

The Torpedoing of The Three Cruisers.

THE ADMIRALTY REPORTS.

The Admiralty issues the following statement concerning the sinking of the three British cruisers by German submarines in the North Sea.

"The facts of this affair cannot be better conveyed to the public than by the attached reports of the senior officers who have survived and landed in England.

"The sinking of the Aboukir was, of course, an ordinary hazard of patrolling duty. The Hogue and the Cressy, however, were sunk because they proceeded to the assistance of the Aboukir and remained with engines stopped, endeavoring to save life, thus presenting an easy and certain target to further submarine attacks.

"The natural promptings of humanity have in this case led to heavy losses which would have been avoided by strict adherence to military considerations. Modern naval war is presenting us with so many new and strange situations that an error of judgment of this character is pardonable. But it has been necessary to point out for the further guidance of His Majesty's ships that conditions which prevail when a vessel of a squadron is injured in a mine field, or is exposed to submarine attack, are analogous to those which occur in action, and that the rule of leaving disabled ships to their own resources is applicable, so far, at any rate, as large vessels are concerned."

A SERIOUS LOSS.

"No act of humanity, whether to friend or foe, should lead to neglect of the proper precautions and dispositions of war, and no measures can be taken to save life which prejudice the military situation. Small craft of all kinds should, however, be directed by wireless to close on the damaged ship at full speed.

"The loss of nearly sixty officers and 1,400 men, would not have been grudging if it had been brought about by gunfire in an open action. But it is peculiarly distressing under the conditions which prevailed. The absence of any of the ardors and excitement of an engagement did not, however, prevent the display of discipline, cheerful courage and ready self-sacrifice among all ranks and ratings exposed to the ordeal.

"The duty on which these vessels were engaged was an essential part of the arrangements by which the control of seas and the safety of the country are maintained, and the lives lost are as usefully, as necessary and as gloriously devoted to the requirements of His Majesty's service as if the loss had been incurred in a general action.

OF SMALL NAVAL SIGNIFICANCE.

"In view of the certainty of a proportion of misfortunes of this character occurring from time to time, it is important that this point of view should be thoroughly appreciated. The loss of these three cruisers, apart from the loss of life, is of small naval significance. Although they were large and powerful ships, they belonged to a class of cruisers whose speed has been surpassed by many of the enemy's battleships.

COMMANDER NICHOLSON'S REPORT.

"The report on the sinking of the Cressy, signed by Bertram W. L. Nicholson, Commander of the late H.M.S. Cressy, follows:

"Sir—I have the honor to submit the following report in connection with the sinking of H.M.S. Cressy, in company with H.M.S. Aboukir and Hogue, on the morning of the 22nd of September, while on patrol duty.

"The Aboukir was struck at about 6.25 a.m. on the starboard beam. The Hogue and Cressy closed and took up a position, the Hogue ahead of the Aboukir and the Cressy about four hundred yards on her port beam. As soon as it was seen that the Aboukir was in danger of sinking, all the boats were sent away from the Cressy and

a picket boat was hoisted out without steam up. When cutters full of the Aboukir's men were returning to the Cressy, the Hogue was struck, apparently under the aft 9.2 magazine, as a very heavy explosion took place immediately. Almost directly after, the Hogue was hit we observed a periscope on our port bow, about three hundred yards off.

THE CRESSY OPENED FIRE.

"Fire was immediately opened and the engines were put full speed ahead with the intention of running her down. Our gunner, Mr. Dougherty, positively asserts that he hit the periscope and that the submarine sank. An officer, who was standing alongside the gunners, thinks that the shell struck only floating timber, of which there was much about, but it was evidently the impression of the men on deck, who cheered and clapped heartily, that the submarine had been hit. This submarine did not fire a torpedo at the Cressy.

"Captain Johnson then manoeuvred the ship so as to render assistance to the crews of the Hogue and Aboukir. About five minutes later another periscope was seen on our starboard quarter and fire was opened. The track of the torpedo she fired at a range of five hundred to six hundred yards was plainly visible, and it struck us on the starboard side just before the after-bridge.

"The ship listed about ten degrees to the starboard and remained steady. The time was 7.15 a.m. All the watertight doors, deadlights and scuttles had been securely closed before the torpedo struck the ship.

"A second torpedo fired by the same submarine missed and passed about ten feet astern. About a quarter of an hour after the first torpedo had hit, a third torpedo, fired from a submarine just before the starboard beam, hit us under the number five boiler room. The time was 7.30 a.m. The ship then began to heel rapidly and finally turned keel up, remaining so for about twenty minutes before she finally sank at 7.55 a.m.

"A large number of men were saved by casting adrift on pattern three target.

"The second torpedo which struck the Cressy passed over the sinking hull of the Aboukir, narrowly missing it. It is possible that the same submarine fired all three torpedoes at the Cressy.

"The conduct of the crew was excellent throughout. I have already remarked on the bravery displayed by Captain Phillips, master of the trawler L. T. Coriander, and his crew who picked up 150 officers and men."

The report of Commander R. A. Norton, late of H. M. S. Hogue, follows:

"I have the honour to report as follows concerning the sinking of the Hogue was struck on the starboard 6.15 and 6.30 a.m., H.M.S. Aboukir was struck by a torpedo. The Hogue closed on the Aboukir and I received orders to hoist out the launch, turn out and prepare all boats, and unlash all timber on the upper deck. Two lifeboats were sent to the Aboukir, but before the launch could get away the Hogue was struck on the starboard side amidships by two torpedoes at intervals of ten to twenty seconds.

"The ship at once began to keel to starboard. After ordering the men to provide themselves with hammocks, etc., and to get into the boats on the beam, and take off their clothing, I went by Captain Nicholson's directions, to ascertain the damage in the engine room. The officer-informed me that the water was over the engine room gatings.

ORDERED TO JUMP OVERBOARD.

"When endeavoring to return to the bridge, the water burst open the starboard entryport doors and the

ship heeled rapidly. I told the men in the port battery to jump overboard, as the launch was close alongside, and soon afterwards the ship lurched heavily to starboard.

"I clung to the ring bolt for some time, but eventually dropped on to the deck and a huge wave washed me away. I climbed up the ship's side and was again washed off. Eventually, after swimming about from various over-laden pieces of wreckage I was picked up by a cutter from the Hogue, Coxswain L. S. Marks, which pulled about for some hours picking up men and discharging them to our picket boat and steam pinnace and to the Dutch steamers Flora and Titan, and rescued in this way Commander Sells of the Aboukir, Engineer Commander Stokes, with legs broken, Fleet Paymaster Eldred and about 120 others.

MEN BEHAVED WELL.

"Finally about eleven a.m. when we could find no more men in the water, we were picked up by the Lucifer, which proceeded to the Titan and took off from her all our men, except about twenty who were too ill to be moved.

"A Lowestoft trawler and the two Dutch ships, Flora and Titan, were extraordinarily kind, clothing and feeding our men. My boat's crew, composed mainly of Royal Naval reserve men, pulled and behaved remarkably well. I particularly wish to mention Petty Officer Halton, who by encouraging the men in the water near me undoubtedly saved many lives.

"Lieut. Commander Tillard was picked up by a launch. He got up a cutter's crew and saved many lives, as did Midshipman Cazalet.

"A Dutch sailing trawler sailed close by, but went off without rendering any assistance, although we signalled her to do so.

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N. B.—Steamboats calling to any port in Newfoundland, by telegraphing the make of instrument, we can send them complete or any piece that may be broken.

Patriotic Association Met Last Night.

A largely attended and enthusiastic meeting of the Patriotic Association was held at the C. L. B. Armoury last night at which His Excellency the Governor presided.

Mr. F. J. Morris, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, reported that 45 branch associations had been formed throughout the Colony, with some 300 persons whose names had been handed over to the Secretary. His Excellency reported that Andrew Wilson, Esq., and J. O'Reilly, Esq., had been added to the Association.

Mr. Montgomerie, for the Recruiting Committee, reported a total enrolment of 970 men, of whom about 565 are in camp. Recruiting from all sources has been discontinued since Saturday last. The Committee have not yet received final approved drafts of the conditions and terms under which the men are to be sworn, so that nothing has been done in this connection.

His Excellency said that Bell Island was worthy of special mention because more recruits were enrolled from that place than from any other place outside St. John's.

Mr. W. H. Renne on behalf of the Musketry Committee, reported that ten squads of recruits, numbering in all 468 had been been instructed at the rifle range. Though weather conditions were bad results were quite satisfactory. About five per cent of the recruits showed no aptitude for rifle shooting and are considered unfit for service. Fifteen per cent need further practice. On the whole the average was about fifty per cent which is considered fair. Equipment such as revolvers, binoculars, ammunition, etc., had been received. The instructors are now at Pleasantville giving instructions in musketry. With regard to the rifles, the Governor announced that five hundred Ross Rifles had been secured in Canada and were on the way since the 19th inst. Only 100 Lee-Enfields were coming, the order for 500 having been cancelled, though the contractor demanded that the bayonets and trenching tools ordered with them should be taken. This was done, and they have been handed over to the War Office.

The Quartermaster, Mr. H. O. Outbridge, reported that the work of his department had been seriously interfered with by storms. After the first storm eleven bell tents were ordered, and a shed capable of holding about 150 men had to be built, at an estimated cost of \$200. An officers mess room was also erected, as the tent used for that purpose was totally destroyed. The military great-coats have arrived, and slouch hats are expected by the Mongolian.

The medical report, submitted by Dr. Macpherson, showed that including re-examination which volunteers had asked for hoping to be passed "fit," the total number examined exceeded 1,000. The Committee had received the co-operation of the medical profession in the city and outports. Dr. Paterson has been in residence at the camp hospital since it started, and Dr. Wakefield has lived at the rifle range. Mr. Reeves, with an ambulance company, had rendered valuable assistance. There has been no serious case of illness. Yacine has been obtained, but it was thought advisable to defer inoculation until after the men are sworn. Thanks were tendered to Hon. G. Knowling, Reid M.D. Co., Mrs. D. Baird, Mrs. H. D. Reid, Mrs. Delgado, and a "work party" for various gifts and services rendered. Sir Joseph Outbridge presented the report of the Officers' Selection Committee, showing the work done. The list of officers has already been published.

Mr. A. J. Harvey, on behalf of the Transport Committee, stated that nothing definite was yet decided. His Excellency suggested that it was inadvisable to give undue publicity to the movements of the troops overseas.

The report of the Finance Committee submitted by Hon. E. R. Bowring showed that pay and allowance for all ranks of the regiment should be the same as those in Canadian forces sent to the front.

The expenditure to date was \$16,401.12 and included pay to officers and men, cost of camp equipment, victualling, arms, etc. The amount in sight for the Patriotic Fund was somewhat over \$60,000.

Before the close of the meeting His Excellency stated that he had been advised that a Reception Committee had been organized in the Old Country for the purpose of attending to the welfare of our men while in England. The hospitality of the West Indian Club was also offered to the men. His Excellency also announced that arrangements had been made with the heads of the different religious bodies whereby Sunday, Oct. 18th, would be set apart as a day of special prayer and supplication for the success of the British arms, and for the welfare of our own men.

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