

The Economic Club of New York

British Navy Night

Honorable, Henry Morgenthau, Presiding
Rear-Admiral Hugh Rodman, U.S.N.
Captain F. B. Carpenter, V.C., R.N.

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Introduction

Dr. Robert Erskine Ely

I think the Officers of this club would like to express their very sincere thanks to every member and every guest of every member for the awfully kind and good natured way in which you have adapted yourselves to the unusual circumstances of this evening. After all, we really didn't come here to eat and drink. We can do that any old time in this old town. (Laughter) We came here to hear these distinguished men. (Applause)

Mr. Henry Morgenthau

Ladies and Gentlemen: Whenever you want to find out who a person is and you want to know what he thinks of himself, you will read "Who is Who." Well, I asked the Admiral who he was. He told me he was born in Kentucky, (Applause), he has not antecedents, and he has no debts; (Laughter), that he was Marine Superintendent of the Panama Canal and that but lately he was in command of a squadron under Sir David Beatty. Now that's what he told me.

What I know about him is quite different. He is a man possessed of a rare sense of humor, of a wonderful presence of mind, of a determined character, of the power to fraternize with the English people. He is a diplomat of the highest order, a financier, and everything that makes up a fine admiral and a great American gentlemen. (Great Applause)

We have all heard of the unkissed lady. Well, the Admiral comes here tonight for the first time to kiss an audience. He has never spoken before to an audience and we want you to take that into consideration -- if there is any little error in his method or power of expression. (Laughter)

So, I think that we ought to be delighted that this club is the first club to have with it the Commander-in Chief of the great ship New York, (Great Applause), and we New Yorkers are proud to have with tonight Admiral Rodman, who has done so much to give credit to the American Navy in this great struggle which we have about ended.

I take unusual pleasure in presenting Admiral Rodman to you. (Prolonged Applause)

Rear-Admiral Hugh Rodman, U.S.N.

Ladies and Gentlemen. Mr. Morgenthau gives me the impression that he is a very close relative to old Colonial Ananias in the few words that he said in introducing me. He is quite right in saying that I have never addressed an audience in my life, and I was only tempted to come tonight because from his letters there was an implication that the relations that existed between my British comrades and the American Navy were not altogether smooth.

I had absolutely no time after my arrival at home -- I have only been home a little while from the other side -- to prepare an address, to memorize it, in fact, or to speak extemporaneously, so that it was necessary for me, in order to bring out the points that I want to impress upon you, to prepare my notes, and if you will pardon me for reading them, I believe that this is the only way in which I can bring out the points that I wish to bring home to you. (Applause)

When I was asked to say a few words in reference to the cordial relations which existed between the British and American naval forces, I was surprised to learn that there had ever been but one idea on the subject on the part of anyone, in or out of the naval service, for surely, to those of us whose work during the war was always in close contact with the British Navy, in the war zone, no such question ever arose. On the other hand, I wish to state most positively and without the slightest reservation, that no happier or more cordial relations could possibly have existed than those which obtained between our two navies which performed war service together. (Great Applause)

I should, however, mention one little incident that occurred before the final status was finally established. On my staff were two British naval officers, who were sent to us when I joined the Grand Fleet, whose duties, among others, were to smooth out the wrinkles that might occur, to help us in our communications and in our official duties.

It came about that we sometimes poked a little fun at each other, criticizing in the friendliest way some of the salient characteristics of the two nations.

But when, in a spirit of fun, we spoke adversely and possibly a little disparagingly, of course, in the sense of humor, about “Punch,” the London weekly, and admitted that its jokes were at best somewhat obscure, (Laughter), we seem to have invaded rather sacred precincts, (Laughter), and it was resented, resented rather feelingly, by one of the officers who said, “Well, at any rate, British jokes are not to be laughed at.” (Great Laughter)

I would like to set forth, if I can, the conditions which made cooperation between our navies a necessity.

When the war had been on about three years, we came into it. In that time, the British Grand Fleet, as I have stated on a previous occasion, had contributed the foundation upon which victory depended. They had swept the surface of the seas of every single German vessel whether it were naval or whether it were commercial, and had put the fear of God, and incidentally, I might add, the British Navy, into the Huns, to such an extent that they very rarely left their fortified bases, either as a fleet or in smaller units, and when it did venture out, on rare occasions, it was always so promptly driven in, that toward the last, it rarely left its anchorages.

I do not refer to the submarine warfare in this preceding statement, for it was still causing a great deal of annoyance and was not gotten under control though until later, but immediately upon our declaration of war, we established what amounted practically to a branch of the Navy Department in London, with Admiral Sims at its head. (Great Applause) he was in very close contact, naturally, in point of fact, he was to all intents and purposes, one of the British Admiralty and through him and the British Admiral, we were enabled to perfect plans and carry them into execution that made our two forces work absolutely harmoniously and effectively together. (Applause)

Our first force that went abroad were the destroyers. They were sent primarily to help combat the submarine menace, and surely no force could have done its work more thoroughly. They were based first at Queenstown, and as others came across at other British Ports, and some went to the French coast. Those at Queenstown, to all intents and purposes, amalgamated with the British destroyers, and were operated under Admiral Bialy of the British Navy.

Personally I never met him, but I hope to someday, for he must be a very agreeable man, capable and efficient to the very highest degree. As to the relations which existed between the American and British destroyer forces under him, I have only heard the highest praise. All of our officers speak of him most loyally, with the greatest admiration, and some with real enthusiasm. I have never heard any other than the most affectionate expression of appreciation in regard to him. While he has the reputation of being an exceptionally blunt and strict disciplinarian, the friendly

rivalry which obtained between the two forces could never have existed unless the spirit of brotherhood had been deep-seated in the minds of the officers and men that constituted the two forces. They worked perfectly together, and toward the end of the war had so far mastered the situation that they had it in hand, and incidentally had also put the fear of God, and the destroyer forces, into the Hun submarines.

But as to our relations in the Grand Fleet, I can speak even more intimately for the battleship force which I commanded for a year, was an integral part of the Grand Fleet. I served directly under the command of its Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir David Beatty, (Great Applause), than whom no better or more gallant or more efficient leader ever tread the deck of a battleship, and it is a very great pleasure and most gratifying to be able to say that I never spent a more enjoyable, a more profitable or happier year than that which I spent in the North Sea as a part of the British Grand Fleet, (Applause), even in spite of the rigorous climate, the arduous duties and the deprivation of those pleasures and recreation which are ordinarily considered essential and requisite to insure contentment.

It would be extremely difficult to explain the thousand and one questions and obstacles that can arise between military and naval forces in the field even when they are of the same nationality and how many more will arise when the forces are of different nationalities. But I can truthfully and earnestly say and it is one of the greatest pleasures to state that there was never the slightest friction or misunderstanding between us, never an untoward event to mar the close coordination

and happy cooperation which at all times existed, but on the other hand, each seemed to vie with the other to lend a helping hand, to smooth out the ways, and so it became a pleasure to serve together in the common cause which actuated our endeavors.

When I add that I sometimes had British Admirals under me in my command in forces that were operating in the North Sea and that not infrequently I served under British Admirals that there was never any thought of nationality nor of misunderstanding that ever arose, you will understand how extremely close and brotherly our relations were. (Applause)

I have sometimes thought that the close, homogeneous and brotherly cooperation with the Grand Fleet, was an example of what two nations could do, who had a common cause, whose hearts were in the right place and in their work, and it was an example and possibly the incentive which first prompted the Allies to place all of their armies under the common leadership of Marshal Foch, (Great Applause), and which as the sequel proved, was the most logical way in which to win the war.

Now here it might be well to diverge for a moment and state that while we are prone to give full credit to our Allies for all that they did both before we entered the war and afterward, we are often inclined to forget ourselves in the part which our Navy accomplished, which, I think, is a most commendable trait. Yet we are entitled to our full share of credit in more ways than one, for our efforts in helping to bring about the final victory (Applause).

There can be no question but that our destroyers did valiant service against the Hun submarines, and our naval artillery which we had mounted on railway cars, manned by naval gunners, with their heavy 14-inch guns, which threw a shell that weighed 1400 pounds, and which operated with the army at the front, made their presence felt in the Hun strongholds, which could not otherwise have been reached by gun fire, and our mining forces that laid a barrage, or string of mines, across the North Sea, from the Coast of Norway over to the Orkney Islands, was largely instrumental in keeping the Hun fleet contained, and making it extremely hazardous for either surface craft or submarines to try to reach the high seas.

Our naval forces in the air service operated with all the armies -- in France, in Italy, and along the coast of France and Great Britain. They, too, did most excellent service, and incidentally they helped to combat the submarines.

I think we are all familiar, more or less, with our operations in protecting the safety of the transports across the ocean (Applause), and what was accomplished there.

Now in addition to that, our battleship force when it entered the Grand Fleet, not only added increased strength and made victory an absolute certainty had the Hun fleet ever given us a chance to fight it out with them, but it added fresh zeal and energy and enthusiasm to our

comrades in the British Fleet, as has been so graciously stated on a number of occasions by the British Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir David Beatty.

We have every reason to be proud and no reason to regret the part which our Navy played in its work during the war, (Applause), and taking a retrospective view, if we had to do the same work all over again, we would do it identically the same way, without changing it one iota. This, to my mind, is the strongest proof of work that is well done.

The feeling of cordiality and the ties of friendship which were engendered in the Grand Fleet would doubtless become international and be spread broadcast to all the peoples of the two countries and to all of their colonies, wherever the Anglo-Saxon spirit prevails, could only they be thrown in contact and learn to know each other. I am sure that his Majesty, King George of Great Britain, shares it, (Great Applause), for when the matter was broached to him, he acquiesced very strongly and expressed the hope that our fleets might meet yearly in friendly visits and intercourse, not by any written agreement or by treaty, but by a natural and friendly desire to perpetuate the deep-rooted, and if I may use the term, affectionate relations which have always obtained between our two naval forces, which worked so pleasantly and agreeable together. (Applause)

I would like to add also that though my comrades in the British Navy were born under a different flag, though we are accredited by this and by geographic boundary or delineations as belonging

to different nations, yet I am convinced, I know, in fact, that the same blood flows through our veins, that we have the same ideals, the same love of righteousness and liberty, and should the time ever come again in the future, as it has done in this war, there is no question in my mind but that we will stand together, through thick and thin, that we will fight together and that we will win together. (Great Applause) for all of them I have the highest admiration, and I can consider it an honor to have served under such a worthy chief as Admiral Beatty, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, and as to cordiality and goo-fellowship and comradeship -- it was absolutely unbounded. (Applause)

In connection with my coming here this evening, I was requested to introduce Captain Carpenter, of the Royal Navy, of Zeebrugge fame. (Great Applause) Why I was asked to do it is beyond my comprehension, for surely his reputation is already world-wide, and his name is a household word wherever the English language is spoken, and in some of the countries where it isn't -- in Germany, for instance, (Laughter), for surely no one in this war ever struck so hard a blow at their pride and morale as he did.

It may be of interest to know that some months before the time came for him to carry his very matured plans into operation, that I had the pleasure of a visit from him on my flagship, the New York, to discuss some of the probable physical effects of his venture, but more particularly in reference to the silting of the entrances and channels due to the sinking of his vessels as obstructions, but I am free to confess that at the time I never realized the tremendous moral effect

that it would have, but now that it is all over, stands as a monument to his bravery and his skill and daring, and which has not been equaled by any other event in this war from a naval standpoint. (Great Applause)

I take a great deal of pleasure in saying this myself, for knowing him as I do, I am well aware of the fact that he will not say it himself. (Laughter) You will doubtless hear some of the details which to me, when I first heard them, were not only thrilling but won my highest admiration, as one of the more glorious achievements in naval history. (Great applause)

Mr. Morgenthau: Ladies and Gentlemen: The Admiral has given us a splendid picture of what the American Navy has done and also has given you a fine statement about Captain Carpenter.

As everybody loves a lover, so everybody in this world adores and admires a hero. I have great pleasure in introducing to you one of the greatest, if not the greatest hero of this war, Captain Carpenter. (Tremendous Ovation)

(Dr. Robert Erskine Ely: Three Cheers for the British Navy and Captain Carpenter!

The entire assemblage rose and gave Three Cheers.)

Captain F. B. Carpenter, V.C., R.N.

The Story of the Zeebrugge Affair

Ladies and Gentlemen: I have so much in my mind to say to you that I really don't know where to begin, but I am going to sum it all up in one word, and that is -- Thank you. (Applause)

When I came here this evening, I knew that Admiral Rodman was coming, but I hadn't the faintest idea what he was going to say, but I will tell you a point of interest: This afternoon some reporters came to interview me. They came through a misconception, because they had been told that I was going to make some official statement about the cooperation between the two Navies. I don't know where they got the idea from, but I didn't want to disappoint them and so I told them what I knew, and I ended up like this. I said, "I understand that there is a certain amount of insidious propaganda going about, stating that our Navies did not always cut in quite well together," and I told them, "If any man tells you that, you can tell him straight that he is a damn liar," (Great Applause), and I ended up with rather a prophetic statement, because I said, "If you don't believe me, I refer you to Admiral Rodman." (Laughter) I didn't know then that he was going to say one single word about it this evening.

Well, I think we had better get on with the lecture. We will have the lights out and have the story.

(The lights were then turned out and the slides were thrown on the screen.)

Now I am going to try and tell you the story of what occurred at Zeebrugge. I will start by giving you an idea of the general situation, what our object was, and what we were up against and then I will tell you what we did, and the result.

Now, Zeebrugge is about here on the Flanders Coast, (indicating). That, (indicating), the country once known as Germany, but it is the wrong name now. (Laughter)

Now the next slide is going to show the southern part of the North Sea, Dover to Zeebrugge. Here is Dover up here and Zeebrugge is up in the right-hand corner.

Now on this coast of Flanders here, there are actually no natural harbors at all. All of the harbors there have been cut out artificially from the coast by dredging, and it is only by continual dredging that they keep those harbors open, because the sand on this coast is always on the move and this movement of the sand on this coast is not exceeded in any other part of the world. It is the most extraordinary thing how this sand goes along the coast with the tide, first one way and then the other -- it is always on the move. The consequence is that shoals are always forming and the whole of this coast is a mass of shoals. It was only by continual surveying in peace times that safe navigation was possible. In war time, of course, this coast has been in the hands of the Germans and it has not been possible for our surveying craft to get in close and resurvey the

place, and therefore we have not been able to keep our charts up to date, and the question of safe navigation, especially for large ships off the coast has been a very difficult one, and that is one of the things we had to contend with.

Now there are one or two harbors on this coast, as I say, artificial, but the main harbor and the main German base was Bruges, which is about 9 miles inland. That was the main harbor. It was their dockyard and where the ships lay for rest, where they got their fuel and everything else. They didn't lay at Zeebrugge and they didn't lay at Ostend in the ordinary course of events. They passed through there, or if they lay there at all, it was only two or three vessels required to patrol work outside. The majority of them lay at Bruges.

Now these craft, which after all, were only at the door of the English Channel, caused us a very great deal of trouble and our losses in merchantmen, the percentage of our losses in merchantmen from the depredations of this craft was exceeding high. At the time when this operation was first planned that percentage was very great. It was about 50%. It was nearly half as much again by the time the operation came off and it was very necessary at the time, and turned out to be more necessary afterwards to take some very active measures against these craft at Bruges.

Now the very best measure you can take, of course, is to capture the craft themselves, but we couldn't do that because the whole of this terrain here was in the hands of the German Army and

so the only other thing we could do, which was really effective, was to prevent these craft getting out.

Now, Bruges is connected up to the sea by a canal system. Here is Bruges. There is a canal running up to Zeebrugge and another one running to Ostend.

The canal running to Zeebrugge is very long, is an absolutely straight canal, very modern, only built a few years ago and is very deep and they can take a good sized craft through, up to the size of light cruisers, for instance.

The canal running to Ostend, on the contrary, is a long, narrow, tortuous and very shallow canal and it was very doubtful in our minds as to whether they could use it to any great purpose at all for getting craft from Bruges to the sea. We did not know for certain, and as we wanted to block the ships in at Bruges definitely, we had to decide to block them at both Zeebrugge and Ostend. Now I am not going to tell you much about Ostend this evening, because the story of Zeebrugge is rather a long one, but at Ostend itself we attempted to block that at exactly the same time, in fact, the same minute, as we blocked Zeebrugge; it was to be a simultaneous blocking. The weather turned against us, as you will hear it later on, and the Ostend operation actually fell, in spite of very great gallantry on the part of the people in it, and we made a second attempt, with the old “Vindictive” which we brought back from Zeebrugge, and she went in, and also in the face of very bad weather conditions, she went into block that place, and she got it partially

blocked; it was never wholly blocked, but it turned out that that doesn't matter very much, because we found out owing to this canal being so inefficient, that they were unable to get any decent craft through it. The only thing that really mattered was the exit at Zeebrugge, and that was the one that we blocked.

Now I will show you Zeebrugge itself on a bigger scale. Now this is a plan showing Zeebrugge. Here is the coast line along here, and here is the entrance to the canal. The entrance is between these two curved piers. I call this one in the lecture the left-hand curved pier, for convenience; that is the right hand curved pier, and any ship wishing to come in has got to come from the sea down in this direction and through the channel here, into the lock which is shown at the bottom of the picture and through the lock, into the canal again and so on up to Bruges, and he reverse on the way out.

Now owing to the silting of the sand which I mentioned just now, they found it exceedingly difficult to keep this channel open to navigation and it is only by dredging all day and night that they can keep it open. They have got to dredge all day and all night. There is no stopping. Also, owing to the silting of the sand, at low water, at low tide, the sand dries right away out to this land you see here. This sort of curved line you see here and also on this side is the edge of the sand which is actually dry at low water. The result is that the channel at this particular spot here is very restricted in size, and I will show you an aerial photograph in a minute which illustrates that. It is only in the very centre of the channel that a ship can pass through.

At high tide that sand there is actually covered, that is to say, it is wet; probably enough for a small boy to sail his toy boat through, but for a ship coming from Bruges it is only in the very centre that the ship can get out and that has a very important bearing on this story.

Now this is an aerial photograph. I have several of these aerial photographs. They are taken from a height of 16,000 feet and this one here shows the left-hand curved pier and the right-hand curved pier of the entrance into the canal. It shows the actual sand. All this sand here is dry, no water over it at all, and so in the position where the end of my stick is the depth of water is one inch and here five feet and there twenty feet and here eight feet, five feet, two feet, one inch, nothing. It is only in the very centre, therefore, of the channel, that a ship can pass through, and that being so, this was without any doubt the ideal position to block that exit and that was what we had every intention of doing, if we could -- to block that exit at that very spot and that is what we did.

That is a German dredger at work. Probably a few hours before this photograph was taken, she has probably dredged out that piece there and perhaps 12 hours afterward there is just as much sand there as there was before. It is only by continual dredging they can keep this place open.

Now I am going to describe the Mole with a certain amount of detail, because it plays a rather important part in the story. The Mole itself is a tremendous thing. It starts here on the coast line.

The coast runs along the bottom of this picture, and it is solid out as far as there, rather a narrow solid structure, and this next piece is like an ordinary pier, built on piles or trestles, across it from the shore.

Up on to the broad part of the Mole a railway runs. You can actually see the railway curving off on to the Mole at the top. That railroad provided the Germans with a very rapid means of getting reinforcements on to the Mole, if desired, and if we wished to prevent them getting reinforcements on to the Mole in a hurry, the best way to do it would be to remove the railway -- and that is what we did. (Laughter)

This is a portion of the broad part of the Mole. I am afraid I haven't got a slide that actually shows the whole of it. The broad part of the Mole is a very long thing. It runs actually for about a little over a mile -- 1875 yards -- and it is slightly over 80 yard broad. It is an immense thing, and I apologize for telling you, it is bigger than anything you have in this country. (Laughter)

You may have some idea of its relative size, when I tell you that the black thing there is a German destroyer lying alongside the Mole and that was one of the favorite positions for them to lie -- they like lying; in fact, wherever they are, they lie.

On the outer side of this Mole, showing up rather whiter than the rest, there is a high wall, which stands right up above the level of the Mole, built for the purposes of preventing the high seas in

bad weather from coming over on to the Mole and washing everything off it and that high wall is 20 feet above the Mole itself and 29 feet above the highest level of those seas -- 29 feet above high tide, or 49 feet above low water. So anybody wanting to get on to the Mole from that side has got to get over that 29 foot wall and get down 20 feet. It was never intended that any ship should go alongside of the outer wall. The other side was made for ships to lie alongside, as you see them doing, with cranes and all the latest arrangements for ships to unload and load their cargo and that was the proper side, of course, to go alongside the Mole, and we went that side.

(Laughter)

Now, here is the Mole in sections. There is the level at high water and this part of the drawing shows this outer wall in sections. The shaded line is the actual floor of the Mole. The top of the wall itself is 29 feet above high water. Anybody wishing to get from there on to here, has to get over that 29 foot wall, over that little bit of top, drop four feet on a sort of parapet that runs along the top of the wall, climb over a handrail and then drop 16 feet on to the Mile. That is the way to get on from that side -- and this is what we did. (Laughter)

Now the broad part of the Mole, as you see, ends here, and the Mole itself narrows out into a thin strip, and extended another 360 yards right up to the Lighthouse. You can see the shadow of the Lighthouse in the photograph. Now on this extension that we call the Lighthouse extension, there was a battery of 7 guns. Those 7 guns were pretty well distributed along this place and they could fire in any direction. They could fire out in that direction or down in this direction -- any

direction they liked. Those 7 guns were a distinct menace to any ships running about off here, but here on the end of the broad part of the Mole, firing only in that direction, were three very heavy guns. I mean when I say very heavy guns, three guns which no ship which is likely to be in those waters, could possibly face. No ship could possibly face those three guns there.

Now I am going to tell you something about those guns, the actual position of those guns and why they were so useful. They put here (indicating) four barges, four very large barges from the river line, which were moored between the Mole here and a buoy down here, and the idea of these barges was to prevent any craft from suddenly rushing around the Lighthouse and coming down in this direction, getting past these guns and causing trouble inside, and down in this corner of the photograph they had a line of entanglement nets. They had 7 buoys with a line of entanglement nets moored between them, the idea being that no ship could cross here without getting these entanglement nets around her screws, so the screws of the ship would be helpless, and so any ship wishing to come in from the north and go down to this ideal position for blocking the canal, which is off the bottom of the picture, has got to pass around the Lighthouse here and then into here, in other words, she has got to pass within point blank range of those 3 guns. Now, that can't be done. It can't be done.

Also, as we wanted to get our block ships into the very best position of all, the ideal position I showed you just now, it was absolutely necessary that before the block ships arrived, we should remove or put out of action those 3 guns, and it was for that purpose, and for that purpose along,

that the vindictive, the iris and Daffodil went and stormed the Mole, to put out those 3 guns before the block ships arrived.

A lot of people imagine that the attack on the Mole is the whole thing and the blocking was a mere afterthought. Of course, that is ridiculous. It was an operation for blocking the canal and this attack on the Mole was merely what you call a diversion or some assistance to the blockers. Some people think we did it to make tradition for the British Navy, or it was an advertising stunt -- that horrible word stunt. I want to impress upon you very strongly that it was done for a substantial reason and that was to allow the block ships to get in. It was necessary to put those three guns out of action -- and that is what we did. (Laughter)

Now this picture here -- don't pay any attention to the wreck; it doesn't come in the story -- this picture here shows a portion of this extension of the Mole running out to the lighthouse, with one of the German guns on it. There were 7 of these guns on this extension.

Now if you can imagine for a moment a duel between this gun, we will say, and a ship steaming out past the Mole, say, within point blank range, out to sea, a thousand yards; a thousand yards is, of course, absolutely point blank range, you can imagine what the duel would be like. All the ship would see of that gun would be its muzzle and the gun shooting over the top of this wall. The ship might fire thousands of rounds and never hit it; it would be a fluke if she hit it, whereas the gun's crew would see a ship, like the Vindictive, 120 yards long, steaming past and she

couldn't possible miss her, except by a fluke; absolutely a fluke to miss a ship 120 yards long at a thousand yards. Why, we use to fire at a target less than the size of this screen, at a thousand yards, in the gun practice days before the war, with a 6-inch gun, and in one minute get 12 hits at a thing of this size, so you can imagine how easy it is to hit a ship, 120 yards long. It would be a fluke if she missed and it would be a fluke if the ship hit that. So I think you will agree that a ship passing here with these 7 guns facing her wouldn't have much of a chance. Fortunately they are not very heavy guns, for I will tell you what damage they actually did.

Now, in addition to these guns on the Mole, there were also guns around the entrance to the canal, but there were many other things we had to contend with. Between a place called Middlekirk and a place called Knocke, the whole of this coast was extremely well fortified. I don't suppose any coast was as well fortified as that one was, because it was most essential for them that they should be able to keep that coast. Between those two points they had 225 coast defense guns and out of those 225 guns, 136 of them were heavy guns, that is to say, over 6-inch. At the beginning of the German occupation of this coast they only had a few guns there. We used to come in and bombard them from 10,000 yards, which is nothing, of course, nowadays, and they didn't do so much damage, and then they got better guns and started hitting us at 15,000 yards, and then we got better guns and we started hitting them at 20,000 yards and so it went until the final bombardment which took place the day before we got in and that bombardment took place at 48,000 yards, which is some idea of the development of gunnery in this war, and

that is, probably, I don't know for certain, but that is probably the biggest range that any ship has ever fired at -- 48,000 yards. It is immense.

Well, of course, the presence of those guns made it absolutely impossible for a ship to wander about off here in daylight, and even an attempt at night would face the dangers of the star shells and the searchlights. Directly you would get within 5 miles and the whole place would be lit up like day, with all these guns firing at them and the ships wouldn't last 30 seconds, and so it was not so easy a problem to consider how you were going to get ships down the coast even at night.

But there were a great many other things we had to contend with. There were mines. The Germans did not like our ships wandering about off here at all and so they mined out to a distance of about 16 miles. They had all of this coast here prettily heavily mined. Of course they had channels through those mines, which they used to send their ships out by. Some people say, oh, that is very simple. All you have to do is to get through that channel. But how are you going to find it? That is simply a ridiculous suggestion to give any naval officer. You wouldn't take any notice of it for two reasons. In the first place, that information you got might be information especially sent out to get you to go over the very worse place of all and secondly, after you got your information, after you had started your ship, we will say, from Dover, a 10 hour trip across, after you started they might hear you were coming in some way, and the first thing they would naturally do would be to blow up their own safe channels, in case you happened to know where they were, and you would come along down their safe channels and you would go right into the

guns and would lose every blessed ship you had, and so we were faced with the alternative to come down here and sweep the channel with the mines ourselves, which is a very slow process. You cannot sweep a channel in a hurry. It has got to be done fairly slowly and they would see you coming, they would see the sweepers, they would realize that something was going to happen and they would be prepared and the other alternative was to take a chance -- and that is what we did. (Laughter)

Now outside of the mine fields, the Germans used their patrol craft. They used to send destroyers and trawlers and vessels of all kinds out, and they were of course, a distinct menace to us, because they might see you coming, and make a report to the defenses. Also they had submarines operating off here because throughout the entire ward, from start to finish, we always had our patrol craft outside here, well outside the mine field, watching them, in case they were coming out to play any of their nasty tricks on some inoffensive village on the coast, going to bombard us. We were always on the lookout for them, and they, of course, had their submarines patrolling, in the hope of being able to submarine them, and so we had to consider the question of these submarines.

The real worse menace over the patrol craft was the air craft. They had their air craft wandering about in this portion of the seas pretty continually, provided our own air craft were not there, (Laughter), because our own air craft at Dunkirk used to shake these fellows up. There was the chance if you started coming across here of one these fellows being up, say, ten or fifteen

thousand feet; he would see you coming and instantly he would report it to the defenses, the defenses would be prepared and the whole thing would be bungled.

So we had to consider this, and what with the guns in the canal entrance, the guns on the Mole, the guns on the coast, the patrol craft and the submarines and the air craft, I think you will allow that the problem was a somewhat knotty one. (Laughter)

Well, as a matter of fact, with one qualification the thing was looked upon as an impossibility and that qualification was the use of smoke. The use of smoke had been greatly developed in this war and we thought that if we could make an artificial fog just on the night when the wind was blowing gently toward the shore, make an artificial fog out here and let it float in front of you, hiding you from the defenses, all you have to do is come in behind it.

It sounds awfully simple, but as a matter of fact, if you think of it, it isn't quite so simple as it sounds, because if the fog that you are protecting yourself is going to hide you from the defenses, it is also going to hide your objective, the place you are trying to find yourself. So it isn't by any means such a simple thing as it sounds, but this use of smoke was the one and only thing which decided us to take this operation, the one and only thing. We considered that without smoke the thing was an impossibility.

This photograph shows two of the German guns on the coast. There is one; another one here, and so on. They were like that all the way along the coast. Of course, a good many of these photographs were taken when they got the coast back at the end of the war.

This is the Vindictive before she was fitted out. She was an old ship. She had done very useful work and she was just about the end of her tiller. Originally I think they were called "fleet rams." They had very big rams and they had a very good steering gear, so they could turn very rapidly. A very handy ship for ramming purposes and in this particular case we wanted a handy ship. You couldn't have really got a better one. After she was fitted out she looked somewhat different. We took the foremast off her and we had this fighting top put on and in that fighting top we had two guns and some Lewis guns and they were put there for a specific reason.

We knew that the outer wall was 29 feet above the water and therefore any gun in that ship less than 29 feet above the water could not fire down on the Mole even when you were alongside, couldn't even see over the top of the wall, and that.....

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...1500 passengers. That night they steamed over 180 miles.

A lot of people seem to think that the operation involved only 7 ships -- the three blocking ships, the vindictive, iris and Daffodil and a submarine. As a matter of fact there were 156 ships in this operation. It was an immense thing, took 5 months to plan out and it involved a very large number of specially picked officers and men.

Now, of course, a great many of the vessels we had were destroyers. They were used chiefly for guarding us from an attack, driving in the enemy patrols that happened to be out -- there weren't any, as a matter of fact -- and for guarding the small craft throughout the operation, in case anything did come out.

That is a photograph of a destroyer which has just depth-charged a submarine. It is a replica of one of the photographs that was on exhibition in New York sometime ago.

We also had a lot of these motor launches, which, I understand, were built over here. Now these motor launches were used chiefly for smoke. I told you that we decided to make an artificial smoke fog and we used these motor launches mostly for that, the idea was that they would take up certain positions according to the direction in which the wind was blowing so as to get the fog to cover the batteries, and to carry on making their smoke until the operation was over. They were mostly manned by naval reserve men and by royal artillery reserve men, and men who had not spent all of their life at sea, and the work they did was perfectly magnificent.

There was always the chance also that someone in the German Admiralty, Von Tirpitz, for instance, might get a sudden rush of courage and send the entire high sea fleet out, and so whenever there was a chance of that, our grand fleet, assisted by the sixth battleship squadron, commanded by Admiral Rodman, was at sea waiting for them.

A number of times we went out, hoping that these fellows would come along, have this sudden rush of courage -- and we would be able to get them. Some people imagine that they came to fight us at Jutland, but my own idea is that that is absolutely untrue. We happened to come along; it was very late in the evening and we couldn't get the full advantage of it, but the only time they did come out to meet us was when they came out to surrender.

Now, after all, with all the ships and all the guns and all the most modern inventions you can think of, they are no good unless you have the right men.

Now the difficulty as to getting the right men or getting the men that we wanted was rather considerable, because the man you want has got to be reliable; he is the type of man who is a volunteer, but we couldn't give a sort of extend welcome to any volunteer who would like to come along. We had to keep the thing an absolute secret and this was the difficulty. So it was finally decided that so many men, the very best men we could get, would be picked from each ship and so many officers from each squadron, and we would send them all down and train them up, and that is what we did.

I don't know, -- Admiral Rodman, of course, could tell you about it -- but I believe myself that a discussion took place between him and Admiral Beatty, he will probably tell me if I am wrong, about the question of the American men being used in this operation. But there was obviously one great difficulty. If we had taken crews out of American ships for this operation and sent them south for their special training, people would see them and would say, "Hello, what's all this about; this is a funny thing; American Officers and men down here; that is something curious and unusual," and suspicion would be aroused at once and the secret would leak out, and that reason alone prevented us from taking any of the men from the American fleet, and it was a very unfortunate thing because while I know they would have given anything to share in it, I know darn well they would have done every bit as well as our own people.

That photograph shows some of the men in a gas mask drill. These men were brought south, put through a special course of training in night fighting and so on, and then a little time before the operation came off, they were taken out to their ships, away from the shore, to a rather lonely anchorage where there was no communication with anyone, no letters written, so that the secret could not get out, and then, and only then, the men were told what they were going to do. As soon as they had been told, they were also told this: that any man wishing to withdraw has but to hand his name in and go. He would not be asked for any reason why he wished to withdraw and he would not be allowed to give any reason why he wished to withdraw, simply give in his name and go. No single man went, you can be quite sure. (Applause)

We told these men every single detail; we kept nothing from them at all. We told them every single detail, because we realized that that was good business. The chances were that a good many of the officers would be knocked out and if the men didn't know what the spirit of the thing was and what they were expected to do, they could hardly defend themselves.

This photograph is of another two of the men. These men wore the most awful rigs. They looked more like devils than men. They used to com charging around the decks, practicing the sword bayonets, and they used to frighten me out of my life.

That photograph there is taken from a snapshot of the Vindictive actually starting on the trip across.

We had among other things some flame throwers. The Germans invented the flame throwers and we thought they might like to know how they worked, so we had some bigger ones than they used. I think they are guaranteed to cut a man in half at 80 yards.

We made three attempts at this operation. On the first attempt we got within 15 miles of the place and the wind changed. The wind had been blowing on shore, everything perfectly satisfactory for making our artificial fog, our little screen to go in front of us and then the wind suddenly changed and blew from the south and made the thing impossible. The Admiral had to

decide very quickly. There we were, all at sea, whether he would postpone or not, and it is that sort of decision which is, without any doubt, the hardest part of a responsible man's work, giving a decision like that, and he very rightly, without any doubt, decided that the operation should be postponed. We all had to go back to the harbor again; a long trip and somewhat dangerous, because the whole thing was done at night and we had a very large number of craft at sea. One small craft got a hole in the bow and the captain sent a man forward to sit in the hole and when he had been sitting there for a little while, they began to work up speed and they got up to 27 knots and the bow of this motor boat came out of water, as you know it does in fast motor craft and feeling that he ought to stick by the squadron, he kept going round and round us at 27 knots the entire night.

I will tell you just one more story. One of these motor boats on this night of the first attempt broke down at the very outset and had to get towed back to Dover and get hoisted out of water and have his engine put right. Well, as soon as the engine was put right, it took some time, and he started off, about 5 hours late. He didn't want to be late for the operation. It was a very fast craft, and so he went as hard as he could for Zeebrugge, absolutely on a straight line, right across mines and everything else. (Laughter) he got down to Zeebrugge alright and he found nothing going on very much to his surprise and he had a somewhat rather exciting experience down, but to cut a long story short, as soon as he realized the thing was off, he went just as hard as ever back for Dover and he arrived back at Dover before we did! (Great Applause)

On the second attempt we made, we had been about 30 miles on the trip when it came on to blow very hard and the small craft couldn't face a very heavy sea and the thing had to be postponed again, when the men were all strung up to it and we knew that we were in for something pretty hectic. The spirit of the men at that time was very fine, because that is the time when a man shows his true character.

Now on the third attempt we made, the conditions were very fair when we started and when we got within 15 or 16 miles of Zeebrugge the first untoward event happened. It came on to rain. Now, we were depending on the air craft for doing the aerial work, at the same time so as to divert the Germans' attention to the air craft. Now you know they can't face a very heavy rain and they were unable to carry out their part of the plan. We had to do without the air craft, which was a very serious thing. The air craft put up a wonderful fight with it, but as a matter of fact they nearly came to grief, all except one.

The next thing that happened was that owing to the mist accompanying the rain, the ships that were going for a long range bombardment so as to divert attention, couldn't find out where they were, and the bombardment started about 20 minutes late, which might have been a very serious thing.

The next accident occurred when the Vindictive was towing the Iris and Daffodil the whole way across to make sure they arrived, because their steaming capacity was small, and about three-

quarters of an hour before they arrived, the hawser parted and the Iris and Daffodil were left behind.

That was a serious matter but the next thing and the most serious of all was with respect to the wind. About 20 minutes before we were due at Zeebrugge, due at the Mole, the wind suddenly died down and 5 minutes later it started blowing from the south, that is to say, it rendered our smoke practically useless, and as I told you before, the smoke was the one thing which had made us attempt what seemed otherwise to be impossible, and there we were. We were faced with a possible alternative of going back again, although we were right down at Zeebrugge, the thing which nobody would have give the order for, and certainly no one would have obeyed, or else go one, and do what we considered to be the impossible -- and that is what we did.

Now when we got just about here with the Vindictive, just off the top of the screen, we were going down, where we were just about to turn to go alongside where the Mole ought to be, we hadn't seen anything for some six miles, we hoped the Mole would be there, and there was a lot of smoke, the Germans started firing and lighting up a number of star shells, and that lighted up the place like day. So we suddenly shot out from the smoke screen and the first thing we saw was this battery of seven guns about 300 yards ahead. We went at full speed, with our helm over and came down this line there, and of course, we got a very bad time from that battery. We passed this gun, the gun out at the Lighthouse about 300 yards off and then we passed this last gun here about 50 yards off, and I told you before that a thousand yards is looked upon as point blank

range. Of course, this was simply ridiculous, but I don't know, I may be wrong, but my own personal opinion is that the fact that we were so close was the one thing that saved us. If we had been further off, I think they would have fired more deliberately, been a little more careful of their fire, owing to the extra difficulty of hitting us, and they would have fired at the waterline of the ship and sunk her. As it was, we were so very close, that they fired at the nearest thing, which of course, was this part of the ship, or the upper part. They killed a large number of the most important people. The two officers who were in charge of the storming parties were knocked out in that first minute. It was the same thing with the Officers; they were told to keep down below but they were determined to remain up on deck with the gangways, ready to help the men up. You can never get officers to stay down below if you give them fifty thousand orders.

We ran down here and we were straight alongside the Mole. As soon as we get here, the guns on this part of the Mole, of course, couldn't hit us, and as a matter of fact there were guns alongside the top of the wall and they couldn't hit us either; they couldn't depress the muzzle of the gun sufficiently.

The actual position we were in was here, right between these two sheds. And the two guns up in my fighting top fired very heavily at the destroyer and sunk her.

Now this slide is taken from an oil painting, which is in my possession. An artist, who got hold of some information from somewhere, did the picture up and asked me if I wouldn't criticize it.

Well, I sent the thing back about 5 times, and I gave him all the detail, and as far as I know, the thing is absolutely correct. There is the ship alongside the wall, and here are the men going out over the gangways.

Now these gangways suffered very severely. We were equipped with 18, and during that run past the 7 gun battery, 14 of those 18 were shot away. That left us with 4 and out of those 4, two were severely damaged, and that left 2, and over those 2 the men stormed the wall. The remaining 2 were repaired in time for the men when they came back again.

The hull of the ship, once alongside the wall, was absolutely safe. They couldn't touch us. There was a gun on the top of the wall, just here by these gangways, and it was only about 20 feet from my upper deck, and he couldn't hit us, and we were right under the Mole. There were two Germans in there, incidentally, and we left them there.

The other part of the ship, the funnels and the ventilators and the fighting top were showing up over the wall and the Germans concentrated all their fire on that part of the ship and of course it suffered considerably.

This picture is wrong. It is also taken from one of the illustrated papers, but it is wrong because it has got all these gangways where there were only two.

The first people to go out were the seamen. The seamen carried these ladders and they carried these out on to the Mole, across the parapet and then placed these ladders down a 16 foot drop. The main storming party consisted of marines and they got down rapidly. The marines immediately followed, carrying all their rifles, hand-grenades, Lewis guns, flame throwers, red sticks and so on, and the way these fellows went out was very fine. These gangways were only 20 inches broad, I might mention.

This picture shows the floor of the Mole. Here are some of the sheds that were set on fire by the guns in the fighting top.

Now these men, as you can imagine, under tremendous shell fire and machine gun fire, had a pretty poor time getting down this place. You can imagine what it is like going down a ladder with your back to the enemy and not knowing what is waiting for you at the bottom. The German personnel on the Mole, as far as we could find out, were roughly a thousand men. We were only supposed to put about 400 on the Mole. We considered that would be ample, because surprise gave us such a tremendous advantage, and we got, roughly, 400 men down on to the Mole.

These men, as I say, had quite a job getting down. A. good many of them were knocked out without getting on the Mole. The others made their way along towards the three guns on the end of the broad part of the Mole.

Now, the whole of this operation was done by time. You couldn't signal "Now do this and now do that and do something else." We did it all by what you call schedule -- I call it shed-Yule (pronouncing).

The idea was that we were due on the Mole at 12 midnight exactly, and the block ships were due at the end of the mole at 20 minutes past twelve. We had to get alongside at 12 o'clock, get our men down and knock out those three guns by 20 past. We were one minute late, as a matter of fact, at the Mole, it was a trip of over 105 miles -- and I actually had word at 18 minutes past twelve that those guns had been knocked out. (Great Applause)

Now these men who did the fighting on the Mole, of course suffered pretty heavily. Some of them were killed, a good many were badly wounded, and any man who was killed or knocked out, disabled entirely, we will say, and yet who got back on the ship, only got back because he was carried up one of this 16 foot ladders by a friend -- no other way. (Great Applause)

Well, to show you how well these men did: Out of the 400 men that we got down on the Mole, fought their way along and suffered in killed and wounded, the total number who were left behind on the Mole after we left -- was twelve. (Great Applause)

I think you will agree that carrying wounded men up vertically like that, under heavy gun fire, was a very fine thing and every man deserved the highest honor. You couldn't give them all

Victoria Crosses, so they were told to ballot for the one who should have it -- the marines who came down here were told to ballot for which marine should have it, and they voted for a man up there, and you can bet your bottom dollar that this fellow deserved it. He also belonged to a different regiment. All these men here were marine and infantry and this man was a Royal Marine Artillery man and there has always been tremendous competition between the two.

Now I will tell you what this man did in that fighting top. With two guns, eight men and one officer, they did tremendous execution. They set these ships on fire, they sunk that destroyer, they fired as these three heavy guns from behind them, and the Germans soon found out what was cause all the trouble and they concentrated at the fighting top and presently they hit it with a heavy shell and killed every man except one and he was badly disabled. He managed somehow to get out from the wreckage, found that one of the guns was damaged and the other in working order and went on with the fight by himself. (Applause) All that fellow had to do was to go down here, a very easy thing, go down to the doctor and have his wounds dressed, but instead of that, he stayed up and went on with the fight, and though he was knocked out, I am glad to say he is still alive and well, and he has got his Victoria Cross. (Great Applause)

Now this shows some of the damage to the Vindictive. This is one of the funnels. Shots were simple coming across. What it was I don't know; all I know is they came. Of course, if a bullet comes along, the chances are it will simply go through you and very likely doesn't hurt you, but

when a shell comes around and cuts off a large chunk of iron and that piece of iron starts flying about, of course it will cut you right in half.

This is the side of the fighting top. That heavy shell very nearly cut the thing in half. All this part of the bridge and the chart house and everything was very badly smashed up. These funnels looked like a lot of holes joined together by pieces of iron. (Laughter)

You can imagine what it was like steaming back. We were steaming back 17 knots and the flames coming out through all these holes. It looked exactly as if the whole ship was on fire. It was a very wonderful sight.

Those are the funnels there and the ventilators. Besides the superstructure on the ship, on the side away from the Mole, both of these holes were made by shots that went through everything having come in from the other side.

There is some of the wreckage of the gangways; some of it.

Now this photograph here shows the fighting top up here. It is really behind the bridge.

We had a howitzer that we were going to use to lob shells over the top, and the gun's crew were waiting in the doorway -- ten men. A shell came in through this hole here and killed the whole

ten. We told off a second gun's crew and they came out and pretty soon these ten were killed.

We told off another gun's crew and they worked until the gun was knocked out.

This was one of the flame throwing huts. I had a shelf built on the corner of this where I could stand up myself and look out through this sort of hut. It was a very good position for me because it was so close to the Mole and in addition you could see the whole range here, from one end to the other. We didn't stay in there very long. I had one other officer who was working the flame thrower and we were only there about 7 or 8 minutes and he got knocked out and my one remaining signalman who was left, told me there was over 200 holes in it.

Five minutes after we got alongside, a submarine came along, steaming to remove the railway, and she ran into the viaduct, the railway viaduct here. She was carrying several tons of high explosives aboard, and then she got out in their little dinky and got well away, before the submarine went off. The first thing that they discovered was that the propeller had come off. That was a very trying time. The tide was running this direction, running through the viaduct, and they had to pull out against it to get away. The boat was very badly hit. They had the light of the Germans on the viaduct here with machine guns and they were firing at these fellows from a point blank range; in fact, you might say the range was as low as 15 feet. How it was these fellows were not killed, one simple cannot state, but I know that on that particular night many miracles happened and this was one of them. We got all six fellows back.

After the six fellows here pulled out and when they got about 300 yards away, the submarine went up, the viaduct went up, the railway went up and the Germans on the railway went up.

That little white streak you see across the gate there is a foot bridge, put there by the Germans afterward, so that they could get articles to the ship, but they were never able to repair the railway and the consequence was that the efficiency of the Mole as a base for coal supplies or anything else was very greatly decreased. That is the hole actually made of the viaduct --105 foot span.

These six fellows, three officers and three men that went in the submarine went into what was absolutely considered certain death. Everybody else thought that they had a possible chance, but these six fellows couldn't have possibly considered that they would ever get back -- absolutely certain death. We got the whole six back -- a most extraordinary miracle.

The captain of the submarine, a young officer called Sandford, Lieutenant Sandford, got his Victoria Cross. I am sorry to say he didn't survive for long to enjoy it, because he died just the other day of typhoid -- a very sad thing. These six men were picked up by a boat which steamed across, the boat being commanded by his brother, Lieutenant-Commander Sandford. Now, so much for the Vindictive.

The Daffodil, in accordance with her orders, directly we got alongside, the Daffodil came in and started pushing in. Unfortunately there was a very heavy sea at the time and we couldn't get secure and I very reluctantly had to give the Daffodil orders to carry on the pushing throughout the operation, which she did. I say, very reluctantly, for two reasons. One was, we couldn't get her men out across us very quickly; they climbed in over the bows, and the other was, being so far out from the wall, she was very much exposed to gun fire and that she wasn't sunk I also think was a miracle.

The Iris went in about 100 yards ahead of us, in accordance with the orders, but owing to the heavy sea they couldn't get secured and they finally turned around, steamed around here and came alongside the Vindictive on the other side, to send the men over the Vindictive. While she was alongside, a heavy shell, from somewhere, I don't know where, came in and killed 58 out of 62, who were waiting down below for orders.

The captain of the iris, Commander Valentine Gibbs, a fellow I had known since he was a tiny boy, and a very, very great friend of mine, had both of his legs shot off. He was an awfully fine fellow; one of the very, very best that you could possibly meet anywhere, and in this operation he only lived for one thing and that was to put his ship alongside and get his men out. He had no other thought, and after he had his legs shot off, he was lying on the bridge and he recovered consciousness he would only ask one question every time and that was, "How are things going." That's all he asked until he died. A very, very fine fellow. (Great Applause)

Now the block ships arrived off the end of the Mole at 20 minutes past twelve. They were absolutely dead up to time. They steamed past the three guns, some of which were still in action and gave them a little trouble. They steamed past thee and came down. The Thetis got very heavily fired on by the heavy gun batteries there and her and down here, and also down at the end of the viaduct all around the entrance to the canal. The Thetis came down here. She had an awful struggle. At one time they thought they wouldn't be able to get any further. They finally struggled on and by the time they got here, they were very heavily on fire and out of control.

Exactly the same thing happened to the Merrimac. They couldn't pass the defenses, simple got smashed up and that is one of the great difficulties all blocking ships have to face. First of all, to find the place they were trying to get at, because you have got to work at night; second, having found it, to get there past the defense guns, and third, having got there, to turn your ship around and sink it in a way to block the channel. Three things, which one or the other or combination of them, have been the cause of every single blocking operation failing throughout naval history, until this particular one. The point that some people overlook is that this is the first blocking operation which has ever succeeded. (Applause)

When the Thetis got there, they sank the ship. Now, these blocking ships were filled with mines, all the way along the bottom. All the captain needed to do was to press a button, the mine would go off, the bottom of the ship went out, the ship would sink quickly and on an even keel and that

is what they did, and incidentally she is still there. They made signals to the other two, directing them to the entrance.

The Intrepid got in here and as far across the channel as she could; the captain pressed the button, the mines went off, the bottom the ship went out, the ship sank and incidentally she is still there.

The Iphigenia followed on and put her helm hard over and ran the ship over until it was on the shore, the captain pressed his button, the mine went off, the bottom of the ship fell away, the ship sank and incidentally she is still there. Now those two ships absolutely blocked that channel for 5 months.

I told you at some length at the beginning of the lecture and I will repeat it now, that the only channel a ship can pass through, is in the very, very centre, and both those ships absolutely blocked that channel. Some of the photographs you will see will show water here between the ship and the shore and the same here, the same there -- it is wet in the picture but that doesn't mean that a ship can pass there, because the cannot. It is not sufficiently deep, and both those ships absolutely blocked that channel and the Germans, after 5 months of heavy work, dredged a little channel out through here through the sand. I will show you some pictures of that in a moment.

Now this is one of the aerial photographs showing the block. There is the Iphigenia and Intrepid. You see it is wet there, but a ship can't get through, because there isn't enough depth there, perhaps a foot or something like that at high tide.

Now one of the things you have to consider is how you were going to rescue the crews. It is a very difficult thing. Here you have the ships and right alongside of them the German batteries and you have to get the crews off somehow. Well, they called for volunteers from the motor launches and they had great difficulty as to who to send in, because everybody volunteered in this particular case. A motor launch came in here under tremendous fire from the shore batteries, and took off the crew of the Iphigenia and took off the crew of the Intrepid. She pushed across to another cutter, made fast to that, steamed out backwards, stern first, until she got her cut, and then turned around and put all the crews on board the destroyer. That motor launch, I might mention, at a pinch could take 50 or 60 men, and she actually brought off that night -- 105. That was a very fine piece of work, one of the things that has been least said of. I think in the account of this story, it is a very, very fine piece of work. It was done by Lieutenant Commander Deane, of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves, and they gave him what he deserved -- a Victoria Cross.

Each of these ships had 87 men on board and in the case of the Intrepid, she actually went in behind some of the German batteries and we got the whole 87 back.

That is a German photograph. If we couldn't get any information ourselves, we generally got it from the Huns. There is the Thetis, Intrepid and Iphigenia, taken by a German aeroplane, about a thousand feet up. That is the Thetis on the....

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Between the time of the 23rd of April, the day that we visited Zeebrugge, until about October, we dripped an average of 4 tons of bombs per day on these people.

Now, of course, as long as we were alongside of the Mole, we were protected, but directly we got away from the mole, we didn't deceive ourselves from the fact that we were going to get it pretty heavy, but we put up a tremendous smoke screen. The wind was then blowing off shore and the German were simply firing everything they had. I should think by the sound of it, from the feeling of it, that the shells were dropping somewhere near the ship, but the whole ship was vibrating.

On the way across, my quartermaster had come in for a certain amount of criticism, perhaps sarcasm. During the operation he had his arm shot off and there was nobody else and I had to steer the ship away from the Mole. I hadn't steered the ship for many years and it was a rather object lesson for me. There is an aerial view of the burning ship after she got back.

There is a rather interesting story. As soon as the Germans discovered what we were up to and what was going on, they started firing at that portion of the Mole all of their heavy guns. One of these heavy shells hit the top of the wall and cut away a large chunk of the top of the wall, a piece weighing about a half a tone and it fell here on my ship, on the ship's side and jammed as you see it here and remained there during the entire trip back. We knew nothing about it being there until we arrived at Dover. Sounds almost uncanny; sounds like a fish story. I might mention that after we had taken a few little souvenirs, I present the main block, which still weighs over 700 pounds to the Imperial Museum in London, where it is now, as a reminder of the operation. (Applause) it is an extraordinary thing, with all our vibration and steaming 17 knots that that should have stayed on the ship's side.

There are four of the wounded. These men, of course, were perfectly splendid. One can't say too much about them. One of the men I went to see 24 hours after we got back in the Dover hospital. He had both his legs off and he had his right arm injured and he had been suffering awfully. I asked this fellow if he was sorry he came and he said in a very simple answer, "No, sir, because I got on the Mole." He was awfully fine. (Great Applause)

They were about the only officers whom we had left who weren't smashed up, more or less.

Some of the men cheering the camera man.

The success of this operation, of course, was due to several things, but there are one or two that I want to lay special stress on.

The man who originally planned this thing was Vice Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, and the man under whose direction this operation was carried out was also Vice Admiral Sir Roger Keyes. He was in it absolutely up to the helm. He was in a destroyer actually at the time the operation was going on. He was the man who would have had to take the blame if anything had gone wrong, and so he is the man, above all others, who deserves the credit. (Great Applause)

Another point - I think when one hears a story like this, it is well to try and draw a moral from it, but I am not preaching a sermon and I want to leave you people to draw your own moral, but might I mention this: the cooperation between the Officers and the men in this thing was the very important matter. The men trusted their Officers and the Officers trusted the men and without that actual trust, we should never have gotten anywhere at all and without the spirit of the men themselves, we shouldn't have gotten anywhere at all. It was due to these things, more than anything else, that the thing was a success.

Now we ought to apply that to civil life. After all, employers and employees are officers and men. Do they cooperate, have they sufficient trust in one another, and have they the right spirit? It is worth considering. (Great Applause)

(The last slide was that of King George V, shown amid great applause.)