

59. By the time JAMAICA ceased firing all cruisers were out of range and the destroyers had not yet been seriously engaged by the enemy. The gun duel between DUKE OF YORK and SCHARNHORST continued until 1820 when SCHARNHORST ceased firing at 20,000 yards probably due to a hit by DUKE OF YORK which reduced her speed, although this was not apparent at the time. DUKE OF YORK checked fire at 1844 when the range had opened to 21,400 yards.

FIRST DESTROYER TORPEDO ATTACK BY SCREEN OF FORCE 2.

60. At this time it seemed quite probable that SCHARNHORST would escape and much depended upon the four "S" class destroyers. At 1713 they had been ordered to attack with torpedoes and I could now see them on my radar very slowly gaining bearing on SCHARNHORST waiting for her to make an appreciable alteration of course to allow them to attack. By 1820 they had closed in to 12,000 yards but were gaining little. At this time they started to forge ahead and this must have been due to the DUKE OF YORK's hit which reduced SCHARNHORST'S speed and has already been referred to. This was borne out by the radar plot and the fact that she ceased firing at this time.

61. As the effect of this was not apparent for some time I had already decided to turn towards the Norwegian coast, hoping the enemy would also lead round and so give my destroyers a chance to attack. When, however, I saw the speed reduction I turned in straight at the SCHARNHORST.

62. By 1840 the first sub-division (SAVAGE and SAUMAREZ) astern of the enemy and the second sub-division (SCORPION and STORD) on her starboard beam had closed in to about 10,000 yards. At this time SCHARNHORST opened up a fairly heavy though ineffective fire on SAVAGE and SAUMAREZ which the two destroyers returned when the range closed to 7,000 yards. That both sub-divisions were not engaged by even heavier fire and considerably earlier on appears, from prisoners' statements, to have been due to the muddled handling of the SCHARNHORST'S A.A. and secondary armament. When DUKE OF YORK first engaged the enemy SCHARNHORST'S A.A. armament (4.1 in. guns' crews and below) were ordered to take cover, leaving only a skeleton crew at the guns and this order never appears to have been countermanded. The secondary armament, on the other hand, seems to have suffered from considerable disagreement between the ship's gunnery officers, resulting in a series of contradictory orders.

63. While the first sub-division to the north-westward, and still closing rapidly, was drawing the enemy's fire, the second sub-division closed in apparently unseen and certainly unengaged from the south eastward. At 1849 the enemy, his speed now definitely reduced, was illuminated by the first sub-division's starshells and was considered by SCORPION to be altering course to southward. This alteration may have been to avoid torpedoes fired by STORD who at this moment was turning to fire. SCORPION immediately turned and fired 8 torpedoes at 2,100 yards and STORD 8 at 1,800 yards. SCORPION claimed one hit, STORD none,

probably due to the fact that SCHARNHORST combed the tracks. SCHARNHORST continued to alter round to starboard after this attack thus placing the first sub-division, attacking a few minutes later, in an excellent position on her starboard bow. The second sub-division was engaged by the enemy's secondary and lighter armament while retiring but the firing was wild and no damage was incurred. Both destroyers replied to the enemy's fire and scored several hits on her superstructure.

64. At 1851 SCHARNHORST was clearly seen by the first sub-division in their own starshell to be altering to a southerly and then, after the second sub-division's attack, to a south westerly course. SAVAGE with SAUMAREZ on her starboard quarter both hastily trained their tubes to starboard and turned in to attack at 1855 when on the starboard bow of SCHARNHORST; SAVAGE fired 8 torpedoes at a range of 3,500 yards and SAUMAREZ, under heavy fire and only able to train one set of tubes owing to casualties and damage, 4 torpedoes at about 1,800 yards. Both destroyers came under heavy fire from the enemy's entire armament as they attacked and both ships returned the fire as they retired to the northward. SAVAGE was undamaged but SAUMAREZ suffered damage, fortunately above the waterline, and casualties. Shells passed through her director and under her range-finder director without exploding but she suffered considerable splinter damage which reduced her speed to 10 knots on one engine only. One officer and ten ratings were killed and eleven ratings wounded. Three hits were observed from SAVAGE and one from SAUMAREZ. From subsequent analysis it seems probable that the first sub-division scored three hits altogether though it is not possible to say from which destroyers the torpedoes were fired.

65. This gallant attack was practically unsupported and carried out, particularly in the case of the first sub-division, in the face of heavy fire from the enemy. Three heavy underwater explosions were heard in DUKE OF YORK and six in BELFAST during this time. Prisoners state that at least three hits were scored and that the ship's company were generally aghast at the relentless attack by what turned out to be four destroyers. They attributed the success of the attack mainly to the bad handling of SCHARNHORST'S secondary and A.A. armament. One torpedo appears to have hit in a boiler room and damaged a shaft which immediately reduced the enemy's speed to 22 knots; another is said to have flooded several compartments aft. After their attacks the destroyers withdrew to the northward and SCHARNHORST steadied temporarily on a southerly course, still making good about 20 knots though this speed slowly decreased as Force 2 closed in from the west to re-engage.

SECOND ENGAGEMENT BY FORCE 2.

66. During the destroyer attack Force 2 closed the enemy rapidly and as the destroyers withdrew to the northward, DUKE OF YORK and JAMAICA re-engaged at 1901 at a range of 10,400 yards, the enemy still steering to the southward. Soon afterwards NORFOLK opened fire but checked after two salvos owing to difficulty in finding the right target. Hits