

were immediately scored while the enemy continued to fire at the retiring destroyers. After five minutes, when SCHARNHORST had been repeatedly hit and fires and flashes from exploding ammunition were flaring up, she shifted her secondary armament fire to DUKE OF YORK at a range of 8,000 yards. During this second engagement she apparently engaged DUKE OF YORK and JAMAICA only occasionally with part of her main armament.

67. After this the battle was soon over. Between 1901 and 1928 the enemy's speed was estimated to decrease from 20 to 5 knots. At 1915 BELFAST opened fire on her at a range of 17,000 yards and a few minutes later she steadied on a northerly course. At 1928 fire was checked in DUKE OF YORK to enable BELFAST and JAMAICA to deliver their torpedo attacks.

68. Little information is forthcoming from prisoners about this part of the action as they were not unnaturally stunned by the success of our destroyer attacks and the pounding which their ship was receiving. They have, however, been able to account for at least ten of DUKE OF YORK'S hits during this period.

69. Of the enemy's main armament, 'A' turret does not appear to have fired at all during this second engagement probably due to damage earlier on; 'B' turret, although damaged and filled with smoke, seems to have functioned intermittently until shortly before the ship sank; 'C' turret was believed by prisoners to have continued firing right up to the end. Most of the crews of the secondary and A.A. armament are thought to have been killed during this second engagement with DUKE OF YORK and by the time the final torpedo attacks came resistance was practically at an end. Prisoners state that the Captain had sent his final signal to Hitler, assuring him that SCHARNHORST would fight to the last shell, and that the Admiral and Captain had then shot themselves on the bridge, though as regards the Captain this is not borne out by SCORPION'S evidence (paragraph 77).

TORPEDO ATTACKS BY BELFAST AND JAMAICA.

70. At 1919 I ordered JAMAICA, and at 1920 BELFAST, to close the enemy, who by this time appeared to be almost stationary, and sink her with torpedoes. Both ships at once closed. JAMAICA fired three torpedoes (one of which misfired) to port at 1925 at a range of 3,500 yards but no hits were claimed, probably due to an under-estimation of the enemy's speed. BELFAST fired three torpedoes to starboard at 1927 and claimed one hit which was unobserved and considered unlikely. Both cruisers hauled round to fire their remaining tubes, JAMAICA engaging the enemy with main and secondary armament while doing so and scoring several hits. SCHARNHORST replied with wild fire from secondary armament and light weapons, causing no damage. Enemy fire had ceased before JAMAICA fired three torpedoes to starboard at 1937 at a range of 3,750 yards with the enemy broadside on and almost stopped. Two hits were claimed but were not observed as the target was completely hidden by smoke; they are considered probable as underwater explosions were felt after the correct interval. When BELFAST turned to fire her port torpedoes at 1935 she found such

a melee of ships and fire round the target that she altered round to the southward to await a more favourable opportunity. She came in again for her final attack at 1948 but on firing starshell to illuminate the target it was clear from the surrounding wreckage that SCHARNHORST had by this time sunk.

TORPEDO ATTACKS BY THE 36TH DIVISION.

71. Throughout the foregoing engagement while SCHARNHORST was fleeing to the eastward the 36th Division, starting its chase well to the westward and therefore well astern of the other forces, had been tracking the enemy by radar and slowly gaining bearing on a parallel course some miles to the northward. As previously mentioned an attempt had been made to synchronise the attack with that of Force 2's screen, but unfortunately MUSKETEE never gained W/T touch with SAVAGE. Although MUSKETEE'S action in attempting to synchronise attacks was correct, SAVAGE would have been justified in proceeding with his attack as it was essential that SCHARNHORST'S speed should be reduced at the earliest possible moment.

72. When SAVAGE'S division delivered its attack the 36th Division was still a long way astern and despite the SCHARNHORST'S alteration of course to the south westward nearly forty minutes elapsed before their own attack was delivered. However, the range closed rapidly and the 71st Sub-Division (MUSKETEE and MATCHLESS) and 72nd Sub-Division (OPPORTUNE and VIRAGO) arrived in the target area at approximately the same time that BELFAST and JAMAICA were completing their first torpedo attacks. At this time SCHARNHORST, steering an erratic course, was altering round from the north east to the south west, but by the time the two sub-divisions fired she was fairly steady on a south westerly course and almost stopped. The destroyers closed from the north and astern of SCHARNHORST on a similar course.

73. The 71st Sub-Division attacked the enemy on the port side. MUSKETEE led the sub-division in and at 1933 fired four torpedoes to starboard at a range of 1,000 yards, observing two, possibly three, hits between the funnel and the mainmast. She then withdrew to the westward. MATCHLESS followed MUSKETEE in but was less fortunate. Shortly before the attack a sea had hit her mountings while the tubes were being trained and had strained the training gear. As the attack developed the tubes had to be trained from port to starboard and before this order could be passed a heavy sea struck MATCHLESS' bridge and broke all communications with the tubes. The training gear being strained, the order to train to starboard did not reach the tubes in time to be carried out. MATCHLESS therefore hauled round without firing and came in to attack again on the enemy's port bow but by this time the SCHARNHORST had sunk and she joined SCORPION picking up survivors from the wreckage.

74. On the starboard side of SCHARNHORST the 72nd Sub-Division led by OPPORTUNE attacked at the same time. OPPORTUNE fired four torpedoes at 1931 at a range of 2,100 yards and claimed one unobserved hit; two minutes later she fired a