

while the flares were dropping. The pilot continued until the eastern end of the Mar Piccolo was reached and turning to port flew along the southern shore. The attack was delivered from 3,000 feet, the bombs dropping in a line running from E. to W. commencing by the most eastern jetty and extending across four of the destroyers to the most westerly cruiser in the line. The pilot made his 'get away' turning sharply 180° to port over the land and returning by the way he had come. A big fire near the seaplane hangar was observed. The aircraft returned to the ship without incident.

## SECTION II.

## NARRATIVE OF SECOND ATTACK.

15. The second striking force formed up in position 8 miles, 130 degrees from H.M.S. ILLUSTRIOUS at a distance of 177 miles from Taranto and took departure at 2145 at a height of 3,000 feet.

16. Morford-Green were in an aircraft which was fitted with an external overload petrol tank. At 2205 the tank fell off and the securing straps began to bang on the fuselage; the pilot was therefore forced to return to the carrier. On approaching the position of the ship the observer fired a Red Verrey Light to indicate that the aircraft was returning in distress, but as it was not expected H.M. Ships ILLUSTRIOUS and BÉRWICK opened fire. The aircraft then fired a 2 star identification light and gunfire ceased. The aircraft remained outside gun-range for another 15 minutes, then made a further approach and was landed on.

17. At 2250 the Squadron commenced to climb and at 2315 sighted flares and anti-aircraft fire from Taranto, a distance of 60 miles, and intermittent firing continued until at 2350, when at 8,000 feet, the north-west shore of the Gulf of Taranto was sighted and the Squadron turned to the north-east. At 2255 the flare droppers were detached and the remainder continued into attack.

## 18. INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES (SECOND FORCE).

(i) *Hale-Carlisle*.

Task: Torpedo attack.

Considerable fire was experienced from San Pietro Island during the last stages of the approach, and the aircraft came in 1 mile north of Rondinella Point at 5,000 feet, and glided down over the commercial basin, being fired at from the eastern corner of the basin. The pilot then steered directly for the more northerly battleship of the LITTORIO class (A in Plan 1), the torpedo being dropped at a range of approximately 700 yards. The "get away" was made to starboard and the aircraft passed just north of the Taranto Shoal Breakwater. The observer saw balloons at approximately 3,000 feet and the pilot, seeing mooring barges, avoided them. Anti-aircraft fire was met intermittently throughout attack—particularly from destroyers on leaving. H.M.S. ILLUSTRIOUS was sighted at 0155 and aircraft landed on at 0200.

(ii) *Bayly-Slaughter*.

Task: Torpedo attack.

This aircraft is missing. It was last seen following the Squadron Commander over Rondinella Point.

(iii) *Lea-Jones*.

Task: Torpedo attack.

Came in astern of the Squadron Commander over Rondinella Point, gliding down to a point 2½ cables south of the canal. The torpedo was dropped at the most northerly CAVOUR (C in Plan 1) at a range of approximately 800 yards. "Get away" was made by turning sharply to starboard between two cruisers and over Lo Scanno Point on San Pietro Island. Severe anti-aircraft fire was received from batteries on each side of the southern end of the Canal, and from cruisers and destroyers in the Mar Grande. When leaving, a fire and petrol smoke were observed near the power station on the mainland behind Rondinella Point. Aircraft landed on at 0230.

(iv) *Torrens-Spence—Sutton*.

Task: Torpedo attack.

Came in over Cape Rondinella, astern of the Squadron Commander, and glided down to a point 5 cables south of the canal. Anti-aircraft fire was experienced from three positions on Taranto Island from the cruisers and the largest battleship. It is probable that the aircraft was silhouetted to the cruisers by the light of the flares. The torpedo was dropped at the more northerly LITTORIO (A in Plan 1) at a range of approximately 700 yards. "Get away" was made by turning to starboard, out between San Paolo Island and the submerged barrier running from the eastern mainland. Pom-pom and machine gun fire was met from San Paolo, San Pietro, and from small gate vessels in the gap on the way out. The aircraft landed on at 0215.

(v) *Welham-Humphreys*.

Task: Torpedo attack.

Came in astern of the Squadron Commander over Rondinella Point, over Mar Piccolo, and the Town of Taranto, and turned to starboard to the centre of the Mar Grande. Encountering a balloon which was avoided, the pilot then dived down to attack, during which period the aircraft received hits from machine gun bullets, one of which hit the outer aileron rod, putting the aircraft temporarily out of control. Control was however regained and the torpedo was dropped at a range estimated at 500 yards on the port quarter of one of the LITTORIOS (B in Plan 1). "Get away" was made by turning sharply to starboard and the aircraft went out to sea over the northern point of San Pietro.

Intense anti-aircraft fire was directed towards the aircraft during the "get away" and a hit was received on the port wing, probably from a 40 mm. explosive projectile.

Aircraft landed on at about 0205.

(vi) *Hamilton-Weekes*.

Task: Dropping Flares.

Came in over Cape San Vito at 7,500 feet, and dived to 5,000 feet, dropping a line of flares at intervals of 15 seconds to the eastward of the harbour. Pom-pom fire was experienced when coming over Cape San Vito and H.E. while releasing the flares.

After dropping all flares successfully, this aircraft delivered a dive bombing attack from a height of 2,500 feet on the oil storage depot. A small fire was caused. The aircraft made