

were not read. "Tairoa" stopped still, not recognising the enemy, but at three-quarters of a mile it was noticed that the ship had all her big guns trained on her. The Radio Officer started on the key and at once the unknown ship fired several shots, which damaged the steering gear, smashed the wings of the bridge and dislodged the sandbags round the Marconi room. The Officers on the bridge went below. Three times the Radio Officer tried again to send out messages and each time the enemy opened fire, but ceased as soon as the wireless stopped. After the third attempt to transmit, the enemy fired two shells which blew

the wireless away, one smashing the receiver. Meanwhile, the order had been given to abandon ship, and the men had lowered and manned the boats. The enemy ship proved to be "Admiral Graf Spee," named "Deutschland" for the time being and crudely disguised as "Repulse" or "Renown." Captain Langsdorf, of "Admiral Graf Spee" later explained that he did not wish to take life, but only fired when "Tairoa" disobeyed a notice in English telling her not to use her wireless. This notice was not read. He complimented the Radio Officer on his courage and devotion to duty.

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