

N.C.130.

9th January, 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to report the movements of H.M.A. Submarine A.E.2 under my command, from time of leaving the anchorage N. of Tenedos Island on April 25th, 1915, to time of the vessel's loss in the Sea of Marmora on April 30th, 1915.

2.- I beg to point out that all records went down in the vessel, and as it was inadvisable to make notes in captivity, and it would probably have been impossible to keep them when made, this report has to be compiled from memory.

3.- My written orders from Actg. Vice Admiral J.M. de Robeck Commanding Eastern Mediterranean Fleet, stated that I was to attempt to make the passage of the Dardanelles, specified the arrangements for receipt of any wireless reports I might be able to send, and further stated that in the event of A.E.2 gaining the Sea of Marmora, another submarine would be ordered to follow her in a few days time.

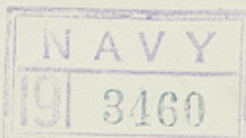
4.- The Vice Admiral informed me verbally that in the event of a successful passage of the Dardanelles, action in the Sea of Marmora would be left to my own discretion, the object to be achieved being the stoppage of ships passing between Constantinople and Gallipoli. The Chief of Staff, Commodore R. Keyes, verbally ordered that "in the event of my reaching the Narrows" at Chanak I was to endeavour to sink any mine-dropping ships sighted, and "generally to run amok." This last order was on account of the ships which would be in action at the mouth of the Dardanelles covering the landing of troops.

5.- Considerable doubt existed as to the possibility of a submarine passage through the Dardanelles; two unsuccessful attempts had already been made; submarines diving in the entrance of the Strait had frequently run ashore owing to the current. What, if any, steps the enemy had taken to guard against a submarine passage were uncertain, and generally the task appeared to be both difficult and dangerous. I submit that this may be taken into account in considering the proceedings which followed.

6.- Having proceeded from the anchorage off Tenedos, I lay at entrance to Dardanelles until the moon set, and about 2.30 a.m. (April 25th) entered the Straits at about 8 knots. Searchlights from White Cliffs, Kephey Pt. and Chanak were sweeping the Straits. Weather calm and clear. As the order to run amok in the Narrows precluded all possibility of making the passage unseen, I decided to hold on on the surface as far as possible. As I proceeded the searchlights at White Cliffs, sweeping the lower reaches of the Strait, forced me to edge

Captain F.A. Sommerville, D.S.O., /towards  
(formerly comdg. H.M.A. "Adamant" and  
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towards the Northern shore. At about 4.30 a.m. being then not quite abreast Swandere River, a gun opened fire at about 1½ miles range from the Northern shore. I immediately dived, and at a depth of 70 to 80 feet proceeded through the minefield. During the ensuing half hour or so the scraping of wires against the vessel's sides was almost continuous, and on two occasions something caught up forward and continued to knock for some considerable time before breaking loose and scraping away aft. Having risen twice for observation in the minefield (which I considered necessary as E.15 had run ashore in this vicinity) on rising the third time I found the vessel in good position, rather over to the Northern side of the Strait, and approaching the Narrows, some two miles distant. The time was then about 6 a.m. In order to take stock of the situation I remained at 20 feet with periscope up.

7.- The sea being a flat calm, the periscope was immediately sighted, and a heavy fire opened from forts both sides of the Narrows, and the accuracy of this fire made observation through the periscope difficult. I observed a hulk anchored off Chanak on starboard side of Narrows, and several T.B.D.'s and small craft moving in higher reaches. As the hulk might be dropping mines, I decided to attack it, and edged over to starboard with that purpose. A small cruiser "judged to be of 'Peik e Shetrek' type, previously unseen, now emerged from behind the hulk, and believing this to be more likely to carry mines, I considered it would be better to attack it. At a range of 3-400 yds. I fired the bow torpedo, at the same moment ordering 70 feet in order to avoid a T.B.D. which was attempting to ram on the port side. As the vessel descended the T.B.D. passed overhead close, and the Torpedo was heard to hit.

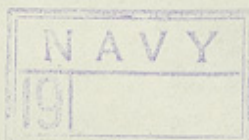
8.- As the cruiser, dead ahead, might be expected to sink almost immediately, I altered course a point to starboard to avoid becoming entangled with her. At the time I believed the vessel to be in the centre of the Strait. About 4 minutes later I altered back to the original course, and ordered 20 feet. As the vessel was rising she hit bottom and slid up on the bank to a depth of 10 feet, at which depth a considerable portion of the conning tower was above water. Through the periscope I observed that the position was immediately under Fort Anadolli Mejidieh. As I looked one of the guns fired, and the flash of the gun almost reached the top of the periscope, which I immediately lowered. For four minutes the sound of shell falling round the boat was continuous, and then, the efforts to refloat her proving successful, she slid down the bank to a depth of 70 feet, with head pointing down the Strait.

9.- I proceeded at 90 ft. on Port motor with helm hard a port to turn up Strait. When two points off correct course, with head swinging rapidly, I went ahead starboard motor. Vessel immediately struck bottom on Gallipoli shore, and slid up the bank to a depth of 8 ft. Through the periscope I judged the position to be immediately under Fort Derina Burnu, and further observed two T.B.D.'s, a Gunboat and several small craft standing close off in Strait firing heavily, and a cluster of small boats which I judged to be picking up survivors of the cruiser. In this position we remained for 5 minutes.

10.- As vessel was lying with inclination down by the bows I went full speed ahead. Shortly afterwards she commenced to move down the bank, gave a slight bump, gathered way and then bumped very heavily. She, however, continued to descend, and at 80 ft. I dived off the bank. The last bump was calculated to have considerably injured the vessel, and probably impaired the fighting efficiency, but as I considered my chief duty was

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to prove the passage through the Straits to be possible, I decided to continue on course.

11.- In connection with these two groundings, I have to report that the behaviour of the crew was exemplary. In these two highly dangerous situations it was only their cool and intelligent performance of their duties which enabled the vessel to be refloated.

12.- On rising to 20 ft. shortly afterwards, I observed the vessel to be in good position approaching Nagara Pt. with the T.B.D's, Gunboat and numerous other pursuing craft surrounding us on every side. At this, as all other appearances of the periscope, the T.B.D's attempted to ram, and I dived to 70 feet. Considering the dangers of rising to take observations in the midst of so many pursuing craft, and the danger of grounding on Nagara Pt. when near the surface, I decided to attempt to round the point without further observation, and proceeded to 90 feet for that purpose. Having made the requisite alterations in course, on rising to 20 ft. some time later I found the vessel in good position in centre of Strait, heading for Sea of Marmora with Nagara Pt. abaft the beam, and observed the pursuing craft carrying out tactics below the point; but owing to calm water the periscope was immediately sighted by the enemy, fire re-opened and the chase resumed. I then dived to 90 ft. and remained at that depth for half an hour.

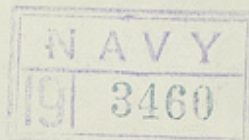
13.- On rising to 20 ft. to observe, I found the pursuing craft in close attendance on every side, and just ahead one on either bow, two tugs with a wire stretching between them. I immediately dived to 90 ft. Considering the situation, it seemed possible that our position was marked through catching in a drift net or by some other means, and I decided to run in on Asiatic shore and await developments, as battery power then remaining was not sufficient to get far out into Sea of Marmora, and thereby gain a fair chance of shaking off pursuit. I therefore altered course 8 pts. to starboard, and ran aground about 8.30 a.m. lying at a depth of 80 ft.

14.- About 9 a.m. a vessel passed overhead and something she was towing hit boat's side and jumped over. From this on vessels continued to pass overhead at frequent intervals, and as we were far out of the track of shipping passing up and down Straits, I decided they must be searching for us, and about 11 a.m. considered it advisable to move to another place. The leaks occasioned by last bump had caused a quantity of water to collect in motor bilges etc. which water it was impossible to pump out as oil mixed with it would immediately give away our exact position. The water was therefore carried forward, and emptied into Beam tube well etc. Consequently on attempting to move off, I found trim had been lost, and all efforts to regain it without coming to surface proved futile, so we remained in the same position throughout the day, while vessels continued to pass and repass overhead until 7 p.m. At 9 p.m. I rose to the surface, found no ships in sight, and commenced to charge batteries. No ships passed in Strait during the night.

15.- About 4 a.m. (April 26th) I proceeded on surface up Strait; just before dawn sighted ships ahead, and dived to attack. As soon as light permitted, I observed through periscope two ships approaching, probably small ship leading, and larger ship astern - both men o' war. Sea was glassy calm, and I approached with periscope down. On hoisting periscope (trained on Port Beam) I observed ship on line of sight of Port tube. I immediately fired, and ship altered course and torpedo missed. I then discovered I had fired at leading ship and found it impossible to bring another tube to

/bear on





bear on second ship (a battleship of Barbarossa class) with reasonable chance of success. I therefore did not fire.

I attribute this failure to the state of the sea and my personal error in overdoing an unseen attack.

16.- I continued on course through Straits, examined the Gallipoli anchorage and found no ship worthy of attack, so proceeded on into Sea of Marmora, which was entered about 9 a.m.

17.- About 9.30 a.m. sighted several ships ahead approaching separately on zig-zag courses. A.E.2 carried no gun, and had only 8 torpedoes, of which two were already expended; I had no intelligence as to the nature of ship likely to be met with, and these ships flew no flag. I considered that until another submarine joined me in the Sea of Marmora, it was necessary to exercise great care in the expenditure of torpedoes. I therefore decided not to fire unless I was certain of troops being on board the enemy ship, and with this intention dived up close to the foremost ship - a tramp of about 2000 tons. Passing about 200 yds. abeam of her, I could see no sign of troops or ammunition but as I passed under her stern she ran up colours and opened rifle fire at periscope. I then dived over to next ship and attacked at 400 yds with starboard Beam torpedo. The torpedo failed to hit. I was unable to get within range of the other two ships. Rose to surface half an hour later and spent remainder of day on surface changing batteries, making good defects and examining fishing boats.

18.- Shortly after dark, when on surface endeavouring to get wireless connection (in which were never successful) was attacked and forced to dive by small vessel; throughout the night whenever we rose to surface, we were attacked by craft within half an hour and forced to dive. The want of a gun was a severe handicap at this time.

19.- At dawn (April 27th) whilst still diving, sighted ship approaching from Eastward, convoyed by two T.B.D's, one ahead of her, and the other on starboard beam. Dived past leading T.B.D. and across the bows of other one, and fired bow torpedo at ship - a beam shot, distance 300 yds. The torpedo's engine failed to start, and T.B.D. attempting to ram precluded possibility of second shot. No other ships passed throughout the day. At night, in order to give the crew some rest, lay on the bottom in Artaki Bay.

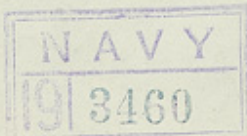
20.- April 28th - a.m. in dead calm weather, attacked small ship convoyed by two T.B.D's. Fired starboard Beam torpedo at 300 yds. range. Torpedo failed to hit, and Destroyer attempting to ram, precluded chance of second shot.

P.M. At dusk sighted two Men o' War approaching at high speed from Westward. Dived to attack, but when near ships it was too dark to see anything but smoke of one of them. Judging her to be near, fired Port torpedo, which failed to hit. Proceeded on towards Gallipoli to reach nearest point to receiving ship in endeavour to get wireless connection.

21.- April 29th - at dawn dived towards Gallipoli, and observed Gunboat patrolling head of Strait off Eski Farnar Pt. Dived under Gunboat down Strait, and returned up Strait showing periscope in endeavour to give impression that another submarine had come through. T.B.D's and T.B's came out to assist Gunboat in pursuit, and having led all up towards Sea of

/Marmora -





Marmora, dived back and examined Gallipoli anchorage, but found nothing to attack. Steared out towards Marmora, and rising to observe some half an hour later, found Gunboat crossing line of fire of stern tube. As battery was getting low, I wished if possible to end the pursuit, and fired at 700 yds. range. Gunboat dodged and torpedo passed one yd. ahead (this I afterwards learnt.) Pursuit then ceased and I proceeded to R.V. 5' North of Kara Burnu Pt. Just before reaching R.V. E.14 rose close on port bow. Commanding Officer of E.14 directed me to meet him at R.V. at 10 a.m. next morning. Proceeded to bay N. of Marmora Island, and rested on bottom for night.

22.- April 30th at daylight refitted exhaust tank valve, and proceeded to R.V. Arrived R.V. at 10 a.m. and sighted T.B. approaching from Westward. Dived to avoid T.B. and whilst diving sighted smoke in Artaki Bay, so steered south to investigate. About 10.30 a.m. boats nose suddenly rose, and boat broke surface about 1 mile from T.B. Blew water forward but could not get boat to dive. T.B. firing, got very close, and ship from Artaki Bay, a Gunboat, also firing at range of about 3 miles; flooded a forward tank, and boat suddenly took big inclination down by bows, and dived rapidly. A.E.2 was only fitted with 100 foot depth guages. This depth was quickly reached and passed. Went full speed astern and commenced to blow main ballast. After some interval boat came back to 100 ft. depth, so reflooded and went ahead, but boat broke surface stern first. T.B. was then close to, and fired two torpedoes. Gunboat about 2 miles off. Boat's inclination down by bow grew bigger, and she again dived very rapidly and passed 100 ft. depth going down fast. Went full speed astern and blew main ballast. After a considerable interval the boat rose rapidly, passed the 100 ft. mark, and in spite of efforts to check her, broke surface stern first. Within a few seconds the engine room was hit, and holed in three places. Owing to the great inclination down by the bow, it was impossible to see the T.B. through the periscope, and I considered that any attempt to ram her would be useless. I therefore blew main ballast and ordered all hands on deck. Assisted by Lieutenant Haggard, I then opened the tanks to flood and went on deck. The boat sank in a few minutes in about 55 fathoms in approximate position 4' N of Kara Burnu Point at about 10.45 a.m.

23.- All hands were picked up by the T.B. and no lives were lost.

24.- I have no explanation to offer of the original loss of trim of the boat. That many leaks had been caused by the final bump when aground in the Narrows did not in my opinion satisfactorily explain the sudden rise of the bows. I believe an identically similar case occurred in the first year of war, to submarine E.11, Lt. Comdr. M. Nasmith, when in the presence of enemy destroyers the boat suddenly rose by the bows and all tanks had to be flooded to sink her to the bottom, as she was fortunately in shallow water. On return to harbour she was docked for examination, but no reason for the extraordinary behaviour was found.

25.- Finally, I have to bring to your favourable notice the behaviour of the crew throughout all the service herein specified. The manner in which they performed their duties was such as to earn the most complete recommendation that I can possibly give them. In such circumstances, I am unable to single out any special names for your particular notice.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,