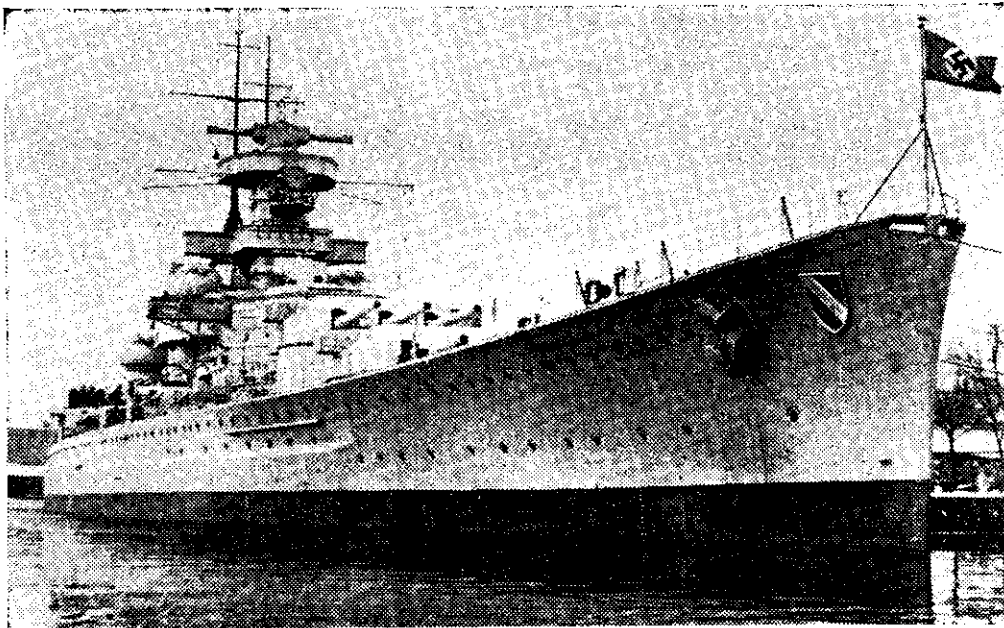


HIT & RUN

THE DRAMA OF THE SCHARNHORST,
by Corvette-Captain Fritz-Otto Busch;
Robert Hale; English price 15/-.

(Reviewed by Denis Glover)

THIS German account makes much of the Scharnhorst, and in truth she was as fast and dangerous a jackal as ever prowled the seas. Shared in quite a tradition, too—for the first time in modern warfare we find battleships ordered to sea for the sole purpose of avoiding action except with merchant ships. The career of the Scharnhorst (with her sister Gneisenau) was ignominious rather than heroic. At the sight of a single British cruiser (the Newcastle) they fled from the corpse of the Rawalpindi; at the sight of single British capital ships (Ramillies, Malaya and Rodney guarding three separate convoys) they saved the honour and the ammunition of the Reich by making off. In company they sank the Glorious off Norway, and her destroyers Ardent and Acasta—not before the Scharnhorst had been torpedoed by the latter, and had a turret put out of action. Thereafter, it was hide and seek, with all the hiding on their side. The dramatic



THE SCHARNHORST—"From the savagery of fire and water, only thirty-odd survivors were rescued"

break through the Channel did no damage except to British pride (we displayed lamentable vigilance, co-ordination, training and skill)—and both battle-cruisers hit mines. The Gneisenau never went to sea again: the Scharn-

horst, which Korvettenkapitan Busch describes as a lucky ship, was reserved, alone, for Hitler's last desperate onslaught against the Russian convoys.

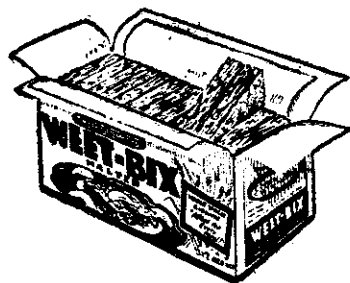
There was nothing heroic about it, unless to die in battle is in itself great.

brushes with Burnett's smaller ships, and one (a dud) on the Duke. From the savagery of fire and water only thirty-odd survivors were rescued.

We can't blame the Scharnhorst. She was commanded and manned by very

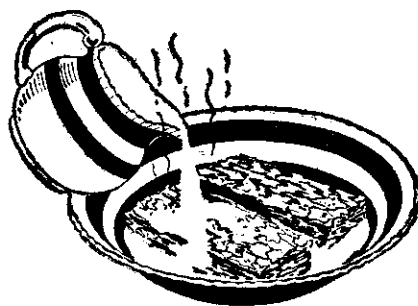
The Scharnhorst walked into a trap which had been set many times by Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser. Instead of the convoy, Admiral Burnett's cruisers appeared before her. Circling to the east, she tried to come down from the north. Again Burnett was there. The convoy sailed on untouched: the Scharnhorst headed for home. But the way was barred. The Duke of York, in the snow-storms and darkness of an Arctic gale not even starshells could illuminate, picked her up at 19,500 yards, with Burnett coming down from the north-west. In the confusion of bad weather and conflicting signals her five destroyers saw no action. The Scharnhorst went down fighting, though she achieved nothing more than a few hits in the earlier

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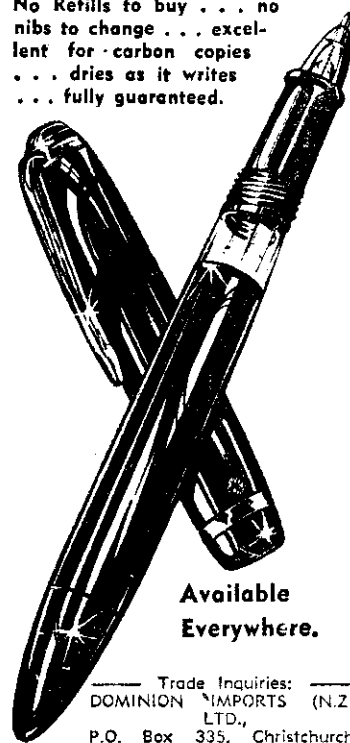
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