

# ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE

## ANTI-SUBMARINE REPORT No.5, OCTOBER 1917

*Via Colin Owers*

### GENERAL REMARKS

During this month aircraft (excluding kite balloons) engaged on anti-submarine work in Home Waters have carried out over 850 patrols, covering a distance of approximately 110,000 miles, the time in the air being 2,600 hours. Of this distance, 70,000 miles have been flown by heavier than air machines, flying over 1,100 hours, and 40,000 by airships, flying nearly 1,500 hours.

Submarines have been sighted and attacked on the following occasions:-

DATE		SUBMARINES	
		sighted	attacked
1st Oct	Felixstowe seaplane	1	1
3rd	Mullion airship	1	1
3rd	Mullion airship	1	-
14th	Scilly seaplane	1	1
14th	Dundee	1	1
15th	Riviera (Dartmouth) SP	1	1
15th	Felixstowe seaplane	1	-
15th	Westgate seaplane	1	1
18th	Bembridge seaplane	1	1
18th	Portland seaplane	1	1
18th	Cherbourg seaplane	1	-
18th	Scilly seaplane	1	1
20th	Riviera (Dartmouth) SP	1	-
22nd	Polegate airship	1	-
22nd	Yarmouth seaplane	1	-
22nd	Calshot seaplane	1	1
22nd	Pembroke airship	1	1
23rd	Westgate seaplane	1	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>

### COMBINED HUNT OF A SUBMARINE BY AIRCRAFT AND TRAWLER-HYDROPHONE FLOTILLA

On 18th October, Wight seaplane No. 9848, from Portland, sighted and bombed a submarine in a position about 20 miles S. by E. of Portland Bill. The trawler hunting flotilla was then about 20 miles to the N.W. At 1730 the hunting flotilla was directed by wireless from the base to proceed to this spot, and arrived there at 2000, when hydrophone operations were commenced.

Unfortunately at 0615 on the 19th they were called off and sent to a position about 10 miles to the N.W. on what was apparently a false report. They were then directed to move about 10 miles S.W. where operations were resumed at 1130.

When the flotilla was in this position Short seaplane No.N.1588, from 'Riviera', sighted and bombed a wake of oil about 5 miles to the southward at 1310. The flotilla heard the explosion on the hydrophone and at once proceeded in that direction, shortly afterwards sighting the seaplane, which landed and informed them of the attack.

Watch was kept round this new position throughout the night until 0700 on the 20th. By this time the trawlers had drifted some miles to westward owing to the tide and were about to move back when a conning tower was sighted about 5 miles to the E.N.E. The submarine was chased and put down by gunfire. Subsequently its periscope was seen and a depth charge dropped at 0815. The flotilla continued operations until after midnight, ultimately being obliged to abandon the hunt owing to stress of weather. No definite indications of a submarine were heard on the hydrophone.

*(As only a wake of oil was observed by the seaplane from H.M.S. 'Riviera,' this attack is not included in the list of submarines sighted and attacked.)*

### PATROLS BY MOONLIGHT

On the 4th October a seaplane from Dundee carried out a patrol by moonlight in search of another machine missing during the afternoon. The seaplane left the station at 2220, returning at 0050 on the 5th. The wind at the time was blowing 35 miles at 700 feet and 50 miles at 2,000 feet. Nothing was observed except destroyers and patrol boats. The missing machine had sunk in the meantime, the crew being picked up by a trawler.

### SEAPLANES AND AEROPLANES

Statistics of the work carried out by seaplanes and aeroplanes are given in Table 'A' overleaf.

Total number of patrols	589
Total distance flown	72,031 miles
Total number of hours flying over sea	1,149
Submarines sighted	14
Submarines attacked	10
Total number of escorts	75

The details of attacks carried out are as follows:-

### OCTOBER 1st

**Felixstowe** - Large America Seaplane No.8694 (Flight Lieut. Hodgson and Flight Sub-Lieut. Wilson) left on patrol to North Hinder at 1133 in company with No.8693. Near Shipwash this machine was lost sight of and No.8694 proceeded to patrol alone. When flying over the Outer Gabbard a submarine was sighted 10 miles to eastward. The seaplane was then flying at 2,000 feet and at once altered course south, climbing to 3,000 feet, in order to come behind the submarine, which was steering N.W., and between her and the sun. Having reached a suitable position, the seaplane headed directly towards the submarine, and when about 3 miles distant shut off the engines and commenced to glide, until she was at 500 feet. The engines were then opened full out, the submarine being then a half a mile distant. She was seen to be a large type, with the conning tower and forward deck painted white, and the aft deck black. No guns or men were observed on the deck. Two recognition signals were fired, but were unanswered, and the submarine immediately began to submerge.

At 1202 two 230-lb bombs were released simultaneously, which fell 10-15 feet ahead of the wash made by the conning tower which had just submerged. A quantity of black oil and air bubbles came to the surface for about five minutes afterwards, a photograph being taken of the oil patch.

The seaplane returned to the Outer Gabbard and there

*The elusive enemy, in this case a UC III type U-boat, of the type used for mine-laying.*

