

7. At 1707, enemy destroyers, probably of the leading flotilla, delivered a long range torpedo attack. At 1714 EXETER received a hit from an 8 in. shell in one boiler room and turned away, reducing to slow speed which later was increased to 15 knots. DE RUYTER held her course for a short time, but the remaining cruisers turned away after EXETER. DE RUYTER then conformed and American destroyers assisted to screen EXETER with smoke and the Allied line was thrown into considerable confusion. About 1715 Japanese torpedoes reached the Allied line; KORTENAER was struck by a torpedo in the engine room and sank.

8. By 1725 the Allied cruiser line (except EXETER) had been straightened again on a N.E. course but was partially screened from the enemy by smoke. EXETER was retiring to Sourabaya on course 150° at 15 knots. At this moment Admiral Doorman ordered the British destroyers to counter-attack.

9. ELECTRA, ENCOUNTER and JUPITER were widely separated and proceeded to attack independently.

ELECTRA led through the smoke in the direction of the enemy and on clearing it sighted an enemy unit of 3 heavy destroyers on opposite courses going into the smoke, range about 6,000 yards. ELECTRA engaged and claims four hits on the leading ship, but as the unit disappeared into the smoke a shell struck ELECTRA in No. 2 boiler room and shattered the boiler. Steam was lost and ELECTRA stopped. Shortly after, a single enemy heavy destroyer emerged from the smoke and the engagement continued, ELECTRA firing in local control with all bridge communication dead. ELECTRA was repeatedly hit and her guns silenced one by one. When only Y gun remained in action the order to "abandon ship" was given. ELECTRA sank about 1800.

10. JUPITER on emerging through the smoke sighted two enemy destroyers which were engaged for a short period before they disappeared. No further target being in sight JUPITER returned to the Allied cruisers where she was joined by ENCOUNTER. ENCOUNTER attacked through a clearing in the smoke, but no details or results of the attack are known.

11. From 1725 to 1745 the cruiser forces were screened from each other by smoke. Japanese gunfire through the smoke, presumably controlled by radar, is reported as accurate. Japanese aircraft were employed on spotting throughout the action.

12. At 1745 Allied cruisers emerged from smoke on opposite course to the enemy 8 in. cruisers at ranges down to 21,000 yards. The action continued spasmodically until 1812, several hits being claimed on the enemy cruisers.

At 1812, the enemy cruisers turned away under cover of smoke, the rear ship heavily on fire aft. When the smoke cleared PERTH states "target appeared to be stopped, the bow rose in the air then seemed to settle back. We then lost sight of her, whether because she sank or whether the light failed I do not know."

By 1830 no enemy forces were in sight.

#### Night Action.

13. In gathering darkness DE RUYTER continued to lead the cruisers to the N.E. and Northward presumably in an attempt to work

round the enemy forces and reach the convoy. At 1927 four ships were sighted to the Westward and engaged for a few minutes at 9,000 yards range; simultaneously Allied force was illuminated by enemy aircraft flares. PERTH turned away to avoid suspected torpedoes; the remainder of the force conformed.

14. It seems probable that Admiral Doorman decided it was impracticable to work round the enemy to the Northward and that better results might be achieved by getting between him and the Java coast and working round to the Southward, for about 1945 he altered course to 170°. This course was continued until about 2035 when ships reached very shallow water near Kodok Point to the West of Sourabaya Strait. DE RUYTER then turned to the Westward keeping about four miles from the coast.

15. At about 2100 in position 06° 45.2' S., 112° 05.5' E. a violent explosion occurred in JUPITER who was following astern of JAVA, the rear cruiser. The explosion, attributed by JUPITER to a torpedo, occurred on the starboard side abreast the forward bulkhead of the engine room and immobilised the ship. No signs of a submarine or of torpedo tracks were sighted from JUPITER who remained unmolested until she sank four hours later. A large number of survivors landed on the North coast of Java from ship's boats and Carley-floats. The weather at time of sinking was— with East force 2, sky and visibility b-7 miles, sea and swell 21.\*

16. From 2150 onwards the Allied cruiser force was continuously shadowed and frequently illuminated by aircraft dropping flares. All alterations of course were signalled by dropping flares, and occasionally by lines of floating calcium flares placed across the track of the ships. Under these conditions a surprise attack on the enemy convoy seemed out of the question.

17. At 2330 contact was made with two cruisers on the port beam of the Allied force which was then steering to the Northward, though its exact position is not known. Range was about 9,000 yards. Enemy opened fire followed by PERTH; the enemy fire was extremely accurate but very slow. PERTH claimed that two or three salvos hit, then star shell falling short concealed the target. One enemy shell hit DE RUYTER on the quarter-deck and DE RUYTER turned 90° away, remaining cruisers conforming.

18. When the line was half way round this turn a violent explosion occurred in the after part of JAVA and she stopped heavily on fire. She was not under gunfire at the time. At about the same moment DE RUYTER, who had completed the 90° turn, also blew up with an appalling explosion and settled aft heavily on fire.† PERTH avoided the blazing wreck by the use of full port rudder and one engine. HOUSTON headed out to starboard.

19. Admiral Doorman's verbal orders to his force before sailing had been that any ship disabled "must be left to the mercy of the enemy" to quote his own words. The Allied force now consisted only of PERTH and

#### Admiralty footnotes:—

\* Wind force 2—light air to light breeze, 1-6 m.p.h.; sky b—less than  $\frac{3}{10}$ ths cloud; sea and swell 21—practically calm.

† Both Dutch cruisers were sunk by torpedo fire from the NACHI and HAGURO (Japanese 5th Cruiser Division).