

demanding the concurrence of favourable conditions of weather and atmosphere. Throughout April the crews of the block-ships, lying in the West Swin anchorage, debarred from communication with the shore, waited eagerly for their arrival. Twice the whole Armada concentrated at sea, and once, on April 11-12, got to thirteen miles from Zeebrugge, when weather conditions compelled it to return.<sup>1</sup> At length, on April 22, St. George's Eve, satisfactory conditions invited a third venture.

The considerable Armada converged upon the scene of action from four points.<sup>2</sup> A covering force of light cruisers and destroyers operated from Harwich towards the Dutch coast. In the West Swin, the main channel from the Nore to the north, the five block-ships, with *Vindictive*, *Daffodil*, and *Iris II*, awaited the summons. At Dunkirk the monitors (six), destroyers, M.L.s and C.M.B.s—in all forty-seven vessels, including nine French M.L.s and T.B.D.s—part of the force detailed for the Ostend operations, were assembled. At Dover the rest of the force was concentrated.

At 1.10 p.m. the Swin ships, and at 2.0 p.m. the Dover contingent, proceeded to join Sir Roger Keyes off the Goodwin Sands, and thence to a rendezvous 63 miles from their objectives; the speed was 10 knots, for the pace of the block-ships was slow. At 4.53 p.m. the force set out from

<sup>1</sup> Of the two occasions mentioned in the text, once the weather compelled abandonment of the operation within an hour. See an interesting article by Lieut.-Commander E. Hilton Young, R.N.V.R., in the *Cornhill Magazine* for December 1918. The author was a Lieutenant R.N.V.R. on *Vindictive* on April 23. See the Dispatch of May 9, General Summary, para. 18.

<sup>2</sup> See Dispatch of May 9, para. 45 ff. Excluding the Harwich covering force (23 ships) and the parent ships (3) the striking force numbered 142 vessels (see Dispatch, para. 31). Of these, 75 were engaged at Zeebrugge and 67 at Ostend.