909/19)

Iceland
Ferry Service

Admty's 1148/16, C. in C., Plymouth's 1757/18 and Admty's 1321/19. ROYAL ULSTERMAN and ROYAL SCOTSMAN will be ready to leave Clyde for Reykjavik on 2/4.

C. in C., W.A., is requested to:
(a) arrange for ships to sail in company with RESOLUTION and for them to proceed to Reykjavik with her escort.
(b) escort the two ships back to U.K. as soon as they have embarked troops.
It is expected that this can be done in 24 hours. (A.C.N.S. H. 1937/19)

/Interception..

MOST SECRETWar Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSOperations-Contd.Interception of
Captured
Whale Ships
or Tankers.

1. HILARY is to proceed at best possible speed to Area A 1.
2. CORINTHIAN is to proceed at best possible speed to Area A.2, until necessary to leave to comply with F.O.C. N.P. 1044/16.
3. Object is interception of captured Norwegian Whale Factory Ships or Tankers which may be returning to French West ports.
4. Report expected time of arrival on patrol waters. (V.C.N.S. 2001/19)
Your 2001/19. Numbers 2805 and 8240 in my copy of S.P. 02329 are blank. Have assumed first to have been allocated to HILARY and am proceeding at utmost speed to Area A.1. Present position 032° N., 019° 25' W. E.T.A. at Area A.1., 1000/22nd. V.A.N.P. 1044/16 not received. (HILARY 2200/19)

GEIR
Intercepted by
British S/M.

Icelandic fishing vessel GEIR reports having been stopped at approx. 1700/16 about 27 miles W.N.W. of Barra Head by a submarine flying white ensign and answering description of British S/M. Trawler ordered to lower boats then boarded and subsequently allowed to proceed. Submarine Commander informed Skipper that on day before had stopped similar trawler with Icelandic markings and same funnel bands, and that the latter had turned out to be German trawler armed with guns, mines and torpedoes. Also stated he had sunk this craft. (F.O.Iceland, 2325/19)

Operation "Claymore".
~~Operation~~
(Lofoten Islands Land.)

Following ships were sunk during this Operation:-
KREBS (Patrol Vessel)
HAMBURG (ex ILMAR, 5470 tons)
EILENAU (German, 1404 tons)
GUMBINNEM (German, 1381 tons)
FELIX HEUMANN (German, 2468 tons)
BERNARD SCHULTE (German, 1058 tons)
RISSEN (Fishing Vessel)
MIRA (Norwegian, 1152 tons)
(D.S. 561.)

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSBritish Air ActivityM/V's and
E-Boat
attacked.

On 18/3 and in 55° 23' N., 6° 30' N., A/C attacked 2 Coastal Steamers of 7-8000 tons heading north. Near Miss. One other Blenheim bombed E-Boat 2 miles N.W. of Texel. Near Miss. (H.Q.B.C. 00020/19)

Fighter
Cover

Request fighter protection for 6 motor ships and one escort vessel, 0800 until dark/19th, 053° 15' N., 005° 25' W., to Avonmouth. E.T.A. dawn 20th. (C. in C., W.A. 0021/19 to H.Q.F.C.)

Patrols

Your 57143 (M.O.8) 18/3. Time of patrol are G.M.T. (G.O.C. Iceland 0218/19 to War Office.)
My 1742/18. Aircraft unable to take off until daylight, consequently patrol R three cannot commence until 1215. R one will now commence 0945 and continue until dusk. (C. in C., Rosyth 0248/19)
My 2010/18. Times given are G.M.T. (D.C. 0534/19 to C. in C., H.F.)
Patrol R.3. should be added to list of 18 Group Standard Patrols. Particulars. (C. in C., Rosyth 0632/19) See Summaries Folder.
Cancel my 1700/22 (Daily patrol over Stavanger aerodrome) This patrol is no longer being flown. (C. in C., Rosyth 0750/19)
My 2128/18. Patrol ~~same~~ is being flown today. (C. in C., Rosyth 1046/19)
My 0248/19. A/C on R. 3 returned owing to engine failure. Patrol will now commence at 1600. (C. in C., Rosyth 1328/19)
Your 56997 M.O.8) of 18th. First patrol over area 0900-1200 hours G.M.T. returned Nothing to report. Visibility to north 50 miles . To South 6 miles. (G.O.C. Iceland, 1542/19 to War Office)
Second patrol over area 1300-1600 hours G.M.T. returned. Nil report. (G.O.C. Iceland, 1754/19 to War Office.)
Patrol planes have returned. Nothing to report. (F.O.Iceland 1815/19)
Blenheim aircraft will carry out two endless chain patrols from 0630 until 1030 to-morrow. First patrol between North Ronaldshay and Sumburgh Head, 2nd patrol between G 24 34. Object attempted interception of Focke-Wulf. Patrol R.3. will be flown from 0730 - 1130 and from 1700 - 2100 to-morrow. (C. in C., Rosyth 1836/19)

/My 1559/18....

War Diary

19.3.1941.
Wednesday

HOME COMMANDS

British Air Activity

Patrols-Contd.

My 1559/18 and 2010/18. Similar patrols will be flown tomorrow Thursday. (D.C. 2157/19 to C. in C., H.F.) Patrols ~~TROST, STAB, BIRD~~, will be flown tomorrow A/C taking off at daylight. (C. in C., Rosyth 2312/19)

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Escort

Expect escort by Blenheim A/C of 18 Group from 0700/19. (C. in C., Rosyth, 0424/19 to QUEEN ELIZABETH)

Bombing
Restrictions.

Ops/349 19/3. Institute bombing restrictions for surface vessels 1930/19 to 0730/20 in area between 48° N., to 50° 30' N., and 3° W., to 7° W. (H.Q.C.C. 0840/19 to 19 Group) Request T.B.R. in Dartmouth S/M sanctuary from 0830 - 1830 daily from 20th to 27th March incl. (C. in C., Plymouth 1117/19 to H.Q.C.C.) Own surface forces will be operating in the Dover Strait tonight 19/20 between Meridian of Greenwich and a line joining North Foreland to Dunkirk. Request bombing restrictions accordingly from 2000/19 until further signal is made. (V.A.Dover, 1507/19 to AO. C. in C., C.C.)

One Aircraft
to Iceland

My 0248/19. One Sunderland A/C left Invergordon 0830/19 on direct route to Reykjavik. E.T.A. 1430/19. (C. in C., Rosyth 1116/19)

My 1046/19. Amend para 2 to read Air Escort by Hudson Aircraft from 1200-1830/19 will be given. (C. in C., Rosyth, 1148/19)

War Diary

19.3.1941.
Wednesday

HOME COMMANDS

Enemy Air Activity

Off
Worthing

Observers report bombs dropped off Worthing to seaward. (N.O.I.C., Newhaven 0123/19)

Convoy
H.G. 55

Enemy aircraft shadowing convoy. My position 55° 28' N., 13° 4' W. (ARETHUSA 0824/19)

Long range enemy aircraft are operating in your vicinity. Attack may be expected. (D.D.I.C. 1129/19 to KEPPEL)

Portsmouth
Damage in
Air-Raid
Night 18/19.

EXCELLENT reports two H.E. at 0345/19 near Fort Cumberland and gun position Fraser battery. Slight damage to brick building. No casualties. (C. in C., Portsmouth 1147/19, S.C. .E. Portsmouth 1500/19)

M/V reported
sunk.

Small Merchant vessel reported sunk by Fokke Wolfe aircraft in position 315° North Rone 35 miles at 0955/19. Glen Martin from Hatston being sent now to search for survivors. (A.C.O.S. 1203/19)

Convoy O.B .298.
BENVORLICH,
(British, 5193 tons
Sunk)
TEMPLE INN
(British, 5218 tons)
MAMURA
(Dutch Tanker,
8245 tons)
Damaged.

O.B. 298 attacked by one Focke Wolfe Aircraft at 0740 in 54° 42' N., 13° 20' W., BENVORLICH sunk, 11 survivors. TEMPLE INN and MAMURA damaged but continued with convoy. Intend drastic evasive action at dusk. Request increased Air escort to throw off shadower. (VETERAN 1305/19)

ROBERT F.HAND
(British Tanker
12,197 tons)
Attacked.

AAAA 52° 34' N., 5. 34' W. ROBERT F. HAND attacked. (Burnham-on-sea Radio, 1332/19) (Port Patrick Radio 1416/19) Course 193, speed 11 knots, enemy aircraft not returned. (Burnham Radio 1402/19)
My 1507. Assist ROBERT F.HAND in 052° 24' N., 005° 38' W. (C. in C., Plymouth, 1531/19 to SAINT CLAIR)
AAAA Received 1410 G.M.T. from ROBERT F. HAND. Cancel our AAAA Broadcast timed 1332/19. (Burnham Radio 1510/19)

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSEnemy Air Activity-Contd.SS LEO
Sunk

ECHO picked up 38 survivors Norwegian SS LEO at 1420/19 in 59° N., 07° 29' W., LEO was bombed at about 0930/19. No casualties. (B.C. 1. 1515/19)

Hull.
Sculcoates Depot
Bombed.

Sculcoates Naval Store Depot, Hull. Serious damage. Civilian watchmen, casualties. (F.O.Humber 1758/19)

Aircraft
off IcelandAircraft sighted by ^{Farmer} ~~FARMER~~ in about 063° 35' N., 018° 00' W., at 1840 flying south easterly. From description R.A.F. officers consider plane to be either H.E. 59 or H.E. 60 or Aride 95. (F.O. Iceland, 1947/19 to C. in C., H.F.)Clyde.
Damage by Air Raid.
Oil Tanks.
Shipyards.
ANTHONY
EASTERN ISLES
Damaged.My 2235/18.
(A) One oil tank No 31 at Old Kilpatrick is still alight but it is expected that it will burn itself out during the course of the night. Draining of saucers proceeding slowly on account of fractured pipe lines in the installation.
(D) Further reports from affected yards are as follows.
ANTHONY received a fair amount of superficial damage; and considerable damage, entailing about 14 days work, was done to the accommodation, docks, etc., of EASTERN ISLES. Both of these were lying alongside the wharves.
All U.X.B's so far reported are being dealt with.
River still open to traffic at stated times only to allow of sweeping operations.
No further damage to ships has been reported.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow 2315/19)

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSMiningChannel
Clearance
Sweep.M/S report for 18/3. (C. in C., Portsmouth
0112/19)Mine clearance operations 18/3. (V.A. Dover
1125/19)Coastguard Shoreham, report. Explosion
as from a mine South of Hove C.G. Station
Distant. (N.O.I.C. Newhaven 0122/19)ScarboroughMine with parachute attached dropped in
Scarborough. (N.O.I.C., Hartlepool 0750/19)
Military report via R.N.O. Bridlington an
unexploded Mine with parachute on shore
at Reighton. Map. ref 607949.
(R.N.O. Scarborough 0857/19)Z.M.E. 24Intend leaving Milford Haven 1630 today
for Z.M.E. 24 to lay at 0005 returning
on completion about 0800 tomorrow. (PLOVER
1016/19)Milford HavenCancel my 1001/15 and 1151/12. Channel
into Port is now only closed for sweeping
between 0700 and 0800, with Berths in the
Harbour available, Ships may be received
at any time. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven,
1101/19)Thames EstuaryMagnetic mine detonated at 0405 in 037°
B. 5 buoy 7 cables. (Capt. M/S Sheerness
1116/19)Operation S.N. 69. Completed. (R.A.M.L. 1410/19)At 0440/19Aircraft dropped heavy objects, possibly
mines, which did not explode in approx.
260° and 320° each 8 cables from No. 1.
Yantlet Buoy. (S.O. T.L.D.F. 1727/19)Operation G.U.*(Minelaying off
the de Bas by
INTRAPID etc.)*Sailed M.L's 156 (S.O.) 180, 177, 160
(N.O.i/c Dartmouth 1859/19) Sailed 1930
KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL. (C. in C., Plymouth
1945/19) *See also next page.*

/TOTTENHAM.....

War Diary19.3.1941.
WednesdayHOME COMMANDSMining-Contd.TOTTENHAM
(British 4762 tons)
PARRACOMBE
(British 4702 tons)

Following damage sustained by near mine misses in Southend Anchorage, both ships anchorage, both ships anchored at time of explosions. M/Sweepers Working. No casualties to personnel reported. (N.C.S.O. Thames, 1906/19)

Six S.A. mines detonated today as follows (Capt. M/S Sheerness, 2214/19)

Anti E-Boat
Floating Mines.

Set to suicide about 0500/20 will be laid about 1900 today in 52° 30' N., 2° 30' E. Ships chasing E-Boats tonight are not to go further east than 2° 15' E., when between latitudes 52° 45' N., and 52° 20' N. (C. in C., Nore, 1216/19)

Humber

Humber closed. Suspected minelaying. Anticipated time of opening five hours after fog lifts. (F.O.Humber 1220/19) Humber is open to Navigation. (F.O.Humber 1735/19)

Rosyth
Command

4th to 18th March inclusive the following mines and anti-sweeping explosive floats have been dealt with in this Command. (C. in C., Rosyth, 1238/19)

Falmouth

1 large red mine detonated by M/S Trawler at 0935 today in 50° 7' 35" N., 5° 1' 50" W. (F.O.I.C. Falmouth 1430/19)

Off Bell Rock

Drifting mines may be met vicinity Bell Rock. (C. in C., Rosyth 1558/19)

Op: G.U.
(Minesweeping off
the de Bas.)

D. 20's 1411/18. Sailed INTREPID, ICARUS and IMPULSIVE (N.O.I.C., Dartmouth 1945/19)

WAR DIARY.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Heligoland
Bight.

Enemy intelligence. (H.Q.B.C. C020/19).

Surface
Unit.

By D/F at 1313/19 G.M.T. Bearing from Cupar 300/3. Traffic YY, remainder unreadable. Probably from German surface unit. (D.D.I.C. 1521/19).

M/V's
leave
Gothenburg.

British Consul reports all German merchant vessels left Gothenburg p.m./18. Number estimated between 30 and 40. (N.A.Stockholm, 1621/19).

Ice in
Baltic, Sound,
and
Belts.

Ice report 19/3.

1. General conditions improving, thaw continues. (Details). (N.A.Stockholm, 1703/19).

Navigation
of Norwegian
Coast.
Panamanian
ship
in
Kristiansand
in 11/40.

My 2005/12. Member of crew of Finnish AAGOT. In middle of December while in Finnish Government ship SUURSAARI G.T. 220 on voyage from Helsinki to Petsamo passed through Norwegian inner Channels as follows.

2. Panamanian ship seen in Kristiansand fully loaded in November. Description. (C.C.S.O. Kirkwall 1755/19).

E/Boats.

Aircraft report 2 E/Boats in 52° 37'N., 4° 30'E. steering 070° at 1710. (C.in C. Nore, 1851/19 to SHELDRAKE etc.) H.Q. Patrol at 2150/18 reported fast moving surface craft heading North and then turning East. Between 0400/19 and 0635 several sources reported sound of fast motor boat cruising up and down coast close inshore off Aldeburgh last reported Orfordness proceeding South. (F.O.I.C. Harwich, 1941/19). 4 E/Boats reported in 052° 10'N., 002° 31'E. at 1915. (C.in C. Nore, 2015/19 to WALLACE etc.) E/Boats bear 140° at 2144. (Yarmouth 2149/19). Further bearings. (Yarmouth 2203/19, 2207/19, 2235/19, 2315/19, 2325/19, 2337/19).

WAR DIARY.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence. (Contd.)

Possible
enemy
expedition
against
Iceland.

Intelligence points to probability of enemy in Norway preparing expedition against Iceland. Seidisfiord and Reydarfjord nearest point and would form advanced bases. G.O.C. however considers Siglufjord with valuable fish factories and stocks of herring oil and meal all highly inflammable most likely target. Only available garrison one platoon. Aircraft not yet available. Consider enemy ships would approach from N.N.W. I have no intelligence of this nature and consider attack on Siglufjord would only affect us from point of view of prestige, though causing loss to people of Iceland.
(F.C.Iceland, 1857/19 to C.in C. H.F.)

U/Boat base
at Hardanger
Fjord.
BLACK PRINCE
* BLACK WATCH
whereabouts.

1. Hardanger Fjord. German U/Boat base is now established at Eidfjord (Eastern extreme of Hardanger).
(N.A.Stockholm, 1629/19).

* U/Boat depot ship 1944-45.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys.General.Meeting
Convoys.

Your 1345/11 (failure to meet incoming convoys, proposals). Concur. The increased chances of the convoy's position being more accurately disclosed must be accepted. Request you will promulgate the proposed amendment to W.A.C.I.S.
(A.C.N.S.(T) 1357/19 to C.in C. W.A.)
Instructions to Capt: (D) Londonderry, Liverpool, Greenock, (C.in C. W.A., 1855/19).

WAR DIARY.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

AUGVALD.

(Norwegian 4811 tons). PIMPERNEL is proceeding independently to Clyde to land badly wounded survivors from AUGVALD and Iceland trawler.
(WHITEHALL, 0409/19).

NEWLYN.

(Steam Drifter). Grounded and became total loss on 26/2 when on passage for return to Owners.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1439/19).

LUDLOW.
LEEDS.

My 1235/17. Both delayed by defects.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1518/19).

War Diary.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

B.C's
sighted by
MALAYA's a/c.

My 1203/15. Crew are certain that first vessel was not a dummy but are not so sure about the second.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 0102/19 to F.O.H., F.O.C.N.A., C.in C. S.A.).

ANTARKTIS
(German)

Sailed from Vigo night of 17-18/3.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1013/19, to N.A. Stn.).

RUDOLF
ALBRECHT,
(German)

My 2112/18 to S. & A. N.A. Station. Owing to possibility of RUDOLF ALBRECHT leaving Teneriffe remain on patrol T.1 further 24 hours if fuel permits.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1056/19 to REGISTAN).
Your 1056/19. Insufficient fuel. E.T.A. Gibraltar 0800/22. (REGISTAN, 1245/19).

ASAKA

By D/F bearings, was approx. 60 miles N.W. of Lisbon at 1458Z/19. (D.D.I.C. 1743/19 to N.A. Stn.).

My 1713/3. French Sources confirms ASAKA loading cases Bilbao believed to contain guns. Cases ex French Ship from Bordeaux.
(N.A. Madrid, 1823/19, to Admty.).

Crew of A/C
Rescued by
Spanish ship.

CABO de BUENA ESPERANZA

My 1242/16. Minister for External Affairs states crew are being sent to Madrid to be put at our disposal. Will send them to Gibraltar unless instructions to contrary. *see page 806. r. 944.*
(N.A. Madrid, 1837/19, to Admty.).

Vichy French
repatriation.

Re repatriation of Vichy Frenchmen at present at Gibraltar. Proposals.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1904/19, to Admty.).

OLE WEGGER
PELAGOS
SOL GLIMT
SANDE FJORD

Following Norwegian whale factory ships OLE WEGGER, PELAGOS and SOL GLIMT and Tanker SANDE FJORD are missing from S. Atlantic. Probable they have been captured and may be returning to French Western ports in next few days, as also German ship TANNENFELS which left Kismayu 30/1.
Experience shows that their route will probably be between 30° W. and 40° W. as far as 45° N. to 46° N. and thence eastward to their destinations. (D.N.I. 2011/19 to F.O.C.N.A., S.O. Force H, C.S.18 etc.). *See also page 629.*

FEARLESS,
FORESIGHT,
FORTUNE,
WRESTLER

* (Sailed?) FEARLESS, FORESIGHT, FORTUNE, WRESTLER in accordance with F.O.C.N.A. 1642/18 (S.O.I. Gib., 2220/19, to Admty., S.O. Force H)

* confirmed by Pink List -

XX N.T. N.W.D.

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19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

SIAM II

Overdue shipping, cancel my 1051/17.
(S.O.I) Capetown, 0936/19).

MALAYA

Possibly reported by U/B 1204/19. See
U-Boat Campaign.

CALENDULA

Fired at U/B in 18.30 N., 22.05 W.
See U-Boat Campaign.

MARATHON

No trace in logs

Overdue shipping. Greek MARATHON,
LUNAH-LUNAN, Ponta Delgada departure 5/3
due Freetown has not arrived.
(S.O.I. Freetown, 1154/19).

S.L.69
REPULSE

Your 1416/9 and 1747/17 (1) REPULSE can
leave Freetown 54 hours after convoy SL 69
overtaking in position 15° N. 18° 30' W.
then accompany to approx 27° N. 22° W.
before leaving to return Freetown to fuel
and be in readiness to escort W.S.7.
Possible will not be able to go further
than 26° N.
(2) If REPULSE proceeds Gibraltar to fuel
she can remain approx. 12 - 24 hours longer
with convoy but would be late for WS 7.
Overtaking WS 7 after leaving Freetown is not
possible as REPULSE has only sufficient fuel
to reach Cape at convoy speed by direct route.
To fuel at St. Helena would mean diversion of
convoy to westward.
Intend action as (1).
(C.in C. S.A., 1307/19, to Admty.).

Convoy SL 69

Should not be sailed until further orders.
(D.T.D. 1405/19 to N.C.S.O. Freetown).

Convoy SL 68

Should make a drastic alteration of course
at dark to-night. If attacked after dark
consideration should be given to the
advisability of scattering convoy, with orders
to reassemble two or three days later at a
rendezvous well off the original line of
advance. Avoid 20° W.
(D.T.D., 1536/19, to MALAYA).

TUSCAN STAR.

Your 1147/12. Has TUSCAN STAR arrived
Freetown? (D.T.D. 1626/19 to C.in C. S.A.).

/ CALENDULA

War Diary.

19.3.1941.

Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

CALENDULA

In view of Admty. 1536/19 and expenditure of oil fuel am patrolling in proximity of $019^{\circ} 08' N. 022^{\circ} 35' W.$ Consider your 0127/19 (not received by Admty.) to be one result today. (CALENDULA 1945/19, to C.in C. S.A.). For submarine attacked by CALENDULA see U/Boat Campaign.

SAINT DOMINGUE

French, arrived Para 19/3.
(S.O.I. Montevideo 2014Z/19).

NORDERNEY
LECH
(German)

Para reports NORDERNEY continues to load. Twelve additional crew have joined ex LECH. (S.O.I. Montevideo, 2112Z/19).

BULOLO,
whaling
ships.

Proceed now to pass through $019^{\circ} 10' N. 032^{\circ} 50' W. 015^{\circ} 30' N. 032^{\circ} 50' W.$ thence to Freetown adjusting speed to arrive A.M./26. Possibility of meeting whale factory ships OLE WEGGER, PELAGOS, SOLGLUMT, SANDEFJORD, captured by Germans, also German ship TANNENFELS which left Kismayu 30/1. (C.in C. S.A., 2119N/19, to BULOLO).
See also North Atlantic p. 627.

CATHAY
CHRISTIAN HUYGENS
BIRMINGHAM

Your 1625/2. CATHAY has serious defects in rudder. Intend CHRISTIAN HUYGENS shall sail from Capetown 21/3 independently routed near coast. BIRMINGHAM to sail p.m./22, join CHRISTIAN HUYGENS about position $21^{\circ} S 10^{\circ} E$ and escort to Freetown. CATHAY to provide escort for EMPRESS OF JAPAN (date). (C.in C. S.A., 2141/19 to Admty.).

W.S.8.

Your 1852/16/1. Request information probable date of sailing of W.S.8 in order that A.M.C. for escort may be arranged. (C.in C. S.A., 2211/19, to Admty.).

DELHI

Request you will sail DELHI to Trinidad after changing propeller in accordance with my 1302/18. Destination in U.S.A. will be signalled. (D.O.D.(F) 2249/19, to C.in C. S.A.).

19.3.1941.

Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

Tripoli
attacked with
bombs and
cucumbers.

Special Operational Summary. All times G.M.T. 9 Swordfish 830 Sqn. F.A.A. despatched to attack Tripoli Harbour night 18/19. 5 carried cucumbers and 4 carried bombs. Attack lasted from 0140 to 0145. Hits and fire observed on Spanish Quay between warehouses and near gun positions East of Seaplane station also direct hit and 2 near misses on M/V 5-8000, tons in harbour near entrance. 5 cucumbers planted in channel between 2 lights in line with North Mole. 1 destroyer 3 miles N.E. Tripoli course 023° at 0148 hours. 1 bomber Swordfish failed to return. (H.Q. R.A.F. Malta, 0945/19).

Convoy

A.S.19 arrived. (N.O.I.C. Port Said 1151/19).

Enemy M.V.
sunk.

Operational Summary No. 282 up to 1200/19. Cyrenaica. Night 17/18 ^{March.} 3 F.A. Albacore torpedo attacked shipping Buerat El Hsun sinking 1 ship about 1500 tons. 1 Albacore missing.

Durazzo
bombed.

2. Greece. Night 17/18. 7 Wellingtons dropped 17,250 lbs. bombs on Durazzo docks. Cloud prevented assessment results but docks well hit with resulting violent explosion.

U/B hunt.

18/3, 1 Sunderland assisted destroyer to submarine hunt position 37° 34' N. 24° 00 mins. East dropping 2 bombs results unknown. (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 1151/19).

ROSAURA ~~Amo~~
mined. *(and landing
was)*

ROSAURA sunk by mine in position 146° Mersa Tobruk Light 8¹/₂ cables when leaving harbour p.m./18. No details yet. (C.in C. Med., 1515/19, to Admty.).

German
A/C's.

Latest information indicates German aircraft carrying out sweeps parallel to North African Coast frequently particularly at dusk. (Capt. S.1, 1615/19, to RORQUAL).

French
Tanker.

American Consular representative just returned from Algiers reports a French Tanker was ready to leave with 10,000 tons Gasoline. (N.A. Madrid, 1743/19, to D.N.I., C.in C. Med., S.O.I., Gib.).

Battleship
Strength.

Review, proposals, re QUEEN ELIZABETH and BARHAM. (C.in C. Med., 1853/19 to Admty.). (See Mediterranean Volume).

19.3.1941.

Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Suez Canal.
ILLUSTRIOUS.

Situation 2000/19.
27 motor vessels from Suez arrived as follows, 8 Port Said, 8 Lake Timsah, 11 Great Bitter Lake. Intend to transit ILLUSTRIOUS and 26 motor vessels from Great Bitter Lake to Suez 20/3.
(S.B.N.O. Suez Canal, 1933/19 to C.in C.Med.)

Fast Minelayers.

Your 1304/23/11/1940. Request information as to when fast minelayers may be expected.
2. If Northern Greece is overrun by Germans much can be done to deny them use of Greek Ports by intensive mining.
(C.in C. Med. 1945/19).

Greek ships,
degaussing.

Provision of facilities for degaussing Greek ships under urgent consideration. Have any orders been issued prohibiting the use of the Canal by undegaussed merchant ships?
(D.T.D. 2035/19 to S.B.N.O. Suez Canal).

Armed
Italian S.V's.

Information received that a number of Italian armed sailing vessels are being employed from Naples on convoy routes.
(Cdr. S.1, 2103/19, to S/M's on Patrol).

Shipping in
Yugoslav
territorial
waters.

Use by Italian shipping of Yugoslav waters. Policy re attack. (Capt. S.1, 2232/19 to REGENT) See Mediterranean Volume.

F.A.A.
attacks on
Valona and
Durazzo.

In view of political desirability of showing our ability to use naval striking force in Adriatic I have agreed to release result of recent F.A.A. activity. Intend to issue following communique: Aircraft of F.A.A. carried out a series of extremely successful attacks on (? nights of) 15th to 17/3 against enemy craft in harbour of Valona and Durazzo, causing severe damage. 6 or 7 hits were scored with torpedoes and ships sunk or damaged include a Cruiser or large destroyer.
(C.in C. Med. 2329/19 to Admty.).

REGENT,
Adriatic
Patrol.

My 1209/18. (?Greeks) have now been requested to keep clear night of 22 - 23 in addition to at daylight/22.
(Capt. S.1, 2355/19, to REGENT).

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19.3.1941.

Wedneaday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

2nd M/S F.

Programme to Suez. (C.in C. E.I.,
0510Z/19 to C.in C. Med.).

M/S craft
for Mauritius.

(C.in C. E.I. 0608Z/19).

Force T.

HERMES and ENTERPRISE (Force T) are to leave vicinity of Colombo p.m./20 and proceed to carry out following programme:- 22/3. Arrive East end one half degree of channel at dawn. Carry out air search of Southern Atolls of Maldives. Then proceed eastward side of Chagos Archipelago. 23/3. Carry out air search of Chagos Archipelago. ENTERPRISE visiting Diego Garcia. 24 to 26/3. Carry out air searches to S, W. and N.W. of Chagos. 27/3 a.m. arrive Addu Atoll and complete fuel from Oiler PEARLEAF.
(C.in C. E.I., 1130Z/19)

SHROPSHIRE

Replacement for, from R.A.N. (See Australia).

CARSO,
MARGHERA,
salvage.

Ref. 0744 Z/26/2, C.in C. E.I. and my 1403 B/7 neither to Admiralty. Salvage of Italian ships scuttled at Kismayu. Syndicate offer attempt to salvage CARSO and MARGHERA on following basis. Very early acceptance is recommended. (N.O.I.C. Simonstown, 1615/19, to Admty.).

Aden Ports.

My 1630/14 and your 0736/17. Agree ports on South Coast Gulf Aden should be responsibility of S.T.O. Aden.
(D. of S.T. 1746/19 to C.in C. E.I.).

CHABOOL
tug,
missing.

Tug CHABOOL is missing since 15/3. My 0830/15 refers. CHABOOL is a steam tug of 58 tons gross owned by Luke Thomas. She left Aden at 1730Z/15 for Berbera under command of Lieut. John Mumford R.N.R. with crew of seven ratings from GLASGOW. Had coal for three days and provisions for four days. Daily air and surface search on and since 16/3 have failed to locate her. She had ample life saving equipment, fire works and signalling lamps but no W/T. Search continues.
(S.N.O. Red Sea, 2005Z/19 to Admty.).

War Diary.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

Warship
sighted
11/3.

Your 2012/17. Information such as that contained in my 0541/16 is automatically passed to A.C.N.B. by Dutch concurrently with authorities at Singapore. (Capt. O.S., Singapore, 0723/19, to Admty.).

See Page 569.

CARIGNANO

Cancel my 0342/17. (re - departure of CARIGNANO) (Capt. O.S. Singapore 0818/19).

America and West Indies.

GEISHA,
submerged
object.

Norwegian ship GEISHA reports striking submerged object on 24/2. in 061.34 N. 016.33 W. caused leak in tank amidships. (S.O.I., Jamaica, 1228/19).

H.X.116,
S.C.26.

Your 1217/18. Concur in using ROYAL SOVEREIGN and PORPOISE as ocean escort for H.X.116 and S.C.26, ROYAL SOVEREIGN sailing from Halifax a.m./22. (A.C.N.S.(T) 1320/19 to R.A.3.).

Homeward
Passages
from Bermuda.

Your 1204/14. Concur in your proposals in para. 4. (D.T.D. 1402/19 to C.in C. A.W.I.).

U/B Report.

A/C Report of S/M, possibly THUNDERBOLT. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1722/19) See U-Boat Campaign

German M.V's.

German Ships at Callao and Antofagasta showing signs of activity. Proceed forthwith so as to arrive Callao a.m./24 for 24 hours, abandon establishment of patrol on 25/3 owing to approach to Callao and endeavour to avoid being sighted. Direct BISHOPDALE R/V with you in Callao Area as requisite, informing me of selected R/V by cable from Callao. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1721/19, to PRINCE HENRY).

DESPATCH

To leave Trinidad a.m./21 and patrol in area O. Leave patrol so as to arrive Trinidad 26/3. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1802/19, to DESPATCH).

War Diary.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Australia.

SHROPSHIRE
CANBERRA
AUSTRALIA

Your 1226/16/1. As SHROPSHIRE does not complete refit at Simonstown until (date) Admiralty will be grateful if refit of CANBERRA can be deferred until after that date so that either AUSTRALIA or CANBERRA will be available to operate in E. Indies Station until SHROPSHIRE is ready.
(D.O.D.(F) 1559/19).

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19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships Attacked.

ERODONA
FERM
(torpedoed
16/3).

Detach WELLARD at daylight/19 to R/V with NORTHERN FOAM and Tug BRIGAND in 61° 33' N. 55' W. When BRIGAND gets M.V. FERM in tow WELLARD is to escort them to Minches. (C.in C. W.A., 0016/19, to KEPPEL). Standing by FERM. No one aboard. Will connect up at daylight. (BRIGAND, 2200/19, to N.O.I.C. Greenock, etc.).

Fleet tug BRIGAND reports picking up survivor of TankerERODONA. Close BRIGAND searching for FERM in 061° 37' N. 011° 07'W. and take off survivors. (C.in C. W.A. 2309/19 to PETUNIA, WELLARD). Your 1930 report if ERODONA has sunk. PETUNIA and WELLARD have been ordered to close you to take off survivors. After transferring survivors continue search for FERM in position X given in my 1555 unless you are in contact with ERODONA. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 2335/19 to BRIGAND).

MANDALIKA

Dutch (ex-NORDMARK) 7750 tons, (Batavia for Belfast with sugar in Convoy S.L.68). Following has been read: SSSS 18.16 N. 21.26 W., MANDALIKA torpedoed. (Gibraltar W/T, 0040/19) (D.S. 561).

VENETIA
(torpedoed 16/3)

Report whether survivors consider VENETIA is still afloat. (C.in C. W.A., 0047/19, to WALKER). No information of s.s. VENETIA. Survivors were picked up by BLUEBELL. (WALKER, 0210/19). VENETIA sank on the night of 16/3. (BLUEBELL, 0401/19). Tug ST. OLAVES is in your vicinity. Report forthwith if her assistance is required stating your p.c. and s. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 0803/19 to BLUEBELL)

CLAN MACIVER
(18/3)

My 2305/18. Attack unsuccessful. 2 enemy submarines 058° 01' N., 024° 25' W. (CLAN MACIVER, 0740/19, to Port Patrick, any British Man-of-War, A.C.O.S. 1356/19 to A.I.G. 64, 81, 83).

FERM
BEDUIN
(torpedoed 18/3)

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War Diary.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked. (Contd.).FERM,
BEDUIN
(torpedoed 18/3)

Only ships now afloat are FERM in position 61° 33' N. 11° 55' W. to whom BRIGAND is proceeding, and stern half of BEDUIN in position 61° 02' N. 11° 53' W. with NORTHERN SKY standing by.
(? 1142/19, to ZWARTE ZEE).

Tugs ZWARTE ZEE, PRUDENT consider that towing of stern of tanker BEDUIN hopeless. Have endeavoured to sink but cannot spare more ammunition. Waiting to see effects of shelling. Have sunk forward half. Request instructions whether to proceed with TR37. (NORTHERN SKY, 1235/19, to S.O.N.P.T.). ZWARTE ZEE made contact with BEDUIN 1100/19 vessel apparently whole with all underwater except stern almost vertical towage impossible. Now standing by FERM, making connection at daylight, has very heavy list position 061° 36' N. 010° 48' W.
(PRUDENT, 1930/19, to F.O.I.C. Greenock).
Re landing of survivors.
(N.O.I.C. Faroes, 2358/19, to A.C.O.S.).

FRANCHE COMTE,
(torpedoed 16/3)

Your 1035/19. Destination FRANCHE COMTE Clyde. (C.in C. W.A. 1209/19 to BLUEBELL). My 1203/19. A/C reports carried out square search in area and observed a very distinct oil patch about 11 miles 340° from position of reported sinking. No boats or ships fittings were observed but small coasting steamer was seen 12 miles 170° from oil patch but would not answer aircraft. Aircraft searched for 70 minutes. (A.C.O.S. 1708/19 to C.in C. Rosyth, C.in C. W.A., Admty.).

H.X.112
(attacked
16/3)

It is established that at least one of the U-boats which attacked H.X.112 entered convoy lines from astern.
(C.in C. W.A. 1829/19 to VETERAN, BULLDOG, DOUGLAS, KEPPEL.).

War Diary.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported.

0015 59.30 N., 1° E., very indefinite. (D.S.561).

1011 54.30 N., 14° W. indefinite. (D.S. 561).

1033 54° - 55° N., W. of 20° W., indefinite
(Italian (D.S. 561)).

1049 54° - 55° N., 16° - 19° W. indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 561).

0536 49° N., 28° W., indefinite (D.S. 561).

1109 55° - 56° N., 22° W. - 25° W., indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 561).

0152 Vicinity of C. Verde, indefinite. (D.S.561).

1221 60° N., 25° W., very indefinite (D.S. 562).

2120 60° N., 15° W., very indefinite (D.S. 562).

2059 59° N., W. of 23° W. very indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 562).

2153 55° N., 16° W. very indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 562).

1454 54° N., 14° W. very indefinite (German)
(D.S. 562).

1908 54° N., 15° W. very indefinite (D.S. 562).

1251 53 - 56° N., 20 - 22° W. very indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 562).

1944 49° N., 37° W. very indefinite (German)
(D.S. 562).

2022 36° N., 15° W. very indefinite (German)
(D.S. 562).

0012 Admty. Message A.F.
Position 58° 05' N: 24° 22' W. at 2312/18 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 0047/19.).

0015 D/F at 0015/19 position of German U-Boat was
59° 30' N. 1° E. This is an indication of the
area only. (D.D.I.C. 0101/19).

0140 Admty. Message AF.
Position 18° 16' N: 21° 26' W. at 0040/19 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 0243/19).

War Diary.

19.3.1941.
Wednesday.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Submarines Reported. (Contd.)

Cape Verde.

Your 1611/18 not to Admiralty.
Unit considered to be U/boat in vicinity of Cape Verde Islands. Your 1516/17 not received in Admiralty.
Request frequency, preamble and text of message. (D.D.I.C. 0402/19 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa)
Your 0402/19. My 1516/17 to C.in C. A.& W.I. placed unit at 0248/17 in 19 N. 18 W. reliable.
Frequency 5660 (b) Frequency 12040 kc/s at 1323/18 begins PP ZBKR IFGG WK.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 0411/19).

1032.

An enemy S/M has made a first sighting report of a Convoy or important unit.
(D.D.I.C. 1032/19).
My 1032/19. Probable that the formation reported was convoy OB 298 or possibly HG.55.
(D.D.I.C. 1055/19 to S. & A. Western Command, VETERAN, SCARBOROUGH, H.Q.C.C., F.O.(S))

1204

D/F bearing of transmission at 1104/19 G.M.T. suggest U Boat approx. 019° N. 021° W.
Indications are U Boat possibly reporting your movements.
(C.in C. S.A., 1127N/19, to MALAYA).

1454.

There was still a U/B in the vicinity of Convoy OB 298 at 1454 B.S.T.
(D.D.I.C. 1525/19 to VETERAN, F.O.S., etc.).
You will possibly be attacked by at least four submarines during the night. A large proportion of these will be Italian.
Inform Commodore. (C.in C. W.A., 1629/19 to VETERAN, HAVELOCK).

2105,
possibly
THUNDERBOLT

Atlantic ferry a/c report s/m in position 041° 30' N. 044° 22' W. course 068° at 2005 G.M.T./19.
Submarine submerged on approach of a/c.
This is possibly THUNDERBOLT. Observer reliable.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1722/19 to KING GEORGE V, French Cruiser JEANNE D'ARC, Atlantic Escort Force, TALISMAN).
Your 1840/18. Bearings of the same transmission obtained by own stations placed unit in vicinity of Cape Verde Island, being result of several bearings cutting at a broad angle. Would be grateful for any future bearings obtained.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 2227/19 to N.A. Washington).

Estimated U/B
dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1421/19).

SECRET

MESSAGE

2018/19th. March IN

638A.

From Capt. D. Liverpool.

Date 19.3.41.

Recd. 2122.

Line copy only

P/L BY T/P

Addressed D A/S W Repeated C. in C. Western Approaches.
IMMEDIATE

Preliminary report from Commander 5th. Group on attack on H x 112 and successful counter attacks. 1920/16 in approximate position 61 degrees 15' N. 13 degrees 50' West. Weather clear after fog, slight sea and swell from South.

Escorts in A A Diagram No. 20 as follows

WALKER A 1 SCIMITAR A2 SARDONYX E VANOC F
 HYDRANGEA D BLUMBELL U.
 VOLUNTEER had become detached in thick weather and
 VICEROY had not joined.

SCIMITAR sighted U boat on surface 5 miles on Port Bow of Convoy. WALKER and SCIMITAR proceeded full speed to Hunt and VANOC ordered to join. Contact not gained at 2106. WALKER left to rejoin convoy. VANOC and SCIMITAR continuing Hunt.

2206 WALKER still astern of convoy observed one ship torpedoed on Port Wing. Another 3 ships were torpedoed before 0048. WALKER taking counter measures with no result.

At 0048 WALKER sighted U Boat distant about one mile, turned at high speed to ram. U Boat submerged 100 yards ahead and received pattern of 10 charges shallow settings. 2 1/2 minutes after first charge exploded heavy explosion felt and orange flare showing steady light for five seconds observed in wake. U Boat almost certainly destroyed at this time. Marked similarity to WOLVERINE'S report. Contact not regained.

0113 VANOC sighted rejoining convoy.
 0131. WALKER obtained firm contact confirmed by VANOC.
 0137. WALKER and VANOC carried out series of attacks until 0200

About 0300 VANOC sighted rammed and sunk U Boat in position of most recent attacks.

0337. WALKER whilst circling VANOC obtained firm contact astern of VANOC. *0343 WALKER attacked with 6 depth charges.*

U Boat believed to be U 99 surfaced almost at once and surrendered with Captain Bretschmer and Spare Commanding Officer and 38 others.

638^B

Meanwhile VANOC had recovered four survivors from her U Boat U 100 Captain Schepke who was not saved.

Whilst engaging U 99 a fourth submarine was reported by reliable witnesses in WAIKAR as surfacing in vicinity but in the general melee this U boat was not seen or heard of again. Prisoners state 5 U boats were operating in company. Inference is that they were rendezvousing astern of convoy on completion of attack.

Master of J.B. White (54) sighted U boat on surface two cables on his starboard beam attacking from within convoy. This form of attack is borne out by captured diagram. Full report will be forwarded when VANOC returns to Harbour. Consider this attack shows that widely varying tactics by enemy must be expected. Stereotyped defence is therefore unsound.

(Capt. D. Liverpool 2018/19 ~~0934/20~~)

~~Advance Copy 1st. Lord. C.S.O. 1st. Sea Lord.~~
Ops. O.D. O.I.C. DA/SW. D.T.D

1st. Lord.

1st. Sea Lord.

V.C.N.S.

A.C.N.S. (H)

A.C.N.S. (F)

A.C.N.S. (T)

Nav. Sec.

C.S.O. to 1st, Sea Lord.

Ops (4)

O.D. (5)

D.N.I. (4)

O.I.C. (2)

D.S.D. 9

D.A./S.W. (2)

D. of P. (3)

D.T.D. (4)

D.T.D. (M)

D.T.S.D.

M. (2)

Press Division

A.H.Q.H.F.

W.D.

I.P. (3)

War Diary.19.3.1941.
Wednesday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Attacked.By CALENDULA

In 018° 30' N. 022° 05' W. submarine submerged when fired at. Searching the area. (CALENDULA, 1221/19 to C.in C. S.A., MALAYA).

By a/c.

Aircraft reported attacking a moving oil streak thought to be from submarine in 059° 57' N. 007° 29' W. at 1113/19. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1434/19 to Orkneys and Shetlands Area). My 1434 Albacore aircraft proceeded to search vicinity. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1530/19).

By WALKER and VANOC 17/3.

Following report from WALKER. WALKER brought back 4⁰ survivors of U Boat believed to be U99 including Capt. Kretschmer. 3 of crew missing. VANOC has 4 survivors of U Boat believed to be U100, not including her Captain Schepka. Reasonably certain that a third U Boat was sunk by WALKER. Prisoners state five U Boats were operating. Some U Boats attacked from inside convoy and I am warning all escorts that this possibility must be borne in mind. (C.in C. W.A., 1839/19, to Admty.). Preliminary report from Comdr. 5th Group on attack on H.X.112 and successful counter attacks, 16/3 and 17/3. (Capt. D. Liverpool, 2018/19 to D. A/S W. amended 0936/20) Original in Lion Copy only. A suspected U Boat has been reported and attacked by aircraft in position 59.47 N., 7.29 W. (F.O.C.O.S., 1840/19, to O. and S. Area).

Mediterranean.

Sunderland assisting destroyer, 37.34 N., 24.00 E., 2 bombs dropped. (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 1151/19) See Mediterranean Station.

War Diary20.3.1941.
ThursdaySITUATION REPORTHome CommandsSearch for
German
Battle Cruisers

NELSON and NIGERIA patrolled to the southward of Iceland last night. HOOD and QUEEN ELIZABETH R/Vd with C. in C., H.F. this morning between Iceland and Faeroes

ADMIRAL
HIPPER
(Cruiser)It was established by P.R.U. R/C today that the ^{ADMIRAL} HIPPER class (cruiser) is not in Brest.E-Boats

There was considerable E-Boat activity off Yarmouth last night and again late tonight. Coastal Command aircraft carried out attacks on E-Boats this afternoon and evening.

Cover Patrol
for E-Coast
Convoys.

A cover patrol for convoys was carried out last night by two destroyers from Harwich and M.G.B's.

U-Boat and
Air Campaign
against
Shipping

The Admiralty today issued a further periodic review. Up to 22/2/40 U Boat attacks with one exception were confined to stragglers from convoys. From 23/2 it became evident that the spring offensive against shipping was beginning. U-Boats and aircraft are now co-operating and convoys have been attacked by 2 or more U-Boats working together. Steps taken to deal with the double menace include mounting of shortrange A/A guns manned by Army personnel, in merchant ships, reinforcement of the destroyer escort forces and of the aircraft of the Coastal Command for service in the N.W. Approaches.

Irish Sea
Escort Force
to be formed

C. in C. W.A., intends to form an Irish Sea escort force of 3 A/S yachts to reinforce trawler escorts between Belfast and Milford Haven. The routeing arrangements which recently came into force will result in convoys of greater size proceeding through the Irish Sea than in the past and C. in C., W.A. considers a greater measure of fighter protection to be an urgent necessity.

/The routeing...

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20.3.1941.
Thursday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Home Commands-Contd.

The routeing of merchant shipping in the Irish Sea with a view to obtaining the maximum security against air attack is to be discussed by naval and Air Force representatives on 25/3.

Fog.

Traffic in Plymouth Sound was stopped at 0830 today owing to fog. M.T.B's were prevented by fog from operating off the Dutch coast tonight.

British Air Activity

Search for
German
Battle Cruiser

Air reports were flown to cover the Denmark Strait today. Patrols south of Iceland was curtailed through bad weather.

Blenheims carried out a sweep off the Dutch coast today and attacked various vessels. Two direct hits were obtained on a 3000 ton ship.

3 aircraft attacked 5 E-Boats 38 miles W.S.W. of Ijmuiden this afternoon.

Nine Coastal Command aircraft bombed Lorient early this morning.

WAR DIARY.

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Thursday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

Enemy Air Activity.

Air Raid
on London.

H.M.Y. CATERINA was damaged at Deptford in air attack on London last night. There were some Naval casualties and damage at Naval Offices ashore.

S.S. CIESZYN (Polish 1386 tons) was bombed and sunk off Falmouth this evening by two aircraft. YOUNG MON (H.M. Drifter) and CHICO (H.M.Y.) were attacked south of Folkestone this afternoon by a Ju.88 which YOUNG MON shot down.

Tug SIR BEVOIS was submerged by air attack at Plymouth today.

Trawler BIANCA was sunk off the Irish Coast this afternoon as a result, it is reported, of picking up a torpedo from an aircraft in her nets.

Two large bombs were dropped on Ramsgate today. No naval damage occurred.

Mining.

Operations
Z.M.E.24.

PLOVER laid mines in St. George's Channel early this morning.

G.U.

20th D.F. (INTREPID, ICARUS, IMPULSIVE) laid mines last night off the Ile de Bas covered by 3 destroyers of 5th D.F. and 4 M.L's from Dartmouth and by air patrol off the Coast of Brittany.

/Enemy aircraft

WAR DIARY.

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Thursday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mining. (Contd.)

Mining
of Thames.

Enemy aircraft apparently minelaying were active last night in the Thames Estuary.

Diesel tug CHARLIGHT and 3 out of 6 barges which she was towing were sunk at 1000 today by a mine off Deptford Victualling yard. All traffic in the Thames was stopped at 1032 between Tower Pier and Barking Creek. One mine was exploded and further mines are suspected. S.S. LINDENHALL was mined and submerged in the London Docks today, apparently by a mine dropped in air attack, yesterday.

? of
work
See
DRISSY.

North Atlantic.

SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU
sighted.

Sighting of SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU see 21/3.

MALAYA
torpedoed.

At 0808 1417 G.M.T. today. There were D/F indications that Convoy S.L.68 was being shadowed by German U/Boat. MALAYA, escorting the convoy was hit by a torpedo at 2331Z today in 20° 2'N., 25° 55'W. (347° St. Antonio Islands (Cape Verde Islands) 180 miles) (For further proceedings see 21/3).

Raider
Captives
Intercepted.

Force H today intercepted about 600 miles West of Finisterre S.S. BIANCA (Norwegian) and SAN CASIMIRO (British) which had been captured by GNEISENAU on 15/3 in mid-N. Atlantic. BIANCA attempted to scuttle and cannot be steamed owing to flooded engine room. SAN CASIMIRO also scuttled. See Page 663728

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

South Atlantic.

Unusual activity and preparations for sea are reported amongst Italian merchant ships at Pernambuco.

Mediterranean.

Air
Operations.

3 F.A.A. Swordfish attacked shipping in Durazzo last night.
ILLUSTRIOUS arrived at Suez today.

America and West Indies.

German ships at Callao and Antofogasta are showing signs of activity. PRINCE HENRY has been ordered to the port.

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

URD.
to be
arrested.

C.in C. Rosyth's 2137/19. Similar instructions have been given in Orkneys and Shetlands Command. (A.C.O.S. 0012/20).

LEOVILLE.

(Sloop). The Free French Navy have taken over command of LEOVILLE from 1000/20. (LE TRIOMPHANT, 1030/20).

Patrol
lines.
T.R.37
to 39.

Following from S.L. N.T. Kirkwall:-
Admty: 1908/16/3. Request it may be represented at conference that ships on these lines would be able to remain on patrol three days longer if based on Reykjavik. While not intended to base trawlers permanently on Reykjavik, it is desired to send a maximum of six ships a month there for fuel and four days rest period. T.O.O. 1540/19/3. (Ends). Request matter may be considered at conference. (A.C.O.S. 1054/20).

H.G.Convoy
S/M Escorts.

Your 1612/19. (proposed instructions to submarine escorts to convoys). F.O.C. N.A. to S.8. No objection. (F.O.S. 1239/20 to S.8.)

Iceland.
Fish
Trade.

Have been interviewed by Icelandic Government on subject of effect of German attacks on Icelandic Trawlers. All sailings ceased both from Iceland and U.K. 6 Trawlers refuelling loaded with fresh fish Reykjavik would sail if escorted. Public opinion much affected by losses and Government consider will be difficult to recommence sailings if stopped for more than few days. Apart from desirability maintain fresh fish trade alternative is salt fish industry which will much interfere with use of harbour. Following proposals possible. Am suggesting Icelandic trawlers darken ship. If this is done some simple form of recognition procedure necessary. Request early instructions. (F.O.Iceland) 1302/20).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Policy. (Contd.)

Anti-
E/Boat
Measures.

1. Sufficient encounters with E/Boats have now been experienced to form an opinion of the value of our various defensive measures.

2. Such success as has been achieved has been obtained by destroyer escorts and destroyer patrols driving off the E/Boats before the attack developed.

3. Good ahead fire and adequate illumination have proved essential, as attacks frequently take place from a range of 3 to 5 thousand yards. Proposals for improving this are now being examined.

4. It is not considered that M.L's are ever likely to be of much value on the East Coast against E/Boats, for the following reasons.

6. Pending the arrival of re-inforcements I should be glad to have 10 or 12 M.L's for trials if these vessels are already delivered and available. They would be better than nothing.

7. It is essential to intercept E/Boats before the attack can develop and to hurry them on their return voyage to Base. Until sufficient suitable aircraft with cannon gun and fast small craft are available to intercept to eastward of mine barrier, destroyers are almost the only hope.

(C.in C. Nore, 1438/20).

Irish
Sea
Escort
Force.

My 1705/6. I intend to form Irish Sea escort force composed of TROUBADOUR, EVADNE and VIRGINIA as they become available shortly.

They will be based at Belfast and I propose that they should normally operate between Belfast and Milford Haven to reinforce trawler escort.

Additional A/A ships will be used to reinforce this service when they can be spared from ocean escorts.

/Arrangements

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Policy. (Contd.)

Irish Sea Escort
Force cont:-

Arrangements made in accordance with your 1850/3 and subsequent signals will result in convoys of greater size proceeding through the Irish Sea than has been the case in the past.

7. The R.A.F. have suggested that it would help greatly if the convoy routes were altered to pass closer inshore off Cardigan Bay.
(C.in C. W.A. 1907/20).

War Diary.

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Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Movements.

UNBEATEN.

Your 1223/18. Arrived R/V.
(N.O.I.C. Dartmouth 1132/20 to S.5.).

ARETHUSA.

Cancel my 0057/17. ARETHUSA is required to escort H.G.56. Proceed to Clyde and refuel, subsequently sailing to join convoy as directed by C. in C. W.A. (A.C.N.S.H. 1150/20.). Arrived ARETHUSA. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1940/20.).

HOLDERNESS.
VANESSA.

Request you will sail HOLDERNESS and VANESSA for Chatham this evening M. (D.O.D.H., 1232/20 to C. in C. Portsmouth. HOLDERNESS and H.M.S. VANESSA will sail 1915/20 passing Sandhead Buoy 0545/21. E.T.A. Sheerness 1015/21. (C. in C. Portsmouth 1753/20.). Visibility permitting request HOLDERNESS and VANESSA may be sailed for Sheerness to pass Sandhead buoy 0545/21. Speed after passing Dumpton buoy not to exceed 12 knots except if attacked by aircraft. Request fighter protection for whole passage may be asked for. (C. in C. Nore 1420/20 to C. in C. Portsmouth.). 2 Motor Launches are on patrol O.D.6 and 7 between No. 10 Buoy and 3 Mines South West of D Buoy. 2 Trawlers are on patrol O.D.5 between No.10 Buoy and No.1. Buoy. (V.A. Dover 2043/20 to HOLDERNESS, VANESSA.).

THUNDERBOLT.

Adty., 2014/18, should THUNDERBOLT proceed to Reykjavik F.O.(S) will arrange with H.Q.C.C. for aircraft flight restrictions to cover her approach. Request you order necessary restrictions for her departure. (F.O.S. 1248/20 to F.O.I.C. Iceland.).

RESOLUTION.

Admiralty 2208/13 and 1321/19. It is essential that RESOLUTION should be sailed as soon as possible. Departure of M.Ls. will have to be postponed until destroyer escort from 5th D.F. is available. (A.C.N.S(H). 1403/20 to C. in C. Plymouth.).

/Admiralty.....

War Diary.

20.3.41.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Movements Contd.

RESOLUTION.

Admiralty 1321/19. Earliest date RESOLUTION can be undocked is 28/3. Ship will be ready to sail P.M. 1st. April. (C. in C. Portsmouth 1747/20.).

SUFFOLK.

Arrived Scapa. (A.C.O.S. 1515/20.).

O.24.

S/M O24 escorted by WELLINGTON may be met tonight proceeding Southward through Minches. (C. in C. W.A. 1547/20 to WANDERER, etc.).

UNION.

KINGSTON CEYLONITE will R/V with you N+1 buoy 220° Hurst Lowestoft Light 9.55 miles at 0645/21. (S.5. 1716/20 to UNION.).

1st.M/S.F.

1st. M.S.F. will be sailing as follows:- SHARPSHOOTER, SEAGULL, NIGER, and BRAMBLE at 0700. SHONA and SPINA at 1030/21. Request Dover will arrange Fighter Escort if considered necessary. (N.O.I.C. Newhaven 1930/20.).

LUDLOW.
LEEDS.

Intend to sail LUDLOW, LEEDS, 1930/21, for Rosyth routed by 83, 160 and 175 Q.Z.S. Fighter protection not required. (C. in C. Plymouth 2007/20.).

UNDAUNTED.

You may meet Northbound convoy off Bell Rock and if set to the Northward you may meet 4 M/S Trawlers searching in vicinity of Milton Ness. Drifting Mines have been sighted in the vicinity of Bell Rock. (S.9. 2 013/20 to UNDAUNTED.).

War Diary.

20.3.41.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

Search for GNEISENAU and SCHARNHORST.

(see also North Atlantic).

EDINBURGH.

Scapa departures F.O.C. 18th C.S. in EDINBURGH, SOMALI, BEDOUIN, MATABELE, and WASHONA. (A.C.O.S. 1100/20.).

see also next page

NORFOLK.

Arrived and sailed 1925 G.M.T. (F.O. Iceland 2025/20.).

NELSON.
HOOD.
QUEEN
ELIZABETH.
NIGERIA.

Steer to the Southward at maximum speed. (1st. S.L. 2107/20 to C. in C. H.F.).

Enemy position.

Enemy Battle Cruisers in position 46° 50' N., 21° 25' W., Course 000°, Speed 20 knots at 1730Z. Destroyers in company search, attack, and shadow. (1st. S.L. 2142/20 to VETERAN.).

REVENGE
SHEFFIELD
ARETHUSA.
NIZAM
NAPIER
KIPLING
KASHMIR.

Raise steam. (1st. S.L. 2155/20 and H.W.R. 2225/20.).

UNION.

UNION proceed forthwith through 049° N., 006° W., to patrol in vicinity 047° 40' N., 006° 10' W. (F.O.S. 2211/20 to UNION.).

See also next page

TIGRIS.

Proceed patrol off Bordeaux. Southern limit of your Zone is extended to 045° N. (F.O.S. 2219/20 to TIGRIS.). My 2142/20 and my 2143/20 are being passed to you for information. (D.S.O. 2235/20 to C.S.18. and R.A.D.).

Following is passed for information begins addressed REVENGE, SHEFFIELD, ARETHUSA, NIZAM, NAPIER, KIPLING, KASHMIR, repeated C. in C. W.A., F.O.I.C. Greenock from Adty. Raise Steam. T.O.O. 2155/20 ends. (D.S.O. 2244/20 to R.A.D. and C.S.18.).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Search for SCHARNHORST & GNEISENAU. cont.

→ EDINBURGH.

See previous page

F.O. Force H's 1830/20. My position at 2330/20, 056° 36'N., 007° 22'W. ^{Am} proceeding in EDINBURGH with four ~~Tribal~~ destroyers course 290° 20 knots. This may conflict with escort arrangements for W.S.7. (C.S.18 2250/20 to C.in C. H.F.)

TIGRIS
UNION
UNBEATEN.

TIGRIS estimated in 047° 40'N., 006° W. proceeding to Patrol off Bordeaux. UNION estimated south of Portland proceeding to vicinity of 047° 40'N., 006° 10'W. UNBEATEN leaving Dartmouth approx. 0100/21 for vicinity of 048° 10'N., 006° 10'W.

UNION and UNBEATEN are not to attack Submarines unless identity is certain.

C. Object of patrols to attack GNEISENAU and SCHARNHORST sighted in 046° 50'N., 021° 25'W. steering North 20 knots at 1730/20 and who may proceed Brest or Bordeaux. (F.O.S. 2251/20).

→ EDINBURGH.

Proceed with destroyers in company towards position 54° N., 20° W. (1st S.L. 2247/20 to C.S.18).

Operation
G.W.
(8rd
M/L.F.
to
Gibraltar.

Communication orders for M.L's. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1119/20).

Interception
of
Norwegian
Whalers.

Description of Norwegian Whale Oil factories. SOLGLIMT, OLE WEGGER, PELAGOS. (D.D.I.C. 1151/20 and 1857/20 to HILARY).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

GEIR.

(See 19/3-
P. 616.)

Submarine referred to was TORBAY whose suspicions were aroused by freshly painted ~~concealing~~ markings and deep draught. No foundation in story of encounter with similar trawler the day before. (F.O.S.1324/20).

M.T.B's
off
Ijmuiden.

3 M.T.B's leaving Harwich 1800 today to operate near 52° 26'N., 4° 20'E. returning Harwich at daylight. (C.in C. Nore, 1636/20).
3 M.T.B's leaving Harwich 1800/20 for Eastward. They have been warned to keep clear of F.S.39A. when returning. (C.in C. Nore, 1657/20 to Capt: D.16).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity.

Patrols.

My 1836/19. First sortie R.3. delayed. Will be flown from 1030/20 to 1430/20. (C.in C. Rosyth, 0716/20).
My 2312/19. Add Patrol ~~UNST.~~ "Unst." (C.in C. Rosyth, 0746/20).
My 1430/17/3. No sunderland A/C available today. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1103/20 to R.A.M.L.)
800. Patrol R.3. cancelled for today owing to lack of visibility. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1113/20).
Aircraft returned from patrol nothing to report. (F.O.Iceland, 1810/20).

Notice
for
Fighter
Protection.

Request commanders in Chief may be asked to make signals with as much notice as possible. (H.Q.F.C.1000/20).

Information
of submarine
movements.

A.C.O.S. 1104/19. Am I correct in assuming that any Aircraft may encounter our own submarines in this area are operated by Coastal Command and are kept informed of submarine movements and bombing restrictions by H.Q.C.C. (F.O.S. 1246/20 to H.Q.C.C.)

S.N.69.
Fighter
Protection.

My 1430/17/3. No fighter protection available today Thursday. (C.in C. Rosyth, 1406/20 to R.A.M.L.)

Type
Catalina
A/C.

Type Catalina aircraft ex American PBY Commence operating as A/S Patrol on 20/3. They are large 2 engined monoplane flying boats with retracting wing float and square wing tips. They carry 4 depth charges and no R/T at present. (C.in C. W.A. 1703/20).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity.

H.A.1.
W.R.1.

H.A.1. completed and ready for operation.
Operation of W.R.1. suspended until
25/3.
(F.O.I.C. Harwich, 2350/20).

Enemy Air Activity.

HELVELLYN.

(Eagle Ship) Sunk by enemy action in
Surrey Commercial Dock at 2300. Ship
on even keel. Casualties.
(F.O.I.C. London, 0037/20).

Convoy
F.S.Odd.

One enemy aircraft shadowing convoy.
My P.C. and S. 51° 45'N., 1° 30'E.
225°, 7 knots.
(Convoy Escort 1025/20).

Deptford
R.V.Yard
and
Offices
destroyed.
CATERINA
(Harbour
defence
Patrol
Craft)
damaged.

Royal Victoria Yard practically destroyed
in Raid 19/20 March. Incendiaries in
large numbers followed by H.E. Several
casualties including some fatal.
(Supt: RVY. Deptford, Recd. 1100/20).
In enemy air attack last night CATERINA
at Deptford buoys sustained damage from
near miss. The offices of D.E.M.S.,
S.I.D.G., E.R.O., F.C.G.O., F.C.G.M.O.,
O.C.A.S. in Green and Silley Weir are
totally destroyed and all documents burnt.
Work will not be affected. Naval
casualties.
(F.O.I.C. London, 1220/20).

Convoy
F.S.

Fighters being sent to F.S.Convoy N. of
Tyne.
(Rosyth W/T 1454/20).

BRITOMART
(bombed 15/3).

My 1917/17. Inspection of bomb damage
has revealed following defects.
(C.in C. Portsmouth, 1647/20).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

YOUNG MON
CHICO
shot
down
aircraft.

An enemy aircraft probably JU.88 was shot down southward of Folkestone about 1410 today by H.M.Drifter YOUNG MON, H.M.Yacht CHICO. Lewis Gunner of YOUNG MON continued to fire until aircraft was within 50 feet. Aircraft continued dive carrying away mizzen mast and disintegrating alongside. No survivors. No casualties in H.M. Ships.
(V.A.Dover, 1808/20).

CIESZYN.

(Polish 1386 tons). AAAA. Bombed 20 from Falmouth.
(Portishead Radio 1837/20).
CIESZYN bombed and sunk by two enemy aircraft at 1940/20 five miles south of Falmouth.
All saved, one W.
(N.C.S.O. Falmouth, 2044/20).

A/C off
Iceland
on 19/3.

F.O.Iceland's 1947/19. These aircraft are believed to be ship borne type.
(D.D.I.C. 1935/20).

Ramsgate
Bombed.

(No Naval damage reported.) At 1120/20. It is possible that the target was that part of the inner harbour where 4 M.T.B's were berthed up to 1730 the previous afternoon.
(N.O.I.C. Ramsgate, 2245/20).

Clyde.
Air-Raid
Damage.

My 2315/19. Fire at Old Kilpatrick Oil installation now extinguished. Further reports from affected yards are as follows. Sweeping operations on the River are being continued, but the River is opened to traffic for stated periods. No further damage to ships has been reported.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 2314/20).

War Diary.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

- G.U. Operation G U completed. Nothing to report.
(D.20 0630/20).
My 1859/19. Returned (M/L's, 156, 180, 177, 160)
(N.O.I.C. Dartmouth 0631/20).
- Z.M.E.24. Operation Z M E 24 completed.
(PLOVER 0830/20).
- Channel Clearance Sweep. Mine clearance operations 19/3. Details.
Three mines cut in following positions.
(V.A. Dover 0929/20).
- PARRACOMBE
(Mined 19/3) My 1906/19. PARRACOMBE now sailed.
(N.C.S.O. Thames, 0937/20).
- Moray Firth.
Search of
War Channel. Commencing at Kinnaird Head at 0700/24
available ships of 5th M.S.F. are to carry out
an Oropesa search from Kinnaird Head to
Duncansby Head and from Duncansby Head to
Kinnaird Head as follows.
(C.in C. Rosyth 0938/20).
- River
Thames. All traffic on River Thames is to cease between
Tower Pier and Barking Creek.
(F.O.I.C. London, 1032/20).
0815 exploded by Skid magnetic mine off Barking
Creek. Further mines suspected off Deptford.
Traffic suspended from Tower Pier to Barking
Creek. (F.O.I.C. London 1100/20).
- EINAR JARL
(Now believed
mined 17/3). N.C.S.O. Aberdeen's 1625/18. ^{p. 588.} EINAR JARL sank
at 2050/17/3 in 56° 17.1/2' N. 02° 18' W.
whilst in convoy E.N.86A.
Statement that loss was due to enemy air action
is not supported by escorting destroyer
WESTMINSTER and other ships in the convoy,
and loss must now be attributed to floating
mine. (C.in C. Rosyth 1341/20).
- Thames Estuary. One S.A.Mine detonated at 1134/20 as follows.
(Capt. M/S Sheerness 1407/20).
- Plymouth Two mines exploded spontaneously on 19/3 as
follows. It is considered that B was laid
12/1/41. (C.in C. Plymouth 1708/20).

War Diary.

20.3.1941.
Thursday. 657

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

Summary of Aircraft activity in Thames Estuary for night 19/20. Objects dropped and Explosion heard.
(S.O.T.L.D.F. Sheerness 1721/20).

Liverpool.

My 1400/16. Intend opening Port of Liverpool at 0700/21.
(F.O.I.C. Liverpool 1800/20).

Operation
Z.M.E.25.

To be carried out on night of 22 March or as soon after as practicable. Details.
(V.C.N.S. 2010/20).

B.S.52.

KITTIWAKE and LA MELPOMENE detailed as escort for BS 52. E.T.A. Number A.M./22. Carry out operation as soon after this as practicable.
(C.in C. Nore 2136/20 to TEVIOT BANK).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Bearings
of
E/Boats.

{Yarmouth W/T 0001/20, 0019/20, 0034/20,
0103/20, 0135/20, 0142/20, 0210/20.

Surface
ship.

Following bearing indicating German surface ship received at 1723/19 G.M.T. Halifax 037/1 Text. QQ, remainder missed. (D.D.I.C. 0502/20).

Shipping
leaving
Gothenburg
18/3.

Your 1621/19. Was ice thaw in the Sound or Oslo Fjord or some other reason the cause of these ships' departure?

2. What was the type and average size of the ships and where were they bound for?

3. Has state of readiness of Swedish Fleet altered recently?
(D.N.I. 1434/20 to N.A.Stockholm).

5 E/Boats
off the
Hague.

5 E/Boats bearing 180° 2 miles, course 270°
My position 52° 10'N., 3° 40'E.
(?C.in C. Nore, 1723/20 to GUILLEMOT)
(A/C Duty N 1740/20 to A/C 90 Sqdn).

URD.

N.O.I.C. Aberdeen's 1927/19 and C.in C. Rosyth's 2137/19. The description of URD appears to be incorrect as she is a sailing vessel 40 feet in length, broad in the beam, painted black and has the letter R in her Registration number. Further information is that she was cruising north along the coast with the intention of slipping over to this country for the purpose of landing Jensen and the German who are both trained and equipped for sabotage.
(D.N.I. 2021/20).

TAIPING.
TARONGA.

My 1130/6/3, 2332/12/3. Further report has been received graded B.2., that Raiders TAIPING and TARONGA were expected to leave Oslo together p.m./20.
(D.D.I.C. 2043/20).
My 1946/10 and 1024/13. It is now reported ships will leave together on 20/3.
(F.O.S. 2233/20 to Submarines Area A).

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

E/Boats.

E/Boats suspected at 7 buoy at 2045.
(C.in C. Nore, 2119/20).
2 Enemy M.T.B's bearing 090° my position
156° 30 miles from outer Dowsing L.V.
(SOUTHDOWN 2243/20).

Miscellaneous.

Position E.

F.743 LW.A.C.I. Volume 2 Section A.
Page two item four column four and
Section D. Part 3 paragraph twenty five.
The correct position is 53 degrees 46'N.,
05 degrees 08' 30" West. In signals
for brevity, this position is to be
referred to as position E.
(C.in C. W.A. 1750/20).

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

New Position.

My 1831/19 and 1855/19. W.A.C.I. Vol. II Sec. D Part 3 Para. 10. In future paragraph E. of "~~SECRET~~" signal will contain a secret position (e.g. BUTTERCUP 070° 00'N., 003° 00'W.) by which Commodore refers to convoy's position in terms of bearings and distance. Subsequent paragraph ~~SECRET~~ signals are to be re-lettered accordingly.
(C.in C. W.A. 1250/20).

Blue Stern Lights.

A trial, blue stern lights is to be carried out in Convoy F.N. 42 due to leave Southend 25/3. Requested that a report on the blue stern lights may be forwarded by C.O. of escorts direct to D.T.D. as early as possible.
(D.T.D. 1904/20 to C.in C's Nore, Rosyth, etc.)

East Coast Convoys.

Your 1028/15/3. (E.N. Convoys to be replaced by E.C. Convoys to run from Southend to Clyde). Intend to operate the following timetables for East Coast Convoys, E.C. and F.N. Convoys using QZS 40, and F.S. Convoys using QZS 172. (Details).
(C.in C. Rosyth, 1925/20 to Admt).
As a measure of security, request you will arrange to prevent any non-essential messages being made by W/T to the escort of W.S.7. once the latter has sailed.

2. Signals concerning this convoy, passed between Simonstown, Freetown, Gibraltar, and U.K. are to be passed by cable whenever time permits.
(D.S.D. 1812/20).

Convoys D.S. and S.D. (Clyde to Iceland Ferry Service).

Particulars.
(A.C.N.S.(H) 1519/20).
See Operations Volume.

WAR DIARY.

20.3.1941.
Thursday.

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CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

ERODONA
(British
Tanker,
6207 tons)
FERM
(Swedish,
1026 tons).

My 2359/19. PETUNIA and WELLARD ordered to close you in 61° 37'N., 11° 07'W. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0051/20 to BRIGAND)

REYKJABOR.
AUGVALD.

Arrival PIMPERNEL with 2 survivors from Icelandic ship REYKJABOR and 1 survivor Norwegian ship AUGVALD. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0750/20).

JOAN
MARGARET.
(mined).

(Duty Boat) Regret to report loss. One survivor (Eng. 6). (Grimsby Base 1530/20).

JADDEN.
2 Lifeboats
sighted.

Polish motor vessel KORAB II on passage Iceland to Scrabster for onward routing reports that in position 61 degrees 14'N., 11 degrees 40'W. at 1230/18 she sighted two steel lifeboats one of which was salvaged. Two torches found were still burning. Name on lifeboat S.S. JADDEN (A.C.O.S. 1634/20).

TABARKA.
(French British
2624 tons).

Escorting TABARKA. E.T.A. 058° 42'N., 003° 23'W. 0600/21. Speed made good 7 knots. (AUBRIETIA 1732/20).

War Diary20.3.1941.
ThursdayFOREIGN STATIONSNorth AtlanticEnemy Unit

D/F bearing at 0217/20 G.M.T. indicated German surface craft. (F.O.C.N.A. 0620/20 to N.A.Station)

D/F Bearing of unknown enemy unit on 8290 Kc/s at 0940 was 277° from Gibraltar (F.O.C.N.A., 0959/20 to N.A.Station) Your 0959/20, request traffic. (D.D.I.C. 1301/20 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Enemy surface unit probably within 50 miles either side of a line joining 30° N., 26° W and 19° N., 33° W., at 0217/20 G.M.T. (D.D.I.C., 1025/20 to SEVERN, F.O.C.N.A. etc) Admty. 1025/20 is passed for information (F.O.C.N.A., 1151/20 to N.A.Station) My 1025/20. Additional bearings suggest the unit is to the south of Cape Verde Islands. Position indefinite. (D.D.I.C. 1841/20 to SEVERN, etc.)

Your 0959/20, 1009/20 and 1420/20, transmission believed to be from Hilo Hawaii (D.D.I.C., 1954/20 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Operation G.W.

Your 1825/19. Concur. (F.O.C.N.A., 1650/20 to C. in C., Plymouth.)

SEHARNHORST
B.C's position

P, C and S of 2 German SCHARNHORST class Battle Cruisers 046° 50' N., 021° 25' W., 000° 20 knots at 1730 Z. P, C and S of RENOWN and ARK ROYAL 045° 00' N., 019° 45' W., 350° 27 knots at 1900 Z. Fuel remaining 45%. (S.O.Force H., 1830/20 to Admty.)

Submarine
Positions

Position of submarines at 1200/21 and movements for 24 hours.

(A) OLYMPUS with H.G. 56

(B) PANDORA in company O.G. 55 arriving Gibraltar a.m./21.

(C) Netherlands S/M O.23 leaving Gibraltar 0815 to eastward for exercises with FORESTER, GENTIAN (Corrupt group) JONQUIL returning Gibraltar about 1800. (F.O.C.N.A. 1905/20 to N.A.Station)

Operation
"Ration"

To be carried out as soon as forces are available. Ships carrying food only are to be detained once the nature of cargo has been ascertained. (D.O.D. (F) 1910/20 to F.O.C.N.A.)

/Photographs...

War Diary

20.3.1941.
Thursday

FOREIGN STATIONS

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North Atlantic-Contd.

Photographs of German Battle Cruisers

B.C. Teneriffe's 1520/17 Photographs are a complete failure as films arrived entirely exposed. (F.O.C.N.A. 1950/20)

SS BELLONIA (German)

Arrived 19/3. (Valencia T.H.I. 2200/20)

Search for SCHARNHORST, Force H., CILICIA.

My 1830, not to C.S. 10 and VETERAN. Night air shadowing and attack prevented by low visibility. Intend dawn search from 050° N., 020° W., from 240° through North to 040° covering S.L. 67, believed 8 hours late. If search proves negative intend returning to Gibraltar searching on passage. E.T.A. a.m./24. CILICIA searching suspicious merchant ship 045° N., 027° W. Have intercepted BIANCA and SAN CASIMIRO. Both (?scuttled) ~~(?diverted)~~. My p.c. and s are 045° 50' N., 020° 20' W., 035° 25 knots (S.O. Force H., 2110Z/20 to Admty.)

see p. 728

Orders to C.S.10.

Enemy battle cruisers in 46° 50' N., 21° 25' W., steering 000° speed 20 knots at 1730Z/20. Endeavour to gain touch two hours after daylight and shadow. (1st S.L. 2143/20 to C.S. 10)
Note: KENYA (flag C.S.10) left Plymouth 1600/17 to relieve Force H. as ocean escort for S.L. 67. MAURITIUS arrived Freetown 16/3; was to relieve MALAYA with S.L. 68 on 26/3.

CILICIA

Remain in company with Convoy until further orders. (1st S.L. 2233/20 to CILICIA)
Your 2233/20. My position 2200 Zone + 1 046° 43' N., 028° 21 W. Left Convoy at 1500 Zone + 1/19 by order of F.O. Force H. (CILICIA 2231Z/20 to Admty.)

O.G. 56

Steer 180° (D.T.D. 2257/20 to ENCHANTRESS)

Enemy Unit

By D/F at 2214 B.S.T. unidentified enemy surface unit bearing Cupar 220/3 Baldock 251/1. (D.D.I.C. 2318/20 to C. in C., H.F. S.O. Force H., etc.)

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Thursday

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FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic

Takoradi

Information required as to largest sized M.V's as regards length and draught which can be berthed alongside at Takoradi. (1st S.L. 0015/20 to C. in C., S.A.) Your 0015/20, 500 ft long 28 feet draught. A longer ship could be berthed if draught does not exceed 26 feet. Report forwarded to D.N.I. by S.O. (I) Freetown on 15/1/1941 contains full information of harbour facilities. (C. in C., S.A., 2335/20 to Admty.)

Suspicious Portuguese Tanker.

See pages 563, 4, 990

BULOLO's 2112/17. Ascertain from C.O. whether it would not have been possible to investigate Portuguese Tanker after having forced her to make a large alteration of course at full speed, and allowing some time to elapse before attempting to board. (D.O.D. 0124/20 to C. in C., S.A.)

FRANCO MARTELLI AIDA LAURO

Fully loaded Italian tanker FRANCO MARTELLI has taken in 500 tons of fresh water, provisions etc. Italian ship AIDA LAURO, with full cargo of coal, is now bunkering outstanding ship BUTTERFLY and indication is that remainder will also receive bunkers. General impression is of unusual activity. (N.C.S.O. Pernambuco, 1002/20 to Admty.) *See also Page 665.*

French Repatriation

Re French Native troops and seamen for repatriation to Madagascar. (Consul-General Lourenco, 1040/20 to Embassy, Lisbon, N.O.I.C., Simonstown 2140B/20)

German Unit BULOLO MAURITIUS SEVERN

Admty 2011/19 D/F. bearing at 0217/20 indicate possibilities of German surface unit within 200 miles position 015° N., 026° W., BULOLO is proceeding through 022° 20' N., 035° 00' W., at 0200/22. MAURITIUS will pass through 014° 28' N., 025° 10' W., at 1700/22 thence northbound with NARKUNDA in company. SEVERN will be (? approx) position 012° 55' N., 027° 00' W a.m./23 proceeding Freetown. (C. in C., S.A., 1141N/20 to MALAYA, MAURITIUS, BULOLO, Force X.)

/W.S. 8.....

War Diary

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Thursday 665

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic-Contd.

W.S. 8.

Your 2211/19. Approximate sailing date (D.O.D. F. to C. in C., S.A., 1305/20) See Operations Volume.

Enemy Unit

D/F bearing at 0217/20 indicates possibility enemy surface unit within 200 miles of 015° N., 026° W., (C. in C., S.A., 1455N/20 to S.A. Station)

Unusual activity of Italian Ships at Pernambuco

Pernambuco reports unusual activity of Italian merchant ships there. Tanker FRANCO MARTELLI has taken 500 tons of fresh water provisions etc., SS BUTTERFLY is now bunkering from SS AIDA LAURO and indication is that remaining will also receive bunkers. (S.O. (I) Montevideo 1854Z/20)

SS TUSCAN STAR

Your 1626/19 TUSCAN STAR has not arrived my 1333/14 refers. (C. in C., S.A., 2333/20)

W.S. 7.

My 1427/15. (LLANGIBBY CASTLE returning for repairs to Freetown) Can another ship be sent in W.S. 7 to take troops in LLANGIBBY CASTLE as stated ship will not be able to go more than 10 knots after repairing at Freetown 1100 personnel on board. Very undesirable to escort separately and any A.M.C. available is required for patrol. (C. in C., S.A., 2057/20 to Admty.)

MALAYA Torpedoed

Have been struck by a torpedo position 020° 02' N., 025° 55' W. (MALAYA, 2331Z/20 to C. in C., S.A.)
Have been torpedoed in position 020° 02' N 025° 55' W., Return to me. (MALAYA 2355Z/20 to MARGUERITE, CROCUS)
Take no further action my 2355Z/20 (MALAYA 0003Z/21 to CROCUS)
My course 085° 7 knots (MALAYA 0018Z/21 to MARGUERITE)

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War Diary

20.3.1941.
Thursday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Services
of Swordfish
Aircraft

H.Q., R.A.F., M.E.'s 1314/18, 1211/17, 1136/17. Admty. Congratulations. Request information as to composition and location of Sqdn. (D.N.A.D.) 0252/20 to C.in C.Med.)

EAGLE's
Aircraft
GNAT

Your 1737/19. (No trace in W/R) EAGLE'S Swordfish are at your disposal now to move to appropriate point of Red Sea coast for R/C. GNAT (? at present Suez) (C. in C., Med., 0746/20 to C. in C., E.I.) Reply, 1208Z/20, see East Indies.

Tripoli
Bombed

Operational Summary No 283 up to 1200 hours 20.3.41. 1. Cyrenaica, night 18/19, 4 Wellingtons dropped 9500 lbs bombs Tripoli Harbour starting 4 large fires along quays 1 fire with 2 explosions near military stores. Others fell among shipping. (H.Q., R.A.F., M.E., 1147/20)

→ Submarines
to attack
Transports

If convoy is escorted by cruiser primary object is attack on transport. (Capt. S.1. 1153/20 to URSULA, UTMOST)

RORQUAL

Proceed through 035° 22' 014° 13' and 035° 32' 114° 13' to arrive off Grand Harbour 0700B/22. (Cdr. S.1., 1215/20, to RORQUAL)

Greek
Submarines
REGENT

My 1209/18 and my 2323/19 Greek submarines are operating between 040° 00'N. and 042° 20'N. Operate as necessary to Northward of this zone. Attention is called to the fact that there is no identification signal for use between British/Greek submarines. Reference C.A.F.O. 422/40 the following German ships are believed to be in the Adriatic (list) (Capt. S.1., 1345/20 to REGENT)

→ Enemy Convoy

At 0945B/20 convoy of six merchant ships escorted by four destroyers passes Kelibia Roads Light Southwards. (Cdr. S.1. 1403/20 to URSULA, UTMOST)

/UTMOST.....

War Diary20.3.1941.
ThursdayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterranean-Contd.UTMOST
URSULA

At 0001/21 UTMOST is to proceed to Area O 035° 00' 012° 10', 000° 40 miles, but is not to enter it before 0600/21. URSULA proceed through 035° 30' 012° 50' and 036° 30' 012° 20' to carry out operation ~~SIGMA~~ (As received) in Area L 036° 00' 010° 00' 000°. 120 miles, 95 miles. Time zone minus 2. (Cdr. S.1. 1441/20 to UTMOST, URSULA)

Degaussing
Greek Ships

Your 2035/19 second sentence reply no average depth in canal is 32½ feet. (S.B.N.O., Suez Canal Area 1803/20)

Enemy Units

Air reconnaissance report Sicilian Channel 20/3.

- (A) One M.V. 5,000 ton, 036° 20' N., 012° 20' E., course 270° at 1046.
- (B) One large M.V. 037° 10' N., 011° 40' E., course 180° at 1208.
- (C) 4 D.R. 5 large M.V's 20' N.W. of Pantellaria, course 350° with flying boat escort at 1215. All times G.M.T. (V.A.Malta, 1811/20 to C. in C., Mediterranean, URSULA, UTMOST)

Suez Canal,
ILLUSTRIOUS

Situation at 2000/20. ILLUSTRIOUS and 25 M.V's arrived Suez. 17 M.V's arrived Port Said. (S.B.N.O., Suez Canal 1921/20)

?

Your 1241/20.* Crew is safe. Have salvaged steamer today and she is now in Jaffa. I am waiting for further report as to her damage. (N.O.I.C., Haifa. 2032/20 to P.S.T.O. Egypt.)
*(Not received in Admiralty, message called for.)

Oil
Pipe Line

Your 1950/16 (Provision of oil pipe line from Suez to Port Said) Proposal is being urgently examined. If scheme is approved it will probably be found more expedient and more expeditious to obtain required material direct from U.S.A. (P.S. to Secretary 2118/20 to C. in C., Med.)

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War Diary

20.3.1941.
Thursday

FOREIGN STATIONS

East Indies

B.N. 22.

Bombay, ANTENOR left with B.N. 22.
(S.O.I.), Bombay, 0601/20)

Cargo Space
in Transports

As Government cargo situation from Colombo to Suez is serious request consideration of use of any available cargo space in U.S. 10 ships or subsequent on-carrying transports. (S.S.T.O. Colombo 0716Z/20 to D. of S.T., A.C.N.B)

CAPETOWN

My 0702/15. Arrival of CAPETOWN at Bombay is postponed indefinitely for the present. She is temporarily attached to Red Sea Force. (C. in C., E.I., 0746Z /20)

Perim
Patrol

Departure KIMBERLEY for Perim Patrol.
(N.O.I.C., Aden 0825Z/20)

EAGLE's
Aircraft

Your 0746/20. Thank you. I have asked R.A.F. whether facilities can be given to EAGLE's 18 aircraft to operate from Port Sudan and/or Hurghada and whether bombs would be available. Pending reply, request plan be made to fly aircraft to those bases and that I may be informed the earliest time they could arrive.
(C. in C., E.I., 1208Z/20 to C. in C., Med)

ILLUSTRIOUS
S.U. 2.

S.B.N.O. Suez 1933/19* Subject to S.N.O.R.S. being able to arrange single destroyer escort from about 020° N., request ILLUSTRIOUS besailed at best speed as soon as possible for Aden. Intend ILLUSTRIOUS to join Convoy S.U. 2 in vicinity Aden.
(C. in C., E.I., 1258/20 to S.B.N.O., Suez Canal S.N.O.R.S.)

* (re vessels from Suez arrived)
C. in C., E.I., 1258/20 can be arranged.
Request R/V. (S.N.O., Red Sea, 1513Z/20 to S.B.N.O. Suez)

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20.3.1941.
Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

China

VILLE DE VERDUN

Inspector General Colonies and Finances Cazeaux with strong pro-British leaning has left Saigon for France on 9/3 by SS VILLE DE VERDUN. Propose his ship be intercepted. (C. in C., China, 0959Z/20 to Admty.)

Enemy Units

My 0501/18. Bearings obtained of one Y.R. on 19/3 are conflicting. Units probably in vicinity of Kobe. An additional Italian unit call sign four F.U. fixed by D/F p.m./19 within 250 miles radius of 023° 30' N., 136° E., (Capt. O.S. Singapore, 1553Z/20)

ASAKA MARU

Special service ship ASAKA of Imperial Japanese Navy formerly merchant ship ASAKA MARU, 7298 tons, which left Bilbao 17/3 is transporting enemy exports to Japan. Although Japanese Govt. have been informed that we cannot agree to her calling at a British port unless she submits to contraband control, the Japanese Govt. have mentioned possibility of ship fuelling at Colombo. If ship does call at Colombo or any British port where naval authorities are in charge she should be informed that no facilities can be given to ship nor can we agree to ship remaining in port unless she is willing to undergo contraband control including examination for enemy exports. No fuel or other supplies should be given, nor should the crew be permitted to land. An immediate report should be made to Admiralty. (Head of M. 1829/20 to C in C's China, A.W.I., S.A., W.A., E.I., etc.)

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20.3.1941.
Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

America & West Indies

U.S. C.G.
Cutters

My 1550/14. Have you any information with regard to the ten coastguard cutters or whether there is any question of giving us destroyers in lieu? (Head of M. 0036/20 to N.A. Washington) *Reply: 1721/28.*

KANTARA

Ministry of Shipping 1235/17. British ship KANTARA not arrived Barbados. (S.O.I., Jamaica 1104/20 to Admty., C. in C., A.W.I.)

WORCESTERSHIRE

Should leave S.C. 26 as convenient after dark before reaching R.V. with inward local escort. (F.O.C. 3 B.S. 1142/20)

Convoy S.C. 26

Halifax departure WORCESTERSHIRE Ocean Escort S.C.+26 (S.O(I) Halifax 1408/20)

Suspicious ship
sighted by
GEISHA

Norwegian ship GEISHA reports sighted suspicious ship at 1800/8 in 031 N., 059 30 W., course East. Ship altered course to follow GEISHA who altered course and lost during dark hours. No description available. (S.O.(I) Jamaica 1625/20)

Australia

Contraband
Control

In Far East War it is not intended to establish Contraband Control Service in Australia as effort would be out of all proportion to resources available and Contraband Control likely to be necessary. (A.C.N.B., 0306Z/20 to Admty.)

ILE DE FRANCE

Your 1807/18. Following is a repetition of my 0235/14 (not previously received) Your 2334/12, embarkation cannot take place at Fremantle. Intend ILE DE FRANCE embark troops Melbourne (ends) (Anticipated date of sailing Sydney) (A.C.N.B., 0330Z/20 to D. of S.T.)

MESSAGE

0034/20 March

To:- A.I.G.47 & 48
for N.C.S.O.S

Date 30/3/41.

OUT

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CIPHER.

From Admiralty
NITE

My 1041/11/1. Following periodical summary of anti-U-boat campaign for period 10th February to 4th March.

2. Up to 22nd February U-boat attacks with one exception were confined to ships straggling from convoy. One convoy was attacked by a U-boat which subsequently shadowed the convoy and probably "homed" 6 aircraft on to the target during the afternoon of the same day. Five ships were bombed and sunk, but at least one aircraft was lost as a result of the attack.

3. From the 23rd February it became evident that the expected spring offensive was beginning and by the end of the month it was estimated that 13 German and 3 Italian U-boats were operating in the N.W. Approaches.

4. Three outward-bound convoys were attacked, two of them having been previously shadowed and in one case the convoy was subsequently attacked by 6 aircraft.

5. In one attack there is little doubt that the U-boat overtook the convoy from astern and torpedoed the rear ships of the centre column of the convoy.

6. It is believed that two lines of U-boats are maintained on patrol the inner line in about 10° to 12° West and the outer line beyond 20° West. Depending upon whether the convoys are homeward or outward-bound the duty of one line is to locate and shadow while the other concentrates to attack.

7. Aircraft either attack convoys already shadowed, or if making the initial contact, have the double function of attacking and guiding the nearest U-boat on to the target to shadow.

8. Steps are being taken to deal with this double menace. As an immediate measure short range A/A guns and crews are being borrowed from the Army for employment in Merchant Ships. Additional destroyers with A/A armament are reinforcing the escort forces. Aircraft of the Coastal Command for service in the N.W. Approaches are being reinforced, their function by day being to ensure that the U-boat is at least kept down and so unable to shadow from a distance.

0034/20

D.T.D. (172)

1st Lord

1st S.L.

V.C.N.S.

A.C.N.S.(H)

A.C.N.S.(F)

A.C.N.S.(T)

Nav.Sec.

D.N.A.D.(T)

C.S.O. to 1st S.L.

Ops.

O.D.(5)

D.N.I.

D.T.D.(4)

D.T.D.(M)

D.S.D.9

I.P.(3)

D.A/S.W.

O.I.C.

W.D.

War Diary

20.3.1941.
Thursday

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN

Summary

My 1641/11/1. Following periodical summary of anti-U-Boat campaign for period 10/2 to 4/3. (D.T.D., 0034/20 to A.I.G. 47 and 48 for N.C.S.O's) Original in Lion Copy Only.

Ships Attacked

MALAYA

Torpedoed at 2331Z/20. See South Atlantic.

ERODONA

British tanker, 6207 tons, in Convoy H.X. 112, probably torpedoed. 21 survivors picked up in 61.36 N., 11.50 W., on 19/3 (D.S. 562)

REYKJABORG
(Torpedoed ? 11/3)

Icelandic, 687 tons, from Reykjavik to Fleetwood, reported sunk off Hebrides, possibly by submarine, about 11/3. 2 wounded survivors landed Greenock. (D.S.562)

BEDUIN
(Torpedoed 16/3)

Your 1450/19 (N.T. in W.R.) Stern of BEDUIN has sunk in position 061° 07' N., 010°50'W. Request permission to proceed to Thorshaven. Leaky Boiler Tubes and short of Feed-water. (NORTHERN SKY 0800/20 to S.O.N.T.)
BEDUIN, in H.X. 112, probably torpedoed at about 2200/16 in approx. 61.20 N., 11.55 W. (D.S. 563)

FERM

No trace in flight or log 1327

Weather conditions too bad to board FERM. ZWARTZEE and PRUDENT standing by with us. JIER sunk p.m/15. Owing to condition of some survivors and weather, too bad transfer. (BRIGAND, 0820/20 to N.O.I.C., Greenock) Owing to condition of 2 survivors am returning to base leaving VASCAMA, PRUDENT and ZWART ZEE with FERM. (BRIGAND, 0950/20)*
My 2309/19. Fleet Tug BRIGAND is returning with survivors. Relieve (VASCAMA) standing by ZWART ZEE, PRUDENT, and FERM. (C. in C., W.A., 1426/20 to PETUNIA, WELLARD)
* (to N.O.I.C., Greenock, C. in C., W.A.)

MOST SECRETWar Diary20.3.1941.
ThursdayU-BOAT CAMPAIGNSubmarines Reported

0016 53° N., 15° - 16° W., Very indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 562)

0755 51.33 N., 15.42 W., reported by A/C (D.S.562)

0732 47° N., 5° - 6° W., Very indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 562)

1521 55°-56° N., 17°-20° W., Indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 563)

1843 55° - 56° N., 19°-21° W., Indefinite
(Italian) (D.S. 563)

1940 53.30 N., 17.30 W. Indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 563)

2018)
2325) 55.30 N., 18.30 W., Indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 563)

1941 47° N., 35° W. Indefinite (German) (D.S.563)

1517 Cape Blanco Area Very indefinite (German)
(D.S. 563)

2354 Cape Verde Islands Area Very indefinite
(German) (D.S. 563)

1909 Bay of Biscay Area Very indefinite (Italian)
(D.S. 563)

0755 Catalina Flying Boat AH 537 signalled at
0655 G.M.T. sighted submarine position
51.33 N., 15.42 W., course 315°, speed
10 knots, dived immediately. (O.A.M.C.U,
Gloucester, 0742/20 to Admty.) (D.D.I.C.
1003/20 to C. in C., W.A., etc.)

0908)
1517) At 0808 and 1417 G.M.T. D/F indications
that SL 68 is being shadowed by German
U-Boat. (D.D.I.C., 1631/20 to MALAYA)
Estimated one Italian U-Boat S.W. of Brest
en route for Bordeaux. (F.O.S. 1517/20 to
TIGRIS)

Estimated
U-Boat
Dispositions.

(D.D.I.C., 1342/20 and 2300/20)

War Diary

20.3.1941.
Thursday

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN

Submarines Attacked

By WALKER 19/3

Amending his 2018/19 (Capt. D. Liverpool
0936/20)

By VANOC 17/3

VANOC's report has little to add to
Capt. D. Liverpool's 2018/19 (re attack
on H.X. 112) except that submarine
attacked between 0137 and 0200, was
eventually located on surface by A.S.V.
which led to its destruction by ramming.
(C. in C., W.A., 1721/20 to Admty.)
Add to my 1721/20. 1 spare commanding
officer and 5 ratings were taken prisoner.
(C. in C., W.A. 1803/20)

War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

SITUATION REPORT

Home Commands

A.P. Vessels.

M/L Flotillas are now being formed and already strengthen considerably our coastal forces. Some of the less efficient A.P. craft are to be paid off.

Defence Against E/Boats

C. in C. Nore does not consider that M.L's are ever likely to be of much value on the East Coast against E/Boats, but pending the arrival of reinforcements he would like to have 10 or 12 M/Ls for trial

Anti E/Boat patrols were carried out last night.

M.T.B. patrols off Dutch Coast

Patrol by M.T.B's off Ijmuiden last night was cancelled on account of low visibility.

Search for SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU

Enemy sighted by Force H. (S.L. 67)

At 2004/20 a signal was received at the Admiralty from Force H. (REOWN, ARK ROYAL) which had left Convoy S.L. 67 at 1600/19 to search for ANTARKTIS and had just intercepted BIANCA and SAN CASIMIRO (See North Atlantic) that SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were sighted at 1730Z/in 46° 50' N., 21° 25' W (247° 570 miles Finzisterre). Course 0° speed 20 knots. Force H was about 160 miles S.E. of this position at the time. Low visibility prevented night shadowing and attack by aircraft and Admiral Somerville intended to make a dawn search, whilst covering the convoy, and if this was negative, to return to Gibraltar; KELLY, KELVIN and JACKAL at Plymouth were ordered to raise steam and proceed towards Gibraltar to screen Force H. in if necessary. At the time of sighting the enemy Force H had 45% of fuel remaining.

Touch with enemy lost

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WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

Search for SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU.
(Contd)

→ C.in C. H.F.
and B.C.I.
EDINBURGH,
Destroyers
to return to
O.B.298.
KENYA.
Submarines.
O.G.56.
Air Searches.

The following dispositions were made. C.in C. H.F. who was at sea between Iceland and Faeroes with NELSON, HOOD, QUEEN ELIZABETH and NIGERIA screened by 6 destroyers, was instructed to steer southward at maximum speed (2107/20). C.S.18 in EDINBURGH with 4 tribals, who had left Scapa at 1100/20 for the Clyde was ordered to proceed towards position 54° N., 20° W. VETERAN with VERITY, MANSFIELD, CHELSEA, HAVELOCK, HESPERUS, HURRICANE, WOLSEY who left Convoy O.B.298 on its dispersal yesterday evening were ordered to search but were later ordered to return to the convoy unless they were shadowing the enemy. C.S.10 (KENYA) who left Plymouth 10/3 to relieve Force H as escort for S.L.67 was ordered to try to gain touch with the enemy after daylight today; failing in this, he was ordered at 1337 to join Convoy H.G.56 and escort it to the Clyde (at 1200/21 H.G. 56 was estimated to be in 41° N., 20° 40'W. steering 352° at 5½ knots.) Submarine TIGRIS was ordered to patrol off Bordeaux and UNION and UNBEATEN off Lorient. Convoy O.G.56 was ordered to steer to the Southward. Three Bomber Squadrons were held in readiness to attack if the enemy were located. Special air searches were arranged for today, though fog caused partial curtailment. At 1330, as there was no further news of the enemy battle cruisers, C.in C. Home Fleet was given liberty to act at his discretion.

C.in C. Home-Fleet.

→ EDINBURGH.

At 1332 instructions were sent to C.S.18 (EDINBURGH) to return to the Clyde unless he heard news of the enemy.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday. 676

SITUATION REPORT.

Search for SCHARNHORST AND GNEISENAU.

(Contd.)

Enemy Battle
Cruisers
sighted
by aircraft.
D.5. to
intercept.

At 2021 today aircraft carrying out searches off the French West Coast ports reported 2 battleships (later reported as 2 cruisers) 1 destroyer, in 47° 17'N., 7° 13'W. (about 150 miles W. by S. of Lorient), steering East at 20 knots. KELLY (Capt: D.5.) KELVIN and JACKAL, who left Plymouth at 1350 today to screen Force H in to Gibraltar, were ordered at 2049/21 (received 2118/21) to intercept and at once increased speed to 30 knots and steered for Brest as this seemed the most likely destination and it was impossible to reach St. Nazaire in daylight.

U/Boat.

A U/Boat was sighted at 1250 today in 47° N., 10° W, steering west.

British Air Activity.

Search for
SCHARNHORST
and GNEISENAU.

Special air searches were ordered for today, to cover the approaches to the French West Coast ports and the N.W. Approaches. Fog interfered with the former. Certain patrols from Iceland subsequent to 1200 today were cancelled owing to poor visibility.

Blenheims of Bomber Command today secured a hit on the stern of a 5000 ton tanker escorted by 4 destroyers off the Belgian Coast.

/The submarine

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

British Air Activity. (Contd.)

The Submarine Base at Lorient was attacked by 22 aircraft of Bomber Command last night.

Enemy Air Activity.

The Small Coaster MILLISLE was bombed and sunk off Helwick L.V. in the Bristol Channel.

S.S. LONDON II was bombed and sunk today near Lundy Island. *See P. 720.*

S.S. DASHWOOD which ran aground in the Thames Estuary today, was bombed and slightly damaged during the night.

Attack on
Plymouth.

Plymouth was attacked last night by about 100 enemy aircraft. Damage was caused to Naval Establishments but damage in the dockyard was slight. There were some 40 naval casualties but none so far reported killed. S.S. MARI II was sunk alongside Plymouth Coal Coy's. berth as result of concussion.

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

678

SITUATION REPORT.

Mining.

19 aircraft laid mines last night off Brest, 10 off Lorient and 8 off St. Nazaire.

Enemy minelaying aircraft operated off the East Coast last night.

S.S. HALO was mined and sunk opposite Margaret Ness in the Thames this evening.

Mines were detonated today off Milford Haven, Swansea and Avonmouth.

The Clyde is now, open without restriction. Liverpool was opened at 0700 today and the Thames at 1300.

S.S. VIRMA (No trace in Lloyd's or BR133)
sunk.

The Finnish Wireless announces that the Finnish s.s. VIRMA has been sunk. The crew were taken to Cuxhaven, so it is presumed the ship was sunk at the mouth of the Elbe.

North Atlantic.

Torpedoing of MALAYA 20/3.

At 0245Z today MALAYA with Convoy S.L.68 was in 19° 57'N., 25° 35'W. steering 085° at 7 knots; he intended to turn the convoy north at daylight. At 0217 MAURITIUS, who arrived at Freetown 16/3 and was to relieve MALAYA as escort

/of convoy

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

679

SITUATION REPORT.

North Atlantic. (Contd.)

of Convoy S.L.68 on 26/3 was ordered to join the convoy as soon as possible. C.in C. S.A. arranged for WISHART and VIDETTE, who are due at Bathurst tomorrow morning, to fuel and proceed to MALAYA; and by orders of C.in C. N.A. FORESIGHT and FORTUNE who were returning to Gibraltar with FEARLESS and WRESTLER, were also ordered to proceed to MALAYA, DELPHINIUM was also sent, and CROCUS and MARGUERITE returned to the Convoy. At 2230 FORESTER and FEARLESS also left Gibraltar to R/V with MALAYA.

At 0052/21 CLAN OGILVY in Convoy 68 S.L was torpedoed in 20° 4'N., 25° 45'W. (350° St. Antonio Is. (Cape Verde Is.) 182 miles). SS JHELVUM see 8/4 page 266.

Convoy S.L.68 dispersed before dark and ships proceeded independently for Trinidad, Bermuda or Halifax, MALAYA left the convoy, after dispersal and steered to R/V with destroyers from Gibraltar.

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

680

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean.

Suez Canal.

The congestion at Port Said and Suez has been cleared and Canal traffic is proceeding normally. ILLUSTRIOUS left Suez this morning, southbound.

DEFENDER was bombed off Malta today, but no damage is reported.

War Diary.

21. 3. 41.
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

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Policy.

Irish Sea
Escort
Force
VIRGINIA.

My 1907/20. VIRGINIA will not be required for this duty at present. (C. in C. W.A. 1130/21).

Your 1907/20. Concur with your proposals except that in para. 7 referred to below.

2. Neither fighter cover nor protection will prevent ships being bombed, and we cannot hope for Fighter Command escort except for an occasional very important ship.

3. It is therefore necessary to rely for air escorts on Coastal Command aircraft provided by 15 and 19 Groups. To obtain the maximum 'escort' value from the limited number of aircraft, it is essential that ships should be grouped, and therefore I consider that disadvantage stated in your para. 5 must be accepted.

4. Your para. 7. This has been discussed with 10 Group, and it was agreed that it would not render fighter cover or protection effective. The effectiveness of coastal command escorts would not be increased and there would be an addition to the flying time necessary. Furthermore, difficulties would also be caused by the large number of training aircraft flying in this area. (C. in C. Plymouth 1825/21, to C. in C. W.A.).

A/P Craft to
be reduced.

In view of the necessity of economy in R.N.P.S. personnel and reduction of general maintenance work it is necessary to pay off some of the less efficient Auxiliary Patrol craft at present in commission. M/L Flotillas are now being formed and already strengthen considerably our coastal forces. C.' in C. are requested to signal by 24/3, the names of any A/P vessels that have proved to be constantly in need of maintenance and repair during the winter. (A.C.N.S.H. 1339/21.).

/PATIA.....

21.3.41.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

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Policy Contd.

PATIA.

Your 1911/17. Assuming all equipment for W/T and R.D.F. type 79 and for catapult is delivered as required for PATIA confirm that a completion date mid-April at latest will be kept. Extreme priority should be interpreted as priority over all other one A work. (Controller 1758/21.).

MENDIP.

Your 2148/20. Except the Captain, MENDIP has very inexperienced officers and 50% of her crew have never been to sea before. It is urged that she be allowed to complete her training. She should then sail about 25/3. (R.A.D. 1832/21.).
Your 1832. Concur with proposed arrangements. Request MENDIP may be sailed for Rosyth when ready to act as additional Escort for F.S. Convoy to Sheerness. (C. in C. Nore 2226/21 to R.A.D.).

Convoy Routes
in Cardigan
Bay. Dividing
Line of Plymouth
and W.A.
Commands.

C. in C. W.A. 1907/20 para. 7. A meeting will be held at Admiralty at 1500/25 to discuss this. C. in C. Plymouth is requested to send representative. Fighter Command is also being asked to send a representative. It is also intended to raise the question of the dividing line between the Plymouth and Western Approaches Commands. (A.C.N.S.T. 1922/21.).

Movements.

UNBEATEN.

Sailed. (N.O.I.C. Dartmouth 0409/21.).

Plymouth.

Suggest traffic in Sound be stopped owing to Fog. (Kings H. Master, Plymouth 0830/21, to C. in C. Plymouth.).

DIDO.

Completes repairs midnight tonight. Intend to sail for Scapa at 1400/22 in accordance with C. in C. H.F. 1617/14. Speed of advance 20 knots. E.T.A. 1200/23. (N.O.I.C. Greenock 1149/21.).

/JAN VAN BRAKEL.....

MOST SECRET.

War Diary.

21. 3. 41.
Friday.HOME COMMANDS.Movements Contd.JAN VAN BRAKEL.

(Dutch Minelayer). Left harbour to patrol off Tyne as protection for ships joining F.S.42. Returning to Tyne A.M. tomorrow. (F.O.I.C. Tyne 1801/21.).

CALIFORNIA
THUNDERBOLT.

R.A.3's 1642/16, A.M.2014/18 and THUNDERBOLT'S 1600/19. On leaving convoy CALIFORNIA and THUNDERBOLT are to proceed in company to Reykjavik to fuel.
2. If CALIFORNIA and THUNDERBOLT part company, THUNDERBOLT is then well clear of convoy, to report e.t.a. to F.O. i/c Iceland in order that bombing restrictions may be arranged.
3. F.O. i/c Iceland to sail THUNDERBOLT for Halifax after fuelling. (A.C.N.S.H.1814/21.).

EXETER.

Intend sailing EXETER for Scapa p.m./25 escorted by KASHMIR and KIPLING to Northern limit of Plymouth Command. As EXETER is not worked up request arrangements may be made for onward escort. (C. in C. Plymouth 1845/21.).

Operations.Search for
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.

SHEFFIELD and REVENGE will be ready to proceed at 0100. ARETHUSA has only 26 per cent fuel remaining and is now oiling. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 0023/21.).
My 1518/20. Amend as follows. UNION. 49° 48' N., 04° 20' W., proceeding, submerged by day to 48° 10' N., 06° 10' W.
UNBEATEN. 49° 45' N., 04° 05' W., proceeding submerged by day for 47° 40' N., 06° 10' W. (F.O.S. 0039/21, to Adty.).
Information given to D.5. (C. in C. Plymouth 0109/21, to Capt. (D)5.).
KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL are to raise steam by 0700 today. (D.C. 0350/21 to C. in C. Plymouth.).

/F.O. Force.....

War Diary.21.3.41.Friday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations Contd.

Search for
SCHARNHORST
and GNEISENAU.

F.O. Force H's 2110Z/20. Available 3 Destroyers of 5th D.F. are to proceed towards Gibraltar and will probably be required to screen Force H into Gibraltar. Capt. D.5 to report before sailing probable time of arrival in 040° N. (D.C.0652/21, to C. in C. Plymouth.).

Am detaching COSSACK, MAORI, ZULU for Reykjavik at 0900z and BOADICEA, ESCAPADE, ACTIVE at 2100 today. They require covering force, victuals, and rest. My position 0800Z 059° 23' N., 020° 41' W., 210° 19 knots. Capital ships may require fuel later at Hvalfjord.

(C. in C. H.F. 0809Z/21 to F.O. Iceland.).

Adty., 0652/21. Proceed forthwith to 040° N., 015° W., Report E.T.A. in this position. (C. in C. Plymouth 0813/21, to D.5.).

If weather is thick take every opportunity of pressing on the surface. T.b.r. arranged until 2100/21. (F.O.S. 1138/21 to UNION, UNBEATEN.).

We have no further news of enemy B.Cs. Cancel my 2107/20. Act at your discretion. (D.O.D(H) 1330/21, to C. in C. H.F.).

My 2247/20. Unless you hear news of enemy battlecruisers return to Clyde. (C.N.S.1332/21 to C.S.18.).

Adty's 0652/21. Sail KASHMIR and KIPLING to Plymouth with despatch, and arrange for alternative destroyers to take their place on present escort duties. (A.C.N.S(H) 1410/21 to C. in C.W.A.).

Sailed 1350 KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL. (C. in C. Plymouth 1415/21.).

My 0813. KELLY, KELVIN, and JACKAL, E.T.A. 40° N., 015° W., at 0400/23 passing through 049° 35' N., 011° W. Speed of advance 22 knots. Estimate 50% fuel remaining at 0400/23. (C. in C. Plymouth 1501/21.).

Comply with Adty's 1410/21. (C. in C.W.A. 1706/21 to F.O.I.C. Greenock.).

Sailed KASHMIR and KIPLING in accordance with Adty's 1410. E.T.A. 1300/22. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1729/21.).

My 1501/21. If delayed by weather, report dark/22 number of hours late. (C. in C. Plymouth 1807/21 to D.5.).

2 Battleships 1 Destroyer position 47° 17' N., 7° 13' W. (Fighter Command 2021/21, D.D.I.C. 2120/21, to Area A,B,F.O.C.N.A, H.Q.C.C.

2 cruisers one destroyer, course 090, speed 20 knots. (Fighter Command Spare 2045/21.).

2021 from A/C Duty X. Proceed to intercept (C. in C. Plymouth 2049/21 to D.5.).

/My 2049.....

War Diary.21.3.41.
Friday.HOME COMMANDS.Operations Contd.Search for
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.My 2049. Course and speed 090° 20 knots.
(C. in C. Plymouth 2107/21 to D.5.).
Two cruisers one destroyer position 1747,
course 090, speed 20 knots. (Fighter
Command Spare Duty X. 2131/21.).M.T.B.
Dutch Coast
Patrol.My 1636/20. M.T.B's unable to operate
owing to low visibility. (C. in C. More
0921/21.).M.L.
Anti
E-Boat
Patrol.Arrivals M.L. 200, 197 and 195 at 1526.
(N.O.I.C. Yarmouth 1555/21.).British Air Activity.Patrols.Patrol ~~FUGLE~~^{"Fugle"} as in my 0326/5/2 will be
flown today by Sunderland one sortie.
One Sunderland from Reykjavik, ordered to
fly special crossover patrol ~~show~~ today
through following positions.
(C. in C. Rosyth 0002/21.).Special
Air
Searches.The following special Air Searches have
been ordered for today 21st.
(1) A cross over patrol between 46.30° N.,
and 48.30° North along meridian 12.50 W.,
by one Sunderland. Patrol commences at
dawn.
(2) An A.S.V. sweep by four Whitleys flying
20 miles apart from 55° N., 10° W., out
to 51.30° N., 21° 30 W. to reach extremity
at 0800.
(3) Two Catalinas to patrol from 55° N., 10°
W., to 55° N., 23.40° W., leave for patrol
0730 and reach extremity between noon and
12.30. (H.Q.C.C. 0100/21, D.O.D.(H) 0205/21.)
My 0002/21. Patrol ~~FUGLE~~^{"Fugle"} is as follows.
(C. in C. Rosyth 0803/21.).
Additional Patrol being flown today "Fair"
"Trost" "Stab" - "Bert" "Stand" - S.A. Three.
(C. in C. Rosyth 0817/21.).
Patrol ~~FUGLE~~^{"Fugle"} to be referred to in future as
~~FUGLE~~^{"Fugle"} 1 and ~~FUGLE~~^{"Fugle"} 2. Details. (H.Q.C.C.
0900/21.). See Summaries Folder.

/My 0205/21.....

War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

HOME COMMANDS

British Air Activity

My 0205/21 Para (2) Patrol was not flown due to fog. (A.C.N.S. (H.) 1155/21 to C. in C., H.F.)

Your 57430 (M.O.8) of 20/3. First patrol over area 0900-1200 hours G.M.T. returned Nil reports. Visibility very poor. Second patrol cancelled owing to weather conditions that are deteriorating. (G.O.C. Iceland, 1330/21 to War Office)

My 0205/21. Search No 1 Aircraft leaves patrol to return to base about 1600. Search No3. Catalinas leave patrol to return to base about 2100. (D.O.D. (H.) 1531/21)

Your A/C will carry out an East to West parallel track search from 1900 to 2030 today between following. (C. in C., Plymouth 1541/21)

Two SCHARNHORST Class Battle Cruisers were reported in 46° 50' N., 21° 25' W at 1830/20 and it is thought that they may attempt to make a French West Coast port. It is probable that they will make a long dark passage at their best speed of about 25 knots arriving at dawn but they may have made their best speed throughout the day with the object of making a short dark passage and arriving at dawn. Four aircraft to carry out the following searches leaving first positions given in each case at 1900/21.

A/C No 1 From 47° 52' N., 7° 55' W., to 47° 52' N., 12° 24' W.,

A/C No 2 From 47° 12' N., 7° 5' W to 47° 12' N 11° 35' W.

A/C No 3 From 46° 44' N., 6° 30' W., to 46° 44' N., 11° W.

A/C No 4 From 46° 28' N., 6° 10' W., to 46° 28' N., 10° 40' W.

It is intended to locate enemy battle cruisers who are to be reported and shadowed. (Plymouth A.C.H.Q., 1553/21 to St. Eval)

/Your 57430....

21.3.1941.

FridayWar DiaryHOME COMMANDSBritish Air Activity

Your 57430 (M.O.8) 20/3. For M.O. 8.
Are patrols required tomorrow 22/3
Will not be despatched unless instructed
(G.O.C., Iceland 1612/21 to War Office)
Patrol aircraft returned. Nothing to
report. (F.O.Iceland, 1720/21)

Patrol tomorrow. Snowdrift crossover
by Sunderland from Iceland, as follows
from 1100/22 until 2000/22.
Patrol R four crosses over by Sunderland
from Sullom Voe as follows from 1700/22
until 2045/22.
Patrol R five crosses over by Sunderland
from Sullom Voe as follows. from 1400/22
until 1800/22 Aircraft to land Reykjavik.
(C. in C., Rosyth 2120/21)
Following patrols to reach Norwegian Coast
at dawn tomorrow. ~~TREST, STAB, BERT, STAB~~
~~HORNEL~~. (C. in C., Rosyth 2130/21)

Thames
Estuary

Fighter A/C despatched to assistance of
6 ships ashore B7 Buoy (Nore W/T 1818/21)

Bomber Squadrons.
Identification
Marks of
H.M. Ships

Three Bomber Squadrons may be sent to
attack enemy Battle Cruiser reported in
S.O. Force H 1830Z/20 if located.
In this event the special identification
marks to aircraft consisting of a
single Red Bar fore and aft is to be
displayed by H.M. Ships. (A.C.N.S. (H)
0221/21)

Brest
Lorient
St. Nazaire

A PL/G22/21/3.
C One Blenheim of 236 Squadron, Cloud
cover and weather permitting, is to
carry out visual R/C of Brest, Lorient,
and St. Nazaire at first light tomorrow.
(A.C.H.Q., Plymouth 1920/21 to St. Eval)

Dutch Coast.
M/V's and one
Minesweeper
attacked.

1. Day 20/3 four Blenheims carried out a
sea sweep and attacked the following
vessels off the Dutch Coast:- A Convoy
of 15 to 20 anchored ships of varying
sizes, a ship of about 3,000 tons marked
with a Swastika accompanied by 7 trawler
type vessels of about 2,000 tons each.
In the latter case near misses were
observed with the first and last bombs and
it is thought likely that two bombs scored
direct hits.

/A Dutch.....

War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

HOME COMMANDS

British Air Activity

Dutch Coast.
M/V's and one
Minesweeper
attacked-Contd.

A Dutch barge of about 100 tons and a minesweeper of 200 tons with sweeps out were also attacked with bombs and machine gun fire.
(H.Q.B.C., 2332/21)

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

Plymouth
Air Raids.

Plymouth attacked by about 100 enemy aircraft between 2035 and 0045. Estimated more than 100 H.E. and many thousands of incendiary bombs dropped, mainly in centre of city. Over 80 fires started many still burning. Damage to Naval establishments as follows.
Casualties.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 0251/21).
Air raid on night of 20/21 caused following damage. Details.

OCTOPUS and
HOPPER
W.36.
damaged.

OCTOPUS "W.13". Damage by blast to machinery in engine room including general service pump casting, main feed and pipe, main inlet and bilge pipes etc. HOPPER W.36. Slight damage by incendiary bomb.
(S.C.E. Devonport, 1718/21).

Convoy
F.N.Even.

Even Numbered
F.N. Convoy S. of Tyne being shadowed in 52° N., 1° 44'E.
(WALLACE 1416/21).

Convoy
E.N. Odd.

Fighter aircraft have been despatched to assistance of ~~MIGHT~~ "night".
(Rosyth 1616/21).

S.S. MILLISLE
ex LONDON II.
See 22.3.41. Page 720.

Enemy planes attacking ship two miles West of Helwick. (See BR 1337).
(Plymouth W/T 1809/21).
Sailed Rescue tug GOLIATH to assist.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven, 2309/21).

Clyde
Air Raid.
damage.

My 2314/20. Repairs to pipe lines and clearing of basins are proceeding satisfactorily. River is now open without restriction No further damage to ships reported.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow, 2305/21).

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

Liverpool.

Cancel my 1400/16. Port opened 0700.
(F.O.I.C. Liverpool, 0701/21).

Operation
S.N.69.

Arrival Port Z.A. R.A.(M) in SOUTHERN PRINCE, MENESTHEUS, PORT QUEBEC, AGAMEMNON, SCOTT, CASTLETON, ST. MARYS, LANCASTER, CHARLESTON.
(TRELAWNEY, 0759/21).

Eastern
Channel
Clearance
Sweep.

Mine clearance operations 20/3.
M.S.1. in Q.Z.X. 315 clearance extends to line joining following positions.
Three mines cut in position from D. buoy as follows.

M/S trawlers in Q.Z.X. 313 cleared 4 and a half cables each side of line joining following positions.
Nothing found.
(V.A.Dover, 1213/21).

River
Thames.

Cancel my 1032/20. Navigation on River Thames may be resumed as from 1300 today.
(F.O.I.C. London, 1255/21).

Off
Deptford.
CHARLIGHT
and 3
barges
sunk. (See BR1337)

At 1000/20/3/41. 75 H.P. diesel tug CHARLIGHT towing six empty iron barges passed over mine off Deptford Victualling Yard. CHARLIGHT and three barges sank. Casualties. Stopped all traffic from Tower Bridge to Barking Creek. Swept this area with skids LL sweep and S.A. gear with negative result. Traffic resumed 1300 today.
(F.O.I.C. London, 1300/21).

B.S.52.

Intend TEVIOT BANK, KITTIWAKE, and LA MELPOMENE to sail from Spurn Point at 1600/22 and take departure from 20 F. Buoy at 0600/23 returning to 20.F. Buoy and thence to Humber. Laying will begin 0745/23.
(S.O. M/L Immingham, 1550/21).

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

691

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

Bristol
Channel.

At 1000/21, Mine exploded by QUENAN off
Tail Patch Buoy. Details.
(N.O.I.C. Avonmouth, 1710/21).
At 0936/21 a Red Mine exploded by S.A.
Gear 52° Flatholm Light 3.85 miles.
(N.O.I.C. Swansea, 1801/21).
At 0842/21 two mines exploded as follows
off St. Ann's Head.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven, 1803/21).
One magnetic mine detonated 124° Great
Castle Head Low Light 18.4 cables.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven, 1813/21).

HALO.

(British 2365 tons). At 1830 proceeding
alongside Bekton No.1 pier opposite
Magaret Ness, exploded mine and sank 200
feet off No.1 Pier. Four killed.
Sweeping has been resumed. Positions of
explosions well outside channel.
(F.O.I.C. London, 1915/21).
later refloated & will be beached (Lloyds 13.8.41).

21.3.1941.
Friday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Reasons for
M/V's sailing
from
Gothenburg.

Your 1434/20.

(1) Thaw in Belts and probable opening of Kiel Canal are main reasons for ships departure.

Condition
of Swedish
Navy.

Contributory cause may be opening of Stettin also clear of (?ice) certain North Sea ports after relatively slack period of restricted traffic.

(2) Vessels between two and six thousand tons. Destination is only communicated to Masters after departure, but most probable majority of vessels bound for North Sea ports.

(3) Swedish Fleet's degree of readiness. (N.A.Stockholm, 1209/21 to D.N.I.)

Norwegian
Whalers.
TANNENFELS.

Norwegian whale factory ships OLE WEGGER PELAGOS and SOLGLIMT and Tanker SANDFJORD are believed to have been captured in South Atlantic and may be returning to Western French port; also German TANNENFELS which left Kismayu on 30th January. Probable route is between 030° and 040° West as far as 044° - 046° North thence to destination. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1317/21 to D.5.)

3. M/V's.

3 Merchant Vessels steering 180° in 58° 05'N., 06° 28'W. at 1410. (F.O.S. 1509/21 to STURGEON).

Suspicious
ship.

Large merchant vessel about 9000 tons flying Swedish flag sighted by air patrol at 1717Z in 61° 50'N., 22° 28'W. course 220° speed 10 knots. description. Nothing known of arrival of such a ship in Icelandic waters and behaviour suspicious. (F.O.Iceland, 2131/21 to ? V.A.N.P.) See page. 723.

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.

Friday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

Op: "Winch"
(Hurricanes
for Malta.)

Sailed SHEFFIELD, ARGUS, MAIDSTONE, DUNNOTTAR CASTLE, NAPIER, NIZAM, OTTAWA, GARLAND, HIGHLAND MONARCH, and LARGS BAY in accordance with my 1620.
(N.O.I.C. Greenock, 1941/21).

W.S.7.

W.S. seven is delayed. COLOMBIA is to escort ORONTES and REINA DEL PACIFICO to Clyde.
(C.in C. W.A. 1751/21).
Admiralty's 1746/9. Sailing of W.S.7. is postponed at least 24 hours.
(D.O.D.(H) 1843/21).

E.C.Convoys.

If you concur propose that routeing of E.C.Convoys should be undertaken by N.C.S.O. Thames.
(C.in C. Nore, 1058/21 to C.in C. Rosyth).

GLENSHIEL Convoy.

For ships in GLENSHIEL convoy only. All orders regarding making a rendezvous are cancelled. Proceed independently at best speed to Halifax, Bermuda or Trinidad.
(A.C.N.S.(T) 1511/21).

Navigation Lights.

To be burnt at full brilliance in following areas. (D.T.D. 1808/21).

Routeing in Irish Sea.

It is proposed to discuss routeing of merchant shipping in Irish Sea with a view to obtaining maximum security against air attack at a meeting at Admiralty at 1500/25. Representatives of Coastal and fighter commands may attend.
(A.C.N.S.(T) 1923/21).

Procedure For capital ships, escorting slow convoys.

(1st S.L. 2234/21 to RODNEY, KING GEORGE V).

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

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CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

Unknown
Vessel.

Ashore on Shipwash Bank 0714/21.
(Scarborough W/T 0751/21).
(N.Foreland, Recd., 0824/21), (0858/21).

Thames
Estuary.
6 ships
ashore,
DICKY,
DASHWOOD.

Proceed forthwith to vicinity of B.7 buoy where 6 ships are ashore.
(C.in C. Nore, 1439/21 to VERDUN).
Your 1531. Steamships ARANMORE, CORMORANT, and SOLHAVN now proceeding Southend with instructions to anchor at dark. Steamship VESTLAND proceeding Harwich. Steamships DICKY and DASHWOOD still aground but likelihood of coming off.

(VERDUN, 1740/21).
Report situation. Tugs to remain during night. If they are unable to approach ships you should endeavour to tow and order auxiliary patrol ships to assist.
(C.in C. Nore, 1841/21 to GUILLEMOT).
My 1838. VERDUN, GUILLEMOT and (Corrupt group) standing by s.s. DASHWOOD. Request permission for H.M.S. VERDUN to proceed and anchor Barrow Deep at dark.
(VERDUN, 1912/21).

VERDUN anchor in swept channel and proceed to Sheerness at daylight to fuel.

GUILLEMOT is to stand by stranded ship.
(C.in C. Nore, 2003/21).

CATTISTOCK is to afford cover to ships stranded in Longsand Head from daylight 22nd subsequently escorting tugs not required for towing to Sheerness. Attempts to refloat are being made at 0800.

GUILLEMOT now stands by. Code word ~~ALPHA~~ "Alpha".

(C.in C. Nore, 2101/21 to CATTISTOCK).
ST. CLEARS is to proceed forthwith with one armed trawler as escort to assistance of six ships ashore near B.Seven Buoy, Barrow Deep.

(C.in C. Nore, 1601/21).

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Raider Situation.

North Atlantic.

SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU probably attacked 2 ships 550 miles S.E. of Newfoundland (approx. 40° N., 43° W) on 15/3. One other vessel made QQQQ so possibly an armed merchant raider was co-operating.

On 16/3 Battle cruisers attacked three ships 300 miles E. by S. from Newfoundland. (Approx. 45° N., 45° W.) GNEISENAU and a fleet tanker were sighted by RODNEY, but escaped in the darkness.

BIANCA
SAN CASIMIRO.

On 20/3 Battle Cruisers were sighted by an aircraft from Force H. 550 miles W.N.W. Cape Finisterre 46° 50' N., 21° 25' W. but weather conditions prevented night shadowing or attack. Two prizes were intercepted, one having been captured S.E. of Newfoundland on 15/3.

On 20/3 D/F indicated a unit south of Cape Verdes. Identity unknown.

South Atlantic.

Vague D/F indications of unit between Freetown and Pernambuco on 16/3. Possibly a supply ship as similar indications 19/2, 23/2, 6/3.

Indian Ocean.

RAMB II, last located at Massawa 21/2. Reported by C.in C. N.E.I. between Celebes and New Guinea on 12/3 may be proceeding to Japan, not known if armed. Unidentified warship reported by C.in C. N.E.I. at Dilli, Timor, on 12/3.

Pacific Ocean.

No information.

ADMIRAL
SCHEER.

No information. If she is returning to Germany at 15 knots could have reached 56° N.
(D.D.I.C. 1813/21).

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War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic

18 C.S.

My 2250/20 Course altered to 250° to (corrupt group) your 2247/20 present best speed 16 knots. (F.O. 18 C.S., 0010/21 to Admty.)

FEARLESS

Return to Gibraltar with moderate despatch with destroyers in company unless otherwise ordered by S.O. Force H. Pass through 036° (710') N., 008° 00' W. (F.O.C.N.A. 0012/21 to FEARLESS) See also South Atlantic, FEARLESS to detach destroyers to assist MALAYA.

Port Etienne
DELPHINIUM

Reported that U-Boats make use of Port Etienne (21° N., 17° W) as a fuelling base. DELPHINIUM is to inspect the harbour as she passes without entering territorial waters. If a U-Boat is discovered inside territorial waters report is to be made and a patrol established to prevent her escape. If nothing is discovered DELPHINIUM is to continue her voyage to Freetown. (D.O.D. (F) 0013/21 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Orange
Shipments

My 1953/8. It now transpires that a large proportion of the orange shipments will have to be lifted from Burriana and Castellon. Approval has been given for these ports to be used subject to the restriction of not more than two ships to be in the area at one time. (D.T.D. 0123/21 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Enemy Unit

Bearings on 1204 Kc/s at 1841 G.M.T. indicate unidentified enemy unit in area 120 miles radius from 47° N., 35° W. (D.D.I.C., 0154/21)

Enemy
Surface Craft

D/F bearings at 0058 B.S.T./21 indicates enemy surface craft at 1841/20 D/F indicates unidentified enemy unit in area of 120 miles radius from 047° N., 035° W., (F.O.C.N.A. 0410/21)

S.L. 67.....

War Diary21.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSNorth Atlantic-Contd.S.L. 67.

Unless shadowing the enemy A/S escort for S.L. 67 is to return to convoy. Ships unable to complete passage with convoy due to shortage of fuel are to part company when necessary and return to base. (1st S.L. 1038/21 to VETERAN HAVELOCK, HESPERUS, HURRICANE, WOLSEY, MANSFIELD, CHELSEA, VERITY.) My 1038/21. C. in C., W.A. is requested to give any further instructions he considers necessary. (D.O.D. (H) 1040/21 to C. in C., W.A.) *See also next page*

EXMOUTH

United States Red Cross ship EXMOUTH sailed New York 16/3 March for Marseilles via Gibraltar E.T.A. Gibraltar 31/3. Description. Route. (F.O.C.N.A. 1155/21)

Your 0801/21 to F.O.C.N.A. only. It may not be practicable for you to fuel from MALAYA and speed should be adjusted accordingly. (F.O.C.N.A., 1300/21 to FORESIGHT)

KENYA
H.G. 56.
ARETHUSA

My 1150/20 and 2145/20. KENYA is to join convoy H.G. 56 and escort it to the Clyde Estimated p, c and s of H.G. 56 at noon/ 21 was 41° N., 20° 40' W., 352° 5½ knots routed through 50° N., 22° 45' W. ARETHUSA is to proceed to Scapa Flow unless otherwise ordered by C. in C., Home Fleet. (1st S.L. 1337/21 to ARETHUSA, C.S. 10)

FORESTER
FEARLESS

Your 0932/21 and Admiralty 0652/21. As 3 destroyers of 5th D.F. are joining Force "H" and escorting them to Gibraltar, FORESTER and FEARLESS are to be sailed to join MALAYA. (1st S.L. 1347/21 to F.O.C.N.A.) Gibraltar departure 2145 FEARLESS and FORESTER in accordance with Admty's 1347/21 and ordered to pass through 031° 40' N 015° 25' W., steering 242° at 0800Z-1/23 to R.V. with MALAYA. (F.O.C.N.A., 2230/21) (Cancelled see 0810/22)

S.L. 67.....

21.3.1941.
Friday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic-Contd.

S.L. 67

Admty. 2142/20 and 1038/21. Search from 051° 28' N., 021° 35' W., to 052° 30' N 021° 30' W., negative in visibility one to 2 miles between 0800 and 1200. Assuming S.L. 67 8 hours late expect to join 1630. VERITY (? HAVELOCK) in company. (VETERAN, 1411/21 to Admty. A.C.W.A.)

See previous page

Situation

Situation in your vicinity at 1200 G.M.T./21
2. Convoy S.L. 68 21° N., 25° W., to be dispersed before dark today, ships proceeding independently to Trinidad, Bermuda ^{or} of Halifax.
3. MALAYA damaged by one torpedo hit leaves convoy after dispersal and steers 015° at 14 knots to R/V with destroyers from Gibraltar.
4. MAURITIUS 14° N., 19° W., steering towards convoy. SS NARKUNDA may be in company.
5. BULOLO as given in 1141/20 from C. in C., S.A.
6. CANTON leaves convoy after dispersal and proceeds towards Bermuda. (D.O.D. (F) 1833/21 to Force X)

Orders to (D) 5.

C. in C. Plymouth's 1501/21 and re Admty 0652/21 Pass through 038° 40' N., 015° 40' W., at 0800 zone (minus) one/23 steering 336° to R.V. with S.O. Force "H" in RENOWN and ARK ROYAL during daylight /23 and escort them to Gibraltar. (F.O.C.N.A. 1856/21 to Capt. (D) 5)

KENYA H.G. 56.

Your 1337. My estimated p,c and s 2000Z/21 050° 20' N., 020° 13' W., 187° 17.60% fuel remaining. Anticipate remaining with HG 56 until p.m/28 (F.O.10 C.S. 1924/21 to Admty.)

Oran DUNKERQUE

Air photographic recon. of Oran. 21/3. One DUNKERQUE class position unchanged. Three small supply ships alongside. Turrets in position but guns not visible. No submarines visible. (4) Commercial Harbour. Very little shipping. Possibly four S/M's present. (F.O.C.N.A., 2304/21 to Admty.)

War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic

MALAYA
(Torpedoed 20/3)

My 2331Z/20. One torpedo abreast "A" boiler room. Damage apparently not serious. Boiler room not flooded yet. remaining with convoy. Cannot ascertain max. speed until daylight. Have recalled MARGUERITE. (MALAYA 0055Z/21 to C. in C. S.A.)

Course 125° (MALAYA, 0100Z/21 to MARGUERITE) WISHART and VIDETTE will arrive Bathurst a.m./22, will fuel there, then proceed to assist. Your position received as 020° 02' N., 025° 55' W., course 125° 7 knots. Destroyers will not be able to escort to Gibraltar unless you fuel them but could escort to Freetown if you proceed there, fuelling Bathurst if necessary. Corvettes can also fuel Bathurst and then rejoin you. (C. in C., S.A., 0107N/21 to MALAYA)

Am returning to you. Consider have sufficient fuel remaining to escort you. MARGUERITE returning at full speed. My speed of advance 11 knots. (CROCUS, 0148Z/21 to MALAYA)

Send four Destroyers to screen MALAYA at earliest moment that their endurance will permit. (1st S.L. 0235/21 to F.O.C.N.A.) My p, c and s at 0245Z, 019° 57' N., 025° 35' W., 085° 7 knots. (MALAYA 0236Z/21 to CROCUS, MARGUERITE)

Detach 2 F class destroyers to assistance of MALAYA torpedoed at 2331Z/20 in position 020° 02' N., 025° 55' W. Report names of ships detached. (F.O.C.N.A., 0254/21 to FEARLESS)

Proceed assistance of MALAYA torpedoed in position 020° 02' N., 025° 55' W., at 2331Z/20. (F.O.C.N.A., 0300/21 to DELPHINIUM) Admty's 0235/21 and C. in C., S.A. 0107N/21 Intend to turn convoy North at daylight. Fuel both corvettes and make towards destroyers from Gibraltar. Will then disperse convoy with orders to rendezvous later with MAURITIUS. Conditions may compel me to return to Freetown. (MALAYA, 0426Z/21 to C. in C., S.A.)

/Your 0235/21.....

War Diary

21.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic-

MALAYA
(Torpedoed 20/3)
-Contd.

Your 0235/21 crossed my 0251/21 (?0254/21) FEARLESS and WRESTLER are returning to Gibraltar to fuel. FORESTER is now available but do not intend sailing her or FEARLESS unless ordered in view of C. in C., S.A.'s 0107/21. FORESIGHT and FORTUNE p,c and s at 0801 A/21 035° 42' N., 012° W., 205° ?22 knots, fuel remaining 306 tons each. (F.O.C.N.A., 0932/21 to Admty.)

Your 0932/21. Destroyers sent to Bathurst primarily in view of possibility of MALAYA proceeding to Freetown. They could not go far on way to Gibraltar without MALAYA fuelling them and are required if possible for REPULSE and W.S. 7. Have no others. (C. in C., S.A., 1029N/21 to F.O.C.N.A.)

p,c and s at 0245Z, 019° 57' N., 025° 35' W 085° 7 knots. (F.O.C.N.A. 0954/21 to DELPHINIUM, FORESIGHT, FORTUNE)

Enemy Unit

Ref. Admty message A.F. Position 20° 02' N., 25° 55' W., at 2331/20 G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 0145/21 to All B.M.S. in Area 1 and 6a) My 2318/20. Bearing on 5595 Kc/s at 0058 B.S.T. Scarborough 245/3 probably same unit. (D.D.I.C., 0156/21)

MAURITIUS

To join S.L. 68 at earliest moment that fuel endurance will permit. (1st S.L. 0217/21 to MAURITIUS)

German
LECH

Commenced loading large shipment of hides Estimated discharge of outward cargo will finish about end of month. (N.C.S.O., Rio de Janeiro 0944/21)

S.L. 69

Your 1200/21. Convoy S.L. 69 proposed time of sailing 1200N/21. (C. in C., S.A., 1051N/21 to Admty.) My 1051/21. Unless sailed today Convoy cannot sail until 1300/22. Do not at present appear to be any indication of U-Boats in Cape Verde-Freetown Area except that of those in touch with S.L. 68. (C. in C., S.A., 1141/21 to Admty.)

/My 1807/20....

MOST SECRETWar Diary21.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSSouth AtlanticS.L. 69-Contd.

My 1807/20. Report proposed time of sailing of S.L. 69. Convoy is not to sail until this is confirmed by Admty. (A.C.N.S.,(T) 1200/21 to C. in C., S.A.)

LOUIS L.D.

Reported arrived Dakar 14/3 with African troops. (S.O. (I) Freetown 1201N/21)

French Troops
Repatriation.

(N.O.I.C., Simonstown 1520b/21 to Embassy Lisbon)

SS.H ERMES, ARUBA.
(Dutch)

Overdue. Departure 26/2 due Freetown 17/3. (S.O(I) Freetown, 1610/21)

MARATHON

Have you any news of Greek MARATHON sailed Ponta Delgada 5/3. (D.T.D., 1653/21 to N.C.S.O. Freetown)

Reporting

Request you will arrange arrivals and departures of shipping and H.M. Ships from St. Helena to be reported to Admty. (D.O.D. (F) 1801/21 to C. in C., S.A.)

GUNNY
HARPALION

Overdue shipping Norwegian GUNNY due Pernambuco 14/3 from Durban and British Ship HARPALISC (?HARPALION) due Buenos Aires 17/3 from U.K. have not arrived. (S.O.I. Montevideo, 2138/21 to Admty.)

WISHART
VIDETTE

Return to Freetown forthwith. (1st S.L. 2200/21)

BIRMINGHAM
CHRISTIAN
HUYGENS

Your 2141N/19 received 1732/21. BIRMINGHAM has defects. Cannot be completed before a.m. 24 and propose to sail CHRISTIAN HUYGENS and BIRMINGHAM respectively in accordance with your 2141/19 but 48 hours late. (F.O.I.C. Simonstown 2215B/21 to C. in C., S.A.)
Approved (C. in C., S.A., 1202/22)

/MAURITIUS.....

MOST SECRETWar Diary21.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSSouth Atlantic-Contd.MAURITIUS

Pending further instructions MAURITIUS is rejoining NARKUNDA (C. in C., S.A., 2327N/21)

MAURITIUS is to proceed to Bathurst to fuel and be ready to take over escort of S.L. 69. NARKUNDA should accompany her. (V.C.N.S., 2331/21 to C. in C., S.A.)

MediterraneanOperations of own S/M's

I much regret it was found necessary to release on broadcast the details of submarine activity given in my 0945/17 despite 3 requests on this subject. This can but make more difficult the task of Malta submarines who already have to operate under intensive air observation and it is also likely to make their rest periods in Malta more disturbed than ever. (C. in C., Med. 0436/21)

Air Operations

19/3. 6 unidentified aircraft bombed landing ground Benghazi before dawn. No damage or casualties.
Night 19/20 March 3 F.A.A. Swordfish attacked shipping Durazzo bad weather prevented assessment results but 2 explosions observed. (H.Q., R.A.F., M.E. 1151/21)

SS MAHANADA

Reported sunk. (R.A. Alexandria 1236/21)

Security of Piraeus and Volo

N.A. Athens 1540/21 See Mediterranean Volume.

Combined Services report Malta up to 1600 hours. Glenn Martin patrolled between Cape Bon and Sicily for shipping information for submarines. Photo R/C. Porto Empedocle.

DEFENDER Damaged

Ju. 88 bombed DEFENDER off Malta. 3 near misses, 1 slight casualty. Hurricanes up and escorted DEFENDER into port no engagements enemy withdrew after one run. (Malta 1620/21)

Further to my I 192, 21/3, DEFENDER sustained slight splinter damage. 6 wounded, 2 seriously. (H.Q., R.A.F., Med 0140/23)

/MAX BERENDT...

War Diary21.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterranean-Contd.MAX BERENDT
GermanCrew arrived, will sail 23/3 or 24/3
ostensibly for Valencia as bottom re-
quires cleaning. (Alicante, 1721/21)Suez CanalSituation 1900/21. Congestion cleared
at Port Said and Suez. Canal traffic
proceeding normally. (S.B.N.O., Suez,
1931/21)UTMOST
URSULAOne R/C reports three S/Ms entering
Tripoli; information received that
enemy submarines would not operate
within 20 miles of convoy routes during
passage of convoys. This indicates
intended S/M activity. If you consider
your position compromised by air R/C or
attack, change area immediately to
UTMOST area P 034° 00' 011° 30' 360° 35 40
URSULA area L two. Return to original
area if subsequently compromised.
Maintain W/T silence throughout patrol.
(Comdr. (S) 12023/21 to UTMOST, URSULA)SAVONA
BELLONAArrival German steamer SAVONA
Departure German steamer BELLONA for
Marseilles (Valencia, T.H.I. 2050/21)

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

ILLUSTRIOUS.

S.U. 2. (Sec. 12.668)

Your 2237/20. Request time of R/V be amended to 0500Z/23.
(ILLUSTRIOUS 0007/21 to S.B.N.O. Suez).
Your 0007/21 approved.
(S.B.N.O. Suez, 0356/21 to ILLUSTRIOUS.)

Dhows.
Mogadiscio.

22 Dhows ranging from 14 to 99 tons are at Mogadiscio. All Italian owned and coming from Alula and Dante Areas.
(Particulars).
(C.in C. E.I. 0712Z/21).

EAGLE'S
aircraft.

My 1208/20. ? R.A.F. can accommodate, ration, refuel and rearm with bombs all EAGLE's aircraft at Port Sudan. Request 12 be flown to Port Sudan as soon as possible.
(C.in C. E.I. 1122/21 to C.in C. Med.)

S.S. SPEYBANK.

Your 0514/11 advise firm SPEYBANK considerably overdue presumed lost.
(D.T.D. 1412/21 to C.in C. E.I.)

S.S. BHUTAN.

Asking whereabouts; with important military stores for Malaya.
(D.O.D.(F) 1756/21).

Assab
bombed.

Bombing 12 Blenheim I's 6,000 lbs Assab. 6,000 lbs. Diredawa.
(G.H.Q. Aden, 1830/21).

America and West Indies.

D/F bearings
for U.S.A.

My 2227/19. Request approval to issue U.S. Authorities with D/F bearing code and recoding tables.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1456/21 to Admty).

Convoy S.L.
68.

Following has been broadcast to ships in S.L. 68 which has been ordered to disperse and R/V later. Begins: All orders regarding making a R/V are cancelled. Proceed independently at best speed to Halifax Bermuda or Trinidad. Ends.
(1st S.L. 1507/21 to C.in C. A.W.I. S.A. etc.)

WAR DIARY.

21.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

CANTON.

My 1507/21. Use every endeavour to pass Admiralty instructions visually to ships of convoy S.L.68.

2. Leave area at noon/22, and proceed to Bermuda spending as much time searching for enemy supply ships in area 24° N., to 28° N., 38° W. to 42° W. as fuel will allow.

(1st S.L. 1533/21 to CANTON).

WAR DIARY.21.3.1941.
Friday.U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.CLAN OGILVY.

British 5802 tons. In convoy S.L.68.
Following has been read.
SSSS 20.04 N., 25.45 W. CLAN OGILVY
torpedoed.
(Gibraltar W/T 0052/21) (D.O.R. 22/3).

FRANCHE COMTE.
(torpedoed
16/3).

Proceed forthwith to assistance of
FRANCHE COMTE off Sanda Island at 0332
proceeding to Greenock with BLUEBELL
standing by.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0440/21 to SALVONIA
TENACITY.

FERM
VENETIA
(torpedoed
16/3).

Tug will tow FERM stern first when possible
(PETUNIA, 1001/21).
BLUEBELL arrived with 67 survivors from
VENETIA and FERM.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1302/21).
ZWARTE ZEE proceeding towards Butt of
Lewis. FERM in 061° 30' 009° 30'.
(PRUDENT 1705/21).
FERM has sunk. Return to base in company
through Minches. PETUNIA and WELLARD
have been ordered to escort you.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 2150/21 to ZWARTE ZEE,
PRUDENT).

Submarines
Reported.

0854.

D/F indications at 0531 B.S.T. of U/B to
Eastward, of Shetlands.
(D.D.I.C. 0854/21).

1156 G.M.T.

U/Boat sighted 1156 G.M.T. in 047° N.,
010° W. steering westward.
(F.O.(B) 1406/21 to UNBEATEN, TIGRIS,
UNION). (C.in C. Plymouth 1641/21 to
forces concerned).

S.L.67.
Shadowed.

It is probable that S.L.67 is being
shadowed by U/Boat.
(C.in C. W.A. 1455/21 to DOUGLAS etc.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.21.3.1941.
Friday.U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.1750
S.L.67 or
KENYA
reported.D/F at 1750/21 indicates that convoy S.L.
67 or KENYA was reported by U/Boat.
(D.D.I.C. 1832/21).1747 G.M.T.
MALAYA,
reported.D/F indications at 1747/21 G.M.T.
suggest that MALAYA may have been reported
by a U/Boat.
(D.D.I.C. 2025/21).1535
G.M.T.Admty. message A.F. 51° 42'N., 18° 55'W.
at 1535/21 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 2343/21).Estimated
U/Boat
Dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1413/21).

Submarines
Attacked.By LA PAMPA
23/2.Following from Baltimore. Master British
ship LA PAMPA in drydock reports marks
on bottom indicates attempt to ram U/Boat
when convoy (Loch Ewe 20/2) was attacked
23/2 ships 59.26N., 21.08 W. may have
been successful.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1044/21).By L
CAMELLIA.
AAm attacking enemy submarine 52° 30'N.,
18° W.
(CAMELLIA, 2345/21).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Home Commands.Search for
enemy battle
cruisers.

Aircraft R/C of the Biscay Ports today has been inconclusive owing to low visibility, and St. Nazaire was the only port covered; at 1951 this evening there was no further news of the German Battle Cruisers. UNION, UNDAUNTED, and TIGRIS are to be disposed to cover the Ports where they now are, and are to be joined by CACHALOT on completion of her minelaying operation the orders for which have been amended; and a force of about 13 submarines is to occupy an arc of some 240 miles radius from St. Nazaire between 44° and 48° North and is to be reinforced by further submarines of the 6th, 7th and 9th Flotillas as these arrive.

NELSON, HOOD, QUEEN ELIZABETH are returning to Scapa, and C.S.18 in EDINBURGH arrived in the Clyde at 0731 this morning.

British Air Activity.Search for
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.

R/C of Brest and Lorient was ordered during moonlight this morning and of these ports and St. Nazaire at first light.

Bad weather caused a reduction in the number of escorts for convoys today.

Bomber Command aircraft made a heavy attack on Lorient last night.

Coastal Command aircraft today attacked and set on fire a ship off Egersund, probably causing total loss.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Enemy Air Activity.Renewed
attack on
Plymouth.

Plymouth was again heavily attacked, from 2039 last night until 0015 this morning, many thousand Incendiary Bombs and more than 100 H.E. Bombs being dropped and the centre of the city is reported as largely destroyed. Slight damage was caused in the Dockyard and some damage was done to the Naval Buildings, but Naval casualties so far reported are only 3 killed and 11 injured.

M/S trawler ASAMA was sunk in Plymouth sound by a direct hit during the air-raid last night; the M/S Trawler COMPUTATOR was damaged when 3 minesweepers were attacked today off Portland; and the L.L. Drifter JEANNIE LEASK was badly damaged at Brightlingsea. Two bombs were dropped on Convoy F.N.39 at 1811 today off Lowestoft, but no damage was done, and H.M. Trawler DERBY COUNTY was unsuccessfully bombed this evening off the Smalls and S/Trawler SAINT FINTAN was sunk.

One or two bombs were dropped harmlessly on the Shetlands tonight.

Mining.

Four Hampdens last night laid mines at the mouth of the Gironde.

A few enemy minelaying aircraft operated off the South West Coasts last night.

/Mines were

WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Mining. (Contd.)

Mines were seen to drop off Harwich at 1700 and 2 explosions were heard. The Port was closed at 1731. Oban was opened at 1740.

Shipping and Convoys.

NELSON is to escort W.S.7 to Freetown to free Force H for operation against German battle cruisers. EDINBURGH will also form part of the ocean escorts.

North Atlantic.

French Trawler ^{POCHOLLE} PIERRE ROCHOLLE was intercepted this morning 40 miles East of the Canary Islands and was sent into Gibraltar under armed guard.

Watch for enemy battle cruisers.

Force H is to fuel at Gibraltar as soon as possible and patrol to westward of the Bay of Biscay to intercept SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU should they leave. FEARLESS, FORESTER, VELOX and WRESTLER are to escort Force H.

/S.O. Force H.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.North Atlantic. (Contd.)Operations
of enemy
battle
cruisers.

S.O. Force H. considers that BIANCA and other captured ships may have been used as a searching force during passage of the enemy battle cruisers to occupied France, to locate convoys. The ships fell into German hands, intact and the Germans used ships' wireless constantly to communicate. He suggests that masters should be instructed to scuttle when enemy character of ship stopping them is definitely established or if this is not desirable they should be prepared to put their wireless sets out of action. S.C. Force H considers that if concealed arms had been available on board the crews might have recaptured the BIANCA and SAN CASMIRO.

South Atlantic.

Force X (S/M SEVERN) reported at 1152/22 that she was shadowing an enemy merchant raider in position 12.55 N., 27.10 W., about 840 miles W.N.W. of Freetown. MAURITIUS, whose noon position was 13.30 N., 23.20 W., was ordered to investigate. At 1845Z/22, the enemy was reported to have altered course to W., SEVERN had lost contact and abandoned the Chase owing to insufficient fuel. It is possible that the ship sighted by SEVERN is British S.S. SACRAMENTO VALLEY. MAURITIUS is to join S.L.69. REPULSE, not now required for this convoy, will escort FURIOUS to Gibraltar.

FURIOUS reported operation "Summer" completed at 0945 today, when all Hurricanes had been flown ashore at Takoradi. She requires 7 days in harbour for defects on arriving Freetown on 25/3.

WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean.

Enemy aircraft bombed the Grand Harbour today, causing damage to buildings in the dockyard. A few bombs were dropped on Malta this evening but no Naval damage is reported.

Tanker MARIE MAERSK arrived at Suda Bay today in charge of a navigating party from WATERHEN, ship had been bombed* and was on fire; the fire was later extinguished but ship is damaged and has lost at least 1000 tons of oil.

*in Kithira Channel, in company, by 6 JU 885, 21/3.
(AN.21)

East Indies.

LEANDER, which arrived at Mauritius early this morning, is to establish a patrol off Tamatave, Madagascar, from a.m. /24 to try and intercept the French VILLE DE VERDUN, which passed Sunda Strait on 13/3 for Madagascar and carries important persons of Free French sympathies.

A/C from HERMES and ENTERPRISE searched the southern atolls of the Maldive Islands today.

WAR DIARY.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

SITUATION REPORT.

America and West Indies.

MALAYA (torpedoed on 20/3) is proceeding to Trinidad, and may require temporary repairs there before proceeding to a U.S. port.

S.S. LORETO, on arrival at Bermuda today reported distress messages, not previously received at Bermuda, from 3 ships gunned on 16/3, all of which were jammed. C.in C. A.W.I. suggests that in such circumstances ships and coast stations should at once shift frequency and repeat the distress signal.

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

8th S/M
Flotilla.
Proposed
Patrol in
Bay of
Biscay.

In view of the present disposition of enemy heavy ships it is proposed that the submarines of the 8th Flotilla at Gibraltar should cease Convoy Escort Duties and instead be employed to reinforce the submarine patrols in the Bay of Biscay. In view of the number of submarines about to be employed in this area propose F.O.(S) should assume operational control of the 8th Submarine Flotilla. (F.O.S. 1109/22).

Your 1109/22. Reasons you put forward are fully appreciated but in view of the vulnerability of these convoys submarines must continue escort duties. (V.C.N.S. 1619/22 to F.O.S.).

R.N.A. Station
at Campbeltown.

R.N. Air Station Campbeltown is to commission as an independent command under the administration of R.A.N.A.S. on 1/4, 1941. (R.A.N.A.S. 1132/22).

PATIA.

Your 1758/21. Assuming all equipment for W/T and R.D.F. Type 79 and for Catapult is delivered by end of March PATIA can be completed by mid April. Work is proceeding to finish earliest possible date which will be reported more precisely within a week. (F.O.I.C. Tyne 1303/22).

Bay of Biscay
Proposed S/M
dispositions.

A. The following are my proposals for submarine dispositions in the Bay of Biscay.
B. Three Submarines, and CACHALOT after her lay, to be disposed now to cover near approach to the Biscay Port where the enemy is located.
(C) By about 28th March this force to be replaced by about 13 submarines disposed on an arc of approximately 240 miles radius from St. Nazaire between latitudes 44° N. and 48° N. The Southern position will be occupied first.
(D) As 8th Flotilla Submarines arrive in the area they will reinforce the southern end of this line.
(E) As further submarines of 7th, 9th, and 6th Flotillas arrive they can be used to reinforce this line. (F.O.S. 1306/22).
Your 1306/22 & A.M. 1619/22.
Approved. (V.C.N.S. 1820/22 to F.O.S.).

Flag of
C.in C. H.F.
to QUEEN
ELIZABETH.

Intend to shift my Flag to QUEEN ELIZABETH p.m. tomorrow. Request following arrangements be made for accommodation for about 10 days. (C.in C. H.F., 1503/22 and 1507/22).

/ Flag of C.in C. H.F.

715

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy. (Contd.)

Flag of
C.in C. H.F.
to QUEEN
ELIZABETH.
(contd.)

Flag of C.in C. H.F. is being transferred from NELSON to QUEEN ELIZABETH p.m./23 but Secretariat, Administration Staff, and Cypher Staff will be accommodated on shore at Hatston. From 1200/23 request that only signals for C.in C. H.F. of priority immediate or above may be passed to C.in C. H.F. by W/T on station waves or via Scapa W/T. All other signals should be passed as follows. (C.in C. H.F. 1959/22).

Identification
of A/C by
Ships.

My 1226/18 applies also to unescorted ships. (C.in C. W.A. 1710/22).

Convoy Routes
in Cardigan
Bay.

Your 1923/21. Representatives from this Headquarters Nos. 9 and 10 Groups and N.C.A.S. will attend Conference. (H.Q.F.C. 1845/22 to Adty.).

Movements.

KELLY
KELVIN
JACKAL

KELLY, KELVIN, and JACKAL are now not required to proceed to Gibraltar. (A.C.N.S.(H) 0109/22).

HOOD.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
NIGERIA.

Admiralty 0043/22. Am proceeding in HOOD with INGLEFIELD, ELECTRA, ESKIMO to refuel in Clyde. E.T.A. about 2300Z/22. QUEEN ELIZABETH with ECHO and ECLIPSE detached to Scapa. (F.O. 1st B.C.S. 0425Z/22).
Cancel my 0425Z. Am proceeding to Scapa. My position course and speed (are) at 0730Z 056° 15' N. 013° 53' W., 055°, 18 knots. (F.O.C. 1st B.C.S. 0731Z/22).
E.T.A. Scapa in HOOD with QUEEN ELIZABETH and 4 destroyers 0600/23. Gate 0650. ECLIPSE detached to Londonderry for fuel. (F.O.C. 1st B.C.S. 1445/22.).
Scapa arrival NIGERIA. (A.C.O.S. 1938/22).

EDINBURGH.

Arrived C.S.18 in EDINBURGH. Also D.6. in SOMALI with BEDOUIN, MATABELE and MASHONA. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 0731/22).

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Movements. (Contd.)

PRINCE OF WALES. Expect to pass Dunnet Head westward about 0600/25. Request firing area for 14 inch full calibre gun trials. Intend to defer preliminary full power steam trials if suitable escort is not available. Request if possible I may be informed of this by 1600 Monday, 24th.

(PRINCE OF WALES 0900/22).

NELSON.

Expect arrive in NELSON with three destroyers at 2359/22. Request Hoxa Gate 0045/23. (C.in C. H.F. 1147/22 to A.C.O.S.).

KASHMIR.
KIPLING.

Arrived 1230/22. (C.in C. Plymouth 1345/22).

DIDO

1436 sailed DIDO in accordance with my 1149/21. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1450/22).

16th D.F.

C.in C. Nore's 1109/22. Intend to sail 1700, speed 25 knots. Request fighter protection. (D.16 1455/22).

Operations.

Search for SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU.

My 2101. Proceed to patrol southward of Belle Isle on assumption enemy is making for St. Nazaire (F.O.S. 0019/22 to TIGRIS).

HOOD.
NIGERIA.

My 0040 to S.O. Force H.

If HOOD has sufficient fuel she should proceed now to patrol to the westward of the Bay of Biscay and remain until arrival of Force H. If any cruisers are available they should join HOOD. (1st S.L. 0043/22 to C.in C. H.F.).

Admiralty's 0043/22. Consider HOOD should complete with fuel. She has had no opportunity to work up after long refit and many changes in personnel. Consider 48 hours most desirable. NIGERIA is returning with NELSON to Scapa to refuel. (C.in C. H.F. 0431/22).

717

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Search for SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU. (Contd.)

5th D.F.

Be outside 20 miles from French Coast at daylight and then return Plymouth if not in contact with enemy heavy ships.

Weather unlikely to be suitable for fighter escort. (C.in C. Plymouth 0213/22 to Capt. D.5.).

Patrolling off Brest 0150 to 0600. Nothing sighted at Ushant, and Armen lights were on. E.T.A. Plymouth 1245. (Capt. D.5 0803/22). KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL, arrived 1150/22. (C.in C. Plymouth 1337/22).

Bay of Biscay

Establishment of S/m Patrol.

OBERON)
TUNA)
TORBAY)
TAKU)
H.31)
H.32)
H.33)
H.34)
H.44)
H.50)
L.26)
L.27)
O.9)
O.10)
O.24)

Movements. (S.7. 0055/22, 0101/22, 0359/22, 0433/22, 1104/22, 1633/22, 1739/22, 2032/22)
(F.O.S. 0136/22, 1131/22)
(WESTERN ISLES 0700/22, 1005/22)
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow 1404/22)
(S.3 1411/22)
(C.in C. Nore 1526/22)
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1748/22)
(C.in C. Portsmouth 2012/22)

URGE
SOKOL
SUNFISH
SEALION
UNDAUNTED
for Portsmouth.

*Note: Urge took up part in this formation.
AGP 8/1/47*

A. Cancel all previous orders for patrols and A/S exercises.
B. URGE, SOKOL, SUNFISH, SEALION, UNDAUNTED are to be sailed as soon as possible for Portsmouth Eastabout.
C. C.in C. Rosyth, C.in C. Nore and V.A.Dover are requested to arrange escorts or passage with convoys as required.
Suggest submarines should proceed unescorted and submerged by day after passing Dungeness. (F.O.S. 1142/22 and 1452/22).
F.O.S. 1142/22. LEDA is to be sailed from Aberdeen A.M./23 to rendezvous with S/M's UNDAUNTED and SOKOL at 1100/23 in 090° May Island 4½ miles. S.9 to sail UNDAUNTED and SOKOL to comply. Route.
(C.in C. Rosyth 1825/22).

UNION
UNDAUNTED
TIGRIS
CACHALOT

....

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Search for SCHARNHORST, GNEISENAU cont:

UNION
UNDAUNTED
→ TIGRIS
CACHALOT

Following is my intention.
(A) UNION, UNDAUNTED, TIGRIS will be disposed to cover Bay of Biscay ports in which enemy heavy forces are located. CACHALOT will join this force on completion of her lay for which amended orders follow.
(B) The remaining S/Ms will be disposed on the arc of circle about 240 miles radius from the Loire between 044° N. and 048° N.
(C) It is intended to maintain maximum concentration possible for short periods. (F.O.S. 1758/22).
Following patrol positions number 50 to 69 inclusive are established. (F.O.S. 2014/22).

→ Operation "European"
EUROPEAN.
(Biscay s/m patrol.)

My 1758. Operation "^{European}EUROPEAN" is to be carried out at already ordered and you are to vacate any patrol position as necessary. (F.O.S. 1759/22 to TIGRIS).

East Coast
Patrol.

M.T.B. Patrol parallel to Channel 8 miles eastward number 5 buoy from dark till daylight to night 22nd/23rd. (C.in C. Nore 1836/22).

Anti
E-Boat
Patrol.

Departure M.T.B's 22, 31, 34 and 43 at 1915. H.M.S. SUTTON at 1929. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 1945/22).

Western
Channel
Patrol.

Sailed 1930 H.M.S. KASHMIR H.M.S. KIPLING for Patrol. (C.in C. Plymouth 2137/22).

British Air Activity.

R/C of
Brest
Lorient
St. Nazaire.

- (1) Two Bs. and one Dr. were reported in position 47 degs. 17 North 07 deg. 13 West at 2021/21 Course 090 speed 20 knots.
- (2) One A/C of 22 Squadron is to recco. Brest during moonlight this morning.
- (3) One A/C of 22 Squadron is to recco. the Lorient - St. Nazaire area, arriving Lorient at 0400/22.
- (4) Three A/C of 59 squadron are to be available to carry out a visual recco. of these areas at dawn/22 if required. (A.C.H.Q. Chatham 0018/22).

/ M.V's and E-Boats
bombed.

....

War Diary.22.3.1941.
Saturday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity. (Contd.)M/V's
and E-Boats
bombed.

Day 21st March one Blenheim attacked a 6,000 ton Merchant vessel escorted by two trawlers and an E boat. The E boat was also attacked and both ships were machine gunned. The actual results were not observed, but bombs fell very close to both ships.

Another Blenheim attacked with bombs and machine gunned a tanker of 5,000 tons escorted by four destroyers. A direct hit was scored on the stern of the tanker and the rear gunner silenced the gun of an escorting vessel by machine gun fire.

One other Blenheim attacked a convoy of 10 to 15 ships near Ameland and one burst was observed very close to a 3,000 ton ship.

One Blenheim attacked two E boats 10 miles North of Borkum and a burst was seen between the two boats which were then machine gunned. Two Blenheims attacked destroyers South West of Heligoland, near misses. Besides above, three Blenheims successfully completed sweep. (H.Q.B.C. 0115/22).

Patrols.

Your 0647/22 and my 2120/21. Patrol R 4 cancelled. This Sunderland will escort you from about 1330. (C.in C. Rosyth 1024/22, to C.in C. H.F.).

My 0.663 to the War Office (? only) dated 21st March.

No reply received yet. In view of information received by 30 Wing, patrols by 98 Squadron Battle Aircraft are being carried out to-day over area detailed War Office 56997 (M.O.8) 18/3. Request very early reply as to whether patrols are required to-morrow.

(G.O.C. Iceland 1516/22 to War Office).

Patrol ~~0647~~ is now in operation until 1845. (C.in C. Rosyth 1702/22).

Your 0.663 21/3.

No patrols required 23/3. In future orders for patrols will be sent by Coastal Command. C.4. (Tels). (War Office 1900/22 to G.O.C. Iceland).

Following patrols ordered for tomorrow.

~~PROST STAB BENT~~ to reach Norwegian Coast at dawn. (C.in C. Rosyth 1944/22).

Flares and
Kites.

Snowball flares successfully operated by WANDERER without difficulty. PERIWINKLE without fitted mast has not yet succeeded in flying kite satisfactorily. Request decision may now be given re flying these kites at night when air escort may be present. (WANDERER 1832/21).

720

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

LONDON II
(British,
1260 tons)

Bombed at 1900/21 in 51° 23' 30" N.
4° 30' W. TORRENT & salvage tug GOLIATH
proceeding to stand by. On fire, abandoned.
(N.O.I.C. Swansea 0352/22).
Following received from TORRENT have searched
vicinity of wreck without finding anything
but boats and wreckage. Tug, also searching,
so far has found nothing. Consider ship must
be judged sunk.
(N.O.I.C. Swansea 0758/22).

Plymouth
Air Raid.

Plymouth attacked by more than 100 enemy
aircraft between 2039 and 0015. Estimated
more than 100 H.E. and many thousands of
incendiaries mainly in centre of City and
Milbay area. City centre including Municipal
Buildings largely destroyed. Guildhall and
many fires still burning. Damage to Naval
Establishments as follows.
Casualties, so far reported
Marines:- 1 killed, 8 injured.
Naval :- 2 killed, 3 injured.
Civil casualties estimated very roughly 450
of which 100 killed.
(C.in C. Plymouth 0405/22).

WAZIRISTAN
(Bombed 2/2)

My 0915/21. Sailing WAZIRISTAN in tow BANDIT
escorted by SPOSA 1030/22. (N.C.S.O. Kirkwall
0905/22).

Convoys "Chitty"
CHITTY and
and GUSTOM. "Custom."

Fighter protection has been sent to ^{"Chitty"}~~CHITTY~~
(S.L. Convoy) and ~~GUSTOM.~~ "Custom."
(Lyness W/T 0951/22).

ASAMA

(M/S Trawler) sunk at 2335/21 in Plymouth
Sound. Direct hit abaft funnel by bomb.
17 known survivors.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1132/22).

Convoy
F.N. Odd.

One enemy Aircraft shadowing Convoy.
My position 52° 18' N. 1° 59' E. course 018°
speed 7 knots.
(EGLINTON 1615/22).

COMPUTATOR
(M/S Trawler)

At 1230 today 3-0 Sweepers were attacked by one
H.E.111K in position 292° Portland Bill 7 miles.
Two bombs dropped and ships machine gunned.
COMPUTATOR received slight damage from machine
gun fire and two minor casualties. Ships state
they hit machine in tail which made off as two
Spitfires arrived. (F.O.I.C. Portland 1701/22).

JEANNIE LEASK. ...
(LL. Drifter)

721

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

JEANNIE LEASK.
(LL. Drifter)

Base and ship yard of Aldous Successors Ltd. attacked by enemy aircraft at 1315 today. Fore part of H.M.D. JEANNIE LEASK badly damaged. One killed, one injured. (N.O.I.C. Brightlingsea 1705/22).

East Coast.

An enemy air unit has been active today between N. Foreland and the Humber reporting shipping. Similar activity by this unit on a previous occasion was followed immediately by "E" boat operations. (D.D.I.C. 1734/22).

Convoy F.N⁺39.

1 Enemy aircraft bearing 340° height 5000 ft. my position 52° 30' N. 2° 5' E. (VERDUN 1746/22).

My 1746 1 Dornier retired northwards. (VERDUN 1757/22).

One enemy A/C bearing 320° distance 2 miles course 210° my position 52° 30' N. 2° 5' E. (VERDUN 1802/22).

Enemy bombing convoy ^{"Pilot"} ~~PILOT~~ in 52° 30' N. 2° 5' E. (VERDUN 1809/22).

My 1809. 2 bombs. (VERDUN 1811/22).

My 1811. No hits. (VERDUN 1819/22).

DERBY COUNTY.

Report: ship being bombed five miles S.W. of Smalls. No damage no casualties. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 2014/22).

Immingham
Enemy A/C
crashed.

An enemy aeroplane which flew up the river at 1900 today Saturday and then flew inland believed as far as Sheffield and then on return at 1945 was engaged by light Ak Ak at Scunthorpe and Immingham proceeded as far as Spurn Point then turned back again and on passing over Immingham at 1950 was engaged by light Ak Ak and struck a balloon barrage cable moored in the Timber Pond and crashed at 1952 close to Immingham. Two dead and one badly wounded. One prisoner at Immingham Police Station. (F.O. Humber 2206/22).

22.3.1941.^{72?}
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

ABDIEL.

ABDIEL is to be sailed forthwith for Milford Haven to embark an outfit of mines for service. Mines will be ready P.M./22.

(1st. S.L. 0023/22).

1. After embarking mines ABDIEL is to be sailed for Plymouth making the passage in dark hours.

2. ABDIEL will probably be required for an operation on night of 23rd/24th March. (V.C.N.S. 1300/22).

ABDIEL arrived.

(N.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1605/22).

My 1300/22. Intention is to lay as follows on Night 23/24. (V.C.N.S. 2216/22) See Operations Volume.

Sailed ABDIEL. E.T.A. 0700/23.

(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 2332/22).

Operation JN

(Mineral laying on Harle-
- Chester way route.)
(M/L W. 2. Section II
/ para: 17.)

My 1201/21. Sailed. (N.O.I.C. Dartmouth 0220/22).

Your 1201/21. Arrived.

(C.in C. Portsmouth 0740/22).

A.L. M/C.D. 2032/41 of 14.3.41. Operation B will be carried out by INTREPID, ICARUS, and IMPULSIVE escorted by FERNIE, TYNEDALE, and CLEVELAND to-Night.

Three M.L's from Portland will act as cover to the Westward. Short Title J.N.

(C.in C. Portsmouth 1543/22).

Thames
Estuary.

At 0040/22 one S.A. Mine detonated. Details. (Capt. M/S Sheerness 1014/22).

Z.M.E.25.

Intend leaving Milford Haven 1615 today for Z.M.E.25 to lay at midnight returning on completion about 0800 tomorrow. (PLOVER 1045/22).

LINDENHALL
(British,
5248 tons)
damaged.

At 1120/20. LINDENHALL damaged by mine supposed dropped on night of 19th instant in Victoria Docks. No casualties. Ship now resting on bottom upright considered not difficult to salve. Seven feet of water in engine room. (F.O.I.C. London, 1500/22).

Faroes
Iceland
Minefield.
Proposed
re-inforcement.

Now propose the reinforcing of Faroes to Iceland minefields should be carried out as follows, operations being in order given after completing S.N.4.

Request your early remarks. (R.A.M.L. 1619/22).

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22.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

B.S.52.

Departure TEVIOT BANK, KITTIWAKE, and LA MELPOMENE in company at 1615. (F.O. Humber 1619/22).

Harwich.

Port closed due to minelaying till 0800 tomorrow. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 1731/22).

Oban.

My 0103/13. Port now open. (N.O.I.C. Oban 1740/22).

Channel
Clearance
Sweep.

Admiralty 2003/11 and My 1309/15. In view of position of mines cut on 20/3 clearance area should be continued to Southeastward. (V.A. Dover 1815/22). Admiralty 1709/21. Search of channel one mile wide completed along following approximate centre line. No mines cut or anti-sweeping device suspected. One old floating German V mine sighted and sank, no ANTENNA float seen. (S.O. 1st M/S Flotilla 1903/22).

Operation
F.D.32.

Details. (F.O.S. 2244/22. See Operations Volume.

Enemy Intelligence.

Suspicious
Ship.

My 2131/21. Consider ship was Swedish KAAPAREN. (F.O. Iceland 0109/22). F.O.I.C. Iceland's 2131/21 KAAPAREN is estimated to be in 61° 42' N. 23° 5' W. at 1800/21 B.S.T. outward bound to Capetown. (C.in C. W.A. 0455/22 to C.in C. H.F.) *See page 692.*

Enemy Shipping.

At 1540/21, one and a half miles North East of Ameland, Blenheim observed convoy of 10 to 15 ships varying from 3,000 to 200 tons in size heading West, two pairs abreast and in line astern. At 1435 in 51° 15' N. 2° 40' E. Blenheim observed 6,000 ton cargo ship escorted by two trawlers ahead and two E boats behind heading South at 10 knots. At 1436/21 in 51° 18' N. 2° 58' E. A tanker-type vessel of 5,000 tons with one funnel aft superstructure amidships and mast forward, four escorting vessels possibly destroyers, and another large vessel ahead heading South West. (H.Q.B.C. 0115/22).

/ Enemy Tanker.

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence. (Contd.)

Enemy
Tanker.

Aircraft report one tanker and two escort vessels steering South West at 10 knots in 059° 15' N. 005° 35' E. at 0920. (F.O.S. 1102/22 to STURGEON).

Shipping off
St. Nazaire.

Air reconnaissance at 0700 reports 3 tankers 1500 tons, one M/V. 2000 tons, outside harbour of St. Nazaire. (D.D.I.C. 1251/22).

R/C of
St. Nazaire
and Brest.

Two large battleships almost certainly GNEISENAU and SCHARNHORST, accompanied by a destroyer, reported by aircraft in 47° 17' N. 7° 13' W. at 2021/21st, steering 090 degs. 20 knots. Reconnaissance today showed no large warships at St. Nazaire or Brest. Weather precludes further reconnaissance today. (D.D.I.C. 1557/22).

My 1557/22. Reconnaissance of Brest inconclusive. (D.D.I.C. 1721/22). Reconnaissance of Biscay ports to-day inconclusive owing to low visibility. There is no further news of German battle-cruisers. (D.D.I.C. 1951/22).

POLYKARP.

Following received begins. Norwegian POLYKARP now a German prize last seen 046° 20' N. 021° 30' W. at 1800Z/20 steering eastwards about 10 knots. Air search to westward of 013° 30' W. at 0900Z today failed to locate. Re-capture crew consider further prizes may be following. Ends. (C.in C. W.A. 1832/22 to FOLKESTONE, ENCHANTRESS).

War Diary.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

W.S.7,
Escort.

Decided that NELSON shall escort W.S.7 to Freetown in order to free Force H. for operations against German Battlecruisers. Probably necessary for NELSON to leave Scapa as soon as she has fuelled.

(1st S.L. 0042/22 to C.in C. H.F.).

W.S.7 is timed to sail so as to R.V. off Oversay Island at 0800.

Requested you will sail NELSON from Scapa to R.V. at that time off Oversay and inform Admiralty earliest date on which NELSON can arrive there.

On receipt of this information convoy will be sailed accordingly.

(D.O.D.(H) 1224/22 to C.in C. H.F.).

Your 1224/22. NELSON can arrive Oversay Island 0800/25 but 26th would be preferable.

(C.in C. H.F. 1450/22 to Adty.).

W.S.7 ORONTES and REINA DEL PACIFICO escorted by COLUMBIA departure Breaksea for Clyde, E.T.A. 1515/23. (N.O.I.C. Cardiff, 1623/22).

My 1746/9, 1802/14 and 1843/21.

Request you will arrange to sail W.S.7 to R/V with NELSON 270° 6 miles from Oversay Light on 25/3 at 0800 B.S.T.

(D.O.D.(H) 2027/22, to C.in C. W.A.).

Your 1450/22.

A very large percentage of troops to be carried in this convoy are now embarked waiting at ports vulnerable to air attack.

Other ships who have sailed will have their strictly limited water supply seriously reduced before leaving U.K.

Troops are urgently required in Middle East.

For these reasons it is necessary for NELSON to sail as soon as possible and it is requested you will arrange for her to R/V with Convoy on 25/3. (D.O.D.(H) 2028/22 to C.in C. H.F.).

Admty. 1746/9, Para. 1, for 22/3 read 24/3.

Para 6, NELSON and EDINBURGH will provide ocean escort to Freetown. (D.O.D.(H) 2207/22 to C.in C. W.A.).

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

BELMONT.

(Destroyer). Have been in collision with unknown merchant vessel. Holed port side abreast number one gun. Am returning to Liverpool. Position is 15 miles off Chicken Rock 330 degs. (BELMONT 0045/22). Your 0045/22. Report immediately whether M/V needs assistance. (C.in C. W.A. 0506/22, to BELMONT).

DASHWOOD.

Tugs LADY BRASSEY and LYNCH are to leave Sheerness P.M. to-day to arrive at DASHWOOD stranded in position 4 miles S.W. of Longsand Head Buoy at 1945. One Trawler conversant with Channels is to form Escort. They are to assist to Tow at High Water and again in morning if Ship does not come off. Report time of sailing so that Fighter Protection may be arranged. 2 Tugs from Harwich will also Tow. (C.in C. Nore 1220/22). Intend sailing SHELDRAKE escorting Rescue Tugs KENIA and ST. CLEARs at 1600 today, proceeding to Longsand Head to refloat S.S. DASHWOOD. Request Fighter protection till dark and again at dawn if necessary. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 1304/22). Sheerness 22nd March arrival tug LADY BRASSEY at 1145. (C.in C. Nore 1443/22). My 2101. Position of Ship Ashore 4 miles South West of Longsand Head Buoy. (C.in C. Nore 2239/21 to CATTISTOCK).

WAR DIARY.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

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FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

→ DELPHINIUM.

Your 0300/21. Request you will order DELPHINIUM to Freetown when FORESIGHT and FORTUNE join MALAYA.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 0018/22 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Force H.
Biscay
Patrol.

A.T.1347/21. Force H. is to complete with fuel at Gibraltar as soon as possible in readiness to proceed on patrol to Westward of Bay of Biscay to intercept SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU should they leave. FORESTER and FEARLESS are to be recalled to Gibraltar to assist with any other destroyers you have available in escorting Force H in and out of Gibraltar.
(1st S.L. 0040/22 to F.O.C.Force H, F.O.C.N.A)

→ FEARLESS.
FORESTER.

Return to Gibraltar with despatch. Report E.T.A.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0424/22 to FEARLESS, FORESTER).
Cancel my 2230/21. FEARLESS and FORESTER returning to Gibraltar.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0810/22).

FORESIGHT.
FORTUNE.

Return to Gibraltar report E.T.A.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0848/22 to FORESIGHT, FORTUNE).
(Reply 1111/22).

→ DELPHINIUM.

Unless in company with MALAYA and if fuel permits comply with Admiralty 0013/21. If fuel does not permit proceed Freetown or as ordered by C.in C. S.A.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0852/22 to DELPHINIUM).

8th S.F.

Re disposition. (F.O.S. 1109/22 see Policy).

→ Destroyers
to R/V.
Force H.

Intend to sail FEARLESS, FORESTER VELOX, WRESTLER to pass through position 036° 00'N., 011° 12'W. steering 290° at 0800 Zone. 1/23 to R/V with you.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1126/22 to S.O.Force H.)

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

WAR DIARY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic. (Contd.)

Destroyers
to R/V.
Force H.
(Contd.)

Departure FEARLESS, FORESTER, VELOX
WRESTLER in accordance with F.O.C.N.A.
1126/22.
(S.O.(I) Gib. 1530/22 to Admty., S.O.
Force H.)
Your 1126/22. Amend course to 330°.
Signal by 1000/23 whether conditions are
suitable for 2 aircraft to land at North
front p.m./23. Arrive gate 0600/24.
(S.O.(Force H) 1934/22 to F.O.C.N.A.)

POLYKARP.

Norwegian POLKARP now a German prize
last seen position 046° 20'N., 021° 30'W.
at 1800Z/20 steering eastward about 10
knots. Air search to westward 013° 30'W
at 0900Z/22 failed locate. Recaptured
crews consider further prizes may be
following.
(S.O. Force H., 1150/22 to Admty).

GERDA VITH
ANTARKTIS.
(German)

My 1100/14. Information about loading of
oil on GERDA VITH (? unconfirmed).
Believed to have been loaded on ANTARKTIS
in drums before she sailed night 17-18/3.
(Consul, Vigo, 1230/22). *See also next page.*

Consider-
ations
induced by
capture of
BIANCA
etc.

(1) Reference capture of BIANCA and other
ships it seems possible these were being
used as searching force during passage
to occupied France to locate convoy and
route being used, Battle Cruiser being
stationed in rear to Westward.

(ii) Ships were allowed to fall into
German hands intact and Germans used ships
wireless constantly to communicate.

(iii) Suggest masters should be instructed
to scuttle when enemy character of ship
stopping them is definitely established.
If this not desirable wireless operators
should be prepared to destroy wireless
or remove and secret essential components.

(iv) It seems possible in the case of
BIANCA and SAN CASIMIRO that if concealed
arms had been available on board ships
might have been recaptured. Prize
crews consisted of merchant service
officers and men for most part which armed
and determined men might well have over-
come.

(S.O. Force H, 1745/22).

WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic. (Contd.)RENOWN.

Your 0040/22. RENOWN required 36 hours in harbour to repair brick work and other engine and boiler defects. Request if ship required to proceed on completion of fuelling.
(S.O. Force H, 1922/22 to Admty).

ANTARKTIS.

German tanker ANTARKTIS arrived Ferrol 18/3 presumed from Vigo with approx. 8000 tons of oil. Entered dry dock for painting and cleaning and is now in harbour ready to sail.
(Guyatt, Coruna, 1930/22). *See previous page*

South Atlantic.S.L.69.

To sail 1300/22. Route. MAURITIUS to escort, REPULSE not required.
(V.C.N.S. 0009/22 to C.in C. S.A.)
Your 0009/22. Owing to length of route all coal-burning ships (22) will have to drop out, leaving 19 for convoy. Coal-burning ships if routed close to Verde Islands and to west would have 3 days margin and if sailed two days later giving same time of arrival any point could top up to make 4 days margin.
(C.in C. S.A. 0629/22 to Admty).
Speed and escort dates if coal burners drop out.
(C.in C. S.A. 0631N to Admty).
Your 0009/22 and my 0631/22. S.L.69 cannot be re-organised in time to sail the 19 ships 22/3 but whole convoy can be sailed today by shorter route closing South and West of Cape Verde Islands.
(C.in C. S.A. 0959/22 to Admty).

Enemy Unit.

D/F bearings at 2010 and 2023 G.M.T./21 indicate enemy surface ship or U/Boat within 80 miles dead reckoning 007° N., 025° W. Reliable 70%.
(C.in C. S.A. 0031N/22 to S.A. Squadron, Force X.)

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (Contd.)MAURITIUS,
S.L.69.To proceed to pick up MARKUNDA and
comply with Admty 2331/21.
(C.in C. S.A. 0103N/22 to MAURITIUS).*See also next page.*FAUSTO
Italian.At Montevideo, has raised steam. Secret
source graded C.3. reports some possibility
of movements.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 0107Z/22).Operation
"Summer."Completed. All Hurricanes flown ashore.
(FURIOUS 0945/22).FURIOUS
FOXHOUND
DUNCAN
DRAGON.E.T.A. Freetown 1000N/25. FOXHOUND, and
DUNCAN in company. Will require seven days
in harbour at 48 hours notice to make good
defects. DRAGON will embark my maintenance
parties at Takoradi 23/3.
(FURIOUS 0946/22 to C.in C. S.A.)DURENDA.Due Capetown 18/3 from U.K. not arrived.
(S.O.(I) Capetown, 1119B/22).Enemy
Raiders.Am shadowing enemy merchant raiders mean
080° 18 knots bearing ?130° 12 miles.
Endeavouring to reach attacking position.
My position is 012° 55'N., 027° 10'W.
(Force X 1152/22 to Admty).
Force X 1152/22. Investigate.
(C.in C. S.A. 1325N/22 to MAURITIUS).
Force X is SEVERN and is proceeding to
Freetown.
(C.in C. S.A. 1345N/22 to BULOLO).
(Corrupt Group) position MAURITIUS at
1200N/22 013° 30'N., 023° 20'W. Force X.
is SEVERN.
(C.in C. S.A., 1349N/22 to Force X).
Enemy has altered course to westward and
contact has been lost. Have insufficient
fuel to renew chase in that direction or
maintain patrol.
Raider resembles WASER though smoke appears
to be coal. Alternative identity fruit
ship shown in C.A.F.O. 143/41 smoking and
with disguised and telescopic funnels.
(Force X, 1845Z/22 to Admty).
Your 1845Z/22. What was position of raider
and approximate course and speed after turn
to westward? Your 1152Z only other
signal received.
(C.in C. S.A. 2031N/22 to Force X).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (Contd.)Enemy Raiders.
(Contd.)

Your 2031. 013° N., 027° W. probable mean course 280° 16 to 18 knots. Easterly chase course varied from 040° to 140° later a mean of 180° before turning West, not a set zigzag.
(Force X 2306Z/22 to C.in C. S.A.)

→ BIRMINGHAM
CHRISTIAN
HUYGENS.

Your 2215B/21 approved .
(C.in C. S.A. 1202/22 to N.O.I.C. Simonstown).

French
Motor
Vessels.

Reported that French, ship CAPITAINE LUIGI arrived Dakar with African troops 16/3. Also that two large ships left 19/3 for North B.3
(S.O.(I) Freetown, 1249/22 to Admty).

DELHI.

Your 1302/18. Simonstown dock not available. DELHI cannot be docked at Capetown before 2/4 to change propeller. Should docking at Capetown be ordered or should new propeller be embarked in ship and taken to refitting port.?
(N.O.I.C. Simonstown, 1255B/22 to Admty).

NARKUNDA.

Your 2331/21. NARKUNDA cannot enter Bathurst, draft too great, will want fuel if diverted there. She can proceed independently or return to Freetown.
(C.in C. S.A. 1337N/22 to Admty).
Your 1337/22. Approved for NARKUNDA to return to Freetown.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 1821/22).

→ BIRMINGHAM.
S.L.70.

F.O.I.C. Simonstown 2215B/21 and my 2141/19. BIRMINGHAM will not now arrive Freetown for convoy S.L.70 until 31/3.
(C.in C. S.A. 1423/22 to Admty).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.22.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (Contd.)Fuelling
at
Sea.

Desired to compile list of gear required by Capital Ships and Cruisers to enable them to fuel underway by stirrup method from a commercial oiler without special fittings. Request remarks.
(V.C.N.S. 1442/22 to R.A.S.A.D.)

CANFORD
~~SAPJORE~~CHINE.

Overdue shipping due Zaxte 12/3 from Clyde 6/2 has not arrived.
(S.O.(I) Freetown, 1728/22 to Admty).

German
LECH.

Rio de Janeiro reports has commenced loading large shipment of hides. Estimate that discharge of outward cargo will be completed by end of month.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 1807/22 to R.A.S.A.D.)

Raider
Intelligence.

R.A.S.A.D. of CANBERRA and LEANDER having sunk COBURG and captured Norway Tanker KETTY BROVIG position 008° 40'S., 061° 25'E., on 4/3 and of information obtained from prisoners.
(C.in C. S.A. 1811/22).

HERMES.

My 1610/21. (Overdue shipping). Dutch HERMES arrived Takoradi 20/3.
(S.O.(I) Freetown, 1934/22).

Guns in
M/V's.

Under consideration to remove 12 pdr. H.A guns and ammunition from ships sailing Freetown outward bound and to mount these guns in ships already stiffened but not mounting guns bound for U.K. Report whether necessary facilities exist.
(D.T.D. 2041/22 to N.O.I.C. Freetown).

W.S.8.
COMORIN
MORETON BAY.

My 1905/8/2 and Admty. 1305/26/3. In view of date of sailing of W.S.8 request you will sail COMORIN for Freetown when ready. Escort for W.S.8. will be detailed when date is more accurately known. Probably MORETON BAY due to complete refit 14/4 please confirm date for MORETON BAY.
(C.in C. S.A. 2219N/22 to F.O.C.N.P.)

War Diary.22. 3. 41.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean.Enemy Air
Activity.(Summary) 13/3. Suda Bay unsuccessfully
attacked. (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 0959/22.).RORQUAL.Leaves Malta p.m./22 (route) operate in
Area Q, passing Pantellaria northbound
night 23/24. (Cdr. S.I. 1313/22. to URSULA.).CORDELIA
YALOVA
(German).Departure Constantza 22/3, CORDELIA; Braila
22/3, YALOVA. (N.C.S.O. Galata 1329/22.).UPHOLDER.

Orders. (Cdr. S.I., 1357/22.).

Convoy A.N.21.Arrived Piraeus 1700/22.
(N.C.S.O. Piraeus, 1850/22 to LETITIA.).MARIE
MAERSK. / AN.21.
(bombed.).Oiler MARIE MAERSK arrived Suda Bay at
1300 today in charge of navigating party
from WATERHEN. Officers and men with
exception of one engineer were taken off by
WATERHEN. A fire caused by bomb which
penetrated a tank and set cargo alight was
extinguished by 1800. At least 1000 tons
of cargo destroyed, ship damaged, is capable
of steaming 7 knots. Impossible to estimate
at present if pump machinery can be got
working. Two men killed and several wounded.
(S.B.N.O. Suda Bay 2007/22.).

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

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War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

^{SAWA}
MOGAMI MARU.

^{N.T. in W.D.}
My 0912/21. Sailed 0330 G.M.T./22 for Madras. Ship detained 36 hours and thorough investigation made with negative result. (N.O.I.C. Rangoon, 0625Z/22, to C.in C. China)

DURMITOR

Admty. 1839/6. Request disposal DURMITOR if vessel is condemned in prize. Vessel due Mombasa today 22/3. (C.in C. E.I., 0804Z/22 to Admty.).

VILLE DE VERDUN
LEANDER

French VILLE DE VERDUN passed Sunda Strait 13/3 for Madagascar, carried important persons of Free French sympathies. LEANDER (arrived Mauritius 0400/22) is to proceed to establish patrol off Tamatave from A.M./24. Ship and aircraft are to avoid being sighted from shore. Coast of Madagascar is not normally to be approached within 20 miles. If intercepted VILLE DE VERDUN is to be taken to Mauritius. (C.in C. E.I., 1236Z/22, to LEANDER).

Raiders,
fuelling.

Your 1828Z/9. Request any further information available on fuelling methods employed by German Raiders. (D. of P. 1441/22 to C.in C. E.I.). Your 0706 March 22nd. (N.T. in W.D.) Code name C H A P T E R repetition C H A P T E R agreed to and promulgated by A.O.C. British Forces Aden this morning. A.O.C. British Forces Aden requests your concurrence. 1650Z/22.

Troop Transport
TALAMBA

Your 0807/7. W.O. request movement of 300 Pioneer Company from Seychelles to Middle East. Suggest they be accommodated in TALAMBA en route from Mauritius to Middle East. (D. of S.T. 1940/22 to P.S.T.O. Bombay).

RUDOLF ALBRECHT

German, left here 2100/22. (Consul, Teneriffe, 2345/22).

War Diary.22.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.China.Indo-China
Imports.

Your 0946/18/1 would be preferable to fix a definite quantity of oil per month which should be permitted to enter Indo-China since the phrase one Dutch tanker per month is not specific. Suggestion.
(A.C.N.S.(T) 1627/22 to C.in C. China).

America and West Indies.MALAYA

Date of arrival Trinidad. Has been hit by one torpedo and may require temporary repairs before proceeding to U.S. port.
No casualties. SAN ADOLFO to be prepared to fuel MALAYA on arrival.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1111/22, to Capt. i/c Trinidad).

EMPIRE SILVER
LUSTROUS

Ships overdue, have not arrived Aruba, Curacao, respectively.
(S.O.I. Jamaica, 1554/22, to Admty.).

"R" Reports
16/3.

Report received from S.S. LORETO on arrival Bermuda 22/3 includes following distress messages not previously received at Bermuda.
(A) RRRR 43.27 N. 45.18 W., EMPIRE INDUSTRY gunned 0907/16. (B) RRRR 43. 53 N. 43.58 W. SARDINIAN PRINCE shelled 1130/16.
(C) RRRR 44.10 N. 44.33 W. MYSON gunned 1312/16.

Distress signals were invariably jammed. Sometimes distress message was anticipated and jamming begun beforehand. Suggest ships and coast stations be instructed that, if jamming is experienced frequency is at once to be shifted to say 650 metres and distress signal repeated. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1906/22, to Admty.)

Reply see Page 996.

WAR DIARY.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

New Zealand.

Suspicious
Warships.

Your 1621/20. (report of warship seen by coastwatcher Keppel Island).
Not definitely established. My
0329Z/16, almost certainly U.S.N.Sqdn.
My 2038Z/14, report not accounted for.
(S.O.(I) Wellington, 0523Z/22).

WAR DIARY.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships
Attacked.

VILLE DE
LIEGE.

Following has been read:-
SSSS 59.53N., 07.48 W. Suspicious vessel possibly submarine on surface. Requested to stop after receiving our name, now gunning us.

(VILLE DE LIEGE, T.O.R. 0545/22).
PETUNIA proceed to assistance of VILLE DE LIEGE being gunned by S/M in position ~~to~~ 059° 53'N., 007° 48'W., at 0554/22.

(C.in C. W.A. 0606/22 to PETUNIA).
VILLE DE LIEGE SAVILLE's SSSS at 0554 in 059° 53'N., 007° 48'W. This ship failed to determine identification of herself correctly and failed to morse when asked so shot was fired. Both ships now proceeding.
(PETUNIA, 0609/22 to C.in C. W.A.)

Unknown
ship.

Capsized ship in position 58° 41 N., 08° 15'W. at 1415Z/22.
(NELSON, 1951/22 to Admty).

Submarines
Reported.

2113/21.
2126/21.

By D/F at 2013/21 G.M.T. and 2026/21 G.M.T. Position of enemy unit, probable U/Boat, estimated to be within 150 miles of 7° 00'N., 25° 00'W. (Bearings).
(D.D.I.C. 0054/22 and 0206/22).

0032/22.

D/F indications at 2332/21 G.M.T. suggest possibility that MALAYA or CANTON was reported by a U/Boat.
(D.D.I.C. 0134/22).

1747/21.

Following is a repetition of my 2254/21. (Not previously recd). D/F indication at 1747/21 suggest that MALAYA may have been reported by U/Boat.
(F.O.C.N.A. 0630/22 to FORESIGHT, FORTUNE, CANTON, DELPHINIUM.)

0032.

Following bearings of probable U/Boat were obtained at 2332/21 G.M.T. and at 0032/22 G.M.T. Additional bearings received from A.W.I. Station do not make it possible to estimate any position.
(D.D.I.C. 0647/22 to C.in C. S.A.)

WAR DIARY.

22.3.1941.
Saturday.

U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Your 0647/22. In view of Freetown bearing 338° and error in tendency of D/F Stations involved suggest U/Boat position at 2332/21 within 100 miles of 028° N., 023° W. reliability 50% Within 300 miles reliability, 90% (C.in C. S.A. 1035N/22 to Admty). D/F bearings at 2332/21 indicate enemy submarine 100 miles 028° 00'N., 023° 00'W. 50 per cent reliability. Within 300 miles 90 percent reliability. (F.O.C.N.A., 1446/22 to N.Atlantic, amended 1732/22).
Your 0647/22. Suggest U/Boat at 0027Z/22 within 100 miles of 18° N., 23° W. Reliability 50% or within 100 miles of 22° N., 21° 30'W. Reliability 30%. (C.in C. S.A. 1751/22 to Admty).

1603Z,
Iceland.

A/C reports submarine 1603Z 062° 20' 026° 30' course (? 180°) unidentified vessel 062° 10' 026° 35' Black 4000 one gun.
(F.O.Iceland, 2251/22 to Admty).

My 2251/22. Submarine was on surface 10 knots. Crash dived when sighted. Unidentified ship has gun aft. Showed no flag or mark, speed 9 knots. A/C tried to contact base by W/T which immediately jammed. A/C contacted RODNEY STAR in position 061° 55'N., 028° 50'W., at 1645.
(F.O.Iceland, 2301/22).

Estimated
U/Boat
Dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1321/22).

Submarines
Attacked.

By CAMELIA.

My 2345/21. Have dropped 20 depth charges and have not regained contact. Continuing until daylight.
(CAMELIA, 0109/22 to Admty, VETERAN).

1. The arrangement of the War Diary is as follows:-

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| HOME COMMANDS | - Policy |
| (Classification | - Defence of United Kingdom |
| by subjects) | - Movements |
| | - Operations |
| | - Allied Air Activity |
| | - Enemy Air Activity |
| | - Mining |
| | - Enemy Intelligence |
| | - U-Boats |
| | - Navigational |
| | - Technical |
| | - Casualties and Defects |
| | - Shipping and Convoys |
|
 | |
| FOREIGN STATIONS | - North Atlantic |
| (Classification | - South Atlantic |
| by stations) | - Mediterranean |
| | - East Indies |
| | - America and West Indies |
| | - Australia and New Zealand |
| | - U-Boat Campaign |

Additional subject headings are sometimes employed temporarily, e.g. when an important operation is in progress.

2. The following volumes should be used to supplement the War Diary: the dates given in brackets are those on which the series held by War Diary commences:-

- (a) Movements of H.M. Ships (prepared by Operations Division, Naval Staff) (23 February 1940).
- (b) Western Approaches (daily) Situation Reports (1 September 1943).
- (c) Dispositions and Movements (Foreign Stations) (1 September 1943).
- (d) Convoy Returns (Positions of convoys and composition of escorts, positions of independent ships and H.M. ships: from Combined Plot) (1 March 1941).
- (e) Daily Convoy Summary (Report made by Admiralty to Connav, giving arrivals and departures, with composition of convoy) (21 June 1943).
- (f) Air Staff Operational Summary (prepared by Air Ministry War Room) (1 July 1941, No.222)
- (g) Daily Operations Report for First Lord (prepared by Operations Division, Naval Staff) (13 September 1939).
- (h) List of abbreviations.
- (i) List of Convoy letters.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

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WAR DIARY.

SITUATION REPORT.

Home Commands.

German
battle
Cruisers.

The action and dispositions which are being taken to counter the threat of German Battle Cruisers are detailed in Admty. 1507/23 and 1511/23, NELSON, HOOD and QUEEN ELIZABETH returned to Scapa early this morning.

Air Reconnaissance of the French Biscay ports today failed to locate the enemy battle cruisers.

Western
Channel
Patrol.

KASHMIR and KIPLING patrolled last night from the Eddystone to the Scillies.

U/Boat
campaign.

WISENDA (Trawler of N.P.) attacked a U/Boat this morning.

U.551 sunk.
G.O. 392

British tanker CHAMA which had left convoy O.G.56 was torpedoed at 2235 today about 520 miles west of the Scilly Is.

British Air Activity.

Search
for enemy
battle
cruisers.

At 1612/21. G.O.C. Iceland Force asked War Office whether patrols were required on 22/3. No reply having been received by 1516/22, The patrols were sent out. This latter signal was not received by the Admiralty from the War Office until 1222/23.

Reconnaissance and PRU flights were made today to the French Biscay ports. Bad weather rendered the reconnaissance of Brest inconclusive and reports at St.Nazaire, Lorient, La Pallice and Gironde were negative.

WAR DIARY.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

British Air Activity. (Contd.)

A. Blenheim claims a direct hit today on one of the escort of a convoy off Brest.

Coastal Command carried out anti-E/Boat patrols from 1700 onwards.

Enemy Air Activity.

Convoy F.S. 43 was unsuccessfully bombed this afternoon, ^30 miles S.E. of Flamborough Head.

Five or Six fishing trawlers were bombed this evening about 60 miles north of the Orkneys. ELMIRA was sunk with loss of 10 of her crew and DAGON was slightly damaged by near miss and m.g. fire. Both these vessels fired on the enemy aircraft and possibly damaged it.

Two or three enemy aircraft dropped a few bombs on Sullom Voe this morning. One of the aircraft was destroyed by A.A. fire. No damage or casualties are reported.

WAR DIARY.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mining.

Operations
B.S.52.

TEVIOT BANK, escorted by ^{KITTIWAKE & LA MELPOMENE} ~~2~~ destroyers,
laid mines today in the East Coast
Barrier.

Z.M.E.25.

This operation, which was to have taken
place last night, has been postponed to
the night 25/26 March on account of fog.

JN.

INTREPID, ICARUS and IMPULSIVE escorted
by 3 destroyers left Portsmouth at 0002
today to lay mines off Havre.

GV.

ABDIEL, escorted by KIPLING and KASHMIR
left Plymouth this evening to lay mines
in the Approaches to Brest.

North Atlantic.

S.S. MALANCHA reported being unsuccessfully
attacked by a U/Boat at 1825 today in
19° 59'N., 26° 27'W. about 500 miles West
of Cape Blanco)

WAR DIARY.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean.

Operation
M.C.9.

Convoy M.W.6. reached Malta at daylight today. The only incident was the shooting down by the Fleet on 21/3 of a R/C A/C damaged by FORMIDABLE's fighter. On 22/3 A combination of bad weather and evasive routing allowed C.in C. Med., to find a gap in the enemy's air R/C and slip the convoy through. On the return journey the Fleet was twice sighted today by enemy aircraft, one of which was damaged by fighters.

Air
attacks on
Convoy M.W.6.
at Malta.

Convoy M.W.6. was dive bombed in Malta Harbour this morning but no direct hits were obtained on the ships, though damage was caused to dockyard buildings. The attack was repeated this afternoon: BONAVENTURE and GRIFFIN were slightly damaged by near miss, transport CITY OF LINCOLN was hit but her cargo is undamaged, PERTSHIRE was hit and some of her cargo was burnt. Several German aircraft were brought down during the attacks, by both fighters and A.A. fire. After the raid, the enemy again carried out extensive search for survivors at 40 miles distance.

Air reconnaissance of Tripoli today reported 38 merchant vessels and 4 submarines at Tripoli; one large and 4 medium sized warships were 20 miles to the N.W.

East Indies.

SHOREHAM this morning intercepted the German ODER (8500 tons) near Perim. The ship blew herself up.

LEANDER on patrol intercepted French CHARLES L.D. east of Tamatave (Madagascar) today and sent her into Mauritius under armed guard.

MOST SECRET

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23. 3. 1941.

Sunday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

East Indies

CHAKDINA and KANDAHAR were engaged today in an operation against the Fadhli Sultan who has been contravening treaties. There was no opposition. Naval demolition parties blew up the Sultan's Palace. (p. 812)

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Movements.

NELSON
ACTIVE
BOADICEA
ESCAPADE

Scapa arrivals C.in C. H.F. in NELSON with ACTIVE, BOADICEA, ESCAPADE. (A.C.O.S. 0031/23).

HOOD
QUEEN ELIZABETH
INGLEFIELD
ELECTRA
ESKIMO
ECHO

Scapa arrival F.O.C. 1st B.C.S. in HOOD with QUEEN ELIZABETH, INGLEFIELD, ELECTRA, ESKIMO, ECHO. (A.C.O.S. 0658/23).

KASHMIR.
KIPLING.

Arrived 0800.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1021/23).

PRINCE OF WALES.

Taking LIDDYSDALE, QUANTOCK, and AVONVALE under her orders PRINCE OF WALES is to sail from Rosyth at 1645/24 and pass over Burntisland D.G. Range, subsequently as follows to pass Dunnet Head westwards at 0600/25. (C.in C. Rosyth 1201/23).

EXETER.

My 1845/21. Owing to possibility of bombing at Plymouth intend sailing EXETER at 1930/24 for Scapa, speed of advance 20 knots, escorted by 5 of 5th D.F. to Lands End, and thence 2 to vicinity of Smalls. 2. Owing to other commitments for 5th D.F. escort beyond this vicinity is unpracticable. (C.in C. Plymouth 1631/23).

RODNEY.

Request time and position at which it is estimated RODNEY will arrive longitude 27° W. (C.in C. H.F. 1716/23). Your 1716/23. At 0200/24 in 59° 50' N. (D.O.D.(H) 2239/23 to C.in C. H.F.).

ABDIEL.

ABDIEL escorted by 2 destroyers arrives Bishop Rock 2030/23. Thence as follows. (S. 3. 1923/23 to S/M's Area A).

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

<u>SOKOL, UNDAUNTED</u>)	Movements.
<u>SEALION, SUNFISH</u>)	(Capt. D. Londonderry 0025/23, 1934/23)
<u>TORBAY, TAKU,</u>)	(S.9. 0631/23)
<u>TUNA, OBERON.</u>)	(S.7. 1406/23)
<u>H.44,</u>)	(S.6. 1811/23)
<u>L.26, L. 27.</u>)	(F.O.S. 1917/23, 1928/23, 2013/23, 2017/23,
<u>0.9, 0.10, 0.24</u>)	2354/23).
	(N.O.I.C. Campbeltown 2230/23).

S/M's to
Operational
Control of
S.5.

The following submarines are to be transferred to operational control of S.5.

1. All submarines of 7th Flotilla proceeding to Bay of Biscay patrol.
2. Submarines of 6th and 9th Flotillas that have been ordered to Portsmouth.

On arrival of ALECTO, WHITE BEAR, and BREDA at Devonport, Dartmouth, and Portland respectively, these ships are to be transferred to operational control of S.5. and their C.O's are to assume the title S.O. Submarines at the port concerned. (F.O.S. 1929/23).

Object and
Orders.

The object of submarines on patrol in the Bay of Biscay is to attack and then report German warships.

U.Boats are not to be attacked unless identity is established beyond all doubt. It is of the greatest importance that the positions of submarines on patrol in the numbered positions are not compromised. Submarines being forced to leave their positions prematurely should not report until well clear of the area covered by the numbered positions unless this is essential (F.O.C.N.A. pass to S.O. Force H.) (F.O.S. 2012/23, to S/M's Area A).

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Search for SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU.

HOOD.

Your 0431/22. Desirability of HOOD working up is recognised but it is essential to do everything possible to prevent SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU getting out on the trade routes again. Hence she should proceed as ordered in A.T. 0043/22 after re-fuelling.

Patrol should be well to the Westward and positions continually changed to prevent U-boat attack being directed on to HOOD by enemy aircraft.

(1st S.L. 0044/23 to C.in C. H.F.).

Cancel A.M. 0044/23. HOOD is not to proceed to Bay of Biscay.

(1st S.L. 2138/23).

Dispositions.

Following action and dispositions are being taken. Details. (1st S.L. 1507/23 and 1511/23)
See Operations Volume.

A.M. 1511/23. Delete all reference to HOOD.
(1st S.L. 2140/23).

Jan Mayen.

HONNINGSVAAG reports operation proceeding satisfactorily. External construction of Station completed. (F.O. Iceland 1235/23).

ORCHIS.

My 1128/20. Submarine B.1 will be available at Campbeltown and ORCHIS trials are to have priority over all other commitments.
(D. A/S W. 1322/23).

East Coast
Patrol.

HOLDERNESS and CATTISTOCK will patrol between Smith's Knoll and 54 F. Buoy tonight and then provide cover ahead of F.S. convoy 443 from Smith's Knoll until daylight.
(C.in C. Nore 1505/23 to HASTINGS, etc.).

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23.3.1941.

Sunday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity.

Convoy
attacked off
Ijmuiden.

On 22/3 in 52° 34' N. 4° 35' E. six Blenheims attacked a convoy of about fifteen ships. Bombs observed to straddle one ship, bursts seen 15/20 yards on either side of it. (H.Q.B.C. 0020/23).

Patrol.

My 1944/22. Add patrol U N S T 0730 till 1000. (C.in C. Rosyth 0806/23).

U.551 sunk
(G.D. 392)

Admiralty request Aircraft be sent to assist VISENDA in locating U.Boat possibly damaged in 210° 4 miles from 62° 37' N. 16° 47' W. (War Office 1405/23 to G.O.C. Iceland). Your 57917 (M.O.8.) 23/3. Aircraft sent as requested. 30 Wing has reported result through Coastal Command Seaboards. F.O.i/c informed. (G.O.C. Iceland 2330/23 to War Office).

R/C of
Biscay Ports.

Air reconnaissance of French Biscay coast has not located SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU. Four reconnaissances were carried out.
(1) Brest - conditions made observations impossible.
(2) Lorient and the coast as far as Pointe du Raz (lat. 48° 2' N).
(3) St. Nazaire and Quiberon Bay.
(4) La Pallice, and the Gironde estuary from Le Verdon to Pauillac.
(D.D.I.C. 2144/23).

Enemy Air Activity.

One aeroplane shadowing 54° N. 14° 12' W. (BROKE 1005/23).
My 1015. F.W. Retired to S.W. (BROKE 1035/23).

MILLISLE
OR
LONDON II.

My 2309/21. GOLIATH returned 1600/22 unable to locate bombed ship presumed sunk. (N.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1220/23).

Convoy
F.S.43.

One enemy aircraft bearing 270° of convoy ^{"Boaty"} BOOBY in 53° 38' N. 0° 16' E. (HASTINGS 1325/23).
Aircraft bombing convoy. (HASTINGS 1334/23).
One enemy Aircraft bearing 100° from convoy. Position 53° 58' N. 0° 33' E. (HASTINGS 1344/23)
My 1334 - LAP - 4 bombs no hits. (HASTINGS 1355/23).

/ Shetlands bombed.
One Enemy A/C
destroyed.

War Diary.23.3.1941.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)Shetlands
bombed
One Enemy
a/c
destroyed.

N.O.I.C. Lerwick reports Two, possibly three E.A. made on attack on Sullom Voe at 1135 this morning. One was destroyed after direct hit by 3 inch A/A fire. One or two bombs dropped. No known damage or casualties. Two aircraft passed across south end of island at approximately 2200/22 dropping one or two bombs, one of which exploded harmlessly and others being investigated.
(A.C.O.S. 1601/23).

1st M/S
Flotilla.

One Bomber dropped 4 Bombs 4 cables clear of sweeping formation at 1725. No damage.
(S.O. 1st M/S Flotilla 1919/23).

LEO.
(Norwegian,
1367 tons)
sunk.

My 1203/19 and 1708/19.
Norwegian s.s. LEO on passage from Hull to Reykjavik, having parted company from E.N.86A, was sunk by Focke Wulf A/C approx. 75 miles N.W. of Butt of Lewis at 0930/19.
Crew of 21 took to boats and were picked up 3 hours later by ECHO and landed Lyness.
No casualties.
(A.C.O.S. 2005/23).

Mining.Operation
JN.

My 1543/22. Sailed. (C.in C. Portsmouth 0002/23).

ZME. 25.

My 1045/22. Operation Z M E 25 not carried out owing fog. (PLOVER 0800/23).
PLOVER's 0800/23. Operation is to be carried out night 25/26. (C.in C. Plymouth 1701/23).

ABDIEL
(Operation
GV)

Arrived 0800. (C.in C. Plymouth 1027/23).

Operation
GV.

By ABDIEL, escorted by ^IKPLING and KASHMIR, during Night 23/24. Details. (C.in C. Plymouth 1257/23) See Operations Volume.
Sailed 1630 ABDIEL, KASHMIR, KIPLING.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1909/23).

/ Falmouth.

War Diary.

23.3.1941 **7.49**
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

Falmouth.

Mine detonated by S.A. Gear at 104°/22 in
50° 05' 58" N. 5° 30' 34" W.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth 1115/23).

Eastern
Channel
Clearance
Sweep.

Visibility prevents sweeping this forenoon.
Intend anchoring after dark on four fathom
ridge until 0500/24 commencing sweeping at
daylight. Intend returning to Newhaven P.M.
25. (S.O. 1st M/S Flotilla 1313/23).
Limit of area cleared as follows. Mine cut
in 050° 46' N. 000° 52' 30" E.
(S.O. 1st M/S F. 1919/23, 2230/23, 0555/24,
V.A. Dover 2155/23).

Thames Estuary
19/3.
Correction.

My 2214/19/3. Amend as follows.
(Capt. M/S Sheerness 1545/23).

Operations
G.S.A. 6.

It has been decided to repeat operation GS,
mines being laid approximately two miles to
the westward of the previous line.
2. 20th D.F. to sail for Plymouth night 24/3
having embarked mines.
3. C.in C. Plymouth allocate short title and
issue orders for operation.
4. Operation C referred to in A.L. M/O.D.
2032/41 dated 14th March 1941 is postponed.
(V.C.N.S. 1609/23).

S.N.4.

R.A.M.L. 1531/17. Concur.
(ii) C.S.2 is to sail two ships of 2nd C.S.
to provide close escort for 1st M L Squadron.
(C.in C. H.F. 1755/23).
Intend to carry out SN.4 as follows.
(R.A.M.L. 2349/23) See Operations Volume.

EMINENT.
sunk 18/3.*?

*(*Confirmed in BR1337
Sunk on 15/3 Page 134.
Correct position given)*

(Belgian, 500 tons) Mined and sunk in 51° 29'
N. 5° 29' W. at 1345/18. ? 18° - See Page 1495 15/3/41
(C.in C. Plymouth 2037/23).

Harwich Area.

4 Parachute mines observed to be dropped at
1700/22 and 2 explosions reported (positions)
(F.O.I.C. Harwich 2159/23).

Enemy Intelligence.

E-Boats.

Indications of E Boat activities in Yarmouth
Area. (C.in C. Nore 2117/23).

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

W.S.7
REVENGE
GEORGIC

Cancel Admty. 2016/14. When A/S Escort parts company REVENGE and GEORGIC are to leave convoy W.S.7 and proceed direct to Halifax. (D.O.D.(H) 0158/23 to REVENGE).

W.S.7
NELSON
to escort.

NELSON screened by 3 destroyers is to proceed passing Hoxa Boom at 1200/24 to R.V. with convoy W.S.7 in 270° Oversay 6 miles at 0800/25 and is to provide additional ocean escort to Freetown.

After making R.V., destroyers are to provide additional A/S escort for convoy, parting company as ordered C.in C. W.A. and returning to Scapa.

C.in C. Rosyth requested to arrange A/S Air escort for NELSON during daylight 24/3. Code word "~~Heavy~~". (C.in C. H.F., 0837/23, to NELSON, R.A.D. H.F., C.in C. Rosyth).

In view of additional battleship with W.S.7 request you will consider strengthening A/S escort of W.S.7 by two further destroyers if possible. (D.O.D.(H) 1321/23 to C.in C. W.A.).

In view of C.in C. H.F.'s 0837/23, cancel my 1321/23. (D.O.D.(H) 1711/23).

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23.3.1941.

Sunday.

War Diary.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

BROCKLEY.

(British, 1564 tons) Of F.S.⁴42. In collision near Sheringham Bell Buoy. One hold flooded. Am escorting her towards Humber speed 6 knots.
(EGLINTON 0202/23).
Departure Tug SABINE 0730/23 to assist BROCKLEY. (F.O. Humber 0814/23).

RICHMOND.

(Destroyer) Have grounded near Benbane Head. Damage as follows. Proceeded to Holyhead. (RICHMOND 0310/23, C.in C. W.A. 2136/23).

H.44.

My 1739/22. H44 has arrived Campbeltown with engine defects, estimate complete in 24 hours. (S.7 0410/23).

DASHWOOD
(Grounded
21/3)

Attempted to tow off DASHWOOD unsuccessfully. Banking fires and removing (? crew). Will return to Harwich with KENIA and LADY BRASSEY. Leaving ARISTOCRAT A.A. guard. (SHELDRAKE 1017/23).

MORAR.

(British, 1507 tons) Of F.N.⁴39 damaged in collision last night. Diverted to Tyne for repairs. (VERDUN 1215/23).

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

Force H.

Your 1922/22. It is desired that RENOWN and ARK ROYAL should leave Gibraltar as soon as possible. (1st. S.L. 0125/23, to S.O. Force H.).

It is recognised that RENOWN'S bulges require^{but} if it is possible it is essential that Force H should continue to operate against enemy battle cruisers so long as they are in the Atlantic.

Request your remarks. (1st. S.L. 0130/23, to S.O. Force H.).

Your 0125 not to F.O.C.N.A. Expect to sail about 2100/24. (S.O. Force H., 0401/23, to Admty.).

My 0401. A/C. is bringing requirements of fuel etc. for RENOWN and ARK ROYAL. Request arrangements for immediate supply on arrival and removal of Prisoners and Passengers. (S.O. Force H., 0405/23 to F.O.C.N.A.).

Can RENOWN and ARK ROYAL be fuelled at sea with facilities now available at Gibraltar? (1st. S.L. 1101/23 to S.O. Force H.).

Reply: 0537/24.

Your 0130/23. RENOWN can continue in her present condition but liability of damage recurring if required to steam at high speeds against any considerable head sea. (S.O. Force H, 1329/23, to Admty.).

ANTARKTIS
(German).

According to information now received ANTARKTIS sailed 0300/18 following unexpected order received 0100. (Consul, Vigo, 1130/23 to Admty.).

ANTARKTIS with 8,000 tons oil having docked at Ferrol was expected to sail yesterday 22/3. (D.D.I.C. 1258/23 to F.O.C.N.A., Western Patrol, etc.).

H.G. 57.
French
Prizes.

Your 1200/8/1. Intend sailing three French prizes in H.G. 57 24/3, observing that Force H will be sailing to westward later same day. (F.O.C.N.A. 1250/23 to Admty.).

/SHEFFIELD.....

War Diary.

23. 3. 41. 753
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic Contd.

SHEFFIELD
defects.

E.T.A. Gibraltar for SHEFFIELD's convoy daylight 30/3. If SHEFFIELD could be docked on arrival for 24 hours damage to oil fuel tanks due to mines exploding in paravane could be made good. Endurance reduced by 13% until damage is repaired. (SHEFFIELD, 1323/23, to F.O.C.N.A.).

RUDOLF
ALBRECHT.

German Tanker left Teneriffe 2100/22. (F.O.C.N.A. 1332/23, to N.A. Stn.). (D.D.I.C., 1527/23 to N. Atlantic, W. Patrol S.O. Force H, etc.).

Oran
Reconnaissance.

My 2304/21. Further scrutiny. Almost certain no submarine in commercial harbour but there are four or five what appear to be escort vessels. (F.O.C.N.A., 1744/23 to Admty.).

French
Convoy.

Gibraltar 1445/23, French destroyer FRONDEUR escorting French merchant ships BAMAKO, light AZROU laden TAMARA, laden, BANFORA, light, passing westbound. (S.O.I., Gib., 1811/23, to Admty., etc.).

Interception
by Force H
of BIANCA &
SAN CASMIRO.

S.O. Force H. 1834/23, 1829/23. See Lion Copy.

PIERRE
POCHOLLE
intercepted
by MARSDALE.

French trawler PIERRE POUCHOLLE, Casablanca to Dakar, boarded 029° 00' N., 012° 36' W., 0015/22. Routed independently to Gibraltar through 035° 00' N., 013° 00' W., Speed varying 9 to 11 knots E.T.A. noon/25. Crew antagonistic MARSDALE E.T.A. Gibraltar 1200/24. Considerable work required on defects. (MARSDALE, 1900/23 to F.O.C.N.A.).

SECRET

M E S S A G E

1834/23 March

IN

753 A.

From S.O. Force H.

Date 24/3/41.

Recd. 1337

NAVAL CYPHER D BY W/T.

RECIRCULATION

Addressed Admiralty. Repeated C. in C. Western Approaches,
F.O.C. North Atlantic, C. in C. America & West
Indies.

651. Force H left S L 57 at 1600/19 with intention of
conducting search for ANTARKTIS. Evening reconnaissance
sighted BIANCA in position 045° 22' north 023° 35' West
steering (090°) 12 knots. Decided to intercept and
shaped course for furthest on position.

1834/23

Advance copy sent Ops. O.D. O.I.C.

1st Lord
2nd S.L.
5th S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S. (H)
A.C.N.S. (F)
A.C.N.S. (T)
Naval Sec.
C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
Ops. (4)
O.D. (5)
D.N.I. (4)
D.T.D. (4)

D.T.D. (M)
O.I.C. (3)
D. of P. (3)
D.S.D. 9.
D.A/S.W.
I.P. (3)

W.D.
D.P.D.
D.S.D.
M. (2)
D.N.A.D.

/c

753B.

SECRET

MESSAGE

1829/23 March

IN

FROM: S.O. Force "H"

DATE: 24.3.41

RECD: 1443

NAVAL CYPHER (D) by W/T

ADDRESSED: Not yet received.

My 1859 Part 2.

(ii) BLANCA sighted by organised (?) search. Ship attempted to scuttle in position $044^{\circ} 16'$ North $019^{\circ} 21'$ West on approach of H.M.S. RENOWN at 1300. Although fires were extinguished by boarding party ship could not be steamed owing to flooded engine room.

(iii) Air search reported SAN CASIMIRO in position $044^{\circ} 50'$ North $022^{\circ} 15'$ West steering 076° 11 knots and POLYKARP in position (?045) $40'$ North $023^{\circ} 26'$ West altering course from East to 010° on being sighted speed. 7 knots.

Whilst H.M.S. RENOWN was dealing with BLANCA H.M.S. ARK ROYAL flew off afternoon search and shaped course escape intercepted. Later report showed this course too far to westward but H.M.S. ARK ROYAL continued in order to avoid breaking W/T Silence.

(iv) H.M.S. RENOWN left BLANCA still afloat possibly salvable and closed SAN CASIMIRO at 1730 in position $045^{\circ} 12'$ North $019^{\circ} 42'$ West who also scuttled. Whilst boarding party away Fulmar closed H.M.S. RENOWN at 1818 15 and gave enemy report by V/S her W/T having failed.

ARK ROYAL then 18 miles distant from RENOWN received report 1825. Considered distance and approaching darkness made it impracticable to regain touch. Striking force prepared and Fulmar who had sighted and had most experienced crew flew off again at 1930 but was unable to locate owing to darkness and poor visibility.

(v) After ARK ROYAL had closed Force H proceeded 340 degrees at 25 knots at 1915 with object of covering possible attack on S.L.67 and searching area to North and West leaving eastward to air and surface Forces from U.K.

(vi) 21st March morning air search from position $049^{\circ} 25'$ North $019^{\circ} 50'$ West ran into fog but penetrated to depth of 80 miles. Nothing sighted. Force turned south with the intention of further search for enemy on the return route to Gibraltar and locating POLYKARP and BLANCA if still afloat. Fuel remaining did not admit of any considerable deviation of course.

(vii) 22nd March. POLYKARP and BLANCA not sighted. Latter may be still afloat, as visibility patchy and whole area of search not guaranteed correct. Master considered ship has probably sunk.

(viii)/

753^e

(viii) Crews of oilers except Master SAN CASIMIRO who is German prisoner and including Master BLANCA with wife and small son on board H.M.S. RENOWN. Also two prize crews from German Battle Cruiser GNEISENAU 2 officers 27 ratings.

1859/23

(Advance copy sent Ops. O.D. O.I.C.)

Note: Part I of this message not received - called for,

- 1st Lord
- 1st S.L.
- 5th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (F)
- A.C.N.S. (T)
- Nav. Sec.
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Ops. (4)
- O.D. (5)
- D.N.I. (4)
- D.T.D. (4)
- D.T.D. (M)
- O.I.C. (3)
- D. of P. (3)
- D.S.D. 9
- D.S.D.
- D A/S W
- I.P. (3)
- Rm. 52 Arch S.
- W.D.
- D.P.D.
- M. (2)
- D.N.A.D.

see
1894/23

JH

War Diary.

23. 3. 1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.Contd.

ARAWA.
S.L.69.
COMMANDANT
DOMINE.

Departure 1600/23/3 ARAWA as ocean escort to S.L.69 and thence to Greenock in accordance with C in C. S.A. 2011/20, also sailed Fr. sloop COMMANDANT DOMINE in accordance with C. in C. S.A. 1131/22/3. Local A/S escort CLEMATIS, CYCLAMEN, until 29/3, H.M. Trawlers TURCOMAN, PICT until 27/3. (S.O.I. Freetown 1631n/23 to Admty.).

SACRAMENTO
VALLEY.

Report of sighting S/M. *See Page 763.*
(See U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.).

CLAN MACNAB.

Damaged in collision night of 17/3, sank at 1600/18. (N.C.S.O. St. Vincent, 1825/23, to to Admty.).

REPULSE.

Return to Freetown to arrive 0600/25. Keep WISHART and VIDETTE with you. (C. in C.S.A., 1853N/23, to REPULSE.).

See next page

FURIOUS.
required
for hunting
group.

Whilst SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU are in Atlantic essential to form as many hunting groups as possible composed of a battle-cruiser and aircraft carrier. Can FURIOUS be made available for this service after embarking outfit of aircraft in U.K., or is some refitting work absolutely essential, and if so what is minimum time required?
(1st. S.L., 1941/23, to FURIOUS.).
Your 1941. FURIOUS certainly will do it either (a) as now, which would mean running ship to death with real risk of dead stoppage at sea due to worn out auxiliary machinery such as main circulators or (b) after 2 weeks alongside good firm and job tackled in same spirit as in February. During operation ~~SCHARNHORST~~ defects developed (details). If situation permits suggest course (b) above.
(FURIOUS, 2201/23, to Admty.).
Cancel my 0946/22. E.T.A. Freetown 0600/25.
Will be ready to sail immediately drinking water and fuel have been embarked. (FURIOUS, 2206/23, to C.in C. S.A.).
My 2201/23, principal requirements (details). (FURIOUS, 2211/23, to Admty.).

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

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FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

FAUSTO
(Italian.).

My 0107Z/22. FAUSTO still has steam raised but shows no other sign of activity. (S.O.I. Montevideo, 0112Z/23, to Admty.).

HARPALION.

Overdue shipping. My 2138/21. HARPALION arrived Buenos Aires. (S.O.I. Monte Video, 0201Z/23.).

→ REPULSE
WISHART
VIDETTE.

Departures 0600/23 REPULSE, WISHART, and VIDETTE, in accordance with C. in C.S.A.'s 2355/22. (S.C.I. Freetown, 0945/23.).

See previous page

Cable
Operations.

My 1934/16/2. Operations A and B to be carried out by MIRROR as soon as available. A in neighbourhood of Madeira and B in position proposed in F.O.C.N.A.'s 1606/17/2. MIRROR will subsequently be required for urgent repairs in Madeira area. (D.S.D. 1232/23 to C. in C. S.A., F.O.C.N.A.).

MILFORD
SEVERN.

MILFORD is to leave harbour at 1600/23 to to R/V with SEVERN in 010° 10' N. 18° 10' W., at 1500N/24 and escort to Freetown. (C. in C.S.A., 1307N/23.).

→ MAURITIUS
REPULSE
S.L.69.
FURIOUS.

In order to avoid withdrawing MAURITIUS prematurely from her hunt and at the same time to provide protection for S.L.69, request you will sail REPULSE escorted by DUNCAN and FOXHOUND as soon as available on 25/3 to join S L 69, remaining with it until MAURITIUS can relieve her or her endurance necessitates her return to Freetown. REPULSE will be required to proceed northward with FURIOUS as soon as practicable. NARKUNDA should be sailed with REPULSE to join S.L.69. NELSON will take W.S.7. to Cape. (D.O.D. (F) 1330/23 to C. in C. S.A.).

~~ARANA~~.....

MOST SECRET.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

WAR DIARY.

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FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

Air Raids on
Malta, 22/3
DEFENDER
damaged,
21/3.

Combined services report Malta up to 1600 hours 22/3. Further to my "I" 192 21/3. DEFENDER sustained slight splinter damage. 6 wounded of which 2 seriously. Enemy air activity. 1400, 10 JU 88's proceeded by 12 ME 109's came in from north and attacked from east and west respectively Bombs dropped S.E. Grand Harbour demolishing some houses and causing damage to buildings in dockyard.

(H.Q. R.A.F. Med. 0140/23)

German A/C.

German reconnaissance A/C probably torpedo bomber may be operating in your vicinity this morning 23/3. T.O.O. 0501/23.

(C.O.I.S. Alexandria, 0525/23, to SALVIA, VOYAGER, WRYNECK, VENDETTA, ELOXINIA, PARTHLAN, TRUANT.)

RORQUAL.

Comdr. S.I. 1403/22 (N.T. in W.R.). You are not to operate to E. of 012° 00'E between latitude 037° 40'N. and 038° 00'N.

(Capt. S.I. 1131/23, to RORQUAL).

Air Raids
on Malta.

Summary of civilian casualties and damage since entry of Italy into the war (O.A.G. Malta No T.O.O.

Recd. 1630/23) see Lion copy only. 1797A

Malta Air
Raids, 22/3,
23/3.
Convoy dive-
bombed in
Grand Harbour.

Combined Services Report Malta up to 1600 hours 23/3, all times G.M.T. 2030/22 approx. 10 enemy A/C flew over island, no moon, and slight mist, obviously found difficulty in locating targets. Few bombs were dropped in isolated areas and several in sea. 23/3. 0545, enemy fighters with 1 J.U. 88 flew over Grand Harbour at 24,000 feet evidently on R/C. 0945 Dive bombing attack on convoy in Grand Harbour by 15 J.U.87's escorted by 15 M.E.109's. Near misses, but no direct hits on ships. Some damage to dockyard buildings and several persons injured. 1335 hours approx. 30 J.U.87's

/ escorted

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

757

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Malta Air Raids,
22/3, 23/3.
Convoy dive-
bombing in Grand
Harbour.
(contd.)

escorted by about 20 M.E. 108's dive-bombing
convoy in Grand Harbour. Reports up to present
show at least 9 J.U.87's destroyed by fighters
alone A.A. claims follow but at least three
certain. Slight damage to ships in harbour,
details will be communicated by V.A.M.
(H.Q. R.A.F., Malta, 1650/23).

Hurricanes.

Reinforcements. (Air Ministry 1725/23).
See Mediterranean Vol.

EAGLE

Can a forecast be given when EAGLE will be
able to pass through Canal?
(1st S.L., 1942/23, to C.in C. Med.).

Damage in
Air Raids
22/3, 23/3.
Convoy M.W.6.
BONAVENTURE
GRIFFIN.

22/3 R/C by escorted Ju. 88 followed later
by attack on Grand Harbour by 10 Ju. 88's
covered by 12 Me. 109's Building in dockyard
damaged, one military and 4 civilian
casualties. During raid there was an
engagement between 8 Hurricanes and some
Me. 109's outside R.T. range 35 miles from
Island. Only three Hurricanes returned
reported one Me. 109 and 1 Hurricane shot
down in sea, fate of remaining 4 Hurricanes
unknown.

Night of 22/3. Raid by about 10 aircraft,
about 70 bombs dropped, damage slight,
4 civilian casualties.

Day 23/3. A.M. R/C by Ju. 88 and fighters
as MW six was berthing. Later Grand Harbour
was attacked by 18 Ju. 87's and again P.M.
by 25 Ju. 87's result as follows:

BONAVENTURE near miss, many small splinter
holes, one killed.

GRIFFIN near miss, large number of small
holes perforated Nos. 1 and 3 oil fuel tanks,
two severe casualties.

CITY OF LINCOLN suffered direct hit demolished
bridge, cargo undamaged.

PERTSHIRE had direct hit in No. 1 hold and
some cargo was burnt.

Dockyard sustained damage, 7 casualties. One
Hurricane lost, pilot safe, 13 Ju. 87's were
brought down with 4 possibles. Enemy carried
out extensive search for survivors after raid
at 40 miles distance indicating heavier
losses. (V.A. Malta, 2230/23).

SECRET

MESSAGE

IM

From. O.A.G. Malta.

Date. 28/3/41.

Recd. 1630.

CYPRUS.

Addressed.

No. 92 Secret. PART I.

1. Following gives summary of Civilian repeat Civilian casualties and damage by air-raids from the entry of Italy into the war to 15th March and some items of interest. Period may be divided into (1) Italian period from 11th June, 1940 to 15th January 1941. During this period raids were made entirely by Italian aircraft. (2) German period from 16th January to 15th March. During the two months from 16th January when the Germans first appeared and dive bombed H.M.S. ILLUSTRIOUS in Grand Harbour bombing raids have been made entirely by German aircraft though fighter protection has sometimes included Italian machines. Only raids during which bombs were dropped are mentioned below. There have been very many signals including 11 German raids in which military objectives have been machine gunned.

2. Italian period. Seven months. Number of bombing raids 49 by day 29 by night. Total 78. Casualties, killed 56 men, 18 women 24 children under 16. Total 98. Seriously injured 41 men 29 women 21 children under 16. Total 91. Buildings demolished or badly damaged approximately 350.

3. German period. Two months. Number of bombing raids 21 by day 43 by night. Total 64. Casualties, killed 40 men 32 women 26 children under 16. Total 98. Seriously injured 31 men 22 women 7 children under 16. Total 60. Buildings demolished or badly damaged approximately 837.

PART II. 4. Totals for both periods. Bombing raids: 142. Casualties, killed 96 men 50 women 50 children under 16. Total 196. Seriously injured 72 men 51 women 28 children. Total 151. Buildings demolished or badly damaged 1187.

5. About one third of the damage to buildings and about one half of the casualties in the German period resulted from attacks on H.M.S. ILLUSTRIOUS during ship's stay of 14 days and occurred in the immediate neighbourhood of ship's berth. Casualties all occurred in the first two attacks on the same day. This area was then evacuated for the second time. After the first evacuation in June it had filled up again during the long period of Italian slackness which preceded the first appearance of the Germans on 16th January. Only those persons who can sleep in bomb-proof shelters now remain. These number about 4,700 out of normal population of 31,000.

6. Another raid resulting in considerable casualties occurred in Sliema on the night of 11th March when 21 people were killed and 19 seriously injured in an always crowded street near the harbour. No bombs had fallen in this particular area for several months.

7. I draw attention to the low proportion of casualties to damaged buildings during the German period of severer raids and to the fact that nearly three-fourths of the casualties during this period occurred on two days and in areas in which the people were taken by surprise. In other German raids causing severe damage casualties have been remarkably few. Number of effective shelters is increasing and the people are evidently more ready to use them.

8. In the latter half of February five parachute mines intended for the harbours on either side of Etta fell by night on the borders of this town and in Senglea and caused extensive damage to houses but very few casualties.

9. The last occasion on which supplies reached us was 10th January. On that date two ships arrived from Egypt forming the sixth in the series from the East and one ship accompanied H.M.S. ILLUSTRICUS from the West and brought seed potatoes and military stores. Convoys from Egypt have usually consisted of four or five ships so we look forward to the next. But such close daily reconnaissance is now maintained by German aircraft over the Island and its approaches that the arrival and unloading of the next convoy may not be as smooth and uneventful as similar occasions were in Italian days. The people are in good heart.

Recd. from Colonial Office by hand.

x Amendment.

1st Lord.
 1st S.L.
 2nd S.L.
 3rd S.L.
 4th S.L.
 5th S.L.
 V.C.N.S.
 A.C.N.S.(H)
 A.C.N.S.(F)
 A.C.N.S.(T)
 NAV SEC.
 CIVIL LORD.
 C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
 Cps.(4)
 O.D.(5)
 D.N.I.(4)
 O.I.C.(2)
 D.S.D.9.
 D.T.D.(4)
 D.T.D.(M)
 M.(26)
 D.M.S.
 D.M.S. Basement.
 D.D.T.M.
 Press Div.
 D of L.D.(2)
 D.N.A.D.
 E.P.S.
 D.T.M.
 I.P.(3)
 W.D.
 D of P.(3)

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

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War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

CARTHAGE

CARTHAGE is to proceed Durban to complete with fuel and leave to resume patrol before arrival of convoy W.S.6 from Durban P.M./25. (C.in C. E.I., 0640Z/23).

Force T.

My 1130/19 Cancel programme after 23/3. On completion of search of Chagos adjust movements so as to arrive Colombo a.m./27. (C.in C. E.I., 0648Z/23, to Force T).

Tug CHABOOL missing.

My 2005/19 search abandoned. Tug and crew must be presumed lost as from 22/3. (S.N.O. Red Sea, 0654Z/23).

2nd M.S. Flotilla.

Your 0510Z/19 and my 1118/4. Can the departure of these vessels from Bombay be expedited, as their arrival in the Mediterranean is a matter of great urgency? (D.O.D.(F) 1654/23 to C.in C. E.I.).

CHARLES L.D. intercepted.

At 1352Z sighted French Ship CHARLES L- D bound to Reunion from Diego Suarez with small mixed cargo. Boarded in position 351 C V S V 8. Preparations for scuttling made but not carried out. Majority of Officers and men willing to work ship and vessel is being sent to Mauritius under Armed Guard. Ship transmitted position on 500 kc/s. Am proceeding in accordance with your 1236Z/22. (LEANDER, 1655Z/23, to C.in C. E.I.).

Swordfish A/C, Hurghada

Your 1844/21. Intended use of Swordfish is ultimately for R/C over sea to locate destroyers should they move North from Massawa. Hence my suggested use of Hurghada which is better place than Ras Garib for watching Approaches to Jubal Straits. Grateful if facilities including wireless could be made available for 3 Swordfish if required to be flown to and based for a limited period on Hurghada at short notice from Port Sudan. Until enemy destroyers move from base, Swordfish will be available to co-operate in reconnaissance of Massawa and bombing of destroyers there. (C.in C. E.I., 1848Z/23, to A.O.C. R.A.F., M.E.).

/ VILLE DE VERDUN

War Diary.

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

VILLE DE VERDUN.

My 1236/22. Possibility of French sending out a S/M to bring in VILLE DE VERDUN cannot be ignored. LEANDER has been instructed to comply with A.M. 1407/10/1 and 1359/11/3, that is, if a combination of S/M's and Merchant ships is met they are to be left alone unless Admiralty orders otherwise. If a S/M is met submerged or unescorted on surface and outside Territorial waters it is to be treated as hostile in accordance with 2033/28/8/40.
(C.in C. E.I., 1906Z/23, to Admty.).

EAGLE
aircraft,
Port Sudan.

17 aircraft will be flown to Port Sudan arriving p.m./26. These will comprise a small number with full crew available for operational work on arrival, the remainder will carry a nucleus maintenance personnel and equipment essential for the upkeep of former. All 17 aircraft cannot be fully operative until approx. 3/4 when main maintenance party should arrive by rail and sea Port Sudan.
(EAGLE, 2114/23, to C.in C. E.I.).

Force T,
fuelling.

It is necessary that Force T and other ships on E.I. Station should be able to fuel from oilers at sea. Can this be arranged with facilities you have on the station?
(1st S.L., 2326/23 to C.in C. E. I.).

23.3.1941.

Sunday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.China.ERITREA.

Kobe arrival 1900Z/22 Italian Sloop ERITREA.
(Capt. O.S., Singapore, 0659Z/23).

Comment by N.I.D.

ERITREA is a sloop of 2172 tons, maximum speed 20 knots, armed with four 4.7" guns and fitted to carry 100 mines.

She was based on Massawa and was known to be there on the outbreak of war with Italy. No further definite news of her was received until 3/3 when a report (C.2) was received that she had proceeded south 21/2 with women and children.

Distance from Massawa to Kobe is approx. 8,800 sea miles. ERITREA's endurance is 40 days at 10 knots and 27 days at 12 knots. If above report is correct she took 29-30 days to reach Kobe, a journey within her endurance.

America and West Indies.U/B
Fuelling
Report.

Information reliable source has reached Consul General Mexico City that German s/m loaded diesel and lubricating oil near Vera Cruz within last 72 hours. Tampico considers rumour spread internationally but is investigating. (S.O.I., Jamaica, 1031/23 to Admty. etc.)
Comment by N.I.D. This report has been carefully examined and is believed to be entirely without foundation.

CARADOC

Leave patrol A.M./24 and return to Kingston, Jamaica. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1202/23, to CARADOC).

MALAYA

P. c. and s. at 1200Z plus *2, 23/3 019° 50' N. 033° 12' W. 250° 13 knots. CROCUS part company 2000/A.M. Ship has stood (Speed) well. Intend maintaining present speed to Trinidad if fuel permits. E.t.a. 0800Z plus 4 29/3. (MALAYA, 1330Z/23, to C.in C. A.W.I., C.in C. S.A.).

23.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Australia and New Zealand.

U.S.10.

Your 0951/20. Anticipated date of arrival
U.S.10 at Ceylon. (A.C.N.B., 1252Z/23).

Contraband
Control.

A.C.N.B. Melbourne's 0306Z/20.
It is similarly not intended to establish
C.C.S. in New Zealand.
(N.Z.N.B. 2224Z/23, to Admty.).

War Diary.

23.3.1941.

Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.ERODONA

British tanker, 6207 tons, in Convoy H.X.112. Presumed torpedoed on 16/3 (D.S. 562). Found abandoned in about 62.22 N., 17.11 W. by VISENDA. (See VISENDA's 1506/23 in S/M's Attacked).

Proceed forthwith to assist ERODONA in 62° 22' N. 17° 11' W. at 1506 today.

H.M.T. VISENDA standing by.

(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1947/23, to THAMES).

My 1947. When contact is made tow vessel to Reykjavik. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 2245/23 to THAMES.).

ANDALUSIAN

ANDALUSIAN torpedoed (one torpedo) 2010/17 014° 33' N. 021° 06' W. Boats remained in positions in which ship was abandoned until daylight but could see no sign of ship thought sunk about 2030/17.

(N.C.S.O. St.Vincent, 1511/23, 1659/23).

MALANCHA
(escaped
see 24/3)

(British, 8124 tons) Following has been read. SSSS 19.59 N., 26.27 W., MALANCHA missed by torpedo. (Freetown W/T, 1825/23 T.O.R. 1728/23).

Submarines Reported.

0805.

Admty. Message AF position 62° 37' N. 16° 47' W. at 0705/23. G.M.T.

(D.D.I.C. 0903/23 to G.B.M.S. Area 1).

My 1205/23. Fishing trawler reports having sighted U-Boat in 059° 50' N. 008° 20' W. at 0700 G.M.T. 22/3. U-Boat surfaced 1½ miles on starboard beam and chased trawler for one hour before submerging. U-Boat of large type fitted with large clipper bow and carrying two sails set fore and aft of conning tower.

U-Boat surfaced and submerged with sails set. No gun was seen.

(A.C.O.S. 1205/23, 1208/23).

1228.

An enemy S/M has made a first sighting report of a convoy or important unit.

(D.D.I.C. 1228/23 to W.A. and Plymouth Commands)

My 1228/23. Probable that formation reported was O.G.56 convoy.

(D.D.I.C. 1244/23 to ENCHANTRESS, etc.).

War Diary.23.3.1941.
Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported. (Contd.)1510.D/F at 1510 B.S.T. Italian U/B in area
46° to 47° N. 2° 30' to 3° 30' W.
(D.D.I.C. 1611/23).My 1611/23. D/F indications that one or
two more Italian submarines may be in this
vicinity, probably further to the South.
(D.D.I.C. 2252/23).22/3.Ref my report of 22/3 SACRAMENTO VALLEY's
1345/23 C.A.F.O. 723/40 and ~~TALBOT BOOTH~~^{18145/23}
1937. No guns or Samson posts seen aft,
appeared to have rake stem, was trimmed by
stern. (Force X, 1801Z/23, to C.in C. S.A.)
(W.D. Note - Force X is SEVERN).SACRAMENTO VALLEY reports sighting submarine
on surface at 1517 G.M.T./22 in 012° 57' N.
027° 02' W. Did you see this ship's speed,
according to C.A.F.O. 2073/40 9½ knots.
(C.in C. S.A. 1830 N/23, to Force X).Note.- May have been H.M.S. SEVERN.
See South Atlantic 24/3. *See page III.*

1923.

Message A.F.
Position 19° 59' N. 26° 27' W. at 1823/23
G.M.T. (D.D.I.C. 2020/23).Estimated U-Boat
dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1350/23).

Submarines Attacked.

By VISENDA.

U. 551 sunk.
(G.D. 392.)One S/M Bearing 210° distance 4 miles my
position 62.37 N., 16.47 W. estimated.

(VISENDA, 0805/23, via Lyness W/T).

Made three attacks. Consider U-boat probably
damaged. Small wreckage and oil patch seen
now lost contact.

(VISENDA, 1000/23, to S.O.T.N.P.).

Admiralty request aircraft be sent to assist
VISENDA in locality U/B in position 62.37 N.
16.47 W. (H.Q.C.C., 1310/23, to No.30 Wing).British ship ERODONA abandoned 8 miles 145 degs.
from U-boat position now found on observation
to be 062° 22' W. 017° 11' W. Ship afloat from
bridge forward. Apparently abandoned for a
considerable time. Considered salvageable.Am returning to U-boat's position, awaiting
further orders. (VISENDA, 1506/23, to S.O.N.T.)

By CAMELLIA

Am attacking S/M, 54.02 N., 14.16 W.

(CAMELLIA, 1015/23).

My 1015, consider non sub.

(CAMELLIA, 1124/23).

War Diary

24.3.1941.
Monday

SITUATION REPORT

Home Commands

Watch for
Enemy
Battle Cruisers

S.O. 1st C.S. (NORFOLK) is to act in general support of the Denmark Strait patrol, operating from Hvalfjord.

RODNEY and 3 destroyers arrived at Iceland this afternoon.

Shipping in
Irish Sea

In order to make the most effective use of air escorts the number of ships sailing independently in the Irish Sea is to be reduced by sailing ships in company whenever practicable even if surface escorts are not available.

Convoy C.W. 29
Shelled

Enemy coastal batteries fired 4 rounds without effect at Convoy C.W. 29 while passing Dover this evening.

U-Boat
Campaign

SS AGNETE MAERSK from Convoy O.G. 56 reported being shelled by a U-Boat at 1530 today about 675 miles west of Ushant.

Norwegian tanker THORSHAVET a straggler from Convoy H.X. 114 reported sighting a U-Boat at 1810 today 450 miles W. by S. of the Faeroes.

War Diary

24.3.1941.
Monday

SITUATION REPORT

British Air Activity

Owing to the weather, no daylight anti-E-Boat air patrol was possible today.

Lorient and St. Nazaire were covered by air R/C today but R/C of Brest and Bordeaux was unsuccessful.

Routine patrols were considerably curtailed today on account of weather.

Bomber Command last night attacked Kiel, Emden, the Helder, Petroleum Harbour at Rotterdam and Calais.

A Blenheim today reports having sunk a small ship off the Hook of Holland.

Enemy Air Activity

EXETER left Plymouth this evening owing to the possibility of bombing at Plymouth.

A/S yacht WILNA was bombed and sunk this morning off the Nab.

SS ROSSMORE on passage from Hayle to Barry Docks was bombed and sunk at 1745 today 12 miles from Godrevy Island SS MARINA who rescued the survivors was machine gunned but had no casualties.

Trawler CAPETOWN reports a small cargo boat, since identified as SS ^{SAINT}FINTAN, was bombed and sunk at 1545/22, 7 miles N.N.W. of the Smalls.

24.3.1941.
Monday

766

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Mining

Operation G.V.

This operation was completed last night
(See 23/3)

Mines were detonated today in the Thames
Estuary and off Liverpool.

Blyth was closed at 0750 and opened at
0916.

North Atlantic

The Captain of the British SS VOCO
arrived at Philadelphia reports seeing
gun flashes at 0400 G.M.T./15 in 41° 6'
N., 45° 18' W (Possibly SCHARNHORST as
members of GNEISENAU's crew captured in
BIANCA and SAN CASMIRO which were
captured 0800/15 in 39° 30' N., 44° W.,
and 1030 ships time/15 in 39° 58' N., 43°
19' W stated that SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU
had not been in company since 11/3)

Search for
Enemy
Battle Cruisers

Force H (RENOWN, ARK ROYAL) screened by
FORTUNE, FORESTER and FORESIGHT arrived
at Gibraltar at 0900 today and left at
2316 for patrol west of the Bay of Biscay.

Three or more Italian submarines are
estimated to be patrolling off Bordeaux
and St. Nazaire.

MOST SECRETWar Diary24.3.1941.
MondaySITUATION REPORTMediterraneanAir Attacks
on Malta

The ex-Italian ADIGE was damaged and some damage was caused to dockyard buildings by air attack on Malta at dawn today. A high level bombing attack was made on the Grand Harbour by 10 JU 88's with escort of 20 M.E. 109's. There were no service damage or casualties.

F.A.A.
Operations

C. in C., Med. reports that on the night of 17/3 three Albatroses working from Bengha attacked shipping off the Tripolitanian coast and torpedoed a ship of 1500 tons off El Harrar. One A/C was lost.

Operation
M.C. 9.

The Fleet returned to Alexandria at 2300 today. It was sighted twice today, but no attacks developed.

Air Attacks
on Convoys

Throughout the period 20/3 to 24/3 enemy aircraft working from Rhodes have been active against our convoys. In addition to MARIE MAERSK (see 22/3) in Convoy A.N. 21, Convoy A.S. 21 under Greek escort plus SALVIA was bombed S.E. of Crete and Greek* ~~EMBIRICOS~~ was sunk and Norwegian SOLHEIM bombed and abandoned. F.A.A. fighters working from Crete have assisted as far as possible, but very drastic measures are necessary to deal with aerodromes in Rhodes.

*EMBIRICOS NICOLAOS

MOST SECRETWar Diary24.3.1941
MondaySITUATION REPORTAmerica & West IndiesConvoy H.X. 117.

The advance sailing telegram for H.X. 117 includes 62 ships, or 22 above the limit imposed by Admty. 1246/29/12. D.T.D. has directed that ships above 40 are not to be held and that if necessary the convoy is to sail in 2 sections in close company on the same route with an additional Commodore.

U-Boat Campaign

The D/F bearings from which it was thought that a U-Boat was proceeding to operate on the trade routes off Newfoundland (see 14/3, 15/3, 16/3) are now thought to have originated from a surface vessel.

24.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

Dartmouth
Patrol
Boats.

Ref. 1339/21 three patrol boats only are in running order at the moment. There should be at least ten to maintain an efficient patrol of six boats per night. Proposals. (M.C. Dartmouth 1220/24).

Iceland
Proposed
inclusion
in W.A.
Command.

In view of the anticipated increased use of Iceland in connection with the defence of trade in the N.W. Approaches it is under consideration to include Iceland in the Western Approaches Command.
2. The proposed dividing line between the Western Approaches and A.C.O.S. Commands is to be from Cape Wrath to the North Eastern limit of Iceland, thence to the coast of Greenland in longitude 30° W.
3. Request your very early remarks. (D.O.D.(H) 2246/24).

Movements.

NELSON.
CURACAO.

Scapa arrival 1201 CURACAO. Departures 1202 NELSON, ARROW, ESKIMO, and ECLIPSE. (A.C.O.S. 1225/24).

EXETER
KELLY
KASHMIR
JACKAL
KELVIN
KIPLING

Regret no surface escort available for EXETER. (C.in C. W.A. 1507/24).
Sailed 1920 EXETER. E.T.A. 0730/26. (C.in C. Plymouth 2031/24).
Your 1603 KIPLING is not to sail. (C.in C. Plymouth 1803/24 to D.5).
Sailed 1915 KELLY, KASHMIR, JACKAL, KELVIN. (C.in C. Plymouth 2023/24).

RESOLUTION.

My 1937/19 and 1321/19 and C.in C. Portsmouth's 1747/20 C.in C. Portsmouth is requested to sail RESOLUTION p.m./1/4. It is anticipated that maximum speed of RESOLUTION will be 15 knots. RESOLUTION should be routed to Halifax in the first instance. Final destination will be signalled later. (D.O.D.(H) 1610/14).

RODNEY.

RODNEY, COSSACK, ZULU, MAORI arrived. (F.O. Iceland 1645/24).

24.3.1941. **770**
Monday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Movements.

PRINCE OF WALES.

Sailed PRINCE OF WALES, QUANTOCK, LIDDESDALE, AVON VALE in accordance with my 1201/23. (C.in C. Rosyth 1700/24).

JACKAL.

Join EXETER if possible who passes 180° Lizard Head 5 miles at 2230 routed in accordance with C.in C. Plymouth 1847/23 speed 22 knots. Otherwise join KELLY who will steer 117° to pass 180° Lizard Head 9 miles at 0115 then alter to 090° speed 14 knots. (Capt. D.5 2031/24 to JACKAL).

Operations.

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

SEALION
SUNFISH
SOKOL
UNDAUNTED
TAKU
TIGRIS
TORBAY
TUNA
UNION
UNBEATEN
OBERON
L.27
0.9
0.10.
0.24.

Orders and Movements. (C.in C. Nore 1130/24) (Capt. D. Londonderry 1214/24) (F.O.S. 1709/24, 1811/24, 1856/24) (C.in C. Plymouth 1919/24) (N.O.I.C. Falmouth 1935/24).

H.class S/M's
and 0.9, 0.10.
Deferred sailing.

Defer sailing of H Class Submarines and Netherlands 0.9 and 0.10 until further orders. Submarines to remain at four hours notice for sea. (F.O.S. 2129/24). My 2012/23 paras. A and B. When in free-for-all area to southward 048° 30' N. the object of submarines addressed is to attack all ships except U-boats. U-boats are only to be attacked if their identity is established beyond doubt. (F.O.S. 2213/24 to TORBAY, TAKU, TUNA, OBERON, L.26, L.27, and 0.24).

/ Falmouth,

War Diary.24.3.1941.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Movements. (Contd.)Falmouth,
Portland,
Dartmouth.
Bombing
Restriction
Areas.

F.S.A.4. It is not intended to establish additional submarine sanctuaries off Falmouth, Portland and Dartmouth. S.5 is to arrange that suitable T.B.R. areas are imposed as necessary off these ports to cover arrivals and departures of submarines. (F.O.S. 1233/24).

1st. C.S. (NORFOLK
4th D.F. See p. 764)

My 0904Z/17. It is my intention that you should act in general support of Denmark Strait patrol operating from Hvalfjord and that you should co-ordinate operation of any force that may become available in that area for U Boat hunting or as additional support. (ii) Use your discretion when to remain in Hvalfjord for any periods longer than is required for refuelling keeping me informed of your intentions. (iii) Captain (D) 4th D.F. and his Destroyers will probably be required to screen KING GEORGE V to Scapa from 025° W. at about 29/3 possibly calling at Hvalfjord if KING GEORGE V requires fuel. (C.in C. H.F. 1154/24 to F.O. 1st C.S.).

Operations
of D.5. 21/3.
22/3.

C.in C. Plymouth 1937/24 See Lion Copy.

Convoy C.W.29
shelled.

C.W.29 passed Dover at 2020. Coastal batteries fired four rounds at about 2010. No damage reported. (V.A. Dover 2141/24).

E-Boats off
Lowestoft.
D.16 attacked.

Indication of E.boats. (Yarmouth W/T 2059/24) Bearings (Yarmouth W/T. 2103/24, 2203/24, 2230/24). E.Boats bearing 024° Lowestoft 20 miles. (Capt. D.16 2249/24). My 2249. Torpedo sighted. (Capt. D.16 2254/24).

E.Boat
off Haisborough.

Suspected E.Boat activity vicinity Haisborough. (C.in C. Nore 2127/24).

441A.

M E S S A G E

1937/24th March.

MOST SECRET.

IN.

From C. in C. Plymouth.

Date 25.3.41.
Time 1030

CUPHER

Addressed Admiralty. Repeated D.5.

982. Following received from D.5. begins:-
KELLY, KELVIN and JACKAL passed gate at 1350/21 and on clearing swept channel increased to 26 knots, shaping course to pass 7 miles South of Lizard, and thence 265 degs. to pass through 49 degs. 35 mins. North, 11 degs. 00' West the total distance to the rendezvous in 40 degs. North 15 degs. West being 375 miles and requiring an average speed of advance of 24 knots to get there by 0400/23.

Simultaneously with receipt of your 2049/21 at 2118/21 in position 49 degs. 40' North 8 degs. 18' West course was altered to 130 degs. and speed increased to 30 knots. This course was chosen to pass 9 miles clear of QZX 300 being the limiting course for either Brest or St. Nazaire.

Although the enemy's course at 2021/21 was directed more towards St. Nazaire than Brest, there seemed every prospect of this being a ruse until after dark. Furthermore, Brest was known to be a first class Naval Base habitually used by the HIPPER, and it seemed far more likely that the Battle cruisers intended making for Brest particularly as HIPPER had recently vacated a suitable dock.

Your 0109/21 gave SCHARNHORST and GNEISNAU's course as 000° speed 20 knots at 1730/20. Assuming that they did not turn to eastward until after dark, their average speed until sighted at 2021/21 worked out at 25 knots. At this speed they would reach St. Nazaire by 0430/22, and at 20 knots, by 0600/22 whereas at 30 knots, 5th Destroyer Flotilla could not reach this position before 0715/22, about an hour after daylight.

To sum up, as it was not only impossible to reach St. Nazaire by daylight or to effect an interception anywhere at sea on the data signalled, and as Brest seemed a very much more likely destination, I decided in reaching the latitude of QZX 300 at 0150/22, to patrol the entrance to Brest, and was rewarded by seeing three navigation lights switched on, Ushant, Armen and an unidentified light, which appeared to confirm the fact that important ships were expected to enter by night and had probably not yet done so, since the lights were still on.

In accordance with your 0213/22, I finally retired at 0600/22 and was shadowed by two Heinkel floatplanes at 0745/22. Shortly afterwards the Flotilla ran into thick weather and nothing further was seen of enemy aircraft.

T.O.O. 1946/23. Ends.

I consider Capt. D. 5. acted correctly on the information available particularly having regard to the sighting of shore lights near Brest.

No information is yet available as to the port at which SCHARNHORST and GNEISNAU arrived.

1937/24

1st Lord.	D. of P. (2)	I.P.
1st S.L.	D.O.D. (F)	W.D.
2nd S.L.	D.D.O.D. (F)	Duty Captain.
3rd S.L.	D.O.D. (H)	Hd. of M.
4th S.L.	D.D.O.D. (H)	D.T.S.D.
5th S.L.	D.N.I. (4)	D.D.I.C.
V.C.N.S.	D.S.D.	E.P.S.
A.C.N.S. (H)	D.N.A.D.	D.T.D.
A.C.N.S. (F)	D. of L.D.	N.I.D. Paym. Cdr.
A.C.N.S. (T)	D. A/S W.	Wilson.
C.S.O. 1st S.L.	D.M.S.	

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24.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity.

Patrols.

Following Patrols will be flown today:

~~TROST STAB BERT.~~
(C.in C. Rosyth 0236/24).
My 0236/24. Add ~~FAIR~~ is in operation.
Patrols ~~TROST~~, ~~STAB~~, and ~~BERT~~ cancelled
owing to weather. (C.in C. Rosyth 0738/24).

Operation
G.X.

Admiralty 1609/23. Request arrangements may
be made for Bomber Command to carry out a
diversionary bombing of Brest between 2300/25
and 0300/26.
2. Short title for minelaying operation is G X.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1239/24).
C.in C. Plymouth 1239/24.
Request bombing diversion may be arranged.
(D.D.O.D. (M.) 1859/24 to Air Ministry).

Bombing
Restriction.

Request bombing restrictions for 3 destroyers
tonight between 3° and 6° W. and North of
49° N. (C.in C. Plymouth 1351/24 to H.Q.C.C.)

Enemy Air Activity.

Convoy ^{"Swift"}~~SWIFT~~.

Fighter protection has been sent to ^{"Swift"}~~SWIFT~~ (One
Destroyer one Merchant Vessel).
(Lyness W/T 0815/24).

is S.S. FINTAN.

Unknown Ship
sunk 22/3. (See Page
765)

Trawler CAPETOWN reports at 1545/22, seven
miles N.N.W. of Smalls, seeing a Coastal cargo
boat name unknown being bombed and disappeared
after a direct hit. One survivor picked up
but since died.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1215/24).

ELMIRA (Trawler)
sunk 23/3.

Trawlers DAGON and ELMIRA while on passage
to Faroes shipping grounds were attacked by
E/A and ELMIRA sank. ELMIRA carried crew of
eleven. One survivor. No casualties in
DAGON which is proceeding Faroes.
(A.C.O.S. 1235/24).
While 5 fishing trawlers in company were on
passage Grimsby to Faroes and in 59° 55' N.
03° 40' W. at 1815/23/3 they were attacked
from low level by E/A. ELMIRA was sunk with
loss of 10 crew. One survivor picked up by
DAGON which was slightly damaged by near miss
and machine gun fire. E/A was fired on by
ELMIRA and DAGON and possibly damaged.
(A.C.O.S. 1245/24).

/ Fishing trawler

War Diary.

24.3.1941.
Monday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

ELMIRA
(Trawler)
23/3.
(Contd.)

Fishing trawler SAINT AGNES SN 88 reported at 1815/23 March she and 5 other trawlers were bombed by aircraft about 60 miles north of Orkneys. Trawler ELMIRA was sunk with all hands. (N.O.I.C. Faroes 1725/24).

WILNA
(A/S Yacht)

Bombed and abandoned 0900 N. Nab one mile at 0835/24. All crew safe. Vessel subsequently sank in 057° Nab 2,400 yards. (C.in C. Portsmouth 1523/24).

Convoy
C.W. Odd.

One enemy aircraft shadowing convoy. My position 50° 29' N. 1° 23' E. (BLENCATHRA 1704/24).

Convoy
F.N. Odd.

One enemy aircraft shadowing convoy ~~Pilot~~ "Pilot". My position 52° 8' N. 1° 53' E. (GUILLEMOT 1707/24).

Mining.

Drifting
Mine.

Intercept 0548 G.M.T. from OLDENBURG. (German ship) Drifting mine in 54° 29.5' N., 11° 28.5' E. 0545 G.M.T. 0651 ends. (F.O. Humber 0702/24).

Blyth.

Port closed. (N.O.I.C. Blyth, 0750/24)
Port open. (N.O.I.C. Blyth 0916/24)

3 British
Mines sunk.

Sunk three British mines in 55.25 N. 06.50 W. (VERITY 0809/24).

Thames Estuary.

One S.A. mine detonated at 0737/24 as follows. (Capt. M/S Sheerness 0935/24).

S.N.4.

My 2349/23. Item (f) amend second position as follows. (R.A.M.L. 1051/24).

/ Iceland.

War Diary.

24.3.1941.
Monday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

Iceland.

Icelandic (Auxiliary Patrol) Protection Ship THOR now been instructed in sinking or towing ashore drifting mine.

Recovered mine $066^{\circ} 04' N.$ $019^{\circ} 12' W.$
Another sunk $066^{\circ} 12' N.$ $019^{\circ} 11' W.$ Both mines British Mark 2⁰.

(F.O.I.C. Iceland 1235/24).

Reinforcement of Faroes-Iceland Minefield.

Your 1619/22.

1. Concur that (a), (b) and (c) should be laid first, the sequence of these three fields being decided by C.in C. Home Fleet.
2. Order of laying (d) and (d) is concurred in. (V.C.N.S. 1346/24).

Op:
G.V.

Arrived 1245 ABDIEL, KASHMIR, KIPLING.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1349/24).

Off Falmouth.

Mine cut in $050^{\circ} 09' 00'' N.$ $004^{\circ} 51' W.$ at 1515/23.

(N.O.I.C. Falmouth 1509/24).

ABDIEL has completed operation G.V.

Ship has number of defects but can be ready for sea p.m./26.

Propose ship should carry out another lay and then proceed to Cowes to make good defects.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1646/24).

Op:
G.S.

Intend to sail 20th D.F.

Expected time of departure Spithead 2015/24.

E.T.A. Plymouth P. of A. 0600/25.

(C.in C. Portsmouth 1407/24)

Eastern Channel Clearance Sweep.

Your 1023. Westbound convoy will pass Dungeness about 2359 today Monday. You are to anchor at least 3 miles inshore of Q.Z.S. 223. Two M.L.'s will patrol between No.10 buoy and 5 miles S.W. of D. buoy after convoy has passed. (V.A. Dover 1519/24 to M.S.1.).

My 1919/23. Clearance extended to line joining following three positions.

No mines cut. Small (corrupt group) exist at eastern edge about one and a half miles north of above limit which will be cleared to-morrow. (S.O. 1st M/S F. 1941/24).

Liverpool.

2 Mines detonated by L.L. Trawler in 121° Bar Light Vessel 1.3 miles. (F.O.I.C. Liverpool 1823/24)

B.S.53.

Particulars. (A.C.N.S. T. 2023/24).
INTREPID, ICARUS and IMPULSIVE sailed. *wt for B.S.53*
(C.in C. Portsmouth 2103/24).

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24.3.1941.

Monday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Intelligence.German
Recognition
Procedure.

Following information on the subject of German recognition procedure is promulgated for information. (D.S.D. 1452/24).

BRITISH ADVOCATE.
SPEYBANK.

British tanker BRITISH ADVOCATE probably captured by SCHEER about 19/2 in Seychelles area, may be returning to Germany, Norway, or France. She may have British crew and other prisoners on board. Cargo of petrol. British SPEYBANK, last reported in company with raider in Indian Ocean 28/2, reported being worked by own crew to carry prisoners. Present whereabouts unknown. (D.D.I.C. 1611/24) (V.A.N.P. 2210/24).

TAIPING.
TARONGA.

My 2043/20 and 2332/12. TAIPING returned to Oslo on 22/3. TARONGA may leave about 27/3. B.2. (D.D.I.C. 1626/24).

Stadtlandet
Area.

In a Norwegian notice dated 16/12 /40 fishing is prohibited by order of the German Authorities in the British declared area off Stadtlandet.

It is possible that the report contained in my 1638/10/3 was based on this notice, but the laying of enemy mines in this area is possible. (D.D.I.C. 1653/24 and 0032/25).

Convoy F.N.41.
Possible
E-Boat
Attack.

Nature of enemy air activity in Thames Estuary indicates a possible E/B attack on convoy F.N.41. (D.D.I.C. 1802/24).

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War Diary

24.3.1941.
Monday

HOME COMMANDS

Shipping and Convoys

Air Attacks
in Irish Sea

My 1850/3 (increased air attacks on shipping in Southern Irish Sea) To make most effective use of air escorts. Important further to reduce number of ships sailing independently both to North and South. This applies to categories (B) and (C)

Until a schedule of group sailings has been organised, N.C.S.O's are to arrange to sail ships in company whenever practicable although surface escorts may not be available. (C. in C., Plymouth, 1107/24)

My 1850/3 and 1107/24. Request you will arrange the grouping of Bristol Channel shipping both northwards and southwards, with or without escorts.

Request also you will discuss with F.O.i/C Milford Haven possibility of using 8th A/S group for escorting as far as Milford Haven when returning from Barry. (C. in C., Plymouth 1735/24 to F.O.I.C. Cardiff)

War Diary.24.3.41.
Monday.CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.DASHWOOD.
(Grounded
21/3)

Departure A/S Trawler escorting tugs KENIA and LADY BRASSEY to attempt refloat S.S. DASHWOOD.
(F.O.I.C. Harwich 0737/24).

REINA DEL
PACIFICO

Has struck some sunken obstacle in approx. 51° 22' N. 3° 35' W. Master reports following damage. Speed could not exceed 15½.
(P.S.T.O. Clyde 1129/24, to F.O.I.C. Greenock 1203/24).

MANSFIELD.

(Destroyer) Broken down in 056° 14.5' N. 010° W. at 1100/24. SALISBURY towing, course 135°. Request tugs as ship's towing gear is indifferent.
(DOUGLAS 1230/24).

SALISBURY reports MANSFIELD proceeding under own power but is unreliable. Tugs not required. SALISBURY is continuing as escort to Londonderry.
(DOUGLAS 1745/24).

Proceed with all despatch to assist MANSFIELD broken down and in tow of SALISBURY speed 6 knots course 135°. Position at 1100 was 56° 14' N. 10° 00' W.

(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1839/24).

My 1839/24. ASSURANCE sailed.

(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1940/24).

Return to base. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 2135/24 to ASSURANCE.).

SPIRAEA.
(Corvette)

My 1207/23. SPIRAEA unable to sail due to boiler defects. (F.O.I.C. Liverpool 2144/24).

WHITEHALL.

(Destroyer) Has developed defect and ST. CLAIR From Londonderry has been ordered to take her place. (C.in C. W.A. 2250/24).

MOST SECRET.

24.3.1941

Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONSNorth Atlantic.Force H,
request for
SHEFFIELD.

Consider inclusion of a Cruiser preferably SHEFFIELD with R.D/F and asdic in Force H whilst operating in Bay of Biscay would be of greatest value. This would facilitate interception and examination of suspicious vessels (without?) disclosing presence of RENOWN and also night shadowing of enemy. Failing cruiser a fast A.M.C. (F.O. Force H, 0536/24, to Admty.) Your 0536/24. Neither SHEFFIELD nor an A.M.C. can be spared at present. Your requirement will be borne in mind. (D.O.D. (F) 1709/24 to F.O. Force H).

Fuelling at
sea. (Force H.)

Your 1101/23. Yes when oiler present under fair weather conditions. Suggest CAIRNDALE be maintained at (place) under red ensign or ordered to cruise in some convenient latitude (given) (F.O. Force H., 0537/24, to Admty.) Orders to CAIRNDALE (D.O.D. (F) 1751/24 to F.O.C.N.A. - see Operation Volume). 24/3/41 - 7-10-41

→ BIANCA
→ SAN CASIMIRO
(intercepted by
Force H 20/3
after capture by
raider.)

Ref C.A.F.O. 770/40.
(i) (a) Norwegian BIANCA (b) 15/3 0800 in 039° 30' N 044° W. Master, Arne Gronningseter D.M.S. 1 and consigns may be in enemy hands.
(ii) (a) British SAN CASIMIRO (b) 15/3 1030 ship's time in 039° 58' N 043° 19' W (g) Mr. R.E. Kirkley Chief Officer (h) all books disposed of.
(RENOWN, 0843/24, to Admty.)

→ Enemy
Intelligence.

Following obtained from German Prisoners ex Battle Cruiser GNEISENAU. Reliability cannot be assessed. (ii) GNEISENAU left Kiel 23/1. (iii) Oiled at sea during night about 10 times, receiving each time approx 900 tons stated to be one quarter full stowage. (iv) GNEISENAU last in company with SCHARNHORST in 030° N 30° W on 11/3. (v) MALAYA'S aircraft sighted on 8/3. (vi) GNEISENAU used Air Arm Aircraft for R/C Red rectangles painted on forecastle and poop of both BIANCA and SAN CASIMIRO after capture by Germans. (vii) GNEISENAU maximum speed stated to be 26 knots. Following from crews of captured ships (graded A.1.) (viii) In both cases GNEISENAU closed to within a few hundred yards before sending boat. (ix) SAN CASIMIRO reports approached by a Tanker shortly before GNEISENAU came in sight. Tanker which was about half loaded similar in appearance to but not BIANCA.

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24.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

Enemy
Intelligence.
cont.:

(x) Germans transmitted from (corrupt group) and SAN CASIMIRO on 24 (?9.), 27 and 705 metres latter when in mid Atlantic and may have been used for communication with GNEISENAU. Reception on 28.77 metres four letter code used. No enigma machine observed. (S.O. Force H, 0920/24, to Admty.).

GERDA VITH
(German)

Indications is painting colours on sides preparatory to sailing. (Consul Vigo, 0955/24.).

Force H.
W/T.

RENOWN and ARK ROYAL will shift to Home Station Area B W/T organization at 0800/26 W/T guard will be maintained on Gibraltar broadcast when near limit of Atlantic Station. (S.O. Force H 1759/24 to Admty.).

ERNA OLDENDORFF
(German).

My 1030/4/2 30 tons coal reported to have been sent yesterday to ERNA OLDENDORFF Pontevedra Bay. (Consul Vigo, 1800/24. to Admty.).

MIRROR,
cable operations.

Your 1232/23. Intend carrying out these operations after MIRROR undocks on 31/3. (F.O.C.N.A. 1818/24 to Admty.).

ARK ROYAL
A/C reces.
for ^{ADMIRAL}HIPPER.

ADMIRAL

R/C carried out by ARK ROYAL 17/3 and 18/3 covers sector 230° to 260° from Brest for speed 23 to 17 knots assuming ADMIRAL HIPPER left dusk 15/3. Negative results suggest HIPPER passed South of Azores or North of 260° from Brest. (S.O. Force H, 1835/24 to Admty.).

Plans to inter-
cept SCHARNHORST
and GNEISENAU.

Your 0049/22 (?0040/22) Assuming enemy leave Brest at dusk speed between 25 and 18 knots course between 280° and 215° and shore based reconnaissance starting at 0700 following are proposed plans. (S.O. Force H 1931/24 to Admty.). My 1931/24. Following information required each day. (Air Reconnaissance.). V.A. Force H, 1923/24, to Admty.).

MOST SECRET.

24.3.1941.

Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic. (continued.)SAVONA
TRAPANI
(German)Left 23/3 for Marseilles.
(Valencia. 2015/24).South Atlantic.CHRISTIAN
HUYGENS
BIRMINGHAM.Cape Town departure 1035/23 transport
CHRISTIAN HUYGENS at 16 knots for Freetown.
E.T.A. 1/4. My 1003/23 to C in C S.A. and
BIRMINGHAM only, BIRMINGHAM will be within
four hours steaming of CHRISTIAN HUYGENS
for only 32 hours during passage.
(F.O.I.C. Simonstown, 0850Z/24. to C in C
S.A.)Capetown departure 1145/24 BIRMINGHAM at
23 knots for Freetown, E.T.A. 0700/30.
BIRMINGHAM is providing distant cover for
CHRISTIAN HUYGENS.
(F.O.I.C. Simonstown, 1230Z/24. to C in C
S.A.)South African
Ports.From Vice Adm. Turner. Inspection of
Commercial Ports Capetown, Port Elizabeth,
and East London. Urgent requirements and
recommendations.
(F.O.I.C. Simonstown 0930B/24 to Admty.
C in C S.A.)SEVERN
enemy report
22/3.My 1835/23 to SEVERN only and your 1801Z/23.
Did you see one ship or two about this
position and time? If two ships one would
appear to be raider if one ship this would
appear to be SACRAMENTO VALLEY. (C) Position
(s), sufficiently near (? presume) it almost
certain that submarine seen was SEVERN.
(C in C S.A. 1041N/24, to Force X).
Message 1041 N/24 groups 12 to 20 not re-
ceived. My 1845Z/22 should read 1745Z/22.
One vessel only in sight from 0810N until
1505N/22. Speed of suspect appeared high
observing SEVERN maintained 18½ knots from
0830 until 1400 only gaining 135° of bearing
SEVERN dived at 1505N. Admty. ?1759/15
SACRAMENTO VALLEY should have been N.E. Cape
Verde Is. on 22/3. It is also significant
that reputed SACRAMENTO VALLEY did not re-
port forthwith in accordance with Admiralty
merchant shipping instructions but waited
until 23 hours had elapsed.
(Force X, 1720Z/24, to C in C S.A.)

MOST SECRET.

24.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (contd.)Greek
GRANICOSOverdue shipping, due Durban 19/3 from U.K.
not arrived.
(S.O.(I) Capetown, 1108B/24).REYNELLAOverdue shipping departure 15/3 from Lobito
for Capetown, not arrived.
(S.O.(I) Capetown, 1150B/24).
B X 106 24/3 life boat containing survivors
reported off Gambia. Request permission
L.5805 carry out search today.
(O.C. R.A.F. Bathurst 1205/24 to C in C S.A.)MULBERA*NT in W.D.*
Your 1841/23. Confirmed MULBERA sailed for
Cape 8/3.
(N.C.S.O. Freetown, 1220/24 to Admty).MARATHON*NT in W.D.*
Correct my 2046/22 originally received very
corrupt). Your 1653/21. Any news of Greek
MARATHON sailed Ponta Delgada 5/3. No.
1154/19/3 from S.O.(I) Freetown refers.
(N.C.S.O. Freetown 1556/24 to Admty).LECH
MONSERRATE
(German)New York German paper states (A) LECH at
Rio de Janeiro commenced loading 20/3
70,000 bags coffee, hides and other goods
(B) MONSERRATE at Callao commenced loading
20/3 700 tons of wool, loading to take
three days. Destination believed
Vladivostok.
(N.S.H.R. Ottawa 1632/24 to Admty).FRISCOCeara reports Captain of Italian LIBRATO
has arrived Ceara to replace Captain of
Italian FRISCO. FRISCO is purchasing 500
gals. lubricating oil.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 1803Z/24).ANTONIO
LIMONCELLI.Fire on board at Moranhas on 18/3.
(D.S. 567).

MOST SECRET.

24.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.South Atlantic. (contd.)A/A personnel.

of ships sailing independently from U.K. ports. Re retention.
(C in C S.A. 2145/24).

Mediterranean.F.A.A.
attack on
shipping.

My 0945/17. On the night of 17/3 three Albacores of 826 Squadron working from Bengna attacked shipping off Tripolitanian Coast and torpedoed a ship of 1500 tons off El Harra, one aircraft failed to return. My 1520/18. (ii) On the night of 19/20 March four Swordfish of 805 Squadron attacked Albanian ports. One which went to Valona had to return with engine trouble. Three attacked Durazzo harbour two explosions seen but result unobserved owing to bad weather.
(C in C Med. 1048/24.)

MAX BERENDT

German, sailed about 4 this morning.
(Powe Alicante T.H.I, 1100/24).

WAIMARARA

Ashore near Rosetta. Learn two Admiralty tugs have gone to assist, believe vessel on Admiralty charter.
(P.S.T.O. Egypt 1111/24 R.A. Alexandria, 1201/24 to Admty. for Lloyds).

Enemy
Convoy.

Secret source reports that at 0715B/24 2 enemy merchant vessels passed Kelibia Roads light escorted by destroyer Cosenz Class steering south.
(S.O.(I) Malta, 1215/24, to Admty).

Malta Air
Raids.

My I. 194, 23/3 enemy victims for 2 dive bombing raids now confirmed. By Fighters 9 confirmed 1 unconfirmed, 2 damaged. By A.A. 4 confirmed, 4 damaged. All were JU 87's and crashed in sea. At dawn today 0406 hours 6 unidentified aircraft dive bombed dockyard. Some damage to dockyard buildings and to ex-Italian S.S. ADIGE. 0655 hours 1 JU 88 escorted by 3 ME. 109's carried out reconnaissance of Grand Harbour at 24,000 ft.

Glenn Martin.....

MOST SECRET.24.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean.Malta Air Raids.

Glenn Martin reported 0830 one destroyer, one Tanker, one M/V 6,000 tons laden in position 33° 15' N, 11° 35' E, course 180° speed 7 knots. At 0800, 1 M/V 8,000 tons unladen, position 36° 15' N, 11° 25' E. course 358° speed 9 knots.
(H.Q. R.A.F. Malta 1630/24).

Enemy prisoners in Greece.

Re removal from Greece of all air crew prisoners of war and specialists and technicians of other arms.
(W.O. 1725/24. to C in C M.E.)

F.A.A. Operations.

C in C Med. 1750/24 see Mediterranean Volume.

Air Reinforcements for Malta.

(H.Q. Malta 1850/24 in reply to Air Ministry 1725/23) See Mediterranean Volume.

MOST SECRET.War Diary.24.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies.ODER
intercepted
by SHOREHAM

SHOREHAM intercepted a four masted merchant vessel in neighbourhood of Perim at 21⁰⁰Z/23. Vessel blew herself up at 2135Z/23. (C.in C. E.I., 0106Z/24, to Admty.)
My 0106/24. Ship was German Ship ODER (8,500 tons) Sank in 12° 30' N. 43° 18.5'. 16 survivors captured. (C.in C. E.I., 0534/24, to Admty.).

French
Cruisers,
GLOIRE,
MARSEILLAISE,
MONTCALM.

French cruisers GLOIRE, MARSEILLAISE, and MONTCALM may pass through E.I. Station for Far East in near future. If met, to be treated as neutral, but although it is not expected that they will attack, H.M. Ship are to be ready for all eventualities. (C.in C. E.I., 0536Z/24, to E.I. Sqdn.).

MOGAMIGAWA.
MARU

In view of N.O.I/c Rangoon's 0625/22 instructions in my 0802/10/10/40 have been cancelled. *See Page 219 10/10/40.* (C.in C. E.I. 0608Z/24).

2nd M.S.
Flotilla.

Your 1654/23. Departure date of 2nd M/S Flotilla from Bombay determined by necessity for boiler cleaning of ABERDARE and HARROW and by fuelling arrangements at Masirah for passage to Aden. F.O.C.R.I.N. is requested to expedite above as much as possible. (C.in C. E.I., 0634Z/24, to Admty.).

DURMITOR

Your 0804/22 and N.O.I.C. East Africa and Zanzibar's 1620/9. Insufficient evidence to justify institution of prize court proceedings in regard to DURMITOR. Negotiations with owner are proceeding with a view to her being either requisitioned or chartered. Further instructions will be signalled concerning her disposal. (D.T.D., 1055/24, to C.in C. E.I.).

CHARLES L-D.

Ref. 1655/23 from LEANDER, French ship arrived here. Details of cargo follow. (N.O.I.C. Mauritius, 1144Z/24, to Admty., C.in C. E.I.)
My 1144/24. Following Officers did not assist in working ship and refuse to assist in future, Captain, First Mate, 2nd Mate, One Cadet. (N.O.I.C. Mauritius, 1501Z/24).

/ GLASGOW,
S.U.2,
ILLUSTRIOUS

War Diary.

24.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

GLASGOW.
S.U.2.
ILLUSTRIOUS

Convoy S.U.2 left Aden escorted by GLASGOW. Route as in C.E.I. 0658/11. E.T.A. Mombasa and Durban. ILLUSTRIOUS joins convoy in Gulf of Aden. (S.N.O. Red Sea, 1330Z/24).

HAWKINS

My 0748/22. HAWKINS is to leave patrol so as to arrive Mombasa A.M./27. (C.in C. E.I., 1442Z/24, to HAWKINS).

EAGLE

Your 1848/23. Owing to urgency for operating EAGLE on the trade routes, her aircraft and personnel must re-embark in EAGLE as soon as she arrives at Port Sudan. (D.O.D.(F) 1622/24 to C.in C. E.I.).

China.

AUGSBERG
renamed
TEIRYU MARU.

Chinwangtao departure 22/3 for Walamatsu, TEIRYUMARU ex German ship AUGSBERG. A.I. reports ship was transferred to Japanese flag on 28/2. (Capt. O.S. Singapore 0443/24).

ELSA ESSBERGER
ANNELIESE
ESSBERGER.
WINNETOU

Departure from Kobe, ELSA ESSBERGER 23/3 after fuelling from WINNETOU. ANNELIESE ESSBERGER, 24/3. (Capt. O.S., Singapore, 1444Z/24).

America and West Indies.

Raider Report.
VILLE DE LIEGE.

Following has been read. RRRR, Armed Merchant Raider VILLE DE LIEGE 63.00 N., 27.10 W., stopped. (Seaforth Radio, 0423/24).

MONSERRATE.

German, at Callao, loading. (See South Atlantic).

CANTON.

Admty. 1533/21. CANTON is due to refit at Belfast as soon as available. She may be used to escort returning convoy if this will be of assistance to R.A. 3rd B.S. but should not otherwise be delayed. (D.O.D.(F) 1538/24 to C.in C. A.W.I.).

24.3.1941.

Monday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

H.X.117.

H.X.117 Ref your 1421/23 (Advance sailing telegram showing 62 ships) and my 1246/29/12/40 para.1. Ships in excess of 40 are not to be held. If necessary convoy should be sailed in 2 sections in close company on same route with additional Commodore.
(D.T.D. 1935/24 to C.O.A.C. Halifax.).

Ships attacked at 0500/15.

Capt. of Br. ship VOCO arrived Philadelphia reports seeing gun flashes in 41.06 N. 45.18 W. at 0400 G.M.T./15.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 2005/24, to Admty.).

Enemy Unit W. of 35° W.

My 1345/14 and 1406/15 and 1319/16. It is now considered unlikely that a U/B was in fact located west of 35° W.
D/F bearings on which this information was based are thought therefore to have originated from a surface vessel.
(D.D.I.C. 2020/24 to C.N.S. Ottawa, C.in C. A.W.I., C.in C. W.A.).

The sinking of M/V. "CHAMA" by U.97 on 23.3.1941.

At 1115 on 23rd March 1941, U.97 sighted a convoy escorted by several destroyers, steering a south-westerly course.

tanker Owing to the extremely poor visibility, contact was lost in the early afternoon but the U-boat continued to follow the convoy's mean course and at 2200/23.3. sighted the silhouette of a ship in the approx. position 49°40'N.-19°20'W. This turned out to be an independent ~~ship~~ on a westerly course and it was thought that she had probably lost the main convoy in the bad visibility conditions.

U.97 pursued the tanker and at 2347/23.3. (German Summer Time) fired two torpedoes. One of the torpedoes exploded in the forward part of the ship and she began to settle slightly by the head. She immediately began to morse with her searchlight and, at the same time, transmit distress signals. From these distress signals it was possible for U.97 to identify the tanker as M/V. "CHAMA".

M/V. "Chama" still remained afloat and it was not until she was struck by two more torpedoes that she finally sank in flames at approx. 2359/23.3.

German Records contain no mention of survivors.

Source: War Diary "U.97"
PG/30093.

War Diary.

24.3.1941.

Monday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.CHAMA
(torpedoed
23/3)

(see 787A)

British tanker, 8077 tons. Following received from ENCHANTRESS. (Begins) CHAMA torpedoed in 049° 35' N. 019° 13' W. at 2235/23 out of convoy. No further signal from CHAMA received. 0800 (ends). (SNAPDRAGON, 1101/24, to C.in C. W.A.) Had left O.G.56. (D.S. 567).

MALANCHA

Ref. SSSS message my 1825/23 undamaged, proceeding.
(MALANCHA, 1115/24, to Admty.).

ANDALUSIAN
(torpedoed 17/3)

Ref. Trade Div. Memo. 4/9/1939.
(1) British ship ANDALUSIAN
(2) Ellerman Papayanni lines
(3) 2115 G.M.T./17 15.50 N. 20.42 W.
(4) (5) and (6) unknown
(7) ship sunk (8) 7 officers 16 crew rescued by Portuguese ship NYASA. 4 officers and 15 crew missing in ship's boat.
(9) unknown (10) torpedo (11) full sets of C.B's and confidential papers dumped. (N.C.S.O. Funchal, 1130/24, to Admty.).
Torpedoed in 15° 48' N. 20° 42' W.
Re survivors. (N.A. Lisbon 2004/24).

AGNETE MAERSK.

S S S S de AGNETE MAERSK 49° N. 21° 55' W. shelled by submarine.
(Lands End Radio, 1430/24) Had left Convoy O.G.56. (D.S. 567).

THORSHAVET

Norwegian tanker 11,015 tons. Following has been read. SSSS THORSHAVET 61.14 N., 21.48 W. Submarine sighted. (Lyness, 1810/24) THORSHAVET was straggler from convoy H.X.114.

MEMNON
(torpedoed
11/3) by U.106.

22 survivors from MEMNON landed near Dakar p.m./21. Vessel torpedoed at 1410/11 in 20° 30' N. 21° 00' W. by German Submarine. Further report from Governor Gambia states lifeboat containing 41 survivors from same vessel passed Dakar proceeding Bathurst 23/3. (S.O.I. Freetown, 1837N/24, to Admty.). MEMNON bound independently from Port Pirie for Avonmouth and Swansea (D.S. 568). Following survivors landed at Dakar. (S.O.(I) Freetown 1901/24). Captain and 8 other survivors landed from MEMNON at Dakar. (S.O.I. Freetown, 1859/24, to Admty.).

War Diary.24.3.1941.
Monday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Submarines Reported.

0808.

D/F at 0808 B.S.T. Italian U/B in 46° N.
6° W. unreliable fix, homeward bound.
(D.D.I.C. 0858/24).U/B and
unidentified
ship off
Iceland, 22/3.Your 2301/22. (1) Was W/T defective or jammed
by outside station? (2) Did A/C take any
offensive action? (3) Did ship resemble
Norwegian OLAF FOSTENES which was in this
vicinity. (D.D.I.C. 1017/24 to F.O.I.C.
Iceland). Reply: 2157/25.Estimated U/B
dispositions.(D.D.I.C. 1250/24) (F.O.S., 1516/24 to S/M's
Area A.).1910.Admty. message AF position 61° 14' N:
21° 48' W. at 1810/24 G.M.T.
(D.D.I.C. 2012/24).W. of 35° W.Unlikely that transmission originated from U/B.
(See America and W. Indies).Submarines Attacked.By VISENDA
23/3.U. 551 Sunk
(G.D. 392)S.O.N.P.T.'s 1840/23. Bubbles last seen rising
from observed position 062° 22' N. 017° 11' W.
at 1330 yesterday.
(VISENDA, 0700/24, to LORD MIDDLETON)
W.R. Note: Passed to Admty. & R.A.N.P.
for information - no trace of former quoted.

War Diary.

25.3.1941.

Monday.SITUATION REPORT.Home Commands.Enemy battle
cruisers.

Air R/C today reported no major units in St. Nazaire, Lorient or Rade d'Abri at Brest but effective R/C of the Biscay ports has not been possible since the date when it is believed the battle cruisers entered one of them.

RODNEY left Reykjavik at 1131 today and is proceeding with despatch to the focal point of trade off Newfoundland in case the enemy are making for this point.

Adty. 2249/25 contains instructions for the operations of Force H. It is estimated that 7 or 8 Italian S/M's are patrolling in the Bay of Biscay.

E boat
activity.

E. boat activity off the East coast commenced at 2100/24. (No anti-E.boat daylight air patrol had been possible owing to the weather.) By 2200 one group was apparently operating N.E. of Yarmouth and another off Cromer. At 2250 D.16 in WORCESTER covering Convoy F.N.41 sighted E.boats who fired torpedoes. E.boats were reported by destroyers with F.N.41 and F.S.44 up to 0333 today. No casualties to H.M. ships or convoys are reported.

S.S. WILLIAM CASH in Convoy F.N.41 claims to have damaged an E.boat off Sheringham buoy. Aircraft search is to be carried out.

Tanker
sunk.

It is reported that on 20/3 STURGEON torpedoed and probably sank a tanker, possibly Norwegian ~~TALBOT BOOTH~~, off Obrestad.

*H.S. Note
DRAFN n/v 8205? See Torpedo attack register

British Air Activity.

All operations by Bomber Command last night were cancelled on account of weather. Ships were attacked today off the Frisian Is.

War Diary

25.3.1941.
Tuesday

SITUATION REPORT

Enemy Air Activity

SS BEAVERBRAE was bombed and *damaged* in the N.W. Approaches this morning.

Bombs or mines which did not explode were reported by HASTINGS this afternoon to have been dropped east of Aldeburgh near 54 Buoy.

SS ESCAUT was attacked this afternoon and drove ashore near Bude.

Three M.E. 109's attacked the Dungeness M.L. patrol about 1900 today. Slight damage, not affecting seaworthiness was caused to M.L. 139.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

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WAR DIARY.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mining.

Operations
GX.

The minelaying operation off Brest Approaches originally intended for night 25/26 was today postponed 24 hours on account of weather. C.in C. Bomber Command was unable to assist the operation tonight by a diversionary bombing of Brest.

S.N.4.

RAM with ⁴minelayers escorted by 4 destroyers sailed from Port Z.A. at 1025 today to carry out operation S.N.4. GALATEA, AURORA and CURACOA left Scapa, this morning to escort.

Z.M.E.25.

Minelaying in St. Georges Channel was cancelled today on account of fog.

F.D.32.

CACHALOT should have completed this operation yesterday or today, before proceeding on patrol.

Fishing motor boat ALASKAN was sunk by mine today in 54° 48' 48" N., 1° 7' W. (Off Hartlepool).

Mines were detonated in the Thames Approaches today. A mine was cut off Falmouth.

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

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SITUATION REPORT.

South Atlantic.

Raider
reported.

S.S. BRITANNIA reported being shelled by a warship raider in 7° 24'N., 24° 34'W., (about 700 miles West of Freetown) at 0855 N., today. At this time, REPULSE and FURIOUS with FOXHOUND and DUNCAN were fuelling at Freetown. REPULSE left at 1700/25 to join S.L.69 at 1100/26. FURIOUS and destroyers are to leave at 0700/26 to join REPULSE at 0900/27. MAURITIUS was in 10° 20'N., 22° 12'W., at 1600N/24 proceeding towards Freetown and was ordered to investigate the raider report. BULOLO has been ordered to join S.L.69 until the arrival of REPULSE.

BRITANNIA made an amplifying message which was received by MAURITIUS at 0920N/25, reporting that she was being chased and gunned by a merchant ship raider in 7° 24' N., 24° 3' W., and was steering north at 15 knots.

Mediterranean.

~~It is believed that S.S. BJONNESS has been sunk by enemy action last night whilst in convey off the south coast of Crete.~~

Brazilian
TAUBETE
attacked.

C.in C. Med. reports that Brazilian S.S. TAUBETE was attacked on 22/3 by a German aircraft, while proceeding independently from Cyprus to Alexandria. Each attempt to abandon ship was frustrated by machine gun fire. One man was killed and 14 wounded.

4 Blenheims bombed and machine gunned Scarpanto and Calato Aerodromes early today, damaging enemy aircraft. A 7000 ton merchant vessel was hit off Astropalia Island.

Tripoli was bombed last night by 3 Wellingtons.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

Lamlash
Examination
Service.

Lamlash examination service will come into operation on 31/3. Request all necessary authorities be informed that all ships for Ayr Treen Irvine and Ardrossan hitherto sent to Rothesay for examination should be sent to Brodick Bay as from 31/3.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1314/25).

South
Greenland
proposed
D/F
Station.

The establishment of an H/F D/F station near Julianehaab in South Greenland is under consideration to obtain bearings in a southerly direction. Canadian and U.S.Governments are being consulted.

2. Request your early remarks on the possibility of station being erected and manned from Canadian resources should the U.S. approve this course. It is proposed communication should be by existing W/T service to Belle Isle.
(V.C.N.S. 2021/25).

Movements.

KELLY
KASHMIR.

Arrived 0722.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 0903/25 and 1009/25).

RODNEY.

RODNEY, COSSACK, MAORI, ZULU sailed in accordance with C.in C. H.F. 0035/24.
(F.O.Iceland, 1131/25).

PRINCE OF
WALES.

Scapa arrivals PRINCE OF WALES, QUANTOCK, LIDDESDALE, AVON VALE.
(A.C.O.S. 1909/25).

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrols.

O.9.
Recognition
signals.

My 1919 (? 24). Dutch submarine O.9 has not acknowledged signal giving her new recognition signal. She is being ordered to obtain new minor warship signal from her escort but it is uncertain if she will do so. She may therefore use either wrong signal correct grenade and flare or correct minor warship signal.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 0015/25).

CACHALOT,
SUNFISH,
SOKOL,
SEALION.
UNDAUNTED,
H.31,
H.32,
H.33,
H.34,
H.44,
H.50,
O.9.
O.10.

Movements.
(F.O.S. 1137/25, 1138/25, 1319/25, 1842/25).
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth 1224/25, 1702/25).
(F.O.I.C. Harwich, 1306/25).
(S.5. 1610/25).

VORTIGERN,
E/Boat
sighted.

1 E/Boat bearing 057°. Cromer 30 miles.
(VORTIGERN 0023/25).
My 0023. Heard hydrophone effect. Saw smoke screen after illumination. Enemy retired to eastward.
(VORTIGERN, 0031/25).

WILLIAM CASH.
Engagement
with E/Boat.

(British 1186 tons). Of F.N.Convoy441, reports having opened fire on E/Boat 2 miles north of Sheringham Light Buoy. 3 bursts were said to have hit at 200 feet range and the E/Boat last seen apparently stopped.
(VANESSA, 1000/25).
Search by aircraft will be made. Ships and vessels in this area are to be warned to keep a lookout.
(C.in C. Nore, 1237/25).

East Coast
anti-E/Boat
Patrol.

2 A/P's, normally North of 5 buoy will remain westward of Channels tonight until F.N. has passed and then patrol vicinity of 7 buoy.
(C.in C. Nore, 1025/25).

25.3.1941. 795
Tuesday.

WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

FARADAY.

(Cable ship) Is to be sailed from U.K. in convoy as arranged by C.in C. W.A. She will call at Freetown, Capetown, Mombasa, and Suez to discharge stocks of cable for Cable and Wireless.

2. As cargo is irreplaceable C.in C. W.A. is requested to arrange following additional precautions.

(i) One A.A. destroyer stationed close to her when in areas where aircraft attack is possible.

(ii) Two corvettes to escort her as far as Freetown.
(D.S.D. 1306/25).

Western
Channel
Patrol.

Capt: (D) Plymouth R/V with Capt: (D) 5 at 2000 today is cancelled. KELVIN and JACKAL are to patrol tonight between longitude of Scilly Isles and The Lizard and arrive Plymouth at 0730/26.

Object of patrol is to cover shipping proceeding from Falmouth to Bristol Channel.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1313/25).

STURGEON
attack
on M/V.
20/3.

In mist and rain on 20/3 STURGEON attacked southbound freighter at 1529 at long range in 230° Obrestad Light 7 miles. Explosions followed after 8 minutes. Twenty minutes later in improved visibility sighted tanker with only after part showing above water and blowing off steam. Tanker was on firing course of torpedoes.

Possibly identified as Norwegian No. 22
~~TALBOT BOOTH~~ (Talbot Booth) ^{DRAFN M/V 8205.}
(S.6. 1410/25 to F.O.S.) (see Torpedo attack Register).

DRAUG
nearly
fired
on.

GUILLEMOT reports that Norwegian Destroyer DRAUG on patrol approached F.N.41, at high speed during E/Boat attack and was nearly fired on.
(VERSATILE, 1601/25).

1759/25th March.

MOST SECRET.

MESSAGE.

OUT.

To: F.O.I.C. Greenock.
V.A.C.T.C.

Date. 25.3.41.

Repeated: C.in C. Western Approaches. 472.
F.O.I.C. Glasgow.
101 R.M. Bde.
P.S.T.O. Clyde.

NEWCASTLE (A.I.).

From: Admiralty.

The following arrangements for H.T.'s ETTRICK, KARANJA and H.M.S. ULSTER MONARCH are promulgated for information and necessary action.

2. ETTRICK and KARANJA are available for training of 101 Force until p.m. 30th March. Both ships are to be sailed from Inveraray to arrive Clyde a.m. 31st March.
3. Stores of 101 Force will be transferred from ETTRICK to KARANJA as arranged by War Office and D.of S.T. Subsequently ETTRICK will return to normal trooping duties and KARANJA will return to Inveraray at 4 days' notice for 101 Force. Subject to this requirement, she will be available for V.A.C.T.C.'s training programme.
4. Landing craft and their crews in ETTRICK are to be left at Inveraray and are to be transferred to KARANJA on her return.
5. While KARANJA is on the Clyde, opportunity will be taken to modify her to take 1 SLC and 1 MLC. in addition to her establishment of 8ALC's.
6. It may be necessary to move H.M.S. ULSTER MONARCH to the Clyde early in April to load with military stores.

1759/25.

O.D. (434)

1st Lord.	I.P.
1st S.L.	W.D.
2nd. S.L.	Duty Captain.
3rd S.L.	Head of M.
4th. S.L.	D.T.S.D.
5th. S.L.	D.D.I.C.
V.C.N.S.	E.P.S.
A.C.N.S. (H)	D.T.D.
A.C.N.S. (F)	N.I.D.10 (Pay Cdr. Wilson).
A.C.N.S. (T)	D.of S.T.
C.S. . to 1st S.L.	D.C.O.
D.of P. (2)	D.D.T.S.D.(C.O.).
D.O.D. (F)	W.D. for 9S (P)
D.D.O.D. (F)	
D.O.D. (H)	
D.D.O.D. (H)	
D.N.I. (4)	
D.S.D.	
D.N.A.D.	
D.of L.D.	
D.A/S.W.	
D.M.S.	

WAR DIARY.25.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity.2 M/V's
bombed.

On 24/3. One Blenheim attacked and sank a small ship marked with a white swastika at 52° 5'N., 4° 12'E. Another Blenheim attacked one small M/V in 53° 13'N., 3° 8'E. Results not seen.
(H.Q.B.C. 0012/25).

Patrols.

"Trost", "Star", "BERT"
TROST, STAR, BERT expected to take off 1100. PAIR in operation now.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 0850/25).
Air patrol ~~HOURLY~~ in operation.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 1256/25).

Brest.
Proposed
diversionary
Air Attack.

Your 98 25/3. Your 1239/24. Do not count on my assistance tonight. If present weather holds, air operations in Brest area will not be possible.
(C.in C. Bomber Command, 0950/25 to C.in C. Plymouth).

Escort
Ships.
Kites with
Flares.

Kites carrying flares may be flown by escort ships at night. Escorts will be informed when night air escort may be expected. On being informed, escort ships are not to fly kites until they have told air escort by R/T.
(C.in C. W.A. 1047/25).

Air Searches.

If weather is suitable aircraft will carry out a U/Boat search tomorrow in sector radius 300 miles from Tory Island between bearings 260° and 280° leaving Tory Island 0800 and returning 1500. Fuel permitting RIPLEY and SAINT FRANCIS should endeavour to pass this sector at appropriate time co-operating with aircraft.
(C.in C. W.A. 1708/25).
Admiralty, 1712/25. Whitley aircraft taking off from Wick 2000. E.T.A. position about 2200. Searching for 4 hours, then returning Wick.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 1916/25).

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.25.3.1941.
Tuesday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity. (Contd.)Green
Corridors.

X 704 25/3. Cancel my X.78 21/3.
New Directional Instruction for Green
Corridors centred on Mablethorpe and
Filey.
(Air Ministry F.O.6. 1500/25).

Anti-
Invasion
Patrols.

Your A.617 of 22/3 has been considered
in conjunction with Bomber Command
signal Ops. 44 22/3. Decision is that
instructions contained in my X.60 15/3
must stand. Responsibilities of Air
Ministry in final sentence to be regarded
as including consideration of any special
features which might affect reversion
107 and 114 Squadrons in light of
situation at the time.
(Air Ministry 1755/25 to A.O.C. C.C.)

Ships
Bombed.

1. Night 24/25. All operations
cancelled owing to unfavourable weather.
Day 25/3. One Aircraft attacked a convoy
of 18 ships at 55° 45'N., 4° 50'E.,
bombed two large ships about 4-5000
tons each and machine gunned one ship
from sea level. Two bursts were
observed and were near misses. Another
aircraft attacked a motor vessel.
Another aircraft attacked a stationary
Flak ship in 53° 28'N., 5° 40'E. Results
not observed but probable direct hit
scored. Another aircraft attacked
what was thought to be a naval patrol
vessel at 53° 36'N., 6° 32'E.
(H.Q.B.C., 2344/25).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941. 798
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

BEAVERBRAE.
(British
9956 tons)
bombed.

Proceed to assist BEAVERBRAE bombed
in 60° 38'N., 08° 44'W., at 0900/25.
Survivors are in 4 life boats.

(C.in C. W.A. 1016/25 to 10th A/S
Group). *but see also p. 828*

BEAVERBRAE on fire.

(C.in C. Rosyth, 1024/25).

Proceed to assist.

(R.A.D. H.F. 1030/25 to TARTAR, GURKMA)

Lifeboats and crew 4 miles E.N.E. ship
drifting S.E.

(Liverpool, 1113/25).

Proceed with all despatch to assist.

(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1201/25 to BRIGAND)

R.A.(D) H.F.'s 1030. 1 Whitley

aircraft E.T.A. position 1330, relieved
by second Whitley about 1800. Call
signs.

(C.in C. Rosyth, 1236/25 to TARTAR,
GURKMA).

A/S Trawler WINDERMERE has been sailed
to escort BRIGAND.

(N.O.I.C. Stornoway, 1425/25).

Sighted BRIGAND.

(WINDERMERE 1555/25).

(?Crews of) all 4 boats now on board.

BEAVERBRAE still afloat in 060° 13'N.,

009° 12'W. Consider ship can be

(?salved).

(From (?) 1730/25 to R.A.D. H.F.)

Convoy
F.N.Even.

One aeroplane shadowing convoy ^{"Agent"} ~~AGENT~~
Position TLCE 0751, in 52° 7'N., 1° 51'E.
(HASTINGS 1455/25).

BENVORLICH
(Bombed 19/3).

Clyde arrival LAMELEK with 20 survivors
from BENVORLICH.

(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1601/25).

Convoy
F.S.Even.

One aeroplane height less than 1,000
feet convoy ~~AGENT~~ in 52° 19'N., 1°
59'E.

(HASTINGS, 1634/25).

My 1634. Torpedo Bomber. Course 210.

(HASTINGS, 1636 /25).

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

ESCAUT
Bombed.

(Dutch 347 tons). From Ayr to Parcrew 7, 2 gunners. Machine gunned and bombed by enemy aircraft at 1620/25 eight miles from shore. Engine room flooded and drove ashore Southern end of Cleave Strand near Bude. Two lifeboats known to be adrift about 8 miles West of Desert Point, painted grey water logged. 1 gunner wounded in leg. 1 of crew seriously ill. All crew landed safely.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth, 2150/25).

M/L
Patrol
and
Dungeness
bombed.
M.L.139
damaged.

At about 1900 today Dungeness M.L. Patrol was attacked by three M.E.109s. One small bomb struck Wheel House of M.L.139 causing slight damage not affecting seaworthiness and wounding Helmsman. Casualty landed Dover where temporary repairs being effected. Three other bombs fell on beach at Dungeness.
(V.A.Dover, 2209/25).

War Diary.

25.3.41.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

INTREPID
ICARUS
IMPULSIVE.
(~~.....~~).

Arrived 0734. (C. in C. Plymouth 0915/25.).

S.N.4.

Scapa departure 0859 GALATEA and AURORA
0932 CURACOA. (A.C.O.S. 0955/25.).
Departure Port ZA R.A.(M) in SOUTHERN PRINCE,
MENESTHEUS, PORT QUEBEC, AGAMEMNON, CASTLETON,
CHARLESTOWN, St. MARYS, LANCASTER, to carry
out S.N.4. (TRELAWNEY 1025/25.).

Thames
Estuary.

Two S.A. Mines detonated as follows at
0352/25. (Capt. M/S. Sheerness 1102/25.).

Western
Channel
Clearance
Sweep.

My 1941/24. Holiday cleared. No mines out.
(S.O. 1st. M/S.F.1139/25.).

Operation
G.X.

V.C.N.S.1205/25 See Operations Volume.
Your 1646/24. ABDIEL is to embark mines at
Milford Haven and should be sailed accord-
ingly. Decision as to position of lay and
subsequent movements will be signalled later.
(V.C.N.S. 1209/25 to C. in C. Plymouth.).
Operation G X is postponed 24 hours on ac-
count of weather. (C. in C. Plymouth 1237/25)

Z.M.E.25.

C. in C. Plymouth's 1701/23. Z.M.E.25
will not be carried out today on account
of fog. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1253/25.).
Your 1253/25. Operation is to be carried
out night of 26/27. (C. in C. Plymouth
1653/25.).

ALASKAN.

(Fishing motor boat) Sunk by mine explosion
in 54° 48' 48" N., 01° 07' W. Crew
rescued by fishing motor boat SUNRAY and
landed at Hartlepool.
(N.O.I.C. Hartlepool 1455/25.).

Off Harwich.

LEDA reports. At 1904/23 bearing red 140°
distant 1.5 miles, heavy explosion and
column of white spray. Ship in 51° 52.7'
N., 01° 34.9' E. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 1507/25.).

War Diary.

25.3.41.
Tuesday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Mining Contd.

Off Harwich.

One magnetic mine detonated in 51° 47' N.,
01° 18.1' E at 0950. (F.O.I.C. Harwich
1551/25.).

Off Southwold.

My 1634. Bombs or mines which did not
explode dropped in approximate position
150° 5 cables 54 F buoy. (HASTINGS 1650/25.).

Operation
G.X.

C. in C. Plymouth 2020/25. see Operations
Volume.

G.W.

Operation G.W. sailing date postponed.
Date for ships to assemble at Falmouth will
be signalled later. (C. in C. Plymouth
2023/25.).

Enemy Intelligence.

E-Boats.

One E boat bearing 000° Cromer 10 miles.
(MEYNELL 0229/25.).
Two E Boats in sight. My position 005°
Cromer 11. (MEYNELL 0333/25.).
Following is summary of E boat activity
last night 24/25. No anti-E-Boat daylight
air patrol possible owing to weather.
Activity started at 2100. By 2200 one
group apparently operating N.E. of Yarmouth
and another off Cromer.
At 2250 D 16 in WORCESTER covering F.N.41,
sighted E boats near M buoy who fired ^
torpedoes. D.16 claims 2 hits on E Boat.
At 0023/25 VORTIGERN with F.S.44 reported
H.E. at 56A Buoy and sighted smoke screen.
At 0230 MEYNELL with F.N.41 reported E boat
near Sheringham Buoy. At 0252 QUORN with
F.S.44 reported H.E. at Hearty Knoll Buoy.
At 0333 MEYNELL reported 2 E boats 11 miles
north of Cromer. No casualties to H.M.
ships or convoys reported.(C. in C. Nore
1238/25.).

/TAIPING.....

War Diary.

25.3.41.
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence Contd.

TAIPING
TARONGA.

My 1123/13. TAIPING returned Oslo 22nd March. TARONGA may leave March 27th. (F.O.C.N.P. 1109/25.).

Kiel.
R/C on
24/3.

Southern portion only of Kiel covered by air reconnaissance 24/3 March. HIPPER Class Cruiser still alongside. LEIPZIG has left dry dock but may be present elsewhere in harbour. Berth occupied by LUTZOW on 18/3 not covered. (D.D.I.C. 1225/25.).

St. Nazaire
Lorient
Brest.

Air reconnaissance reports no major units in St. Nazaire, L'Orient or Rade Abri at Brest, 25/3. (D.D.I.C. 1706/25.).
A/C A/59 reports:-
At 1059 crossed French coast at Pleubian set course to Morvbian Bay. At 1128 over Morvbian Bay at 2000 ft. No shipping seen. Searched creeks down coast to St. Nazaire. At 1140 at Castelli Pt. took photos of gun positions and pillboxes from 250 ft. At 1144 over Le Cruisic took photos of gun positions from 600 ft. appeared deserted. At 1150 outside St. Nazaire harbour. In the harbour were sighted 1 cargo vessel 5/6000 tons heavily camouflaged in black and white, 1 smaller cargo vessel about 2000 tons and 9 small vessels about 2000 tons. (Chatham 1715/25 to H.Q.C.C.).

German
Ship.

Your 1808/25. (See North Atlantic)
Unit was probably to Northward of Scotland. (D.D.I.C. 2022/25.).

³
25.2.1941.
Tuesday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

Firing
by M/V's
at
Starshell.

During a recent encounter between E/Boats and destroyers forming additional cover to a convoy, ships in convoy observed to open fire on Starshell also at destroyer firing starshell. Considered that unless the enemy, whether A/C or E/B, can be definitely seen, promiscuous firing of this description is only a waste of ammunition and hampers destroyers in driving off attack. Request N.C.S.O's may impress upon masters undesirability of opening fire at random.
(C.in C. Nore, 1156/25).

E.C.Convoys.
in Pentland
Firth.

Suggest that in order to avoid delays to Merchant shipping E.C.Convoys should when necessary proceed through the Pentland Firth by night. Alternatives are to waste time in Methil Roads, Moray Firth, or proceed by Fair Island Channel, all of which involve delay in arrival and appear undesirable.
(C.in C. Nore, 1620/25 to C.in C. Rosyth)

Dispersal
of S.L.68.

My 1507/21. Convoy S.L.68 left Sierra Leone on 13/3 and was dispersed in position 21° 10'N. 4°40'W. on 21/3. Broadcast instructions have now been issued for these ships to proceed to Halifax if bunkers permit. There are 51 ships of which 26 are coal burners which may each require up to 500 tons at Halifax. Can this be supplied without undue delay? Other ships comprise 19 Diesel vessels (maximum requirements). Can this also be met? (D.T.D. 1925/25 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa).

Military
Convoys.

W.S.7.

REINA DEL PACIFICO
Sailed Clyde portion W.S.7. except / escorted by Commodore C.S.18 in EDINBURGH, REVENGE, SOMALI, MATABELE, MASHONA, LEGION, BROADWATER, PIORUN. (N.O.I.C. Greenock, 0043/25 to Admty). My 0043/25. STRATHAIRD has been in collision and has returned to Clyde. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0805/25, P.S.T.O. Clyde, 0830/25).

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941. 804
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys. (Contd.)

Military
Convoys.

102 R.M. Bde.,
and L.C.
S.S. KENYA.
SOBIESKI.

Admiralty 1727/19/2.
Decided that Transports and Personnel
referred to and held at short notice
are to be released subject to following
arrangements.
(D.C.D.(H) 1737/25 to F.O.I.C's Greenock
Glasgow etc.)

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

WAR DIARY.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

DASHWOOD
(Grounded
21/3).

Departures H.M. A/S trawler SWORD DANCE escorting Tugs KENIA and LADY BRASSEY to attempt to refloat of DASHWOOD (F.O.I.C. Harwich, 0752/25). DASHWOOD refloated proceeding Southend. (F.O.I.C. Harwich, 1152/25).

MARAUDER.

^{Rescue}
(Tug) In collision with S.S. EMPIRE SONG last night. Tug out of action. (N.O.I.C. Aultbea, 1027/25). Damage as follows. Repairs cannot be carried out locally. Engines are all right also propellers. Ship will require escort to assist steering. (N.O.I.C. Aultbea, 1217/25).

Suspected
shipwrecked
crew.

At 0439/25 in 17° 21'N., 26° 9'W. HIGHLAND PRINCESS reports lights observed. Suspected ship-wrecked crew. (Portishead Radio 1930/25).

Unknown Ship
ashore off
Cromer.

Following intercept from Humber Radio, begins. AHAMO to ACAVUS. Ashore off Cromer. Ends. (F.O. Humber, 2244/25).

KENTWOOD.

(British 2180 Tons). Following received by Humber Radio at 2203 from KENTWOOD. (Have?) run ashore Cromer. Request tug. (F.O.Humber, 2343/25).

JOAN
MARGARET.

(Drifter 25 tons). Sunk by enemy action 20/3. 2 killed, 3 missing, 1 wounded. Details unknown. (D.S. 567).

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic

Crew of
A/C Rescued by
Spanish ship.

CABO de BUENA ESPERANZA
intended.
Your 1837/19. Crew were transferred to
Las Palmas at 2400/24 on board Spanish
vessel XAUEN
(Consul Teneriffe. 0956/25 to N.A. Madrid).
(See pages 377, 437, 501, 528, of March 41.)

PANDORA
to escort
→ CAIRNDALE
(oiler)

Admty. 1751/24 and 2227/24 PANDORA is
available 29/3. Propose to sail her to act
as protection to CAIRNDALE while at R/V
"PEDESTAL". In event of an attack by
raider I consider PANDORA would have good
chance of defence vide para 8 S.O. Force
H 0920/24. A submarine will still be
available for HG and OG convoys.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1200/25, to Admty.) See also
1748/25.

Enemy unit.

D/F Bearing Cupar 210° 2nd Class at 0920
G.M.T. /25 indicates probable enemy
surface craft.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1243/25, to N.A. stn.)
Middle Hill reports at 1618 German ship?
was bearing 356°. 2nd Class.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1808/25, to N.A. Stn.)
My 1808. Unit was probably to northwest of
Scotland.
(F.O.C.N.A. 2302/25 to N.A. Stn.)

ARK ROYAL
defect

ARK ROYAL reports defect. Material for
repair on board estimated time to complete
12 days. Boiler can be steamed until sup-
-erheater carrier rail carries away.
(S.O. Force H, 1410/25 to Admty.)

→ CAIRNDALE
(to fuel Force H)

Admty. 1751/24. Intend sailing CAIRNDALE
P.M./26 escorted by two Corvettes until
2100/28.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1748/25 to Admty.)

Force H

Your 1931/24. Policy re operation of Force
H in vicinity of convoy routes between
latitude of Ushant and Lisbon.
(1st S.L. 2249/25 to S.O. Force H) (See
operations Volume)

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

TACOMA
(German)

(Interned at Montevideo after her association with GRAF SPEE). Reported to have received instructions from her owners to be ready for sea by May. (D.S. 567).

MAURITIUS

Was further to eastward than thought and has seen nothing. Unlikely that contact will now be made. Has had defect in circulation. Have ordered her to Freetown. Arrives 26/3. (C in C S.A. 0009N/25 to Admty.)

BRITANNIA.
Raider Report.

Following has been read:- RRRR 7 24 N 24 34 W, BRITANNIA gunned. (Freetown W/T 0855N/25) (D.D.I.C. 1159/25 to C in C H.F. S.A. etc. and 1206/25 to G.B.M.S. Areas 6A, 7,9, and 1)

REYNELLA

Overdue shipping cancel my 1150/24, REYNELLA delayed Lobito now due Capetown M 27/3. (S.O.(I) Capetown, 1007/25)

Dispositions.

BRITANNIA Raider Report. REPULSE, FURIOUS, FOXHOUND, DUNCAN, at Freetown fuelling. REPULSE will leave Freetown P.M./25 to join S.L. 69. FURIOUS and Destroyers leave A.M./26 to join REPULSE. MAURITIUS in 010° 20' N 022° 12' W at 1600N/24 then towards Freetown, ordered to investigate Raider Report. BULOLO ordered to join Convoy until arrival of REPULSE. (C in C S.A. 1047N/25, to Admty.) My 1047/25 REPULSE sailed 1700/25 and will join Convoy 1100/26 FURIOUS and destroyers sail 0700/26 and join convoy 0900/27. NARKUNDA sailed 1730/25 and will join Convoy 0700/27 being given cover by REPULSE, FURIOUS and Air on passage. (C in C S.A. 1259N/25 to Admty.) My 1047/25 Intend REPULSE, FURIOUS, and destroyers shall remain in company with Convoy S L 69 as long as REPULSE endurance permits then return to Freetown to fuel and proceed in accordance with your 1330/23. REPULSE

should leave.....

War Diary.

25.3.1941. ⁸⁰⁸
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

Dispositions
(contd.)

REPULSE should leave convoy 30/3. MAURITIUS to join convoy by this date must leave raider search not later than p.m./26 to fuel Bathurst. After joining she can stay with convoy until about 4/4 in 029° N. if proceeding Scapa or till 9/4 in 039° N. if proceeding Gibraltar. Intend MAURITIUS shall proceed to join convoy as stated unless other escort is provided. (C.in C. S.A., 1947N/25, to Admty.).

BIRMINGHAM
CHRISTIAN
HUYGENS

F.O.I.C. Simonstown's 0850Z/24. BIRMINGHAM should overtake CHRISTIAN HUYGENS as soon as practicable and remain with her until arrival at Freetown. (D.O.D.(F) 1137/25 to C.in C. S.A.). N.O.I.C. Simonstown 0850/24. After overtaking CHRISTIAN HUYGENS you are to remain in company and escort until arrival Freetown or relief by another ship, see my 2141/19 and 1947/21. (C.in C. S.A., 1139N/25, to BIRMINGHAM).

HAWKINS

My 1142/10. HAWKINS will now arrive Durban 4/4. Intend her to dock to change propellers and carry out seven days self refit. (C.in C. E.I., 1206Z/25, to N.O.I.C's Simonstown, Durban).

Italian ships,
Rio de Janeiro.

Reported to be storing for overseas voyage. No assessment given to report. (S.O.I. Montevideo, 2206Z/25 to Admty.).

ILLUSTRIOUS

To be docked at Durban for examination of underwater fittings and report as to any castings, fittings, etc., which will require replacement during refit in America. (D.O.D.(F) 2253/25, to C.in C. S.A.).

SEVERN's
"Q" report
22/3.

My 1041/24. Consider it likely that suspicious ship sighted by SEVERN in position 13° N. 27° W. at 1152/22 was SACRAMENTO VALLEY. Further report will be made when ship arrives Freetown. (C.in C. S.A., 2331/25 to Admty.).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.

Tuesday.

809

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

WAIMARAMA
(24/3).

My 1111/24. WAIMARA^{MA} refloated and arrived Alexandria. Steering gear damaged. Further signal will be made. (P.S.T.O. Egypt, 1249/25).

MARIE MAESK.
(damaged
in air
attack).

Your 2007/22. As soon as space is available MARIE MAESK cargo should be transferred using other oiler pumps. Report if this can be done. Report quantity of coal cargo, remaining. (C.in C. Med., 1151/25 to S.B.N.O. Suda Bay).

M.C.9.

EMBRICOS

Operation completed. Report. MARIE MAERSK (A.N.21) damaged by bombs; NIKOLAOS⁸⁵ ~~██████████~~ sunk; SOLHEIM bombed and abandoned. (C.in C. Med., 1321/25). Original in Lion Copy only.

Brazilian
S.S. TAUBATE
bombed.

Attacked on 22/3 by a German A/C while on independent passage from Cyprus to Alexandria, about 100 miles N.E. of Alexandria. Attack lasted 1½ hours. Six bombs dropped and a near miss damaged steering gear. TAUBATE stopped immediately attack started and tried to abandon ship but each attempt was frustrated by M.G. fire. One man killed 14 wounded. One boat eventually got away. Later when A/C departed ship reboarded by crew and brought into Alexandria. Flying boat sent out but arrived after enemy had left. (C.in C. Med., 1327/25 to Admty).

Escort of
Malta
Hurricanes.

Your X.472 23/3. Am not clear as to purpose of escorting Sunderlands. Hurricanes allotted Malta from Egypt normally proceed in company of escorting land plane only. Suggest in this case each formation of 6 Hurricanes is escorted by 2 Fulmars to guard against W/T failure. Suggest you reconsider decision to use Sunderlands especially in view of danger proceeding Malta in Daylight. (H.Q. R.A.F. M.E. 1523/25 to Air Ministry.)

SECRET

MESSAGE

1321/25th March.
IN.

809A

From C. in C., Mediterranean.

Date 26/3/41.

Recd. 1207

Naval Cypher "D" by
W/T

Addressed Admiralty.

727. My 1231/19. Operation M C 9 completed. Convoy M W (?62) and force "A" both sighted by aircraft off Gavdo Island about 1030/21 by two enemy reconnaissance aircraft, one of these after damaging by H.M.S. FORMIDABLE's fighter came low over fleet and was shot down. Weather conditions were bad for aircraft during 21st and this coupled with presence of convoy passing in and out of Aegean may have deceived enemy. In any case neither fleet nor convoy were sighted by any aircraft on 22nd, though two passed close in dark hours, and convoy reached Malta without further incident at daylight on 23rd.

2. Convoy and escort bombed in harbour as reported in V.A. Malta's 2230/23.

3. On return journey Fleet was sighted 0900/23 in position 035 degrees 17' North 019 degrees (?39') East. Contact made by fighters and one enemy aircraft damaged. Fleet again sighted 1600. Fighters made contact but enemy got away.

4. On 24th Fleet was sighted by 2 reconnaissance aircraft at 0930 and again at 1155. Fleet arrived Alexandria 2300/24.

5. The passing of M W 6 into Malta without attack is nothing short of surprising as heavy air attacks had been expected throughout day, (?particularly) on 22nd March and in view of obvious high standard of German reconnaissance. We must count ourselves most fortunate that a combination of bad weather and evasive routing allowed us to find a gap and slip the convoy through. It is improbable that this immunity can be achieved in future Malta convoys.

6. Throughout period 20th - 24th March there has been extensive activity by enemy aircraft working from Rhodes against our convoys. MARIE MAERSK from A N 21 was damaged by bombs but brought in by navigating party from H.M.A.S. WATERHEN to Suda Bay, one tank burnt out with loss of about one thousand tons. Convoy A S 21 under Greek escort plus H.M.S. SALVIA bombed S.E. of Crete. Greek ~~ships~~ ships ~~MAERSK~~ sunk, Norwegian SOLHEIM bombed and abandoned by crew, search for ship in progress. F.A.A. Fighters working from Crete have assisted as far as possible but very drastic measures are necessary to deal with aerodromes in Rhodes.

7. Intend issuing following communique. The Mediterranean Fleet has been operating in Central Mediterranean during period 21st to 24th March covering various convoy movements. During these operations one enemy reconnaissance aircraft was shot down and at least one other was damaged. No enemy surface forces were sighted.

1321/25

Advance copy sent P.O., C.S.O., to 1st S.L., A.C.N.S.(F) Ops., O.D., O.I.C., and D.P.D.

1st Lord.	A.C.N.S.(F)	O.I.C.(2)	E.P.S.	W.D.
1st S.L.	Nav.Sec.	D.S.D.9	D.T.D.(4)	D.A/S.W.
5th S.L.	Parl. Sec.	D.N.I.(4)	D.T.D.(M)	D.of S.T.
V.C.N.S.	C.S.O., to 1st S.L.M.(15)		D.N.A.D.	Cdr.Holbrook.
A.C.N.S.(H)	Ops.(4)	Press Div.	D.T.S.D.	
A.C.N.S.(TF)	O.D.(5)	D.of P.(3)	I.P.(3)	

MW6
EMBARICOS
NICOLAOS

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

810

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Malta
Air
Raid.

Combined service report Malta up to 1600 hours 25/3. 1630 hours 24/3. High level bombing attack Grand Harbour by 10 JU.88's with escort of 20 ME.109's. No service casualties or damage. Damage to civilian property slight. (H.Q. R.A.F. 1600/25), (Malta).

BJONNESS
Probably
sunk.

*(no sinking
see 24/3)*

Most probable but not yet confirmed that BJONNESS has been sunk by enemy during night whilst in convoy off south coast of Crete (?). Master and crew saved. (S.B.N.O. Suda Bay, 1745/25, to Admty). (N.T. in Lloyds, D.S.569). *See 24/3. P958.*

ISIS
ENCOUNTER.

Enquiring their whereabouts and when they may be expected at Suez. Badly needed in Mediterranean. (C.in C. Med., 183/25 to C.in C. S.A.)

See next page.

Fleet
Movements.

Arrival 24/3 C.in C. Med. in WARSPITE, FORMIDABLE, BARHAM, VALIANT, JERVIS, JUNO, JANUS, JAGUAR, NUBIAN, MOHAWK, STUART, DEFENDER, HERO. Arrival 25/3 BONAVENTURE, HOTSPUR, GREYHOUND, GRIFFIN, HAVOCK. Departure 25/3 ROVER, DEFENDER. French M/L PLUTON, JAGUAR, FIONA, APHIS, CARLISLE, BRECONSHIRE. (S.O.(I) Alexandria, 1852/25 to Admty).

Submarines.

Proposed reinforcements. (Head of M., 2250/25 to C.in C. Med.) See Med. Volume.

ATLAS
LIVORNO.

Arrival German Steamers ATLAS and LIVORNO. (Valencia T.H.I. 2340/25).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday. 811

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

Shipping
for
Service
Needs.

Owing to rapid changes in Military situation additional shipping now necessary for (a) Petrol. (b) Personnel for Mogadiscio. (Suggestions).
(S.O. Force W., 0556Z/25 to C.in C. E.I).

Fuelling
methods
employed
by German
Raiders.

N.T. in W.D.
Admty. 1441Z/22. Following information (COBURG and KETTY BROVIG) supplements my 0439Z/9.
(CANBERRA, 0725Z/25 to C.in C. E.I).

CHARLES
L.D.

My 1501 (N.T. in W.R.) Crew only undertook to work ship as far as Mauritius. Consider almost certainly 3 officers and some men would declare for De Gaulle if ship was seized. (cargo)
(N.O.I.C. Mauritius, 0831Z/25, to Admty)

Vizagapatam.

My 0632/18. Examination service and P.W.S.S. commenced operating 25/3.
(F.O.C.R.I.N. 0950Z/25).

ISIS,
ENCOUNTER.

Sailed in accordance with C.in C.E.I. 1144Z/12. E.T.A. Kilindini 1000 G.M.T. /29.
(N.O.I.C. Durban, 1052Z/25).

COLOMBO
CALEDON.

Present intention is that COLOMBO will escort Bombay portion B.N.24 to Aden, and will then join Red Sea Force in place of CALEDON. CALEDON is to be sailed to Colombo for refit on arrival COLOMBO at Aden.
(C.in C. E.I. 1156Z/25 to S.N.O. Red Sea, COLOMBO).

Orders for
ANTENOR.

On arrival Aden ANTENOR is to complete with fuel and then proceed to Bombay at 15 knots. To boiler clean on arrival at Bombay.
(C.in C. E.I. 1158Z/25).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941. 812
Tuesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

SHROPSHIRE.

Your 1344Z/18. (Re aircraft to be transferred to SHROPSHIRE). Confirmed. (D.N.A.D. 1302/25 to C.in C. E.I.)

KETTY BROVIG
Raider R/V.

CANBERRA reports that examination of KETTY BROVIG documents show that her four R/Vs with other ships between 12/2 and 4/3 all took place in area East Saya De Malha and Nazareuh Bank, Farewell message between KETTY BROVIG and raider on 28/2 implied that one of them, latter possibly, was about to leave for Germany. (C.in C. E.I., 1306/25 to A.C.N.B.)

CANBERRA,
SHROPSHIRE,
AUSTRALIA.

Proposals for. (A.C.N.B. 1324/25). (See Australia.)

Reunion.

Re. (Hd. of M., 1607/25 to C.in C.E.I) (See Operations Volume).

Swordfish
flight.

My 0700/26/2 and your 0700/24/3 (Neither received in Admty) Swordfish flight is to be sent to Suez first opportunity and not Port Sudan. Report your intentions regarding this movements. (C.in C. E.I. 1628Z/25 to N.O.I.C. Mombasa).

Punitive
landing,
Shugra, q (Shugra)
CHAKDINA.
KANDAHAR.

Owing to contravention by Fadhli Sultan of existing treaties, Governor Aden on instructions from S. of S. for Colonies wished to take active steps against Sultan on 23/3 and asked for H.M. Ship to convey and land 150 Government guards at Shugra. CHAKDINA and KANDAHAR were employed for this duty, the latter covering the landing. No opposition or gunfire, but Sultan's Palace was blown up at request of Governor, Aden, by naval demolition party. The Sultan escaped. (C.in C. E.I. 1736/25 to Admty).

War Diary.

25. 3. 1941. 813
Tuesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

Indo-
China.

Your 1627/22. Arrangement regarding Dutch tankers. (C. in C. China, 0229/25, to Admty.).

Japanese
tankers.

Your 1216/12. C. in C. N. E.I., reports he cannot object formally to these 4 tankers visiting Taraoan. To prevent their concentrating in or immediately outside N.E.I. territory he has arranged with B.P.M. that each ship will be fuelled as quickly as possible but that "owing to technical reasons" a week will have to elapse between arrival of each tanker. Consideration also being given by Dutch to using submarines to investigate in vicinity if circumstances permit. (C. in C. China, 0729Z/25, to Admty.).

Sale of
Ammunition
to Chinese.

Your 1527Z/21, which is being passed to Admiralty. Arrangements approved generally. Co-operation of Gov., of Burma is being sought. Ammunition and explosives to be offered for sale to Chinese Gov., in preference to being jettisoned provided diplomatic mission see no objection. (C. in C. China, 0733Z/25, to FALCON.).

Indo-China
Rubber
Exports
to Japan.

My 0319Z/. 25/2 and Tokyo 402 9/3 to F.O. I am informed by Admiral Decoux that Gov. of Indo China have been compelled, on orders from Vichy, to accede to a Japanese demand for delivery of 35,000 tons of rubber during 1941. Remarks and suggestions. (C. in C. China, 1047/25, to Admty.).

MOST SECRET.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

WAR DIARY.

814

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies.

Service
Personnel
in
RAJPUTANA
A.M.C.

Your 1931/17. Intend to embark 10 officers and 100 other ranks in RAJPUTANA escorting H.X.117. Only other escort available is TRIBUNE but some distant cover will be given by capital ships outward bound and escorting other homeward bound convoys.
(F.O.3.B.S. 1129/25 to Admty).

ELK
HUSKY
VISON.

Regret circumstances compel me to request the return of ELK, HUSKY and VISON. Request vessels may be sailed so as to arrive Halifax early May.
(C.N.S. Canada, 1206/25 to C.in C.A.W.I.)

MALAYA.

On arrival Trinidad report to Admiral French details of damage and also principal items of defects to be carried out concurrently with repairs.
(D.C.D.(F) 1732/25 to MALAYA).

Australia.

CANBERRA,
SHROPSHIRE,
AUSTRALIA.

Your 1559/19. State of materials for CANBERRA expected to allow deferment of refit for some months. Therefore propose CANBERRA remain under the orders of C.in C. E.I. until SHROPSHIRE refit completed. AUSTRALIA to return to Australian Station after escort U.S.10. Present intention is for AUSTRALIA to relieve CANBERRA on E.I. Station after escort of U.S.11.
(A.C.N.B. 1324Z/25 to Admty).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

815

U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships Attacked.

ERODONA.
(torpedoed
16/3).

Am now in observed position 062° 19'N., 018° 10'W., with abandoned ERODONA. No sign of tug and unable to get in touch with her by W/T. Weather similar but towing gear ready and intend to make attempt to board. (Tug ST. MARTIN, 1100/25, to S.O.T.N.P). My 1100. Now in 62° 30'N., 18° 35'W., have put 1 officer and 4 ratings on board and was towing for 40 minutes when tow parted. Weather deteriorating but will make further attempt. (VISENDA, 1747/25 to S.O.N.T.) Trawler reports standing by ERODONA in 062° 19'N., 018° 10'W at 1100/25. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1830/25).

S.L.67.
(attacked
8/3).
HARMODIUS
TIELBANK
HINDPOOL
NARDANA
LAHORE.

Master of BARON CAWDOR, first Clyde arrival from S.L.67, reports that on 8/3 at 0250 Convoy was attacked by enemy submarine in position 20° 50'N. 20° 25'W. When daylight arrived following ships were found to be missing:- HARMODIUS, TIELBANK, HINDPOOL, NARDANA, LAHORE. The latter ship was burning forward. A second attack was made on convoy at 2330/20 in 50° 39'N., 21° 12'W. by submarine or submarines. Convoy dispersed. Master not certain whether ships mentioned in first attack were sunk or not. (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1123/25 to Admty).

Submarines
Reported.

Bay of
Biscay.

Indications by D/F that up to 8 Italian U/B's are in Bay of Biscay East of 7° W., between 44° 30'N., and 47° 00'N., mostly between 45° and 46° N., and 2° and 4° West. Three of these have returned from patrol before their normal time. At least two have been at sea for 3 days without moving far. It is considered that patrols are being maintained. (D.D.I.C. 1149/25).

WAR DIARY.

25.3.1941.
Tuesday.

816

U/BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Estimated
U/Boat
Dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1400/25).

1636.

D/F at 1636/25. Position of Italian U/Boat was approx. 62° N., 2° 30'W. May be proceeding to a German or Norwegian port.
(D.D.I.C. 1712/25).

2023.

D/F at 2023 U/Boat in approx. 048° N., 017° 20'W., probably homeward bound.
(F.O.S. 2107/25 to Submarines on Patrol).

U/Boat
reported,
off Iceland
22/3.

Your 1017/24.
(i) Jammed by outside station.
(ii) No.
(iii) Further signal will be made.
(F.O.I.C. Iceland, 2157/25 to Admty).

26.³.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

SITUATION REPORT.

Home Commands.

Iceland
Faeroes
patrol.

In order to strengthen our surface R/C between Iceland and Faeroes a patrol of 2 cruisers, when available, is to be maintained in the northern part of the area occupied by the patrol lines. NIGERIA and FIJI are to leave Scapa tomorrow evening, to establish the patrol. (Fresh orders were given to NIGERIA and FIJI on 28/3).

Western
Patrol.

A patrol by vessels of the Northern Patrol is to be established in order to intercept shipping proceeding to French west coast ports.

Development
of Shetlands,
Faeroes and
Iceland for
use by Naval
forces.

See C.in C. H.F. 0159/26.

Western
Channel
patrol.

KELVIN and JACKAL patrolled last night between the Scilly Is. and Lizard to cover shipping proceeding from Falmouth to the Bristol Channel.

Weather.

Wick harbour was closed at 1210 today.

Enemy
battle
cruisers.

Air R/C today reports no large enemy warships in the Gironde estuary as far as Bordeaux.

Oiling
at sea.

It is intended to oil capital ships, aircraft carriers and cruisers in the open sea. Preliminary trials are to be carried out.

Fishing.

C.in C. Portsmouth states that the orders prohibiting inshore and waterways fishing should be reconsidered, in order to augment the country's food supplies.

/ Number of ships
in convoy.

War Diary.

26.3.1941.

Wednesday.SITUATION REPORT.Home Commands. (Contd.)Number of
ships in
convoy.

In view of the urgent necessity for a quick turn round of shipping it has become impracticable to retain a limit of 40 ships in a convoy.

Protection
of shipping
in Plymouth
Command.

C.in C. Plymouth reports that the increasing danger of air attack in his Command has led to the necessity of sailing as much shipping as possible in groups. Coastal Command and Fighter Command provide air protection when possible, though there are many occasions when enemy aircraft are able to attack whilst our aircraft are grounded owing to the weather. The number of escort vessels available is insufficient to protect all the groups of shipping, and C.in C. Plymouth asks urgently for better escorts such as Hunts or Wairs.

Destroyers
and corvettes
from W.A. to
reinforce
S.A.

C.in C. Western Approaches is to send 2 destroyers and 4 corvettes to join C.in C. South Atlantic, owing to the U-boat attack now developing in the area off Freetown. (For forces to be maintained at Freetown for protection of shipping see Adty. 0113/28 to C.in C. S.A.).

British Air Activity.

Bad weather prevented operations by Bomber Command today, other than attacks on enemy shipping off the Dutch coast.

A Beaufort of Coastal Command torpedoed a 6000 ton merchant ship in convoy off Ymuiden this afternoon.

Owing to bad weather, only two routine patrols were flown by Coastal Command during daylight today. Convoy air escorts in the N.W. Approaches were limited and aircraft had great difficulty in locating convoys.

/ Attempts to carry out R/C

819

26.3.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

SITUATION REPORT.

British Air Activity. (Contd.)

Attempts to carry out R/C of Brest and P.R.U. sorties there were inconclusive. P.R.U. sorties were made to Lorient and Bordeaux, but the German battle cruisers were not located.

All operations by Coastal Command tonight were cancelled on account of bad weather.

Enemy Air Activity.

F.W. activity today was more extensive than on any day since 28/1.

Skaw A.M.E. Station on Uist Island was attacked today. No damage was caused. Auskerry Lighthouse was bombed today but no damage to the light, or casualties were caused. The living quarters were slightly damaged.

S.S. CAROLINA THORDEN (Finnish) was attacked off Nolso (Thorshavn) today and set on fire. MENESTHEUS was slightly damaged above water by bombs today during minelaying operation S.N.4. south of Faeroes. Fishing vessel LITTLE EMMA was unsuccessfully bombed this afternoon north of the Faeroes. Fishing smack BEINISVOR was sunk by an enemy aircraft this evening between the Faeroes and Shetlands.

S.S. EMPIRE MERMAID was bombed and damaged this morning in the N.W. Approaches. Tug BRIGAND, standing by S.S. BEAVERBRAE (bombed 25/3) in 60° 1' N. 9° 46' W. was ordered to assist and was herself attacked in 60° 14' N. 9° 31' W. but was not damaged though BEAVERBRAE was hit.

Trawler KINGSWAY was bombed, and damaged 10 miles east of Bell Rock this afternoon.

/ S.S. KNOLL

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.SITUATION REPORT.Enemy Air Activity.

S.S. KNOLL (Norwegian) was attacked and damaged today by 2 German planes, 8 miles west of Lundy and was beached.

Cable ship FARADAY carrying irreplaceable cargo was bombed this evening whilst entering Milford Haven. The ship was set on fire and had to be abandoned. At the time, there were 42 merchant vessels, excluding 2 ocean convoys, between Land's End and the Smalls, with only 2 escorts amongst them. There were only 9 escorts immediately available in the Plymouth Command, and these are being worked to capacity.

C.in C. Plymouth reports that the only measures which would have saved FARADAY are more fighter escorts and/or ensuring that enemy aircraft are picked up immediately on their approach.

S.S. SOMALI, in Convoy F.N.42 was bombed and set on fire this evening, off the Tyne. The ship blew up later.

VERSATILE shot down an enemy aircraft this morning off the Naze.

A.P. Vessels TROUT and CENTAURUS were attacked in Studland Bay this afternoon and the former was damaged.

Mining.

Operation
S.N.4.

R.A.M. reported the minelaying operation south of Faeroes completed at 1430/26. MENESTHEUS was bombed and slightly damaged during the operation.

S.S. YARMOUTH TRADER and ~~ALIOTH~~ ^{ALIOTH} (Dutch) were damaged by mines this morning off the Humber.

(ALIOTH was damaged on 27th - see page 861)

821

26.3.1941.

Wednesday.

War Diary.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean.

TICINO
mined.

Capt. on Staff, Alexandria reports that the Italian Auxiliary (water carrier) TICINO struck a floating mine at 1444 G.M.T. today in 38° 6' N. 72° 31' E. (off Trapani, Sicily).

Attack on
Ships at
Suda Bay
YORK
torpedoed.

An attack on ships at Suda Bay was made today, apparently by one-man submarines. YORK and oiler PERICLES were torpedoed and beached. The latter is capable of steaming and has lost 500 tons of cargo. One boat was captured intact and two were destroyed; six prisoners were captured from ~~a~~ raft~~s~~. *Torpedoed by explosive motor boat.

Air attacks
on A.S.22.

Convoy A.S.22 was attacked from the air twice today, once by as many as 30 German bombers.

At 1000 B/26 an enemy convoy of 5 M.V.'s escorted by 3 destroyers passed Kelibia Roads, Tunis, from southwards at 10 knots. 4 of the vessels were estimated at 15,000 tons each.

East Indies.

C.in C. E.I. 1246Z/26 gives a summary of the work of the 9 warships of the R.I.N. lent to him for operations in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf since the outbreak of war.

822

26.3.1941.

Wednesday.

War Diary.

SITUATION REPORT.

America and West Indies.

The same method of authenticating plain language messages as adopted by C.in C. South Atlantic has been brought into force on A. and W.I. Station.

It is reported that at 2100 G.M.T. today S.S. MOORBY in 45° 35' N. 44° 26' W. sighted a volume of black smoke on the horizon, possibly a vessel on fire, and a second vessel near by heading away eastward apparently at high speed.

MOST SECRET

M E S S A G E

0159/26th Mar.

IN

From C. in C. Home Fleet.

Date 26.3.41.

Recd 1218.

Naval Cypher (A1) by T/P

Addressed Admiralty, repeated C. in C. Western Approaches, A.C.O.S.,
C. in C. Rosyth, Air Ministry.

*proposed
division
Iceland
WA
unavoid.*

(i) Your 2246/24. The full development of Shetland Faroes and Iceland for surface and air reconnaissance and for escorting or striking forces, is fundamental to our strategy. They are to some extent inter dependent and I recommend that their development and local defence, from naval point of view, should remain under one authority - A.C.O.S.

(ii) It is contemplated that Home Fleet units, including heavy ships and cruisers, will require to make increased use of Iceland in their dual role of direct trade protection and reconnaissance of northern passages and for this reason it would be preferred that administrative arrangements in Iceland should remain as at present since circumstances enable a much closer liaison to be maintained with "A.C.O.S." than with "C. in C. Western Approaches."

(iii) The Home Fleet has other direct interest in Iceland particularly in intelligence obtained from H.F.D.F. and coast watch organization which would be more readily available under present arrangements.

(iv) It is important that additional R.A.F. Squadrons expected to arrive in Iceland shortly should be operated by 18 Group of Coas Command. All Home Fleet reconnaissance requirements are provided by this group through the liaison of C. in C. Rosyth and A.C.O.S. and I deprecate any proposal would involve yet another authority in process providing operational necessity for Home Fleet.

(C in C. HF. 0159/26)

Advance copies sent Ops. O.D. & O.I.C.

- 1st Lord.
- 1st S.L.
- 2nd S.L.
- 3rd S.L.
- 4th S.L.
- 5th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (F)
- A.C.N.S. (T)
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- D. of P. (2)
- D.O.D. (F)
- D.D.O.D. (F)
- D.C.D. (H)
- D.I.O.D. (H)
- D.N.I. (4)
- D.S.D.
- D.N.I.D.
- D. of L.D.
- D. A/S W.
- D.M.S.
- I.P.

- W.D.
- Duty Captain.
- Hd. of M.
- D.T.S.D.
- D.D.I.C.
- E.F.S.
- D.T.D.
- N.I.D. 10 (Paym. Cdr. Wilson)

MOST SECRET.26.3.1941.
Wednesday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Policy.Inshore
Fishing
Policy.

Reference the country's food supplies the time has come to reconsider the position with regard to inshore and waterways fishing. Existing orders close the foreshores and immobilise all boats in tidal waters. (C in C Portsmouth 1205/26)

Extension of
Western
Patrol.

A.C.N.S. (F) 1212/26 See Operations Volume.

MANELA.

My 1749/24. MANELA is of such importance to our development in Iceland that special attention should be paid to her security. (A.C.N.S.(H) 1517/26.)

C.-in-C H.F.
Transfer of
Flag.

Intend to transfer my flag from QUEEN ELIZABETH to KING GEORGE V after your arrival at Scapa. Orders. (C in C H.F. 1741/26 to KING GEORGE V.)

Protection of
Shipping.

Increasing danger of air attack in this Command has led to the necessity for sailing as much shipping as possible in Groups.

2. These Groups are given a surface escort whenever practicable and such air protection as is possible either by aircraft from Coastal Command or from Fighter Command.
3. There are, however, many occasions when enemy aircraft are able to attack while our Aircraft are grounded due to weather.
4. Further, the number of escorts available is insufficient to protect all the Groups and the armament of trawlers and M.L's is inadequate for dealing with this form of attack.
5. Consider that provision of better surface escorts such as HUNTS or WAIRS is an urgent necessity.

(C in C Plymouth 1759/26 and 2315/26)

Anti-Invasion
Orders.

Information is requested whether the action proposed in para 2 of C in C W.A's +2054/13/3 will be implemented since a

similar.....

MOST SECRET.26.3.1941,
Wednesday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Policy.Anti-Invasion
Orders.

similar requirement exists for all Home Fleet units who may operate in the areas of any of the Home Commands.
(C in C H.F. 1924/26)

2 Destroyers
& 4 Corvettes
to re-inforce
C in C S.A.

Consequent on the U-boat attack now developing in the area off Freetown it has been decided that a reinforcement of two destroyers and four corvettes shall be sent to join the command of C in C South Atlantic 2. These ships must be taken from the forces at your disposal. Request that you will detail:

- (a) two destroyers, who should be fitted for tropical service if possible.
- (b) four corvettes fitted for tropical service but not for minesweeping.
- (c) Inform Admiralty of the names of ships detailed and the earliest date on which they can be ready to leave U.K.
(A.C.N.S.(H) 2022/26 to C in C W.A.)

Iceland.
Proposed inclusion
in W.A. Command.

Views of C in C H.F. and A.C.O.S.
(C.in.C.H.F. 0159/26(See Lion Copy only)
A.C.O.S. 2354/26).

HOME COMMANDS.Movements.EXETER.

Scapa arrival 0828 EXETER, 0850 TARTAR,
0935 GURKHA.
(A.C.O.S. 0945/26)

CURACOA.
(Convoy W.N.4).

In view of weather part company with convoy forthwith and return to Scapa.
(F.O.C.D. H.F. 1620/26 to CURACOA)

War Diary.

26.3.41.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

Search for
SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.

As effective aircraft reconnaissance of Biscay Ports has not been possible since the date on which it is believed SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU entered one of them, they may have sailed again and be making for the focal point off Newfoundland. You should reach this focal area with despatch. (1st. S.L. 0058/26 to RODNEY.).

Denmark
Strait
Patrol.

Intend to arrive Hvalfjord 0700/27. for 48 hours for boiler cleaning and oil. (F.O.C. 1st. C.S. 0935/26.).

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

Dispositions.

Disposition of submarines in Bay of Biscay is as follows. (F.O.S. 1159/26.).

UNBEATEN.
UNDAUNTED.
UNION.
SEALION.
SOKOL
SUNFISH.
H.33.
H.50.

Movements and Orders.
(F.O.S. 1201/26, 2201/26.).
C. in C. Portsmouth 1303/26, 1907/26, 2103/26)
(C. in C. Plymouth 1353/26.).
(C. in C. Falmouth 1829/26.).
(Capt. S.5. 2105/26.).

Western
Patrol
Extension.

My 1212/26. F.O.C.N.A. 1656/25, and F.O.C.N.P. 0430/26. Request you will fill X1, Z1, A1, A2 in that order of importance. Either REGISTAN or MARSDALE in southern zone as required by F.O.C.N.A. (A.C.N.S.F. 1324/26.). *See p. 838.*
I.N.P. Number 3. Patrol areas are to be extended on the same scale to the north westward from area A one, A 2 and Letter/Numbered X one, X 2, Z one and Z 2. X one and X 2 the most northerly. HILARY is to leave A one and take X one ~~repetition X one.~~ CAVINA and CAMITO are to proceed to areas Z one and A one repetition Z one A one respectively. MALVERNIAN to A 2 passing north of 053° N., 021° W. (F.O.C.N.P. 1916/26.).

/Iceland-Faroes...

Wa r Diary.

26.3.41.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations Contd.

Iceland-
Faroes
Passage.
2 Cruisers
to patrol.
NIGERIA
FIJI.

To strengthen our surface reconnaissance between Iceland and Faeroes, intend to maintain, when ships are available, a patrol of 2 cruisers in Northern part of area occupied by T R patrol lines.

(ii) The primary object of the patrol is reconnaissance but S.O. has discretion to leave the area if reliable information of enemy surface unit within striking distance is received.

(iii) C. in C. Rosyth is requested to keep Cruisers on patrol informed of any air search which he may be able to arrange while this patrol is in operation.

(iv) The first Group will be sailed to arrive patrol p.m./28. (C. in C. H.F. 1512/26.)

My 1512/26.para. (iv). Take FIJI under your orders and proceed tomorrow to establish patrol between T R 36 and Iceland. You will probably be on patrol for 7 days. (C. in C. H.F. 1524/26 to NIGERIA.).

MODESTA.

My position is 062° 42' N., 015° 23' W., MODESTA proceeding under armed guard.E.T.A. Kirkwall 0900/29. (NORTHERN GIFT by Scapa W/T 1630/26.).

British Air Activity.

Patrols.

"Unst"
~~U N S T~~ in operation now. All other air patrols and air escorts cancelled owing to weather today. (C. in C. Rosyth 0830/26.).

Brest
Area.

My OPS 998 25/3. Weather conditions will not permit bombing operations in Brest area tonight.(C. in C. B.Cd. 1321/26 to C. in C. Plymouth.).

/Close-hauling.....

War Diary.26. 3. 41.
Wednesday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity.Close-hauling
of Balloons.

It is understood that orders have been given to 952 Squadron to close-haul balloon to 1000 feet at night. As this would render the barrage ineffective it is requested that these orders may be cancelled or deferred pending investigations. (C. in C. Nore 1327/26.).

Own A/C and
Southampton
and Eastleigh
Barrages.

H.Q. F.C. reports:- At 1530/ 23 friendly biplane flew through Southampton barrage at 1000 feet subsequently landing Eastleigh. Particulars Osprey K6790 P/O Douglas. At 1725/2 amphibian flew through Eastleigh barrage at height between 1000 and 3000 ft. evidently attempting to land at aerodrome but after two red Verrey lights were fired aircraft flew off in direction of Worthy Down ends. Request report. (Air Ministry, F.O.6. 1640/26 to R.A.N.A.S.

Thames
Estuary.
Balloon
Barrage.

A 219 26/3. C. in C. Nore Protests against gun operational control being exercised over Thames Estuary balloons which have been lowered at night to 1000 feet. Please instruct your local A.A. Defence Commander to co-ordinate with Naval Authorities pointing out that balloons cannot prevent bombing from aircraft above their operational heights but that guns may succeed in doing so if balloons are controlled so as to prevent their interference. Also explain that no balloons are lowered which do not affect this special equipment and all balloons revert to operational height automatically if enemy aircraft are plotted below 6000 feet. (H.Q.F.C. 1800/26 to A/A Command.).

Search
for
U-boat.

If weather is suitable, 6 Hudson A/C will carry out a U.Boat search tomorrow in sector radius 300 miles from Tory Island between bearing 280° and 315° leaving Tory Island at 0700 and returning 1300. If BOREAS and ACHATES are in this sector between times mentioned they should co-operate with aircraft. (C. in C. W.A. 2235/26 to BOREAS, ACHATES.).

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

ROSSMORE
(British,
627 tons)
bombed
and sunk
MARINA
(Finnish
1407 tons).

From Hayle to Barry Docks bombed and sunk N.E. Godreavy Island 12 miles at 1745/24. Four survivors landed at St. Ives by S.S. MARINA of which two badly injured one slightly 5 missing. One plane in attack two direct hits, MARINA machine gunned no casualties. (F.O.I.C. Falmouth, 0810/26). *See BR. 1334 for correct date of sinking 25/3.*

BEAVERBRAE
(Bombed
25/3).

Standing by BEAVERBRAE on fire fore and aft. Position 060° 1'N., 009° 46'W. After part red hot, after deck blown up, and sides fractured. Salvage prospects nil. Request instructions. (BRIGAND, 0845/26).

BRIGAND'S 0846/26. BEAVERBRAE should be sunk. If present TARTAR's concurrence should be obtained. On completion order WINDERMERE to escort BRIGAND to base.

(C.in C. W.A. 1119/26 to E.O.I.C. Greenock F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1129/26 to BRIGAND). Sailed tug BRIGAND to assist BEAVERBRAE. (N.O.I.C. Greenock, 1505/25).

BEAVERBRAE was attacked by Focke Wulf aircraft at 0805/25 in 60° 12'N., 09° 08'W. Aircraft attacked 3 times from low level with M/G cannon, and 2 bombs, one of which hit after deck. Entire crew of 84 landed Lyness from TARTAR. 3 slight casualties 2 being retained in AMARAPOORA. A/C was hit both by fire from Bofors and Hotchkiss.

(A.C.O.S. 1835/26). Report position. BRIGAND and whether BEAVERBRAE has sunk. (C.in C. W.A. 2319/26 to WINDERMERE).

A/C shot
down off
Harwich.

One M.E.110 shot down in position 51° 52'N., 1° 35'E. (VERSATILE 0905/26, 1701/26). VERSATILE's 1701. Original Signal 0905 referred to believed JU.88 brought down - later identified as probably ME.110.

A/C was definitely hit many times by pom pom and Lewis Gunfire at close range and seen to crash in sea in 51° 52'N., 01° 40'E.

Two of own fighters in vicinity at the time.

A/C machine gunned ship. No casualties or damage. (C.in C. Nore, 1937/26).

WAR DIARY.

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

BRIGAND.

(Rescue Tug) Attacked by aircraft in
60° 14'N., 9° 31'W.
(BRIGAND 1235/26).
Attacked by one Hostile Aircraft in
061° 14 N., 009° 31'W. Sticks of bombs
hit BEAVERBRAE then flew eastwards.
(BRIGAND 1250/26).

Convoy
F.N.Odd.

One enemy aircraft shadowing Convoy "Pilot"
~~Pilot~~ my position 52° N., 1° 58'E.
(VORTIGERN 1612/26, PUFFIN, 1616/26).

TROUT
damaged.

N.O.I.C. Poole reports TROUT Q V 4 and
CENTAURUS Q V 5 attacked by enemy A/C
in Studland Bay at 1300 today. 4 Bombs
dropped 2 exploded, one near miss
damaged Q.V.4 but vessel towed into
harbour and being slipped. No casualties.
Q.V's fired at and although consider hit
aircraft no damage was observed.
(F.O.I.C. Portland 1722/26).

Auskerry
Lighthouse.

At 1415 enemy A/C attacked Auskerry
Lighthouse. One bomb within 50 yards
but no casualties or damage to Light.
Living quarters slightly damaged.
(A.C.O.S. 1810/26).

CAROLINA
THORDEN
(Finnish
3645 Tons)
bombed.

Attacking by aircraft south Nolso
Finnish ship struck requires assistance
immediately.
(LEICESTER CITY, 1905/26).
Bombing attack by two enemy aircraft
believed to be Heinkel 111K at 1915/26
on Finnish CAROLINA THORDEN which had
just cleared for Philadelphia.
Ship directly hit and is now on fire
and will likely be total loss.
As far as can be ascertained at present
no deaths no other damage.
(N.O.I.C. Kirkwall, 2350/26).

WAR DIARY.26.3.1941.
Wednesday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)1st M.L.S.
MENESTHEUS
damaged.
In op. S.N. 4

One airplane shadowing ^{"Thursic"} ~~MUSIC~~ in
61° N., 6° 47' W.
(S.O. 1st M.L.F. 1027/26).
MENESTHEUS received slight damage above
water from two bouncing bomb hits
from Focke Wulfe. No casualties.
(R.A.M.L. 1430/26).

EMPIRE
MERMAID,
(British
6381 Tons)
bombed.

In 58° 36' N., 19° W. EMPIRE MERMAID
bombed. Enemy gone.
(Valentia 1030/26).
In 58° 36' N., 10° W. EMPIRE MERMAID
bombed and hit.
(Wick Radio 1034/26).
Proceed forthwith in company to 58°
36' N., 10° W. where EMPIRE MERMAID has
been bombed.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock, 1124/26 to BRIGAND,
WINDERMERE).
EMPIRE MERMAID bombed. Engine room
flooding. Towage assistance urgent.
(Lands End, 1140/26) G.M.T.
Proceed to assist, and report
situation. Tug BRIGAND is being sent.
(C.in C. W.A. 1155/26 to ACHATES, BOREAS).
Position of EMPIRE MERMAID now reported
as 58° 36' N., 10° W. Order BRIGAND
repeated WINDERMERE to proceed to this
position.
(C.in C. W.A. 1335/26 to F.O.I.C.
Greenock).
My 1155/26. As position of EMPIRE
MERMAID is uncertain pass through
58° 38' N., 18° 10' W. only if convenient.
Search in this area is not necessary.
Tug BRIGAND is not being sent to above
position.
(C.in C. W.A. 1612/26).

SAINT
FINTAN.

My 1215/24. Body now identified as one
of crew of S.S. SAINT FINTAN 495 tons.
Vessel cleared from Cardiff 18/3.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven, 1135/26).

WAR DIARY.26.3.1941.
Wednesday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)KNOLL
bombed.

(Norwegian 1151 Tons). Beached Lundy landing place. Captain reports having been bombed and machine gunned by 2 German planes 8 miles West of Lundy. Fore hold half full of water. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1947/26).

Convoy
F.N.42.
SOMALI
(British
6809 tons)
damaged.

Enemy aircraft bombing convoy ^{"Lunch"} ~~LUNCH~~.
My position 54° 21'N., 1° 25'W.
(HASTINGS 2009/26).
Convoy ~~LUNCH~~ needs help from aircraft attack.
(HASTINGS 2010/26).
My 2009. SOMALI hit. On fire.
(HASTINGS 2015 /26).
Request immediate assistance for SOMALI at 20 T buoy.
(HASTINGS 2017/26).
SOMALI has no water service. LEDA standing by burning ship.
(HASTINGS 2040/26).
HASTINGS 2015. Bridge and midship section wrecked. Fire almost under control. Am standing by. My position 055° 23.5' N., 001° 21'W.
(LEDA 2050/26).
Tug and auxiliary patrol vessel are being sent to assist you from Tyne.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 2104/26 to HASTINGS).
Rescue tug SEA GIANT and Commercial tug left Tyne and proceeding to SOMALI. Two patrol trawlers also converging on position.
(F.O.I.C. Tyne, 2255/26).
Your 2158/26. Tug should meet you approx. 0100/27.
(C.in C. Rosyth, 2310/26 to LEDA).

Unst
~~UNST~~
bombed.

Between 1715 and 1725 enemy aircraft was plotted north of Shetlands. This A/C attacked A.M.E. Station Skaw in the island of Unst with bomb and M/G fire. No damage or casualties reported.
(A.C.O.S. 2045/26).

FARADAY.

Bombed and hit by enemy plane 1½ miles from St. Anne's at 1945 while entering harbour and burnt fiercely. Crew abandoned and picked up by VIVA II escorting. Position at 2130 FARADAY still on fire drifting towards Marloes Sands. 4 tugs proceeding to her assistance. (F.C.I.C. Milford Haven, 2131/26).

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

832

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

Z M E 25.

Intend leaving Milford Haven 1600 today for Z M E 25 to lay at midnight returning on completion about 0745 tomorrow. (PLOVER 1028/26)

Faeroes - Iceland Minefield Reinforcement.

Admiralty's 1346/24. Order of laying fields should be (a) S.N. 8 (c) S.N. 9 (b) S.N. 67 (C in C H.F. 1117/26 to R.A.M.L.)

G X

Operation G X is postponed to night of 27/28 March. (C in C Plymouth 1309/26).

ABDIEL.

My 1209/25. Propose ABDIEL lay as follows (V.C.N.S. 1326/26) See Operations Volume. Intend to sail ABDIEL for Milford Haven at 1940/26. (C in C Plymouth 1341/26.)

"Dagger" DAGGER

2. A.L. M010210/40 series (Plan ^{"Dagger"}~~DAGGER~~ and amendments) are cancelled and are to be destroyed by fire. Dispositions of M/S Vessels made prior to or subsequent to them are not affected and vessels remain attached to their present bases. Admty. 1331/5/6/40 and 1819/25/10/40 are also cancelled. (A.C.N.S. H 1350/26.) Reference A.M. 186 AZ of 26th March cancelling Plan ~~DAGGER~~. The Admiralty's general direction with respect to enemy minelaying and our minesweeping effort in the event of Invasion is contained in A.L. M.M/S 074/41 dated 5/3 1941. (A.C.N.S. H. 1430/26.)

S N 4

Operation completed. (R.A.M.L. 1430/26).

B S 53

LA MELPOMENE and SHELDRAKE arrive Humber 28th and a.m. 28th respectively to form escort B.S. 53. You should if possible sail for operation on 29/3. (C in C Nore 1556/26 to TEVIOTCANK)

MOST SECRET.

War Diary.

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

833

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining.

B.S. 53
Contd.

My 1556/26. Escort cannot now arrive at Humber before 31/3. You should arrange to sail for B S 53 on 1/4.
(C in C Nore 2204/26.)

Eastern
Channel
Clearance Sweep.

Should visibility necessitate anchor in Southern Downs till daylight. Dungeness and Dover fog signals will operate.
(V.A. Dover 1836/26.)

Thames
Estuary.

One S.A. mine detonated as follows at 1236/26.
(Capt. M/S Sheerness 1927/26.)

WAR DIARY.

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

834

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Gironde.

Air R/C reports no enemy large warships in the Gironde estuary as far as Bordeaux.
(D.D.I.C. 1753/26).

Oiling
ships
at Sea.

It is intended to oil capital ships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers in the open seas under the following conditions:-

- (i) Fair weather with slight ocean swell
- (ii) Admiralty oilers to be used.
- (iii) Oiler to be ahead of warship requiring oil.
- (iv) Speed of advance immaterial.
- (v) Stirrups and 5 inch hose required can be made available.

2. Request you will carry out at an early date preliminary trials.
(V.C.N.S. 1204/26 to C.in C. H.F.)

Miscellaneous.

Wick
closed.

Wick harbour closed. Weather.
(R.N.O. Wick, 1210/26).

War Diary.

26. 3. 1941.
Wednesday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping & Convoys.

Limit of
40 Ships
Waived.

Your 1216/2. In view of urgent necessity for a quick turn round of Shipping it has become impracticable to retain a limit of 40 ships in a convoy. N.C.S.Os at Ocean Convoy Assembly Ports at Home should be instructed that shipping is not to be delayed on account of a convoy exceeding 40 ships, but N.C.S.O. Mersey is to inform C. in C.W.A. and Admty., if number is likely to be materially exceeded. (A.C.N.S.(T).1041/26, to C. in C. W.A.). (C. in C. W.A., 2136/26, to N.C.S.O. Mersey.).

Burning of
Navigation
Lights.

Admty. Message "E U." Whilst in Area 1, large liners outward-bound from U.K. have discretion to burn navigation lights at full brilliance westward of 25° W., when northward of 40° N. All other merchant ships proceeding independently are normally to exhibit dimmed navigation lights within these limits. (D.T.D. 1352/26 to G.B.M.S. all areas.).

Shipping in
Pentland
Firth.

C. in C. Nore's 1620/25. In view of C. in C. Nore's reasons I am prepared to accept lights being shown in Pentland Firth. Requested they may be ordered for minimum time. They will be extinguished in event of an air raid. If night raids on Scapa recommence on a large scale I may have to reconsider this decision. (A.C.O.S., 1558/26 to C. in C. Rosyth.).

HX.112.

On time at R.V. Convoy attacked under A/S escort, following ships torpedoed and sunk: J.B. WHITE, VENETIA, FERM, KORSHAMN and BEDUIN. FRANCHE COMTE torpedoed and arrived in harbour. ERODONA torpedoed and now in tow. A/S Escort made successful counter attacks. (D.T.D. 1910/26 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa.).

Military Convoys.

W.S.7.

A.T. 1747/17. Amend escorts for W.S.7. to read (a) Freetown to Cape - for REPULSE read NELSON. (A.C.N.S.(F). 2006/26, to C. in C.'s E.I. and S.A.).

War Diary.

26.3.41.
Wednesday.

CASUALTIES & DEFECTS.

Unknown Ship.

S.O.S. Following received from unknown ship at 0633 G.M.T. Begins sinking rapidly off H.2 buoy ends. (Humber Radio 0633/26.).

VIMEIRA.

(British Tanker, 5728 Tons) F.N.42 expected time of arrival 20 C buoy 1630. VIMEIRA bow considerably damaged by collision. Propose diverting her to Tyne. (HASTINGS 0915/26.).

EWELL.

(British, 1350 Tons) Arrived down by the head. Salvage vessel NESSUS and H.M.Tug SABINE in attendance. DRAUG escorting at 1220. (F.O. Humber 1240/26.).

East Dudgeon.

Following received from Trinity House Superintendent. Begins: East Dudgeon damaged and out of action. No.59 buoy damaged and extinguished. 1252/26. (F.O.I.C. Yarmouth 1355/26.).

LORNASTON.

(British, 4934 Tons.). Your telephone message 1142/26/3. LORNASTON has gone to Leith to make good damage done in collision. (N.C.S.O. Methil 1434/26 to Adty.).

SPHENE.

(British, 815 Tons). Ex E N 91, bound Maryport, slightly damaged in collision and has put in to Lyness. Temporary repairs will be effected and vessel sailed in next convenient westbound convoy. (A.C.O.S. 1814/26).

H.44.

Your 2129/24. Following defects in H.44 necessitates extension of notice for sea to 8 hours until completion of work. (N.O.I.C. Falmouth 1841/26.).

REINA DEL PACIFICO.

Required to dock at Liverpool on 28/3.
2. Request you will arrange escort and sail this ship from Clyde accordingly.
3. Ship can maintain 15 knots and is fully loaded with troops. (A.C.N.S.H. 2200/26.).

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

837

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

Force H,
fuelling.

I am assuming that Admiralty will give instructions (? before proceeding) whether Force H is to refuel at Gibraltar or from CAIRNDALE. (S.O. Force H, 0831/26, to Admty.).

See next page

GERDA VITH
(German)

My 0955/24 GERDA VITH sailed last night. Uncertain about colours on sides. (Consul, Vigo, 1000/26, to Admty.).

SHEFFIELD

SHEFFIELD's 1323/23. Dock available. In view of her 2001/17 time to complete underwater repairs may considerably exceed 24 hours. Request early decision whether dock should be prepared. (A.S. Gibraltar, 1156/26, to Admty.). Your 1156/26. It appears SHEFFIELD's operational efficiency is only affected so far as endurance is concerned. Her immediate operational commitments are of such urgency as to make docking for more than 24 hours very undesirable. If examination during 24 hours docking would assist later repairs, this may be carried out on her arrival. (D.O.D.(F) 1646/26 to A.S., Gibraltar).

Spanish
Ships
carrying
Germans.

All ships of Spanish Naviera Aznar Line to be boarded when practicable. Suspected of carrying Germans not shown on Passengers or crew lists. (Instructions). (F.O.C.N.A., 1208/26, to N.A. Station) (See also South Atlantic 0531/26)

SKAANE
(Danish)

My 1510/30 (Master of SKAANE instructed by his owners not to leave Lisbon) May I expect to receive reply? (Consul-General, Lisbon, 1735/26, to Admty.).

Explosions.

Today at noon several explosions heard S.S.E. of Cape Carvoeiro. (N.A. Lisbon, 1801/26, to Admty.).

Yugoslav
Shipping.

My 1600/9 (Yugo-Slav ships applying for bunkers) and D. of S.T. 2007/22. What is position about Yugo Slav ships on this trade now? No supplies being made pending further instructions. (A.S. Gibraltar, 2034/26, to Admty.).

CAIRNDALE
(to oil
Force H,

....

26.3.1946.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic. (Contd.)

CAIRNDALE
(to oil
Force H,
Bay of
Biscay.)

Gibraltar departure R.F.A. CAIRNDALE escorted by FLEUR DE LYS and COREOPSIS in accordance with my 1748/25. (F.O.C.N.A. 2036/26, to Admty.).

REGISTAN
MARSDALE

A.M. 1212/26 and A.M. 1324/26 para. 2. REGISTAN has been sailed for T 3. MARSDALE sailing p.m. /28 is therefore available for Northern Zone as directed by F.O.C.N.P. (F.O.C.N.A., 2142/26 to Admty.).

South Atlantic.

ASAKA MARU

Japanese Naval ship ASAKA (ex ASAKA MARU) from Spain to Japan is estimated to be in lat. 7° N. southbound 15 knots. If met she is to be reported at first opportunity without breaking W/T silence and her p.c. and s. indicated. (C.in C. S.A., 0123N/26, to S.A. Sqdn.).

S.L.69
Escorts.

C.in C. S.A.'s 1047/25 and my 0009/22. Intend that additional ocean escort for Convoy S.L.69 shall be provided as follows. Dates and positions approximate. REPULSE as far as endurance will allow, thence to Gibraltar with FURIOUS. MAURITIUS to join convoy when REPULSE leaves remaining until 5/4 32° N. 27° W. then to Freetown for S.L. 71. EDINBURGH to leave W.S.7 on 29/3 proceed to Gibraltar for fuel, relieving MAURITIUS on 5/4 and escorting convoy till A/S escort joins. C.in C. S.A. requested to sail NARKUNDA with either FURIOUS or MAURITIUS and to arrange for her to continue with REPULSE and FURIOUS to Gibraltar. (D.O.D.(F) 0152/26, to C.in C. S.A., F.O.C.N.A., C.S.18.)

/ MAURITIUS

War Diary.

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

→ MAURITIUS

If nothing is in sight at daylight proceed at best speed to Bathurst for fuel and report E.T.A.
(C.in C. S.A., 0305N/26 to MAURITIUS).

Spanish Ships carrying Germans.

Reported ships of Spanish Naviera Aznar Line names commencing with MONTE) when trading between Spain and S. America via Canary Is. and vice versa sometimes carry Germans not shown on either crew or passenger list. Any ship of this line encountered at sea outside region guaranteed by American Neutrality zone (see S.A. General message 127 G / of 24/12/1940) should be boarded, circumstances permitting. Ships are not to be diverted for purposes of this search.
(C.in C. S.A., 0531N/26, to S.A. Station).

W.S.6.

CORNWALL and PHOEBE escorting Durban portion of Convoy W.S.6 arrived.
(N.O.I.C. Durban, 0833Z/26).

BRITANNIA, raider report.

Your 1259N/25. BRITANNIA made following amplifying message received at 0920N/25 (begins) QQQQ 007° 24' N. 024° 03' W. BRITANNIA chased-gunned, course North speed 15. (ends). Longitude of position of attack in BRITANNIA's first report was also 024° 03' W.
X(MAURITIUS, 1032/26 to C.in C. S.A.).

See also p. 841

PAMPANO
AIDA LAURO
~~XXIV~~ MAGGIO ~~XXIV~~
STELLA
AFRICANA
(Italian)

My 1002/20 PAMPANO has taken 940 tons oil fuel from tanker. AIDA LAURO has transferred 540 tons coal to MAGGIO, and it is understood STELLA will receive 2000 and AFRICANA 1000 tons.
All ships are receiving large amounts fresh water and are provisioning extensively.
(N.C.S.O. Pernambuco, 1036/26 to Admty.)
(S.O(I), Montevideo, 1744Z/26 to S.A. Div.).

X XXIV MAGGIO

MARISTELLA
VOLUNTAS
PELORUM
(Italian)

My 1719/20 MARISTELLA sailing P.M./27 (grade A1) VOLUNTAS and PELORUM at Quequen expected to receive similar orders at any moment.
(N.A. Buenos Aires, 1041/26, to R.A.S.A.D., D.N.I., etc.).

DURENDA

Overdue shipping, my 1119/22, DURENDA arrived Capetown. (S.O(I), Capetown, 1041B/26).

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

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War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

→ REPULSE
FURIOUS
MAURITIUS
S.L.69.

My 1947/25/3 and your 0153/26/3. As originally routed REPULSE if she proceeded to Gibraltar would have had one day with convoy and could not have remained until MAURITIUS joined. As now routed REPULSE, FURIOUS, and Destroyers can remain with convoy till a.m./29 proceeding to Gibraltar east of Canary Islands. MAURITIUS probably able to join convoy A.M./29. REPULSE to comply.
(C.in C. S.A., 1101/26, to Admty.).

See also next page

DELHI.

Admty. 1539/24. DELHI reports that under war conditions Ship will use 77% of fuel if sent from Freetown to Trinidad direct without zigzagging and at 12 knots only. DELHI proposes that on passage from Simonstown to Trinidad ship should fuel at St. Helena and Pernambuco or alternatively St. Helena, Freetown and St. Vincent Cape Verde Islands. Propose to sail DELHI a.m./28.
(F.O.I.C. Simonstown, 1150B/26 to C.in C. S.A.)

Raider Report
22/3.

Force X's 1720Z/24. From information available in Admiralty it is unlikely SACRAMENTO VALLEY was in position given in your 1830N/23. Her maximum speed is 9½ knots.
(D.D.I.C. 1230/26 to C.in C. S.A.).

See also next page

Convoys
off French
W.A.

Undesirable that convoys should be routed within 100 miles of Dakar or French W.A. coast and 120 miles would be better. Exact extent of French air reconnaissance is not known but aircraft have been met 120 miles S.W. of Dakar as reported in my 2215/18/2. If sighted details would undoubtedly be reported ashore and would get through from Agents or pro Germans. (C.in C. S.A., 1239N/26, to Admty.).

DUNCAN
FOXHOUND
W.S.7.

Your 1259/25 and A.T. 1416/9. Not now intend that DUNCAN and FOXHOUND should return to Gibraltar with FURIOUS. Presume this will enable you to use all four destroyers for inward escort of W.S.7. (D.O.D.(F) 1353/26 to C.in C. S.A.). Departure 1230/26 FURIOUS, DUNCAN, FOXHOUND to R.V. with S.L.69. (S.O.I. Freetown, 1657/26). Admty. 1353/26, DUNCAN and FOXHOUND are to be detached so as to arrive at Bathurst P.M./29, fuel and be ready to sail 1600/30. Destroyers will be required to R/V with and escort W.S.7 to Freetown.
(C.in C. S.A., 2049N/26, to FURIOUS, REPULSE).

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

X AMABILITAS
VITTORIO VENETO
(Italian)

My 1041/26.
AMABILITAS sailing 2200Z/26 from Bahia Blanca.
VITTORIO VENETO sails from there 27/3
indicated as at 0700. (Grade A.1).
(N.A. Buenos Aires, 1515/26, to R.A.S.A.D.
amended 1640/26).
My 1515/26. Reported AMABILITAS postponed
sailing. (N.A. Buenos Aires, 2205/26, to
R.A.S.A.D., etc.).

Route E.
of Canary
Islands.

Your 1101/26 and A.M. 1353/26. It is not
considered advisable for REPULSE and FURIOUS
to pass east of Canary Islands without
destroyer screen.
(F.O.C.N.A. 1736/26, to C.in C. S.A.)
See Admty. 1831/27. *See previous page*

German Unit
Report.

C. 3 source reports that a German unit
"D. 241", reported on 25/3, that she was
lying damaged in 11° 28' S. 19° 12' W.
awaiting assistance.
Comment. Report may be planted, but "41" is
believed to be a raider which has been
operating in Pacific. D/F indications of a
German unit in this area on 11/3.
(D.D.I.C. 1740/26 to C.in C. S.A., R.A.S.A.D.)

→ SACRAMENTO
VALLEY

Arrived 26/3. Will do utmost to sail her
S.L.70.
(M.S.R. Freetown, 1756/26). *See previous page*

VIDETTE
defect.

Has damaged port propeller which requires
replacement, spare presumably available
Gibraltar. Request whether WRESTLER or
VELOX can now relieve VIDETTE, ships to sail
simultaneously from Gibraltar and Freetown.
VIDETTE's estimated maximum speed now 15
knots. Your 1218/19/2, refers.
(C.in C. S.A. 1839/26, to F.O.C.N.A.).

Raider Attack
on BRITANNIA

See p. 839

BRITANNIA's? (09?0/25) passed by MAURITIUS
was not received and decyphered until
1530/26/3 when MAURITIUS was on way to
Bathurst to comply with your 0152/26 Additional
Ocean escort for S.L.69 and my 0305/26 no
further information of BRITANNIA. Now
established that SACRAMENTO VALLEY was ship
reported by SEVERN.
(C.in C. S.A. 2051N/26 to Adty.).

NORDERNEY
MONBALDO

Para reports German ship NORDERNEY has stopped
loading having loaded all cargo booked to date.
C.3 report that Italian ship MONBALDO is about
to sail from Para. (S.O.I. Montevideo,
2154Z/26, to Admty.).

26.3.1941. ⁸⁴²
Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

U/B
probably
sunk by
Greek T.B.

A communique issued by the Greek Ministry of Marine states that the Greek torpedo-boat SPHENDONI on night of March 11 was attacked by an Italian submarine, which fired three torpedoes; all of them missed. SPHENDONI then opened fire with all her guns against the submarine, and there was every indication that it was sunk. (The Times, 26/3/41).

Tripoli
missing.
mining.

Consider mining of Tripoli Harbour is of extreme importance and should be primary task of 830 F.A.A. Sqdn. Admiralty concur. Understand V.A. Malta, has already been informed. Suggest that when attacks are carried out all available aircraft should carry mines. (Air Ministry, 1130/26, to H.Q. R.A.F., M.E.)

Tripoli
bombed.

Operational Summary No.289 up to 1200/26. Night 24/25 3 Wellingtons dropped 4,240 lbs. bombs Tripoli Harbour starting 2 fires near Government Offices and explosions.

Day 25/3 Blenheim reconnaissance reported 5 small ships Buerat El Hsun. 21/3.

Br. tanker
bombed.

Convoy for Greece bombed by JU. 88's Kithera Channel. 2 hits on 1 tanker. (see 25/3) (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 1138/26)

YORK)
PERICLES)

Torpedoed (S.B.N.O. Suda Bay 1251/26 - see 31/3), *and next page. Details, p 1019, 1020.*

Enemy
Convoy.

At 1000 B/26 convoy of 5 enemy merchant vessels escorted by 3 destroyers passed Kelibia Roads from southwards speed 10 knots, 4 of these vessels estimated as 15000 tons each. Reliability A.1. (S.O.I. Malta, 1254/26, to Admty.).

Enemy
Intelligence.

C.in C. Med. 1728/26 See Mediterranean Volume.

Dispositions
and
Instructions.

My 1728/26. You should complete Force B 7th C.S. GLOUCESTER and destroyers, with fuel P.M./27 and sail for R.V. with Force C., NUBIAN, MOHAWK, HAVOCK, HOTSPUR, GREYHOUND, at 0630/28 in 034° 20' N., 024° 10' E. They will be sailed P.M./27 from Alexandria. (ii) Convoy AG 9 will be turned back for Alexandria at dusk /27 and GA 8 will not be sailed until situation clears. (iii) HEReward, VENDETTA will be ordered to Suda Bay to join you on 27/3. (iv) JUNO, JAGUAR, DEFENDER will be kept at immediate notice at Piraeus. (v) ROVER is being ordered to patrol off / Suda Bay ...

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26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Dispositions
and
Instructions.

Suda Bay and TRIUMPH South Milo.
(Amended, Capt. S.l. 2205/26, 2209/26).
(vi) Greeks are being warned to clear area of shipping and will be asked to keep their destroyers at short notice.
(vii) Maximum scale shore based air reconnaissance will be lead on to westward Kithera Channel.
(viii) Fleet Air Arm Maleme will standby with (?Torpedo aircraft) and fighters air borne at dawn.
(ix) S.B.N.O. Suda Bay is being warned to withdraw patrol craft under defence of Suda Bay.
(x) CARLISLE will be ordered to Suda Bay to reinforce A.A. there as intense air activity is expected.
(xi) All authorities Crete? are being warned to standby for trouble.
(xii) Your action must depend on circumstances. Your dawn position has been selected to enable you to withdraw in face of an unreasonably superior force or to intercept force as it returns. (C.in C. Med., 1814/26, to V.A.L.F.).

YORK and
PERICLES
torpedoed.

My 0609/26. (N.T. in W.D.) Damage as follows. Torpedo hit on bulkhead between B boiler room and forward liner room both of which are open to sea. Cause of flooding in A boiler room and after engine room probably strained bulkheads. Salvage tug's pumps are making some headway in A boiler room. Further assessment of damage impracticable until this boiler room has been cleared of water possibly a.m./27. Another salvage tug is required.
(YORK, 1521/26, to C.in C. Med.).
YORK torpedoed at Suda Bay at (?0600) both (?engine) room and boiler rooms flooded. Ship beached in 4½ fathoms. It appears doubtful if ship will be able to steam. YORK states attack apparently by one-man submarine. (C.in C. Med., 1734/26, to Admty.).
My 1734/26. Attack on ships at Suda Bay was apparently made by six one-man boats. Of these one has been recovered intact and two are known to have blown up. Six prisoners picked up on a raft. Oiler PERICLES also hit amidships at same time as YORK and holed both sides. Ship has been beached but is capable of steaming, cargo intact less about 500 tons.
(C.in C. Med., 1930/26, to Admty.)

TICINO mined.

Italian Auxiliary TICINO struck a floating mine in 038° 06' N. 012° 31' E. at 1444/26.
(Capt. O.S., Alexandria, 1802/26).

TRIUMPH

Cancel previous orders. Proceed forthwith with utmost despatch to position 036°10'N. 026°25'W.
(Capt. S.l, 2205/26, to TRIUMPH).

/ ROVER ...

War Diary.26.3.1941.
Wednesday.FOREIGN STATIONS.Mediterranean. (Contd.)ROVER.

Cancel previous orders. Proceed forthwith with utmost despatch to Kithera Channel. (Capt. S.1 2209/26, to ROVER).

East Indies.CHARLES L.D.

Re important papers and further search. (D.D.N.I., 0006/26, to N.O.I.C. Mauritius). My 1144/24. Governor has requisitioned French ship CHARLES L D. (N.O.I.C. Mauritius, 0851Z/26).

Attack on Fadhli Sultan.

My 1736/25/3. See Governor Aden's Tel.135 to S. of S. for Colonies. See Lion copy. (C.in C. E.I., 0632Z/26, to Admty.).

Swordfish Flight for Suez.

Your 1628/25 and D.S.T.O's 18/3. Hope to embark Swordfish and personnel in ship asked for by D.S.T.O. Mombasa. (N.O.I.C. E. Africa, 0640Z/26, to C.in C.E.I)

CANBERRA

To leave Mauritius a.m./27 to search vicinity of Nazareth Bank and Saya De Malha returning to Mauritius 1/4. CANBERRA will be required to escort transport leaving Mauritius about 3/4 for Northward. (C.in C. E.I., 0642Z/26, to CANBERRA)

Boom Defences, Aden.

Your 1834/5/11/40. Experience is proving difficulty of maintaining efficiency of Boom Defences at Aden. Any possibility of BARNET being relieved by a proper boom defence vessel? (C.in C. E.I., 1158Z/26, to Admty.).

Work of R.I.N.

C.in C. E.I. 1246Z/26 See Lion Copy only.

ODER.

German. Information from interrogation of prisoners. (Ship scuttled in estimated position 12° 33' N., 43° 21½' E., on 23/3). Crew of 54 escaped in 4 boats. One boat captured containing 15, others unaccounted for. (S.N.O. Red Sea, 2058Z/26 to C.in C. E.I.).

844A

CONFIDENTIAL

MESSAGE

0632Z/26th March
IN

From C. in C.East Indies.

Date 27.3.41.

Recd. 1109

NAVAL CODE X BY W/T

Addressed. Admiralty.

903. My 1736/25/3 / See Governor Aden's
Telegram 135 to Secretary of State for Colonies.

0632Z/26

/ Attack on Fadhli Sultan.

CIRCULATION BY M. *with former*

- 1st Lord
- 1st S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S.(T)
- A.C.N.S.(F)
- Nav.Sec.
- Parl.Sec.
- P.A.S.(S)
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Ops.(4)
- O.D.(5)
- M.(30)
- D.N.I.(4)
- O.I.C.(2)
- D.S.D.9.
- D. of P.(3)
- Press Divn.
- I.P.(3)
- W.D.

EVE.

Colonial Office Reference No. 78473/41

844B

With the compliments of Mr. A.H.Poynton

Date 28th March, 1941.

Reference _____

Earlier correspondence was sent to Col.L.W.Spraggett.

CYPHER TELEGRAM

FROM

Governor

ADEN

D. 1st March, 1941.
R. 2nd " " 05.30 hrs.

IMMEDIATE.

No. 115.

Your telegram No. 126. Fadhli Sultan.

(1) After consultation with A.O.C., S.N.O., R.S. and my political advisers I propose that subject to your concurrence following action should be taken.

(a) On 10th March ultimatum would be delivered to the Fadhli Sultan. For this purpose aircraft and possibly one of H.M. Ships (if available) would be used. After reciting his misdeeds ultimatum would direct the Sultan to present himself before noon 13th March at Government House, Aden, where he would be required to apologise for his misbehaviour and give written undertaking (1) to comply in future with agreements and promises entered into by himself and his predecessor with the Government; (2) To abstain from all imposts on or interference with Government supplies passing through his country; (3) Not to impede the supply of foodstuffs from his country for our troops; (4) At all times freely to admit to his country officers of the Government and treat them with courtesy. Ultimatum would conclude with warning suggested in paragraph 5 of your telegram under reference.

(b) If the Sultan submits within the time limit and gives required undertakings, I should later return with him (accompanied by military and air escort) to Shukra where his undertakings would be read out to the tribal gathering in the presence of myself and the Sultan with all due ceremony.

(c) If the Sultan fails to comply with the ultimatum within the time limit and subject to military requirements, military force of 300 plus some 50 Government guards would be landed at dawn 15th March near Shukra and would surround the town and the Sultan's house outside. Aircraft would cooperate by preventing motor vehicles leaving while investing move was taking place. Main object would be to prevent the Sultan from absconding with stock of arms and ammunition and money with which he might secure sufficient tribal support to make trouble for the Government. Force would withdraw within 24 hours.

(d) In the unlikely event of the Sultan being found in Shukra he would be brought to Aden and deported.

(e).....

(e) If he escaped, his house would be bombed after due warning and letters would be dropped on the tribe reciting the Sultan's misdeeds saying that H.M.G. no longer recognised him and inviting the Tribe of Agils to elect new Sultan who would honour his pledges, treat his people properly and live in amity with H.M.G.

Above proposals are necessary threats since Fadhli Sultan's reactions can never be predicted with certainty, and I trust that you will allow me discretion in consultation with the A.O.C. to vary any arrangements that you approve in order to meet the situation as it develops.

I should certainly consult with Sultan of Lahej about the successor to Fadhli Sultan. Indeed I should like to give him my full confidence and consult him now if this would not involve risk of leakage. As to this I have received conflicting advice and I should greatly value Reilly's opinion.

I should be grateful for very early reply because date of the proposed operation is governed by the moon and tide. A.O.C. and S.N.O. Red Sea concur in this telegram.

78473/41.

CYPHER TELEGRAM.

TO

Governor

ADEN.

Sent 6th March, 1941 20.00 hrs.

IMPORTANT.No. 141.

Addressed Governor Aden No. 141 please repeat to S.N.O. Red Sea. Repeated to C. in C. East Indies.

Your telegrams Nos. 115 and 116. I am glad to hear of Fadhli Sultan's apology, and I hope situation will be favourable to obtain from him written undertaking proposed in paragraph 1 (a) of your telegram No. 115, to be followed by action proposed in paragraph 1 (b).

2. If Sultan fails to comply I approve action indicated in paragraph 1 (c), (d) and (e), and I agree that you should use your discretion in consultation with A.O.C. to vary details of these arrangements if necessary.

3. Reilly considers that Sultan of Lahej can safely be consulted fully about general question of your policy towards Fadhli Sultan, including question of his possible successor. I presume you do not intend to confide details of time table of possible operations to him, especially if they are intended to include any element of surprise. It is not suggested that Sultan would purposely divulge them, but unintentional leakage might be possible, consequences of which might be very embarrassing to him as well as others concerned.

Please communicate copy of this telegram to Air Officer Commanding and to M.E. Intelligence Centre with copies of your telegrams under reference.

AMENDED COPY (amendment underlined)

CYPHER TELEGRAM

FROM

Governor

ADEN

D. 13th March, 1941.

R. 14th " " 21.55 hrs.

No. 135 MOST SECRET.

Most grateful for your telegram No. 141 Fadhli unfortunately owing to circumstances of which you are probably aware military support cannot at present be provided for the course proposed in paragraph 1 (c) of my telegram No. 115. Action must therefore be deferred for a week or two.

844 E. 2.

CYPHER TELEGRAM.

FROM

Governor

ADEN

D. 25th March, 1941.

R. 25th " " 21.55 hrs.

IMMEDIATE.

No.159. Secret.

Addressed to S. of S. for the Colonies No.159 repeated to C. in C. East Indies No.2. M.I.C.E. No.55 My telegram No.135.

On 20th March letter was sent to Fadhli Sultan by hand and air informing him that in view of his past misdeeds simple apology was not enough and summoning him to come to Aden before midday 23rd March and give written assurances of good behaviour (as at (a), (1), (2), (3) and (4) of my telegram No.126) and of future co-operation with the Government in all matters connected with welfare of Fadhli. Letter stated that if he did this he would suffer no harm or restraint, but if he did not comply steps would be taken to replace his unfriendly policy.

2. On 21st March Sultan replied that he was prepared to give required undertakings and would liked to visit me but was afraid as he had been advised by his tribal Agils (who were not in fact in Shugra) that if he did so he would be detained on 22nd March. I sent him a letter by air repeating that if he obeyed my summons and signed undertaking (of which I enclosed copy) he would be allowed to return free to Shugra and that if he did not comply action would be taken against him. Sultan of Lahej also sent letter advising compliance and reassuring him about his personal safety.

3. On the morning of 23rd March Fadhli Sultan replied that he had slight fever and cold and would visit me on March 30th. His agent reported that he was in fact in the best of health.

4. On the evening of 23rd March a force of 100 Government guards and 40 levies with two Vickers and two Lewis guns under the command of Shepard, with Figgis in political charge of the operations, embarked in H.M.S. CHAKDINA and proceeded to Shugra accompanied by H.M.S. KANDAHAR arriving about dawn. At 5.30 a.m. aircraft arrived over Shugra and dropped reassuring explanatory leaflets on the population and warning on the Sultan to submit. Aircraft thereafter "air pinned" Sultan's house at Unstead to prevent anyone leaving by horse or car while the troops were disembarking. One slave attempting to escape on horseback was inadvertently killed by fire from aircraft. He had only himself to blame. Unstead and Shugra town were occupied without resistance by 8.20 a.m. Aircraft then dropped leaflets on tribes informing Agils

that

844 F

that the Sultan had been deposed because of his misdeeds and asking them to elect new Sultan.

5. Unfortunately Sultan escaped from Unstead on foot shortly after arrival of aircraft. He is reported to have previously transferred his money and the bulk of arms and ammunition to Am Suriya (15 miles west of Shugra). He was accompanied apparently voluntarily by Sultan Abdullah Bin Uthman hitherto believed to be hostile to him and rival for the Sultanate. In Unstead troops found 27,000 rounds of S.A.A., a small field piece and supplies of ammunition therefore Unstead has been demolished. Pending election of new Sultan troops will remain in Shugra where there is much rejoicing at the deposition of the Sultan.

6. Sultan had tried without success to enlist support of the tribes and intended to defend Unstead but on arrival of aircraft and warships decided to decamp.

I am in close consultation with the Sultan of Lahej regarding election and other possible developments.

EVE
DW.

SECRET

M E S S A G E

IN

1246Z/26 March.

DATE 28.3.41.

From C. in C. East Indies.

TIME 1945.

NAVAL CYPIER (X) BY W/T. RECIRCULATIONAddressed Admiralty. Repeated F.O.C.R.I.N.
S.N.O. Red Sea.*Royal Indian Navy, war work.*NINE

910. Your 1659/22/3. The following R.I.N. Ships have operated under the C. in C. East Indies in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf since the beginning of the War. OLIVE, CORNWALLIS, HINDUSTAN, INDUS and LAWRENCE. In December and January last INVESTIGATOR, NETRAVATI, PARVATI and RATHAGIRI in addition were spared from India to augment these forces. Their Principal function has been to reinforce the R.N. in escort and Patrol duties which have been continuous and arduous. RATHAGIRI was recently employed in landing troops and supplies on Eritrean Coast and, although there was no opposition, she successfully carried out this operation under difficult conditions. PARVATI and NETRAVATI carried the first troops to land during the recent recapture of Berbera and came under fire. The Harmonious relations existing between R.I.N. and R.N. Ships has led to efficiency and in practice the two services have merged and act as one. The R.I.N. in Bombay have taken a large share in world wide Naval communications and the efficiency of their Signal Branch is noteworthy.

1246Z/26.

1st Lord.
1st S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S. (F)
Ops. (4)
O.D. (5)
D. of P. (3)
E.P.S.
I.P. (3)
W.D.
Movts.
Mr. Gleadowe.

D.S.D. (2)
M. (2)
Press Division.
R.I.N.L.O. (2) } Bath.
Sub W.R.

ERIC

FOREIGN STATIONS

China.

~~SECRET~~

26. 3. 1941
Wednesday.

0915Z/26th March.

MOST SECRET.

MESSAGE.

IN.

From - C. in C. China.

Date - 27/3/41

Recd. - 1025.

NAVAL CYPHER (D) by W/T.

Addressed - Admiralty repeated C. in C. Far East, Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, New Zealand Naval Board.

337. Reference telegram 109 to Dominions Office from Prime Minister New Zealand. Para 2A. D.A. report, it is impossible to rule out altogether the chance that Japan will use powerful naval force(s) in the way suggested, but as we shall be, at any rate to begin with, in a position of inferiority, we must use such forces as we have to meet the most formidable menace.

2. I do not personally consider we could afford in the first instance to detach any more ships from elsewhere to meet the menace of Japanese attack on sea communications in (? S.W.) Pacific, whatever scale the attack there, in view of our commitments against Germany and Italy.

3. I do not consider the prize offered to the Japanese would be of reasonable value to induce them to undertake an extra overseas war setting up fresh bases after outbreak of war, when they would almost certainly be engaged in major expedition elsewhere.

4. I fully concur.

5. As stated in paragraph of report here quoted, I do not consider this problem can be dealt with in Far East, as it is a matter of weighing up menace of enemy attack in all parts of world and redistributing naval forces accordingly. This contingency, i.e., an "all-in" attack by the Japanese on sea communications, is not repetition not that envisaged in paragraph 12 of report which is based on initial assumption that attack on sea communications will be on scale contemplated in paragraph 53 of Imperial Chief (?complete) statement. I am quite prepared to take further steps to draw up plans for the operation of the Imperial, Dutch, Australian and New Zealand Naval Forces on the assumption that the forces available are as laid down in paragraph 12 of A.D.A. report, but I do not feel any useful purpose would be served by considerations at Singapore of the policy or plans to be adopted in the event of an "all-in" attack by the Japanese on sea communications. The area and scale of such an attack being world wide the provision and disposition of the forces to be employed must be considered in London.

6. This must depend on general requirements for capital ships, and is a worldwide problem.

Part 2.

As a general comment on views of Chiefs of Staff in Australia and New Zealand I should like to reiterate my personal opinion that if the Japanese enter this war it will be with the primary, if not the sole, objective of establishing control of source of vital war supplies, (oil rubber tin coal rice) in south-east Asia purely on a basis of self interest. I doubt very much whether they will be induced to assist Germany more directly by diverting their strength from this objective to an attack on sea communications, which might help to win Germany's war for her. If they establish control of south east/

2.

east Asia they may hope to hold on to these areas even if Germany does not succeed in defeating her enemies. Secondly, I feel that our planned effort should now be directed to establishing at least the broad outline of our policy with ~~repetition with~~ United States of America co-operating. This appears to me now to be most probable situation and we have done little towards thinking it out. It is a more urgent requirement than working out in detail our plan for operation without ~~repetition without~~ United States of America assistance, which so far as trade protection is concerned are already in full operation in our war with Germany and which if Japan enters can only develop as reinforcements become available from other theatres.

0915Z/26th

Advance copy sent 1st Lord, A.C.N.S.(F)
C.S.O. to 1st S.L., Duty Capt.,
D.O.D. (F), D.D.I.C.

1st Lord
1st S.L.
2nd S.L.
3rd S.L.
4th S.L.
5th S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S. (H)
A.C.N.S. (F)
A.C.N.S. (T)
C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
D. of P. (2)
D.O.D. (F)
D.D.O.D. (F)
D.O.D. (H)
D.N.I. (4)
D.S.D.
D.N.A.D.
D. of L.D.
D.A/S W.
D. S.S.
I.P.
W.D.
Duty Captain
Head of M.
D.T.S.D.
D.D.I.C.
E.P.S.
D.T.D.
D.D.O.D. (H)
Adm. Bailey.
N.I.D.10 (Paymaster Cdr. Wilson).

War Diary.

26.3.1941.
Wednesday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

Defence
Against
Japan.

Comments on tel. 109 to Domions Office from Prime Minister, New Zealand. (C.in C. China, 0915Z/26 to Admty.). Full text in Lion copy only. (p. 844 F)

Anglo-
U.S. and Dutch
Communications.

Reply to 14⁰³/14/3 re systems of inter communication in force in the Far East. (Head of M. 1403/26 to C.in C. China).

America and West Indies.

MALAYA,
secrecy.

Owing to numerous air passengers in transit through Trinidad for New York, impossible to prevent presence of MALAYA becoming known after arrival. Consider ship should be sailed for refitting Port with all possible despatch. Request destination be communicated. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1021/26, to Admty.).

Use of P/L.

A.M. 1200/22/2. (Re use of P/L by W/T on home stations). Same method of authenticating plain language messages as adopted by C.in C. S.A. has been brought into force on America & West Indies Station. (C.in C. A.W.I., 1154/26, to Admty. etc.).

DUNEDIN

Your 1701/16. Regretted that at present it is considered there is a greater need for DUNEDIN on S.A. Stn. Question of her return to your Command will be borne in mind. (D.O.D.(F) 1245/26 to C.in C. A.W.I.).

H.X. Convoys,
HOOD,
RAMILLIES,
REVENGE
ROYAL SOVEREIGN.

Your 0011/15 and my 1047/15. Request confirmation that HOOD is being made available for H.X.118. Expect RAMILLIES to undock 29/3 but if delayed by bad weather ship might be too late for this convoy after refuelling Halifax. Assume RAMILLIES escort H.X.119, REVENGE H.X.120, and ROYAL SOVEREIGN H.X.121, it appears RODNEY could escort T.C.10. In this circumstances a further captial ship would be required for H.X.122 and if possible H.X.123, in case RAMILLIES is late returning. (F.O. 3 B.S., 1413/26, to Admty.).

/ French units and M.V's ...

War Diary.

26.3.1941.

Wednesday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America and West Indies. (Contd.)French Units
and M.V's

My 1235/21 seven destroyers mentioned should be read seven submarines. They are believed to have left for Rio de Ora for convoy work. Following from State Department from Casablanca following number of vessels regularly employed as indicated: between Casablanca and Dakar 23 between Casablanca and Martinique 5 between Oran and Marseilles 21 between Casablanca and Bordeaux. (N.A. Washington 1635/26).

Request confirmation that RAMILLIES will complete in sufficient time to escort H.X.118.

(A.C.N.S.(H) 1811/26 to R.A.3).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.

26.3.1941.

Wednesday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.WESTERN CHIEF.

British (ex-American) 5759 tons, straggler from S.C.24. Netherlands S.S. VENUS landed Ponta Delgada Master and 20 other survivors from WESTERN CHIEF torpedoed 2150 G.M.T./14 058° 52' N. 021° 13' W.
(N.C.S.O. Ponta Delgada, 1050/26, to Admty.)
(D.S. 569).

PROMETHEUS,
(attacked
26/2)

British Ship PROMETHEUS arrived 25/3 from Liverpool. Master reports convoy attacked on 26/2, first by U-Boat and later by 5 aircraft which attacked with cannon, machine guns and bombs. Minor damage to Engine Room and hull which does not affect seaworthiness. Fear that cargo may be damaged from bomb explosions. Ship sailing 27/3 for Middle East.
(S.O.I. Capetown, 1350/26, to Admty.).

ERODONA
(torpedoed
16/3)

Your 1400 (not to Admty.) THAMES arrived 1730 and endeavouring to get tow line on board. My loose tow line parted at 1600. Will render all possible assistance and intend to escort to Reykjavik. Weather moderating.
(VISENDA, 1915/26, to S.O.N.P.T., R.A.N.P.).

Submarines Reported.

Estimated U/B dispositions.
(D.D.I.C. 1355/26).

Submarines Attacked.By RIPLEY

At 1825/26, 55.10 N., 10.52 W., 270° Bloody Foreland 92', made 6 attacks on contact. No visible result. (A.2)
(D.S. 569).

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Home Commands.

Enemy
Battle
Cruisers.

It is reliably reported that the enemy battle cruisers are in Brest. Submarines on patrol off the Bay of Biscay have been redisposed.

Denmark
Straits
patrol.

C.S.1. considers the Denmark Straits patrol to be in effective at present and makes certain proposals for rendering it effective.

Air
protection
of shipping
in Western
Approaches.

In order to make more economical use of Coastal Command aircraft engaged in the protection of shipping in the Western Approaches, certain routeing arrangements have been made which are detailed in Admty. 2334/27 to C.in C. W.A.

British Air Activity.

Bomber Command carried out no operations last night on account of bad weather. Eight Blenheims today in the course of a sweep attacked a naval formation consisting of a submarine, 20 E/Boats, 3 probable destroyers and other vessels west of Schonweir.

Bad weather caused patrols to be much curtailed today. R/C of Brest and St. Nazaire was unsuccessful.

S.S. BERNARD VON TSHIRSCHKY with valuable cargo on board was attacked in Alderney Harbour today by 6 Skuas. 3 direct hits were obtained.*

* See p. 855

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.27.3.1941.
Thursday.SITUATION REPORT.Enemy Air Activity.

Several ships were attacked by four enemy aircraft between 1730 and 2100 today approximately between St. Goran's and St. Ann's s.s. PALMSTON, MEG MERRILEES OUD BEYERLAND, are reported to have been damaged. BARONS COURT was slightly damaged by splinters (7 bombs and 1 torpedo reported dropped), and proceeded on passage, she claims to have badly damaged two of the enemy aircraft. LEITH was unsuccessfully attacked this morning and shot down one enemy aircraft 25 miles S.W. of St. Davids Head.

A further attack was made on A.M.E. Station Skaw today. No damage is reported.

Fishing trawlers AVONSIDE and FORT DEE were attacked this evening and slightly damaged between the Faeroes and Shetlands.

Mining.Operation
G.X.

20th D.F. escorted by Capt: D.5. (KELLY) with 4 destroyers laid mines last night off Brest. Fighter protection and diversionary bombing of Brest were arranged.

Z.M.E.25.

PLOVER laid mines last night off the north Coast of Cornwall.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.27.3.1941.
Thursday.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean.Enemy air
attacks
increasing.

C.in C. Med., reports that the scale of air attack in the Mediterranean is increasing very rapidly, and he asks that the heavily armed sloops FLAMINGO and AUCKLAND may be sent to him from the Red Sea. Of his 4 A.A. ships two are lame ducks.
(See 31/3 East Indies).

Enemy
light
force
sighted.

At 1220 today aircraft sighted 3 enemy cruisers and a destroyer in 36° 30'N., 16° 40'E., (75 miles E. by S. Cape Passaro), steering 120° (See 29/3).

Two enemy
ships
torpedoed.

C.in C. Med., reports that at 1150/16 PARTHIAN attacked an escorted convoy east of Cap Dell 'Armi and is thought to have torpedoed a merchant ship and a tanker.

America and West Indies.

The Anglo-United States Bases Agreement was signed today *in London.*

MOST SECRET.27.3.1941.
Thursday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Policy.W.A. Command.
Inclusion of
Iceland.

Admty 2246/24. Inclusion of Iceland in Western Approaches Command though not essential would be a great help operationally.

At least two escort groups will be based Iceland shortly for summer period or longer and I had hoped new Air Forces about to be based Iceland would be joined up to 15 group so as to obtain best operational value.

I understand however that present intention is to place these aircraft under operational control 18group.

I strongly recommend former alternative as this combined H.Q. is only centre where complete operational picture of Atlantic Approaches is centred.

(C. in C. W.A., 1115/27).

Message 2246/24 is being passed to C in C Rosyth.

(C in C H.F. 2359/25).

Denmark Straits
Patrol.

Consider Denmark Straits patrol ineffective at present for following reasons:-

- (a) One signal from ships on patrol probably sufficient to indicate position of patrol. Several have been made recently
- (b) A.M.C's speed insufficient until short nights of May to prevent 20 knot raiders passing during dark hours.
- (c) Raiders can use R D/F to have contact in lieu of VV during dark hours.

2. Propose -

- (d) Two A.M.C's should be fitted with best surface R D/F at once, or type 286 as stop gap, and should then maintain patrol until May.

- (e) Patrol to be moved nearer to Mine-field and adjusted to prevailing ice conditions so as to take (?advantage of) emergency gap between mine-field and ice.

- (f) Supporting Cruisers should have aircraft Isafjord should provide shelter waters. NORFOLK's aircraft is (?embarked) in KING GEORGE V.

(C.S.1. 1145/27 to C in C H.F.)

S.A. Command.....

War Diary.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

852

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy. (contd.)

S.A. Command
Reinforcement.

Your 2022/26.

(1) Ships detailed and dates ready to sail:-
BOREAS 4/4. BRILLIANT on completion of re-
fit. ANCHUSA, AMARANTHUS, 2/4 GARDENIA,
COLUMBINE 6/4.

(2) Intend corvettes sail with Southbound
convoys.

(3) HIGHLANDER due Gibraltar 30/3 has been
ordered to join flag of C. in C.S.A. till
relieved by BRILLIANT late in April.
(C in C W.A. 1556/27.)

Movements.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
RODNEY
REVENGE.

Admiralty 0011/15.

It is intended that QUEEN ELIZABETH will
escort T.C.10 to the U.K. leaving Halifax
about (date).

2. RODNEY is returning to Halifax from
Hvalfiord. REVENGE should arrive Halifax
2/4. This should ensure four battleships
being available in the Halifax escort force
in the immediate future.

(1st S.L. 1031/27 and 0048/28).

HOOD.

B.C.S.1 in HOOD screened by three destroyers
is to sail for Halifax 31/3.

(ii) C in C Rosyth is requested to arrange
A/S Air Escort for as far to Westward as
practicable. Code word ~~LABEL~~ "Label".

(iii) Destroyers are to part company in
025° W and are then to act as ordered by
R.A. (D) H.F.

(C in C H.F. 1721/27 and 1907/27).

See called. See p. 886

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations.

Northern
Patrol.

Your 2142/26. Propose MARSDALE takes U.3. REGISTAN T.3. until P.M. 30th thence proceeding to X. one to relieve HILARY.
(F.O.C.N.P. 0930/27 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Patrol K.

Carry out Patrol K tonight until 2230 then proceed towards F.S. 47 and provide cover until daylight.
(C.in C. Nore, 1054/27 to HOLDERNESS, CATTISTOCK).

Bay of Biscay Submarine Patrol.

TIGRIS
(Operation "European.")
EUROPEAN).

A. TIGRIS patrol in area eastward of long. 04° W., and between 45° N., and 47° 20' N.

B. While in this area object is operation ~~EUROPEAN~~ and to attack ships of all descriptions.
(F.O.S. 1127/27).

Movements and Orders.

(S.5. 1422/27, 1705/27, 2203/27)
(F.O.S. 1506/27, 1609/27).
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1833/27).

SOKOL.
SUNFISH.
SEALION,
CACHALOT,
TAKU,
TUNA,
TORBAY,
Q24,
L.26,
L.27,
OBERON,
UNBEATEN.

Numbered
Positions.

Additional numbered positions 70 to 82 inclusive established as follows.
(F.O.S. 1236/27).
See Summaries Folder.

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941.
Thursday . 854

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Object and Orders.

A. The object of submarines on patrol and on passage is

1. When in the free for all area to attack vessels of all descriptions. In addition cruisers and above or large numbers of merchant ships should be reported.

2. When outside this area to attack and then report enemy warships only.

B. U/Boats are not to be attacked unless their identity is established beyond all doubt.

C. At commanding officers discretion full use should be made of underwater signalling to pass enemy reports to adjacent submarines.
(F.O.S. 1949/27 to S/M's Area A).

A/S
Sweep
off
Rockall.

Cancel my 0940/24. ARROW, ESKIMO, ECLIPSE, will not be required to ^{pass} Reykjavik. When released take Home Fleet destroyers under your orders and return to Scapa.

2. If fuel permits divide force and carry out A/S sweeps North and South of Rockall on passage.
(R.A.D. H.F. 1505/27 to D.6.)

Iceland
- Faroes
Patrol.

Scapa departures FIJI and NIGERIA.
(A.C.O.S. 1644/27).

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity.

BERNHARD
VON TSHIRSCHKY.*

* There was no ship of
this name. She was
almost certainly the
ex Belgian DIAMANT
(715 GRT). No damage
or casualties resulted
from the attack.

A.B. FDS

Patrols.

An enemy M/V 800 tons BERNHARD VON TSHIRSCHKY entered Alderney at 1145/27 with valuable cargo on board. 6 A/C of 801 Squadron armed with 500 lbs. sap bombs are to destroy forthwith. (Plymouth 1315/27 to H.Q. 19 Group). Six Skuas of 801 Squadron have been ordered to attack enemy M/V in Alderney. Ship reported to have valuable cargo on board. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1401/27).

2 Aircraft fitted with A.S.V. is carrying cross-over patrol from 2100 to about 0100/28th between 048° 32'N., 005° 53'W. and 047° 25'N., 004° 50'W. Flares may be dropped till 2359/27th clear of own force. (C.in C. Plymouth, 1837/27 to D.20). The following two cross over patrols will be flown tomorrow. Cross over patrol by Sunderland A/C from Sullum Voe as follows, from 1500/28 to 2015/28. Cross over patrol by Sunderland A/C from Reykjavik as follows, from 1100/28 to 2000/28. (C.in C. Rosyth, 2243/27).

Illumination
of Minelaying
A/C.

Successful experiments along Suez Canal emphasize necessity for early trial of floodlights at Harwich, Thames Estuary, and Humber. (Air Ministry, 1920/27). (See Mediterranean).

Bombing
Restriction.

Request bombing restrictions between 48° and 50° N., and 4° and 6° West. (C.in C. Plymouth, 2031/27 to H.Q.C.C.)

War Diary.27.3.1941.
Thursday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity.

EMPIRE MERMAID *Straggler HX114*
(Bombed 26/3.).

Reported drifting helpless with engine-room flooded in $058^{\circ} 25' N$ $010^{\circ} 15' W.$, at 2200/26.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock. 0010/27.).
Request you sail ZWARTE ZEE with all despatch to assist. Tug BRIGAND and WINDERMERE are also proceeding.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock. 0029/27 to N.O.I.C. Aultbea.).
ZWARTE ZEE is to R/V trawler THIRLMERE at 0900/27. THIRLMERE will escort ZWARTE ZEE to assist EMPIRE MERMAID.
(C. in C. W.A. 0206/27.).
Received at 0610. May last a little longer but not much.
(Port Patrick Radio 0610/27.).
Sinking, require immediate assistance, urgent.
(EMPIRE MERMAID T.O.R. 0630/27.).
Departure Tug ZWARTE ZEE.
(N.O.I.C. Aultbea 0700/27.).
~~Subsidiary~~ leaving Sullom Voe 0800 to endeavour to locate EMPIRE MERMAID and assist her.
(C. in C. Rosyth 0732/27.).
Am proceeding with utmost speed to assist.
(DIANELLA 0816/27.).
Cancel previous orders.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 0828/27 to ZWARTE ZEE.).
At 0600 EMPIRE MERMAID was reported in $057^{\circ} 48' N.$, $011^{\circ} 40' W.$ If not in contact search in this direction. Air search is being made. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1143/27 to BRIGAND.).
Report forthwith your p.c. and s. and whether you have made contact with EMPIRE MERMAID. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 1220/27 to BRIGAND). Your 1220/27. Position $058^{\circ} 17' N.$ $010^{\circ} 40' W.$ course 225° speed 12 knots heavy easterly sea. (BRIGAND 1405/27 to N.O.I.C. Greenock) Arrived position given your 1256/27 and have searched vicinity without result. Have contacted WINDERMERE and BRIGAND in vicinity who state they are also looking for EMPIRE MERMAID. In view of this have abandoned search and am rejoining convoy O.B.160.
(DIANELLA 1959/27 to C. in C. W.A.).

/Your.....

MOST SECRET.27.3.1941.
Thursday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS. (contd.)Enemy Air Activity.EMPIRE MERMAID.
(Bombed 26/3)

Your 1143/27. Area searched till dark. No trace of ship or survivors. Heavy North Easterly sea.
(BRIGAND 2050/27 to F.O.I.C. Greenock)
Your 2050/27. Continue search. Further air R/C will be carried out tomorrow. Report forthwith your p.c. and s.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 2245/27 to BRIGAND).

CAROLINA
THORDEN.
(Bombed 26/3.)

Enemy aircraft believed to be Heinkel bombed set on fire Finnish CAROLINA THORDEN entrance Thorshaven Bay. Crew passengers rescued, 3 of which wounded.
Enemy aeroplane returned twice bombs fell harmlessly on land. No military damage casualties. Please despatch 10,000 tracer immediately.
(O.C. Troops, Faeroes 0015/27 to War Office)

S.S.SOMALI
(Bombed 26/3)

Your 2359/26. Remain with SOMALI and make every effort to save ship with assistance of tug.
(C in C Rosyth 0044/27 to LEDA)
Newton coastguard reports SOMALI blown up and sank half mile east of Beadnell Point whilst being towed to Budle Bay, Farne Islands.
(F.O.I.C. Tyne. 1257/27).

LEITH.

(Sloop, escorting one M/V) Help. Position 51° 36' N 5° 48' W. Course 110 speed 7 knots.
(LEITH 0911/27)
My 0911. Enemy is bombing.
(LEITH 0914/27)
M 0911. 1 of 2 A/C destroyed.
(LEITH 0926/27).
Air attack imminent of ~~LEITH~~ (1 M/V escorted by LEITH.)
(Plymouth W/T 1006/27).
Your 0926. There are indications that second plane may also have been brought down. Can you confirm.
(C in C Plymouth 1157/27 to LEITH).

Your.....

War Diary27.3.1941.
ThursdayHOME COMMANDSEnemy Air ActivityLEITH-Contd.

Your 1157. Second aircraft appeared undamaged when last seen. (LEITH 1238/27 to C. in C., Plymouth).

Convoy
F.S. Even

Am being shadowed by two enemy aircraft ~~ALPHA~~ Two, in 52° 15' N., 1° 57' E. (COTTESMORE 1133/27)

FARADAY
(Bombed 26/3)

My 2131/26 FARADAY is aground on Long Point one mile north west of St. Anne, main deck awash at H.W. Ship burnt fiercely all night. Cable tanks were partly flooded. There may be a chance of salvaging part of cargo. Salvage officer arriving this afternoon. According to Yacht VIVA II enemy plane which attacked FARADAY crashed in sea close to ship but this not confirmed by P.W.S.S. (F.O.I.C., Milford Haven, 1203/27) Particulars of attack (C. in C., Plymouth 1409/27)

Plymouth
Command.
Request for
increased
Fighter and
Surface A/A
Escorts.

5. At 1800 on 26th there were 42 merchant vessels excluding 2 ocean convoys, between Lands End and the Smalls with only 2 escorts amongst them. There were only 9 escorts immediately available in the Plymouth Command. These are being worked to capacity as shown in my No 657/M. 264 of 19/3/41.

6. The only measures which would have saved FARADAY are more fighter escorts and/or ensuring that E/A whether they approach high or low are picked up by R.D/F or C.H.L. and dealt with immediately by our fighters. 19 group are doing all they can to provide air escorts and I have already asked in my 712/M 491 of 22/3 that they should be reinforced by 2 Squadrons of Beau Fighters; this is an urgent request.

7. Two other ships, bombed and beached during the day. To allow the extension of the grouping of shipping to cover the Bristol Channel the extra surface escorts requested in my No 657/M 264 and my 1759/26 are required now,

8. It is further requested that the escorts

/for shipping.....

MOST SECRET.

27.3.1941.

Thursday.War Diary.HOME COMMAND.Enemy Air Activity.

Plymouth
Command. Request
for increased
Fighter and
Surface A/A
Escorts. (contd.)

for shipping between Portsmouth and Dartmouth may be provided in future by C in C Portsmouth to release two escorts now for the dangerous route north of Land's End.
 (C in C Plymouth 1409/27).

Shetlands.
Skaw A M E
Station bombed.

My 2045/26. A further attack was made by single E/A on A M E Station Skaw at 0830 Two bombs dropped but no damage or casualties reported. E/A was engaged by Lewis Gun fire but without apparent effect.
 (A.C.O.S. 1205/27.)

BEINISVOR
sunk.

Faeroes Smack BEINISVOR sunk by near miss from single enemy aircraft at 1800/26 in approx 61° 40' N. 04° 37' W. Crew landed at Thorshavn in another Faeroes Fishing Vessel.
 (N.O.I.C. Faroes 1245/27).

Unknown ship
attacked.

Automatic A.A. A.A. heard 1344 G.M.T. strength 2 bearing from G.L.D. 020°
 (Lands End 1548/27)
 A.A. A.A. Station sending Spar of St. Govans light vessel and automatic A.A. A.A. strength 3 bearing 020° from G.L.D.
 (Lands End 1607/27.)

MENESTHEUS.
(Bombed 26/3)

My 1430/26. Damage as follows; Will be repaired locally and ship can continue to operate.
 (R.A.M.L. 1628/27).

Raft in
Irish
Sea.

Master of Dutch M/V DEPA reports picking up raft in 54° 02' N 03° 54' W at 1715/26. Description. Had been hit by M.G. bullets.
 (F.O.I.C. Belfast. 1657/27).

Enemy A/C shot
down by Destroyer
off Milford Haven.

27/3 Destroyer reported enemy A/C shot into sea 1000 hours. 1443 H.Q.F.C. reported two rafts picked up by destroyer which destroyed E/A. 1445 hours rescue operations cancelled.
 (10 Group 1700/27 to H.Q.F.C.)

LITTLE EMMA.....

War Diary.

27.3.1941.

Thursday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)LITTLE EMMA

(Faeroes fishing vessel). Reports single enemy aircraft dropped eight bombs near her in 063° 44' N. 007° 30' W. at 1730/26. No damage. (N.O.I.C. Faroes 1731/27).

Clyde.
Air-Raid
damage
on 20/3.

My 2314/20. Further reports on production of affected yards are as follows - (F.O.I.C. Glasgow 2037/27).

KNOLL
(Bombed 26/3)

My 1947/26. Reports indicate ship afloat, in safe position at present, and can be salvaged. Crew standing by in charge of Chief Officer. (C.in C. Plymouth 2229/27).

Milford Haven.
PALMSTONE
MEG MERRILIES
OULD BEIJERLAND
damaged.

6 ships have been attacked by enemy aircraft approximately between St. Govan's and St. Annes between 1730 and 2100 this evening.

1. PALMSTONE Salvage vessel Swansea to Milford Haven towed in damaged and beached inside haven.
2. EDENVALE destination unknown undamaged.
3. MEG MERRILIES being towed in destination unknown. Damaged.
4. FELSEAR from Oban for Barry Roads undamaged.
5. OULD BEIJERLAND damaged inside Haven being pumped by tug SEINE probably have to be beached.
6. One unknown ship and A/P trawler WELBECK assisting, who was herself bombed but undamaged. It is not certain number 2 and 4 were definitely attacked. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 2246/27).

Mining

Operation ABDIEL
OK.

Op: GY.

See next page

Admiralty's 1326/26. If practicable ABDIEL should be loaded and ready to proceed by 1300/27. Report estimated time, (C.in C. Plymouth 0059/27 to ABDIEL). Your 0059/27. Ready to sail about 1300. Mines cannot be prepared by that time. 4 hours additional in harbour essential for this purpose. (ABDIEL 0912/27 to C.in C. Plymouth).

ABDIEL will be required to sail about 1300/28. (C.in C. Plymouth 1241/27). *See next page*
Operation GX is to be carried out tonight. If weather unsuitable Capt.(D)5 has discretion to postpone operation. (C.in C. Plymouth 1253/27 to Capt. D.5). Sailed 1736 INTREPID, IMPULSIVE, ICARUS 1758 KELLY, KELVIN, JACKAL, KASHMIR. (C.in C. Plymouth 1847/27).

Op: GX

/ Operation GY

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Thursday

HOME COMMANDS

Mining-Contd.

Operation
GY.

Your 1326/26. Concur (ii) intend that ABDIEL carries out this lay on the night 28/29.

(iii) Consider it desirable for a further lay (position) to be carried out.

(iv) Propose ABDIEL return to Milford Haven to reload on completion of first lay and carry out second lay proposed before proceeding to Cowes.

(C. in C., Plymouth 1235/27)

Particulars. (C. in C., Plymouth 1941/27)

See Operations Volume.

1. Your 1233/27. Paragraph 3. Concur.
2. Paragraph 4. Second operation should be carried out by 20th D.F., loading at Milford Haven after completion of operation G.X.
3. ABDIEL should proceed to Cowes after completing first lay.
(V.C.N.S. 1829/27 to C. in C., Plymouth).

Explosion
under
HOPETARN

British ship HOPETARN on arrival at Portland, M.E. reports that on 8/3 when in 53° 36' N., 03° 38' W., in 18 fathoms 2 explosions occurred beneath the ship thought to be due to acoustic mines. No apparent damage to ship. (N.S.H.Q., Ottawa, 1723/27).

Humber
3 mines
exploded.

At 0145/26 a mine exploded close to A.S.I.S. YARMOUTH TRADER anchored in 270° Killingholme High Light 6 cables. YARMOUTH TRADER had just dropped a second anchor. At 1840/26 a mine exploded spontaneously in 048° No 10 Elbow Buoy 4½ cables. At 0800/27 approximately a mine exploded close to Dutch ship ALBOTH outward bound in position 3 miles east of Humber L/V.
(F.O.Humber 1901/27)

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Thursday.

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WAR DIARY.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

SCHARNHORST
GNEISENAU.

Report from reliable source on 26/3 states SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU have entered Brest with a convoy of English ships. The following are known:- ROYAL CROWN, EMPIRE INDUSTRY, GRANLI, CHILEAN REEFER, MANGKAI, BRITISH STRENGTH SILVERC FIR, ATHELFOAM, SAN CASIMIRO, POLYKARP, DEMETERTON. They reckon about 200 prisoners ends. Graded B.3.

Comment. Although it is known SAN CASIMIRO was scuttled it is possible source learnt the name through the capture of the Master. All other ships are known to have been attacked or could have been in a position to have been attacked.

(D.D.I.C. 1244/27).

My 1244/27. It is not clear from original French text whether report refers to actual British Merchant ships or their crews only having arrived in Brest.

(D.D.I.C. 1828/27).

M/V and
Escort
off
Ushant.

Following has been received from Duty Officer 53 Squadron begins:- - Merchant ship and two escort vessels 5 miles west of Ushant Head 330 speed 8 T.O.O. 1146 - Ends.

(C.in C. Plymouth, 1315/27).

My 1315/27. At 1410 position of same Force was 048° 40'N., 004° 35'W., course 080° 14 knots.

(C.in C. Plymouth, 1743/27 to S/M's Area A).

One M/V with two escorts reported 5 miles West of Ushant course 330° at 1145/27, and then again in 48° 40'N., 04° 35'W. course 080° 14 knots at 1410/27.

(C.in C. Plymouth, 1745/27 to C.in C. Portsmouth.)

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Dutch
Fishing
Boats.

Information re Dutch fishing Boats
(some thought to be German manned)
graded B.2. from escapers:-
(D.N.I. 1731/27).

3 Transports.

Three transport vessels of 12000 tons
each reported leaving Mouth of Elbe
at dawn 28/3 for assembly in the
Netherlands.
(Chatham, A.C.H.Q. 2222/27).

Enemy
surface
ship.

D/F at 2151/27 bearing of German surface
ship was 006° 2nd class.
(F.O.S. B.C.S. 2341/27 to Admty).

Technical.

Oiling
at
Sea.

My 1204/26. Request you will also give
consideration to the following method
which has been tried.
(4th S.L. 1808/27 to C.in C. H.F.)

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941. 864
Thursday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

Code
Words.

Admty. Gen Message. 188 AZ of 26/3.
Add following description to convoys mentioned.
(Codes for B.B. D.S. S.D. and E.C. Convoys).
(D.S.D. 1304/27 to Admty.Gen.Message 192 AZ. Home) (See Special Summaries Folder).

S.C.24.

On time at R/V two stragglers.
Gale 10/11/3. All ships arrived with exception of WESTERN CHIEF not yet accounted for.
(D.T.D. 1120/27 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa).

Cancellation
of Distress
messages.

Admty. Message "EV". Importance of adhering strictly to procedure for cancellation of distress message made in error as outlined in A.M.S.I. 268 para.2 is emphasised. Failure to do so leaves Naval Authorities with misleading information leading to unnecessary movements of British warships.
Ref: A.M.S.I. 268 and Admty. Message "DV". coded message cancelling original report referred to in para.2(b) should be prefixed "DR". Para 3 is cancelled.
(D.T.D. 1154/27 to G.B.M.S. all areas).

H.G.56.

Your 1924/21. KENYA should remain with convoy H.G.56 as long as fuel permits, if possible as far as the North Channel.
(D.O.D.(H) 1254/27 to C.S.10).

A/C
Danger
Area.

My 1850/3. Enemy aircraft are particularly active between Helwick and St. David's Head. Every effort is to be made to ensure that ships proceed through this area in darkness. If proceeding to Milford Haven they should arrive at sunrise.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 2209/27 to N.C.S.O's etc.)

WAR DIARY.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

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HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys. (Contd.)

Advice of
Important
cargoes.

Ships carrying especially important cargoes have been sailed without provision of extra precautions which would have been taken had attention been called to their particular importance. Action is being taken to ensure that departments responsible will inform local Naval Authority when shipment of special cargoes (such as gun mountings, ammunition etc.) is intended. N.O.I.C. or F.O.I.C. concerned should draw the attention of their C.in C. to the shipment. C.in C. will inform Admty. whenever they consider it desirable.
(V.C.N.S. 2224/27 to All C.in C's etc., at Home).

Radius
Routes
for
M/V's
in W.A.
Command.

In order to make more economical use of Coastal Command aircraft it has been decided to establish daily fixed routes on radii of 125 miles from 58° 58'N., 06° 45'W. and 150 miles from 55° 35'N., 07° 00'W. and to route all inward and outward bound independently sailed ships 5 miles to the southward and northward respectively of one of these radii.
Convoys will not necessarily proceed in or out on the radius for the day but will be routed by the radius most appropriate to their ocean route and the U/Boat situation. Details.
(A.C.N.S.T. 2334/27).

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

WAR DIARY.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

SHERWOOD.

My 1650/24. SHERWOOD delayed by defects.
(C.in C. Plymouth, 1111/27).

WINCHELSEA.

Has 2 major defects, as follows.
(WINCHELSEA, 1500/27).

COMITATUS.

S.A.Trawler COMITATUS has completely destroyed her S.A. Type A. gear by striking bottom while crossing Tay Bar today. Expected out of action for about three weeks. Ship herself undamaged.
(N.O.I.C. Dundee 1555/27).

BRITTANY.

(Netlayer) Was in collision with wooden jetty in Methil docks Fairway at 1415/27. Holed above water line, not making water but unfit for sea. Ship unable to proceed to dock for 72 hours.
(N.O.I.C. Methil, 1620/27).

AGAMEMNON
(Minelayer).
CASTLETON
(Destroyer).

AGAMEMNON and CASTLETON were in collision this morning. The following damage being sustained. Propose AGAMEMNON to operate at approx. two thirds capacity.
CASTLETON can steam in sheltered waters with safety.
(R.A.M.L. 1631/27).

War Diary

27.3.1941.
Thursday

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic

SHEFFIELD

Your 1646/26. In view of extreme shortage of labour at Gibraltar, see My 1916/14/1 (?) do not intend to dock SHEFFIELD on this occasion.
(A.S., Gibraltar, 1106/27 to Admty.).

PANDORA
to R/V.
CAIRNDALE.

PANDORA sails at 2000/28 routed through 032°N 014°W and 031° 20'N., 016° 30'W to R/V with CAIRNDALE in position 'Pedestal' during daylight/3.
Object of PANDORA while in company with CAIRNDALE is to sink any Raider which attempts to attack. PANDORA can remain at sea about 25 days and will return Gibraltar.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1216/27 to S.O. Force H).

A/C crew
rescued by
Spanish
Ship.

3 interned airmen (names) leaving 28/3 Madrid by air Spanish IBERIA passenger aircraft.
(Consul, Las Palmas, 1730/27 to Madrid).

SPARTA,
LISBOA,
LIVORNO
(German)

Arrival
SPARTA and LISBOA departure LIVORNO for Marseilles.
(Valencia T.H.I. 2200/27.)

Enemy
Unit.

By D/F at 2151/27 bearing of German surface ship was 006° 2nd Class.
(F.O.C.N.A., 2341/27, to Admty.)

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Thursday

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War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic

MEMNON
survivors,
CEVENNES,
KILISSI.

Following from Navy Dept. from Dakar 23/3. Two members of crew of M.V. MEMNON landed at Dakar by KILISSI. Second life boat with section of survivors reported following coast attempting to reach Gambia. British authorities Bathurst informed. Arrived CEVENNES from Morocco with general cargo and KILISSI from South with Bananas. Latter continuing voyage to North. (N.A. Washington, 1105/27). (MEMNON was torpedoed 11/3).

→ REPULSE.
FURIOUS.

F.O.C.N.A., 1736/26 (? unless you) receive further information that other destroyers will be provided to meet you, you should leave Convoy in time to proceed West of Canary Islands. (C.-in-C., S.A. 1205N/27, to REPULSE, FURIOUS).

Allied
S/M's.

My 118 G 1045/9/12 is cancelled. (C.-in-C., S.A. 1210/27.) F.O.C.N.A.'s 1736/26. Between lat. 30° N. and 25° N., there has so far been no sign of U-boat activity east of Island of Palma. Between lat. 25° N. and 15° N, all U-boat activity during March has been west of 20° W. Unless you have other information, REPULSE and FURIOUS should be routed east of Canary Islands. (V.C.N.S. 1831/27 to C-in-C., S.A., F.O.C.N.A.)

GUNNY

Norwegian GUNNY due Pernambuco 14/3 from Durban has not arrived there. Have you any news of her in 974 areas? (S.O.(I).Freetown, 1230/27, to S.O.(I), Kingston, N.S.H.Q., Ottawa.)

ASPHODEL

A.S. Gibraltar 2026 (ASPHODEL completes 29/3), request you sail ASPHODEL for Freetown as soon as completed. (C.-in-C., S.A., 1301N/27 to F.O.C.N.A.)

/ Italian ships

27.3.1941.
Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic (Contd.)

Italian
Ships,
B. Aires.

Captain of Italian M.V. here states that all Italian ships have received orders to prepare for sea.

(N.A., Buenos Aires, 1621/27, to D.N.I.)
Following are in harbour:-

CAPO ROSA	-	4,699	tons
CERVINO	-	4,363	"
GIAN FRANCO	-	8,181	"
MARI STELLA	-	4,802	"
MONTE SANTO	-	5,850	"
PRINCIPESSA MARIA	-	8,918	"

(D.S. 571, 29/3.)

LECH,
Italian
M.V's.

Following report from Bahia (begins).
Domschke German ship agents have warned their launch to stand by for next few days to attend LECH. This may be ruse since launches can be obtained at short notice (Ends). Santos reports Italian ships there appear raising steam.
(S.O.(I), Montevideo, 1903Z/27, to Admty.)

Captured
Norwegian
Whale
Catchers.

Following obtained from Norwegians from whale catchers intercepted by SCARBOROUGH on 13/3. (My 1335/14 refers) - SOLGLIMT, PELAGOS, OLEWEGGER and 11 catchers captured 14/1 and 16/1 in about 59°S. 2° 30'W. by raider known as No. 33 or PINGUIN. Appearance similar to Indian Ocean Raider No. 16 (details). SOLGLIMT and PELAGOS sent North on 24/1. DUCESA, captured by SCHEER 18/12/40, was met on 31/1. Her prize crew transferred to whalers and ship sunk. Whalers fuelled from OLE WEGGER about 17/2 in approx. 20°S. 17°W. then proceeded North in pairs. Raider parted company on this date. Catchers fuelled from 11000 ton German tanker, possibly NORDMARK, in approx. 27°N. 42°W. on 6/3. A raider in company with tanker resembled SANTA CRUZ. Definitely a fruit ship with very fine lines forward. Raider had mining ports in stern. No. 33 said to have operated off Madagascar and to have mined Hobart Straits and to have rested for four weeks in Southern latitudes before capture of whalers. If true she may have been responsible for attacks S.E. of Madagascar in August and September and for either NOWSHERA and PORT WELLINGTON or for MAIMOA and PORT BRISBANE.
(D.D.I.C. 1943/27 to C. in C. H.F., F.O.C.N.A., C. in C., S.A., etc.)

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FOREIGN STATIONS

South Atlantic (Contd.)

FRISCO.

Un-assessed report from Ceara states that Italian FRISCO has received clearance papers for Oslo and will leave during next 48 hours.

(S.O.I), Montevideo, 2003Z/27, to Admty.)

MULBERA.

N.T. in W.D.
Your 1727/26. MULBERA sailed W.S.6, See my 1623/8, and for other ships that sailed besides those reported in my Vesca 2016/8.

(N.C.S.O., Freetown, 2130/27 to Admty.)

MAURITIUS.
S.L.69.

My 1419/27. Proceed as soon as fuelled to join S.L. 69 before dark/28. (C. in C., S.A., 2131N/27, to MAURITIUS). (MAURITIUS arrived Bathurst 1400/27 - S.O.I., Freetown, 2041N/27.)

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Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean.

TRIUMPH,
ROVER.

My 2205 to TRIUMPH and my 2209 to ROVER. Proceed with utmost despatch to establish offensive patrol by dawn 28/3 as follows. TRIUMPH within 20 miles of position 180° Anti Milo 20, routed through 036° 10', 026° 25', 036° 18', 025° 17', ROVER within 20 miles of Cape Drepano, Suda Bay through 033° 10', 023° 25', 035° 00', 022° 45', thence through Kithera Channel. (Capt. S.L., 0027/27, to TRIUMPH, ROVER). See 1739/27. *Cancelled - See p 912*

1 man U-boat
captives,
Suda Bay.

Your 1930/26. What nationality are the prisoners? (1st S.L., 0842/27, to C. in C. Med.) Reply: See 1845/27.

JUNO.

My p.c. and s. 186 CMC 22 X10 204 30. (JUNO, 1005/27, to C. in C. Med., VALIANT, V.A.2 Med.)

Widening of
Canal for
EAGLE to
pass.

My 1921/12 and your 1219Z/26. Canal Company estimate date of completion is now 8/4 but is subject to modifications further signal will be made as soon as firm date can be given. (S.B.N.O., Suez Canal, 1019/27, to C. in C., E.I.).

Enemy Air
Attacks
FLAMINGO,
AUCKLAND.

Scale of air attack in Mediterranean is increasing very rapidly. Yesterday A.S.22 was twice attacked, once by as many as 30 JU 88. Would it be possible to spare the 2 heavily armed escort ships FLAMINGO and AUCKLAND from Red Sea Force? CARLISLE has only one shaft and COVENTRY can only operate in fine weather as permanent repairs to her bows have not yet been possible. (C. in C., Med., 1043/27, to Admty.) See also C. in C., E.I., 1440Z/27.

YORK.

Your 1822/26. Turrets are out of action through lack of power. One could be worked in local control by retaining ILEX alongside to supply but intend (? all available) destroyers to be ready for sea at immediate notice. (YORK 1051/27, to C. in C., Med.)

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War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean (Contd.)

OGADEN
(Italian)

Due to leave Naples (Napoli) for Libya on 26/3. Cargo probably aviation spirit in drums.
(Comdr. S.I., 1107/27, to RORQUAL, URSULA).

LE TRIOMPHANT)
LEOPARD)

Suggested employment.
(Head of M., 1122/27 to C. in C., Med.)
(See Med. Vol.).

Distinguishing marks.

1045/18/1. As from 0001 G.M.T./28, H.M. Ships at sea are to display a white square of canvas with two red bars fore and aft. B.N.A. Athens please inform me if Greek Ships will conform.
(C. in C., Med., 1135/27.)

Malta Report.

Up to 1600 hours 27/3.
Enemy kept a standing fighter screen of 2 and sometimes 3 formations of 3 to 6 aircraft mostly 10 to 20 miles east of Malta, but at times covering north and south Approaches, from dawn to 1615 hrs. Tactics probably to intercept reconnaissance aircraft from Malta.
(H.Q. R.A.F., Malta, no T.O.O./27.)

1st B.S.,
FORMIDABLE
to proceed
to Westward.

My 1814/26. I have now decided to take 1st B.S. and FORMIDABLE to sea after dark tonight to proceed Westward south of Crete. Force C will accordingly not be sent to join you, being required to screen battle fleet. Convoy A.G.9 will only be turned back sufficiently to be to Eastwards of battle fleet at dawn and will then resume passage. If no developments have taken place R.V. with me in 034° 10'N., 023° 50'E. at 1700/28.
(C. in C., Med., 1219/27, to V.A.L.F.)

Appreciation and Dispositions.

(start of Matapan action)

It is suspected that the enemy intend a surface raid into Aegean against our convoys and it is certain that intensive air operations North and South of Crete are intended 28th. Following dispositions are therefore being made:
(a) Force B, 7 C.S., GLOUCESTER, ILEX, HASTY, HERWARD, VENDETTA after fuelling at Suda Bay p.m./27 to be in position 034° 24'N. 024° 10' East at 0630/28.
(b) Force A, 1st B.S., FORMIDABLE, and available destroyers (? leave) Alexandria 1900/27 and proceed Westward on course about 300°.

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War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Appreciation
and
Dispositions
(contd.).
(Start of
Matapan action)

- (c) Force D, JUNO, JAGUAR, DEFENDER at short notice in Piraeus a.m./28.
- (d) Convoy A.G.9 being turned back along track to get to Eastward of battle fleet at dawn/28 and will then resume previous route.
- (e) F.A.A. Maleme standing by with fighter and Swordfish armed with torpedoes.
- (f) R.A.F. R/C of Italians ports and of area Q R S to Greek coast arranged today. R/C for tomorrow. One aircraft on line R X X 200 miles from Agria Grabusa. One aircraft in section A.A.W. between 270° from Agria Grabus and W. coast of Greece. One aircraft in West Aegean west of 024° 20'E. One aircraft in South Aegean West of 026° 40' E. commencing from Kaso.
- (g) F.A.A. reconnaissance from Maleme as ordered by R.A.(A), Mediterranean. F.A.A. from FORMIDABLE will search to N.E. at dawn to maximum depth.
- (h) R.A.F. bombers and Blenheim fighters may operate in Aegean.
- (k) Submarines. ROVER to patrol off Suda Bay from dawn/28. TRIUMPH S.W. of Milo from dawn/28.
- (l) Greeks have been requested to clear South Aegean of ships and (? convoys). Greek destroyers warned to be at short notice.
- (m) CARLISLE at Suda Bay to augment A/A. defence.
- (n) K. Patrol and other local patrols withdrawn within gun defences of Suda Bay.
- (o) Sailing of G.A.8 postponed.
- (p) 3 enemy cruisers and 1 destroyer sighted at 1220 in 036° 30'N. 016° 40' E course 120°.
- (q) Detached units should not seek action with unreasonable superior force by day, but maintain touch.
- (r) If situation does not develop forces A and B R.V. 1700/28 in 034° 10'N., 023° 50'E.
- (C. in C., Med., 1423/27, to Med Fleet.)

Enemy
sightings.

CALCUTTA.

Leaves Suda Bay at 0130/28 passing anti Kithera Channel at 0500/28.
(Capt. S.l., 1627/27, to ROVER).

/ Escort of

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Thursday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean (Contd.)

Escort of
Malta
Hurricanes.

Your A.493/25/3. Admiralty are unable to provide second escorting A/C for each formation. Although Sunderland has some advantage over land A/C for escort purposes it is left to you to decide whether Sunderlands or land planes are detailed as second escorting A/C. Hurricanes themselves would provide NM fighter defence for escorting A/C. (Air Ministry, 1630/27, to H.Q. R.A.F., M.E.)

REGENT.

Leave patrol by same route as when Northbound so as to cross lat. 040° 00' not later than 0400/2 and arrive at Malta dawn/5 (route). Greek forces in the Adriatic will keep clear from 1800/31 to 0600/2. (Capt.S.1., 1721/27, to REGENT)

Two ships
torpedoed
by
PARTHIAN.

PARTHIAN attacked an escorted convoy East of Cape Dell'Armi at 1150/16. 3 torpedoes fired at 6000 tons merchant ship and 3 at 10,000 tons tanker. Result unobserved owing to counter attack but 2 explosions heard probably hits on merchant ship followed later by another explosion thought to be hit on Tanker. Consider 2 ships were hit. On 19/3, TRUANT entered anchorage of Burat el Hsun at night to attack small tanker observed during day. Torpedoes fired at 400 yards missed under as tanker had unloaded. One appears to have hit lighter or pier. (C. in C., Med., 1735/27.)

Enemy Forces.
Orders to
ROVER,
TRIUMPH.

My 0027/?27. Enemy forces are reported to be approaching Aegean from West. Total strength unknown but three cruisers reported at 1220 in 036° 00', 016° 30' course 120° speed 15. At daylight 28/3 all British and allied warships and merchantships will be clear of Aegean but may re-enter later. Heavy air activity is to be expected. Ref. operation B.S., para. 19, bring into force condition A. (Capt.S.1., 1739/27, to ROVER, TRIUMPH.)

/ PERICLES

27.3.41
Thursday

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean (Contd.)

PERICLES
(torpedoed
26/1).

There were no casualties.
(S.B.N.O., Suda Bay, 1835/27).

Prisoners
captured at
Suda Bay.

Admty.
0842/27 to C. in C., Med. all prisoners
are Italian. Names and ranks. All are
uninjured.
(S.B.N.O., Suda Bay, 1845/27.)

Human
torpedoes.

Description (S.B.N.O., Suda Bay 1855/27).

Illuminating
A/C.
Minelayers,
Suez Canal.

R.A.F., M.E. report experiments to
illuminate enemy Minelayers with ground
flares most successful. Details.
Report emphasises necessity for early trial
of floodlight installation at Harwich.
Also suggest that Middle East scheme be
tried out in Thames Estuary and Humber.
Request your views.
(Air Ministry, 1920/27 to Fighter Command)

Convoy
S.U.4.

Your 0522Z/27. Request sailing of S.U.4
may be postponed until 3/4. Request
route and R/V.
(S.B.N.O., Suez Canal, 1929/27 to
C. in C., E.I.) Concur (C. in C., E.I.,
1052Z/29).

Suez Canal.
Anti-Mining.

Request report of progress being made in
anti-mining operations in the Suez Canal
with special reference to:- (a) Lookout
organisation. (b) Problems of locating
mines, diving trawling and counter-mining.
(c) Number of sweepers of various types
available in the canal.
(D.M.S. 1945/27 to S.B.N.O., Suez Canal).

Libya Convoy
Report.

Following received from secret source
graded C.O. Convoy of six ships
transporting German troops and tanks due
to leave Salerno near Naples for Libya
27/3 or 28/3.
(D.N.I., 2012/27, to C. in C., Med.,
C.O.I.S., Alexandria) See also 2350/27.

/ Italian Plans.....

27.3.1941
Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean (Contd.)

Italian
Plans.

A.T. 1510/27 and 1007/26. As Italians seem interested in whereabouts of Force H., they may be contemplating a bombardment of Malta as a revenge for Genoa.

(1st S.L., 2020/27, to V.A.(M)).

My 2020/27. Another possibility is a reinforcement of Dodecanese by troops, air personnel and supplies.

(1st S.L., 2132/27, to C. in C., Med.)

AUCKLAND,
FLAMINGO,
ISIS,
ENCOUNTER.

C. in C., Med.'s 1043/27 and C. in C., E.I.'s 1414/27. Suggested that AUCKLAND and FLAMINGO should be transferred to Med.

Fleet and that ISIS and ENCOUNTER should relieve them temporarily in Red Sea Force, their passage northward being accelerated as much as possible. If C. in C. Med.

agrees then C. in C., E.I. should release AUCKLAND and FLAMINGO as soon as possible. Would it be possible to assist

C. in C. E.I. to meet present threat to Suez by the temporary loan of one or more gunboats from the Mediterranean?

(1st S.L., 2033/27 to C. in C., Med., C. in C., E.I.). *See next page*

UTMOST.
Operation
"Purge".

Proceed with despatch to Area K 035° 20', 011° 10' - 000 - 30 - 281.

6 transports carrying German units expected to leave Salerno 27/3 or 28/3.

Possibility operation 'PURGE' at Malta, remain on patrol until recalled.

(Comdr. S.L., 2350/27 to UTMOST).

27.3.1941.
Thursday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

East Indies.

→ HERMES,
ENTERPRISE.

Colombo arrival 27/3 0355Z, Force T consisting of HERMES, ENTERPRISE. (S.O.I., Colombo, 0404Z/27 to Admty.)

U.S.10.

Ships available for on carriage. (S.S.T.O., India (Bombay) to D. of S.T., 0745Z/27).

Orders for
ISIS and
ENCOUNTER.

On arrival at Mombasa 29/3 ISIS and ENCOUNTER are to be sailed for Aden as soon as practicable. Report onward programme repeated to all addressees. Route (a) 002°N. 048°. (b) 011°, 052° 40' (c) 012° 45', 051° 15'. (C. in C. E.I. 1106Z/27).

→ Force T.

HERMES and ENTERPRISE are to leave Colombo at 0400Z/28 and proceed Mahe, Seychelles, via Lardive Channel adjusting speed of advance to arrive A.M./2. (C. in C. E.I., 1110Z/27 to Force T.)

AUCKLAND,
FLAMINGO.

C. in C., Med. 1043/27. I would be glad help C. in C. Med. as suggested provided two ships are exchanged for destroyers. The principal threat in Red Sea is now from at least six Italian destroyers which it is expected will be driven to act more offensively than hitherto. Red Sea Force contains insufficient suitable ships to guard all commitments against possible scale of attack. My 1738/19 refers. AUCKLAND and FLAMINGO are next best ships after destroyers. (C. in C., E.I. 1440Z/27 to Admty.)

FORT
LAMY.

NT in W.D.
Your 1911/26 FORT LAMY sailed 24/3 for Mauritius reported Vesca number 010. (N.O.I.C. Aden 1500Z/27.)

VILLE DE
VERDUN.

Your 1236Z/22. Re interception of VILLE De VERDUN. Nothing seen of French Ship VILLE DE VERDUN. (LEANDER 1501Z/27 to C. in C., E.I.)

/ NIEUW HOLLAND.....

27.3. 1941.
Thursday

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS

East Indies (Contd.)

NIEUW HOLLAND.

N.T. in W.D.
My 0602/26 and N.O.i/c. Simonstown's 1626/27. NIEUW HOLLAND is being diverted to Mombasa and may be expected to arrive p.m./28 or a.m./29. Request embarkation of troops may be expedited and ship sailed as soon as possible for Durban after disembarkation at Mogadiscio.

(C. in C. E.I., 1846Z/27 to S.O. Force W)

Troop
Transports.

Ref. A.C.N.B's 0538/1, my 2341/3, C. in C., E.I's 1500/9 and C. in C. Med's 1040/18. It is approved for QUEEN ELIZABETH, QUEEN MARY, ILE DE FRANCE and MAURETANIA and AQUITANIA to proceed to Suez. Further instructions will be given concerning NIEUW AMSTERDAM also as to disposal of ships earmarked for on-carriage of troops ex U.S. 10 from Ceylon. To provide adequate protection C. in C. E.I. may adjust date of leaving as necessary.

(V.C.N.S., 2202/27 to C. in C.s. E.I., Med.)

1001z/27th March.

SECRET.

MESSAGE.

878.A

From. C. in C. China.

IN
Date: 28 3.41
Recd: 0423

Interdepartmental Cypher 9. By W/T.

RECIRCULATION & CORRECTION.

Addressed. Admiralty. Repeated. C. in C. Far East. Consul General
Saigon, British Minister Bangkok, British Ambassador
Tokyo 778, Gov. Straits Settlements, Plenipotentiary, Burma.

345. Following information given in course of
conversation by M. Alcan of Messrs. Anglo - French and
Bendixsens who has just returned from Saigon and visited
me at suggestion of French Consul General is transmitted
for what it is worth.

- (1) Infiltration of Japanese into Thailand mainly by
Civil Air Service via Indo China continues. Now
estimated about 1200 in Bangkok believed to be mainly
military Officers in plain clothes, business men
and Minor Administration Officials. Institution of
daily air service may increase flow considerably.
This latter proposal has been referred to Vichy.
- (2) In personal opinion of General Mordaunt, Japanese
attack on Burma is now more likely than attack on
Malaya. Japanese are said to be very interested
in developing aerodrome between Dien Baen Phu
in Tongking which would, for geographical and
meteorological reasons, be a much more effective
base for attack on Rangoon than Hanoi.
- (3) Rubber exports from Indo China to Japan are to be
paid for in gold dollars. At least this is
ostensible intention of agreement. There is
said to be now in Indo China gold dollar credit of
dollars 3 million. A surplus of gold dollars
credit in that country might be a possibility if
payments are actually made.
- (4) All Thailand rubber exports, estimated at 40000 tons
per annum, are now going to Dairen in Japanese Bottoms.
- (5) Japanese have not yet made any specific demands on either
country as price of mediation, but are expected to do
so as soon as details of settlements have been worked
out and agreement signed. French are trying to spin
out negotiations as long as possible and most of them
still believe Japanese will make economic demands
only on Indo China but will demand bases and military
facilities in Thailand.

1001z/27.

1st Lord.	C.S.O. to 1st S.L.	D.N.I. (4)	Advance Copy D.N.I.
1st S.L.	P.A.S. (S)	O.I.C. (2)	W.D.
V.C.N.S.	D. of P (2)	D.S.D.9.	I.P. (3)
A.C.N.S. (T)	Ops. (4)	M. (6)	D.N.A.D.
A.C.N.S. (F)	O.D. (5)	D.E.W.D. (3)	

War Diary.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

ELSA ESSBERGER,
ERMLAND. (German)
One Italian M.V.

Kobe Arrival 25/3 E. ESSBERGER. Present 26/3 a newly painted ship possibly ERMLAND. Present 26/3 an additional Italian Ship about 2500 tons slender yellow funnel not yet identified. (C.O.I.S. Singapore, 0711Z/27).

FALCON.
evacuation from
Chungking.

Asking for his co-operation evacuating officers and men of FALCON from Chungking to Rangoon via Burma Road. Details. (C.in C. China, 0835Z/27, to Govr., Burma).

Japanese
intentions etc.

C.in C. China, 1001Z/27 see Lion copy.

America and West Indies.

U.S. Refitting
Yards.

Armuk 26, 26/3. My Armuk 13 and 19. (Refit of MALAYA)
Navy Yards selected are as follows - DELHI, New York, RESOLUTION, Philadelphia. MALAYA, New York. ILLUSTRIOUS, Norfolk. FURIOUS, Norfolk. LIVERPOOL, Mare Island, Any material for the ships should be despatched to their respective yards. Your 0045/18, request DELHI be informed as well as other ships named. President has instructed Navy Department that the fact that these ships are to be taken in hand in Navy Yards is to be kept Most Secret until he has made public announcement of the fact himself. T.O.O. 1515/26. (A.R.M., Washington, 0305/27, to Admty.).

QUEEN ELIZABETH)
RODNEY)
REVENGE)

To arrive Halifax. (1st S.L., 1031/27 amended 0048/28). See HOME COMMANDS, Movements.

Germans in
MAGALLANES

Following from reliable source. Spanish MAGALLANES sailed 26/3 from New York for Lisbon with 181 Germans including 34 men. Helen Zimmerman believed carrying official documents. 21 Roumanian seamen also on board. (N.A. Washington, 1050/27, to Admty.).

War Diary.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

MALOJA

Your 1257/26. MALOJA delayed by defective feed pump and will not be able to sail before 0800 Q/1/4. Ship will arrive off Partridge Island at 1300 Q/3/4 unless otherwise desired.
(C.in C. A.W.I. 1221/27 to R.A. 3 B.S.).

U.S. Bases Agreement.

Anglo United States Bases Agreement will be signed 1530 today. Governor Bermuda has text of General Agreement and all amendments. Governor of each Territory has lease and special provisions applicable to his territory. Your 1301/20 is under consideration.
(Head of M. 1409/27 to C.in C. A.W.I.).

Fuelling H.M. Ships in U.S.A.

B.N.A. Washington 1459/27 see Lion Copy.

T.C.10.

In order to allow time for loading of GEORGIC sailing of T.C. 10 should be adjusted to (date) (A.C.N.S.(H) 1715/27 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, etc.).

Explosion under HOPETARN

N.S.H.Q. Ottawa 1723/27 see Home Commands (Mining).

"Q" Report. WINKLEIGH

2205 G.M.T. following intercepted 600 metres QQ QQ 045° 47' N. 047° 12' W. S.S. WINKLEIGH suspicious 2200/27. Weak signals and interference, no bearing possible. (C.O.A.C., Halifax, 1807/27, to Admty.). Following received from CAMPERDOWN, begins: 2253 G.M.T. following intercepted from s.s. WINKLEIGH. Cancel my QQQQ 2200/27 Ends. (C.O.A.C. Halifax, 1957/27, to Admty.).

MOORBY's report ? raider.

British MOORBY reported to Cape Race that at 2100 G.M.T/26 in 45.35 N. 44.26 W. she sighted a volume of black smoke on horizon possibly vessel on fire also second vessel in close proximity heading away Eastward apparently at high speed. Vessels too distant for description to be obtained.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1811/27).

/ Enemy Unit.

War Diary.

27.3.1941.
Thursday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

Enemy Unit.

By D/F at 1214/27 G.M.T. position of unknown enemy unit was within 200 miles of 53° 00' N: 30° 00' W.
(D.D.I.C. 1909/27, to C.in C. H.F., C.in C. A.W.I., etc.).

Newfoundland Bases.

To enable battleships to proceed further to the Eastward with their convoys it is considered that certain anchorages in Newfoundland might be used as fuelling bases. Requested you will give consideration to this matter and signal proposals.
(A.C.N.S. (H) 1947/27 to R.A. 3 B.S.)

Bofors Guns in M.V's

40 mm. Bofors A/A guns are being mounted in a number of British vessels now sailing independently or in OB Convoys. A military guns crew is embarked with each gun. As only a limited number of guns are available it is desired as far as possible to keep them mounted in vessels in North Atlantic. Under consideration to fit them in vessels proceeding through Panama Canal, the vessels being ordered in to Bermuda to hoist out gun and disembark crew which would subsequently require embarking and the gun mounted in homeward bound vessels. A small amount of stiffening is required but guns can be mounted on existing H.A. gun stiffening if no H.A. gun is already mounted. Priority would be given to vessels without H.A. guns. Report whether this can be arranged.
(V.C.N.S. 2038/27, to Capt. i/c Bermuda).

Refit of LIVERPOOL.

ARMUK. 28. My ARMUK 26 timed 1515/26. Ref. ARMUK 13 timed 1315/20 and ARMUK 19 1415/15 should read 2221/24 and 0506/26 resp. LIVERPOOL should read Mare Island West Coast not repetition not Pearl Island and West Coast. T.O.O. 1330/28.
(B.A. R.M. Washington 2304/27).

Australia and New Zealand.

ALEXANDRE ANDRE

Belgian. Re crew trouble.
(D.S.T., 2223/27, to D.N.O. Queensland, R.A. Malaya).

War Diary.27. 3. 1941.
Thursday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships
Attacked.
MEMNON
(torpedoed
11/3.)2 survivors landed Dakar by KILISSI.
(N.A. Washington, 1105/27.). See South
Atlantic.ERODONA
(torpedoed
16/3.)Hope to arrive Reykjavik with ERODONA day-
light /30. Ship submerged from amidships
to aft estimate draught aft 60 ft. if stern
is still there which is doubtful. Believe
forward tank(s) still full of benzine.
THAMES has equipment for pumping in equal
water off main cook. Observed position 063°
03' N., 020° 10' W. (NOTE: 1915/26 refers)
(VISENDA, 1430/27 to F.O.I.C. Iceland.).S/M's
Reported.

0858.

By D/F at 0858/27 bearing of Italian U.
Boat from Gibraltar was 310° 3rd class.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1027/27 to N.A. Station.).
My 1027/27. Further bearings indicate
position of Italian U-Boat was between
046° and 047° N., and 012° and 013° W.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1611/27.).

0300/23.

S/M. reported off Svortulofr position 64°
52' N., 24° 03' W., at 0300 Z/23 Grade B 2.
(N.O.I.C. Iceland 1532/27, to Admty.).
Estimated U-boat dispositions. Still un-
reliable. (D.D.I.C. 1406/27).

28.3.1941.
Friday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Home Commands

Watch for
SCHARNHORST
and GNEISENAU

HOOD sailed from Scapa this morning to R/V with NIGERIA and FIJI from the Clyde, to take over the Bay of Biscay Patrol from Force H.

The SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were located in Brest this evening by air R/C; one of them is in dry dock.

Convoys
H.X. 114
and S.C. 25.

These convoys are approximately 2 days late.

British Air Activity

A Hudson patrolled 60 miles west of Brest last night, to intercept shipping entering or leaving.

2 aircraft of Bomber Command and 5 of Coastal Command attacked Brest last night.

War Diary

28.3.1941.
Friday

SITUATION REPORT

Enemy Air Activity

STAFFORDSHIRE was bombed and set on fire in the N.W. Approaches this morning, but is proceeding at 10 knots.

SS ANTWERPEN (Dutch ³⁶⁴254 tons) was sunk off Bull Point (Bristol Channel) this afternoon.

Trawler KESTREL was bombed and damaged this afternoon off Lundy.

Norwegian SS SVINT was attacked 3 times between 1445 and 1700, near the Longships, but had only one casualty. Dutch M.V. DRITTURA reported being machine-gunned at 1600 off Lands End but had no casualties.

Mining

Milford Haven was closed at 0204 and was opened under local restrictions at 1245.

War Diary

28.3.1941.
Friday

SITUATION REPORT

Mediterranean

Attack on
Lecce

In connection with the Fleet operations R.A.F. made an attack at dawn on Lecce Aerodrome (Apulia) and claim to have destroyed one or two aircraft and damaged 20 others.

Matasan

Note For the Action between the British and Italian Fleets see 29/3.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

U-Boats
off Iceland.

I attach great importance to the hunt both by air and surface craft of any U-Boats reported off South and West coast of Iceland. (C.in C. H.F. 1124/28).
If possible I would like 2 or even one destroyers available Reykjavik to operate on any U/Boat reports in the vicinity. (C.in C. H.F. 1126/28 to R.A.D. H.F.).

20th
D.F.

It has been decided to keep 20th D.F. in the South for the present. (V.C.N.S. 1323/28).

HIGHLANDER

On arrival Gibraltar you are to join Flag of C.in C. S.A. temporarily till relieved by BRILLIANT late in April. (C.in C. W.A. 1656/27 to HIGHLANDER)

Identification
Marks of
H.M. Ships to
A/C.

Particulars.
(V.C.N.S. 1921/28 (A.M. 895.A)
See Operations Volume.

Defence of U.K.

Unified
Invasion
Orders.

Your 1924/26. Arrangements have been made for unified invasion orders to be produced by C.in C. Nore.
2. Commands concerned are each issuing an appendix to cover points of purely local significance. (D.O.D. H. 1344/28).

Movements.

HOOD.

My 1721/27 is cancelled. (C.in C. H.F.0914/28)

Iceland
Faeroes
Patrol.

NORFOLK's intentions.
(F.O.I.C. (?1st C.S. 1533Z/28).

Proposed 2
Destroyers
for Iceland.

28.3.1941. 887
Friday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Movements. (Contd.)

Proposed
2 Destroyers
for Iceland.

If circumstances permit detach two destroyers to Reykjavik. ARROW and ECLIPSE suitable if endurance permits.
(S.O. Destroyers 1556/28 to Capt. D.6.)
Situation 2000.
No destroyers have sufficient endurance to comply with your 1556/28 with any safety margin.
(Capt. D.6. 2043/28 to F.O.C. D.F. H.F.).

KING GEORGE V.

If it is necessary to proceed Reykjavik for fuel, aircraft and crew ex NORFOLK are to be transferred to NORFOLK.
(C.in C. H.F., 1710/28 to KING GEORGE V.).

Operations.

HOOD
NIGERIA
FIJI
for Bay
of Biscay
Patrol.

It has been decided that an operation in the Western Mediterranean requiring Force (H) is to be put into execution at the earliest possible date.
2. HOOD with 2 cruisers is required to relieve Force H on Bay of Biscay patrol. Instructions for this patrol were given in A.M. 2249/25.
3. C.in C. H.F. is requested to sail this force and inform Admiralty and F.O. Force H when it may be expected to arrive in lat. 50° N. At this time Force H should return to Gibraltar at best speed. (1st S.L. 0019/28).
Details and Orders. (C.in C. H.F. 0035/28)
(See Operations Volume)
C.in C. H.F. 0035/28. Intend to sail 0600/28 passing 000° Butt of Lewis 15 miles at 1300/28 as at present through following positions to reach lat. 050° N. at 1630/30.
NIGERIA and FIJI join me before dark 28/3 or in 056° 32' N. 015° 02' W. at 0900/29. Destroyer will be sent to Londonderry to refuel and rendezvous with HOOD for (?return) passage. Anticipate leaving area of operation (date). April arriving Scapa (date). All times B.S.T. (B.C.S. 1. 0417/28).
Scapa departure HOOD, ELECTRA, ESCAPADE, TARTAR. (A.C.S. 0700/28).

/ Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

<u>SOKOL, SUNFISH.</u>	)	Movements and Orders.
<u>UNION, UNBEATEN.</u>	)	(F.O.S. 0031/28, 1416/28)
<u>SEALION, H.44.</u>	)	(N.O.I.C. Falmouth 2007/28).

Disposition and Strength of Patrol.

Details.
(F.O.S. 1246/28, 1606/28)
See Operations Volume.

East Coast Anti E-Boat Patrol.

Weather permitting tonight Friday 3 M Ls are to carry out patrol 5 miles either side of 55 buoy in direction 020/200 degrees. Patrol to be taken up at dark and maintained until daylight. It is important that M Ls should not get to Westward of patrol line. (C.in C. Nore 0957/28)

Tonight provide cover for F.N.45 to vicinity Newarp L.F., then return to Patrol KXM (C.in C. Nore 1021/28 to D.16, WHITSHEDE.) No A/P vessel at No.5 or between No.5 and Hearty Knoll tonight. (C.in C. Nore, 1101/28 to PYTCHLEY, etc.).

Operation QE.

During next moonlight period starting about 3/4 motor gunboat will be operated with an A/S trawler to intercept E boats. Trawler will be stationed as ordered by C.in C. Nore according to information available concerning enemy line of approach motor gunboat to make fast astern of trawler until enemy is detected. Request you will detail one A/S trawler for this duty as it is considered desirable that same trawler should be employed throughout. If necessary (?harbour) patrol may be discontinued when required. As position chosen for trawler and motor gunboat will probably be off Yarmouth it may be expedient to base trawler there while this operation is in force. This operation will be known as Q E. (C.in C. Nore 1246/28).

Jan Mayen.

HONNINGSCVAAG left Jan Mayen for Reykjavik 1900/27. VESLECKARI remaining. W/T communication between Jan Mayen and Reykjavik not yet established. (F.O. Iceland 1412/28).

Western
Channel
M.G.B.
Patrol.

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations. (Contd.)

Western
Channel
M.G.B.
Patrol.

M.G. Bs 43, 44, and 48 are to call Plymouth for Radars and will patrol lat. 49° 40' N. between 04° W. and 04° 50' W. from 2000/28 till necessary to leave to enter Fowey at 0700/29. (C.in C. Plymouth 1749/28).

British Air Activity.

Patrols and
Escorts.

Following Patrols and Searches in operation today Patrol ~~U N S F~~. Escort EMPIRE MERMAID. MOSDALE. AKAROA.
(C.in C. Rosyth 0730/28).
Patrols ~~SIN~~ and ~~TROOP~~ and being flown p.m. today.
(C.in C. Rosyth 1406/28).

Own A/C
fired on
by Trawler.

X 434. 28/3. Request you investigate and report on following incident. Report received that Blenheim L.9389 fired on by trawler off Yarmouth at about 1430/24. Aircraft subsequently reported missing.
(Air Ministry F.O.6. 1715/28).

Albino
Units.

X.442 28.3.41. My X.633 dated 13/3. Prohibition on use of present Albino units is cancelled in order to enable Prime Minister's directions regarding experiments at Liverpool to be implemented.
(Air Ministry 1730/28).
Night 26/27. No operations were carried out owing to unfavourable weather.
Day 27/3. 8 Blenheims successfully completed sweep during which one attacked a naval formation of one submarine, 20 E. Boats, 3 probable Destroyers, a Naval Tender and one Motor Launch at 51° 47' N. 3° 18' E.
Results not observed.
(H.Q.B.C. 1744/28).

War Diary.

28.3.1945 ⁸⁹⁰
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

FARADAY.

In view of A.M. 1306/25 request report why FARADAY was sailed from Falmouth without waiting for a proper A/A escort. (1st S.L. 0241/28 to C.in C. Plymouth). Your 0241/28. Report on loss of FARADAY has already been communicated in my 1409/27. The following are additional remarks. (C.in C. Plymouth 1337/28).

MEG MERRILEES.
(Bombed 27/3)

My 2246/27. MEG MERRILEES was abandoned 3½ miles N.N.W. of St. Govans light, owing to parting of tow. Search being made to ascertain if vessel is still afloat. If so tug will be sent to tow her in as soon as port is open. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 0253/28). My 0253/28. Vicinity of position has been searched. Nothing found except small boat. MEG MERRILIES presumed sunk. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 0945/28).

EMPIRE MERMAID
(bombed 26/3).

EMPIRE MERMAID reported taking to boats 0653 G.M.T. (BRIGAND 0315/28). If fuel permits proceed to assist BRIGAND searching for EMPIRE MERMAID. If nothing found by dark abandon search and escort Fleet Tug BRIGAND back to base. (C.in C. W.A. 0756/28 to ACHATES, BOREAS). EMPIRE MERMAID sighted 1400. Sank 1445 057° 33' N. 012° 43' W. No crew on board. Am proceeding to boats. (ACHATES 1455/28). My 1455. One boat picked up. Others not in company since abandoning ship 0800/27. Request air co-operation. (ACHATES 1605/28). My 1453. Both boats accounted for. 19 of crew saved. Am returning to Clyde, BOREAS in Company. (ACHATES 1920/28).

BARONSCOURT
(British,
869 tons)
Bombed 27/3.

Add to my 2246/27. BARONSCOURT attacked by 4 A/C at 2029/27 and badly damaged 2 of them. Vessel is proceeding on passage although slightly damaged herself. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 0401/28). Master of BARONSCOURT reports being attacked by 4 twin engined aircraft when 5 miles N.W. of Saint Govans between 2015 and 2045 on the 27th. 7 bombs and 1 aerial torpedo dropped close to vessel. No casualties caused and only splinters and bullet damage to vessel. BARONSCOURT proceeding to Newport. (N.O.I.C. Barry, 0913/28).

28.3.1941.
Friday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

Shetlands.

One Enemy Aircraft 45 miles N. of Unst
Course SW. (Lyness 0931/28).
My 0931. 75 miles NW Unst Course West.
200 M.P.H. (Lyness 0956/28).

Convoy
F.S. Odd.

Fighters have been despatched to convoy ~~BOOPY~~ ^{"Booty"}.
(Nore W/T 1028/28).

STAFFORDSHIRE

(British, 10,683 tons) Bombed in 60° N.
10° 36' W. Main transmitter out of action
1030 G.M.T. (Lyness W/T 1041/28).
Position 59° 30' N. 10° 18' W. Ship ablaze.
(Lyness W/T 1225/28.)
One Whitley from 18 Group is being sent to
escort. (C.in C. Rosyth 1336/28).
Detach one Destroyer forthwith to assist.
(C.in C. W.A. 1337/28 to WANDERER).
A/C reports STAFFORDSHIRE bombed and on fire.
Part of crew still on board in 59° 30' N.
10° 18' W. at 1225. WANDERER expects reach
this position at 1730. Request ZWARTE ZEE
may be sailed to assist.
(C.in C. W.A. 1457/28 to F.O.I.C. Greenock).
Request you sail ZWARTE ZEE with all despatch
to assist STAFFORDSHIRE.
WANDERER standing by. (F.O.I.C. Greenock
1505/28 to N.O.I.C. Stornoway).
Sighted STAFFORDSHIRE in 059° 43' N. 010° 38' W.
(WANDERER 1730/28).
Proceed forthwith to assist STAFFORDSHIRE.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1744/28 to BRIGAND).

Unknown Ship
attacked.

AAAA heard Automatic at 1518 G.M.T. strength
5 bearing from G L D 009° Gonio B bearing
from Burnham-on-Sea 315° strength 3.
(Portishead Radio: Recd. 1632/28).
Enemy aircraft reported one medium merchant
ship damaged 60 miles S.S.W. from Lands End
at 1525. (C.in C. Plymouth 1953/28 to
Capt. D.5)

AVONSIDE
FORT DEE
(Trawlers)
attacked.

Fishing Trawler AVONSIDE A.9 and FORT DEE A 34
on Passage Faeroes to Aberdeen arrived
Scrabster and reported having been attacked
by 2 E/A's, probably HE.111, with 8 bombs and
M/G Fire near 61° 31' N. 05° 04' W. at 1815/27.
Slight damage to Trawlers and 2 slight
casualties to crew of FORT DEE.
(A.C.O.S. 1801/28).

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)

→ ABDIEL

Help "Skipper".
(ABDIEL 2000/28).

KESTREL
(Trawler)
bombed.

R.N.O. APPLIEDORE reports Trawler KESTREL bombed and damaged N.E. from N. Lundy Light at 1418/28. One man died from wounds. She is unable to steam and is at present in Lundy Roads. (C.in C. Plymouth 2243/28).

SVINT.
(Norwegian,
1174 tons)
three times
attacked.
DRITTURA
(Dutch,
187 tons)

R.N.O. Penzance reports Norwegian vessel SVINT landed one rating wounded by machine gun fire from enemy Aircraft. Vessel was attacked north of Longships 10 miles at 1700/28. Was previously attacked at 1445/28 N.E. Longships 20 miles, and again at 1545/28. Position not given. Dutch vessel DRITTURA also reports being machine gunned off Lands End at 1600/28. No casualties.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth 2315/28).

Mining.

Operation
GY.

Haven
20th Destroyer Flotilla proceeding Milford / to load mines on completion G.Y. E.T.A. 1300/28. (C.in C. Plymouth 0023/28).
Operation GY Para. 5. ABDIEL would like passage southward made at 20 knots and to lay at 16 knots. Para. 6, for 0700/29 read 0730/29.
Para 7, for 0230/29 read 0330/29.
(C.in C. Plymouth 1153/28).
Sailed ABDIEL. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1438/28).
As you have taut wire measuring gear request you will navigate force. 5th D.F. takes station on you. (Capt. D.5. 1548/28 to ABDIEL).
Sailed KELLY, KELVIN, KASHMIR, JACKAL 1645. (C.in C. Plymouth 1745/28).

Milford Haven.

Port is closed owing to mine laying by enemy aircraft. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 0204/28).
Port is open under local restrictions. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1245/28).

War Diary.28.3.1941.
Friday.HOME COMMANDS.Mining. (Contd.)Z.M.E. 26.

Particulars. To be carried out on night 29/3 or as soon after as practicable. (V.C.N.S. 1112/28).

Bristol Channel.

At 1623/27 one Red Mine exploded by S.A. Gear 220° distant eight cables from English and Welsh Light Vessel. (Capt. M/S Bristol Channel 1115/28).

Dartmouth Minefield.

Dartmouth Minefield is now laid and in operation. (N.O.I.C. Dartmouth 1202/28).

Operation P.W.6.

Operation P.W.6 will be carried out tonight, ships sailing 1900. (C.in C. Nore 1228/28). Departures M.T.B's 22. 30 and 34 at 1905. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 1907/28).

P.W.7.

Intended position of lay (C.in C. Nore 1234/28) See Operations Volume.

Operation G.Z.

Arrived 20th D.F. less EXPRESS. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1348/28) Particulars. (C.in C. Plymouth 1403/28) See Operations Volume.

Channel Sweep.

On leaving area search on wide front from Needles Channel along 050° 40' N. into Poole Bay. (C.in C. Portsmouth 1519/28 to S.O. 9th M/S F.).

Enemy Intelligence.Enemy Units.

By D/F at 2314/27, approx. position of unknown enemy unit probable surface craft, was between 45° N. - 48° N. and 14° - 18° W. (D.D.I.C. 0030/28). At 0248/28 a D/F was obtained of an enemy surface unit probably a small vessel in the neighbourhood of Brest. (D.D.I.C. 0327/28).

/ North Sea
Movement.

War Diary28.3.1941.
FridayHOME COMMANDSEnemy Intelligence-Contd.North Sea
Movement

W/T Intelligence suggests a movement from westwards into the North Norwegian Area. (D.D.I.C., 1140/28)

E-Boats

Special intelligence indicates possibility of E-Boat attack North of 53° N., tonight. (C. in C., Nore, 1724/28)

SCHARNHORST
GNEISENAU

Two battle cruisers probably SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU+ now in Brest - one in torpedo nets at T.B. Station Rade Abri and other in Western dry dock Rade Abri - dock is wet but many Pontoon - like structures alongside battle cruisers. Boom is placed across entrance to dry dock and gates are closed. Preliminary examination shews no destroyers present. (P.R.U. St. Eval 1920/28 to H.Q.C.C., C. in C., Plymouth 1951/28 to D.5., ABDIEL) (D.D.I.C., 2103/28)

(See next page
lion copy)

SECRET

M E S S A G E

1859/28 March

OUT

To C. in C. Home Fleet. 761. Date 28/3/41 894A
F.O.C. North Atlantic. 413.
C. in C. South Atlantic. 126.
N.O.I.C. Simonstown. 430.
R.A.S.A.D. 962.
C. in C. America & West Indies. 891.
Australian Commonwealth Naval Board. 977
C. in C. China. 611.
N.S.H.Q. Ottawa. 525.
C. in C. East Indies. 527.
New Zealand Naval Board. 64.
N.A. Washington.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CYPHER

From Admiralty.

NOTE

My 1813/21.

North Atlantic. SCARNHORST and GNEISENAU sighted by aircraft at 2021/21 about 140 miles S.W. of Brest. A.B.3 report stated they entered Brest either with several prizes or prisoners from them. Impossible so far to confirm this by air reconnaissance. Probable that they attacked 15 ships March 15th and 16th. Apparently no armed merchant raider with them.

No news of HIPPER which left Brest night 15/16th March or of SCHEER. Latter may have returned to Germany.

RUDOLF ALBRECHT with cargo of gas oil, reported fitted as raider supply and prison ship left Teneriffe March 22nd.

*BRITANNIA attacked by armed merchant raider 700 miles W. of Freetown March 25th. This raider may have attacked Greek MARATHON overdue at Freetown.

South Atlantic. A.C.3 report dated March 25th states a German ship was lying disabled 400 miles S.W. of Ascension. Indian. It is possible that a unit is E. or N.E. of Seychelles.

Pacific. ANNALIESE ESSBERGER left Kobe 24th March not known if this connected with raiders.

* See p. 901

1859/28

for D.D.I.C. (Green Line 8)

1st Lord.
1st S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S.(H)
A.C.N.S.(F)
A.C.N.S.(T)
Naval Sec.
C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
Ops. (4)
O.D.(5)
D.N.I.(4)
D.T.D.(4)
D.T.D.(M)
O.I.C.(3)

D. of P.(3)
D.S.D.9.
D.A./S.W.
I.P.(3)
Rm. 52 Arch S.
W.D.
D.P.D.
M.(2)

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

A/C
Danger
Area.

Enemy aircraft are particularly active between Helwick and St. Davids Head. Every effort is to be made to ensure that ships proceed through this area in darkness. If proceeding to Milford Haven they should arrive at sunrise. (C.in C. W.A., 1142/28, to N.C.S.O's etc.).

H.X.114 and
S.C.25.

Approx. 2 days late. (C.in C. W.A. 1355/28).

Permanent
Code words.

Allotted to escorted groups of merchant vessels (C.in C. Plymouth 1923/28) See Summaries Folder.

War Diary.

28.3.1941.

Friday.CASUALTIES & DEFECTS.MELROSE ABBEYAshore off Rattray Head.
(Wick Radio 0351/28).

MELROSE ABBEY now inside bar 1 mile north of entrance to River Ythan. Weather conditions render operations impossible. 16 of crew landed by surf life boat from Newburgh. 26 crew are on board and consider they are safe. Tug ABEILLE IV returned to Aberdeen, and with ATTENTIF standing by to proceed if necessary when weather moderates.

(N.O.I.C. Aberdeen 1258/28).

Ship MELROSE ABBEY from convoy E.N. 92 is ashore near Ythan River 057° 18' N. 002° W.

Please send tug to her assistance.
(ULLSWATER 0730/28).HIBISCUS.*(Tilbury, repairs)*

My 1330/25. Requires deperming and thus necessitates programme being retarded by 24 hours. (F.O.I.C. London 1020/28).

FYLLA.(Grounded
17/3)Refloated 1030 and towed to Southampton.
(Salvage Officer, Southampton 1640/28).GURKHA.

(A) Collision with vessel unknown. Following damage. (R.A.D. 1818/28).

TWEEDBANK.(British, 5627 tons) Ex E.N.92. Arrived with extensive engine damage.
(N.C.S.O. Dundee 2045/28).ELIZABETH.Received 2015 from ELIZABETH. Steering trouble developed again. Have anchored same position. Require tugs to return Barry.
(Burnham Radio 2115/28).Received 2144 from ELIZABETH. Vessel dragging to two anchors out of searched Channel. Unable steer. Send tugs immediately.
(Burnham Radio: Recd. 2320/28).CAIRO

A further tube perforation in forward condenser, the eighth failure in six months, has been reported by CAIRO. (R.A.D. 2130/28).

MENDIP.Have been in collision with PICTON CASTLE. As far as can be ascertained both ships seaworthy. A/S trawler is in company. Am rejoining convoy. My position 054° 36' 06" N. 000° 38' 08" W.
(MENDIP 2145/28).GARTH.

No serious damage. Request tug be sent immediately. (GARTH 2325/28).

War Diary.Friday.
28.3.41.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic.REPULSE
escort.

Intend to sail FEARLESS (S.O.). FORTUNE FORESTER, FURY as requisite to pass through position 030° 40' N., 016° 20' W., at 0800 zone/31 steering 240° to R.V. with you during daylight as escort to Gibraltar. (F.O.C.N.A. 0058/28, to REPULSE.).

Operation
"Ration".

Cancel my 1910/20. Operation ^{"Ration"} "RATION" is to be carried out as soon as forces are available. All French ships intercepted without ship navicerts should be brought in and their cargo should be immediately reported. (Head of M. 0120/28 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Enemy
Unit.

D/F bearings at 2314/27 indicate, unknown enemy unit probably surface craft between 045° N., 048° N., and 014° W., 018° W. (F.O.C.N.A., 0240/28, to N.A. Stn.).

CITY OF
DIEPPE
raider.

QQQQ DE GCK 35 30 N., 6 53 West CITY OF DIEPPE suspicious. (Valencia Radio 0520/28.).

Spanish
ships
carrying
Germans.

My 1208/26 refers primarily to vessels trading between Spain and South America via Canary Is. and vice versa. (F.O.C.N.A. 1114/28. to N.A.S. Station.).

Relief of
VIDETTE.

Your 1839N/26. Owing to other commitments it is not anticipated that this exchange can be effected until mid April. Further signal will be made. (F.O.C.N.A. 1212/28, to C. in C.S.A.).

ATLANTA
GIANNA.M
(Italian.).

ATLANTA moored alongside tanker GIANNA.M yesterday, and returned to mooring buoy yesterday evening. Insistent rumour 3 Italian Steamships will leave shortly. (VRUH) No trace of these signal letters. Arrived today war material for Military Authorities also brought over from Teneriffe British Government interned seaplane. Spanish Ship CASTILLO BENISANO arrived with about 950 tons of Welsh coal from Cadiz for Spanish Naval Authority. (B.C. Las Palmas 1230/28.).

War Diary.

Friday.
28.3.41.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic Contd.

FAULKNOR.
FURY.
VELOX to
Screen
Force H,
into Gib.

A.M. 0019/28. Intend to sail FAULKNOR FURY, VELOX as requisite to pass through (positions) to rendezvous with you as escort to Gibraltar. (F.O.C.N.A.1238/28 to to S.O. Force H.).

→ FLEUR DE LYS.
COREOPSIS.

Remain in company with CAIRNDALE till further orders. (F.O.C.N.A. 1620/28.).

ASPHODEL
movements.

Your 1301/27. ASPHODEL can be ready to sail p.m./30. Requests she may remain an extra three days at Gibraltar in order to carry out a/s and gunnery practice. If approved propose to sail ASPHODEL as extra escort for H.G.58. parting company from convoy on 5/4 and proceeding thence to Freetown. (? F.O.C.N.A. 1630/28 to C. in C. S.A.).

A/C Rescued
by Spanish Ship.
CABO de BUENA ESPERANZA

My Tel. No. 15, T.O.O. 1100/25. aircraft was (carried) Las Palmas in Spanish War Transport CONTRAMAESTRE CASADO A.M./28. (Consul, Teneriffe, 1805/28, to N.A. Madrid)

(See Page 806 re
9-944 re arrival at
Madrid)

CONTE DI SAVOIA.
REX.

Fairly reliable information that CONTE DI SAVOIA and REX left Naples 27/3 with German troops for Tripoli routed along north coast of Sicily C.2. (N.A.Madrid 1921/28, S.O.(I) Gib. 2332/28.).

→ FLEUR DE LYS.
COREOPSIS.

Return to Gibraltar with CAIRNDALE. Follow same route as outward voyage. (F.O.C.N.A. 2136/28.). *Cancelled - See 29/3 - p 943*

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

Reinforcements.

For protection of convoys and A/S operations (1st. S.L., 0113/28 to C. in C. S.A.). See Operations Volume.

FRANCO MARTELLI.

(Italian tanker) applied for clearance on morning tide 28/3 for Rio de Janeiro. This was not granted, but it is possible ship may sail this afternoon. .
27/3 Italian plane, on pretence of testing engines, made extensive flight to seaward. (N.C.S.O. Permambuco 0855/28, S.O.(I) Monte Video 1418Z/28.). *see next page*

GRANICOS.

/N.T. in v.D.
Overdue shipping my 1108/28 Greek GRANICOS arrived Durban. (S.O.(I) Capetown 0932B/28.).

Inspection of Port Etienne by DELPHINIUM.

Your 0013/21. Anchorage at Port Etienne was inspected by DELPHINIUM on 24/3 from a distance 3 miles from coast. No submarines were seen. Medium size oil tanker was present looking as if most of her cargo had been discharged. It was not practicable to ascertain whether anything was alongside shoreward side of tanker. Signal station ordered stop on approach. DELPHINIUM signalled was seeking sheltered water to make good defects. Was inside about 2½ hours, do not think was fired on, no aircraft seen. W/T Station was heard later making long signal to Dakar Saint (corrupt group) movements of destroyers reported is result. (C. in C.S.A. 1049N/28.).

HIGHLANDER to join C. in C.S.A.

C. in C. W.A. 1556/27. (1656/27 Intended.). Request you will sail HIGHLANDER for Freetown as required suggest might accompany HIGHLAND MONARCH, NIZAM, and NAPIER. (C. in C. S.A. 1127Z/28 to F.O.C.N.A.).

/GUNNY.....

War Diary.

28.3.41.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic Contd.

GUNNY.

S.O.(I) Montevideo's 2139/21. Norwegian GUNNY arrived St. Thomas West Indies 23/3. (S.O(I) Freetown, 1604/28.).

DRESDEN.
→ FRANCO
MARTELLI
FRISCO.
BABITONGA.

DRESDEN has permission to leave Santos BABITONGA held temporarily owing to having too much oil. Italian FRANCO MARTELLI at Pernambuco applied for clearance papers to-day. Italian FRISCO at Ceara has received clearance papers for Oslo. Ships in all ports active but Chief of Naval Staff tells me crews of Italian Ships are refusing to put to sea. (N.A. Rio de Janeiro, 1715/28.).

** in previous page*

→ FRANCO
MARTELLI.

My 0855/28. Italian tanker has cleared for Oslo and is now, 1730/28, leaving harbour. (N.C.S.O. Pernambuco 1730/28, S.O.(I) Monte Video 2101Z/28.).

in previous page

DRAGON.
BULOLO.
S.L.70.

On completion exercises DRAGON is to act as escort to convoy SL70 until relieved by BULOLO about p.m./2 then return to Freetown. It is possible you may be required to remain longer. (C. in C.S.A., 1953/28, to DRAGON.).

NORDERNEY.

My 2154Z/26. Para reports German ship NORDERNEY left Quay and anchored in stream. (S.O.I) Monte Video, 2021Z/28.).

Falklands
Defences.

Your 2245/12. Following has been decided:- (D. of L.D. 2022/28 to C. in C. S.A.).

BIRMINGHAM.

Your 1137/25 and my 1423/22. BIRMINGHAM now arrives Freetown 1/4. Will sail P.M. same day and overtakes convoy 3/4 about 18⁰⁰ N. (C. in C. S.A., 2029/28, to Admty.).

/Refits.....

901

War Diary.

Friday.
28.3.41.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic Contd.

Refits
in U.S.A.

Facilities are now available for three A.M.C's to be taken in hand for refit in U.S.A. Adty's 0104/28, has approved the refitting of CANTON in U.S.A. Administrative Authorities are requested to report the names of any other A.M.C's requiring refit at an early date. (D.O.D.(F) 2059/28, to C. in C. S.A., C. in C.E.I., R.A., 3 B.S.). Reply from C. in C. E.I., 1806Z/31, None.

Suspicious
Portuguese
Tanker, 17/3.

A.G.M.857A of 19/3. BULOLO 2112/17/3, is being passed to you. Request whether Portuguese GORGULHA was on voyage reported and whether any further information can be obtained. BULOLO's signal indicates vessel as small tanker. Lloyds Register of Shipping indicates general raider with appearance of tanker. (C. in C. S.A. 2141/28 to F.O.C.N.A.)

DOMINE
(Spanish).

Left Fernando Po 23/3 for Las Palmas. One German woman on board. Chief steward or passenger Soulol may have German Consul's mail. If encountered ship is to be boarded and German Consul's mail removed, result of search being reported to Adty., and C. in C. S.A. by signal without breaking W/T silence. DOMINE is not repetition not to be diverted for search. (C. in C. S.A. 2238/28 to S.A. Station.).

BRITANNIA
survivors.

Following is a repetition of my 2027/28. (Originally recd. corrupt.). CILICIA reports has 63 BRITANNIA survivors on board ex Spanish Ship BACHI.* Raider reported similar to PIONEER but has (?tier) form bow and straight stern and funnel nearer bridge. CILICIA expects to arrive Freetown 0700/30. (Ends.). (C. in C. S.A., 2357N/28 to Admty.).

See p. 894^A

* possibly MEIER form? Bz 14/8/77

MOST SECRET

28.3.1941.

Friday

902

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

(MATAPAN)

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets

3 Cruisers
3 Destroyers
sighted
(Southern force)

Following has been read.

My 0802. Three cruisers unknown number destroyers bearing 010° 13 miles $127^{\circ} 34' 15''$ N., $24^{\circ} 7'$ E. (ORION 0821/28)

My 0812. Class of enemy ships indicated 2- 8 inch cruisers, 2- 6 inch cruisers, three destroyers. (ORION, 0824/28)

My course and speed 160° 16 knots. (ORION, 0832/28)

My 0824. Three cruisers three destroyers bearing 034° distance 16 miles, course 160° position $132^{\circ} 34'$ N., 24° E., 23. (ORION, 0837/28)

Enemy
Alters course
for home.

My 0824, enemy has turned to port: my position $141^{\circ} 34'$ N., 24° E., 33 (ORION, 0859/28)

My 0859. Enemy's course 300. (ORION, 0903/28)

My 0859. Three Cruisers, Three Destroyers bearing 322° distance 14 miles, Course 265, enemy speed 28 knots, position $128^{\circ} 34'$ N., 24° E., $33' 33''$. (ORION, 0936?/28)

Blenheims
to search.

X. 7844 A.773 28/3. 6 Blenheims carrying out armed search from centre $35^{\circ} 04'$ N. $22^{\circ} 20'$ E., at 1330 hours local time. (H.Q.B.A.F., Greece 1015/28)

ORION further
sports.

My 0936. 3 Cruisers 3 Destroyers bearing 304° distance 18 miles, course 320° My position $158^{\circ} 34'$ N., 24° E., 4 based on detached unit at 1000 (ORION 1029/28) One unknown vessel bearing 002° distance 16 miles course unknown, my position $281^{\circ} 34'$ N., 24° E., 10 based on a detached unit at 1000 (ORION 1058/28)

Battleships
reported.

2 Battleships. My position $281^{\circ} 34'$ - 24° E., 10 based on a detached unit at 1000 (ORION, 1059/28) Position of Enemy Cruisers and destroyers 34.05 N., 23.45 E. (Mediterranean A/C, 1111/28)

VENDETTA
Breaks down

Engine trouble my position is $164^{\circ} 34'$ $26'$ N., $25^{\circ} 7'$ E., course 310° , speed 24. Request instructions, (VENDETTA, 1130/28, to C. in C., Med.)

/5 Cruisers.....

MOST SECRETWar Diary28.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanEngagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (Japan.)5 Cruisers
3 Destroyers
sighted.
(Northern force)P,C and S of 5 enemy Cruisers 3 Enemy
Destroyers 34° 55' N., 23° 24' E., Course
280° speed 25 knots. (Mediterranean A/C
1135/28)P,C. and S of enemy (2 BS 3 CR 3 DR) 290°
25 knots. Correct my 1133 to 2 Battle-
ships 3 cruisers 3 destroyers.
(Mediterranean A/C 1143/28)ORION's
positionMy P, C and S 34.19 N., 24.10 E., 120°
30 knots. (ORION 1145/28)2 "CAVOUR"
Class2 CAVOUR 15 inch, 2-6 inch, 4 destroyers.
(Mediterranean A/C 1145/28)P,C and S of 5 cruisers 3 destroyers
34.55 N., 23.24 E., 280°, 25' Time of
observation 1035. (Med.A/C 1150/28)
Position of enemy is 34.57 N., 23.16 E.,
based on a fix at 1200, enemy are in
single line ahead, bearing 290°
(Mediterranean A/C 1210/28)
Correct my 1210/28 position 34. 57 N.,
23.26 E., by fix at 1200 enemy destroyers
are bearing 295° from Admiral (Med A/C
1210/28)Enemy
SubmarineI am over enemy S/M in position 34.57 N.,
23.16 E., Bearing 295° based on a fix
at 1200. (Mediterranean A/C 1210/28)C. in C. Med's
Position.My P, C and S 114 34 N., 24° E., 36, 270°
24 knots. (C. in C., Med., 1215/28 to
2 in C., Med.)Greek Destroyers
proceeding.Seven Greek Destroyers proceeding at
once through canal to await oiler between
Cephalonia and Zante. (N.A.Athens, 1215/28
to C. in C., Med.)Enemy Course.Enemy's course and speed 315° 25 knots
5 destroyers screening enemy battle
fleet. (Med. A/C 1218/28)
Are you in touch with Enemy Battle Fleet?
(C. in C., Med., 1220/28, to F.O. 2 in C
Med.)

/Two enemy...

904

War Diary28.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanEngagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (Mediterranean)

Two enemy 8-inch cruisers, one 6 inch cruiser three destroyers in 033° 54' N., 024° 14' E., course 300° to (7320) speed 28 knots at 0935. Own cruiser and destroyer(s) in contact. Own Battlefleet to South East. (N.A. Athens, 1231/28 to S.B.N.O., Suda Bay.)

Enemy Aircraft

3 Hostile aircraft in Sector A. (C. in C Med., 1253/28 to 2 in C. Med.)

Enemy position
1300.

P, C and S of enemy 34. 56 N., 22. 32 E., 295° 25 knots my position 235° (7Spada) 73 miles obtained by fix at 1300. (Med. A/C 1301/28)

Following has been read. Search to Northward. (Mediterranean A/C 1305/28) A. 155 aircraft reports at 1210, 2 CAVOUR, 1 POLA 2 ZARA, 5 destroyers, position 34.57 N., 23.16 E., considered reliable. (R.A.F., C/S Med. A/C 1310/28 to C. in C., Med.)

T/B attack
ordered

If possible a dusk Torpedo Bomber Attack should be carried out on Enemy Forces working on Flying Boat report. YORK pass to Maleme. (C. in C., Med., 1318/28 to YORK, F.A.A. Station, Maleme)

JUNO

Maintain Kithera patrol. Enemy forces are in your vicinity. (C. in C., Med., 1323/28 to JUNO)

VENDETTA

Your 1130 Return to Alexandria. (C. in C., Med. 1326/28 to VENDETTA)

P, C and S of enemy 35.03 N., 22.26 E obtained by fix at 1300, 300° 30 knots (Med. A/C 1344/28)

/BONAVENTURE.....

War Diary

28.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (Mafaban.)

BONAVENTURE
COVENTRY

BONAVENTURE sailed 1300 at 25 knots. DECOY and WATERHEN sail 1700 at 20 knots all for position 033° 20' N., 025° 00'E thence if no other orders received to Suda Bay. They have your 1331/27. Intend to sail off Alexandria section of A.N.23 at 0600/29 with COVENTRY and HERO as escort to join Port Said Section. TURBO sails for Mersa Tobruk at 1900 escorted by SOUTHERN MAID. (R.A.Alexandria, 1350/28 to C. in C., Med.)

F.A.A.
Attacks.

3 Swordfish attacked cruiser with torpedoes at 1205 in position 288 34° N., 24° E., 48 one possible hit. Second striking force being despatched against battleship in position 300 34° N., 24° E., 33 course 280° at 1230. (Maleme 1415/28)

Shadow enemy cruiser(s) and destroyer(s) estimated to be in 34 05N32 50 E., at 1115. (Med A/C(?) 1420/28 to Med A/C(?))

No enemy has been sighted between bearings 34° and 260° up to a distance of 60 miles from Admiral - average visibility 15 miles. (? Mediterranean 1440/28)

A, 159. Navy believe enemy force battle-ships cruisers about 50 miles S.E. of your force. R.A.A. confirm. (Mediterranean A/C 1445/28)

JUNO

Leave patrol at 0600/29 and proceed to Piraeus. Sail A.G. 8 from Piraeus p.m./29 (C. in C., Med. 1500/28 to JUNO)

/Enemy.....

MOST SECRETWar Diary28.3.1941.
FridayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanEngagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (M.a.F.a.p.a.r.)Enemy Position
1500

V.12 265. 3 Cruisers, 5 Destroyers in position 35° 25' N., 21° 44' E., course 300° speed 30 knots. Based on a fix at 1500. (Mediterranean A/C 1503/28)
P, C and S of 3 cruisers 2 destroyers 34.42 N., 21.47 E., 300° 30 knots. (Med. A/C 1539/28)
3- 6 inch Cruisers bearing 156 from Main Fleet. (Med, A/C 1550/28)

Enemy previously reported are of type indicated 2 SAVOIA 1 DIAZ (Med. A/C 1550/28)

V14 Enemy previously reported are 3 cruisers 155 main fleet. (Med. A/C 1550/28)

Enemy's course and speed 325° 30 knots (Mediterranean A/C 1600/28)

Enemy Cruisers are in single line ahead or formed on a line of bearing 3 ? 5 degs. (Med. A/C 1605/28)

2 Enemy forces confirmed.

AQ67 confirm - presence two enemy forces my A165 refers. (Mediterranean A/C 1645/28?)

A. 168 search for battleship may be with force in 34 42 N., 21 47 E., (Med. A/C 1700/28 to A/C Med.)

V. 19 YA 167 force A 36 01 N., 20 32 E., 300 30 Force B 37 14 N., 21 20 E., course 325° speed 30 knots. (Med. A/C 1700/28 to Med. A/C)

V20 425 A 3609N 2019E X 17 300 30 ? 1730/28.

Note: Incompletely decoded.

/LITTORIO....

28.3.1941.
Friday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (Thalapan.)

VITTORIO VENETO
LITTORIO
(Battleship)
sighted.

1 Enemy Battleship 3 Enemy Cruisers
7 Enemy destroyers bearing 270° distance
10 miles course 310° my position 300 35° N
22° E., (Med A/C 1827/28 to Alexandria)

3 cruisers, 4 destroyers bearing 265 14
miles course 170° my Position 305 35° N
22° E., 30. (Med. A/C 1831/28 to Alexandria)

Following has been read.

My 1827 Enemy course and speed 300° 15
knots, Enemy previously reported are
* LITTORIO and 3-6 inch cruisers.
(WARSPITE A/C 1841/28 to Alexandria)
My 1831 3 Enemy cruisers.
(WARSPITE A/C 1844/28)

* VITTORIO VENETO

Enemy
Concentrating

Total enemy force concentrating and con-
sisting of 1 Battleship 6 Cruisers
11 Destroyers P.C.S. Enemy Battlefleet
291 35° N., 22° E., 41 300° 14 knots.
(WARSPITE A/C 1855/28)

Following has been read:

Enemy battle fleet is in 5 columns.
Columns of Enemy Battle fleet reading
from Port to Starboard or van to rear
consist of:

3 NAVIGATORE CLASS

3- 6 inch Cruisers

? (1 LITTORIO CLASS

(2 NEMBO

3- 8 inch class & 2- 6 inch Cruisers

Enemy's anti-S/M screen consists 4 vessels.
(WARSPITE A/C 17 1914/28)

2 unknown bearing 205° distance 10 miles
course unknown My position 285 35° N., 22° E
2 based on reference Position of Admiral
at 1800 G.M.T. (ORION 1915/28)

Enemy course and speed 295° 15 knots.
(WARSPITE A/C 1920/28)

/Enemy's....

War Diary

28.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (Mataban)

Enemy's course and speed 230° 15 knots.
(WARSPITE's A/C 1930/28)

F.A.A.
Attack

Enemy engaging our aircraft and making
smoke bearing 303° distance 9 miles am
concentrating 284° 35° N., 22° E 30
from Admirals 1800 reference position.
(ORION 1930/28)

Searchlights ready flash in bearing
285° 12 miles UN 290° 35° N., 22° E., 37?
from Admirals 1800 reference position
(message corrupt) (ORION 1950/28)

ORION finds
the POLA.

One unknown ship 240° 5 miles apparently
stopped. My position 013° 35° 21' N.,
21° 18' E., (35° 18' N., 21° 13' E)
ORION 2040/28)

Blenheims'
attack
(from Greece)

A 784. 23 Blenheims attacked enemy ships
between 1445 and 1655 hours. Following
results claimed. Probably 2 direct hits
1500 hours on one cruiser not confirmed
2 direct hits with (? 500) pound S.A.P.
bombs on cruiser 1650, black and yellow
smoke emerging for 10 minutes (? alongside)
ship stopped. One bomb on destroyer
at 1630 hours with 500 S.A.P. bomb. Many
near misses and considerable interference
with movements of enemy reported.
Position of cruiser when stopped was 035°
31' 021° 25'. From H.Q., B.F. Greece.
(B.N.A. Athens 2043/28 to C. in C., Med.)

My P C and S 013° 35° 21' E., 25 310°
15 knots R. 18. (ORION 2059/28)

My P C and S 005° M.B. H.S. 27 R 18 300°
20 knots. (ORION 2115/28)

/F.A.A.....

War Diary

28.3.1941.
Friday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd. (M. A. P. N.)

F.A.A.
Attack 1940.

Air striking force attacked at 1940 in position 28° 35' N., 22° E., 35. Enemy fleet consisted of one battleship seven cruisers about ten destroyers. One hit observed, others probable. Two FORMIDABLE aircraft missing. (Maleme 2205/28 to C. in C., Med.)

My P.C and S 342° 35' 34' N., 21° 18' E., 340° 20. Am keeping clear to North of own flotillas. All cruisers in company. (Nore W/T 2215/28)

Am engaging enemy cruisers and destroyers (C. in C., Med., 2232/28 to F.O.C., 2nd i/c Med.)

Greek
Naval Forces

Greek C. in C., is awaiting your orders. (B.N.A. Athens 2347/28)

WAR DIARY.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

910

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (General).

→ UNIQUE.
UPRIGHT.

Surface and proceed into Harbour.
(S.O.(S) 1044/28 to UNIQUE, UPRIGHT.)

Mediterranean.

PAGANINI
SARDEGNA
LIGURIA
SAN GIORGIO.

Athens wireless on 27/3 states information from prisoners supplies confirmation of sinking in Adriatic carrying troops. PAGANINI was acknowledged by Italian Press in July as a loss by fire. SARDEGNA and LIGURIA often claimed by Greeks since early January. No previous report of loss of SAN GIORGIO. (D.S.570).

Submarine
to be
sent.

Your 2250/25. I am grateful for these reinforcements. "U" Class can easily accommodate at Malta.
(C.in C. Med., 1124/28).

Orders
for
RORQUAL
URSULA
UTMOST
→ UNIQUE
UPRIGHT.

Leave present patrols p.m./30 to arrive Malta 0700B as follows. RORQUAL through 036° 35' 012° 00' to Ionian Sea 2/4 URSULA through 036° 30' 012° 20' and 035° 44' 014° 20' to Ionian Sea, 1/4 UTMOST through 035° 20' 013° 00' and 035° 37' 014° 07' to Ionian Sea 1/4 UNIQUE and UPRIGHT leave Malta as in my *1131/27. UNIQUE will not operate North of 036° 20' N. until after 0001/31.
(Comdr. (S) 1125/28). * N.T. W.W.D.

RECORDER.

RECORDER is not to start work until further orders. If she has sailed she is to be recalled to Mersa Tobruk. (N.O.I.C. Alexandria, 1156/28 to S.O. Force I).

ROVER.
TRIUMPH.

ROVER proceed into Suda Bay to assist YORK. TRIUMPH return to former duties.
(C.in C. Med. 1428/28 to Capt: S.1)

See also p. 912

WAR DIARY.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

911

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

Arrivals and
Departures
Suda Bay.

27/3 arrivals CARLISLE, [REDACTED].
Departures [REDACTED], CALCUTTA, ILEX, HASTY.
(S.B.N.O. Suda Bay, 1535/28).

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED],
[REDACTED]
([REDACTED], [REDACTED]).

CARLISLE.

Defects made good. Ready for service.
(CARLISLE 1546/28).

Germans
in
Roumania,
S/M's
building.

My 1135/26. Probably some 100 German
Naval Officers in Constanza on 22/3 but
comparatively few ratings. At
Bucharest 30 or more German Naval Officers

Numerous reports of arrival of alleged
Submarine parts by rail, but do not
consider anything positive proved yet.
(S.O.(I) Istanbul, 1800/28).
Comment by N.I.D. Report of personnel
may well be true. Considered some
personnel will be used to man or
partially man vessels of Roumanian Navy.
Also believed to be some German Speed
Boats at Constanza. Arrival of Sub-
marine parts at Constanza most unlikely.
There are at least two Roumanian
Submarines building at Galatz from
parts supplied from Germany.

F.A.A.

2 Swordfish No.775 Squadron (F.A.A.)
transporting torpedoes leave Dekheila 0700
tomorrow via El Adem E.T.A. Maleme
1530.
(R.A.Alexandria 1815/28).

YORK
(torpedoed
26/3).

My 1521/26. Estimated that with full
salvage resources and work shop
facilities it would take at least four
to five months uninterrupted work to
make ship fit to be towed. Without
such facilities salvage considered
impracticable.

/YORK cont:.....

(b)

WAR DIARY.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

912

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

YORK
(torpedoed
26/3).
(Contd.)

No prospect of restoring ship's electrical supply.

(d) Intend to send majority of ships company to Alexandria at first opportunity retaining enough for close range A.A. defence.
(YORK 1916/28 to C.in C. Med.)

Manning
of Fleet.

2nd S.L. 1915/28 See Lion Copy.

Orders for
ROVER and
TRIUMPH.

Cancel my 0027/27 TRIUMPH proceed forthwith routed North of Cristiani and Soorrana Island to comply with memo. S.O.7. ROVER remain at present patrol area Eastward of 024° 30' during the night proceeding on the surface (? to) arrive end Suda Bay (? at) 0700/29. Proceed into Suda Bay and act under orders of YORK.
(Capt: (S) 1919/28 1921/28, 1925/28).

CONTE DI
SAVOIA.

Fairly reliable source informs me that CONTE DI SAVOIA and REX left Naples 27/3 with German troops for Tripoli routed along North Coast of Sicily.
(C.2.)
(N.A.Madrid, 1921/28 to C.in C. Med. etc)

Enemy
Convoy.

Convoy of 4 enemy motor vessels of 5000 tons each and one (? ten) thousand tons: motor vessel escorted by three destroyers FOLGORE class and three Dorniers passed Kelibia Road Light steering south at 1300B/28.SO(I) Alexandria pass to C.in C. Med. Assessed A one.
(S.O.(I) Malta, 2008/28).

Convoy
A.G.9.

Greek A/S escort Anson will meet you 1200 and Blenheim Fighters 1400/29.
(N.A.Athens, 2203/28 to Escort of A.G.9).

SECRET.

M E S S A G E

1915/28.March.

M
912A

To: + C. in C. Mediterranean, 494.

Date: 28.3.41.

Naval Cypher (X.R.)

From Admiralty.

NITE. AIDAC.

Your 1501/24 ships commissioning at home are now considerably under borne in both substantive and non-substantive rates and the shortage of the latter has been accentuated as a result of enemy action on the training schools.

The process of training up understudies at sea must therefore be applied in all branches and young ratings of which large numbers are now en route must be absorbed at the lower end of the scale in order to release men from the top.

The relief of men overdue can also be facilitated by exchanging them with others from ships proceeding to America ports for refit and reduction.

Transfers to Act: R.P.O. under A.F.O. 212/41 may be authorised by C. in C. Mediterranean where satisfactory evidence of police service is available.

Arrangements will be made to provide the Sailmakers and H.S.Ds. required gradually.

Use should also be made of K.R. and A.I. Art.1591 as regards difference of pay.

1915/28.

for D.P.S.

(Rex House 106.)

Approved by 2nd S.L.

2nd S.L.

V.C.N.S.

A.C.N.S. (F)

A.C.N.S. (H)

N.A.2.S.L.

O.D. (5)

D.P.S. (2)

N.

W.D.

M.68 (M019479/40) (2)

D.N.A.)

S.W.R.) Bath.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

WAR DIARY.

913

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

Force T.

Colombo departure 28/3 0410Z Force T consisting of HERMES, ENTERPRISE. (S.O.(I) Colombo 0426/28). My 0802/28 Part Two final. (ii) Prisoner also reported WARTENFELS as the only other German ship to have sailed. (apart from COBURG) and another source reports her as having arrived ~~(?)~~ (iii) A Ramb Class Italian Merchant Ship, probably RAMB II, is reported as having arrived Kobe (together with?) Italian Sloop ERITREA. (iv) Photographic air reconnaissance of Massawa March 27 indicated another ship (? might have) sailed and owing to fall of Keren a general exodus might now be attempted. (v) Capt: on Staff Alexandria is requested to inform M I C E. 0802Z/28. N.B. Part II only received. Part I has been called for.

Troop
Transport,
NIEUW HOLLAND.

Your 1846/27. Consequent on capture of Harrar 27/3 requirements for transport of 2200 military ranks to Berbera from Mombasa now more urgent than transport of 3300 to Mogadishu for which NIEUW HOLLAND (corrupt group) now diverted. Army urgently requests NIEUW HOLLAND may take Berbera contingents. Further requests NIEUW HOLLAND subsequently takes Mogadishu contingents or that another ship be made available as soon as practicable. (S.O. Force W. 0803Z/28 to C.in C. E.I).

→ WARTENFELS.

S.N.O.R.S. 2041/26. (2058/26 intended) Chief Censor Mauritius reports that WARTENFELS has arrived Diego Suarez. (C.in C. E.I. 0804Z/28 to Admty).

→ WARTENFELS.

Naval Censorship indicates German steamer WARTENFELS now at Diego Suarez. (D.D.I.C. 1335/28 to C.in C. E.I. etc).

MOST SECRET.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

WAR DIARY.

914

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

TAIREA.

Sailed 1600/28 to Berbera calling Mogadiscio to land 10th Belgian C.O.S. E.T.A. Berbera daylight, 3/4. (D.S.T.O. Mombasa, 1618/28).

B.S.22.

Bombay ships are detailed to transport Indian Brigade from Port Sudan to Suez and are expected to proceed Port Sudan in B.S.22, TAKLEWA, SLAMAT, MENELAUS, KHEDIVE, ISMAIL, QUEEN ADELAIDE, CUSTODIAN, PRESIDENT DOUMER, expect to be able to release ships on completion. Agreed. (S.T.O. 2011/28 to G.H.Q. M.E.), (Egypt)

MOST SECRET.

WAR DIARY.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

915

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

ELSA ESSBERGER
MUNSTERLAND
ERMLAND
(German).

Kobe arrival 27/3 ESSBERGER. My 0711/27
closer inspection suggests this is
MUNSTERLAND, ERMLAND.
(Capt: O.S. Singapore, 0503/28).

SECRET.

I N.

From B.N.A. Washington.

Date. 28.3.41.

Recd. 0720.

915A

Interdepartmental Cypher by Cable.

Addressed Admiralty. Repeated C. in C., America & West Indies.

C. in C., America & West Indies' telegram 1022
March 13th two questions are involved:

- (a) whether fuel oil supplied H.M. Ships in United States ports is to be furnished under Lease Lend Act or is to continue to be purchased in ordinary way and
- (b) Whether present restrictions on quantity and frequency of fuelling can be modified.

As regards (a) though we have every hope bunker fuel for H.M. Ships will be included under Lease Lend Act President has so far taken no specific decision on this or similar points and it may be a little time before such decisions are taken. As regards (b) it would seem only logical if H.M. Ships are to be repaired in American ports and to be allowed to remain there for as long as may be necessary to complete these repairs that present restrictions on refuelling should be relaxed.

We see no reason why approach should not be made to American authorities in regard to (b) without waiting decision to be reached as regards (a). If you and Foreign Office agree no doubt you will arrange for necessary instructions to be sent to us.

1459/27

- 1st Lord.
- 1st S.L.
- 4th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (F)
- A.C.N.S. (T).
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Ops. (4)
- O.D. (5)
- O.I.C.
- D.S.D.9.
- D.N.I. (4)
- M. (5) for action.
- D. of S. 2a.
- D. of P. (3)
- Ad. Bailey.
- I.P. (3)
- W.D.

1459/27

SECRET.

M E S S A G E 1812./28th March

IN

915B

From: C. in C. America and
West Indies.

Date 1.4.41
Recd. 0737

Naval Cypher X by cable.

Addressed: Admiralty.

34. Your 1801/9 March ✓. Reply has been delayed on account of conversations which are now proceeding with Colonial Government. As result of these conversations it is anticipated that agreement will be reached whereby Naval Boarding Officer will be in sole charge of all parties including customs and censorship officials on board ships under consideration.

A large proportion of difficulties of dual control would thereby be resolved, and a case such as occurred in 'EXCAMBION' where adequate action was not taken to enforce production of a passenger required for examination, would be allowed for. Smoother working with ships officers would result.

(2) Position as regards municipal law and its powers in matter of removal of neutrals from ships calling voluntarily is appreciated and it is realised that unless special legislation is introduced these powers cannot be exercised by Naval Contraband. Responsibility for examination of passengers, baggage and crew, and decision whether to search and/or detain therefore still rests with Colonial Government. Government officials, although under the general control of the Naval Boarding Officer whilst on board the ship, will still be responsible to the Colonial Government as heretofore. It is proposed to await experience under arrangements outlined in para. one above before pursuing this aspect of the problem further.

(3) Report will be made when conversations with Colonial Government are concluded.

1812/28

Advance copy Ops, O.D. M. D.E.W.D.

✓ Re Neutral ships entering British Ports.

1st Lord.
1st S.L.
V.C.N.S.
A.C.N.S. (F)
A.C.N.S. (T)
Naval Sec.
C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
P.A.S. (S)
Ops. (4)
O.D. (5)
Admiral Bailey.
D.T.D. (4)
D.T.D. (M)
M. (5)
I.P. (3)
W.D.
D. of P. (3)
D.N.I. (4)
D.S.D. 9
D.E.W.D. (3)

28.3.1941.
Friday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies.

H.M.C.S.
OTTER
lost.

B.U.P. message from Halifax, N.S., states 2 officers and 17 men of R.C.N. lost when H.M.C.S. OTTER Lieut. D.S. Mossman, R.C.N., a converted yacht, was lost off Canadian coast in a sudden fire. 22 others of crew picked up by merchantmen. (The Times, 28/3).

MONSERRATE
(German)

At Callao, said to have cargo of cotton to be taken to a Mexican port for transshipment to a Japanese ship, is reported by Press to have delayed sailing owing to known presence of British forces. (D.S. 570).

RODNEY,
H.X.
Convoy
Escorts.

My 0058/26 and 1031/27.
If no further information of enemy forces is received RODNEY is to proceed to Halifax. RODNEY will then be available for escort duty with next convenient Halifax convoy. Under present circumstances it is considered that first half of the Atlantic crossing is the more likely period for enemy attack. In order therefore to increase number of convoys which can be provided with battleship escort, R.A.3 is requested to arrange that battleships will leave their convoys between 35° and 40° W. R.A.3 requested to inform Admiralty of his proposals for escorts based on the foregoing information. (1st S.L., 0047/28 to R.A.3, RODNEY).

MALAYA
Repairs.

Your 1021/26. Concur. New York. Particularly necessary to prevent it being known that ship has been damaged. (V.C.N.S. 0049/28 to C.in C. A.W.I.). MALAYA is to leave Trinidad as soon as possible after fuelling and carrying out any essential modified repairs, and proceed to New York. Route via Mona Passage, thence direct to New York. (C.in C. A.W.I. 1012/28, to MALAYA).

CANTON
Refit.

Cancel A.T. 1533/21. Approved for CANTON to refit in U.S.A. Refitting port will be communicated when known. Desired that during refit ship should be prepared for fitting of a catapult. It is intended to fit the catapult at first opportunity in U.K. 0104/28.

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

Suspicious Ship. 13/3.

British KING EDWARD on arrival Philadelphia reports having sighted most suspicious vessel believed to be enemy on 13/3 in position 048°N. 042° W. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1031/28)

Further signals see Pages 962, 1026.

KOS\$ Ships.

Your 1505/24. KOS\$ 5 KOS\$ 4 KOS\$ 16 and KOS\$ 17 arrived here 1130 G.M.T./27. (N.O.I.C. St. Johns N.F. 1116/28 to C.O.A.C. Halifax).
Your 1505/25. KOS\$ 18 arrived here 0900 G.M.T. today. (N.O.I.C. St. Johns N.F. 1122/28 to C.O.A.C. Halifax).

10 coastguard cutters.

Please hasten reply to my 1550/14 and 0036/20. (D.N.I. 1605/28 to N.A. Washington).

FORT DE FRANCE PANEMA POINTE A PITRE

St. Thomas Departure 27th March French Ships FORT DE FRANCE, PANEMA, ~~POINTE A PITRE~~. Former loaded 500 tons Diesel latter 550 tons fuel oil. (S.O.(I) Jamaica 1216/28).

Refitting FURIOUS

UKARM 22. Your 2221/24. FURIOUS will not be refitted in America. As far as can be seen the principal defects and approximate dates of arrival in American East Coast ports could be as follows.

MALAYA RESOLUTION ILLUSTRIOUS DELHI LIVERPOOL CANTON

2. MALAYA, RESOLUTION and ILLUSTRIOUS to have first priority. DELHI, LIVERPOOL, CANTON second priority. A further signal will be made in regard to other two A.M.C.s. (Controller 1351/28 to N.A. Washington).

SIRIKISHNA

(British) overdue at Halifax since 6/3. Request any information available. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa 1533/28).

LECH, NORDERNEY, FRANCO MARTELLI.

Letter intercepted at Trinidad states LECH, NORDERNEY, and 7 Italian ships at Pernambuco intend to sail possibly in Convoy under protection of 2 German Battle Cruisers in South Atlantic. FRANCO MARTELLI loaded 14000 tons diesel oil, other ships agricultural produce. Alternative rumour movement of ships is intended to divert British Men-of-War from North Atlantic. (S.O.I. Jamaica, 1630/28 to Admty. etc.).

War Diary.

28.3.1941.
Friday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

U.S. Coastguard
Cutters.

Your 1605/28. No decision yet reached. Official request for ten cutters has been made to Mr. Hopkins by Mr. Purvis pointing out that the matter is vital and asking that as many as possible of those released should be of the (? 20) knot type. Decision likely to be favourable.
(N.A. Washington, 1721/28, to Admty.).

Sydney,
ice conditions.

Your 1259/27. Sydney Harbour is not likely to be navigable before 1/5. Ships should be able to arrive Father Point by 20/4 unless ice conditions in Cabot Strait are very bad. Normal peace time ice reports will be broadcast to ships. Ships may be routed north of Sable Island after 15/4. It is hoped to commence assembling convoys at Sydney about 1/6.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1742/28, to Admty.).

EMPIRE SILVER

My 1554/22 (overdue shipping). Cancel reference to British ship EMPIRE SILVER. (S.O.I. Jamaica, 2335/28).

War Diary.

28.3.31941.
Friday.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships Attacked.

ERODONA
(torpedoed
16/3)

ERODONA sinking gradually. Have taken off boarding party. THAMES continues to tow towards Reykjavik but will endeavour to beach her if conditions become critical. Position 125° Reykjanes Light 5 miles. (Scapa W/T, 2000/28).

Submarines Reported.

0052.

D/F at 0052/28 position of Italian U/B probably homeward bound, was approximately 47°N. 7° W. (D.D.I.C. 0131/28). One enemy submarine bearing 220° distance 4 miles position 63.30 N., 21.50 W. (VISENDA, 0730/28, to Iceland). Enemy S/M sighted by VISENDA at 0630Z (?370) 30 miles from Reykjanes. Aircraft and A/S trawler from Iceland proceeding to position. (F.O. Iceland, 0730Z/28 to Northern Patrol). VISENDA with damaged ship and rescue tug in company reported enemy submarine approximately in position 30 miles 135° from Reykjanes light at 0630Z. Aircraft will attack if weather suitable. Are destroyers available? (F.O. Iceland, 0735/28, to F.O.C. 1 C.S.). Submarine reported at 0730/28 in position 220° 4 miles from 63.30 N., 21.50 W. NESTOR pass to CIRCASSIA. (C.in C. W.A., 0837/28, to NESTOR, ANTHONY, CIRCASSIA). My 0730. U-Boat seen to dive immediately. No contact made. Am continuing screening tug and tow. (VISENDA, 0900/28, to F.O.I.C. Iceland). U/B sighted by H.M. Trawler VISENDA at 0730/28 B.S.T. Position 63° 26' N. 21° 56' W. (D.D.I.C. 0919/28 to CIRCASSIA and 1033/28 to Orkneys and Shetlands, W. Approaches, H.Q.C.C.).

Estimated U/B dispositions.

Reduction in number of U/Bs operating considered temporary and renewed activity is expected in 2 or 3 days. No fresh evidence of patrols in Bay of Biscay. (D.D.I.C. 1237/28).

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

SITUATION REPORT

Home Commands

U-Boat Campaign
3 ships
torpedoed in
H.X. 115.

Convoy H.X. 115 was attacked by U-Boat early this morning in the N.W. Approaches. The following ships are reported to have been torpedoed:- HYLTON, GERMANIC, LIMBOURG.

It was evident this evening that either Convoy H.X. 115 or O.B. 302 was being shadowed and reported by U-boat, two or more of which were near. KING GEORGE V sighted a U-Boat 10 miles distant at 1755 in 60° 15' N., 19° 57' W.

The Clyde-Iceland Ferry convoy was reported as being attacked by U-Boat this morning.

VISENDA (trawler) and THAMES (Tug) this evening brought into Reykjavik the SS ERODONIA, torpedoed on 16/3 in the North Atlantic in H.X. ~~115.~~ 112

Search for
ADMIRAL SCHEER

At 1917 D.F. bearings indicated that an enemy surface warship, possibly ADMIRAL SCHEER, homeward bound, was near convoys H.X. 115 and O.B. 302. C. in C. H.F., ordered KING GEORGE V who was proceeding to Scapa after leaving Convoy H.X. 115, to intercept if fuel permitted.

921

29.3.1941.
Saturday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

British Air Activity

Bomber Command carried out no operations last night owing to the weather. A force stood by today to attack the German battle cruisers in Brest, but weather over the target was unsuitable for attack, and attack planned for tonight was cancelled on account of bad weather.

Routine patrols by Coastal Command were greatly curtailed today on account of bad weather. Special patrols were flown west of Brest to locate the SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU if they should break out.

Three attempts to carry out P.R.U. sortie at Brest failed owing to bad weather. All night patrols and operations were cancelled for the same reason.

Battle aircraft from Iceland carried out A/S patrols south of Iceland.

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

SITUATION REPORT

Enemy Air Activity

Plymouth
Command

To meet the increasing scale of enemy air attack in the Plymouth Command, C. in C's Portsmouth and Western Approaches are each to lend Plymouth Command one destroyer and LEWES, previously allocated to Rosyth is to be retained after working up. M/S Trawler SIR JOHN LISTER was machine-gunned off the Lizard at mid day and had one casualty. An unknown ship was attacked off the Scarweather at 1900.

Attacks on
Shipping off
East Coast.

VERDUN and Convoy F.S.449 were attacked twice this afternoon off Sheringham, but no ships were hit.

PYTCHLEY and Convoy F.N.445 were attacked 26 miles 310° from the outer Dowsing L.V. but were not hit. Fighters obtained contact with the enemy aircraft.

SS ALBERT C.FIELD made a distress message at 1347 off Yarmouth, whilst a straggler from F.N.445 and is believed sunk.

WALLACE and Convoy F.N.446 were attacked off the East Coast several times this evening and tonight and British tanker OILTRADER was sunk off the coast of Suffolk.

Trawler KIMBERLEY was bombed and sunk off Grimsby this evening. SS EFFRA appears also to have been attacked but was not damaged.

Attacks in
N.W.Approaches

SS VENI, a straggler from Convoy S.C. 25 was attacked in the N.W. Approaches this afternoon (200 miles N.W. of Cape Wrath)

923

29.3.1941.
Saturday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Mining

Operations
P.W. 6
G.Y.

3 M.T.B's from the Nore last night carried out a mining operation off the Belgian coast.

ABDIEL last night laid mines off Brest, escorted by 4 destroyers.

SS GRENAA was ^{*}sunk by magnetic mine at Bellamy's Wharf (London) about 1230 today.

* Forepart blown off, stern remained afloat 29/3.

From Capt Matthews.

T.D. 28/3/41

BR.1337 See Pg 106.

Mines were detonated today at the Nore.

The convoy anchorage Aberlady Bay was opened at 1217.

Mining of Humber

Mines were exploded off Spurn Point early this afternoon. SS EVROS and MOUNT PELION were mined at Milford Haven this afternoon, the latter whilst at anchor. About 20 enemy aircraft were over the Humber this evening and it is thought that about 50 mines were laid. The port was closed at 2152.

Avonmouth was closed at 2318

South Atlantic

There is reported to be a general preparation for sailing of enemy merchant vessels from Latin American ports. AMELIORATO MARTELLI sailed from Pernambuco and FRISCO from Ceara 2230/28, and DRESDEN left Santos 2240/28. Italian ships at Montevideo appear to have reverted to normal.

FRANCO

intended
see page
948.

WAR DIARY.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

924

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean.

Fleet Operations. (Matahan.)

28.3.1941.

Dispositions.

In the expectation that a surface raid was about to be carried out against our convoys in the Aegean, with extensive air operations north and south of Crete, on 28/3, C.in C. Mediterranean ordered Force B (ORION, AJAX, PERTH, GLOUCESTER and destroyers), after completing with fuel p.m./27 at Suda Bay to be in position 34° 20'N., 24° 10' East at 0630/28.

Force B.

Battle
Fleet.
Forces A,
C.)

Force A. (WARSPITE, VALIANT, BARHAM) with FORMIDABLE and available destroyers (Force C) left Alexandria p.m./27 and proceeded westwards.

Convoys.

Convoy A.G.9 was turned back at dusk 27th so as to be to eastward of the Battle Fleet at dawn 28/3 before resuming its previous route. The sailing of Convoy G.A. was postponed.

Force D.

Force D. (JUNO, JAGUAR, DEFENDER) were put at short notice at Piraeus and were later ordered out on Kithera patrol.

Submarines.

Submarines ROVER on patrol off Suda Bay and TRIUMPH S.W. of Milo from dawn today.

Suda Bay.

CARLISLE to reinforce the A.A. defence of Suda Bay. Local patrol craft off Crete are withdrawn under the defences of Suda Bay.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

WAR DIARY.

925

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)
Fleet Operations. (Malapan.)

Air
Dispositions.

F.A.A. standing by with fighters and Swordfish armed with torpedoes. R.A.F. R/C was arranged.
(Note: At 1220/27 aircraft sighted 3 enemy cruisers and a destroyer in 36° 30'N., 16° 40'E. (75 miles E. by S. of Cape Passaro) steering 120°).
(Note: The following account of the engagement with the Italian Fleet is based on information available up to 30/3/41).

Enemy
Cruisers
sighted
0802.

At 0802 today V.A.L.F. (ORION) reported an enemy force of either 3 cruisers or 2 8 inch and 2 6" cruisers, with 3 destroyers, bearing 010° 13 miles about 70 miles south of Gavdo steering approximately S.E. The enemy altered course, first to the southward and at 0859 to course 300°, with ORION chasing.

VITTORIO VENETO
(2 Battleships)
sighted
1059.

Note based on C in C. Med. 1604/2. The force sighted by ORION at 1059 was VITTORIO VENETO; the latter opened fire on Force B which was lucky to escape damage as destroyers had difficulty in getting into position to smoke screen the rear ship CLOUCESTER. During the high speed, Force B was outranged throughout.

reported
At 1059 ORION/2 battleships and at 1145 she reported that she was steering 120°, evidently with the intention of drawing the enemy towards the C.in C. Med., who was some miles to the eastward; ORION reported her position as 34° 19'N., 24° 10'E., course 120° speed 30 knots.
(Note: C.in C. Med. reports (1558/30) that at 0749 a force was sighted consisting of one LITTORIO class, 6 cruisers and 7 destroyers, later joined by 2 cruisers and at least 2 destroyers).

Second
Force
sighted
by A/C.
2 battle-
ships,
3 cruisers
1135.

At 1135 aircraft reported 2 enemy battleships (CAVOURS) 3 cruisers and 3 destroyers * steering 280°, about 50 miles to the northward of the former force.
*(Note: C.in C. Med., 1558/30 says 4 destroyers.)

By noon all forces seem to have been steering a westerly course at high speed.

WAR DIARY.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Fleet Operations. (Mata) (con.)

VENDETTA.

At 1130 VENDETTA in 34° 26'N., 25° 7'E. reported engine trouble and ordered (1326/28) to return to Alexandria. Seven Greek destroyers proceeded shortly after noon to await oiler between Cephalonia and Zante.

Greek.
Destroyers.

BONAVENTURE.

BONAVENTURE sailed at 1300 at 25 knots and DECOY and WATERHEN about 1700 at 20 knots, all for 33° 20'N., 25° 0'E., thence if no other orders received for Suda Bay.

Enemy
Submarines.
C.in C's
position.

An enemy submarine was reported by aircraft at 1210 in 34° 57'N., 23° 16'E. At 1215 the C.in C. was in 114° 34'N., 24° E. 36 miles steering 270° at 24 knots.

First attack
by
FORMIDABLE,
5 A/C.

A torpedo bomber attack was launched from FORMIDABLE, which arrived at 1130 and claimed a possible hit. The *LITTORIO and her cruisers then turned westward.
(C.in C. Med., 1558/30).

*VITTORIO VENETO

Attack
by F.A.A.
from
Maleme.

At 1415/28, Maleme reported that at 1205 three F.A.A. Swordfish attacked the cruiser force in 288° 34' N., 24° E., 48 miles. (34° 15'N., 23° 6'E.) *from Maleme* and obtained one possible hit. A second striking force of Swordfish was ordered at 1200 to attack the battleships in 300° 34'N., 24° E., 33 miles (34° 16'N., 23° 20'E.) F.A.A. were ordered by *Maleme* C.in C. Med., to carry out a dusk torpedo bomber attack if possible.

VITTORIO VENETO.
LITTORIO
torpedoed
by F.A.A.

During the afternoon search from FORMIDABLE regained touch with the enemy and a further torpedo bomber attack was carried out, claiming 3 hits on LITTORIO class battleship, (C.in C. Med., 1558/30), reducing her speed.

WAR DIARY.29.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean. (Contd.)Fleet Operations (Mafapan).Attacks
by
Blenheims.

Between 1500 and 1700. 19 Blenheims from Greece attacked the enemy formation of 2 battleships, 3 cruisers and 3 destroyers in 35° 0'N., 20° 55'E., and claim a direct hit with a 500 S.A.P. bomb on a cruiser, a hit with 250 lb. S.A.P. bomb on a second cruiser, and a hit with 250 lb. S.A.P. bomb on a destroyer, in addition to near misses and considerable interference caused to the enemy's movements. The first cruiser stopped after being hit; her position is given as 35° 31'N., 21° 25'E.

Northern
force
LITTORIO V. VENETO
sighted
enemy
concentrating.

VITTORIO
VENETO

At 1827/28 aircraft reported that a battleship (amplified a few minutes later by WARSPITE's A/C as LITTORIO) with 3 6" cruisers and 7 destroyers was in 35° 11'N., 21° 20½'E., and at 1855 WARSPITE's A/C reported that they were concentrating with the other force of 3 cruisers and 4 destroyers. By 1914/28 the enemy battle fleet was in 5 columns, reported by WARSPITE's A/C as one LITTORIO Class, 3 8" and 5 6" cruisers, 5 destroyers, with A/S screen of 4 vessels. The course of the enemy was about 300°.

VITTORIO
VENETO

Dusk
attacks
by F.A.A.

F.A.A. striking force attacked this formation with torpedoes. The number of cruisers is given as 7 at 1940, position reported as 286° 35' N., 22° E., 35 miles, one hit was seen (apparently on a cruiser) others reported probable. Two of FORMIDABLE's aircraft are missing. The enemy was reported at 1930 engaging our aircraft and making smoke.

VITTORIO VENETO

A dusk torpedo bomber attack was also made by Maleme. It is not thought that LITTORIO was hit during the above two attacks, but definitely one cruiser was hit. (C.in C. Med., 1558/30).

At 2040/28 ORION reported an unknown ship apparently stopped in 35° 18'N., 21° 13' East.

MOST SECRET.29.3.1941.
Saturday.WAR DIARY.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean. (Contd.)Fleet Operations (Matapan.)

→ C.in C.
engages
cruisers.

At 2232/28 C.in C. Med., reported that he was engaging the enemy cruisers and destroyers. (It was apparently at this time that the FIUME and ZARA were crippled).

Fleet
ordered
to R/V.

At 0005/29 C.in C. Med., ordered the Fleet in company to R/V with him at 0700 in 35° 55'N., 21° 38'E.

LITTORIO ^{VITTORIO} V. VENETO.
stopped.
HAVOCK
reports
no
torpedoes
left.

At 0020/29 HAVOCK (Force C) reported she was in contact with a battleship of LITTORIO class which appeared to be undamaged and stopped. HAVOCK had expended all her torpedoes. At 0050 she reported her position at 35° 17' 0" N 21° 5' 15" E., (in ORION's report 2040/28) GRIFFIN and GREYHOUND reported that they were on the way to the position.

→ Night
actions.
2 cruisers
sunk.

Course
In the cause of a series of actions which took place during the night 28/29 March, within 50 miles of position 35° N., 21° E., our battleships very severely damaged the two 8 inch cruisers FIUME and ZARA (which were later torpedoed and sunk by our destroyers). The battleships and FORMIDABLE withdrew before daylight, C.in C. sending the screen to mop up.

At 0830/29, an A/C sighted survivors rafts and a dinghy with survivors were sighted later in 35° 20'N., 21° 0'E., and 35° 46'N., 20° 50'E.

Position
of
Fleet
0700.

At 0700/29 the C.in C. Med., and Fleet were in 35° 55'N., 21° 40'E., steering 250° at 17 knots.

WAR DIARY.29.3.1941.
Saturday.SITUATION REPORT.Mediterranean. (Contd.)
Fleet Operations (Matapan.)

A dive bombing attack by about 12 aircraft was made on the Fleet today. No damage was caused and one enemy aircraft was shot down.

Submarine
to
intercept
damaged
ships.

At 2329/29 RORQUAL was ordered to patrol North of the Straits of Messina, to intercept damaged Italian ships, particularly LITTORIO class battleship probably proceeding to Spezia with speed reduced to 15 knots by successive torpedo aircraft attacks yesterday.

Casualties.

On 30/3 C.in C. Med., reported that it was definitely confirmed that the following Italian ships were sunk:-

8" Cruisers.

FIUME
POLA
ZARA

Destroyers.

~~VINCENZO GIOPERTI~~ VITTORIO ALFIERI
~~MAESTRALE~~

In addition one COLLEONE cruiser and a third destroyer were probably sunk and a good deal of damage done to other ships including LITTORIO (Flagships of Italian C.in C.)

It seems likely that the ^{VITTORIO VENETO} ~~LITTORIO~~ engaged some of her own forces during the night as 15 inch firing was heard at a time and in a direction where none of our forces were present.

Two of the sunk cruisers were wrecked by the battleships and finished off by our destroyers, the third (POLA) was apparently damaged by F.A.A. attack at 2030 and self-sunk later.

Two JU. 88 were shot down during the action. No damage or casualties was caused to our ships or personnel throughout the operation, other than three F.A.A. aircraft missing.

The Greek destroyers were rushed through the Corinth Canal but arrived too late to take part in the action.

About 900 Italian survivors were rescued further rescue work was prevented by German aircraft.

WAR DIARY.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)
Fleet Operations (Haitapan.)

Force C.

NUBIAN.

MOHAWK.

HAVOCK.

HOTSPUR.

GREYHOUND.

Also left
for
Alexandria
with C. in C.

STUART.

JERVIS.

JANUS.

GREYHOUND.

GRIFFIN.

Force B.

STUART.

HEREWARD.

VENDETTA ?

MOST SECRETWar Diary29.3.1941.
SaturdaySITUATION REPORTMediterranean -Contd. (General.)Air
Operations

Bombs were dropped at certain points on Malta last night but no Service damage or casualties occurred.

Wellingtons bombed Tripoli harbour last night.

America & West Indies

MALAYA arrived at Trinidad this morning.

932

War Diary.

29.3.41.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

Defence
Against
Human
Torpedoes.

Ref. A message 524 A. of 8/11/40.
A successful attack by six human torpedoes has been carried out in Suda Bay. Attention is drawn to importance of precautions already ordered in 625 A of 20/12/40 and 752 A of 4/2/41. Where possible A/S patrols should also be maintained as far to seaward in approaches to important harbours as possible. This should increase distance at which human torpedoes must be disembarked from their parent submarine. Constant boat patrols within the anchorage are also desirable as the period for which a human torpedo can remain submerged is probably limited. (D. of L.D. 0016/29, "A" Message, Home and Abroad 896.A.).

Plymouth.
Command
Redispositions.

To meet the increasing scale of enemy air attack in the Plymouth Command, it has been decided to make the following redispositions:
2. LEWES, previously allocated to Rosyth, to be retained by C. in C. Plymouth on completion of working up.
3. C. in C. Portsmouth is requested to loan one HUNT class to C. in C Plymouth.
4. C. in C.W.A. is requested to loan one WAIR to C. in C. Plymouth. (V.C.N.S.1523/29.)

Defence of U.K.

Nore Command
Notice
for Steam.

Starting today destroyers, corvettes, and fleet minesweepers in harbour are normally to be at the following notice for steam
0630 -2030 daily 2= 1/2 hours.
2030 -0630 1/2 hours.
Cancel my 1112/23/10/40.
(C. in C. Nore 1225/29.).

/MANELA.....

War Diary.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Movements.

MANELA.

JACOB VAN

My 1234/28. Pass to MANELA and HEEMSKERK. Cancel route from Sullom Voe to Reykjavik. Further route will be signalled. (F.O. Greenock 1207/29 to RESTIGOUCHE.).

RESOLUTION.

Your 1321/19. RESOLUTION will not be ready to sail until P.M./ 2/4. (C. in C. Ports-mouth 1607/29.).

Operations.

Bay of Biscay S/M Patrol.

CBERON, TUNA,	)	Movements.
TORBAY, UNBEATEN,	)	(F.O.S.0043/29.).
H.31, H.32, H.34,	)	(C. in C. Plymouth 0745/29)
H.44, H.50,	)	(Capt.S.5.1401/29.).
L.27,)	
O.9, O.10.)	

Numbered Positions.

Additional numbered Positions 83 to 89 inclusive established as follows. (F.O.S.1736/29). See Summaries Folder.

Orders on leaving. Patrol positions.

Should it for any reason be necessary for a Submarine to quit her patrol position she should proceed well clear of other patrol positions and then to eastward of QZX 336 crossing lat. 48° 30' between meridians 7° and 8° W., and thence towards Plymouth.

Unless it is essential no report should be made until to the north of lat. 48° 30' N. The above does not apply to O 24 who should in such circumstances proceed to Gibraltar. (F.O.S. 1852/29.).

Positions and Group Movement.

(a) Position occupied by submarines in Bay of Biscay at 0800/30 is as follows:-
(b) Group Movement is as follows.
(F.O.S. 1942/29.).

TIGRIS.

Eastbound enemy shipping is believed to cross 100 fathom line between 046° N., and 046° 20' N., approach on approx. course 90°.

/Operate.....

934

29.3.41.
Saturday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations Contd.

TIGRIS.contd.

Operate in this vicinity close west of 100 fathom line from 31/3 leaving if necessary for alternative date of operation EUROPEAN. (F.O.S. 1943/29 and 0059/30 to TIGRIS.).

East Coast Patrol.

No A.P. Vessel at 5 Buoy, between 5 Buoy and Hearts Knoll, Sheringham Buoy, or between 57 C and 58 Buoy tonight Saturday. (C. in C. Nore 1005/29.).

Patrol K.

HOLDERNESS and VANESSA will do Patrol K tonight and will cover F.S. 49 from Hearty Knoll until daylight. (C. in C. Nore 1529/29)

CHILIAN REEFER.

attacked by GNEISENAU 16/3.

Your 1244/27. Master and 23 survivors CHILEAN REEFER attacked by GNEISENAU and last seen burning fiercely landed by RODNEY in Reykjavik 25/3. Master states intercepted distress signal from six of ships mentioned. Consider report refers to crews of these ships and that ships were sunk. (N.O.I.C. Iceland 1810/29.).

ADMIRAL SCHEER.

D/F at 1917 B.S.T. Cupar 303° (2) Possibly surface ship, Bearing passes vicinity of convoys HX.115 and O.B.302.(D.D.I.C.2106/29). Adty., 2106/29xreliable report. Possibly ADMIRAL SCHEER homeward bound. Endeavour to intercept if fuel permits. (C. in C. H.F. 2332/29 to KING GEORGE V.).

British Air Activity.

Escorts.

Expect following a/c from 18 Group as a/s air escort today. Whitley form first light until 1030. Sunderland from 1030 to 1500. Hudsons from 1500 till dark. (C. in C. Rosyth 0237/29 to OTTAWA, etc.). Cancel my 1730/29. Expect escort by 18 Group Sunderland from 0900/30 until 2030/30 when Whitley Aircraft of 18 Group take over until 0800/31. (C. in C. Rosyth 2350/29 to VENOMOUS, etc.).

/Bombing.....

935

War Diary.29.3.41.
Saturday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity Contd.Bombing
Restrictions.

Ops.387. 29/3/41.
Institute t.b.r. within 15' of coast between
Dodman Point and Lizard Head from 0700 to
1100/29. (H.Q.C.C. 0525/29.).
Cancel my 2031/27. Bombing restrictions between
48° 50' N. 4° 6' W. (C. in C. Plymouth 1113/29.)

Iceland.

03005 0685 Cipher 29/3. Your 58955 (M.O.8)
29th March. Position and date not fully under-
stood. Presume this is convoy attacked about
0400/29 on which O.C. 30 wing and F.O.I.C. are
already taking action. One Sunderland and 3
battle aircraft employed on searching and con-
voy duties. (G.O.C. Iceland 1224/29.).

Air
Operations.

Day 28th March. 18 Blenheims successfully
completed sweep. No enemy shipping observed.
Night 28/29 March. No operations were carried
out owing to unfavourable weather. (H.Q.B.C.
1600/29.).

Patrols.

To locate enemy battle cruiser leaving Brest
the following patrols are being flown by 19
Group weather permitting.
A. Coastal search from Brest to Gironde and
return finishing at light.
B. Cross-over patrol by A.S.V. fitted air-
craft between 048° 32' N., 005° 53' W., and
047° 23' N., 004° 50' W., 2100 till 0100.
Large enemy warships will be reported and
shadowed. (C. in C. Plymouth 1737/29.). My
0652/29. ~~and "Herald"~~ not flown.
2 Blenheims on offensive patrol Muckle Flugga
to 61° 30' N., 0° 20' W., to intercept enemy
aircraft now in operation till dark.
(C. in C. Rosyth 1810/29.).

Own A/C
fired on
24/3.

Following received from Air Ministry.
"X.434. 28/3. Request you investigate and
report on following incident. Report re-
ceived that Blenheim L.9389 fired on by
trawler off Yarmouth at about 1430 hours 24/3.
Aircraft subsequently reported missing".
2. Request you investigate and report.
(D. of L.D. 1812/29 to F.O.I.C. Yarmouth.).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.29.3.1941.
Saturday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity.STAFFORDSHIRE
(Bombed 28/3)

Am escorting STAFFORDSHIRE on her remaining dual engines to Loch Ewe. SAMA in company with 160 survivors. 76 survivors in WANDERER. Estimated 30 dead and (?) seriously wounded. Several minor casualties for hospital treatment.

(WANDERER. Rec'd. 0220/29)

Your 2030/28. Survivors and wounded should be taken to Stornoway.

(C in C W.A. 0953/29 to WANDERER.)

SAMA bound Liverpool to St. John N.B. sailing independently arrived Stornoway with 234 survivors and 4 corpses from STAFFORDSHIRE (N.O.I.C. Stornoway 1617/29).

STAFFORDSHIRE arrived Loch Ewe has 2 Officers and 41 Naval Ratings on board landed 10 Officers and 25 Ratings at Aultbea. Known Naval casualties one Lieut. R.N.R. and one Motor Mechanic. Ratings on board standing by ship. Am collecting crew and returning them to ship at Captain's request. Ship still afloat but water gaining. Am standing by to beach her if necessary.

(N.O.I.C. Aultbea. 1912/29).

STAFFORDSHIRE has been beached.

(N.O.I.C. Aultbea 2153/29).

Convoy
FS.449

One enemy aircraft bearing 180° 3 miles, course 270°. Position 53° 28' N. 0° 57' E. (VERDUN 1152/29).

My 1152. Aircraft shadowing 1000 feet. (VERDUN 1207/29).

One Aircraft bearing 300° distant one mile course 260° my position 53° 14' N 1° 8' E. (VERDUN 1415/29).

Help. Enemy A/C bombing convoy "Plumb." (VERDUN 1419/29)

My 1419. 2 bombs no hits. (VERDUN 1425/29).
Fighter aircraft being sent to ~~PLUMB~~ PLUMB.
(Whitehall W/T 1428/29)

Am being attacked by enemy aircraft. 3 bombs no hits.

(VERDUN 1534/29).

ANTWERPEN.....

MOST SECRET.29.3.1941.
Saturday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity.ANTWERPEN.(Dutch, 364 tons) Bombed and sunk at 1330/28
7 Miles N.W. Bull Point in 051° 16' N
004° 21' W. 4 survivors out of crew of 7
landed at Swansea. (N.O.I.C. Swansea
1220/29).ARROW1 A/C bearing 080° 3 miles my position
54° 10' N 14° 12' W.
(ARROW. 1305 /29)Convoy
FN445.One enemy A/C bearing 050 from Convoy.
Position 310° Outer Dowsing LV 26 miles.
(PYTCHLEY 1325/29 and 1408/29).
My 1408. 4 bombs no hits fighters chasing.
(PYTCHLEY 1433/29)
Fighter protection being sent Pilot.
(Whitehall: Rec'd. 1438/29).EMPIRE
MERMAID.
(Bombed 26/3)Arrived ACHATES with 19 survivors from
EMPIRE MERMAID.
(F.O.I.C. Greenock 1346/29).VENI.(Norwegian, 2982 tons). Attacked by enemy
plane in 60° 10' N. 11° 11' W.
(VENI 1431/29).Convoy
WN. 51 A/C Shadowing Convoy Material in 58° 18'
N 2° 29' W.
(Whitehall W/T 1615/29). "Material"
Fighters being sent to assist MATERIAL
(Liverpool W/T 1624/29).SIR JOHN LISTER(M/S Trawler) Machine-gunned off Lizard
1200/29. One rating to Falmouth sick
quarters. Injury serious but not dangerous.
(F.O.I.C. Falmouth 1622/29).Convoy ^{"Agent"} AGENT
OILTRADER
(British Tanker,
5550 tons sunk)Shadowed by one enemy aircraft in 52° 19' N
1° 59' E.
(WALLACE 1658/29)

1 shadowing.....

MOST SECRET.29.3.1941.
Saturday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity.

"Agent"
 Convoy AGENT (F.N. 446) 1 shadowing aircraft Convoy AGENT, in
 OILTRADER 52° 30' N 2° 5' E.
 (British Tanker, (WALLACE 1832/29) "Agent"
 5550 tons sunk.) Enemy A/C bombing AGENT.
 (continued). (WALLACE 1845/29).
 My 1845 OILTRADER hit in after hold.
 Engines out of action send tugs.
 (WALLACE 1850/29).
 My 1850. OILTRADER abandoning ship.
 (WALLACE 1902/29). "Agent"
 Enemy aircraft bombing AGENT.
 (WALLACE 1915/29).
 AGENT Bombed a second time. No hits.
 (WALLACE 1919/29).
 My 1902. Trawlers standing by trying to
 beach her.
 (WALLACE 1924/29).
 My 1915. 2 bombs no hits.
 (WALLACE 1925/29).
 Tugs leaving Yarmouth for OILTRADER.
 (C in C Nore 1951/29).
 My 1924. Position of OILTRADER 052° 36.5'
 N 002° E.
 (WALLACE 1958/29).
 Enemy aircraft bombing.
 (WALLACE 2004/29).
 My 2004. 3 AP bombing and machine gunning.
 (WALLACE 2009/29). My 2009 No damage. Seek.
 (WALLACE 2019/29).
 Your 1951. OILTRADER has sunk.
 (EGLINTON 2044/29).

Unknown
Ship.

Received 1904 G.M.T. AAAA DE GHPG 10W.
 Scarweather Ship. Planes attacking.
 (Burnham Radio 1900/29).

KINGSWAY.

(British steam Trawler) Reports have been
 bombed by enemy A/C at approximately 1400/
 26. Position 10 miles E. of Bell Rock.
 Vessel making water slowly. No casualties.
 Vessel now in Leith. (C in C Rosyth 1909/29)

KIMBERLEY.
sunk.

(Trawler) Bombed and sunk vicinity 62E
 buoy, Survivors landed at Grimsby. Boats

crew from.....

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

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War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Air Activity.

KIMBERLEY.
sunk. (cont.)

crew from S.S. EFFRA engaged on present work also landed at Grimsby. EFFRA undamaged and proceeded. (F.O. Humber 2206/29).

Mining.

Operation
GZ.

C in C Plymouth 1403/28. Owing to unexpected difficulties in preparing mines vessels concerned cannot be loaded until 1700 today. Request instructions. (N.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1009/29). Operation G.Z. is postponed to night of 30/31 March. (C in C Plymouth 1029/29). Operation G.Z. para 5. Amend R/V to read 130 Wolf Rock 10 at 2030/30. 20th D.F. to round Wolf Rock 140 Approach R/V on an easterly course. (C in C Plymouth 1357/29).

Z.M.E. 26.

Intend leaving Milford Haven 1545 today for Z.M.E. 26 to lay at midnight returning on completion about 0845 tomorrow. (PLOVER 1042/29).

Thames
Estuary.

Four S.A. Mines detonated today as follows. (Capt. M/S. Sheerness 1150/29).

Aberlady
Convoy
Anchorage.

Cancel my 1244/4/3.
(C in C Rosyth 1217/29).

Operation
SN 8.

Proposals and details.
(R.A.M.L. 1242/29). See Operations Volume.

Operation
PW 7.

Proposals.
(C in C Nore. 1234/29) See Operations Volume

MOUNT PELION.

(Greek, 5655 tons) Mined at anchor Milford Haven. Number One full up water. (Burnham Radio 1552/29).

MOST SECRET.29.3.1941.
Saturday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Mining.(contd.)3 Mines sunk
off Iceland.

My 1235/24 and my 1409/27 Icelandic Fisheries Protection Ship THOR sank 3 mines 28/3 as follows. Mines recovered. (position) All mines British marked XX. (N.O.I.C. Iceland 1600/29).

GRENAA.

(British, 1262 tons) Loaded with grain. Blew up by magnetic mine whilst securing to Bellamy's Wharf at about 1230 today. 4 killed 3 missing. *Damage received forepart*
(F.O.I.C. London. 1832/29). *stern remained afloat.*
From Capt Matthews T.D.

Spurn Point.

At 1234 today L L Trawlers detonated a mine 049=1/2°. Spurn Point Lighthouse 20 miles. At 1304 a mine exploded spontaneously in 138°. Spurn Point Lighthouse 3 miles.
(F.O. Humber 1942/29)

Humber.

My 2152/29. About 20 aircraft over Humber. Expected about 50 miles laid below middle L/V. Anticipated port will be open at 1100 tomorrow.
(F.O. Humber 2230/29).

Avonmouth.

Owing to possibility of minelaying no ships are to enter or leave Avonmouth until further orders or to proceed above Walton Bay.
(F.O.I.C. Cardiff. 2318/29).

Enemy Intelligence.SCHARNHORST
GNEISENAU.

SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were in Brest a.m./28.
(F.O.S. 0104/29).

Enemy Convoy.

Convoy 6 M V tonnage 3000 to 8000, course 090° position 61° - 55' N. 4° - 55' E. (D 254. 1045/29 to 18 Group). 00603 cipher 29/3. Following for M.I.3 French Ambassador told Counsellor last night that he had news of recent German movements towards channel ports.
(Military Attache Berne 2122/29 to War Office)

MOST SECRET.29.3.1941.
Saturday.War Dairy.CASUALTIES & DEFECTS.GARTH.

GARTH's position uncertain. Two Tugs to proceed as arranged to Haisboro' Sand third Tug with lighter to N. Scroby earliest daylight escorted by Trawler A/C from Bircham Newton searching at daylight Fighter Patrol asked for if possible.
(C in C Nore 0453/29).

Departure GARTH in tow of tug DIVERSION for Harwich by swept channels E.T.A. 2000 (F.O.I.C. Yarmouth 1148/29).

GARTH escorting F N445 last night grounded on North Scroby. Now refloated and will be towed to Harwich. Propellers known to be damaged. Other damage not known.
(C in C Nore 1211/29).

→ B1.

Rammed in Rosses's Channel Londonderry at 1920 28/3 by H.M. Trawler LADY ELSA. Slight superficial damage near the bows. No damage to torpedo tubes, hydroplanes or pressure hull. Still seaworthy.
(B 1 0950/29).

LEWES.

My 1652/24. LEWES delayed by defects (C in C Plymouth 1244/29).

→ S/M B1.

Norwegian submarine B 1 in collision with H.M.T. LADY ELSA at 1920/28 in Loch Foyle. LADY ELSA undamaged. B. 1 damaged, intend to carry out sufficient repairs by 0900/3 to enable trials to complete without delay when weather is suitable.
(Capt. D Londonderry 1539/29).

CAIRO

R.A.D's 2130/28/3. Work of installing two pom poms will take 10 days. Ships officers seriously concerned regarding foremost condenser tubes. Request early decision.
(F.O.I.C. Glasgow 1640/29).

APV. { MARGUERITE
MARIE LOUISE

Cancel my 0930/28. Now at Appledore. Will be returning with defects to Port Talbot.
(N.O.I.C. Swansea 1645/29).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.29.3.1941.
Saturday.HOME COMMANDS.Shipping and Convoys.Capital Ship
Escorts.

Procedure at night when escorting slow convoys.
(V.C.N.S. 1038/29) "A" Message) original in Lion copy only.

Radius
Routes.

Reply to Admty. 2334/27.
(C in C W.A. 1743/29 to Admty). Original in special Summaries Folder.

Advice of
important cargoes

Admty. 2224/27. Authorities concerned should give as much notice as possible, in order that necessary arrangements may be made for escorts.
(D.O.D. (H) 2141/29. to all C in C's and F.O.I.C.'s Home.)

Military Convoys
W.S. 7

List. Fuel consumption and bunkers.
(D.S.T. 0314/29).
Following twenty vessels sailed U.K. 25/3 in convoy W.S. 7 List. Speed Distination and Port of Call, South Africa.
(D.S.T. 1754/29).

GLENARTNEY
COMORIN
BOREAS

Loading at Liverpool with important Military stores for Suez, ready to leave U.K. 4/4. COMORIN carrying military personnel for Freetown will leave Clyde 4/4 April for Freetown and is to provide ocean escort for GLENARTNEY to vicinity of Freetown. BOREAS is to provide A/S escort as far as fuel permits proceeding to Gibraltar to re-fuel. C in C W.A. requested to provide the necessary additional A/S escort.
(D.O.D.(H) 2253/29 to C in C W.A. etc.)

942A

1038/29th March.

SECRET.

MESSAGE.

OUT.

To: "A" Message Home and Abroad. 897 A. Date. 29.3.41.

Naval Code (J) Secret.

Permanent

From Admiralty.

BASEGRAM.

Capital ships when escorting slow convoys without a good A/S screening force for the convoy should leave the convoy after dark and cruise independently during the night, gradually working ahead of the convoy so that should an attack by surface ships on convoy take place during night or at daylight, they will be able to close convoy rapidly. Escorting capital ship should rejoin convoy as soon as it is light.

2. It is considered above procedure will give greater security by night to escorting capital ship than if she cruised with the convoy at slow speed as it may be expected that any U boat shadowing the convoy will concentrate on attacking the convoy and be unaware that the escorting capital ship has left it.

3. It is, however, of great importance that a cruiser or heavier ship when acting as ocean escort to a slow convoy should be able to remain with it for as long as possible.

4. This period has, in some cases, been seriously reduced by the escorting vessel proceeding at a higher speed than the convoy, zigzagging ahead or astern of it, as a counter to possible danger from submarines.

5. Subject to considerations of visibility, intelligence of enemy movements, need for operating aircraft, etc., it is considered that whenever submarine attack is considered a possibility the ocean escort should normally be stationed by day in the centre of the convoy about a cable astern of the line of the leading ships.

6. The centre columns should be opened out to such distance as will allow complete freedom of manoeuvre to the ocean escort. The escort should, when in this station, proceed at the speed of the convoy.

1038/29.

D.O.D. (F) 164

Approved by V.C.N.S.

- 1st. Lord.
- 1st. S.L.
- 5th. S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H).
- A.C.N.S. (F).
- A.C.N.S. (T).
- Naval Sec.
- C.S.O. to 1st. S.L.
- Ops. (4).
- O.D. (5) (O.D. 1048/41).
- O.I.C. (2).
- D.S.D. 9.
- D.N.I. (4).
- D. of P. (3).

- M. (2).
- D. A/S. W.
- D.T.D. (4).
- D.T.D. (M).
- I.P. (3).
- W.D.
- D.N.A.D.
- A.C.R.
- A.G.R.M.
- W/T Room.

*Purpose Lim
Copy*

N.T.

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.29.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic.CAIRNDALE.

Your 2136/28. Admty intention was that CAIRNDALE should proceed to sea R/V. Unless you have any special reason to cancel it, request you will so direct her. (1st S.L. 0007/29 to F.O.C.N.A.)
 Canceled my 2136/28. Order CAIRNDALE to proceed in accordance with previous orders. FLEUR DE LYS and COREOPSIS return to Gibraltar on same route as outward voyage. Inform CAIRNDALE that information regarding PANDORA will be passed to her. FLEUR DE LYS acknowledge when 50 miles from CAIRNDALE.
 (F.O.C.N.A. 0118/29 to FLEUR DE LYS).
 PANDORA sailed 0300/29 and will now R/V with you during daylight 3rd or 4th/4. (F.O.C.N.A. 0252/29 to CAIRNDALE).

Operation
"Winch"
"Tender".

You have full discretion to carry out operations "WINCH" and "TENDER" as you think fit observing that: (a) "WINCH" must be carried out as soon as practicable. (b) REPULSE, FURIOUS, ARGUS and NARKUNDA must wait at Gibraltar until an adequate screen can be provided. (c) HIGHLANDER is at your disposal until further orders. (d) NAPIER and NIZAM must proceed to Freetown with HIGHLAND MONARCH without delay.
 (1st S.L. 0022/29 to F.O. Force H, F.O.C.N.A.)

→ PANDORA.

Leaves Gibraltar 0300/29 routed through 034° N., 012° and 031° N., 018° W thence to vicinity of 032° 30' N., 032° 30' W. speed of advance 10½ knots.
 (F.O.C.N.A. 0220/29 to N.A. Station).
 Departure PANDORA in accordance with F.O.C.N.A.'s 1216/27 amended by 0252/29. Route.
 (S.O.(I) Gibr. 0356/29).

"Q"
Report.

Unknown armed merchant ship ordering me to stop.
 (CITY OF DIEPPE, 0615/29).
 Following has been read. Cancel my 0520/28, CITY OF DIEPPE, friendly. (Gibraltar Radio 0652/29).
 Your 0630/29. (No trace W/R, 0615/29 from CITY OF DIEPPE refers.) CITY OF DIEPPE is Naval Store Carrier bound for Gibraltar from Freetown. Report your P.C. and S.
 (F.O.C.N.A. 0732/29 to MARSDALE.)

/Your 0732/29.

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic-Contd.

"Q" Report
cont:

Your 0732/29. At 0550 P C and S 035° 16' N., 006° 56' W., 233° 12½ knots proceeding after investigating ship. At 0800 P. C and S 035° 33' N., 006° 30' W 233 12½ knots. (MARSDALE, 0930/29) Cancel my 0520/29. ~~FRIEND~~. (CITY OF DIEPPE 0752/29 to F.O.C.N.A.) CITY OF DIEPPE later chased by submarine See U/B Campaign.

- See page 627.

Crew of A/C
Rescued by
Spanish Ship.

My 1837/19. All arrived and in my charge Will be sent to Gibraltar after few formalities. (N.A.Madrid 1001/29 to Admty.)

CABO de BUENA ESPERANZA 8/3

French Convoy
Operation
"Ration",
Escorts for
Force H and
REPULSE.

Slow French convoy consisting of BANGKOK, SAN DIEGO, CAP VARELLA, AZROU escorted by French Destroyer SIMOUN now passing Straits Eastbound in territorial waters. Intend to carry out "RATION" with four "Fleets" supported by SHEFFIELD. As it is unlikely that interception can take place until convoy reaches French North Africa territorial waters about noon/30, force concerned cannot be expected to reach Gibraltar until p.m/31. They will not be available to meet either S.O. Force H or REPULSE. Unless therefore NAPIER and NIZAM can be utilized which should not delay them more than about two days there will be only four destroyers and EGRET available here to meet and screen Force H and REPULSE. EGRET's convoy sails on 3/4. (F.O.C.N.A., 1044/29 to Admty.) Your 1044/29.

It is hoped that interception may prove possible earlier than noon/30. NIZAM and NAPIER may be used to screen battlecruisers but should be delayed as short a time as possible. (V.C.N.S., 1348/29 to F.O.C.N.A.) *See also next page* Your 1044/29. You should be guided by A.T. 0120/28 and not A.T. 2255/13. BANGKOK however remains your major objective. (A.C.N.S.(F) 1920/29 to F.O.C.N.A.)

/Captured.....

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic-Contd.

Captured Tankers

My 1848/26. (N.T. in W.D.) Method of raider oiling at sea. Indications of ALTMARK Class tanker co-operating on 15/3 and appeared part loaded when sighted by SAN CASIMIRO at dawn that day.

Following ships reported sunk up to 15/3 and other prizes. KANTARA, TRELAWNEY, DUFF, HASLEDEN.

HARLESDEN

Master of BIANCA states that from previous experience in Norway ALTMARK is capable of at least 22 knots.

(F.O.C.N.A., 1108/29 to Admty.) ? A.D. HUFF

ASAKA MARU

My 1022/28. My reply sent 15/3 repeated herewith. Your 1551/14, she asked for 500 tons took 285 from Portuguese Company not subject to our control 1224/15. (N.A.Lisbon 1113/29 to Admty.)

CAPO ALGA,
TODARO
BURANO

Italian vessels, now ready to sail, Admiralty has been informed. (Consul Teneriffe, 1117/29 to D.N.I.)

FRISCO

(Italian) sailed from Ceara at 2330/28. (D.D.I.C., 1623/29 to F.O.C.N.A., F.O.C.N.P)

See p. 947.

French Hostages

55 French hostages taken at Dakar have now been here for six months and there appears to be no prospect of early settlement with Vichy Govt. Will you press for immediate withdrawal to U.K. or elsewhere? Accommodation urgently required. (Govr. Gib. 1630/29 to W.O.)

Force H Escort.

My 1238/28. (Escort for S.O. Force H in operation in Western Mediterranean) Amend names of destroyers to read NAPIER (S.O.) FORTUNE and NIZAM. (F.O.C.N.A. 1734/29 to S.O. Force H.)

See previous next page

/Operation.....

29.3.1941.
Saturday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic-Contd.

Operations
"Ration"

Gibraltar departures eastward SHEFFIELD FAULKNER, FURY, FORESTER, FEARLESS, to carry out Operation "Ration" in accordance with F.O.C., N.A's 1044/29 (S.O.I., Gib. 2300/29 to Admty. etc.)

NAPIER
NIZAM
FORTUNE

Gibraltar departure NAPIER, FORTUNE, NIZAM, to R.V. Force H in accordance with my 1734/29. (S.O.I. Gib. 2340/29 to S.O. Force H.)

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

WAR DIARY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic.

LECH
(German).

Rio de Janeiro reports loading of LECH is proceeding and that it is expected ship will be ready to sail about second week in April.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 0012Z/29 to S.A. Division).

FAUSTO
and
Italian ships
in
Montevideo.

My 0112/23. (FAUSTO reported to be raising steam). No further signs of activity on board Italian ships in Montevideo which appear to have reverted to normal.
(S.C.(I) Montevideo, 0044Z/29).

German
ships
at
Santos.

Following A.3. report received from Santos. Reported German ships at Santos are sailing early a.m./30. So far no signs of activity, 2035/28 (Ends).
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 0132Z/29).

DRESDEN
sailing.

Following received from Santos. German ship is now leaving harbour 2240/28. This presumably refers to DRESDEN. S.O.(I) Freetown informed.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo 0230Z/29, to Admty.)
(C.in C. S.A. 2107/29 to Admty.)
My 0230Z/29 name of ship is DRESDEN.
(S.O.(I) Montevideo 1201Z/29).

FRISCO.

Italian FRISCO departure 2330/28 destination not known.
(Scara. to Fairmiss, T.H.I. 0735/29).
(N.C.S.O. Pernambuco, 0851/29).
(S.O.(I) Montevideo, 1108Z/29).

See p. 945

DELHI.

Simonstown departure 0900/28 DELHI, for St. Helena and Freetown at 16 knots in accordance with C.in C. S.A's 1347/27 E.T.A. St. Helena 1600/1.
(F.O.I.C. Simonstown, 0915Z/29 to Admty).

Missing
Aircraft.

FURIOUS reports Fulmar missing since 1100 /27 may have landed on coast, requests enquiries.
(C.in C. S.A. 1021N/29 to Admty).

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

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WAR DIARY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

ASPHODEL
H.G.58.

Your 1630/28. (Proposal to sail ASPHODEL with H.G.58 convoy). I agree with programme and proposals. (C.in C. S.A. 1203N/29 to F.O.C.N.A.)

FRANCO
MARTELLI,
FRISCO,
→ DRESDEN,
LECH.

FRANCO MARTELLI sailed with 10,000 tons of oil 1730/28 from Pernambuco. *See Page 964.* FRISCO 5,000 tons Naptha 2330/28 from Ceara.

DRESDEN 2240/28 from Santos. LECH likely to leave Rio De Janeiro 31/3. Manager of Shipping Company at Bahia has been approached to clean bottoms of German ships lying there in a hurry. (N.A. Rio de Janeiro, 1401/29 to D.N.I., C.in C. S.A. 1601/29 to S.A.Sqdn.)

→ DRESDEN.

Secret information B.3. received reports DRESDEN left for South of Tristan Da Cunha lat. 40° where she will receive further instructions. (N.A. Rio De Janeiro 1639/29 to D.N.I. etc)

French
West
Africa.

Situation if Free French in West Africa were attacked by Vichy French. (G.O.C. W. Africa, 1650/29 to W.O.)

Dispositions
of S.A.D.

In view of activity of enemy merchant vessels in S. American ports. (R.A.S.A.D. 1724Z/29) See Operations Volume.

Bunkers
from
Freetown.

My 1030/5. To ensure sufficient space kept for bunkers Masters to be reminded that delays waiting convoy at Freetown may cause serious fouling and increased coal consumption to maintain convoy speed. In addition to requirements in my 1030/5, tramps are required to leave Freetown with sufficient coal to reach Tyne safely. (D.T.D. 1944/29 to C.in C's E.I. China, A.C.N.B. etc.)

29.3.1941. ⁹⁴⁹
Saturday.

WAR DIARY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

W.S.7.
WISHART.
VIDETTE.

Departure 1800 WISHART and VIDETTE to Bathurst for fuel then R/V with W.S.7. 1600/2.
(S.O.(I) Freetown, 2127/29 to Adnty).

CABO DE HORNOS.

Following has been read. Addressed to all ships. SS CABO DE HORNOS. At 2000 hours we took shipwrecked on lat. 7.50N., 25.56 W. we be careful all ships nearby.
L/c (MOSQUITERA (Spanish) T.O.R. 2152N/29).
not ship.

Convoy S.L. 70.

Departure 0900/29 Convoy S.L.70 with DRAGON as escort until relieved by BULOLO. Local A/S escort CALENDULA until 4/4 H.M. Trawlers KELT and PICT until 2/4.
(S.O.(I) Freetown, 2357N/29).

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

(MATAPAN)

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets

List of Principal Officers

(From Admiralty narrative issued to Press for publication 2.4.1941.)

C. in C.	Adm. Sir A.B.Cunningham.	WARSPITE
V.A.L.F.	Vice-Adm. H.D. Pridham Wippell	ORION
R.A. (A)	Rear-Adm. D.W. Boyd	FORMIDABLE
R.A. 1 B.S.	Rear-Adm. H.B. Rawlings	BARHAM

Battleships:-

WARSPITE	Capt. D.B. Fisher
VALIANT	Capt. C.E. Morgan
BARHAM	Capt. G.C. Cooke

Aircraft Carrier:-

FORMIDABLE	Capt. A.W. La T. Bisset
------------	-------------------------

Cruisers:-

ORION	Capt. G.R.B. Back
AJAX	Capt. E.D.B. Mc. Carthy
PERTH	Capt. Sir P.W. Bowyer-Smyth, Bt.
GLOUCESTER	Capt. H.A. Rowley

Flotilla Leader:-

STUART	Capt. H.M.L. Waller R.A.N.
--------	----------------------------

War Diary29.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanEngagement between British & Italian Fleets*(Malabar)*Mediterranean
Fleet. Position.

- (1) Intend to pass through position 200° 36.22 N., 21.18 E., at 2330 on course 070° 17 knots.
- (2) Intend to alter course to 250° at 0430.
- (3) R.V. with me in 252° 36° N., 22° E., 18 at 0700 on course 250° 17 knots.
- (4) BONAVENTURE, JUNO, JAGUAR, DEFENDER keep East of 022° $45'$ E., till 0430 then proceed R.V. (C. in C., Med., 0005/29 0006/29 to Med. Fleet)

HAVOCK
in contact
~~with~~ VITTORIO
VENETO.

In contact 1 LITTORIO Class who appears to be undamaged and stopped. Will not return (corrupt group) Have expended all torpedoes. (HAVOCK 0020/29 to Capt. D. 14.)

Following has been received. Addressed HAVOCK from C. in C., Med. Verify your 0020. Give position. (Nore W/T 0040/29) Following received. Addressed Capt. D.14 Repeated C. in C., Med. from HAVOCK. My position is 014° 35° N., 21° E., 18.8 (Nore W/T 0050/29)

Following received (Corrupt group) repeated D. 14 HAVOCK from GREYHOUND Expect to reach HAVOCK 0140 with GRIFFIN. (Nore W/T 0105/29)

Following received. Addressed HAVOCK from D. 14. Were you burning searchlights at 02? (Nore W/T 0213/29)

Battleship and
2 Cruisers
damaged

Speed of one LITTORIO class battleship reduced to 15 knots by successive day torpedo aircraft attacks. Fleet pursued and in ensuing night actions our battleships have very severely damaged 2 8-inch cruisers, hoped sunk. Destroyer attacks taking place result not yet known. (C. in C., Med., 0028/29 to Admt.)

Aircraft
Attack

My 2205/28. (attack on enemy fleet) One aircraft landed 2300/28, one crashed Suda Bay, crew safe. (Maleme, 0045/29 to C. in C., Med.)

/Following...

War Diary29.3.1941.
SaturdayFOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanMatapan.Engagement between British & Italian Fleets
Contd.

Following has been read.
Suda must not use Admirals as point
(? to) point. (Naval Gen. Call Sign
0115/29 to Alexandria)

BONAVENTURE

R.A. Alexandria's 1350/28. Am joining
you. My P C and S are 033° 20' N., 025°
00' E., 300° 25 knots. (BONAVENTURE 0131/
29 to C. in C., Med.)

Part 2, my A 184/29. Continue long as
fuel permits then land Scara Cancel W.A.A.
N refuel stand by during daylight.
(Med. A/C 0315/29 to A/C Mediterranean)

FORMIDABLE
Aircraft

FORMIDABLE's aircraft R.V. with fleet in
position 235° 53 miles from Cape Matapan
at 0700. M.L.A. 250° 17 knots. (C. in C.,
Med. 0326/29 to S.B.N.O., Suda Bay)

Greek
Destroyers

Greek destroyer flotilla may be joining
the fleet from northward at 0700. (C. in
C., Med. 0335/29)

Following has been read: W. 329 A 184 L.
Leave first light search sector depth
130 miles between 270° and 327° from
position 280° Spade 100 miles. 0312/29
(Med. A/C 0342/29)

Destroyers to
R.V. at 0700

Be sure and make the R.V. at 0700 in
position 252° 36° N., 22° E 18, 250° 17
knots. (C. in C., Med, 0358/29 to
Capt.(D) 2. Capt. (D) 14 Capt. (D) 10
HASTY, GREYHOUND, HAVOCK.

/Following...

953

29.3.1941.

Saturday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Malapan.

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets
Contd.

Following has been read. Am returning to base Suda to make repair on water. (Med. A/C 0525/29 to Med. Fleet A/C)

Sector 270. 327° from 3600 N., 21.40 E. (Med. A/C 0530/29 to A/C Med.)

A. 188 shift search 40 - M - NW. (Med. A/C., 0750/29)

Series of night actions took place in area within 50 miles of position 035° N., 021° E. Believe two (? enemy cruisers) sunk. C. in C. Med. and fleet P. C and S at 0700, 035° 55' N., 021° 40' E., 250°, 17 knots. (Capt. O.S., Alexandria, 0753/29 to V.A. Malta, etc.)

Lifeboats

XX I Lifeboats and men position 35. 22 N 20.20 E. (Med, A/C 0820/29 to A/C Med.)

GIOVANNI DELLE
BANDE NERE

Following has been read:- A.C. Mediterranean From Sigs. possibly survivors ex GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE. (Med. A/C 0830/29)

Following has been read: 193A Negative return Alexandria search sector between 270° and 327° from datum 36° 9' N., 21° 40' E., (A/C Med. 0903/29)

2 enemy ships,
ORION

Two enemy warships type unknown bearing 205° 10 miles course unknown position 285 35° N., 22° E., R 18. (ORION 1915/29, ? 0915/29)

AAA. 198 Cancel previous orders N search sector 300° and 330° V sector 270° to 300° datum 36.00 N., 21.40 E. (A/C Med. 1100/29 to Med. A/C)

/AAAA.....

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Engagement between British & Italian Fleet
Contd.

AAAA 199. Search area between 35.00 N., and 36. 00 N., from 20.00 E., to 18.00 E., (Med. A/C 1102/29, to A/C Med.)

Greek
Destroyers

Greek destroyers are conforming with your 1135/27. (Not to Admiralty - See 0335/29 from C. in C., Med.) (N.A.Athens 1145/29 to C. in C., Med.)

Rafts

Following has been read:
Six rafts about 80 survivors position 35. 20 N., 21.00 E. (Med., 1208/29)

A/C landing

Following for Maleme. Greek Coast watchers report one fighter from an aircraft carrier has forced landing at Urtemon San Nijxlo at Kithera Island at 1200/29. (N.A.Athens 1301/29 to ? S.B.N.O Suda Bay)

Greek
Destroyers

Following has been read.
Four destroyers Greek 36.09 N., 19.34 E., MLA 080 25 3 destroyers Greek 15 N., 19 34 E MLA 080 25. (Med. A/C 1350/29)

Italian
Survivors

Dinghy 4 survivors Italian 35.46 N., 20. 50 E. (Med A/C 1405/29 to C. in C., Med.)

Following has been read.
QQ1. 4 Destroyers position 30.08 N., 21.19 E., course 099°, speed 20 knots H British. (A/C Med., 1420/29) W.R. Note The position 30.08 N., is understood to be wrong but nothing better can be obtained from the signal as received.

/Following.....

War Diary29.3.1941.
Saturday.FOREIGN STATIONSMediterraneanMatapan.Engagement between British & Italian Fleet, Contd.

Following has been read.
Your 1773 nothing to report intend landing
Suda examine damage due to combat, E.T.A.
1640. (Med. A/C 1525/29)

RORQUAL

Order RORQUAL to patrol north of Straits
of Messina 30/3 to 1/4 to intercept
damaged enemy particularly Italian battle-
ship LITTORIO, probably proceeding Spezia.
(C. in C., Med. 1603/29 to Capt. S. 1.)

Greek Navy

Movements 30/3.
One submarine patrolling in Adriatic.
7 destroyers returning Piraeus through
(? Elafonise) One ship with one
destroyer leaves Piraeus p.m. for Suda
Bay. (N.A. Athens, 1637/29 to Admty.)

A.N. 23
G.A. 8

S.S.T.O. Port Said No. 193.
Convoy A.N. 23 sailed Port Said p.m./28,
Alexandria 0700/29 to arrive Piraeus via
Anti Kithera 0900/1. G.A. 8 (15 knots)
sailed Piraeus p.m./29 probably via Anti-
Kithera. JUNO, JAGUAR, DEFENDER left
Kithera patrol 0600/29 for Piraeus as
escort for G.A. 8. 8. Greek destroyers
returning to Piraeus from position west
of Kithera. SOUTHERN MAID escorting
one ship from Alexandria expected time
of arrival Mersa Tobruk 1000/30. KINGSTON
CRYSTAL with 3 ships sailed Alexandria
1700/29 for Mersa Tobruk. PROTECTOR
sailed Piraeus for Alexandria p.m./29.
H.S.DORSETSHIRE sailed Mersa Tobruk a.m./29
E.T.A., at Haifa 1800/31.
(C. in C., Med. 1829/29 to Med. Fleet)

Aircraft
landing

Your 1712 and my 1120. Aircraft 7 G
force landed Kithera Channel Islands.
Crew safe. (Maleme 1851/29 to FORMIDABLE)

/R.A.F.....

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Matapan.

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets, Contd.

R.A.F.
Report of
attacks on
Enemy.

Operational Summary Number 292 up to 1200 hours. 29/3/41.
Greece. 28/3. During early afternoon 19 Blenheims dropped 18750 lbs bombs on Italian warships in position 35° 00' N., 20° 55' E., reported by flying boat reconnaissance. Strength of enemy 2 battle-ships 3 cruisers 3 destroyers. Direct hit one cruiser 500 lbs. S.A.P. bomb. Second cruiser 250 lb. S.A.P. bomb 1 destroyer 250 lbs. S.A.P. bomb. Several near misses. Damage to first cruiser forced it to stop. No R.A.F. casualties. British Naval forces subsequently gained contact and in series of night actions believed sank 2 enemy cruisers.
(H.Q., R.A.F., M.E., No T.O.O./29)

VITTORIO VENETO
escapes
3 cruisers sunk,
4 Swordfish lost,
1 crew safe.

My 0028/29. I much regret (* LITTORIO) who must be badly damaged below water, escaped during night action against enemy cruisers (? and) was not located by reconnaissance on 29th.

(ii) Three cruisers sunk for certain, viz, ZARA, POLA, one name unascertained probably FIUME or BANDENERE class. It is even possible both of the last two were sunk. One destroyer of VINCENZO GIUBERTI class sunk for certain and probably two others. Considerable other damage was done including that by 23 Blenheims from Greece who attacked at 1500/28.

(iii) Three Swordfish were lost during operation (?), one other crashed but crew safe. No other casualties reported.

(iv) Transferred 900 officers and men injured prisoners including Capt. Despisi of Cruiser POLA. Admiral Cantoni who was in (? ZARA) apparently lost. Italian C. in C., was in *LITTORIO.

(v) Chase of *LITTORIO broken off at 1100/29 after Fleet had returned to scene of night action to deal with any damaged ships which remained.

* VITTORIO VENETO

/vi).....

*One submarine
added to this
list 1730/30
(Per 493 B)*

957

War Diary

29.3.1941.
Saturday

FOREIGN STATIONS

Mediterranean

Malapan.

Engagement between British & Italian Fleets,
Contd.

(vi) Sorry to have had to abandon 200 to 300 men in rafts, crew of a sunken cruiser, owing to the presence of German aircraft. I informed Italian Chief of Naval Staff of position of these survivors by W/T.
(vii) Fuller account follows also suggested press communique. (C. in C., Med. 2207/29 to Admt.)

Proposed
Press
Communique

C. in C., Med. 2210/29 see Lion Copy. (p. 960 A)

Orders to
RORQUAL

Comdr. (S) 1. 1403/22 and 1125/28
Proceed forthwith to establish patrol North of Straits of Messina to intercept damaged enemy ships particularly LITTORIO class battleship probably making for Spezia. Leave this area p.m./1 and return to Malta by route as previously ordered by Comdr. (S) 1. (Capt. S. 1. 2329/29 to RORQUAL)

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

WAR DIARY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (General).

Defence
Against
1-man
torpedoes.

Warning re successful attack by six human torpedoes at Suda Bay. Instructions. (D. of L.D. 0016/29, 0016/29 "A" message). See HOME COMMANDS, Policy.

For defensive measures against human torpedoes, following information required. (D. of L.D. 1413/29 to C. in C. Med., repeated YORK).

BJONNESS,
SOLHEIM.

(Reported sunk in Med. by enemy aircraft) Now known there is no ship of this name. Bjonness being the name of the master of Norwegian tanker SOLHEIM. (D.S. 571, 29/3).

Mediterranean.

CARNIA
sunk
and 1 M.V.
damaged.

Italian supply ship 5451 tons. Greek Ministry of Marine announces sunk on 23/3 by S/M TRITON. A small ship was seriously damaged. (D.S. 572).

Convoy
A.N. 23.

Proceed in company to join A.N. 23. On joining DECOY remain with Convoy, WATERHEN to Alexandria for boiler cleaning. (C. in C. Med., 0902/29 to DECOY, WATERHEN) Convoy sailing telegram A.N. 23 Alexandria sections. 0600/29 (iv) eight knots (v) as for Port Said Section. (vi) DECOY, HERO. (N.C.S.O. Alexandria, 1135/29 to Admty etc.) Following is repetition of DECOY's 1715/29 (N.T. in W.R.) S.B.N.O. Suda Bay From DECOY. Cancel my 1455/29. Am complying with C. in C's 0902/29. T.O.O. 1715/29. (Ends.) (Malta W/T 1940/29).

WAR DIARY.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

Convoy
A.N.23.

Consists of 16 ships escorted by COVENTRY, HERO and SALVIA.E.T.A. 0920/1.
(R.A.Alexandria, 0915/29 to Med. Fleet).

Hurricanes
for
Malta.

Flying limitations of Hurricanes when fitted long range tanks render them ineffective as Fighters. Suggest two convoys of 6 Hurricanes each escorted by Skuas proceed in company without Sunderland escort from point of departure. Suggest convoys be routed across Tunisia and that Sunderland of Glenn Martin from Malta should meet them at (say) Sfax and lead into Malta.
(H.Q. R.A.F. M.E. 0941/29 to Air Min:).

Pipe
Line,
Suez -
Port Said.

Your 1950/16. Material and time required. Request report.
(4th S.L. 1106/29 to C.in C. Med.)

Exchange
between
AUCKLAND
FLAMINGO
and
GNAT
LADYBIRD.

C.in C. Med., 1126/29 See Mediterranean Volume.

Aircraft
casualties.

Summary by types of category 3 R.A.F. aircraft casualties this Command due to enemy action and other causes from 1.1.1941. up to and including 28.3.1941.
(H.Q. R.A.F. M.E. 1214/29 to Air Ministry)

Malta
Air
Raid,
28/3.

Enemy aircraft continued patrols round Island 2238 to 2350 hours approximately 14 aircraft flew over Island from North. No moon, very dark, no fighters up. Parachute flares dropped A.A. engaged unseen targets without results. Several bombs dropped in sea. Some dropped on land near Rabat, Dingli, Hal Far, Kalaf-rana. No service damage or casualties.
(H.Q. R.A.F. Malta, 1640/29).

WAR DIARY.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

AJAX.
PERTH,
HASTY.
DEFENDER.

AJAX, PERTH, HASTY, DEFENDER, pass
anti Kithera Channel 0200. Destroyers
E.T.A. Suda Bay, 0630.
(AJAX 2046/29 to S.B.N.O. Suda Bay).

AJAX.
PERTH.
A.N.23.

AJAX and PERTH expect to arrive Piraeus
1400 to fuel, sailing on completion
to cover A.N.23.
(AJAX, 2136/29 to N.A.Athens, DECOY).

2210/29th March

SECRET

MESSAGE

IN

From C. in C. Mediterranean.

Date 30.3.41.

Recd. 1624.

NAVAL CYPHER (D) BY W/T

Addressed Admiralty.

IMPORTANT

~~Request~~ Request press communique on following lines be issued:

Our air reconnaissance having reported a force of enemy warships to eastward of Cape Passero on ~~March 27th~~ and steering to eastward steps were taken to intercept. On morning ~~March 28th~~ our forces made contact south of western end Crete with a force of enemy cruisers and one LITTORIO class battleship. A second force containing two battleships, a cruiser, and destroyers was also reported by air reconnaissance further north.

A series of torpedo bomber attacks by F.A.A. was made on ~~LITTORIO~~ ^{VITTORIO VENETO} who was seriously damaged, her speed drastically reduced in consequence. R.A.F. bombers also attacked, scoring several hits on cruiser(s) and destroyer(s). (Corrupt Group) damaged was followed but contact was only made as darkness fell. All forces then went into attack and our Battle Fleet very seriously damaged two or three Italian Cruisers, Destroyers following up, ~~and eight inch Italian Cruisers POLA and Italian Cruiser ZARA~~ were sunk and also one other Cruiser either FIUME or one of the ~~Bandenere~~ ^{BANDENERE} Class.

GILOBERTI It is even possible that both were sunk, in addition to one destroyer of ~~Vincenzo Gioberti~~ Class was sunk (?and) probably 2 others. Damage was seen to be inflicted on a number of ships but in the rapidly changing phases of a night action it has not yet been possible to establish details. One J U 88 was shot down during the day.

About 900 survivors of their ships were rescued the following morning, and it would have been possible to save considerably more had it not been for the arrival of German A/C. Captain Despisi of the ~~Italian Cruiser POLA~~ was saved, but Admiral Cantoni whose flag was in ~~Italian Cruiser ZARA~~ is missing. Italian C. in C. was in Italian Battleship LITTORIO. ^{VITTORIO VENETO}

In these actions two aircraft failed to return. No casualties were suffered by our surface craft.

(C. in C., 2210/29)

~~Note: Message very corrupt and delayed in consequence. Portions which read badly are being verified.~~

Advance copy sent to 1st Lord, A.C.N.S.(F), C.S.O. to 1st S.L., Duty Captain, D.O.D.(F), D.D.I.C., D.P.D. and D. of P.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|
| 1st Lord | D.N.I.(4). | |
| 1st S.L. | D.T.D.(4). | |
| V.C.N.S. | D.T.D.(M). | |
| A.C.N.S.(H). | O.I.C.(3). | |
| A.C.N.S.(T) | D. of P.(3). | |
| NAVAL SEC. | D.S.D.9. | |
| C.S.O. to 1st S.L. | D.S.D. | |
| Ops.(4). | D.A/S.W. | W.D. |
| O.D.(5). | I.P.(3). | D.P.D. |
| | | M.(2). |

abd

War Diary.

29.3.1941. 961
Saturday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies.

Italian Dhows
in East
Africa.

Can reply now be given to my 0712/21/3?
Now 26, and owing to difficulty in feeding
crews they have been sailed to Mombasa under
safeguards.

Military concur that selected Dhows should be
released to carry on normal Coastal Trade,
and Marshal of Prize Court has been asked
that, subject to your approval, prize
proceedings should be waived or formal only.
(C.in C. E.I., 0658/29, to Admty.).

RANCHI
CARTHAGE.

RANCHI is to leave East London a.m./31 and
proceed 15 knots to position (x) given and is
then to patrol between position (x) and
position (t) (given) at 12 knots.
My 0640/23. CARTHAGE is to leave patrol so
as to arrive Durban A.M./2.
(C.in C. E.I., 0830Z/29, to RANCHI, CARTHAGE).

HECTOR,
EMPRESS OF
JAPAN.

My 0800/16, para. 2 (re sailing of EMPRESS OF
JAPAN for Capetown) Intend HECTOR instead of
CAPETOWN to escort EMPRESS OF JAPAN from
Bombay probably to vicinity of Durban where
escort will be changed.
(C.in C. E.I., 0840/29 to COMORIN, HECTOR).

Convoy
S.U.4.

S.B.N.O. Suez Canal Area 1929/27. Concur
(in postponement of sailing to 3/4.)
(C.in C. E.I., 1052Z/29).

French
Repatriations

Admty. 1607/25. Over 600 demobilized native
troops with 11 white officers all from
VILLE DE MAJUNGA are due to sail from
Lourenco Marques on 1/4 for Reunion and
Tamatave. They are due to sail in Portuguese
ship INHARRIME by arrangement with Lisbon.
Half of them are for Reunion. French
authorities stated to have given satisfactory
guarantee.

(ii) British Consul General, Lourenco Marques,
reports it might be disastrous to repatriation
arrangements to land Reunion native troops at
Tamatave.

(iii) Understand Ministry of Shipping approved
alternative arrangements (in the event of non-
receipt of French guarantee) for landing these
troops at Dar Es Salaam or Mombasa.
(C.in C. E.I., 1100Z/29, to Admty.).

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

French repatriations
(Contd.)

They are at present in British Ship COLONIAL shortly due Lourenco Marques.
(iv) Will landing of 300 demobilized native troops in Reunion prejudice the operation referred to in A.M. 1607/25? If so request immediate instructions for disposal of both Madagascar and Reunion contingents.
(C.in C. E.I., 1102Z/29, to Admty.).

M.T.B.'s.

Your 1042/17. No allocation of M.T.B's to India is at present proposed and it is regretted that unless present priorities were radically altered no M.T.B's could be made available before 1943.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 1315/29 to F.O.C.R.I.N.).

Greek Ships.

Following Greek ships are carrying urgently required food supplies mainly wheat for Greece. Request they be given priority of movement as far as possible.
(D.T.D. 1942/29, to C.in C. E.I., C.in C. Med.).

China.

Indo-China Trade.

Your 1144/22/1. Grassoux agreed to temporary use of other Allied vessels normally engaged in Indo China trade so long as three Norwegian vessels named were not available. He has now drawn my attention to importance of using these three ships in order to avoid complications with Armistice Commission. Is it intended to make them available at some future date?
(C.in C. China, 0229Z/29 to Admty.).

RAMSES

7983 tons, reported by Press to have left Shanghai for Japan on 29/3. Had been in Shanghai since Sept. 1939. (D.S., 572).

ANNELIESE)
ESSBERGER)

Left Kobe 24/3, returned there 27/3.
(D.S. 572).

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies.

PORPOISE

To part company with Convoy H.X.116 and return to Halifax.
(D.O.D.(H) 0008/29, to ROYAL SOVEREIGN PORPOISE).

→ FRANCO MARTELLI

Italian tanker left Pernambuco 1730/28 having cleared for Oslo.
(D.D.I.C. 0700/29 to C.in C. A.W.I., F.O.C.N.A., VA.N.P.).

→ MALANCHA
Q Report.

Following has been read.
QQQQ 45.33 N. 28.19 W. MALANCHA suspicious.
(Lands End Radio, 1028/29).

A./S. Vessels
at Trinidad &
Bermuda.

Situation. Asking if VISON or HUSKY can be retained at Trinidad until June (C.in C. A.W.I. 1031/29 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa) See Lion Copy.
Cancel my QQQQ of 1024/29, vessel friendly.
> (MALANCHA, 1048/29).

Suspicious
Vessel
sighted.

My 1031/28. Ship was fourmasted Motor Ship of German Type. (Details) My 2215/15 and S.O.(I) Montevideo's 2103Z/25/2 might refer to same Ship.
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1032/29, to Admty.) *See Page 463. 1026.*

DRESDEN
(German)

Reported left Santos 2240/28.
(D.D.I.C. 1118/29 to C.in C. A.W.I., F.O.C.N.A., F.O.C.N.P.).

MUNERIC,
Q Report.

Following has been read. QQQQ. 46.15 N. 30. 35 W., MUNERIC suspicious, (Valentia Radio, 1504/29).
MUNERIC, cancel my 1504/29. Ends.
(Valentia Radio 1523/29).

NORDERNEY
MONBALDO
AMABALITAS
FRISCO
FRANCO MARTELLI

Following information has been received from State Dept. indicating there is a general preparation for sailing of enemy Merchant vessels from Latin American Ports.
From Para, 27/3 NORDERNEY completed loading and anchored with MONBALDO nine miles down river.
(2) From Buenos Aires 27/3 AMABALITAS has received permission to connect wireless and is preparing to leave Bahia. Two Italian vessels at Necochea preparing to sail.

Italian Shipping

War Diary.

29.3.1941.
Saturday

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FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. con'td.

NORDERNEY
MONBALDO
AMABILITAS
FRISCO
FRANCO MARTELLI

(3) From Rio 28/3 German and Italian ships preparing to leave from Rio Santos Rio. Andalusia Recife. FRISCO at Forsythaleza has applied for clearance for Oslo.
(4) From Para, West Indies, NECOCHEA returned and anchored in foreign stream.
(5) *From Pernambuco, 28/3 FRANCO MARTELLI reported ready to leave with cargo of fuel oil. * *see page 948.*
(N.A. Washington, 1140/29 to Admty).

T.C. 10

Your 1736/27. Ocean escort will not be available before (date).
(D.O.D. (H) 1205/29 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa).

H.X. 118

Your 1050/9/2. Intend using Belgian S.S. JEAN JADOT as Cdre. ship for Adml. Austin. H.X. 118. No other suitable ship except DALHOUSIE destination London. Request approval.
(N.C.S.O. Halifax 1424/29 to Admty) Reply
See 1302/30. Page 997.

MOORBY
suspicious smoke,
26/3.

British MOORBY reported to Cape Race that at 2100 G.M.T./26 in 45° 35'N 44° 26'W. she sighted a volume of black smoke on the horizon, possibly vessel on fire, also second vessel in close proximity heading away eastward apparently at high speed. Vessels too distant for description to be obtained.
(D.D.I.C. 1447/29. to C.in.C.H.F. RODNEY, KING GEORGE V, F.O.C.N.A.)

Report of
suspicious vessel's
position by
KING EDWARD.

Your 1031/28. Request particulars and reasons why report was not made at the time by W/T.
(C in C A.W.I. 1633/29 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa)

U.S. Coast-
guard
Cutters.

My 2142/28. Ten coast guard cutters are being made available for transfer. Desired to take them over in U.S. ports, crews being provided from ships' companies of MALAYA and RESOLUTION additional officers and ratings being sent in RESOLUTION and QUEEN ELIZABETH. Capt. Palliser of MALAYA is to make necessary arrangements in conjunction with you. Reply required whether transfer can take place in U.S. and if so dates and ports proposed. Confirm

whether.....

War Diary.

29.5.1941.
Saturday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies.

U.S. Coast-
guard
Cutters.

whether vessels are of 20 knot or 16 knot type.
(1st S.L. 1752/29, to N.A. Washington.)
Reply: 1105/31.

TAYBANK
Q Report.

Following has been read. QQQQ Disguised Merchant Raider, unread position, 31° 15' W TAYBANK, suspicious.
(Lands End Radio 1927/29).
Cancel my QQQQ TAYBANK.
(Lands End Radio, 2000/29).

MALAYA

L/T message originating from MALAYA indicate ship arrived Trinidad A.M./29 Routine report not yet received.
(C in C A.W.I. 2232/29, to Admty).
Your 1012/28. Diving under difficult conditions so far discloses no large hole in ship's side. If confirmed tomorrow consider ship fit to proceed after further shoring. Intend to sail tomorrow-night. Anticipate arrival New York 6/4 subject to weather conditions.
(MALAYA, 2347Z/29 to C in C A.W.I.)

A/S Forces
Western
Atlantic.

The U-Boat threat to Canada's Atlantic Approaches has not, at present, materialised Suggested therefore, that, for present, following precautionary action only should be taken. (a) Next 12 Corvettes to complete in Canada be retained in Dominion. (b) TOWN Class destroyers refitting in Canada to be retained. Any withdrawal of destroyers from vitally important N.W. Approaches to this country should be deferred until such time as submarine campaign on Western Atlantic seaboard actually develops. . . .
(1st S.L. 2254/29 to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa.)

SECRET

MESSAGE

1031/29th March.

IN

From C. in C. America and West Indies. Date. 1.4.41
 Recd. 0230

Naval Cypher (X) by Cable.

Addressed N.S.H.Q. Ottawa. Repeated Admiralty.

39. Your 1206/25 March. Am seriously concerned about the situation regarding A/S vessels at my disposal for Trinidad and Bermuda. Apart from the three Canadian yachts I have only two vessels completed B.E. CASTLE HARBOUR at Bermuda and DOROTHY DUKE about to sail for Trinidad. Three more yachts OWERA, MARAVAL, and SUMAR, are waiting to be fitted out at Bermuda but cannot be taken in hand until completion of LADY SOMERS late in April. The fitting out of this ship has proved to be a far larger proposition than I was led to expect. I would be most grateful if you would consider either VISON or HUSKY remaining at Trinidad until June when MARAVAL and SUMAR should be ready. ELK and HUSKY or VISON would return Halifax early May.

V.C.N.S.

1031/29

A.C.N.S. (H)

A.C.N.S. (F)

C.S.O. to 1st S.L.

Ops. (4)

O.D. (5)

O.D. 8

O.I.C. (2)

I.P. (3)

D.S.D. 9.

D.A./S.W.

W.D.

M. (2)

Movts.

Mails.

29.3.1941. 966
Saturday.

War Diary.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

Ships Attacked.

→ HYLTON

British, 5197 tons, in Convoy H.X. 115
Following received from O i/c Resolution
Island begins - 0457 G.M.T. "SSS 6118 N
2205 W HYLTON torpedoed" bearing 74
approx uncalibrated (ends).
(N.S.H.Q. Ottawa 0357/29 to Admty).

ATHEL PRINCE
MASUNDA.

British 8782 tons, 5250 tons both in
Convoy H X 115. Following has been read:-
SSSS de GKR (Wick Radio) 61 19N. 21 57W.
ATHEL PRINCE and MASUNDA torpedoed.
(? 0508/29) W.D. Note. ATHEL PRINCE and
MASUNDA were erroneously reported as
torpedoed. For correct names see 1520/29.
Proceed to assist HYLTON ATHEL PRINCE
MASUNDA torpedoed in approx 061° 18' N
022° 05' W at 0535/29). ^{Page 967}
(C in C W.A. 0616/29 to KINGCUP.)
Detach 1 destroyer to assistance of
HYLTON ATHEL PRINCE and MASUNDA.
(C in C W.A. 0657/29 to VENOMOUS.)

See page
967.

→ HYLTON
GERMANIC.

* not seen by
MAN O'WAR.

HYLTON and GERMANIC (British 5352 tons, in
H X 115) still floating have towed sur-
vivors back to ship. DIANELLA with no
A/S standing by. Am searching for U boat
with MANOWA and NORTHERN DAWN. My position
061° 18' N 022° 05' W.
(SABRE 1020/29 to VENOMOUS, READING).
Complete crew of HYLTON and my staff on
board. 35 survivors from GERMANIC on board
Permission requested for DIANELLA proceed
direct to Clyde or Londonderry.
(Adml. Ramsay in DIANELLA 1251/29 to
C in C W.A.)
KINGCUP remain with any damaged ships still
afloat. Report situation. Destroyer
detailed for this duty is to join H X
115 before dark/29 if situation permits.
(C in C W.A. 1436/29 to KINGCUP)
Large Vessel Wreck 61° 11' N 23° 7' W Timber
and empty boats near Tomen seen 30 feet
bow above water.
(Q/20 1500/29 to 18 Group).

LIMBOURG.. ..

967

War Diary29.3.1941.
SaturdayU-BOAT CAMPAIGNShips Attacked-Contd.LIMBOURG etc.:

*966.

Following for C. in C., from READING. Correct names of ships torpedoed in H.X. 115 are *HYLTON, *GERMANIC, LIMBOURG. (Q/201 1520/29 to 18 Group) LIMBOURG Belgian 2396 tons, in convoy H.X. 115. Proceed direct not through Minches forthwith to assist HYLTON and GERMANIC torpedoed in 061° 18' N., 022° 05' W. Trawler escort is being provided. (F.O.I.C., Greenock. 1922/29 to PRUDENT, TENACITY)

ERODONA
(torpedoed
16/3)

Settled several feet but has now stopped sinking. No more oil leaking THAMES considers expected arrival midnight tonight or early tomorrow depending on conditions. Position 240° Skagi 5 miles. (VISENDA 0800/29 to F.O.I.C., Iceland)

CITY OF DIEPPE

Following has been read. 36.38 N., 6.15 W CITY OF DIEPPE chased by submarine. (Lands End Radio, 0854/29) See also North Atlantic for earlier "Q" Report. (See Pages 943 & 944).

ANDALUSIAN
(torpedoed 17/3)
MALANCHA
(missed 23/3)

Your 1153/27 19 survivors of ANDALUSIAN were rescued from Island of Boa Vista on 22/3. *See Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil* MALANCHA made following signal at 1845/23 S.S.S. 19.59 N., 26.27 W. missed by torpedo. This telegram was received by Portuguese authorities but not passed to N.C.S.O. SS (?STEAD DE MAIA) sailed midnight/23 to search position indicated, returning 26/3 with nothing to report or seen. (Consul St. Vincent C.V., 1135/29 to D.N.I.)

MANDALIKA
(torpedoed 18/3)

Ref. I D form S.A. Dutch ship MANDALIKA ex-German NORDMARK (Rotterdam Lloyds) hit by one torpedo fired by S/M while in Convoy at 2330 Z plus 1 on 18/3 in 18.30 N., 21.20 W., S/M trimmed down on surface observed immediately after torpedo hit, steering similar course to Convoy one cable two points before port beam. Ship abandoned well down about 0030 but was not seen to sink. S/M withdrew after attack. Position of ship in Convoy leader of starboard wing column. Convoy No 121 3 killed, 62 survivors. (N.C.S.O. Freetown. 2201N/29 to Admty.)

War Diary.

29.3.1941.
Saturday.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

S/M's Reported.

- 0630 One Battle aircraft from Reykjavik ordered to position $061^{\circ} 19' N$ $021^{\circ} 57' W$ to hunt. (C in C Rosyth 0630/29 to VENOMOUS, READING, etc. amended 0926/29) (see ships attacked)
- 0800 Request escort by Battle aircraft for convoy position on 29/3 at 0800 hrs. $61^{\circ} 27' N$. $21^{\circ} 00' W$. approx 130 miles S of Reykjavik. Convoy being attacked by U-boat. Course East speed eight knots. (War Office 0955/29 to G.O.C. Iceland Force)
- 0921 At 0921/29 Italian S/M Bearings 290° Second Class. (F.O.C.N.A. 0959/29 to N.A. Stations.)
- 1234 An Enemy S/M has made a first sighting report of a convoy or important unit. (D.D.I.C. 1234/29 to W Approaches H.Q.C.C.) My 1234"29. Probable that formation reported was O.B. 302 HX 115 or KING GEORGE V. (D.D.I.C. 1300/29). My 1300/29. It is evident that Convoy HX 115 or OB 302 is being shadowed and reported by U-boat. There are two or more U boats in the vicinity. (D.D.I.C. 1843/29 to W. App. KING GEORGE V, VENOMOUS, H.Q.C.C., SABRE, DIANELLA.
- 1343 D/F indications that HX 56 is being shadowed by U-boat. (D.D.I.C. 1343/29 to W Approaches KENYA).
- 1505 U boat has reported your position at 0636. It is possible that two U boats are shadowing you. (C in C W.A. 1505/29 to LEGION, SCIMITAR).

1755.....

MOST SECRET.

29.5.1941.

Saturday.

969

War Diary.

U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.

S/M's reported.(contd.)

1755

1 Submarine bearing 066° distant 10 miles approx; true course unknown, position 60° 15' N 190° 57' W. based on a fix obtained at 1400.

(KING GEORGE V, 1755/29 to Scapa W/T).

2100/28

Received by Wick Radio. From S.S. LYRA Sighted in 60° 03' N 9° 11' W 28/3 at 2100 B.S.T. suspected U boat on surface. (Scapa W/T 2217/29).

Estimated U/B dispositions.

(D.D.I.C. 1410/29, F.O.S. 1656/29).

S/M's Attacked.

1602

U/B attacked 1602/29 by A/C 60 50 N 22.30 W 335' N.W. x W of Rockall. Dropped 1 250 lb bomb No hit. (D.S. 572).

WAR DIARY.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Home Commands.

Battle cruiser. SCHARNHORST
GNEISENAU.

R/C today indicates that the two ships are still in the same position in Brest. (one in dock).

Search
for
ADMIRAL
SCHEER.

Air patrols were carried out today between Iceland and Faeroes to intercept ^{ADMIRAL} SCHEER if she is making for Germany.

C.S.2. (GALATEA) proceeded today with ARETHUSA to patrol between Iceland and Faeroes to intercept. AURORA returned to Scapa with DIDO.

No further information having been received by noon, KING GEORGE V proceeded to Scapa.

British Air Activity.

Special patrols were flown today and tonight to locate the enemy battle cruisers if they left Brest and also between Iceland and Faeroes to locate ADMIRAL SCHEER if she is making for Germany.

All routine patrols by Coastal Command were cancelled on account of bad weather except a sweep to the Heligoland Bight and a patrol in the Southern part of the North Sea. The usual anti-E/Boat patrol was carried out at dusk.

WAR DIARY.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

SITUATION REPORT.

Enemy Air Activity.

MENDIP, VERDUN, and Convoy F.S.49 were attacked twice this morning in the Thames Approaches. S.S. GRASLIN was slightly damaged.

WALKER and Convoy O.G.57 were attacked today in 54° 33'N., 14° 15'W at 0917.

SEAWOLF was attacked at 1440 off Berwick by an aircraft identified by 2 officers as a Blenheim, with enemy markings. Apparently towing some explosive object. SEAWOLF was not damaged.

See BR1337 (Page 153)

Iceland
to
Shetland.

CAROLINA THORDEN (bombed 26/3) was again unsuccessfully attacked at the Faeroes this evening. Trawler CHANDOS was machine gunned and her skipper was killed and 1 hand wounded.

A E S No. 4 was unsuccessfully attacked this morning. Since 1725/26 there have been 3 attacks on A M E S and one on A E S in Unst A M E. S M. at Thrumster (near Wick) was also attacked but only slight damage to huts was caused.

A trawler was attacked East of Nolso (Thorshaven) this evening.

A F.W. flew over ships in Reykjavik harbour this morning, apparently on photographic R/C.

WAR DIARY.30.3.1941.
Sunday.SITUATION REPORT.Mining.Operation
Z.M.E.26.

PLOVER laid mines last night off the approaches to Bristol Channel.

Mining
of
Humber.

The Humber was reopened at 1102 today but was closed at 2321 after some 26 aircraft apparently minelaying (chiefly to seaward of Spurn Point) had been over the mouth of the river between 2050 and 2315. Previous to this, several mines were detonated off Spurn Point.

Avonmouth was reopened at 1914. Restrictions on Aberdeen were withdrawn at 1233.

North Atlantic. (See p. 985.)
Mediterranean.

Operation
"Ration".

SHEFFIELD with FAULKNER, FURY, FORESTER and FEARLESS this morning intercepted a French eastbound slow convoy consisting of S.S. BANKOK, SAN DIEGO, CAP VARELLA, AZROU escorted by French destroyer SIMOUN off Nemours. The convoy refused to stop and retired into Nemours. The shore batteries opened fire on SHEFFIELD and destroyers and SHEFFIELD replied and withdrew. SIMOUN took no part. SHEFFIELD was attacked by Glenn Martin A/C's at 1217 and again at 1301, but was not hit.

/The Admiralty

WAR DIARY.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

SITUATION REPORT.

NORTH Atlantic.
Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Operation
"Ration".
(Contd.)

The Admiralty ordered a further attempt to be made to intercept the convoy tonight. SHEFFIELD was sighted and unsuccessfully bombed at 1810 whilst steering to the eastward, about 8 miles east of Gibraltar, and since the enemy were forewarned and for other reasons, F.O.C.N.A. cancelled the operation and the ships returned to Gibraltar at 2300.

Mediterranean.

Air
Activities.

Bombs were dropped in various localities on Malta last night, and again this afternoon, many in the sea. No damage or casualties occurred.

Wellingtons bombed docks and petrol installations at Tripoli last night. Blenheims bombed shipping in and near Astropalia, Dodecanese today.

Aftermath
of Fleet
action.

Sunderland reconnaissances 29/30 March sighted oil patches, unidentified wreckage and rafts with Italian survivors in the area between 120 and 180 miles West of Crete where the Fleet action was fought.

East Indies.

BERTRAM
RICKMERS
scuttled.

R.A.F. reconnaissance reported a merchant ship leaving Massawa at midday yesterday and its position early this morning. KANDAHAR intercepted the ship, S.S. BERTRAM RICKMERS (German) at 0750 G.M.T. in 14° 7'N., 41° 42'E., off the coast of Eritrea 60 miles S.W. of Massawa. BERTRAM RICKMERS abandoned ship on sighting and fired scuttling charges. Ship was still afloat at 1000 G.M.T./30 anchored in 14.06N., 41.40E., Crew escaped ashore except 2 engineers, as KANDAHAR had no power boat.

/The dispositions

MOST SECRET.WAR DIARY.30.3.1941.
Sunday.SITUATION REPORT.East Indies. (Contd.)Dispositions
in Red Sea.

The dispositions which S.N.O. Red Sea will maintain to deal with the six Italian destroyers at Massawa and the escape of enemy merchant vessels, are detailed in C.in C. E.I. 1906Z/30.

America and West Indies.

C.in C. A.W.I. points out that demands for U.S. Govt., and private traffic on our cable and wireless communications in the America and West Indies, which are now working to full capacity, may choke our own vital communications; and we should plan ahead and be ready with a scheme of expansion.

A.M.C. CALIFORNIA picked up, at ^{1630/31/3} ~~0517Z/30~~
39 survivors from British COULTARN in
60.18N., 29.28W. This ship was in
Convoy O.B. 302 for Mobile. ~~It is not
stated by what means~~ She was sunk ~~by U. boat~~
~~torpedoes, the first striking at 0517/30/3 and a second~~
~~20 minutes later. (Interview with Master on 29.5.41~~
~~in Trade Division)~~

War Diary.

30.3.41.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy.

SCHARNHORST
and
GNEISENAU.
Proposed
Air Attack.

SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were known on 27th to have been in Brest. Up to present they have not been subject to any serious attack, whereas many tons of bombs have been dropped on other targets in Germany which like the poor are always with us. Hitler's avowed intention is to wage war on our shipping and these two ships constitute the most potential weapon he possesses. They are now lying within easy striking distance but may leave at any moment. I consider it vital that maximum possible air attack should be directed against these ships now and sustained at expense of all other targets until they are out of range or have been destroyed. (C. in C. Plymouth 1305/30.). *Ref: 1500/31*
See Operations Vol.

Disposition
of M.L.
Flotillas.

Your 1819/18. A considerable number of M.L's are now completed and operating but the following considerations have led to the diversion of the boats which would have been placed under your Command to other duties:-
(a) Cessation of coastal operations by U-boats.
(b) Unsuitability of boats for operating on the West Coast in winter.
(c) Urgency of air rescue work.
(d) Need for anti-E-boat escorts on the East Coast.
2. The following is the present position. It is under consideration to send the 18th Flotilla to operate from Stornoway; it is due to commence to form in May.
3. Request your remarks. (D. A/S. W.1416/30 to C. in C. W.A.).

Lamlash
Examination
Service.

Lamlash examination service will come into operation on 31/3. (D.T.D. 1500/30.).

Status of
M/V. Masters.

It has been suggested that para.2 (i) of Adty., message 2109/6/7/40 might, if it or orders based on it fell into the hands of the enemy, prejudice the civilian status of the masters of merchant ships and render them liable to action by the enemy as "franc tireur".

2. Paragraph 2 (i) of the above quoted signal is therefore to be cancelled and following substituted:-
All defensively equipped ships to be berthed

/so that their...

War Diary.

30.3.41.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Policy Contd.

Status of
M/V. Masters.

so that their guns can be used to the best advantage in defence.
3. A corresponding amendment is to be made in para. 8 (i) of ALM/LD01893/41 dated 3/3/41. (A.C.N.S(T) 2010/30.).

Defence of U.K.

Orkneys
A/A.Guns.

Meeting of reconnaissance party in accordance with your 1330/15 was held this morning. Meeting unanimously agreed that no withdrawal of light A.A. guns could be accepted before replacement. (A.C.O.S. 1317/30.).

Campbeltown.
Defences.

Adty., 1702/20. Defences at Cambeltown are completed. (GUARDIAN 2100/20.).

Movements.

WHITSHED
WORCESTER.

Provide cover for FN47 and FS450 tonight arranging your movements as circumstances require. (C. in C. Nore 0942/30th to D.16.).

Operations.

Search for
ADMIRAL
SCHEER.

Adty., 2106/29, Indication that this may possibly be ADMIRAL SCHEER homeward bound. Proceed with 2nd C.S. and DIDO towards 064° N., 001° W. Object is to intercept. (C. in C. H.F. 0025/30 to C.S.2.). Scapa departures F.O.C. 2nd C.S. in GALATEA with AURORA, ARETHUSA, and DIDO. (A.C.O.S. 0358/30.). My 2332/29. If no further information is received by 1200/30 proceed Scapa. (C. in C. H.F. 0929/30 to KING GEORGE V.).

/Proceed.....

War Diary.

30.3.41.
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Operations Contd.

Search for
ADMIRAL
SCHEER.

Proceed with GALATEA and ARETHUSA to establish patrol in accordance with my 1512/26 between T.R.36 patrol line and Iceland. (ii) DIDO and AURORA are to return to Scapa. (C. in C. H.F. 1237/30 to C.S.2.).

East Coast
Patrols.

Tonight following auxiliary patrols positions will not be filled: (A) 5 buoy (B) 5 buoy to Hearty Knoll (C) Sheringham Buoy (D) 57 C to 58 Buoy. (C. in C. Nore 0934/30.).

CAIRNDALE.

Admiralty's 1751/24, 2227/24 and F.O.C. N.A., 1200/25, which was approved by Admiralty. F.O.C.N.A., 1748/25, 1216/27, and 0252/29/, are passed to you for information. (A.C.N.S.(F) 1130/30 to B.C.I., and C. in C. H.F.).

Bay of Biscay. S/M Patrol.

UNION, H.32, O.9,	)	Movements.
TUNA, TORBAY,	)	(C. in C. Plymouth 1153/30
OBERON, L.27.	)	(S.S.1444/30.).
		F.O.S. 1847/30, 1049/31).

Strength
of Patrol.

The number of S/MS in numbered patrol positions in the Bay of Biscay will be as follows: 31/3 - 11, 1/4 - 15, 2/4 - 18, 4/4 - 17, 5/4 - 15, 7/4 - 6, 8/4 - 4, 9/4 - 1, 11/4 nil. (F.O.S. 1732/30.).

War Diary.30.3.41. 978
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity.Patrols.

My 2332/29 passed to you. Request air patrol ~~from~~ from daylight tomorrow. Object is to intercept enemy warship passing from West to East. (C. in C. H.F. 0045/30 to C. in C. Rosyth.). Sunderland A/C leaves Sullom Voe at daylight to carry out B patrol ~~from~~ Cross over patrol as follows. A/C. should be able to remain on patrol for about 6½ hours. (C. in C. Rosyth 0146/30.). Your 0146/30. Request patrol may be moved from D to mean line between position (A) 090° N., 013° W. (B) 063° 30' N., 010° W. (C. in C. H.F. 0916/30 to C. in C. Rosyth.). My 0916/30. Para. (A) for 64° N., read 65° N. (C. in C. H.F. 1801/30 to C. in C. Rosyth.). Following Patrols tomorrow.

- (1) Cross over by Sunderland from about 1300 till 1900 as follows.
- (2) Patrol off South of Iceland by Battles depending on availability of A/C.
- (3) Patrol by Sunderland from 1400 till dusk as follows. (C. in C. Rosyth 1924/30.).

Patrols tomorrow in addition to those in my 1924/30. ~~from~~, ~~from~~, ~~from~~, ~~from~~, ~~from~~. Patrols to reach Norwegian Coast 1600/31. (C. in C. Rosyth 1938/30.). PL/G22/30/3. Ref. PL/G14/30/3. It is appreciated that the enemy battle cruisers may sail at any time during the hours of darkness. In order that they should not do so undetected the following cross over patrol is to be maintained from 0730/31 until it is established by reconnaissance that the battle cruisers are still in Brest. (H.Q. 19 Group 2010/30 to St. Eval.). PL/G24/30/3. In order to establish that two enemy Cruisers are still in Brest Harbour one Fighter Blenheim is to carry out a visual R/c. of Brest at first light. (H.Q. 19 Group 2050/30 to St. Eval.).

Escorts.

Cancel my 2350/29. No air escort available today till 1630 when expect 15 Group Sunderland. Whitley aircraft of 18 Group take over from about 2030/30 to 0800/31. (C. in C. Rosyth 0640/30 to VENOMOUS, etc.).

/My 0640/30.....

War Diary.

30.3.41. 979
Sunday.

HOME COMMANDS.

British Air Activity Contd.

My 0640/30. Owing to weather all air escorts cancelled until daylight. 31st. (C. in C. Rosyth 1536/30 to VENOMOUS, etc.).

Bombing Restrictions.

Operation G.Z. Request bombing restrictions in area between 50° N., and 48° N., and 050° W., and 06° W., from 2030/30 till 0600/31. (C. in C. Plymouth 1159/30 to H.Q.C.C.).

Summary of Operations.

1. Day 29 March. 4 Blenheims completed a sweep off the Belgian Coast, one of them attacked a single funnelled tanker of 5,000 tons escorted by six Flakships at 51° 27' N. 3° 25' E. One of the Flakships was machine-gunned. (H.Q.B.C. 1705/30.).

Kites in W.A. Command.

Kites are not to be flown at night in W.A. Command when air escort is present. (C. in C. W.A. 1835/30.).

Alleged firing on own A/C on 24/3.

(Adty. 1812/29.). No Vessels in or off Yarmouth fired on Blenheim on the afternoon of 24/3. The report apparently came from a Policeman who saw neither flash or smoke of discharge or shell burst. He also states machine after circling the Town again proceeded seaward flying level on a steady course and no faltering of engine. (F.O.I.C. Yarmouth 1930/30.).

Thames Estuary Balloon Barrage.

C. in C. Nore reports following received from 952 Squadron begins:-
A.A. Command and 30 Group have instructed barrage in Thames Estuary to be close-hauled during hours of darkness tonight request instructions ends 1240. Close-hauling has been agreed to for the present. It would be much appreciated if proposals for altering the operation orders of the balloon barrage could be made known to me before orders are given to 952 Squadron which conflict with existing agreed procedure. Consider use of balloons at operational height has been important factor in inducing

/minelaying.....

980

War Diary.30.3.41.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity Contd.Themes
Estuary
Balloon
Barrage.

minelaying aircraft to drop at over 6000 feet thus spoiling accuracy and apparently causing large proportion of prematures. Request barrage at operational height may be restored during next moonlight period, April 4th to 14th whenever minelaying is expected and on other occasions when it appears beneficial to do so. At least half an hour's warning is required. 1054/29. Ends. 2. Request your remarks. (D. of L.D. 2009/30 to Air Ministry.).

Enemy Air Activity.OILTRADER.
(Bombed
29/3.).

Following received from BASSET. OILTRADER sunk by bombs in 325° 3 miles and ½ from No. 5 Buoy. Have 33 survivors. Anchoring near Cork Light Vessel tonight. LE TIGER has proceeded with convoy and 18 survivors. All lives saved. 2125/29. Ends. (C. in C. Nore 0043/30.).

Convoy
W.N.Even.

Fighters are being sent to the assistance of even numbered WN convoy. (Lyness W/T 0904/30.).

Convoy
F.S.49.

Convoy being attacked by aircraft. (MENDIP 0915/30.).
My 0915. Enemy aircraft bombing, my position 51° 52' N., 1° 36' E. (MENDIP 0916/30.).
My 0916, 2 bombs no hits. (MENDIP 0921/30.).
One enemy aircraft shadowing convoy F.S.49 bearing 110° 2000 feet my position 51° 48' N., 1° 31' E. (VERDUN 0922/30.).
1 Aircraft attacking convoy Plumb my position 51° 47' N., 1° 31' E. (MENDIP 1010/30.).

/Convoy

War Diary.30.3.41.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity.Contd.Convoy "Clash".
GLASH."Clash"
Convoy ~~GLASH~~ being bombed. My position
54° 33' N., 14° 15' W. (WALKER 0917/30.).Shetlands
bombed.Following received from N.O.I.C. Lerwick
begins: At 0851/30 A E S No.4 reported
being bombed and machine gunned. Subsequent
report at 0855 reported one large calibre
bomb dropped causing no casualties or
damage. A good burst of M/G fire was re-
turned from ground defences. T O O 0909
Ends. Since 1725/26th there have been 3
attacks on A.M.E.S. and 1 on A.E.S. in Unst.
(A.C.O.S. 1120/30.).A/C over
Iceland.One enemy aircraft F.W.type flew over ships
in Reykjavik Harbour at 1010 this morning
height 8000 feet. R.A.F. think on photo-
graphic R/c. No bombs dropped. A.A. fire
was opened by ships and land batteries.
Six Battle planes chased raider away.
(N.O.I.C. Iceland 1146/30, G.O.C. Iceland
1434/30.).Convoy
F.S.Even."Arena"
Convoy ~~ARENA~~ is being shadowed by one
enemy airplane. My position 54° 7' N., 0°
1' E. (EGLINTON 1216/30.).
2 Enemy aircraft shadowing Convoy "Arena" my
position 53° 22' N., 0° 58'E.
(SOUTHDOWN 1857/30.).Thrumster.
A.M.E.
Station
bombed.My 1120/30. At 0835 an enemy A/C also
attacked A.M.E.SM. at Thrumster near Wick.
Two or three bombs were dropped and E/A
machine gunned station. No casualties
and only slight damage to huts.
(A.C.O.S. 1240/30.).SEAWOLF
attacked.SEAWOLF reports at 1440 in 56° 02' N., 02°
20' W., aircraft identified by two officers
as Blenheim appeared from west and circled
submarine.

/Black crosses.....

War Diary.30.3.41.
Sunday.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity Contd.SEAWOLF
attacked.

Black crosses were then noticed and SEAWOLF dived to 90 feet for 7 minutes. On return to periscope depth aircraft was seen approaching from astern at about 100 feet towing object in appearance like a bag just above surface of water. Submarine went deep and on passing 41 feet close explosion was heard. Submarine sustained no damage or casualties. (PYTCHLEY 1445/30. S.9. 1959/30.).

Trawler
attacked.

Help Thorshaven. (Thorshaven W/T 1909/30). Trawler being attacked east of Nolso. (Thorshaven W/T 1910/30.).

Enemy
A/C.

F.W. reported in 63° 30' N., 19° 00' W., at 1140/30. Course East. (D.D.I.C.1925/30-)

Mining.Z.M.E.26.

Operation Z M E 26 completed. (PLOVER 0901/30.).

P.W.7.

Prepare to carry out P W (7) as amended by my 1234/29 on first suitable night. Report when ready. (C. in C. Nore 1002/30 to BEEHIVE.).

Humber.

Humber is open to navigation. (F.O. Humber 1102/30.).
Humber closed to navigation. About 26 aircraft over the Mouth of the Humber between 2050 and 2315 today, apparently minelaying although very few inside Spurn Point. Anticipated time of opening 1100 tomorrow. (F.O. Humber 2321/30.).

/Moray Firth.....

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30.3.41.
Sunday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining Contd.

Moray
Firth.
Searching
Sweep.

Commencing from No. 32 Buoy at 0530/1st., available ships for 5th M.S.F. are to carry out searching sweeps as follows:-
(C. in C. Rosyth 1117/30 and 1655/1.).

Aberdeen.

Restriction in my 1131/20/2/41 now removed.
(N.O.I.C. Aberdeen 1233/30.).

Operation
G.Z.

Departure 20th D.F. less EXPRESS.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 1404/30.).
Sailed 1730. KELLY, KASHMIR, JACKAL, KELVIN.
(C. in C. Plymouth 1813/30.).

Spurn
Point.

Following three mines were detonated by LL trawlers today. Details.(F.O. Humber 1849/30).

Avonmouth.

My 2318/29. Ships may now enter and leave Avonmouth. (F.O.I.C. Cardiff 1914/30.).

Enemy Intelligence.

Enemy
Unit.

My 2106/29. Nature of traffic indicates that unit is a warship possibly ^{ABYSSAL} SCHEER.
(D.D.I.C. 0003/30.). * NT in W.D.

3 M/V's.

Aircraft report at 1806/29. Three Merchant ships between 1500 and 2000 tons in 047° 14' 005° 15' W. Course 140° speed 6 knots.
(F.O.S. 0101/30 to TIGRIS.).

SCHARNHORST
GNEISENAU.
3 M/V's.

Reconnaissance indicates two ships, probably SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU, still in same position in Brest. Three Merchant ships are reported in Chenal Du Four East of Ushant 3 miles West of Pointe de Corsen course 360 at 0735/30.).
(C. in C. Plymouth 1459/30 to D.5, D.20.).

Surface
Craft.

Bearing, probably of surface craft, obtained at 2114/30. Scarborough 000/3.(D.D.I.C. 2230/30.).

E-Boats.

Possible E-boat activity at 2212 near 57A buoy. (C. in C. Nore 2235/30.).

War Diary.

30. 3. 41.
Sunday.

CASUALTIES & DEFECTS.

GARTH.

Arrived. (F.O.I.C. Harwich 0752/30.).
Request you sail GARTH in tow of tug
DIVERSION and escorted by PUFFIN for
Sheerness A.M. today. Fighter protection
has been asked for. (C. in C. Nore 1026/30
to F.O.I.C. Harwich.).
Departures GARTH towed by tug DIVERSION
and escorted by PUFFIN at 1112.
(F.O.I.C. Harwich 1116/30.).

OURAGAN.

OURAGAN returning to Greenock with engine
defects. (Capt. D.3. 1442/30.).
Starboard propeller is causing considerable
vibration. Cause unknown. Am returning
to harbour. E.T.A. 1500/31. (OURAGAN
1900/30.).

MELROSE
ABBEY.
(Grounded
28/3.).

Grounded one mile North of River Ythan
Aberdeenshire at 0430/28/3. Prospects of
salvage are good but will certainly be
prolonged. (C. in C. Rosyth 1925/30.).

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War Diary.30.3.1941.
Sunday.FOREIGN STATIONS.North Atlantic.Operation
"Ration."

Your 0026/30. Appearance of BANGKOK does not agree with that given in Adty. 1429/14. Tangier's 1850/28 to F.O. and message 1300/29 from Tangier may be correct. (F.O.C.N.A., 0410/30 to Admt.).

SHEFFIELD
in action
with Nemours
Battery.

Am withdrawing, ships are under cover of shore guns. (SHEFFIELD, 0954/30, to F.O.C.N.A.). SHEFFIELD and Destroyers carrying out "RATION" in 035° 18' N. 001° 52' W. at 0855/30. SHEFFIELD reports shore battery has opened fire, SHEFFIELD is replying. (F.O.C.N.A., 1004/30, to Admt.). Convoy refused to stop and retired into Nemours where shore battery opened fire with 6-inch on SHEFFIELD and destroyers. SHEFFIELD replied and battery was repeatedly hit and large fire seen. Have withdrawn the whole force. Battery was well clear of town. French Dest. SIMOUN took no part. Request instructions. (SHEFFIELD, 1005/30, to F.O.C.N.A.). Do not hesitate to withdraw if you consider there is no prospect of carrying out operation successfully. (F.O.C.N.A. 1040/30, to SHEFFIELD).

Enemy Air
Attack on
SHEFFIELD

Enemy aircraft bombing. (SHEFFIELD, 1217/30 to Gibraltar). 6 aircraft in sight, approx. course 000, approx. height 11,000 feet, my position obtained from a fix within $\frac{1}{2}$ hour of 1000 - 35.38 N., 02.53 W. (SHEFFIELD, 1219/30, to Gibraltar). 6 Glen Martins attacked, no hits. (SHEFFIELD, 1235/30 to F.O.C.N.A.). Bombed 2nd time. 5 Glen Martins. No hits. (SHEFFIELD, 1301/30, to Gib. W/T). SHEFFIELD to signal immediately full report including information as to time and position in which convoy was first ordered to stop and all subsequent movements and action taken. (V.C.N.S. 1428/30 to SHEFFIELD).

Report from
SHEFFIELD.

SHEFFIELD in 035° 30' N. 001° 51' W. sighted French Convoy at 0800 bearing 205° 14 miles. Destroyers who were spread were concentrated and at 0840 Capt. (D) 8 proceeded at 25 knots to intercept. Convoy scattered to Southward and SIMOUN exchanged signals with Capt.(D) 8

/ "You are ...

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War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic.

Op: "Ration."
Report from
SHEFFIELD.
(contd.)

"You are inside territorial waters. I cannot allow you to interfere with convoy, I give you my word of honour that ships are destined with feeding for people of France. I beg you to let them pass". Destroyers closed each ship and signalled them to stop but they proceeded slowly towards Nemours. At 0946 a shore battery opened at a range 12000 yards on SHEFFIELD. Destroyers and convoy were all inshore of SHEFFIELD. SHEFFIELD replied with six broadsides and fire ceased. SHEFFIELD also ceased to avoid bloodshed. Five minutes later shore batteries opened fire on inshore Destroyers and SHEFFIELD replied causing a heavy explosion, probably the magazines. The passive resistance of the French left no alternative but to torpedo the convoy which was completely at my mercy, or to withdraw. I decided to withdraw rather than cause a serious international incident and break international law. Force was bombed by 10 Glen Martins during retirement. (SHEFFIELD, 1515/30, to A.)
Add to my 1515/30. Admty. 0026/30 had not been received by me until 1930/30. (SHEFFIELD, 1836/30).

Operation
to be
renewed.

A further attempt should be made to intercept convoy during dark hours tonight, if they proceed to sea again. Possible presence of French submarines should be allowed for. In view of rubber having been unloaded from BANGKOK, instructions for sinking this ship in my 0026/30 are cancelled. (V.C.N.S. 1544/30, to F.O.C.N.A.).

Advice to
Abandon
Operation.

Weather precludes any air R/C tonight. Consider passage between Nemours and (?Oran) would probably be made in daylight and ships may be at Oran by now as their bombers will have informed them of withdrawal of our forces now in sight of Gibraltar. Alternatively convoy may have no intention of proceeding beyond Nemours and intend to discharge there.

/ As weather was unfit ...

War Diary.

30.3.1941.

Sunday ~~987~~

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic. (Contd.)

Advice to
Abandon
Operation.
"Faction" cont.

As weather was unfit for boarding this morning conditions are probably worse now, this reduces operation to coercing ships to proceed to Gibraltar or sink them with inevitable loss of life.

To search coast in darkness close in shore in bad weather with lights probably extinguished appears to me to invite disaster. Consider it would be wise to abandon operation. An additional consideration is that at moment there are two loaded troop ships and one aircraft carrier in Gibraltar and that within next three days two more carriers and two battle cruisers will arrive.

My 1750. SHEFFIELD now being bombed about eight miles east of Gibraltar (F.O.C.N.A. 1810/30 to Admty.).

My 1810. SHEFFIELD reports no hit. (F.O.C.N.A., 1922/30, to Admty.).

Advise Admiralty quickly air raid Gibraltar - warship being bombed.

(Cable Supt. Gibraltar, 1815/30 to Admty.).

ALL CLEAR, 1855/30.

Ref. Cable Supt. Gibraltar's 1815/30.

Was Gibraltar bombed or SHEFFIELD only?

(1st S.L. 2218/30 to Admty.).

Your 2218/30. Gibraltar has not been bombed yet. SHEFFIELD was bombed but not hit about 8 miles from Rock. (F.O.C.N.A., 2332/30, to Admty.).

My 1300/29 (T.H.I. 1340/29) following from equally reliable source.

Rubber ex S.S. BANGKOK sent overland to Algeria during last ten days. S.S. completed loading vegetable fibre and other produce 27/3 and was expected to clear for Marseilles at any time.

(Consul Gen., Tangier, 1815/30, to Admty.).

Renewal
Abandoned.

My 1725. Admty. directed that further attempt to intercept convoy should be made during darkness tonight 30/31 but you (?have) been sighted and bombed while (?steering) to eastwards. I consider there is virtually no chance of your being able to do so. Return to Gibraltar. (F.O.C.N.A. 1916/30, to SHEFFIELD).

S.S. GAZA,
Portuguese,
intercepted.

In 035° 39'N 017° 02'W following enemy nationals are on board. All bound for U.S.A. Ship has no route from N.C.S.O. Proceeding with her, keeping touch with convoy pending your decision (?which) nationals are to be removed. (ENCHANTRESS, 1130/30, to F.O.C.N.A.)

/ My 1130,

War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

North Atlantic. (Contd.)

S.S. GAZA.
Portuguese,
intercepted.
(contd.)

My 1130, passengers have American visas issued Lisbon and claim to be refugees. Search revealed 2 non-suspect Portuguese stowaway. (ENCHANTRESS, 1237/30).

NARKUNDA

Is proceeding to Gibraltar for onward passage to U.K. and is not with an S.L. Convoy. (D.T.D. 1238/20 to C.in C. W.A.).

MIRROR

Your 1232/23/3. Cable operations. Proposal. (F.O.C.N.A. 1246/30 to Admty.). Approved (D.S.D., 1208/1).

CAIRNDALE

^{N.T. & W.D.}
CAIRNDALE sailed before receipt of your 2316/25. ~~BRITANNIA~~ BRITANNIA expected to sail before return of CAIRNDALE. Request arrangements be made for relief of HOOD in normal manner. (A.S. Gibraltar, 1306/30 to Admty.).

Malta
Hurricanes.

Re communication arrangement for operation. (F.O.C.N.A. to S.O. Force H, 2030/30).

South Atlantic.

FRANCO MARTELLI
DRESDEN

My 0700/29 and my 1118/29 are being passed to you. (H.W.R. 0750/30 to C.in C. S.A.). Both addressed F.O.C.N.A. and C.in C., A.W.I. and concern movements of Italian tanker FRANCO MARTELLI and German ship DRESDEN respectively. Messages have also been passed to R.A.S.A.D.

ORMONDE

Simonstown Dockyard reports ready to sail Capetown 31/3 with 350 service personnel, no escort available unless ship is held until EMPRESS OF JAPAN is ready to sail with CATHAY about 17/4. Intend she shall sail without escort. Should she come to Freetown for onward passage in convoy? (C.in C. S.A., 1105/30, to Admty.). Reply: 1245/31.

BRITANNIA (attacked by raider 25/3) survivors in CABO DE HORNOS

War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

BRITANNIA
(attacked by
raider 25/3)
survivors in
CABO DE HORNOS

Endeavour to intercept and remove survivors ex BRITANNIA from Spanish CABO DE HORNOS 007° 50' N. 025° 56' W. at 2000/29 estimated speed 15 knots. LARGS BAY should remain in company with you. (C.in C. S.A., 1311N/30, to DUNNOTTAR CASTLE).

My 1311. Adjust course and speed in order to intercept CABO DE HORNOS reporting per p.c. and s. to DUNNOTTAR CASTLE. FOXHOUND, DUNCAN are to R.V. with W.S.7 at 14 (00?)/1 latest. CLEMATIS and CYCLAMEN to remain with CABO DE HORNOS informing her they are waiting to take off survivors. Corvettes to take survivors if DUNNOTTAR CASTLE does not arrive and then transfer later to DUNNOTTAR CASTLE.

(C.in C. S.A., 1341N/30, to FOXHOUND, DUNCAN, CLEMATIS, CYCLAMEN).

See p. 901 My 2027/28. (██████████) CILICIA arrived a.m./30 with 63 survivors on board, taken from Spanish Ship BACHI who picked them up in 08° 090' N. 25° 13' W. at 1100/26 all from one boat. Six other boats got away also some rafts. All had abandoned ship before she sunk. Raider ceased fire when abandoning started.

Raider passed ship on opposite course without taking any action then circled round and immediately opened fire from port quarter. Early gunfire made most of guns crew casualties. Raider ceased fire manoeuvred clear of smoke floats and screen and half an hour later opened fire effectively at 8000 yards. It appears possible position of attack given in distress signal was up to one hundred miles in error. Spanish ship CABO DE HORNOS reports having picked up 77 survivors in addition.

(C.in C. S.A. 1415/30, to Admty.).

My 1415/30 to Admiralty only.

Description of raider that sank BRITANNIA is as follows. (C.in C. S.A., 1631N/30, to Admty.).

CUBA

My 0422/27. CUBA can be accepted in U.S.A. for fitting as troopship and should be sailed as soon as possible for Trinidad for fuelling. As CUBA is proceeding to U.S.A. present prize cargo cannot remain on board. Separate instructions will be given to S.T.O. Freetown. (D.S.T. 1542/30 to C.in C. S.A.).

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30.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

SANTA CRUZ
(raider) ^{operating as}
THOR.

Your 2357/28 and my 1943/27. The raider seen by whale catchers on 6/3 in 27° N. 42° W. has now been identified as SANTA CRUZ. Suggest SANTA CRUZ attacked BRITANNIA. Can survivors confirm from silhouette? (D.D.I.C. 1606/30 to C.in C. S.A.).

Suspicious
Portuguese
Tanker.

Your 0124/20 and BULOLO's 2112/17. Further details. Consider further reply should have been obtained using gun to hasten and ship? should have been told to steer a course, but to have remained in company at night while boarding might have involved much risk and better alternative would have been to have remained in neighbourhood returned in daylight and investigated further then when submarine could not have followed except on surface. Do not consider vessel involved justified undue risk of loss of valuable ship. (C.in C. S.A., 1647/30, to Admty. amended 1700/1). *See page 901.*

BIRMINGHAM
to escort
S.L.70.

Request you will arrange to sail BIRMINGHAM with s.s. CHRISTIAN HUYGENS to overtake S.L.70 and escort to U.K. CHRISTIAN HUYGENS has about 1200 service personnel on board. Intended that BIRMINGHAM should fuel from CAIRNDALE about 12/4 at "~~FEDERAL~~", leaving convoy temporarily for that purpose. (A.C.N.S.(F) 1900/30 to C.in C. S.A.).

BULOLO
S.L.70.

Departure 1700/30 BULOLO to R.V. with and act as ocean escort to convoy S.L.70 and thence to Freetown. 3 escorting ships. (S.O.I. Freetown, 1929N/30, to Admty.).

Force U.

Departure 1800/30 Force U less MILFORD and BRIDGEWATER. (S.O.I. Freetown, 2123N/30, to Admty.).

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War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean.

Disposal of Prisoners.

Propose Greeks be asked to limit prisoners of war in Crete to 7,000 plus 4,000 civil internees. In return we will accept in Middle East maximum of 500 air crew prisoners specialists and technicians. We are willing to agree that Greeks evacuate 10,000 to India provided they go in Greek ships with Greek escorts and India concur. (C.in C. M.E., 0110/30, to W.O.).

Convoy G.A.8.

0001/30 16 knots Escorts STUART, HEReward, GRIFFIN.
(N.C.S.O. Piraeus, 0130/30, to C.in C. Med.)
Names (0135/30).
CAMERONIA had not appeared by 0145.
Have proceeded with BRECONSHIRE only one hour late.
(Capt. D.10, 0255/30, to C.in C. Med.).

Human Torpedoes.

Craft which attacked Suda Bay on 26/3 were 14 foot Turtle deck shallow draft one man motor boats with six cylinder engines and twin propeller on one shaft. Charged for 500 pounds explosive in bows to detonate on/or by hydrostatic pressure.
(C.O.I.S. Alexandria, 0733/30, to N.A. Athens etc.).

Escort of Malta Hurricanes.

Your A140 27/3. (0941/29) Although routeing across Tunisia is political question our information indicates that French Fighters entitled to attack. In one case this actually occurred. Proposal that aircraft from Malta should intercept Hurricanes en route and lead in is not recommended. Recommended one Skua and one Sunderland escort each formation.
(H.Q. R.A.F., Malta, 1037/30, to H.Q. R.A.F. M.E.).
Your A. 140, 27/3.
Proposal to route aircraft over Tunisia not approved. Agree route proposed in Malta's A. 445 1850/24. (Air Min., 1301/30, to H.Q. R.A.F., M.E.).

Tripoli bombed.

Operational Summary 293.
Night 28/29 March. 2 Wellingtons dropped 4,000 lbs. bombs Tripoli Harbour. Some bombs fell among shipping.
(H.Q. R.A.F. M.E., 1111/30).

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Suez Canal Mining.

Your 1945/27 Anti mine operations in Canal (details) (S.B.N.O. Suez Canal, 1251/30, to Admty.).

MAURO CROCE (Italian)

Departure 30/3. (Barcelona, 1301/30).

Enemy Convoy Route.

Information received Convoy passed by Kelibia about 2 miles off Thasos follows Coast about 5½ miles out until 011° 09' and down this meridian to vicinity Kurba Bank. (Cdr. S.1, 1331/30, to UNIQUE).

Greek Destroyers to rescue Italians.

3 Greek Destroyers are leaving at 1930 at 25 knots passing through Antikithera Channel proceeding 035° 25' N. 020° 50' E. to pick up 600 survivors reported by Sunderland. Greek destroyers picked up 110 survivors last night in 035° 23' N. 021° (00') E. and there is vague talk among prisoners that Italian aircraft promised them rescue during night by BOLZANO and destroyer(s). Can I use CALCUTTA or others to support Greeks? (N.A. Athens, 1425/30, to C.in C. Med.). Cancel movement in my 1425/30, as there is no sign now of 600. (N.A. Athens, 1609/30).

Enemy Losses.
(See Warships Index.)

Preliminary interrogation of few prisoners indicates certain sinking of ZARA and POLA. Almost certain FIUME and ALFIERI. Admiral Cataneo believed killed. General impression that VITTORIO VENETO sunk. (N.A. Athens, 1445/30, to C.in C. Med.).

Italian Thanks for notice of position of survivors.

Following intercepted at 1422 G.M.T. From Coltano Radio. To Rinella Radio Malta. For C.in C. of British Navy in Mediterranean from C.in C. of Italian Navy. Thank you for your communication. Hospital ship GRADISCA already left Taranto yesterday evening at 1700. Italian en clair. (Land's End Radio, recd. 1730/30).

A/C in Greece.

My 1301/29. Aircraft is undamaged but requires 30 gallons of petrol. It is at St. Nikolas Bay on S.E. side of Kithera Island within 6 miles of Kithera town. St. Nikolas Bay is reported to be suitable harbour for small ships. Request you will take action. (N.A. Athens, 1503Z/30, to S.B.N.O. Suda Bay).

/ No British Damage.
Italian Ships sunk.

30.3.1941 ⁹⁹³
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

No British
Damage.
Italian Ships
sunk.

ALFIERI

Ref. enemy broadcast claims there have been no casualties or damage throughout operations to ships or personnel of H.M. Fleet other than aircraft as reported in my 2210/29 (?2205/28). Now definitely confirmed Italian Cruisers FIUME, POLA, ZARA, Italian Destroyers VINCENZO VITTORIO GIOBERTI and MAESTRALE were sunk. Situation not yet known about BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI Class Cruiser. (C.in C. Med. 1532/30, to Admty.).

Malta Air
Raids.

Night 29/30. About 8 unidentified aircraft over singly at long intervals. Bombs dropped various localities causing no damage or casualties. Many bombs in sea. At 1410 hours formation of about 20 ME. 109's and CR. 42's patrolled five miles off Grand Harbour at 16,000 feet to distract Hurricanes while 4 JU.88's escorted by 4 ME.109's at 17,000 feet came over and bombed Takali Aerodrome. Slight damage, no casualties. (H.Q., Med., 1640/30, to Air Min.).

Battle of
Cape Matapan.

Report of the Battle (C.in C. Med. 1700/30) See Lion Copy.

Report of
Action
28/3 - 29/3.

My 0028/29 and 2205/29. Further account is as follows, but details still uncertain and modification may be needed. (C.in C. Med., 1558/30, 1730/30) Originals in Lion copy only. Following comparison of forces engaged is given:-

	<u>British</u>	<u>Italian</u>
Battleships	3	3
Aircraft Carrier	1	-
Cruisers	4	3 or 11 9
Destroyers	12	14
	<u>20</u>	<u>24</u>

Suez.
Protection
of Shipping.

Admty. 0117/27 and C.in C. Med. 1126/29. As this operation now appears more imminent and both your forces and those of C.in C. E.I. are fully stretched request you will consider following proposal to give protection to valuable shipping at Suez.
2. On assumption that C.in C. E.I. carries out a daily air reconnaissance of Massawa and would be able to report the departure of enemy from that port, would it be possible for you to station at Port Said any destroyers that may be boiler cleaning or waiting for convoys so that they could pass quickly through the Canal and reach Suez before the enemy? (1st S.L., 2005/30, to C.in C. Med.).

SECRET

XXXXXXXXXX

22 July 29 1941
IN

5014
993A

From. C. in C. Mediterranean;

Date. 31.3.41.

Time. 0930.

NAVAL CYPHER (X) BY CABLE.

Addressed. Admiralty.

IMPORTANT.

781. My 0028/29 and 2205/29. Further account is as follows but it will be appreciated that details are still uncertain and modification may be needed.

2. Enemy sighted in two groups. 1 Southern Group at 0749/28 in approximate position 34 30 North 24 00 East steering south east and consisting of one LITTORIO six Cruisers and seven Destroyers later joined by two Cruisers and at least two Destroyers. Northern Group at 1135/28 in position 34 55 North 23 24 East steering 290 degrees and consisting of two Cavours three Cruisers and four Destroyers.

3. [At time aircraft sighted Southern Group V.A.L.F. was about 40 miles South East of them and the Battlefleet was in position 33 00 North 26 00 East. V.A.L.F. proceeded and gained touch with Cruisers of the Southern Group at 0802 and they turned to North East drawing him on to LITTORIO. On sighting the latter V.A.L.F. turned to south east.]

4. A torpedo bomber attack was launched from FORMIDABLE which arrived at 1130 and either this or knowledge of the presence of an aircraft carrier caused LITTORIO and her cruisers to turn to North West. At this juncture V.A.L.F. lost touch but came in sight of our Battlefleet. First torpedo bomber attack claimed a possible hit. Our forces pressed on after the enemy.

5. A torpedo bomber attack was launched shortly after from MALEME and claimed a hit. Search from FORMIDABLE regained touch during the afternoon and a further torpedo bomber attack went in claiming three hits on LITTORIO. 23 Blenheims from Greece also attacked with bombs between 1500 and 1700 claiming two direct hits on a cruiser one on a destroyer and two probable hits on another cruiser.

5. At 1600 a report was received from aircraft that speed of LITTORIO was drastically reduced and Vice Admiral Light Forces was ordered to press on with his four cruisers to gain touch. FORMIDABLE launched a dusk attack with torpedo bombers and so did MALEME. It is not thought these attacks hit LITTORIO but definitely one cruiser was hit.

6. My night intentions signalled were to launch a destroyer attack should Vice Admiral Light Forces gain touch and if circumstances prove favourable to follow it up with the Battlefleet.

7. Vice Admiral Light Forces gained touch just after dusk and the fourteenth and second destroyer flotillas of four boats each were ordered to attack. Tenth destroyer Flotilla of four boats being retained as battlefleet screen. Vice Admiral Light Forces later moved clear of destroyers to North East.

8. At 2210 RD/F reports from Vice A.L.F. and VALLANT showed that an enemy vessel was stopped and would pass three miles to port of battlefleet.

para 3 amended, see p 993c.

117' SE

Sic

Sic

Sic

1558/30

Note. Corrections to C. in C. Mediterranean's 1730/30. In para 11 GDODOSN should read Captain.

In para 13. Italian forces opposing should read 3 battleships 7 cruisers 14 destroyers.

Advance copy sent 1st Lord., C.S.O. to 1st S.L., A.C.N.S. (F), Ops., O.D., O.I.C., Press Div., Capt. Pim, U.W.R., D. of P.

1st Lord.	A.C.N.S. (F)	Ops. (4)	Capt. Pim, U.W.R.
1st S.L.	A.C.N.S. (T)	O.D. (5)	D. of P. (3)
2nd S.L.	EARL SEC.	D.N.I. (4)	D.S.D. 9.
5th S.L.	NAVAL SEC. (2)	D.T.D. (4)	I.P. (3)
V.C.N.S.	C.S.O. to 1st S.L.	D.T.D. (M)	D.S.D.
A.C.N.S. (H)	D.N.A.D.	O.I.C. (3)	D.../S W.
	E.P.S.	K. (2)	W.D.
	D.T.S.D.		D.P.D.

1730/30th March

993 B

SECRET

MESSAGE

IN

From C. in C. Mediterranean.

Date 31.3.41.

Recd. 0038.

NAVAL CYPHER (X) BY W/T

Addressed Admiralty.

IMPORTANT

? 21° intended.

My 1730/30 Part Two. This vessel is now known to have been POLIA. A turn to engage was made by battleships and FORMIDABLE from position 35° degrees 29' North (29° degrees 48' East but while approaching three cruisers were sighted at 2225 on starboard bow of battle fleets, leading one being a COLLEONI followed by two ZARAS. The enemy were crossing from starboard to port. The battlefleet was turning back to the original course and as the cruisers passed ahead of the screen GREYHOUND illuminated the first heavy cruiser, who was by then on port bow. The battlefleet opened fire and the enemy was completely taken by surprise. The first salvos all hit and practically wrecked both ZARAS as far as fighting was concerned. Destroyers astern of the cruisers were seen to turn and fire torpedoes and the battlefleet turned away to avoid them. I then deemed it inadvisable for the battleships and FORMIDABLE to take any further part in the fighting so withdrew to northeastward sending the screen into mop up, which they did very effectively. (1) Exactly what followed is still obscure, but STUART and HAVOCK did considerable execution. The destroyer attacking force searching for LITTORIO failed to locate her, and it seems probable she moved off during the action against the cruisers. Captain D. Fourteen subsequently made touch with the destroyers from the battlefleet and assisted in sinking ZARA and POLIA. (10) Results are ZARA, POLIA, and FIUME sunk, one COLLEONI probably sunk, VICENZO GIOBERTI and MESTRALE sunk, one other destroyers probably sunk. There is little doubt that a good deal of damage was done to other ships and it seems certain that LITTORIO was heavily engaged with her own force as 15-inch and secondary armament fire were heard at a time and in a direction which we now know cannot have been from any of our forces. The results of this action is not known except that this may have been the cause of the possible loss of the Gelleoni-Cruiser. (11) About 55 officers and 850 men were saved including ~~Commander~~ of POLIA. Admiral Cantonei is thought to have been lost with ZARA. Italian Commander-in-Chief was in LITTORIO. Prisoners from POLIA say she was hit by an aircraft torpedo which made her unable to use any of her guns owing to electrical failure. (12) Our own ships were unhurt, receiving neither casualties nor damage. This point may be worth emphasising for propaganda purposes. Range of battleships action 4000 yards on opening fire. (13) Opposing forces were: British, three battleships, one aircraft carrier, four cruisers, 12 destroyers; Italians, three battleships, 14 fourteen destroyers. (14) Our aircraft losses as reported in my 2207/29, plus one Fulmar which forced-landed, crew lost. One J.U. 88 was shot down on 28th and another on the 29th by A.A. fire during an unsuccessful dive bombing attack on Fleet by about 12 aircraft. One S.79 shadowed by Fulmars on 30th. (15) Greek destroyers were rushed through Corinth Canal in order to join action, but unfortunately too late to take part, on 28th. They came out on 29th and picked up some survivors. I have thanked Greeks for this very prompt and unsolicited effort.

all 4

Sic

Sic

Sic

14

sample
ulcers
ankle
trans double
Orion
4/2
1/2
6/10/41

14DF 2 DF

COLLEONI

Captain

7 cruisers

(C. C. M., 1730/30, 5/Admiralty)

advance copy sent Ops., O.D., O.I.C.

1st Lord.		Press Division D. of P.	
1st S.L.	C.S.O. to 1st S.L.	D. of P. (3).	Note:- Part I not yet received.
2nd S.L.	Ops. (4).	D.S.D. 9.	
5th S.L.	O.D. (5).	D.S.D.	
A.C.N.S. (H).	D.N.I. (4).	D. & S.W.	D.N.A.D.
A.C.N.S. (F).	D.T.D. (4).	I.P. (3).	E.P.S.
A.C.N.S. (T).	D.T.D. (M).	W.D.	D.T.S.D.
Parl. Sec.	O.I.C. (3).	D.P.D.	
Nav. Sec.		M. (2).	

9995.

SECRET.

MESSAGE.

From War Registry.

Date 31.3.41.

Reference C. in C. Mediterranean's 1730/30 re action in the Mediterranean. In paragraph 13, Italian forces opposing British should read "three battleships, eleven cruisers 14 destroyers.

- 1st Lord
- 1st S.L.
- 2nd S.L.
- 5th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (F)
- A.C.N.S. (T)
- Naval Sec.
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Cps. (4)
- C.D. (5)
- D.N.I. (4)
- D.T.D. (4)
- D.T.D. (M)

- O.I.C. (3)
- D. of P. (3)
- D.S.D. 9.
- D.A./S.W.
- I.P. (3)
- W.D.
- D.P.D.
- D.S.D.
- M. (2)
- D.N.A.D.
- E.P.S.
- D.T.S.D.
- Capt. Pim, (Upper War Room).

(altered to 7 cruisers, see note to C.C. Mem., 1858/30)

993.D

War Registry.

31/3/41.

C. in C. Mediterranean's message 1730/30 re Naval action in the Mediterranean. In para. 13 the Italian forces opposing the British should read "three battleships (? seven ? eleven) cruisers fourteen destroyers. It is not clear from the cypher version which number of cruisers is correct.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1st Lord. | D. of P. (3) |
| 1st S.L. | D.S.D.9. |
| 2nd S.L. | D. A/S V. |
| 5th S.L. | I.R. (3) |
| V.C.N.S. | W.D. |
| A.C.N.S. (H) | D.P.D. |
| A.C.N.S. (F) | D.S.D. |
| A.C.N.S. (T) | M. (2) |
| NAV. SEC. | D.N.A.D. |
| C.S.O. to 1st S.L. | C.P.S. |
| Ops. (4) | D.T.S.D. |
| O.D. (5) | Capt. Pim (U.W.R.) |
| D.N.I. (4) | |
| D.T.D. (4) | |
| D.T.D. (3) | |
| O.I.C. (3) | |

(Lion)

SECRET

M E S S A G E

1604/2 April
IN

DATE: 4.4.41
RECD: 2302

993 E

From C in C Mediterranean.

Naval Cypher D by W/T

Addressed Admiralty, Repeated V.A. Malta, S.B.N.O. Suez Canal

827. My 1700/30 please amend as follows: 2. Para 3, cancel and substitute. Communication A/C sighted Southern group V.A.L.F. was about 20 miles south of them. He was engaged by the 3 8 inch cruisers at about 26000 yards for about an hour on a south easterly course. At 0855 enemy turned west pursued by V.A.L.F. and led latter on to Italian Battleship VITTORIO VENETO who was sighted to Northwards at 1055 and who opened an accurate fire on H.M.S. ORION at 32000 yards. Force B was thus placed in a most awkward position and must be accounted lucky to have avoided damage.

V.A.L.F. altered course to southward and gradually round to Force B and made smoke. Fire was (? diverted) to H.M.S. GLOUCESTER the rear ship, at 1115. Owing to high speed destroyers had difficulty in getting into position to smoke screen H.M.S. GLOUCESTER. Many straddles and near misses but no hits. Cruisers were out ranged throughout and fired only a few salvos.

3 for Italian B 3 LITTORIO read Italian Battleship VITTORIO VENETO throughout.

4 for Italian destroyer VINCENZO GIOBERTI read Italian destroyer VITTORIO ALFIERI.

1604/2

Advance copy Ops O.D. O.I.C.

+ Re recent Mediterranean Battle.

- 1st Lord
- 1st S.L.
- 2nd S.L.
- 5th S.L.
- V.C.N.S.
- A.C.N.S. (H)
- A.C.N.S. (T)
- A.C.N.S. (F)
- NAV. SEC.
- PARL SEC.
- C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
- Ops (4)
- O.D. (5)
- D.N.I. (4)
- D.T.D. (4)
- D.T.D. (M)
- O.I.C. (3)
- D of P (3)
- D.S.D.9
- D.S.D.
- D.A/S.W.
- I.P. (3)
- W.D.
- D.P.D.
- M (2)
- D.N.A.D.
- E.P.S.
- D.T.S.D.
- Capt. Pim Upper War Room.

EM

994

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. (Contd.)

Enemy Objective.

FIUME,

ZARA

POLA

2130/27 VITTORIO VENETO, three Italian cruisers ZARA Class, and four destroyers left Taranto. They knew other cruiser and destroyers were joining but knew nothing of another battleship. Object was attack on convoy by light forces whilst main force covered southerly. FIUME believed (?destroyed) by heavy guns ZARA self blown up after serious damage. POLA disabled by torpedo from F.A.A. at 2030 and self sunk about 2330. VITTORIO VENETO believed not sunk. (N.A. Athens, 2115/30, to C.in C. Med.)

East Indies.

French
Repatriees

My 1102/29. Now understand that INHARRIME expects to leave Lourenco Marques 31/3 to pick up troops who are in COLONIAL at Beira. Dar-Es-Salaam cannot accommodate troops. Not yet known about Mombasa. Request instructions. (C.in C. E.I., 0644Z/30, to Admty.)

ODER,
German
personnel,
captured
documents.
UCKERMARK,

Illidest. { PANTERA,
NAZARIO SAURO

My 2058/26. Original engine room complement of German ships at Massawa were Chinese and Indians who have left. Engine room complement of ODER consisted of (numbers) drawn from other German ships in Massawa. Unlikely that sufficient men would be available to man all the remainder of the German ships especially in view of para 3(A) below.

3. Diary found in possession of officer up to 11/2/1941 contains following information. (B) Volunteers from German motorised unit in Asmara were called for towards the end of January to man the UCKERMARK which was to be transformed into an auxiliary cruiser. (C) Confirmed that alleged attack on Red Sea Convoy on 3/2 was carried out by PANTERA and NAZARIO SAURO (C.in C. E.I. 0636Z/3 refers) (D) On 8/2 two scuttling charges were fixed in ODER by Italian Navy and P.M. that day orders given to stand by to scuttle. Orders were cancelled at noon/9. (S.N.O., Red Sea, 0832Z/30, to C.in C. E.I.)

995

War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

PHOEBE

After crossing lat. of 25° S. PHOEBE is to be detached from convoy W.S.6 and proceed to Mediterranean at best speed.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 1216/30 to C.in C. E.I.).

Relief for
NELSON.

ADMIRAL

My 1747/17 and 2006/26.
Should there be definite indications that SCHEER is not in South Atlantic or Indian Ocean it is desired to relieve NELSON by one 8" cruiser as soon as possible, preferably in time for NELSON to return to Freetown without calling at Cape.
Request your proposals.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 1230/30, to C.in C. E.I.).

BERTRAM
RICKMERS
intercepted
by KANDAHAR.

R.A.F. R/C reported a merchant ship leaving Massawa at 12 G.M.T./29 and also its position at 0540 G.M.T./30 KANDAHAR intercepted this ship, the BERTRAM RICKMERS at 0750 G.M.T./30 in 14° 7' N., 41° 42'. BERTRAM RICKMERS abandoned ship on sighting and fired scuttling charges. Full details not yet available.
(C.in C. E.I., 1300Z/30, to Admty.).

Red Sea.
plans to
intercept
enemy vessels.

S.N.O., Red Sea will as far as possible maintain the following dispositions in Red Sea to deal with Italian Destroyer(s) and the escape of enemy Merchant Vessel(s)
(A) Striking force of one C Class Cruiser and one Destroyer based on Port Sudan.
(B) Section of similar force based on (?Suez) for Straits of Jubal and Northern part of Red Sea.
(C) In Straits of Bab El Mandeb a composite force which will contain a sloop and be supported by one Destroyer. (2) Two sloops will be normally B.N. and B.S. convoy escorts between about 020° N. and Aden, and forces (a) and (b) will provide cover in their respective areas. Personnel of convoy escorts will be reinforced from forces (a) and (b). (3) Operation "~~XXXXXXXXXX~~" will be supported by Force (a) (4) Swordfish embarked from EAGLE will provide R/C of (?Canal) from Massawa and (corrupt group) to prevent and be ready to strike if the movement of enemy Destroyer is detected. Possibility of moving some Swordfish to Hurghada in emergency is under consideration with R.A.F. Alternatively A.O.C. in C. M.E. may be able to provide Sunderland Flying Boat in Gulf of Suez.
(C.in C. E.I., 1906Z/30, to Admty.).
Addition, see 1212/31.

/UMBRIA ...

996

War Diary.

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

East Indies. (Contd.)

UMBRIA
(Italian),
scuttled.

Your 1020/22 (N.T. W.R. and D. of S.T.)
Master of PROTECTOR reports UMBRIA sunk in
deep waters and salvage impracticable.
(P.S.T.O. Egypt, 2311/30, to N.O.I.C.
Port Sudan).

America and West Indies.

ANGLO INDIAN
Raider report.

The following has been read. RRRR
ANGLO INDIAN position lat. unread, long.
31.51 W., is suspicious.
(Lands End, 0828/30).
R.R.R.R. Cancel my 0828/30.
(ANGLO INDIAN, 0857/30).

MALAYA

Arrival 0830/29 local time. Regret delay in
routine signal.
(N.C.S.O. Port of Spain Trinidad, 0914/30).

PRINCE DAVID

Leave Trinidad A.M./1 and proceed 15 knots
to establish patrol at South Eastern End of
area O. Complete to full stowage fuel and
water before sailing.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1041/30, to PRINCE DAVID).

MALOJA

Leave Bermuda as soon as ready on 1/4 and
proceed to St. John N.B. by most direct
route. Adjust speed so as to arrive off
Patridge Island not later than 1230 Q/3.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1042/30, to MALOJA).

/ See page 735.

"R" report
22/3.

My 1906/22. Report received from S.S.
CAPSA on arrival Curacao mentioned RR RR
heard from ROYAL CROWN. (C.in C. A.W.I.,
1122/30, to Admty.).

LIVERPOOL
refitting
port.

Your tel. regarding LIVERPOOL. Yard was
corrected in ARMUK 28 (T.O.O. 2304/27) to
Mare Island. T.O.O. 1330/28.
(B.A.R.M. Washington 1123/30 to Admty.).

997

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

H.X. 118.

Your 1424/29. No objection to sailing Commodore in DALHOUSIE. He should not embark in JEAN JADOT.
(? D.T.D., 1302/30, to C.O.A.C. Halifax).

H.X.118
S.C.27.

RAMILLIES successfully undocked to-day 30/3 and will be available for H.X.118 sailing a.m./1 in company with SURCOUF to overtake convoy. SALOPIAN is escorting S.C.27 and WOLFE H.X.118. (B.S.3. 1602/30, to Admty.).

"Q" Report.

43.58 N., 30.56 W.,
QQQQ 15.40 G.M.T. GMPG suspicious vessel.
1545/30. (? , T.O.R. 1651/30)
W.R. Note: GMPG (FLM 17?)

"Q" Report
SATURNUS

Following has been read: QQQQ 43.28 N.
28.40 W., SATURNUS, suspicious.
(SATURNUS, 1650/30).
Cancel my QQQQ 1647, vessel is friendly.
(Valentia Radio, 1718/30).

Seizure of
Italian Ships.

Secretary of the Treasury ordered Coastguards today to take possession of all Italian ships in U.S. territory. Action taken after discovery that crews of five at Newark, N.J., BRENNERO, SAN LEONARDO, ALBERTA, AUSSA, and ARSA, had ruined the engines by burning out essential parts. (The Times, 31/3/41, from telegrams dated 30/3).

MALAYA

Your 1012/28. Intend to sail at 2200/30 via Mona Passage and position 100 miles East of Cape Hatteras. E.T.A. Ambrose L.V. 0800 Zone plus 5/6 April.
(MALAYA, 1836Z/30, to C.in C. A.W.I.)
MALAYA departed. (N.O.I.C. Trinidad, 2252/30, to C.in C. A.W.I.).

Cable
communications.

Your 1404/24. Cable and wireless communications in this area now working to full capacity. Demand for facilities for private messages by U.S. personnel and U.S. Government traffic may also be expected. Consider this will lead to choking of our own vital communications, followed by demand for better facilities. We cannot give these. U.S. demand for right to supply their own will be unanswerable. In view of great

998

30.3.1941.
Sunday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies. (Contd.)

Cable
communications.
(Contd.)

importance of maintaining complete control of Imperial Communications consider we should at least plan ahead and be ready with scheme of expansion.
(C.in C. A.W.I., 1907/30, to Admty.).

Australia.

Free French
Volunteers.

Free French Authorities request arrangements for movement of 300 volunteers from Tahiti and 300 from New Caledonia to Middle East. Request report whether arrangements can be made for movement in first place to Australia or N.Z. and subsequently to M.E. in U.S.11.
(D.S.T., 1107/30, to A.C.N.B.).

War Diary.30.3.1941.
Sunday.U-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.HYLTON
GERMANIC
(torpedoed 29/3)

Cancel my 1922/ag. (Proceed direct to help of HYLTON and GERMANIC). Remain at 1/2 hours notice, (F.O.I.C. Greenock, 0015/30, to PRUDENT, TENACITY).

ERODONA
(torpedoed 16/3)ERODONA brought into Edis Vik anchorage near Reykjavik. Stern resting on bottom in approx. 60 feet.
(F.O. Iceland, 1401/30, to Admty.)
ERODONA, THAMES, and VISENDA escorted by WHITETHORN arrived 2000/29.
(F.O.I.C. Iceland, 1600/30, to S.O.N.P.T.)MANSEPOOL
(torpedoed 24/2)(A) S.S. MANSEPOOL (B) 0500 G.M.T./24/2.
61° 07' N. 13° 10' W. (F) ship was not seen to sink. (C.in C. S.A., 2046/30, to Admty.)Submarines Reported.

1210.

D/F at 1210/30 makes it probable that OG 57 has been reported by a German U-Boat.
(D.D.I.C. 1235/30).Estimated U Boat dispositions.
(D.D.I.C. 1348/30).

War Diary

31.3.1941.
Monday

SITUATION REPORT

1000

Home Commands

German
Battlecruisers

C. in C. Plymouth pointed out yesterday that the SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were known to have been in Brest on 27/3, but no serious attack had been made on them, although since 27/3 many tons of bombs have been dropped on targets in Germany which cannot run away. These two ships constitute the most potential weapons Hitler possesses for carrying out his avowed intention of waging war on our shipping. C. in C. Plymouth considers it vital that the maximum possible air attack should be directed against these ships and sustained at the expense of all other targets until they are out of range or have been destroyed.

The Admiralty replied today that the considerations put forward are uppermost in the mind of the Admiralty, Air Ministry and War Cabinet, but last night was the first night on which the weather was suitable for attack, though the weather meanwhile has been suitable for bombing the other objectives referred to.

P.R.U. Sortie showed that SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU were still in Brest at 1645 today. The funnel of the docked ship was emitting smoke but the ship was apparently still resting on chocks.

Plymouth &
W.A. Commands

An adjustment had^s been made between the boundaries of the Plymouth and Western Approaches Commands.

Dover
shelled.

Eight rounds were fired at Dover by enemy coastal batteries between 1106 and 1145 today. No naval damage or casualties occurred.

U-Boats in
Bordeaux.

P.R.U. sortie today showed 18 U-boats in Bordeaux compared with 9 or 11 on 26/3.

War Diary31.3.1941.
MondaySITUATION REPORTShipping & Convoys

C. in C., Western Approaches, considers that until supplied with secreted arms for subsequent use if opportunity arises, all British Merchant ships should be ordered to scuttle themselves if there is no other way to avoid capture.

Owing to shorter hours of darkness it is intended to alter sailings between Dartmouth and Portsmouth by stopping at Portland for one day on passage.

British Air Activity.Operations
against
SCHARNHORST &
GNEISENAU

It is thought that the SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU may sail from Brest at any time during darkness. Air patrol is to be maintained from 0730 today until it is established that the battle cruisers are still in Brest. Air patrols are to be maintained by a/c fitted with special equipment, from 2 hours after dark until dawn daily until further orders.

109 aircraft of Bomber Command were detailed to attack the battle cruisers at Brest last night. 98 reached the objective and dropped 118 tons of bombs. No direct hits on the battle cruisers are claimed, though it is assumed from reports that a high percentage of the bombs dropped on the portion of the docks where the battle cruisers are situated.

Attacks on
shipping off
French & Dutch
coast.
Destroyer hit.

20 Bomber Command Aircraft were despatched today to attack enemy shipping off the French and Dutch Coasts. Two 3000 ton tankers were set on fire off Le Havre and two hits are claimed on a large destroyer off Schiermonnikoog; which was left listing with smoke issuing from the stern. A hit is claimed on a 2000 ton merchant ship in convoy off IJmuiden.

War Diary

31.3.1941.

Monday

1002

SITUATION REPORT

Enemy Air Activity

Two merchant vessels escorted by WOOLSTON and LEITH were unsuccessfully bombed at 1701 at the mouth of the Bristol Channel. WOOLSTON called for help again at 1807.

Trawlers WHINNYFOLD and ^{? YORK} YORK were attacked in 60° 30' N., 9° 35' W this evening and the former had some casualties and damage. Trawler ONTARIO was sunk this morning in 60° 15' N., 11° W.

SS KALEV was disabled but not seriously damaged in air attack on Falmouth today.

3 bombs were dropped in Portsmouth Dockyard at 2011, damaging the Torpedo Store Depot.

Mining

Operation G. Z.

20th D.F. (less EXPRESS) laid mines last night off Brest, covered by 4 destroyers. Aircraft laid mines off Brest last night

Hartlepool was closed at 2230.

A/C mining

8 mines were laid off Brest by aircraft last night and 4 off Ameland.

Mining of
Humber

The Humber was reopened at 1025. At 1110 A/P trawler LORD SELBORNE was sunk 3 miles E. by S. of the P.W.S.S. Mines are scattered between Hull and Grimsby and apparently also off Spurn Point, to seaward. The Humber was closed again about midnight.

/Milford Haven.....

1003

31.3.1941.
Monday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Mining-Contd.

Milford Haven was closed at 0530 and reopened subject to local restrictions, at 1103.

What is considered to have been a mine detonated inside East India Dock Basin at 0005 today, slightly damaging the dock gates.

South Atlantic

A Fulmar aircraft from FURIOUS, flown off on 27/3 125 miles W. of Bathurst, is missing and may have force landed in Portuguese territory. Portuguese Govt. have been asked to institute an air search if possible.

Look-out
ships in
Convoys.

It is proposed to give a trial to a scheme of look-out ships, capable of at least 3 knots over convoy speed, in S.L. convoys, the look-out ships not to close the convoy on sighting an enemy warship and to make a raider report by W/T.

1004
31.3.1941.
Monday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

Mediterranean

BONAVENTURE
Sunk

BONAVENTURE escorting Convoy G.A. 8 was hit by 2 torpedoes early this morning off the S.E. end of Crete. The ship sank immediately, with heavy loss of life. STUART attacked the submarine, which broke surface and then crash dived after the third attack. After the fourth attack contact faded out.

Operation
"Ration"

F.O.C.N.A. reports five minor casualties in FORESTER by machine gun fire from aircraft, presumably when SHEFFIELD's force was attacked yesterday after engaging shore batteries at Nemours. SHEFFIELD reports that although the British force was steaming at 25 knots it could not have got between the convoy and the shore before the former reached gun range of the batteries.

[Should be under N. Atlantic]

Air attack
on Tripoli.

3 Wellingtons attacked Tripoli last night, for the third night in succession. A convoy of 10 ships was attacked off the port.

East Indies

To assist in protecting shipping in the Red Sea C. in C., Med. is sending GREYHOUND and GRIFFIN to Suez, but requests they may be relieved by ISIS and ENCOUNTER as soon as possible to prevent delay to Operation "Lustre" and to maintain Battle Fleet screen

/The arrival.....

1005

31.3.1941.
Monday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

East Indies- Contd.

The arrival of GREYHOUND and GRIFFIN from Mediterranean at Suez will enable Jubal Straits to be watched and more adequate protection given to convoys B.S. 22 and S.U. 4. which will be passing through Red Sea at the same time that operation "Atmosphere" is taking place.

FLAMINGO and AUKLAND are to escort B.N. 22 to Suez and then be at the disposal of C. in C., Mediterranean.

China

C. in C., China, sees no objection to allowing Thailand to have oil within reasonable limits provided she carries out her obligations regarding the supply of rice to Malaya, which she has recently reduced.

Japanese
accepting
Navycerts.

It is reported from Singapore that the N.Y.K. are to accept British Navycert System, and it is believed the O.S.K. and M.B.K. are also accepting.

Explanation
of escape of
ERITREA &
RAMB II

The N.E.I. Naval C. in C. (V.A. Helfrich) has explained that the escape of the Italian sloops ERITREA and the RAMB II through the Moluccas unseen, to Japan occurred owing to a delay, so far unexplained of 36 to 48 hours in W/T communication. C. in C., China 1072/31 gives the N.E.I. Naval dispositions.

1006

31.3.1941.
Monday

War Diary

SITUATION REPORT

America & West Indies

Axis Ships

It is stated in the press, that U.S. armed guards have been placed on board all Italian ships (and apparently German and Danish ships also) in U.S. ports, on the ground that their crews were sabotaging them.

EISENACH
FELLA

Crews of German EISENACH and Italian FELLA set fire to their ships early this morning at Punta Arenas, Costa Rica, and it is believed both will be a total loss. The crews are being arrested.

American Export
SS Line

An officer of this line has been discovered carrying letters handed to him by persons wishing to evade censorship. Other officers are suspected.

2219/31. March.

SECRET.

MESSAGE.

OUT.

Date. 31.3.41.

To: "A" Message Home and Abroad. 909A.

NAVAL CODE (J)

TEMPORARY.

From Admiralty.

After 6 weeks experience it has become apparent that some adjustment of the boundary between the Plymouth and Western Approaches Commands is necessary.

2. After consultation with the authorities concerned it has been decided that the Northern boundary of the Plymouth Command should be amended as follows:-

- (a) In the St. Georges and Bristol Channels by a line from Fortishead Point 51 degrees 30' N. 2 degrees 46' W. along the foreshore as far as Lynmouth Foreland 51 degrees 15' N. 3 degrees 47' W. thence 270 degrees as far as the Northern edge of the declared dangerous area which northern limit it then follows to the Tuskar Rock and Carnsore Point.
- (b) In the Atlantic by a line 270 degrees from Slyne Head 53 degrees 24' N. 10 degrees 14' W. to the Meridian of 15 degrees W.

3. The Western limit of the Milford Haven sub-command, and the Southern limit of the Cardiff sub-command are to be amended to conform with the division of the main commands.

4. For defence against invasion O. in C. Plymouth will remain responsible for all on the south shore of the Bristol Channel.

5. Dividing line between W/T areas (A) and (B) will be adjusted to conform.

2219/31.
D.O.D. (H)
Approved First Sea Lord.

1st. Lord.	D.A/S.W.	
1st. S.L.	D. of S.T.	
2nd. S.L.	I.P. (3)	
3rd. S.L.	D.S.D. (2)	
4th. S.L.	D. of L.D. (2)	
5th. S.L.	A.H.C.H.F.	
V.C.N.S.	O.I.C. (2)	
A.C.N.S. (H)	D.S.D. 9.	
A.C.N.S. (F)	H.W.R. (3)	
A.C.N.S. (T)	A.G.R.M.	
Nav. Sec.	A.C.R.	
C.S.O. to 1st. S.L.	W/T Rm (2)	
Civil Lord.	W.D.	
O.D. (5)	Hydrog.	
Ops. (4)	M. (9)	
D. of P. (2)	D.A/S.W. (2)	Bath.
D.N.I. (4)	Sub. W.R.	Bath.
D.T.D. (4)	File X.	

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.41.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Policy.Air Attacks on
SCHARNHORST and
GNEISENAU.

Reply to C.-in-C., Plymouth 1305/30 (1st S.L. 1500/31). See Operations Volume.

Plymouth and
Western
Approaches
Commands.

Adjustment of boundaries (1st S.L. 2219/31 "A" Message. Home and Abroad). See Lion Copy.

Defence of U.K.Dover.
Proposed
increased
immobilisation.

A.L.M/LD.01893/41 of 3/3. In view of the fact that Dover if captured by the enemy could be used for landing of tanks and M/T, more drastic measures for immobilisation as visualised in para. 4 of A.L. are now proposed as follows:-

(1) The sinking of all available craft such as Coasting Steamers, Lighters, Tugs, and FALCONET alongside Quays and at Dock Entrances.

(2) The blowing of Breach in Eastern Arm if this proves practicable.

Request approval to embody these in revised immobilisation arrangements. (V.A.Dover 1126/31)

Movements.O.24

Have left patrol. Have just sufficient fuel remaining to reach Gibraltar at moderate speed. Request instructions. (O.24. 0030/31). Your 0030/31. Proceed on the surface at your discretion passing through 041° N. 012° W. thence as ordered by F.O.C.N.A. (F.O.S.0334/31 to O.24).

COTTESMORE.

Tonight Provide cover for E.C.1. from dark to 59 Buoy, then return by 172 Q.Z.S. (C.-in-C. Nore 1019/31 to D.21).

UNDAUNTED.

F.O.S. No.541/SM 0028 of 27th March Para. 4. In anticipation of Admiralty approval intend to sail UNDAUNTED to Mediterranean Station on April 3rd. (F.O.S.1138/31).

PRIMULA.PRIMULA will sail^{for} Gibraltar with O.G.58 on 7/4. (C.-in-C. W.A.1554/31 to C.-in-C. Med.) But see CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

War Diary.31.3.41.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.Movements. (Continued)PRUDENT.
TENACITY.

Return to Campbeltown so as to arrive at 0700/1/4. Acknowledge all signals received by you while at Loch Foyle. (F.O.I.C.Greenock 1930/31).

WOOLSTON.

Report before you sail so that Fighter Escort may be arranged. (C.-in-C. Plymouth 2203/31).

UNBEATEN.See under Med. - p.1020.Operations.East Coast
Patrol.

Tonight the following Auxiliary Patrol positions will not be filled. A Sheringham Buoy. B.57 C to 58 Buoys. (C.-in-C. Nore 0955/31).

Dover
Shelled.

Enemy coastal batteries fired 8 rounds between 1106 and 1145 today; six fell in town and two to seaward of harbour. Damage and casualties (No Naval). V.A. Dover 1744/31).

Patrol O.

The duty at sea for which 2 destroyers of 16th D.F. or 21st D.F. are detailed each night is to be known in future as convoy protection instead of patrol 'O'. (C.-in-C. Nore 2211/31).

British Air Activity.Attacks on
M/Vs.

Day 30/3. Six Blenheims carried out R/C of coast off Frisian Is. for enemy shipping. Two aircraft bombed and machine gunned cargo vessel of 2-3,000 tons at 53° 40'N. 6° 22'E. and three bombs were seen to fall 10-20 yards away from the port side. Another aircraft attacked two stationary flak ships two miles off Terschelling but no bursts were observed. (H.Q.B.C.0022/31).

Patrols.My 1924/30/3. Aircraft will leave patrol one about 1700/31. (C.-in-C. Rosyth 1126/31). My 1938/30 patrols ~~sent~~ and ~~sent~~ cancelled as A/C unable to take off owing to weather. (C.-in-C. Rosyth 1514/31). To ensure enemy battle cruisers cannot leave Brest undetected following cross over patrol to be maintained from 2 hours after dusk till dawn daily until further orders by an A/C

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.41.
Monday.HOME COMMANDS.British Air Activity. (Continued).Patrols.
(Continued)

fitted with special equipment. From PSMQ 3207 to FXMQ 1445 to FXTK 2510 and PSZR 2141 leaving first position 2 hours after dusk all special equipment contacts to be identified unless own sea forces operating in vicinity. Enemy battle cruisers to be reported and shadowed. A/C to carry maximum load of flares and fuel.
(ACHQ. Plymouth. 1520/31 to St. Eval).
My 1514 Patrol ~~SMQ~~ has now taken off.
(C.-in-C. Rosyth 1636/31).

A/A Escort for
SCOTT.

My 1007/30. In view of SCOTT'S very inadequate A/A armament, and the fact that she will be spending 48 hours in the area South West of Faeroes on 3rd and 4th April, request if possible that A/A escort may be detailed for her during this period.
(R.A.(M) 1431/31 to C.-in-C. H.F.)

Attack on
SCHARNHORST
& GNEISENAU
at Brest.

Night 30/31 March. By 98 aircraft. No direct hits claimed but assumed from reports received that high percentage of bombs fell on part of docks where battle cruisers situated.
(HQBC.1630/31). See Lion Copy.

Enemy Air Activity.

IMMEDIATE. One aircraft bearing 310° height 10,000 feet. My position 51° 48' N. 1° 31' E. Course 226. Speed 12 knots. (WHITSHED 0705/31).

OILTRADER
(Bombed
29/3).

Trawlers unable to locate wreck of OILTRADER within an area 3 miles radius of 052° 35' 50" N. 002° 01' 30" E. (F.O.I.C. Yarmouth 0803/31).

→ Convoy O.G.

One enemy A/C circling convoy "Clasp" Height 1000 feet my position 53° 44' N. 18° 20' W. Course 249°, speed 7 knots. (WALKER 0821/31).

CAROLINA.
THORDEN.
(Bombed 26/3)
CHANDOS
Bombed.

Enemy aircraft unsuccessfully bombed 1900/30 wreck of Finnish vessel CAROLINA THORDEN lying near Nolso Island which is still burning also machine gunned Grimsby trawler CHANDOS about 1 mile south east of Nolso killed Captain wounded Gunner.
(O.C. Troops, Faroe Is. 1047/31).

→ Convoy
O.G.

1 Enemy A/C shadowing. Circling height 1000 feet position 53° 36' N. 18° 52' W. (WALKER 1137/31).

ALBERT C.
FIELD.
(British
1,764 tons)

Request whereabouts may be communicated when known. Vessel made air distress message at 1347/29/3 off 8 B Buoy, whilst a straggler from F.N.45 bound Hartlepool from Southend.
(C.-in-C. Rosyth 1240/31).

SECRET

1630/31/March
M E S S A G E

IN

From H.Q.B.C.

Date 31.3.41

Recd 2039

P/L BY T/P

Addressed:- Air Ministry War Room, Air Ministry War Room Z
Headquarters 1 2 3 4 5 6 and 7 groups, Coastal
Command (repeat Admiralty) H.Q. R.A.F. Northern
Ireland.

Bomber Command Intelligence Summary No. 741

Reports received during period 0001 hrs to
1200 hrs. 31 March.

Summary of Operations

Night 30/31 March

Brest-SCHARNHÖRST and GNEISENAU

A force of 109 aircraft were detailed to attack the battle
cruisers at Brest. 98 aircraft reached their objectives and
delivered a strong attack. Although no direct hits were actually
seen, due in the most part to darkness and intense searchlight
concentration, it is reasonable to assume from reports received
that a high percentage of the bombs were dropped upon that
portion of the docks in which the cruisers are situated.
Of 13 Wellingtons (1 Group) which attacked, one claims to have
seen hits on the dry docks from another aircraft at 0029 hrs
and also a possible hit on a ship alongside the quay opposite
the torpedo boat station, presumably the SCHARNHÖRST.
15 Blenheims started a large fire immediately North of the
two dry docks as part of their contribution and many of the 32
Wellingtons of 3 group claim to have straddled the cruisers
from all directions. The docks were clearly seen although in
most cases the targets were not actually picked out. 22
Whitleys dropped their bombs well in the target area but found
searchlight activity made observation of results difficult
although the cruisers were clearly seen by the light of our
flares, enemy gun flashes and search lights. 13 Hampdens and
4 Manchesters added to the night's work. 1 Manchester and 4 of
the Hampdens identifying their actual targets but make no claim
to direct hits, although several large fires were observed a
in and around target area. Several enemy aircraft were
encountered over the target, but no attacks were made. 3
Wellingtons of 1 group however were attacked on approaching
their home base, one of the enemy aircraft was definitely
identified as an H.E. 111. Flak was heavy and accurate for
height and red, green and blue tracer came up very fast from
position of warships. The green was not seen to explode.
Searchlights and flak co-operated, very powerful searchlights
forming a cone through which the flak was fired, bursting
at the apex.

Ostend

All the 13 Wellingtons of 3 group detailed for this target attacked
and the whole target area received attention, several
explosions being seen.

1 Whitley unable to reach its primary target, attacked the docks
at Cherbourg.

1630/31/March

Mining

8 Hampdens successfully laid mines.

For details see summary of bombing results No. 471.

A table supplementary to the above summary will in future be sent by D.R.L.S. which will embody observations of searchlights, Beacons, aerodrome activity, dummies, etc.

1630/31.

Advance copy sent Ops. O.D. C.I.C.

1st Lord
 5th S.L.
 V.C.N.S.
 A.C.N.S. (H)
 C.S.O. to 1st S.L.
 D.S.D. 9,
 Ops. (4)
 O.D. (5)
 C.I.C.
 D.N.I. (4)
 D.P.D.
 D.N.A.D.
 D.M.S.
 D.M.S. Basement
 D. of P (2)
 D.S.D. (2)
 O.C.S.G.
 W.D.

31.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.HOME COMMANDS.Enemy Air Activity. (Contd.)Convoy
E.N. Even.Fighters despatched to assistance of
Convoy ~~MISSION~~. (Rosyth 1439/31).Convoy
"Obstacle"Request fighter assistance Convoy ~~MISSION~~ ^{"Obstacle"}
(2 M/V's escorted by WOOLSTON and LEITH)
Position. (WOOLSTON 1701/31).
My 1701/31 4 bombs no hits.
(WOOLSTON 1706/31).
Help ~~MISSION~~ 51° 16' N. 4° 23' W.
(WOOLSTON 1807/31).Portsmouth.At 2011 a plane dropped 3 H.E. on Dockyard
Canteen at Unicorn Gate and Torpedo Store.
Details of damage not yet ascertained.
Casualties. (C.in C. Portsmouth 2122/31).Mining.Milford
Haven.Port is closed owing to enemy mining.
(F.O.I.C. Milford Haven 0530/31).Humber.Humber is open to navigation.
(F.O. Humber 1025/31).Milford
Haven.My 0530/31. Port is open subject to local
restrictions. (F.O.I.C. Milford Haven
1103/31).LORD SELBORNE
sunk.(A/P Trawler) Lost by underwater explosion
at 1110 today. Approximate position
believed to be 102 degs PWSS 3 miles.
No further details known yet.
(F.O. Humber 1150/31).Operation
B.S.53.Intend TEVIOTBANK, GUILLEMOT, and
LA MELPOMENE to sail from Spurn Point at
1230/1st and take departure from 20 F buoy
at 0230/2 to initial position.
Laying will begin at 0420/2.
(S.O. Minelayers, Immingham 1152/31,
C.in C. Rosyth 1631/31).

1011

War Diary.

31.3.1941.
Monday.

HOME COMMANDS.

Mining. (Contd.)

Operation
ZME 27.

Details. Operation to be carried out on night of 2/4 or as soon after as practicable. Time of laying to be as near midnight as possible. Movements of ships to be restricted as for operation Z.M.E. 24. (V.C.N.S. 1614/31).

Moray Firth
searching
sweep.

My 1117/30. Operations postponed for about 24 hours on account of weather. Further signal will be made. (C.in C. Rosyth 1625/31 to S.O. 5th M.S.F., ALBURY). Positions of Acoustic mine detonated today and spontaneous explosions heard. 1818/31.

Skids.

Enemy's recent practice of dropping ground mines in docks, basins and rivers, where reduced salinity of water renders 'LL' Sweep ineffective makes it particularly important to have skids and skid towers available for instant action at ports where the above conditions obtain. (D.M.S. 1933/31 to C.in C. W.A. etc.).

KENYA.
re deperming.

Cdr. D.G. Helensburgh reports: if time permits KENYA should be depermed. T.O.O. 1030/31 ends. It is understood that this would take a day and a half. Request instructions. (F.O.I.C. Greenock 2120/31).

Hartlepool
closed.

Port of Hartlepool closed owing to suspected minelaying. (N.O.I.C. Hartlepool 2230/31.).

Humber.

Humber is closed to navigation, enemy mine-laying scattered mine-laying between Hull and Grimsby. Difficulty to estimate number and position owing to Breakdown in communications. Anticipated time of opening 1100/1/4. (F.O. Humber 2358/31).

1012

31.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Enemy Intelligence.

Convoy off
Sables
D'Olonne.

A/C reported 3 Merchant ships escorted by 5 E Boats off Sables D'Olonne course N.W. speed 12 knots at 1210. (F.O.(S) 1459/31 to TIGRIS).

18 U boats
in Bordeaux.

PRU Sortie 1210/31 shows in Bordeaux wet basins eighteen submarines of which three docked as compared with 9 possibly 11 on 26/3. (P.R.U. Benson, 1645/31).

SCHARNHORST
& GNEISENAU

PRU Sortie 1645/31 shows in Brest SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU still present. Funnel of docked vessel emitting smoke but ship apparently still resting on chocks. No other naval units of importance noted but large tanker alongside at seaplane station. (P.R.U. Benson 1950/31).

Armed fishing
vessels in
Bay of Biscay.

It is believed that certain fishing vessels working in the Bay of Biscay may be armed with torpedoes. (F.O.(S) 2347/31 to S/M's on Patrol Area A).

31.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

HOME COMMANDS.

Shipping and Convoys.

Suggested
Scuttling.

Until supplied with secreted arms for subsequent use if opportunity arises, I consider all British Merchant ships should be ordered to scuttle themselves if there is no other way to avoid capture.
(C.in C. W.A., 1552/31, to Admty.).

S.L.
Convoys.

Proposed institution of look-out ships.
(D.T.D., 1832/3) See South Atlantic.

Channel
Sailings,
New Scheme.

C.in C. Plymouth's No. 654/M. 478 of 19/3 and Message 1409/27 and A.M. 1646/28. Owing to Shorter hours of darkness it is intended to alter sailings between Dartmouth and Portsmouth by stopping at Portland for one day on passage and to provide escorts as follows:
(C.in C. Portsmouth 1803/31 to C.in C. Plymouth, F.O.I.C. Portland).

1014

31.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

CASUALTIES AND DEFECTS.

RESTIVE

Out of action due to collision. D.G. circuit out. Structural damage not very serious. Repairs cannot be undertaken here. (MORT. Campbeltown 1005/31).

GARTH.

Left Sheerness 1208/31 in tow.
(C.in C. Nore 1436/31).
My 1108/11. PRIMULA delayed by defects
further signal will be made.
(C.in C. W.A. 1722/31).

31.3.1941.
Monday

War Diary

FOREIGN STATIONS

North Atlantic

FORESTER
Casualties
from air
attack.

Following casualties in FORESTER.
Five wounded by machine gun fire
from aircraft, none serious. No
casualties in other ships of force.
(F.O.C.N.A., 0038/31 to Admty.)
My 0038/31. All minor injuries
(F.O.C.N.A. 1805/31)

Operation
"Ration"

SHEFFIELD 1515/30. It is not clear
why SHEFFIELD did not get between the
convoy and the shore.
(1st.S.L. 1215/31 to F.O.C.N.A.)

Biscay
Patrol

Remarks on recent patrol off the Bay.
(S.O.Force H., 1657/31 to Admty.)

Operation
"Ration"

See Lion copy for full text.
Your 1215/31 SHEFFIELD reports as
follows. SHEFFIELD and destroyers
though steaming 25 knots could not
have got inside convoy before it
reached gun range of shore batteries.
Unaware of shore batteries, closing shore
made boarding possible and was to my
advantage. I was not attempting to rush
the operations hoping by strict adherence
to procedure to avoid any incident with
French destroyer SIMOUN.
(F.O.C.N.A., 1954/31 to Admty.)

Aircraft
Reinforcements
for Malta

H.Q. Middle East's A 493, 25/3. Fulmars
cannot be made available. Previous
experience indicates improbable
Sunderlands can make dawn R.V. with
Force H. Prefer Sunderlands patrol
five miles North of Galita Island on
D 3. Request immediate signal
transmitted not later than 0400 A if
conditions unsuitable Malta area, when
operation will be postponed 24 hours.
E.T.A. first formation in still air
about 0930 A on D.3. D.1 at present
fixed for 1/4.
(S.O. Force H. 1625/31 to V.A. Malta)
See also Mediterranean 1615/31.

SECRET

M E S S A G E

IN

1657/31st March.

From S.O. Force H.

Date 1.4.41.

Recd. 1026.

Naval Cypher (D) by W/T.

Addressed Admiralty. Repeated F.O.C. 1st B.C.S., C. in C. Plymouth,
C. in C. Home Fleet, C. in C. Western Approaches,
F.O.C.N.A.

I M P O R T A N T.

676. Following remarks on recent patrol off the Bay.

Locality of German Battle Cruisers being uncertain during 26th 27th and 28th March Force H covered O G 56 and H.M.S. SHEFFIELD's convoy in the vicinity of 041° North 020° West.

(iii) On receipt of report of Battle cruisers in Brest p.m. 28th March Force H moved north to 043° North and proceeded East to 018° 30' West forenoon 29th and 30th in case daylight revealed departure of enemy.

(iv) Weather prevented reconnaissance on all days except 26th and 30th when areas (corrupt group) surrounded by positions 039° North 015° West and 043° North 018° West respectively were covered.

(v) Unless air or surface craft from U.K. are confident of maintaining touch with enemy throughout second night out from Brest consider intercepting force should move in to about 017° or 018° West in forenoons unless:-

(a) A S V Patrol close off Brest has been maintained previous night or

(b) Departure previous night is considered improbable.

(vi) Providing latitude and directions of approach and retirement are varied U-Boat risk is considerably reduced.

(vii) Nightly signal stating whether A S V Patrol is being maintained and assessing probable departures that night would obviate unnecessary moves to eastward and assist in gauging degree of attention which can be given to covering convoys and investigating raider and D/F bearing reports in vicinity.

1657/31.

Advance Copy Ops., O.D., O.I.C.

Note. Message received very corrupt and delayed in consequence.

1st Lord	Naval Sec.	D. of P. (3)
1st S.L.	C.S.O. to 1st S.L.	E.P.S.
5th S.L.	Ops. (4)	D.N.A.D.
V.C.N.S.	O.D. (5) for action	D.A./S.W.
A.C.N.S. (F)	O.I.C. (2)	D.T.D. (4)
A.C.N.S. (H)	D.N.I. (4)	D.T.D. (M)
A.C.N.S. (T)	D.S.D. 9.	W.D.
		I.P. (3)

MOST SECRETWar Diary31.3.41.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONSNorth Atlantic Contd.SHEFFIELD.

Your 1646/26 and my 1106/27. Re temporary repairs to make fuel tanks tight one week. Ship is seaworthy. Do not intend putting any repairs in hand at present.
(A.S. Gibraltar, 1654/30 to Admty.)

Raider which
sank
BRITANNIA 25/3.

Description of Raider that sank S.S. BRITANNIA 0855/25 in 007° 24' N 024° 34' W as follows;
(F.O.C.N.A. 2122/31, to N.A. Station).

South Atlantic

CABO DE
HORNOS.

Your 1341N/30. Steering to intercept. My P.C. and S is 057° 26' N 020° 37' W 294° 14 knots CYCLAMEN in company.
(CLEMATIS 1000N/31 to C.in C. S.A.).

Corvettes

Your 0910/28. Corvettes for U boat attack in area off Freetown. (N.T. in W.D.). All ships fitted H/F.
(C. in C. W.A., 1025/31 to C. in C., S.A.).

FURIOUS
missing
aircraft.

Please inform Portuguese Govt. that aircraft crew of 2, flown off H.M. Ship West of Bathurst missing since 27/3 and may have forced landed in Portuguese territory. Request Portuguese Govt. be asked to institute, if possible, an air search.
For your information, aircraft is Fulmar flown off FURIOUS 125 miles W of Bathurst.
(Head of M. 1241/31 to N.A. Lisbon).

ORMONDE.

Your 1105/30 ORMONDE should remain at Capetown to await onward escort.
(A.C.N.S.(F) 1245/31 to C. in C., S.A.).

BIRMINGHAM
CHRISTIAN
HUYGENS

Your 1900/30 my 2029/28. BIRMINGHAM escorting CHRISTIAN HUYGENS will probably overtake S L 70 a.m./4 in approx. 19° 30' N instead of 3/4 in 18° N.
(C. in C., S.A., 1517N/31 to Admty).

SECRET.

MESSAGE

1616A

1015N/31st March,
IN

From. C. in C. South Atlantic.

Date: 31.3.41.
Recd: 2309.

Naval Cypher D by W/T.

Addressed. F.O.C. North Atlantic, C. in C. America & West Indies,
C. in C. East Indies, N.C. i/c Simonstown, R.A.S.A.D. 185.

Weekly statement 29 March.

Freetown H.M.S. ALCANTARA, H.M.S. SEVERN, H.M.S. ALBATROSS,
H.M.S. VINDICTIVE, H.M.S. SURPRISE, H.M.S. MARGUERITE,
H.M.S. BULOLO sails to join S L 70 March 30. H.M.S. WISHART,
H.M.S. VIDETTE sail 29 to meet W S 7. H.M.S. DELPHINIUM
sails Simonstown 30 via St. Helena.

Bathurst Freetown CROCUS.

U.K. Freetown W S 7 escorted by H.M.S. NELSON arriving
5th April, H.M.S. CILICIA arriving 30. H.M.S. DUNNOTTAR CASTLE
arriving 3rd April.

Freetown Gibraltar H.M.S. REPULSE, H.M.S. FURIOUS.

Freetown U.K. H.M.S. ARAWA, H.M.S. MAURITIUS escorting S
L 69. Local escort H.M.S. CLEMATIS H.M.S. CYCLAMEN leave for
Bathurst 30. H.M.S. DUNCAN, H.M.S. FOXHOUND leave S L
69 to fuel at Bathurst and then meet W S 7. H.M.S. CALLENDULA
local escort to S L 70. H.M.S. CASHALOT escorting S L 70
until relieved by H.M.S. BULOLO.

My 1021 part one.

1015N/31.

Note:- part II (1021/31) already
circulated.

Advance Copy. Ops., O.D., Trade.

1st Lord.

1st S.L.

5th S.L.

V.C.N.S.

A.C.N.S. (F)

A.J.S. (T)

C.S.O. to 1st S.L.

Ops. (4)

O.D.8.

O.D. (5)

M. (2)

C.I.C.

Mails.

Movts.

D.S.D. 9

D.P.S.

I.P. (3)

D.A/S.W.

W.D.

D.N.A.D.

D.T.D. (4)

D.T.D. (M)

D. of P. (3)

D.T.S.D.

D.M.S.

D.M.S. Basement.

1017

31.3.1941.
Monday.

War Diary.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic. (Contd.)

ZAAANLAND.

Union Department of Agriculture are enquiring whereabouts of Dutch ZAAANLAND which was carrying an important cargo for themselves.

(S.O.I. Capetown, 1631/31, to Admty.).

Oiling at
Sea.

Reply to Adty. 1442/22.
(R.A.S.A.D., 1648Z/31).

Look-Out
Ships.
S.L. Convoys.

Ref. BULOLO's R. of P. 20/1, 1941, propose, subject to your concurrence, to give his scheme of look-out ships, but not his suggested zig-zag screen, a trial in S.L. convoys which have not been given a battle-ship or cruiser escort.

Trials to be subject to following:-

(1) To be at discretion of Commodore.
(2) Masters to be volunteers and carefully selected.

(3) Ships selected to have an excess over convoy speed of at least 3 knots.

(4) Look-out ships not to close convoy on sighting an enemy warship and to make a R.R.R. report by W/T.

(A.C.N.S.(T) 1832/31 to C.in C. S.A.).

(Reply: 2013/1/5)

CANTON

Your 0104/28/3 para. 3.

Hoped that total time to equip CANTON with Catapult will not be greater than if entire work carried out in U.K. as A.M.C's with high speed are urgently required for raider patrols. Also that it will be possible to fit all improvements as done in ALCANTARA including longer range guns.

(C.in C. S.A., 1946/31, to Admty.).

Survivors of
BRITANNIA
(sunk by
raider 25/3)

My 1415/30. (Survivors taken from Spanish BACHI by CILICIA). Survivors include following 6 naval officers and 26 naval ratings named in my 1942/31. All are well.
(C.in C. S.A., 2101/31, to Admty.).

AFRICANA
XXIV MAGGIO.

All Italian Ships at Pernambuco are now alongside outer Mole. AFRICANA has completed with water and XXIV MAGGIO is still receiving coal.

(N.C.S.O. Montevideo 2135Z/31).

MILFORD,
passages on
24/3 and 29/3.

1018

War Diary.

31.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

South Atlantic Contd.

MILFORD,
messages on
24/3 and
29/3.

Report by L/T on arrival St. Helena if it was MILFORD that made dummy message in international code on 24/3 and 29/3. This should not be done to jam distress messages made in error, as much confusion may result. (C. in C. S.A., 2203N/31, to Force U for MILFORD.).

Mediterranean.

Action
off
Crete.

Congratulations from Prime Minister, (D.C., 0216/31 to C. in C. Med.). Original in Lion Copy only.

BONAVENTURE
sunk.

BONAVENTURE torpedoed and sunk in p.146° 34'N 26°E. 33' GRIFFIN with Convoy. STUART attacking submarine. HEReward picking up survivors. (Capt. D.10, 0307/31, to C. in C. Med.) Position 90' S. of Crete. BONAVENTURE sunk by two torpedoes in 033° 20'N., 026° 35'E., at 0307. 10 officers including Captain and 300 men saved. Ship sank immediately. STUART attacked submarine which broke surface and then crashed after third attack. After fourth attack contact faded out. STUART then rejoined convoy. Suggest no announcement yet. (C. in C. Med., 1237/31, to Admty.).

Suez
Protection
of Shipping.

A.M. 2005/30 is not practicable. Boiler cleaning is only opportunity destroyers have of making good repairs. If this threat is considered a real one it can in my opinion only be dealt with by destroyers on spot. It is quite likely a (? mining) attack on canal would be made at same time. I am therefore sending two destroyers to Suez but I request they may be relieved by ISIS and ENCOUNTER as soon as possible, otherwise I shall have to delay operation "EAST" and meanwhile if battle fleet has to proceed to sea it will have to do so with negligible screen. (C. in C. Med., 1039/31, to Admty.,) (Names of destroyers, see East Indies, 1930Z/31.).

/Tripoli.....

1018A

M E S S A G E

0216/31st March.

SECRET.

OUT.

To C. in C. Mediterranean 545.
Repeated A.O.C. in C. Middle East.

Date 31.3.41.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CYPHER (9)

CORRECTION.

From Admiralty.

IMPORTANT.

Following from Prime Minister.

War Cabinet desire me to express to you our admiration of the brilliant victory gained in the Mediterranean by the conduct and proficiency of the officers and men of your fleet and of the Fleet Air Arm under your own skilful and audacious leadership.

We also express our gratitude to the squadrons of the Royal Air Force who so intimately and effectively prepared, aided and confirmed the success of these memorable encounters.

0216/31

D.C. for Prime Minister.

1st Lord.

1st S.L.

2nd S.L.

Controller.

Vice Controller.

4th S.L.

5th S.L.

V.C.N.S.

A.C.N.S. (H)

A.C.N.S. (F)

A.C.N.S. (T)

PARL. SEC.

CIVIL LORD.

Controller (M.S.P.) (London)

SEC.

NAV. SEC.

C.S.O. to 1st S.L.

P.A.S. (S)

Ops. (4)

O.D. (5)

M. (2)

D. of P. (3)

O.I.C. (2)

D.S.D. 9.

D.N.I. (4)

D.N.A.D.

T.P. (3)

D.P.S. (2)

W.D.

D.P.D.

1019

War Diary.

31.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean Contd.

Tripoli
bombed.
Wreckage of
Italian Ships.
Astropalia
bombed.

Operational Summary No. 294 up to 1200 hours 31.3.41. Night 29/30. 4 Wellingtons dropped 8000 lbs. bombs on docks and petrol installations Tripoli. Greece. 29/30. Sunderland reconnaissances reported oil patches unidentified wreckage and several rafts carrying Italians ship survivors in area between 120 and 180 miles West Crete where British and Italian naval forces were engaged 29/3.30/3. 5 Blenheims dropped 5000 lbs. bombs on shipping in and near Astropalia (Dodecanese) nearest bombs bursting within 100 yards. (H.Q. R.A.F., M.E., 1128/31.).

"Human
Torpedoes"
Suda Bay.

My 1734/26. Attack on Suda Bay was carried out by six boats. Description of boats as follows:- 14 foot turtle deck shallow draft one-man motor boat, with 6-cylinder engines and twin propellers on one shaft. Charge of about 500 pound explosive contained in cylindrical compartment in bow. Apparently charge may be set to detonate on impact or by steam pressure as ?explosive charge sunk alongside target. Recovered boat is being sent Alexandria for further examination. (C. in C. Med., 1537/31 to Admty.). See also p. 1020.

M.N.B.D.O.
in W.S.6.

BERGENFIORD and *ARAWA of W.S.6. Convoy contain M.N.B.D.O. Unit and priority stores urgently required Alexandria. Request they may be sent ahead of W.S.6, if practicable and escort available. (Corrupt groups) should also be (Corrupt Group) on completion transferred to BERGENFIORD before leaving Durban. (C. in C. Med., 1545/31, to C. in C. E.I.). * NoFA M.C. ARAWA.

Malta Air
Raids.

Combined Services Report Malta up to 1600 hours 31/3. All times GMT. Enemy activity 1500 hours 30/3. 4 JU. 88's escorted by 2 ME. 109's high level bombing on Takali. Only 2 bombs on camp. No casualties or damage. 31/3 considerable activity from 0500 to 0900 hrs on either side of Malta. 0930 hours small formation carried out recco round island. Enemy did not cross coast. (H.Q. R.A.F., Malta, 1600/31.).

/Malta.....

War Diary.

31.3.1941.
Monday.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

Mediterranean. cont:

Malta
Hurricanes

After further consideration and in view of possible adverse sea conditions for Sunderlands suggest following alternatives regarding R/V. 200 Group pass S.O. Force H who request signals us exact position of carrier at 0430 G.M.T. April 3. Also instruct first Hurricanes formation land Hal Far second Luca.

(H.Q. R.A.F. Malta 1615/31).

Your 1301/30 re proposal to route aircraft over Tunisia. Sunderland T.9048 should arrive Malta from Alexandria 1/4 or 2/4 and together with Sunderland L.5807 now at Malta will provide escort for Hurricanes under arrangements to be made by you.

(H.Q. R.A.F. ME 1707/31 to Malta).

UNBEATEN

Should be
under Home
Commands.
p.1008.

On return from patrol UNBEATEN is to revert to extended notice and is to be prepared to sail for Mediterranean on 12/4. Leave should be granted accordingly.

(F.O.S. 1733/31. to S.5).

YORK and
PERICLES
torpedoed
26/3.

Your 0058/31. Sent by W.R. for repetition of 1251/26 (See 1835/17 from Suda Bay.) Following is a repetition of my 1251/26 At 0515 this morning PERICLES was torpedoed as well as YORK. Hit amidships. Holed both sides. Capable of steaming. Cargo intact less about 500 tons. Attack was apparently made by 6 one man boats. One boat recovered intact is being investigated and two are known to have blown up ashore. Six prisoners here picked up off rafts. (Ends).

(S.B.N.O. Suda Bay, 1855/31, to Admty).

TINOS
BELLONA
SPARTA
(German.)

Arrival 30/3 TINOS. Departures BELLONA SPARTA both for Marseilles. (Valencia T.H.I. 1930/31).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies.Force W
Disbanded.

My 1500/19/2 para 1 (Ships in Italian Somaliland operations to be known as Force W.) Force "W" has been disbanded. (C. in C. E.I. 0444/31).

CERES

To escort NIEUW HOLLAND to Berbera. (C. in C. E.I. 0630Z/31, to CERES).

Greeks and
Italian Ships.

Censor Mauritius reports two Italian ships assaulted by Greek crews at Diego Suarez and by crew of NIVOSE. Italians now confined to ship. It is assumed Italian ships are DUCA, ABRUZZI and SOMALIA. (C. in C. E.I. 0658Z/31, to Admty etc.)

B.N. 22

Sailed (times) Escorts. AUUCKLAND, INDUS. (N.C.S.O. Aden, 0720Z/31) List and destinations (0730Z/31).

BERTRAM
RICKMERS

My 1500/30. (Interception of BERTRAM RICKMERS and attempted scuttling). Ship was still afloat at 1000 G.M.T./30 anchored in position 014° 06' 041° 40'. All crew escaped ashore except two Engineer Officers as KANDAHAR had no Power Boat. (C. in C. E.I. 0806/31 to Admty).

*See also p. 1023*French
Repatriees

Your 2044Z/30 has now been passed to Beira. INHARRIME sails 1700/31 for Beira arriving noon/2. Will not accept passengers until destination has been decided.

4. Please instruct British Consul Beira sail INHARRIME with native troops to Reunion and Tamatave with the least possible delay. American Consul-General and his family will be on board. COLONIAL is expected to load p.m./2 and to leave Beira 3/4 for Lourenco Marques. (Consul-Gen., Lourenco M., 1130/31 to C. in C. E.I.)

Essential that French troops in Portuguese ship COLONIAL should not be permitted to leave Beira in INHARRIME until further instructions have been received concerning their destination.

(Hd. of M. 1410/31 to Consul, Beira.)

If inadvisable.....

MOST SECRET.31.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies.French
Repatriees.
(contd).

If inadvisable to repatriate French native troops either to Reunion or Madagascar, I might be able to accommodate them here for three or four weeks at some inconvenience (Governor, Ceylon T.H.I. 2023/31 to C. in C. E.I.)

My 1410/31. French troops should be repatriated to Reunion and Madagascar in accordance with existing arrangements. (Head of M. 2143/31 to Consul, Beira).

Red Sea
Dispositions.

My 1906/30. Add para 4 R.A.F. make daily reconnaissance of Port Massawa. (C. in C. E.I. 1212Z/31 to Admty).
Admty. 2005/30. This would be reassuring to me especially when my Northern striking force is covering convoy to south. See my 1906/30 and 1212/31. As regards air reconnaissance, I hope this will provide information in sufficient time. (C. in C. E.I. 1214Z/31 to C. in C. Med.)

"R" report
CITY OF
HEREFORD.

British CITY OF HEREFORD made an R distress signal at 1405Z/31 suspicious vessel in sight. Position 014° 09' S 042°. An H.M. Ship is in the vicinity. (C. in C. E.I. 1450Z/31 to E.I. Sqdn.)
My 1450/31. Distress Message was cancelled at (?1610) G.M.T. in accordance with Admty. Message D.V. (C. in C. E.I. 1746Z/31 to E.I. Sqdn.)

TALAMBA
CANBERRA
W.S.6

Intend TALAMBA escorted by CANBERRA to Seychelles A.M./7. TALAMBA will embark Seychelles Pioneer Troops, and sail P.M./7 to R/V with convoy W.S.6. (C. in C. E.I. 1554Z/31, to CANBERRA etc).

A.M.C.
Refits.

Your 2059/28. (Facilities for refitting A.M.C.s in U.S.A.) A.M.Cs. None. (C. in C. E.I. 1806Z/31 to Admty.)

GREYHOUND, GRIFFIN.....

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.East Indies.GREYHOUND
GRIFFIN
FLAMINGO
AUCKLAND.

Your 1039/31 and 1107/31. Very grateful for GREYHOUND and GRIFFIN. Their early arrival at Suez will enable Jubal Straits to be watched and more adequate protection given to Convoys B.S.22 and S.U.4 which will be passing through Red Sea at this critical time and when operation ~~at Suez~~ also taking place. Your 1126/29. Intend FLAMINGO and AUCKLAND shall escort B.N.22 through to Suez whence they will be at your disposal.
(C. in C. E.I. 1930Z/31. to C.in C.Med.)

BERTRAM
RICKMERS
Intelligence.

Interrogation of two prisoners ex BERTRAM RICKMERS carried out 31/3. KANDAHAR 1201Z/30 refers.)
(S.N.O. Red Sea. 2000Z/31 to C. in C. E.I.)

WAR DIARY.

31.3.1941.
MONDAY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

China.

RAMSES
(German).

Shanghai 29/3. Proceeding down river in ballast.
(Capt: O.S. Singapore, 0821/31 to Admty etc.)

Japanese
accepting
Navicerts.

Shipping Controller, Singapore, informs me that Local Manager N.Y.K. called on him this morning and after congratulating him effusively on excellent Mediterranean victory announced that N.Y.K. were to accept British Navycert System. Shipping Controller believes O.S.K. and M.B.K. also accepting.
(C.in C. China, 1011/31 to Admty).

Oil for
Thailand.

Bangkok telegram No. 213. Governor of Straits Settlements and myself can see no objection to allowing Thailand to have oil within reasonable limits but consider any arrangement made must be subject to Thailand carrying out all obligations regarding supply of rice to Malaya which they have recently (?) reduced.
(C.in C. China, 1015Z/31 to Admty).

ERITREA
RAMB II
Italian
escape to
Japan.

I have received semi official letter from V.A. Helfrich expressing regret and disappointment at escape to Japan of Italian Sloop ERITREA and RAMB II. He had stationed destroyers (4) and 2 flying boats in Lesser Sunda Island: in Molucca 6 Flying boats ready for action at Ambon and 2 of newest S/Ms near Halmaheira. Netherlands Cruiser DE RUYTER was kept ready in a central position. DELIGHT was undergoing overhaul at Sourabaya and Netherlands Cruiser TROMP was on convoy duty, east of Torres Strait. Owing however to a delay so far unexplained of 36 - 48 hours in radio communication the Italian Ships evidently got through Moluccas unseen. He states for the present he is maintaining his main forces in Molucca, with patrol in Sunda Strait on West coast of Sumatra and in Lesser Sunda Island.
(C.in C. China, 1017/Z/31 to Admty).

WAR DIARY.

31.3.1941.
MONDAY.

FOREIGN STATIONS.

America and West Indies.

EISENACH
FELLA
fired.

Punta Arenas, German ship EISENACH
Italian ship FELLA set fire by crew
early this morning when local authority
attempted to board ships. Fire not
yet under control but British Legation
ask if permission may be granted
Master of British ship SALVADOR now in
Punta Arenas to assist in extinguishing
fire.

(Limon, 0815/31 to Admty).
My 0815/31. Owing to lack of fire
control installation ships are well
ablaze. German ship heavy list to
port, Italian ship ablaze amidships.
Believed both will be total loss.
Italian crew arrested, German crew
being rounded up.
(Limon, 1010/31).

IMPERIAL
MONARCH.

My 0808/5. Ship now Barbados
discharging 700 tons damaged wheat
loading sugar in Lieu. Accident
at canal due jammed steering gear no
evidence caused by sabotage.
Estimated date sailing 12/4.
(S.O.(I) Jamaica 0951/31).

NEWBROUGH,
suspicious
ship,
15/3.

Master Br. NEWBROUGH reports suspicious
ship sighted 1822 G.M.T./15 in 029°
21 N., 048.25W. 15000 tons 4 masts,
one funnel, speed 18 knots. Course
246° parallel to NEWBROUGH who altered
to Southward. Ship followed and
appeared to be closing until 2052 when
appeared to alter to N.W.
(S.O.(I) Jamaica 0959/31 to Admty).
See also 1127/31, 1756/31.

See next page

Enemy ships
Punta
Arenas.

Charge D'Affairs, Costa Rica, reports
Government intended seizing Enemy ships
Punta Arenas daybreak today.
No information yet result of action.
Callao pass to PRINCE HENRY.
(S.O.(I) Jamaica 1029/31 to Admty etc.)

MOST SECRET.31.3.1941.
Monday.War Diary.FOREIGN STATIONS.America & West Indies. (contd).→ Suspicious
Ship.

Your 1032/29. Suspicious vessel was presumably Dutch AAGTEKERK. (C. in C. A.M.I.1033/31 to N.S.H.Q.)

U.S. Guards
Italian
Ships.

Press reports U.S. armed guards have been placed on board all Italian ships in U.S. ports. These include CONTE BIANCAMANO, at Colon, and tanker COLORADO, at San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were seized on the ground that Italians were sabotaging them. (D.S. 573 31/3).

U.S.
Coastguard
Cutters.

Your 1752/29 Navy Dept. still unaware that Coastguard Cutters have been released. Expected President will make announcement on return to Washington. Meantime undesirable for me to approach Navy Department who I believe to be against transfer. (N.A. Washington, 1105/31 to Admty).

→ Suspicious
Ship.

N.S.H.Q. Ottawa's 1032/29. Request whether ship sighted by NEWBROUGH resembled description given by KING EDWARD. (D.D.I.C. 1127/31 to S.O.I. Jamaica.) Your 1127/31 Ottawa 1032/29 not received Ref. my 0959/31 topmast and crosstrees on each mast, short superstructure amidships low bridgework and relatively low funnel. (S.O.I. Jamaica, 1756/31 to Admty.)

ROYAL CROWN
DEMETERTON

Your 1222/7 British ROYAL CROWN and DEMETERTON have not arrived this side. (N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 1156/31).

Vichy
French
Naval
Forces.

Following from Navy Dept. from Martinique 24/3 State of French Naval Forces West Atlantic (number of officers and men estimated effective). At Fort De France BEARN, 450 EMILE BERTIN, 750; BARFLEUR, 75; VILLE D'YS, 70; LEMEKONG, 80; VAR, 80; Coastal Patrol boat ESPERANTO 15; Seaplane base 56; Pyrotechnic Station, 15; plane maintenance 17; Marine Station 50; (?Military Intelligence) 20; at Guadeloupe JEANNE D'ARC, 750; at Cayenne, Coastal Patrol boat GOUVERNEUR STROUD, believed 20. (N.A. Washington 1225/31. to Admty).

VISON, HUSKY.....

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.1941.
Monday.FOREIGN STATIONS.America & West Indies (contd).VISON
HUSKY.

Your 1031/29 and my 1206/25. Your difficulties fully appreciated and I concur in either VISON or HUSKY remaining at Trinidad until June.
(C.N.S. Canada 1336/31 to C. in C. A.W.I.)

COULTARN
survivors.

Picked up 39 survivors from COULTARN (British 3759 tons) ^{torpedoed} ~~(torpedoed)~~ at 0517Z/30 in 0600° 18' N 029° 28' W. Second engineer and 2 firemen missing. (Names) (CALIFORNIA, 1458/31 1802/31 to Admty). COULTARN had been in O.B. 302 for Mobile (see N.C.S.O. Loch Ewe, 1216/26). COULTARN believed torpedoed. (See page 974)
(D.S. 574 1/4).

EXCAMBION,
Censorship
evasion.

Purser of American Export Steamship S.S. EXCAMBION which passed through Bermuda Westbound on 15/3 was found to be carrying about 150 letters which evidence shows were handed to him by various persons with object of evading censorship. Purser of EXCALIBUR also suspected of same practice. Request you inform Ambassador of this, which does not seem in accord with helpful co-operation which company is understood to have (?offered)
(C. in C. A.W.I. T.H.I. 1645/31 to N.A. Washington).

HERMONTHIS.
MÜNCHEN.
(German)

Reported sailed 0005 G.M.T.
(C. in C. A.W.I. 2341/?31 to PRINCE HENRY)
Press Reports state left unexpectedly disregarding port formalities.
(D.S. 574 1/4).

Australia.ALEXANDRE
ANDRE
Belgian.

Your 2223/27. Details of crew trouble.
(D.N.O. Queensland 0655Z/31 to Admty).

MOST SECRET.War Diary.31.3.1941.
MondayU-BOAT CAMPAIGN.Ships Attacked.ERODONA
(torpedoed
16/3).Grateful for assistance rendered by
VISENDA. Convey my congratulations to her
Captain, Officers and men on bringing
safely to port under such adverse condi-
tions.
(C. in C. W.A. 1045/31 to S.O.N.T. 1050/31
to F.O.I.C. Iceland.)COULTARNBritish 3759 tons, possibly torpedoed.
See America and West Indies.CLAN OGILVYBritish 5802 tons, torpedoed 21/3, now
presumed sunk.
(D.S. 574 1/4).CHAMABritish 8077 tons, torpedoed 23/3 now
presumed sunk.
(D.S. 574/ 1/4).MEMNON.
(torpedoed
11/3) by U.106My 1145/26/3. Following from survivors
Vessel torpedoed when steaming at 15½ knots
zig zag No. 5. Torpedo struck No. V
Hatch. Submarine believed German surfaced
after ship had sunk. Master of French
ship KILISSI met at sea gave great assis-
tance and advised against entering Dakar.
(S.O.I. Freetown, 1549/31 to Admty.)S/M's Reported.Estimated U Boat
dispositions.

D.D.I.C. 1336/31)

S/MS Attacked.

0207

By STUART, 33.20 N. 26.35 E.
(See Mediterranean).