



Attack At Dawn: Reliving the First Battle of Narvik in World War Two

By Ron Cope

PRESS RELEASE

On the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Narvik, author Ron Cope shines a spotlight onto the brave young sailors behind this dramatic military campaign, including his father.

On 1 March 1940, Adolf Hitler ordered the invasion of Norway. Having swept across Europe at a terrifying pace, the Nazi assault on Scandinavia was designed to secure the valuable source of iron ore being delivered by rail from Sweden to the Norwegian port of Narvik. To complete the task, Hitler sent ten large, modern destroyers, with 220 Alpine Troops on each. Five smaller British H Class destroyers were sent up the fjord in retaliation by the Allied forces, with little knowledge of what to expect. On April 10, the first battle of Narvik began. Royal Naval Captain, Bernard Warburton-Lee, led his flotilla at midnight into the fjord. They had to navigate the four hour passage undetected, under darkness and in driving snow storms. The harbour — eerily silent on their arrival — quickly erupted into a torpedo

attack. Back into the fjord, the destroyers Hardy, Hunter, Hotspur, Havock and Hostile were confronted by five German destroyers, coming from both the front and rear. This resulted in a ferocious sea battle with the loss of Hardy and Hunter and damage to the enemy ships. Those crew members who managed to abandon ship and swim ashore, under bombardment from the Germans, had to endure a ten mile march and pray for safe passage back to Britain in order to survive.

Attack at Dawn: Reliving the First Battle of Narvik in World War Two is the exemplary culmination of author Ron Cope's six-year-long commitment to producing a social history narrative focussing on the men who fought alongside his father, Cyril — then, a twenty-one year old Torpedoman on HMS Hardy — at this extraordinary assault. Divided into three stages; the battle itself, the immediate response to the Narvik action — including a speech from Winston Churchill — as the survivors managed to return home, and the post-war aftermath ; Cope expertly navigates the reader through the complexities of British WWII naval history, expertly juxtaposing the myriad strategic difficulties encountered by the British Navy, with the vivid and insightful personal accounts of its brave crew members.

Attack at Dawn includes rousing first-hand testimony from ex-Signalman Ralph Briggshaw — now 94 years old — and Cope's father, whose humorous anecdotes — including giving a fellow officer a long ballroom dress to wear after abandoning the ship under terrifying live fire — provide a refreshing insight into the realities of the human experience in military combat. The book also benefits from the remarkable personal documents of Captain Warburton-Lee - who was awarded the first Victoria Cross for bravery and leadership - lent by his family, and those of the National and Imperial War Museum Archives. **Attack at Dawn** is essential reading, as it not only memorialises this critical but lesser-known WWII battle, but because it pays much-needed tribute to those who fought for Britain and the freedoms she enjoys.

About the author: Born in Salford, Ron Cope followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Royal Navy in 1964, working in electronics. After leaving the forces in 1986, he spent over twenty years working in the probation service, specifically with young offenders. Now a proud father and grandfather, Cope is retired and living with his wife Alison in Telford, Shropshire. **Attack at Dawn: Reliving the First Battle of Narvik in World War Two** by Ron Cope (published by Clink Street Publishing RRP £11.99 paperback, RRP £7.99 ebook) is available from 10 April 2015 online from retailers including amazon.co.uk and to order from all good bookstores.

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