

"M.25" (Lieutenant-Commander B. H. Ramsay, R.N.), and damage was done to submarine workshops and harbour works. The enemy returned our fire with heavy guns of calibre probably larger than our own, and with considerable accuracy. Again the shooting on the part of our vessels was remarkably good, and the assistance rendered by the Auxiliary Craft most valuable.

On the same day Westende was subjected to attack by H.M. Ships "Redoubtable" (Captain V. B. Molteno, R.N.), "Bustard" (Lieutenant O. H. K. Maguire, R.N.), and "Excellent" (Commander G. L. Saurin, R.N.), under the direction of Captain V. B. Molteno, and with results that reflected credit on all concerned.

On the 19th September, with several of the vessels, including H.M.S. "Marshal Ney" (Captain H. J. Tweedie, R.N.), I carried out an attack against certain defences in the neighbourhood of Middlekirke, Raversyde and Westende, which resulted in damaging and silencing the batteries. Valuable co-operation was received from the French batteries in the vicinity of Nieuport.

On the evening of the 24th September, I despatched H.M.S. "Prince Eugene" (Captain E. Wigram, R.N.) and one other monitor and the requisite auxiliary craft to bombard the following morning the coast of Knocke, Heyst, Zeebrugge and Blankenberghe (east of Ostende), while with the other vessels, including H.M.S. "Lord Clive" (Commander G. R. B. Blount, R.N.), on the same day I carried out an attack on the fortified positions west of that place. Again, during these attacks, considerable damage was done.

On the 26th, 27th and 30th September I made further attacks on the various batteries and strong positions at Middlekirke and Westende.

On the evening of the 2nd October I sailed with four monitors, and again attacked with satisfactory results the batteries at Zeebrugge on the morning of the 3rd. The whole coast during our passage was showing signs of considerable alarm and unrest as a result of the previous operations. Our advanced vessels were attacked by submarine boats, but without result.

On the 6th, 12th, 13th and 18th October and 16th-19th November other batteries or positions of military value have been attacked by the vessels under my command.

Up to the present, therefore, concerted operations of considerable magnitude have been carried out on six occasions, and on eight other days attacks on a smaller scale on fortified positions have taken place. The accuracy of the enemy's fire has been good.

The damage inflicted on the enemy is known to include the sinking of one torpedo boat, two submarines and one large dredger, the total destruction of three military factories and damage to a fourth, extensive damage to the locks at Zeebrugge and the destruction of thirteen guns of considerable calibre, in addition to the destruction of two ammunition depôts and several military storehouses, observation stations and signalling posts, damage to wharves, moles and other secondary places. Further, a considerable number of casualties are known to have been suffered by the enemy.

I regret that three vessels were lost during the operations:—

H.M. Armed Yacht "Sanda," sunk by gunfire;

H.M. Drifter "Great Heart," sunk by mine;

H.M. Mine Sweeper "Brighton Queen," sunk by mine.

Our total casualties numbered 34 killed and 24 wounded, which, considering the dangers to which the vessels were exposed by gun fire, aircraft, submarine boats and mines on an enemy's coast, may be looked upon as comparatively small in proportion to the number of officers and men taking part in the operations.

It is with regret that, among others, I have to report the death of Lieutenant-Commander H. T. Gartside-Tipping, R.N., of the Armed Yacht "Sanda," who was the oldest naval officer afloat. In spite of his advanced age, he rejoined, and with undemonstrative patriotism served at sea as a Lieutenant-Commander.

I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which the officers and men under my command have carried out the duties allotted to them. The work has been varied, and to a great extent novel, but in all particulars it has been entered into with a zeal and enthusiasm which could not have been surpassed. The gunnery results have exceeded my expectations.

Their Lordships will appreciate the difficulties attendant on the cruising in company by day and night under war conditions of a fleet of 80 vessels comprising several widely different classes, manned partly by trained naval ratings but more largely by officers of the Naval Reserve, whose fleet training has necessarily been scant, and by men whose work in life has hitherto been that of deep sea fishermen.

The protection of such a moving fleet by the destroyers in waters which are the natural home of the enemy's submarines has been admirable, and justifies the training and organisation of the personnel of the flotilla. But more remarkable still, in my opinion, is the aptitude shown by the officers and crews of the drifters and trawlers, who in difficult waters, under conditions totally strange to them, have maintained their allotted stations without a single accident. Moreover, these men under fire have exhibited a coolness well worthy of the personnel of a service inured by discipline. The results show how deeply sea adaptability is ingrained in the seafaring race of these islands.

It is to the excellent work done by the destroyers under Commodore C. D. Johnson, M.V.O., and the drifters under Captain F. G. Bird, that I ascribe our immunity from loss by submarine attack. The mine sweepers, under Commander W. G. Rigg, R.N., have indefatigably carried out their dangerous duties.

Throughout these operations attacks have been made on our vessels by the enemy's aircraft, but latterly the vigilance of our Dunkirk Aerodrome, under Wing-Commander A. M. Longmore, has considerably curtailed their activity.

I wish specially to mention the cordial assistance always tendered to me by the Vice-Admiral Favereau, Commanding the French