



Sink The Battleship Tirpitz: Operation Source

(11 September to 8 October 1943)

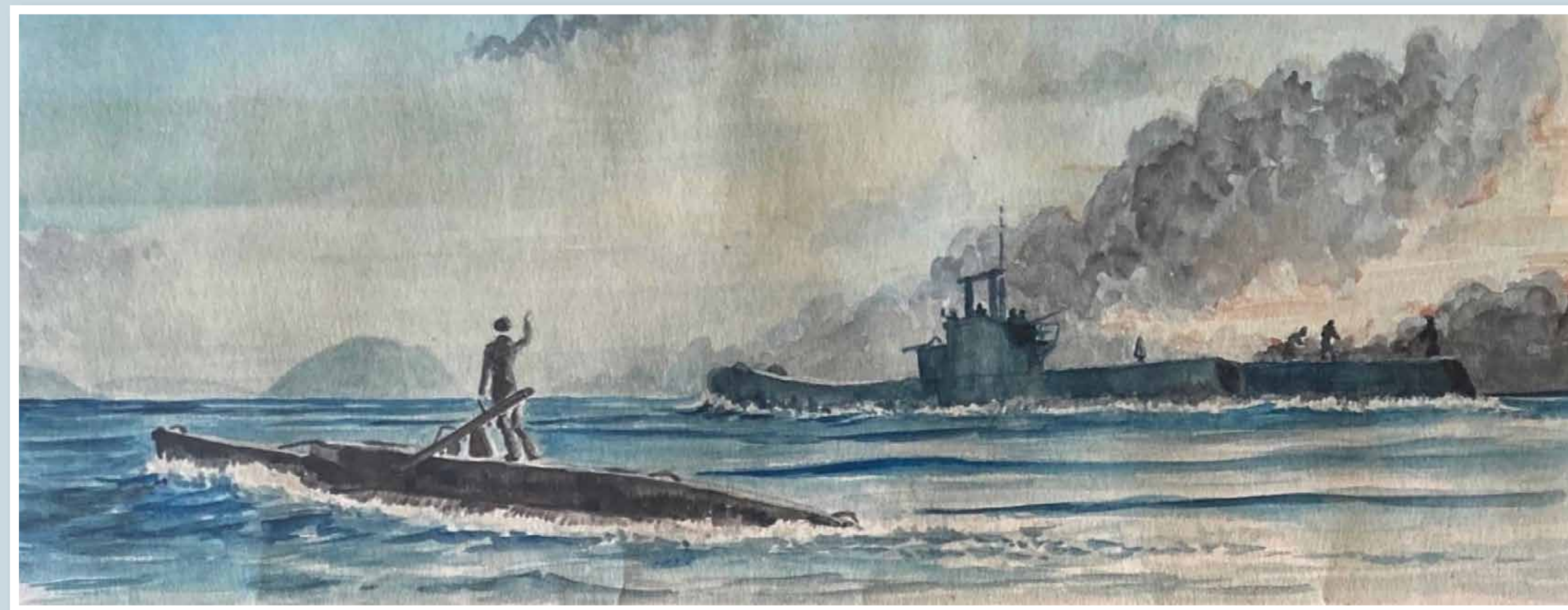
In September 1943, from the waters below this cairn, was mounted one of the most daring raids of all time, the operation to sink the German Battleship TIRPITZ by midget submarines (X-Craft) carrying explosive charges.

The significance for Kylesku was that the midget submarine training was conducted here in Loch Cairnbawn below. Training was rugged and thorough, including cutting through nets and 'escape and evasion' techniques for personnel. It also included each midget submarine being subjected to depth charge explosions to familiarise the crews with what it was like being under attack.

After this extensive training, six midget submarines were towed by larger submarines on a journey north of some 1000 miles to the German Battleship TIRPITZ, then sheltering in a fjord in the very north of Norway. None of the midget submarines survived the mission (Operation Source) but with two of the X-Craft penetrating the defences of the great battleship and laying charges below her keel on 22nd September, the ship was extensively damaged. The brave crews were rewarded with gallantry medals, including two Victoria Crosses.

This was one of the most secret of operations of World War II, and the area around Kylesku was prohibited. However, to the great credit of the local population 'they saw much and said nothing.'

Nine people lost their lives on Operation Source, and a total of forty lives were lost world wide in operations of this type and accidents during World War II. Their names are enshrined on the memorial bronze, mounted on the adjacent cairn.



Watercolour by Donald Cameron VC, whilst in a German PoW Camp



A midget submarine (X-Craft) during training exercises



The map shows the route of the submarines to the TIRPITZ, berthed some 1000 miles to the north of Kylesku.