

(e) D.5 in KELLY with KASHMIR, KIPLING, KELVIN and JACKAL had left Malta at 2130/21st May and had orders to join Force A1 to the west of Crete at 1000/22nd May.

(f) D.14 in JERVIS with NIZAM and ILEX had returned to Alexandria to refuel and were now steering for the Kaso Strait.

(g) D.10 in STUART with VOYAGER and VENDETTA had left Alexandria on the 21st May with orders to join Force A1.

27. At 0830 Force C was steering towards Milo when a single caique was sighted. This caique, which was carrying German troops, was sunk by PERTH whilst NAIAD engaged large numbers of aircraft who were bombing. At 0909 CALCUTTA reported a small merchant vessel ahead and destroyers were ordered to sink her. At 1000 Force C was 25 miles south of the eastern corner of Milo. PERTH had rejoined after sinking the caique but NAIAD was still some way astern. Ten minutes later an enemy destroyer with four or five small sailing vessels was sighted to the northward. Our destroyers immediately gave chase, whilst PERTH and NAIAD engaged the enemy destroyer, causing her to retire under smoke. KINGSTON engaged an enemy destroyer at 7,000 yards, claiming two hits. She also reported sighting a large number of caiques behind the smoke screen, which the enemy destroyer was now making. Although in contact with the enemy convoy, C.S.15 considered that he would jeopardise his whole force if he proceeded any further to the northward. H.A. ammunition was beginning to run low. The speed of his force, which he considered must be kept together in face of the continuous air attacks, was limited to 20 knots, on account of CARLISLE's maximum speed being 21 knots. C.S.15, therefore, decided to withdraw and ordered the destroyers to abandon the chase. The Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean's message timed 0941 of 22nd May, which showed that this convoy was of considerable size, was not seen by C.S.15 until after 1100.

28. Force C was bombed practically continuously from 0945 for three and a half hours. NAIAD was damaged by near misses which put two turrets out of action, flooded several compartments and reduced her speed to 16 knots. CARLISLE was hit but not seriously damaged. At 1321 Force A1 was sighted coming up to the Kithera Channel from the westward, in response to an appeal for support from C.S.15.

29. During the night 21st/22nd May, Force B (GLOUCESTER and FIJI with GREYHOUND and GRIFFIN) had been patrolling off Cape Matapan. Instructions from the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean to proceed to Heraklion with all despatch reached them too late to be carried out, but they entered the Aegean, and, at daylight, were about 25 miles north of Canea. Whilst withdrawing towards Force A1, Force B was attacked by dive bombers almost continuously from 0630 for one and a half hours. FIJI received slight damage and GLOUCESTER superficial damage during these attacks. Force B joined Force A1 at 0830/22nd May.

30. Force A1 had been 45 miles south west of the Anti Kithera Channel at daylight on 22nd May and was joined by Forces D and B at 0700 and 0830 respectively. The H.A. ammunition situation was giving cause for anxiety, the amount remaining at 0930 being:—

GLOUCESTER 18%	FIJI 30%
DIDO 25%	ORION 38%
AJAX 40%	WARSPITE 66%
VALIANT 80%	

31. C.S.7 had decided that he would meet Force C in the Kithera Channel about 1530. Meanwhile he continued to patrol with Forces A, B and D between 20 and 30 miles to the west of the channel; apparently, to use his own words, "serving a useful purpose by attracting enemy aircraft."

32. At 1225, C.S.7 heard from C.S.15 that NAIAD was badly damaged and in need of support. C.S.7 immediately decided to enter the Aegean and increased to 23 knots.

33. C.S.7 sighted A.A. shell bursts from Force B at 1312. Twenty minutes later WARSPITE, in which C.S.7 was wearing his flag, was hit by a bomb which wrecked the star-board 4" and 6" batteries.

34. At 1320 GREYHOUND was detached from Force A1 to sink a large caique between Pori and Anti Kithera Islands. She successfully accomplished this and was returning to her position on the screen when at 1351 she was hit by two bombs and 15 minutes later sank stern first in approximate position 270° Pori Island 5 miles. C.S.15 (who was the senior officer of forces present) ordered KANDAHAR and KINGSTON to pick up survivors from GREYHOUND. At 1402 C.S.15 ordered FIJI, and, five minutes later, GLOUCESTER, to give KANDAHAR and KINGSTON A.A. support and to stand by GREYHOUND until dark. These rescuing ships and the men swimming in the water were subjected to almost continuous bombing and machine gun attacks. C.S.15 did not realise at first how little A.A. ammunition was left in GLOUCESTER and FIJI. At 1413 C.S.15 asked C.S.7 for close support as his force had practically no ammunition left. Force A1 closed Force C at WARSPITE's best speed (18 knots) and C.S.7 who was feeling uneasy about the orders given to GLOUCESTER and FIJI, informed C.S.15 about the state of their H.A. ammunition. At 1457 C.S.15 ordered GLOUCESTER and FIJI to withdraw, with ships in company, at their discretion.

35. At 1530 GLOUCESTER and FIJI were sighted coming up astern of Force A1 at high speed, engaging enemy aircraft. At about 1550 GLOUCESTER was hit by several bombs and immobilised in approximate position 294° Pori 9 miles. She was badly on fire and her upper deck was a shambles. In view of the continuous air attacks, FIJI reluctantly decided that she must leave GLOUCESTER. FIJI reported the situation to C.S.15. After consulting C.S.7, C.S.15 decided that to take the battlefleet back in support of GLOUCESTER would only be risking more ships.

36. Air attacks on Force A1 had continued intermittently from 1320 until 1510. At 1645 further high level attacks were made and VALIANT was hit aft by two medium bombs but no serious damage was done.