

SOME COMMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION ON NEVER TRUST A FISHERMAN MEMORIES OF THE 2002 TOUR¹

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I have read the article by Dale Hjort “Never trust a fisherman – memories of the 2002 tour” published in “The Gallipolitan – Spring 2003” with great interest.

The sad end of the British submarine *E15* was also the subject of my article “Ostatnia misja *E15*” (“The last mission of *E15*”) which was published in one of the Polish maritime magazines (“Okrety Wojenne”, 1/2000(36)) and which was the result of two years of research.

Mr. Hjort’s article provided me with some new information, but – as my text was based mainly on research at the battlefield and in the Turkish sources – I can add a little to the story, answer some of his questions, as well as ask a few more, to which hopefully some readers can give me a reply.

In different sources, books and articles published in the West and in Turkey there are a lot of speculations about the exact number of casualties that the crew of *E15* suffered as a result of a single hit scored by one of 150/40 mm. cannons of the Dardanos / Hasan-Mevsuf Battery (Fort No. 8). The number of dead varies between 7 and 3. The definitive answer seems to be given by one of the most reliable, detailed and still unpublished Turkish sources, the diary of Lieutenant Commander Nazmi Akpınar, who was then responsible for the minefield in the Dardanelles. He writes that 4 officers and 20 seamen had been captured, a commander killed and 6 of the crew were missing. Actually, we know that the number of officers of the E-class submarines was not 4, but 3. In the photo of the crew in captivity (published also in Mr. Hjort’s article, p. 17) we can see two of them – the third one is the former British vice-consul in Çanakkale, Mr. Palmer Clarence (first from the right in the sitting row). At the British Consular Cemetery in Çanakkale we can find only 3 gravestones related to *E15*. The first one, belonging to Lieutenant Commander Theodore Stuart Brodie with the date of April 17, 1915, does not raise any questions. But the two other, belonging to Able Seaman F. J. Cornish and E. R. A. 2nd CL E. V. Hindman, and having the dates of April 18, 1915, give the opportunity for some speculations. Were their corpses (first considered as missing) just found a day later and the date on their graves reflects this fact, or were they killed indeed a day later? Maybe they voluntarily decided to stay on board *E15* to defend her as long as possible from being taken over by the Turks? We should remember that *E15* was then one of the most modern submarines, and lying almost untouched (only with one hole in the casing) on the beach at Kepez was a perfect gift for the German intelligence. Or, maybe Cornish and Hindman stayed in the ship to destroy some top-secret documents left by Palmer? Lieutenant Commander K. Edwards (*We dive at dawn*, Rich & Cowan, London 1939) writes that on board *E15* were some

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top-secret documents and orders of essential importance for the landings at the Gallipoli Peninsula, that were to start a few days later. Maybe the real task of the *E15*'s mission was to cross the Dardanelles, meet somewhere by the shore of the Marmora Sea with one of the US diplomats and forward him those documents. During WWI the US Embassy in Constantinople officially represented the interests of the United Kingdom. We also know that one of the American diplomats (named Einstein) several times tried to contact the captured crew. Finally, we do not know what has happened to the other 4 missing sailors? Had they been drawn in the Dardanelles while leaving *E15* under Turkish fire and their corpses never found? All sources seem to forget about their fate.

And now something about another photo – the one showing *E15* aground at Kepez Point (Mr. Hjort's article, p. 17). A Turkish torpedo-boat behind her is *Musul* and a Turkish Navy officer (seen on the forward right) is most probably Lieutenant Commander Vossidlo alias Wossidlo – a German Navy officer of Czech, Slovak or Polish origin, who was a commander of the Anadolu Hamidiye Fort (Hamidieh I) and an expert on shore artillery.

It is also worthwhile to mention that before the wreck of *E15* was finally torpedoed by a steamboat commanded by Lieutenant Godwin (Lieutenant Commander Eric Gascoigne Robinson commanded the whole operation from another steamboat, but did not torpedo *E15* himself, as lots of historians claim) the Turks managed to remove from the submarine some of the most sophisticated equipment and 10 torpedoes. In the Turkish Naval Museum at Beşiktaş / Istanbul we can still see a few relics of *E15* (including the periscope) as well as some of the personal belongings of the crew (uniforms, sword of the commander T. S. Brodie and a straw hat, belonging maybe to vice-consul Palmer).