

the destruction of REPULSE. They are divided into five separate attacks with varying periods between them, the interval between numbers four and five being very brief.

6. The first attack developed shortly after 1100 when nine aircraft in close single line abreast formation were seen approaching REPULSE from about Green 50* and at a height of about 10,000 feet. Fire was at once opened on them with the Long Range H.A. by PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE. It was very soon obvious that the attack was about to be entirely concentrated on REPULSE. The formation was very well kept and bombs were dropped with great accuracy, one near miss on the starboard side abreast B turret and one hit on the port hangar burst on the armour below the Marines' messdeck and caused damage. The remainder of the salvo (it was thought seven bombs were dropped altogether), fell very close to the port side and this concluded this attack. There was now a short lull of about twenty minutes during which the damage control parties carried out their duties in a most efficient manner and fires which had been started by this bomb had all been got under control before the next attack; and the bomb having burst on the armour no damage was suffered below in the engine or boiler rooms. It is thought that the bombs dropped were about 250 pounds.

7. The second attack was shared by PRINCE OF WALES and REPULSE and was made by torpedo bomber aircraft. They appeared to be the same type of machine, believed to be Mitsubishi 86 or 88. I am not prepared to say how many machines took part in this attack but on its conclusion I had the impression that we had succeeded in combing the tracks of a large number of torpedoes, possibly as many as twelve. We were steaming at 25 knots at the time. I maintained a steady course until the aircraft appeared to be committed to the attack when the wheel was put over and the attacks providentially combed. I would like to record here the valuable work done by all Bridge personnel at this time in calmly pointing out approaching torpedo bombing aircraft which largely contributed to our good fortune in dodging all these torpedoes. PRINCE OF WALES was hit on the port side right aft during this attack and a large column of water appeared to be thrown up, larger than subsequent columns of water which were thrown up when REPULSE was hit later on.

8. The third attack was a high level bombing attack again concentrated on REPULSE. Possibly the enemy were aware, and particularly so if they were using 250 pound bombs, that these bombs would have had little chance of penetrating PRINCE OF WALES'S horizontal armour. I was manoeuvring the ship at high speed at the time and we were actually under helm when the bombs fell. No hits were received. There was one near miss on the starboard side and the remainder fell just clear on the port side. The attack was carried out in the same determined manner as was the first. PRINCE OF WALES had "not under control" balls hoisted at this time and I exchanged some signals with the Commander-in-Chief. I asked PRINCE OF WALES about

her damage and she appeared to have a list to port but I got no reply though she still made some signals by Aldis light after this. Although uncertain at this time of the signals PRINCE OF WALES had made, I made an emergency report "Enemy aircraft bombing" followed immediately by an amplifying report which was just about to be transmitted at the time the ship sank. I also made a visual signal to the Commander-in-Chief telling him that we had up to date fortunately avoided all torpedoes fired at REPULSE and that all damage received from the bomb had been got under control. I also asked the Commander-in-Chief whether his wireless was still in action in case he wished me to make any reports. I closed PRINCE OF WALES at this time and reduced to 20 knots, the better to ascertain her damage, and to see if I could be of any assistance. Very shortly after this the fourth attack started to develop.

9. In the fourth attack about eight aircraft were seen low on the horizon on the starboard bow. Being low down it signified another torpedo bombing attack was impending. When about three miles away they split into two formations and I estimated that those on the right hand would launch their torpedoes first and I started to swing the ship to starboard. The torpedoes were dropped at a distance of 2500 yards and it seemed obvious that we should be once more successful in combing their tracks. The left hand formation appeared to be making straight for PRINCE OF WALES who was at this time abaft my port beam. When these aircraft were a little before the port beam at a distance of approximately 2000 yards they turned straight at me and fired their torpedoes. It now became obvious that, if these torpedoes were aimed straight, REPULSE would be most certainly hit as any other alteration of course would have caused me to be hit by the tracks of those torpedoes I was in the process of combing. One torpedo fired from my port side was obviously going to hit the ship and it was possible to watch its track for about a minute and a half before this actually took place. The ship was hit amidships port side. The ship stood this torpedo well and continued to manoeuvre and steamed at about 25 knots. There was now only a very short respite before the final and last attack.

10. I think it is interesting to report here the remarkable height from which the torpedoes were dropped, estimated to be between three and four hundred feet and all torpedoes appeared to run perfectly straight from the point of dropping.

11. The second Walrus aircraft which had been damaged by the first bombing attack was successfully got over the side to avoid a petrol fire.

12. From what I saw myself and from evidence I received at this period it became evident that the whole ship's company were carrying out their duties as if they were at ordinary peace exercises. The damage control parties working under Commander R. J. R. Dendy had replaced damaged lighting, had put out fires, and successfully coped with every situation as it arose.

13. The torpedo bombers had carried out some machine-gunning on the port deck and the gunnery control positions aloft but this was not experienced on the Bridge.

Admiralty footnote —

* Green 50—50° on the starboard bow.