

until picked up and taken in tow by "Prince Eugene."

29. The small inshore craft—C.M.B.'s, under Lieutenant Arthur E. P. Welman, D.S.C., R.N., and Lieutenant Francis C. Harrison, D.S.O., R.N., and the M.L.'s under Commander Ion Hamilton Benn, D.S.O., R.N.V.R., as before, carried out all their duties splendidly; to them must be given the chief honours of having guided "Vindictive" in.

Daring exploits of these small craft, all contributory to the general success, are numerous; they are recounted by the senior officers of divisions in their detailed reports, but I would specially mention the following:—

C.M.B. No. 25 (Lieutenant Russell H. McBean, R.N.) escorted "Vindictive" with smoke screen close up to the entrance, where she assisted her with guiding lights, then torpedoed the piers, and finally engaged the machine guns there with his own machine guns with apparently good effect, during which Lieutenant McBean was wounded and Acting Chief Motor Mechanic G. E. Keel killed. Having seen "Vindictive" inside the piers, and her work being completed, Sub-Lieutenant George R. Shaw, R.N.R. (second-in-command), brought her safely back to harbour, Motor Mechanic A. J. Davies filling Chief Motor Mechanic Keel's place, and keeping the engines running most efficiently.

C.M.B. No. 24 (Lieutenant Archibald Dayrell-Reed, D.S.O., R.N.R.) and C.M.B. No. 30 (Lieutenant Albert L. Poland, R.N.), both carried out successful torpedo attacks on the pier ends, afterwards laying and maintaining good smoke screens close inshore throughout the remainder of the operation.

C.M.B. No. 26 (Lieutenant Cuthbert F. B. Bowlby, R.N.) escorted "Vindictive" close up to the entrance, then ran ahead, and, finding one of the piers, fired his torpedo at it. The water being shallow, and range short, the explosion shook the boat so severely as to damage her engines and open her seams. She commenced to sink, but by his presence of mind, and the cool perseverance of Chief Motor Mechanic G. W. McCracken, Lieutenant Bowlby got the leak stopped, engines going again, and brought his boat out of the fire zone, where Commander Bertram H. Ramsay, leader of one of the offshore divisions, took her in tow.

C.M.B. No. 22 (Lieutenant William H. Bremner, R.N., with Lieutenant Arthur E. P. Welman, D.S.C., Senior Officer of C.M.B.'s, aboard), when carrying out her smoke screen-

ing of the shore batteries, encountered close inshore an enemy torpedo boat, who switched on her searchlight and opened fire. C.M.B. No. 22 had no better weapon than her Lewis guns, but with these she attacked and peppered the torpedo boat to such good effect as to drive her away from the harbour entrance, and prevent her interfering with the blocking operation.

C.M.B. No. 23 (Lieutenant the Hon. Cecil E. R. Spencer) escorted "Vindictive" close inshore, and kept touch with her until "Vindictive" gave the "last resort" signal, on which C.M.B. No. 23 laid, and lit, the million candle-power flare, by whose light "Vindictive" eventually found her way in.

30. To recount the foregoing exploits of the small craft is in no way to detract from the praise due to all, particularly to the senior officers of units, for the care and precision with which they carried out my necessarily rather elaborate orders.

31. The general retirement was well executed, and without further casualties or incident, the supporting forces remaining out until daylight to pick up any disabled small craft who might still be out. There were none, however; those who were unable to return by their own power had already been towed home.

32. No interference by enemy craft was experienced throughout the operation, but from subsequent reports of some of the inshore craft it appears that several German torpedo boats were lying close under the shore batteries the whole time, and made no move to come out.

33. Our casualties were remarkably light—2 officers and 6 men killed, 5 officers and 25 men wounded, 2 officers and 9 men missing, believed killed. Our only loss in material is M.L. 254. A number of the small craft were considerably damaged by gunfire, but all these are, or will be shortly, ready for action again. The light casualty list must be attributed to the efficient smoke screens, and probably also to the fog.

34. Of the "Sappho," I can but record the bitter disappointment of all aboard her at the accident that prevented her following "Vindictive." One and all, they begged to be given another chance, and when the day comes for their request to be granted, I am sure they will not be found wanting.

I have, &c.,

HUBERT LYNES,

Commodore.

To Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes,
K.C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O.

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