

Sinclair, M.V.O., A.D.C., indicating the presence of enemy vessels. The direction of advance was immediately altered to S.S.E., the course for Horn Reef, so as to place my force between the enemy and his base.

"At 2.35 p.m. a considerable amount of smoke was sighted to the eastward. This made it clear that the enemy was to the northward and eastward, and that it would be impossible for him to round the Horn Reef without being brought to action. Course was accordingly altered to the eastward and subsequently to north-eastward, the enemy being sighted at 3.31 p.m. Their force consisted of five battle-cruisers.

"After the first report of the enemy, the 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons changed their direction, and, without waiting for orders, spread to the east, thereby forming a screen in advance of the Battle Cruiser Squadrons and 5th Battle Squadron by the time we had hauled up to the course of approach. They engaged enemy light cruisers at long range. In the meantime the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron had come in at high speed, and was able to take station ahead of the battle cruisers by the time we turned to E.S.E., the course on which we first engaged the enemy. In this respect the work of the Light Cruiser Squadrons was excellent, and of great value.

"From a report from 'Galatea' at 2.25 p.m. it was evident that the enemy force was considerable, and not merely an isolated unit of light cruisers, so at 2.45 p.m. I ordered 'Engadine' (Lieutenant-Commander C. G. Robinson) to send up a seaplane and scout to N.N.E. This order was carried out very quickly, and by 3.8 p.m. a seaplane, with Flight Lieutenant F. J. Rutland, R.N., as pilot, and Assistant Paymaster G. S. Trewin, R.N., as observer, was well under way; her first reports of the enemy were received in 'Engadine' about 3.30 p.m. Owing to clouds it was necessary to fly very low, and in order to identify four enemy light cruisers the seaplane had to fly at a height of 900 feet within 3,000 yards of them, the light cruisers opening fire on her with every gun that would bear. This in no way interfered with the clarity of their reports, and both Flight Lieutenant Rutland and Assistant Paymaster Trewin are to be congratulated on their achievement, which indicates that seaplanes under such circumstances are of distinct value.

"At 3.30 p.m. I increased speed to 25 knots, and formed line of battle, the 2nd Battle Cruiser Squadron forming astern of the 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron, with destroyers of the 13th and 9th Flotillas taking station ahead. I turned to E.S.E., slightly converging on the enemy, who were now at a range of 23,000 yards, and formed the ships on a line of bearing to clear the smoke. The 5th Battle Squadron, who had conformed to our movements, were now bearing N.N.W., 10,000 yards. The visibility at this time was good, the sun behind us and the wind S.E. Being between the enemy and his base, our situation was both tactically and strategically good.

"At 3.48 p.m. the action commenced at a range of 18,500 yards, both forces opening fire practically simultaneously. Course was altered to the southward, and subsequently the mean direction was S.S.E., the enemy steering a parallel course distant about 18,000 to 14,500 yards.

"At 4.8 p.m. the 5th Battle Squadron came into action and opened fire at a range of 20,000 yards. The enemy's fire now seemed to slacken. The destroyer 'Landrail' (Lieutenant-Commander Francis E. H. G. Hobart), of 9th Flotilla, who was on our port beam, trying to take station ahead, sighted the periscope of a submarine on her port quarter. Though causing considerable inconvenience from smoke, the presence of 'Lydiard' (Commander Malcolm L. Goldsmith) and 'Landrail' undoubtedly preserved the battle-cruisers from closer submarine attack. 'Nottingham' (Captain Charles B. Miller) also reported a submarine on the starboard beam.

"Eight destroyers of the 13th Flotilla, 'Nestor' (Commander the Hon. Edward B. S. Bingham), 'Nomad' (Lieutenant-Commander Paul Whitfield), 'Nicator' (Lieutenant Jack E. A. Mocatta), 'Narborough' (Lieutenant-Commander Geoffrey Corlett), 'Pelican' (Lieutenant-Commander Kenneth A. Beattie), 'Petard' (Lieutenant-Commander Evelyn C. O. Thomson), 'Obdurate' (Lieutenant-Commander Cecil H. H. Sams), 'Nerissa' (Lieutenant-Commander Montague C. B. Legge), with 'Moorsom' (Commander John C. Hodgson), and 'Morris' (Lieutenant-Commander Edward S. Graham), of 10th Flotilla, 'Turbulent' (Lieutenant-Commander Dudley Stuart), and 'Termagant' (Lieutenant-Commander Cuthbert P. Blake), of the 9th Flotilla, having been ordered to attack the enemy with torpedoes when opportunity offered, moved out at 4.15 p.m., simultaneously with a similar movement on the part of the enemy Destroyers. The attack was carried out in the most gallant manner, and with great determination. Before arriving at a favourable position to fire torpedoes, they intercepted an enemy force consisting of a light-cruiser and fifteen destroyers. A fierce engagement ensued at close quarters, with the result that the enemy were forced to retire on their battle-cruisers, having lost two destroyers sunk, and having their torpedo attack frustrated. Our destroyers sustained no loss in this engagement, but their attack on the enemy battle-cruisers was rendered less effective, owing to some of the destroyers having dropped astern during the fight. Their position was therefore unfavourable for torpedo attack.

"'Nestor,' 'Nomad' and 'Nicator,' gallantly led by Commander the Hon. Edward B. S. Bingham, of 'Nestor,' pressed home their attack on the battle-cruisers and fired two torpedoes at them, being subjected to a heavy fire from the enemy's secondary armament. 'Nomad' was badly hit, and apparently remained stopped between the lines. Subsequently 'Nestor' and 'Nicator' altered course to the S.E., and in a short time, the opposing battle-cruisers having turned 16 points, found themselves within close range of a number of enemy battleships. Nothing daunted, though under a terrific fire, they stood on, and their position being favourable for torpedo attack fired a torpedo at the second ship of the enemy line at a range of 3,000 yards. Before they could fire their fourth torpedo, 'Nestor' was badly hit and swung to starboard, 'Nicator' altering course inside her to avoid collision, and thereby being prevented from firing the last torpedo. 'Nicator' made good her escape, and subsequently rejoined the Captain (D), 13th Flotilla. 'Nestor' remained stopped, but