

22nd March, 1941.

Convoy A.S.21 attacked by HE.111s S.E. of Gavdo. Greek NICHOLAS EMBIRICOS and SOLHEIM both badly damaged. NICHOLAS EMBIRICOS sank later and SOLHEIM abandoned.

31st March, 1941.

H.M.S. BONAVENTURE, escorting Convoy G.A.8, was hit amidships by two torpedoes at 0830 and sank almost immediately.

2nd April, 1941.

Convoy A.S.23 attacked by six JU.88 D/B.* KOULANDIS, XENOS and HOMEFIELD hit and abandoned. S.S. TETI, who had apparently been near missed, reported that she was leaking badly and proceeded to an anchorage near Lissmos.

2nd April, 1941.

Convoy A.N.F.24 attacked by H.L.B.† S.S. DEVIS hit in No. 6 hold and fire started, 7 men being killed and 14 injured.

3rd April, 1941.

Convoy A.N.F.24 attacked by D/B. NORTHERN PRINCE (carrying important stores for Greece from U.K.) was hit and set on fire—later blew up and sank.

17th April, 1941.

Convoy A.N.27 attacked by H.L.B. and T/B.‡ Oiler BRITISH SCIENCE torpedoed and speed reduced to 6 knots. Proceeded independently for Suda Bay. Torpedoed again at 1530/18 and caught fire. Ship abandoned and later sank.

21st April, 1941.

Convoy A.S.26 attacked by D/B. BRITISH LORD hit and later taken in tow by AUCKLAND.

EVACUATION OF THE ARMY FROM GREECE.

The following Despatch was submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on the 7th July, 1941, by Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, G.C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Station.

Mediterranean.

7th July, 1941.

REPORT ON OPERATION "DEMON"

The attached reports on the evacuation of Imperial troops from Greece between 24th and 29th April, 1941, are forwarded for the information of Their Lordships.

2. The operations were most ably conducted by the Vice Admiral, Light Forces§, who met the needs of a confused and constantly changing military situation in a masterly manner. In this he was substantially assisted by the untiring efforts of Rear Admiral H. T. Baillie-Grohman, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., who was in charge of arrangements ashore in Greece.

3. The conduct of the naval forces involved including the special landing craft was, with few exceptions, beyond praise. Officers and men went for many days almost without rest under conditions of great discomfort with their ships

Admiralty footnotes:—

* D/B—Dive Bombers.

† H.L.B.—High Level Bombers.

‡ T/B—Torpedo Bombers.

§ Vice Admiral, Light Forces—Vice Admiral H. D. Pridham-Wippell, C.B., C.V.O.

crowded with troops under constant air attack. They were materially helped in their task by the admirable discipline and spirit among the troops they embarked.

4. A notable feature of the operation was the gallant and enterprising performance of the merchant seamen in the troopships who had to take their ships into unlighted and difficult anchorages, in many cases without adequate charts. A high proportion of Dutch ships were included and were particularly noticeable for their efficient and seamanlike performance.

5. It was most fortunate that the Glen ships* with their landing craft were present in the Mediterranean. These ships, their landing craft and the tank landing craft, although playing their rôle in the reverse of that for which they were intended, proved invaluable and undoubtedly made it possible to embark many more troops than would otherwise have been the case.

6. This melancholy operation coming as it did on top of the prolonged operation of transporting the troops into Greece, threw a very severe strain on both men and material of the Mediterranean Fleet; a strain which was most nobly shouldered in the face of heavy air attack which usually had to be met without fighter protection of any sort.

7. The operation was throughout a most anxious one; performed, as it was, with no cover from enemy surface interference. The urgent need for destroyers for the actual evacuation precluded the provision of screens to enable the sorely needed battleship cover to be provided. Had our enemy shown more enterprise the results might have been very different.

(Signed) A. B. CUNNINGHAM,

Admiral,

Commander-in-Chief.

ENCLOSURE I.

Office of Flag Officer Attached Middle East,
General Headquarters, Middle East,
Cairo.

15th May, 1941.

*The Commander-in-Chief,
Mediterranean.*

I have the honour to forward herewith my report on the evacuation of the British forces from Greece, covering the period 17th April to 30th April, 1941, with the following remarks.

Situation in Piraeus, and Control of Local Shipping.

2. On arrival in Greece, I found Piraeus failing to function as a harbour on account of the great destruction caused by the explosion of an ammunition ship, with the resultant fires in the harbour on 7th April and continual mining or bombing since that date. Moreover, the Greek authorities, through whom the British naval authorities had been working for the control of shipping, berthing, supplies for ships and so on, had been prevented by the destruction and disorganisation caused by the explosion from attending at their posts except in one or

Admiralty footnotes:—

* Glen ships—a class of merchant ships converted to "Infantry Assault Ships", subsequently known as "Landing Ships, Infantry", for use in Combined Operations.