

SECRET.

H.M.S. "Vanamois"  
12th August, 1942

No. 1

LOSS OF H.M.S. "EAGLE"

Sir,

I regret to report the loss of H.M.S. "Eagle" due to enemy action. The circumstances were as follows.

2. H.M.S. "Eagle", forming part of Force "F", was in datum position close on the starboard quarter of the Convoy. At about 1235B on 11th August a large group of enemy aircraft had been reported approaching from the Southward. 4 Hurricanes were flown off and the Ship's Company went to action stations and remained closed up for approximately 20 minutes.

3. At about 1317B on the same day, while in approximate position  $38^{\circ} 05' N$   $03^{\circ} 03' E$ , course  $090^{\circ}$ , speed 12 knots, a heavy muffled explosion was experienced on the port quarter of the ship and this was quickly followed by three similar explosions within 10 seconds and splashes were observed at 40 feet intervals going forward. The first explosion occurred abreast P3 gun. No tracks were observed from the bridge or gun positions, but an officer and some ratings on the flight deck say they saw the tracks of three torpedoes at about 50 feet from the ship after the first explosion. After the first hit the ship listed about  $5^{\circ}$  to Port, but after the fourth hit she listed to  $15^{\circ}$  and continued to list rapidly to  $30^{\circ}$  and settled bodily. It is estimated that the ship sank in about 6 minutes.

4. It was very quickly realised that the ship was listing and sinking rapidly and all officers in their respective stations gave the order to abandon ship. A large majority of the carley floats and floatnets floated free. As the port side of the flight deck was under water within three minutes no boats on that side were got away and the boats on the board side were useless owing to the list.

5. Reduced Damage Control Parties in accordance with the Damage Control Handbook were closed up at the time the ship was torpedoed and the ship was in the three unit position for steaming. Owing to the rapidity with which the ship was sinking it was not possible to exercise any degree of damage control or to investigate the damage. But from an investigation amongst survivors picked up by H.M.S. "Lockout" the following points have been ascertained:

(a) It appears that the Port Wing Engine Room was hit and no survivors from it are known to have escaped.

(b) The Centre and Starboard Wing Engine Rooms were undamaged.

(c) A, C and D Boiler Rooms were damaged and flooded but some survivors escaped from all three. In each case the port wing bulkheads collapsed.

The Vice Admiral Commanding  
NORTH ATLANTIC.

(d) ....

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(d) It is considered that the armour belt prevented explosions occurring in the magazines which were in the vicinity of all four explosions.

(e) The secondary lighting functioned correctly.

(f) My standing orders that the engines should be stopped by the engine room staff if the ship was hit and listing were carried out. Orders were given from the bridge to stop both engines and to put the wheel Port 30°. Normal means of communication failed after the fourth explosion. The lead of the sound powered telephone from the Damage Control Headquarters to the Bridge was accidentally parted owing to the weight of the operator being put on it when the ship listed. There was no time to start up the diesel dynamos, and at least one of these must have been damaged by the hits.

6. At the time the ship was torpedoed the whole ship's company was still on the move going from action stations to defense stations and this probably accounts for the large number of survivors - about 67 officers and 900 men.

7. There was a marked unwillingness on the part of the ship's company to abandon ship until a superior officer actually gave the order, and I was very impressed by the coolness, morale and discipline of all officers and men.

8. A detailed list of casualties will be forwarded as soon as possible.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,



Sd. L.D. Mackintosh

CAPTAIN.

II.

No.X.383/551.  
THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

Forwarded for the information of Their Lordships.

2. Commanding Officer, EAGLE's letters Nos.2 and 3 of 15th and 14th August, respectively, are attached.

(Sgd.) A.C. Robertson

Gibraltar,  
26th August, 1942.

for VICE ADMIRAL.

LOSS OF H.M.S. EAGLE.

SECRET

FROM ... Captain L.D. Mackintosh, D.S.C., R.N.

DATE ... 14th August, 1942.

No.3.

TO ..... THE VICE ADMIRAL COMMANDING, NORTH ATLANTIC.

(Copy to:- The Senior Officer, Force 'F')  
The Commanding Officers, H.M. Ships

LAFOREY

LOOKOUT

KEPPEL

VENEMOUS

MALCOLM

H.M. Tug "Jaunty".

I would like to bring to your notice the efficient and seamanlike conduct of the Commanding Officers, Officers and ship's companies of H.M. Ships LAFOREY, LOOKOUT and H.M. Tug "Jaunty" who rescued so large a number of survivors from H.M.S. EAGLE, and also of H.M. Ships KEPPEL, VENEMOUS, and MALCOLM to whom the survivors were subsequently transferred.

2. The organisation of these ships for feeding, clothing and accommodating so large a number of men was excellent. The unselfish way in which all the officers and men co-operated and even vied with one another in their efforts to see that everybody was made as comfortable as possible, earned them the gratitude of all.

(Sgd.) L.D. Mackintosh,

CAPTAIN.