

### **East Coast Barrier**

The British successfully mined their East coast from Dover to Orkneys during the first few months of the war. In September 1939 alone, the British minelayers *Adventure* and *Plover* laid 3,000 mines across the Strait of Dover. In the second half of September, the barrage was completed with 3,636 U-boat mines, which soon paid results, Germany losing three U-boats in October. The British set up the East Coast Barrier, a mine barrage between twenty and fifty miles wide, from Scotland to the Thames, leaving a narrow space for navigation between the barrage and the coast. In early January 1940 The New York Times reported: "British naval vessels are sowing some of the last mines needed to complete Great Britain's 30,000,000-pounds protective shield for east-coast shipping, which is the most extensive mine field ever laid." If one assumes that the weight of those mines varied between 300 and 1,200 pounds, the number of mines laid in autumn along the east coast alone would be between 25,000 and 100,000 mines.

**The report of a mining mission in mid-October 1939:** The German destroyers '*Galster*', '*Eckholdt*', '*Lüdemann*', '*Roeder*', '*Künne*' and '*Heidkamp*' took on their cargo of 60 mines each (except '*Heidkamp*') at Wilhelmshaven, and departed at noon, racing northwards first, at 30 knots, as a misleading measure, then, at dusk, turning westwards for the target area: the mouth of the Humber. In the early hours of the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, the five destroyers began their task, between the Humber Estuary and the Withernsea Light. On completion, the destroyers headed home at full speed. This minefield of 300 mines eventually sank seven ships.