



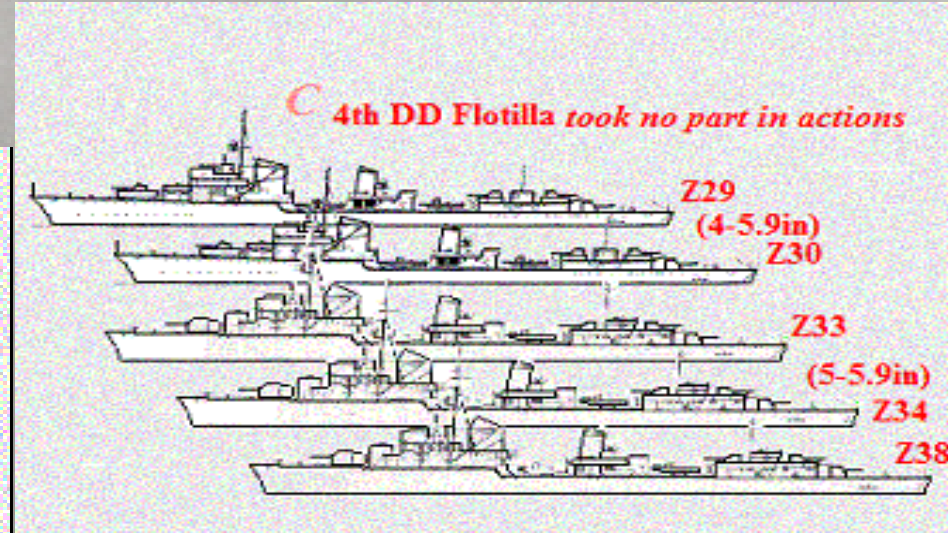
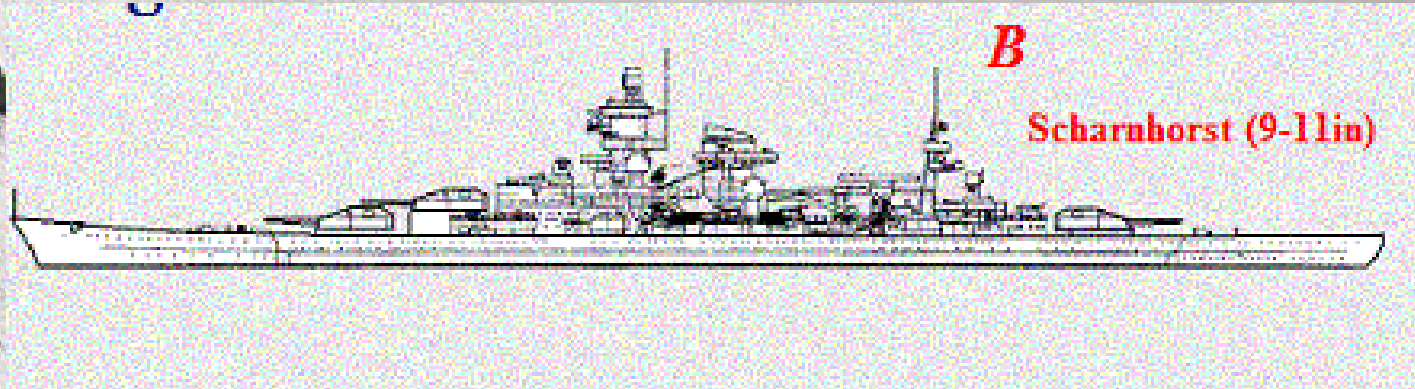
# **SCHARNHORST-THE LAST SIGNAL**

**Presented by Ken Lloyd**

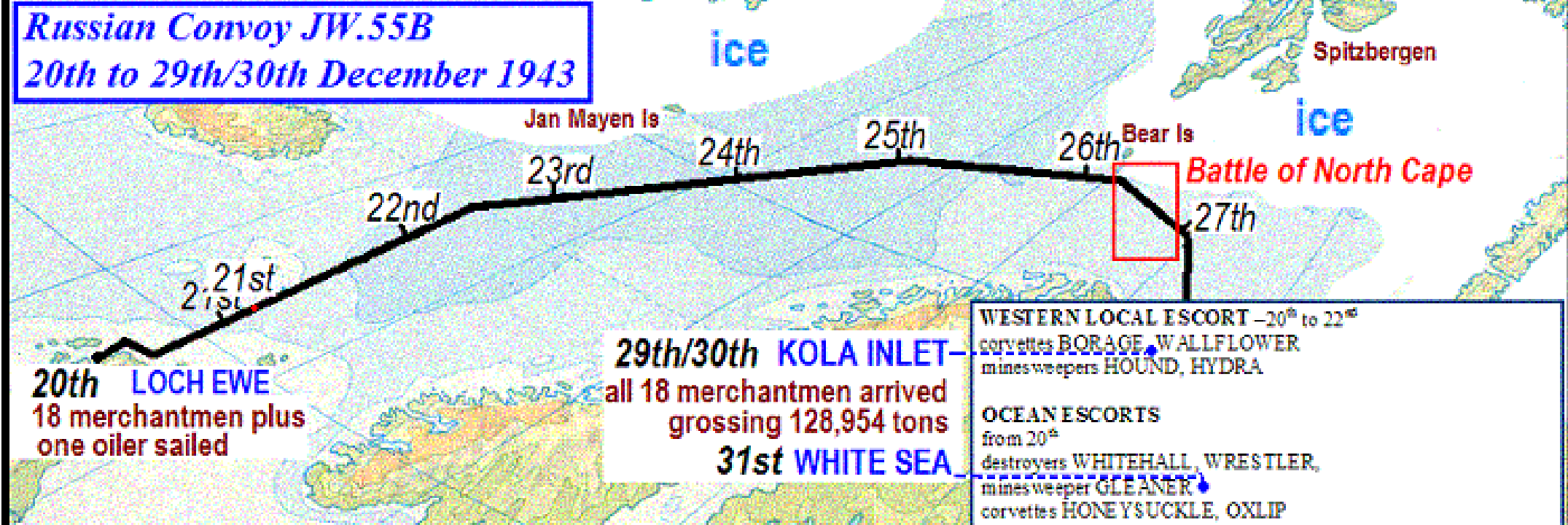
**Convoy JW-55B 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 1943**



# OPERATION OSTFRONT



**Russian Convoy JW.55B**  
**20th to 29th/30th December 1943**



**20th LOCH EWE**  
 18 merchantmen plus  
 one oiler sailed

**29th/30th KOLA INLET**—  
 all 18 merchantmen arrived  
 grossing 128,954 tons  
**31st WHITE SEA**

**WESTERN LOCAL ESCORT** – 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>  
 corvettes BORAGE, WALLFLOWER  
 minesweepers HOUND, HYDRA

**OCEAN ESCORTS**  
 from 20<sup>th</sup>  
 destroyers WHITEHALL, WRESTLER,  
 minesweeper GLEANER  
 corvettes HONEYSUCKLE, OXLIP

joined 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>  
 destroyers IMPULSIVE, ONSLOW, ONSLAUGHT, ORWELL,  
 SCOURGE, Canadian HAIDA, HURON and IROQUOIS

from convoy RA 55A joined 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>  
 destroyers MATCHLESS, MUSKETEE, OPPORTUNE, VIRAGO

**EASTERN LOCAL ESCORT** – 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>  
 minesweepers HALCYON, HUSSAR  
 three Russian destroyers

**COVER FORCE** – 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> (took part in cruiser  
 action & chase)  
 cruisers BELFAST, NORFOLK, SHEFFIELD

**DISTANT COVER FORCE** – 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> (took part in  
 battle action)  
 battleship DUKE OF YORK,  
 cruiser JAMAICA  
 destroyers SAVAGE, SAUMAREZ, SCORPION,  
 Norwegian STORD

	13/US JOHN J ABEL 7191/43	12/Br OCEAN VALOUR 7174/41	11/Br FORT NAKASLEY 7100/43 Vice Commodore
24/US JOHN WANAMAKER 7176/43	23/US CARDINAL GIBBONS 7191/42	22/Br FORT VERCHERES 7122/42	21/US BERNARD N BAKER 7191/43
34/US JOHN VINING 7191/42	33/US BROCKHOLST LIVINGSTON 7176/42	32/Pan NORLYS 8892/36 Escort oiler	31/Br FORT KULLYSPELL 7190/43 Commodore
	43/Br OCEAN MESSENGER 7178/42	42/Br BRITISH STATESMAN 6991/23	41/US THOMAS U WALTER 7176/43
	53/Br OCEAN GYPHY 7178/42	52/Br OCEAN PRIDE 7173/42 Rear Commodore	51/US HAROLD L WINSLOW 7176/43
		62/US WILL ROGERS 7200/42	61/Br OCEAN VICEROY 7174/42



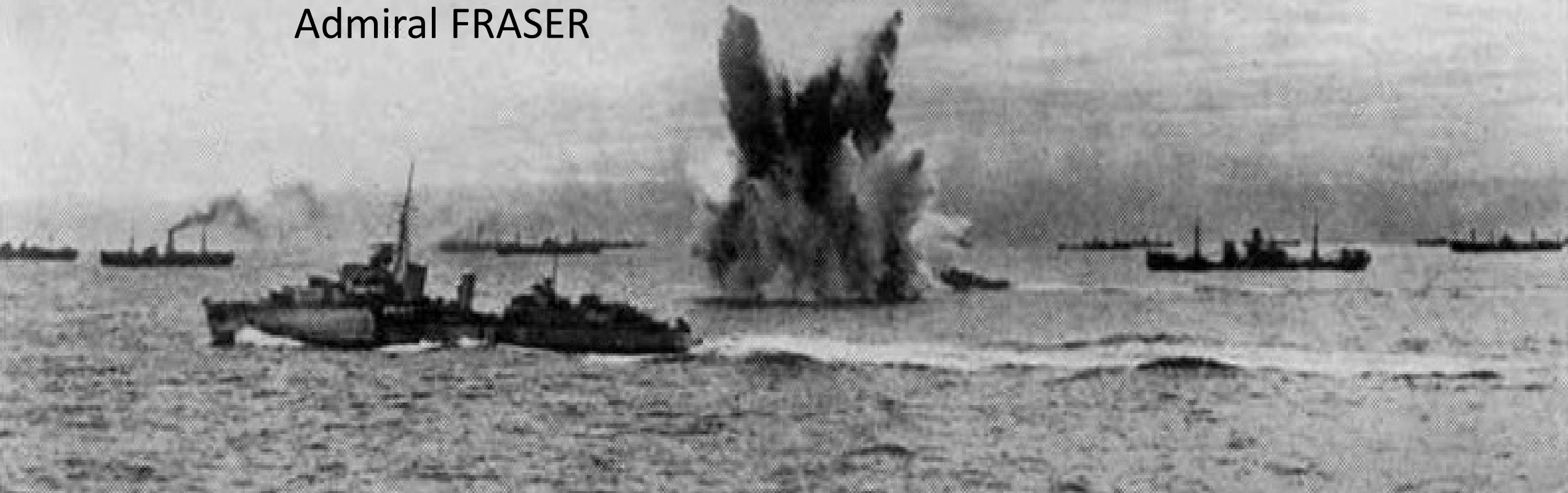
**SCHARNHORST with U-Boat**



# The Signals story

"...the speed of wireless communications and the exceptional performance of radar ... contributed in the greatest measure to its success."

Admiral FRASER



# Factors and Influencers

- The Weather
- Command and Control
  - Kriegsmarine
  - Admiralty
- Technology
  - Radar
  - Radio Direction Finding
  - Signals Intelligence





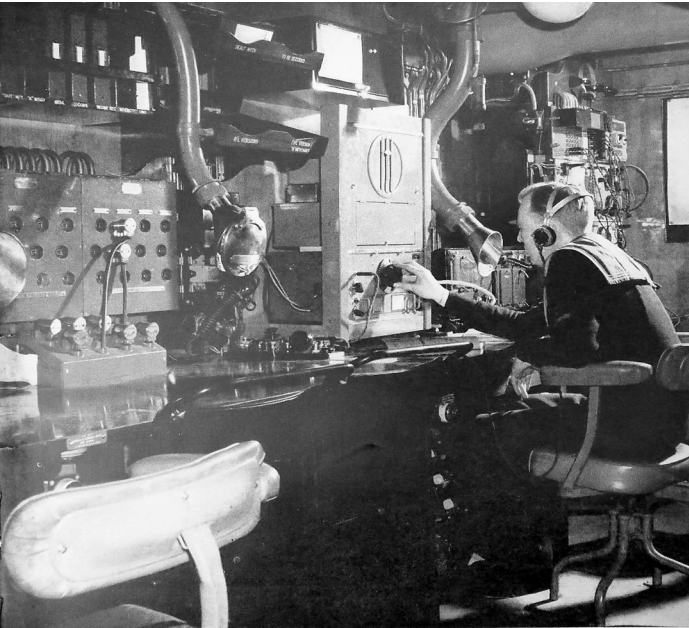
# SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE

On board ships and on shore-  
High Frequency Radio interception and Direction Finding.

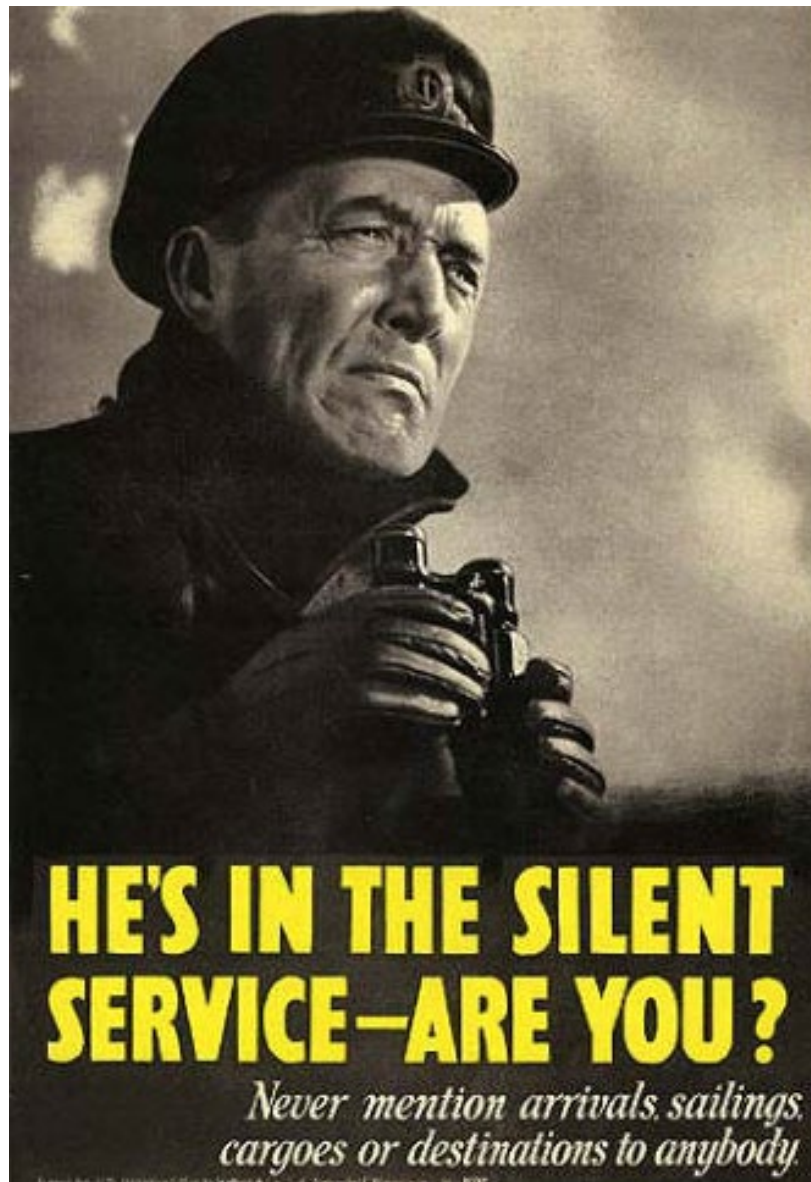
ENIGMA messages deciphered at Bletchley

direct to Admiralty OIC  
Ultra intelligence

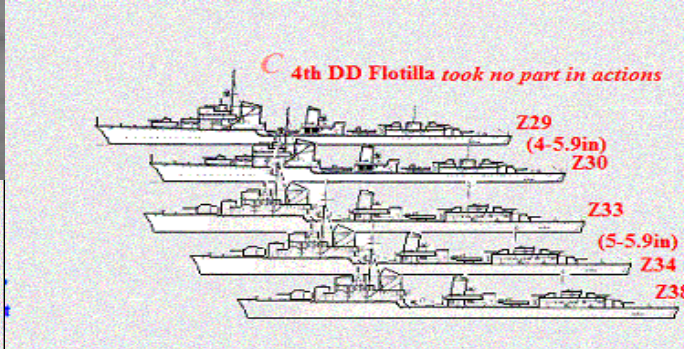
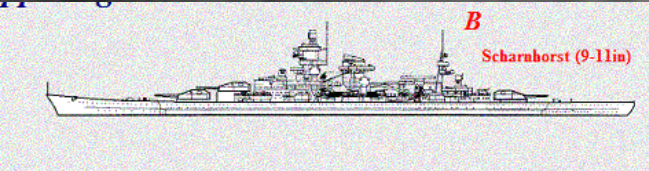
direct to  
CIC Home Fleet



# RADIO SILENCE



# Scharnhorst and 1<sup>st</sup> Battle Group





**1<sup>st</sup> Battle Group  
Scharnhorst and 4th Destroyer Flotilla**



# 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1943

**20 Dec Convoy JW-55B sails**

**21 Dec ULTRA reports SCHARNHORST preparing to sail**

**22 Dec ULTRA German Air recce reports convoy**

**23 Dec Force 2 and HMS DUKE OF YORK prepare to protect JW-55B**



## 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> December 1943

24 Dec ULTRA SCHARNHORST ordered to prepare to sail

24 Dec ULTRA German Air recce ordered over convoy

24 Dec Adm Fraser breaks radio silence orders to JW-55B

25 Dec Adm Fraser orders 4 Destroyers from RA-55A to JW-55B

25 Dec ULTRA U Boats and Air recce report JW-55B.

Admiral Doenitz orders MOST IMMEDIATE OSTFRONT.

**26<sup>th</sup> December 1943 02.17am “EMERGENCY  
SCHARNHORST probably sailed 1800/25<sup>th</sup> December”  
Admiralty OIC to Admiral Fraser**





# SCHARNOST signal located by HMS ONSLOW

Admiralty signal to Adm Fraser "260319 Admiralty appreciates that SCHARNHORST was at sea."





**Bear Island**

**Convoy JW55B**

**Force One**

**Force Two**

**Schamhorst**

**Murmansk**

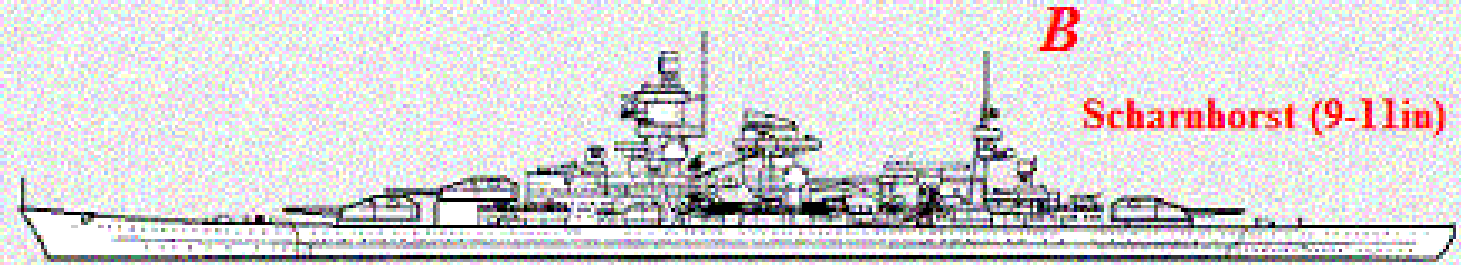
0 250  
Scale: Nautical miles

**Arctic Circle**

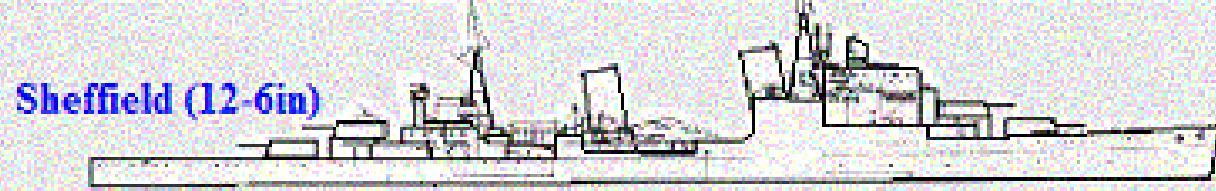
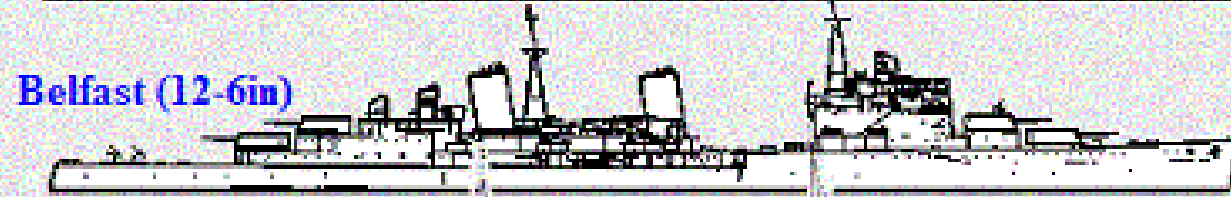
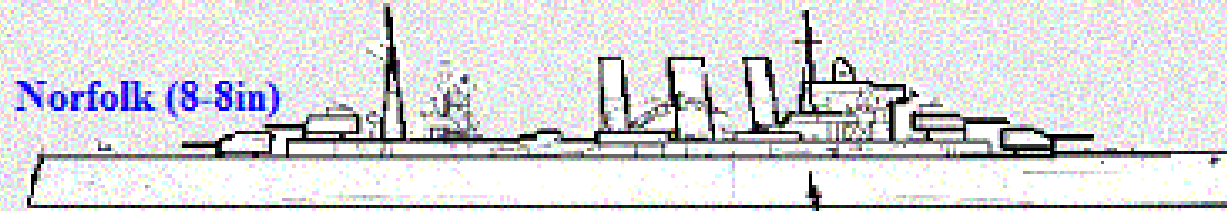
**Iceland**

**Norway**

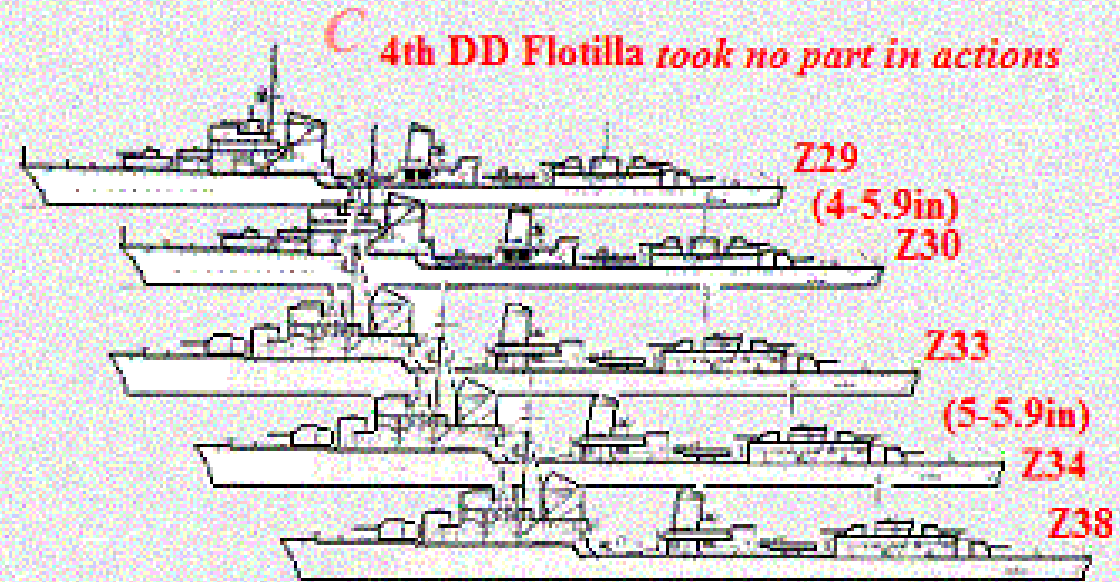
# Opposing Forces



## **A** CRUISER COVER FORCE



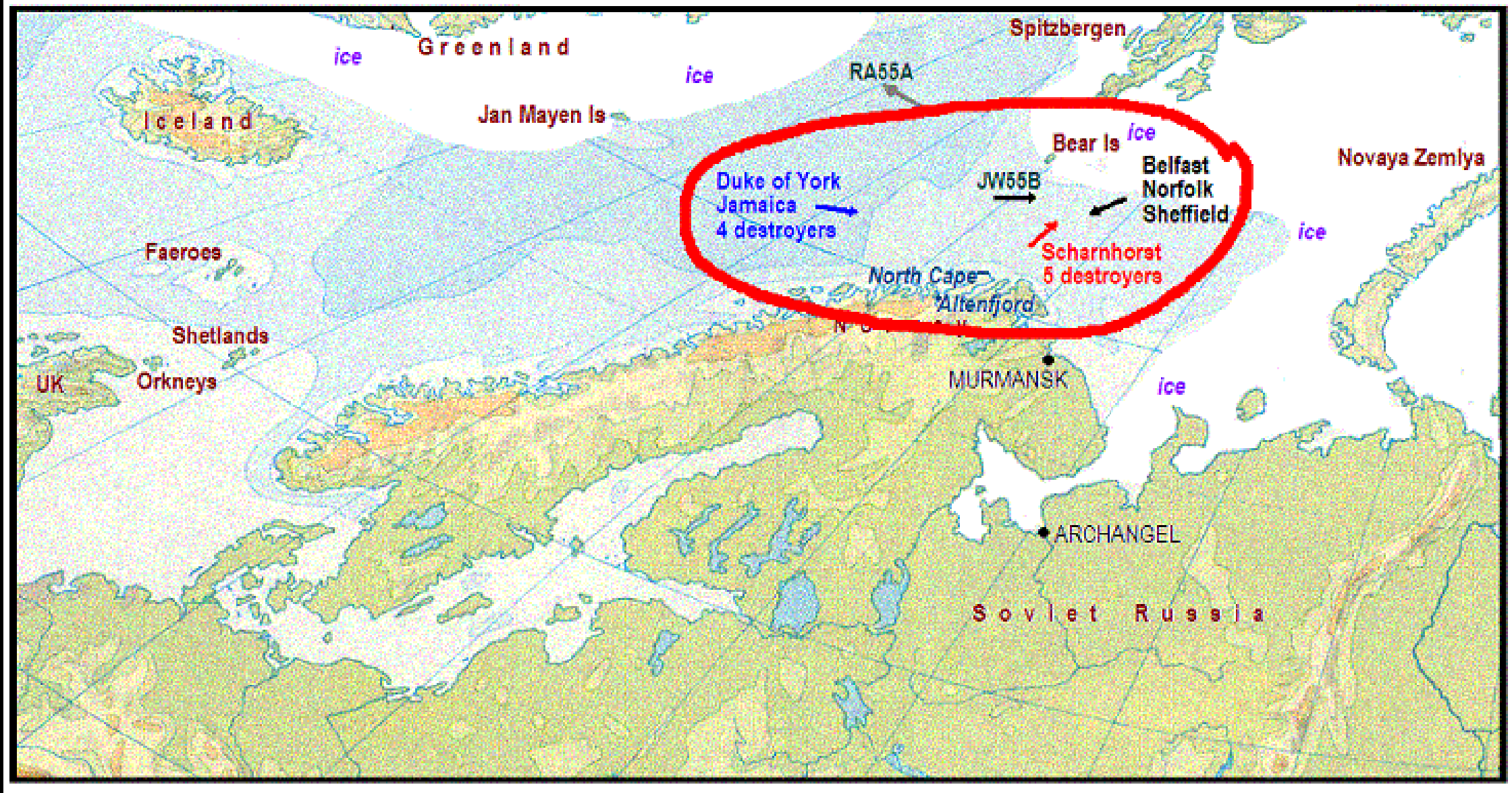
destroyers *Musketeer*, *Matchless*, *Opportune*, *Virago*  
join cruisers before second engagement



**0400** approximate force positions (arrows)

0921 - "enemy in sight" from HMS Belfast

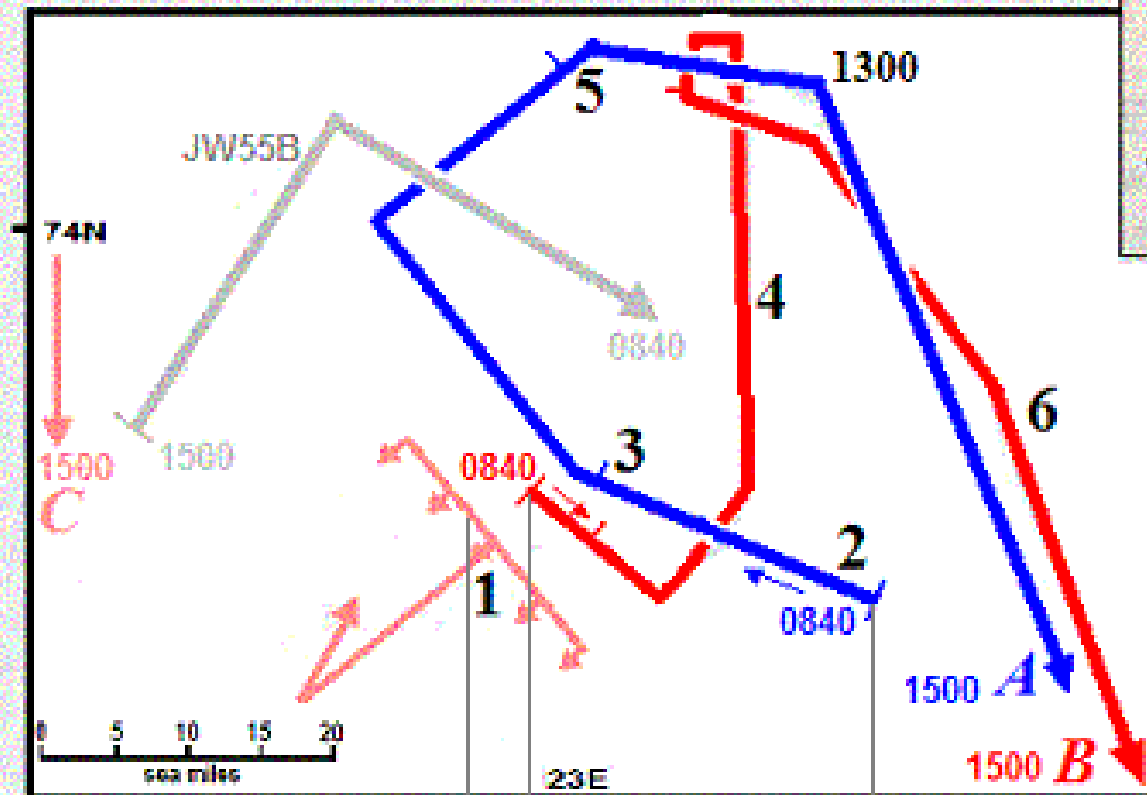
1945 - battlecruiser Scharnhorst sunk



# Engagements



*HMS Sheffield*



*B* Scharnhorst  
*C* 4th DD Flotilla

*A* CRUISER COVER FORCE

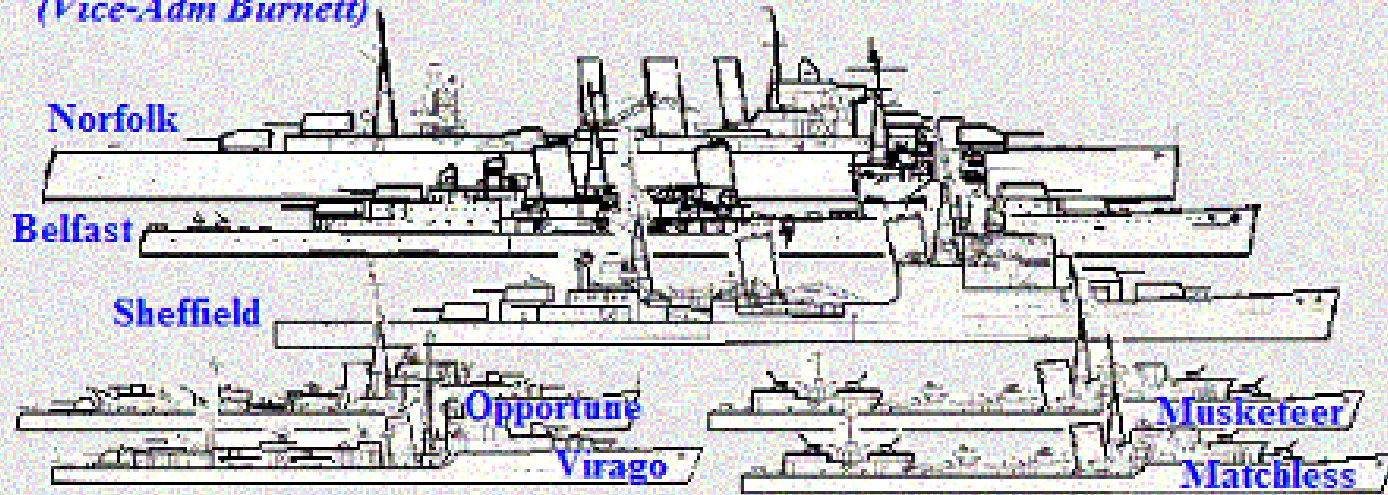
- 1** 0730 - German destroyers search for convoy
- 2** 0840 - first radar contact; 0921 - sighted
- 3** 0929 - Norfolk opens fire, hits 'Scharnhorst'
- 4** Cruisers close convoy as 'Scharnhorst' searches to north
- 5** 1205 - second radar contact, 1221 - cruisers open fire, Norfolk damaged
- 6** Cruiser stern chase

# HMS DUKE OF YORK

-locates SCHARNHORST using type 273 radar

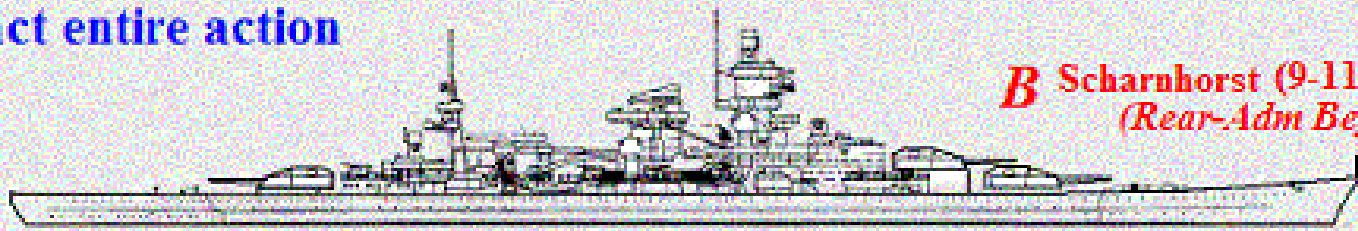


**A CRUISER  
COVER FORCE  
(Vice-Adm Burnett)**

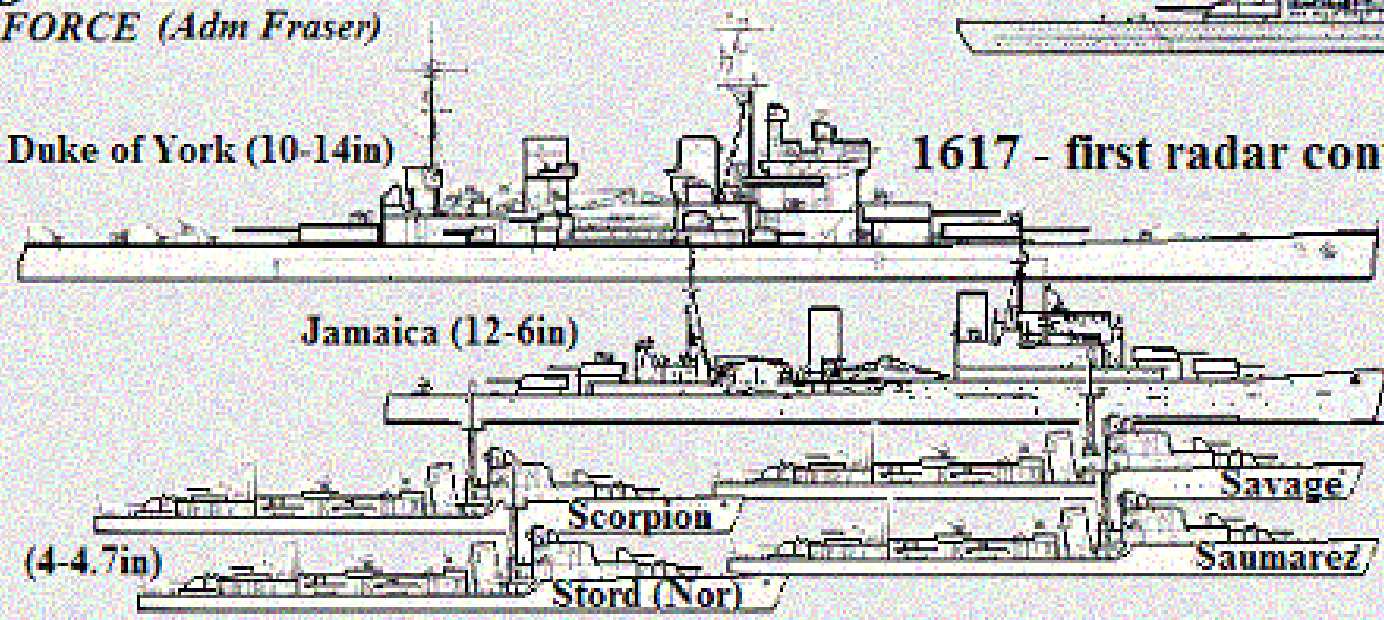


# Opposing Forces

remains in contact entire action



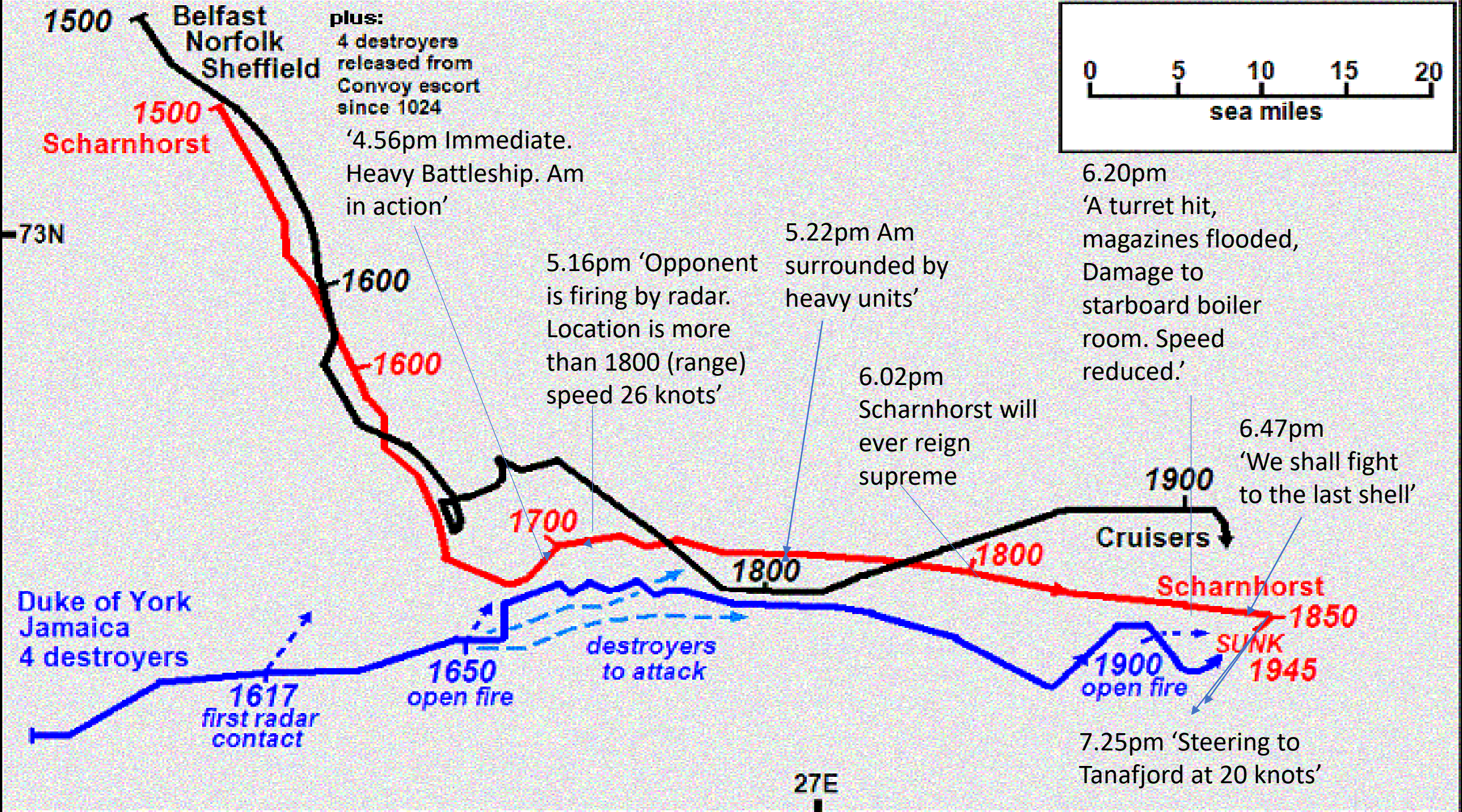
**D DISTANT COVER  
FORCE (Adm Fraser)**



1617 - first radar contact













The last words  
are left for  
Admiral Fraser

