

keel was showing, and the maximum height above water was about 6 feet. Fire was opened with one gun of "B" mounting in quarters firing and 4 hits obtained. This released air from inside the hull and the wreck slowly sank.

One survivor from the MOHAWK was picked up near the wreck. No sign was now left of the LUCA TARIGO.

There were two merchant vessels left afloat, heavily on fire, and one small destroyer with her fore end completely ablaze. Nothing else was afloat and one of these blew up about 0415.

JANUS suffered no damage from enemy action.

(Signed) J. A. W. TOTHILL,
Commander, R.N.

H.M.S. ST. ANGELO.

17th April, 1941.

I have the honour to submit the following report in regard to the circumstances which led up to the sinking of H.M.S. MOHAWK at 0241 on 16th April, 1941.

2. At 0045, MOHAWK was in company with JERVIS (Captain (D), Fourteenth Destroyer Flotilla), JANUS and NUBIAN, steering 330 degrees, speed 20 knots.

At 0130, suspicious objects were sighted on the port bow and course was altered to close from northward, speed being increased to 25 knots.

3. At 0145, these objects were made out to be a convoy of five merchant ships, screened by three destroyers, and JERVIS led round so as to close on the starboard quarter, opening fire on the nearest screening destroyer at 0205.

This destroyer was quickly hit and disabled and MOHAWK engaged the rear merchant ship, opening fire a few minutes later. This ship was hit at the second salvo and burned fiercely and fire was checked after firing about eight salvos.

4. Fire was opened spasmodically for the next few minutes, as the merchant ships were being repeatedly hit by the destroyers ahead of MOHAWK and I did not wish to waste ammunition.

At 0223, an enemy destroyer of the Navigatori class was sighted on the starboard bow, steering an opposite and parallel course at high speed. She was immediately engaged by NUBIAN and MOHAWK, hit and set on fire and was last seen stopped and on fire about a mile astern.

5. At 0230, NUBIAN led round to port across the bow of the leading merchantman, who immediately altered course to starboard and tried to ram MOHAWK. This ship appeared

to be quite undamaged and on avoiding her and crossing over to the port side, I turned to starboard with the object of engaging and sinking her.

6. As the ship was still under helm and turning to starboard, a torpedo struck on the starboard side abreast "Y" gun, blowing away the after part of the ship from just forward of this gun. The ship was at once stopped and I ordered the Engineer Officer to report to me as to the extent of the damage.

The foremost group of guns then opened fire on the merchant ship in Director firing and hits were at once obtained, the ship catching fire and stopping. No ship could be seen in the vicinity which could have fired this torpedo, apart from the enemy destroyer who was stopped and on fire over a mile astern of MOHAWK, and I came to the conclusion that it must have been a stray torpedo fired by this vessel, possibly with the object of getting rid of top-weight.

7. The Engineer Officer then reported to me that although most of the stern had been blown away, the propeller shafts and propellers were still in place and that he would try to move them and get way on the ship.

About five minutes after the first torpedo had struck, a second one struck MOHAWK on the port side approximately on the bulkhead separating Nos. 2 and 3 boiler rooms. The ship commenced to settle rapidly on an even keel and I ordered all hands on deck.

Less than a minute after this order had been given, the ship took up a very heavy list to port and settled on her beam ends with the after parts submerged as far as the after end of the torpedo tubes. The order was then given to abandon ship as I considered that it was only a matter of minutes before the ship sank.

8. Six Carley floats were got out and manned, the remainder of the hands jumping into the sea. It was not possible to lower the boats owing to the rapid listing of the ship but the hands abandoned ship in an orderly manner and I consider that under the circumstances it was not possible to get out the remainder of the Carley floats.

The approximate position in which the ship was torpedoed was 34 degs. 56 mins. North, 11 degs. 42 mins. East. The depth of water in this position was seven fathoms.

9. The survivors were eventually picked up by JERVIS and NUBIAN and the forepart of the forecabin of the MOHAWK which still remained above water was sunk by JANUS.

10. I cannot pay too high a tribute to the way officers and men behaved during the action. The foremost group fired rapidly and accurately after the ship had been torpedoed and the spirit of the men in the water was admirable.

(Signed) J. W. EATON,
Commander, R.N.

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