

I was always able to feel complete confidence in their actions. During flying on and off the divisions were operated independently by the carriers with great efficiency. The destroyers under Captain Todd* as usual carried out their duties with great efficiency and particularly the oiling from cruisers and BLACK RANGER.

(Signed) W. F. WAKE-WALKER,
Rear Admiral Commanding,
First Cruiser Squadron.

APPENDIX I.

H.M.S. FURIOUS.

5th August, 1941.

OPERATION "E.F."

Attack by FURIOUS' Aircraft on Petsamo on Wednesday, 30th July, 1941.

I have the honour to forward herewith a report of Operation "E.F."

NARRATIVE.

Flying Off.

2. Zero hour for the Operation was 1400B/30.

The T.S.R. striking forces from both carriers were due to leave Force "P" for their objectives at 1429B.

3. At 1349 one enemy aircraft was sighted right ahead. The Hurricanes of the first range, which was at that time being flown off, endeavoured to locate it but without success.

4. The aircraft were flown off in three ranges, the last aircraft leaving the deck at 1436. The total time taken to fly off all aircraft was one minute inside a programme based on the best times for ranging, etc., which had been noted in rehearsals.

Passage to the Objective.

5. 812 Squadron left at 1425B, 817 Squadron at 1432B, and 800 Squadron at 1442B, the ship then being in approximate position 70 degs. 42 mins. N., 33 degs. 00 mins. E.

6. On passage, FURIOUS Squadrons passed, as planned, twelve miles West of Majakkaniemi, flying low on the water in an effort to avoid visual and R.D.F. detection. They climbed whilst proceeding to the entrance to the Gulf of Petsamo. The Squadrons had concentrated, 812 Squadron leading and followed by 817 Squadron, both at about 2,000 feet, with 800 Squadron above and astern of them.

7. At approximately 1450B, single engined monoplane aircraft were observed by FURIOUS Squadrons flying over Majakkaniemi at a height of 1,500-2,000 feet. It is thought, but not yet confirmed, that these were Fulmars of 809 Squadron from VICTORIOUS; if this was the case, presumably they had lost their way. By flying above the agreed height and over the land, they frustrated all efforts to evade detection.

8. One Fulmar of 80 Squadron forced landed in position 260 degrees, six miles from Heinasaari Island Light with smoke pouring from its engine. The crew were seen to get into their dinghy.

The Approach.

9. At the entrance to the Gulf of Petsamo, the bomber sub-flights were detached and proceeded independently.

10. The Torpedo Striking Force proceeded to Huutoniemi Point in sub-flights in line astern and then headed South, using the hills on the East side of the Gulf as cover until they were approximately due East of their targets. They then crossed the sky-line and came down on to the water as quickly as possible, using the background of the hills as cover during the attack.

11. It was the intention for 812 Squadron to proceed to the Trifona anchorage, had there been targets there, and for 817 Squadron to attack targets at Liinahamari. It was thus hoped that the torpedo attacks of these two Squadrons, developing from the East would be synchronised with that of the bomber force from the West.

In the event of there being no targets at Trifona, it was planned that both Squadrons should attack Liinahamari from the East, there being insufficient manoeuvring space for attacks on the harbour to be carried out from more than the one general direction.

12. The leader of 812 Squadron saw that Trifona anchorage was empty of shipping and led his Squadron to attack the jetties at Liinahamari, as no shipping was seen to be present. Thus all torpedo aircraft attacked from approximately the same direction, with the exception of three aircraft of 817 Squadron which approached from the South of Ristmiemi, one attacking the Swedish Quay and the other two a small ship which was a doubtful target of about five hundred tons, lying off Paksuniemi.

13. The bomber sub-flights, after being detached, proceeded to the West of Nurmensatti and approached over the lakes and behind the hills to the West of Liinahamari, whence they made their final approach along the line of targets from the ship repair yard to the oil tanks.

14. The fighter escort proceeded South, keeping to the West of the torpedo aircraft and climbing above them.

They patrolled to the Southward of the target area, keeping between it and the nearest aerodrome some fifteen miles to the South. They then acted in accordance with the general plan, in which, if no enemy aircraft were encountered, they were to assist the striking force by attacking ground targets with bombs and machine-gun fire, with the restriction that not more than half their ammunition was to be expended on ground targets.

The Attack.

15. There were no suitable ship targets for torpedoes at either Trifona or Liinahamari. One small ship off Paksuniemi was unsuccessfully attacked and a photograph reveals that another small ship, unseen by aircraft, was actually berthed alongside Number 1 pier. One torpedo was fired at this pier and seen to run. A second observer saw an explosion at this pier, but he also failed to see this ship.

Other than the above, there were only small harbour craft present at Liinahamari, and three motor-boats, possibly E-Boats.

Admiralty footnote:—

* Captain (D), 3rd Destroyer Flotilla.