

27th. December 1940.

Senior Officer,  
H.M.S. Flotilla.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report on the loss  
H.M.S. Mercury on the 25th. December 1940.

Towards the end of the sweep on the third lap, my  
orepesa float dipped and I surmised a mine was in the sweep -  
it was some time before the mine was cut and appeared on the  
surface. The orepesa float, however, did not break surface and  
it continued to run submerged after the lap was completed, I  
gave a signal to the Senior Officer requesting permission to  
pull out of line and investigate.

On permission being granted I proceeded to steam at  
full speed and by zigzagging and altering speed endeavoured to  
clear the obstruction if such existed.

The orepesa ran on the surface for short periods but  
again dipped.

Orders were given to remove the primers from the  
depth-charges, and this was carried out.

Speed was then reduced to slow ahead; the kite slowly  
hove in, seen to be clear and then brought inboard. The sweep  
was then slowly hove in until a black object was observed in  
the otter.

I then received a request from the sweeping deck to top engines. The crepesa was then brought inboard, and the lost wire unshackled. I then proceeded aft and observed a dark object in the otter, gave orders to clear the sweeping deck and returned to the bridge.

The signalman was then instructed to report the position to the Senior Officer.

My intention was then to proceed slow ahead, veer sweep and if the obstruction was a mine, to explode it on the bottom, and in any case cut the sweep when sufficient wire had been reeled for safety.

It was at this moment, 1632, a very heavy explosion occurred, and I immediately proceeded aft to investigate and found there were no casualties. From the first investigation no actual damage could be observed in the hull, the rudder was badly bent and out of action. A report was sent to the Senior Officer by V/S. 3-3-32

At 1800 the ship was taken in tow by 'Mangrove'. At 1820 the water had reached to wardroom level, and the Senior Officer was informed.

4071

1941

At 2040 the tow parted. At 2051 'Almond' came  
ongside with instructions to take off everybody. This operation  
a completed by 2110. At 2115 'Mercury' sank.

Particulars of sweep :-

250 fathoms Port sweep.

15 do. float wire.

50 do. kite wire.

6 cutters in accordance with R.S.11 instructions.

From the time of the explosion until the ship was  
andoned, everything possible was done by all the officers and  
en for the saving of the ship.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

B. A. Palmer

Lieut-Commander,, R.N.V.R.  
in Command.

(LOSS OF H.M.S. "MERCURY").

No.18.

FLAG OFFICER IN CHARGE,  
MILFORD HAVEN?

4071

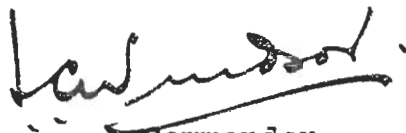
941

Submitted.

2. It is noted that the ship was stopped, and the float hoisted inboard after a 'dark object' had been seen in the otter.

3. I am satisfied that everything was done to try and save the ship, but her light construction made this impossible. After the tow had parted, and water had risen to the level of the Ward Room deck, I ordered all ratings who could be spared to embark in "Almond". A short time later, whilst "Almond" was still alongside, I ordered everybody to be taken off. The ship sank ten minutes after this had been done, in approximately 51 deg. 58.3 mins. North, 6 deg. 24.2 mins. West.

4. The work performed by "Mangrove" and "Almond" in the darkness was most commendable.



Commander,  
Senior Officer, 11th. M.S.F.

"Jeanie Deans",  
27th. December 1940.

OFFICER IN CHARGE
DECISION <i>per</i>
MILFORD HAVEN.

Milford Haven

2 7/12/40

O. I. C.

Milford Haven.

206/79 M. H.

4071

415

I beg to submit that as the result  
the loss of my ship, certain Confidential  
Publications went down therein.

A list of the salvaged books together  
with the Register have been handed in to  
Confidential Book Office where a  
list of the lost books has been compiled.  
Certain books were in the self sending  
ammunition ships & the remainder, being those  
in use at the time, were in the chart room  
and were lead weighted.

I consider all the missing publications  
safe from salvage by the enemy.

Every effort was made to save the entire  
run of publications but the time at our  
disposal was very limited, there being only  
an interval of five minutes between the  
completion of abandoning ship & her sinking.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant

B. H. Palmer Lt. Com. 1st Regt. C.O. 4th Mo. Infantry

FLAG OFFICER IN CHARGE,  
H.M.S. MILFORD HAVEN.  
Date 30 Dec 1940

Supply  
Receipt  
Acquaint  
Destruction

Note for S.P. or C.B. Books

(Each class of book is to be shown on a separate form.)

How many copies	Registered numbers of copies	Reference number of book	Date of book	Remarks
LIST OF BOOKS LOST ON H.M.S. "MERCURY".				
of each.	532	Cover for aircraft signal books and code.		
	4024	02192 (2) ✓		
	3988	02226 ✓		
	4025	02226 N (1) ✓		
	2644	02227 ✓		
	696	02254 ✓		
	932	02275 ✓		
	153	02275 ✓		
	1376	02275 N ✓		
	1377	02275 N ✓		
	1215	02315 and A ✓		
	1215	02316 and A ✓		
	3110	02323 (2) ✓		
	1523	02358 (1) ✓		

REGISTER	BB. 15.4.41
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16/1/41

The above mentioned documents have been supplied  
received from

lost from H.M.S. "Mercury"

Signature

Rank

APPARSON

W.A.S. (for C.B.O.)

I hereby certify that—

- (a) The titles, reference numbers, and copy numbers of the above mentioned books have been compared with those given in the order for destroying them and in the Register and the books have been burnt in our presence
- (b) The books have been erased from the list of books on charge in the Register.
- (c) We have verified that no books or documents other than those ordered to be destroyed were included among the books destroyed.

Distributing Authority's  
Date Stamp.

Signature

Rank

Signature

Rank

Forwarded

Commanding Officer.

This Form to be rendered in duplicate to the Distributing Authority, who is to forward one copy to the Admiralty.

H.M.S. ....

Date.....

**Supply  
Receipt  
Acquaint  
Destruction**

Note for S.P. or C.B. Books

(Each class of book is to be shown on a separate form.)

How many copies	Registered numbers of copies	Reference number of book	Date of book	Remarks
	LIST OF BOOKS LOST ON H.M.S. "MERCURY".			
of each.	1426	C.B. 1937	✓	
	1465	C.B. 1937 A		
		<del>C.B. 1938 A</del>		
		B.R. 54/63		
		B.R. 62		
		B.R. 63		
		B.R. 88		
		B.R. 145		
		B.R. 154		
		B.R. 184		
		B.R. 219		
		B.R. 233		

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Rank.....

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Distributing Authority's  
Date Stamp.

Signature ..... Signature .....

Rank ..... Rank .....

Forwarded

.....  
Commanding Officer.

STRIKE OUT INAPPLICABLE SECTION.

This Form to be rendered in duplicate to the Distributing Authority, who is to forward one copy to the Admiralty.

Sta. 6691/36. Sta. 3/38.



H.M.S. ....

Date .....

Supply  
Receipt  
Acquaint  
Destruction

O.O.  
Note for ~~S.P.~~ or ~~C.B.~~ Books  
(Each class of book is to be shown on a separate form.)

How many copies	Registered numbers of copies	Reference number of book	Date of book	Remarks
of each.	LIST OF BOOKS LOST ON H.M.S. "MERCURY".			
		O.U. 5516/40		
		O.U. 5366/35		
		O.U. 5371/39		
		O.U. 6290/37		
		O.U. 5339/40		
		O.U. 5416/32		
		O.U. 5242		
		O.U. 5242 A		
		O.U. 5242 (2)		
		O.U. 5748		
		O.U. 5254 (38)		
		O.U. 5339 A (2)		
		O.U. 5408		
		O.U. 5408 A		
		O.U. 5463		

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Distributing Authority's  
Date Stamp. Signature ..... Signature .....  
Rank ..... Rank.....

Forwarded

Commanding Officer.

STRIKE OUT INAPPLICABLE SECTION.

H.M.S. ....

Date.....

**Supply  
Receipt  
Acquaint  
Destruction**

O.O.

Note for ~~S.P.~~ or C.B. Books

(Each class of book is to be shown on a separate form.)

How many copies	Registered numbers of copies	Reference number of book	Date of book	Remarks
each.	LIST OF BOOKS LOST IN H.M.S. "MERCURY".			
		O.U. 6066		
		O.U. 6118		
		O.U. 6184 (30)		
		O.U. 6184 (1) and (2)		
		O.U. 6282		
		O.U. 6329 (1)		
		O.U. 6333		

REGISTER	
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Signature ..... Signature .....

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.....  
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