

Reference: M. 052365/42.

Precis of Attack by VENOMOUS.

Date: 12.11.42.

Time: 0139.

Position: 35° 50' N.
09° 57' W.

Weather Conditions:

Wind N. Force 2; Weather cloudy; Sea 11;
Visibility 2-3 miles.

Duty: Screening H.M.S. HECLA who was stopped having been torpedoed.

Narrative: At 0100 MARNE was standing by to pick up survivors from HECLA who was in the process of abandoning ship having already been torpedoed four times. At 0105 both HECLA and MARNE were hit by further torpedoes on the starboard side. HECLA sank and MARNE had her stern blown off but remained afloat. VENOMOUS, who was at this time on the port bow of HECLA, closed MARNE's starboard quarter at full speed, illuminating the area with starshell. Shortly after the U-boat was sighted on VENOMOUS' port bow, crossing from port to starboard at about 1,500 yards range. VENOMOUS was proceeding at 24 knots.

On sighting VENOMOUS, the U-boat altered course away and steered a zig-zag course at high speed. VENOMOUS overhauled slowly. When the range was about 1,000 yards the U-boat fired a torpedo from the stern tubes which was avoided.

At a later stage during the chase VENOMOUS opened fire with her main armament but claimed no hits. The U-boat did not dive until the range had been closed to 200 yards and the periscope was observed to pass down the port side of VENOMOUS about ten yards away.

Details of Attack: A pattern of five depth charges set to 50 feet was fired by eye when the last feather from the disappearing periscope was passing astern. VENOMOUS and the U-boat were still on approximately parallel courses when the attack was made.

With the last charge there was a much heavier explosion than normal and a much higher column of water. The last charge did not appear to fire shallow.

Subsequent Events: The explosions of the depth charges put one dynamo temporarily out of action and this resulted in an electrical failure. This was soon put right, but asdic contact was not gained after the attack in spite of a search carried out until 0240. The area was illuminated with starshell and snowflake but nothing was sighted and nothing picked up on the R.D.F.

Surface Evidence: The U-boat dived at a range of 20 yards and on the evidence the pattern was dropped well over its position, the periscope having only just disappeared. It is noted that the depth charges were fired (presumably this means the order to fire was given) as the feather from the disappearing periscope was passing the stern. Allowing three seconds for the time lag and taking into account the fact that VENOMOUS was still apparently proceeding at 24 knots, it would appear possible that the depth charges were released late (3 seconds at 24 knots = 40 yards). On the other hand depth charges would have taken five seconds to sink and the U-boat was stated still to be on a parallel course.

Asdic Evidence: None.

Other Evidence: There has been no record of any claim by the enemy to have sunk HECLA. This may mean that the U-boat did not survive to tell the tale.

C.O.'s Opinion: It appears certain that the U-boat was in the pattern and that the result must have been highly damaging if not fatal.

Decision of U-boat Assessment Committee: From the evidence of the attack this has been assessed as "Probably sunk."

1st February, 1943.

Reference: M. 052365/42.

Precis of Attack by VENOMOUS.

Date: 12.11.42.

Time: 0550.

Position: 35° 44' N.
09° 59' W.

Weather Conditions: Wind N. Force 1-2; Weather cloudy; Sea 11; Visibility 3 miles.

Narrative: After the hunt for the U-boat described in the previous precis had been abandoned, VENOMOUS returned to H.M.S. MARNE to pick up survivors from HECLA and to screen the former. At 0550 a U-boat was detected by R.D.F. at a range of 3,600 yards. Shortly after it was sighted steering a course for MARNE.

VENOMOUS increased to full speed and opened fire. Only one round of 4.7" was fired owing to the blinding effect. Hits on the conning tower with the Oerlikons were claimed. The U-boat dived at a range of about 300 yards fine on VENOMOUS' bow. Asdic contact was obtained at once and two attacks were made.

Details of Attacks:

No. of Attack.	1st.	2nd.
Time	0554	0603
Doppler	Opening	Closing
H.E.	None	Yes
Movement of target	Yes	Yes
Range of losing contact.	200 yards	500 yards
Time to fire obtained by	Recorder	Recorder
No. of Depth Charges	5	5
Depth Settings	50 feet	140 feet
Remarks	6 explosions were heard.	

After the last charge in the first pattern had detonated a sixth and heavier explosion was heard both by officers on the bridge and the depth charge party aft. Contact was regained after this attack and it was decided to carry out another counter-attack without waiting for a further ten charge pattern to be reloaded as the U-boat was dangerously near MARNE. The second attack was therefore carried out with heavy charges only. Contact was not regained after this attack in spite of an asdic search of the area which was continued until daylight.

Surface Evidence: U-boat dived at a range of 300 yards. There was no evidence of damage except for a heavy impression after the first attack as described above. The impression of various witnesses in VENOMOUS is that this U-boat was considerably larger than the one attacked at 0139. (See Serial No. 91).

Asdic Evidence: No recorder trace has been received but asdic conditions were described as good.

C.O.'s Opinion: The sixth explosion in the first attack cannot be explained. As neither VENOMOUS nor MARNE, who was immobile, were further molested, it is considered that the attack was sufficiently damaging to put the U-boat out of further action.

Decision of U-boat Assessment Committee: The sixth explosion was probably due to one of the depth charges hanging up. It appears to have been a good attack and has been assessed as "Probably damaged B."

1st February, 1943.

Details of Attacks:

No. of Attack	Time	Dogger	R.E.	Location of target	Range of target
0803	0854	Open sea	None	Yes	500 yards
0803	0854	Open sea	None	Yes	500 yards