

104. At 0630, STRATHNAVER arrived, escorted by BRAMHAM and BLYSKAWICA, and secured alongside in the outer harbour.

105. Between 1000 and 1100, a heavy attack by about 30 Ju. 88s developed. The principal targets of this attack were MARNIX and DEWDALE, but individual vessels on patrol were also attacked. Most of the planes were kept high by A.A. fire. The gunnery efficiency of DEWDALE and MARNIX undoubtedly saved these ships. The only damage was a near miss on BLYSKAWICA. Two Ju. 88s were shot down by DEWDALE.

106. At 1100, MARNIX escorted by BICESTER sailed for Algiers. Unloading had not been fully completed.

107. Landing craft were delayed by all these attacks but left for Djidjelli with petrol and R.A.F. stores between 1100 and 1200, arriving late that night.

108. At 1240, the harbour was attacked by six torpedo bombers. At least two of these were shot down, one, the first, by a Spitfire patrol from Algiers; the other is claimed by DEWDALE. The attack was broken up and turned away, torpedoes being dropped at long range.

109. Two high level bombing attacks were carried out between 1330 and 1430. One attack was by ten planes, the other by four planes. One aircraft was shot down by A.A. fire. BLYSKAWICA sustained further casualties and damage from a near miss and was sailed for Algiers at 1600.

110. At 1655, Ju. 88s carried out dive attacks from scattered low clouds. When the light was failing two waves of torpedo bombers attacked. The attack was directed against DEWDALE, who again came through unscathed. Two planes were shot down. WILTON was hit by a bomb which fortunately passed through the ship without exploding and only caused superficial damage. WILTON then sailed for Algiers, being practically out of ammunition.

111. At 2115, STRATHNAVER sailed for Algiers escorted by BRAMHAM.

112. Fighters had been providing cover intermittently throughout the day, but were only once present during an air attack. They had to be flown to and from Maison Blanche aerodrome at Algiers, which only permitted 20 minutes of patrol over Bougie. R.A.F. fighters at Algiers also had other commitments and the cover provided at Bougie was consequently thin and inadequate.

113. R.A.F. fighters were flown to Djidjelli aerodrome in the early morning of the 12th, but were not able to operate continuously until the 13th, because the attempts to land petrol and ammunition by landing craft did not succeed until midnight 12th/13th. By using up all the petrol in the tanks of its aircraft, the squadron was able to carry out one sortie in defence of Bougie, destroying a number of enemy bombers, before being grounded through lack of petrol.

114. At 1210, a bombing attack was carried out by fourteen Ju. 88s, the attack being well pressed home. The M.T. GLENFINLAS was hit alongside whilst unloading and subsequently sank. The French ship ALCINA was also hit and set on fire. Fighters drove off the raiders. ROBERTS shot down two of the attackers.

115. It was decided as a result of this raid that two French ships, unable to raise steam, should be scuttled to prevent them catching fire. Both ships rolled over and lay on their beam ends.

116. During the night the M.T. ships OCEAN VOLGA and STANHILL and the oiler DEWDALE sailed for Algiers, together with five French merchant ships.

117. The M.T. URLANA, the last ship of the assault convoy to be unloaded, was sailed during the night of the 17th.

118. On Sunday, 15th November, the A.A. ship POZARICA arrived at Bougie. I had sent her there on relief by DELHI from her duty as A.A. guardship, Algiers. Enemy air activity since then has been on a very reduced scale.

119. Before concluding my report, I would like to refer to the very happy relations which existed in H.M.S. BULOLO between the Navy, the Army, the Air Force and the American Army. In my quarters I was privileged to have Major-General C. W. Ryder, U.S. Army, Major-General V. Eveleigh, O.B.E., 78th Division, and Air Commodore G. M. Lawson, C.B.E., M.C., R.A.F., and throughout the whole period there was complete understanding and co-operation between us and our services.

120. The operation was in many ways far more difficult than a straightforward Combined Operation in that the political factors were very strong and denied us the initiative in offensive action. The quick success of the operation was undoubtedly due mainly to surprise, good weather, and the number of places at which landings took place which gave the impression of overwhelming force. Had the operation taken place in bad weather and with strong opposition it might well have failed due to lack of training and rehearsal, and this fact should not be overlooked when planning further operations.

(Signed) H. M. BURROUGH,
Vice-Admiral.

ENCLOSURE II.

*Office of Naval Commander Centre
Task Force,
c/o Admiralty, S.W.1.
27th December, 1942.*

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of proceedings of the Centre Naval Task Force in Operation "Torch".

2. An operation of such magnitude and scope must of necessity produce many lasting impressions and of these the zeal and enthusiasm of every man, British and American, were the most outstanding.

3. With Major-General L. R. Fredendall, the Commanding General, and his staff, co-operation was easy, and from first to last we worked as one.

4. The altogether admirable discipline of the American troops evoked much favourable comment. Once they understood what was expected of them, they were untiring until the job was properly performed.

5. The value of preliminary practice in combined operations needs no emphasis and great value was gained from the exercise in Loch Linnhe and elsewhere prior to sailing.