

5. At dusk a diversionary convoy was due to be sailed from Port Said to rendezvous at 0800/D.2 with a similar convoy which was to sail from Haifa at 0400/D.2. These convoys were to be escorted by cruisers and destroyers and were due to turn back at dark D.2.

It is believed that these movements took place as arranged though no information was received by me to that effect.

*Tuesday, 11th August (D.2).*

6. At 0645, ASHANTI (Captain D.6), LEDBURY, ZETLAND, WILTON, BRAMHAM, BICESTER, FORESIGHT and DERWENT made contact with Force R and commencing fuelling, having been detached at 2130 the previous night. SIRIUS, PHOEBE and Tug JAUNTY joined from Force R at 0845. JAUNTY reported his maximum speed as being  $12\frac{1}{2}$  knots. Captain (D), 6th Destroyer Flotilla remained with Force R in charge of the oiling until relieved by Captain (D), 19th Destroyer Flotilla at 1800. Thanks to the excellent arrangements on board the oilers, CAIRO and 24 destroyers had been fuelled by 2030.

By the end of the day, BROWN RANGER was down to 100 tons and 1,000 tons of oil were transferred from DINGLEDALE on the morning D.3.

7. At 0800/11, COLTSFOOT, one of the corvettes screening Force R, reported that 2 torpedoes had been observed to break surface in position  $37^{\circ} 56' N.$ ,  $01^{\circ} 40' E.$  There were indications that Force F may have been reported by Italian U-Boats at 0815 when south of Formentera Island.

8. At 1055 I received Vice-Admiral Commanding, North Atlantic's 0902A/11 informing me that an aircraft sighting report of Force F at 0620Z/11 had been broadcast by Rome to "all units and stations." This followed a previous warning from Vice-Admiral Commanding, North Atlantic (his 0732A/11) that German reconnaissance aircraft were active in the Western Mediterranean.

The first radar contact was obtained at 0815, and from then onwards there was continuous "snooping" of the force by enemy aircraft. Two sections of 4 fighters each were kept in the air throughout the day, being reinforced as necessary. The enemy machines (JU.88s) were flying at 20,000 feet or more and difficulty was experienced by our fighters in intercepting them. Five interceptions were made resulting in one JU.88 shot down and two damaged. One Hurricane and one Fulmar were lost but the crews of both were recovered.

9. At 1128 three distant disturbances on the surface of the sea, as of torpedo discharges, were seen in both NELSON and CHARYBDIS, bearing  $200^{\circ}$ , about 3 miles. They were described by a submarine officer in NELSON as exactly similar to the torpedo discharges of a carelessly handled submarine, and by CHARYBDIS as a torpedo "break surface". It seems probable that a U-Boat attempted to attack the convoy at this time.

*Operation "Bellows".*

10. At 1218, FURIOUS screened by LIGHTNING and LOOKOUT moved out to the port

quarter of the convoy for Operation "Bellows". The first Spitfire took off at 1229. Two flights of 8 Spitfires were flown off before delay was caused by emergency turns following the sinking of EAGLE.

The third, fourth and fifth flights were flown off between 1350 and 1450. In all 38 Spitfires were flown off of which one, with a defect, landed on INDOMITABLE. I was informed later in the day by Vice-Admiral, Malta that 37 had arrived at Malta.

*Sinking of EAGLE.*

11. At 1315 in position  $38^{\circ} 05' N.$ ,  $3^{\circ} 02' E.$ , EAGLE was hit on the port side by four torpedoes, all within an interval of about 10 seconds. At this time EAGLE was stationed on the quarter of the starboard wing column of the convoy, speed 13 knots, and on the starboard leg of zig-zag No. 10, mean line of advance  $090^{\circ}$ .

12. EAGLE heeled rapidly over to port and sank in about eight minutes. No torpedo tracks were seen and it seems probable that the attack was carried out by a German U-Boat which dived under the screen, passed between columns 3 and 4 and attacked EAGLE at very short range with electric torpedoes. There were thirteen destroyers on the screen at this time and none obtained a contact.

13. LOOKOUT, who was screening FURIOUS for "Bellows", and LAFOREY were ordered to stand by EAGLE. Tug JAUNTY also proceeded immediately towards EAGLE and joined LOOKOUT in picking up survivors. Neither LOOKOUT nor CHARYBDIS, who steamed over the probable position of the U-Boat, obtained a contact. Nine hundred and twenty-seven survivors, including the Commanding Officer, were picked up by LAFOREY, LOOKOUT and JAUNTY.

14. For about one hour and a half after the sinking of EAGLE numerous sightings of submarines and torpedoes and asdic contacts were reported but there is no conclusive proof of a second U-Boat being in the vicinity during this period.

15. At 1429, KEPPEL (Senior Officer), MALCOLM, AMAZON, VENOMOUS, WOLVERINE and WRESTLER were sighted by Captain (D), 19th Destroyer Flotilla, and ordered by him to carry out an A/S search of the area. After picking up survivors, LAFOREY (Captain D. 19) and LOOKOUT rejoined Force F. KEPPEL, MALCOLM, VENOMOUS, WOLVERINE and WRESTLER joined at 1545, AMAZON having been ordered to take JAUNTY under his orders and join Force R.

I then ordered survivors in LAFOREY to be transferred to KEPPEL, those in LOOKOUT to VENOMOUS, and those in JAUNTY to MALCOLM. This was completed by 1830 when the five destroyers formed screen on FURIOUS who parted company and returned to Gibraltar.

16. At 1420 enemy aircraft approaching from the starboard beam were detected by radar. They passed directly over the force at a great height at 1430; NELSON and RODNEY opening fire in barrage for a few minutes. These aircraft were not seen but it