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OFFICIAL ADMIRALTY COMMUNIQUE

It is now possible to give some account of the operations which have lately been taking place in the Arctic.

These operations were concerned with the passage of two convoys - one carrying important war supplies to Russia and the other consisting of homeward-bound ships which had already taken cargoes to North Russia.

Over a period of several days the enemy made determined attempts by light ^{surface} forces, by U-boats, and by aircraft, to prevent the safe passage of these convoys.

Although we suffered some loss as a result of these attacks, nearly the whole of the convoy bound for North Russia arrived safely at its destination, and only one ship was lost from the homeward-bound convoy. This ship was in ballast.

Losses were also inflicted upon the enemy.

On the afternoon of April 30, the cruiser H.M.S. EDINBURGH (Captain H.W. Faulkner, R.N.) was torpedoed by a U-boat and her steering gear was disabled, but she was able to continue under her own power at reduced speed.

On the following afternoon (May 1) the homeward-bound convoy was attacked by three German destroyers. During that afternoon the German destroyers made five separate attempts to break through the convoy escort and destroy the convoy. In these attacks the enemy was assisted by heavy weather and low and patchy visibility.

All five of these attacks were driven off by the convoy escort, but one ship of the convoy was sunk. Two ships of the convoy escort suffered a small number of casualties, of which seven were fatal. The next-of-kin of casualties are being informed.

On the morning of May 2 the damaged cruiser, H.M.S. EDINBURGH, and her escort of destroyers were attacked by three German destroyers in heavy weather and low visibility. H.M.S. EDINBURGH was by this time in tow. The enemy was at once engaged by H.M.S. EDINBURGH and our destroyers.

One of the enemy destroyers was sunk. Another was hit and severely damaged.

H.M.S. EDINBURGH, however, was again hit by torpedo. She was abandoned and later had to be sunk by our own forces as towing was no longer practicable in the weather conditions prevailing. The next-of-kin of casualties in H.M.S. EDINBURGH have been informed.

The homeward-bound convoy was not again molested by the enemy.

After the attack by three German destroyers on the afternoon of May 1, the convoy bound for Russia was attacked by six Ju.88 dive-bombers. One of the enemy aircraft was shot down, and no damage or casualties were suffered by the convoy or its escorts.

This convoy was again subjected to air attack on the evening of May 2. This time the attack was by six torpedo-carrying aircraft. At least one of the enemy aircraft was destroyed and others were damaged, but three ships of the convoy were hit by torpedoes and sank.

This convoy was again dive-bombed on the following evening, May 3. The attack was unsuccessful, only minor damage being caused to one ship. One Ju.88 was shot down.

The convoy completed its voyage without further interference by the enemy, and thus 90% of the supplies for Russia reached their destination.

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