

21. Captain (D), Second Destroyer Flotilla, then made to the Flotilla "Keep on engaging enemy." T.O.O. 0555/10. This was the last signal he made as shortly afterwards a shell burst on HARDY'S bridge and he was mortally wounded. Everyone on HARDY'S bridge and in the wheelhouse was now either killed or wounded. The ship, not under control and on fire forward, was making at high speed for the south shore of the fiord. The Captain's Secretary (Paymaster Lieutenant G. H. Stanning) was wounded, but struggled down from the bridge to find an empty wheelhouse. He took the wheel himself for a short time but on relief by an Able Seamen returned to the bridge. By this time the ship had practically lost steam and the Captain's Secretary directed her to be beached. The torpedo officer (Lieutenant G. R. Heppel), thinking that bridge steering was out of action, had gone aft to connect tiller flat steering but finding the bridge still controlling had returned there in time to agree to the beaching of the ship. The action taken at a critical time by Paymaster Lieutenant Stanning may well have resulted in saving many lives. Whether it was right or wrong, he showed great initiative in an unaccustomed role.

22. Shortly after HARDY had been hit, HUNTER was seen to be on fire and her forward torpedo tubes were missing, indicating some explosion. She was seen to lose steam just ahead of HOTSPUR at the same moment the latter's steering and all bridge communications were put out of action. Whilst not under control HOTSPUR collided with the damaged HUNTER and these two ships, locked together drew all the enemy's fire. By means of verbal orders to engine room and tiller flat, given from "X" gun deck, HOTSPUR was able to extricate herself from this predicament but the combined effects of the collision and the damage done by the enemy caused HUNTER to sink.

23. The enemy, however, must have received considerable punishment. One destroyer appeared to have been struck by a torpedo and seemed to be aground whilst others had been hit by gunfire. HOTSPUR and HOSTILE had fired torpedoes at the enemy who had replied with four, which passed close down HOTSPUR'S starboard side.

24. When withdrawing after her collision HOTSPUR was still under fire from at least 4 enemy ships. HOSTILE and HAVOCK had got clear to the westward practically undamaged. Quickly taking in the situation, they immediately turned back into the Fiord and covered HOTSPUR'S retirement. This was a bold move, skilfully executed in narrow waters and it probably persuaded the enemy from following up his advantage.

25. As HOTSPUR was being conned from aft and had no signalling arrangements HOSTILE took charge and escorted her to Skjel Fiord. When about 18 miles west of Narvik, the German ammunition ship RAUFELDS was seen steaming up the fiord. Mistaking us for German destroyers she continued her course and was then stopped and blown up by HAVOCK.

26. HARDY had last been seen aground and on fire with men clambering over the side. One gun was still firing and it seemed likely that the enemy would close and finish her off. In the event, however, the enemy held off and

160 men got ashore. The epic story of how most of these men reached the village of Ballangen and were rescued by IVANHOE 3 days later, has been told elsewhere.

27. About an hour after landing, HARDY'S torpedo officer made his way back on board and with a 9 lb. T.N.T. charge from the detonator tank blew up the steel chests in the Captain's Cabin. He was also able to rescue the Navigating Officer, who had been too badly wounded to abandon ship. The action of Lieutenant G. R. Heppel in returning to the ship, which was still on fire forward, is most creditable.

28. The results of the raid are difficult to assess and time alone will show the full effect. It is probable that 2 or 3 enemy destroyers were put out of action and 7 or 8 merchant ships sunk. One ammunition ship was blown up. Some damage was done to wharves and jetties by gunfire. On our side, HUNTER was sunk, HARDY put out of action and HOTSPUR severely damaged. The appearance of the flotilla in a snowstorm must have given a shock to the Germans on the day after their occupation. Any plans which the enemy had for blocking the approaches must have been interfered with and the way was paved for our subsequent attacks. Some encouragement must have been given to the Norwegians by the prompt appearance of our warships in their occupied waters.

29. Finally, on behalf of those who took part in the raid, I would like to pay a tribute to the initiative and fine fighting spirit shown by our leader, Captain B. A. W. Warburton-Lee, whose conduct was an example to us all.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) H. F. LAYMAN,

Commander.

*The Rear Admiral Commanding
Home Fleet Destroyers.*

H.M.S. HAVOCK,

27th April, 1940.

H.M.S. HAVOCK was in company with Captain D.2 in HARDY, HOTSPUR, HOSTILE and HUNTER during the night of April 9th-10th and was the fourth ship in the line during the passage up the Ofthord.

2. The weather was overcast, with frequent squalls of snow and the visibility varied between 5 and 2 cables.

3. The passage up the fiord was without incident except that touch was lost once due to a sudden alteration of course.

4. At 0426 the snowstorm cleared and the south side of the harbour of Narvik and some merchant ships were disclosed.

5. Captain D. entered the harbour between the British s.s. NORTH CORNWALL and the remainder of the merchant ships, and opened fire with guns and torpedoes. HUNTER followed and as soon as she was clear HAVOCK followed her. Fire was opened with the guns at a destroyer alongside a merchant ship whose gun-flashes could be seen, and with torpedoes at merchant ships and a destroyer at anchor. Three torpedoes only were fired as HUNTER appeared to have hit all the merchant ships in