

shelled the ship closely for twenty minutes. The enemy then submerged and steamed past the ship 150 yards off, examining her through the periscope. Captain Campbell decided then to fire one of his torpedoes, but missed by a few inches. The submarine crossed the bows and came slowly down the other side, whereupon a second torpedo was fired and missed again. The enemy observed it and immediately submerged. Urgent signals for assistance were immediately sent out, but pending arrival of assistance Captain Campbell arranged for a third "panic party" to jump overboard if necessary and leave one gun's crew on board for a final attempt to destroy the enemy, should he again attack. Almost immediately afterwards, however, British and American destroyers arrived on the scene, the wounded were transferred, boats were recalled and the fire extinguished. The "Dunraven" although her stern was awash, was taken in tow, but the weather grew worse, and early the following morning she sank with colours flying.

(The award of the Victoria Cross to Lieut. Charles George Bonner, D.S.C., R.N.R., and P.O. Ernest Pitcher, O.N. 227029 (Po.), was announced in London Gazette No. 30363, dated the 2nd November, 1917.)

(5) Action of H.M. Armed Smack "Nelson," on the 15th August, 1917.

On the 15th August, 1917, the Smack "Nelson" was engaged in fishing when she was attacked by gunfire from an enemy submarine. The gear was let go and the submarine's fire was returned. The submarine's fourth shot went through the port bow just below the water line, and the seventh shell struck the skipper, Thomas Crisp, partially disembowelling him, and passed through the deck and out through the side of the ship. In spite of the terrible nature of his wound Skipper Crisp retained consciousness, and his first thought was to send off a message that he was being attacked and giving his position. He continued to command his ship until the ammunition was almost exhausted and the smack was sinking. He refused to be moved into the small boat when the rest of the crew were obliged to abandon the vessel as she sank, his last request being that he might be thrown overboard.

(The posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Skipper Thomas Crisp, D.S.C., R.N.R., 10055 D.A., was announced in London Gazette No. 30363, dated the 2nd November, 1917.)

(6) Action of H.M.S. "Stock Force," on the 30th July 1918.

H.M.S. "Stock Force," under the command of Lieutenant Harold Auten, D.S.C., R.N.R., was torpedoed by an enemy submarine at 5 p.m. on the 30th July, 1918. The torpedo struck the ship abreast No. 1 hatch, entirely wrecking

the fore part of the ship, including the bridge, and wounding three ratings. A tremendous shower of planks, unexploded shells, hatches and other debris followed the explosion, wounding the first lieutenant (Lieutenant E. J. Grey, R.N.R.) and the navigating officer (Lieutenant L. E. Workman, R.N.R.) and adding to the injuries of the foremost gun's crew and a number of other ratings. The ship settled down forward, flooding the foremost magazine and between decks to the depth of about three feet. "Panic party," in charge of Lieutenant Workman, R.N.R., immediately abandoned ship, and the wounded were removed to the lower deck, where the surgeon (Surgeon Probationer G. E. Strahan, R.N.V.R.), working up to his waist in water, attended to their injuries. The captain, two guns' crews and the engine-room staff remained at their posts.

The submarine then came to the surface ahead of the ship half a mile distant, and remained there a quarter of an hour, apparently watching the ship for any doubtful movement.

The "panic party" in the boat accordingly commenced to row back towards the ship in an endeavour to decoy the submarine within range of the hidden guns. The submarine followed, coming slowly down the port side of the "Stock Force," about three hundred yards away. Lieutenant Auten, however, withheld his fire until she was abeam, when both of his guns could bear. Fire was opened at 5.40 p.m.; the first shot carried away one of the periscopes, the second round hit the conning tower, blowing it away and throwing the occupant high into the air. The next round struck the submarine on the water-line, tearing her open and blowing out a number of the crew.

The enemy then subsided several feet into the water and her bows rose. She thus presented a large and immobile target into which the "Stock Force" poured shell after shell until the submarine sank by the stern, leaving a quantity of debris on the water. During the whole of the action one man (Officer's Steward, 2nd Class, R. J. Starling) remained pinned down under the foremost gun after the explosion of the torpedo, and remained there cheerfully and without complaint, although the ship was apparently sinking, until the end of the action.

The "Stock Force" was a vessel of 360 tons, and despite the severity of the shock sustained by the officers and men when she was torpedoed, and the fact that her bows were almost obliterated, she was kept afloat by the exertions of her ship's company until 9.25 p.m. She then sank with colours flying, and the officers and men were taken off by two torpedo boats and a trawler.

The action was cited as one of the finest examples of coolness, discipline and good organisation in the history of "Q" ships.

(The award of the Victoria Cross to Lieutenant Harold Auten, D.S.C., R.N.R., was announced in London Gazette No. 30900, dated the 14th September, 1918.)

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