

of sight. If they have torpedoes they are in a position of great advantage. HERO and BEDOUIN ammunition almost exhausted. BEDOUIN "A" mounting out of action. 1520."

I thereupon signalled BEDOUIN:—

"The torpedo menace must be accepted. Enemy must be destroyed without delay. Take KIMBERLEY, FORESTER, HERO and PUNJABI under your orders and organise attack sending most serviceable destroyer first. Ram or board if necessary. 1540."

39. Meanwhile WARSPITE'S aircraft was recalled and hoisted inboard and preparations were made to carry out an indirect bombardment of the ships at the head of the fiord, should this be necessary. On its return WARSPITE'S aircraft reported sinking a submarine anchored off Bjerkvik, in Herjangs Fiord, by bombing. This sinking was accepted as a fact.*

40. While I was in communication with BEDOUIN, HERO, ICARUS and KIMBERLEY proceeded up Rombaks Fiord and, as soon as the targets could be observed in the smoke, opened fire on the destroyers at the head of the Fiord. No reply was made, however, and fire was checked. The enemy had abandoned the ships, of which there proved to be three. One was already scuttled, one sank forthwith and HERO and ICARUS sent away a boarding party to the one remaining. BEDOUIN, on arrival, ordered boarding parties to return, and the enemy was sunk by a torpedo from HERO. HERO states the boarded destroyer was the HANS LUDEMANN.

41. As the destroyers had successfully dealt with all enemy forces at the top of the Fiord, indirect bombardment by WARSPITE was not necessary and it was decided to return to Narvik Bay to investigate the state of affairs there.

42. COSSACK was still grounded on a wreck and had been under spasmodic fire from a shore gun of small calibre. Although not definitely located, the COSSACK silenced it by retaliatory fire in its direction.

FOXHOUND, standing by, had sent her Medical Officer to COSSACK and was picking up survivors from the German destroyer abandoned on fire off Narvik.

43. At 1742 I made the following report of the situation.

"WARSPITE, COSSACK and FOXHOUND in Narvik Bay. Little opposition. All German destroyers sunk, three of them after retiring up Rombaks Fiord. One submarine sunk by WARSPITE'S aircraft. Parties of men, possibly soldiers retreating over hills. One field Howitzer silenced by COSSACK. Enemy aircraft have been sighted. Damage to own ships so far reported:—ESKIMO bows blown off by torpedo. COSSACK damaged and ashore in Narvik Bay. PUNJABI one boiler out of action. 1742."

44. I thereupon considered the landing of a party to occupy the town as the opposition had apparently been silenced.

With the force available only a small party could be landed and to guard against the inevitable counter-attack it would be necessary to keep the force concentrated close to the water-front and to provide strong covering gunfire. In fact I considered it would be necessary to keep WARSPITE off Narvik.

45. A signal was then received from FOXHOUND that the Officer prisoners taken had reported the presence of several German submarines in the Fiord.

46. At 1800 twelve enemy aircraft were sighted approaching from the westward.

47. Apart from the above considerations I felt, that, to place, at the end of a long and strenuous day, a party of less than 200 tired seamen and marines in the midst of a force of not less than 2,000 professional German soldiers, would be to court disaster, even allowing for the moral effect which the day's engagement must have had on the enemy.

48. The cumulative effect of the roar of WARSPITE'S fifteen inch guns reverberating down and around the high mountains of the Fiord, the bursts and splashes of these great shells, the sight of their ships sinking and burning around them must have been terrifying to the enemy. But such an effect cannot be of a lasting nature to the soldiers on shore, and I felt that to be taken full advantage of, it would have required a trained, organised military force, ready to land directly the Naval engagement had ceased. If such a force had been present, I believe that they would have succeeded in establishing themselves so strongly in Narvik that its eventual capture would only be a matter of time and reinforcements.

49. I thereupon decided against keeping WARSPITE stopped in the Fiord off Narvik, subject to submarine and air attack.

50. At 1832 I signalled:—

"General from BC. One.* Am withdrawing. KIMBERLEY is to guard COSSACK withdrawing her if possible from Narvik harbour. PUNJABI to guard ESKIMO."

51. HOSTILE (Commander J. P. Wright) and IVANHOE (Commander P. H. Hadow), based on Skjel Fiord, had been placed at my disposal by your signal. I ordered these destroyers to proceed to Narvik and reinforce those to be stationed there. IVANHOE had been ordered to patrol the entrance to the Fiord and was therefore in the vicinity.

52. I proceeded down Ofot Fiord with FOXHOUND ahead. BEDOUIN, HERO and ICARUS followed withdrawing from Rombaks Fiord. FORESTER was delayed embarking the majority of ESKIMO'S crew.

53. At 1840 when close to Hamnesholm Light (67° 25' North 16° 36' East) FOXHOUND obtained a submarine contact and counter-attacked. This submarine was apparently escaping out of Ofot Fiord. A later report received from the Hamnesholm Lighthouse keeper confirms this. I have since come to the conclusion that a submarine navigating submerged in the narrow waters of a fiord would find himself in a not very enviable position with Anti-submarine destroyers operating overhead and his desire to get out of it is therefore understandable.

* Admiralty footnote: It has since been confirmed that this submarine was sunk by WARSPITE'S aircraft.

* Admiralty footnote: A signal to all ships present from V.A.C. 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron.