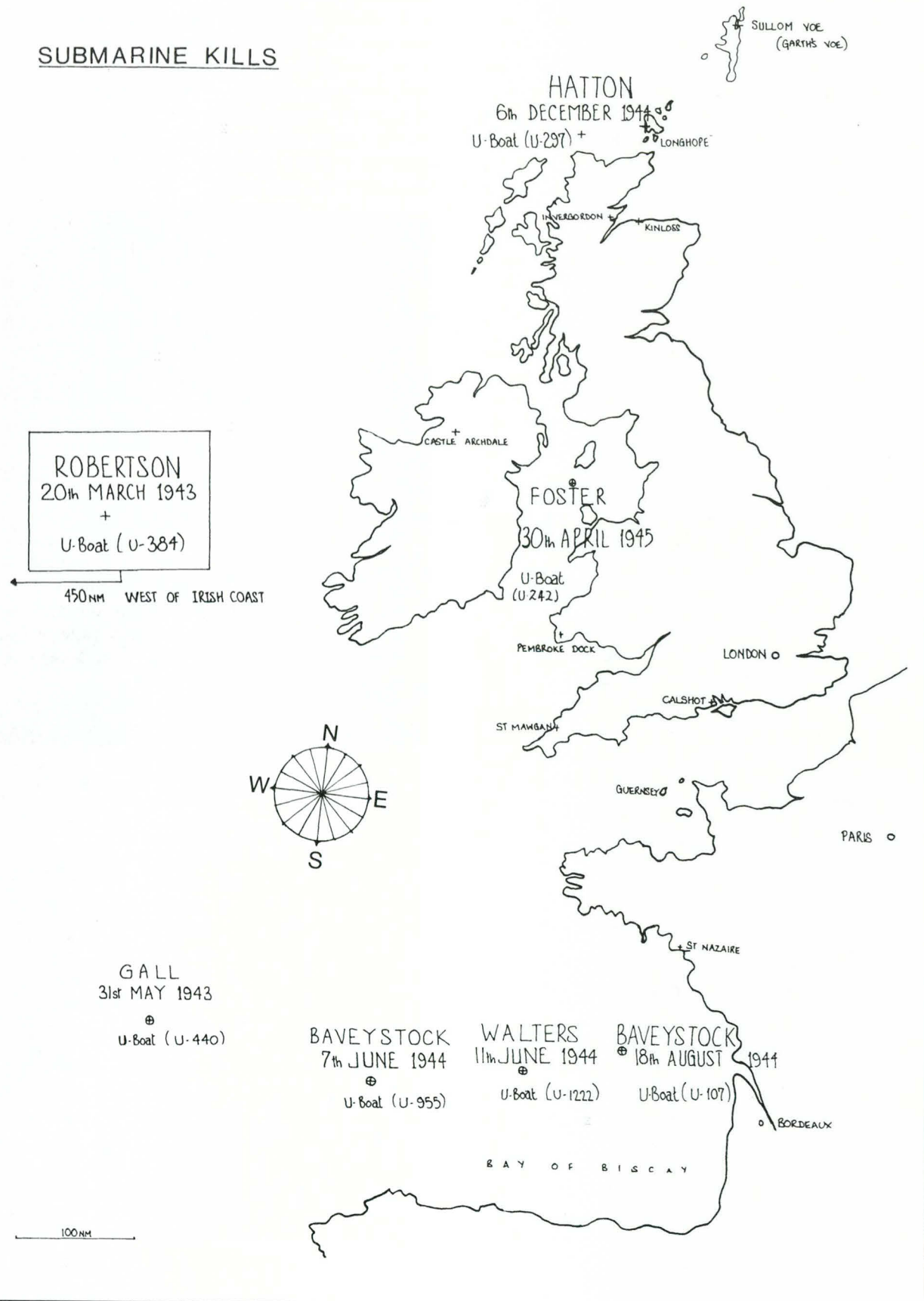


SUBMARINE KILLS



FINALE 1945

The new year opened with the weather taking a hand. Normal operations had been maintained for the first three weeks of January but, from the 22nd onwards, the weather became intensely cold, with fog, low cloud and snow. Conditions became so serious that the Lough was frozen over and aircraft had to be brought up the slip. At one time there were 37 aircraft on the slip at Castle Archdale and normal flying for the Squadron could not be resumed until 7th February.

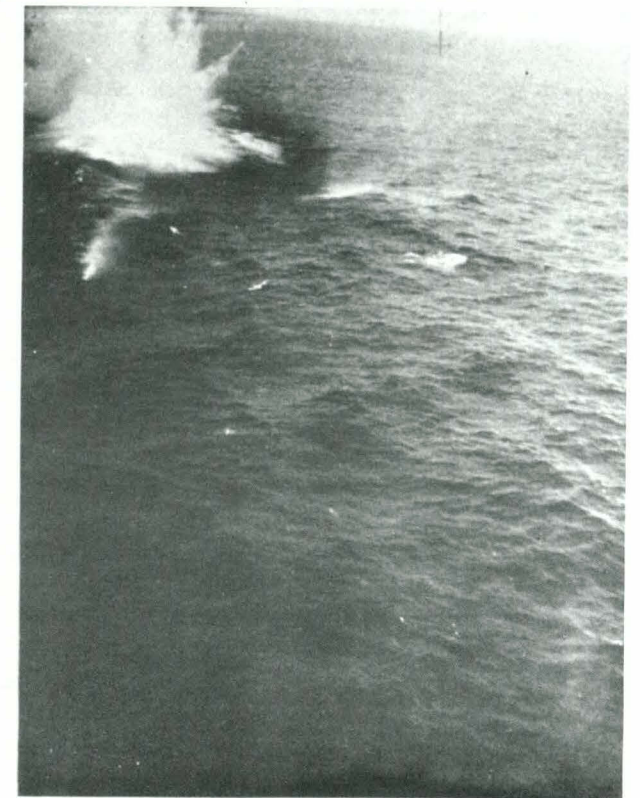


Sunderland Mk IIIA, NS/Q (ML742).
The A indicates a new type

Submarine sightings were still fairly frequent; four in March, and two in April. The second incident in April resulted in the Squadron's last official 'kill' of the war. In fact it was a half a kill, the success shared with the frigates HMS Hesperous and HMS Havelock, both of the 14th Escort Group. It is interesting because success was achieved in part through the use of sonobuoys to localize the target; the first time a 201 crew had done this. The contact was U-242.

Flt Lt Ken Foster's crew was on patrol over the Irish sea when the first pilot and front gunner simultaneously sighted a cloud of smoke rising from the sea, which turned out to be the exhaust plume from a schnorkel. Unfortunately the port bomb doors jammed and an attack with depth charges could not be made. The schnorkel disappeared when the aircraft opened up with its guns. This aircraft, however, was carrying

sonobuoys and so a pattern was dropped, while the two nearby frigates were summoned. Three hours later the second pilot saw a small cloud of smoke and spray five miles north of the original sighting, which they attacked with depth charges. There was no apparent result from this and so more buoys were laid. Indications of a U-boat were heard on one buoy and the aircraft began a square search, passing the information on to three frigates in the area who arrived and took over the search whilst the aircraft resumed its patrol. HMS Hesperous and HMS Havelock eventually gained a bottom contact. An echo-sounder run over the top produced a promising trace, revealing the possible outline of a submarine. They made another six attacks on the stationary contact before air bubbles, diesel oil and other wreckage floated to the surface. It is quite probable that the crippled U-boat settled on the bottom after



Ken Foster's attack - 30 April 1945