

ADD EXETER, PLYMOUTH (TIMED 8:53A)

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY WINSTON CHURCHILL, ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLED OFFICERS AND MEN ABOARD THE EXETER, TOLD THEM:

"WE ARE SPECIALLY ABLE TO CONGRATULATE YOU UPON THE FORTUNE WHICH ENABLED YOU TO FIGHT AN ACTION IN THE OLD STYLE, INSTEAD OF THE LONG, INTRICATE STRUGGLE WITH MINES AND U-BOATS WHICH YOUR COMRADES IN THE FLOTILLAS HAVE BEEN WAGING HERE.

"THIS GREAT ACTION WILL LONG BE TOLD IN SONG AND STORY. WHEN YOU CAME UP THE RIVER THIS MORNING, WHEN YOU ENTERED THE HARBOR, YOU SAW THE CROWDS CHEERING FROM THE BANKS. ONE MAY ALMOST HAVE THOUGHT THERE WERE OTHER SPECTATORS IN THE GREAT SHADES OF THE PAST, CARRYING US BACK TO DRAKE, RALEIGH, AND THE GREAT SEADOGS OF OLDEN TIMES.

"IF THEIR SPIRITS BROODED ON THIS SCENE, YOU WOULD BE ENTITLED TO TELL THEM: 'WE, YOUR DESCENDANTS, WILL MAKE WAR, AND HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE LESSONS YOU TAUGHT US.'

"MANY MONTHS, PERHAPS SOME YEARS, OF LONG AND ANXIOUS STRUGGLE LIE BEFORE US, AND WE FACE THE FUTURE IN A SPIRIT OF SERIOUS RESOLVE.

"YOU ALL HAVE LOST GOOD COMRADES, BUT YOU ARE HERE AND YOUR GALLANT SHIP IS BACK TO CHEER THE HEARTS OF YOUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. YOU HAVE COME BACK WITH YOUR WORK NOTABLY AND FAITHFULLY ACCOMPLISHED IN A WORTHY CAUSE, WITH YOUR HONORS TATHERED AND YOUR DUTY DONE."

ATTIRED IN A SHORT NAVAL GREATCOAT AND WITH A NAUTICAL CAP PERCHED RAKISHLY ON HIS HEAD, CHURCHILL SAID:

"IN THIS SOMBRE, DARK WINTER WHEN, APART FROM THE NAVY, WE HAVE BEEN AT WAR AND YET NOT AT WAR, IN THESE LONG MONTHS WHEN WE HAVE HAD TO WATCH THE AGONY OF POLAND AND NOW OF FINLAND, THE BRILLIANT ACTION OF THE PLATE IN WHICH YOU TOOK MEMORAL PART CAME LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHT ON THE SCENE, CARRYING WITH IT ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL WHO ARE FIGHTING, TO OURSELVES AND OUR ALLIES, AND CARRYING WITH IT CAUSE FOR REJOICING TO FREE MEN AND FREE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD....AS YOU KNOW, ALL OVER THE WORLD YOUR COMRADES OF THE ROYAL NAVY ARDENTLY AND EAGERLY ARE AWAITING OPPORTUNITY OF EMULATING YOUR EXAMPLE."

AFTER HIS SPEECH CHURCHILL TURNED TO A NEARBY OFFICER AND SAID: "WE ARE NOT GOING TO SEE IF WE CAN FIND THE WOUNDS. YOU SEEM TO HAVE HEALED THEM UP."

HIS STATEMENT APPARENTLY WAS TRUE FOR APART FROM TWO FUNNELS PITTED WITH HOLES FROM TOP TO BOTTOM THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF SHELL DAMAGE TO THE EXETER.

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Exeter - Graf Spee