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COASTAL FORCE ACTIONS.

The following Despatch was submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on the 13th March, 1943, by Admiral Sir HENRY H. HARWOOD, K.C.B., O.B.E., Commander-in-Chief, Levant.

Levant,
 13th March, 1943.

MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS 61, 77, 82, 307 AND 315
 —REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 15TH/16TH
 FEBRUARY, 1943.

Forwarded for the information of Their Lordships, concurring generally in the remarks of the Captain Coastal Forces. This operation resulted in a torpedo hit on an enemy merchant ship and damage to other enemy ships by gunfire.* Much valuable experience was gained.

2. The remarks in paragraph 3 of the Captain Coastal Forces' letter are fully concurred in. M.T.B.s 77 and 82 should have fired both torpedoes at their targets.

3. The operation was carried out in the face of strong opposition in a spirited and determined manner, which bodes well for future operations. The diversion by the M.G.B., was well planned and carried out.

4. The freedom from mechanical trouble during the operation reflects credit on all concerned.

(Signed) H. H. HARWOOD,
Admiral,
Commander-in-Chief.

Admiralty footnote:

* The action took place in the vicinity of Maritimo Island, off the western point of Sicily.

ENCLOSURE 1 TO C.-IN-C., LEVANT'S LETTER.

FROM ... The Captain Coastal Forces,
 Mediterranean.

DATE ... 21st February, 1943.

TO ... The Commander-in-Chief, Levant.

The attached report and diagram from the Commanding Officer, 7th Motor Torpedo Boat Flotilla are forwarded, with the following remarks.

1. The composition of this strike was as follows:—

M.T.B.s 61	} 7th Flotilla (Vospers)
77 (Flotilla Commanding Officer on board)	
82	
M.T.B.s 307	} 10th Flotilla (Elcos).
315	

As the 10th Flotilla boats had been undocked only the same day, it was impossible for them to be ready in time to sail in company with the other boats. It was unfortunate that the two units were not able to join up, as intended; results would probably have been far more effective had a larger number of Motor Torpedo Boats been available to attack the main enemy convoy. The results of this attack were that one merchant vessel of medium size was definitely damaged with an expenditure of two torpedoes. There is now no reason to suppose that this ship was the same as that subsequently sunk by an aircraft.

2. It is considered that Motor Torpedo Boat 77 was well handled by Lieutenant J. B. Sturgeon, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. His