

THE OLD HOUSE
BIGHTON
NR. ALRESFORD
HAMPSHIRE SO24 9RE
ALRESFORD 2772

19th Jan. 1981

Dear Mr Danielson,

Thank you for your letter dated 11th Jan. I am afraid I can only speak from memory of 40 years ago, but I will try to cover your points.

The Dorsetshire was escorting a convoy from South Africa to England when we intercepted signals that a concentration of the British Home Fleet had sighted and would attack the Bismark some 300 miles to the North of us.

We left our convoy in the

charge of the armed merchant cruiser we had with us and proceeded at full speed to the Bismark's position, arriving the next morning.

The situation then, as we soon discovered, was that the combined armament of the British Fleet had, at first, crippled the manouvering of the Bismark and then reduced her to a stationary shambles unable to fight - No gun was capable of firing -

However she would not sink, and all ships in the British fleet had expended their

II

THE OLD HOUSE
BRIGHTON
NR. ALRESFORD
HAMPSHIRE SO24 9RE
ALRESFORD 2772

full outfit of Torpedoes -

The Commander in Chief / Home fleet accordingly ordered the Dorsetshire, which had its full outfit of torpedoes, to sink the Bismark -

We approached her starboard side, firing our 8 in guns, to which there was no response, until we were within a couple of miles, when we turned and fired half our outfit of torpedoes into her Starboard side - There was no immediate

visible effect - We then went round to the port side and fired our remaining torpedoes at it.

The Bismark began to get lower in the water and her crew, those still capable of doing so, jumped into the sea and swam towards us.

She did not list to port or starboard, nor plunge bow or stern first (as the Dorsetshire did, both, when we were later sunk by Japanese dive bombers in the Indian ocean) but just acquired negative buoyancy, apparently on an even keel -

The sea was flat calm and we managed to rescue about 100 men with ropes and nets

III

THE OLD HOUSE
BIGHTON
NR. ALRESFORD
HAMPSHIRE SO24 9RE
ALRESFORD 2772

over the side until an object
resembling a periscope was sighted
and we made off hastily-

Your Question 3 - I cannot
remember the time these events
took, but she sank very soon
after the second torpedo attack -

Yours Sincerely

Bryan Durant

Alexander Autographs, Inc.
P.O Box 101
Cos Cob, Connecticut 06807
(203) 622-8444

*Fine letters, documents
and manuscripts in all
fields of collecting.*

1311

BRYAN DURANT British Admiral who led the final attack resulting in the sinking of the Bismarck. Good content A.L.S. 5pp. 12mo., Hampshire, England to a man recounting the last moments of the Bismarck. Durant, captain of the H.M.S. Dorsetshire, relates that was summoned to meet the British fleet then off the coast of Uruguay. When he arrived he found a crippled Bismarck, but the fleet had used all of their torpedoes: "...However she would not sink... The Commander in Chief Home Fleet accordingly ordered the Dorsetshire, which had its full outfit of torpedoes, to sink the Bismarck - We approached her starboard side, firing our ...guns, to which there was no response, until we were with in a couple of miles, when we turned and fired half our outfit of torpedoes into her Starboard side -There was no immediate visible effect - We then went round to the port side and fired our remaining torpedoes at it. The Bismarck began to get lower in the water and her crew, those still capable of doing so, jumped into the sea and swam towards us. She did not list to port or starboard, nor plunge bow or stern first... but just acquired negative buoyancy, apparently on an even keel - The sea was flat calm and we managed to rescue about 100 men with ropes and nets over the side until an object resembling a periscope was sighted and we made off hastily... " Very good.