

0143 Increased speed to 25 knots. Altered course as required to close shapes from northward, towards moon. Ships in line ahead, approaching convoy bearing Red 20,* inclination 010 to the right.

0210 approx. Opened fire on rear merchant vessel. This vessel was hit about third salvo, there was an explosion and a large fire broke out aft. Shifted target to second from rear; and again to a small ship turning away to port. Both these ships were also repeatedly hit and were on fire. Checked fire to allow smoke to clear. Proceeded to head of convoy.

0223 Sighted 1 destroyer (Navigatori class) on opposite course, range about 1,000 yards on starboard beam.

0225 Increased speed and altered course towards and then away. Engaged destroyer with pom-pom, 0.5 M.G. and 4.7. Destroyer fired back and there was a short engagement which had to be terminated as MOHAWK passed between NUBIAN and the enemy. Hits were definitely obtained under the bridge and on the hull aft.

0230 Crossed bow of leading merchant ship.

0236 Received V/S signal from MOHAWK (astern of NUBIAN about 4 cables†) "Have been hit by torpedo".

0237 Made signal to Captain (D) 14 re MOHAWK. Sighted destroyer (1 funnel) on port bow and engaged, several salvos were fired and she was repeatedly hit and caught fire. Turned and pursued merchant vessel making off to south westward. Engaged with 4.7-in and hit, setting on fire. Turned to port and closed MOHAWK.

0300 Stopped among MOHAWK survivors.

0301 Proceeded 27 knots on report of sighting unknown vessel to the westward.

0307 Reported this unknown vessel to Captain (D) 14. JERVIS and JANUS closed. Turned to port and engaged unknown vessel, now identified as merchant ship. From subsequent information I consider this was probably an old wreck. Ceased fire when vessel was seen to be on fire, and closed MOHAWK.

JANUS closed merchant vessel to investigate.

0313 to 0405 Engine movements as required to pick up survivors.

0405 Proceeded 15 knots, increasing to 29 knots, course 080 degs.

(Signed) R. W. RAVENHILL,
Commander-in-Command.

SKIRMISH OFF SFAX—NARRATIVE BY H.M.S. JANUS.

0140 Obtained contact by R.D.F.‡ at a range of 12,000 yards on a westerly bearing.

0220 JERVIS opened fire on a small one funnel destroyer.

0222 Opened fire on this destroyer with an R.D.F. range of 2,400 yards and hit with the opening salvo. This was

the only time that an R.D.F. range could be used as later the targets became too numerous and confused.

As soon as this destroyer was seen to be well hit fire was shifted to the rear merchant ship. Hits were obtained at a range of 4,000 yards with the second salvo and, after about 5 salvos, a fire was started. Fire was then shifted to the next merchant ship, a fire started in her too, and the order check fire given. One torpedo was fired at the destroyer which had previously been engaged and this missed.

0230 approx. Opened fire on the largest merchant ship in the leading group of three and obtained hits.

Fired three torpedoes at this same group of merchant ships. Results not observed from the bridge but tubes' crews claim that one hit was clearly seen.

0231 approx. A Navigatori class destroyer passed through the line from port to starboard at high speed, between JERVIS and JANUS. Two torpedoes were fired which missed astern. The 4.7-in. guns could not train fast enough to catch up the target but the pom-pom claimed to have hit this ship.

0241 Having altered round to port to the northward, opened fire on a large merchant vessel on fire to the eastward.

0242 Fired one torpedo at this ship, which blew up at 0243.

0246 Sighted a Navigatori class destroyer ahead steaming north and making smoke. Increased to 30 knots and hauled out to port clear of the smoke. As soon as his bow could be seen, fire was opened and 3 hits with the first salvo spotted through his smoke.

0247 Engaged the LUCA TARIGO on various to courses at speed varying between 16 and 30 knots, mostly at fixed sight range. During this time two torpedoes were fired in bridge control and one in local control, all of which missed. The Italian gunnery was poor, their tracer could be seen going high and wide.

A great many hits were scored on the LUCA TARIGO and by 0259 she was stopped, on fire, and had ceased firing. I considered that she was in a sinking condition and withdrew to the eastward to join Captain (D). Ordered by Captain (D) 14 to finish off the LUCA TARIGO. Fire was opened at 2,000 yards, many hits were scored, and an explosion occurred amidships. A very fierce fire broke out, and the ship could be seen listing over to starboard.

0326 Obtained R.D.F. contact range 10,000 yards bearing 330 degs. Increased to full speed and closed.

0326 I realised that I was in extremely shallow water and hauled off to the eastward.

This contact was two ships about 1,500 yards apart, and obviously aground.

0333 Ordered by D.14 to finish off the MOHAWK. About 100 feet of her

Admiralty footnotes:—

* Bearing Red 20 signifies 20 degs. from right ahead on the port side.

† 1 Cable = 200 yards.

‡ R.D.F., i.e. radar.