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H.M.S. "Whitshed",
c/o "G.P.O.", London.

14th Feb. 1942.

The Captain (D),
16th Destroyer Flotilla.



Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report in connection with the operation against German Naval Units on Thursday, 12th February 1942.

"Whitshed" remained in company with Captain (D), 16th Destroyer Flotilla, in "Mackay" throughout the operation except for a short period between 1545 and about 1600. "Whitshed's" track chart during this period and the estimated track of the "PRINZ EUGEN", the enemy ship attacked, is appended.

At 1540, when steering 075°, enemy ships were sighted bearing 150°. At first a Destroyer Screen could be seen and at 1542 a heavy ship, thought to be a Battle Cruiser, became distinguishable. Her range was estimated at 3 miles.

At this stage Captain (D) 16 was observed to be detaching himself from the leading Division and "Whitshed" followed in open order, closing the heavy ship ~~sighted~~ on a course of about 125° and later 170°. At 1545 "Mackay" turned and fired her torpedoes. It was my intention to fire as well, as it was apparent that the enemy would not present a better target by further delaying. Torpedoes however were not ready so "Whitshed" continued to close.

As soon as "Mackay" had fired, the target was observed to make a large alteration of course away. At first it was thought that this alteration was to avoid "Mackay's" torpedoes, but I am now of the opinion that she was taking avoiding action from Air Attacks. At one moment her inclination was 0° but half a minute later she made a further turn to starboard and when her inclination was estimated at 50°-60° right "Whitshed" turned and fired torpedoes at 1547. Her range was then not more than 3000 yards and in view of her apparent preoccupation with aircraft, it was thought there was a good chance of obtaining a hit. No results were observed as I turned away to the northward at once to rejoin "Mackay".

As "Whitshed" was retiring, two or three very heavy explosions were felt. This coincided with my estimation of the time required for "Mackay's" torpedoes to reach the enemy, and would account for no results of "Mackay's" attack being observed in "Whitshed".

The attacking course was an extremely difficult one on account of the weather. The ship was nosing into a heavy sea; water was coming over the bridge continuously and the forward guns could not be kept in action. The ship was yawing badly, which made the training of the torpedo mounting difficult. Failure on my part at the outset to appreciate how the attack would develop, caused a delay in training the tubes to Port which was no fault of the tube's crew, who did their utmost in most unpleasant conditions.

It was

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It was not until after the attack that the identity of the target was first doubted. When seen at fine inclination her beam seemed very broad, but from a study of the silhouettes afterwards it appeared that the attack was made on the PRINZ EUGEN and not on one of the Battle Cruisers.

Whilst retiring and closing "Mackay" the ship was twice attacked by enemy aircraft. In the second attack made by a Dornier it was considered some hits were obtained by Oerlikons and Pom-poms on her. The aircraft jettisoned her bombs well clear.

During the "run in" there was little interference from the enemy. A few rounds were heard whistling overhead but their source was never established. On retiring the After Group 4.7" guns opened fire on the PRINZ EUGEN in Group Control. Gunnery details and expenditure of ammunition used against both surface craft and aircraft are appended.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



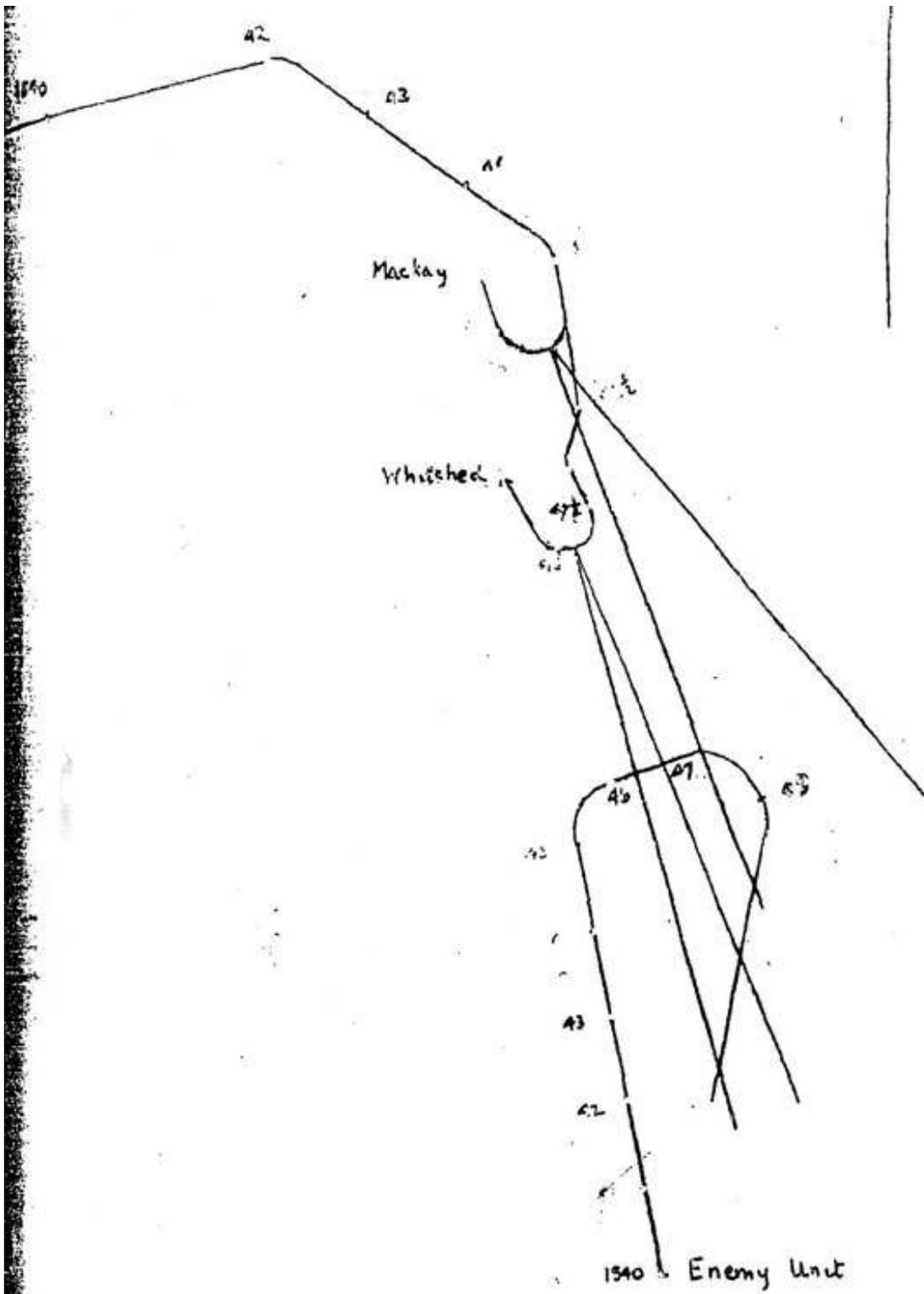
Lieutenant Commander.
Commanding Officer.

Enclosures :---

1. Track Chart.

2. Report in accordance with GAFG 1870/41. "~~Torpedoes fired in Action~~".

3. Details of ammunition expended.



Mackay and Whitshed
Track Chart

Scale - 1 cm : 500 yds

J. B. Moraw
Lieut (R)