

Allied Warships

HMS Birmingham (19)

Light cruiser of the Southampton class



HMS Birmingham in 1943

Navy	The Royal Navy
Type	Light cruiser
Class	Southampton
Pennant	19
Built by	Devonport Dockyard (Plymouth, U.K.) : John Brown Shipbuilding & Engineering Company Ltd. (Clydebank, Scotland)
Ordered	1 Mar 1935
Laid down	18 Jul 1935
Launched	1 Sep 1936
Commissioned	18 Nov 1937
End service	3 Dec 1959
History	On 3 December 1959 <i>HMS Birmingham</i> was paid off at Devonport, being the last of the class in service. In September 1960 she was broken up for scrap by Ward of Inverkeithing. Hit by U-boat Damaged on 28 Nov 1943 by U-407 (Brüller).
U-boat Attack	See our <u>U-boat attack entry for the HMS Birmingham</u>

Commands listed for HMS Birmingham (19)

Please note that we're still working on this section
and that we only list Commanding Officers for the duration of the Second World War.

Commander	From	To
1 Capt. <u>Eric James Patrick Brind</u> , RN	3 Jan 1938	4 Mar 1940
2 Capt. <u>Alexander Cumming Gordon Madden</u> , RN	4 Mar 1940	15 Dec 1941
3 Capt. <u>Henry Berwick Crane</u> , RN	15 Dec 1941	7 Sep 1943
4 Capt. <u>Herbert Wyndham Williams</u> , RN	7 Sep 1943	13 Jan 1944
5 Cdr. <u>Langton Gowlland</u> , RN	13 Jan 1944	19 Apr 1944
6 Capt. <u>Herbert Wyndham Williams</u> , RN	19 Apr 1944	19 Nov 1945

You can help improve our commands section

Click here to [Submit events/comments/updates for this vessel](#).

Please use this if you spot mistakes or want to improve this ships page.

Notable events involving Birmingham include:

The page for this light cruiser was last updated in February 2022.

2 Sep 1939

HMS Eagle (Capt. A.R.M. Bridge, RN), **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) and **HMS Daring** (Cdr. S.A. Cooper, RN) departed Singapore to patrol off the Mentawai Islands off the west coast of Sumatra. (1)

3 Sep 1939

Due to engine problems **HMS Daring** (Cdr. S.A. Cooper, RN) parted company with **HMS Eagle** (Capt. A.R.M. Bridge, RN) and **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) and returned to Singapore where she arrived later the same day. (1)

6 Sep 1939

At 1005G/6, **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) sighted a merchant vessel south-west of Padang, Sumatra, Netherlands East Indies, which turned out to be the German ***Franken*** (7789 GRT, built 1926). The German ship returned to Padang on sighting the British cruiser.

At 2128G/6, **HMS Birmingham** parted company with **HMS Eagle** (Capt. A.R.M. Bridge, RN). **HMS Birmingham** then proceeded south towards the Sunda Strait to establish a patrol there. (2)

15 Sep 1939

During the night of 15/16 September 1939, **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) fuelled from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker ***Appleleaf*** (5892 GRT, built 1917). (2)

22 Sep 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) left the Sunda Strait patrol for a patrol along the west coast of Sumatra. (2)

26 Sep 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) passed the Sunda Strait eastbound to proceed to Singapore. (2)

28 Sep 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Singapore after a lengthy patrol. (2)

4 Oct 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Singapore for the Sunda Strait patrol. (3)

6 Oct 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived in the Sunda Strait. (3)

20 Oct 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed the Sunda Strait patrol to return to Singapore. (3)

22 Oct 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Singapore from patrol. (3)

28 Oct 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) and **HMAS Hobart** (Capt. H.L. Howden, RAN) departed Singapore for a patrol around Sumatra. (3)

1 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) and **HMAS Hobart** (Capt. H.L. Howden, RAN) parted company with each other. *HMS Birmingham* proceeded south to the Sunda Strait while *HMAS Hobart* proceeded north to return to Singapore via the Malacca Strait. (4)

4 Nov 1939

HMS Dauntless (Capt. G.D. Moore, RAN) relieved **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) on the Sunda Strait patrol. (5)

6 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Singapore from patrol. (4)

7 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Singapore for Hong Kong. (4)

10 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Hong Kong. (4)

13 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Hong Kong for a patrol south of Japan. (4)

21 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) is ordered to make rendezvous of Shanghai with the French transport ***André Lebon*** (14365 GRT, built 1915) and escort her to Hong Kong. (6)

26 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) anchored off the Yangtse estuary, north-east of Zhousan Island (Saddle

Islands) in position 30°10'N, 122°24'E. Later she is joined by the French transport *André Lebon* (14365 GRT, built 1915) and both ships then set course for Hong Kong. (4)

28 Nov 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) and the French transport *André Lebon* (14365 GRT, built 1915) arrived at Hong Kong. (4)

6 Dec 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Hong Kong for a patrol south of Japan. (7)

17 Dec 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at the Saddle Islands off the Yangtze estuary. There she fuelled from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker *Francol* (2607 GRT, built 1917). The two ships however collide and *HMS Birmingham* sustained damage to her bow. Emergency repairs are made and *HMS Birmingham* is able to resume her patrol south of Japan. (8)

27 Dec 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Hong Kong from patrol. At Hong Kong she is immediately docked for repairs to her bow and to change a propeller. (7)

30 Dec 1939

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) is undocked. (7)

3 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Hong Kong for Singapore. She had been ordered to return to the U.K. for service with the Home Fleet. (9)

6 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Singapore. (10)

8 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Singapore for Colombo. (10)

11 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Colombo. She departed for Aden later the same day. (10)

16 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Aden. She departed for Suez later the same day. (10)

19 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Suez. She transited the Suez Canal northbound later the same day and arrived at Port Said from where she departed for Malta. (10)

21 Jan 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Malta where she temporary joined the Mediterranean Fleet. At Malta she first commenced a short refit. (10)

4 Feb 1940

A/Admiral Sir A.B. Cunningham, KCB, DSO and 2 Bars, RN, hoisted his flag in *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. E.J.P.

Brind, RN) which then departed Malta for Alexandria. (11)

6 Feb 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN, flying the flag of A/Admiral Sir A.B. Cunningham, KCB, DSO and 2 Bars, RN) arrived at Alexandria. (11)

11 Feb 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN, flying the flag of A/Admiral Sir A.B. Cunningham, KCB, DSO and 2 Bars, RN) departed Alexandria for Malta. (11)

13 Feb 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN, flying the flag of A/Admiral Sir A.B. Cunningham, KCB, DSO and 2 Bars, RN) arrived at Malta. (11)

14 Feb 1940

A/Admiral Sir A.B. Cunningham, KCB, DSO and 2 Bars, RN, struck his flag in *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN). (12)

15 Feb 1940

During 15/16 February 1940, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN), conducted exercises off Malta. These included night exercises.

On the 16th she was joined by *HMAS Stuart* (Cdr. H.M.L. Waller, RAN). (13)

19 Feb 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) departed Malta for Portsmouth. (11)

24 Feb 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. E.J.P. Brind, RN) arrived at Portsmouth. At the Portsmouth Dockyard degaussing equipment was fitted. Also the crew painted the ship. The crew was also given foreign service leave. (11)

16 Mar 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted D/G trials off Portsmouth. On completion of these she set course to proceed to Scapa Flow via the Clyde. (14)

17 Mar 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived in the Clyde. (14)

18 Mar 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed the Clyde for Scapa Flow where she arrived later the same day and joined the Home Fleet. (14)

19 Mar 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow for the Northern Patrol. She is to patrol south of Iceland. (15)

28 Mar 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow from the Northern Patrol. (15)

31 Mar 1940

Around 2015A/31, **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow for an anti-shipping raid along the Norwegian coast.

She was joined around 1220A/1, by the destroyers **HMS Fearless** (Cdr. K.L. Harkness, RN) and **HMS Hostile** (Cdr. J.P. Wright, RN) which came from Sullom Voe.

In the afternoon of the 3rd, *HMS Fearless* fuelled from *HMS Birmingham*.

In the morning of the 4th, *HMS Hostile* captured the German fishing trawler ***PG 365 / Friesland*** (247 GRT, built 1921, former Hinrich Cordes) north-west of Tromso in position 70°06'N, 17°01'E. A prize crew was put on board the ship, with had a crew of thirteen and one passenger (a women). She arrived in the U.K., in a port in north-east Scotland, on 12 April 1940.

In the afternoon of the 4th, *HMS Hostile* fuelled from *HMS Birmingham*.

On the 6th, *HMS Fearless* captured the German fishing trawler ***PG 529 / Blankenburg*** (344 GRT, built 1938) near the North Cape in position 71°05'N, 26°49'E.

On the 7th, *HMS Hostile* captured the German fishing trawler ***PG 105 / Nordland*** (393 GRT, built 1922) north of the Lofoten in position 69°05'N, 14°30'E. ⁽¹⁶⁾

5 Apr 1940

Operation Wilfed.

Minelaying in Norwegian territorial waters and subsequent movements leading up to the First Battle of Narvik.

Three British forces were to lay mines in Norwegian territorial waters, these were;

' Force WB ': destroyers **HMS Hyperion** (Cdr. H.St.L. Nicolson, RN) and **HMS Hero** (Cdr. H.W. Biggs, RN). They were to simulate a minelay of Bud. This force departed Scapa Flow with *HMS Renown* at 1830/5 (see below).

' Force WS ': Auxiliary minelayer **HMS Teviotbank** (Cdr.(Retd.) R.D. King-Harman, DSC and Bar, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Inglefield** (Capt. P. Todd, RN), **HMS Ilex** (Lt.Cdr. P.L. Saumarez, DSC, RN), **HMS Imogen** (Cdr. C.L. Firth, MVO, RN) and **HMS Isis** (Cdr. J.C. Clouston, RN). This force was to lay mines in the Stadlandet area between Aalesund and Bergen.

' Force WV ': Minelaying destroyers: **HMS Esk** (Lt.Cdr. R.J.H. Couch, RN, with Capt. J.G. Bickford, DSC, RN, Capt. D.10 onboard), **HMS Icarus** (Lt.Cdr. C.D. Maud, RN), **HMS Impulsive** (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Thomas, RN) and **HMS Ivanhoe** (Cdr. P.H. Hadow, RN) escorted by destroyers **HMS Hardy** (Capt. B.A. Warburton-Lee, RN), **HMS Havock** (Cdr. R.E. Courage, RN), **HMS Hotspur** (Cdr. H.F.H. Layman, RN) and **HMS Hunter** (Lt.Cdr. L. de Villiers, RN). This force was to lay mines in the entrance to the Vestfjord.

To cover ' Force WS ' it had been intended to sent out the battlecruiser **HMS Renown** (Capt. C.E.B. Simeon, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Greyhound** (Cdr. W.R. Marshall-A'Deane, RN), **HMS Glowworm** (Lt.Cdr. G.B. Roope, RN) and the destroyers from ' Force WB '. As the Admiralty received information that all four Norwegian coast defence ships were at Narvik this was changed at the last moment and the Renown force was then ordered to cover ' Force WV ' instead. *Renown* and her escorting destroyers departed Scapa Flow around 1830/5.

' Force WS ' departed Scapa Flow around 1930/5. During the night the destroyers in company with *HMS Renown* had lost contact with her in the heavy weather. By dawn they were regaining contact when *HMS Glowworm* reported a man overboard at 0620/6. She was given permission shortly afterwards to search for her missing crewmember and doubled back.

' Force WV ' departed Sullom Voe around 0515/6. They were to rendezvous at sea with *HMS Renown*, her escorting destroyers and ' Force WB '. Rendezvous was effected at 0735/6.

HMS Hyperion and *HMS Hero*, were detached to refuel at Lerwick prior to their simulated minelay off Bud. They arrived at Sullom Voe around 1545/6.

When the Admiralty found out on the 7th that only *HMS Greyhound* was with *HMS Renown* the light cruiser **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Fearless** (Cdr. K.L. Harkness, RN) and **HMS Hostile** (Cdr. J.P. Wright, RN) were ordered to make rendezvous with *HMS Renown* off the Vestfiord.

In the evening of the 7th, *HMS Renown* signalled her intention to be in position 67°15'N, 10°40'E at 0500/8 to *HMS Birmingham* and *HMS Glowworm*. Due to the bad weather conditions *HMS Birmingham* and her escort failed to make the rendezvous in time.

Between 0430 and 0530/8 the ' Force WS ' laid their minefield in Vestfiord. *HMS Hardy*, *HMS Havock*, *HMS Hotspur* and *HMS Hunter* then proceeded to make rendezvous with *HMS Renown* while *HMS Esk*, *HMS Icarus*, *HMS Impulsive* and *HMS Ivanhoe* patrolled near the minefield.

At 0759/8 *HMS Glowworm*, who was then in position 65°04'N, 06°04'E, and steering towards the rendezvous with *HMS Renown*, sighted the German destroyers *Z 11 / Bernd von Arnim* and *Z 18 / Hans Ludemann*. Immediately *HMS Glowworm* sent an enemy report and at then engaged *Z 18 / Hans Ludemann*.

At 0855/8, *HMS Glowworm* reported an unknown ship bearing 0°, steering 180° in position 65°06'N, 06°20'E. The German destroyers had called for assistance and drew *HMS Glowworm* towards the heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper* which then engaged the British destroyer. Mortally wounded by the enemy's gunfire, *HMS Glowworm* managed to ram the German cruiser, tearing away 130 feet of the cruiser's armour belt and wrenching the enemy's starboard torpedo tubes from their mountings.

At 0904/8, *HMS Glowworm* sent her last signal before sinking in position 64°13'N, 06°28'E. After the war Lt.Cdr. Roope, *Glowworm's* Commanding Officer was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

Immediately after the receipt of *HMS Glowworm's* enemy report, *HMS Renown* and *HMS Greyhound*, then in position 67°34'N, 10°00'E turned south steering for the reported position believing that the enemy force was heading for Vestfiord and expecting to meet them around 1330/8.

At 0915/8, the C-in-C Home Fleet, detached the battlecruiser **HMS Repulse** (Capt. E.J. Spooner, DSO, RN), light cruiser **HMS Penelope** (Capt. G.D. Yates, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Bedouin** (Cdr. J.A. McCoy, RN), **HMS Eskimo** (Cdr. St.J.A. Micklethwait, DSO, RN), **HMS Punjabi** (Cdr. J.T. Lean, RN) and **HMS Kimberley** (Lt.Cdr. R.G.K. Knowling, RN) from his force to go to the aid of *HMS Glowworm*.

At 1045/8 the Admiralty ordered all destroyers of ' Force WV ' including those patrolling the minefield to join *HMS Renown* and *HMS Greyhound*.

At 1330/8 *HMS Renown* and *HMS Greyhound*, not having encountered the enemy, reversed course and steered to the north-east to make rendezvous with the destroyers of ' Force WV '.

At 1715/8 near the Skomvaer Lighthouse, about seventy miles west of Bodø, *HMS Renown* and *HMS Greyhound* made rendezvous with *HMS Hardy*, *HMS Havock*, *HMS Hotspur*, *HMS Hunter*, *HMS Esk*, *HMS Icarus*, *HMS Impulsive* and *HMS Ivanhoe*. They then again turned to the south but sailing with gale force winds from the north-west the ships had great difficulty to keep formation and stay in company.

At 2100/8 the ' *Renown* ' force reversed course on to 280° to prevent the enemy from entering Narvik. This was on ordered from the Admiralty. They now had to proceed into a full north-west gale.

At 0100/ 9, the ' *Renown* ' force changed course to 180°.

At 0337/9, when in position 67°22'N, 09°36'E, and now steering 130°, *HMS Renown*, still with the destroyers in company, sighted two unknown ships, bearing 070°, distance 10 miles. They were sighted despite a snow storm. The ships were thought to be a German battlecruiser and a heavy cruiser but were in fact the German battlecruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*.

At 0359/9, *HMS Renown*, having now positively identified the ships as German, turned on 305°, parallel to the German ships.

At 0405/9, *HMS Renown* fire with her main armament at a range a little over 18000 yards. Target was the *Gneisenau*. *Renown's* secondary armament, (4.5" DP) opened fire on the *Scharnhorst*. The destroyers also joined in with their 4.7" guns.

At 0416/8, *HMS Renown* received a 28cm shell hit on her foremast. Only *HMS Hardy* and *HMS Hunter* were able to keep up with *HMS Renown* in the gale conditions, but the other destroyers fell behind. Also at about this time *HMS Renown* sustained weather damage to her starboard anti torpedo bulge.

At 0417/8, *HMS Renown* hit *Gneisenau's* fire control system out of action so the German ship turned away on course 30°. The *Scharnhorst* then moved between her sister ship and *HMS Renown* to lay a smoke screen.

At 0419/9 *HMS Renown* scored a hit on *Gneisenau's* 'A' turret. A further hit was also obtained. *HMS Renown* then shifted her main armament to the *Scharnhorst* but she was then hit herself in the stern. Damage was minor. The Germans then broke off the action and turned away to the north-east at best speed.

Renown tried to follow the German ships but could only do around 20 - 23 knots so as not to swamp 'A' turret in the bad weather. The German ships gradually managed to pull away.

At 0515/9, *HMS Renown* briefly reopened fire on the *Scharnhorst* as she came into range when the Germans also had to reduce speed temporarily.

At 0615/9, *HMS Renown* lost contact with the German ships. By now also no of her escorting destroyers was in touch with her. During the action 230 rounds of 15" and 1065 rounds of 4.5" had been fired.

At 0626/19, Vice-Admiral Whitworth ordered *HMS Hardy* to take all destroyers under her command and to patrol the entrance to Vestfiord.

At 0800/9, *HMS Renown* turned west. One hour later the Admiralty ordered *HMS Renown* and other units of the Home Fleet to concentrate off the Vestfiord.

Around 1400/9, *HMS Renown* made rendezvous with *HMS Renown*, *HMS Penelope*, *HMS Bedouin*, *HMS Eskimo*, *HMS Punjabi*, *HMS Kimberley* and *HMS Hostile*. *HMS Penelope* was then detached to patrol in the entrance to the Vestfiord while the remainder of the force moved to patrol 30 miles to the west of *HMS Penelope*. *HMS Hostile* however was apparently ordered to join the other 'H'-class destroyers under Capt. D 2 in *HMS Hardy*.

That leaves us with Forces 'WB' and 'WS', *HMS Teviotbank* with her destroyer escort of *HMS Inglefield*, *HMS Ilex*, *HMS Imogen* and *HMS Isis* was ordered, at 2251/7, to abort the minelay and proceed to Sullom Voe. The destroyers went ahead and arrived at 0830/9 followed by *HMS Teviotbank* at 1100/9. *HMS Inglefield*, *HMS Ilex*, *HMS Imogen*, *HMS Isis*, *HMS Hyperion* and *HMS Hero* departed Sullom Voe at 0300/10 to join Admiral Forbes force which they did around 1100/10.

10 Apr 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow from operations off Norway. (17)

11 Apr 1940

Convoy NP 1.

This troop convoy departed the Clyde on 11 April 1940 for Harstad, Norway. In the end the convoy was split up and one part arrived at Harstad on 15 April. The other part arrived off Namsos on 16 April.

It was made up of the troopships *Empress of Australia* (British, 21833 GRT, built 1914), *Monarch of Bermuda* (British, 22424 GRT, built 1931) and *Reina del Pacifico* (British, 17702 GRT, built 1931).

They were escorted by the destroyer *HMS Amazon* (Lt.Cdr. N.E.G. Roper, RN).

Early in the afternoon of 12 April the troopships *Batory* (Polish, 14387 GRT, built 1936) and *Chrobry* (Polish, 11442 GRT, built 1939) departed Scapa Flow to join convoy NP 1 at sea.

They were escorted by the destroyers *HMS Highlander* (Cdr. W.A. Dallmeyer, RN), *HMS Vanoc* (Lt.Cdr. J.G.W. Deneys, RN), *HMS Volunteer* (Lt.Cdr. N. Lanyon, RN), *HMS Whirlwind* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Rodgers, RN) and *HMS Witherington* (Lt.Cdr. J.B. Palmer, RN). The netlayer *HMS Protector* (Capt. W.Y la L. Beverley, RN) also departed Scapa Flow with these ships.

Around 1600/12, the light cruisers *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow to join the convoy at sea which they did around 1945/12.

Shortly afterwards the convoy was also joined by the AA cruiser *HMS Cairo* (Capt. P.V. McLaughlin, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Brazen* (Lt.Cdr. M. Culme-Seymour, RN), *HMS Fearless* (Cdr. K.L. Harkness, RN) and *HMS Griffin* (Lt.Cdr. J. Lee-Barber, RN) which had sailed from Sullom Voe around 1130/12.

Late in the evening of 12 April repair ship *HMS Vindictive* (Capt. A.R. Halfhide, RN) escorted by the destroyers *HMS Codrington* (Capt. G.E. Creasy, MVO, RN), *HMS Acasta* (Cdr. C.E. Glasfurd, RN) and *HMS Ardent* (Lt.Cdr. J.F. Barker, RN) departed Scapa Flow to join the convoy which they did late in the afternoon of the 13th.

Coming south from a patrol off the Vestfjord area were the battleship *HMS Valiant* (Capt. H.B. Rawlings, OBE, RN), battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* (Capt. E.J. Spooner, DSO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Janus* (Cdr. J.A.W. Tothill, RN), *HMS Javelin* (Cdr. A.F. Pugsley, RN) and *HMS Juno* (Cdr. W.E. Wilson, RN). These ships made rendez-vous with

the convoy in the afternoon of the 13th after which *HMS Repulse* with the three J-class destroyers continued on towards Scapa Flow while *HMS Valiant* joined the convoy.

On April 14th it was decided that some of the troops were to be sent to Namsos and the convoy split up;

Troopships *Chrobry* and *Empress of Australia* escorted by the light cruisers *HMS Manchester* and *HMS Birmingham*, AA cruiser *HMS Cairo* and the destroyers *HMS Highlander*, *HMS Vanoc* and *HMS Whirlwind* split off late in the afternoon. This convoy arrived off Namsos early in the morning of the 16th.

The remainder of the ships; troopships *Batory*, *Monarch of Bermuda*, *Reina del Pacifico*, repair ship *HMS Vindictive* and netlayer *HMS Protector* with their escort made up of the battleship *HMS Valiant* and the destroyers *HMS Codrington*, *HMS Amazon*, *HMS Acasta*, *HMS Ardent*, *HMS Brazen*, *HMS Fearless*, *HMS Griffin*, *HMS Volunteer* and *HMS Witherington* arrived at Vaagsfjord late in the morning of the 15th. They had been escorted in by the light cruisers **HMS Southampton** (Capt. F.W.H. Jeans, CVO, RN) and **HMS Aurora** (Capt. L.H.K. Hamilton, DSO, RN).

17 Apr 1940

Troopship ***Chrobry*** (Polish, 11442 GRT, built 1939) departed Lillesjona for Namsos to land more troops and stores together with the troops that had been put on board the destroyers **HMS Afridi** (Capt. P.L. Vian, RN), **HMS Nubian** (Cdr. R.W. Ravenhill, RN), **HMS Sikh** (Cdr. J.A. Giffard, RN), **HMS Matabele** (Cdr. G.K. Whitmy-Smith, RN) and **HMS Mashona** (Cdr. W.H. Selby, RN). The newly arrived AA cruiser **HMS Curlew** (Capt. B.C.B. Brooke, RN) went in with the *Chrobry* and the five destroyers while **HMS Manchester** (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) remained at sea while the other AA cruiser, **HMS Cairo** (Capt. P.V. McLaughlin, RN), was sent north to Skjel Fjord to fuel. The troopship ***Empress of Australia*** (British, 21833 GRT, built 1914) was ordered to return to the U.K. escorted by **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Vanoc** (Lt.Cdr. J.G.W. Deneys, RN) and **HMS Whirlwind** (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Rodgers, RN). **HMS Highlander** (Cdr. W.A. Dallmeyer, RN) was also initially have to been part of this escort but she had run aground while on A/S patrol off Lillesjona around 0130 hours and had been damaged. She was detached soon after departure for the Tyne where she was to undergo repairs. Shortly before *HMS Highlander* was detached she forced a German submarine to dive which enabled the convoy to pass unharmed.

At 0200/18 unloading of the *Chrobry* was halted and she went out to sea again with 170 tons of stores still onboard. She had to clear the area before daylight and the expected air attacks. She was to return the next night. *Chrobry* indeed succeeded in landing her remaining stores in the evening of the 18th. She then took on board a cargo of timber and set course for the U.K. escorted by *HMS Sikh* and *HMS Mashona*. *HMS Matabele* and *HMS Curlew* meanwhile had gone back to the U.K. for fuel. *HMS Manchester* was also on her way back home but was ordered to return to assist a French convoy that was next to land troops at Namsos. *HMS Manchester* could not be back in time to assist in the landings but course and speed were adjusted so as to meet the convoy at sea and escort it on the return passage. *HMS Manchester* joined the convoy in the evening of the 20th and remained with it until off the Shetlands the next day after which she was detached and set course for Scapa Flow. *HMS Cairo* had meanwhile also returned after fueling at Skjel Fjord and assisted the French during the landings. *HMS Cairo* then returned to the U.K. bolstering the escort of the French convoy. (18)

19 Apr 1940

Around 0445A/19, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow having been detached from escorting the troopship ***Empress of Australia***.

She departed Scapa Flow for Rosyth around 0930A/19. She was recalled for escort duty later and proceeded north to make rendezvous with a troop convoy the following day. (17)

20 Apr 1940

Around 0100A/20, the French transport *Ville d'Alger* with French troops on board departed Scapa Flow for Namsos. She was being escorted by the French destroyers *Bison* (Capt. J.A.R. Bouan) and *Foudroyant* Foudroyant (Cdr. P.L.A. Fontaine).

These ships were joined around 0800A/20 by the AA cruiser *HMS Calcutta* (Capt. D.M. Lees, DSO, RN) which also came from Scapa Flow.

Around 2015A/20, the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) also joined she remained with the convoy until 2035A/21 when the convoy entered Namsen Fjord. *HMS Birmingham* then set course for Rosyth.

Around 2315A/21, *HMS Calcutta* parted company with the French ships and left Namsen Fjord to proceed back to sea. (19)

22 Apr 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Rosyth from operations. (17)

24 Apr 1940

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) departed Rosyth loaded with troops for Molde. Passage north was made with *HMS York* (Capt. R.H. Portal, DSC, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) that were also loaded with troops but these were to be landed at Aandalsnes. Escort was provided by the destroyers *HMS Acheron* (Lt.Cdr. R.W.F. Northcott, RN), *HMS Arrow* (Cdr. H.W. Williams, RN) and *HMS Griffin* (Lt.Cdr J. Lee-Barber, DSO, RN).

The cruisers disembarked their troops at their destinations in the evening of the 25th. (18)

25 Apr 1940

In the evening, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN), successfully landed her troops at Molde as did *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and *HMS York* (Capt. R.H. Portal, DSC, RN) at Aandalsnes.

After doing so the cruisers immediately set out to sea again and remained in the Trondheim area.

HMS Manchester and *HMS Birmingham* departed the area for Scapa Flow in the forenoon of the 28th. (20)

29 Apr 1940

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow from operations of Norway. (21)

30 Apr 1940

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow together for Aandalsnes where they were to evacuate troops. They were escorted by the destroyers *HMS Inglefield* (Capt. P. Todd, RN), *HMS Diana* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) and *HMS Delight* (Cdr. M. Fogg-Elliott, RN). (18)

1 May 1940

In the evening, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Inglefield* (Capt. P. Todd, RN), *HMS Diana* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) and *HMS Delight* (Cdr. M. Fogg-Elliott, RN) arrived off Aandalsnes to evacuate troops. At Aandalsnes they joined the AA cruiser *HMS Calcutta* (Capt. D.M. Lees, DSO, RN), destroyers *HMS Somali* (Capt. R.S.G. Nicholson, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Mashona* (Cdr. W.H. Selby, RN) and the sloop *HMS Auckland* (Cdr. J.G. Hewitt, RN). (22)

2 May 1940

After having taken on board troops, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Inglefield* (Capt. P. Todd, RN) and *HMS Delight* (Cdr. M. Fogg-Elliott, RN) set course to return to Scapa Flow where they arrived around 0015/3. *HMS Diana* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) was detached to transport the Norwegian General Ruga and his staff to Tromsø, where she arrived at 1100/3. *HMS Somali* (Capt. R.S.G. Nicholson, DSO, DSC, RN) had gone ahead and arrived at Scapa Flow at 1630/2. *HMS Calcutta* (Capt. D.M. Lees, DSO, RN) and *HMS Mashona* (Cdr. W.H. Selby, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow at 0730/3 and finally *HMS Auckland* (Cdr. J.G. Hewitt, RN) arrived there at 1015/3. (22)

8 May 1940

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Hyperion* (Cdr. H.St.L. Nicolson, RN), *HMS Hereward* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Greening, RN) and *HMS Janus* (Cdr. J.A.W. Tothill, RN) departed Scapa Flow for Rosyth where they arrived later the same day. (23)

9 May 1940

A group of German auxiliary minelayers with escorts has been reported to be west of Jutland, Denmark in position 56°39'N, 03°37'E. At 0900A/9 the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Hyperion* (Cdr. H.St.L. Nicolson, RN), *HMS Hereward* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Greening, RN), *HMS Havock* (Lt.Cdr. R.E. Courage, RN) and *HMS Janus* (Cdr. J.A.W. Tothill, RN) departed Rosyth to intercept and attack them. Off Rosyth they were joined by four more destroyers; *HMS Kelly* (Capt. L.F.A.V.N. Mountbatten, GCVO, RN), *HMS Kimberley* (Lt.Cdr. J.S.M. Richardson, RN), *HMS Kandahar* (Cdr. W.G.A. Robson, RN) and *HMS Hostile* (Cdr. J.P. Wright, RN). *HMS Kimberley* however was short of fuel and she was soon sent to Rosyth.

At 1200A/9 the destroyers *HMS Mohawk* (Cdr. J.W.M. Eaton, RN), *HMS Gallant* (Lt.Cdr. C.P.F. Brown, RN), *HMS Fury* (Cdr. E.W.B. Sim, RN), *HMS Foresight* (Lt.Cdr. G.T. Lambert, RN) and *HMS Bulldog* (Lt.Cdr. J.P. Wisden, RN) were sent from Scapa Flow to proceed to position 57°21'N, 02°33'E to intercept a group of German motor torpedo boats that had been reported and then join the 'Rosyth force'.

When *HMS Kandahar* obtained an A/S contact she and *HMS Kelly* were ordered to hunt it down. They were later joined by *HMS Bulldog* who had lost touch with her group.

At 2230A/9 *HMS Kelly* was torpedoed and badly damaged by the German motor torpedo boat *S 31* in position 56°48'N, 05°09'E. She was taken in tow by *HMS Bulldog*.

Shortly after midnight on the 10th the German motor torpedo boat *S 33* collided in thick fog with *HMS Bulldog* and *HMS Kelly*. She was not able to inflict damage to the destroyers but she sustained heavy damage herself from the collision.

The destroyers *HMS Kandahar*, *HMS Gallant* and *HMS Fury* were ordered to escort *HMS Bulldog* and *HMS Kelly*.

At daylight on the 10th *Kelly's* wounded were transferred to *HMS Kandahar*. She had also suffered 27 casualties during the attack.

The light cruisers ***HMS Manchester*** (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN) and ***HMS Sheffield*** (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) departed Scapa Flow at 0330A/10 to provide cover for the damaged destroyer and her escorts. They joined at 1400A/10. By that time also coastal command Hudson aircraft were patrolling overhead.

Shortly before 0930A/10, *HMS Birmingham*, *HMS Hyperion*, *HMS Hostile*, *HMS Hereward*, *HMS Havock*, *HMS Foresight* and *HMS Kimberley* (this last one had apparently joined by this time having fuelled at Rosyth).

HMS Kandahar was detached to refuel and land the wounded at Rosyth before sailing again to rejoin the damaged destroyer. She arrived at Rosyth on the 11th and departed again later the same day.

Shortly after 1600A/11, *HMS Manchester* and *HMS Sheffield* parted company and proceeded to Rosyth where they arrived very early the following day.

At 0500A/12 the tugs *Watermeyer* and *Brahman* arrived to relieve *HMS Bulldog* from towing the damaged destroyer about two hours later.

HMS Kelly in tow of the *Watermeyer* and *Brahman* and screened by *HMS Bulldog*, *HMS Fury*, *HMS Gallant* and *HMS Kandahar* arrived at the Tyne at 1730A/13.

She was then sent to her builders yard at Hebburn-on-Tyne for major repairs. This was now the third time in a little over 8 months that *HMS Kelly* was at a dockyard for major repairs. (24)

11 May 1940

Around 1100A/11, the light cruiser ***HMS Birmingham*** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers ***HMS Maori*** (Cdr. G.N. Brewer, RN) and ***HMS Janus*** (Cdr. J.A.W. Tothill, RN) arrived at Immingham. (25)

20 May 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Immingham for Rosyth. (25)

21 May 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Rosyth from Immingham. (25)

27 May 1940

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN), ***HMS Sheffield*** (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) and ***HMS Birmingham*** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) proceeded from Rosyth to Immingham. (26)

10 Jun 1940

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G. Layton, CB, DSO, RN), ***HMS Sheffield*** (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) and ***HMS Birmingham*** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) proceeded from Immingham to Rosyth. (27)

21 Jun 1940

Heavy cruiser ***HMS York*** (Capt. R.H. Portal, DSC, RN), light cruisers ***HMS Manchester*** (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN,

flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN), *HMS Sheffield* (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Rosyth escorted by the destroyer *HMS Gallant* (Lt.Cdr. C.P.F. Brown, RN) to rendez-vous with the heavy cruiser *HMS Sussex* (Capt. R.V. Symonds-Taylor, DSC, RN) and light cruiser *HMS Newcastle* (Capt. J. Figgins, RN) at sea (These two cruisers had departed Scapa Flow early in the morning) and then to join the battlecruisers *HMS Renown* (Capt. C.E.B. Simeon, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral W.J. Whitworth, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Repulse* (Capt. W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Inglefield* (Capt. P. Todd, RN), *HMS Zulu* (Cdr. J.S. Crawford, RN), *HMS Maori* (Cdr. H.T. Armstrong, RN), *HMS Mashona* (Cdr. W.H. Selby, RN), *HMS Forester* (Lt.Cdr. E.B. Tancock, RN), *HMS Escort* (Lt.Cdr. J. Bostock, RN) and *HMS Diana* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) which had departed Scapa Flow at 1220/21.

The German battlecruiser *Scharnhorst* had been sighted leaving Trondheim southwards escorted by four destroyers and four torpedo-boats. The Germans however retreated inside the fjords and the British ships were recalled arriving back in port on 22 June. (28)

23 Jun 1940

Around 1030A/23, the light cruisers *HMS Sheffield* (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyer *HMS Gallant* (Lt.Cdr. C.P.F. Brown, RN) departed Rosyth with despatch to make rendezvous with the damaged Polish submarine *ORP Wilk* (Kpt.mar. (Lt.Cdr.) B. Karnicki). After *Wilk* reported she was able to dive the British ships were ordered to return to Rosyth which they did around 1830A/23. (29)

26 Jun 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) is docked in No.3 Dock at Rosyth. (30)

30 Jun 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) is undocked. (30)

2 Jul 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Rosyth for Sheerness. (30)

3 Jul 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Sheerness from Rosyth. (30)

4 Jul 1940

Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN, struck his flag in *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and hoisted it in *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN). (31)

6 Jul 1940

During the night of 6/7 July, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) conducted patrol 'M' [Thames estuary]. (32)

10 Jul 1940

During the night of 10/11 July, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) conducted patrol 'M' [Thames estuary]. (32)

8 Aug 1940

During the night of 8/9 August, the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Campbell* (Capt. C.R.L. Parry, RN)

and *HMS Windsor* (Lt.Cdr. G.P. Huddart, RN) conducted patrol 'O' [East of Lowestoft between 52°00'N and 52°45'N]. (33)

17 Aug 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) and *HMS Southampton* (Capt. B.C.B. Brooke, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral M.L. Clarke, DSC, RN) departed Sheerness around 1800A/17 for Rosyth where they arrived around 1300A/18. They were relocated to Rosyth due to the almost continuous bombing of the south part England by the Luftwaffe. (34)

20 Aug 1940

Around 2030A/20, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) departed Rosyth for Scapa Flow where she arrived around 0700A/21. (33)

21 Aug 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (33)

23 Aug 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (35)

26 Aug 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (35)

29 Aug 1940

Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN, transferred his flag from *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) to *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN). (36)

30 Aug 1940

The light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN) both shifted from Scapa Flow to Rosyth. On leaving Scapa Flow they were briefly escorted by the destroyers *HMS Kashmir* (Cdr. H.A. King, RN) and *HMS Kipling* (Cdr. A. St. Clair-Ford, RN).

Having returned to Scapa Flow from escorting the cruisers for part of their trip to Rosyth, *HMS Kashmir* (Cdr. H.A. King, RN) and *HMS Kipling* (Cdr. A. St. Clair-Ford, RN), departed Scapa Flow to reinforce the escort of convoy SL 43. (36)

1 Sep 1940

Around 0001A/1, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and *HMS Southampton* (Capt. B.C.B. Brooke, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral M.L. Clarke, DSC, RN) departed Rosyth for the Humber. Around 0140A/1, near Fidra, they were joined by the destroyers *HMS Versatile* (Cdr.(Retd.) J.H. Jauncey, RN) and *HMS Vimy* (Lt.Cdr. D.J.B. Jewitt, RN) which parted company again around 0250A/1. *HMS Woolston* (Lt.Cdr. W.J. Phipps, OBE, RN) was also to have joined later but it does not appear that she actually did, presumably due to the fact that around

0305A/1 the cruisers were recalled and then returned to Rosyth arriving around 0600A/1. The destroyers returned to Methil. ⁽³⁷⁾

4 Sep 1940

Around 1230A/4, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral G.F.B. Edward-Collins, CB, KCVO, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and *HMS Southampton* (Capt. B.C.B. Brooke, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral M.L. Clarke, DSC, RN) departed Rosyth for Immingham. They were escorted by the escort destroyer *HMS Holderness* (Lt.Cdr. D.E. Holland-Martin, DSC, RN).

The escort was reinforced around 2000A/4 by the destroyers *HMS Jupiter* (Cdr. D.B. Wyburd, RN) and *HMS Kelvin* (Cdr. J.H. Allison, DSO, RN) which had come from Immingham to rendez-vous with the cruisers and escort them in.

All ships, minus *HMS Holderness* which was detached shortly before arriving, arrived at Immingham, where they had been diverted to, shortly before midnight.

The cruisers were sent to Immingham for anti-invasion duty. ⁽³⁷⁾

25 Sep 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Immingham for Birkenhead (Liverpool) where she was to refit. ⁽³⁸⁾

27 Sep 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Birkenhead. ⁽³⁹⁾

1 Nov 1940

During her refit, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), is docked at Birkenhead. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

3 Dec 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), is undocked and moved to the basin to continue her refit. ⁽⁴¹⁾

26 Dec 1940

With her refit completed, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), departed Liverpool for Scapa Flow. ⁽⁴¹⁾

27 Dec 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow from Liverpool. ⁽⁴¹⁾

28 Dec 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted D/G trials at Scapa Flow. ⁽⁴¹⁾

30 Dec 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. ⁽⁴¹⁾

31 Dec 1940

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted RDF and torpedo firing exercises at Scapa Flow.

[No log for January 1941 is available, therefore some details for this month will be missing.] ⁽⁴¹⁾

11 Jan 1941

As it was thought a German warship was operating west of Ireland the battlecruisers *HMS Hood* (Capt. I.G. Glennie, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral W.J. Whitworth, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Repulse* (Capt. W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), light cruisers *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland,

CB, RN), **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers **HMS Somali** (Capt. C. Caslon, RN), **HMS Bedouin** (Cdr. J.A. McCoy, DSO, RN), **HMS Eskimo** (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN), **HMS Tartar** (Cdr. L.P. Skipwith, RN), **HMS Escapade** (Cdr. R.E. Hyde-Smith, RN) and **HMS Eclipse** (Lt.Cdr. I.T. Clark, RN) sailed from Scapa Flow around 0100A/11 to try to intercept.

The force returned to Scapa Flow around 0100A/13 minus *HMS Hood* which was detached with orders to proceed to Rosyth. To escort her the destroyers **HMS Echo** (Cdr. S.H.K. Spurgeon, DSO, RAN), **HMS Electra** (Cdr. S.A. Buss, MVO, RN) and **HMS Keppel** (Lt. R.J. Hanson, RN) had departed Scapa Flow at 2300A/12.

16 Jan 1941

HMS Edinburgh (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and **HMS Nigeria** (Capt. J.G.L. Dundas, RN) conducted torpedo firing exercises at Scapa Flow. (42)

22 Jan 1941

Operation Rubble

Escape of five Norwegian merchant vessels from Gotenburg, Sweden to the U.K.

The Norwegian merchant vessels; ***Elizabeth Bakke*** (5450 GRT, built 1937), ***John Bakke*** (4718 GRT, built 1929), ***Ranja*** (tanker, 6355 GRT, built 1928), ***Tai Shan*** (6962 GRT, built 1929) and ***Taurus*** (4767 GRT, built 1935).

During their escape the merchant vessels narrowly miss the German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* in the Kattegat during their passage to the Atlantic.

The light cruisers **HMS Naiad** (Capt. M.H.A. Kelsey, DSC, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral E.L.S. King, CB, MVO, RN) and **HMS Aurora** (Capt. W.G. Agnew, RN) departed Scapa Flow at 2250A/23 to make rendez-vous with the escaping ships.

The light cruisers **HMS Edinburgh** (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN) and **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) with the destroyers **HMS Echo** (Cdr. S.H.K. Spurgeon, DSO, RAN), **HMS Electra** (Cdr. S.A. Buss, MVO, RN), **HMS Escapade** (Cdr. R.E. Hyde-Smith, RN) departed Scapa Flow at 0130A/24.

As the *Elizabeth Bakke* was the much faster than the other ships she proceeded independently. She arrived at Kirkwall at 0903A/25 not having been able to make rendez-vous with the destroyer *HMS Echo* which had been detached to escort her.

HMS Naiad and *HMS Aurora* met steamers *Tai Shan* and *Taurus*. They turned these steamers over to the other warships group and then proceeded east again to meet the *John Bakke* and *Ranja*. These two merchant vessels were under air attack when the cruisers found them. *Ranja* sustained some minor damage and her First Officer was wounded.

Taurus arrived at Kirkwall at 0430A/25 escorted by *HMS Electra*, these were followed by the *Tai Shan* around 0535 hours.

The *John Bakke* arrived at Kirkwall at 0700A/25 escorted by *HMS Aurora*.

The final ship to arrive at Kirkwall was the tanker *Ranja*. She arrived at 0815A/25 escorted by *HMS Naiad*.

All warships involved then returned to Scapa Flow. All arrived on the 25th.

23 Jan 1941

In the late afternoon / early evening, *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Nigeria* (Capt. J.G.L. Dundas, RN) and *HMS Mauritius* (Cdr. A.R. Pedder, RN) conducted RIX (rangefinding and inclination) exercises off Scapa Flow. ⁽⁴²⁾

24 Jan 1941

Around 0115A/24, *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Echo* (Cdr. S.H.K. Spurgeon, DSO, RAN), *HMS Electra* (Cdr. S.A. Buss, MVO, RN) and *HMS Escapade* (Cdr. R.E. Hyde-Smith, RN) departed Scapa Flow to participate in operation Rubble.

They returned to Scapa Flow around 1115A/25.

[For more information on this operation see the event ' Operation Rubble ' for 22 January 1941.] ⁽⁴³⁾

25 Jan 1941

As the German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were reported to have left Kiel, Germany for operations in the Atlantic the Home Fleet sailed late in the evening to intercept them.

The ships that sailed from Scapa Flow were the following, battleships *HMS Nelson* (Capt. G.J.A. Miles, RN, flying the flag of A/Adm. J.C. Tovey, KCB, DSO, RN), *HMS Rodney* (Capt. F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, RN), battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* (Capt. W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), light cruisers *HMS Arethusa* (Capt. Q.D. Graham, RN), *HMS Galatea* (Capt. B.B. Schofield, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.T.B. Curteis, CB, RN), *HMS Aurora* (Capt. W.G. Agnew, RN), *HMS Mauritius* (Cdr. A.R. Pedder, RN), *HMS Naiad* (Capt. M.H.A. Kelsey, DSC, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral E.L.S. King, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Phoebe* (Capt. G. Grantham, RN), *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Bedouin* (Cdr. J.A. McCoy, DSO, RN), *HMS Matabele* (Cdr. R.St.V. Sherbrooke, DSO, RN), *HMS Punjabi* (Cdr. J.T. Lean, DSO, RN), *HMS Tartar* (Cdr. L.P. Skipwith, RN), *HMS Echo* (Cdr. S.H.K. Spurgeon, DSO, RAN), *HMS Electra* (Cdr. S.A. Buss, MVO, RN), *HMS Escapade* (Cdr. R.E. Hyde-Smith, RN), *HMS Beagle* (Lt.Cdr. R.H. Wright, DSC, RN), *HMS Brilliant* (Lt.Cdr. F.C. Brodrick, RN), *HMS Keppel* (Lt. R.J. Hanson, RN) and *ORP Piorun* (Cdr. E.J.S. Plawski).

On the 27th, *HMS Rodney*, *HMS Birmingham*, *HMS Edinburgh*, *HMS Mauritius* and the destroyers *HMS Beagle*, *HMS Brilliant*, *HMS Keppel* and *Piorun* parted company to return to Scapa Flow which they did around 2345A/28 except for *HMS Keppel* and *ORP Piorun* which returned to Scapa Flow at 0700A/29.

They were to remain at Scapa Flow until 30 January when they would sail to relieve units still on patrol to enable them to return to base.

On 30 January the light cruisers *HMS Naiad* and *HMS Phoebe* arrived at Scapa Flow at 1100 hours. They were followed about half an hour later by the light cruisers *HMS Galatea* and *HMS Arethusa*.

HMS Nelson, *HMS Repulse*, *HMS Bedouin*, *HMS Matabele*, *HMS Punjabi*, *HMS Tartar*, *HMS Echo*, *HMS Electra* and *HMS Escapade* arrived at Scapa Flow at 1700A/30.

Light cruiser *HMS Aurora* also returned to Scapa Flow on 30 January.

4 Feb 1941

In the late afternoon and evening, *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Nigeria* (Capt. J.G.L. Dundas, RN) and *HMS Mauritius* (Cdr. A.R. Pedder, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (44)

5 Feb 1941

HMS Edinburgh (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow for Greenock. (45)

6 Feb 1941

HMS Edinburgh (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Greenock. (45)

9 Feb 1941

Convoy WS 6A.

This convoy departed U.K. waters on 9 February 1941 and arrived at Freetown on 1 March 1941.

The convoy was formed at in position from three sections of troopships / transports coming from Avonmouth, Liverpool and the Clyde.

The convoy was made up of the following troopships / transports; *Almanzora* (British, 15551 GRT, built 1914), *Ascanius* (British, 10048 GRT, built 1910), *Bellerophon* (British, 9019 GRT, built 1906), *Bergensfjord* (Norwegian, 11015 GRT, built 1913), *Burdwan* (British, 6069 GRT, built 1928), *Cape Horn* (British, 5643 GRT, built 1929), *City of Athens* (British, 6558 GRT, built 1923), *City of Corinth* (British, 5318 GRT, built 1918), *City of Hankow* (British, 7360 GRT, built 1915), *City of Pittsburg* (British, 7377 GRT, built 1922), *Consuelo* (British, 4847 GRT, built 1937), *Dalesman* (British, 6343 GRT, built 1940), *Highland Brigade* (British, 14134 GRT, built 1929), *Kina II* (British, 9823 GRT, built 1939), *Leopoldville* (Belgian, 11509 GRT, built 1929), *Llandaff Castle* (British, 10799 GRT, built 1926), *Llangibby Castle* (British, 11951 GRT, built 1929), *Logician* (British, 5993 GRT, built 1928), *Masheer* (British, 7911 GRT, built 1925), *Manchester Citizen* (British, 5343 GRT, built 1925), *Mataroa* (British, 12390 GRT, built 1922), *Nova Scotia* (British, 6796 GRT, built 1926), *Opawa* (British, 10354 GRT, built 1931), *Port Alma* (British, 8400 GRT, built 1928), *Rangitata* (British, 16737 GRT, built 1929), *Ruahine* (British, 10832 GRT, built 1909), *Salween* (British, 7063 GRT, built 1937), *Scythia* (British, 19761 GRT, built 1920) and *Thysville* (Belgian, 8351 GRT, built 1922).

Escort was initially provided by the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Phoebe* (Capt. G. Grantham, RN), armed merchant cruiser *HMS Cathay* (A/Capt.(Retd.) C.M. Merewether, RN), destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr. M.J. Clark, RAN), *HMCS Ottawa* (Cdr. E.R. Mainguy, RCN), *HMCS Restigouche* (Cdr. H.N. Lay, OBE, RN), *HMCS St. Laurent* (Lt. H.S. Rayner, RCN), *HMCS Skeena* (Lt.Cdr. J.C. Hibbard, RCN), *HMS Legion* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, RN), *Piorun* (Cdr. E.J.S. Plawski), *ORP Garland* (Lt.Cdr. K.F. Namiesniowski, ORP), *HMS Keppel* (?), *HMS Broadwater* (Lt.Cdr. C.L.de H. Bell, RD, RNR) and the escort destroyers *HMS Atherstone* (Lt.Cdr. R.F. Jenks, RN) and *HMS Cottesmore* (Lt.Cdr. J.C.A. Ingram, RN).

Information on this convoy is difficult to find but it appears that most of the A/S escort parted company with the convoy in the early evening of 12 February (according to the logbook of *HMS Birmingham*) and then proceeded as follows; *HMAS Napier* and *HMAS Nizam* to Scapa Flow passing north of Rockall, *HMS Keppel*, *HMS Atherstone* and *HMS Cottessmore* to Londonderry, *HMCS Ottawa*, *HMS Restigouche*, *HMCS St. Laurent* and *HMCS Skeena* through area 52°N to 53°N, 23°W to 20°W and then to Greenock through position 55°N, 15°W, *HMS Legion*, *HMS Broadwater*, *ORP Piorun* and *ORP Garland* through position 57°N, 19°W and then to Greenock while passing north of Rockall. All groups were to conduct A/S sweeps on their way back.

Shortly before noon on the 15th the battleship *HMS Rodney* (Capt. F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, RN) was sighted which was to join the convoy.

Shortly after *Rodney* joined *HMS Phoebe* parted company with the convoy to fuel at Gibraltar.

HMS Rodney remained with the convoy until 1700/16. She then set course to join convoy HX 108.

The battlecruiser *HMS Renown* (Capt R.R. McGrigor, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, DSO, RN) and aircraft carrier *HMS Ark Royal* (Capt. C.S. Holland, RN) joined the convoy at 1000/17. They remained with the convoy until 1030/21 when they were relieved by *HMS Malaya* (Capt. A.F.E. Palliser, DSC, RN).

HMS Phoebe rejoined the convoy shortly before noon on 23 February 1941.

Shortly after noon on 25 February 1941 the destroyers *HMS Faulknor* (Capt. A.F. de Salis, RN) and *HMS Forester* (Lt.Cdr. E.B. Tancock, DSC and Bar, RN) joined the convoy.

At 2030/25 the armed yacht *HMS Surprise* (Capt.(Retd.) E.C. Stubbs, RN) also joined.

Around 0900/27 the sloop *HMS Milford* (Cdr.(Retd.) the Hon. V.M. Wyndham-Quin, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Vidette* (Lt. E.N. Walmsley, RN) and *HMS Wishart* (Cdr. E.T. Cooper, RN) joined the escort of the convoy.

On February 28th, *HMS Malaya* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Freetown taking the destroyers *HMS Faulknor* and *HMS Forester* with her. Also on this day the destroyers *HMS Encounter* (Lt.Cdr. E.V.St J. Morgan, RN) and *HMS Isis* (Cdr. C.S.B. Swinley, DSC, RN) joined the escort of the convoy.

At 1226A/1, a Walrus aircraft from *HMS Birmingham* force landed on the water 95° from position 09°25'N, 16°39'W. *Birmingham* searched for the aircraft rejoining the convoy for the night not having found the aircraft. A new search was not possible without first fuelling at Freetown.

Shortly before arrival at Freetown on 2 March 1941 the corvettes *HMS Calendula* (Lt.Cdr. A.D. Bruford, RNVR) and *HMS Clematis* (Cdr. Y.M. Cleaves, DSC, RD, RNR) joined. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

2 Mar 1941

Around 1015N/2, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Freetown where she immediately commenced fuelling. She also embarked a replacement Walrus aircraft from the seaplane tender *HMS Albatross* (A/Capt. W.G. Brittain, RN).

She departed to search for her missing Walrus aircraft around 1815N/2.

She returned to Freetown around 1530N/4, not having found her missing aircraft and its crew. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

8 Mar 1941

Convoy WS 6.

This convoy departed Freetown on 8 March 1941 for South / Africa (Capetown / Durban).

It was a combined convoy made up with ships from convoy's WS 6A and WS 6B which had come to Freetown from the U.K.

The convoy was made up with the following troopships / transports; *Almanzora* (British, 15551 GRT, built 1914), *Ascanius* (British, 10048 GRT, built 1910), *Bellerophon* (British, 9019 GRT, built 1906), *Bergensfjord* (Norwegian, 11015 GRT, built 1913), *Burdwan* (British, 6069 GRT, built 1928), *Cape Horn* (British, 5643 GRT, built 1929), *City of Athens* (British, 6558 GRT, built 1923), *City of Corinth* (British, 5318 GRT, built 1918), *City of Hankow* (British, 7360 GRT, built 1915), *City of London* (British, 8956 GRT, built 1907), *City of Pittsburg* (British, 7377 GRT, built 1922), *Consuelo* (British, 4847 GRT, built 1937), *Dalesman* (British, 6343 GRT, built 1940), *Kina II* (British, 9823 GRT, built 1939), *Leopoldville* (Belgian, 11509 GRT, built 1929), *Llandaff Castle* (British, 10799 GRT, built 1926), *Llanstephan Castle* (British, 11348 GRT, built 1914), *Logician* (British, 5993 GRT, built 1928), *Mahseer* (British, 7911 GRT, built 1925), *Manchester Citizen* (British, 5343 GRT, built 1925), *Mataroa* (British, 12390 GRT, built 1922), *Northumberland* (British, 11558 GRT, built 1915), *Nova Scotia* (British, 6796 GRT, built 1926), *Opawa* (British, 10354 GRT, built 1931), *Port Alma* (British, 8400 GRT, built 1928), *Rangitata* (British, 16737 GRT, built 1929), *Ruahine* (British, 10832 GRT, built 1909), *Salween* (British, 7063 GRT, built 1937), *Scythia* (British, 19761 GRT, built 1920) and *Thysville* (Belgian, 8351 GRT, built 1922).

The convoy was escorted by the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), *HMS Phoebe* (Capt. G. Grantham, RN) and the armed merchant cruiser *HMS Cathay* (A/Capt.(Retd.) C.M. Merewether, RN).

Heavy cruiser *HMS Cornwall* (Capt. P.C.W. Manwaring, RN) joined the convoy at 1126Z/11 in position 00°50'N, 06°48'W. *HMS Cathay* was then detached with orders to proceed direct to Capetown at her best speed.

At 0600Z/20 the *Almanzora*, *Bergensfjord*, *Llanstephan Castle*, *Ruahine* and *Scythia* parted company for Capetown. These ships were to take on board water at Capetown. They were escorted by *HMS Birmingham*.

At 1600Z/21 the Capetown section of the convoy was detached. It was made up of *Ascanius*, *Burdwan*, *Cape Horn*, *City of Athens*, *Consuelo*, *Kina II*, *Leopoldville*, *Llandaff Castle*, *Nova Scotia* and *Opawa*. They were being escorted by *HMS Phoebe*. These ships were to arrive at Capetown at 0700Z/22.

At 2055Z/22 the *Port Alma* was detached to proceed independently to Capetown.

At 1300Z/25, *HMS Phoebe* with *Almanzora*, *Bergensfjord*, *Llanstephan Castle*, *Ruahine* and *Scythia* rejoined the convoy. *Consuelo*, from the Capetown section, was also present.

At dusk on the 25th, *HMS Phoebe*, was sent ahead to Durban with six of the faster ships to arrive two to three hours ahead of the remainder on the 26th.

The whole convoy had arrived at Durban well before noon on the 26th.

On 27 March 1941 the following troopships / transports sailed from Capetown; *Ascanius*, *Burdwan*, *Cape Horn*, *City of Athens*, *Kina II*, *Llandaff Castle*, *Nova Scotia*, *Opawa* and *Port Alma*. These was one new addition to the convoy;

Leopoldville (Belgian, 11509 GRT, built 1926). They were being escorted by the heavy cruiser **HMS Dorsetshire** (Capt. B.C.S. Martin, RN).

On 1 April 1941 the following troopships / transports sailed from Durban; *Bellerophon*, *Bergensfjord*, *City of Corinth*, *City of Hankow*, *City of London*, *City of Pittsburg*, *Consuelo*, *Dalesman*, *Llanstephan Castle*, *Logician*, *Masheer*, *Manchester Citizen*, *Salween* and *Thysville*. There were also five new additions to the convoy, these were; **City of Canterbury** (British, 8331 GRT, built 1922), **Costa Rica** (Dutch, 8055 GRT, built 1910), **Dilwara** (British, 11080 GRT, built 1936), **Elizabethville** (Belgian, 8351 GRT, built 1922) and **Yoma** (British, 8131 GRT, built 1928). The Durban section was escorted by the heavy cruiser *HMS Cornwall* and light cruiser *HMS Phoebe*.

The Capetown section and Durban section made rendez-vous late in the morning of April 2nd.

HMS Phoebe parted company with the convoy in the evening of April 3rd. She arrived at Aden on 10 April.

HMS Dorsetshire parted company with the convoy in the evening of April 7th. She arrived at Durban on 10 April.

Around noon on the 12th the convoy was joined by the transport **Talamba** (British, 8018 GRT, built 1924) which came from the Seychelles and was escorted by **HMS Glasgow** (Capt. H. Hickling, RN). They had departed the Seychelles on 8 April. *HMS Glasgow* parted company with the convoy on 13 April and arrived back in the Seychelles on 16 April.

The convoy was disbanded in the morning of April 17th near Perim. Most of the ships in the convoy proceeded to Suez independently at their best speed. *HMS Cornwall* arrived at Aden very late in the afternoon of 17 April. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

21 Mar 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Capetown after convoy escort duty. ⁽⁴⁸⁾

24 Mar 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Capetown to overtake the troopship **Christiaan Huygens** (Dutch, 16287 GRT, built 1927) and escort her to Freetown.

Rendezvous was effected around 1800B/26. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

29 Mar 1941

Convoy SL 70.

This convoy departed Freetown on 29 March 1941 and arrived in UK waters (Liverpool) on 23 April 1941.

The convoy was made up of the following merchant vessels; **Alfred Jones** (British, 5013 GRT, built 1930), **Ancylus** (British (tanker), 8017 GRT, built 1935), **Andrea Brovig** (Norwegian (tanker), 10173 GRT, built 1940), **Barrgrove** (British, 5222 GRT, built 1918), **Belgravian** (British, 3136 GRT, built 1937), **Benledi** (British, 5943 GRT, built 1930), **Bulysses** (British, 7519 GRT, built 1927), **Chelatros** (Greek, 3489 GRT, built 1914), **Clan MacBrayne** (British, 4818 GRT, built 1916), **Clan MacInnes** (British, 4672 GRT, built 1920), **Colyto** (Dutch, 4408 GRT, built 1926), **Dagomba** (British, 3845 GRT, built 1928), **Delius** (British, 6065 GRT, built 1937), **Denpark** (British, 3491 GRT, built 1928), **Dornoch** (British, 5186 GRT, built 1939), **Egda** (Norwegian (tanker), 10050 GRT, built 1939), **Elstree Grange** (British, 6598 GRT, built 1916), **Grangepark** (British, 5132 GRT, built 1919), **Gunda** (Swedish, 1770 GRT, built 1930), **Henry Stanley** (British, 5026 GRT, built 1929), **Industria** (British, 4850 GRT, built 1940), **Mandalay** (British, 5529 GRT, built 1911), **Marconi** (British, 7402 GRT, built 1917), **Meliskerk** (Dutch, 6045 GRT,

built 1919), *Para* (Norwegian, 3986 GRT, built 1921), *Parklaan* (Dutch, 3807 GRT, built 1911), *Phidias* (British, 5623 GRT, built 1913), *Sacramento Valley* (British, 4573 GRT, built 1924), *Storanger* (Norwegian (tanker), 9223 GRT, built 1930) and *William Wilberforce* (British, 4013 GRT, built 1930).

The rescue ship *Zamalek* (British, 1567 GRT, built 1921) was also part of the convoy.

On departure from Freetown the convoy was escorted by the light cruiser *HMS Dragon* (Capt. R.J. Shaw, MBE, RN), corvette *HMS Calendula* (Lt.Cdr. A.D. Bruford, RNVR) and the A/S trawlers *HMS Kelt* (T/Lt. W.T. Hodson, RNVR) and *HMS Pict* (???)

At 1726N/31, *HMS Dragon* parted company with the convoy. The armed merchant cruiser *HMS Bulolo* (Capt. (Retd.) R.L. Hamer, RN) had joined shortly before *HMS Dragon* parted company.

Around 1300N/4, *HMS Kelt* and *HMS Pict* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Bathurst.

At 1755N/4, *HMS Calendula* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Bathurst.

Around 1730N/5, the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the troopship *Christiaan Huygens* (Dutch, 16287 GRT, built 1927) joined the convoy. They had departed Freetown around 1730N/2 to overtake the convoy.

Around 1600N/19, *HMS Marsdale* (Lt.Cdr. D.H.F. Armstrong, RNR) joined the convoy after which *HMS Bulolo* parted company.

Around 0900N/20, the destroyer *HMS Winchelsea* (Lt.Cdr. W.A.F. Hawkins, DSC, RN) joined the convoy.

Around 1800N/20, the destroyers *HMS Harvester* (Lt.Cdr. M. Thornton, DSC, RN), *HMS Beagle*, (Lt.Cdr. R.T. White, DSO and Bar, RN), *HMCS Columbia* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) S.W. Davis, RN), *HMCS St.Francis* (Lt.Cdr. H.F. Pullen, RCN) and the corvettes *HMS Heather* (Cdr.(Retd.) J.G.C. Gibson, RN), *HMS Orchis* (Lt. A.D. White, RNR), *HMCS Hepatica* (T/Lt. C. Copelin, RCNR) and *HMCS Windflower* (T/Lt. J.H.S. MacDonald, RCNR) joined the convoy.

At 2105N/20, *HMS Birmingham* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Scapa Flow.

The convoy arrived in U.K. waters on 23 April 1941. Some of the A/S escorts had already parted company with the convoy earlier.

1 Apr 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) and the troopship *Christiaan Huygens* (Dutch, 16287 GRT, built 1927) arrived at Freetown. ⁽⁴⁹⁾

22 Apr 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow after convoy escort duty. ⁽⁴⁹⁾

2 May 1941

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

5 May 1941

Minelaying operation SN 9A.

Minelaying operation by the 1st Minelaying Squadron.

At 0925B/5, the auxiliary minelayers *HMS Agamemnon* (Capt.(Retd.) F. Ratsey, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral R.L. Burnett, OBE, RN), *HMS Menestheus* (Capt. J.S. Crawford, DSO, RN), and *HMS Port Quebec* (Capt. (Retd.) E.C. Watson, RN) of the 1st Minelaying Squadron departed Loch Alsh to lay minefield SN 9A. They were escorted by the destroyers *HMS Intrepid* (Cdr. R.C. Gordon, DSO, RN), *HMS Impulsive* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Thomas, DSC, RN), *HMS St. Marys* (Lt. K.H.J.L. Phibbs, RN) and *HMS Brighton* (Cdr. (Retd.) C.W.V.T.S. Lepper, RN).

Around 1310B/5, the light cruiser *HMS Kenya* (Capt. M.M. Denny, CB, RN) joined the force off the Butt of Lewis to provide close cover. She had departed Scapa Flow at 0750B/5.

The light cruisers *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) of the 18th Cruiser Squadron which had departed Scapa Flow around 1445B/5 to cover the minelaying operation. On completion of this they proceeded on operation EB.

Minefield SN 9A was laid between 1812B/6 and 2058B/6. It was laid along a line between positions 63°20'0"N, 11°36'0"W and 63°57'5"N, 12°02'0"W.

The minelayers laid as follows; *HMS Agamemnon* 532 mines, *HMS Menestheus* 410 mines and *HMS Port Quebec* 548 mines.

At 0952B/8, *HMS Kenya* parted company with the 1st Minelaying Squadron.

HMS Agamemnon, *HMS Menestheus*, *HMS Port Quebec*, *HMS St. Marys* and *HMS Brighton* returned to Port Z.A. (Loch Alsh) at 1331B/8.

HMS Kenya arrived at Scapa Flow around 1500B/8.

HMS Intrepid and *HMS Impulsive* arrived at Scapa Flow around 1030B/9 having been diverted for an A/S hunt on the 8th while en-route from Port Z.A. to Scapa Flow. (51)

6 May 1941

On completion of minelaying operation SN 9A (see 5 May 1941 on the pages of the ships involved) the cover force, made up of the light cruisers *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Vice Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN), *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) proceeded on operation EB.

At 1110B/6 the destroyers *HMS Somali* (Capt. C. Caslon, RN), *HMS Bedouin* (Cdr. J.A. McCoy, DSO, RN), *HMS Eskimo* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) and *HMAS Nestor* (Cdr. G.S. Stewart, RAN) joined they started to search for a German weather reporting vessel. These destroyers had departed Skaalefjord around 0730B/6.

On the 7th they succeeded in capturing the German weather vessel *München*. *HMS Somali* was able to recover an Enigma machine and important documents from this ship.

Around 2359B/7, *HMAS Nestor* parted company to return to Scapa Flow where she arrived around 2100B/8.

On the 9th, *HMS Somali* was detached. She arrived at Scapa Flow around 0700B/10.

HMS Edinburgh, *HMS Manchester* and *HMS Birmingham* arrived at Scapa Flow around 1945B/10.

HMS Bedouin and *HMS Eskimo* arrived at Scapa Flow around 2145B/10 having been detached at 1250B/10 from the cruisers to hunt for a reported enemy submarine. (52)

13 May 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted D/F trials at Scapa Flow. (53)

14 May 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (53)

17 May 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. On completion of the exercises she conducted D/G trials. (53)

18 May 1941

Chase and sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck*,

18 to 27 May 1941.

Part I.

Departure of the *Bismarck* from the Baltic.

At 2130B/18 the German battleship *Bismarck* and the German heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* departed Gotenhafen for an anti-shipping raid in the North Atlantic. The following morning they were joined off Cape Arkona by the German destroyers *Z 16 / Friedrich Eckhold* and *Z 23*. They then proceeded through the Great Belt. The four ships were joined by a third destroyer, *Z 10 / Hans Lody* shortly before midnight on 19 May.

First reports of *Bismarck* and British dispositions 20-21 May 1941.

On 20 May 1941 two large warships with a strong escort were seen at 1500 hours northward out of the Kattegat. This information originated from the Swedish cruiser *Gotland* which had passed the Germans off the Swedish coast in the morning. The Naval Attaché at Stockholm received the news at 2100/20 and forwarded it to the Admiralty. At 0900/21 the *Bismarck* and her consorts entered Kors Fjord, near Bergen, Norway and anchored in nearby fiords. A reconnaissance aircraft flying over Bergen at 1330/21 reported having seen two Hipper class heavy cruisers there. One of these ships was later identified on a photograph as being the *Bismarck*. This intelligence went out at once to the Home Fleet.

The ships of the Home Fleet were at this time widely dispersed on convoy duties, patrols, etc. Some of the units were ranging as far as Gibraltar and Freetown. The Commander-in-Chief, A/Admiral Sir John Tovey, was at Scapa Flow in his flagship, *HMS King George V* (Capt. W.R. Patterson, CVO, RN). With him were her newly commissioned sister ship *HMS Prince of Wales* (Capt. J.C. Leach, MVO, RN), the battlecruiser *HMS Hood* (Capt. R. Kerr, CBE, RN, with Vice-Admiral L.E. Holland, CB, RN, onboard), the aircraft carrier *HMS Victorious* (Capt. H.C. Bovell, RN), the light cruisers *HMS Galatea* (Capt. E.W.B. Sim, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral K.T.B. Curteis, CB, RN), *HMS Aurora* (Capt. W.G. Agnew, RN), *HMS Kenya* (Capt. M.M. Denny, CB, RN), *HMS Neptune* (Capt. R.C. O'Connor, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Achates* (Lt.Cdr. Viscount Jocelyn, RN), *HMS Active* (Lt.Cdr. M.W. Tomkinson, RN), *HMS Antelope* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN), *HMS Anthony* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Hodges, RN), *HMS Echo* (Lt.Cdr. C.H.deB. Newby, RN), *HMS Electra* (Cdr. C.W. May, RN), *HMS Icarus* (Lt.Cdr. C.D. Maud, DSO, RN), *HMS Punjabi* (Cdr. S.A. Buss, MVO, RN) and *HMAS Nestor* (Cdr. A.S. Rosenthal, RAN). *HMS*

Victorious was under orders to escort troop convoy WS 8B from the Clyde to the Middle East. *HMS Neptune* was working up for service with the Mediterranean Fleet and was to escort convoy WS 8X from the Clyde to the Middle East on completion. She did not sail to operate against the Bismarck having only just began her post-refit work-up programme.

Rear-Admiral W.F. Wake-Walker (commanding the first Cruiser Squadron), with the heavy cruisers *HMS Norfolk* (Capt. A.J.L. Phillips, RN) (flag) and *HMS Suffolk* (Capt. R.M. Ellis, RN) was on patrol in the Denmark Strait. The light cruisers *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) were patrolling between Iceland and the Faeroes. The battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* (Capt. W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) was at the Clyde to escort troop convoy WS 8B.

Action taken by the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet

Admiral Tovey took the following action when he received the news the Bismarck had been spotted at Bergen. Vice-Admiral Holland with the *Hood*, *Prince of Wales*, *Achates*, *Antelope*, *Anthony*, *Echo*, *Electra* and *Icarus* was ordered to cover Rear Admiral Wake-Walker's cruisers in the Denmark Strait. His force departed Scapa Flow around 0100/22.

HMS Arethusa (Capt. A.C. Chapman, RN), which was taking the Vice-Admiral, Orkneys and Shetlands, to Reykjavik on a visit of inspection, was ordered to remain at Hvalfiord and placed at Rear-Admiral Wake-Walkers disposal. *HMS Manchester* and *HMS Birmingham* were ordered to top off with fuel at Skaalefiord and them to resume their patrol. The other ships that remained at Scapa Flow were brought to short notice for steam.

The Free French submarine *FFS Minerve* (Lt. P.M. Sonnevile), which was on patrol off south-west Norway was ordered to proceed to position 61°53'N, 03°15'E and *HMS P 31* (Lt. J.B.de B. Kershaw, RN) was ordered to proceed to position 62°08'N, 05°08'E which is to the west of Stadtlandet.

The sailing of *HMS Repulse* and *HMS Victorious* with troop convoy WS 8B was cancelled and the ships were placed at the disposal of Admiral Tovey.

A reconnaissance aircraft flying over Bergen reported that the German ships were gone. This information reached Admiral Tovey at 2000/22. *HMS Suffolk* which had been fuelling at Hvalfiord was ordered to rejoin *HMS Norfolk* in the Denmark Strait. *HMS Arethusa* was ordered to join *HMS Manchester* and *HMS Birmingham* to form a patrol line between Iceland and the Faeroes. Vice-Admiral Holland, on his way to Iceland was told to cover the patrols in Denmark Strait north of 62°N. Admiral Tovey would cover the patrols south of 62°N.

Commander-in-Chief leaves Scapa Flow on 22 May 1941

The *King George V*, with Admiral Tovey on board, departed Scapa Flow at 2245/22. With the *King George V* sailed, *HMS Victorious*, *HMS Galatea*, *HMS Aurora*, *HMS Kenya*, *HMS Hermione* (Capt. G.N. Oliver, RN), *HMS Windsor* (Lt.Cdr. J.M.G. Waldegrave, DSC, RN), *HMS Active*, *HMS Inglefield* (Capt. P. Todd, DSO, RN), *HMS Intrepid* (Cdr. R.C. Gordon, DSO, RN), *HMS Punjabi*, *HMS Lance* (Lt.Cdr. R.W.F. Northcott, RN) and *HMAS Nestor*. *HMS Lance* however had to return to Scapa Flow due to defects.

At A.M. 23 May they were joined off the Butt of Lewis by *HMS Repulse* escorted by *HMS Legion* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, RN), *HMCS Assiniboine* (A/Lt.Cdr. J.H. Stubbs, RCN) and *HMCS Saguenay* (Lt. P.E. Haddon, RCN) coming from the Clyde area which they departed on 22 May.

The Commander-in-Chief was 230 miles north-west of the Butt of Lewis in approximate position 60°20'N, 12°30'W when at 2032/23 a signal came in from *HMS Norfolk* that she had sighted the *Bismarck* in the Denmark Strait.

HMS Suffolk and HMS Norfolk made contact with the *Bismarck* in the Denmark Strait on 23 May 1941.

At 1922/23 *HMS Suffolk* sighted the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* in position 67°06'N, 24°50'W. They were proceeding to the south-west skirting the edge of the ice in Denmark Strait. *HMS Suffolk* immediately sent out an enemy report and made for the mist to the south-east. *HMS Norfolk* then commenced closing and sighted the enemy at 2030 hours. They were only some six nautical miles off and the *Bismarck* opened fire. *HMS Norfolk* immediately turned away, was not hit and also sent out an enemy report.

Although *HMS Suffolk* had sighted the enemy first and also sent the first contact report this was not received by the Commander-in-Chief. The enemy was 600 miles away to the north-westward.

Vice-Admiral Holland had picked up the signal from the *Suffolk*. He was at that moment about 300 nautical miles away. Course was changed to intercept and speed was increased by his force to 27 knots.

Dispositions, 23 May 1941.

At the Admiralty, when the Norfolk's signal came in, one of the first considerations was to safeguard the convoys at sea. At this time there were eleven crossing the North-Atlantic, six homeward and five outward bound. The most important convoy was troop convoy WS 8B of five ships which had left the Clyde the previous day for the Middle East. She was at this moment escorted by the heavy cruiser *HMS Exeter* (Capt. O.L. Gordon, MVO, RN), light cruiser (AA cruiser) *HMS Cairo* (A/Capt. I.R.H. Black, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Cossack* (Capt. P.L. Vian, DSO, RN), *HMS Maori* (Cdr. G.H. Stokes, DSC, RN), *HMS Zulu* (Cdr. H.R. Graham, DSO, RN), *ORP Piorun* (Cdr. E.J.S. Plawski), *HMCS Ottawa* (Cdr. E.R. Mainguy, RCN), *HMCS Restigouche* (Cdr. H.N. Lay, RCN) and the escort destroyer *HMS Eridge* (Lt.Cdr. W.F.N. Gregory-Smith, RN). *HMS Repulse* was also intended to have sailed with this convoy but she had joined the Commander-in-Chief instead.

Force H was sailed around 0200/24 from Gibraltar to protect this important convoy on the passage southwards. Force H was made up of the battlecruiser *HMS Renown* (Capt Sir R.R. McGrigor, RN), aircraft carrier *HMS Ark Royal* (Capt. L.E.H. Maund, RN), light cruiser *HMS Sheffield* (Capt. C.A.A. Larcom, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Faulknor* (Capt. A.F. de Salis, RN), *HMS Foresight* (Cdr. J.S.C. Salter, RN), *HMS Forester* (Lt.Cdr. E.B. Tancock, RN), *HMS Foxhound* (Cdr. G.H. Peters, DSC, RN), *HMS Fury* (Lt.Cdr. T.C. Robinson, RN) and *HMS Hesperus* (Lt.Cdr. A.A. Tait, RN).

HMS Norfolk and HMS Suffolk shadowing Bismarck 23 / 24 May 1941.

During the night of 23 / 24 May 1941 *HMS Norfolk* and *HMS Suffolk* hung on to the enemy, The *Norfolk* on their port quarter, *Suffolk* on their starboard quarter. All through the night they sent signals with updates on the position, course and speed of the enemy. At 0516 hours *HMS Norfolk* sighted smoke on her port bow and soon *HMS Hood* and *HMS Prince of Wales* came in sight.

HMS Hood and HMS Prince of Wales 23 / 24 May 1941.

At 2054/23 the four remaining escorting destroyers were ordered to follow at best speed in the heavy seas if they were unable to keep up with the capital ships which were proceeding at 27 knots. Two destroyers, *HMS Antelope* and *HMS Anthony* had been ordered to proceed to Iceland to refuel at 1400/23. The destroyers all managed to keep up for

now and at 2318 hours they were ordered to form a screen ahead of both capital ships. At 0008/24 speed was reduced to 25 knots and course was altered to due north at 0017 hours. It was expected that contact with the enemy would be made at any time after 0140/24. It was just now that the cruisers lost contact with the enemy in a snowstorm and for some time no reports were coming in. At 0031 hours the Vice-Admiral signalled to the *Prince of Wales* that if the enemy was not in sight by 0210 hours he would probably alter course to 180° until the cruisers regained touch. He also signalled that he intended to engage the *Bismarck* with both capital ships and leave the *Prinz Eugen* to *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*.

The *Prince of Wales'* Walrus aircraft was ready for catapulting and it was intended to fly it off, but visibility deteriorated and in the end it was defuelled and stowed away at 0140 hours. A signal was then passed to the destroyers that when the capital ships would turn to the south they were to continue northwards searching for the enemy. Course was altered to 200° at 0203/24. As there was now little chance of engaging the enemy before daylight the crews were allowed to rest.

At 0247/24 *HMS Suffolk* regained touch with the enemy and by 0300 hours reports were coming in again. At 0353 hours *HMS Hood* increased speed to 28 knots and at 0400/24 the enemy was estimated to be 20 nautical miles to the north-west. By 0430 hours visibility had increased to 12 nautical miles. At 0440 hours orders were given to refuel the Walrus of *HMS Prince of Wales* but due to delays due to water in the fuel it was not ready when the action began and it was damaged by splinters and eventually jettisoned into the sea.

At 0535/24 hours a vessel was seen looming on the horizon to the north-west, it was the *Bismarck*. She was some 17 nautical miles away bearing 330°. *Prinz Eugen* was ahead of her but this was not immediately realised and as the silhouette of the German ships was almost similar the leading ship was most likely thought to be the *Bismarck* on board *HMS Hood*.

Battle of the Denmark Strait, action with the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen. Loss of HMS Hood.

At 0537/24 *HMS Hood* and *HMS Prince of Wales* were turned together 40° to starboard towards the enemy. At 0549 hours course was altered to 300° and the left hand ship was designated as the target. This was a mistake as this was the *Prinz Eugen* and not the *Bismarck*. This was changed to the *Bismarck* just before fire was opened at 0552 hours. At 0554 hours the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* also opened fire. In the meantime *Prince of Wales* had also opened fire at 0053 hours. Her first salvo was over. The sixth salvo was a straddle. The *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* were too far astern of the enemy to take part in the action.

At 0555 hours *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* turned two points to port. This opened up *Prince of Wales'* A arcs as her ninth salvo was fired.

Shortly before 0605 hours *Hood* signalled that another turn of two points to port had to be executed. *Bismarck* had just fired her fifth salvo when the *Hood* was rent in two by a huge explosion rising apparently between the after funnel and the mainmast. The fore part began to sink separately, bows up, whilst the after part remained shrouded in a pall of smoke. Three or four minutes later, the *Hood* had vanished between the waves leaving a vast cloud of smoke drifting away to the leeward. She sank in position 63°20'N, 31°50'W (the wreck was found in 2001 in approximate position 63°22'N, 32°17'W, the exact position has not been released to the public.)

The *Prince of Wales* altered course to starboard to avoid the wreckage of the *Hood*. The *Bismarck* now shifted fire from her main and secondary armament to her. Range was now 18000 yards. Within a very short time she was hit by

four 15" and three 6" shells. At 0602 hours a large projectile wrecked the bridge, killing or wounding most of the personnel and about the same time the ship was holed underwater aft. It was decided temporarily to discontinue the action and at 0613 hours *HMS Prince of Wales* turned away behind a smoke screen. The after turret continued to fire but it soon malfunctioned and was out of action until 0825 hours. When the *Prince of Wales* ceased firing the range was 14500 yards. She had fired 18 salvos from the main armament and five from the secondary. The *Bismarck* made no attempt to follow or continue the action. She had also not escaped unscathed and had sustained two severe hits.

Such was the end of the brief engagement. The loss by an unlucky hit of *HMS Hood* with Vice-Admiral Holland, Captain Kerr and almost her entire ships company was a grievous blow, but a great concentration of forces was gathering behind the Commander-in-Chief, and Admiral Somerville with Force H was speeding towards him from the south.

The chase

When the *Hood* blew up, *HMS Norfolk* was 15 nautical miles to the northward coming up at 28 knots. By 0630/24 she was approaching *HMS Prince of Wales* and Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker, signalling his intention to keep in touch, told her to follow at best speed. The destroyers that had been with *HMS Hood* and *HMS Prince of Wales* were still to the northward. They were ordered to search for survivors but only *HMS Electra* found three. The *Prince of Wales* reported that she could do 27 knots and she was told to open out to 10 nautical miles on a bearing of 110° so that *HMS Norfolk* could fall back on her if she was attacked. Far off the *Prinz Eugen* could be seen working out to starboard of the *Bismarck* while the chase continued to the southward.

At 0757 hours, *HMS Suffolk* reported that the *Bismarck* had reduced speed and that she appeared to be damaged. Shortly afterwards a Sunderland that had taken off from Iceland reported that the *Bismarck* was leaving behind a broad track of oil. The Commander-in-Chief with *HMS King George V* was still a long way off, about 360 nautical miles to the eastward, and Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker on the bridge of *HMS Norfolk* had to make an important decision, was he to renew the action with the help of the *Prince of Wales* or was he to make it his business to ensure that the enemy could be intercepted and brought to action by the Commander-in-Chief. A dominant consideration in the matter was the state of the *Prince of Wales*. Her bridge had been wrecked, she had 400 tons of water in her stern compartments and two of her guns were unserverable and she could go no more than 27 knots. She had only been commissioned recently and barely a week had passed since Captain Leach had reported her ready for service. Her turrets were of a new and an untried model, liable for 'teething' problems and evidently suffering from them, for at the end of the morning her salvos were falling short and wide. It was doubted if she was a match for the *Bismarck* in her current state and it was on these grounds that Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker decided that he would confine himself to shadowing and that he would not attempt to force on an action. Soon after 1100/24 visibility decreased and the *Bismarck* was lost out of sight in mist and rain.

Measures taken by the Admiralty, 24 May 1941.

After the loss of *HMS Hood* the following measures were taken by the Admiralty. To watch for an attempt by the enemy to return to Germany, *HMS Manchester*, *HMS Birmingham* and *HMS Arethusa* had been ordered at 0120/24 to patrol off the north-east point of Iceland. They were told to proceed to this location with all despatch.

HMS Rodney (Capt. F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, RN), which with four destroyers was escorting the troopship *Britannic* (26943 GRT, built 1930) westward, was ordered at 1022/24 to steer west on a closing course and if the *Britannic* could not keep up she was to leave her with one of the destroyers. *Rodney* was about 550 nautical miles

south-east of the *Bismarck*. At 1200/24 she left the *Britannic* in position 55°15'N, 22°25'W and left *HMS Eskimo* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Le Geyt, RN) with her. *HMS Rodney* then proceeded with *HMS Somali* (Capt. C. Caslon, RN), *HMS Tartar* (Cdr. L.P. Skipwith, RN) and *HMS Mashona* (Cdr. W.H. Selby, RN) westwards on a closing course.

Two other capital ships were in the Atlantic; *HMS Ramillies* (Capt. A.D. Read, RN) and *HMS Revenge* (Capt. E.R. Archer, RN). The *Ramillies* was escorting convoy HX 127 from Halifax and was some 900 nautical miles south of the *Bismarck*. She was ordered at 1144/24 to place herself to the westward of the enemy and leaving her convoy at 1212/24 in position 46°25'N, 35°24'W, she set course to the north. *HMS Revenge* was ordered to leave Halifax and close the enemy.

Light cruiser *HMS Edinburgh* (Capt. C.M. Blackman, DSO, RN) was patrolling in the Atlantic between 44°N and 46°N for German merchant shipping and was ordered at 1250/24 to close the enemy and take on relief shadower. At 1430/24 she reported her position as 44°17'N, 23°56'W and she was proceeding on course 320° at 25 knots.

Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker was ordered to continue shadowing even if he ran short of fuel so to bring the Commander-in-Chief into action.

The Bismack turns due south at 1320 hours on 24 May 1941.

In the low state of visibility, *HMS Norfolk* and *HMS Suffolk* had to be constantly on the alert against the enemy falling back and attacking them. At 1320/24 the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* altered course to the south and reduced speed. *HMS Norfolk* sighted them through the rain at a range of only 8 nautical miles. *Norfolk* had to quickly turn away under the cover of a smoke screen.

It was at 1530/24 when *HMS Norfolk* received a signal made by the Commander-in-Chief at 0800/24 from which it was estimated that the Commander-in-Chief would be near the enemy at 0100/25. This was later changed to 0900/25.

At 1545/24, Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker was asked by the Admiralty to answer four questions;

- 1) State the remaining percentage of the *Bismarck's* fighting efficiency.
- 2) What amount of ammunition had the *Bismarck* expended.
- 3) What are the reasons for the frequent alterations of course by the *Bismarck*.
- 4) What are your intentions as regards to the *Prince of Wales'* re-engaging the *Bismarck*.

The answers by Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker were as follows.

- 1) Uncertain but high.
- 2) About 100 rounds.
- 3) Unaccountable except as an effort to shake off *HMS Norfolk* and *HMS Suffolk*.
- 4) Consider it wisely for *HMS Prince of Wales* to not re-engage the *Bismarck* until other capital ships are in contact, unless interception failed. Doubtful if she has the speed to force an action.

The afternoon drew on towards evening. Still the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* held on to the south while the *Norfolk*, *Suffolk* and *Prince of Wales* were still keeping her in sight.

At 1711/24 in order to delay the enemy if possible, by attacking him from astern, the *Prince of Wales* was stationed ahead of the *Norfolk*. The enemy was not in sight from the *Norfolk* at that time, but the *Suffolk* was still in contact.

At 1841/24 the *Bismarck* opened fire on the *Suffolk*. Her salvoes fell short, but one or two shorts came near enough to cause some minor damage to her hull plating aft. *HMS Suffolk* replied with nine broadsides before turning away

behind a smoke screen.

On seeing the *Suffolk* being attacked, *HMS Norfolk* turned towards and she and *HMS Prince of Wales* opened fire, the latter firing 12 salvos. By 1856 hours the action was over. Two of the guns on the *Prince of Wales* malfunctioned again. After the action the cruisers started to zig-zag due to fear for German submarines.

British dispositions at 1800 hours on 24 May 1941.

From the Admiralty at 2025/24, there went out a signal summarising the situation at 1800/24. The position, course and speed of the *Bismarck* was given as 59°10'N, 36°00'W, 180°, 24 knots with *HMS Norfolk*, *HMS Suffolk* and *HMS Prince of Wales* still in touch. The Commander-in-Chief's estimated position at 1800/24 was 58°N, 30°W, with *HMS King George V* and *HMS Repulse*. *HMS Victorious* was with the 2nd Cruiser Squadron (*HMS Galatea*, *HMS Aurora*, *HMS Kenya*). They had parted company with the Commander-in-Chief at 1509/24. Heavy cruiser ***HMS London*** (Capt. R.M. Servaes, CBE, RN) was in position 42°45'N, 20°10'W and had been ordered to leave her convoy and close the enemy. *HMS Ramillies* was in estimated position 45°45'N, 35°40'W. She had been ordered to place herself to the west of the enemy. *HMS Manchester*, *HMS Birmingham* and *HMS Arethusa* were returning from their position off the north-east of Iceland to refuel. *HMS Revenge* had left Halifax and was closing convoy HX 128. *HMS Edinburgh* was in approximate position 45°15'N, 25°10'W. She had been ordered to close and take over stand by shadower.

Evening of 24 May 1941.

At 2031/24 *HMS Norfolk* received a signal sent by the Commander-in-Chief at 1455/24 stating that aircraft from *HMS Victorious* might make an attack at 2200/24 and Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker now waited for an air attack which he expected at 2300 hours. By that time *Bismarck* had been lost from sight but at 2330/24 *HMS Norfolk* briefly sighted her at a distance of 13 nautical miles. At 2343/24 aircraft from *HMS Victorious* were seen approaching. They circled round *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Norfolk* and the latter was able to direct them to the enemy. At 0009/25 heavy anti-aircraft gunfire was seen and the *Bismarck* was just visible as the aircraft attacked.

HMS Victorious and the 2nd Cruiser Squadron detached by the Commander-in-Chief.

At 1440/24 the Commander-in-Chief ordered the 2nd Cruiser Squadron (*HMS Galatea*, *HMS Aurora*, *HMS Kenya*, *HMS Hermione*) and *HMS Victorious* to a position within 100 nautical miles from *Bismarck* and to launch a torpedo bombing attack and maintain contact as long as possible. The object of the torpedo bombing attack was to slow the enemy down. On board the *Victorious* were only 12 Swordfish torpedo bombers and 6 Fulmar fighters. *Victorious* was only recently commissioned and her crew was still rather green. She had on board a large consignment of crated Hurricane fighters for Malta which were to be delivered to Gibraltar.

At 2208/24 *HMS Victorious* commenced launching 9 Swordfish in position 58°58'N, 33°17'E. Two minutes later all were on their way to find the *Bismarck*. The Squadron was led by Lt.Cdr.(A) E. Esmonde, RN.

HMS Victorious aircraft attack the Bismarck.

When the Swordfish took off from *HMS Victorious* the *Bismarck* was estimated to be in position 57°09'N, 36°44'W and was steering 180°, speed 24 knots. At 2330/24 they sighted the *Bismarck* but contact was lost in the bad weather. Shortly afterwards the Swordfish sighted *HMS Prince of Wales*, *HMS Norfolk* and *HMS Suffolk*. *HMS Norfolk* guided them to the enemy which was 14 nautical miles on her starboard bow. At 2350 hours a vessel was detected ahead and

the squadron broke cloud to deliver an attack. To their surprise they found themselves over a United States Coastguard cutter. The *Bismarck* was 6 nautical miles to the southward and on sighting the aircraft opened up a heavy barrage fire. Lt.Cdr. Esmonde pressed home his attack, 8 of the Swordfish were able to attack, the other had lost contact in the clouds.

The 8 planes attacked with 18" torpedoes, fitted with Duplex pistols set for 31 feet. At midnight three Swordfish attacked simultaneously on the port beam. Three others made a longer approach low down attacking on the port bow a minute later. One took a longer course, attacking on the port quarter. One went round and attacked on the starboard bow a couple of minutes after midnight. At least one hit was claimed on the starboard side abreast the bridge. The Germans however state that no hit was scored but that the violent maneuvering of the ship to avoid the attack, together with the heavy firing by the *Bismarck* caused the leak in no.2 boiler room to open up. No.2 boiler room was already partially flooded and now had to be abandoned.

All Swordfish from the striking had returned to *HMS Victorious* by 0201/25. Two Fulmars launched at 2300/24 for shadowing failed to find their ship in the darkness due to the failure of *Victorious'* homing beacon. Their crews were in the end picked up from the chilly water.

HMS Norfolk and HMS Suffolk loose contact at 0306/25.

While the aircraft from *HMS Victorious* were making their attack, *HMS Norfolk* sighted a ship to the south-west and gave the order to open fire. *HMS Prince of Wales* was able to identify it in time as an American coast guard cutter, but in the movements preparatory to opening fire *HMS Norfolk* lost touch with the enemy for a time and it was not until 0116/25 that she suddenly sighted the *Bismarck* only 8 nautical miles away. There followed a brief exchange of fire. *HMS Norfolk* and *HMS Prince of Wales* turned to port to bring their guns to bear and the latter was ordered to engage. It was then 0130/25. The *Prince of Wales* fired two salvos at 20000 yards by radar. The *Bismarck* answered with two salvos which fell a long way short. The light was failing and the enemy was again lost to sight. *HMS Suffolk*, which had to most reliable RDF set was told to act independently so as to keep in touch.

Around 0306/25 the *Suffolk* lost touch with the *Bismarck*. At 0552/25 Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker asked if *HMS Victorious* could launch aircraft for a search at dawn.

Search measures, 25 May 1941.

With the disappearance of the *Bismarck* at 0306/25 the first phase of the pursuit ended. The Commander-in-Chief, in *HMS King George V* with *HMS Repulse* in company was then about 115 nautical miles to the south-east. At 0616/25, Rear-Admiral Wake-Walker signalled that it was most probable that *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* made a 90° turn to the west or turned back and 'cut away' to the eastward astern of the cruisers. *Suffolk* was already searching to the south-west and *Norfolk* was waiting for daylight to do the same. *Prince of Wales* was ordered to join the *King George V* and *Repulse*.

Force H was still on a course to intercept the *Bismarck* while steaming on at 24 knots. The Rear-Admiral commanding the 2nd Cruiser Squadron in *HMS Galatea* had altered course at 0558/25 to 180° for the position where the enemy was last seen and the *Victorious* was getting 8 aircraft ready to fly off at 0730/25 for a search to the eastward. This plan however was altered on orders being received from the Commander-in-Chief to take the cruisers and *Victorious* and carry out a search to the north-west of the *Bismarck's* last reported position. Five Fulmars had already been up during the night, two of them had not returned to the ship. The search therefore had to be undertaken

by Swordfish, the only aircraft available. At 0810/25, seven Swordfish were flown off from position 56°18'N, 36°28'W to search between 280° and 040° up to 100 nautical miles. The search was supplemented by *Victorious* herself as well as the cruisers from the 2nd Cruiser Squadron (*Galatea*, *Aurora*, *Kenya* and *Hermione*) which were spread some miles apart.

DF position of the Bismarck of 0852/25.

HMS King George V was still proceeding to the south-west when at 1030/25 the Commander-in-Chief received a signal from the Admiralty that the *Bismarck's* position had been obtained by DF (direction finding) and that it indicated that the *Bismarck* was on a course for the North Sea by the Faeroes-Iceland passage. To counter this move by the enemy the Commander-in-Chief turned round at 1047/25 and made for the Faeroes-Iceland passage at 27 knots. *HMS Repulse* was no longer in company with *HMS King George V*, she had been detached at 0906/25 for Newfoundland to refuel. *Suffolk* also turned to the eastward to search, her search to the south-west had been fruitless. The search by *HMS Victorious*, her aircraft and the 2nd Cruiser Squadron to the north-west also had no result. Six Swordfish were landed on by 1107/25, one failed to return. *HMS Galatea*, *HMS Aurora* and *HMS Kenya* now turned towards the DF position of the *Bismarck* to search in that direction. *HMS Hermione* had to be detached to Hvalfiord, Iceland to refuel as she was by now down to 40%. The other cruisers slowed down to 20 knots to economise their remaining fuel supply which was also getting low. At this moment *HMS King George V* had about 60% remaining.

Events during 25 May 1941.

At 1100/25, *HMS King George V*, *HMS Suffolk* and *HMS Prince of Wales* were proceeding to the north-east in the direction of the enemy's DF signal. *HMS Rodney* was in position 52°34'N, 29°23'W some 280 nautical miles to the south-eastward on the route towards the Bay of Biscay. On receiving the Commander-in-Chief's signal of 1047/25 she too proceeded to the north-east.

Meanwhile the Admiralty had come to the conclusion that the *Bismarck* most likely was making for Brest, France. This was signalled to the Commander-in-Chief at 1023/25 to proceed together with Force H and the 1st Cruiser Squadron on that assumption.

In the absence however of definite reports it was difficult to be certain of the position of the enemy. The DF bearings in the morning had not been very definite. At 1100/25, *HMS Renown* (Force H), was in position 41°30'N, 17°10'W was ordered to act on the assumption the enemy was making for Brest, France. She shaped course accordingly and prepared a comprehensive scheme of air search. At 1108/25, *HMS Rodney*, was told to act on the assumption that the enemy was making for the Bay of Biscay. At 1244/25 the Flag Officer Submarines ordered six submarines to take up intercepting positions about 120 nautical miles west of Brest. The submarines involved were *HMS Sealion* (Cdr. B. Bryant, DSC, RN), *HMS Seawolf* (Lt. P.L. Field, RN), *HMS Sturgeon* (Lt.Cdr. D. St. Clair-Ford, RN) from the 5th Submarine Flottilla at Portsmouth, *HMS Pandora* (Lt.Cdr. J.W. Linton, DSC, RN), which was on passage to the U.K. from the Mediterranean to refit, *HMS Tigris* (Lt.Cdr. H.F. Bone, DSO, DSC, RN), from the 3rd Submarine Flottilla at Holy Loch and *HMS H 44* (Lt. W.N.R. Knox, DSC, RN), a training boat from the 7th Submarine Flotilla at Rothesay which happened to be at Holyhead. *Seawolf*, *Sturgeon* and *Tigris* were already on patrol in the Bay of Biscay, *Sealion* departed Portsmouth on the 25th as did *H 44* but she sailed from Holyhead. *Pandora* was on passage to the U.K. to refit and was diverted.

At 1320/25 a good DF fix located an enemy unit within a 50 mile radius from position 55°15'N, 32°00'W. This was sent by the Admiralty to the Commander-in-Chief at 1419/25 and it was received at 1530/25. It was only in the

evening that it was finally clear to all involved that *Bismarck* was indeed making for a French port. Air searches had failed to find her during the day. (54)

18 May 1941

Chase and sinking of the German battleship Bismarck, 18 to 27 May 1941.

Part II.

26 May 1941.

By now the question of fuel was becoming acute. For four days ships had been steaming at high speeds and the Commander-in-Chief was faced with the reality of fuel limits. *HMS Repulse* had already left for Newfoundland, *HMS Prince of Wales* had by now been sent to Iceland to refuel. *HMS Victorious* and *HMS Suffolk* had been forced to reduce speed to economise their fuel.

Coastal Command started air searches along the route towards the Bay of Biscay by long range Catalina flying boats. Lack of fuel was effecting the destroyer screens of the capital ships. There was no screen available for *HMS Victorious*. The 4th Destroyer Flotilla, escorting troop convoy WS 8B, was ordered at 0159/26 to join the Commander-in-Chief in *HMS King George V* and *HMS Rodney* as was *HMS Jupiter* (Lt.Cdr. N.V.J.P. Thew, RN) which sailed from Londonderry. Leaving the convoy the 4th D.F. proceeded to the north-east. Force H in the meantime was also approaching the immediate area of operations. These forces were to play an important part in the final stages of the chase of the *Bismarck*.

Force H, 26 May 1941.

HMS Renown, *HMS Ark Royal* and *HMS Sheffield* were having a rough passage north in heavy seas, high wind, rain and mist. Their escorting destroyers had already turned back towards Gibraltar at 0900/25. At dawn on the 26th there was half a gale blowing from the north-west. At 0716/26 *HMS Ark Royal* launched a security patrol in position 48°26'N, 19°13'W to search to the north and to the west just in case the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had departed Brest to come to the aid of the *Bismarck*. At 0835/26 there followed an A/S patrol of ten Swordfish. All planes had returned by 0930. None had seen anything.

Bismarck sighted at 1030/26.

It was at 1030/26 that one of the long range Catalina's of the Coastal Command sighted the *Bismarck* in position 49°30'N, 21°55'W. It was received in *HMS King George V* at 1043 hours and in *HMS Renown* in 1038 hours. It placed the enemy well to the westward of the *Renown*. It was confirmed within the hour when two Swordfish from the *Ark Royal* which reported the *Bismarck* in position 49°19'N, 20°52'W some 25 miles east of the position given by the Catalina. The Commander-in-Chief was at that moment about 130 miles to the north of the *Bismarck* but it was soon clear that the *Bismarck* had too great a lead to permit her being overtaken unless her speed could be reduced. Nor was the question one merely of distance and speed. The *Bismarck* was approaching a friendly coast and could run her fuel tanks nearly dry and was sure of air protection, while the British ships would have a long journey back to base in the face of air and submarine attack. *HMS Renown* was ahead of the *Bismarck* but it was important that she did not engage the *Bismarck* unless the latter was already heavily engaged by the better armoured *HMS King George V* and *HMS Rodney*.

When the Catalina found the *Bismarck* at 1030 hours, the 4th Destroyer Flotilla was steering east to join the Commander-in-Chief. They seem to have crossed astern of the enemy's track about 0800/26. The Catalina's report reached Capt. Vian in *HMS Cossack* at 1054/26 and 'knowing that the Commander-in-Chief would order him to intercept the enemy' Capt. Vian altered course to the south-east.

First attack by aircraft from the Ark Royal.

At 1315/26 *HMS Sheffield* was detached to the southward with orders to close and shadow the enemy, who was estimated to be 40 nautical miles south-west of the *Renown*. The visual signal ordering this movement was not repeated to *HMS Ark Royal*, an omission which had serious consequences for the aircraft that were to take off did not know that *HMS Sheffield* had parted company.

At 1450/26 *HMS Ark Royal* launched a striking force of 14 Swordfish aircraft with the orders to proceed to the south and attack the *Bismarck* with torpedoes. Weather and cloud conditions were bad and a radar contact was obtained on a ship some 20 nautical miles from the estimated position of the enemy that had been given to the leader shortly before takeoff. At 1550 hours they broke through the clouds and fired 11 torpedoes. Unfortunately the supposed enemy was *HMS Sheffield* which managed to avoid all torpedoes. The *Bismarck* at that time was some 15 nautical miles to the southward. The striking force then returned and all aircraft had landed on by 1720/26.

At 1740/26, *HMS Sheffield*, sighted the *Bismarck* in position 48°30'N, 17°20'W and took station about 10 nautical miles astern and commenced shadowing the enemy.

Ark Royal's second attack, 2047/26.

The first striking force on its way back sighted the 4th Destroyer Flotilla 20 nautical miles west of Force H. As soon as the aircraft from the first strike had landed they were refuelled and rearmed as fast as possible. Take off started at 1910/26, a total of 15 Swordfish were launched. Reports coming in from *HMS Sheffield* placed the *Bismarck* at 167°, 38 nautical miles from the *Ark Royal*. The striking force was ordered to contact *HMS Sheffield* who was told to use DF to guide them in.

At 1955/26 *HMS Sheffield* was sighted but soon lost in the bad weather conditions. She was found again at 2035 hours, she guided the Swordfish in and directed them by visual signal on the enemy bearing 110°, 12 nautical miles. The force took departure for the target in subflights in line astern at 2040/26.

At 2047/26 no.1 subflight of three Swordfish dived through the clouds and sighted the *Bismarck* 4 nautical miles off to the south-east. One Swordfish of no.3 subflight was with them. Approaching again just inside the cloud they made their final dive at 2053/26 on the port beam under a very intense and accurate fire from the enemy. They dropped four torpedoes of which one was seen to hit. No.2 subflight, made up of two Swordfish, lost touch with no.1 subflight in the clouds, climbed to 9000 feet, then dived on a bearing obtained by radar and then attacked from the starboard beam, again under heavy and intense fire. They dropped two torpedoes for one possible hit. The third plane of this subflight had lost touch with the other two and had returned to *HMS Sheffield* to obtain another range and bearing to the enemy. It then flew ahead of the enemy and carried out a determined attack from his port bow under heavy fire and obtained a torpedo hit on the port side amidships.

Subflight no.4 followed subflight no.3 into the clouds but got iced up at 6600 feet. It then dived through the clouds and was joined by no.2 aircraft from subflight no.3. The *Bismarck* was then sighted engaging subflight no.2 to starboard. The four aircraft then went into the clouds and circled the German battleships stern and then dived out of

the clouds again and attack simultaneously from the port side firing four torpedoes. All however missed the *Bismarck*. They came under a very heavy and fierce fire from the enemy and one of the aircraft was heavily damaged, the pilot and air gunner being wounded.

The two aircraft of subflight no.5 lost contact with the other subflights and then with each other in the cloud. They climbed to 7000 feet where ice began to form. When coming out of the cloud at 1000 feet aircraft 4K sighted the *Bismarck* down wind, she then went back into the cloud under fire from the enemy. She saw a torpedo hit on the enemy's starboard side, reached a position on the starboard bow, withdrew to 5 miles, then came in just above the sea and just outside 1000 yards fired a torpedo which did not hit. The second plane of this flight lost his leader diving through the cloud, found himself on the starboard quarter and after two attempts to attack under heavy fire was forced to jettison his torpedo.

Of the two Swordfish of subflight no.6 one attacked the *Bismarck* on the starboard beam and dropped his torpedo at 2000 yards without success. The second plane lost the enemy, returned to the *Sheffield* for a new range and bearing and after searching at sea level attacked on the starboard beam but was driven off by intense fire. The attack was over by 2125/26. Thirteen torpedoes had been fired and it was thought two hits and one probable hit had been obtained. Two torpedoes were jettisoned. The severe nature and full effect of the damage done was at first not fully realised. Actually the *Bismarck* had received a deadly blow. The last of the shadowing aircraft to return had seen her make two complete circles. One torpedo had struck her on the port side amidships doing little damage but the other torpedo that hit was on the starboard quarter damaging her propellers, wrecking her steering gear and jamming her rudders, it was this torpedo hit that sealed her fate.

HMS Sheffield was still shadowing astern when at 2140/26 the *Bismarck* turned to port and fired six accurate salvos of 15". None actually hit Sheffield but a near miss killed three men and seriously injured two. *HMS Sheffield* turned away and while doing so she sighted *HMS Cossack* and the other destroyers from the 4th DF approaching from the westward. She then gave them the approximate position of the *Bismarck*. At 2155/26, *HMS Sheffield* lost touch with the *Bismarck*. The destroyers continued to shadow and eventually attack. Meanwhile *HMS Renown* and *HMS Ark Royal* shaped course for the southward to keep the road clear for the Commander-in-Chief in *HMS King George V* and for *HMS Rodney*. Also in the *Ark Royal* aircraft were being got ready for an attack on the *Bismarck* at dawn.

Bismarck, 26 May 1941.

The *Bismarck* could no longer steer after the torpedo hit aft. The steering motor room was flooded up to the main deck and the rudders were jammed. Divers went down to the steering room and managed to centre one rudder but the other remained immovable. She was by this time urgently in need of fuel. It was hoped by the Germans that while she was nearing the French coast strong forces of aircraft and submarines would come to her assistance.

At 2242/26, *Bismarck* sighted the British destroyers. A heavy fire was opened on them. Their appearance greatly complicated the situation. Before their arrival however, Admiral Lütjens seems to have made up his mind as one hour earlier he had signalled to Berlin 'ship out of control. We shall fight to the last shell. Long live the Führer.'

The fourth Destroyer Flotilla makes contact, 26 May 1941.

Just as the sun was setting, Captain Vian (D.4) in *HMS Cossack* with *HMS Maori*, *HMS Sikh*, *HMS Zulu* and the Polish destroyer *ORP Piorun* arrived on the scene.

Shortly after 1900/26 *HMS Renown* and *HMS Ark Royal* were sighted to the northward. *Ark Royal* was just about to fly off the second striking force. The destroyers continued on the the south-east. At 2152/26 *HMS Sheffield* was sighted and from her Captain Vian obtained the approximate position of the enemy.

The destroyers were spread 2.5 nautical miles apart on a line bearing 250° - 070° in the order from north-east to south-west, *Piorun*, *Maori*, *Cossack*, *Sikh*, *Zulu*. During the latter stages of the approach speed was reduced and the flotilla manoeuvred so as to avoid making a high speed end-on contact.

At 2238/26, *ORP Piorun* on the port wing reported the *Bismarck* 9 nautical miles distant, bearing 145° and steering to the south-eastward.

Destroyers shadowing, late on 26 May 1941.

At the time the *Piorun* reported being in contact with the *Bismarck* the destroyers were steering 120°. All were at once ordered to take up shadowing positions. Four minutes later the *Bismarck* opened a heavy fire with her main and secondary armaments on the *Piorun* and *Maori*. Two attempts were made by these ships to work round to the northward of the enemy but they were silhouetted against the north-western horizon making them easy to spot. The *Bismarck's* fire was unpleasantly accurate, through neither destroyer was actually hit. The Commanding Officer of the *Maori* then decided to work round to the southward and altered course accordingly.

The *Piorun* closed the range and herself opened fire from 13500 yards but after firing three salvos, she was straddled by a salvo which fell about 20 yards from the ships side. She then ceased fire and turned away to port while making smoke. During this engagement she lost touch with the other destroyers and later also with the *Bismarck*. She remained under fire for about one hour but was not hit. She worked round to the north-east of the *Bismarck* but eventually lost touch with her prey at 2355/26.

The other destroyers, meanwhile, had been working round to the southward of the enemy to take up shadowing positions to the eastward of him. Soon after the initial contact it was evident the the *Bismarck's* speed had been so seriously reduced that interception by the battlefleet was certain, provided that contact could be held. In these circumstances Captain Vian defined his object at firstly, to deliver the enemy to the Commander-in-Chief at the time he desired, and secondly, to sink or immobilise her with torpedoes during the night but not with to great a risk for the destroyers. Accordingly at 2248/26 as signal was made to all ordering them to shadow and this operation was carried out through the night, though torpedo attacks were carried out later under the cover of darkness.

As darkness came on, the weather deteriorated and heavy rain squalls became frequent. Visibility varied between 2.5 nautical miles and half a mile but the *Bismarck*, presumably using radar, frequently opened up accurate fire outside these ranges.

About half an hour after sunset, the destroyers were ordered at 2324/26 to take up stations preparatory to carrying out a synchronised torpedo attack. This was subsequently cancelled on account of the adverse weather conditions and they were ordered to attack independently as opportunity offered. At about 2300 hours the *Bismarck* altered course to the north-westward.

At this time *HMS Zulu* was in touch with her and kept her under observation from the southward. At 2342 hours the *Bismarck* opened fire on *HMS Cossack*, then about 4 miles to the south-south-west and shot away her aerials. The *Cossack* turned away under the cover of smoke, shortly afterwards resuming her course to the eastward.

A few minutes later, at 2350 hours, *HMS Zulu* came under heavy fire from the *Bismarck's* 15" guns. The first three salvos straddled wounding an officer and two ratings. Drastic avoiding action was taken as a result of which *Zulu* lost touch. *HMS Sikh*, however, who had lost sight of the enemy half an hour previously, had observed her firing at *HMS Cossack* and now succeeded in shadowing from astern until 0020/27 when the enemy made a large alteration to port and commenced firing at her. *HMS Sikh* altered course to port, intending to fire torpedoes, but the view of the Torpedo Control Officer was obscured by shell splashes and *Sikh* then withdrew to the southward.

Destroyer night torpedo attacks, 26/27 May 1941.

HMS Zulu, after her escape at 2345/26, had steered to the northward and at 0030/27 fell in with *HMS Cossack*. Shortly afterwards she sighted *ORP Piorun*. On receipt of a signal from Captain Vian, timed 0040/27, to take any opportunity to fire torpedoes, *HMS Zulu* altered course to the westward, and at 0100/27 sighted the *Bismarck* steering 340°.

Positions of the destroyers was now as follows; to the north-eastward of the enemy, *HMS Cossack* was working round to the north and west. *HMS Maori*, since losing touch, had been making to the westward. She was now to the south-west of the *Bismarck*. *HMS Sikh* was some distance to the southward, not having received any information regarding the position of the *Bismarck* since 0025/27. *HMS Zulu* was astern of the enemy and in contact. Range was only 5000 yards. *Bismarck* finally spotted *Zulu* and at once opened fire with her main and secondary armament and straddled *Zulu*. She fired four torpedoes at 0121/27 but no hits were observed and they are believed to have missed ahead. *Zulu* then ran out to the northward in order to be clear of the other destroyers. Shortly afterwards they witnessed a successful attack by *HMS Maori*.

HMS Maori had seen the *Bismarck* opening fire on the *Zulu* at 0107/27. *Maori* then closed to 4000 yards on *Bismarck's* port quarter apparently undetected. When abeam of the enemy, who then appeared to be altering course to starboard *Maori* fired a star shell to see what he was about. Two minutes later, at 0137/27, two torpedoes were fired and course was altered towards the *Bismarck* with the intention of attacking again from her starboard bow once the enemy had steadied on her new course. Whilst *Maori* was turning a torpedo hit was observed on the enemy. A bright glow illuminated the waterline of the enemy battleship from stem to stern. Shortly afterwards there appeared between the bridge and the stem a glare that might have been a second hit. The enemy immediately opened up a very heavy fire with both main and secondary armaments and quick firing guns. As the *Maori* was being straddled, she turned away, and increased to full speed. Shots continued to fall on both sides of the ship until the range had been opened up to 10000 yards. *Maori* was not actually hit. Meanwhile *HMS Cossack* had been creeping up from the north-eastward and at 0140/27, only three minutes after *Maori* had fired two torpedoes, *Cossack* launched three torpedoes from 6000 yards. *Bismarck* stood out plainly, silhouetted by the broadsides she was firing at the *Maori*. One torpedo was seen to hit. Flames blazed on the forecastle of the *Bismarck* after this hit but they were quickly extinguished. Probably as a consequence of the torpedo hits the *Bismarck* stopped dead in the water, this was reported by *HMS Zulu* at 0148/27. After about one hour the *Bismarck* got underway again. On receipt of this report, *HMS Sikh*, who was closing the scene of the action from the southward, made an attack. Four torpedoes were fired at 0218/27 at the stopped battleship. It is believed that one hit was obtained. After this attack *Sikh* remained in radar contact with the enemy until 0359/27 when contact was lost.

Around 0240/27 the *Bismarck* was underway again, proceeding very slowly to the north-westward. At 0335/27, *HMS Cossack* made another attack firing her last remaining torpedo from a range of 4000 yards. It missed. *HMS Cossack*

then came under a heavy fire. She withdrew to the northward under the cover of smoke, altering to a westerly course shortly afterwards.

At 0400/27 all destroyers had lost touch with the enemy. *HMS Cossack* was then to the north-west and *HMS Sikh*, *HMS Zulu* and *HMS Maori* were between the south-west and south-east of the *Bismarck*. All destroyers now endeavoured to regain contact.

Touch with the enemy was not regained until shortly before 0600 hours. By that time *ORP Piorun*, which was running short of fuel, had been ordered to proceed to Plymouth.

Destroyers shadowing, morning twilight, 27 May 1941, final attack.

Touch was regained by *HMS Maori* at 0550/27 when she sighted the *Bismarck* zigzagging slowly on a base course of 340° at about 7 knots. *Maori* commenced shadowing until daylight. At 0625 hours, *HMS Sikh* was also in contact when the *Bismarck* emerged from a rain squall 7000 yards on her starboard bow. By then it was nearly full daylight but to the surprise of the crew of the *Sikh* she got away with it without being fired at.

Shortly before sunrise a final torpedo attack was carried out by *HMS Maori*, which fired two torpedoes at 0656/27 from 9000 yards. Both missed. The *Bismarck* opened fire and straddled *Maori* which escaped at 28 knots.

At daylight the destroyers were stationed in four sectors from which they were able to keep the enemy under continuous observation until the arrival of the Battle Fleet at 0845 hours.

Force H, 26/27 May 1941.

While the destroyers were shadowing the *Bismarck*, the pursuing forces were drawing steadily closer. To the north was the Commander-in-Chief with the *King George V* and the *Rodney* with the *Norfolk* closing on them. In the south *HMS Dorsetshire* (Capt. B.C.S. Martin, RN) was coming up, while Force H was waiting for the dawn. When Captain Vian's destroyers got in touch at 2251/26 the *Renown* and *Ark Royal* were north-west of the enemy. It was not possible to attack with aircraft during the night but all preparations were made to attack at dawn with 12 Swordfish. Course was shaped to the northward and then to the west for a time and at 0115/27 Force H turned south. Shortly afterwards instructions were received from the Commander-in-Chief to keep not less than 20 miles to the southward of the *Bismarck* so as to leave a clear approach for the Battle Fleet. Force H accordingly continued to the southward during the night. Bursts of starshell and gunfire could be seen during the night while the destroyers attacked. At 0509/27 an aircraft was flown off from *HMS Ark Royal* to act as a spotter for *HMS King George V* but it failed to find the *Bismarck* in the bad weather. The striking force of 12 Swordfish was ready but due to the bad weather to strike was cancelled.

At 0810/27, *HMS Maori* was sighted. She reported the *Bismarck* 11 miles to the north of her. She made the enemy 17 miles to the north of *HMS Renown* so course was shaped to the south-west. At 0915/27 heavy gunfire could be heard and the striking force was flown off. They found the *Bismarck* at 1016/27. By then the battle was almost over, her guns were silenced and she was on fire. They saw her sink. At 1115/27 they had all landed back on *HMS Ark Royal*. A German Heinkel aircraft dropped a couple of bombs near *HMS Ark Royal* when they were landing on.

HMS Norfolk, 26/27 May 1941.

When the Catalina report (1030/26) came in, *HMS Norfolk* altered course to the south-west and increased speed to 27 knots. At 2130/26 the *Bismarck* was still some 160 nautical miles to the southward and speed was increased to 30

knots. At 2228/26 the report on the torpedo hit by the aircraft from *Ark Royal* came in and the *Norfolk* turned to the southward, continuing to close the enemy. At 0753/27 *Norfolk* sighted the *Bismarck*. She did not open fire and was lost to sight after ten minutes. At 0821/27, *HMS King George V*, was sighted to the westward, 12 nautical miles away. The position of the enemy was passed to the Commander-in-Chief. The action opened at 0847/27 at which time *HMS Norfolk* was then some 10 nautical miles from the Commander-in-Chief and due north of the *Bismarck*. *HMS Norfolk* had seen the beginning and was now to see the end.

HMS Dorsetshire, 26/27 May 1941.

On 26 May 1941, *HMS Dorsetshire*, was with convoy SL 74 proceeding from Freetown to the U.K. When she received the sighting report from the Catalina at 1056/26 she was some 360 nautical miles to the south of the *Bismarck*. She then left the protection of the convoy to the Armed Merchant Cruiser *HMS Bulolo* (Capt.(Retd.) R.L. Hamer, RN) and set course for the northward to take up the possible task of shadowing. By 2343/26 it became clear from reports that the *Bismarck* was making no ground to the eastward and that at 0230/27 she appeared to be laying stopped. Due to the heavy seas *HMS Dorsetshire* was forced to reduce speed to 25 knots and later even to 20 knots. At 0833/27 a destroyer was sighted ahead at a range of 8 nautical miles, it was *HMS Cossack* which reported the enemy at a range of 6 nautical miles. At 0850/27 the flashes of the *Bismarck's* guns could be seen to the westward. *HMS Dorsetshire* arrived at the scene of the action in the nick of time.

HMS King George V and HMS Rodney, 26/27 May 1941.

During 26 May 1941 the Commander-in-Chief in *HMS King George V* had been making hard to the south-east at 25 knots. He had been joined by *HMS Rodney* at 1806/26. They were then some 90 nautical miles north of the *Bismarck*. Fuel was a matter of grave anxiety. At noon on the 26th, *HMS King George V*, had only 32% remaining and *HMS Rodney* reported that she had to return at 0800/27. Speed had to be reduced on this account to 22 knots at 1705/26. In these circumstances it was no longer possible to hope to intercept the enemy, and the Commander-in-Chief decided that unless the enemy's speed had been reduced by 2400/26, he must turn at that hour. The only hope lay in the *Bismarck* being slowed up by the Swordfish attacking from *HMS Ark Royal*. A report came in that the striking force had left. Then at 2132/26, *HMS Sheffield*, reported that the enemy was steering 340° followed by 000° four minutes later. These reports indicated that the *Bismarck* was not able to hold her course and that her steering gear must have been damaged. It might still be possible to intercept her.

The Commander-in-Chief turned to the south at once hoping to make contact from the eastward in the failing light. Due to the bad weather conditions and visibility the Commander-in-Chief decided to haul off the the eastward and northward and then work round to engage from the westward at dawn. He turned eastward at 2306/26. During the night reports from Captain Vian's destroyers came in confirming the northerly course of the *Bismarck*. At 0236/27 the Commander-in-Chief ordered Captain Vian that the destroyers were to fire star-shell every half hour, but frequent rain squalls prevented these from being seen and they tended to attract the enemy's fire. The *Bismarck* was still a formidable opponent for at 0353/27 Captain Vian reported that during the last hour she had done 8 nautical miles and that she was still capable of heavy and accurate fire. The Commander-in-Chief decided not to make a dawn approach but to wait until daylight while approaching from the west taking advantage of wind, sea and light. At 0529/27 *HMS Rodney* reported sighting *HMS Norfolk* to the eastward by DF. It was light at 0600 hours. At 0820 hours *HMS Norfolk* was sighted on the port bow of *HMS King George V*. She signalled 'enemy 130°, 16 nautical miles'. At

0843/27 looming on the starboard bow there emerges out of a rain squall the dark grey blot of a large ship. 'Enemy in sight'.

Bismarck 26/27 May 1941.

The *Bismarck* after altering course to the north-west had been labouring along with a jammed rudder, steering an erratic course at 8 knots. During the night the attacking destroyers were met with heavy and accurate salvos. Sixteen torpedoes were fired at her. Early in the morning a glare of star-shell burst over her, lighting her up. Three torpedoes followed from a destroyer on the port bow (*HMS Maori*) of which one hit on the port side amidships. Three minutes later three more came from the starboard side (these were fired by *HMS Cossack*) of which one hit on the starboard bow. The damage that was sustained from these torpedo hits is not known. The *Bismarck* lay stopped for over one hour. At 0140/27 a message was received that a large number of Junkers bombers were coming to her aid as were U-boats but the *Bismarck* was beyond their help besides that the aircraft did not find her. One U-boat (*U-556*, which was out of torpedoes) on its way back from the Atlantic joined her and was within sight during the night. Another (*U-74*) arrived at 0600/27 but had been damaged in a depth charge attack and could do nothing as well. In the *Bismarck* the crew was exhausted and men were falling asleep at their posts. It was under these conditions that at 0840/27 two British battleships were seen to approach from the westward.

Situation before the action, 27 May 1941.

A north-westerly gale was blowing when dawn broke with a good light and clear horizon to the north-eastward. Reports received during the night indicated that, despite reduced speed and damaged rudders, *Bismarck's* armament was functioning effectively. Given the weather conditions the Commander-in-Chief decided to approach on a west-north-westerly bearing and, if the enemy continued his northerly course, to deploy to the southward on opposite course at a range of about 15000 yards. Further action was to be dictated by events.

Between 0600 and 0700 hours a series of enemy reports from *HMS Maori* which was herself located by DF bearings. This enabled *HMS King George V* to plot her position relatively to the *Bismarck* which had apparently settled down on a course of 330° at 10 knots. At 0708/27, *HMS Rodney*, was ordered to keep station 010° from the flagship. *HMS Norfolk* came in sight to the eastward at 0820/27 and provided a visual link between the Commander-in-Chief and the enemy. After the line of approach had been adjusted by two alterations of course, the *Bismarck* was sighted at 0843/27 bearing 118°, range about 25000 yards. Both British battleships was then steering 110° almost directly towards the enemy in line abreast formation, 8 cables apart.

Commencement of action 0847/27.

HMS Rodney opened fire at 0847/27, her first salvo sending a column of water 150 feet into the air. *HMS King George V* opened fire one minute later. *Bismarck* opened fire at 0850 hours after turning to open up A arcs. The first German salvo was short. The third and fourth salvos straddled and nearly hit, but the *Rodney* manoeuvred successfully to avoid them and the nearest fell 20 yards short. At 0854/27, *HMS Norfolk* joined in, but the target was not clearly visible and she opened fire without obtaining a range.

Observers state that the German gunnery was accurate at first, but commenced to deteriorate after 8 to 10 salvos. The first hit on the *Bismarck* was believed to be scored by the *Rodney* at 0854 hours with her third salvo. Both British battleships made small alterations of course away from the enemy shortly after opening fire, the *King George V* to increase her distance from the *Rodney* and the latter to open her A arcs. From then onwards they manoeuvred

independently although *HMS Rodney* conformed to the Flagship's general movements. The *Bismarck's* secondary armament came into action during this phase. *HMS Rodney* opened fire with her secondary armament at 0858 hours.

Run to the southward.

HMS King George V deployed to the southward at 0859/27 when the *Bismarck* was 16000 yards distant. *HMS Rodney*, 2.5 nautical miles to the northward, followed suit a minute or two later. Cordite smoke was hanging badly with the following wind and spotting was most difficult. Considerable smoke interference was therefore experienced on the southerly course which was partly overcome by radar. The *Bismarck* had transferred her fire to the *King George V* shortly after the turn but except for an occasional splash the latter hardly knew that she was under fire. At 0902/27, *HMS Rodney* saw a 16" shell hit the *Bismarck* on the upper deck forward, apparently putting the forward turrets out of action. At 0904 hours, *HMS Dorsetshire* joined in the firing from the eastwards from a range of 20000 yards but observation of the target was difficult and she had to check fire from 0913 to 0920 hours. Between 0910 and 0915 hours the range in *King George V* was more or less steady at 12000 yards.

The fate of the *Bismarck* was decided during this phase of the action although she did not sink until later. Around 0912 hours, the *Bismarck* was hit on her forward control position. During the run to the south *HMS Rodney* fired six torpedoes from 11000 yards and *HMS Norfolk* four from 16000 yards. No hits were obtained. The *King George V's* secondary battery came into action at 0905 hours but this increased the smoke interference and was accordingly ordered to cease fire after two or three minutes.

Run to the northward.

At 0916/27 the *Bismarck's* bearing was drawing rapidly aft and *HMS Rodney* turned 16 points to close and head her off. The *King George V* followed a minute or so later and both ships re-opened fire at ranges from 8600 and 12000 yards respectively. The *Bismarck* shifted her target to the *Rodney* about this time. A near miss damaged the sluice of her starboard torpedo tube. Most of the enemy's guns had however been silenced at this time. Only one turret from her main armament was firing at this time as was part of her secondary armament. A fire was blazing amidships and she had a heavy list to port. During the run to the north *HMS Rodney* obtained a very favourable position on the *Bismarck's* bow from which she poured in a heavy fire from close range. She also fired two torpedoes from 7500 yards but no hits were obtained.

HMS King George V's position, further to leeward, was less favourable. Her view was obscured by smoke and splashes surrounding the target and her radar had temporarily broken down. Mechanical failures in the 14" turrets constituted, however, a more serious handicap at this stage. 'A', 'X' and 'Y' turrets were out of action for 30, 7 and an unspecified short period, respectively. This resulted in reduction of firepower of 80% for 7 minutes and 40% for 23 minutes which might have had serious effects under less favourable conditions. There were also several defects of individual guns in addition to those effecting the turrets.

At 0925/27, *HMS King George V*, altered outwards to 150° and reduced speed to avoid getting too far ahead of the *Bismarck*. She closed in again at 1005 hours, fired several salvos from a range of only 3000 yards and then resumed her northerly course. Meanwhile *HMS Rodney* was zigzagging across the *Bismarck's* line of advance at a range of about 4000 yards firing her main and secondary armaments. She also fired four torpedoes, one of which is thought to have hit. By 1015 hours the *Bismarck* was no more than a wreck. All her guns were silenced, her mast had been blown away, she was a black ruin, pouring high into the air a great cloud of smoke and flame. Men were seen

jumping overboard at this time and the Captain of the *King George V* later remarked had he known it he would have ceased fire.

End of the action.

The Commander-in-Chief was confident that the enemy could never get back to harbour, and as both battleships were running short of fuel and as further gunfire was unlikely to hasten the *Bismarck's* end, the Commander-in-Chief signalled the *King George V* and *Rodney* to steer 027° at 1015/27 in order to break off the action and return to base. At 1036/27 the Commander-in-Chief ordered *HMS Dorsetshire* to use her torpedoes, if she had any, on the enemy. In the meantime *HMS Norfolk* had been closing the target but due to the movements of the *King George V* and *Rodney*, had not fired her torpedoes until 1010 hours when she fired four torpedoes from 4000 yards and two possible hits were reported. The *Dorsetshire* was then approaching a mile or so to the southward, and anticipating the Commander-in-Chief's signal at 1025 hours fired two torpedoes from 3600 yards into the enemy's starboard side. She then steamed round the *Bismarck's* bow and at 1036 hours fired another torpedo but now into her port side from 2600 yards. This was the final blow, the *Bismarck* heeled over quickly to port and commenced to sink by the stern. The hull turned over keel up and disappeared beneath the waves at 1040/27.

The *Dorsetshire* then closed and signalled to one of *HMS Ark Royal's* aircraft to carry out a close A/S patrol while she was to pick up survivors assisted by *HMS Maori*. After 110 men had been picked up by both ships from the water both ships got underway again as a submarine was suspected to be in the area.

Damage to the Bismarck.

Survivors have told the story of terrible damage inflicted on her. The fore turrets seem to have been knocked out at 0902 hours. The fore control position was knocked out around 0912 hours. The after control position followed about 0915 hours. The after turrets were at that moment still in action. Then the aftermost gun turret was disabled by a direct hit on the left gun which burst sending a flash right through the turret. 'C' turret was the last one in action.

One survivor stated that around 0930 hours a shell penetrated the turbine room and another one entered a boiler room. A hit in the after dressing station killed all the medical staff and wounded that were in there at that moment. The upper deck was crowded with killed and wounded men and the seas surging in washed them overboard. Conditions below were even more terrible. Hatches and doors were jammed by concussion and blocked with wreckage. The air was thick with smoke and even more smoke was coming in from great holes in the upper deck. By 1000 hours all heavy guns were out of action and 10 minutes later the all secondary guns were also silent.

Commander-in-Chief returns.

As *HMS King George V* and *HMS Rodney* turned northwards they were joined by *HMS Cossack*, *HMS Sikh* and *HMS Zulu* at by 1600/28 more destroyers had joined the screen (*HMS Maori*, *HMS Jupiter*, *HMS Somali*, *HMS Eskimo*, *HMS Punjabi*, *HMAS Nestor*, *HMS Inglefield*, *HMS Lance*, ***HMS Vanquisher*** (Cdr. N.V. Dickinson, DSC, RN), ***HMCS St. Clair*** (Lt.Cdr. D.C. Wallace, RCNR), ***HMCS Columbia*** (Lt.Cdr. (Retd.) S.W. Davis, RN) and ***HMS Ripley*** (Lt.Cdr. J.A. Agnew, RN). Heavy air attacks were expected that day, but only four enemy aircraft appeared, one of which bombed the screen while another one jettisoned her bombs on being attacked by a Blenheim fighter. The destroyers *HMS Mashona* and *HMS Tartar*, 100 nautical miles to the southward, were not so fortunate. They were attacked in position 52°58'N, 11°36'W at 0955/28 by German aircraft. *HMS Mashona* was hit and sank at noon with the loss of 1 officer and 45 men. The Commander-in-Chief reached Loch Ewe at 1230/29. Vice-Admiral

Somerville with Force H was on his way back to Gibraltar. *HMS Renown*, *HMS Ark Royal*, *HMS Sheffield* made rendezvous at 0800/29 with the destroyers *HMS Faulknor* (Capt. A.F. de Salis, RN), *HMS Forester* (Lt.Cdr. E.B. Tancock, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Fury* (Lt.Cdr. T.C. Robinson, RN) and *HMS Wishart* (Cdr. E.T. Cooper, RN). At 1605/29, *HMS Forester* and *HMS Fury* were detached to hunt a submarine further to the west. Force H, minus the two destroyers that had been detached, arrived at Gibraltar around 2030/29.

End of 'Operation Rheinübung'.

The *Bismarck's* consort, heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen*, was not heard off until 4 June 1941 when aircraft reported her having arrived at Brest. After leaving the *Bismarck* at 1914/24, the *Prinz Eugen's* primary need was to replenish her fuel stock. She set course for a rendez-vous with two tankers, the *Spichern* (9323 GRT, built 1935, former Norwegian *Krossfonn*) and the *Esso Hamburg* (9849 GRT, built 1939) which were position to the north-west of the Azores. All next day the German cruiser made her way southwards, and at 0906/26, some 600 nautical miles west-north-west of the Azores she sighted the *Spichern* and refuelled. Two reconnaissance ships had also been ordered into this area, the *Gonzenheim* and the *Kota Pinang*. On the 28th *Prinz Eugen* fuelled from the *Esso Hamburg*. She then proceeded southwards to carry out cruiser warfare against independently routed ships in the area to the north and west of the Cape Verde Islands but an inspection of her engines the next day showed that an extensive overhaul was needed. Her Commanding Officer then decided to break off the action and course was set for Brest, France where she arrived at 2030/1 June.

A German reconnaissance ship, a supply vessel and two tankers were intercepted by Royal Navy warships and sunk by their own crew or sunk with gunfire. Also two tankers were captured. These were in chronological order; tanker *Belchen* (6367 GRT, built 1932, former Norwegian *Sysla*) by gunfire from *HMS Kenya* and *HMS Aurora* on 3 June 1941 in the Greenland area in approximate position 59°00'N, 47°00'W.

On 4 June the tanker *Esso Hamburg* by *HMS London* and *HMS Brilliant* (Lt.Cdr. F.C. Brodrick, RN) in position 07°35'N, 31°25'W,

tanker *Gedania* (8966 GRT, built 1920) was captured in the North Atlantic in position 43°38'N, 28°15'W by naval auxiliary (Ocean Boarding Vessel) *HMS Marsdale* (Lt.Cdr. D.H.F. Armstrong, RNR), she was put into service with the MOWT as *Empire Garden*, reconnaissance vessel *Gonzenheim* (4000 GRT, built 1937, former Norwegian *Kongsfjord*) was scuttled by her own crew after being sighted by *HMS Esperance Bay* ((Capt.(ret) G.S. Holden, RN) and intercepted by *HMS Nelson* (Capt. G.J.A. Miles, RN) and finally ordered to be boarded by *HMS Neptune* in position 43°29'N, 24°04'W. The next day (5 June) supply vessel *Egerland* (10040 GRT, built 1940) was intercepted by *HMS London* and *HMS Brilliant* in approximate position 07°00'N, 31°00'W. On 12 June, *HMS Sheffield*, intercepted tanker *Friedrich Breme* (10397 GRT, built 1936) in position 49°48'N, 22°20'W and finally on 15 June, *HMS Dunedin* (Capt. R.S. Lovatt, RN), captured the tanker *Lothringen* (10746 GRT, built 1940, former Dutch *Papendrecht*) in position 19°49'N, 38°30'W which had first been sighted by an aircraft from *HMS Eagle* (Capt. E.G.N. Rushbrooke, DSC, RN). The *Lothringen* was sent to Bermuda and was put into service by the MOWT as *Empire Salvage*. (54)

18 May 1941

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow together to relieve the cruisers *HMS Nigeria* (Capt. J.G.L. Dundas, RN) and *HMS Kenya* (Capt. M.M. Denny, CB, RN) on the Faroes-Iceland patrol. (50)

22 May 1941

HMS Manchester (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) made a short call at Skaalefjord, Faeroer Islands to fuel before resuming their patrol. (55)

25 May 1941

In the evening, *HMS Manchester* (Capt. H.A. Packer, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), arrived at Hvalfjord, Iceland to refuel. They departed again early the next day. (50)

31 May 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow from patrol. (53)

2 Jun 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Scapa Flow for Greenock. (56)

3 Jun 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Greenock from Scapa Flow. (56)

4 Jun 1941**Convoy WS 9A.**

This convoy was assembled off Oversay on 4 June 1941.

On assembly the convoy was made up of the transports; *Aagtekerk* (Dutch, 6811 GRT, built 1934), *Capetown Castle* (British, 27000 GRT, built 1938), *Durban Castle* (British, 17388 GRT, built 1938), *Eastern Prince* (British, 10926 GRT, built 1929), *Empire Condor* (British, 7773 GRT, built 1940), *Empire Curlew* (British, 7101 GRT, built 1941), *Empire Egret* (British, 7169 GRT, built 1939), *Empire Widgeon* (British, 6737 GRT, built 1940), *Empress of Japan* (British, 26032 GRT, built 1930), *Franconia* (British, 20175 GRT, built 1923), *Highland Brigade* (British, 14134 GRT, built 1929), *Llangibby Castle* (British, 11951 GRT, built 1929), *Mendoza* (British, 8233 GRT, built 1919), *Mooltan* (British, 20952 GRT, built 1923), *Orbita* (British, 15495 GRT, built 1915) and *Samaria* (British, 19597 GRT, built 1921).

On assembly of the convoy it was escorted by the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN), AA cruiser *HMS Cairo* (A/Capt. I.R.H. Black, RN), armed merchant cruisers *HMS Ausonia* (Capt.(Retd.) G.H. Freyberg, OBE, RN), *HMS Dunnottar Castle* (Capt.(Retd.) C.T.A. Bunbury, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Cossack* (Capt. P.L. Vian, DSO, RN), *HMS Maori* (Cdr. R.E. Courage, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Sikh* (Cdr. G.H. Stokes, RN), *HMS Zulu* (Cdr. H.R. Graham, DSO, RN), *HMCS Ottawa* (Cdr. E.R. Mainguy, RCN), *HMCS Restigouche* (Cdr. H.N. Lay, RCN), *HMS Vanquisher* (Cdr. N.V. Dickinson, DSC, RN), *HMS Winchelsea* (Lt.Cdr. W.A.F. Hawkins, OBE, DSC, RN), *HMS Ramsey* (Lt.Cdr. R.B. Stannard, VC, RNR) and *HMS Richmond* (Lt.Cdr. A.F.L. Evans, RN).

At 0130Z/7, *HMS Vanquisher* and *HMS Winchelsea* parted company with the convoy.

At 0700Z/7, *HMS Ausonia*, *HMS Cairo* and all remaining destroyer parted company with the convoy.

In the afternoon of the 14th the destroyers *HMS Highlander* (Cdr. S. Boucher, RN), *HMS Boreas* (Lt.Cdr. D.H. Maitland-Makgill Crichton, DSC, RN) and *HMS Velox* (Lt.Cdr. E.G. Roper, DSC, RN) joined the convoy escort.

HMS Highland was however soon detached for other duties.

In the morning of the 15th the destroyer **HMS Brilliant** (Lt.Cdr. F.C. Brodrick, RN) joined the convoy escort.

The convoy arrived at Freetown on 16 June 1941.

The convoy departed Freetown for South Africa on 20 June 1941.

The composition of the convoy was the same in which it had arrived with the addition of the transports ***Bergensfjord*** (Norwegian, 11015 GRT, built 1913) and ***Christiaan Huygens*** (Dutch, 16287 GRT, built 1927).

On departure from Freetown the convoy was escorted by the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* and the destroyers *HMS Boreas*, **HMS Vansittart** (Lt.Cdr. R.L.S. Gaisford, RN), *HMS Velox* and **HMS Wild Swan** (Lt.Cdr. C.E.L. Selater, RN).

At 0700ZA(-0.5)/23, the destroyers parted company with the convoy.

In the morning of July 1st, the transports *Capetown Castle*, *Durban Castle*, *Eastern Prince*, *Empire Widgeon*, *Empress of Japan* and *Llangibby Castle* parted company with the convoy and proceeded to Capetown.

At 1400AB(-1.5)/2, *HMS Birmingham* parted company with the convoy after the escort had been taken over by the heavy cruiser **HMS Hawkins** (Capt. H.P.K. Oram, RN). *HMS Birmingham* then proceeded to Simonstown.

The *Eastern Prince* departed Capetown on 2 July to proceed independently to Durban.

The remainder of the convoy arrived at Durban on 4 July 1941.

On 5 July 1941, the ships of the Capetown section (minus *Eastern Prince*, see above) departed there escorted by *HMS Birmingham* which had come from Simonstown.

On 8 July 1941, the transports *Aagtekerk*, ***Arona*** (British, 9031 GRT, built 1941), *Empire Condor*, *Empire Curlew*, *Empire Egret* and ***Thysville*** (Belgian, 8351 GRT, built 1922) and their escort *HMS Hawkins* departed Durban to make rendezvous with the Capetown section the following day.

On making rendezvous, *HMS Birmingham* was detached to return to Simonstown.

At 1415D, the transports *Capetown Castle*, *Durban Castle* and *Empress of Japan* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Durban. They were escorted by the armed merchant cruiser **HMS Hector** (Capt.(Retd.) F. Howard, DSC, RN) which had just made rendezvous with the convoy. They arrived at Bombay at 24 July.

The remainder of the ships continued on to the vicinity of Aden escorted by *HMS Hawkins*. The convoy was dispersed on 21 July 1941. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

11 Jul 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Simonstown after convoy escort duty. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

12 Jul 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) is docked at the Simonstown Dockyard. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

17 Jul 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) is undocked. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

25 Jul 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) conducted full power trials off Simonstown. Upon completion of these she ran over the DG range a couple of times.

In the evening she departed Simonstown for Freetown. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

1 Aug 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) arrived at Freetown from Simonstown. ⁽⁵⁹⁾

4 Aug 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN) departed Freetown for patrol in the South Atlantic. She was to arrive at Samborombón Bay, Plate area on the 14th. ⁽⁶⁰⁾

14 Aug 1941

HMS Newcastle (Capt. E.A. Aylmer, DSC, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) is joined in Samborombón Bay by her sister ship *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN).

Rear-Admiral Pegram then transferred his flag and staff to *HMS Birmingham* as *HMS Newcastle* was to proceed to the USA to refit there.

HMS Birmingham also fuelled from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937).

Both cruisers then departed Samborombón Bay for patrol around midnight during the night of 14/15 August 1941. ⁽⁶¹⁾

18 Aug 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) and *HMS Newcastle* (Capt. E.A. Aylmer, DSC, RN) made rendezvous around 0630P/18, in approximate position 24°16'S, 45°18'W with *HMS Carnarvon Castle* (Capt.(Retd.) H.N.M. Hardy, DSO, RN). *HMS Newcastle* then took over German prisoners from the *Carnarvon Castle* for transportation to Freetown.

The cruisers parted company with the armed merchant cruiser around 1000P/18. ⁽⁶²⁾

19 Aug 1941

At 1500O/19, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) and *HMS Newcastle* (Capt. E.A. Aylmer, DSC, RN) parted company with each other. *HMS Birmingham* continued her patrol. *HMS Newcastle* set course to proceed to Freetown. ⁽⁶¹⁾

28 Aug 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Rio de Janeiro from patrol. ⁽⁵⁹⁾

30 Aug 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Rio de Janeiro to patrol in the South Atlantic east of Pernambuco. ⁽⁵⁹⁾

8 Sep 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled from

an RFA tanker (most likely *Broomdale*) at the Abrolhos Islands. She then proceeded to patrol to the north-east of the Plate area. ⁽⁶³⁾

18 Sep 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937) in Samborombón Bay, River Plate area.

She departed for Buenos Aires later the same day. ⁽⁶³⁾

19 Sep 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Buenos Aires. ⁽⁶³⁾

21 Sep 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Buenos Aires to patrol in the Plate focal area. ⁽⁶³⁾

30 Sep 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Samborombón Bay, River Plate area, where she fuelled from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937). She departed for patrol the following day. ⁽⁶⁴⁾

4 Oct 1941

Around 1330ON(+1.5)/4, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) made rendezvous, in approximate position 24°15'S, 44°30'W, with the corvettes *HMS Bergamot* (Lt. R.T. Horan, RNR) and *HMS Lavender* (Lt.Cdr. J. Whayman, RNR).

HMS Bergamot then commenced to fuel from *HMS Birmingham*.

Later the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937) also joined. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

5 Oct 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) and *HMS Lavender* (Lt.Cdr. J. Whayman, RNR) fuelled from the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937) to the south-west of Ilhabela, Brazil. *HMS Bergamot* (Lt. R.T. Horan, RNR) meanwhile conducted A/S patrol nearby.

On completion of the fuelling (and storing) operations all ships proceeded on patrol. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

13 Oct 1941

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) made rendezvous of the Abrolhos Islands with the armed merchant cruiser *HMS Bulolo* (Capt.(Retd.) R.L. Hamer, RN), corvettes *HMS Bergamot* (Lt. R.T. Horan, RNR), *HMS Lavender* (Lt.Cdr. J. Whayman, RNR) and the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937). ⁽⁶⁵⁾

14 Oct 1941

On completion of the fuelling operations with the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937), light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) made rendezvous of the Abrolhos Islands with the armed merchant cruiser *HMS Bulolo* (Capt.(Retd.) R.L. Hamer, RN) and the

corvettes *HMS Bergamot* (Lt. R.T. Horan, RNR) and *HMS Lavender* (Lt.Cdr. J. Whyman, RNR) resumed their patrol operations in the Abrolhos focal area. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

22 Oct 1941

During the day, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937), to the west of the Abrolhos Islands. On completion of fuelling *HMS Birmingham* patrolled off the Abrolhos Islands. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

23 Oct 1941

During the day, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) again made rendezvous with the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937), to the west of the Abrolhos Islands. The corvettes *HMS Bergamot* (Lt. R.T. Horan, RNR), *HMS Lavender* (Lt.Cdr. J. Whyman, RNR) also were in company and fuelled from the tanker. All ships resumed their patrol duties later in the day. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

30 Oct 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Rio de Janeiro from patrol. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

2 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Rio de Janeiro for patrol. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

12 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled from the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937) to the south-west of Ilhabella, Brazil. *HMS Birmingham* resumed patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

17 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Montevideo. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

19 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Montevideo for the Falkland Islands. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

21 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

25 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Port Stanley, Falkland Islands for Samborombón Bay. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

27 Nov 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Samborombón Bay where she topped off with fuel from the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937). She then departed for a patrol in the South Atlantic which was to end at Simonstown, South Africa. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

10 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Simonstown from patrol. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

11 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Simonstown for patrol in the South Atlantic. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

20 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Samborombón Bay where she fuelled from the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937). ⁽⁶⁷⁾

21 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Samborombón Bay for Montevideo. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

22 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Montevideo. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

24 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Montevideo for patrol. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

29 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled from the RFA tanker *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937) near Ilhabella, Brazil on completion of which *HMS Birmingham* set course for Rio de Janeiro. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

30 Dec 1941

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Rio de Janeiro. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

1 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Rio de Janeiro for patrol in the South Atlantic. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

7 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

8 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Port Stanley, Falkland Islands for Punta Arenas, Chile. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

10 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Punta Arenas, Chile. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

11 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Punta Arenas for patrol which was to end at the Falkland Islands. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

16 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

After fuelling she departed for patrol. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

18 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

19 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

20 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

21 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

22 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

23 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

25 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

She departed for patrol later the same day. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

26 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) returned to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

27 Jan 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Port Stanley, Falkland Islands for patrol in the River Plate focal area. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

4 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. A.C.G. Madden, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Samborombón Bay where she was fuelled on this and the next day by the RFA tankers *Arndale* (8296 GRT, built 1937) and *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937).

Capt. A.C.G. Madden also left the ship, Capt. H.B. Crane, which had joined the ship on 27 January at Port Stanley then took over command. ⁽⁶⁹⁾

5 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) departed Samborombón Bay for patrol in the Plate focal area. ⁽⁶⁹⁾

14 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) fuelled at Samborombón Bay from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937). On completion she resumed her patrol in the Plate focal area. ⁽⁶⁹⁾

19 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) arrived at Montevideo from patrol. ⁽⁶⁹⁾

21 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN) proceeded from Montevideo to Samborombón Bay where she fuelled from the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937). ⁽⁶⁹⁾

22 Feb 1942

The light cruiser, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), departed Samborombón Bay for Simonstown, South Africa via Tristan da Cunha.

Shortly before departure, Rear-Admiral F.H. Pegram, DSO, RN, had transferred his flag to the armed merchant cruiser *HMS Asturias* (Capt.(Retd.) H. Ardill, RN). ⁽⁷⁰⁾

27 Feb 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) made a short stop at Tristan da Cunha before continuing her passage to Simonstown. ⁽⁶⁹⁾

3 Mar 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Simonstown where she will be taken in hand for refit before joining the Eastern Fleet.

De-ammunitioning was completed on 4 March. The log of the ships does not give the date she was docked but this was presumably on completion of de-ammunitioning or shortly afterwards. (71)

19 Mar 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) is undocked. (72)

6 Apr 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises in False Bay. (73)

8 Apr 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises in False Bay.

She then conducted night exercises during the night of 8/9 April 1942 off False Bay. On return on the 9th she conducted D/G trials. (73)

10 Apr 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises in False Bay. (73)

30 Apr 1942

With her refit completed, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), departed Simonstown for Kilindini. (73)

7 May 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Kilindini where she joined the Eastern Fleet. (74)

18 May 1942

Ships from the Eastern Fleet departed Kilindini in the morning for several days of exercises, these were; light cruisers *HMS Caledon* (A/Capt. H.J. Haynes, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Dragon* (Capt. R.J. Shaw, MBE, RN), *HMS Emerald* (Capt. F.C. Flynn, RN), *HMS Enterprise* (Capt. J.C.A. Annesley, DSO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Decoy* (Lt.Cdr. G.I.M. Balfour, RN), *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN), *HMS Griffin* (Capt. H.St.L. Nicolson, DSO, RN), *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC, RN) and *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN).

They were joined in the afternoon by the battleships *HMS Revenge* (Capt. L.V. Morgan, CBE, MVO, DSC, RN), flying the flag of A/Vice-Admiral A.U. Willis, DSO, RN), *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN) (the C-in-C had transferred his flag to *HMS Adamant* temporary), light cruisers *HMS Newcastle* (Capt. P.B.R.W. William-Powlett, DSO, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMAS Nestor* (Cdr. A.S. Rosenthal, DSO and Bar, RAN) and *HMS Foxhound* (Cdr. G.H. Peters, DSC, RN).

Exercises continued on 19 and 20 May although several ships returned to harbour. *HMS Dauntless* (A/Capt. J.G. Hewitt, DSO, RN) joined the exercises on the 19th.

At dawn on the 20th the last exercises were concluded and the ships proceeded as follows;

HMS Revenge, *HMS Warspite*, *HMS Dauntless*, *HMS Caledon*, *HMAS Napier*, *HMAS Nestor*, *HMAS Norman* and *HMS Foxhound* proceeded to Zanzibar.

HMS Newcastle, *HMS Birmingham*, *HMS Griffin*, *HMS Fortune* and *HMS Decoy* proceeded to Tanga, returning to Kilindini the following day.

HMS Emerald and *HMS Enterprise* proceeded to Manza Bay.

At dawn on 21 May, *HMS Caledon* and *HMS Dauntless* departed Zanzibar for Tanga where they were to join the ships that had proceeded there on their departure from Tanga.

Around 0800 hours all the other ships left their anchorages and proceeded to sea. Some ships were to conduct gunnery exercises (including night exercises), these were; *HMS Revenge*, *HMS Warspite*, *HMS Decoy* and *HMAS Napier*. They used a target that was being towed by *HMS Dragon* which had come from Kilindini.

The other ships returned to Kilindini on that day.

The ships that had been involved in the gunnery exercises returned to Kilindili on 22 May. (75)

25 May 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN) *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN) and *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN) departed Kilindini for Aden. (74)

30 May 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN) and *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN) arrived at Aden. They departed for Suez later the same day. (74)

3 Jun 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN) and *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN) arrived at Suez. (76)

6 Jun 1942

The light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Arethusa* (Capt. A.C. Chapman, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMS Griffin* (Lt.Cdr. A.N. Rowell, RN) and *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN) passed the Suez Canal northbound and arrived off Port Said.

Off Port Said they were joined by the destroyers *HMS Jervis* (Capt. A.L. Poland, DSO and Bar, DSC, RN) and *HMS Kelvin* (Cdr. M.S. Townsend, OBE, DSC and Bar, RN) which had departed Alexandria at 0830C/6.

Course was then set towards Alexandria. (77)

7 Jun 1942

At 1115C/7, the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Arethusa* (Capt. A.C. Chapman, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Jervis* (Capt. A.L. Poland, DSO and Bar, DSC, RN), *HMS Kelvin* (Cdr. M.S. Townsend, OBE, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMS Griffin* (Lt. A.N. Rowell, RN) and *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN), arrived at Alexandria. (77)

11 Jun 1942

Operation Vigorous.

Convoy MW 11 from ports in the Eastern Mediterranean to Malta.

Operation Vigorous in the Eastern Mediterranean took place at the same time of Operation Harpoon in the Western Mediterranean.

11 June 1942.

On 11 June 1942, a diversionary convoy, MW 11C, departed Port Said for Malta. It was made up of the following transports; *Aagtekerk* (Dutch, 6811 GRT, built 1934), *Bhutan* (British, 6104 GRT, built 1929), *City of Calcutta* (British, 8063 GRT, built 1940) and *Rembrandt* (Dutch, 8126 GRT, built 1941).

The convoy was escorted by the AA cruiser *HMS Coventry* (Capt. R.J.R. Dendy, RN) and the escort destroyers *HMS Airedale* (Lt.Cdr. A.G. Forman, DSC, RN), *HMS Aldenham* (Lt. H.A. Stuart-Menteth, RN), *HMS Beaufort* (Lt.Cdr. S.O'G Roche, RN), *HMS Croome* (Lt.Cdr. R.C. Egan, RN), *HMS Dulverton* (Lt.Cdr. W.N. Petch, OBE, RN), *HMS Eridge* (Lt.Cdr. W.F.N. Gregory-Smith, DSC, RN) and *HMS Hurworth* (Lt.Cdr. J.T.B. Birch, RN).

The four transports all had an MTB in tow. These were *HMS MTB 259*, *HMS MTB 261*, *HMS MTB 262* and *HMS MTB 264*.

The convoy proceeded eastwards and on 12 June the convoy was joined while near Alexandria by the escort destroyer *HMS Exmoor* (Lt.Cdr. L.StG. Rich, RN).

12 June 1942.

On 12 June 1942, convoy MW 11A departed Haifa for Malta. It was made up of the following transports; *Ajax* (British, 7540 GRT, built 1931), *City of Edinburgh* (British, 8036 GRT, built 1938), *City of Lincoln* (British, 8039 GRT, built 1938), *City of Pretoria* (British, 8049 GRT, built 1937), *Elizabeth Bakke* (British, 5450 GRT, built 1937) and *Princess Marguerite* (Canadian, 5875 GRT, built 1925).

On departure from Haifa this part of the convoy was escorted by the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMAS Nestor* (Cdr. A.S. Rosenthal, DSO and Bar, RAN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr. M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN).

Also on 12 June 1942, convoy MW 11B departed Port Said to join up with convoy MW 11A. It was made up of the following merchant vessels; *Bulkoil* (American (tanker), 8071 GRT, built 1942) and *Potaro* (British, 5410, built 1940).

It was escorted by the destroyers *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Paladin* (Cdr. A.D. Pugsley, RN) and *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN).

13 June 1942.

Convoy MW 11C turned back eastward after dark on the 12th and joined convoys MW 11A and MW 11B near Alexandria on the 13th. The Hunt-class escort destroyers escorting convoy MW 11C were sent to Alexandria to fuel.

The transport *City of Calcutta* had been damaged by a near miss at 2100C/12 while the convoy was still proceeding to the west. She had been detached and was now escorted to Tobruk by *HMS Croome* and *HMS Exmoor*. The four MTB's that were in tow of the four merchant ships of convoy MW 11C, were slipped and also sent to Tobruk due to the bad weather conditions. *MTB 259* however was damaged and sunk.

The transport *Elizabeth Bakke* was unable to keep up with the convoy and was therefore detached from convoy MW 11A to return to Alexandria. The decoy ship *Centurion* joined the convoy from Alexandria. This ship was disguised as a battleship.

The destroyers ***HMS Jervis*** (Capt. A.L. Poland, CB, DSO and Bar, DSC, RN), ***HMS Javelin*** (Lt.Cdr. G.E. Fardell, RN), ***HMS Kelvin*** (Cdr. M.S. Townsend, OBE, DSC and Bar, RN), ***HMS Sikh*** (Capt. St.J.A. Micklethwait, DSO and Bar, RN), ***HMS Zulu*** (Cdr. R.T. White, DSO and Bar, RN), ***HMS Hasty*** (Lt.Cdr. N.H.G. Austen, RN) and ***HMS Hero*** (Lt. W. Scott, RN) departed Alexandria in the afternoon to relieve all the fleet destroyers which were with the convoy at that time. The rescue ships *Antwerp* (British, 2957 GRT, built 1920) and *Malines* (British, 2969 GRT, built 1921) took passage to the convoy with these destroyers. The destroyers they were to relieve were then to proceed to Alexandria to fuel. The corvettes ***HMS Delphinium*** (Cdr.(Retd.) R.L. Spalding, RN), ***HMS Erica*** (Lt.Cdr. W.C. Riley, RNR), ***HMS Primula*** (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) J.H. Fuller, RNR) and ***HMS Snapdragon*** (T/Lt. P.H. Potter, RNR) also joined the convoy escort from Alexandria.

At 1730C/13 the Rear Admiral Commanding, Fifteenth Cruiser Squadron, which was in overall command, sailed from Alexandria in ***HMS Cleopatra*** (Capt. G. Grantham, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral P.L. Vian, KBE, DSO and 2 Bars, RN) with ***HMS Dido*** (Capt. H.W.U. McCall, RN), ***HMS Hermione*** (Capt. G.N. Oliver, DSO, RN), ***HMS Euryalus*** (Capt. E.W. Bush, DSO, DSC, RN), ***HMS Newcastle*** (Capt. P.B.R.W. William-Powlett, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), ***HMS Birmingham*** (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and ***HMS Arethusa*** (Capt. A.C. Chapman, RN). They were escorted by the destroyers: *HMAS Napier*, *HMAS Nestor*, *HMAS Nizam*, *HMAS Norman*, *HMS Pakenham*, *HMS Paladin*, *HMS Inconstant*, *HMS Fortune*, ***HMS Griffin*** (Lt.Cdr. A.N. Rowell, RN), *HMS Hotspur* and the escort destroyers *HMS Dulverton*, *HMS Airedale*, *HMS Aldenham*, *HMS Beaufort*, *HMS Eridge*, *HMS Hurworth* and ***HMS Tetcott*** (Lt. R.H. Rycroft, RN).

14 June 1942.

HMS Erica had to be detached to Mersa Matruh during night of 13th/14th due to defects.

The escort destroyers *HMS Croome* and *HMS Exmoor* rejoined the convoy at daylight coming from Tobruk.

The transport *Aagtekerk* was unable to keep up with the convoy and was ordered to proceed to Tobruk escorted by *HMS Tetcott* and *HMS Primula*. She was later attacked by aircraft, set on fire and had to be grounded near Tobruk. She was later declared a total loss.

The minesweepers ***HMS Boston*** (Lt. D.H.G. Coughlan, RNR) and ***HMS Seaham*** (Lt.Cdr. R.E. Brett, RNR) joined the convoy coming from Tobruk.

During the afternoon and evening the convoy and escort were heavily bombed. The transport *Bhutan* was hit and sank while the transport *Potaro* was damaged but she was able to remain with the convoy. The rescue ships picked up crew and passengers from the *Bhutan* following which they parted company with the convoy and proceeded to Tobruk.

In the early evening it was reported that Italian warships had left Taranto.

15 June 1942.

Rear-Admiral Vian ordered the convoy to turn back at 0145C/15 so that an air attack could be launched on the enemy fleet before contact could be made. During the night of the 14th/15th the convoy was constantly illuminated by

aircraft flares and was also attacked by E-Boats and submarines. *HMS Newcastle* was hit forward by an E boat (S 56) torpedo around 0300C/15, her speed being reduced to 24 knots and her forward turret was put out of action. *HMS Hasty* was torpedoed and damaged also by an E boat (S 55) at 0525C/15 and later had to be scuttled by *HMS Hotspur* which also rescued her crew, only 12 of the crew of *HMS Hasty* were lost.

At 0630C/15 the convoy turned west again, but had to turn back to the east at 0930C/15 when the enemy was only 100 miles to the west and air attacks had not developed. At 1115C/15 a Beaufort torpedo bomber striking force reported hits on the two Littorio battleships, and the Commander in Chief Mediterranean ordered the convoy to turn westward once again. However the enemy continued to proceed to the south-east, apparently not reduced in speed. Rear-Admiral Vian, therefore, maintained his course to the eastward.

There were heavy air attacks with mainly Ju-88's and Ju-87's throughout the day and torpedo bombers attacked at dusk. Both *Centurion* and *HMS Birmingham* were damaged, but were able to continue. *HMS Airedale* was hit and she was later scuttled by *HMS Aldenham* and *HMS Hurworth*, casualties were fortunately once again slight. *HMAS Nestor* was also hit and immobilized but she did not sink and taken in tow by *HMS Javelin* with *HMS Beaufort* and *HMS Eridge* escorting the tow.

By 1630C/15 it had been reported that the enemy fleet had turned northward and the Commander in Chief Mediterranean again ordered the convoy to turn to the westward if in any way possible. Shortage of fuel and ammunition, however, did not permit this, and Rear-Admiral Vian was instructed to return to Alexandria with his whole force.

Submarines then intercepted the enemy fleet, but a simultaneous air attack caused the enemy to alter course and unfortunately the attacks could not be pressed home. The heavy cruiser *Trento* was damaged by the air attack and later sunk by *HMS P 35* (Lt. S.L.C. Maydon, RN) while making her way back to Italy. *HMS P 35* also reported one torpedo hit on a Littorio-class battleship but this was not the case, she had missed the *Vittorio Veneto*.

16 June 1942.

At 0126C/16 *HMS Hermione* was torpedoed by the German submarine *U-205* and sank shortly afterwards taking 88 of her crew with her. *HMS Aldenham*, *HMS Beaufort* and *HMS Exmoor* rescued 498 of her crew.

The efforts to tow the damaged *HMAS Nestor* had to be abandoned at 0530C/16 and she was scuttled by *HMS Javelin* who then proceeded to rejoin the 15th Cruiser Squadron and its escort.

During the day several attacks on A/S contacts were carried out by the convoy escort, but there was no evidence of damage or a submarine sunk.

In the early evening ships started to arrive back at Alexandria and all the remaining ships arrived there during the evening except the merchant vessels *Bulkoil* and *Ajax* which went on to Port Said escorted by *HMS Pakenham*, *HMS Inconstant*, *HMS Griffin* and *HMS Fortune*. (78)

21 Jun 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Paladin* (Cdr. A.D. Pugsley, RN), *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMS Inconstant*

(Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN) departed Alexandria for Port Said. (79)

22 Jun 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Pakenham* (Capt. E.B.K. Stevens, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Paladin* (Cdr. A.D. Pugsley, RN), *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN) arrived at Port Said. They then transited the Suez Canal southbound and arrived at Suez later the same day. (79)

23 Jun 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Port Said escorting the troopship *Queen Mary* (British, 81235 GRT, built 1936) southwards.

HMS Birmingham parted company with the troopship in the early hours of the 24th and then returned to Suez. (76)

28 Jun 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN) departed Suez for Aden. (76)

1 Jul 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN) arrived at Aden.

While at Aden, Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, transferred his flag from *HMS Newcastle* (Capt. P.B.R.W. William-Powlett, DSO, RN) to *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN).

HMS Birmingham, *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *Inconstant*, *HMS Hotspur*, *HMS Griffin* (Lt.Cdr. A.N. Rowell, RN) and *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN) departed Aden for Kilindini. (76)

8 Jul 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN), *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Griffin* (Lt.Cdr. A.N. Rowell, RN) and *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN) arrived at Kilindini where they rejoined the Eastern Fleet. En-route from Aden they had encountered very heavy weather. (76)

15 Jul 1942

During 15 to 20 July 1942, ships of the Eastern Fleet conducted exercises off Kilindini. The ships involved were the battleships *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of A/Vice-Admiral A.U. Willis, DSO, RN), *HMS Resolution* (Capt. A.R. Halfhide, CBE, RN), aircraft carriers *HMS Illustrious* (Capt. A.G. Talbot, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral D.W. Boyd, CBE, DSC, RN), *HMS Formidable* (Capt. A.W.LaT. Bisset, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Duncan* (Capt. H.St.L. Nicolson, DSO, RN), *HMS Arrow* (Cdr. A.M. McKillop, RN), *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. T.D. Herrick, DSC, RN), *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr. M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN) and *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN).

A/Vice-Admiral Willis temporary flew his flag in *HMS Warspite*. Rear-Admiral Tennant had struck his flag in *HMS Birmingham*, temporary, before she proceeded to sea.

During 17 and 18 July the battleship *HMS Royal Sovereign* (Capt. R.H. Portal, DSC, RN), on passage from Bombay to Kilindini, also joined the exercises until fuel shortage forced her to proceed to Kilindini. ⁽⁸⁰⁾

21 Jul 1942

Around 0800C/21, ' Force A ' of the Eastern Fleet, made up of the battleship *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN), aircraft carriers *HMS Illustrious* (Capt. A.G. Talbot, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral D.W. Boyd, CBE, DSC, RN), *HMS Formidable* (Capt. A.W.LaT. Bisset, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Mauritius* (Capt. W.D. Stephens, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN) and *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) departed Kilindini for Colombo via the Seychelles.

The destroyer *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN) sailed from Kilindini later on the same day (around 1800C/21) to overtake and join ' Force A ' which she did around 1000D/23.

The destroyers were detached around 1200D/23 to fuel at Port Victoria, Seychelles. They rejoined ' Force A ' around 0700D/24.

' Force A ' arrived at Colombo around 1030F/28. En-route exercises had been carried out. ⁽⁸¹⁾

30 Jul 1942

Operation Stab.

Diversionsary operation in the Bay of Bengal.

The object of this diversionsary operation in which landings on the Andaman Islands simulated was to distract Japanese naval forces in conjunction with American operations in the Solomons.

To simulate landing forces three convoys were to leave India and Ceylon. These were;

' Force V ', sailing from Vizagapatam.

Tansports *Blackheath* (British, 4637 GRT, built 1936), *Cranfield* (British, 5332 GRT, built 1919) and *Mahout* (British, 7921 GRT, built 1925). These ships were escorted by the sloop *HMIS Jumna* (Cdr. J.E.N. Coope, RIN, Senior Officer) and the destroyer *HMS Scout* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) H. Lambton, RN).

' Force M ', sailing from Madras

Transports *Clan McIver* (British, 4606 GRT, built 1921), *Custodian* (British, 5881 GRT, built 1928), *Hoperange* (British, 5177 GRT, built 1939), *Tasmania* (British, 6405 GRT, built 1935) and *Yuen Sang* (British, 3229 GRT, built 1923). These ships were escorted by the fast minelayer *HMS Manxman* (Capt. R.K. Dickson, RN, Senior Officer), corvette *HMS Aster* (Lt. W.L. Smith, RNR) and patrol vessel *HMIS Sonavati* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. C.F. Smith, RINR).

' Force T ', sailing from Trincomalee

Transport (RAF Tender) *Shengking* (British, 2999 GRT, built 1931) and the tankers *Marit Maersk* (Danish, 1894 GRT, built 1938), *Appleleaf* (Royal Fleet Auxiliary, 5892 GRT, built 1917) and *Broomdale* (Royal Fleet Auxiliary,

8334 GRT, built 1937). These ships were escorted by the sloop *HMIS Hindustan* (A/Cdr. I.B.W Heanly, RIN, Senior Officer) and the corvette *HMS Marguerite* (Lt.Cdr. A.N. Blundell, RNR).

These forces were to proceed at best speed and reverse their course after dark at 1700Z/1 and return to their ports at best speed to arrive there before dusk on 2 August 1942.

' Force A ' of the Eastern Fleet was to sail from Colombo at 0400Z/31 so as to be eastward of Trincomalee by the time ' Force T ' was due to sail on the 1st August. Thereafter, ' Force A ' was to cover ' Force T ' from the eastward during the 1st and 2nd August. Subsequent movements of ' Force A ' were to depend on the situation, the force finally returning to Colombo about the 4th August.

During the night of 1/2 August, whilst forces are at sea, a wireless diversion (called Operation Spark) was to be carried out to simulate the following events.

- 1.) An imaginary collision was to occur in ' Force M '.
- 2.) One of the damaged ships was to make a plain language W/T signal reporting she had been in collision and is unable to proceed on the operation. One of the escort was to order her to keep silence and later to report to the Commander-in-Chief that ' Force M ' was unable to proceed. The Commander-in-Chief was then to postpone the operation and order all forces to return to their ports.
- 3.) Shore Wireless Stations were to carry out their normal W/T procedure.

Catalina Patrols were to be established well to the eastward to cover the three convoys during the short period they were at sea and ' Force A ' whilst operating in the Bay of Bengal.

At 2200F/30, the Commander-in-Chief received the following enemy report from the Dutch submarine *HrMs O 23* (Lt.Cdr. A.M. Valkenburg, RNethN) which was on patrol in the Malacca Straits: ' Two cruisers of the Takao-class and four destroyers in position 05°32'N, 98°50'E. Course 340°. Speed 14 knots. Torpedoes missed. Time of Origin of the signal of *HrMs O 23* was 2352Z/28.

It seemed unlikely that the enemy cruiser force, moving northwards close to the Thailand coast, was a sign of enemy reaction to the 'planted' rumours in India that seaborne forces were being prepared to attack the Andaman Island. A more probable reason to account for this movement was a possible raid on shipping in the northern part of the Bay of Bengal or a visit to Rangoon to coincide with the establishment of the new Burmese puppet government.

HrMs O 23 was due to leave patrol in the Malacca Straits on the 31st July and return to Colombo. In view of the enemy forces reported previously by her and the forthcoming Operation Stab, she was ordered to remain on patrol until 3rd August.

Forces ' T ' and ' M ' were provided with air cover (this was not possible for ' Force V '), both by the long range reconnaissance Catalina patrols and local fighter escort, and in addition would have Force A covering them to the eastward, but ' Force V ' would be without air cover and too far away to be covered by ' Force A '. The Commander-in-Chief therefore decided to cancel the sailing of ' Force V ', but that all preparations for its departure were to continue.

In view of the enemy cruisers reported in the Malacca Straits on 29th July, The Commander-in-Chief decided to proceed with ' Force A ' from Colombo in the afternoon of 30 July. This would enable operation Stab to be carried out on the prearranged date and also admit of intercepting the Japanese force should it venture to the southern part of the Bay of Bengal.

' Force A ', comprising the battleship *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN), aircraft carriers *HMS Illustrious* (Capt. A.G. Talbot, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral D.W. Boyd, CBE, DSC, RN), *HMS Formidable* (Capt. A.W.LaT. Bisset, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Mauritius* (Capt. W.D. Stephens, RN), AA cruiser *HrMs Jacob van Heemskerck* (Cdr. E.J. van Holte, RNethN) and the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN) and *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) sailed from Colombo at 1700F/30.

Course was shaped to keep out of sight of land and to be in a position 35 miles to eastward of Trincomalee by 1000F/1.

Two air searches were sent out from ' Force A ' on 31st July. The first at 0800F to cover the section 050° to 080° ahead of the fleet to a depth of 150 miles; and the second at 1500F to search the sector 000° to 110° to a depth of 160 miles. Nothing was seen in either search.

Since no further information of the enemy cruiser force had been received, the Commander-in-Chief decided at 1100F/31 to postpone the sailing of ' Force M ' until 4 hours later and ordered a Catalina patrol to the north eastward of this force whilst at sea so as to give warning of approach of any possible enemy forces.

' Force T ' sailed from Trincomalee at the prearranged time, 0900F/1. At that time ' Force A ' was 40 miles north-east of Trincomalee, course south-west. At 1000F/1 course was altered to north-east, parallel to that of ' Force T ', and throughout the day, ' Force A ' maintained a covering position to the north-east of ' Force T '. An air reconnaissance was flown off at 0830F/1 to cover the section 340° to 000° to 130° to a depth of 150 nautical miles. This search saw nothing.

At 1040F/1, when ' Force A ' was in position 09°00'N, 21°42'E, 40 nautical miles north-east of Trincomalee, course northeast, an RDF contact was obtained on an aircraft bearing 100° range 73 miles. This was at first thought to be one of the reconnaissance aircraft returning, but the absence of IFF indication being the unfortunately the rule rather than the exception. This aircraft was tracked around the fleet and passed astern at 1130F/1 on a bearing 220°, range 24 miles thence proceeded to the north-westward and finally faded on bearing 060° at 60 miles at 1215F/1. The aircraft was sighted by *HMS Formidable* and identified by two officers and an air lookout as a Catalina and reported as such. *HMS Formidable* did not send out fighters to investigate. Although the prearranged programme of the Catalina reconnaissance did not suggest one of these aircraft should be acting in this manner, the possibility was accepted in view of the lack of training of many of the newly arrived Catalina crews. Subsequent investigations and a warning of the presence of British forces broadcast from Tokyo established this was an enemy aircraft.

At noon a fighter umbrella of two Martlets was maintained by *HMS Illustrious*. One Martlet crashed into the barrier on deck landing. The need to economise on the fighter umbrella was governed by the necessity of conserving the Martlets. Had the aircraft referred earlier not been wrongly identified as a Catalina, The Commander-in-Chief was convinced that it could have been intercepted by Martlets that were ranged at readiness in both aircraft carriers.

A further air search was sent out at 1500F/1 to cover the sector from 000° to 110° to a depth of 150 miles but nothing was seen.

At 1800F/1, one of the Fulmar search aircraft made an emergency landing on *HMS Illustrious*, but crashed on deck due to a fractured oil pipe spraying the pilot's windscreen, and was badly damaged.

At 1830F/1, all the search aircraft except two Fulmars had returned to their carriers. The two missing aircraft reported to *HMS Formidable* by wireless that they were lost and requested D/F bearings. The Commander-in-Chief at once ordered wireless silence to be broken to home these aircraft. The fleet was turned at 1840F/1 to close one of the aircraft when bearing had been definitely established by D/F and RDF. Searchlights were burned at dusk to assist returning aircraft and at 1920F/1 *Very's* lights were sighted to the south-west. A few minutes later one of the aircraft was sighted and closed the carriers. Unfortunately, the aircraft by this time so short of petrol that it had to force land in the sea. The crew were picked up by *HMAS Norman*.

By 2000F/1. 'Force A', which had become somewhat dispersed during reversal of course and whilst locating the crew of the aircraft, was reformed and course altered to the north west. Unfortunately nothing further was heard or seen of the other missing Fulmar with the exception of one report that a light had been seen to the eastward. A night search for the survivors of this aircraft was considered, but as they would have left the convoy uncovered to the northeast, The Commander-in-Chief decided it was preferable to return to this area at dawn and carry out a daytime air search. The Commander-in-Chief therefore continued to the north-west and at 0100F/2 in position 11°30'N, 82°15'E, course was reversed to the south-east and at daylight course was altered to south.

The wireless diversion (Operation Spark) was carried out as previously arranged during the night at 2300F/1 and appears to have been fully effective.

At 0630F/2, a thorough air search was sent out to look for survivors of the Fulmar which had been lost the previous evening. Whilst this attack was continuing, 'Force A' was manoeuvred in the area in which it was estimated that the survivors might have landed. No survivors were located and it must be presumed with regret that the crew of two was lost. Catalinas which would be operating through this area were requested to keep a good lookout for survivors.

At 1030F/2, despatches were transferred by *HMAS Norman* from *HMS Warspite* to *HMS Illustrious* and thence sent by aircraft to Trincomalee for onward transmission. At 1100F/2, *HMS Formidable* flew off two Martlets as fighter umbrella. At 1112F/2, both carriers reported RDF contact on an aircraft bearing 055°, range 55 miles. *HMS Formidable* directed two Martlets onto this aircraft. When the fighters sighted the enemy flying boat at 10000 feet they first thought it was a Catalina, but on approaching closely identified it as a Japanese flying boat Navy Type 97, and promptly shot it down in approximate position 09°26'N, 83°16'E. The flying boat, which appeared to be taken completely by surprise, gave no return fire and after the second burst of fire from the Martlets, caught fire, disintegrated and fell in flames. No survivors were seen.

In the meantime at 111F/2 a further two Martlets each were flown off by the carriers. One of these Martlets from *HMS Formidable* crashed into the sea on taking off. The pilot was rescued by *HrMs Jacob van Heemskerck*.

A fighter umbrella of two Martlets was maintained for the rest of the day by *HMS Illustrious*. At 1530F/2 one of these Martlets appeared to have an engine failure and crashed into the sea whilst approaching to land on. The pilot was lost.

At about 1100F/2, the Commander-in-Chief had received information from the Flag Officer, Ceylon that Air Headquarters Bengal considered there were indications of naval activity south of the Andamans at 2300Z/31, that pointed to the possibility of an attack on Madras at dawn on the 3rd August and that the information on which this

was based was from a most secret source. Flag Officer, Ceylon, had also informed Admiralty and the Deputy Commander in Chief, Eastern Fleet.

There was nothing in Air Headquarters Bengal signal to indicate what was the nature of the naval activity which had been reported nor the reliability of the source. The Commander-in-Chief immediately requested Flag Officer, Ceylon to obtain amplification of this report.

Although a dawn attack by this Japanese naval force on Madras on 3rd August was possible, The Commander-in-Chief considered the following factors would make it very improbable.

- 1.) ' Force A ', probably having been sighted by the Japanese flying boat A.M. 1st August.
- 2.) ' Force A ', breaking wireless silence to endeavour to recover aircraft on the evening of 1st August.
- 3.) The wireless diversion (Operation Spark), carried out on the night of 1st/2nd August.

Nevertheless the Commander-in-Chief felt that he could not disregard Air Headquarters Bengal report and he therefore decided to proceed at once to Trincomalee and refuel destroyers in preparation for an extension of the present operation. he informed Their Lordships of his intentions in his signal 1215Z/2. Course was altered at 1215F/2 to the westward and speed increased to reach Trincomalee before dark.

' Force A ' entered Trincomalee at 1915F/2 and refuelling of destroyers commenced at once and as completed at 2200F/2 when it had been intended that ' Force A ' should sail again.

Additional Catalina patrols had been arranged to cover the approaches to Madras from the east and south-east, from p.m. 2nd August until daylight 3rd August.

It was not until ' Force A ' arrived at Trincomalee at 1900F/2 that the Commander-in-Chief received a message from Air Headquarters India (Flag Officer Ceylon's 0744/2) stated that they did not agree with the deductions nor authorize the message from Air Headquarters Bengal. After discussion with Rear Admiral Commanding, Aircraft Carriers and Rear Admiral Commanding Fourth Cruiser Squadron, the Commander-in-Chief decided that there was no real basis for this report and in view of *HMS Formidable* and *HMS Birmingham* being required at an early date to return to Kilindini for Operation Streamline Jane, the Commander-in-Chief decided the ' Force A ' should return to Colombo.

The Commander-in-Chief informed Their Lordships of his revised intentions in his message 1649Z/2.

' Force A ' sailed accordingly from Trincomalee at 0600F/3 and shaped course for Colombo keeping out of sight of land. During the day a safety patrol of one aircraft was maintained 30 miles ahead of the Fleet. This patrol was carried out by Walrus aircraft from cruisers during the afternoon but had to be cancelled owing to rising wind and sea. A fighter umbrella of two Martlets was maintained throughout the day.

At 1030F/3, *HMS Manxman*, who was returning from Madras to Colombo, as about 30 miles south-west of ' Force A '. An aircraft was sent to order her to join ' Force A ', which she did at 1300F/3.

At 1430F/3, *HMS Illustrious* obtained an RDF contact on an aircraft bearing 60° and at 1440F/3, *HMS Warspite* obtained a doubtful contact on the same bearing at a range of 50 miles. Both contacts faded ten minutes later. At that time ' Force A ' was in position approximately 06°40'N, 82°10'E. The RDF contact may have been a Japanese flying boat, but more probably an aircraft operating from China Bay as no Catalina were know to be in that area. The uncertainty and short duration of the contacts rendered fighter interception impracticable.

Before leaving Trincomalee the Commander-in-Chief had proposed to Air Officer Commanding, Ceylon that opportunity should be taken to exercise that Fighter Direction of shore based fighters from HM ships and any other air exercises he might wish to carry out.

From 1645F/3 to 1800F/3, successful fighter direction exercise was carried out using two Fulmars from *HMS Illustrious* as the enemy. R/T communication was obtained quickly and no difficulty experienced in directing the Hurricanes on to their target. From 1800F/3 till dusk these two Fulmars took over the duties of fighter umbrella.

The next air exercise was a night shadowing exercise and a night torpedo and bombing attack on the fleet.

At 1850F/3, *HMS Illustrious* reported an aircraft in sight bearing 190° and directed the fighter umbrella of two Fulmars to investigate. This aircraft which was clearly in sight from *HMS Warspite* was a flying boat just visible above the horizon and though it presented characteristics of a Catalina, it could not definitely be identified as such. *HMS Illustrious* directed the Fulmars on to the target, a warning being given by R/T that the aircraft was possibly friendly. Unfortunately the designation 'Bandit' i.e. enemy aircraft, as opposed to 'Bogey' i.e. unidentified aircraft, was employed by the Fighter Directing Officer. For this and other reasons which are being investigated by a Board of Enquiry one of the Fulmars opened fire on this flying boat, which proved to be a Catalina. Fire was ceased directly the pilot realized his mistake but the Commander-in-Chief regret to report that one airman was killed and two injured and the Catalina's rudder damaged. The Fulmars returned to *HMS Illustrious* and from subsequent signals it appeared that the Catalina was still airborne and returning to her base. As a safety measure *HMS Mauritius* and *HMS Manxman* were detached to search the area in case the Catalina was forced to land, but were recalled when it was clear from RDF bearings that the Catalina was proceeding to Koggala.

During the night of 3rd/4th August the shore based reconnaissance aircraft were unable to locate 'Force A' and in consequence no attacks were delivered. From 0530F/4 to 0645F/4 another fighter direction exercise with shore based aircraft was successfully carried out.

'Force A' arrived at Colombo at 0900F/4. ⁽⁸¹⁾

4 Aug 1942

At 1800F/4, having completed fuelling, the aircraft carrier *HMS Formidable* (Capt. A.W.LaT. Bisset, RN), light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), fast minelayer *HMS Manxman* (Capt. R.K. Dickson, RN), and the destroyers *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMAS Nizam* (Lt.Cdr M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN) departed Colombo for Kilindini. The *HMS Manxman* and the destroyers were to refuel at Seychelles during the passage which they did on 8th August. They rejoined later the same day / early the next morning.

These ships arrived at Kilindini around 1000C/11. ⁽⁸²⁾

24 Aug 1942

During 24/25 August 1942, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and *HrMs Jacob van Heemskerck* (Capt. E.J. van Holte, RNN) conducted exercises off Kilindini. These included night exercises. ⁽⁸³⁾

6 Sep 1942

'Force M' made up of the aircraft carrier *HMS Illustrious* (Rear-Admiral A.W.laT. Bisset, RN), light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer

Force M), AA cruiser *HrMs Jacob van Heemskerck* (Capt. E.J. van Holte, RNethN) and the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN) and *HrMs Tjerk Hiddes* (Lt.Cdr. W.J. Kruys, RNethN) sailed for the rendezvous position where all forces involved in the scheduled landings at Majunga on 10 September 1942 (Operation Stream) were to assemble.

[No further information available on Operation Stream for the moment, further research is required.] (81)

14 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Diego Suarez from operations. (84)

16 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Diego Suarez for Tamatave, Madagascar to participate in Operation Line, which were the landings at that place.

[No further details available to us at the moment, further research will have to be done in the future.] (84)

18 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) anchored off Tamatave. (84)

19 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Tamatave for Diego Suarez. (84)

19 Sep 1942

Around 0700D/19, *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN) and *HrMs Tjerk Hiddes* (Lt.Cdr. W.J. Kruys, RNethN) departed Tamatave for A/S patrol in the area.

Around 1700D/19, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer Force M), also departed Tamatave and joined the two Dutch destroyers at sea following course was set for Diego Suarez where they arrived around 1730D/20. (85)

20 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Diego Suarez from Operation Line, the landings at Tamatave. (84)

26 Sep 1942

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer Force M) and the destroyers *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) and *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. F.T. Burghard, RNethN) departed Diego Suarez to participate in the landings of South African troops at Tulear.

[No further details available to us for the moment, further research will have to be conducted in the future.] (84)

29 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer Force M) anchored off Tulear. (84)

30 Sep 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer Force M) departed Tulear for Diego Suarez. ⁽⁸⁴⁾

3 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, Senior Officer Force M) arrived at Diego Suarez from Tulear. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

5 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and **HMS Gambia** (Capt. M.J. Mansergh, CBE, RN) departed Diego Suarez for Kilindini. ⁽⁸⁷⁾

6 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and **HMS Gambia** (Capt. M.J. Mansergh, CBE, RN) arrived at Kilindini from Diego Suarez. ⁽⁸⁷⁾

8 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Kilindini for Durban. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

12 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) made a short stop at Durban before immediately departing for Simonstown. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

14 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Simonstown. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

16 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) is docked at Simonstown. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

28 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) is undocked. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

29 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) conducted trials and exercises off Simonstown. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

31 Oct 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Simonstown for Durban. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

1 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Durban from Simonstown. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

2 Nov 1942

The battleship *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN, C-in-C Eastern Fleet), light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. P. Bekenn, RN) departed Durban for Kilindini. ⁽⁸⁸⁾

6 Nov 1942

The battleship *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN, C-in-C Eastern Fleet), light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) and the destroyers *HMAS Napier* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN) and *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. P. Bekenn, RN) arrived at Kilindini from Durban. En-route various exercises had been carried out. ⁽⁸⁹⁾

8 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Kilindini for Bombay. The Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Fleet, Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN and his staff were on board during the passage to Bombay. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

13 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Bombay from Kilindini. The Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Fleet, Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN, then left the ship. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

21 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Bombay for Kilindini. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

24 Nov 1942

During 24 and 25 November 1942, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), picked up a total of 678 survivors from the transport *Tilawa* (British, 10006 GRT, built 1924) that had been torpedoed and sunk on 23 November 1942 by the Japanese submarine <http://www.combinedfleet.com/I-29.htm>>I-29 in position 07°36'N, 61°08'E.

At 0405DE(-4.5)/24, *HMS Birmingham* had altered course to proceed to the north-east to the sinking position after having been ordered to do so in a signal.

After picking up the survivors course was set to return to Bombay. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

27 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at Bombay where the survivors were landed. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

30 Nov 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Bombay for Kilindini. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

5 Dec 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) arrived at

Kilindini from Bombay. ⁽⁹¹⁾

8 Dec 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) conducted independent exercises off Kilindini. ⁽⁹¹⁾

11 Dec 1942

During 11/12 December 1942, the battleship *HMS Valiant* (Capt. L.H. Ashmore, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Ceres* (Capt. C.C.A. Allen, RN), destroyer *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. P. Bekenn, RN) and the escort destroyer *HMS Derwent* (Cdr. R.H. Wright, DSC, RN) conducted exercises off Kilindini. These included night exercises. ⁽⁹²⁾

14 Dec 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) conducted exercises off Kilindini. On completion of these exercises she proceeded to Manza Bay. ⁽⁹¹⁾

16 Dec 1942

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN) departed Manza Bay for exercises which continued on during the night of 16/17 December 1942. On completion of the exercises on the 17th, *HMS Birmingham* proceeded to Kilindini. ⁽⁹¹⁾

21 Dec 1942

On 21 December 1942, *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN, C-in-C Eastern Fleet) and *HMS Valiant* (Capt. L.H. Ashmore, RN), aircraft carrier *HMS Illustrious* (Capt. R.L.B. Cunliffe, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Gambia* (Capt. M.J. Mansergh, CBE, RN), armed merchant cruisers *HMS Ranpura* (Capt.(Retd.) H.T.M. Pawsey, RN), destroyers *HMS Rotherham* (Capt. F.S.W. de Winton, RN), *HMAS Nepal* (Cdr. F.B. Morris, RAN), *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. P. Bekenn, RN) and the escort destroyers *HMS Blackmore* (Lt. H.T. Harrel, RN) and *HMS Derwent* (Cdr. R.H. Wright, DSC, RN) conducted exercises off Kilindini. *HMS Ranpura* returned to Kilindini on 22 December the other ships on 23 December. ⁽⁹³⁾

30 Dec 1942

During 30/31 December 1942, the battleship *HMS Resolution* (Capt. J.W. Durnford, RN, flying the flag of A/Vice-Admiral A.U. Willis, DSO, RN, Second in Command, Eastern Fleet), heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* (Capt. G.A. French, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Capetown* (Capt. G.E.M. O'Donnell, DSO, RN), destroyer *HMS Rotherham* (Capt. F.S.W. de Winton, RN) and escort destroyer *HMS Blackmore* (Lt. H.T. Harrel, RN) carried out exercises off Kilindini / Mombasa. These included night exercises.

HMS Capetown came from Manza Bay. ⁽⁹⁴⁾

5 Jan 1943

During 5 to 8 January 1943, the battleships *HMS Resolution* (Capt. J.W. Durnford, RN, with Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, on board), *HMS Revenge* (A/Capt. St.J. Cronyn, DSO, RN), aircraft carrier *HMS Illustrious* (Capt. R.L.B. Cunliffe, RN), heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* (Capt. G.A. French, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Mauritius* (Capt. W.D. Stephens, RN), destroyers *HMS Rotherham*

(Capt. F.S.W. de Winton, RN), *HMAS Norman* (Cdr. H.M. Burrell, RAN), *HMAS Nizam* (Cdr. M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMAS Nepal* (Cdr. F.B. Morris, RAN), *HMS Foxhound* (Cdr. C.J. Wynne-Edwards, DSC and Bar, RN), escort destroyers *HMS Blackmore* (Lt. H.T. Harrel, RN) and *HMS Catterick* (Lt. A. Tyson, RN) conducted exercises off Kilindini.

HMS Blackmore returned to Kilinidi for other duties on the 6th. ⁽⁹⁵⁾

10 Jan 1943

Convoy MC 3.

This convoy departed Aden on 10 January 1943 and arrived at Durban on 23 January 1943.

The convoy was made up of the transports *Arona* (British, 9031 GRT, built 1941), *Ascanius* (British, 10048 GRT, built 1910) and *Felix Roussell* (British, 17083 GRT, built 1930).

On departure from Aden the convoy was escorted by the heavy cruiser *HMS Devonshire* (Capt. D. Young-Jamieson, RN), armed merchant cruiser *HMS Carthage* (A/Capt.(Retd.) W.V.H. Harris, DSC, MVO, RN), destroyer *RHS Panther* and the minesweeper *HMS Romney* (Lt. W.E. Halbert, RNR).

At 1800C/11, *RHS Panther* parted company to return to Aden.

At 0800C/12, *HMS Romney* was detached to return to Aden.

Around 1300C/16, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) joined the convoy. *HMS Devonshire* then parted company to proceed to Kilindini.

Around 0345D/21 the destroyers *HMS Express* (Lt.Cdr. F.J. Cartwright, RN), *HMS Hotspur* (Lt. P. Bekenn, RN) and escort destroyer *HMS Blackmore* (Lt. H.T. Harrel, RN) joined the convoy escort.

Around 0345D/22, the destroyers *HMS Fortune* (Lt.Cdr. R.D.H.S. Pankhurst, RN) and *HMS Inconstant* (Lt.Cdr. W.S. Clouston, RN) joined the convoy escort.

The convoy arrived at Durban on 23 January 1943.

13 Jan 1943

During 13/14 January 1943, the battleship *HMS Warspite* (Capt. F.E.P. Hutton, RN, flying the flag of Admiral J.F. Somerville, KCB, KBE, DSO, RN, C-in-C Eastern Fleet), heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* (Cdr. M. Everard, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), *HMS Mauritius* (Capt. W.D. Stephens, RN, flying the flag of Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN), *HMS Ceres* (Capt. C.C.A. Allen, RN), destroyers *HMAS Nizam* (Cdr. M.J. Clark, DSC, RAN), *HMS Foxhound* (Cdr. C.J. Wynne-Edwards, DSC and Bar, RN) and the escort destroyer *HMS Catterick* (Lt. A. Tyson, RN) conducted exercises off Kilindini. These included night exercises.

Shortly before the exercises commenced Rear Admiral W.G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN, had transferred his flag from *HMS Birmingham* to *HMS Mauritius*.

Early on the 14th *HMS Birmingham* and *HMS Hawkins* parted company and set course to proceed to Diego Suarez. *HMS Ceres* also parted company to proceed to Durban. ⁽⁹⁶⁾

15 Jan 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and *HMS Hawkins* (Cdr. M. Everard, RN) arrived at Diego Suarez. ⁽⁹⁷⁾

16 Jan 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Diego Suarez to join convoy MC 3 as escort.

[For more info on this convoy see the event ' Convoy MC 3 ' for 10 January 1943.] ⁽⁹⁸⁾

23 Jan 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Durban as escort of convoy MC 3. ⁽⁹⁸⁾

24 Jan 1943**Combined convoy WS 26 / KMF 8.**

This combined convoy was formed off Oversay on 24 January 1943. The convoy was divided into convoys WS 26 and KMF 8 at sea on 29 January 1943.

The combined convoy was made up of the following (troop) transports; *Antenor* (British, 11174 GRT, built 1925), *Arundel Castle* (British, 19118 GRT, built 1921), *California* (British, 16792 GRT, built 1923), *Chyebassa* (British, 7043 GRT, built 1942), *Circassia* (British, 11136 GRT, built 1937), *Dempo* (British, 17024 GRT, built 1931), *Dominion Monarch* (British, 27155 GRT, built 1939), *Duchess of Richmond* (British, 20022 GRT, built 1928), *Duchess of York* (British, 20021 GRT, built 1929), *Dunnottar Castle* (British, 15007 GRT, built 1936), *Durban Castle* (British, 17388 GRT, built 1938), *Empire Pride* (British, 9248 GRT, built 1941), *Empress of Canada* (British, 21517 GRT, built 1922), *Highland Chieftain* (British, 14135 GRT, built 1929), *Letitia* (British, 13595 GRT, built 1925), *Maloja* (British, 20914 GRT, built 1923), *Mooltan* (British, 20952 GRT, built 1923), *Orduna* (British, 15507 GRT, built 1914), *Rembrandt* (Dutch, 8126 GRT, built 1941), *Ruys* (British, 14155 GRT, built 1937), *Samaria* (British, 19597 GRT, built 1921), *Sibajak* (British, 12226 GRT, built 1927), *Stratheden* (British, 23722 GRT, built 1937), *Strathnaver* (British, 22283 GRT, built 1931), *Tiwali* (British, 8178 GRT, built 1931) and *Volendam* (British, 15434 GRT, built 1922).

The aircraft carrier *HMS Argus* (Capt. H.L.St.J. Fancourt, RN) was also part of the convoy.

On assembly off Oversay the convoy was escorted by the armed merchant cruisers *HMS Canton* (A/Cdr.(Retd.) R.J.E. Daintree, RN), *HMS Cicilia* (Capt.(Retd.) J.M. Scott, RN), destroyers *HMS Relentless* (Lt.Cdr. R.A. Fell, RN), *HMS Quadrant* (Lt.Cdr. W.H. Farrington, RN), *HMS Clare* (Lt.Cdr. J.P. Stewart, DSC, RNR), escort destroyers *RHS Adrias*, *RHS Miaoulis*, sloops *HMS Egret* (Cdr. C.R.S. Farquhar, RN), *Savorgnan de Brazza*, cutters *HMS Banff* (Lt. P. Brett, RNR), *HMS Fishguard* (Lt.Cdr. H.L. Pryse, RNR) and the frigate *HMS Test* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) F.B. Collinson, RD, RN).

On 25 January 1943 the destroyer *HMS Clare* parted company to return to Londonderry. The escort destroyer *RHS Miaoulis* had lost touch with the convoy during the night of 24/25 January 1943. She was unable to regain touch and was also ordered to return to Londonderry. Her sister ship *RHS Adrias* had also lost touch but apparently was able to regain contact.

Around 1730A/26, the *Antenor* parted company with defects to return to the Clyde. It appears that she was escorted back to the Clyde by the sloop *Savorgnan de Brazza*.

Around 1630A/29, the convoy split into two parts.

Convoy KMF 8 continued on towards the Mediterranean and was made up of the transports *Circassia*, *Duchess of York*, *Dunnottar Castle*, *Empire Pride*, *Letitia*, *Samaria*, *Strathnaver*, *Tawali* and the aircraft carrier *HMS Argus*. They were escorted by *HMS Egret*, *HMS Banff*, *HMS Fishguard* and *HMS Test*.

Around 1630A/30, *HMS Argus* and the transport *Letitia* parted company with convoy KMF 8 to proceed to Gibraltar. They entered Gibraltar Bay around 0330A/31. Presumably they were escorted by the frigate *HMS Test* which also arrived at Gibraltar on this day.

On 31 January the destroyer ***HMS Verity***, (Lt.Cdr. R. Horncastle, RN) and sloop ***HMS Enchantress*** (Lt.Cdr. A.E.T. Christie, OBE, RN) joined convoy KMF 8 having departed Gibraltar on 30 January.

Later on 31 January the destroyers ***HMS Laforey*** (Capt. R.M.J. Hutton, DSO, RN), ***HMS Lookout*** (Lt.Cdr. A.G. Forman, DSC, RN) and the corvettes ***HMCS Alberni*** (Lt. I.H. Bell, RCNVR), ***HMCS Baddeck*** (T/Lt. J. Brock, RCNVR), ***HMCS Lunenburg*** (T/Lt. W.E. Harrison, RCNVR), ***HMCS Port Arthur*** (T/A/Lt.Cdr. E.T. Simmons, DSC, RCNVR) and ***HMCS Summerside*** (T/A/Lt.Cdr. F.O. Gerity, RCNR) joined the escort of convoy KMF 8. They had departed Mers-el-Kebir earlier on 31 January. On the joining of *HMS Laforey* and *HMS Lookout*, *HMS Verity* was detached to join convoy GUF 4 as was the corvette *HMCS Port Arthur*.

The transport *Strathnaver* was detached to proceed to Oran escorted by *HMCS Alberni*, *HMCS Baddeck*, *HMCS Lunenburg* and *HMCS Summerside*.

The remainder of convoy KMF 8 arrived at Algiers on 1 February escorted by *HMS Laforey*, *HMS Lookout*, *HMS Egret*, *HMS Enchantress*, *HMS Banff* and *HMS Fishguard*.

When the convoys split up, WS 26 continued on to Freetown. It was made up of the transports . They were escorted by the armed merchant cruisers *HMS Canton*, *HMS Cilicia*, destroyers *HMS Quadrant*, *HMS Relentless* and the escort destroyer *RHS Adrias*.

On 31 January, the repair ship ***HMS Wayland*** (A/Capt.(Retd.) W.S. Carson, RN) and the transport ***Leopoldville*** (Belgian, 11509 GRT, built 1929) escorted by the destroyers ***HMS Racehorse*** (Cdr. A.F. Burnell-Nugent, DSC, RN), ***HMS Redoubt*** (Lt.Cdr. N.E.G. Ropner, DSO, RN) and ***HMAS Quickmatch*** (Lt.Cdr. R. Rhoades, DSC, RAN) joined. They had departed Gibraltar on 29 January. Also on 31 January the destroyers ***HMS Quality*** (Lt.Cdr. G.L. Farnfield, DSO, RN) and ***HMAS Quiberon*** (Cdr. G.S. Stewart, RAN) joined. They had departed Gibraltar on 30 January.

The destroyers *HMS Quadrant*, *HMS Relentless* and escort destroyer *RHS Adrias* parted company on 31 January to fuel at Casablanca from where they departed again on 1 February to rejoin the convoy. *HMS Quadrant* and *HMS Relentless* rejoined on 3 February. *RHS Adrias* only rejoined on 5 February.

On 4 February the transport *Leopoldville* parted company with the convoy escorted by the destroyer *HMS Redoubt*. They arrived at Bathurst on 5 February.

Convoy WS 26 arrived at Freetown on 6 February 1943 escorted by the armed merchant cruisers *HMS Canton*, *HMS Cilicia*, destroyers *HMS Quality*, *HMS Quadrant*, *HMAS Quiberon*, *HMAS Quickmatch*, *HMS Racehorse*, *HMS Relentless* and the escort destroyer *RHS Adrias*.

Convoy WS 26 departed Freetown on 9 February for South Africa. It was made up of the transports *Arundel Castle*, *California*, *Cheybassa*, *Dempo*, ***Dilwara*** (British, 11080 GRT, built 1936), *Dominion Monarch*, *Duchess of Richmond*, *Empress of Canada*, *Highland Chieftain*, *Maloja*, *Mooltan*, *Orduna*, *Rembrandt*, *Ruys*, *Sibajak*, *Stratheden*, *Volendam* and the repair ship *HMS Wayland*.

On departure from Freetown the convoy was escorted by the armed merchant cruisers *HMS Canton*, *HMS Cilicia*, armed boarding vessel ***HMS Corinthian*** (Cdr. E.J.R. Pollitt, RNR), destroyers *HMS Quality*, *HMAS Quiberon*, *HMAS Quickmatch*, *HMS Racehorse* and the escort destroyer *RHS Adrias*.

On 12 February *HMS Corinthian* and *RHS Adrias* parted company with the convoy.

At 1145AB(-1.5)/13, the destroyer *HMS Relentless* joined the convoy coming from Lagos having departed there on 12 February immediately after being undocked.

Also on the 13th the corvette ***FFS Commandant d'Estienne d'Orves*** joined the convoy escort.

In the morning and early afternoon of the 14th, *HMS Racehorse* and *HMAS Quickmatch* fuelled from *HMS Canton*.

Around 0900AB/15 the destroyers *HMS Quality* and *HMAS Quiberon* arrived at Porte Noire to fuel after having parted company with the convoy around 2300AB/14. After doing so they departed again around 1230AB/15 to rejoin the convoy which they did around 1700AB/15. Also on the 15th the *Commandant d'Estienne d'Orves* fuelled from *HMS Canton*.

Around 2215B/20, the escort destroyer ***HMS Blackmore*** (Lt. H.T. Harrel, RN) joined the convoy coming from Saldanha Bay.

Around 0630B/21, *HMAS Quiberon* and *HMAS Quickmatch* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Capetown where they arrived around 2100C/21. They departed again around 0730C/22 to rejoin the convoy which they did around 1000C/22.

Around 1000C22, the Capetown section of the convoy, made up of *Arundel Castle*, *California*, *Cheybassa*, *Duchess of Richmond*, *Highland Chieftain*, *Orduna*, *Ruys*, *Sibajak* and *HMS Wayland* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Capetown. Part of the escort, *HMS Racehorse*, *HMS Relentless*, *HMAS Quiberon* and *FFS Commandant d'Estienne d'Orves* went with them, some of which then went on to Simonstown.

The light cruiser ***HMS Ceres*** (Capt. C.C.A. Allen, RN) joined the Durban section as did the corvette ***HMS Genista*** (Lt.Cdr. R.M. Pattinson, DSC, RNR). This corvette was later detached around 1000C/24 and arrived at Port Elizabeth on later 24 February. Around 1200C/22, *HMS Racehorse* later rejoined after having fuelled at Capetown. *HMS Blackmoor* then parted company.

The remaining ships proceeded to Durban arriving there on 25 February escorted by *HMS Ceres*, *HMS Cicilia*, *HMAS Quiberon*, *HMAS Quickmatch* and *HMS Racehorse*.

On 26 February 1943 the Capetown section departed there to proceed towards Durban. It was now made up of the transports *Arundel Castle*, *California*, *Cheybassa*, *Highland Chieftain*, *Orduna* and *HMS Wayland*. The convoy was escorted by the armed merchant cruiser *HMS Canton*, destroyer *HMS Relentless* and the escort destroyers ***HMS Catterick*** (Lt. A. Tyson, RN) and *HMS Blackmore*.

At 0115C/1, *HMS Relentless* was detached to proceed ahead to Durban to fuel.

On completion of fuelling she returned from Durban together with the corvette *HMS Freesia* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. R.A. Cherry, RNR), and the minesweepers *HMIS Carnatic* (Lt. H.J.D. Hamilton, RIN) and *Commandant Duboc*.

Meanwhile the corvette *HMS Jasmine* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) C.D.B. Coventry, RNR) had also joined the convoy escort.

HMS Blackmore and *HMS Catterick* also went to Durban to fuel. They returned later together with the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and *HMS Ceres*.

HMS Canton parted company with the convoy and entered Durban.

Transports that joined coming from Durban were the *City of Paris* (British, 10902 GRT, built 1922), *Dempo*, *Dilwara*, *Dominion Monarch*, *Lancashire* (British, 9445 GRT, built 1917), *Maloja*, *Mooltan*, *Rembrandt*, *Selandia* (South African, 8482 GRT, built 1938) and *Stratheden*. The repair ship *HMS Resource* (Capt.(Retd.) D.B. O'Connell, RN) also joined the convoy. The *Dilwara* however returned to Durban with defects shortly after sailing.

Around 1830C/3, *HMS Jasmine* and *HMS Freesia* parted company.

Around 0530C/4, *HMS Relentless*, *HMS Blackmore* and *HMS Catterick* parted company.

Around 1500D/6, the *Lancashire* was detached to Tamatave escorted by the *Commandant Duboc*.

Around 0300C/8, *HMS Ceres* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Diego Suarez.

Around 0800CD(-3.5)/9, *HMS Resource* was detached from the convoy to proceed to Kilindini escorted by *HMS Birmingham*. The heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* (Capt. G.A. French, RN) had joined just before.

Around 1200D/10, the heavy cruiser *HMS Frobisher* (Capt. J.F.W. Mudford, RN) joined the convoy.

Around 0700D/11, the convoy split up into the Aden section and the Bombay section.

The Aden section was made up of the *Arundel Castle*, *City of Paris*, *Highland Chieftain*, *Maloja*, *Orduna*, *Rembrandt* and *Selandia*. They were escorted by *HMS Frobisher*. They arrived off Aden on 15 March 1943 where the convoy was dispersed.

The Bombay section was made up of the *California*, *Chyebassa*, *Dempo*, *Dominion Monarch*, *Mooltan* and *Stratheden*. They were escorted by *HMS Hawkins*. They arrived at Bombay on 17 March 1943.

1 Feb 1943

Convoy CM 38.

This convoy departed Durban on 1 February 1943 and arrived at Bombay on 20 February 1943.

The convoy was made up of the transports *Arona* (British, 9031 GRT, built 1941), *Ascanius* (British, 10048 GRT, built 1910), *Ekma* (British, 5108 GRT, built 1911) and *Pulaski* (Polish, 6345 GRT, built 1912).

On departure from Durban the convoy was escorted by the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and the escort destroyer *HMS Catterick* (Lt. A. Tyson, RN).

At 1400CD(-3.5)/3, *HMS Catterick* parted company to return to Durban.

Around 0745D/9, *HMS Birmingham* turned the convoy over to the heavy cruiser *HMS Frobisher* (Capt. J.F.W. Mudford, RN). *HMS Birmingham* then set course to proceed to Kilindini.

The convoy arrived at Bombay on 23 February 1943.

11 Feb 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Kilindini after convoy escort duty. ⁽⁹⁹⁾

11 Feb 1943

Convoy MC 4.

This convoy departed Aden on 11 February 1943 and arrived at Durban on 27 February 1943.

The convoy was made up of the transports *City of Canterbury* (British, 8331 GRT, built 1922) and *Elisabethville* (British, 8351 GRT, built 1922).

On departure from Aden the convoy was escorted by the heavy cruiser *HMS Hawkins* (Cdr. M. Everard, RN) and the minesweeper *HMAS Toowoomba* (Lt.Cdr. J.H. Simpson, RANR(S)).

Around 0300D/14, *HMAS Toowoomba* parted company with the convoy for other escort duties.

Around 0800CD(-3.5)/18, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) took over the escort from *HMS Hawkins* which then set course to proceed to Kilindini.

The convoy arrived at Durban on 27 February 1943.

16 Feb 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Kilindini for escort duty with convoy MC 4.

[For more info on this convoy see the event ' Convoy MC 4 ' for 11 February 1943.] ⁽⁹⁹⁾

27 Feb 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Durban as escort of convoy MC 4. ⁽⁹⁹⁾

1 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Durban to form part of the escort of convoy WS 26.

[For more info on this convoy see the event ' Convoy WS 26 ' for 24 January 1943.] ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

11 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) and *HMS Resource* (Capt.(Retd.) D.B. O'Connell, RN) arrived at Kilindini. ⁽¹⁰¹⁾

18 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Kilindini for Durban.

HMS Birmingham was to proceed to the U.K. to refit. ⁽¹⁰²⁾

21 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Durban from Kilindini. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

22 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Durban for Simonstown. (100)

24 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Simonstown from Durban. (100)

30 Mar 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Simonstown on completion of which she proceeded to Capetown. (100)

2 Apr 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Capetown for Freetown. (103)

9 Apr 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Freetown from Capetown. (103)

10 Apr 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) departed Freetown for Plymouth. (103)

19 Apr 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) arrived at Plymouth from Freetown. (103)

22 Apr 1943

On completion of de-ammunitioning, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN), is taken in hand for refit at the Devonport Dockyard. (103)

4 May 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) is docked in No.8 Dock at the Devonport Dockyard. (104)

21 Jul 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.B. Crane, RN) is undocked. (104)

13 Sep 1943

With her refit completed *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted D/F calibration trials in Plymouth Sound. (105)

16 Sep 1943

With her refit completed *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted D/G and compass swing trials off Plymouth. (105)

17 Sep 1943

With her refit completed *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery trials off Plymouth. (105)

21 Sep 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Plymouth for Scapa Flow. (105)

23 Sep 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow to commence a post refit work-up period. (105)

28 Sep 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. Also a refuelling at

sea exercise was carried out in which **HMCS Haida** (Cdr. H.G. De Wolf, RCN) was fuelled. (105)

29 Sep 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing and 4" HA gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (105)

1 Oct 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (106)

2 Oct 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing exercises at Scapa Flow. (106)

4 Oct 1943

HMS Viking (Lt. R. Bannar-Martin, DSC, RN) conducted A/S exercises at/off Scapa Flow with **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), **HMCS Haida** (Cdr. H.G. De Wolf, RCN), **HMS Speedwell** (Lt.Cdr. T.E. Williams, RD, RNR) and **HMS Seagull** (T/A/Lt.Cdr. R.W. Ellis, DSC, RNR).

On completion of the A/S exercises, *HMS Birmingham* conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (107)

5 Oct 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing exercises at Scapa Flow. (106)

8 Oct 1943

During 8/9 October 1943, **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) and **HMS Royalist** (Capt. M.H. Evelegh, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. These included night exercises. (108)

12 Oct 1943

During 12/13 October 1943, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (106)

14 Oct 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (106)

15 Oct 1943

HMS Kent (Capt. G.A.B. Hawkins, DSC, MVO, RN) and **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (109)

19 Oct 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Scapa Flow for a few days of exercises.

During the night of 19/20 October 1943 exercises were carried out with **HMS Royalist** (Capt. M.H. Evelegh, RN)

During the night of 20/21 October 1943 exercises were carried out with **HMS Kent** (Capt. G.A.B. Hawkins, DSC, MVO, RN) and **HMS Jamaica** (Capt. J.L. Storey, DSO, RN).

HMS Birmingham returned to Scapa Flow on 21 October. (110)

19 Oct 1943

HMS Tuna (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) J.R.G. Harvey, RN) conducted practice attacks on **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) for the C.O.Q.C. (Commanding Officers Qualifying Course). (111)

21 Oct 1943

In the morning, *HMS Uther* (Lt. P.S. Beale, RN), conducted exercises off Scapa Flow with *HMS Queen Elizabeth* (Capt. H.G. Norman, CBE, RN) that was escorted by the destroyers *HMS Urchin* (Lt.Cdr. J.T.B. Birch, DSO, DSC, RN) and *USS Capps* (T/Cdr. B.E.S. Trippensee, USN).

In the afternoon *HMS Queen Elizabeth*, with her destroyer escort, conducted range and inclination exercises with *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN). (112)

23 Oct 1943

HMS Renown (Capt. W.E. Parry, CB, RN), *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Ashanti* (Lt.Cdr. J.R. Barnes, RN) and *USS Forrest* (T/Cdr. K.P. Letts, USN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow.

In the afternoon *HMS Renown* and the two destroyers served as targets for the British submarine *HMS Uther* (Lt. P.S. Beale, RN). (113)

25 Oct 1943

HMS Uther (Lt. P.S. Beale, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow together with *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN).

On completion of these A/S exercises, *HMS Birmingham* conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (114)

26 Oct 1943

During 26/27 October 1943, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) and *HMS Royalist* (Capt. M.H. Evelegh, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. These included night exercises. (108)

3 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (115)

4 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) and *HMNZS Gambia* (Capt. N.J.W. William-Powlett, DSC, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (116)

5 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Bermuda* (Capt. T.H. Back, RN) and *HMNZS Gambia* (Capt. N.J.W. William-Powlett, DSC, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (117)

9 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) and *HMNZS Gambia* (Capt. N.J.W. William-Powlett, DSC, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (116)

10 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (115)

13 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Scapa Flow for Greenock.

HMS Birmingham is to proceed to the Far East to join the Eastern Fleet. (115)

14 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Greenock. (115)

15 Nov 1943

Convoy KMF 26.

This convoy departed the Clyde on 15 November 1943 and arrived at Alexandria / Port Said on 30 November 1943 / 1 December 1943.

This convoy was made up of the following transports; *Arundel Castle* (British, 19118 GRT, built 1921), *Cameronia* (British, 16297 GRT, built 1920), *Chinese Prince* (British, 9485 GRT, built 1943), *City of Lincoln* (British, 8039 GRT, built 1938), *Clan Campbell* (British, 9545 GRT, built 1943), *Dempo* (British, 17024 GRT, built 1931), *Duchess of Bedford* (British, 20123 GRT, built 1928), *Dunnottar Castle* (British, 15007 GRT, built 1936), *Franconia* (British, 20175 GRT, built 1923), *Highland Princess* (British, 14133 GRT, built 1930), *Monarch of Bermuda* (British, 22424 GRT, built 1931), *Orion* (British, 23371 GRT, built 1935), *Ranchi* (British, 16738 GRT, built 1925), *Reina del Pacifico* (British, 17702 GRT, built 1931), *Samanco* (British, 8336 GRT, built 1943), *Samaria* (British, 19597 GRT, built 1921), *Sarmiento* (British, 8335 GRT, built 1943) and *Scythia* (British, 19761 GRT, built 1920).

On departure the convoy was escorted by the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) (actually joined on the 16th), sloops *HMS Pelican* (Cdr. J.S. Dalison, DSO, RN, S.O. of A/S escort), *HMS Woodpecker* (Lt.Cdr. H.L. Pryse, RNR) and the frigates *HMS Evenlode* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. A.L. Turner, RNR), *HMS Jed* (Lt.Cdr. R.C. Freamer, DSO and Bar, RD, RNR), *HMS Rother* (Lt.Cdr. W.R. Hickey, RNR) and *HMS Spey* (Lt.Cdr. B.A. Rogers, RD, RNR)

In the afternoon of 19 November, *HMS Birmingham* fuelled *HMS Spey* as the frigate had two out of four fuel tanks contaminated with seawater drastically effecting her range. With this underway refuelling she was able to continue on to Algiers.

During the morning of 20 November, the frigate *HMS Rother* also received some fuel from *HMS Birmingham*.

On passing the Straits of Gibraltar, *HMS Birmingham* parted company with the convoy and entered Gibraltar harbour. The AA cruiser *HMS Colombo* (Capt. D.H. Hall-Thompson, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Anthony* (Lt.Cdr. J.H. Wallace, DSC, RN) and *HMS Brilliant* (Lt.Cdr. J. Smallwood, RN) joined the convoy coming from Gibraltar. Also the submarine *HMS Stonehenge* (Lt. D.S.M. Verschoyle-Campbell, DSC and Bar, RN) joined the convoy for passage to Alexandria.

On the 25th, *HMS Anthony* and *HMS Spey* parted company with the convoy.

Off Oran / Mers-el-Kebir the transports *Egra* (British, 5108 GRT, built 1911), *Karoo* (British, 7009 GRT, built 1915) and *Rohna* (British, 8602 GRT, built 1926) joined the convoy. They were escorted by the destroyer escorts *USS Frederick C. Davcis* (Lt.Cdr. O.W. Goepner, USNR), *USS Herbert C. Jones* (T/Lt.Cdr. A.W. Gardes, Jr., USN) and the minesweepers *USS Pioneer* (Lt. L.E. Rogers, Jr., USNR) and *USS Portent* (Lt. H.C. Plummer, USNR).

Off Algiers transport *Monarch of Bermuda* and the escorts *HMS Brilliant*, *HMS Pelican*, *HMS Woodpecker*, *HMS Evenlode*, *HMS Jed*, *HMS Rother* parted company with the convoy while the escort destroyers *HMS Atherstone* (Lt.Cdr. E.N. Wood, DSC, RNVR), *HMS Catterick* (Lt.Cdr. A. Tyson, RN), *HMS Cleveland* (Lt.Cdr. J.K. Hamilton, RN), *RHS Miaoulis* and *ORP Slazak* (Cdr. R. Nalecz-Tyminski, ORP) joined the convoy.

In the afternoon of 26 November the convoy was attacked by German aircraft and the transport *Rohna* was sunk by a glider bomb in position 36°56'N, 05°20'E. 1149 crew and passengers (mostly US troops) were killed in this attack.

Off Philipeville the transports *Cameronia*, *Clan Campbell* and *Duchess of Bedford* parted company with the convoy to proceed to that place while the transport *Derbyshire* joined the convoy coming from there.

On 27 February first *HMS Colombo* and later *USS Frederick C. Davis* and *USS Herbert C. Jones* parted company with the convoy to proceed to Bizerta.

The remainder of the convoy proceeded towards Alexandria / Port Said.

24 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Gibraltar after convoy escort duty with convoy KMF 26. (115)

25 Nov 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Gibraltar for Alexandria. (115)

28 Nov 1943

At 1117A/28, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) was torpedoed and very seriously damaged by the German U-boat *U-407* off the coast of Cyrenaica in position 33°05'N, 21°43'E. 29 lives were lost in this attack.

The destroyer *HMS Faulknor* (Capt. M.S. Thomas, DSO, RN) and the escort destroyers *ORP Krakowiak* (Lt.Cdr. W. Maracewicz) and *RHS Themistocles* come to assist the damaged cruiser which in the end joined convoy UGS 23. The three destroyers / escort destroyers then proceeded on their previous duties.

30 Nov 1943

The damaged light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Alexandria escorted by the destroyers *HMS Fury* (Lt.Cdr. T.F. Taylor, RN) and *HMS Pathfinder* (Lt.Cdr. F.W. Hawkins, RN).

At Alexandria *HMS Birmingham* was taken in hand for temporary repairs. (115)

10 Dec 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is docked in the floating dock at Alexandria. (118)

18 Dec 1943

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is undocked. (118)

13 Apr 1944

HMS Birmingham (Cdr. L. Gowlland, RN) is docked in the floating dock at Alexandria. (119)

30 May 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is undocked. (120)

16 Jun 1944

During 16/17 June 1944, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted trials and exercises off Alexandria. These included night exercises. (121)

21 Jun 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Alexandria for Norfolk, Virginia, USA where she was to undergo full repairs. Passage to Gibraltar was made in convoy MKF 32. (121)

21 Jun 1944

Convoy MKF 32.

This convoy departed Port Said on 21 June 1944 and arrived in U.K. waters on 4 July 1944.

It was made up of the following transport vessels; *Antenor* (British, 11174 GRT, built 1925), *Nieuw Holland* (British, 11066 GRT, built 1927), *Orduna* (British, 15507 GRT, built 1914), *Orion* (British, 23371 GRT, built 1935), *Ormonde* (British, 14982 GRT, built 1917), *Ranchi* (British, 16738 GRT, built 1925), *Stratheden* (British, 23722 GRT, built 1937) and *Strathmore* (British, 23428 GRT, built 1935).

On departure from Port Said the convoy was escorted by the escort destroyers *HMS Chiddingfold* (Lt. T.M. Dorrien-Smith, RN), *HMS Croome* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. J.S. Lawrence, DSC, RNVR), *HMS Exmoor* (Lt. D.D. Howson, RN), *HMS Tetcott* (Lt. H.J. Watkins, RN) and *HMS Wheatland* (Lt. H.A. Corbett, DSC, RN).

Later on 21 June 1944 the damaged light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) joined the convoy for passage to Gibraltar. She came from Alexandria together with the netlayer *HMS Guardian* (Capt.(Retd.) H.A.C. Lane, OBE, RN) which also joined the convoy for passage westwards to Djidjelli, Algeria [now called Jijel].

In the eastern Mediterranean the escort destroyer Quantock was also with the convoy for a while. [Further details currently unknown.]

Around noon on 25 June 1944 convoy SNF 25 coming from Naples merged with the convoy. Convoy SNF 25 had departed Naples on 24 June 1944 and was made up of the transports *Hai Lee* (Norwegian, 3616 GRT, built 1934), *Orontes* (British, 20097 GRT, built 1929) and *Samaria* (British, 19597 GRT, built 1921).

On departure from Naples this convoy was escorted by the escort carrier *HMS Attacker* (Capt. H.B. Farncomb, DSO, MVO, RAN), frigates *HMS Bazely* (Lt.Cdr. J.V. Brock, RCNVR), *HMS Bentinck* (Cdr. E.H. Chavasse, DSO, DSC, RN), *HMS Byard* (A/Lt.Cdr. J.I. Jones, DSO, DSC, RNR), *HMS Calder* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. E. Playne, RNVR), *HMS Drury* (Lt.Cdr. N.J. Parker, RN), *HMS Pasley* (Lt.Cdr. J.H. Wright, RD, RNR) and the destroyer escort *USS Frederick C. Davcis* (Lt.Cdr. O.W. Goepner, USNR). This last ship served as jammer escort against German radio guided bombs.

The transport *Hai Lee* proceeded to Bizerta while the other two transports joined convoy MKF 32.

On 26 June, off Djidjelli, *HMS Guardian* was detached and later off Algiers the transport *Champollion* (French, 12263 GRT, built 1925) joined the convoy while *HMS Attacker* was detached.

On 27 June, off Oran the transport *Monarch of Bermuda* (British, 22424 GRT, built 1931) and the escort carrier *HMS Hunter* (Capt. H.H. McWilliam, RN) joined the convoy. They were escort from Oran to the rendezvous with convoy MKF 32 by the destroyers *USS Knight* (T/Cdr. J.C. Ford, Jr., USN) and *USS Doran* (T/Cdr. N.E. Smith, USN). *USS Frederick C. Davis* was detached to Mers-el-Kebir.

On 28 June, off Gibraltar the escort carrier *HMS Hunter* was detached as were the escort destroyers *HMS Chiddingfold*, *HMS Croome*, *HMS Exmoor*, *HMS Tetcott* and *HMS Wheatland*.

Also off Gibraltar the transports *Felix Roussell* (French, 17083 GRT, built 1930) and *Tai Shan* (Norwegian, 6962 GRT, built 1929) joined the convoy as did the escort carriers *HMS Nairana* (Capt. R.M.T. Taylor, RN), *HMS Ravager* (A/Capt. G.V.B. Faulkner, RN) and the AA ship *HMCS Prince Robert* (Cdr. A.M. Hope, RCN).

The convoy arrived in U.K. waters on 4 July 1944.

27 Jun 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) parted company with convoy MKF 32 arrived at Gibraltar. (121)

29 Jun 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Gibraltar for Norfolk, Virginia, USA. (121)

9 Jul 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Norfolk, Virginia, USA. (122)

12 Jul 1944

On completion of de-ammunitioning, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), is taken to the Norfolk Navy Yard where she is taken in hand for full damage repairs. (122)

24 Jul 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is docked at the Norfolk Navy Yard. (122)

19 Sep 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is undocked. (123)

23 Nov 1944

With her repairs completed, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), proceeded from Norfolk to Chesapeake Bay. (124)

24 Nov 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted compass swing trials in Chesapeake Bay. (124)

25 Nov 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery trials in Chesapeake Bay. (124)

26 Nov 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted trials and exercises in Chesapeake Bay. (124)

27 Nov 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises in Chesapeake Bay. (124)

28 Nov 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Norfolk, Virginia, USA for the U.K. via the Azores. (124)

4 Dec 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Horta, Azores. (125)

5 Dec 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Horta, Azores for Portsmouth. (125)

8 Dec 1944

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Portsmouth where some equipment and armament modifications were to be carried out at the Portsmouth Dockyard. (125)

11 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is docked at the Portsmouth Dockyard. (126)

12 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) is undocked. (126)

13 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Portsmouth for Scapa Flow via the east coast. (126)

14 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow to commence a work-up period. (126)

22 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing and gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (126)

23 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. On completion of these D/F trials were carried out. (126)

24 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (126)

27 Jan 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted rangefinding and inclination exercises off Scapa Flow. (126)

27 Jan 1945

HMS Trusty (Lt. J.P. Fyfe, DSC, RN) conducted exercises with *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) off Scapa Flow. (127)

31 Jan 1945

HMS Trusty (Lt. J.P. Fyfe, DSC, RN) conducted A/S exercises with *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) off Scapa Flow.

Following these A/S exercises *HMS Birmingham* conducted 4" HA gunnery exercises. (128)

2 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (129)

5 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (129)

6 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing exercises, oiling at sea exercises with the RFA tanker *Blue Ranger* (3417 GRT, built 1941), full speed trials and maneuvering exercises at Scapa Flow. (129)

8 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises with aircraft off Scapa Flow. These were followed by gunnery exercises. (129)

9 Feb 1945

HMS Berwick (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted

rangefinding and inclination exercises off Scapa Flow. Around noon the remainder of the exercises were cancelled and both cruisers returned to Scapa Flow. (130)

12 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted AA gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (129)

13 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing and gunnery exercises at Scapa Flow. (129)

14 Feb 1945

Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN, hoisted his flag in *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN). (129)

17 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN) conducted gunnery exercises and radar trials off Scapa Flow. (129)

20 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN) conducted a towing exercise with **HMS Devonshire** (Capt. G.M.B. Langley, OBE, RN). This exercise was followed by underway refuelling exercises with the RFA tanker *Blue Ranger* (3417 GRT, built 1941). On completion of these exercises *HMS Birmingham* returned to Scapa Flow where the flag of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN, was transferred to **HMS Dido** (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN). (131)

21 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (129)

23 Feb 1945

Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN, transferred his flag from **HMS Dido** (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN) to **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN). (132)

24 Feb 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN) conducted gunnery exercises and full power trials off Scapa Flow. (129)

2 Mar 1945

HMS Norfolk (Capt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN) and **HMS Dido** (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (133)

6 Mar 1945

Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, KCB, RN, transferred his flag from **HMS Birmingham** (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) to **HMS Diadem** (Capt. E.G.A. Clifford, CB, RN). (134)

8 Mar 1945

During 8/9 March 1945, ships from the Home Fleet conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. These included night exercises. The ships that participated in the exercises were the battleship **HMS Rodney** (Capt. R.O. Fitzroy, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral H.R. Moore, KCB, CVO, DSO, RN, Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet), heavy

cruisers *HMS Berwick* (Capt. S.H.T. Arliss, DSO, RN), *HMS Devonshire* (Capt. G.M.B. Langley, OBE, RN), *HMS Norfolk* (Capt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Dido* (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN), *ORP Conrad* (Capt. S.T. Dzienisiewicz) and the destroyers *HMS Tartar* (Capt. B. Jones, DSO and Bar, DSC, RN), *HMCS Haida* (A/Lt.Cdr. R.P. Welland, DSC, RCN), *HMS Savage* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Malins, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Scourge* (Lt.Cdr. C.G.H. Brown, DSC, RN), *HMS Serapis* (Lt.Cdr. E.L. Jones, DSC, RN), *HNoMS Stord* (Lt.Cdr. H. Øi) and *HMS Carysfort* (Lt.Cdr. L. St.G. Rich, DSO and Bar, RN). [It is possible more ships participated.] (135)

15 Mar 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (136)

16 Mar 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted a refuelling at sea exercises at Scapa Flow with *HMCS Haida* (A/Lt.Cdr. R.P. Welland, DSC, RCN). These were followed by gunnery exercises. On completion of the exercises *HMS Birmingham* made several runs over the D/G range. (136)

22 Mar 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted torpedo firing exercises at Scapa Flow. These were followed by depth charging exercises. Finally gunnery exercises were carried out. (136)

29 Mar 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (136)

4 Apr 1945

During 4/5 April 1945, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. These included night exercises. (137)

6 Apr 1945

Operation Newmarket.

Air attacks on German submarine tenders at Kilbotn, Norway.

The escort carriers *HMS Searcher* (Capt. J.W. Grant, DSO, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Puncher* (Capt. R.E.S. Bidwell, RCN), *HMS Queen* (A/Capt. K.J. D'Arcy, DSO, RN), *HMS Trumpeter* (A/Capt. K.S. Colquhoun, RN), light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Bellona* (Capt. G.S. Tuck, DSO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Onslow* (Capt. H.W.S. Browning, OBE, RN), *HMS Offa* (Lt.Cdr. E.M. Thorpe, DSO, RN), *HMS Scorpion* (Cdr. C.W. McMullen, DSC, RN), *HMS Scourge* (Lt.Cdr. C.G.H. Brown, DSC, RN), *HMS Zambesi* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Palmer, RN), *HMS Zealous* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Zest* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN) and *HMS Carysfort* (Lt.Cdr. L.St.G. Rich, DSO and Bar, RN) departed Scapa Flow on 6 April 1945 to conduct air strikes against German submarine tenders off Kilbotn, Norway.

The operation however had to be cancelled due to the weather conditions rendering flying impossible. The ships remained in the area for about three days but weather did not improve.

The ships returned to Scapa Flow on 12 April 1945. (138)

17 Apr 1945

Operation Invective.

Anti-shipping sweep off the Norwegian coast between 58°06'N and 58°55'N. If no shipping was encountered during the sweep an enemy radar station in approximate position 58°37'N, 05°37'E was to be bombarded.

In the morning of the 17th the destroyers *HMS Scorpion* (Cdr. C.W. McMullen, DSC, RN), *HMS Scourge* (Lt.Cdr. C.G.H. Brown, DSC, RN), *HMS Savage* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Malins, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN) and *HMS Zambesi* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Palmer, RN) departed Scapa Flow to conduct this anti-shipping sweep and bombardment.

In the early evening of the 17th the light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Scapa Flow to provide cover for the destroyers during their return trip.

No shipping was sighted by the destroyers. Shore searchlights were then engaged instead.

All ships returned to Scapa Flow in the afternoon of the 18th. (138)

20 Apr 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (137)

20 Apr 1945

HMS Norfolk (Capt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Devonshire* (Capt. G.M.B. Langley, OBE, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) all conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. (139)

23 Apr 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (137)

24 Apr 1945

HMS Norfolk (CCapt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), *HMS Sussex* (Capt. A.F. de Salis, DSO, RN), *HMS Devonshire* (Capt. G.M.B. Langley, OBE, RN) and *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted exercises and trials at Scapa Flow. (140)

26 Apr 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Cleopatra* (Capt. B.I. Robertshaw, RN), *HMS Diadem* (Capt. A.M. Knapp, RN), *HMS Obdurate* (Lt.Cdr. R.D. Franks, DSO, DSC, OBE, RN) and *ORP Garland* (Lt. K. Hess) were all conducting exercises at Scapa Flow. (141)

4 May 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted speed trials on the measured mile at Scapa Flow. These were followed by gunnery exercises off Scapa Flow. (142)

5 May 1945

In the evening, *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Scapa Flow for Rosyth where she arrived the following morning. (142)

6 May 1945

Operation Cleaver.

Entry of a naval surface force into the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

The following forces took part in this operation;

' Force 5 ' which was made up of the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Dido* (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Zephyr* (Capt. J.H. Allison, DSO and Bar, RN), *HMS Zealous* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Zest* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN) and *HMS Zodiac* (Lt.Cdr. H.R. Rycroft, DSC, RN).

This force departed Rosyth in the evening of the 6th.

' Force 6 ' which was made up of the heavy cruiser *HMS Norfolk* (Capt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Scourge* (Lt.Cdr. C.G.H. Brown, DSC, RN, with Capt. P.G.L. Cazalet, DSC, RN on board), *HMS Savage* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Malins, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Obedient* (Lt.Cdr. H. Kirkwood, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Offa* (Lt.Cdr. E.M. Thorpe, DSO, RN), *HMS Opportune* (Cdr. R.E.D. Ryder, VC, RN), *HMS Zambesi* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Palmer, RN) and *HMS Carysfort* (Lt.Cdr. L.St.G. Rich, DSO and Bar, RN). This force departed Scapa flow early the 7th except to joined the escort carriers *HMS Queen* (A/Capt. K.J. D'Arcy, DSO, RN), *HMS Searcher* (Capt. J.W. Grant, DSO, RN), *HMS Trumpeter* (A/Capt. K.S. Colquhoun, RN) which had still been at sea after operation Judgement together with the escort carrier *HMS Campania* (Capt. C.B. Alers-Hankey, DSC, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Obdurate* (Lt.Cdr. R.D. Franks, DSO, DSC, OBE, RN), *HNoMS Stord* (Lt.Cdr. H. Øi) and *ORP Piorun* (Lt.Cdr. J. Tchorznicki, ORP). The cruisers and the destroyers joined the escort carriers around 1000B/7.

HMS Campania, *HMS Obdurate*, *HNoMS Stord* and *ORP Piorun* then parted company.

And the 40th Minesweeping Flotilla made up of *HMS Catharine* (Cdr. Kenneth Hillam Fraser, RN), 6541 *HMS Cynthia* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. C.L. Chatwin, RNVR), *HMS Elfreda* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. L. Jolly, RNVR), *HMS Grecian* (T/A/Cdr. C.R. Fraser, DSC and Bar, RNR) and *HMS Gazelle* (Lt.Cdr. J.D. Sutcliffe, RN), *HMS Maenad* (Cdr. C.E. Duggan, RD, RNR), *HMS Steadfast* (T/A/Lt. A.H. Hall, RNVR) and *HMS Tattoo* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) F.G. Rogers, RD, RNR). They departed Rosyth of the 6th.

Force 5 and the 40th M/S Flotilla arrived at Copenhagen, Denmark on 9 May. The 40th M/S Flotilla swept Force 5 through the minefields.

Force 6 returned to Scapa Flow on 10 May. ⁽¹³⁸⁾

6 May 1945

Operation Cleaver.

Entry of a naval surface force into the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

The following forces took part in this operation;

' Force 5 ' which was made up of the light cruisers *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Dido* (Capt. R.F. Elkins, OBE, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Zephyr* (Capt. J.H. Allison, DSO and Bar, RN), *HMS Zealous* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Zest* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN) and *HMS Zodiac* (Lt.Cdr. H.R.

Rycroft, DSC, RN).

This force departed Rosyth in the evening of the 6th.

' Force 6 ' which was made up of the heavy cruiser *HMS Norfolk* (Capt. J.G.Y. Loveband, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral R.R. McGrigor, CB, DSO, RN), escort carriers *HMS Queen* (A/Capt. K.J. D'Arcy, DSO, RN), *HMS Searcher* (Capt. J.W. Grant, DSO, RN), *HMS Trumpeter* (A/Capt. K.S. Colquhoun, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Scourge* (Lt.Cdr. C.G.H. Brown, DSC, RN, with Capt. P.G.L. Cazalet, DSC, RN on board), *HMS Savage* (Lt.Cdr. C.W. Malins, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Obedient* (Lt.Cdr. H. Kirkwood, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Offa* (Lt.Cdr. E.M. Thorpe, DSO, RN), *HMS Opportune* (Cdr. R.E.D. Ryder, VC, RN), *HMS Zambesi* (Lt.Cdr. J.M. Palmer, RN) and *HMS Carysfort* (Lt.Cdr. L.St.G. Rich, DSO and Bar, RN). This force departed Scapa flow on the 6th.

And the 40th Minesweeping Flotilla made up of *HMS Catharine* (Cdr. Kenneth Hillam Fraser, RN), 6541 *HMS Cynthia* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. C.L. Chatwin, RNVR), *HMS Elfreda* (T/A/Lt.Cdr. L. Jolly, RNVR), *HMS Grecian* (T/A/Cdr. C.R. Fraser, DSC and Bar, RNR) and *HMS Gazelle* (Lt.Cdr. J.D. Sutcliffe, RN), *HMS Maenad* (Cdr. C.E. Duggan, RD, RNR), *HMS Steadfast* (T/A/Lt. A.H. Hall, RNVR) and *HMS Tattoo* (Lt.Cdr.(Retd.) F.G. Rogers, RD, RNR). They departed Rosyth of the 6th.

Force 5 arrived at Copenhagen, Denmark on 9 May. The 40th M/S Flotilla had swept Force 5 through the minefields.

Force 6 returned to Scapa Flow on 10 May. ⁽¹³⁸⁾

20 May 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Zephyr* (Capt. J.H. Allison, DSO and Bar, RN) and *HMS Zest* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN) departed Copenhagen for Rosyth. ⁽¹⁴³⁾

21 May 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Zephyr* (Capt. J.H. Allison, DSO and Bar, RN) and *HMS Zest* (Lt.Cdr. R.B.N. Hicks, DSO, RN) arrived at Rosyth from Copenhagen. ⁽¹⁴³⁾

22 May 1945

Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN transferred his flag from *HMS Belfast* (Capt. R.M. Dick, CBE, DSC, RN) to *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN). ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

23 May 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) departed Rosyth for Bergen, Norway. ⁽¹⁴³⁾

24 May 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) arrived at Bergen, Norway from Rosyth. ⁽¹⁴³⁾

1 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) departed Bergen for Rosyth via Lerwick. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

2 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham,

CBE, RN) made a stop at Lerwick where she fuelled before leaving for Rosyth later the same day. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

3 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) arrived at Rosyth. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

11 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) departed Rosyth for Portsmouth to give leave to her crew. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

12 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) arrived at Portsmouth. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

25 Jun 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) is docked in No.15 Dock at the Portsmouth Dockyard.

She actually had entered the dock on 23 June 1945 but the dock was only pumped out on the 25th. ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

11 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) was undocked. She then departed Portsmouth for Plymouth. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

12 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) arrived at Plymouth. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

14 Jul 1945

The light cruiser *HMS Birmingham* (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) and the destroyers *HMS Serapis* (Lt.Cdr. E.L. Jones, DSC, RN), *HMS Obdurate* (Lt.Cdr. R.D. Franks, DSO, DSC, OBE, RN), *HMS Obedient* (Lt.Cdr. H. Kirkwood, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Zealous* (Cdr. R.F. Jessel, DSO, DSC and Bar, RN), *HMS Zephyr* (Lt.Cdr. C.R. Purse, DSC and Bar, RN) and *HMS Zodiac* (Lt.Cdr. H.R. Rycroft, DSC, RN) departed Plymouth to make rendezvous with the US Heavy cruiser *USS Augusta* (T/Capt. J.H. Foskett, USN) and the light cruiser *USS Philadelphia* (T/Capt. R.L. Boller, USN). On board the *USS Augusta* was President Truman which was en-route to Antwerp, Belgium.

Rendezvous was made in the morning and the ships then proceeded in company westwards through the English Channel.

In the early evening the British ships parted company near the North Goodwin Buoy. Shortly afterwards the escort destroyers *HMS Garth* (Capt. W.G. Davis, DSC, RN), *HMS Hambleton* (Lt. C.G.deL. Bush, RN) and *HMS Holderness* (A/Lt.Cdr. P.F. Cole, DSC, RN) joined the US ships to escort them to Antwerp where they arrived in the morning of the 15th. ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

16 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) and *HMS Obedient* (Lt.Cdr. H. Kirkwood, DSC and Bar, RN) arrived at Scapa Flow. ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

17 Jul 1945

HMS Sportsman (Lt.Cdr. N.L.A. Jewell, MBE, DSC, RN) conducted A/S exercises off Scapa Flow together with *HMS Glasgow* (Capt. C.P. Clarke, DSO, RN), *HrMs Van Galen* (Lt.Cdr. P.A. Mulock van der Vlies Bik, RNethN) and *ORP Garland* (Lt. K. Hess).

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN), *HMS Bellona* (Capt. G.S. Tuck, DSO, RN) and *HrMs Van Galen* also conducted gunnery exercises. ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

20 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN), *HMS Glasgow* (Capt. C.P. Clarke, DSO, RN) and *HMS Bellona* (Capt. G.S. Tuck, DSO, RN) conducted exercises off Scapa Flow. ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

23 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) departed Scapa Flow to proceed to Llandudno. *HMS Birmingham* is to conduct radar trials in Beaumaris Bay. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

24 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

25 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

26 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

27 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

28 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

30 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted radar trials in Beaumaris Bay before she anchored off Llandudno for the night. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

31 Jul 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) departed Llandudno for Greenock. ⁽¹⁵¹⁾

1 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham,

CBE, RN) arrived at Greenock. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

6 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted bombardment exercises off Catacol Bay, Isle of Arran. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

8 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral A.E.M.B. Cunninghame-Graham, CBE, RN) conducted bombardment exercises off Catacol Bay, Isle of Arran. On completion of these exercises speed trials were carried out on the Arran measured mile before *HMS Birmingham* proceeded to Greenock. Rear-Admiral Cunninghame-Graham and his staff then most likely left *HMS Birmingham* as he hoisted his flag in ***HMS Bellona*** (Capt. G.S. Tuck, DSO, RN) at Rosyth on 10 August 1945. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

14 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted underway refuelling trials / exercises in the Clyde area with the RFA tanker *Broomdale* (8334 GRT, built 1937). ⁽¹⁵²⁾

18 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) departed Greenock for Golspie. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

19 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) anchored off Golspie. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

20 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted radar guided gunnery trials off Golspie. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

21 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) conducted radar guided gunnery trials off Golspie. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

23 Aug 1945

HMS Birmingham (Capt. H.W. Williams, RN) proceeded from Golspie to Rosyth. En-route a full power trial was carried out.

HMS Birmingham remained in Home waters until 1948. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

Sources

1. ADM 53/108211
2. ADM 53/107768
3. ADM 53/107769
4. ADM 53/107770
5. ADM 53/107770 + ADM 53/108217 + ADM 199/374
6. ADM 199/374
7. ADM 53/107771
8. ADM 53/107771 + ADM 199/374
9. ADM 53/111571 + ADM 199/2547
10. ADM 53/111571
11. ADM 53/111572
12. ADM 199/2547
13. ADM 53/111572 + Report of proceedings of the Australian Destroyer Flotilla for February 1940
14. ADM 53/111573
15. ADM 53/111573 + ADM 199/385

16. ADM 53/111573 + ADM 53/111574 + ADM 199/361 + ADM 199/376 + ADM 199/385
17. ADM 53/111574
18. ADM 53/112663 + ADM 186/798
19. ADM 53/111574 + ADM 53/111634 + ADM 199/361 + ADM 199/385
20. ADM 53/112663
21. ADM 53/111574 + ADM 53/112663
22. ADM 53/112664 + ADM 186/798
23. ADM 53/111575 + ADM 199/376 + ADM 199/385
24. ADM 199/361 + ADM 199/363 + ADM 199/375 + ADM 199/385
25. ADM 53/111575
26. ADM 53/111575 + ADM 53/112664 + ADM 53/113211
27. ADM 53/111576 + ADM 53/112665 + ADM 53/113212
28. ADM 53/112665 + ADM 199/361
29. ADM 53/111576 + ADM 53/113212 + ADM 199/385
30. ADM 53/111576
31. ADM 53/111577 + ADM 53/112666 + ADM 199/385
32. ADM 53/111577 + ADM 199/385
33. ADM 53/111578 + ADM 199/385
34. ADM 53/111578 + ADM 53/113255 + ADM 199/385
35. ADM 53/111578
36. ADM 53/111578 + ADM 53/112667
37. ADM 53/111579 + ADM 53/112668 + ADM 53/113256 + ADM 199/385
38. ADM 53/111579 + ADM 199/385
39. ADM 53/111579
40. ADM 53/111581
41. ADM 53/111582
42. ADM 53/114198 + ADM 53/114793
43. ADM 53/114198 + ADM 199/396 + ADM 199/399 + ADM 199/409
44. ADM 53/113709 + ADM 53/114199 + ADM 53/114794
45. ADM 53/113709 + ADM 53/114199
46. ADM 199/1136
47. ADM 53/113710 + ADM 199/394
48. ADM 53/113710
49. ADM 53/113711
50. ADM 53/114624
51. ADM 53/113712 + ADM 53/114202 + ADM 53/114491 + ADM 53/114624 + ADM 199/650 + ADM 199/651
52. ADM 53/113712 + ADM 53/114202 + ADM 53/114624 + ADM 199/396 + ADM 199/399
53. ADM 53/113712
54. ADM 234/322
55. ADM 53/113712 + ADM 53/114624
56. ADM 53/113713
57. ADM 199/1138
58. ADM 53/113714
59. ADM 53/113715
60. ADM 53/113715 + ADM 199/395
61. ADM 53/113715 + ADM 53/114788
62. ADM 53/113842 + ADM 53/114788
63. ADM 53/113716
64. ADM 53/113716 + ADM 53/113717
65. ADM 53/113717
66. ADM 53/113718
67. ADM 53/113719
68. ADM 53/115429
69. ADM 53/115430
70. ADM 53/115375 + ADM 53/115430
71. ADM 53/115431 + ADM 199/2547
72. ADM 199/115431
73. ADM 53/115432

74. ADM 53/115433
75. ADM 199/426 + ADM 199/429
76. ADM 53/115434
77. ADM 199/650
78. ADM 199/650 + ADM 234/353
79. ADM 53/115434 + ADM 187/19
80. ADM 199/429 + ADM 199/1389
81. ADM 199/1389
82. ADM 53/115436 + ADM 199/1389
83. ADM 53/115436 + File 2.12.03.5995 (Dutch Archives, The Hague, Netherlands)
84. ADM 53/115437
85. File 2.12.03.1612 (Dutch Archives, The Hague, Netherlands) + File 2.12.03.2099 (Dutch Archives, The Hague, Netherlands)
86. ADM 53/115438
87. ADM 53/115438 + ADM 53/115979
88. ADM 53/115439 + ADM 53/116768 + ADM 199/2349
89. ADM 53/115439 + ADM 53/116768
90. ADM 53/115439
91. ADM 53/115440
92. ADM 53/115440 + ADM 53/115567 + ADM 53/116732
93. ADM 53/115440 + ADM 53/115981 + ADM 53/116518 + ADM 53/113366 + ADM 53/116769 + ADM 199/429
94. ADM 53/115440 + ADM 53/115502 + ADM 53/116046 + ADM 53/116542
95. ADM 53/117047 + ADM 53/117617 + ADM 53/117652 + ADM 53/117894 + ADM 53/118438 + ADM 53/118460
96. ADM 53/117047 + ADM 53/117173 + ADM 53/117617 + ADM 53/117894 + ADM 53/118709
97. ADM 53/117047 + ADM 53/117617
98. ADM 53/117047
99. ADM 53/117048
100. ADM 53/117049
101. ADM 53/117049 + ADM 53/118450
102. ADM 53/117049 + ADM 199/2547
103. ADM 53/117050
104. ADM 53/117051
105. ADM 53/117055
106. ADM 53/117056
107. ADM 53/117056 + ADM 173/18454
108. ADM 53/117056 + ADM 53/118489
109. ADM 53/117698 + ADM 53/117056
110. ADM 53/117056 + ADM 53/117683 + ADM 53/118489
111. ADM 173/18313
112. ADM 53/117056 + ADM 53/118388 + ADM 173/18397
113. ADM 173/18397
114. ADM 53/117056 + ADM 173/18397
115. ADM 53/117057
116. ADM 53/117057 + ADM 53/117568
117. ADM 53/117032 + ADM 53/117057 + ADM 53/117568
118. ADM 53/117058
119. ADM 53/119008
120. ADM 53/119009
121. ADM 53/119010
122. ADM 53/119011
123. ADM 53/119013
124. ADM 53/119015
125. ADM 53/119016
126. ADM 53/121002
127. ADM 173/20037
128. ADM 53/121002 + ADM 173/20037
129. ADM 53/121003

130. ADM 53/120994 + ADM 53/121003
131. ADM 53/121003 + ADM 53/121216 + ADM 53/121239 + ADM 199/1440
132. ADM 53/121004 + ADM 53/121239 + ADM 199/1440
133. ADM 53/121004 + ADM 53/121240 + ADM 53/121930
134. ADM 53/121004 + ADM 53/121228
135. ADM 53/120995 + ADM 53/121004 + ADM 53/121217 + ADM 53/121240 + ADM 53/121930 + ADM 53/122156
136. ADM 53/121004
137. ADM 53/121005
138. ADM 199/1440
139. ADM 53/121005 + ADM 53/121218 + ADM 53/121931
140. ADM 53/122334
141. ADM 53/121005 + ADM 53/121107 + ADM 53/121229
142. ADM 53/121006
143. ADM 53/121006 + ADM 199/1440
144. ADM 53/120959 + ADM 53/121006 + ADM 199/1440
145. ADM 53/121007 + ADM 199/1440
146. ADM 53/121007
147. ADM 53/121007 + ADM 199/1440 + Log of USS Augusta
148. ADM 53/121008 + ADM 187/50
149. ADM 173/19713 + File 2.12.03.1620 (Dutch Archives, The Hague, Netherlands)
150. ADM 53/121008 + ADM ADM 53/120973 + ADM 53/121426
151. ADM 53/121008
152. ADM 53/121009

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