

NO BLACK BORDERS ON CRUISERS' LOSS

Finest Traditions of British Navy Maintained by Officers and Men of Aboukir, Hague and Cressy

Sister Ships Ran Into Danger But Survivor Says "Somehow You Expect It of the Navy"—Twenty-four Men Adrift Four Hours on Target—Cressy Fired at Submarines But No Certainty Damage Was Done—No Excitement When Explosions Came.

(By EDGAR ROWAN.)
(Special to Daily Telegraph and Montreal Gazette.)

Ymuiden, Holland, Sept. 23.—When the history of this war comes to be written we shall put on no black borders as men without pride or hope, around the story of the loss of the cruisers Aboukir, Cressy and Hague. We shall write it in letters of gold for a plain unvarnished tale of those last moments when the cruisers went down helplessly before hidden foes, for it ranks among the countless deeds of quiet, unseen, unconscious heroism that goes to make up the navy's splendid pages.

It is easy to learn all that happened, for the officers want chiefly to tell how splendid the men were and the men pay like tribute to the officers. The following, however, appear to be the main outlines of the disaster: The cruisers had for some time been patrolling the North Sea. Soon after 6 o'clock Tuesday morning, no one agrees on the exact time, the Aboukir suddenly felt a sharp shock on her port side. A dull explosion was heard, and a column of water was thrown up, most high. The explosion wrecked the stoke hole just forward amidships, and judging by the speed with which the cruiser sank, tore the bottom open. Almost immediately the doomed cruiser began to settle.

Except for the watch on deck, most of the crew were asleep, wearied by the constant vigil in bad weather. But in perfect order, the officers and men rushed to quarters. Firers were manned in hope of a dying shot at a submarine, but there was not a glimpse of one. Of the few boats carried when cleared for action, two were smashed in the recent gales and another was wrecked by the explosion. Meanwhile, the Aboukir's sister cruisers, more than a mile away, saw and heard the explosion and thought the Aboukir had been struck by a mine. They closed in and lowered boats. This sealed their own fate, for while they were standing by to receive survivors, first the Hague and then the Cressy were torpedoed.

NOT SURE SHE GOT SUBMARINES

Only the Cressy appears to have seen the submarines in time to attempt to retaliate and she fired a few shots before she herself was broken in two and sank. Whether or not she sank any submarines is not known. Men of the Aboukir, at least, were sure of the presence of the submarines. The sister cruisers, and all survivors agree that when these all sank many gave up the struggle for life and went down. An officer told me that while swimming he had lost his jacket in the grip of a drowning man. His chief thought was that the Germans had sunk only three comparatively obsolete cruisers, which shortly would have been scrapped. Twenty-four men were saved on a target which floated off the Hague's deck. The men gathered on it, where for four hours waist deep in water.

The rescued officers unite in praising the skill and daring of the German naval officers and far from bearing any grudge, they have nothing but personal praise for the submarines' feat.

"Our only grievance," one said, "is that we did not have a shot at the Germans. Our only share in the war has been a few uncomfortable weeks of bad weather, mines and submarines."

TALKED TO OFFICERS IN THEIR PAJAMAS

When I entered the billiard room of the hotel where sheltering survivors and asked if any British officers were there, several unshaven men in the khaki working kit of the Dutch army, and fishermen's jerseys, got up from their chairs. Most of them had been saved in their pajamas and they had to accept the first things in the way of clothing offered by the kindly Dutch. One lieutenant apologized for closing the window, as he had only a thin jacket over his pajamas. He gladly accepted the loan of my overcoat while making a list of his men who had been saved.

While the survivors are technically prisoners in the neutral country to be interned until the end of the war Ymuiden steadfastly refused to regard them as other than honored guests. The soldiers posted before every building where officers or men were housed were to be guards of honor rather than prison wardens, and everyone in the place is competing for the honor of lending clothes, running errands or offering cigars to the survivors. When the Dutch steamer Flora arrived with the survivors last night flying her flag at half-mast and signalling for a doctor, the Red Cross authorities, the British Vice-Consul, Mr. Ribborsberg, at once set the machinery in motion and soon the officers were settled in the hotels and the men were divided among a hospital, a church and a young men's institution.

I saw one bluejacket asleep covered with a white ensign. He snatched it up before diving overboard. He held it in his teeth while in the water and refused to part with it when rescued. He is now prepared to fight anyone who may attempt to steal this last relic of his ship.

For hours Captain Vorrhan, of the Flora, and Captain Berkhout, of the Trian, caring nothing for mines and submarines, cruised over the scene of the disaster, and gallant Dutch steamers were rewarded by the rescue of 400 survivors.

STORY OF RESCUING CAPTAIN

Captain Vorrhan, who landed all the survivors at Ymuiden, says: "We left Rotterdam early Tuesday. In the North Sea we saw a warship which proved to be the Cressy. Not long afterward I saw her keel over, break in two, and disappear. When we got to the spot where she disappeared boats approached us and we began to get the men in from the water. It was a very difficult undertaking, as the survivors were exhausted and we were rolling heavily."

"We also lowered our boats and picked up many from the wreckage. All were practically naked and some were so exhausted that they had to be hauled aboard with tackle. Later I saw the Trian approaching and signalled for help. One man was brought aboard with his legs broken. It was touching to see how tenderly his mates handled him."

"Presently the British destroyers approached us. A survivor on my ship signalled with his arms that he was on a friendly ship and the warships passed on. Among these saved were two doctors who worked hard to help the exhausted men."

"My men collected all the clothes and blankets on board and gave them to the survivors and the cook was busy getting coffee and other food for my large party of guests."

"By 11.30 we had picked up all the survivors we could see. Soon after we saw four submarines, and thinking it best to get to the nearest port called here."

ABOUKIR SURVIVOR TELLS STORY

Harwich, Sept. 23.—In an interview with a survivor from the Aboukir, I learned the following story. He says: "I was on watch when the ship was struck about 6.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning. The first thing that I was conscious of was a tremendous explosion which literally shook the whole ship. I believe a submarine torpedoed us between the first and second boilers for a great lump was torn out of the side of the ship."

"The explosion was so dreadful that a number of men on the upper deck were killed outright. I tumbled up as quickly as I could. Some say a second torpedo was fired at us. But as to that I do not know. The first certainly was enough to settle us."

"When I got up I found no excitement whatever. No one had seen anything of a submarine and everyone of us believed it was a mine. Orders were given by the officers of the ship and they were carried out with absolute quietness and method. In a few minutes the ship heeled over until the oil was at most touching the water. The order was then given to every man to save himself. I took off my boots. There was no need to dive; I simply slid into the water."

"I really could not tell you what length of time elapsed between the time of the first blow and the sinking of the cruiser, but I believe it was six minutes. I had time to glance around before taking the water and I could see the Cressy and the Hague floating nearby."

"It was pitchy dark, but although it was very dark I knew what you would expect in a navy. Long before they could get up to us our ship had disappeared. From information which I received I must say that the sinking of these German cruisers was amazing. The men were saved as a long way off and we could not see them. They came up right under the nose of our guns and I believe they got a broadside smack at us with their torpedoes at a distance of a few hundred yards only."

"The Cressy caught sight of the submarines and she fired at two of them but whether she hit them I cannot say. The Cressy had actually stopped and had launched her boats when she was torpedoed and the Hague fell a victim almost immediately after. Both ships might have been able to have dodged the submarines by maneuvering if they had known that they were in the vicinity. But I will say this: The Germans took us by surprise and they made the most of the opportunity."

Kidnapped, Railroaded To American Pen, Gray-Haired Canadian Tells His Story



(By Linton K. Starr in New Orleans Daily States.)

Atlanta, Ga., July 25.—There's little Walden Kelly—he was five, the last of July—and he was only a baby the day I left. And the other ten, they're all scattered now. And mother—mother's dead."

Convict Number 2851 brushed the back of his big rough hand across his eyes and tried to hide the tears streaming down his wrinkled old face. He tried twice to speak but he only choked. Then he put his head down on the side of his hard little cot and sobbed out the grief that has been bottled up in him for four years.

"Oh, I know you are the answer to my prayers at last," he said finally. "I am a God-fearing old man and I felt the Lord would not desert me. Say you are the one who has come to let me out so I can go back to my own country, back to my little home, back to my friends and back to my motherless babies! Say it! Please say it!"

I could not tell Bill Kelly—Convict No. 2851—that I had nothing to promise him, for he is an old man, and I was not sure enough. So I said to him the kindest words I could think of that would still be true.

"Yes, I believe maybe I am the beginning of the Lord's answer to your prayers, Bill," I said.

Promises Bill To Tell Story To American People.

"I think that I am going to be the messenger who will tell the just and good people of the United States—and the most of us are just and good, Bill—your real story. And I think that means that very soon you are going to leave this lonely, loveless place and spend the rest of your life back with your friends and your babies."

"I have never given up that hope," smiled the old man, after a while, "because I believe justice will always prevail in the end. I am just an innocent man, made the victim of a revengeful plot and my faith in God tells me that I shall not be made to suffer all my life in such a way. If the American people only knew the true story—if they only knew."

The Bill Kelly-hard-working, respected farmer of the Canadian province of New Brunswick, told me the story of how he has come to 50 Central 2851, the Federal penitentiary at Atlanta (Ga.).

And it is a story that all who love justice should read.

Prosperous Farmer With Good Wife and Ten Children.

"My story begins a long time ago," Kelly started, settling himself back

against the stone wall of his little cell. "It begins 12 years ago. Twelve years ago when I was a prosperous farmer with a nice home, ten fine children and the dearest little wife in the world. Oh, but we were happy!"

"One day the boys and I dug a load of potatoes and started toward the American line—the boundary between the State of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick—to sell them."

"About fifty rods on the American side of the border I met a man dressed like a peddler. He announced himself an officer of the law. I asked him to show his authority. He drew his revolver and said, 'This is my authority.' I didn't believe he was an officer so I pulled a stake out of my wagon to defend myself with."

"Without hesitating he fired two bullets at me. One hit me here."

"The other hit my belt buckle and was turned away. If it hadn't been it would have gone through my stomach and I would have died—in shame! For my friends and family would never have known the truth!"

"Well, I took that man's revolver away from him before he could kill me and I thrashed him well—as he richly deserved for firing at an unprotected man. Then I went home—without selling any potatoes."

"That was April 17, 1908. The sheriff of Woodstock, Canada—a my town—arrested me and took me to the county jail. When they put me behind those bars I promised Almighty God that I would never try to smuggle another man into my life, and I have kept that word."

Acquitted, Goes Back To Farm and Prosper.

"Well, I had 110 acres of land in New Brunswick. I had moved on that farm in 1858 and brought up my family there. After I was acquitted, I went back there to live as a man ought to live—clean and upright. I prospered and was happy with that fine family. God had given me. Another baby came—and

quest against their wills another section. Let us reach a final and simple solution and let us fortify and confirm the settlement by a law of nations which even the most audacious will have been forced to respect."

The foregoing report of the interview is issued by the British official bureau, and consequently can be regarded as an official document.

REPORT LOSS OF THREE AUSTRIAN SHIPS BY MINES

(Continued from page 1.)

The Cap Trafalgar, however, suddenly opened the upper hatch, which sank, the sailors in the boat perishing. The German, whose officers were angered by the act of the Cap Trafalgar, opened fire and sank the German vessel. The British boat then continued on her voyage.

In announcing the sinking of the Cap Trafalgar, the British official bureau on Sept. 20 added that the German lost nine men killed and that twenty-six others were wounded. The survivors of the German ship, it said, were rescued by a cutter.

Krupp's Yacht Held In England.

London, Sept. 24, 4.10 p.m.—The racing yacht Germania, owned by Lieut. Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, head of the Krupp Gun Works of Germany, has been ordered detained by the British prize court.

The yacht was sent to England to participate in the Cowes regatta.

Having heard by wire that her brother E. A. Crocker had died suddenly in Boston, Mrs. J. R. Palmer, of Lakeside, left Wednesday for that city. The late Mr. Crocker was a native of Doughton (N. B.), about thirty-five years of age and unmarried.

BRITISH UNSHAKEN UNDER SHELL FIRE

(Continued from page 1.)

THEIR ARTILLERY FIRE IS NOT GOOD; IT IS MORE THAN GOOD—IT IS EXCELLENT. BUT THE BRITISH SOLDIER IS A DIFFICULT PERSON TO IMPRESS OR DEPRESS, EVEN BY IMMENSE SHELLS FILLED WITH A HIGH EXPLOSIVE, WHICH DETONATE WITH TERRIFIC VIOLENCE AND FORM CRATERS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACT AS GRAVES FOR FIVE HORSES.

"THE GERMAN HOWITZER SHELLS ARE FROM EIGHT TO NINE INCHES IN CALIBRE, AND ON IMPACT THEY SEND UP COLUMNS OF GREASY SMOKE. ON ACCOUNT OF THIS THEY ARE DUBBED 'COAL BOXES,' 'BLACK MARIAS' OR 'JACK JOHNSON' BY THE SOLDIERS."

"MEN WHO TAKE THINGS IN THIS SPIRIT ARE, IT SEEMS, LIKELY TO THROW OUT THE CALCULATIONS BASED ON THE LOSS OF MORALE SO CAREFULLY FRAMED BY THE GERMAN MILITARY PHILOSOPHERS."

"A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION HAS BEEN GLEANED FROM PRISONERS. IT HAS BEEN GATHERED THAT OUR BOMBARDMENT ON THE FIFTEENTH PRODUCED A GREAT IMPRESSION. THE OPINION IS ALSO REPORTED THAT OUR INFANTRY MAKE SUCH GOOD USE OF THE GROUND THAT THE GERMAN COMPANIES ARE DECIMATED BY OUR RIFLE FIRE BEFORE THE BRITISH SOLDIER CAN BE SEEN."

"From an official diary captured by the first army corps it appears that one of the German corps contains an extraordinary mixture of units. If the composition of the other corps is similar it may be assumed that the present efficiency of the enemy's forces is in no way comparable with what it was when the war commenced."

"The losses in officers at noted as having been especially severe. A brigade is stated to be commanded by a major; some companies of foot guards by one-year volunteers, while after the battle of Montmirail one regiment lost fifty-five out of sixty officers. The prisoners recently captured appreciate the fact that the march on Paris has failed and that their forces are retreating, but state that the object of this movement is explained by the officers as being to withdraw into closer touch with the supports which have stayed too far in the rear."

"The officers are also endeavoring to encourage the troops by telling them that they will be at home by Christmas. A large number of the men believe that they are beaten. The following is an extract from one document:

"With the English troops we have great difficulties. They have a queer way of causing losses to the enemy. They make good trenches, in which they wait patiently; they carefully measure the ranges for their rifle fire and they open a truly hellish fire on the unsuspecting cavalry. This was the reason that we had such heavy losses. According to our officers, the English striking force are exhausted, the English people really never wanted war."

"From another source: 'The English are very brave and fight to the last man. One of our companies has lost 130 men out of 240.'

"The following letter, which refers to the fighting on the Aisne, has been printed and circulated to the troops:

"Letter found on German officer of seventh reserve corps: Cerny, South of Laon, Sept. 17, 1914.

"My Dear Parents: Our corps has the task of holding the heights south of Cerny in all circumstances, till the fourteenth corps on our left flank can grip the enemy's flank. On our right are other corps. We are fighting with the English guards, Highlanders and Zouaves. The losses on both sides have been enormous. For the most part this is due to the brilliant French artillery."

"The English are marvellously trained in making use of ground. One never sees them and one is constantly under fire. The French aimers perform wonderful feats. We cannot get rid of them. As soon as an alarm has flown over us, ten minutes later we get their shrapnel in our position. We have little artillery in our corps; without it we cannot get forward."

"Three days ago our division took possession of these heights and dug itself in. Two days ago, early in the morning, we were attacked by an immensely superior English force—one brigade and two battalions—and were turned out of our positions. The fellows took five guns from us. It was a tremendous hand-to-hand fight."

"How I escaped myself I am not clear. I then had to bring up support on foot. My horse was wounded and the others were too far in the rear. Then came up the guard Jager battalion, fourth Wager, sixth regiment, reserve regiment, thirteen and Landwehr regiments thirteen and sixteen and with the help of the artillery, we drove the fellows out of the position again. Our machine guns did excellent work; the English fell in heaps."

"In our battalion three Iron Crosses have been given, one to C—, O—, one to Captain —, and one to Surgeon —, (names probably deleted). Let us hope that we shall be the lucky ones the next time."

"During the first two days of the battle I had only one piece of bread and no water. I spent the night in the rain, without my great coat. The rest of my kit was on the horses which have been left miles behind with the baggage and which cannot come up into the battle because as soon as you put your nose up from behind cover, the bullets whistle."

"War is terrible. We are all hoping that a decisive battle will end the war, as our troops already have got round Paris. If we beat the English, the French resistance will soon be broken. Russia will be very quickly dealt with; of this there is no doubt."

"We received splendid help from the Austrian heavy artillery at Maugebe. They bombarded Fort Gerfontaine in such a way that there was not ten metres of parapet which did not show enormous craters made by the shells. 'Yesterday evening, about 6, in the valley in which our reserves stood, there was such a terrible cannonade that we saw nothing of the sky but a cloud of smoke.'

Amongst the items of news are the following: Recently a pilot and observer of the Royal Flying Corps were forced by breakage in their aeroplane to descend in the enemy's lines. The pilot managed to pancake his machine down to earth and the two escaped into some thick undergrowth in the woods. The enemy came up and seized and smashed the machine but did not search for their men, who were much luck. The latter lay hidden till dark and then found their way to the Aisne, across which they swam, reaching camp in safety but barefooted."

"Numerous floating bridges have by now been thrown across the Aisne and some of the permanent bridges had been repaired under fire. On the twentieth, Lieutenant (name deleted) of the Third Signal Corps, Royal Engineers, was unfortunately drowned while attempting to swim across the river with a cable in order to open up fresh telegraphic communication on the north side."

"Espionage is still carried on by the enemy to a considerable extent. Recently the suspicious of some of the French troops were aroused by coming across a farm from which the horses had been removed. After some search they discovered a telephone, which was connected by an underground cable with the German lines, and the owner of the farm paid the penalty in the usual way in war for his treachery."

"After some cases of village fighting, which occurred early in the war, it was reported by some of our officers that the Germans had attempted to approach to close quarters by forcing prisoners to march in front of them. The Germans have recently repeated the same trick on a large scale against the French, as is shown by the copy of an order printed below."

"During a recent attack (the order reads), 'the Germans drove a column of French prisoners in front of them. This action is to be brought to the notice of all our troops (1), in order to put them on their guard against such a dastardly ruse; (2), in order that every soldier may know how the Germans treat their prisoners. Our troops must not forget that if they allow themselves to be taken prisoners, the Germans will not fail to expose them to French bullets.'

"Further evidence has now been collected of the misuse of the white flag and other signs of surrender."

During an action on the 17th owing to this, one officer was shot. During recent fighting also some ambulance wagons advanced in order to collect the wounded. An order to cease fire was consequently given to our guns, which were firing on this particular section of ground. The German battery commanders at once took advantage of the lull in the action to climb up their observation ladders and on to a haystack to locate our guns, which soon afterwards came under a far more accurate fire than any to which they had been subjected up to that time."

A British officer, who was captured by the Germans and has since escaped, reports that while a prisoner he saw men who had been fighting subsequently put on Red Cross service."

"That irregular use of the protection afforded by the Geneva convention is not uncommon is confirmed by the fact that on one occasion men in the uniform of combatant units have been captured wearing a Red Cross brassard, hastily slipped over the arm. The excuse given has been that they had been detailed after the light to look after the wounded."

It is reported by a cavalry officer that the driver of a motor car, with a machine gun mounted on it, which was captured, was wearing a Red Cross brassard. Full details of the actual damage done to the cathedral at Rheims will doubtless have been cabled home; so that no description of it is necessary. The Germans bombarded the cathedral twice with their heavy artillery."

"One reason it caught light so quickly was that on one side of it was some scaffolding which had been erected for restoration work. Stray shells had been laid on the floor for the reception of German wounded. It is to the credit of the French that practically all the German wounded were successfully extricated from the burning buildings."

"There was no justification on military grounds for this act of vandalism, which seems to have been caused by exasperation born of failure—a sign of impotence rather than of strength. It is noteworthy that a well known hotel not far from the cathedral, which was kept by a German, was not touched."

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