

N.I.D.3, OTTAWA., 22 May, 1945.

~~SECRET~~

Report on an Interrogation of some members of the crew of U-190, which formally surrendered to H.M.C.S. "THORLOCK" and "VICTORIAVILLE" on 12th May, 1945, in 43° 45' N., 45° 15' W.

The information which follows was obtained from surrendered Prisoners-of-War and should not be accepted as factual unless or until confirmed by other information. The interrogation was hurried and the surrendered U-boat and documents were not then available.

DECLASSIFIED

ON 31 OCT 77

D 2130-1 (SIRC)

Authority 12-86-1972

By *[Signature]* for DHIST/NDHQ Canada

TYPE: IXC

TONNAGE: 740 tons

C.O.: Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Edwin REITH

FLOTILLA: 33rd, Flensburg but formerly 2nd, Lorient.

BUILT: Deschimag, Bremen

COMMISSIONED: 29th September, 1942 at Bremen by Kapitaenleutnant Max WINTERMEYER, who commanded her for 4 patrols and turned her over to Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Edwin REITH at Lorient in the summer of 1944.

ARMAMENT: Guns: 1 - 37 mm. twin mount on C/T
2 - 20 mm. twin mount on C/T but these had been stowed below because of defects.

Ammunition: usual type; thrown overboard on 11th May, 1945.

Torpedoes: 4 bow tubes, 2 stern tubes
14 torpedoes carried: 6 T-3 (Lut)
8 T-5

RADAR: Hohentwiel

SCHNORCHEL: fitted; crew members claimed to have spent upwards of 40 days on this patrol schnorcheling continuously.

G.S.R.: Fliege with Hela amplifier
Rundipol on Schnorchel.

RADAR DECOYS: Aphrodite carried.

6th and Last Patrol

After a long overhaul at Bremen, when her bows were cut-away, U-190 sailed to Kiel, arriving there on or before 26th January, 1945. About 10th February, she sailed from Kiel, via Horten, to Christiansand (S), where she spent a few days. On 21st February, 1945, she departed Christiansand (S) alone. According to statements of the quartermaster, she steered through approximately 63° 54' N., 00° 30' W. to 62° 18' N., 16° 15' W. to 41° 33' N. 45° 42' W., thence via the map square CB 20 (called Caesar Bruno) to her operational area off the coast of Nova Scotia. The passage report ('Passiermeldung') was wirelessly after passage through the Rosengarten. The C.O. Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Edwin REITH stated that he had been allowed freedom of action ('freies Manoever') in his operational area. According to him and to the W/T Petty Officer, certain of the code books and other Top Secret & Secret material were thrown overboard at the end of March, the C.O. stating that such action could be taken at his own discretion. On 12th April the last distinct message in code was received from the Operational Headquarters of the U-Waffe in Germany.

Attacks

On about 12/13th April, while patrolling South of Halifax, U-190 fired a T-5 at a tanker and then a spread of 2 Luts at a steamer, which were travelling independently. After submerging she came up to periscope depth, but could not see the steamer and then fired a Lut at the tanker. The C.O. is of the opinion that the tanker was hit by the first torpedo, but managed to escape; he did, however, hear the 2 Luts explode, which were fired at the steamer. (N.I.D. Note: no record of these attacks can be found).

Sinking of H.M.C.S. "ESQUIMALT"

Between 16/18th April, while operating close to the approaches to Halifax harbour, U-190 was picked up by the asdic of a ship, thought to be 800-1000 tons, which circled the U-boat and passed overhead two or three times. U-190 fired a T-5, set at 1,000 - 2,000 metres which hit the ship amidships and the C.O. watched her explode and sink. (N.I.D. Note: at 0930Z on 16th April, H.M.C.S. "ESQUIMALT" was torpedoed and sunk in 44° 28' N., 63° 10' W.; 2 officers and 25 ratings survived). U-190 remained submerged for 7 days, following this attack, during which time she was hunted by surface vessels, who dropped d/c's. (N.I.D. Note: At 1317Z on the 16th April, H.M.C.S. "SARNIA" made two attacks on promising asdic contact in 44° 28' N., 63° 23' W. and E.G. 28 searched the area from 16th to 21st April).

On 29th April, U-190 started on her homeward voyage and on or about 30th April, the C.O. sighted what he thought to be a destroyer or a frigate and fired a spread of 3 Luts. The frigate turned towards the oncoming torpedoes, which all missed, and the C.O. was of the opinion that the torpedoes might have been visible to her. (N.I.D. Note: There are no Allied naval reports on record to confirm this statement).

Early in May, the C.O. fired 5 torpedoes. He claims to have fired them all at frigates, all on the same day, and that all of them missed. (N.I.D. Note: REITH gave the interrogators the impression that he was simply getting rid of his torpedoes). This story would account for 13 of his 14 torpedoes; when various members of the crew were pressed to say when the 'missing' torpedo was fired, the L.W.O. finally remembered that it was fired at 3 unidentified ships in minesweeping formation, but missed them. The date of this attack could not be reconstructed. On the other hand, the W/T Petty Officer stated that 6 - not 5 - torpedoes had been fired on the one day, early in May.

On 11th May, U-190 picked up an incomplete version of the surrender orders, relayed by the German High Command, and REITH instructed the Wireless Petty Officer to send the following message in P/L:

"An B.d.U.: Seit 12 April ohne F/T. Nach erfolgreicher Unternehmung auf Ruckmarsch. F/T über Kapitulation verstümmelt aufgenommen. Bitte um nähere Anweisungen". ("To Admiral Commanding U-boats: Have been without wireless communication since 12 April. Now homeward bound after successful patrol. Wireless orders about surrender received in mutilated form. Request fuller details").

The Wireless Petty Officer stated, however, that the message was never sent, as it was impossible to establish contact with Control. U-190 then sent surrender signals on 500 Kcs. to New York, Boston and Cape Race. On the same day the ammunition and secret documents were thrown overboard. Cape Race acknowledged the signals and U-190 proceeded surfaced on course 305° until 12th May, 1945, when she was met by H.M.C.S. "VICTORIAVILLE" and "THORLOCK" in 43° 54' N., 45° 15' W., who put boarding parties on U-190, and obtained a signed deed of surrender. They escorted U-190 to Bay Bulls, Newfoundland, where the P/W's were transferred to H.M.C.S. "PRESTONIAN" and taken to Halifax, N.S., arriving there on 16th May. Here, one and the same day, they were interviewed by pressmen and broadcasters, interrogated by N.I.D. and handed over to the military.

Commanding Officer

Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Edwin REITH belongs to the January, 1939 entry, and had served under Kapitaenleutnant Georg SCHEWE, receiving the Iron Cross, 1st Class in 1943. His first command was U-190, which he took over from Kapitaenleutnant Max WINTERMEYER in Lorient in July or August, 1944. He sailed her to Flensburg, manned partly by her own crew and partly by trained personnel obtained from Lorient's manning pool, and carried home a full load of torpedoes. This voyage lasted about 47 days and all action was successfully avoided. U-190 then proceeded from Flensburg, via Kiel, to Bremen for the lengthy overhaul, which included cutting away her bows, a process which some of the crew derided as a completely wasted effort.