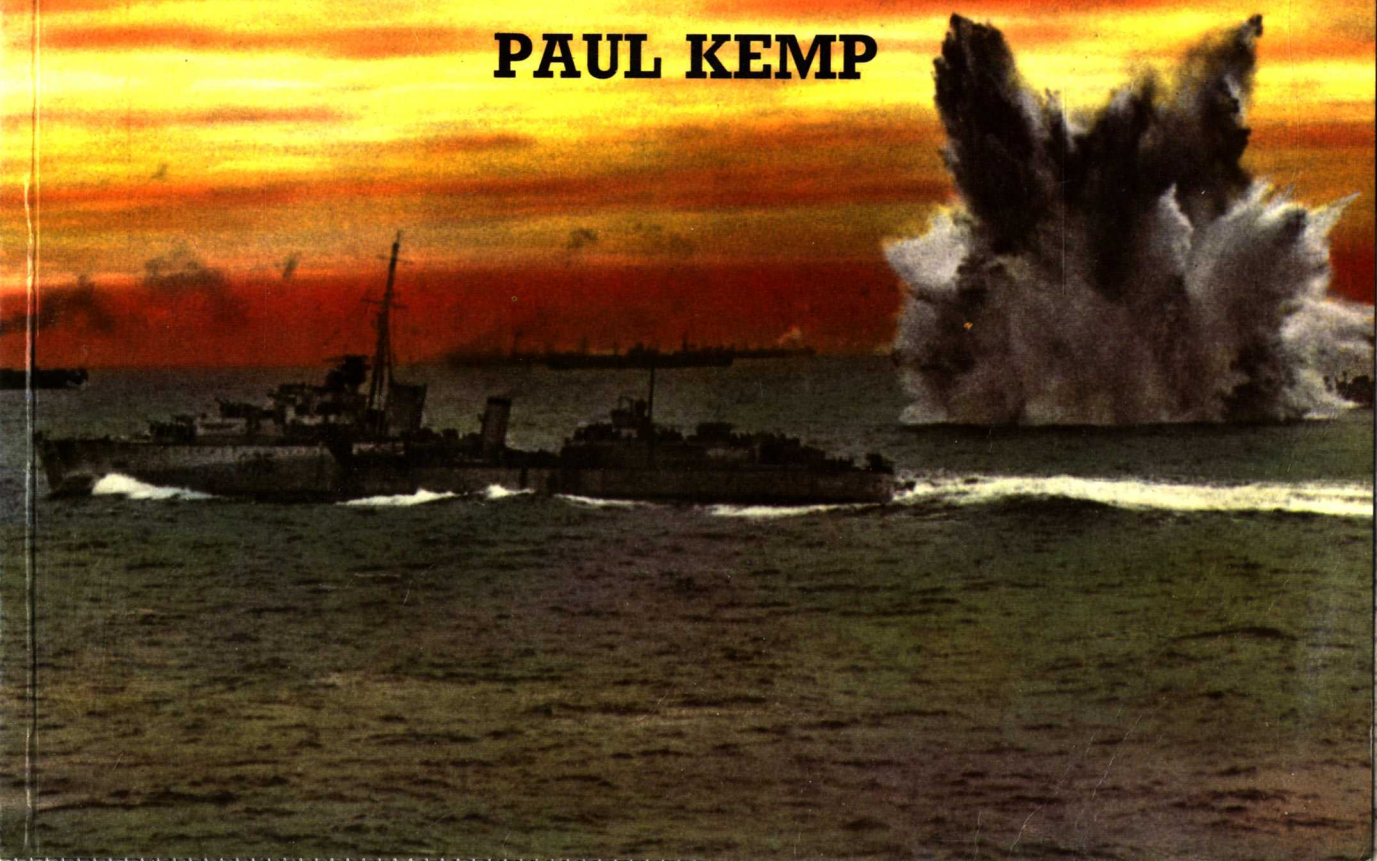




**WARSHIPS ILLUSTRATED No 9**

# The Russian Convoys 1941-1945

**PAUL KEMP**



**Cover illustration:** A bomb falls behind the destroyer *Eskimo*, narrowly missing the *Hunt* Class destroyer HMS *Wheatland* as PQ.18 forges on towards Russia, September 1942. Ten of PQ.18's forty ships were lost to air attack, and U-boats claimed another three; in return the Germans lost 41 aircraft and three U-boats. (IWM A.12022)



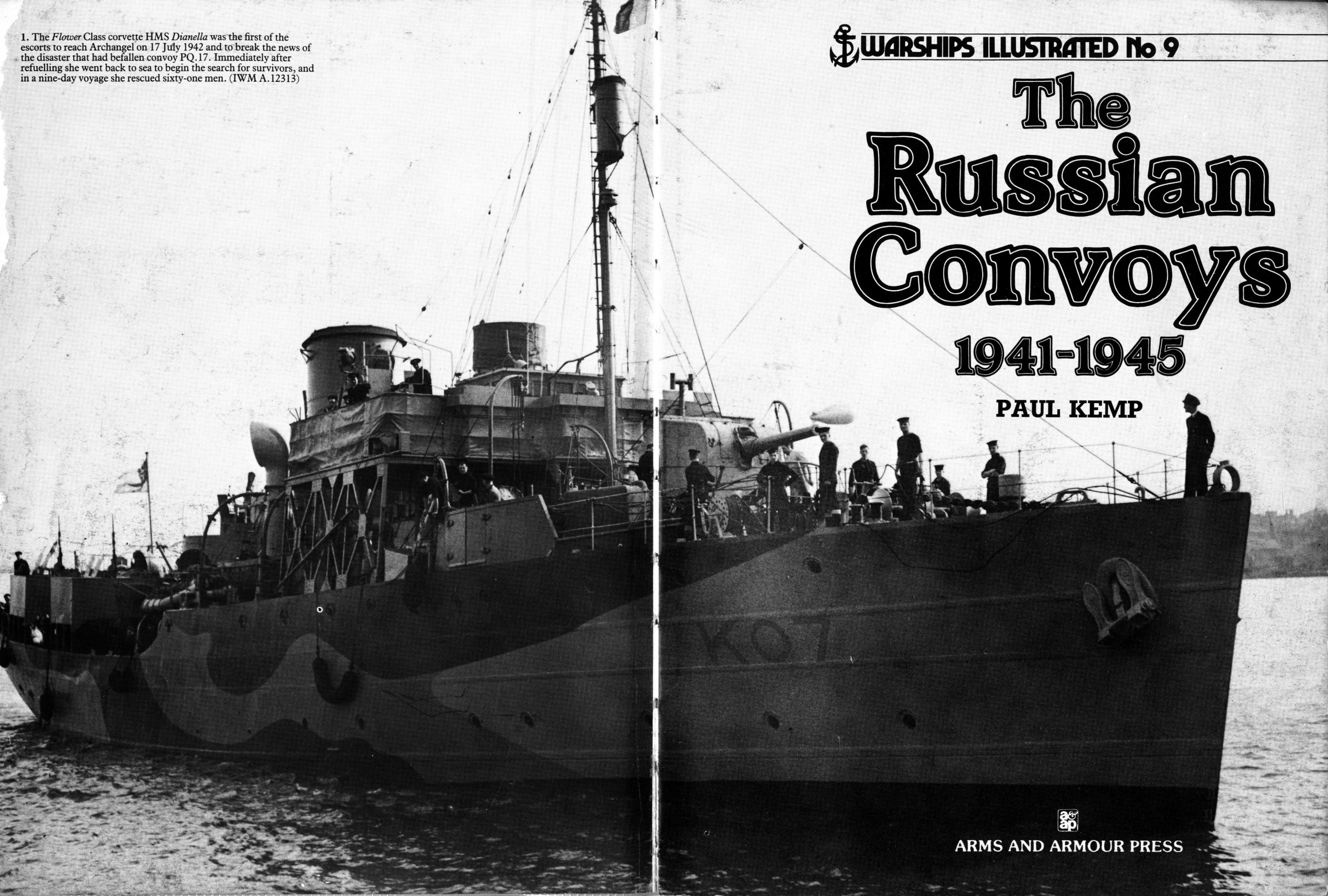
1. The *Flower* Class corvette HMS *Dianella* was the first of the escorts to reach Archangel on 17 July 1942 and to break the news of the disaster that had befallen convoy PQ.17. Immediately after refuelling she went back to sea to begin the search for survivors, and in a nine-day voyage she rescued sixty-one men. (IWM A.12313)

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# The Russian Convoys

1941-1945

PAUL KEMP



ARMS AND ARMOUR PRESS





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# Introduction

The convoys which took war material to the USSR via the northern trade route during the Second World War have a special place in the history of the war at sea because of the unequalled hardships they faced. After being assembled in the grim harbour of Hvalfjord in Iceland or a remote Scottish loch the convoys would sail through the Norwegian and Barents Seas to the Russian port of Murmansk in the Kola Inlet or Archangel on the White Sea. The route the convoys had to follow is notorious for bad weather and conditions which border on the limits of human endurance. In winter the northern latitudes produce conditions of continuous darkness, while from May to August there is perpetual daylight. The fierce storms which frequently battered the convoys caused ice to build up on ships' superstructures and deck fittings, and this had to be chipped away to prevent the vessels from becoming top-heavy. This was treacherous work, and a man's chances of survival should he fall overboard into that icy water were very slim.

As if the appalling climate were not enough, the convoys also faced continual attack since they were always within range of German airfields in Norway. The Norwegian fjords also sheltered U-boats and capital ships like the *Tirpitz*, which meant that considerable British and American forces were needed to cover the convoys when they could have been of more use in other theatres.

Under these conditions the men of the Royal and United States Navies, together with their colleagues in the Merchant Marine, laboured to bring material to Russia. The total quantities of material supplied to Russia throughout the war were immense, although only 24.2 per cent was delivered via the Arctic route: the remainder were sent via the Persian and Pacific routes. There is no doubt that the USSR needed every scrap of assistance available, but in the light of these figures it could be argued that the Russian convoys were more important as a political demonstration of Allied solidarity than for the quantities of material they supplied. If this is so, then the price paid was very high.

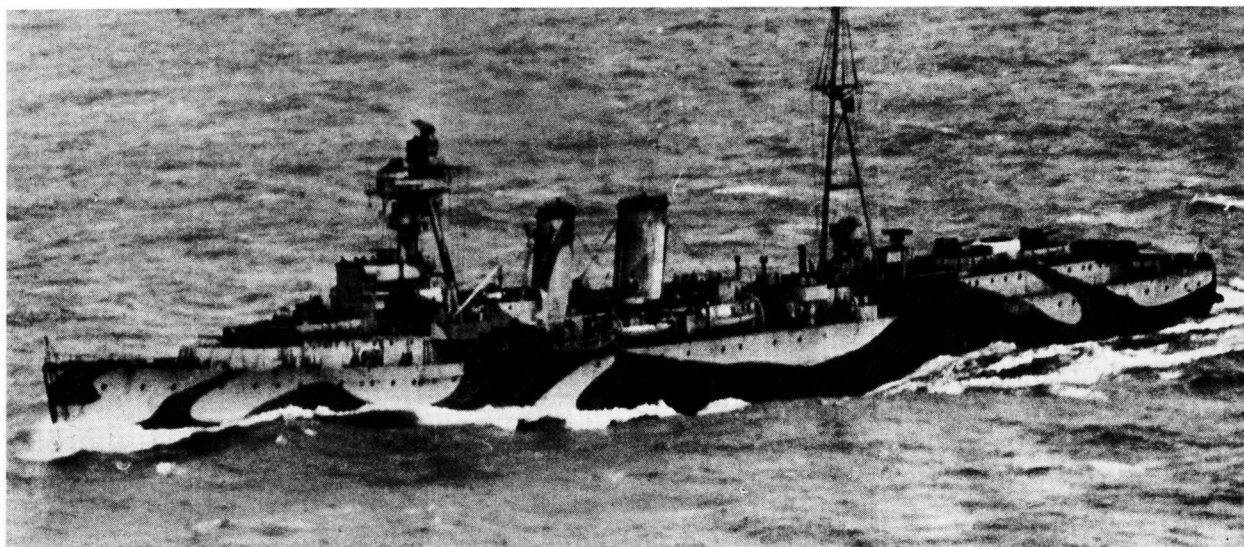
Almost all the photographs used in this book are from the Imperial War Museum in London and I am grateful to that establishment for permission to use them. My sincere thanks are also due to my colleagues Jeff Pavey, Alan Williams and Mike Willis in the Department of Photographs at the IWM for their help in locating material.

Paul J. Kemp

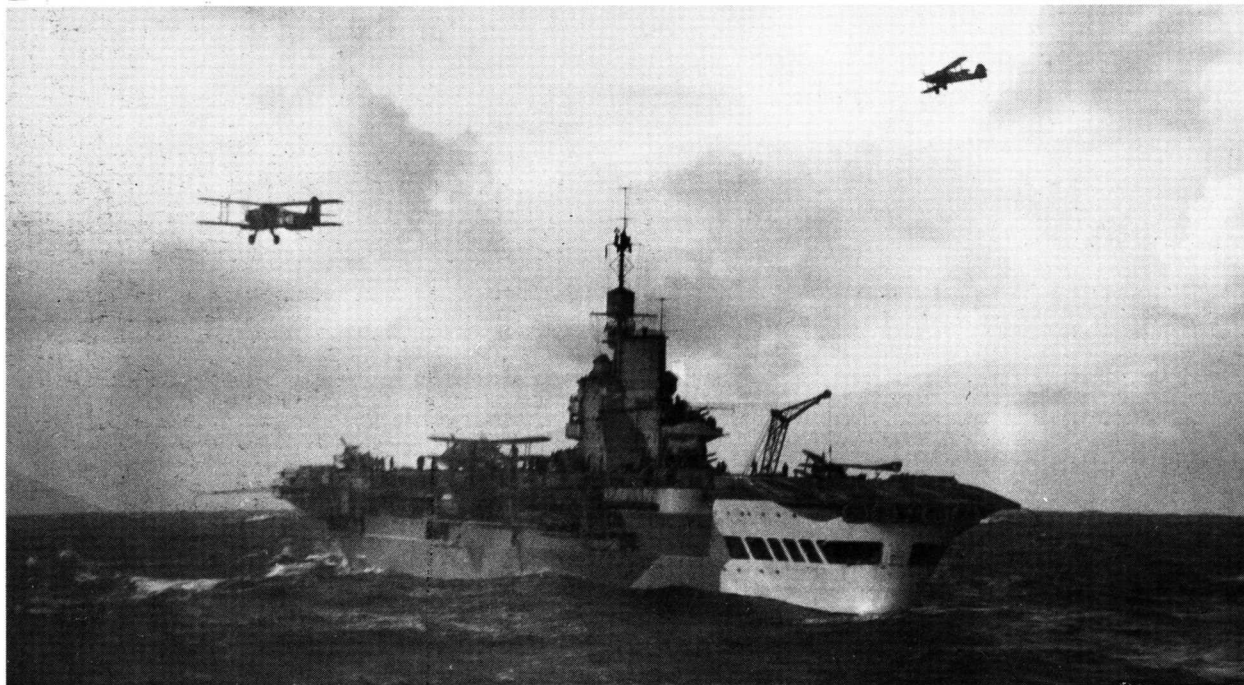
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2. A seaman stands against the snow- and ice-encrusted barrette of 'B' turret on board the cruiser *Belfast*. The port high-angle director can be seen at the top right of the photograph. (IWM A.20689)

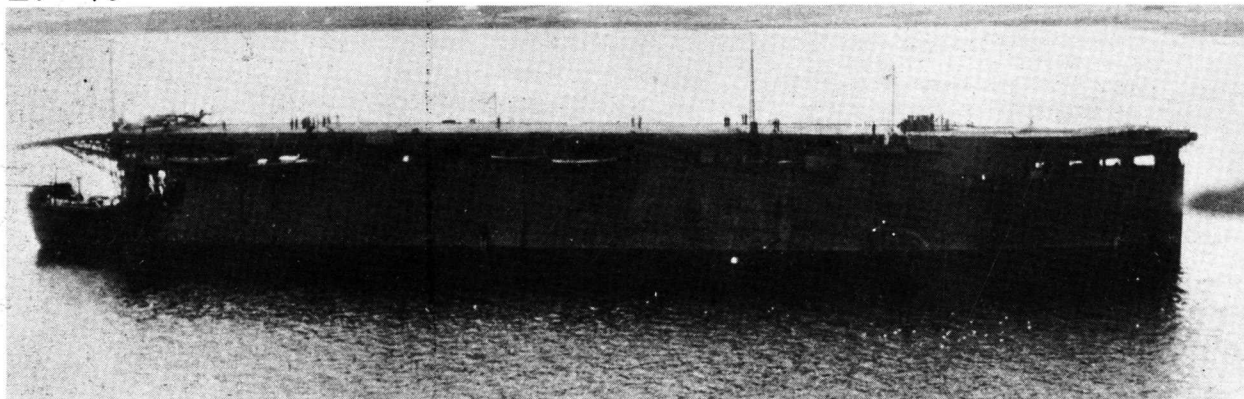




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3. On 22 June 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Winston Churchill pledged Britain's full support for Russia and the Russian people. Stalin responded with a demand for the immediate opening of the Second Front – a demand which was to occur with monotonous regularity for the next three years. Churchill replied that active measures were being taken against German operations in the Arctic and as proof of Britain's support for her new ally the minelayer HMS *Adventure* (pictured) arrived at Archangel on 1 August with a consignment of military supplies. (IWM FL.200)

4. Albacore aircraft operating over the aircraft carrier HMS *Victorious* in 1941. On 30 July 1941 thirty-eight Albacores and eighteen Fulmars were launched from the carriers *Victorious* and *Furious* in a strike against German forces in the Kirkenes/Petsamo area. However, the element of surprise was lost when the British ships were spotted by the *Luftwaffe*, and twelve Albacores and four Fulmars were shot down for little in the way of results. The operation had been planned to take the pressure off the Soviet defenders of Murmansk and was not repeated. (IWM A.5997)

5. The first convoy to Russia comprised six merchant ships and sailed from Scapa Flow on 21 August, arriving safely at Archangel ten days later. The convoy also included the old aircraft carrier *Argus*, with 24 Hurricanes of No. 151 Wing RAF on board. Another fifteen crated Hurricanes were taken out on one of the merchant ships and assembled locally. (IWM FL.941)

6. A Hurricane fighter of No. 81 Squadron RAF at an airfield near Murmansk. The Hurricanes were needed to replace the aircraft of the Soviet Air Force which had been destroyed in the initial stages of the German invasion and to protect the approaches to the ports of Murmansk and Archangel together with the naval base at Polyarnoe. (IWM CR.190)

7. The signing of the Moscow Protocol on 1 October 1941 by the USSR and a joint US/UK delegation led by Mr Averell Harriman, shown seated at the desk. Britain and the United States undertook to supply Russia with war material but nothing was said in the agreement about losses of material caused by enemy action. The Russians tended to regard such losses as negligence on the part of their allies rather than a misfortune of war! (IWM NYP.25928)

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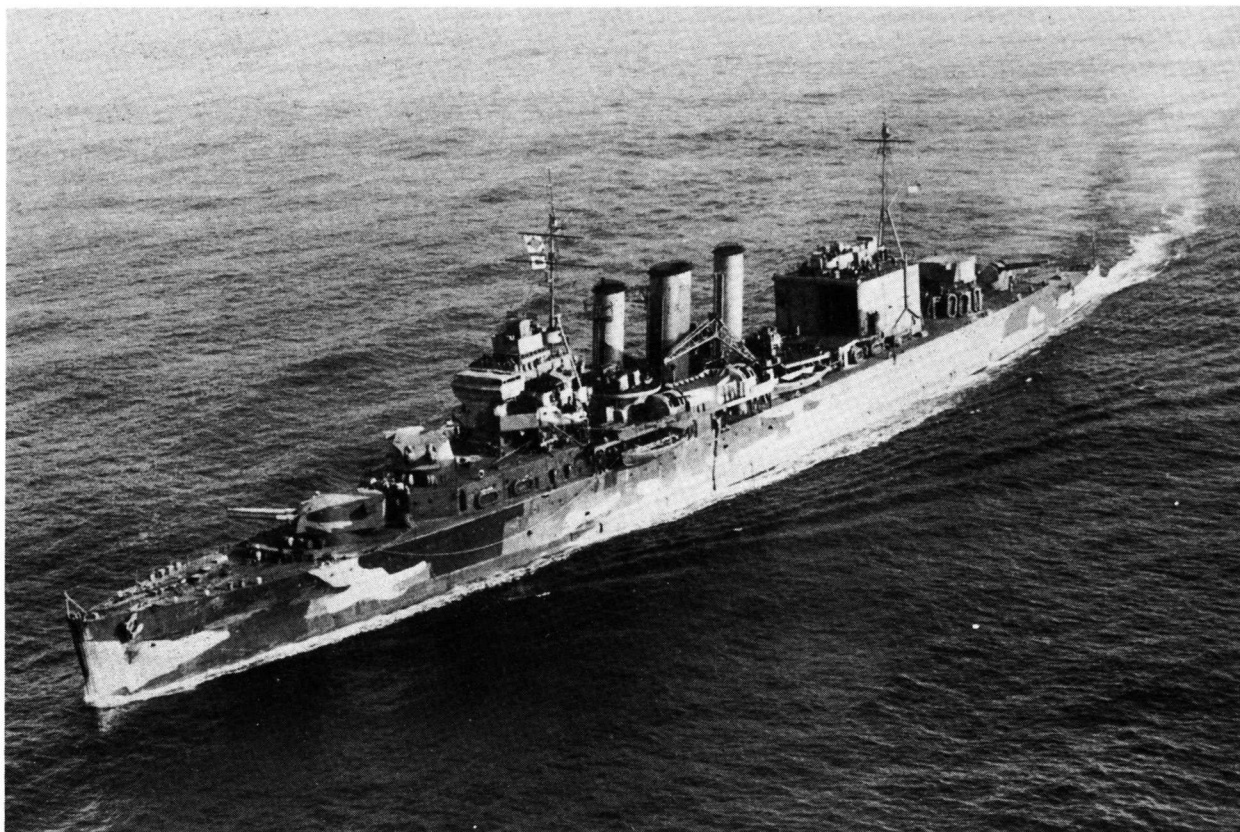
8. The struggle of the USSR against Nazi Germany became a tremendously popular cause in Britain. Here, workers at a Midlands tank factory show their support for the USSR with two Valentine tanks destined for the Red Army. British aid to Russia was generously given but the cost was high and involved the men of the Royal and Merchant Navies in one of the most bitter and gruelling campaigns of the Second World War. (IWM P.233)

9. Matilda tanks for the Soviet Army are loaded at a British port prior to the sailing of convoy PQ.2. The latter consisted of six merchant ships, which left Scapa Flow on 17 October 1941 and reached Archangel on 31st of the month without loss. From September 1941 until November 1942 outward bound convoys were coded 'PQ' and homeward convoys 'QP'. The letters were then changed to 'JW' for outward and 'RA' for homeward convoys. When a convoy was split the letters 'A' or 'B' were added. (IWM H.14786)

10. Admiral Sir John Tovey, Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, who was responsible for the safe passage of the convoys to Russia. The forces at his disposal varied because of the demands made by other theatres of war but usually consisted of two battleships, two carriers, four cruisers and about twenty destroyers. This was, on paper, an impressive force, but in reality the escorts available for the early convoys were pitifully weak. (IWM A.14585)







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11. The County Class cruiser *Suffolk*, armed with eight 8in guns, escorted many of the early PQ series of convoys. A cruiser would accompany each convoy all the way to its destination while another stood off in support to the west of Bear Island. (IWM A.4168)

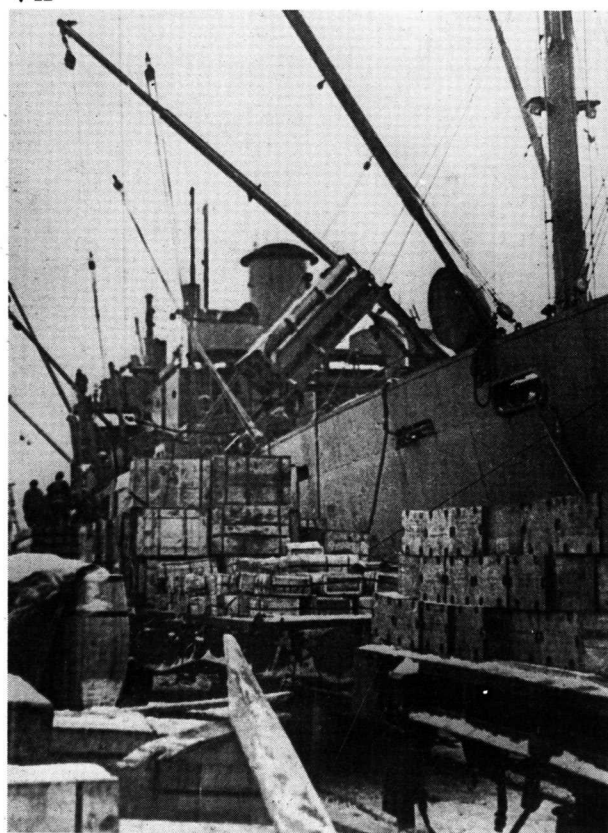
12. Supplies are unloaded at the Russian port of Murmansk. By the end of 1941, fifty-three ships had been escorted to Russia without loss. A total of 750 tanks, 800 fighters, 1,400 vehicles and over 100,000 tons of stores had been delivered to the Russians. (US Navy)

13. A U-boat crew gather on the casing of their submarine in icy weather. In July 1941 the German Naval High Command had ordered more U-boats to the Arctic but they did not make their presence felt until 1942. The photograph shows clearly how both sides faced a common enemy in the weather. (IWM HU.40267)

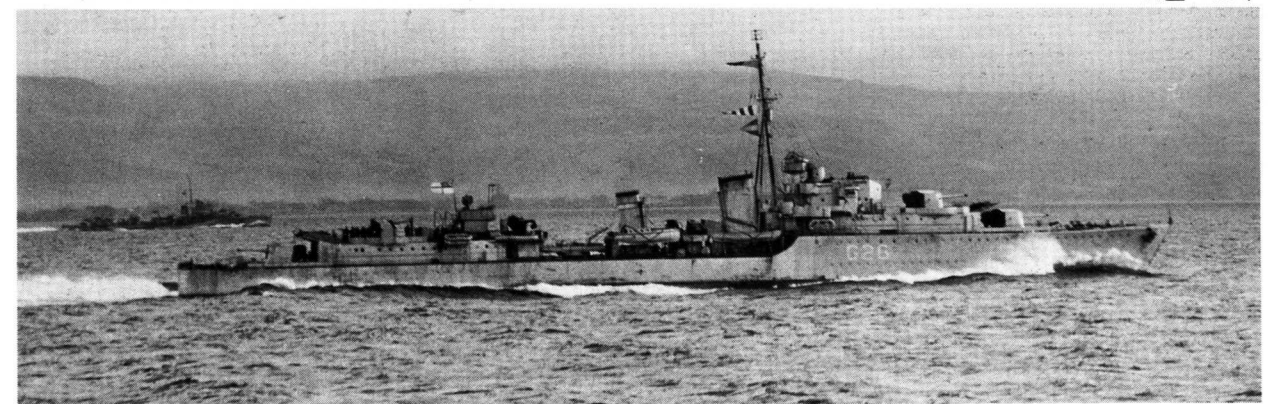
14. The German battleship *Tirpitz*, displacing 42,900 tons and armed with eight 15in guns, arrived at Trondheim on 15 January 1942 after completing her trials in the Baltic, signalling that the Germans were not prepared to watch the passage of the Russian convoys from the sidelines. The immediate effect of *Tirpitz's* arrival was the suspension of the sailing of PQ.9, and for the rest of her life *Tirpitz* would remain the single most important influence on the running of the convoys. (IWM HU.2827)

15. The first convoy to suffer from enemy attack was PQ.8, which sailed from Hvalfjord in Iceland on 8 January 1942. On 17 January *U454* torpedoed the commodore's ship *Harmatris* off the Kola Inlet and in the same attack torpedoed and sank the Tribal Class destroyer *Matabele*, seen here on 9 December 1941. There were only two survivors from *Matabele's* ship's company of nearly 200. Many had frozen to death in the icy water – a grim foretaste of things to come. (IWM A.6647)

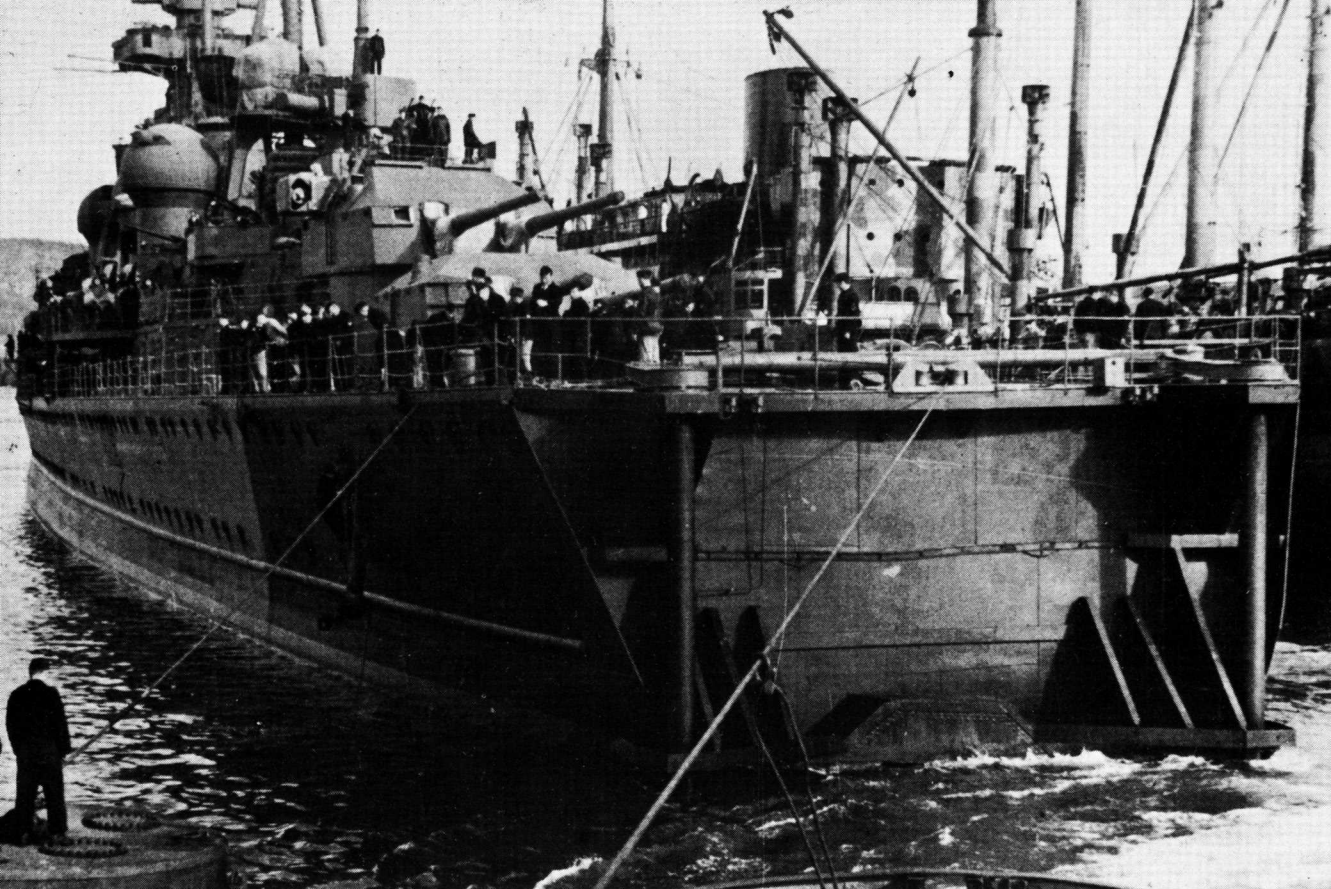
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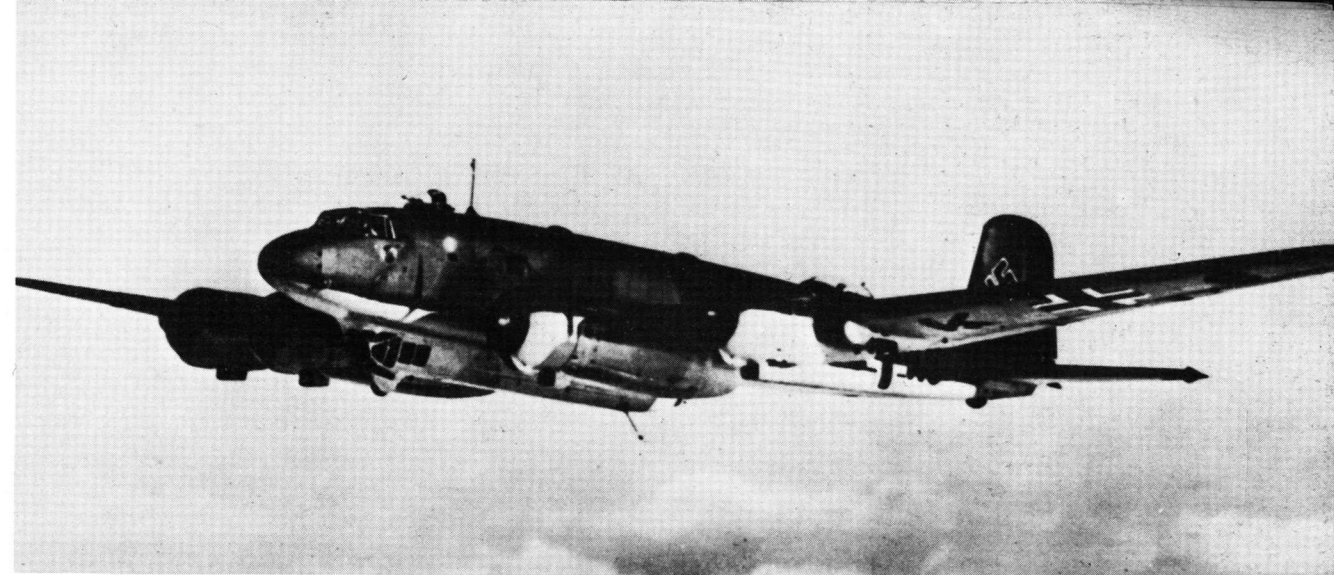
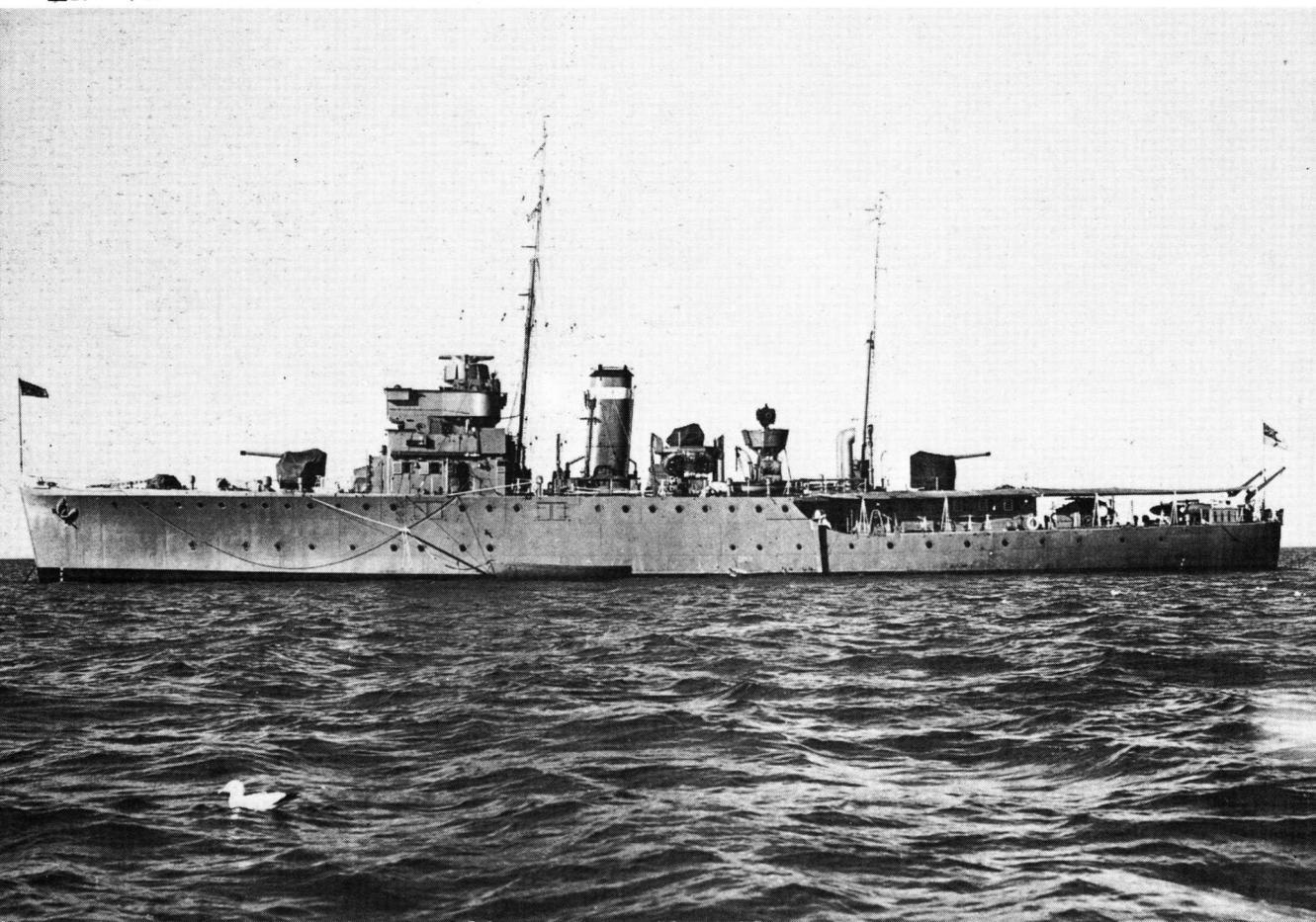
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16. As part of the reinforcement of German naval forces in Norway the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* was ordered north after the successful completion of the 'Channel Dash', but on 23 February she was torpedoed by the British submarine *Trident* off Trondheim. The cruiser's stern was blown off by the explosion, and this photograph shows the temporary repairs to the hull undertaken in Norway before she returned to Germany. (IWM HU.399)

17. The minesweeper *Sharpshooter*, which rammed and sank *U655* on 24 March 1942 during the homeward passage of convoy QP.9. *U.655* was the first of thirty-two U-boats to be lost in action against the Russian convoys. (IWM (Code 1).984)

18. The first attempt by the Germans seriously to interfere with a Russian convoy came when a Focke-Wulf FW 200C aircraft spotted convoy PQ.12, consisting of sixteen merchant ships, seventy miles

south-east of Jan Mayen Island on 5 March 1942. The next day *Tirpitz*, flying the flag of *Vizeadmiral* Otto Ciliax and escorted by three destroyers, put to sea on her first combat mission to intercept the convoy. (IWM MH.2627)

19. The battleship *King George V*, seen from the snow-covered flight deck of *Victorious* in March 1942. Both ships were already at sea under the command of Admiral Tovey to cover the passage of PQ.12 and the homeward bound QP.8. When the submarine *Seawolf* reported sighting *Tirpitz*, Tovey altered the routes of the convoys to take them out of danger. Bad weather prevented both Tovey and Ciliax from using air reconnaissance, so both sides began to play a sort of 'blind man's buff', each using RDF to establish the other's position. (IWM A.8149)

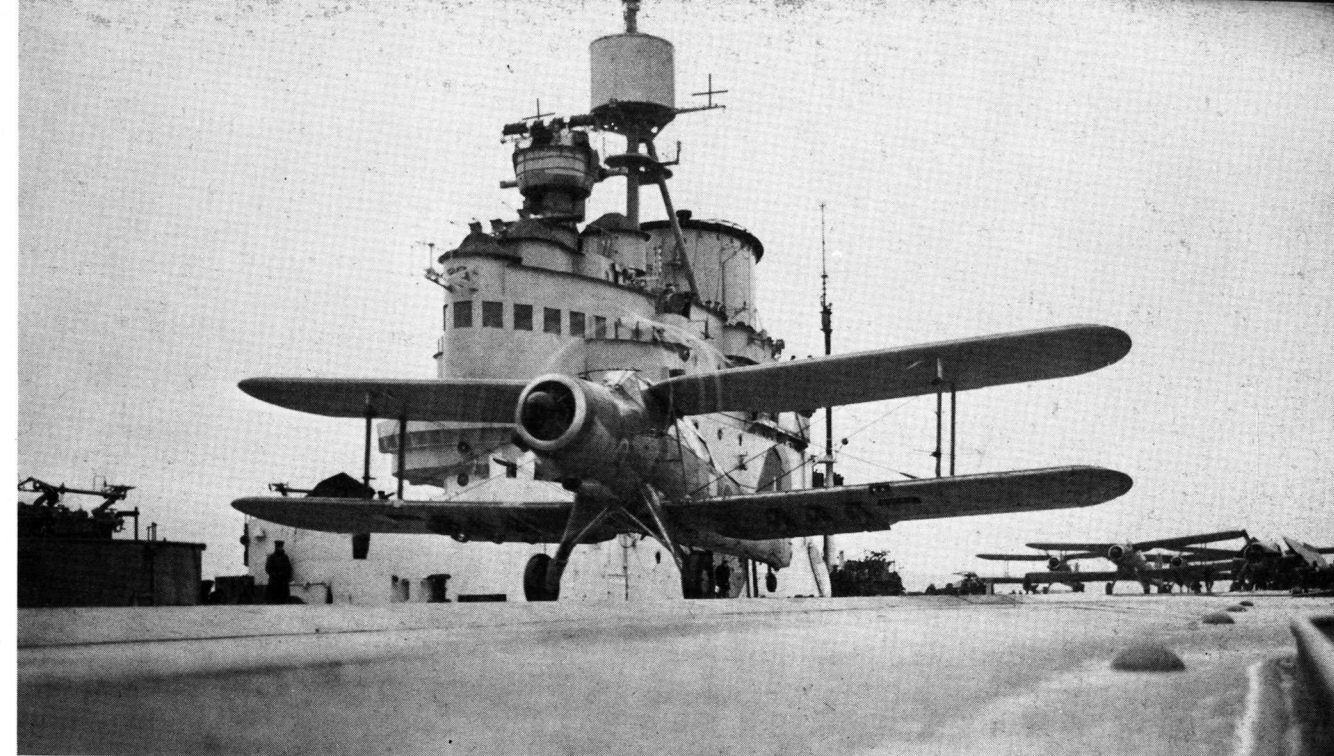
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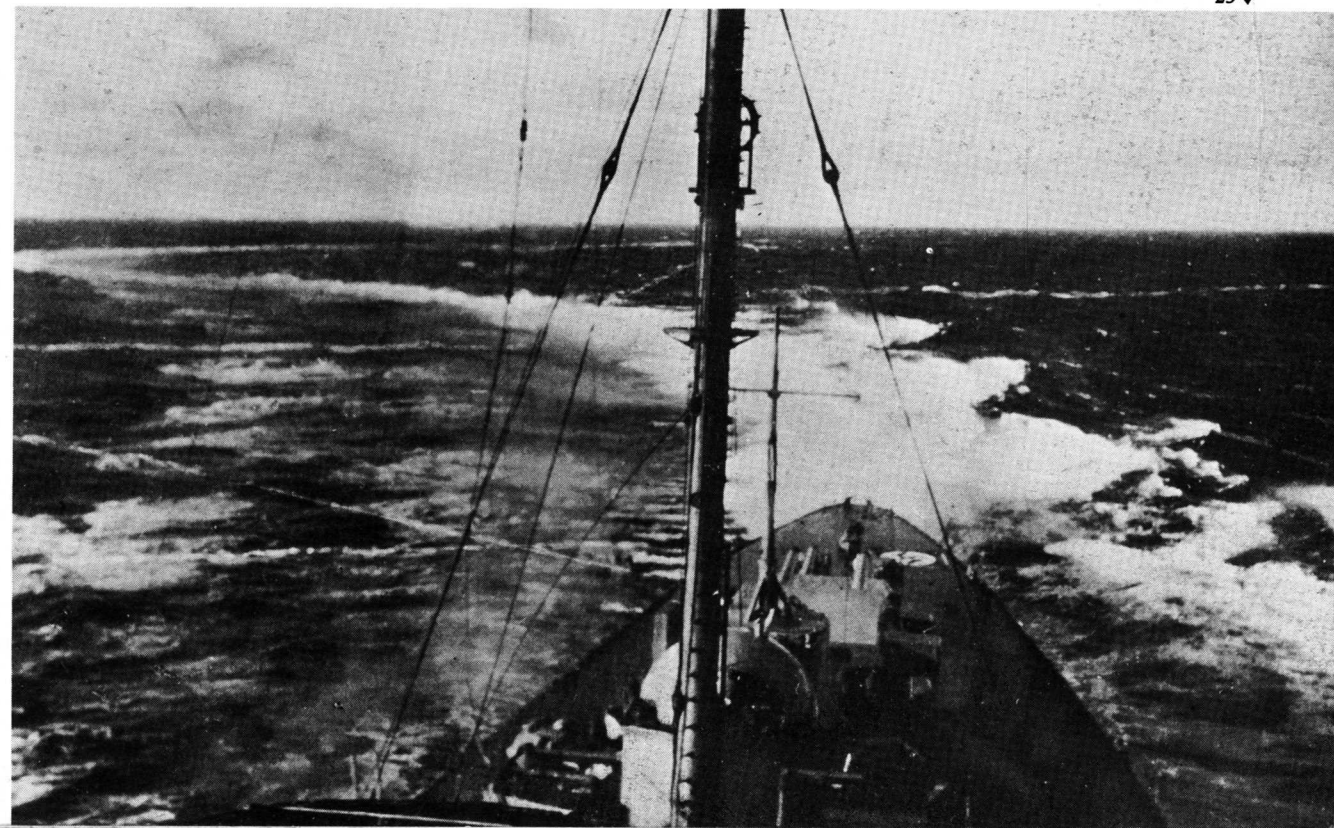


20. Ice hangs from the barrels of a 14in quadruple turret on a *King George V* Class battleship during an Arctic winter. (IWM A.8670)  
 21. HMS *Duke of York* ploughs through rough seas in March 1942 while providing distant cover for convoys PQ.12 and QP.8. (IWM A.8143)  
 22. An Albacore torpedo-bomber prepares for take off on board HMS *Victorious*. By 9 March weather conditions had improved to allow *Victorious* to fly off twelve Albacores in a strike against *Tirpitz*. The aircraft had hoped to use cloud cover to work themselves into a favourable attacking position, but the weather was clearing and

exposed them to the German gunners. The attacks were resolutely pressed home with what one German writer described as 'that fanaticism of which every Briton is capable'. (IWM A.12546)  
 23. The wake of *Tirpitz* as the great ship twists and turns to avoid the torpedoes launched at her from both sides by *Victorious*' Albacores. Captain Karl Topp handled his ship with consummate skill, and two of the Albacores were shot down. No hits were scored, although both Topp and Ciliax later considered that *Tirpitz* had been struck by one or possibly two torpedoes which failed to explode. (IWM HU.2217)

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24. The heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper* was sent to Norway to replace the damaged *Prinz Eugen*. The ship reached Trondheim on 19 March, adding strength to the German battle-group, which now consisted of *Tirpitz*, the 'pocket-battleship' *Admiral Scheer*, *Hipper* herself and several destroyers and other craft. *Hipper*'s camouflage does not seem to be very effective. (IWM HU.35747)

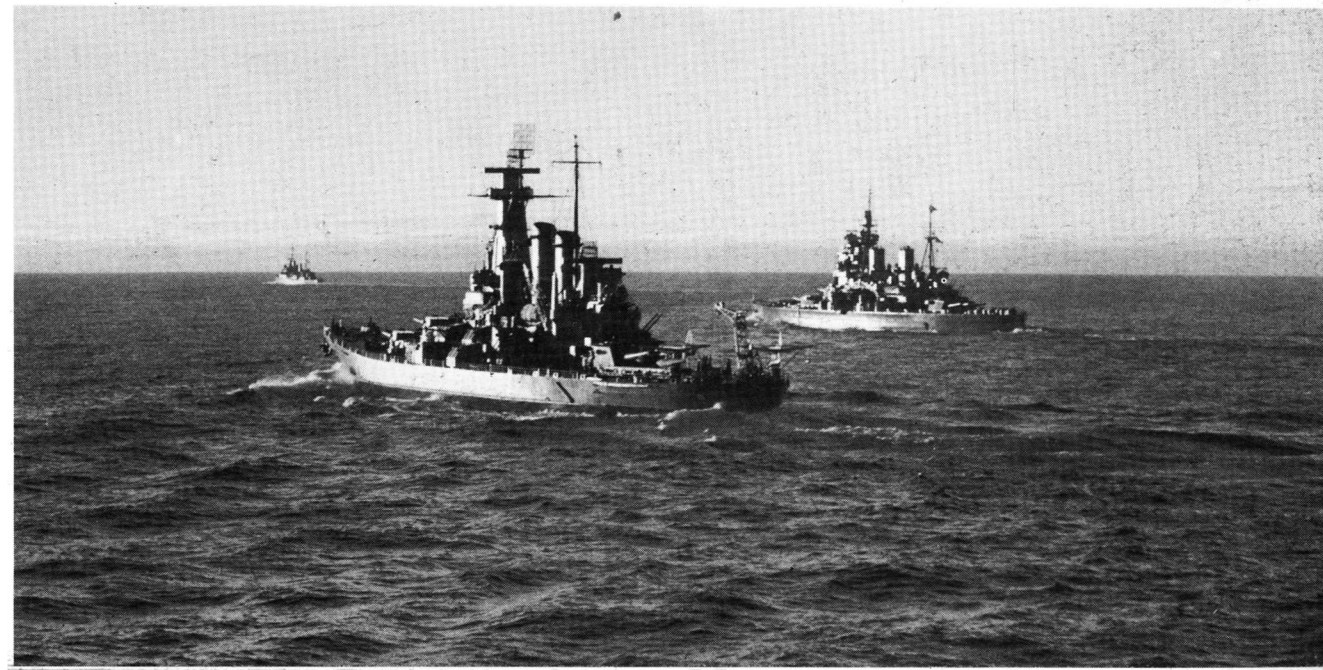
25. The entry of the United States into the war in December 1941 brought some much-needed reinforcement for the Home Fleet. On 3 April 1942 an American task force arrived at Scapa Flow to serve with the Royal Navy, thus repeating history. The photograph shows the aircraft carrier *USS Wasp* being cheered into Scapa by the crew

of the cruiser *HMS Edinburgh*. (IWM A.9231)

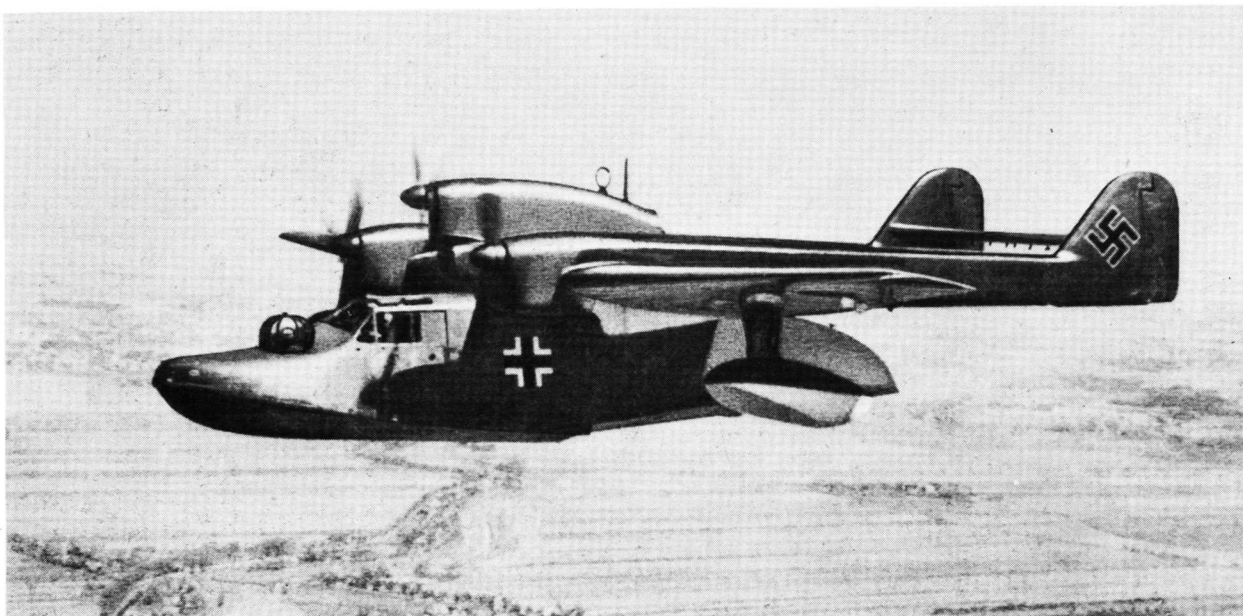
26. The American ships were commanded by Rear-Admiral Robert C. Giffen, who is seen here on board *HMS Duke of York* with the second-in-command of the Home Fleet, Vice-Admiral A. T. Curteis. (IWM A.9230)

27. The US battleship *Washington*, seen here in company with *HMS Duke of York* in May 1942, was, with her main armament of nine 16in guns, an extremely powerful addition to the Home Fleet. The Royal Navy found their American allies to be very enthusiastic and well equipped, but considered that their screening and anti-submarine techniques needed some improvement. (IWM A.10664)

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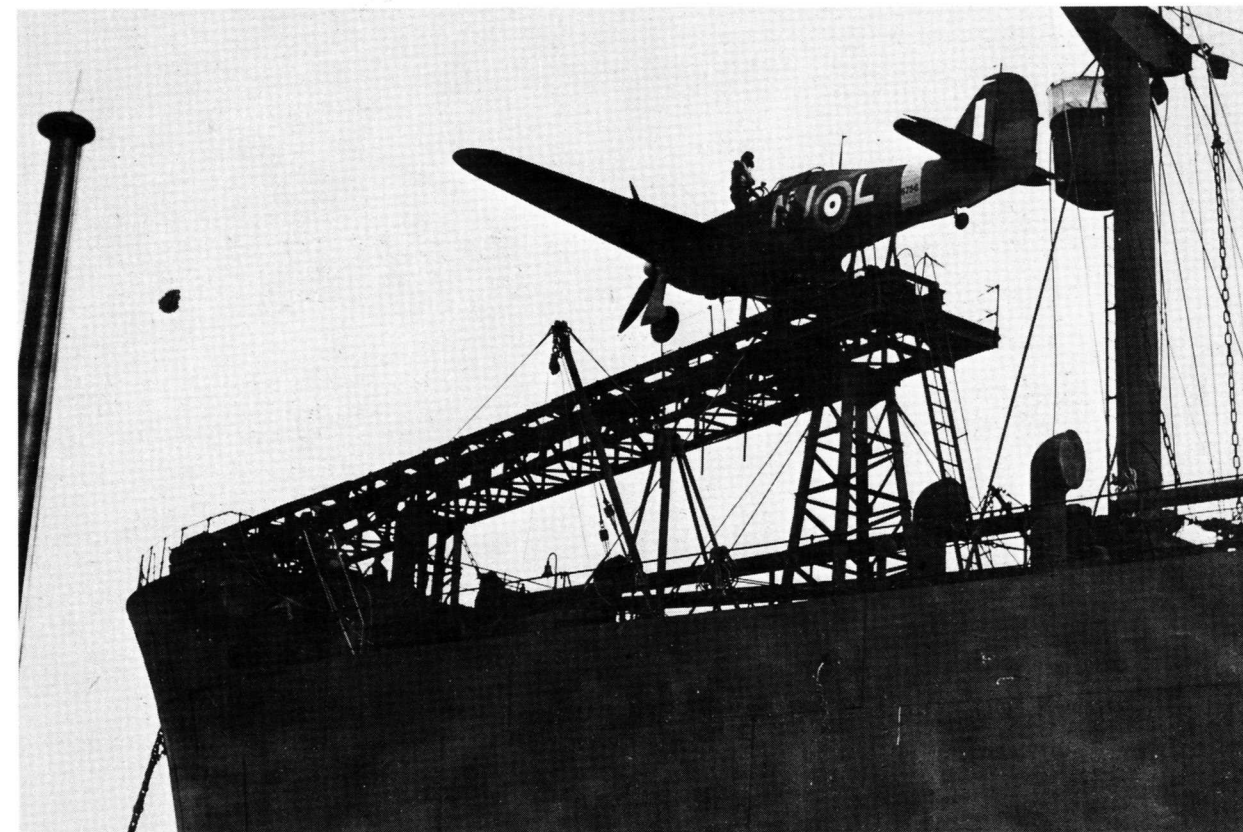
28. A Blohm und Voss BV 138 long-range reconnaissance aircraft, which, from airfields in northern Norway, could cover the whole of the Barents Sea. As the 'winter nights' drew to a close in the spring of 1942 the *Luftwaffe* assembled a force of 264 aircraft, many of whose crews were specially trained in anti-shipping work, to use the long hours of summer daylight to launch heavy attacks on the convoys. (IWM GER.255)

29. An aerial reconnaissance photograph of a convoy. Since the convoys lacked effective air defence, shadowing German aircraft

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like the FW 200 and BV 138 were free to vector U-boats and bombers in to the attack. Convoys running to Russia in April and May 1942 noted increasing air attacks, and the Admiralty considered that unless adequate air defence could be provided for the convoys their sailing should be suspended until the long winter nights made them less vulnerable. Political considerations, however, meant that the Admiralty was overruled. (IWM OEM.6561)



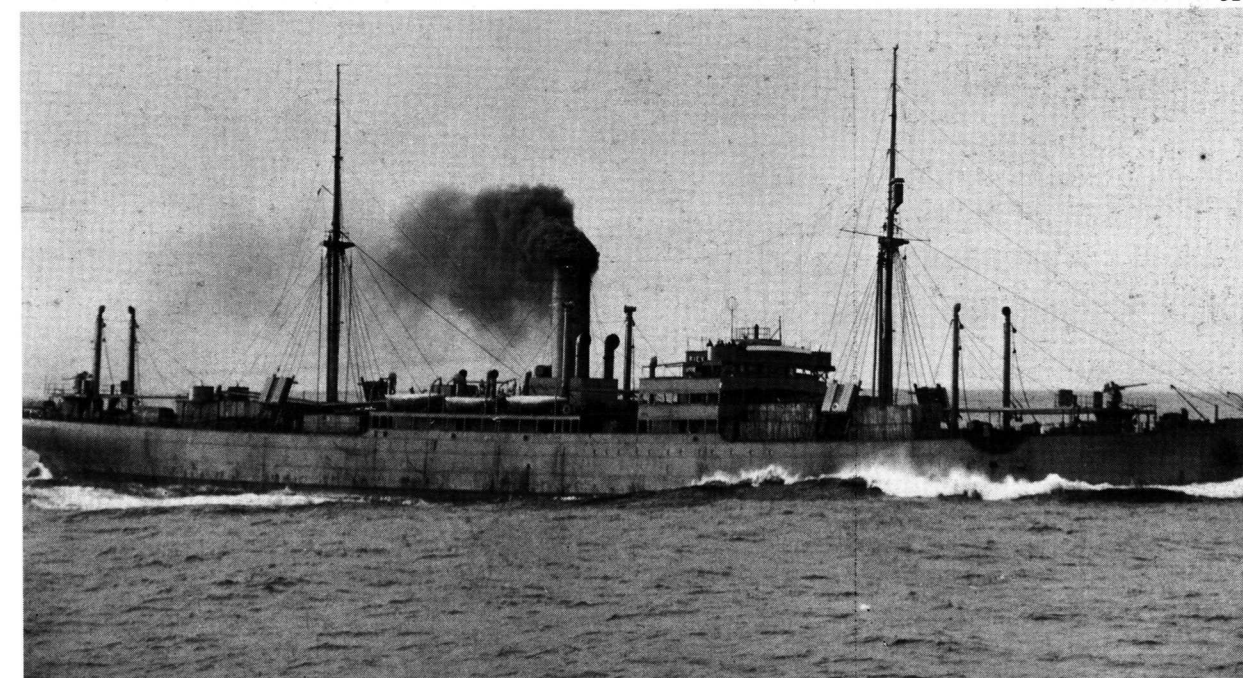
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30. The obvious solution was for an aircraft carrier to accompany the convoy, but none was available, so the only alternative was Hurricanes mounted on catapults fitted in the bows of converted merchant ships. These were, however, 'one shot' weapons, since there was no means of recovering the aircraft once they had been launched. The pilots would have to ditch and hope someone

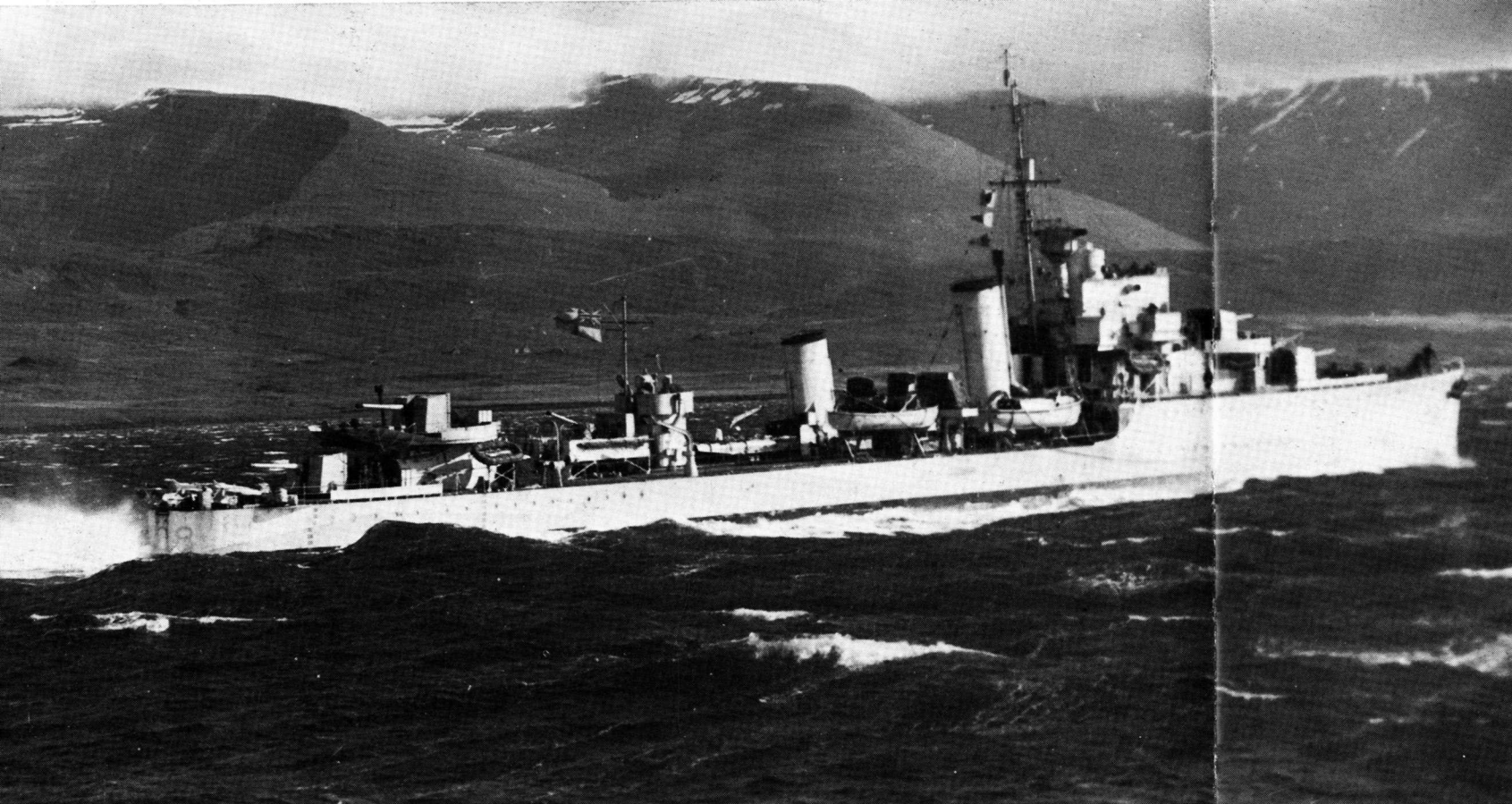
stopped to pick them up! (IWM A.9422)

31. The Russian merchant ship *Kiev* (6,000grt), torpedoed while bound for Iceland with convoy QP.10. As well as the threat from the *Luftwaffe*, U-boat activity was also increasing. By June 1942 at least sixteen U-boats were operating against the Russian convoys. (IWM A.8084)

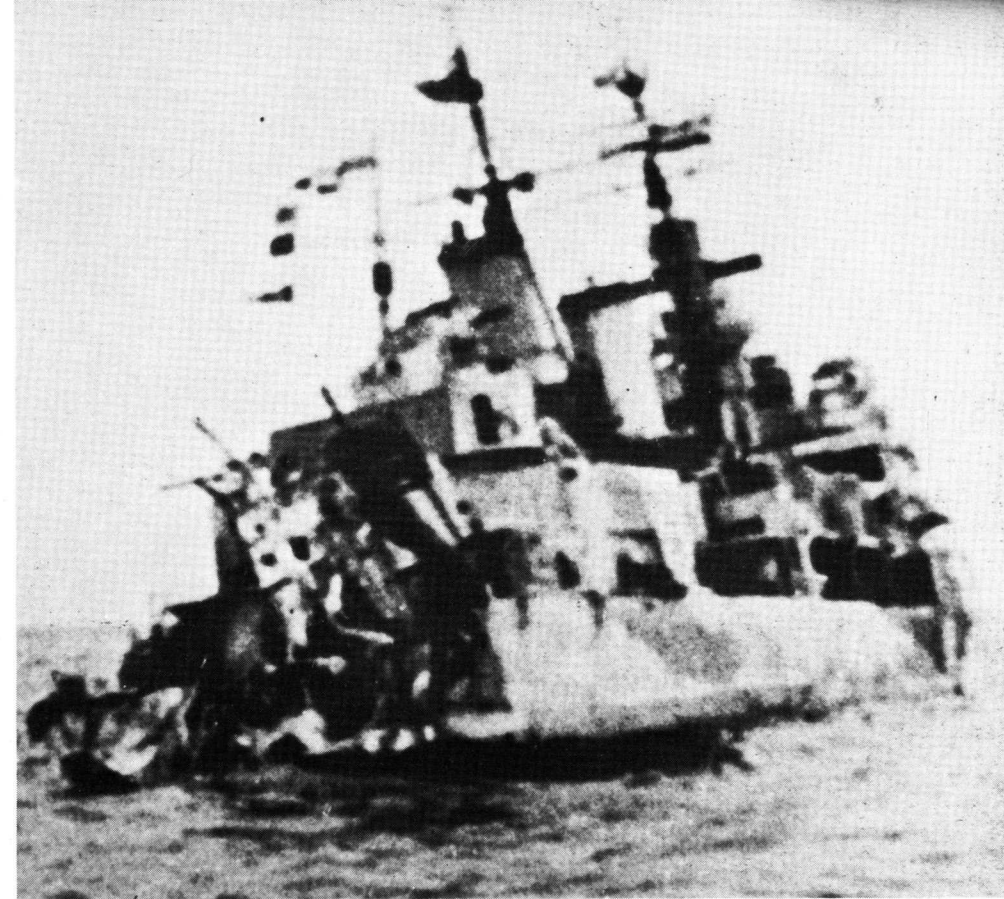
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32. The destroyer HMS *Eclipse*, built in 1934 and armed with four single 4.7in guns on the CP Mk XVII mounting. Note that the after bank of torpedo tubes has been replaced by a 3in HA gun. During an attack on convoy PQ.13 on 29 March by three German destroyers, *Z24*, *Z25* and *Z26*, *Eclipse* chased and sank *Z26*, but in the same attack the cruiser *Trinidad* was badly damaged by one of her own torpedoes which turned in a half-circle and returned to strike the cruiser on the port side. Under escort from *Eclipse* and HMS *Fury*, the damaged *Trinidad* arrived safely in the Kola Inlet on 30 March. (IWM A.11551)

33. The cruiser HMS *Edinburgh*, armed with twelve 6in and twelve 4in guns. *Edinburgh* had sailed to Russia with PQ.13 carrying steel plating for the damaged *Trinidad* and on her homeward journey with QP.11 was carrying five tons of Russian gold as part payment for Allied supplies. (IWM A.6160)

34. On 30 April *Edinburgh*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Stuart Bonham Carter, was steaming 15 miles ahead of QP.11 when she was hit by two torpedoes fired by *U456*. The first struck amidships on the starboard side while the second blew off *Edinburgh's* stern, leaving her dead in the water. Using her two remaining shafts, the cruiser began the slow crawl back to Kola with the destroyer HMS *Forester* and two Russian destroyers acting as a screen and with another destroyer, *Foresight*, secured astern to act as a drogue and keep her on a steady course. (IWM MH.23866)

35. The German destroyer *Z25*, built in 1940 and armed with four 15cm guns. On 1 May *Z25* left Kirkenes with *Z24* and *Hermann Schoemann* to attack QP.11. The Germans were not enthusiastic about using unsupported destroyers to harry the convoys, but *Konteradmiral* Schmundt changed his mind on receiving *U456's* report of the damaged *Edinburgh* (IWM HU.1053)

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36. The three destroyers found QP.11 on the afternoon of 1 May and under cover of snowstorms approached to within 9,000yds to fire torpedoes. The convoy was skilfully defended by its destroyer escort, led by *Bulldog*, seen here on 17 April 1944. Four times the German destroyers came in to launch attacks, but they were beaten off each time despite the great disparity in armament between the two forces. (IMW FL.1817)

37. The destroyer *Foresight* was still screening the damaged *Edinburgh* when the three German destroyers appeared from the south-west. Having failed to attack the convoy, the Germans thought that the British cruiser would be easy game, and under cover of smokescreens and snowstorms tried to approach to within torpedo range but were prevented by the bold tactics of the British destroyers. *Forester* was badly damaged but was saved by *Foresight* steaming in between her and the enemy. (IWM A.5857)

38. *Edinburgh's* condition was serious. She was down by the bow and had a heavy list to port, but despite the damage she was able to engage the German destroyers using 'B' turret in local control. Her second salvo struck *Hermann Schoemann*, two shells landing in Nos. 1 and 2 turbine rooms and bringing the destroyer to a halt. *Schoemann* was later abandoned and scuttled. (IWM HU.43349)

39. *Edinburgh's* luck could not last for ever, and she was hit on the port side amidships by a torpedo probably fired by Z24. The list now increased to 17 degrees and Rear-Admiral Bonham Carter realized that the ship must be open to the sea from side to side, a supposition later confirmed by the engine room staff. Accordingly Captain Faulkner was given the order to abandon ship and the minesweepers *Harrier* and *Gossamer* came alongside to take off survivors. *Edinburgh* was finally scuttled by a torpedo fired by HMS *Foresight*. (IWM MH.23867)

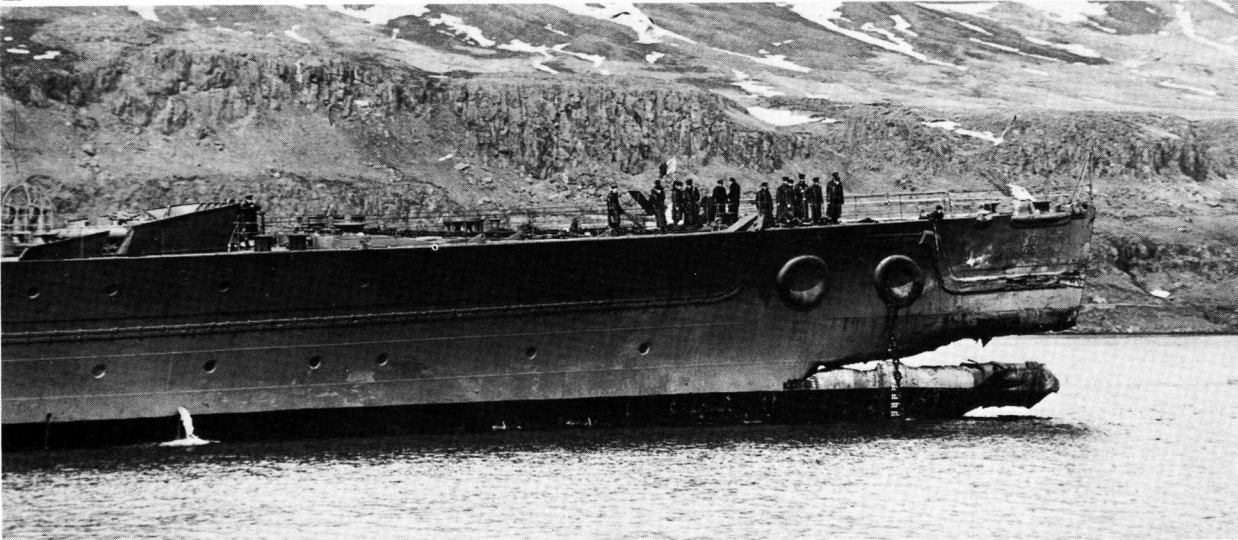
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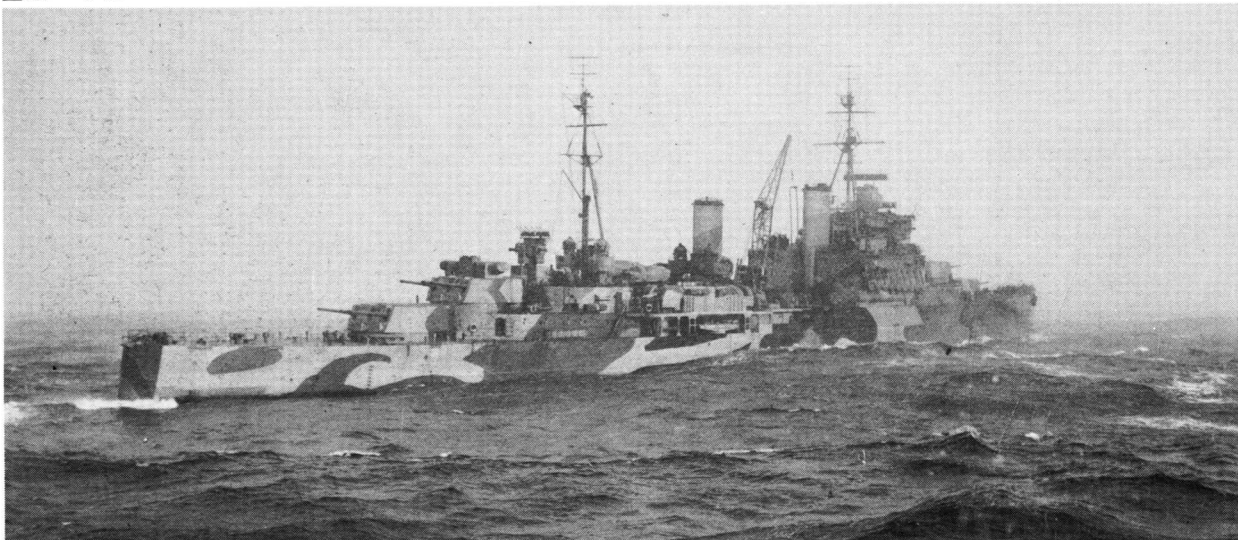




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40,41. The Tribal Class destroyer HMS *Punjabi*, armed with three twin 4.7in and one twin 4in guns and seen here (photograph 40) on 20 November 1941, was part of the covering force for convoy PQ.15. In poor visibility on 1 May she was rammed and cut in half by the battleship *King George V*. *Punjabi*'s forward half remained afloat long enough for 206 men to be rescued but the stern half, on which *Punjabi*'s outfit of thirty depth charges was stowed, sank rapidly. The DCs had not been set at 'safe' and exploded, increasing the damage the battleship had suffered in the collision. Photograph 41 shows the damage to *King George V*'s bows; the ship had to return to Iceland before proceeding to Liverpool for permanent repairs. (IWM A.6460/IWM A.9947)

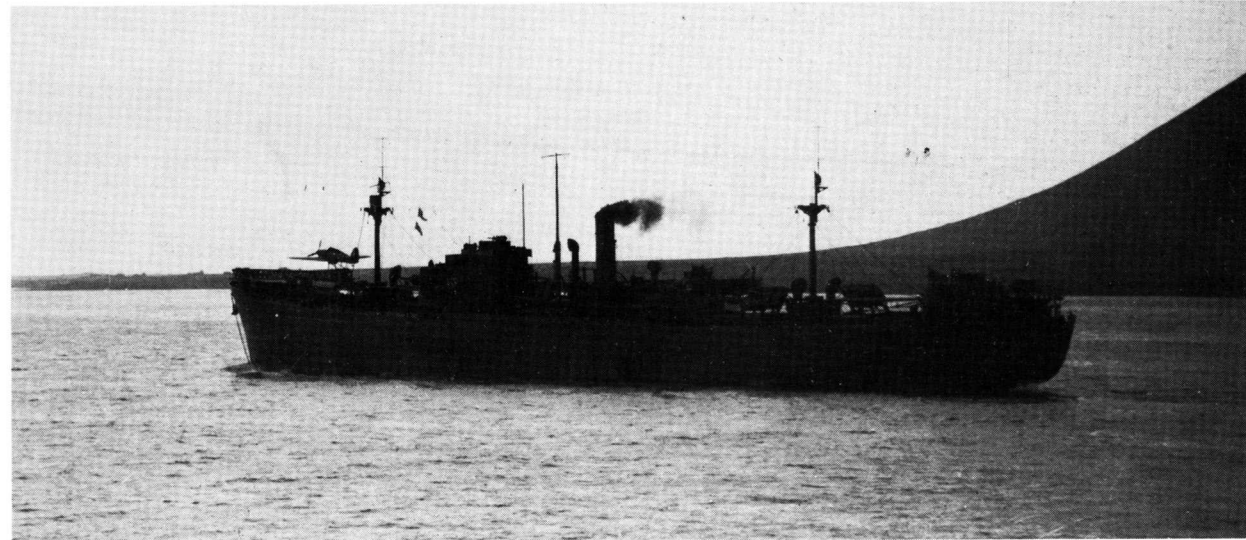
42. Repairs to the cruiser *Trinidad*, which had languished in the Kola Inlet since the end of March, were complete by the beginning of May 1942. On 13 May she sailed for Iceland, but she was attacked the next day by Ju 88 bombers. Two hits were sustained, fires were started which rapidly got out of control, and for the second time in less than a fortnight Rear-Admiral Bonham-Carter was forced to abandon his flagship. *Trinidad* was later sunk by a torpedo fired by HMS *Matchless*. This photograph was taken in

March 1942 and shows *Trinidad* about to refuel the destroyer *Eclipse*. (IWM A.8087)

43. On 21 May 1942 convoy PQ.16 sailed from Iceland bound for Murmansk and Archangel. PQ.16 was the largest convoy so far sent to Russia and consisted of 35 merchant ships escorted by four cruisers, eight destroyers, two submarines and ten other warships. The Admiralty was concerned about the threat from German air attack and requested that the convoy be suspended, but Churchill, unwilling to offend either Stalin or Roosevelt, insisted on the operation. The photograph shows PQ.16 assembling in Hvalfjord before departure. (IWM A.9172)

44. PQ.16 was one of the first convoys to be given the protection of a CAM ship – the *Empire Lawrence*, seen here leaving Hvalfjord on 21 May. On 25 May this vessel flew off her Hurricane, which shot down one He 111 torpedo-bomber and damaged another, only to be shot down in turn by the AA fire of one of the merchant ships. Six of the merchant ships in PQ.16 were lost to air attack while *U703* sank another; *Empire Lawrence* herself was bombed and sunk on 27 May, and it seemed that the worst fears of the Admiralty had been realized. (IWM A.9292)

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45. Escorts and merchant ships assemble in Hvalfjord in June 1942 before the sailing of the next Russian convoy, PQ.17; behind the destroyer *Icarus* (103) is the Russian tanker *Azerbaijan*. There were 36 merchant ships in PQ.17, escorted by six destroyers, four corvettes, two submarines, two special AA ships and seven smaller warships, and for the first time three specially equipped rescue ships accompanied the convoy. (IWM A.8953)

46. The escort forces were commanded by Commander J. Broome in HMS *Keppel*. Broome was very experienced, having spent the whole war in the Western Approaches Command, and he was concerned that none of the escorts had worked together before – a departure from successful ‘escort group’ tactics with which he was familiar. (IWM A.21926)

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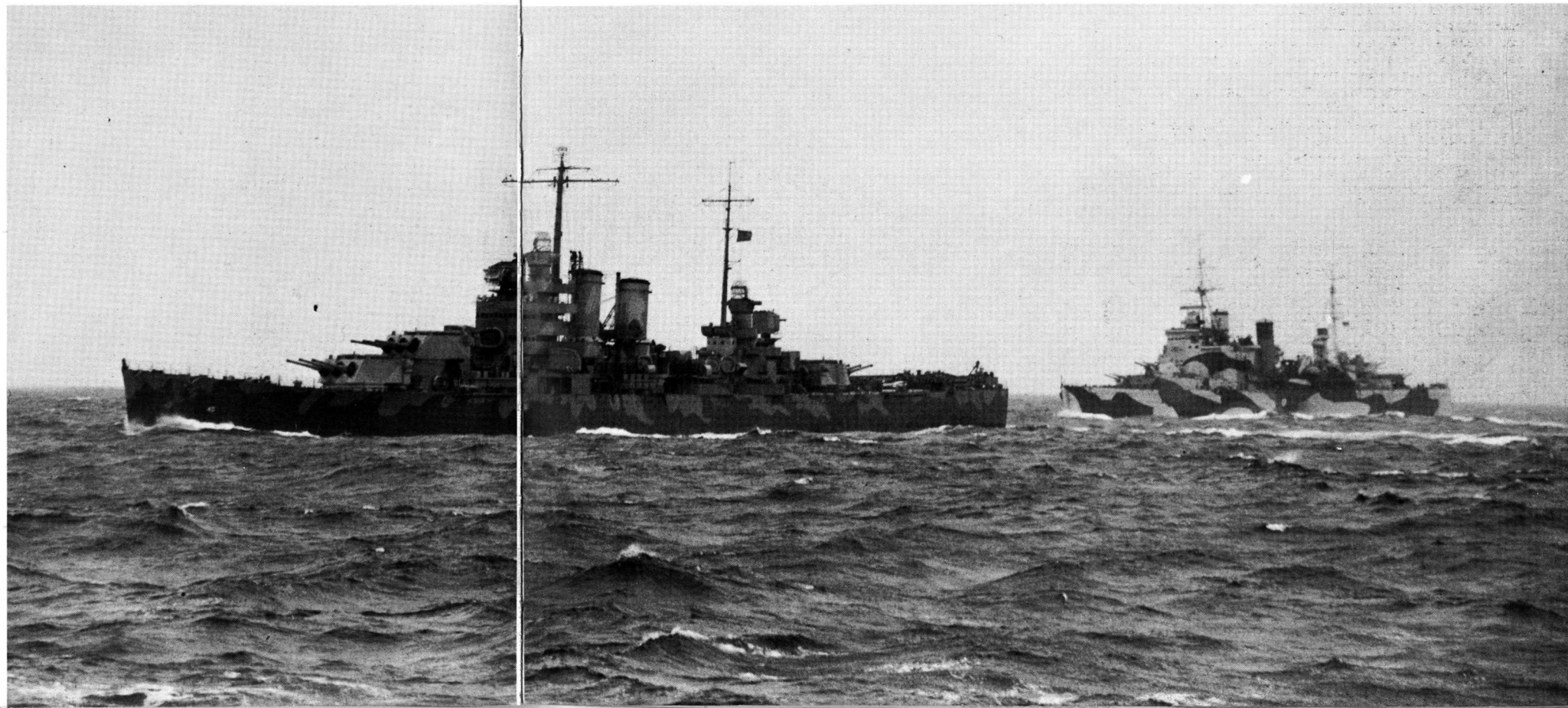


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47. Rear-Admiral ‘Turtle’ Hamilton, who commanded the covering force for PQ.17, was a popular and respected officer who bitterly resented having to sail PQ.17 without proper air cover. Like many naval officers he disliked the emphasis placed on the bombing of German cities when the Navy and RAF Coastal Command were starved of aircraft. (IWM A.6822)

48. The covering force for PQ.17 consisted of the British cruisers *London* and *Norfolk* and the USS *Wichita* and *Tuscaloosa*; the photograph shows *London* and *Wichita* in June 1942. *London* was one of the well-known County Class cruisers but had been completely reconstructed from March 1939 to February 1941, and both she and *Wichita* are examples of the cruisers built by the major naval powers under the terms of the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty. (IWM A.9295)

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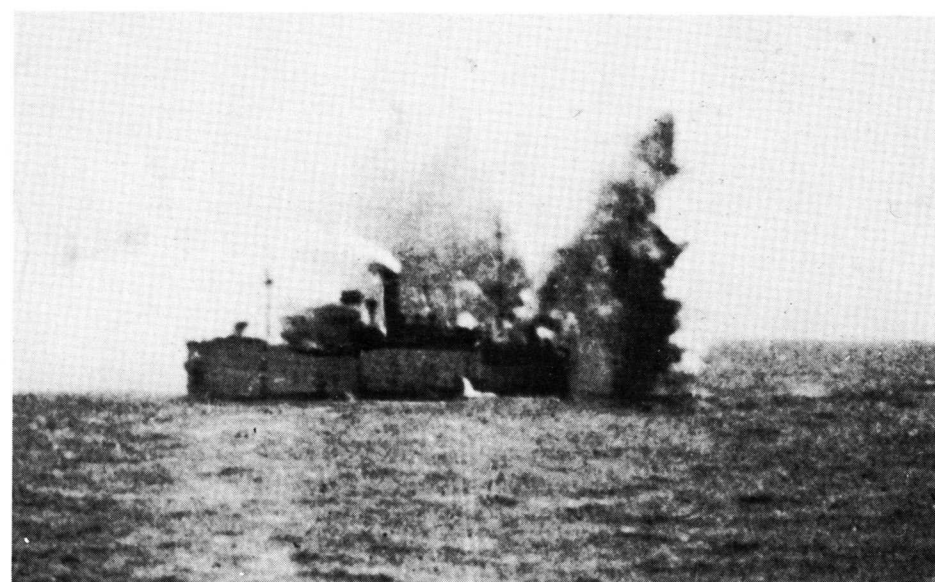
49. A Heinkel He 115 torpedo-bomber of the type which mounted the first air attacks on PQ.17 on 2 July. The German squadron commander flew between two columns of merchant ships, dodging the hail of AA fire but then crashed into the sea ahead of the convoy. Before two escorts could approach to rescue the crew, another He 115 swooped down, landed alongside the wreck, picked up the survivors and took off again – an incredible feat of courage and airmanship by the pilot. (IWM HU.2720)

50. The US destroyer *Wainwright* was steaming on the starboard side of PQ.17 on 4 July when her radar picked up a stream of contacts which proved to be 23 He 111 torpedo-bombers of KG 26. *Wainwright* swung out towards the aircraft and with her four 5in guns put up a terrific barrage which brought down one Heinkel and completely broke up the German attack. This photograph shows the destroyer about to refuel from the cruiser *HMS Norfolk*. (IWM A.10690)

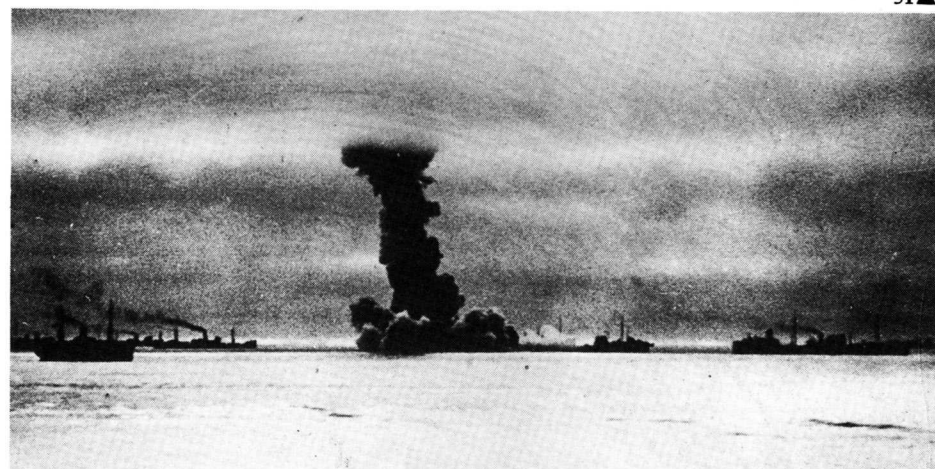
51. The British freighter *Navarino* explodes after being torpedoed during the second attack on 4 July. The freighter *William Hooper* was also hit in this attack. (IWM OEM.3970)

52. In the same attack the Russian tanker *Azerbaijan* was torpedoed. Her crew stayed on board and mastered the fire, and within half an hour the ship had taken up her position in the convoy. *Azerbaijan*'s crew included a number of women whose presence was a never-ending source of speculation among British and American merchant seamen. *Azerbaijan* survived the débâcle which was to follow and arrived safely at Archangel despite a gaping hole in her side. (Associated Press)

53. The progress of PQ.17 had been closely monitored by the German Navy, and on 2 July *Tirpitz*, seen here at Trondheim in the spring of 1942, was ordered north to Altenfjord and was joined by the 'pocket-battleship' *Admiral Scheer* and the cruiser *Admiral Hipper*. At Altenfjord the German ships awaited Hitler's permission to sail and attack the convoy – permission was which not granted because the *Luftwaffe* could not guarantee the absence of British capital ships and aircraft carriers from the convoy's escort. The move from Trondheim had been detected by British aerial reconnaissance, but not *Tirpitz*'s subsequent arrival at Altenfjord. (IWM HU.35755)



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54. Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, the First Sea Lord, who from his headquarters in London had been watching the movements of both PQ.17 and the German task force in Norway. To Pound it was clear that *Tirpitz's* absence from Trondheim meant that an attack on PQ.17 was imminent, despite some intelligence to the contrary. At 9.11pm on 4 July, Pound ordered PQ.17's cruiser escort to withdraw to the west, and twelve minutes later he ordered the convoy to disperse; twenty-three minutes later he ordered 'Convoy is to scatter'. Swinging round her buoy in Altenfjord *Tirpitz* had won the greatest victory of her career while the heavily laden and lightly armed merchant ships of PQ.17 were left to the mercy of the U-boats and the *Luftwaffe*. (IWM A.20791)

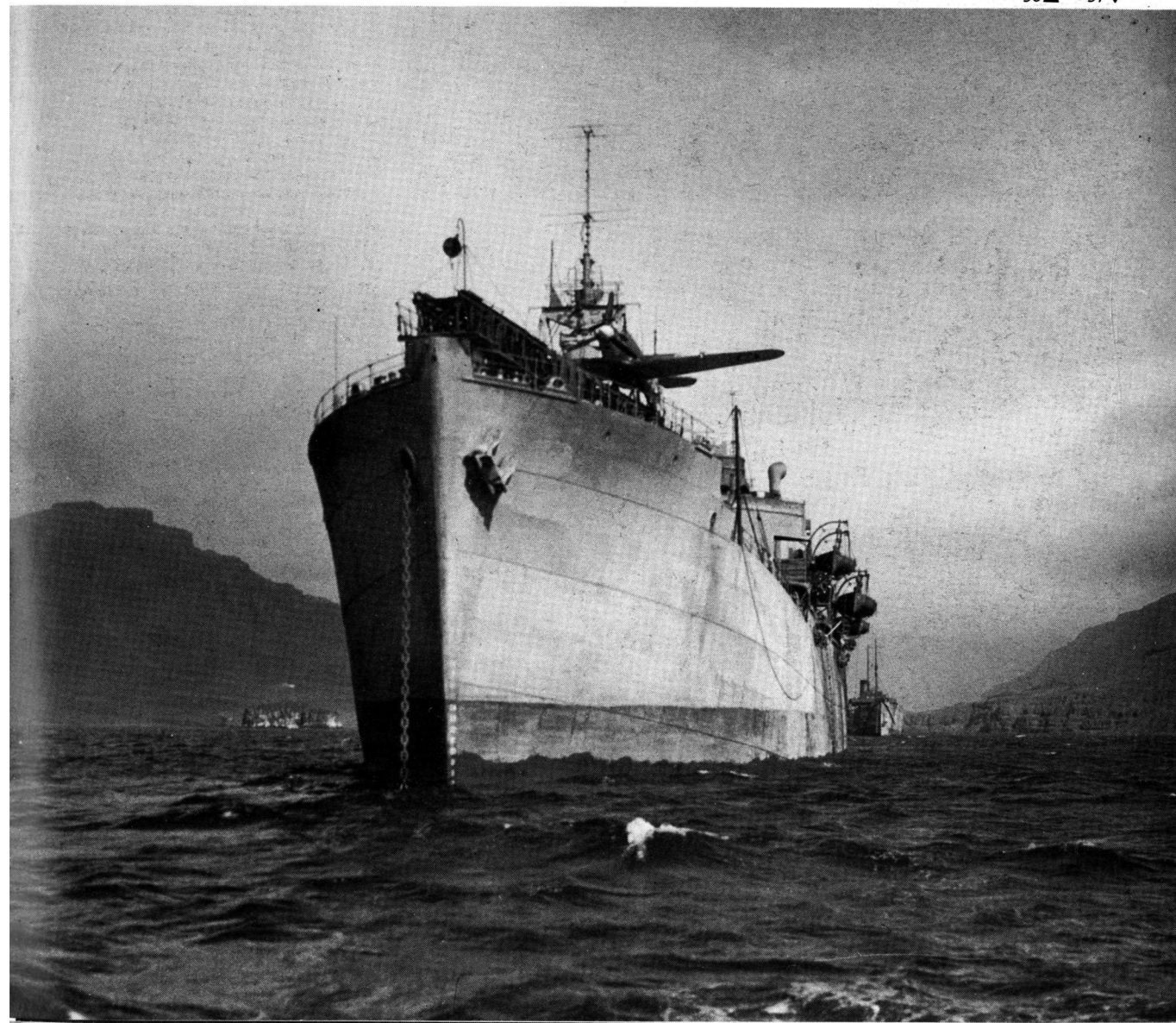
55. The Hunt Class destroyer HMS *Ledbury* was once one of the destroyers detached from the Home Fleet for PQ.17's escort. When the order to scatter the convoy was received Commander Broome directed the destroyers in the escort to join Hamilton's cruisers, leaving the other escorts to proceed to Russia, since he felt that the destroyers would be of more use to Hamilton if *Tirpitz* appeared. It was a difficult but undoubtedly correct decision, but when no German ships were sighted morale dropped and *Ledbury's* captain wrote: 'It was now realized that we were abandoning the convoy and the whole ship's company was cast into bitter despondency'. (IWM A.30687)

56. The armed trawler *Ayrshire*, of 540 tons and armed with one 4in gun, Lewis machine guns and depth charges. When the order to scatter was received the merchant ships spread out and proceeded independently. *Ayrshire* gathered three freighters, *Silver Sword*, *Troubador* and *Ironclad*, under her wing and headed north for the ice-field. The four ships steamed some 20 miles into the ice pack and then hove-to. They then painted all their south-facing sides white as a form of camouflage and for two days waited while listening to the distress calls of their former consorts before breaking out. Eventually, on 24 July, they reached Archangel. (IWM A.10101)

57. The CAM ship *Empire Tide*, under the command of Captain M. Harvey, which headed for the island of Novaya Zemlya after the order to scatter had been given. Narrowly missing attack by U255, she took refuge in Mollen Bay and awaited assistance. On 17 July she was spotted by a prowling Ju 88, but the sight of the ship's Hurricane preparing to take off caused the German aircraft to break off. Finally, on 20 July, the Free French corvette *La Malouine* arrived to escort *Empire Tide* back to Archangel. (IWM A.10115)



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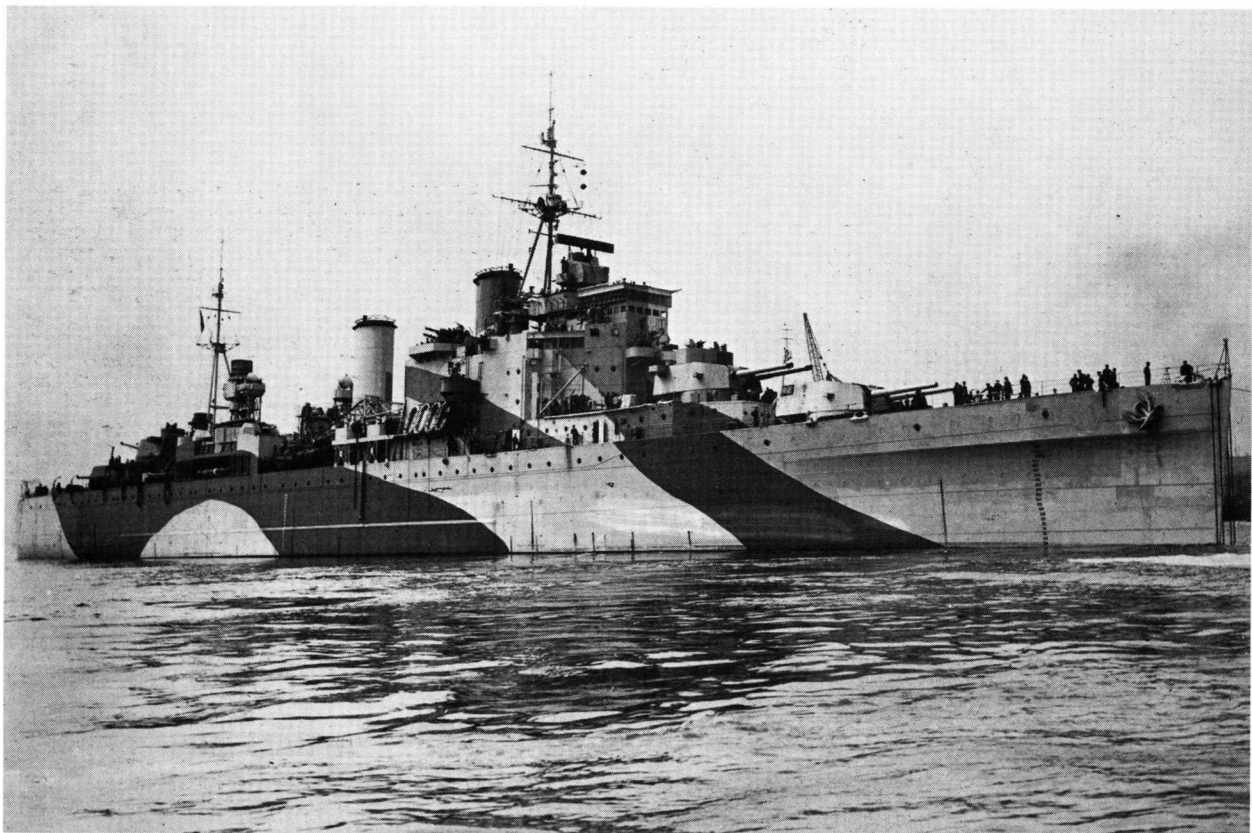




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#### ◀ 61

58. A U-boat commander at the periscope. U-boats accounted for sixteen of the 36 merchant ships in PQ.17, the *Luftwaffe* sank another eight, and two had turned back. The supplies intended for Russia which had been lost amounted to 430 tanks, 210 aircraft, 3,350 vehicles and 99,316 tons of cargo, and 152 merchant seamen lost their lives. German losses consisted of five aircraft. (IWM FLM. 1460)

59. Rear-Admiral Hamilton's flagship, the cruiser *London*. After the PQ.17 disaster there was much bad feeling in the Fleet and *London* acquired the derisory nickname 'Wop Flagship'. In an effort to calm things down Hamilton cleared lower deck and gave his ship's company an unprecedented briefing on what had happened. *London* is shown here on the Tyne after her third and final refit in 1943. (IWM FL.2968)

60. The next convoy, PQ.18, was delayed because of the need to transfer forces to the Mediterranean for Operation 'Pedestal' (the relief of Malta), but by the end of August the necessary ships were back in home waters. Rear-Admiral Robert Burnett, a tough, no-nonsense tactician, seen here (right) on the bridge of HMS *Faulknor* with Captain A. Scott Moncrieff, was appointed by Admiral Tovey to fight PQ.18 through to Russia in the face of whatever forces the Germans chose to pitch against it. (IWM A.10318)

61. The lack of air cover had been a crucial factor in the loss of PQ.17, and Burnett was given the use of the new escort carrier HMS *Avenger* in order to improve anti-aircraft protection. *Avenger* carried six Sea Hurricanes – which can be seen on the flight deck in this July 1942 photograph – and three Swordfish ASW aircraft. This was a small force compared with the might of the *Luftwaffe*, but Burnett was confident that these aircraft would be able to discourage shadowers and break up attacking formations effectively. (IWM FL.1268)





62. As well as improved air defence, PQ.18 was also given an additional 12-16 destroyers called the Fighting Destroyer Escort. The FDE would reinforce the ASW screen and AA defence and, in the event of an attack by German surface ships, deliver massed torpedo attacks. In this photograph the destroyer *Fury*, herself a veteran of many Russian convoys, leads HMS *Ashanti* and two other destroyers of the FDE in the intensive exercises which preceded the sailing of the convoy. The appointment of Burnett, together with the provision of improved AA and escort forces, showed Britain's commitment to fulfil the promises made to her Russian ally and erase the stain of PQ.17. (IWM A.10296)

63. On 13 September the *Luftwaffe* launched its first attack on PQ.18 using He 111 torpedo-bombers of KG 26, an experienced anti-shipping unit. The Germans used a technique called the 'Golden Comb' whereby the aircraft approached the convoy in line abreast and released their torpedoes simultaneously. (IWM MH.6547)

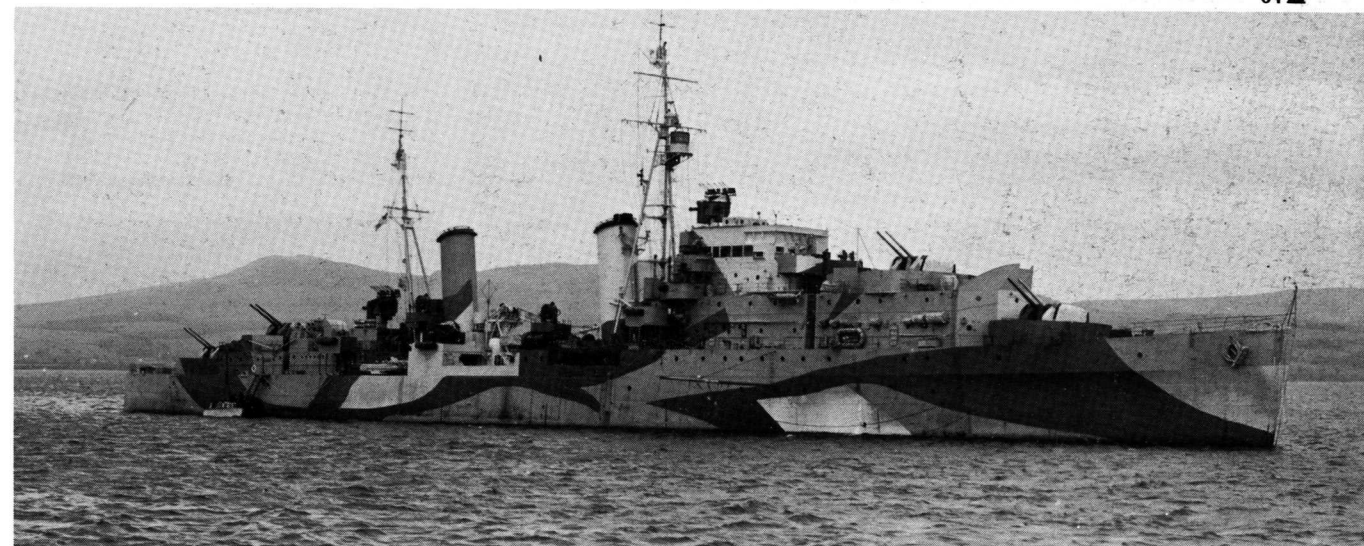
64. A photograph taken from *Avenger* during the first air attack on PQ.18. Five German aircraft can be seen flying amid the intense AA barrage put up by the escorts. In an effort to avoid the torpedoes the Commodore ordered an emergency 45-degree turn to starboard, but many of the American ships, who were unused to the rigid discipline required of merchant ships in convoy, ignored or misunderstood the signal and as a result six of the seven ships in the two starboard columns were hit. (IWM A.12018)

65. The *Dido* Class cruiser *Scylla*, seen here anchored in the Clyde in mid-1942, was Admiral Burnett's flagship. Like her sister-ship *Charybdis*, she carried an armament of four twin 4.5in Mk III HA/LA mountings instead of the five twin 5.25in Mk II mountings fitted to most *Didos*. As a result *Scylla* was known at the 'Toothless Terror', yet she did useful work in breaking up formations of German aircraft with barrage fire. (IWM FL.2932)

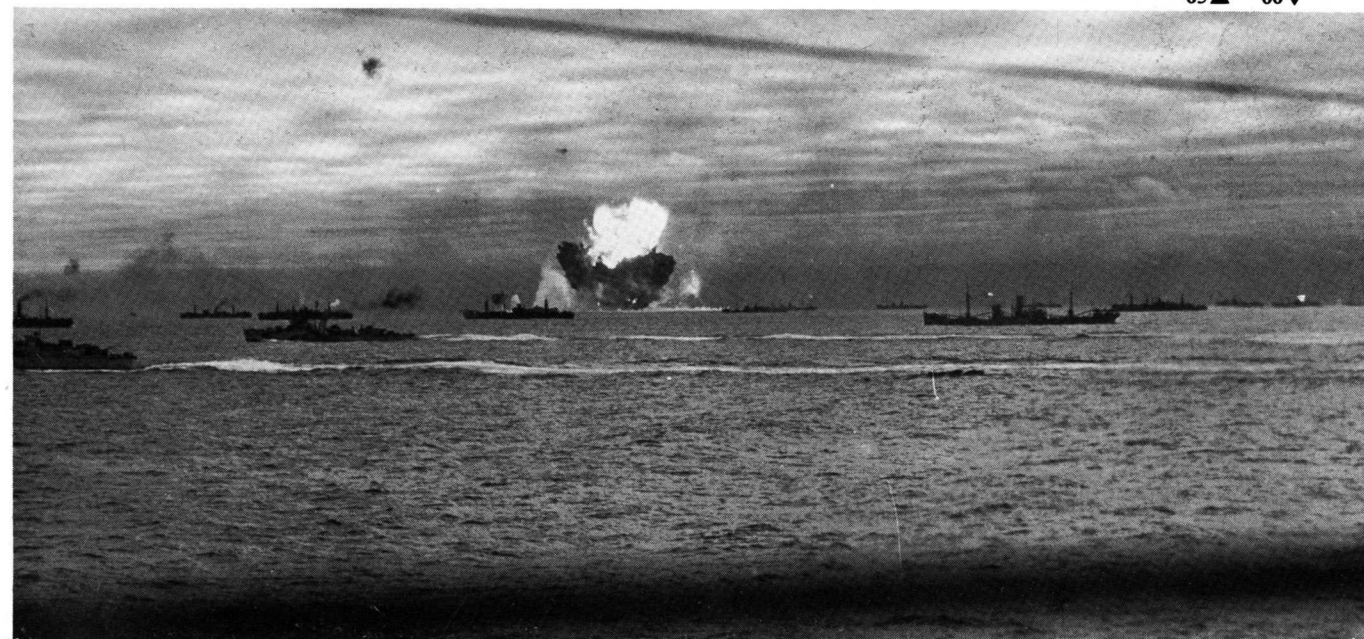
66. A tanker exploding, possibly the oiler *Atheltemplar*, which was torpedoed by U457 on 14 September. *Atheltemplar* could not be kept afloat and had to be sunk by the escorts. PQ.18 was persistently shadowed by U-boats, but good work by the escorts and *Avenger*'s three ASW Swordfish did much to keep them at bay. U457 was sunk three days later by HMS *Impulsive*. (IWM A.12275)



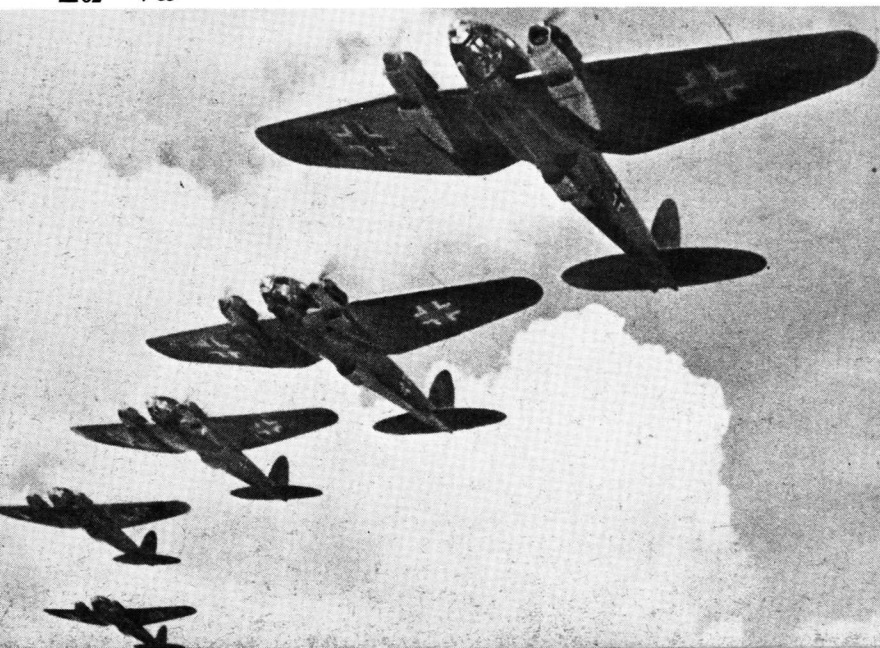
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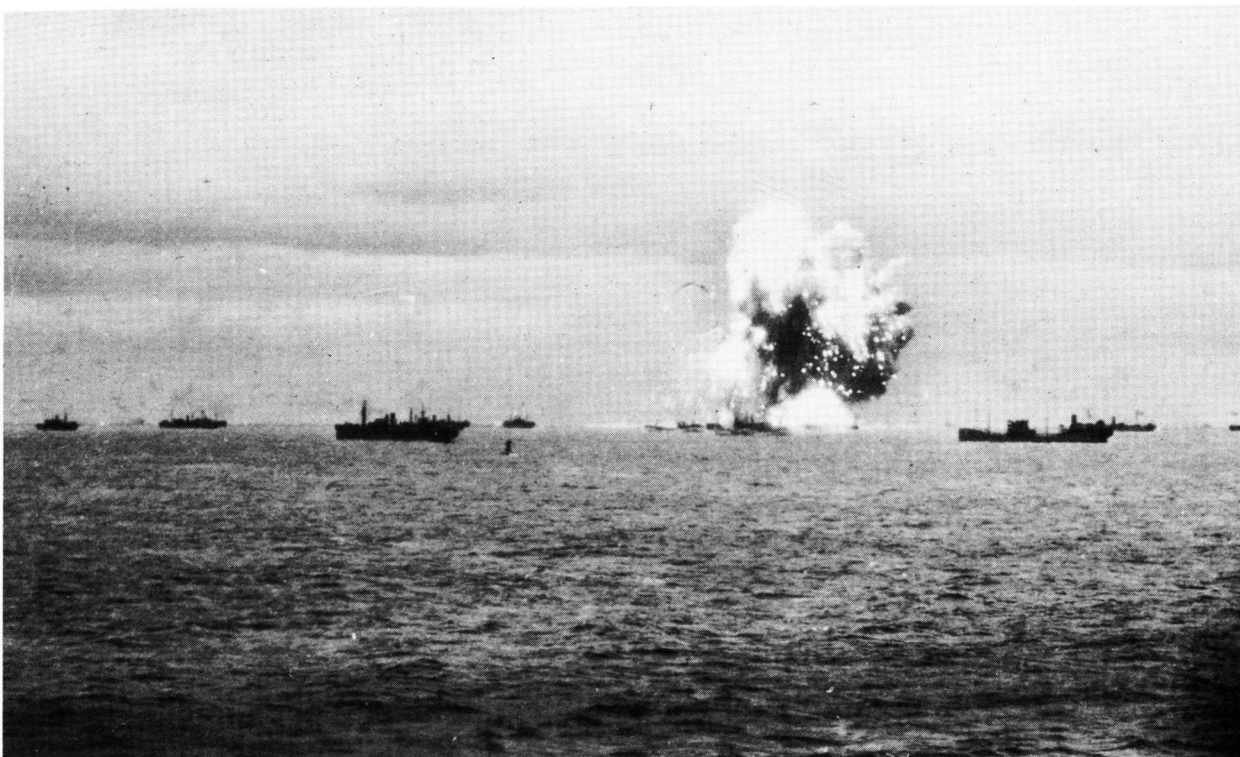
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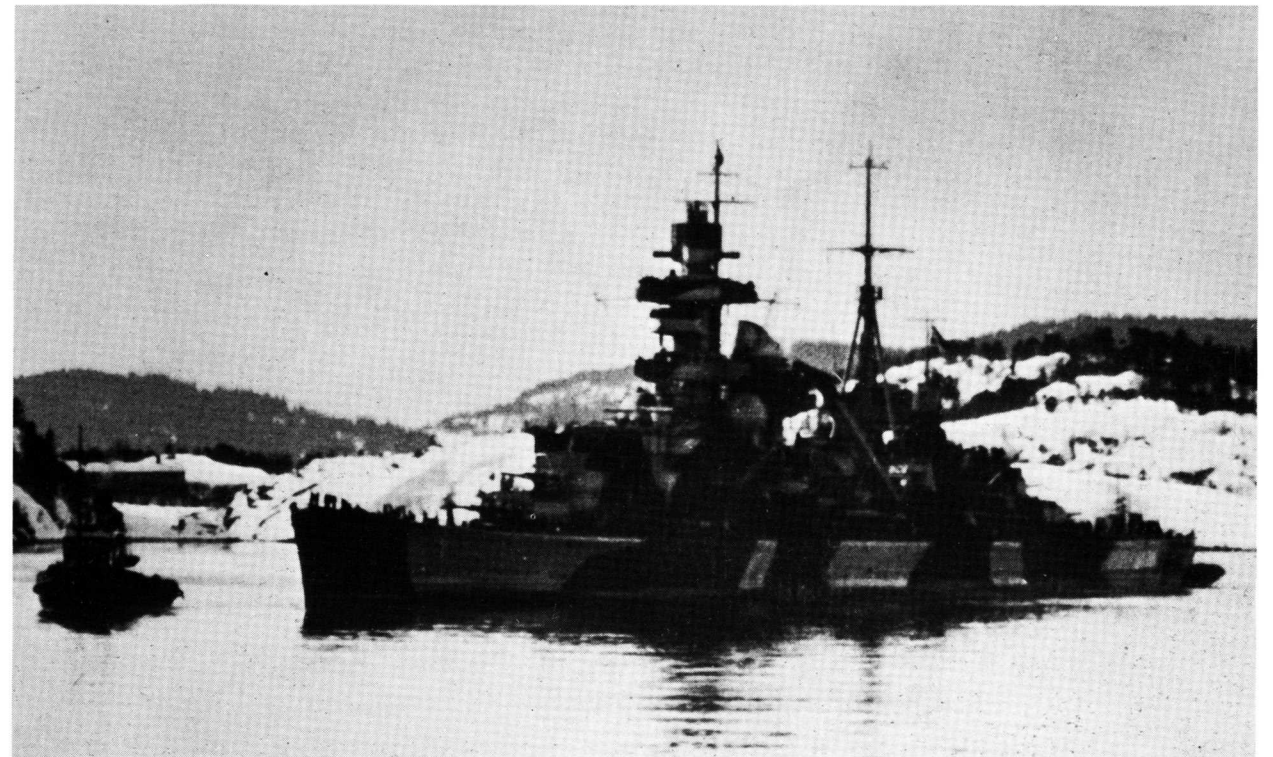
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67. A photograph showing the ammunition ship *Mary Luckenback* exploding after being torpedoed on 14 September by a Heinkel He 111. Amazingly, some of the freighter's crew survived this inferno. (IWM A.12271)

68. Survivors are transferred to HMS *Scylla* from the minesweeper *Harrier*. The cruiser possessed far better medical and messing facilities and thus was better able to look after survivors. (IWM FLM.1236)

69. The German cruiser *Admiral Hipper* in Altenfjord during the winter of 1942–43. Following the attacks on PQ.17 and 18 Hitler gave permission for an attack on the next Russian convoy, JW.51B, which left Loch Ewe on 22 December. *Hipper*, *Lützow* and six destroyers left Altenfjord on 30 December under the command of

Konteradmiral Kummetz. Kummetz had very restrictive orders regarding his risking an engagement with British cruisers, but he felt confident because the *Luftwaffe* had not reported JW.51B's cruiser escort, *Sheffield* and *Jamaica*. (IWM HU.2275)

70. The escort for JW.51B was commanded by Captain R. Sherbrooke on board the destroyer *Onslow*, seen here on 10 December 1942. On the morning of 31 December the destroyer *Obdurate* was fired on by three of the German destroyers and withdrew towards the convoy; on seeing the gun-flashes Sherbrooke took *Onslow*, together with *Orwell*, *Obedient* and *Obdurate*, and headed towards the destroyers but encountered instead the cruiser *Admiral Hipper*. (IWM FL.2830)

70 ▼







71. Captain Sherbrooke of HMS *Onslow*. When Sherbrooke sighted *Hipper* he launched simulated torpedo attacks which caused the German ship to turn away. Sherbrooke conducted a running battle with *Hipper* for the next half an hour, keeping her away from the convoy, but the cruiser's seventh salvo struck *Onslow*, causing enormous damage and badly wounding her captain, who refused to leave the bridge until satisfied that *Obedient* had taken over command. Sherbrooke was later awarded the Victoria Cross for his defence of the convoy. (IWM HU.1920)

72. Admiral Burnett, flying his flag in HMS *Sheffield* (seen here at Murmansk with the minesweeper *Seagull* alongside), followed the well-known maxim 'When in doubt, head for the sound of the guns!' At 11.30am both *Sheffield* and *Jamaica* engaged the *Hipper*, taking her by surprise and scoring three hits before she could reply. One of *Sheffield*'s shells exploded in *Hipper*'s No. 3 boiler room, reducing her speed to 27kts. The suddenness and ferocity of the British attack caused Kummets to break off the action and return to Altenfjord. (IWM A.6878)

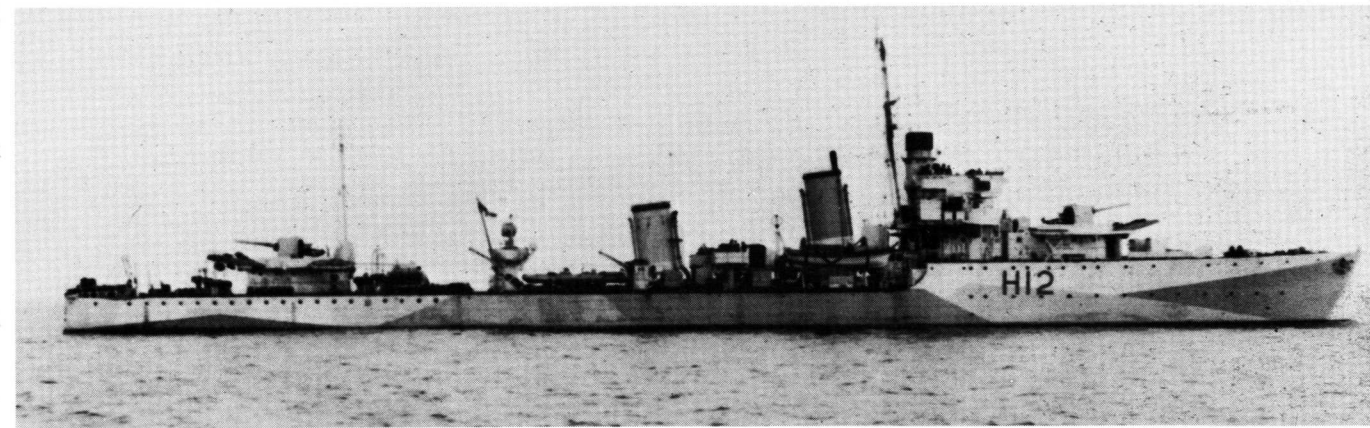
73. A German destroyer of the same class as the luckless *Friedrich Eckholdt*, which mistook *Sheffield* and *Jamaica* for *Hipper* and *Lützow*. Before the German destroyer could realize her mistake she found herself under a hail of fire at ranges which fell to 1,000yds. At such close quarters, and under fire from 6in, 4in and even anti-aircraft guns, there was no escape and in minutes *Eckholdt* was a blazing shambles. She later sank, taking her crew of 340 with her. (IWM HU.35754)

74. British losses amounted to the destroyer *Achates*, seen here earlier in 1942, and the minesweeper *Bramble*, but these German successes were small beer in comparison to the opportunity which Kummets had let slip through his fingers, and the Battle of the Barents Sea had consequences which ranged far beyond the confines of the Arctic - *Grossadmiral* Raeder resigned and Hitler threatened to decommission the capital ships of the German Fleet. (FL.51)

75. Convoy sailings to Russia continued in the early part of 1943 because Tovey wanted to make the most of the long dark nights when German air reconnaissance was least effective. JW.52, consisting of fourteen merchant ships, sailed on 17 January and arrived at Kola ten days later without loss; the eleven-ship return convoy, RA.52, arrived at Loch Ewe on 8 February having lost only one vessel, the *Greylock* (to U255). The photograph shows part of a convoy steaming through light ice in early 1943. (IWM A.15358)



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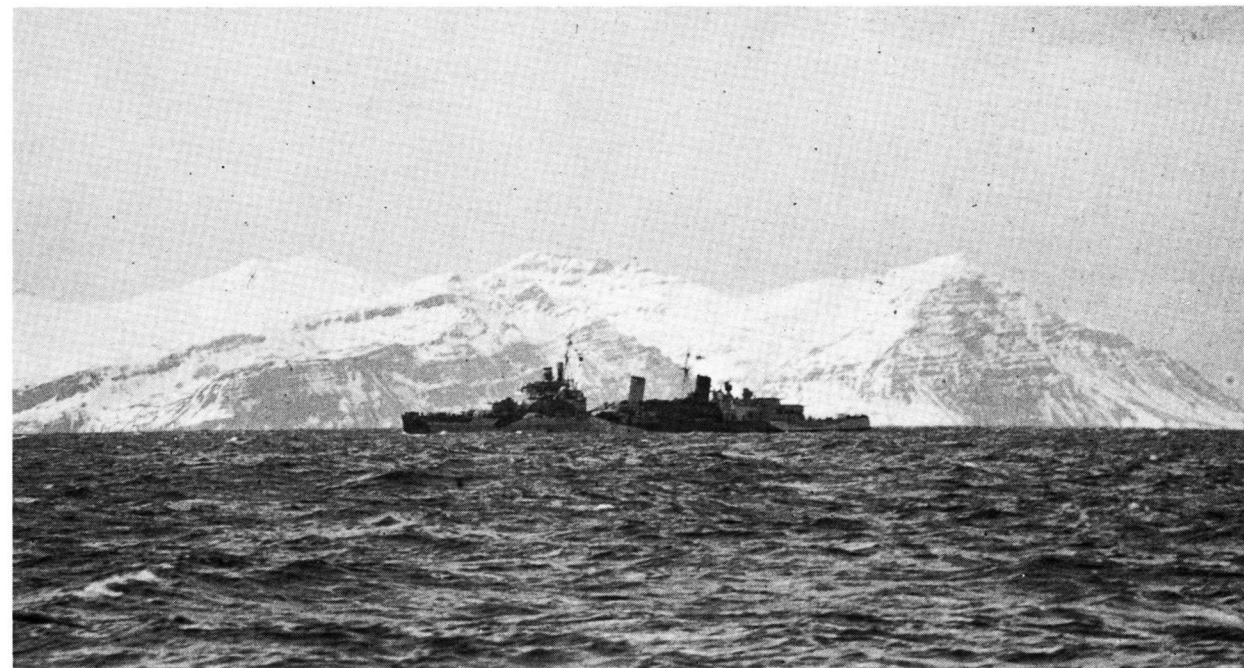
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76. The next convoy, JW.53, consisted of 25 merchant ships and sailed on 15 February. As there were now nearly seven hours of daylight in northern latitudes JW.53 had a large ocean escort consisting of the cruiser *Scylla*, the escort carrier *Dasher* and fifteen destroyers, in addition to the convoy escort and covering forces. Shortly after leaving Loch Ewe JW.53 was struck by a fierce gale and *Dasher* and three merchant ships had to return. The photograph shows two of JW.53's merchant ships steaming through fog produced by the cold waters of the Arctic mixing with the warmer

waters of the Gulf Stream. (IWM A.15356)

77. The cruiser covering force for JW.53, consisting of *Belfast*, *Cumberland* and *Sheffield*, fared little better than the convoy in the gale. The photograph shows the view from *Sheffield*'s bridge during the gale: both 'A' and 'B' turrets have been trained on the beam to avoid damage to the canvas blast screens of the 6in guns, but one wave nevertheless struck 'B' turret a terrific blow, removing the roof and hurling it over the side. (IWM A.14892)

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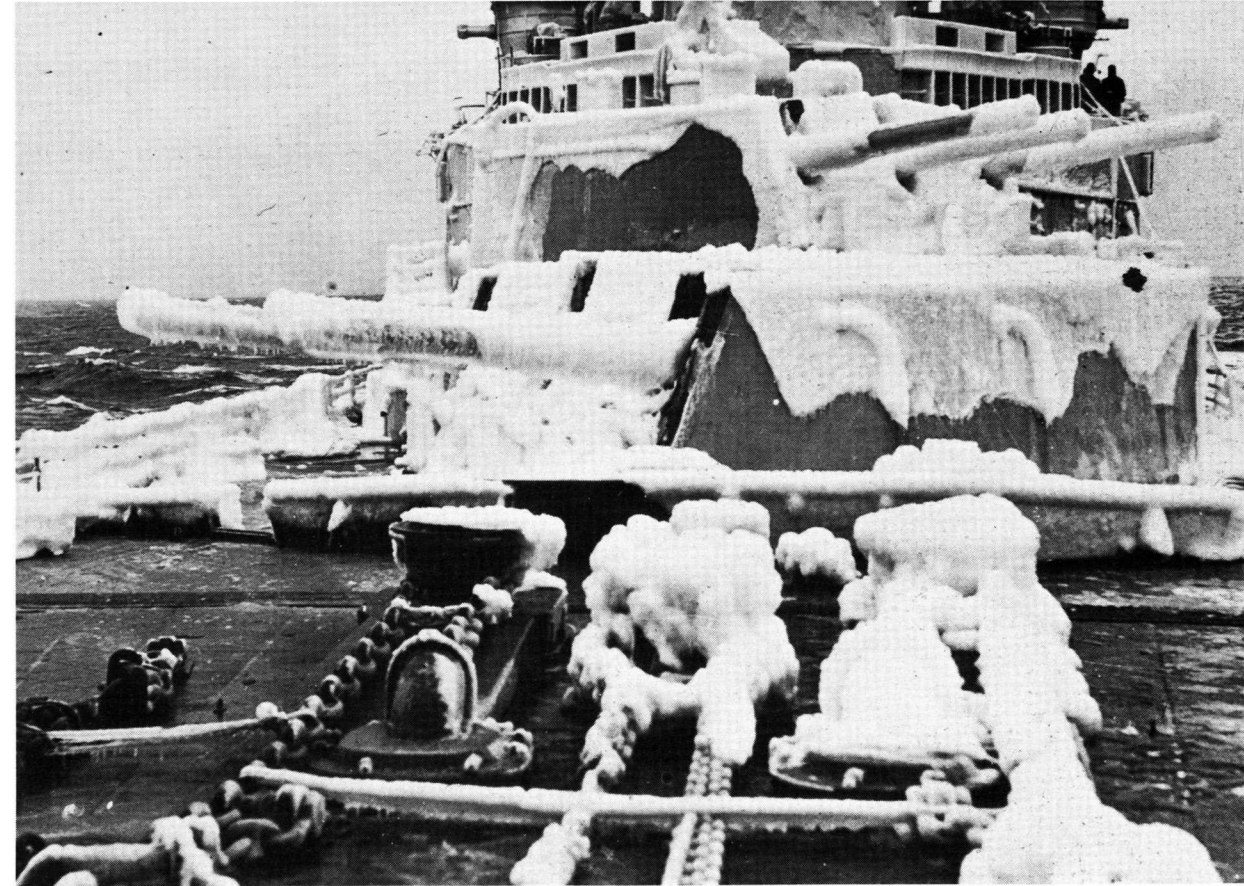
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78. The cruiser HMS *Belfast* seen off Iceland prior to her sailing as part of the covering force for JW.53 in February 1943. (IWM A.15530)

79. Ice and snow on the forecastle of HMS *Belfast* while escorting

JW.53. Spray froze on masts, rigging and upper deck fittings, equipment had to be constantly checked to keep it in working order, and the cold was often so intense that no amount of winter clothing would keep a man warm. (IWM A.20687)

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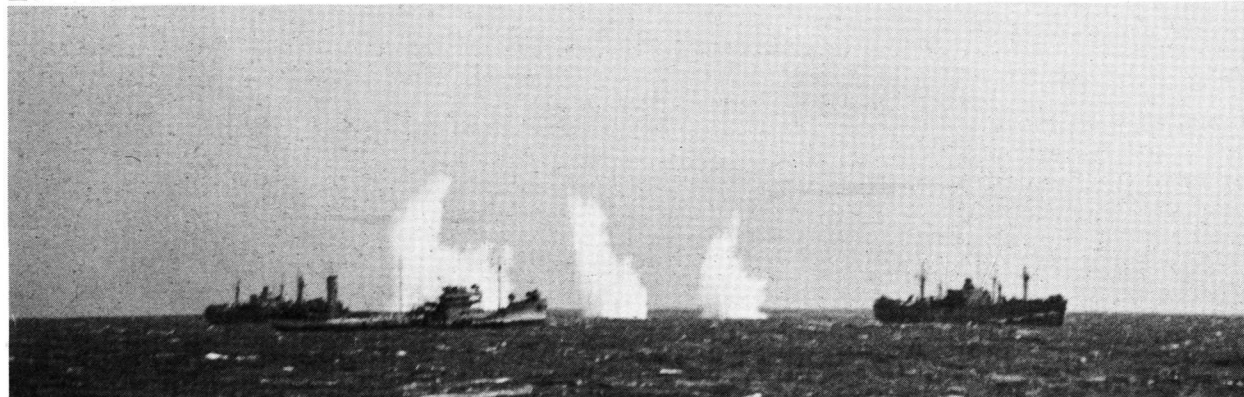


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80. Seamen clear snow and ice from the forecastle of the cruiser HMS *Scylla* during the passage of convoy JW.53 in February 1943. (IWM A.15365)

81. JW.53 had almost been scattered in the gale but was kept together thanks to some remarkable work by the escorts. The convoy is seen here steaming through light ice just south of the main field. Because the polar ice pack extended so far south JW.53 was only 250 miles from German airfields and on 23 February was sighted by German air reconnaissance. (IWM A.15360)

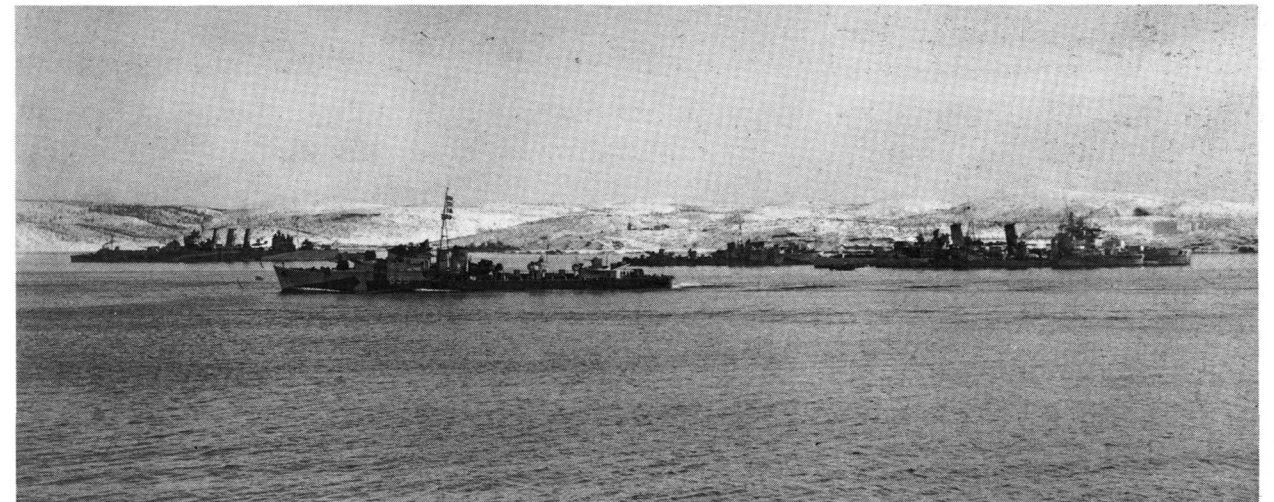
82. On 25 February 1943 JW.53 was attacked by ten Ju 88s of KG 30 but only one ship sustained any damage. The attacks were repeated on 26 February but with no success, and four Soviet destroyers joined the escort for the final stage of the journey. On 27 February fifteen ships arrived in the Kola Inlet while the remainder

proceeded to Archangel. (IWM A.15362)

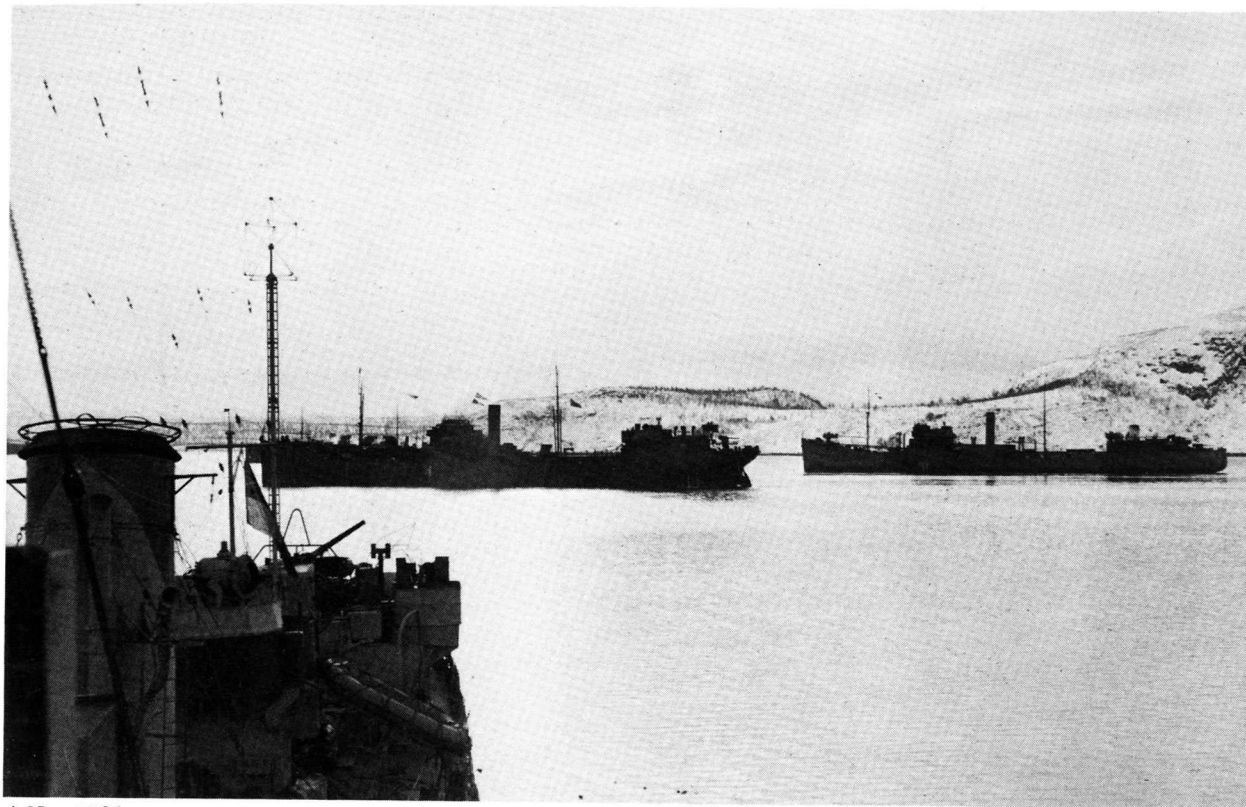
83. A turret crew closed up in 'X' turret, manned by Royal Marines, on board HMS *Sheffield*. The threat of enemy attack required constant vigilance, which placed a great strain on ships' companies already working in very inhospitable conditions. Note the 6in shells lying in the loading trays at the top left of the photograph and in ready-use racks at the rear of the turret. (IWM A.6879)

84. Escorts of JW.53 at anchor in the Kola Inlet after the arrival of the convoy. This photograph was taken from HMS *Inglefield* and shows, from left to right, *Cumberland*, *Obdurate*, an unidentified 'O' Class destroyer and *Belfast*, with an unidentified 'V' or 'W' Class destroyer alongside. In the background are the administrative buildings of the Russian naval base. (IWM A.15419)

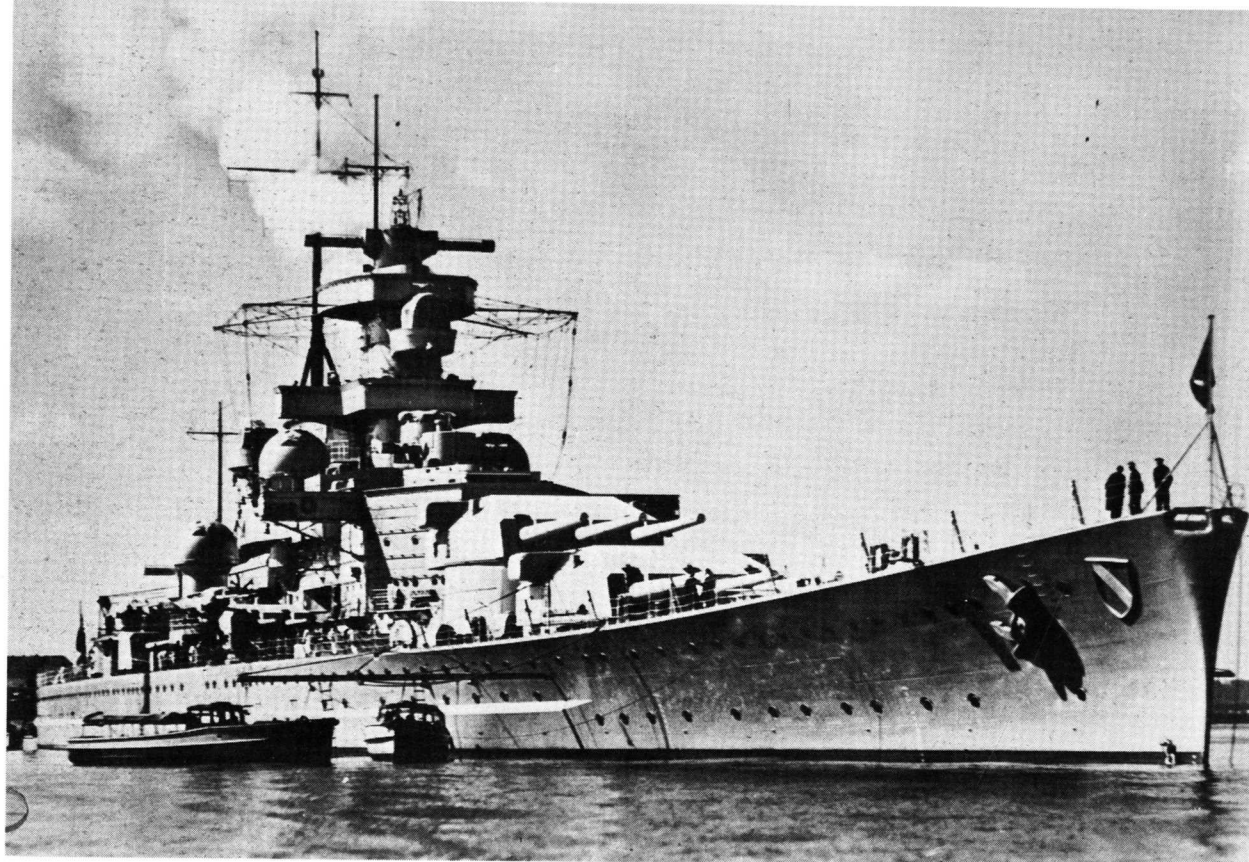
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85. Ships of JW.53 in the Kola Inlet. After their arrival, on 27 and 28 February, the *Luftwaffe* raided the harbour, damaging three ships, and in further raids on 6 and 13 March Ju 87s of StG 5 sank one ship and damaged another, showing that the AA defences of the port were hopelessly inadequate. Note the bleak nature of the surroundings. (IWM A.15421)

86. On 24 March 1943 the German battlecruiser *Scharnhorst*, with nine 11in guns and a top speed of 31½kts, arrived in Altenfjord to join *Tirpitz*, *Lützow* and *Nürnberg*. The presence of this powerful force so close to the convoy routes caused Admiral Tovey to order the suspension of convoy sailings until the winter nights arrived. The Admiralty agreed, and the convoys were discontinued until September. (IWM HU.1042)

87. On 8 May 1943 Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser took over command of the Home Fleet from Admiral Tovey. Since his forces were freed from escorting convoys throughout the summer, Fraser conducted two sweeps along the Norwegian coast. No German surface forces were encountered in either operation but five BV 138s were shot down. (IWM A.16489)

88. A British midget submarine, or 'X craft'. On 22 September 1943 two of these boats successfully laid their charges beneath *Tirpitz* lying in Altenfjord. The explosions put an end to *Tirpitz*'s career as an ocean-going warship, and six months of repairs were needed before she was even moderately seaworthy. German forces were further reduced when *Lützow* returned to the Baltic for a refit, leaving *Scharnhorst* as the only sea-going German capital ship in northern waters. (IWM A.22903)



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89. Admiral Fraser with his Soviet counterpart, Admiral Arseni Golovko, on board the battleship *Duke of York* on 16 December 1943. The sailing of convoys to Russia had been resumed in October, but their size had been reduced and they now ran in two sections each of about twenty ships about a fortnight apart. No opposition had been encountered, but the sailing of the outward-bound JW.55B and the homeward-bound RA.55A had caused considerable German signal traffic and Fraser took hurried leave of Golovko on 18 December, believing that a sortie by *Scharnhorst* was imminent. (IWM A.21117)

90. *Scharnhorst* digs her bows into the Arctic Ocean. Fraser's concern about German intentions was correct, for on 25 December *Scharnhorst* and six destroyers left Altenfjord and headed north at 25kts. The German force was commanded by Konteradmiral Eric Bey, an experienced destroyer officer. As soon as Bey reached the operational area he spread the destroyers out in a scouting line to look for the convoy but rough seas reduced their speed as they were steaming head-on to wind and sea. (IWM HU.2219)

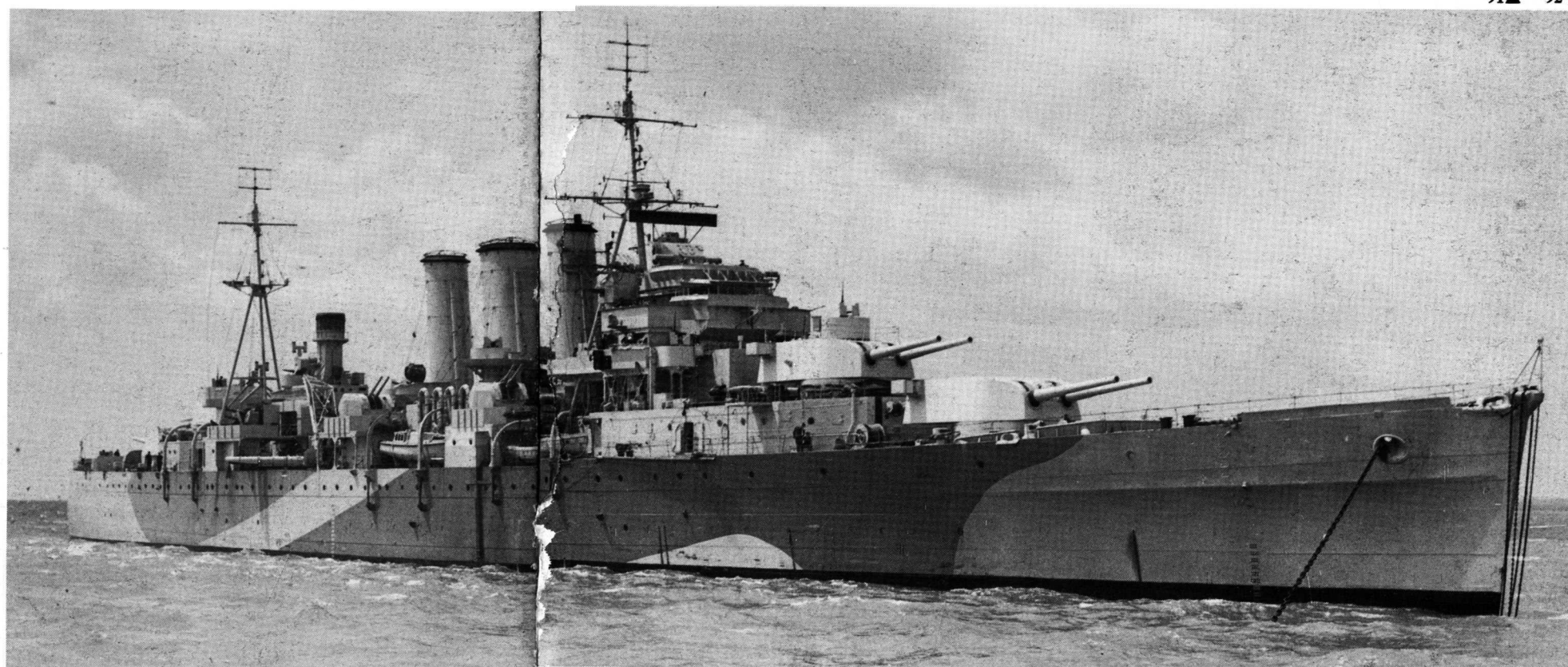
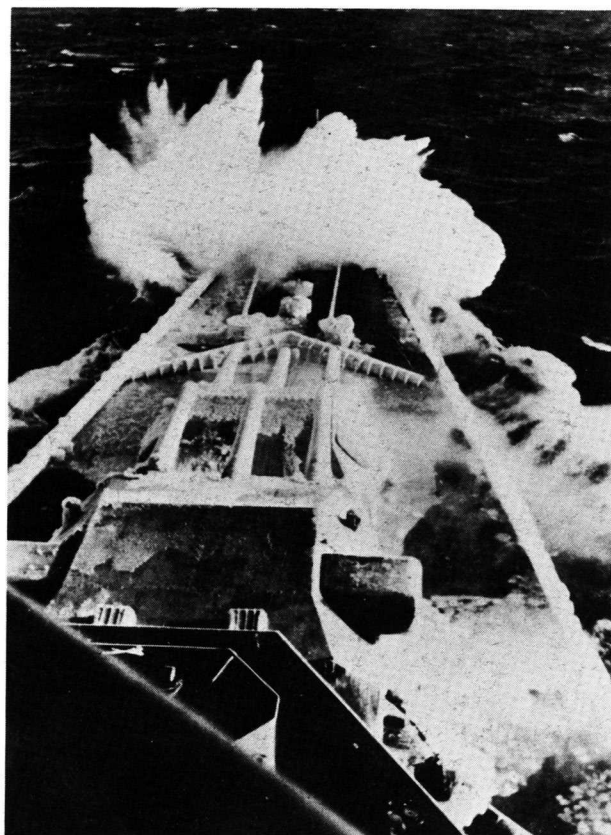
91. Early on 26 December the cruisers *Belfast* (seen here in November 1942), *Sheffield* and *Norfolk* were acting as the covering force for JW.55B and RA.55A and were known as Force 1, under the command of Rear-Admiral Robert Burnett, a veteran of PQ.18 and the Barents Sea action. *Norfolk*'s radar picked up a contact which was confirmed by *Belfast*, and at 0921 hours *Scharnhorst* was sighted by *Sheffield*. After a brief engagement *Scharnhorst* escaped, and Burnett headed back to protect JW.55B, guessing that the German ship would return to the attack. Burnett was right: at 1205 *Scharnhorst* reappeared and the admiral conducted a skilful defence of the convoy before the enemy turned and headed back to Altenfjord with the three cruisers in hot pursuit. (IWM FL.1656)

92. The County Class cruiser HMS *Norfolk*. Although *Norfolk* possessed a heavier broadside than either *Belfast* or *Sheffield*, she was not equipped with flashless cordite and so became the principal target for *Scharnhorst*'s gunners, receiving two 11in hits which caused considerable damage. Yet *Norfolk* got in some good shooting herself, hitting *Scharnhorst* three times and destroying an HA director as well as radar equipment. (IWM FL.1861)

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93. Fraser's flagship, *Duke of York*, was being supplied with *Scharnhorst's* position and course by Burnett's team in *Belfast* which was grimly hanging on to the battlecruiser. The continuous flow of information from Burnett enabled Fraser to intercept *Scharnhorst*, and at 1650 *Duke of York* opened fire with a ten-gun broadside. The gunnery duel continued until *Scharnhorst* was hit in a machinery compartment and her speed dropped. Fraser's destroyers then launched torpedo attacks before the battlecruiser was finished off by more gunfire from *Duke of York*. By 1945 hours the once-proud vessel was a blazing wreck and she rolled over to starboard and sank after being hit by a torpedo fired by HMS *Jamaica* (IWM A.7552)

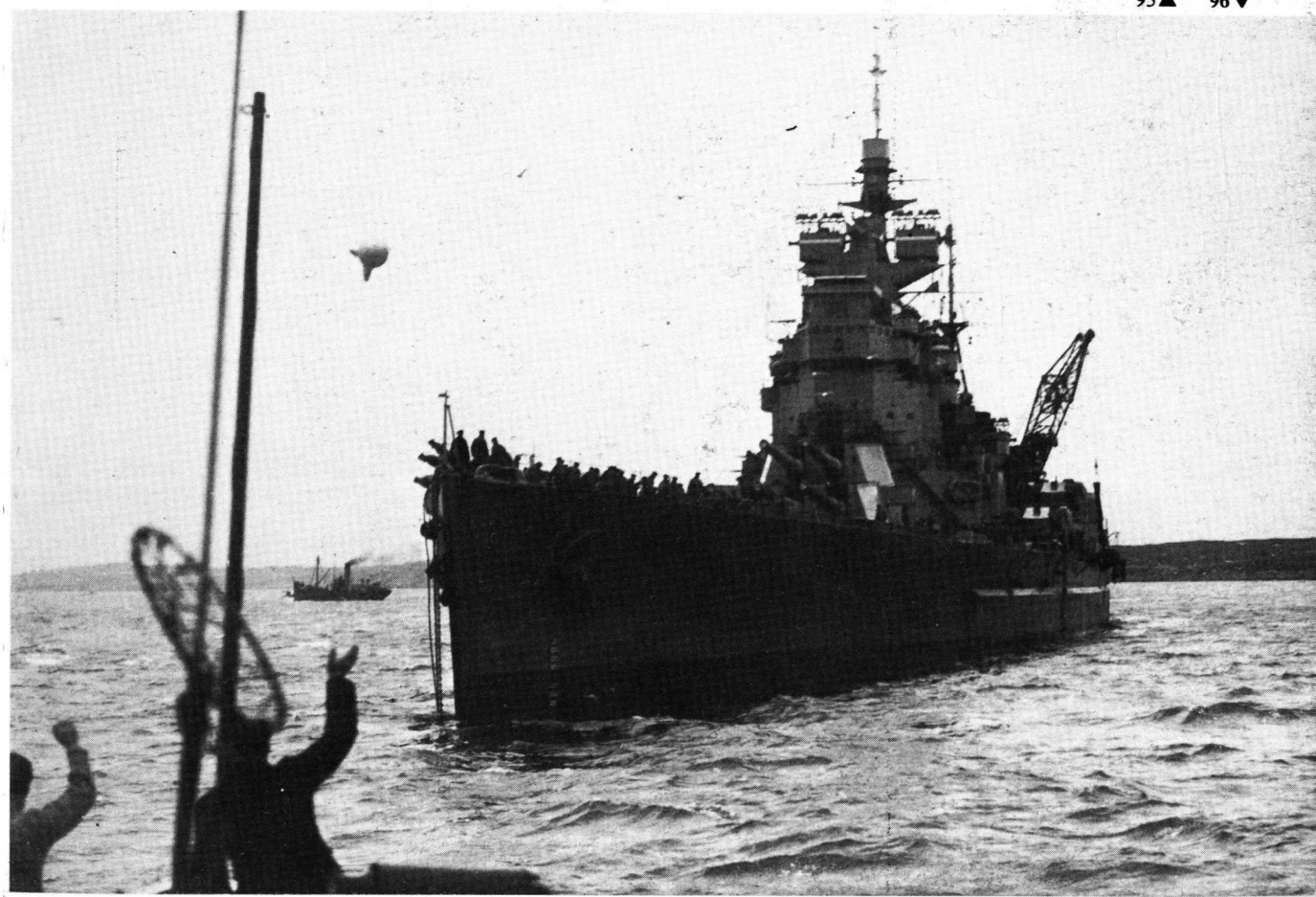
94. The shattered director control tower of the destroyer HMS *Saumarez*. The DCT had been hit by an 11in shell from *Scharnhorst* which passed through without exploding but killed all but one of the crew. Another 11in shell exploded in the water along *Saumarez's* starboard side and splinters punctured the forced lubrication system to the starboard main engines. The ship continued her attack with only one shaft and at a speed of 8kts but still managed to fire four torpedoes, causing at least one hit on *Scharnhorst's* port side. (IWM A.21314)

95. When *Scharnhorst* sank many of her crew of nearly 2,000 were left swimming in the icy water but only 36 were picked up, by *Scorpion* and *Matchless*. They were taken to Kola Inlet and transferred to *Duke of York* before being taken back to Britain. Here the survivors leave the drifter *St Ninian* at Scapa Flow on their way to a prisoner-of-war camp. (IWM A.21201)

96. New Year's Day, 1944: HMS *Duke of York* arrives to a hero's welcome at Scapa Flow after sinking the *Scharnhorst*. (IWM A.21166)



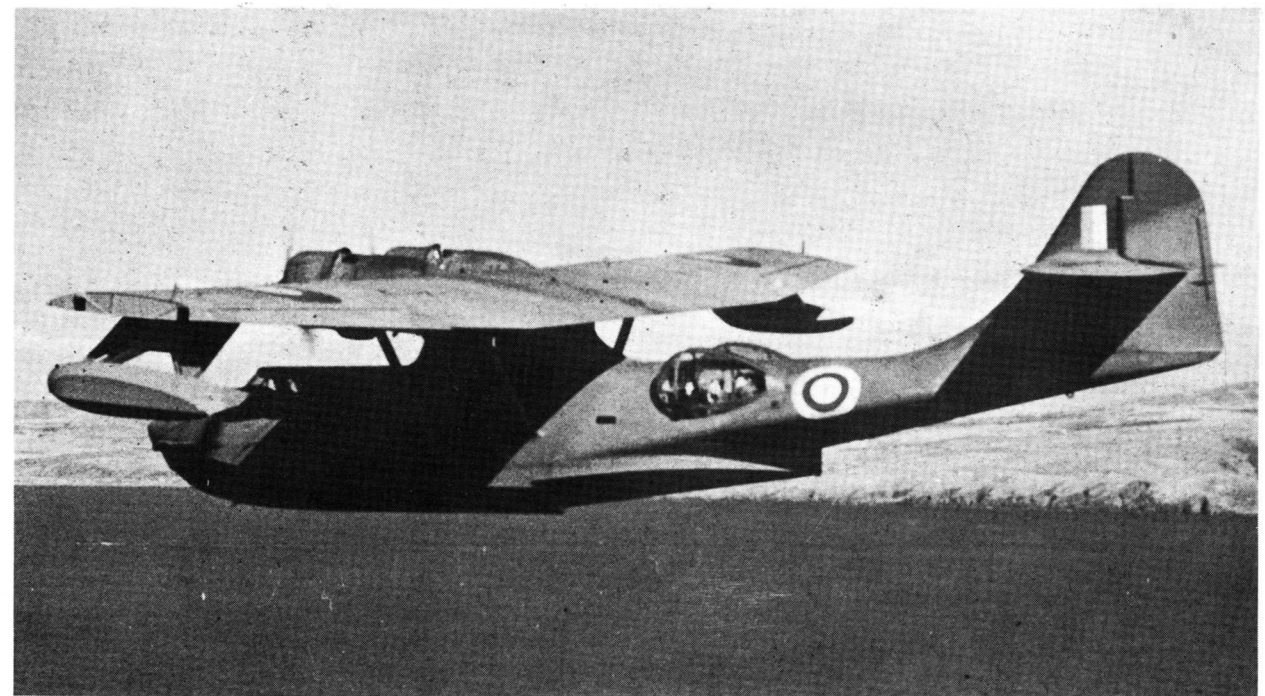
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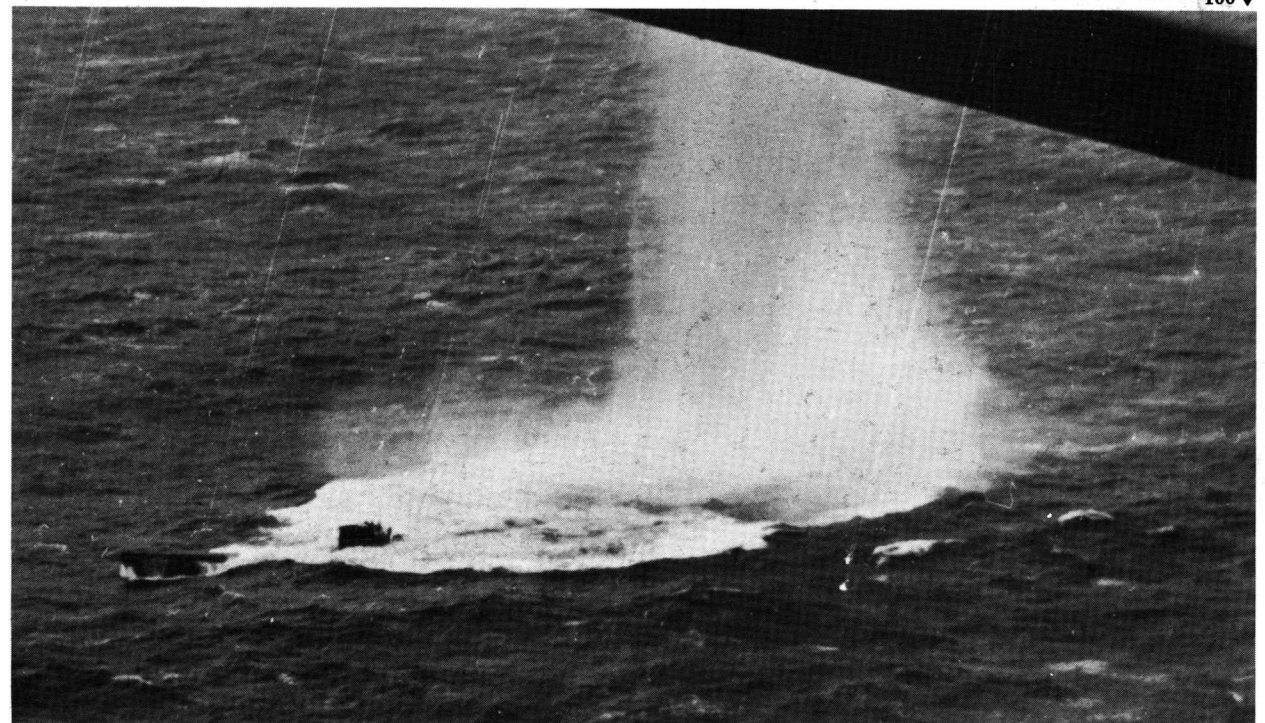
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97. *Duke of York* received only one hit from the *Scharnhorst*, which passed through the legs of the tripod foremast without exploding, although there were several near-misses. *Duke of York* suffered more damage from the blast of her own 14in main armament than from enemy gunfire. (IWM A.21165)

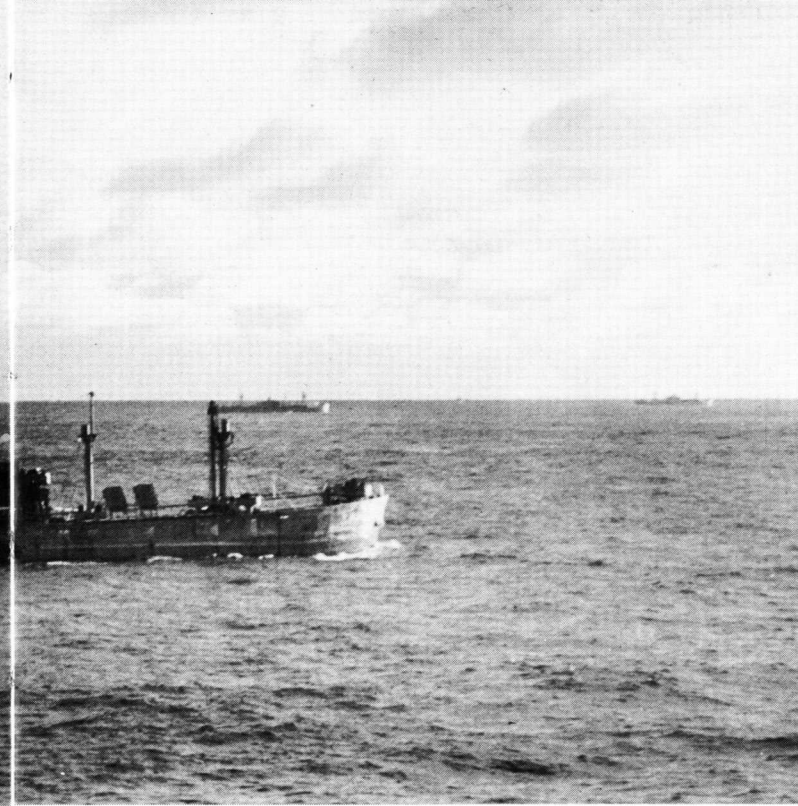
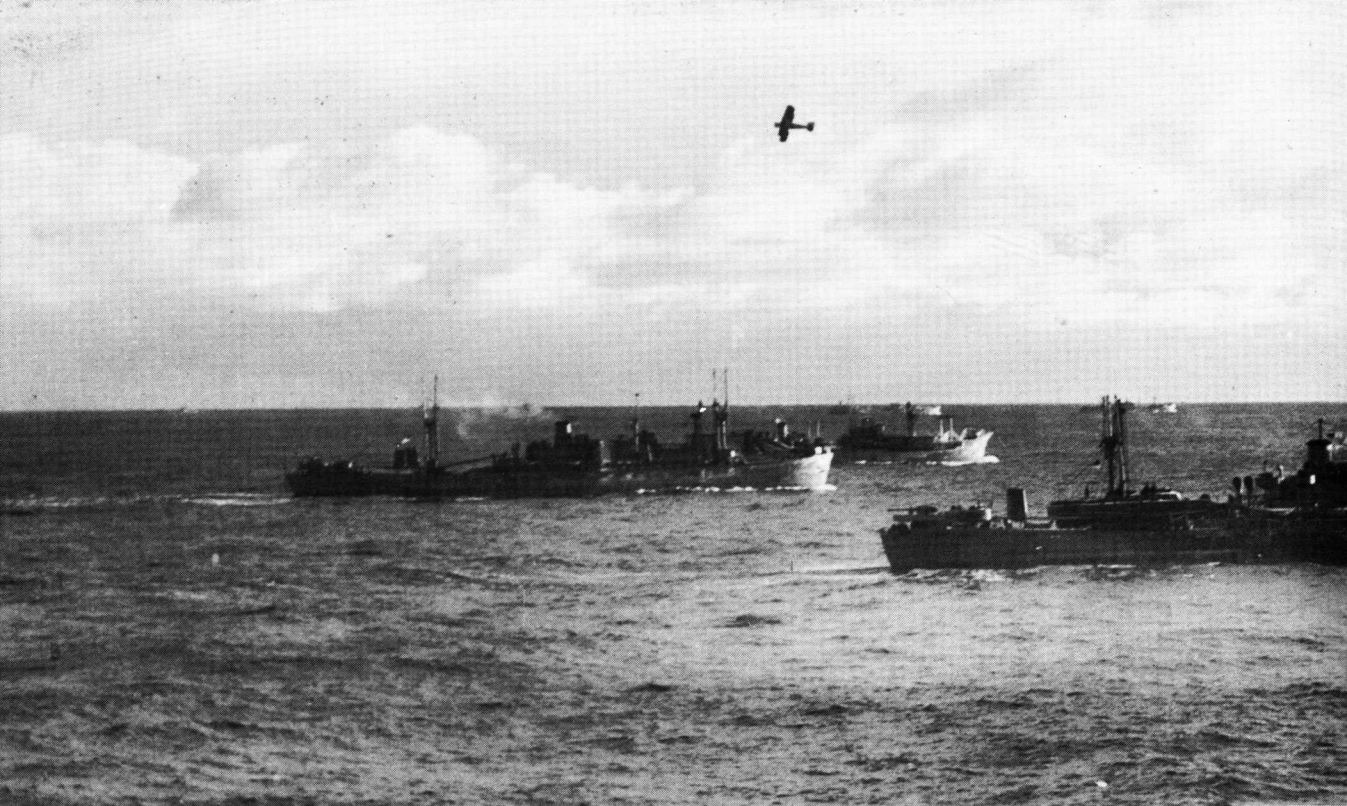
98. The escort carrier *Chaser*, which was detached from Western Approaches Command to give extra air cover to the Russian convoys in the spring of 1944. The coming of the long hours of summer daylight meant more frequent air attacks and Fraser was taking no chances: instead of sending two small convoys Fraser

decided to return to sailing one, heavily escorted. (IWM A.22465) 99,100. A Catalina reconnaissance aircraft of No. 210 Squadron RAF which operated from Sollum Voe in the Shetland Islands. On 25 February 1944 aircraft 'M' from this unit sighted *U601* on the surface shadowing convoy JW.57. The Catalina dropped both its depth charges (photograph 100) and the U-boat was seen to sink. Eight or ten survivors were seen in the water but were lost to sight in a snowstorm. As if in return for the loss of *U601*, *U990* sank the destroyer *Mahratta* with an acoustic torpedo. There were only seventeen survivors. (CH.2456/FL.2798)

100▼







101. Swordfish aircraft from HMS *Chaser* fly combat air patrol over the homeward bound RA.57. The convoy consisted of 31 ships and had a very strong escort. *Chaser*'s Swordfish accounted for three U-boats during the voyage of RA.57, and the convoy arrived safely at Loch Ewe on 10 March 1944 with the loss of only one ship. (IWM A.22345)

102. The crew of Swordfish 'B for Baker' of 816 Naval Air Squadron on board HMS *Chaser* after sinking *U472* on 4 March 1944: (from left to right) Sub-Lt. W. P. Laing, Sub-Lt. P. T. Beresford and L/A J. Beech. *Chaser*'s aircraft also accounted for *U336* and *U973*. (IWM A.22349)

103. Barracuda dive-bombers pass over Langfjord during Operation 'Tungsten' on 3 April 1944. The British were aware that *Tirpitz*'s repairs following the 'X-craft' attack were nearly complete and 'Tungsten', a strike by carrier-borne aircraft, was intended at least to cripple *Tirpitz* and prevent her from interfering with convoy sailings. (IWM A.22631)

▲101 ▼102



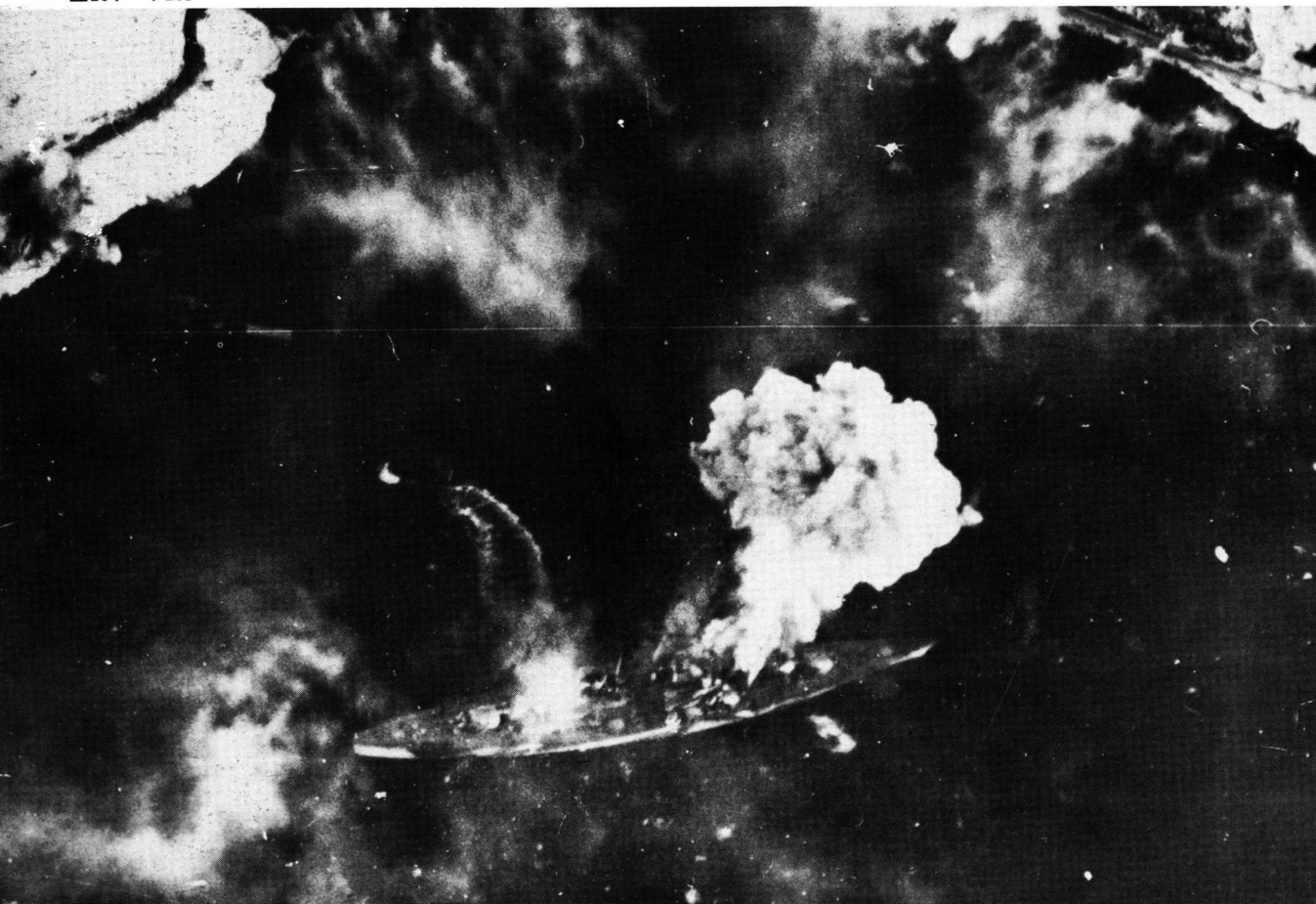
103▼







▲104 ▼105



106▲

104. A view of *Tirpitz* (centre) moored in Kaafjord as the first fighters begin their flak-suppression attacks. Hellcat and Wildcat fighters destroyed *Tirpitz*'s flak directors, caused numerous casualties and damaged the gun mountings with armour-piercing machine gun rounds. The smoke generators on the shores of the fjord have only just started to produce the smokescreen as only four minutes' warning of the attack was received. (IWM A.22634)  
105. Smoke rises from *Tirpitz* as bombs from the Barracudas strike home. The battleship was hit several times and serious damage was caused to upper-deck structures, whilst one 600lb bomb fell alongside the ship abreast the after boiler room, causing flooding in some compartments. The repairs had to be undertaken locally and

*Tirpitz* would not be ready for further operations until the end of July. (IWM A.22633)

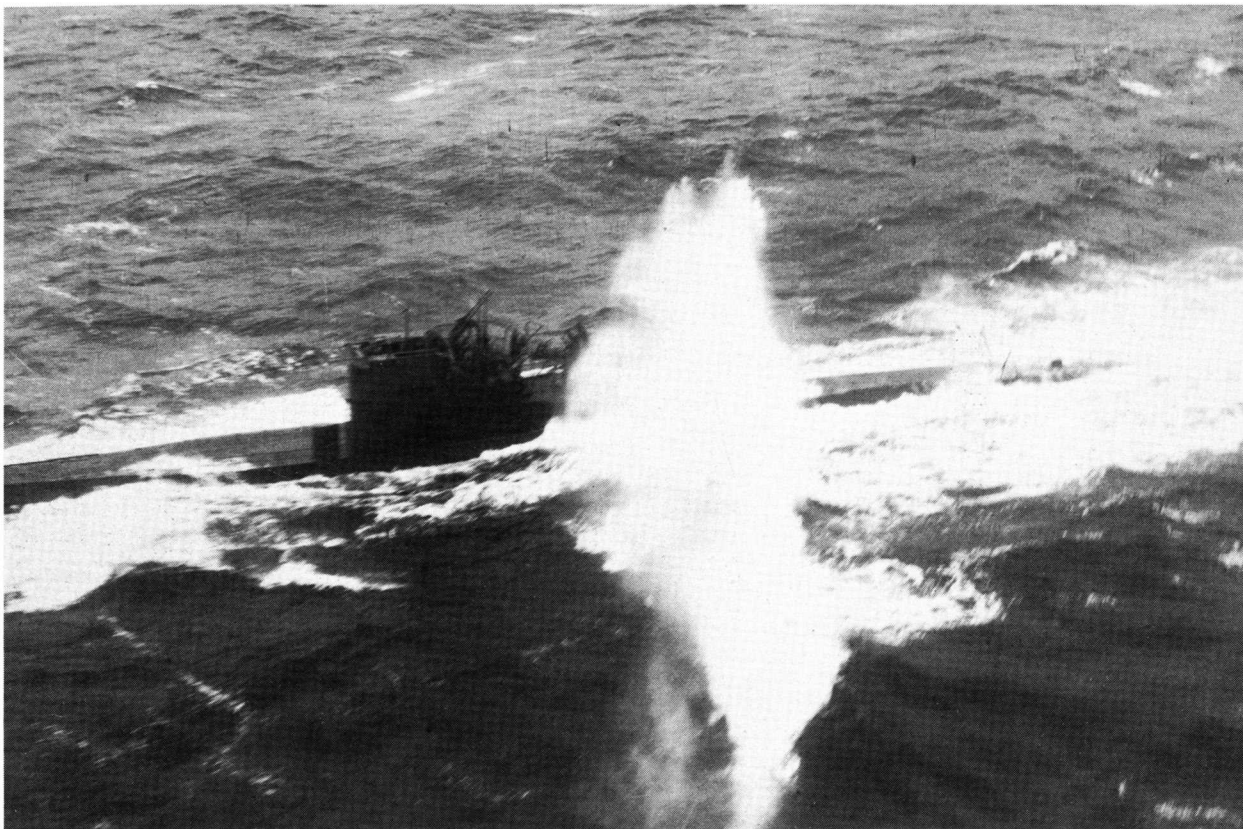
106. A Barracuda returns to the carrier *Furious* after 'Tungsten'. The aircraft had delivered their attacks swiftly, aided by the flak suppression tactics of the fighters. Three follow-up strikes were planned, but each had to be called off because of bad weather. (IWM A.22645)

107. An RAF PRU photograph of *Tirpitz* on 12 July 1944; her decks have been painted to give a mottled camouflage. Throughout the summer of 1944 *Tirpitz* was subjected to continual attacks by aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm. (IWM C.4535)

107▼







▲108

108. *U288* under attack by aircraft from the escort carriers *Tracker* and *Activity* on 3 April 1944 during the passage of JW.58. The U-boat was sunk, although not before one Swordfish had been shot down. Three U-boat groups totalling seventeen boats had been deployed against JW.58, but the escorts and aircraft won a notable success by sinking four of them. Six shadowing aircraft were also shot down. The losses suffered by the Germans in the early months

▼109



of 1944 were a sure sign that the tide was now running in the Allies' favour. (IWM A.22859)

109. Swordfish aircraft in icy conditions on the flight deck of HMS *Fencer* during the homeward voyage of RA.59 in April 1944. RA.59 consisted of 45 ships which had been lying empty in Russian ports. Their return to Britain was important because all available shipping was needed for the invasion of Normandy. (IWM A.23576)



110▲

110. A U-boat under attack from by *Fencer's* aircraft. Three U-boats – *U277*, *U959* and *U674* – were sunk during RA.59's homeward passage. U-boats had considerable difficulty in defending themselves against air attack because their AA armament was often iced up. Sometimes, however, the submarines did fight back: on 3 May 1944, for example, *U278* successfully defended herself against three aircraft, shooting down one, and escaping without damage. After RA.59 had arrived in Britain convoy sailings

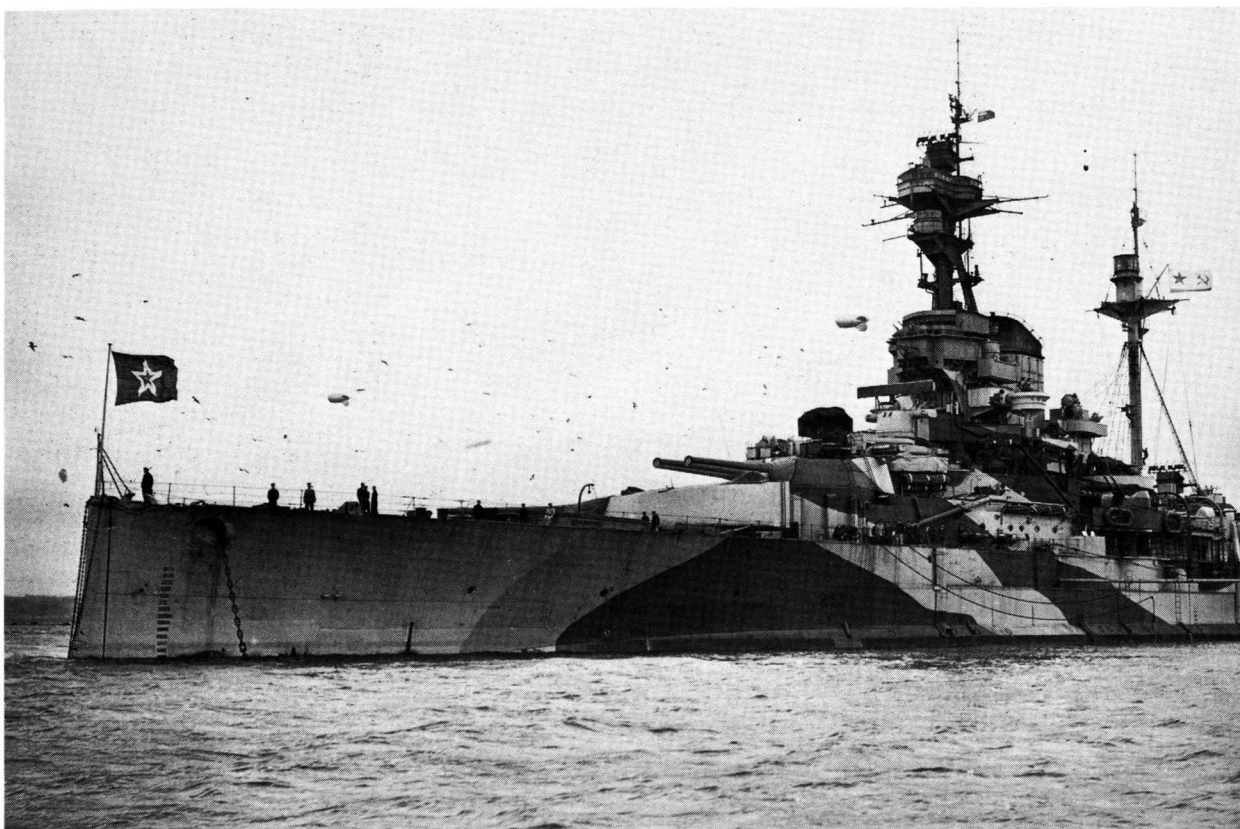
were suspended for the summer. (IWM A.23574)

111. Convoy sailings resumed in the middle of August with JW.59. The escort carrier *Vindex*, seen here on trials in the Clyde, accompanied the convoy, having embarked 825 NAS, whose aircrew were specially trained for operating at night. During the passage of the return convoy RA.59A on 28 August an aircraft from *Vindex* damaged *U394*, which was later finished off by the escorts. (IWM FXL.6157)

111▼



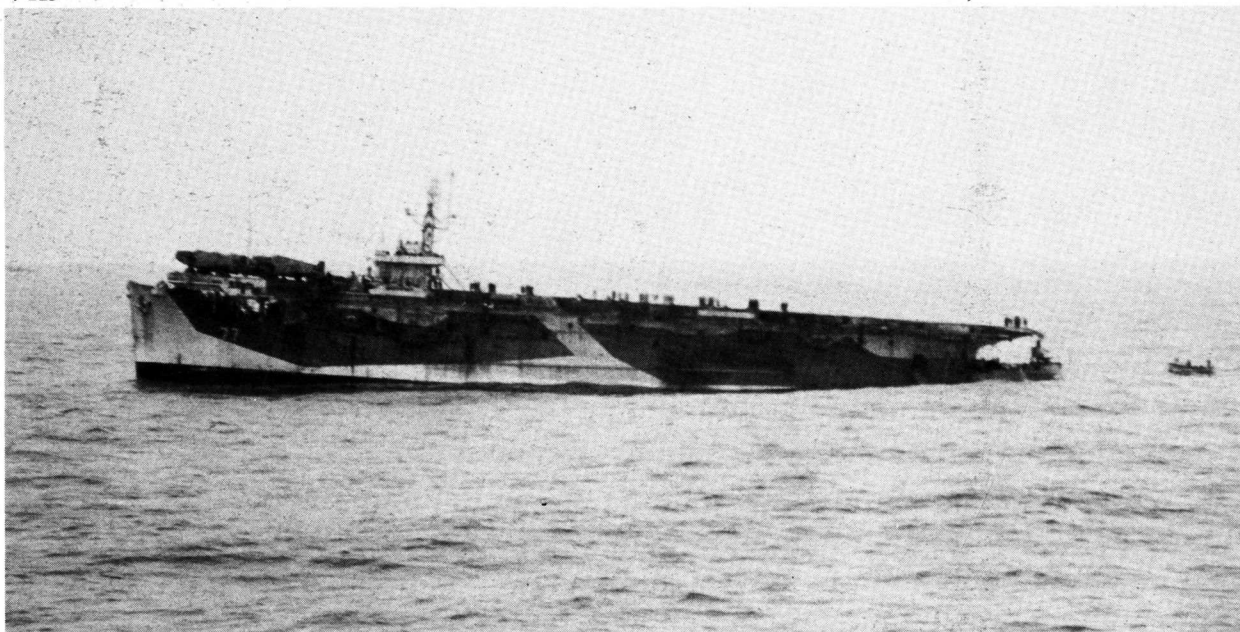




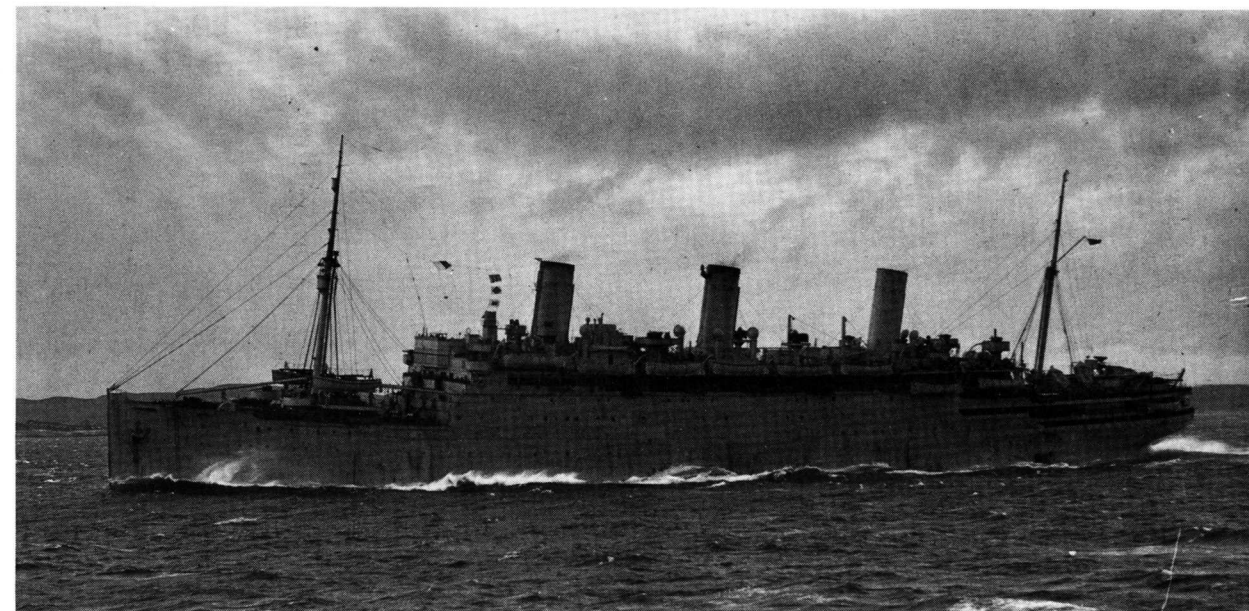
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112. Aid to Russia of a different kind came with the transfer to the Soviet Union of the battleship HMS *Royal Sovereign*. The Soviet Navy took possession of the ship on 30 May 1944 and she was renamed *Arkhangelsk*. Also transferred were one cruiser, eight destroyers and four submarines (one of which was later sunk in error by an RAF Liberator on 27 July while on passage to Russia). The Russian jack looks incongruous on the well-known silhouette of the *Royal Sovereign*. (IWM A.23815)

▼ 113



113. On 22 August 1944 the Fleet Air Arm launched another strike on the *Tirpitz*, to coincide with the resumption of convoy sailings. After the attack the escort carrier *Nabob* was torpedoed by *U354*. The photograph shows *Nabob* seriously down by the stern, but excellent damage control enabled the ship to make the 1,000-mile passage back to Scapa Flow despite encountering a gale on the way. (IWM A.25371)

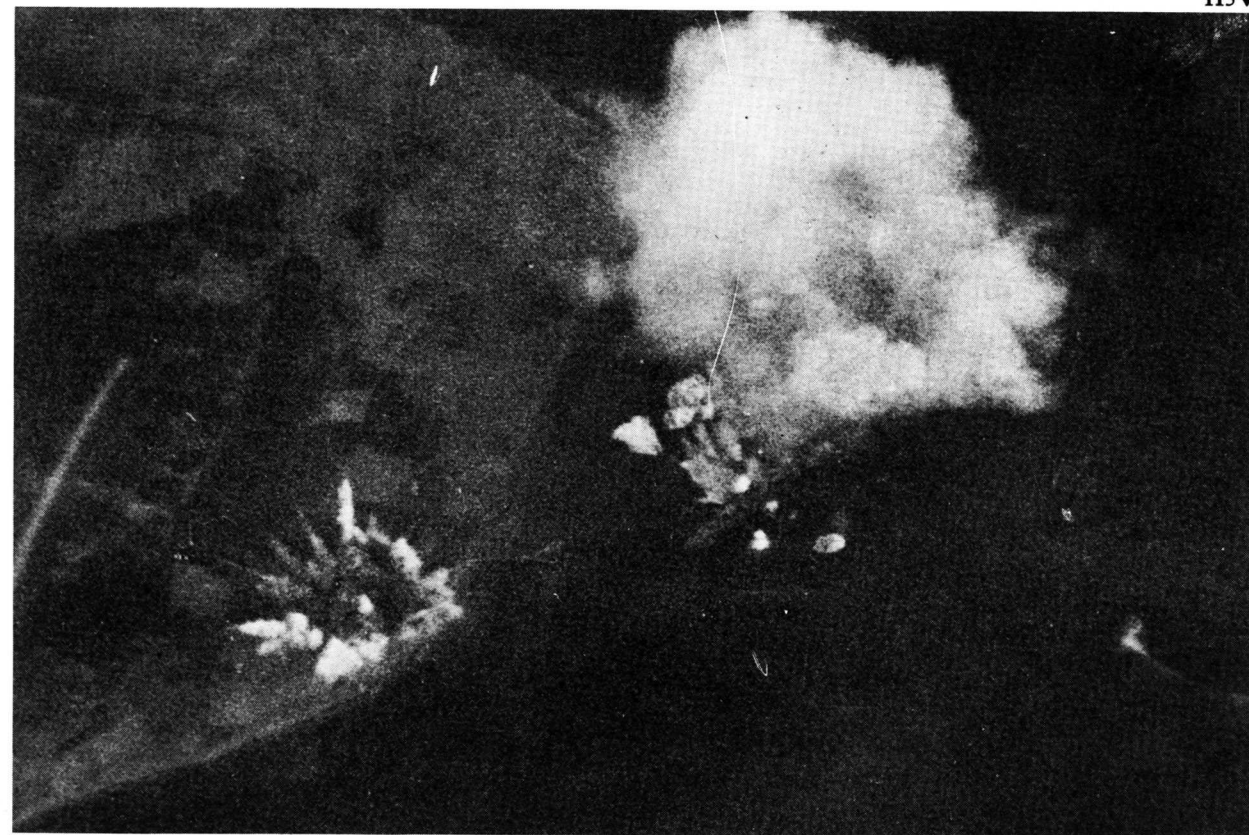


114 ▲

114. A less savoury aspect of British aid to Russia was the forced repatriation of 11,000 Russian ex-prisoners of war and slave workers of the Germans. Many were reluctant to return but the Soviet government was adamant and the British government complied with the Soviet request. A special fast convoy of two troopships, the *Empress of Australia* (see here entering the Kola Inlet) and the *Scythia*, escorted by *Berwick*, *Campania* and six destroyers, left Scapa Flow on 1 November. The convoy was coded JW.61A and arrived at Murmansk on 6 November from where most of the

Russian ex-PoWs went straight into the Gulag. (IWM A.26473)  
115. The end of the *Tirpitz*, 'The Lone Queen of the North', came on 12 November when twenty-one Lancasters of Nos. 9 and 617 Squadrons raided the battleship's new anchorage west of Tromsø, whither the ship had been moved to in October. *Luftwaffe* fighters failed to give cover, and so the bombers had a clear run in over the target. After receiving several hits *Tirpitz* capsized, taking nearly 900 men with her. The menace which had for so long threatened the Russian convoys was gone. (IWM C.5168)

115 ▼







▲ 116

116. A hit from a 12,000lb 'Tallboy' on *Tirpitz*; three hits and several near-misses were claimed. The bows of the ship can just be discerned protruding from the lower left-hand edge of the smoke and steam caused by the direct hits of the bombs. Note the explosion of one bomb on Haakoy Island. (IWM C.4775)

▼ 117



117. The escort carrier *Nairana*, seen from HMS *Campania* during the passage of JW.64 in February 1945. JW.64 and the homeward bound RA.64 were the last convoys to suffer serious opposition from the Germans: two merchant ships and three escorts were sunk. (IWM A.27216)



118▲

118. Rear-Admiral Roderick McGrigor conducts the defence of JW.64 from the bridge of HMS *Campania*. The escort carriers offered better command and communications facilities than the cruisers; even so, the bridge looks very cramped! (IWM A.27526)  
119. A merchant ship in the storm which struck the return convoy RA.64. Winds of up to 70kts were encountered, and many ships

were forced to heave-to with engine trouble while others had difficulty with shifting deck cargoes. The freighter *Henry Bacon* became detached from the convoy and was sunk by the *Luftwaffe* – the last ship to be sunk by German aircraft in the Second World War. (IWM A.27518)

119▼







▲ 120

120. Wildcat fighters on board HMS *Trumpeter* while escorting JW.65 to Russia. Wildcats were more suitable than Swordfish for Arctic conditions: the open cockpit of the latter did not make for comfortable flying. JW.65 encountered opposition from two U-boat packs, which sank two freighters and the sloop *Lapwing*. (IWM A.28202)

121. The corvette *Honeysuckle* secured alongside HMS *Trumpeter* in Murmansk after the arrival of JW.65 on 21 March 1945. Both ships returned to Britain with the homeward bound RA.65, which arrived in the Clyde without loss. The next pair of convoys, JW/RA.66, went to and from Russia with the loss of one escort, the frigate *Goodall*. RA.66 arrived in the Clyde on 8 May, three days after the end of the war in Europe. (IWM A.28203)

▼ 121



122▲ 123▼

122. The corvette *Bluebell*, torpedoed by *U711* on 16 February 1945 while escorting RA.64, was one of the last Allied warships to be lost on the Russian convoys. In all, 21 Allied warships were sunk and naval casualties amounted to 1,944; Merchant Navy losses were 98 ships and 829 men killed or drowned. The Germans lost two capital ships, three destroyers, 32 U-boats and an unknown number of aircraft. (IWM FL.2383)

123. A bows-on view of the carrier HMS *Vindex*, which escorted the last pair of convoys. Fears that some U-boats may have ignored the surrender order made the Admiralty insist that JW/RA.67 sail with an escort, despite the formal end to hostilities. No resistance was encountered, and with the safe passage of JW/RA.67 the story of the Russian convoys comes to an end. (IWM FXL.6162)





124. Heavy industrial equipment, in this case a 2500kW generator, to help the USSR with reconstruction work is loaded on to a merchant ship. The story of Allied aid to Russia ended on a sour note when in April 1945 the Truman administration abruptly terminated Lend-Lease to the USSR as part of the 'get tough with Russia' policy. As the Second World War drew to a close the world was already embarking on the 'Cold War'. (IWM P.1772)

125. A concert organised by the Russians for the ship's company of HMS *Berwick* in November 1944. The Russians were difficult allies, and relations were not always at this cordial level. Despite the problems, Mr. Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, said that 'the Russian convoys are a northern saga of heroism, bravery and endurance'. (IWM A.26471)

124 ►



▼ 125







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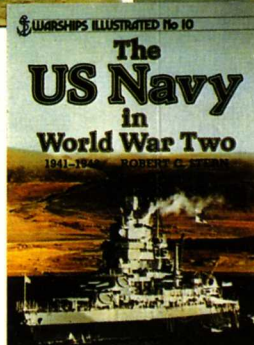
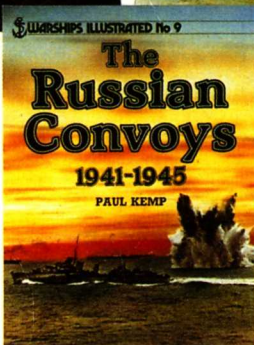
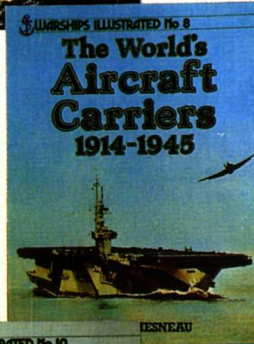
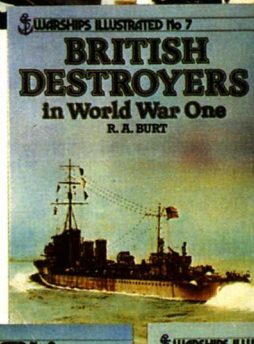
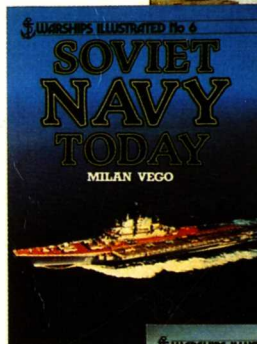
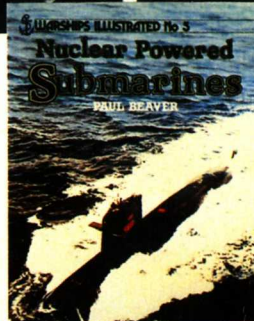
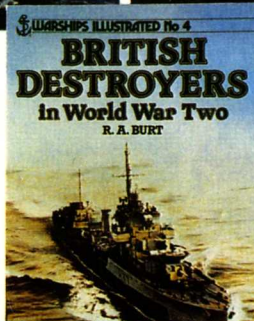
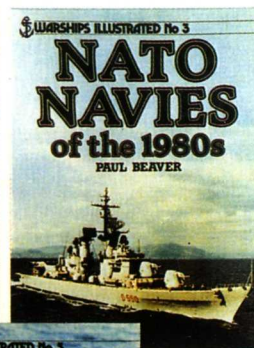
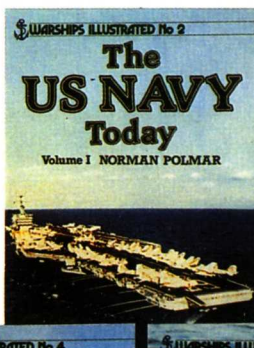
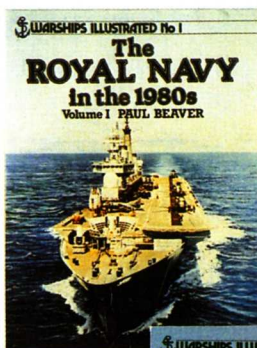
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