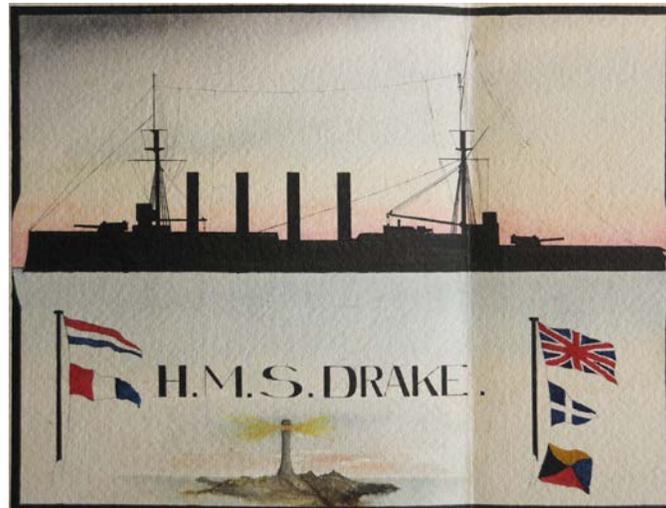


Diary of

**Lieutenant Maurice Fiennes Fitzgerald
Wilson, R.N.**

on board

HMS Drake



August - December 1914

INTRODUCTION

Only the odd man out of many thousands, who begins a diary on any 1st of January, keeps it going. The one way to give a diary a real chance is to make the keeping of it an offence. At the beginning of the Great War one of the first orders issued by the Admiralty was that which forbade the keeping of private diaries. This gave me (with many others - including Admiral Keyes, who should have known better) the necessary fillip; and I kept a record fairly continuously from the outbreak until the summer of 1919.

Some branches of the Navy were fully extended by the war. The submarines, mine-sweepers, decoy-ships, barrage watchers, and many of the destroyer flotillas, in particular. They led a hard life and suffered heavy losses. Their service could fairly be compared with that of the soldiers. But most of the Navy lived in conditions hardly different from those of peace-time. Warmth, good housing, dry clothes, sanitation and cleanliness were with us all the time; and in the whole four years of war the average seaman heard less sound of angry gun-fire than troops on the Western Front might crowd into a few dirty minutes.

So that, contrasted with army conditions, this is a peace diary. It has an interest for me, because it recalls the life we led, and reminds me that we lived - mentally - on hearsay, gossip, and rumour; by argument, forming theories, and piecing together stories from odd signals or other bits of news which we grabbed at as they wafted by. Some of the criticisms and comments which occur here and there were my own; some were what I had heard expressed, and agreed with. They were often, I suppose, based on second-hand untruths; I don't give them weight, as I did when first writing them down, but they have a certain use in helping to fill out the picture of our little niche in the big scheme, The whole story, in fact, is a rather unreliable wardroom medley, and may suitably be entitled "Below-stairs in the War."

It has been put together thus:- the part which is typed the full width of the page is taken from the diary, unaltered except for spelling mistakes and commas. The paragraphs which are stepped over to the right have been put in to connect up the story. They are sometimes condensed diary, sometimes not. Copies of signals kept for interest, and other matter not forming part of the story, are typed on the left-hand pages in close spacing.

NAVIGATION SCHOOL 1914

My mobilising appointment had been to JUPITER. After the review, the 3rd and 4th Fleet ships (we were very much 4th Fleet) paid off, and we went back to our shore jobs. I was at the Navigation School, taking a class of Acting Subs. When the tension period set in work eased up; everybody began to pack and hope for orders. Leave was restricted until no-one was allowed out of telephone reach, and was finally stopped altogether. The Saturday - 1st August - was spent by Booty (Captain of the Nav. House) sitting on the upholstered seat of a weighing machine in the School hall, bent forward

with his hands clasped between his knees, and swinging his legs - he being a short man. The rest of us wandered round, sighting Booty at intervals, until after tea the order came to mobilise.

Sunday, 2nd August.

Arrived onboard at 7 a.m., having got the order to mobilise at 5 p.m. yesterday. The day spent taking wood-work ashore.

Monday, 3rd August.

Being gradually filled up with R.F.R. men. Dumping wood-work ashore. Most of the officers are now onboard. In the afternoon, a signal that most of our few active service ratings would be sent to the Tyne for the new AGINCOURT, late Turk. None of our officers are to go, which sickens us. Mostly, the officers who had mobilised in July returned now to the ship. A few were changed. The ship's company were nearly all fresh, the men being drafted to their ships straight off the queue of arrivals in barracks.

I asked Captain Le Mesurier for leave to Portsmouth; reason - desire to be married. He was most helpful, and allowed me away next day from first thing till about 6 p.m., during a period while the state of tide prevented the ship from leaving the basin. This was kinder than it may now sound, because we were all fearing that war would break out and the big fight be over before we could get to the scene; and he must have hoped to goodness I would not fail to report on time.

Tuesday, 4th August.

Cooper (A.P.) gone to OCEANIC. Thoys (1st lieut.) to EMPRESS OF BRITAIN. News of Germany declaring war on France, and of our ultimatum to Germany about Belgium.

I caught a train at cock-crow, drove from Salisbury to Southsea, was married, spent the honey-moon motoring back to Salisbury, caught my train, and returned onboard in Keyham basin "to my leave".

Wednesday, 5th August.

After breakfast the Captain went into the dockyard. He came back about 10 o'clock. Most of the officers found business on the quarterdeck at the moment. As he stepped on-board he said, "Well, we are at war with Germany." Our ratings are being taken off for other ships, and everybody is muck sick about it. Ridler (G) has gone to Jarrow, presumably for the ERIN, late Turk. Rumour at lunch time of a fight in the North Sea - LION sunk, MARLBOROUGH badly damaged, and 8 German battleships sunk. This was denied in the evening papers.

At 7 in the evening I got a wire to join DRAKE at Queenstown forthwith. Caught the midnight train via Bristol, Cardiff, Fishguard, and Rosslare, and arrived onboard at midnight. I had a long wait at Templemeads station in the early hours. There were many small parties of soldiers also waiting for trains. Some of these were in song, and introduced me to the afterwards famous "Tipperary".

Thursday, 6th August.

LePage, my predecessor, had been sent to hospital with a nervous break-down. Hence this vacancy. W.L. Grant is flying his flag onboard, and has LEVIATHAN under him. The ship was well under way taking in 1,500 tons of coal. She had been on the Atlantic trade route for the last few days, and brought CARMANIA in the evening before.

Friday, 7th August.

News of the AMPHION sunk by a mine, after sinking a German converted mine-layer. Also - semi-official! - of our fleet having met the High Seas Fleet, and now chasing them towards the Dutch coast. Admiralty have stated that the North Sea is safe for shipping during daylight hours. Finished coaling, and went out of harbour at 6 p.m. On arrival at Daunt light vessel a joint blew, so we returned to harbour.

Saturday, 8th August,.

Left at 6 a.m. Blowing hard from the S.W., with rain. The fog gun on Daunt light vessel gave us a temporary shock, as the smoke looked like a mine exploded. We were bound for Scapa Flow, West-about. Passed a few trawlers.

Sunday, 9th August.

Still blowing a gale. Crossed the North Atlantic shipping track about noon. Doing about 15%, with the gale behind us, with 70 revolutions. I owe myself a deep apology for having written such simple stuff. Because it was "war", every silly routine tedious occurrence seemed to have some peculiar moment, and to be worth discussing. I remember the flurry of excitement caused by our crossing this shipping track North of Ireland.

*We'd done it before,
But never at war!*

I hope, though, that no-one but myself was so naive as to record these matters, solemnly, in a diary.

Monday, 10th August.

Arrived in the Flow at 1 p.m. IRON DUKE (the Fleet flag-ship) and 2nd C.S. (Cruiser Squadron) came in soon afterwards for coal. Started coaling about 4 o'clock, took in about 400, and sailed again at 9.50. Went slowly to the Westward, keeping close to the land. The Germans are supposed to have their submarines out across the North Sea from Norway to Kinnaird Head. One fired at BIRMINGHAM and missed, and BIRMINGHAM rammed and sank her - place and time not given away. Some 12-pdrs have been placed at the various entrances, and are manned by marines. Four or five "river" boats are on patrol day and night, one off each hole-in-the-wall.

HANNIBAL and MAGNIFICENT came up from the Humber this afternoon; before sunset one goes to Hoxa and the other to Hoy Sound, to searchlight these entrances. She lights are out at East and West entrances, and after tonight the Hoxa Sound lights will be doused also.

The battlefleet seems to be at sea, North-West of Orkney. Tuesday, 11th August. Entered the Flow at 6.50 a.m., anchored, got the collier alongside by 8 o'clock, and went on coaling. A weary process, 40 tons an hour maximum, with only one hold left. An East-and-West channel was by way of being kept swept, but the sweeping flotilla has been ordered North somewhere.

There have been two or three reports of aeroplanes seen off Shetland - not British. They seem to think the Germans must have fixed up a temporary depot on one of the islands, and a thorough search is to be made. The B.O.S. (Battle Cruiser Squadron) and 2nd and 5rd C.S. are given permission to search the Norwegian fiords for an inferred submarine depot ship.

We sailed at 9 p.m., and found we were for the Faroe Islands.

Wednesday, 12th August.

It was thick all the morning and forenoon. We made the Southern point of South Island at 1 p.m. We went up the East side, close inshore, looking into the various bays, and anchored off Thorshavn at 4.50. We are to patrol North of the islands, to intercept shipping bound in or out of the North Sea.

The Captain went ashore, and returned with the consul and vice-consul. They had a long confab with the Admiral. We left again at 7.50, going out to the North through the Lervig Fiord.

These islands are very steep and bleak. There are no trees, but the slopes are well covered with grass. The scenery is quite grand, and we seemed very insignificant going through the fiord. Thorshavn is rather like the Norwegian villages - wood or tin shanties. All the superior houses seem to be thatched with turf, growing grass or moss. The Danish flags all came out as soon as we showed up, and the natives rowed out and talked to us in the best English. The Captain said the sympathy was entirely with us and the French.

Captain Aubrey Smith ought to have attracted some sympathy here. He was so to speak a ginger blonde, with pale blue eyes. He had a strong growth, and had given up shaving on the outbreak. By this time his beard was very presentable, and he looked a regular Scandinavian.

I had begun to follow his example, and so had Francis, one of our watchkeepers. But we never really rivalled him - so as to be noticed; and we could not master his aggressive Captain-Kettle trick of sticking out the chin.

Thursday, 15th August.

Got hold of a trawler early, but she could give us no information. She gave us 2 tons of fish, however, and wouldn't take any money. Name - EULALIA, of Grimsby. During the forenoon ENDYMION and GIBRALTAR joined up, and we patrolled up and down East and West, doing some target practice in the afternoon. The Training Squadron - 6 ships, I think including ROYAL ARTHUR - are spread between Shetland and Norway; our 5 ships North of Faroe; ALBEMARLE with perhaps others between Shetland and Faroe; and the battlefleet cruising N.W. of Orkney. The 5rd B.S, (Battle Squadron) is based on Loch Ewe, just round Cape Wrath. The cruiser squadrons and flotillas are, we suppose, somewhere in the North Sea.

A great friend of ours, Graham Anderson, was Staff-Surgeon in the ROYAL ARTHUR. He was afterwards lost in the CLAN MACNAUGHTON.

The next five days of the diary is a trivial record of patrolling, boarding, failure to obtain news or gossip, with occasional compensation in a gift of fish from one of our generous trawlers. Shipping in or out of the North Sea there was not. Summary - safe but monotonous.

Wednesday, 19th August.

Arrived in Scapa at 5 a.m., and Started coaling, 1,200 tons. B.C.S. and 3rd B.S. are in here. Some of the ships have painted out their masts, turrets, and upper works - white or speckled. We are to have a further thinning down of woodwork tomorrow, cabin doors to go among other things. I wish they would abolish the forebridge.

Thursday, 20th August.

We are now painting masts, funnels, and hull in the most recent style. Funnels mottled all colours like the soldiers' guns. Hull,, white forward. Masts, chequered. The idea is to baffle the range-finders.

Saturday, 22nd August.

Sailed with KING ALFRED (who joined us on Wednesday) at 4 a.m. in some fog, and groped our way round to Noup Head. We did some firing off there, and are now on our way to the North Sea to support one of the cruiser Squadrons sweeping. An unoffending big fish after a shoal of small ones broke surface, and was mistaken for a submarine. A point of land showing through the white mist was reported as a ship which appeared to be steaming away from us "very fast".

The next few days were spent patrolling, mostly off Udsire, with ALSATIAN in company. On the 26th a condenser leak developed, and we turned for harbour.

Wednesday, 26th August.

About 10 p.m. saw searchlights to the North, and after much panic identified the 5rd B.S. I was looked on somewhat coldly in this connection. All ships or squadrons

SIGNALS

22/8/14.

FROM S.N.O, Scapa.

TO C.in C.

Officer landed Sule Skerries reports no W/T nor any aeroplanes seen. Ground not suitable for landing aeroplanes. (1941)

25/8/14.

FROM Admiralty.

TO A.C. 2nd and 5rd Fleets.

Main body of Expeditionary Force will have crossed this afternoon. You can return with the Channel Fleet to Spithead after 4 p.m. today. Inform C.in C. Portsmouth probable time of arrival. (1456)

25/8/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO A.C. 10th C.S.

I think an attempt is being made cut cable between Shetlands and Caithness. Possible landing intended Shetlands. Warn your Shetlands patrol. (1834)

27/8/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO Ships of Grand Fleet.*

Reports from trawlers indicate that lines of mines have been laid for long distance out from Tynemouth in direction E.by N.% N. Line may extend 100 miles out. Ships to keep clear of this locality until it has been examined. (1725)

* *This is the earliest mention I can find of the title "Grand Fleet".*

which were likely to be in each others' neighbourhood during the night used - as a matter of routine - to exchange "position, course, and speed" signals before dark, so that movements could be placed on the chart and surprise meetings prevented. It comes back, to me (reading this entry) that we had received such a signal from the 3rd B.S; either I omitted to plot it, or forgot to point it out to the Officer of the Watch. This would have been a most dangerous fault, and without doubt W.L.G. and Aubrey Smith rubbed home the sin.

We reached Scapa on the 27th, and coaled. An intercepted signal from Beatty showed that something was in the wind, and set all tongues wagging.

Friday, 28th August.

Sailed to the Westward at 1 p.m., and did some full calibre firing off Sule Skerries; then at dark through the Pentland Firth to a beat off Buchan Ness in support of the 10th C .S.

SIGNALS

27/8/14.

FROM A.C. 1st B.C.S.
TO INVINCIBLE.

Will meet you 5 a.m. 55.10 N. 6.00 E» Are there any restrictions as to - - ? - - What formation will destroyers be in from 4 a.m, to 8 a.m. It is of utmost importance that our presence should not be revealed. After dark tonight no W/T signals are to be made except enemy-in-sight or of the utmost urgency. (1730)

30/8/14.

FROM A.C. 6th C.S.
TO C.in C.

My noon position 58.30 N. 0.03 E. KING ALFRED in company. Continuously boarding steamers. (1200)

30/8/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO S.N.O. Cromarty.

Germans may attempt to lay mines off Rattray Head tonight. Send 2 destroyers and 4 trawlers to observe area from 10 to 20 miles off Rattray Head between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. Inform R.A. 3rd C.S. their movements, (1255)

30/8/14.

FROM C.inC.

TO S.N.O. Scapa. Fleet will arrive Scapa Flow 7 a.m. 19 battleships each in want of coal about 800 tons. 2 light cruisers each in want of coal about 500 tons. Make arrangements reporting distinguishing signals of colliers detailed. INFLEXIBLE will arrive Scapa Flow this evening in want of 600 tons. (1555)

Saturday, 29th August.

The morning and forenoon watches spent boarding ships. C.in C. has made a signal to B.C.S. congratulating them, and they are for Scapa to coal and fill up with ammunition. The rumour is that they have been supporting destroyers in some stunt off Heligoland. We passed the B.C.S. and L.C.S, at 1 p.m. on their way in, at 21 knots. They are evidently Jellicoe's blue-eyed boys at this moment.

W.L.G, signalled to congratulate LION as we passed, and Beatty replied giving him some details. As far as we can gather it was a destroyer raid on the flotillas inside Heligoland. The weather was thick. The 1st and 5^d Flotillas were chased away, and they with the light cruisers drew the Germans out on top of the battle cruisers. The answer is;-2 light

cruisers corresponding to our "town" class, and probably a third, destroyed; 2 destroyers sunk and several damaged. On our side, FEARLESS, ARETHUSA, and AMETHYST damaged, the last two badly. About 100 prisoners were picked up.

After spending our time chasing and boarding ships, mostly Norwegian, we came into Scapa on the 31st for coal.

SIGNALS

31/8/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO Battlefleet,
Attached Cruisers,
1st L.C.S.

Capt.(D) 2 and 4. Fleet will sail about 10 a.m. Ships with net defence not coaling or storing place net defence tonight. Ships in outside line to man part an-bi-T.B. armament but no turrets. 4th Flotilla will leave with Battlefleet. 2nd Flotilla will leave about noon. (1720)

31/8/14.

FROM S.N.O. Scapa.
TO C.in C.

Coal report. Scapa Flow 56,000 tons in 23 colliers. Aultbea 51,000 tons in 19 colliers. Cromarty 28,000 tons in 15 colliers. 6,800 tons expected at Cromarty in 2 colliers. (2145)

1/9/14.

FROM FALMOUTH.
TO C.in C. Periscope was seen following CARRY into harbour through Holm Sound. Just saw bow or top of conning tower when I fired. (1918)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO FALMOUTH. How close was she. From what direction did she come. (1950)

Monday, 31st August.

Some of the 2nd B.S. did a long range firing the other day, splashed the target at 18,000 yards, and began hitting at 14,000.

The ORION was in harbour last Saturday, with defects in condensers. Sir Robert wearing a soft collar. General consternation!

Sir Robert Arbuthnot was a noted stickler for the dress regulations. He had been Commodore (T) at Harwich two or three years before this, and had always insisted, not only on stiff collars, but also on stiff-fronted shirts upon the bosoms of his destroyer

officers. Bad weather made no excuse, in harbour or at sea, and it was uncanny the way he used to smell out sinners.

Tuesday, 1st September.

There have been rumours about for the last day, or two, the gist of which is that we have fetched some 60,000 Russians from Arkangel to Aberdeen, trained them South, and landed them at Ostende.

I went onboard BOADICEA this afternoon. They had no news, except the fright they were put into on sighting AGINCOURT a few days ago. She seemed some strange foreign monster; and they, being out of reach of the fleet with steam for but 16 knots, were highly alarmed.

SIGNALS

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO Battlefleet,
Attached Cruisers,
1st L.C.S., 6th C.S.

Ships weigh independently as steam is ready and proceed respectively to rendezvous. Vice-Admirals get their ships together as there is an opportunity. 1st B.S, 15 miles N.W. of Sule Skerries. 2nd B.S. 15 miles N. of Sule Skerries. 4th B.S. 10 miles N. of Sule Skerries. All cruisers 10 miles N.E. of Sule Skerries. (1945)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO FALMOUTH.

Proceed to anchorage. Burn searchlights across Southern end of fleet to illuminate area. (2002)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO Capt. (D) 4th Flotilla.

Fleet is leaving as soon as possible by Southern entrance and goes to Westward. (2005)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO General. Ships are to hail any steamboats near them and direct them to return to their ships to be hoisted in. (2025)

This evening at 7 o'clock there was a flap - a submarine reported in the Flow. A destroyer came in from the Holm Sound entrance flashing vigorously with her searchlight; and SOUTHAMPTON, who was anchored on the Southern side of the fleet,

made the signal "Submarine in Flow bearing South". We went to night defence stations in quickish time. All boats were sent to steam at high speed off the fleet and ram anything they saw. Steam was raised at once, we being at 5 hours notice. One of the light cruisers was under weigh, close to the Southward, and she fired 6 or 8 rounds. Another light cruiser fired too, and also one of the battle-ships in the Southern line. It was hazy weather, and dark by 8 o'clock. The 2nd Flotilla were under weigh in half an hour, and took up the patrol round the fleet, while the steamboats came back and were hoisted in.

SIGNALS

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO General.

Fleet will weigh by Divisions in 1st Organization as Divisions are ready. 5rd Division to report to IRON DUKE when ready. Cruisers to follow fleet.

(2045)

1/9/14.

FROM G.in C.

TO Capt.(D) 4th Flotilla.

Inform destroyers West side of Pentland to burn navigation lights and keep at North end of patrol while fleet is passing out to Westward between midnight and daylight.

(2145)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. Sweeping Vessels. Search with survey sweep tomorrow over the area where FALMOUTH is said to have sunk a submarine and report if you consider one has been sunk.

(2200)

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO 1st L.C.S.

When fleet is going out keep searchlights out of the way.

(2205)

Some of our people thought they saw a periscope inshore of us about half an hour. after the alarm, and it was cautiously reported, "by W.L.G., who refused to associate himself with the suggestion. Later on, after dark, two destroyers made the "6 shorts" (the warning signal for a submarine in sight) in the same spot; but I don't think there can have been anything,

The battlefleet started leaving about 10.30, and we were under weigh soon after midnight - the last out. It was thick outside, and we burned our navigation lights after nearly getting across the bows of BIRMINGHAM off Punnet Head.

Signal 1720 on page 16, together with this autumn evening idyl of the Flow, give some hint of what the C. in C.'s anxiety must have been during these first few months, with no safe home for his ships.

Wednesday, 2nd September.

The fleet met off Noup Head at 7 a.m., and went off in their various directions - 6th C.S. to Area 6. There is some business on on the 4th, the battlefleet being off the Kattegat on that day, and the 6th and 10th C.S. are to do a swift sweep Eastwards during the forenoon. But W.L.G. bottles up his news.

SIGNALS

1/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO General.

Rendezvous for whole fleet 5 miles N.W. of Noup Head at 7 a.m. instead of as ordered. Give entrance to Hoy Sound wide berth if passed before daylight as destroyers are patrolling there.

(2520)

2/9/14.

PROM C.in C.
TO S.N.O. Scapa, Capt.i/c
Minelayers.

To prevent recurrence of last night's incident it is essential to make anchorage difficult of approach by submarines. You are to take steps to hire drifters their crews and nets complete. Lay lines of nets as follows:- One line West from Crow Head Taing Point extending 4)6. miles. Another line South from Toiness extending 5 miles. Use anchors and buoys necessary to keep head of net 5 feet from surface. Nets themselves should have depth of 20 feet if possible. Lay a single line first and if successful double it, the 2 lines some 50 feet apart. Anchor a drifter at end of each line of nets to show entrance. Warn all ships entering of track to take. Erect a light on East end of Calf of Flotta to be visible one-sided when bearing between 140 and 27, using steaming lights temporarily. Report progress made Saturday.

(1320)

There is a hint of resentment in that last remark. But we did hanker, these days, for any least crumb of gossip. The more stripes on a body's arm, the more greedily we chewed on anything which fell from him, however trivial or groundless. It seems to me that the perfect Senior Officer would make it one of his war-time duties to keep his people busy with rumour and tittle-tattle, to their great content. I am thinking of the Navy, where we lived in a state of physical comfort, well fed and dryly housed, so were saved all those bodily troubles which must have distracted the soldiers' minds; where also censorship was very easy to enforce.

There seems to be no positive evidence of a submarine inside last night. It was not a clear evening; and seals, divers, and such like may easily be converted into periscopes without a very gifted imagination being required. The periscope we saw was a sea-bird to the best of my belief. If a submarine had got into the Flow, it is inconceivable that she wouldn't have driven her torpedoes off into the thick of the ships. It has been a very useful occurrence, as extra precautions are now to be taken to guard the Flow. If a boat did get in, it tends to show that they are more proficient in pilotage than in their torpedo work.

Several people have said how well the fleet got out last night, how no other navy could have done it without a, i panic and firing on each other, and so on. No doubt a fault on the right side, but there is probably a happy mean to be found between glorious panic and stolid indifference.

We arrived in Area 6 at 6 p.m., and met CRESCENT with her squadron.

Having left harbour in such a hurry we would have brought no mails, but the custom in these early days was for an out-coming ship to bring letters and the latest papers to the patrols. Ships would wallow in company for half an hour at a time, while boats passed leisurely between them. It took the disaster on 22nd of this month to make us appreciate the danger from submarines.

The 10th C.S. then turned off on their sweep, we with KING ALFRED supporting.

Thursday, 3rd September.

Four German cruisers and six submarines were expected out of the Baltic, passing the Skaw about midnight tonight; 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 10th C.S., B.C.S., and a Flotilla were to have swept in towards the Naze to try and bag them. However the latest information is that they are in the North Sea already.

Several submarines have been sighted during the last day or two on the Eentland-Ekersund line. They seem to come out for a week or so, and then retire, and then out again. I think this is their third appearance. The line runs close North of our Area.

SIGNALS

2/9/14.

FROM BIRMINGHAM.

TO S.O, 1st L.C.S.

German call-sign CU very loud.

(0155)

2/9/14.

FROM LATONA.

TO G.in C., S.N.O. Scapa.

Urgent. 58.51 N. 2.20 W. apparently 2 submarines.

(2114)

2/9/14.

FROM A.C. 10th C.S.

TO S.N.O. Scapa. German trawlers GEESTE and DELME were taken and sunk in North Sea by 10th C.S. The crews were sent by DRYAD to Scapa Flow.

(2525)

5/9/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO A.G. 6th and 10th C.S.

You must move at good speed and *zig-zag* (The first reference to zig-zagging. This word - the actual printed look of it, I mean - always gives me the idea of unbecoming levity when used in connection with battleships. Pompous dowagers dance the polka. But it was very impressive carried out by the whole fleet) as submarines are appearing on Ekersund-Pentland Firth line.

(1150)

Friday, 4th September

Boarding ships all day. We have stacks of lookouts. One in a crow's-nest 150 feet high, a signalman in the foretop, an officer in charge of lookouts on monkey's island (pet name for the upper bridge), a lookout each side of the bridge, and a pair of them in the eyes of the ship behind a canvas screen. Most of them have x6 spotting glasses. We have also a maxim mounted on a tub each side of the bridge, always manned. If anything is seen the maxim is intended to play on it until the guns pick up the target.

Last month we steamed 5,100 miles, and took in 3,700 tons of coal.

The Heligoland fight seems to have occurred about the same time as the Russians were disembarking at Aberdeen, so it was probably arranged as a counter-attraction.

There are more reports of mines again today, off the Tyne; and also South of Flamborough Head. We don't seem to have much luck in picking up the mine-layers. And if these reported submarines from the Baltic are now in the North Sea, as seems to be thought, it appears to be only a matter of time before they bag something. There is

a report also of mines off Wick. It is a pity we can't hear what our own submarines are doing all this time.

SIGNALS

5/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO DRAKE.

Urgent. Steer N.E. at utmost speed.

(0744)

5/9/14.

FROM NAIAD.
TO A.C. 3rd and 10th C.S., DRAKE.

Enemy protected cruiser position 58.53 N. 1.05 W. steering between E. and S.E.
(0833)

5/9/14.

FROM Capt.i/c Mine-layers.
TO C.in C.

Certain stranger was not SWIFT. An officer and masthead-man both sure she had 3 funnels and 2 masts. When sighted by NAIAD at 8.35 a.m. she was steering N.N.W. and altered immediately after to S.E. by E. which course she retained till out of sight. My position 8.35 a.m. was 58.48 N. 1.26 W. Stranger was bearing N.87 E. about 12 miles.
(1100)

5/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO S.O. 1st L.C.S.
A.C. 2nd and 5rd C.S.
Capt.i/c Mine-layers.

To R.A. 6th C.S. Indications point that ships are chasing each others' smoke. Do not continue too long.
(1200)

Saturday, 5th September.

In the middle watch, orders to return to Scapa for coal, and to be back in this Area by Monday ' morning. Later in the morning KING ALFRED was called in to escort a floating dock to Cromarty. This must be the Portsmouth floating dock, coming round West-about. We gather that the Chatham dock is already at Rosyth.

About 7.30, soon after we had sighted land, an "enemy-in-sight" signal came from THETIS, who with NAIAD and LATONA is patrolling Dunnet Head-Pentland.

Soon after this we were ordered to chase; so also were 2nd, 3rd, and 10th C.S., mine-layers, and destroyers. After a fruitless hunt of 80 miles, which landed us back in Area 6, heavy doubts crept in - to the minds of all, save only that of NAIAD. The supposed

enemy was a 3-funnelled cruiser; and this from the evidence was the SWIFT, who was roped in in chase of herself.

At 1.30 we all gave over, proceeding our several ways. It was a good sweep, which, covered hundreds of square miles, and there can hardly have been anything unfriendly about. NAIAD seemed rankled at the doubts cast on his observations.

In his signal 1100 NAIAD had given a perfectly good description of SWIFT, but wouldn't have it to be that ship. I suppose that with him, this fine morning, the gallant wish was father to the silly thought; he was death on getting his guns off in anger at something, somehow, before the war should close down on us all. He cost his Country a tidy little sum for fuel.

SIGNALS

5/9/14.

FROM R.A. DRAKE.
TO NAIAD.

Where is enemy. (1215)

Reply;- Last seen S.E.by E. at 10.55 whwi NAIAD was in 58.59 N. 0.54 W. (1220)

5/9/14.

FROM A.C. 6th O.S.
TO C.in C., A.C. 2nd C.S.,

S.O. 1st L.G.S. Little doubt chase was SWIFT and smoke that of destroyers on EKERS13ND line. I am returning. Propose arrive Scapa Flow daylight. (1550)

5/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO S.O. 1st L.C.S.

Following frott Naval Centre Rosyth. Begins - PATHFINDER blew up 10 miles N. of St. Abbs Head, at 3.45 p.m. probably a mine. - Ends. Ascertain for certain clear channel before you enter. (1820)

6/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO General.

All lights on East coast from Wick to Outer Gabbard L.V. will be extinguished from 7th September in order to reduce ease with which mines are laid. When required for Naval purposes certain lights will be lighted. (1015)

This has delayed our return. We are now heading for Scapa, to arrive at 4 in the morning. The prospect of mess marketing having to be undertaken on a Sunday in Scotland is dull to contemplate.

The gossip is that we were ordered up to Scapa early in the month, and LEVIATHAN to the Azores, on the supposition that W.L.G. had hoisted his flag in LEVIATHAN. He is the senior R.A. afloat, and it must be rather difficult finding him suitable employment, anyway until he proves himself. Of course the difficulty will be gone if and when the squadron is collected again.

Admiral Grant was a great trial to us young ones. His method of working to a decision on any matter was ghastly deliberate. Whatever the problem, it seemed to be odds whether his mind would be made up, or the war over, first. Throughout the time he was in the DRAKE nothing arose which required an instant "snap" decision from him, so he never came under test. Given ample time, his mind revolved to some purpose; and when he had at long last decided his judgment turned out to be sound - without exception. He was well thought of by the Powers, for he left us to command the 3rd C.S. in the North Sea, then to China as Commander-in-Chief; and he finished the war as Commander-in-Chief on the West Indies Station.

SIGNALS

8/9/14.

FROM OCEANIC.
TO IRON DUKE.

OCEANIC bumping badly in swell making much water all along starboard side in bad position. (1550)

8/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO CYCLOPS.

To Vice-Admiral. OCEANIC reported ashore Hveldgrund 2½ miles E. by S. from Southness Foula I. Send salvage steamer LYONS also ERIN to render assistance. (1555)

8/9/14.

FROM C.in C.
TO General.

Disposition for the night. Battlefleet 2nd Organization. Divisions line ahead disposed abeam to port. Divisions open out to 5 miles apart by 7 p.m. Close at daylight. RUSSELL 8 cables ahead of IRON DUKE. ALBEMARLE 8 cables ahead of KING GEORGE V. COMMONWEALTH 8 cables ahead of MARLBOROUGH. Remainder of 4th Division 2 miles astern of rear ship 2nd Division. DRAKE BLONDE and BELLONA 5 miles ahead of RUSSELL ALBEMARLE and COMMONWEALTH respectively. BLANCHE 2½ cables astern of DRAKE ready to board steamers. Course and speed for the night S.by E. 8 knots.

(1715)

Sunday, 6th September.

Arrived in Scapa at 5 o'clock, and spent the day coaling.

The 3rd B.S. are cutting down the wood-work of their bridges and wheel-houses, and I hope we shall take the hint from them and do the same. The Captain will not decide to take his stance on monkey's island; and our conning tower is at present rather a death trap, to my mind, with all this bridge planking about.

All our ships, from light cruisers upwards, were fitted with conning towers. The intention was that a ship should be fought from here, the controlling officers being protected by the thick walls and armoured roof of the tower. The practice was that - finding the space very cramped, the outlook hopelessly restricted, communications inefficient, and the compass (before the days of gyro) quite useless - ships came to be fought from the upper bridge, where was freedom of view, space to move, and proper control. The vindication was that a hit on or near the conning tower would probably fill the air with flying bits from the surrounding bridge-work, damage what communications there were, and play havoc with the inmates; whereas any projectile which missed those on the bridge met with no obstruction against which to burst, and went harmlessly by.

SIGNALS

9/9/14.

FROM ALSATIAN.
TO CRESCENT.

OCEANIC a total wreck. Have her ship's company onboard. Where shall I take them.
(0208)

9/9/14.

FROM Admiralty.
TO All ships.

"Silence sign" will be made by Cleethorpes at 10 p.m. tonight. During duration of silence Admiralty messages may be made. Ships are not to answer or acknowledge and are only to use W/T in case of urgent necessity or to report movements of the enemy to Flag Officers concerned. "Negative silence" will be made at 3.30 a.m. tomorrow by Cleethorpes.
(1545)

10/9/14.

FROM Commodore(T).
TO A.C. 1st B.G.S.

My position at 4.30 a.m. 54.03 N. 7.05 E. W. by N.½ N. 20 knots. Nothing has been sighted.
(0445)

10/9/14.

FROM S.O. 1st L.C.S.
TO C.in C.

My position 4 a.m. about 12 miles W.N.W. from Heligoland. Visibility 2 miles. At 5 a.m. visibility a good 3 miles.
(0940)

But conning towers were not given up at first, everywhere, without agony of heart. There were some who found it difficult to turn their backs on a structure so massive, costly, and full of polished gil-guys; a thing moreover which they had been brought up with, which they had often shown to admiring friends, and in which they had pictured themselves standing while they carried their ship into action.

Still, in time common-sense won the day over sentiment. How do we know? Because, after the war, conning towers were lifted out of light cruisers!

SIGNALS

11/9/14.

FROM Capt.i/c Mine-layers.
TO C.in C.

Often valuable time is spent by boarding already boarded vessels. Suggest visiting officers when satisfied instruct Master to hoist a single Commercial Code flag or combination of flags when-ever meeting other men-of-war on that and one following day to indicate he has already been boarded. Such signals for each day one month in advance could be issued monthly - - ? - - instituted forthwith. Referring to "Instructions for Boarding" p.30 consider it undesirable to enter name of man-of-war boarding in log of merchant ship as it indicates position of man-of-war. Request authority for this not being done in ships passing correctly. (1100)

11/9/14.

FROM Admiralty (This referred to the death of Admiral Jellicoe's father..
TO . C.in C.

Accept my deep sympathy. One would wish that the old gentleman could have lived to see the victorious Lord Jellicoe (First Sea Lord) bring his fleet back. (1250)

15/9/14

FROM Admiralty.
TO All ships

You have full authority to send into British ports neutral ships which hamper your operations. Your own discretion will show you importance of not appearing to be maltreating flag of a small neutral.

Tuesday, 8th September.

Sailed yesterday, and joined the C.in C. with the battlefleet.

This morning boarded a number of trawlers on the Sumburgh - Hook-of-Holland line. Fishing is forbidden to the Eastward of this. The fleet spread for firing in the forenoon. After dinner we reformed, and jogged over to the Norway coast,

At dawn on the 10th the light cruisers and destroyers, with the battle cruisers in support, swept in to Heligoland. We were with the battlefleet, steering towards them, in distant support. Nothing was seen.

Thursday, 10th September.

About 11 a.m. the 2nd and 3rd C.S. ships heard heavy firing. The directions fitted in, placing the position in 55 N. and 5 E. We all chased thither, and had a grand meeting with the battle-fleet, three cruiser squadrons, battle cruisers and destroyers. The origin of the noise remains a mystery. The fleet then formed up, and we steamed off N.W.ly.

Before noon there was a lot of fog about, during which ARGYLL rammed a Norwegian fishing smack, putting one 7.5 and two 6in. guns out of action in the process. He made two long-winded signals to the C.in C. about this, ending up by requesting instructions. The Commander-in-Chief, ready as ever with sympathy in trouble, replied "You have been causing interference".

Friday and Saturday were spent with the fleet at manoeuvres, practising deployment. On Sunday morning we were detached and sent in for coal.

Sunday, 13th September.

Arrived in Scapa, and found L.C.S., B.C.S., 3rd B.S., INFLEXIBLE and INVINCIBLE. Began coaling at 2 p.m. and continued all night.

Monday, 14th September.

According to Commodore Goodenough (of the 1st L.C.S.) the German shooting on the 28th was not good. The weather was very thick, and our ships fired a good deal at the enemy's flashes - all they could see.

A clerk out of the PATHFINDER is now in one of the battle cruisers. He says that the bosn's mate of the watch saw the submarine at about 2 miles, and cleared lower deck on his own initiative. Two minutes later the ship was hit. She was steaming at 8 knots, with no lookouts and no guns manned.

This from Goodenough, who was in Rosyth the other day --- After the 28th, the young Von Tirpitz and some other officers were taken to Queensferry.

of the 1st C.S. with him - or perhaps only three - but not the battle cruisers. He gave as his reason for giving up the chase (of the GOEBEN) that he had not the speed to catch her, and also no guns to meet her 12in. with. The second excuse will be apt to damn his prospects.

Spicer came onboard in the train of Pakenham. (Admiral Pakenham commanded the 3rd C.S.) Some of his views:- The 12in. excuse is a reasonable one. - The fleet should not have gone North at the end of July, but into the Bight and mopped up everything they found. It is too late for anything of the sort now, as the cupboard will be bare of all but mines. - Bayly is probably the stand-by C.in C., though he would prefer Beatty. Bayly is the only really offensive man we have got, and might in his enthusiasm lead the fleet into a mess.

Finished coaling by 10 a.m. Sailed at 5, for the N.E. corner of Area 4.

Apparently the Canadians are on their way across, and a raid by the German battle cruisers is on the cards. By 8 tomorrow morning we shall have two patrols across the North Sea, placed so that they cannot both be passed during darkness.

Sunday, 4th October.

Yesterday on the patrol, the lines steaming South during daylight, and North after dark. Exactly the same today, but with bad weather and visibility low.

The C.in C. has shown anxiety to get warm clothing onboard us. I hear, on the side, that we have had a cypher-A message from him warning us to be ready for a long trip on Friday. The alternatives seem to be Arkangel, West Atlantic, East Indies, or merely to meet and escort in some Canadians.

Orders to dock on Tuesday, at Cromarty.

Monday, 5th October.

On patrol. At 2 p.m. turned for Cromarty. In the first watch the light cruisers crossed us, and their Westernmost ship, which was then on our port side steaming South, refused to answer our challenge. Moral - look out aft also.

Tuesday, 6th October.

Anchored off Invergordon at 7.30. At noon a Liverpool pilot came onboard and took us into dock, tearing up 6 or 7 feet of the port bilge keel in the process. He told me he had brought the dock from Portsmouth behind four small tugs, average speed 3 1/2 knots and time taken 16 days. The floating crane came up sitting in the dock. Docked down by 4.30.

Soon after 10 this evening the signal station at Cromarty reported two airships seen over Delny, one going towards Invergordon. Delny is at the head of Nigg Bay, some 4 miles from us. Our little 3pdr. aerial gun and the shelter-deck guns were manned, and ship and dock darkened.

An hour later the airships were seen "hovering" over Nigg camp. Lower deck was cleared, the dock's crew turned up, and seamen and marines distributed round the upper deck with rifles. The Admiral arranged to flood the dock if there was any further news, but none came, so at 1.30 we packed up and turned in.

It was nearly full moon. The sky was dappled with high clouds, and there was plenty of light. A Zeppelin at any height under a mile must have been seen a good three miles.

Nobody had much idea what the airship ought to look like, and we all kept wondering whether one or other of the dark holes in the clouds was IT. Of course a Zepp three

SIGNALS

4/10/14.

FROM C. in C. TO CYCLOPS.

To Rear-Admiral Base. Send warm clothing in JAFFA consigned EXMOUTH to DRAKE
Invergordon to arrive by noon Wednesday. (2136)

6/10/14.

FROM Admiralty. TO All ships.

It is a possible suggestion that imitation periscopes may be attached to floating
mines to induce ships to ram them. Ships are warned accordingly. (1105)

6/10/14.

FROM Cromarty Signal Station. TO DRAKE.

Two airships reported hovering over Nigg Camp. (2255)

7/10/14.

FROM A.C. 6th C.S.

TO S.N.O. Cromarty.

Is there any further news of airships. If so propose flooding dock. (0040)

Reply:- Your 0040 no further news. (0105)

miles off would have looked enormous, as we ought to have realised.

Our authorities turned all hands up on deck on the assumption that "a lucky bomb would sink ship and dock like a stone, and if below they would be caught like rats in a trap" (Aubrey Smith verbatim). It is a situation which has not been thought out beforehand. It is obvious that everybody should be out of his hammock and dressed, but unarmed men ought to go below, even under the protective deck. It is wicked to let four or five hundred men stand massed in the open under these conditions.

Wednesday, 7th October.

Undocked at noon. The pilot cast off everything and backed out at good speed, pushing our port side heavily into the dock wall. So the honours of war are all his. He will dock NEW ZEALAND next week.

Lord Charles Beresford is in here since morning with the Duchess of Sutherland in her yacht CATANIA, painted grey. They cruise about paying calls.

Thursday, 8th October.

Most of the local military and townsfolk saw our airships on Tuesday night. GRAFTON also saw them, "clearly delineated", but admitted handsomely that they dissolved into cloud later.

Saturday, 10th October.

ALSATIAN met a submarine yesterday morning 60 miles N.E. of Shetland. We sailed after dark, for Area 6 to our intense disgust. Just before midnight, however, we were recalled to Cromarty to fill up with coal, and (as Aubrey Smith blurted out in his excitement and was afterwards sorry for) then to Arkangel.

Sunday, 11th October.

Arrived at daybreak and began coaling. The 3rd C.S. came in later. ANTRIM was fired on by a submarine on the 9th not far from Udsire, and had a lucky escape. She was zig-zagging at 12 knots, and had just turned to port when a periscope was sighted on the port bow 3 or 4 cables off. She went full astern port, turning towards, and checking her way a little. A moment later the enemy fired two torpedoes. Captain Molteno said that one passed under the ram, and the other a very few feet. ahead. ANTRIM went for the submarine, which dived; and as she passed over her the two lookouts, who had "up to then seen nothing whatever", shouted in unison "We've hit something, Sir!" No shock was felt on the fore mess-deck, or anywhere else. So perhaps they got her, praps not. Pakenham's people swore by him. He had been Naval Attache in Japan during the Russian war, and at Tsushima was put to watch events in the after conning tower of a battleship. A shell burst near, and Pakenham with the others inside was spattered with gore and pieces of torn flesh blown in through the slit. This was too much for him. He went below, and the Japs didn't think any the better of him for so doing. But they changed their opinion when five minutes later he was back, spotless in a clean suit of whites.

He was just the same now, fastidious, dry, and imperturbable. His speech was polished; so was his accent; his humour was a bit crude. There were lots of stories about him, not all for publication. When this submarine was reported the Admiral was at food with his staff in the sea-cabin. They stampeded out, and Pakenham caught his shin a blow against the coaming. His expression never changed as he said in even refined accents, "B - ah!"

On another occasion the Captain was wanted urgently on the bridge. A shy little snottie was sent after him, and could find him nowhere. At last he plucked up courage to knock at the door of the round-house, and ask "Is the Captain there, Sir, please?" Pakenham (the occupant) replied, "No. I am quite alone."

Sailed at 5.30 p.m. W.L.G. has no idea what we are to do on arrival. MANTUA leaves Scapa tomorrow afternoon, and will join us.

SIGNAL

10/10/14.

FROM CYCLOPS. TO C.in C.

From Rear-Admiral. Captain Kedroff and Commander Smirnoff Russian Navy arrived by THESEUS and have proceeded to London with despatch for Russian Ambassador. (1640)

Tuesday, 13th October.

MANTUA is behind, and we are to meet at noon tomorrow. Latitude at noon 63 1/2 N. No change in the temperature as yet.

Wednesday, 14th October.

MANTUA has been making several signals relative to the importance of "our mission", and hinting broadly at important news for the Admiral's private ear. She caught us up at daylight, and Captain Tibbets came onboard to unburden himself. The only wardroom theory yet evolved is that MANTUA has a cargo of cash for Russia.

This afternoon we were off the Lofoten Islands. The weather has cleared up, but the temperature has not dropped appreciably. We entered the Arctic Circle at 10 this forenoon, amid scenes of very mild enthusiasm.

A great contrast from the 9th August, when we had whoo-pee-d our way across a mere shipping track. We are now war veterans, less easily stirred. The Commander, hearing of the Arctic Circle, asked "Well! Is no one going up to look?"

We now steer steady courses, and man the guns with half a watch only.

GIBRALTAR has been ordered to Spitzbergen (Why ever? This is really something to guess about), but is now recalled after getting into 75 N.

Friday, 16th October.

Temperature still above 40. Passed the North Cape soon after midnight, in latitude 71½ N. We have been running past the Norwegian Lapland coast. It is all high land, steep-to black rocky cliffs up to 1,000 feet, rising inland to twice that height, with occasional big ice-fields and glaciers.

Sunday, 18th October.

Anchored at 7.30 a.m. 2 miles inshore of the North Dvina L.V. All we can see from the anchorage is Modyugski Island to the East, and a few beacons and tree tops lifted up by mirage to the South.

After lunch the Captain of the Port came out to call with our Attache, the vice-consul, and a Russian treasury expert. It seems that we are going to fetch money away.

Captain Tibbets says he was within 30 miles of ALSATIAN on the 9th, and thinks her submarine was some animal of the deep. His own guns fired on a porpoise, a whale, and a diver, all within the hour; and he had to put a stop to it as the ship's company kept on seeing things. - The Admiralty would not let him keep on the ship's Lascar fire-men, so he picked up true-born British men in lieu, the scum of East London. They get £6 to £8 a month, and saw no need to work in harbour until he read them the Articles of

War. Then they opined that they seemed to suffer death whichever way they turned, and have settled down to be fairly good workers. There are three professional burglars on his books.

Monday, 19th October.

A small steamer took a party of us up the river this morning, and another took the Admiral and Staff to pay calls; leaving the ship to fill up with coal.

The land is flat, a few feet above water level, peat covered with yellow grass. A good deal of scrub, and further inland small pines begin. The lower Customs House is 12 or 15 miles below Arkangel, and above this timber yards are almost continuous on both banks, right up to the city. There are miles of wharfage, alongside of which were 50 or so steamers, half British and the rest mostly Norwegian.

The wharves are built of faggots, inside uprights. Layers of planking every couple of feet, then more faggots, and the deck boarded over flush. There must have been a dozen saw-mills, huge tin buildings each as big as a Zepp. shed.

Arkangel stands on a level 50 feet above the river. All streets at right angles, paved with big rough cobbles, the pavements being boarded gangways a foot above the road. There were quite a number of good-looking shops, and we saw two restaurants. In one of them it was thrilling to see the waiters wearing boiled shirts. Trinity Cathedral is a brick plastered building with five newly gilded byzantine domes, which looked well in the sun. There were a number of English ashore from the shipping in harbour.

The population may be about 20,000. There are 2 1/2 miles of river front, most of it with wharfage. At Solombalski across the bridge is the big coal store. For the first month after the outbreak no shipping came into the port, but since then there has been a great revival, and half a million tons of coal have come in. The colliers go out with cargoes of timber. Until a few days ago the coal was lightered up the Dvina and by canal to Petrograd and elsewhere. Now that is stopped, as the river is expected to freeze any moment. The only communication left is a single track of narrow gauge line to Vologda, and from there by broad gauge.

Arkangel is now their only sea-port. Navigation finishes at the end of the month, normally; but this year with the help of ice-breakers they hope to keep open till the end of December. The river ice, and what forms in Arkangel Bay, doesn't worry them. But in the last half of November ice drifts down from the Arctic, and finally wedges itself across the neck between Intzi and Sosnovetz; and nothing can deal with this.

The local pronunciation is Ach-hong-II, with stress on the first syllable.

A gunboat, the BAKANE, was in the camber as guard-ship. We went onboard, and were kindly treated out of a coffee pot with what they said was their last bottle of cognac. Strong drink can't be bought since war broke out. Still, we had a kind of feeling that they were perhaps a little better off than they let us think, so we accepted without any hesitation.

We left at 4 o'clock, with much clicking of the heels and bowing from the waist. The most sightly of our party were the Marine, Major Edwards - a tiny dapper little man - and Eames, the Fleet Surgeon, who had a stately presence. But none were so to say debonair to look at, and of all I was far the worst in a dreadful great-coat green with age and my untidy amateur set of whiskers. We must have been a sight, making "legs" to our hosts. We got back onboard about 8.30. During the day DRAKE had stowed away £4,000,000 worth of bullion, and MANTUA something over £3,000,000. Three Government potentates of sorts are coming back in MANTUA. Edmunds, the Captain's Clerk, asked tactfully of one of them, "Are you in the treasury?" "I am the Treasury!", he replied.

Tuesday, 20th October.

Sailed at noon. Liverpool is the destination; we are to keep 100 miles from the Norwegian coast, and West of Shetland and the Hebrides. It turned very cold at dark, and we had frost for the first time.

Wednesday, 21st October.

Passed Gape Orlov soon after midnight. The White Sea at this time of year should be a painful place. Rain, snow-storms, frost, and dense fog are the rule. We have had exceptional luck, every day clear, sunny, and mild. Now we are out of the Sea the weather has broken. We are uncomfortable with wet fog, heavy head seas and wind. In spite of the clear weather the aurora has not been much in evidence. Every fine night there was a distinct lighting of the Northern sky, quite faint like the very last of the twilight.

But last Friday, on the way in, we had a beautiful display. The faint light increased, and finally concentrated itself behind a low cloud in the form of a mammoth searchlight beam. This spread in a huge curve which finished high up, almost overhead. A great quantity of light came from the beam, seemingly equal to a half-moon at least. I would have said a full-moon, but the books of words say that the light is never more than a quarter-moon.

After five or six minutes the beam dissolved, and was followed by transparent folds of drapery, hanging vertical. This curtain must have covered a quarter of the Northern half of the sky. Then for a few moments waves of bright light shimmered through the curtain from East to West, as if it were shaking in a breeze. Then it gradually died away. The whole display lasted about fifteen minutes.

Thursday, 22nd October.

Weather continues bad. At 9 tonight we were off the North Cape in $72\frac{3}{4}$ N. Temperature is 43, which feels sticky and stuffy; a great contrast with 14th August off Faroe, when 49 was pure chilly misery. The journey South was uneventful and grey. Signals showed that the fleet was South or West of Faroe. We had many discussions as to the future of the North Sea Areas after

the HAWKE disaster (She was submarined on the 14th). And arising out of this, we began to realise how much we were attached to our Major Edwards. It transpired that HAWKE was the second of his "late" ships to be put down in this war; and feeling rapidly came to harden against Edwards receiving a new appointment.

Early on, the Captain had formed the habit of collecting the ship's company for a few moments once a week, to give them whatever news or gossip it was thought safe to unloose. These weekly bulletins were looked forward to enormously. On the way South from Arkangel the news-box was empty, and Aubrey Smith racked his brains for subject matter.

Failing anything better, our (T), A.H.Taylor, dug up for him an account (out of Hakluyt's Discoveries) of some expedition long years back into the White Sea. The Articles of Agreement included a list of disgracefull naughtie acts, with the appropriate punishments, to which the ships' companies were required to agree before setting forth. I forget everything now except that we thought it very funny indeed. Aubrey Smith duly shot it off at his audience; but he hadn't read it over beforehand, the light was bad and the typing was poor; so he checked and stumbled. And the reading was an utter flop. The troops, packed like sardines on the aft-deck, the solid mass of them swaying with the ship's motion, the politely enduring expressions on their faces as they waited for the halting sentences to end, made an absurd picture which for some reason has always stuck with me.

SIGNALS

27/10/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO A.C. 2nd B.S.

Remain well to the West of 10 W. Fire tomorrow at small targets weather permitting.
Economize fuel after dark. (1105)

27/10/14.

FROM LIVERPOOL. TO C.in C.

From Vice-Admiral. Your 1400 yes please. OLYMPIC tow has parted. LIVERPOOL is taking AUDACIOUS in tow. (1540)

27/10/14.

FROM LIVERPOOL. TO C.in C.

From Vice-Admiral. Captain of AUDACIOUS thinks all officers saved except - - ? - - off a boat this morning. It is certain that nobody is left now. (1900)

27/10/14.

FROM SHANNON.

TO A.C. 2nd B.S.

Ship is still afloat. Have taken all the officers and men off for the night. I think there is only one man drowned. Three attempts were made to tow but all failed. Attempts to tow will be renewed if ship is still afloat at daylight. (1930)

Monday, 26th October

Passed this morning between Shetland and Faroe, and at midnight were abreast of St.Kilda.

Tuesday, 27th October.

This morning as we were making Islay the following was gathered from intercepted signals:- 2nd B.S. were doing target practice from Lough Swilly, when at 9.30 AUDACIOUS hit a mine in 55.30 N. 8.00 W. The explosion was abreast the port engine-room. The rest of the squadron scattered, fearing a submarine. Destroyers and tugs were sent out, and the LIVERPOOL stood by. At 10.30 AUDACIOUS reported she could not steam. The port engine-room, was flooded, and midship engine-room unable to keep the water down. About noon OLYMPIC appeared from the West, and made two attempts to take in tow. There was some swell and wind, and each time the tow parted. LIVERPOOL took the ship's company off.

During the afternoon the Admiralty and C.in C. both evinced concern for MANTUA and ourselves. (Not for us. For our money!) By dark SHANNON had arrived and taken charge. She said that AUDACIOUS' upper deck was awash aft, and that another attempt to tow would be made at daylight if she was still afloat. Our ship's company got wind of all this, and were therefore informed, with strict orders to keep it secret. It is thus certain to leak out, even if 3,000 folk in the OLYMPIC were not in the know. During the night a secret message came - which I do not know anything about - that AUDACIOUS has sunk.

I was not so right in my guess. The AUDACIOUS secret was kept surprisingly well; and in the keeping of it all manner of unexpected men must have held their tongues. This new mine-field seems to be pretty extensive North of Tory Island. It must have been directed against Liverpool shipping, and the AUDACIOUS can only have been a lucky windfall.

Wednesday, 28th October.

Arrived off the Bar at 5 a.m. We were taken into the Alfred dock, Birkenhead side. MANTUA missed the tide, and was brought up on the evening high water. The Foreign Office bag was taken up to Town guarded by a revolver amidst great secrecy.

Thursday, 29th October.

Unloading bullion. This I took with an escort to the Woodside station in 14 carts, and loaded

into two special trains. These left for London armed with military, police, detectives, and railway officials. This gold gave us many pleasant shivery spinal thrills. It was a real chapter of Phillips Oppenheim. Sinister emissaries of a foreign Government, dark suspicion, 'tees, revolvers, and millions of money - all were there. But the better educated among us felt that at some point we should have been offered temptation by a bewitching dark-haired siren in jewels.

Sunday, 1st November.

We took in 2,000 tons of coal on Friday, and remained in the basin, waiting for orders. Leave was given each night, and there was a lot of leave-breaking, Monday, 2nd November. Sailed at 10 a.m., leaving behind 40 stragglers as the result of 4 nights' leave. Owing to the mine-field we have to pass along the North Irish coast inside the islands, and to 9 1/2 W. before turning North. Our destination is the Iceland-Faroe patrol.

Tuesday, 3rd November.

At noon when South of Tory Island orders came to proceed to Scapa at full speed and coal. Similar orders were being given to 2nd C.S., TIGER (who is working up at Bantry), and to various divisions of destroyers.

I used to relieve -the officer of the watch for evening quarters. This evening after quarters "Clear ship for action" was practised, which involved dropping down the forecastle guard-rails. We were in consider- able motion in a heavy swell, and the men were finding some trouble in keeping their feet. I had just got my mind clear what was the proper sequence of orders for dropping a lifebuoy and getting the sea-boat's crew away, and whether it would be best to go full astern or circle round and come back to the spot, when an unfortunate man did fall overboard. We searched till dark, but didn't see him again.

There was much speculation as to our next orders. Our wise ones say we are being galvanized into activity by Jacky Fisher - his first move after taking office. It turned out later to have been on account of a German squadron - composition unknown - which arrived off Yarmouth on Monday (?) afternoon, fired on HALCYON, and then made off, bagging "D5" with a dropped mine during the pursuit. It is a quaint procedure, at first sight; when the enemy come out, we dash off at full speed -- to coal!

Wednesday, 4th November.

Found the fleet in the new winter anchorage off Long Hope. Started coaling, 400 tons. During the forenoon all full-speed orders were cancelled, and excitement simmered down.

Thursday, 5th November.

Sailed at 4 p.m. for the Northern patrol. Soon after getting outside the Admiral abetted by "Flags" (Phillip Warre) saw indications of a submarine. We meandered on, leaving this legacy behind, a sleepless night for everybody in the Flow. Three hours later a hot bearing forced us to return to Scapa.

Friday, 6th November.

Arrived at 1 a.m. The patrol destroyers are very lenient with us. We answer their challenge with our low-power lamp. This is never seen. They allow us plenty of time

SIGNALS

5/11/14.

FROM A.C. 6th C.S.

TO C.in C., S.N.O. Scapa.

What appeared to be the unmistakable feather of a periscope was seen by flag-lieutenant and myself

2 miles South of Brims Ness at 5 p.m. Have warned patrol destroyers. (1745)

5/11/14.

FROM S.O. st B.C.S. TO C.in C.

INVINCIBLE and INFLEXIBLE pass through Pentland Firth between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Dunnet Head is arranged to be lighted at this time.* (1732)

Detached after Von Spee.

5/11/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.N.O. Scapa.

Request arrangements be made for following ships to carry out following orders:- 2nd C.S. and st L.C.S. to construct 8 rope nets of following dimensions as submarine traps. Each net 300 by 48 feet 1½ or 2 inch hemp 12 foot mesh. Net to be floated by breakers and weighted to hang vertically with top 15 feet below the surface. Also suitable moorings. Buoy fitted to each end with sufficient drift line to remain on surface in event of submarine taking net deep and so enabling patrol boat to follow and attack. (2120)

to discuss the situation thus created, and finally to decide on using the cruiser arc lamp. But they would be fully justified in firing on us.

A bearing casting is cracked, and we shall probably be in till Tuesday. 2nd C.S. are in, and TIGER arrived this morning. Mainguy lunched here, and from him I gathered some crumbs:-

At the time of the HAWKE's accident there was a general submarine scare. One afternoon two were seen in the Flow, vouched for personally by Admiral Colville, no less. IRON DUKE and some dreadnoughts were in here. The flagship put two colliers alongside each side of her while raising steam, and the remaining colliers were placed one each side of the other ships. They all cleared out of the Flow after dark. About the same time ANTRIM was attacked again, N.W. of Orkney, and submarines were reported at various places in the Hebrides. Scapa Flow was abandoned; colliers and store-ships cleared out, and the fleet wandered homelessly South, to find themselves eventually in the Tory Island minefield.

About the same time, too, there was a submarine scare in Cromarty. Some gamekeeper told a constable that he had seen three, passing Alness. This was reported, and ships began seeing them right and left. Two battle cruisers opened fire, knocking down a

couple of houses in Jemima Town, and damaging a small child. The gamekeeper later on said he was being funny, and is now in vile durance.

Mainguy aired the view, which must be very general among junior officers, that the enemy C.O.s bear quite well comparison with many of ours. A case in point is the DUNCAN, who is on patrol off the Hebrides. We intercepted a signal from C.in C. to him on Tuesday night - "Are you in chase?" The full transaction was as follows:- After dark DUNCAN reported a suspicious ship without lights who had not replied to the challenge and had made off in some direction or other. C.in C. then signalled as above. DUNCAN replied - No, because the ship was steaming fast and on an opposite course. I may not have got the exact reason, but it was something just about that convincing. DUNCAN is hero of another episode. During our "Canadian contingent" sweep at the beginning of last month, DUNCAN reported sighting battle cruisers. He was asked more about them - were they enemy? He answered to this effect - I cannot say what nationality they were, but as one of them crossed close under my bows I heard the pipe "Close water-tight doors!" It turned out that DUNCAN was 20 miles out of position, and in our own battle cruiser line. There would have been a vacancy for command by now in the German Navy.

Saturday, 7th November.

There are now about 70 trawlers in Long Hope. The original craft are organized with an Emergency or R.N.R. lieutenant in charge of each 6. The rest will be similarly grouped as soon as officers can be found to take charge of them. At present, according to the Captain of SPEEDWELL (McDowell) they are not to be trusted a yard. They go outside, anchor round the corner, and go onshore until it is time to come in again. He (SPEEDWELL) puts no belief in these submarine scares. Any number are set in motion by farmers or constables, who "see them distinctly 2 or 3 miles out to sea". These can be accounted for by porpoises or seals. Others, such as seen by W.L.G., are probably tide-rips. He has seen these constantly, inside and outside the Flow - just ripples leaving a "feather", which travel over still water at really high speed.

But each scare had to be taken seriously by the C.in C., because his anchorage was not yet submarine-proof, and he couldn't be sure.

Since the 5th rumours had been in the air about Cradock's squadron. On the 8th we had telegrams reporting the loss of GOOD HOPE and MONMOUTH.

The battlefleet was once more back in Scapa, and the forbidden word "Audacious" was being uttered in wardrooms. Perhaps, too, on lower decks. The news in fact was all over the fleet. We heard that OLYMPIC (who was held in Lough Swilly a while for purposes of secrecy) had been enlarged, and one of her company already run in under the Official Secrets Act. In KING GEORGE V the impression was firm that a submarine had been the cause. This theory was - my diary notes - the result of "some deep reasoning, which I did not properly grasp".

Monday, 9th November.

INFLEXIBLE has now Admiral Sturdee onboard. She and INVINCIBLE got to Plymouth yesterday, and are off on some interesting trip which I cannot get news about. Perhaps to round up the SCHARNHORST and GNEISNAU.

Tuesday, 10th November.

Hardman Jones was over here today from IRON DUKE. From him:- In the flagship also they think a submarine finished AUDACIOUS. When she upended and sank some 12 miles from Lough Swilly there was a tremendous explosion. - The hole was in the port wing engine-room. The rather heavy swell damaged the bulkhead to the centre engine-room, which had no pumping appliances whatever. It had been thought impossible that a ship could be directly holed there, and the constructors' imagination had not carried them further. If a tug with powerful pumps had been available there is little doubt the ship would have been saved. - The first intention was to keep the secret for a week; but as the authorities have had better success than they hoped the intention now is to keep it up indefinitely. This comes a bit hard on the officers, who are distributed through the fleet, and are not allowed to write and order clothes. The ship's company, of course, can be fitted out locally.

Wednesday, 11th November.

News this morning that EMDEN has been sunk by SYDNEY off the Cocos Islands, and that KONIGSBERG is blocked inside some river in German East Africa by the CHATHAM.

We were to have left today for the Northern patrol, and to do some firings, but were told to remain inside as a foul gale is blowing from the N.W., with hail storms.

It is now a question whether Germany will think it worth while to send a couple more cruisers out on to the trade routes. Of course she needs her light cruisers for work with destroyers; but here at home one light cruiser employs two of our ships, whereas abroad one ship keeps (according to the Admiralty) 70 of ours busy. Any way, a proportionally huge number.

Friday, 13th November.

EMDEN was driven ashore, with 200 casualties out of a complement something over 300. The Captain saved unwounded, for which everybody is glad.

We should have sailed at daylight for target practice, but weather prevented. Again at sunset weather prevented. CRESCENT came in today from the Shetland - Faroe patrol, and seemed glad to be still afloat. The foremost stoke-hold was flooded and fires doused. The forebridge was also badly knocked about, and the charthouse wrecked.

Saturday, 14th November.

Two more attempts to leave, but it was useless as the weather would have made firing impossible outside.

We sailed at daybreak on Sunday. At this period all departures and arrivals were timed for morning or evening darkness, the entrances being still rather sketchily defended against submarines.

Lord Jellicoe in "The Grand Fleet" says that the first permanent line of submarine nets was not in place across our front-door entrance - Hoxa - before the 29th December of this year; and not across the other entrances till the end of February /15.

In many of the ships, about now, spare moments were being employed in making big-mesh nets, some of 1 1/4 inch target-towing wire, some of small hemp. I spent a day helping to set some of these in Switha Sound. Lord Jellicoe says in his book that the improvised obstructions had a "psychological effect". Indeed they did. I felt happy making them, and safe when they were laid. Faith!

On the Monday we managed some firing. On Tuesday the weather was too bad; on Wednesday much too bad. We were now in place on the Shetland-Faroe patrol.

SIGNALS

15/11/14.

FROM C.in C. TO DRAKE.

Urgent. Alleged submarine 5 miles North from Cape Wrath steering N.W. (1530)

18/11/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO Capt.(D) 2.

Urgent. Send immediately one division of destroyers out to N.W. towards N. Ronaldshay. (1300)

18/11/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S.

Urgent. Submarine on surface steering N.W.by W. from 5 miles North of N. Ronaldshay, being chased by mine-layers. Possibly cannot dive. Send BOADICEA to go immediately to intercept not getting close if she dives. (1300)

18/11/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. Sweepers.

BOADICEA coming from North ordered to help. Tell her if submarine dives. Keep her informed of position. (1310)

18/11/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S.

Negative BOADICEA. Submarine has dived. (1325)

Thursday, 19th November.

Our ships almost had a submarine yesterday, North of Orkney. Probably she was caught on the surface charging batteries.

Did some small firing in the forenoon. In the afternoon met MIANTUA; took some fresh food and about two dozen of our leave-breakers off her. We are now short of nine, who with the lapse of time are qualified deserters. They have probably joined up with the territorials.

"The way of a man with a maid", sings Kipling. (Does he?) "The way of a matelot with a night's leave", says I. One of our recovered ones had wanted to get (from Birkenhead) to London. This between 5 p.m. and the following 7 a.m., including time for the return journey! Not having enough money, he took a single to Sheffield, a place about at right angles to the direction of London. From there he wired to his home for money, with which instead of coming back he did actually go to London. He drifted into Liverpool some days later, in time to take passage in MANTUA. He told of these movements as the sort of luck liable to come anyone's way, and switched on an air of pained surprise at being punished.

We remained on patrol until Friday evening, and then turned for Scapa. Arrived late Saturday night, 1,500 tons short of coal, with a condenser tending to leak, and a knock in one of the main bearings.

Barber, our Chief Engineer, and Archard (his Senior) had a very thin time. They spent their days and nights in overalls, mothering the wretched machinery, and trying to guess where the next weak spot would show. Nobody could have done better; and yet all of us superior ones (who had heard that steam may form at 212 farenheit - and little else) used to cast disapproving "Come on! Come on!" glances at them. They took it all quite goodtemperedly.

We spent Sunday coaling. The fleet sailed at dusk, and we followed them a little before midnight, to overtake them by daybreak.

Monday, 23rd November.

Discovered that a sweep of the North Sea is to be made, and tomorrow morning a sea-plane raid on the Cuxhaven air-sheds, supported by the fleet.

At daybreak found the fleet ahead of us. We were joined later by 7 "King Edwards" from Rosyth. We spent the forenoon doing PZ (tactical exercises) against the B.C.S. It was most instructive, and more seems to be needed for our (the cruisers') benefit.

Soon after noon we broke down - an eccentric strap shifted and put the port engine out of action. We were sent back to Scapa, disgusted. Yesterday we heard that LEVIATHAN has been ordered West, to join the 4th C.S. It begins to be imperative for us that DRAKE

shall justify her existence at least to the extent of not breaking down at sea. Or we shall be told to go away and not come back.

Tuesday, 24th November.

Arrived in the dark. Anchored at daybreak, and got a store-ship alongside. We also dismantled our wireless to strike top-gallant masts, which put us out of touch with the fleet at an interesting time. Our Commander, Brocklebank, is appointed to the command of an armed liner, the CHANGUINOLA, and leaves us tomorrow. Regretted, fore and aft.

Wednesday, 25th November.

Coaled all day, taking in 800 tons. The other day one of our trawlers, No.96, bagged a submarine, "U18". She was following a collier into the Flow. No.96 went for her, got over her, bumped, heeled over, and found a periscope scraping down the side. The engineer dashed below for a sledge-hammer with which to demolish it, but by the time he was back the submarine had drifted astern and dived. Soon afterwards she came up and showed a white flag. The crew were taken off by GARRY, and the submarine sank. The Admiralty were prompt in congratulations, and said the reward should be noble. This will ginger up the patrol enormously.

Thursday, 26th November.

We gather that the Cuxhaven raid was cancelled, by Admiralty order. Among other arrivals this morning were WARRIOR and BLACK PRINCE, from Gibraltar. They are to be attached to us for the present. Their gossip is that Troubridge with the 1st C.S. (these two ships were then part of the 1st C.S.) had an opportunity to engage GOEBEN one morning, but he had direct orders from Berkeley Milne not to fight her during daylight. - Malta is bought up by the French fleet. - CARIVANIA was at Gibraltar when they passed through. She had just finished refitting after her fight with CAP TRAFALGAR. It was a touch-and-go affair. The ship's company were much panic stricken, and did not know they were winning till the CAP TRAFALGAR actually sank.

From 27th November till 3rd December we lay in Scapa Flow with the fleet. The weather was poisonous, and second anchors were let go every other day.

On the 3rd GARRY had an encounter with a submarine in Holm Sound, in a heavy Westerly gale. The submarine got away.

Our new Commander, Maitland-Kirwan, joined from the Admiralty. He said we had 80 submarines and 80 destroyers on the stocks.

The problem of altering course during battle to avoid torpedo attack was being discussed hard just now. W.L.G. got interested, and made Taylor and myself plot out his 11 situations for him. His views, badly expressed in my diary, were:- The law at night when an attack is made is to bring the torpedo craft abaft the beam if possible; this is done by turning away. But a day attack during a fleet action is certain to be made at long range, and so by the time any steps can be taken the torpedoes will probably have

been already fired. In these circumstances the proper course in almost every case is to turn towards the attack and thus lessen the size of the target presented. A 2-point turn often shortens up the target a great deal; whereas, turning away, nothing less than 8 points may be any use; which plays into enemy hands by disorganizing our gun-fire. A patrol had been established lately, consisting of 3 cruisers who worked from 40 to 100 miles East of Pentland. This was maintained while-ever the fleet was in harbour. DRAKE, BLANCHE, and SAPPHIRE sailed at dusk on the 3rd to relieve this patrol.

SIGNAL

5/12/14.

FROM Admiralty. TO All ships.

Who sent signal timed 2035 yesterday regarding keeping clear of Tory Island light.

(0800)

Saturday 5th December.

Zig-zagging at 15 knots during daylight and at 10 during the dark hours. The weather is vile, about two sharp gales daily, with brief quiet intervals. At sunset 6 submarines were reported off Kinnaird Head, and a little later 3 off Buchan Ness. It would be interesting to know how many actually were sighted, to give rise to a tale of nine.

We spend a good deal of our time in the old Area 6. Nothing has been seen yet but trawlers. They are not allowed to fish East of the Sumburgh - Hook-of-Holland line, and consequently do. We may not close them, board them, or stop; but must send them out of the forbidden area. The problem - how to do so labouring under these restrictions - has not yet been solved.

A strange thing happened on the 4th. Malin Head sent, or rather passed, a signal purporting to be an Admiralty warning to all ships to keep 60 miles clear of Tory Island. The wording was ambiguous in parts, so the message was queried by the C.in C.; whereupon the Admiralty seems to have denied parenthood. It was mysterious, but we listened out vainly for a solution.

We remained on patrol in continuously dirty weather.. Reached Scapa at cock-crow on the 10th, and spent the day coaling. News of the Battle of the Falklands came today.

Friday, 11th December.

Easterly gale. Two anchors down, and x shackles of cable out.

Saturday, 12th December.

Cadogan (one of our lieutenants) was on the Switha patrol today, and got into converse with the Captain of the GARRY (W.W.Wilson was a fluent member, so it was quite easy), who told him about his encounter on the 3rd. GARRY at (a) sighted the submarine, "U29", at (a). She could not ram from this position as "U29" was close inshore. So she went to (b) to get a clear run. Meanwhile the submarine had moved as the sketch

shows. GARRY was firing most of the time, with no results on account of the weather. Somewhere between (c) and (d) they exchanged torpedoes at about 250 yards range. Soon after (d) "U29" found herself in deep water, and dived. [sketch missing]

Sunday, 13th December.

DONEGAL arrived at daylight. She now forms half of the 6th C.S., as WARRIOR and BLACK PRINCE were handed over to Admiral Moore some days ago. Still it is hopeful, the way the squadron is kept just breathing; so we may pull through and not be abolished.

Easterly gale continues. No communication with the shore since Friday.

Monday, 14th December.

We have three dummy dreadnoughts in the Flow. They are large tramps, some of them prizes, built up with guns, turrets, masts, funnels, derricks, and warship stern. They are excellent imitations at about 2 miles, even on a clear day when viewed with suspicion. They are being built at Belfast, and we hear there will be a couple of dozen. Official designation - Coastal Squadron. They are now anchored at the ends of the lines, first fruit for a marauding submarine. Germany is suspected of having built some. It will be strange if in the event we each cleverly deceive the other, and these imposing harmless fleets meet in battle. But of course it couldn't happen that way. No men could act so brave!

SIGNALS

15/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 1st B.C.S.

Urgent. Raise steam with all despatch for 20 knots. (0030)

15/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO 2nd. B.S., 1st L.C.S.

Raise steam with all despatch for 18 knots. (0032)

15/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 1st B.C.S.

Urgent. Leave base when you are ready. Rendezvous will be given later. When can you leave. (0045)

15/12/14.

FROM S.O. 1st B.C.S. TO C.in C.

Shall be ready to proceed 5 a.m.

15/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 1st B.C.S. Take all destroyers with you.

15/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S. Admiral desires to see you at 4 a.m. (0110) (0125) (0037)

Tuesday, 15th December.

The 2nd B.S. raised steam hurriedly at midnight, and sailed at 4 a.m. B.C.S. and L.C.S. left Cromarty and Queensferry at the same time. At daylight BLANCHE and BOADICEA (light cruisers attached to the 2nd B.S.) came in. They had come to trouble keeping pace with the battleships in the heavy sea outside; BOADICEA had two sea-boats and her bridge stove in, and both ships were full of water.

Wednesday, 16th December.

At 8 o'clock the Admiralty reported 3 battleships of "Dreadnought" class off Scarborough. Later it appeared that they were battle cruisers, and had with them light cruisers and destroyers.

We had now, at sea, the 2nd and 3rd B.S., B.C.S., L.C.S., and some destroyers. Soon after noon we sailed with the remainder of the fleet.

Thursday, 17th December.

Met the battle cruisers, light cruisers, and the remainder of Admiral Warrander's squadrons at 10 this morning. We wandered South till 3 p.m., and then turned

SIGNALS

16/12/14.

FROM Admiralty.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S., 1st B.C.S.

Urgent. 3 battleships of the Dreadnought class reported off Scarborough. (0800)

16/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 3rd B.S.

Urgent. Raise steam for full speed. Have destroyers ready. (0921)

16/12/14.

FROM Admiralty.

TO C.in C.

Urgent. Have ordered 3rd B.S. out. (0936)

16/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 3rd B.S.

3rd B.S. proceed 55.50 N. 1.10 W. to intercept enemy if coming North. Take all available cruisers and destroyers. (0945)

16/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S., 1st B.C.S.

Gap in mine-field between parallel 54.40 and 54.20 and West as far as 0.20 E. Enemy will in all probability come out there. (1004)

back to the North. The whole day was spent unpleasantly at action stations.

The following is pieced together from intercepted signals, a letter from Bissett in the K.G.V, and the 2nd B.S. navigators in converse:-

At about noon yesterday the 2nd B.S. was on the tail of the Dogger Bank, steaming Westerly at 20 knots. The B.C.S. was N.N.W.ly from them, steering the same course, and distant some 12 or 14 miles. The weather, which had been clear, by now had begun to thicken, with occasional rain. At mid-day the 2nd B.S. saw the smoke of a number of ships to the Northward. The situation was as shown by the diagram. [missing] Both German squadrons were sighted by the 2nd B.S. Some saw the light ships, some saw the heavy ships; few seem to have seen both. A German destroyer was sent to identify us. When she had done so, and retired, some of our ships got ranges of 10,000 yards on the enemy battle cruisers. Other ships who were observing the light cruisers say the range was extreme, probably 18,000 or 20,000.

SIGNALS -

16/12/14. FROM C.in C.

TO Capt.(D) 2.

Urgent. 2nd Flotilla proceed to sea at 12.30 p.m. to Eastward and clear area up to 10 miles to the East of Pentland Skerries of submarines ready for fleet coming out. Take whole flotilla. (1051)

16/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO General.

3 enemy battle cruisers have been bombarding East coast Yorkshire. They are accompanied by light cruisers and stand a reasonable chance of being cut off by our forces which left here yesterday morning and 1st B.C.S. One light cruiser is already being engaged. (1335)

16/12/14.

FROM S.O. 3rd B.S.

TO C.in C.

Admiralty has directed me to join 2nd B.S. (1400)

16/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO General.

Admiralty reports that the enemy battle cruisers were in 54.33 N. 1.07 E. at 12.15 p.m. Also that High Seas Fleet was in 54.38 N. 5.55 E. at 12.30 p.m. today. (1500)

It seems clear that for a very short time, 5 or 10 minutes perhaps, while the squadrons were on opposite courses and on each others' quarter, the German battle cruisers were inside effective range; and there was a lot of discussion afterwards as to why Warrender did not open fire. There seems to have been no doubt from the first as to the identity of the enemy - as enemy.

Warrender at once turned to the N.E. in chase. During the turn the enemy were lost sight of in the mist, and were not seen again, though the chase was kept up till 3 o'clock.

The enemy had the Devil's luck in passing between the 2nd B.S. and the B.C.S. within easy range of both, never sighted by the battle cruisers and only by the battleships when on the edge of safety. The encounter must have given them the shock of their lives; but as we missed them it is a pity we ever saw them.

When we first saw the Admiralty message on Wednesday morning the same thought occurred to several of us - Why aren't we all out? The Admiralty intelligence must be good, as the squadrons that did go out sailed from our bases on Tuesday morning, whereas the enemy did not leave his base till the same evening. IF only we had had the fleet out on Tuesday morning they can hardly have got away. From what one knows of

Jellicoe it seems as if the Admiralty must hamper him. Anyway, there are signs of divided control (signals 0936 and 1400).

The above has an interest in the light of better knowledge. Winston Churchill in "The World Crisis" Vol.I gives a full description of this pathetic day of mischances; and a picture at p. 472 shows that no enemy battle cruisers were in sight. Only light cruisers passed out between our squadrons, the battle cruisers having gone away to the North across the bows of our B.C.S., right out of sight. But there is still the question - Why weren't we all out?

Friday 18th December

The fleet after steaming South as far as 56 N. turned yesterday afternoon. This morning we carried out service firing, with the usual depressing results. Afterwards the fleet dispersed into harbour, DRAKE and DONEGAL remaining out on the Eastern patrol. Our gunnery officer was excitable. It was in any case a difficult business to work up the shooting of an un-cared-for old ship with a scratch ship's company. But "Guns" might have done better if he had let one simple straight-forward shoot go through without bringing in complications. Then the guns' crews would have got a little confidence in themselves. Instead, pretty well the first salvo was the signal for breakdowns, casualties, or alternative controls. The result made "Guns" gibber with emotion; the gun-layers and fire control party lost any hope of success ever; Aubrey Smith for some reason (himself an ex. gunnery officer) regretted it all without making any change in the plan of training; while W.L.G. showed open contempt for the whole lot, he being an ex. torpedo-man.

Saturday, 19th December.

An uneventful day on patrol. MARLBOROUGH is at Queensferry today landing Bayly and embarking Cecil Burney, who are exchanging commands. Bayly is said to have propounded so many brave schemes that he is to be given a chance of carrying some of

SIGNALS

18/12/14

TO C.in C.

Submarine reported inside Scapa Flow. All available craft chasing and I am raising steam. (1355)

18/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO A.C. 1st C.S., 2nd C.S.

Urgent. Submarine reported in Flow. Keep out until further orders. (1504)

18/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.N.O. Loch Ewe.

Do not send colliers from your base to Scapa Flow. (1510)

18/12/14.

FROM C.in C.

TO S.O. 2nd B.S.

Urgent. Is it certain that submarine is in. (1515)

18/12/14.

FROM S.O. 2nd B.S.

TO C.in C.

Your 1515. It is very doubtful. Will make further report. (1532)

them out. The hard lines comes on Warrender, whom Burney displaces as 2nd in command of the Grand Fleet.

Monday, 21st December.

Left the patrol last night after dark. Arrived in the Flow at daybreak, and coaled. The Coaling Officer's enthusiasm has waned since August. During the first month here our collier would be under weigh before our anchor was down. Nowadays we seldom begin under two hours from the time of anchoring.

The submarine scare referred to in the signals was afterwards proved a false alarm. It was caused by the discovery that a portion of the submarine net between Nevi Skerry and Hoxa had disappeared, and a U-boat was imagined in the Flow wrapped up by the missing portion. Enquiry showed that BENBOW had twice entered harbour by this quite unorthodox route.

Wednesday, 23rd December.

This morning the navigators of the fleet assembled onboard IRON DUKE. We were conducted by Leggett (Master of the Fleet) in a drifter through the gate and back. (The

SIGNALS

18/12/14

TO A.C. 1st C.S., 2nd C.S.

Postpone arrival till 10 p.m. Alter lights accordingly. Submarine situation should be clear by then. (1615)

20/12/14.

FROM C.in C. TO General.

A portion of Hoxa Sound obstruction East of Nevi Skerries having disappeared it is considered possible submarine has dragged it away and the submarine may be in the Flow. Explosive charges are being fired near the obstruction and the two destroyers off Hoxa Sound - - ? - - have been directed to search Flow during the night using their searchlights. Each battleship is to have an armed picket boat ready hoisted out. (1835)

gate was a section of the submarine net which could be swung open to allow passage for ships.) The signal summoning us negated EMPEROR OF INDIA and BENBOW; which was truly Naval, as it was BENBOW who carried away the obstruction, and was the cause of my morning's plans being dis-arranged.

Since those days I have completely changed my opinion on this. It happens so often that a man makes a blunder, and is then punished, penalized, disgraced perhaps, and put in a position where he will never again be able to repeat the mistake. And yet it should be evident that he, the blunderer, (supposing he has any sense of responsibility) is the one man who can be betted on never to fail again in just that way.

In the evening the Commander-in-Chief with most of the fleet sailed.

Thursday, 24th December.

W.L.G. has gone on the sick list, into PLASSEY. In the afternoon 6th C.S. and 1st B.S. sailed.

Friday, 25th December.

We celebrated the season by closing up at action stations before dawn, and remaining there till dark. We joined the fleet at 9 a.m. and steered S.E.ly into about 56½ N. by dusk, when we turned back to the North.

The Harwich Force was supporting an air raid on Cuxhaven. During the afternoon submarines were seen near the fleet's track. We turned again to the Southward before midnight, with a rising wind and sea. A dull Yuletide.

Admiral Colville had finished his term in command of the 1st Battle Squadron only the previous June, and it must have been bitter aloes to him to find himself just out of the fleet when war came. He had since then taken the Orkneys-and-Shetlands Command, under Jellicoe who was junior to him in the Navy. Now Admiral Burney was on the sick list, so Colville came back to his old squadron for this cruise. It was quite uneventful, but he did have the satisfaction of hoisting his flag afloat in the war,

Saturday, 26th December.

By daylight it was blowing a gale from the South. During the forenoon INDOMITABLE joined up, and as she turned to the course of the fleet we watched her main topgallant mast go over the side.

A little later we turned Northwards once more, the cruiser squadrons, flotillas, and 3rd B.S. being sent in (to the Forth). Ourselves and DONEGAL stayed with the dreadnoughts. A very heavy sea ran till the late afternoon, when the wind dropped somewhat for a short while. We spent an uncomfortable day at speeds between 15 and 19, rolling up to 35 degrees each way, and bringing the propellers out of water.

I ate an unsatisfying tea that day. An extra special lurch unshipped the fiddles, and sent them, me, some chairs, a tin of treacle, and a pot of scalding tea, all down into a corner - giving innocent pleasure to several.

At dusk the fleet formed single line; 2nd B.S., DRAKE, 1st and 4th B.S., with 1 mile intervals; DONEGAL away on to the Eastern patrol. We were due to enter Scapa before dawn.

Sunday, 27th December.

Sighted Noss Head soon after 3. The moon had set and it was very dark, wind and sea again rising from the S.E. We lost MARLBOROUGH (leading 1st B.S.) soon after this, and following her alter-course signals passed close North of Pentland Skerry light. We assumed the 1st B.S. to be astern of us, and acted independently. There was a high wind and sea in the Firth, with a lot of wet in the air.

After passing Pentland Skerries we ran on Stroma light, and when about at * saw a light close on the port beam or a little before. This was the MARLBOROUGH'S steaming light, and as she was running on Swona light it was providential that she had it switched on, or we should have hit about at right angles. She afterwards said we were within a cable of her, but I am sure we were never less than two. We altered to starboard out of her way and went on full speed. There was a mass of lights in the entrance, trawlers and examination steamers, and Hoxa Head was hard to pick up. (Other ships had the same difficulty, and as a result it is to be altered from Fixed White to Flashing Red.) We found the entrance clear, got in, and anchored against the North shore in a howling gale. The 1st B.S. came in 20 minutes later.

We learned later that there had been a general mess up. As the 2nd B.S. were coming in, MONARCH, to avoid one of the patrol trawlers, went astern; CONQUEROR came up, cut into MONARCH's stern, and tore open about 100 feet of her own starboard bow. This mess must have only just been cleared up when we arrived at the gate.

Aubrey Smith brought the following back from the MARLBOROUGH, whose Captain, E.P.F.G. (alphabetical) Grant, is a gossip of his:- The 2nd Division of the 1st B.S. were told to pass East of Savona and to precede the 1st Division in. But there was failure in communications, and they remained behind the 1st Division.- 4th B.S. had trouble too. Last night LEVIATHAN twice led her squadron through them. When they (4th B.S.) got to Stroma the weather was too bad to take the entrance in the dark, so they went on towards Cape Wrath, returning and entering at 9 a.m. IRON DUKE as she turned back to the East led through the tail of her own line. About noon the wind suddenly dropped, and during the afternoon ships anchored in their proper berths. We began coaling at sunset.

On the 28th DONEGAL came in from patrol. Her Captain was an officer addicted to the use of many words, and I thought he had had this day's patrol given him for annoying the C.in C.

with signals on the 25th and 26th. Who would have guessed that Vice-Admiral Carpendale was to become deputy Director of the B.B.C.?
On the 30th W.L.G. returned to duty.

Thursday, 31st December.

A report on SYDNEY's action with EMDEN has been passed round. The fight lasted from 9.40 till 11.20 a.m., at which time EMDEN grounded. SYDNEY fired 670 rounds, nearly all of which were lyddite, and she considers that EMDEN was entirely disabled in the first half hour. Practically all the casualties in SYDNEY were on the disengaged side. EMDEN opened at a surprising range, probably 12,000, and made very good shooting at first. The 2-inch side armour of SYDNEY entirely defeated the 4-inch projectiles at 8,000 yards.

Dined the gunroom, who saw the New Year in, in a semi-tipsy condition.