

at the head of which lies Djupvik. Her bows pointed to the eastward, and her torpedo armament bore across the fiord. She was hidden from the approaching destroyers.

20. The warning conveyed by the aircraft was therefore invaluable. The leading destroyers turned their guns and torpedo armament on the starboard bow, and before the enemy could fire more than one salvo, she was heavily engaged. Two torpedoes, one from BEDOUIN and one from ESKIMO struck the ship and in three minutes she was on fire forward and aft. A report was received, however, that a figure was seen standing by the torpedo tubes and her destruction was completed by salvos from WARSPITE'S main armament. Torpedoes fired by the enemy but passed clear of our destroyers.

21. Meanwhile more enemy destroyers had appeared in Ofot Fiord. In the smoke and haze the targets were not clear, but at least four ships were observed. The enemy steamed to and fro across the Fiord bringing guns and torpedoes to bear and turning as the limit of the run was reached. Our destroyers, with the exception of those sweeping, adopted a loose formation from one to three miles ahead of WARSPITE altering course as necessary to bring armament to bear and avoid shell fire. From this point Force "B" advanced up Ofot Fiord at a mean speed of 10 knots.

22. At 1318 WARSPITE'S aircraft sighted five torpedo tracks approaching from ahead. These passed clear to port and subsequently an explosion was observed at the water's edge on the port beam.

23. WARSPITE'S main armament engaged the enemy when a target presented itself. But owing to the smoke of the destroyer engagement fire was intermittent. Speed was adjusted to maintain support of the destroyers but to keep WARSPITE clear of the torpedo danger as far as possible.

24. At 1341 FURIOUS'S aircraft were sighted on the port quarter approaching to the attack.

25. A further torpedo exploded on the fore-shore bearing Red 20°.*

26. At 1345 sweeping destroyers hauled their sweeps and subsequently proceeded in support of the Destroyers of the Striking Force.

27. At 1350 COSSACK reported yet another torpedo approaching. WARSPITE was manoeuvred to present the smallest target but the track was not seen.

28. At 1352 WARSPITE'S aircraft reported no destroyers in Skjomen Fiord.

29. Meanwhile the engagement with the enemy manoeuvring to the North of Narvik had become closer and another destroyer was seen leaving the harbour distant 12,000 yards from WARSPITE. She was engaged by destroyers on the starboard wing and by WARSPITE'S main armament and was soon severely damaged. The enemy's fire was becoming ragged and shots were falling round WARSPITE.

30. Gunfire was then observed in Narvik Harbour and was thought to be from a shore battery. At 1402 I ordered the destroyers to engage enemy destroyers while WARSPITE engaged the shore battery.

31. At 1417 PUNJABI passed WARSPITE withdrawing from the action owing to hits which had put the main steam pipe and all guns temporarily out of action.

32. At the same time a heavy explosion shook WARSPITE: the cause was not ascertained.

33. At 1421 WARSPITE ceased fire on the target in Narvik Bay owing to our own destroyers fouling the range. This target had proved to be a destroyer alongside the quay and not a shore battery.

34. The situation then developed as follows:—

One enemy destroyer badly on fire, ran ashore at Herjangen (68° 33' North 17° 33½' East) and was struck by a torpedo from ESKIMO.

The destroyer, which had just left Narvik Harbour, broke out in flames forward and aft, and was abandoned by her crew close to the shore northwest of Narvik.

An unknown number of destroyers retired up Rombaks Fiord, under cover of smoke from funnels and floats and were followed by ESKIMO, FORESTER, HERO, ICARUS and later BEDOUIN.

The destroyer alongside in Narvik Harbour continued to fire. COSSACK and FOXHOUND entered the harbour supported by KIMBERLEY, and under their combined attack the enemy caught fire. FOXHOUND approached to board but was received with Machine gun fire from the shore. Then the destroyer blew up and resistance in the harbour ceased.

While carrying out this attack COSSACK drifted on to a submerged wreck.

35. Until defensive action in Narvik ceased WARSPITE lay off the entrance and at 1450 I signalled to the Commander-in-Chief:—

"Three enemy destroyers still up Rombaks Fiord. No enemy opposition in Narvik Bay. Four enemy destroyers destroyed. Am investigating possibility of occupying the town."

36. At 1500 I proceeded up Rombaks Fiord to clear up the situation there. Two enemy destroyers were reported at the head of the Fiord by the aircraft and ESKIMO was leading five destroyers to the attack.

ESKIMO passed through the narrow neck in Rombaks Fiord followed closely by FORESTER and HERO and engaged two enemy ships in sight. The enemy replied with gun and torpedo fire and at 1450 ESKIMO was struck by a torpedo which removed the bow of the ship. Of the two enemy ships, one, after firing torpedoes, ran aground at Sildvika where she was destroyed by gunfire and abandoned. The other retired under cover of smoke to the top of the fiord.

37. Difficulty was then experienced owing to the congestion in the narrow neck of this fiord. ESKIMO was trying to get clear stern first assisted by FORESTER, the remaining destroyers were endeavouring to enter and continue the chase.

38. At 1520 I ordered all available destroyers to concentrate in Rombaks Fiord.

At 1530 a report on the situation was received from BEDOUIN as follows:—

"One aground out of action (this was at Sildvika). Two more round the corner out

* Admiralty footnote: Red 20° = 20° on the port bow.