

took half an hour to do, on account of the serious condition of some of the wounded.

14. Dawn was now breaking, and H.M.S. "Warwick" and her consorts were within close range of the enemy's batteries. M.L. 254 was too badly damaged forward to allow of her being towed, and was rapidly settling down. I ordered her to be destroyed, and, as soon as this had been carried out, withdrew the division at 25 knots.

15. By this time the tide had fallen so low that it was inexpedient to return by the route inside of the shoals by which the approach had been made, and a course was steered for a gap in the net defence by the deep-draught route from Ostend to seaward.

It would seem that the enemy had mined this route in anticipation of an attack. At 4.0 a.m. H.M.S. "Warwick" struck a mine, which broke her back just before the superstructure of the after superimposed 4-inch gun, and destroyed the after part of the ship. She took a heavy list and appeared to be settling by the stern. H.M.S. "Velox" was ordered alongside H.M.S. "Warwick," and the wounded, of whom there were a large number on board, were transferred to the former. H.M.S. "Whirlwind" then took H.M.S. "Warwick" in tow, and the latter being unable to steer, H.M.S. "Velox" was kept alongside while navigating the channels through the shoals to the open sea.

I arrived at Dover in H.M.S. "Warwick" at 4.30 p.m.

16. I have again to refer to the fine work done by the motor launches and coastal motor boats, as reported in paragraph 29 of the Commodore's letter. Their conduct in the late operation confirms the opinion I expressed of them in my despatch on the previous operations.

17. The co-operation of the Air Force, under Brigadier-General Charles L. Lambe, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.A.F., was of great value during the operation. In spite of the fog the 214th Squadron (Squadron-Commander Herbert G. Brackley, D.S.O., D.S.C.) continued to attack in accordance with the programme until after the completion of the operation.

18. I greatly regret the loss of so fine an officer as Commander Godsall. His zeal to retrieve the failure of the "Brilliant" on the 23rd April impelled him to disregard all protection in order to secure success on this occasion.

19. As on the 22nd/23rd April, I am much indebted to Vice-Admiral Pierre Alexis M. A. Ronarc'h, Commandant Supérieur de la Marine dans la zone des Armées du Nord, Dunkerque, who placed at my disposal all the available vessels under his command, and assisted me in every possible way. The French torpedo craft and M.Ls. performed valuable service in connection with the monitor bombardment.

20. I commend Commodore Hubert Lynes to their Lordships' favourable consideration.

The officers and men mentioned by him are being included in my list of recommendations, which will be forwarded as soon as possible.

I have, &c.,

ROGER KEYES,

Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol.

Enclosure to Vice-Admiral, Dover, letter No. 2305/003, dated 15th June, 1918. (No. 053.)

Office of Commodore,

Dunkirk,

15th May, 1918.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward the following report on the operations for blocking Ostend Harbour, carried out on the night of the 9th-10th May, 1918.

2. It will be remembered that on the night of the 22nd-23rd April, when the forces under your command so successfully achieved the blocking of the Zeebrugge-Bruges Canal, the Western Squadron, under my Command, was unsuccessful in its attack; simultaneously delivered, and with the same object on Ostend.

3. The failure on that occasion was due, firstly, to the adverse shift of wind that blew all our smoke screens across the harbour entrance at the critical moment, and secondly, to the displacement—whether by design or chance on the enemy's part—of the Ostend Buoy, whose normal position had formed a convenient departure point for the blockships.

4. Our lack of success was the fortune of war, not the fault of anyone concerned; indeed, no one could have carried out their duties more admirably than did the Ostend forces that night, and I am deeply grateful that, in recognition of this fact, you were so considerate as to place the organisation and leadership of another attack in my hands.

5. In the first operation, the blockships had advanced under cover of a smoke screen, guided by the lights and signals made by the small craft (C.M.B.'s and M.L.'s) working close inshore. I decided to adopt in general a similar plan for the new attack, but previous experience, and the necessity for assuming that the enemy would make counter preparations against an exactly similar attack, called for modification in detail.

6. In preparing for the new attack, particular attention was paid to perfecting the navigational arrangements; numerous small, but important, improvements were introduced into the smoke gear, and the alternatives for guiding the blockships into the entrance were made so numerous as to reduce chance of failure, in that respect, to the smallest possible dimensions.

7. The quicker the delivery of the new attack, the greater the element of surprise, and, consequently, of success. Realising this, special efforts were made both at Dover and Dunkirk, so that within a few days of the first attack, "Vindictive" had been prepared for her new rôle of blockship, all the small craft had been completed with their smoke-lights and other fittings, and reorganised according to the new plan of attack, which had been promulgated to all concerned.

The alternative plans of attack, "V.O." and "V.S.," were submitted to you in my operation orders 0/54 and 0/58 respectively.

8. For this rapid and satisfactory work of preparation at Dover, I beg particularly to offer my grateful thanks to Commodore the Hon. A. D. E. Boyle, C.B., M.V.O., Chief of the Staff, who left no stone unturned to have all my numerous requests carried out; for that at Dunkirk, I am chiefly indebted to the energy of Commander J. L. C. Clarke, D.S.O., R.N., my Second-in-Command; to Lieutenant-Com-