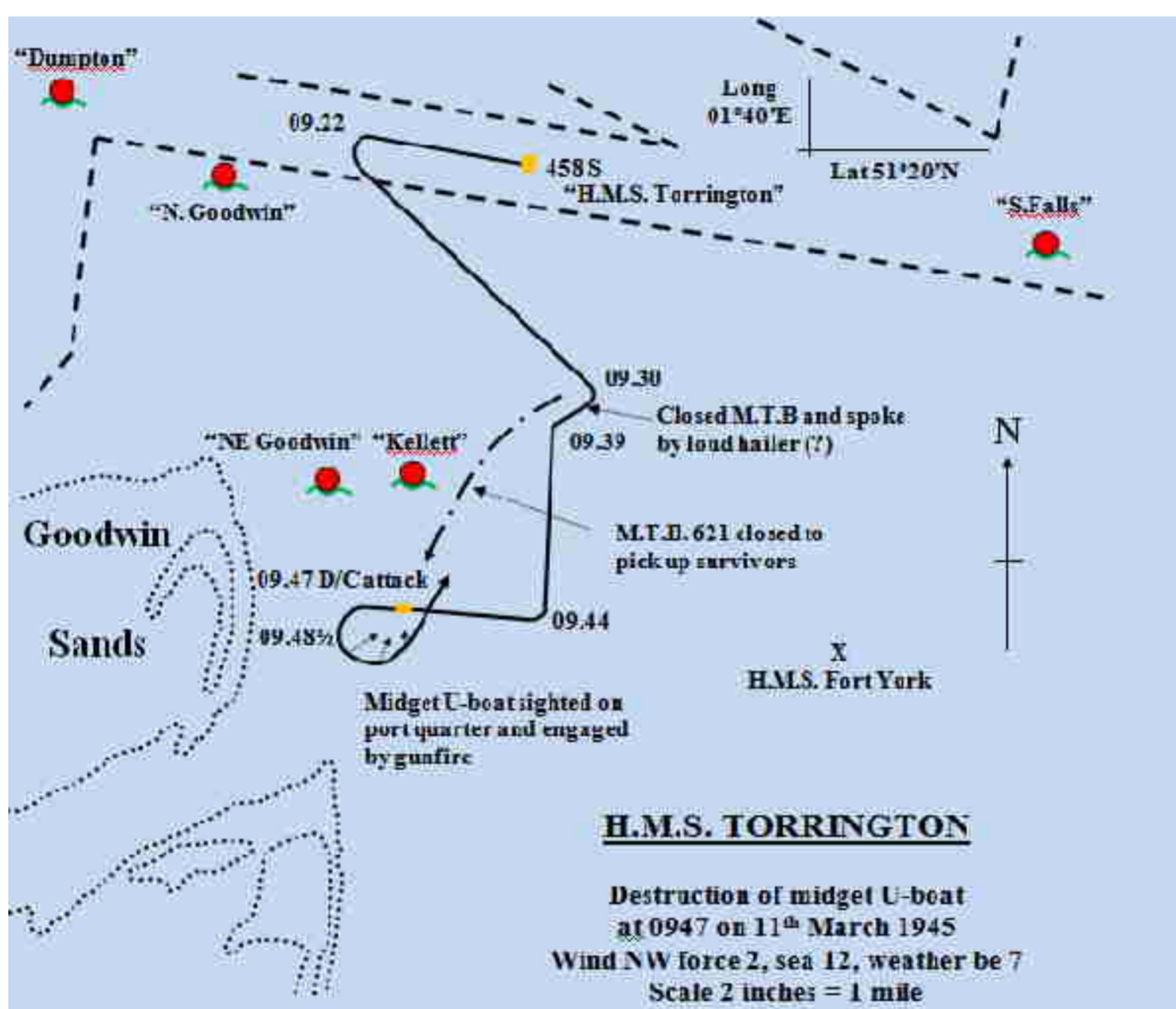


OPERATION SEEHUND - Identifying the Final Resting Place of U5377

In December 1944 the Nazis launched its new naval secret weapon, the Seehund (direct translation is Seahound which is the German for seal) midget submarine. On New Year's Day 1945 seventeen Seehund's sailed from their base at Ijmuiden in the Netherlands to attack a convoy off the Kwinte Bank in the North Sea. This was the start of a new and possibly deadly onslaught on allied coastal shipping by the now desperate Nazi regime. However, of the total 142 sorties Seehund's carried out only 9 ships were sunk (total 18,451 tons of shipping lost) and 3 ships damaged (total 18,354 tons). The Seehund losses were high with 35 never returning back to base. The deadly threat of the midget submarine was nullified by the titanic efforts of the ships, boats and crews of coastal command.

The Seehund operated in specific areas throughout the English Channel and North Sea, with Ramsgate being a favourite destination. This area was under the control of HMS Torrington, a Captain class Destroyer. At 09.47 on 11 March 1945 Torrington engaged and sank Seehund U-5377. The 2 man crew abandoned U-5377, were picked up and then landed ashore at Ramsgate to spend the rest of the war in captivity. The reported position of U-5377 sinking is given in Torrington's report (see below). Until the summer of 2012 U-5377 remained hidden from history. Archaeological divers and NAS members, including the author, from Kent based SeaDive Organisation lead by Bob Peacock have relocated and confirmed the position of U-5377 in conjunction with International Seehund expert Klaus Mattes from Germany.



U-5377 was located off the Goodwin Sands, where Torrington reported its depth charging. The remains of the U-boat were surveyed and recorded with digital video (posted on YouTube and available in the [video gallery](#)) and [stills](#). Its overall dimensions were also taken. After comparisons to known Seehund constructional drawings, the final resting place of U-5377 could be confirmed. Apart from its overall length, depth and width conforming to that of type 127 U-boat, diagnostic features included the air intake mast, details of the conning tower, the ducted propeller, remains of additional fuel tanks on the outside of each side of the hull, the clamps for torpedoes and the fore and aft lifting lugs on the top of the hull.

U-5377 is not a unique example of a Seehund, there are fully intact examples in museums throughout Europe (Germany and France in particular) as well as in the US. U-5377 is however a unique representation of this type of vessel within UK waters. It is to date a unique historically identifiable survivor of the coastal sea battle against the continued and desperate onslaught of the Nazi regime in the last few months of the second world war. Project Seehund was supported by the British Sub Aqua Jubilee Trust.

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