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Some Features of the Battle of Dogger Bank

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AMERICAN EMBASSY
OFFICE OF THE NAVAL ATTACHE
BERLIN

The Secretary
WNOpB
1922-92

Tiergartenstrasse 30,
2 May, 1922.

Rear Admiral W.S. Sims, U.S. Navy,
President, Naval War College,
Newport, Rhode Island.

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT
RECEIVED
MAY 27 1922

My dear Admiral Sims:-

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a report being made this date to O.N.I., translated from the German, which discusses some features of the battle off the Dogger Bank between the German battle cruisers and Admiral Beatty's squadron.

I am taking the liberty of sending you this direct as it appears to me that some of the statements contained therein may be of interest to the War College in their study of these battles. I am trying now to obtain for you another copy of the original article so that you may have a copy of the chart giving the diagram showing the movements of the vessels, according to German sources.

There is a considerable amount of literature of this nature in Germany, of great interest to the War College in the study of German tactics, also bearing on the question of German strategy. Wherever possible, this office is attempting to translate such articles and in order to save waste of time, could furnish the War College direct with copies if you consider same desirable. Some of the material consisting of official publications by the German Admiralty on features of the war, are so long that translation is prohibitive owing to the limited personnel of the office. In such cases, I have made it a practice to send additional copies to O.N.I. so that the War College may be furnished with the originals direct, in the hopes that they could be translated there.

In the course of the next few days, I hope to obtain from the German Admiralty, some interesting discussions regarding the policy of sending their battle cruisers into the Atlantic for making raids on enemy shipping. The question was very seriously discussed on a number of occasions but the project was always turned down as they could not afford to separate their Fleet and the loss of the battle cruisers to the Fleet in any important Naval engagement would have spelled disaster, as is shown by the results of the Battle of Jutland.

If this office can be of assistance in any manner in obtaining information which the War College desires, relative to any particular features of the German and Austrian operations during the war, I shall be only too pleased to comply with the request. This matter is being sent to you direct as well as through O.N.I. owing to the fact that the latter office is very limited in personnel and in many cases the publications might be very much delayed in reaching you for that reason.

Very respectfully,

W. P. Beehler

W. P. BEEHLER.

Lieut. Commander, U.S. Navy.

Enclosure:
Report as
stated.

ATTACHÉ'S REPORT BLANK

Forward five copies (original and four carbons); this number is necessary because of the limited personnel in O. N. I. and because of the urgency for quickly disseminating information from attachés. These copies will be distributed by O. N. I. as per footnote or elsewhere, according to subject matter.

From NA Berlin Date 20 April, 1922 Serial No. 76 File No. 910/300
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Source of information Lt. Commander Gross in "Marine Rundschau" for March and April, 1922.

Subject Germany Operations. Historical.
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Reference

NOTE.—(The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.)

Lt. Commander Gross has published the following article (of which this report is the translation) in Vol. 3 of the "Marine Rundschau". It is entitled, "THE BATTLE ON THE DOGGER BANK, January 24, 1915" and the English authorities quoted are Corbett, "Naval Operations", Vol. 2; and Filson Young, "With the Battle Cruisers."

An unexampled agglomeration of naval forces in the North Sea preceded the Great War. With the outbreak of the latter, the whole world looked forward to a tremendous unloading of forces which would put all previous events in naval history, in the shade. But nothing of the kind happened. The great decision came in the West without the naval forces having had any appreciable influence in bringing it about. It is true that the activities of the German submarines expedited the fall of Antwerp and helped in taking and protecting the coast of Flanders by interrupting the transport of English troops; it also effected the attack of the German battle cruisers against Yarmouth; however, a really balancing influence in the struggle for the British Canal position was never exercised by our High Seas Fleet which was escheloned behind the right wing of the Western Front. In accordance with orders which temporarily prevented the Fleet from taking full risk, it remained stationary during the decisive battles in the West. When an offensive (albeit only a partial one) began in the North Sea with the attacks against the British coast in November and December, 1914, this had no connection whatsoever with the strategic situation existing on the land front. There the most important decisions had long ago occurred and had gripped the lines in a dead-lock.

For the German North Sea forces, December and the beginning of January passed in expectation of a probably impending British attack against the mouths of the German rivers even there was no strategical necessity for same. When this did not take place, it was evident that the weeks of acute preparedness had not failed to leave their mark on the Fleet. Urgently necessary manoeuvres of the III Squadron and several torpedo-boat flotillas, and repairs on several other ships which could no longer be delayed, made it necessary to interrupt this state of preparedness to such an extent that any thought of any initiative in an undertaking, in the existing state of weakness, was absolutely and entirely out of the question.

But though weeks of bad weather had nipped several contemplated undertakings in the bud, an improvement in things now began and gave rise to the Admiralty undertaking an operation when the III Squadron had scarcely left for the Baltic, which such against their will, would lead to the first encounter of large battleships in the North Sea. The proposal of the Chief of Staff, Vice-Admiral Sakermann, read as follows:

"If the weather to-morrow is the same as it is this afternoon and evening, an advance of the cruisers and flotillas to the Dogger Bank would, in my opinion, be very desirable. Special preparations are not necessary. An order need only be sent early to-morrow to the commanding officer of the reconnaissance

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ships. You leave during the night - are there in the morning - and return again in the evening."

Admiral von Ingenohl immediately opposed this on the ground of the Fleet's lack of preparedness at the time and expressed his opinion in the following marginal notation:

"I would much prefer, if such advances are to be made, that the Fleet go along. At the present time, this is unfortunately out of the question."

However, he gave his approval for the advance. As he stated in a report made after the battle, his approval was based on the following grounds:

"The operation against the Dogger Bank was planned for some time. The execution of same was, however, always prevented by special circumstances. It required an extensive torpedo boat advance supported by cruisers, a cleaning away of all the enemy fishing vessels in the way to the Dogger Bank, and a propitious surprising of the light advance outposts of the enemy forces such as were encountered on the occasion of the last advance against the Eastern Coast. For the first time in a long while, the weather was favorable and the torpedo boats could go along. Shortly before on the 19th of January the English Fleet had shown itself in the German Bay. It could therefore be assumed that in consideration of the lighter forces accompanying the Fleet, they had now put back to their harbors for coal. According to the reports, their dislocation seemed to be about as follows: The battle-cruisers in Scapa Flow to frustrate any attempt on the part of the German cruisers to break through for the carrying on of the commercial war, - part of the heavy naval forces in the Firth of Forth and part in the Thames. Therefore, it seemed that a small operation against the Dogger Bank by light cruisers, could be carried through unhesitatingly. Under these premises, the support of the heavy forces was not necessary during a short advance, - it would in fact, probably be detrimental on account of the increased danger through a previous announcement to the enemy. At this time, a more comprehensive undertaking with the idea of engaging parts of the enemy's battle fleet in action, was out of the question as the III Squadron had been sent to the Baltic."

Everything would have gone according to these expectations if, as we now know, the British Admiralty (even as during the advance against the British east coast on December 16th, 1914) had not continuously caught the German wireless messages and almost entirely deciphered them. It now appears from the account of a Russian naval officer in Petrograd that at the time of the stranding of the MAGDEBURG near Odenholm (August 26th, 1914) the codes which had been thrown overboard, were fished out by the Russians and placed at the disposition of the Entente. We were therefore playing with all our cards face up on the table while we were completely in the dark as to what the enemy was doing.

Therefore this relaxation on the part of the German High Seas Fleet from the state of maximum preparedness which arose after the 20th of January, was no secret to the English. This turn of affairs also seemed to offer the possibility of granting a very much needed rest to the Grand Fleet. An especially rigid guarding of the German Bay by submarines east and west of Helgoland and in front of the Ems as well as a reconnaissance cruise of the Harwich forces which was planned for the 23rd of January, was to protect the Fleet from any surprises during this period. The flag-ship, the IRON DUKE had already received orders to dock in Cromarty during which time Admiral Jellicoe was to have a short shore

leave, when reports reached the Admiralty on the morning of January 23rd which set in motion the entire machinery for the protection of the English coast such as was arranged for after the German attack on Yarmouth, Hartlepool and Scarborough. In the early part of the afternoon of this same day, Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty as well as the chief of the III British battle squadron and Commodore (T) all received simultaneously the following telegram from the Admiralty:-

" 4 German battle cruisers, 6 light cruisers and 22 destroyers will put out to sea this evening for a reconnoitering expedition against the Dogger Bank. Return probably to-morrow evening. All available battle cruisers, light cruisers and destroyers from Rosyth should advance to a point de reunion in 55° 13' North, 3° 12' East. Arrive there to-morrow morning 8 A.M. Commodore T should advance from Harwich with all available destroyers and light cruisers in order to join forces with the Vice Admiral of the LION at 8 A.M. at the above mentioned point. (The time given is Central European time, - that is, mean Greenwich time plus one hour.) If Commodore (T) sights the enemy during his advance, he should open fire. Wireless should only be used in the most urgent cases."

The German battle cruisers had therefore scarcely left the Jade when the British had also weighed anchor in the Firth of Forth (7 P.M.) The III battle squadron and III cruiser squadron followed at 9:30 and were to remain well north of the rendezvous indicated, in order to catch any forces breaking away to the North, while the Grand Fleet from Scapa and Cromarty should make for the latitude of Aberdeen from the already mentioned point half way between the Scottish and Jutland Coasts. At the same time, during the dense fog, Commodore Tyrwhitt set out from Harwich with the cruisers ARTHUR, AURORA, UNDAUNTED and all the destroyers which were in readiness, in order to reach the northeastern part of the Dogger Bank at dawn while Commodore Keyes with the destroyers FIREBRAKE, LURCHER and four submarines advanced to the east in order to proceed against Helgoland and the mouth of the Rms. Whether the English measures were only due to the rapid deciphering of the German wireless orders or whether the reports sent out considerably earlier by the German Admiralty at the request of the Fleet relative to an impending German attack against the Humber in order to decoy the British forces to the mine area located there, had something to do with the matter, is uncertain. However, it is absolutely certain that the reports were late in reaching England and arrived there practically simultaneously with the German advance.

The night passed without any special occurrences for either side and nothing warned the German commander, Vice Admiral Hipper, of what was awaiting him. No airship accompanied him although three were in readiness in Fuhlbuttel and Nordholz and only at dawn did one of these leave, - it came too late, however, to protect the German cruisers from surprises. As it began to dawn at 6 o'clock, the British ships had already reached the rendezvous. With the certain expectation of encountering the enemy, Admiral Beatty ordered ships clear for action. A few moments later, the flash of gun fire in the southeast showed that the Harwich forces had encountered the enemy. On account of the fog, the forces spread out a great deal so that at 8 A.M. the ARTHUR with 6 destroyers of the M-class, was 13 nautical

than
miles nearer Beatty's forces as the UNDAUNTED with 13
destroyers and the AURORA east of the latter with 15
destroyers. At 8:10 A.M. the KOLBERG (Commander Widen-
mann) advanced from the starboard flanking of the German
battle cruisers, on the AURORA and after a short battle
in which the KOLBERG was struck once and the British
cruiser three times, both rejoined their heavy forces.
At the flash of the fire, Admiral Hipper advanced imme-
diately on the KOLBERG with the utmost speed, dropped back
however, in accordance with an old cruiser regulation, as
the latter was out of danger, in order to get a survey of
the situation before taking any further action. At the
same time, the light forces gathered at the head of the
battle cruisers. While the STRALSUND (Com. Harder) re-
ported further smoke clouds to north-north-west and
believed this to represent 8 large ships, according to the
battle report of Admiral Hipper, the following picture
was presented to the BEYDLITZ (Com. von Egidy):-

"Astern on starboard side, 4 "Gothams", astern numerous
destroyers under guide of 3 small destroyers of the
ARSTHUSA class. Upon demand, BLUCHER reported in all 7
small cruisers and 26 destroyers and behind them further
smoke clouds". The report continued as follows:-

"The presence of such a numerous force indicated the
presence of further portions of the English Fleet; also,
considering the wireless names used which are the same
as those noted on December 16th, the presence of the
II battle squadron can also be safely assumed. Therefore,
the Fleet was ordered to approach the German Bay at full
speed and only seek contact with the enemy later on."

While the BLUCHER (Com. Brdmsann) successfully
repulsed several advancing destroyers of the M-class, on
the starboard side, and the I British light cruiser squad-
ron pulled out further to the east, - at 9:35 in West-north-
west, 5 British battle cruisers - LION, TIGER, PRINCESS
ROYAL, NEW ZEALAND and INDOMITABLE, appeared in sight
on the starboard side astern. The supposition that these
were not alone but that further heavy forces followed them,
impelled the German commanders to avoid action as long as
possible and then only hold them at bay until in approach-
ing the German Bay, they might be supported by their own
forces. Admiral Beatty on the contrary, feeling he was
supported by the III battle squadron and in a way, by the
Grand Fleet itself, desired to cut off the German forces,
which had so surprisingly presented themselves for battle,
and which were so far inferior in number, from their bases
or at least get them in a leeward position which was so
favorable for their artillery. When Admiral Jellicoe
received his first report of the sighting of the enemy,
he, with his 3 battle and 3 cruiser squadrons, was still
150 nautical miles NNW of the territory in which the battle
began. Even though the plan of a timely concentration of
superior forces against the Germans was in no way com-
pletely successful, nevertheless on account of the vast
superiority of the English intelligence service, their
strategical advantage was still great enough.

The first reports of the German cruisers were
completely surprising to Admiral von Ingenohl. Anchored
at the outpost beyond the mine fields of the Jade, there
was by chance only the weak II squadron consisting at the
time of 5 old line ships with the 18th half flotilla, which
was ready for advance.

On the Weser and the Elbe, there were two further half-flotillas, the 2nd and 5th, on outpost duty. 5 vessels of the I Squadron lay in the Wilhelmshaven roads but could only weigh anchor two hours later. The delays were even greater for the vessels and flotillas lying in harbor. Therefore a general advance of the I and II squadrons for taking on the cruisers, could scarcely be expected before noon. The submarines, however, received orders immediately to advance on the enemy. The commanders of the 2nd and 3rd submarine half-flotillas (Lt. Commander Spindler and Lieut. Gayer) had not awaited these orders and therefore at 11 A.M., the U-19 and soon afterwards, the U-32 were advancing from the Bms towards a point some 40 nautical miles north of Terschelling and about 5 nautical miles south of the contemplated line of the battle cruisers, while T-99 with U-35, U-17 and U-14 advanced from Helgoland towards the open beach near Nordeney. Besides these naval forces, since 10 A.M., L-5 and somewhat later the airplane 83 were en route to the scene of action.

In the meantime, the battle had begun on the Dogger Bank. At 9:34 the signal "Speed 27 kn." was given from the LION. At 9:43, the Admiral ordered 28 and at 9:52, even 29 knots. According to the account of Felson Young, this did not mean that this speed could actually be attained by the vessels, with the possible exception of TIGER, but the Admiral deemed it advisable to give the engineering personnel the highest possible figure. The ships therefore really performed marvels and even though the II battle cruiser squadron slowly dropped astern, nevertheless, it remained - thanks to the efforts of the INDOMITABLE - in tactical connection with the 3 ships of the first squadron of battle cruisers. On the other hand, the high speed of the large battle ships no longer allowed the lighter forces to take their position at the head of the battle cruisers which was necessary for their incorporation as a component part of the impending battle, even the most rapid destroyers of the M-class had to fall back to the ARKTYUSA with the slower destroyers.

The point of view has long been current in Germany that the British opened fire very much earlier than the Germans. The actual facts of the matter are as follows: At 9:52, the distance appeared to be about 200 hectometer, the approximate range of the heavy British guns, and the LION fired the first shot for battering in the BLUCHER. It fell short. At 9:54, Beatty escheloned the battle cruisers astern in conformity with the battle line, in order to be able to reach the target with all the guns, and at ten o'clock the TIGER also began firing on the enemy but it was not until 10:05 that the Admiral gave the signal to open fire in general. The PRINCESS ROYAL now also joined in the fire that for the time being was directed solely against the BLUCHER. The first shots fell short 1000 m and 1500 m and only at 10:12 were long distance shots signalled by the HOLKEE (Capt. von Levetzow) On account of the slowness with which the 3 head British ships fired, the shots had no effect until at 10:09 the signal for opening fire was also given on the SEYDLITZ after the German battle cruisers already 7 minutes before, had taken the southern bearing so that all the guns would carry. On account of the difficulty in getting the target on account of the heavy smoke screen, the DEFFLINGER (Capt. von Reuter) was the only

vessel which could obey this order immediately. A minute later (10.12) LION succeeded for the first time in striking the BLUCHER (in the fore-castle between the two anchors) without any great result. At 10.14, after the DESFLEINER had opened fire, the LION changed and directed fire to the right against the MOLTKE while TIGER and PRINCESS ROYAL continued temporarily to fire on the BLUCHER. Only now did the return fire begin - the BLUCHER at 10.18, the SEYDLITZ at 10.19 and by the MOLTKE at 10.20. Although the order was given to direct the fire from the left, the German fire in the main concentrated on the two head ships of the enemy because these showed up more plainly out of the smoke. There was no question of a really systematic distribution of fire later on. Each ship fired on the target which lay most advantageously for its guns and which could be seen most distinctly. On account of the enemy's position astern, the front turrets were often obliged to be silent and sometimes fire was directed from the rear. At 10.21 the LION was struck and the SEYDLITZ four minutes later without either vessel being put out of fighting commission. At 10.35, the LION sheering off temporarily, passed over 200 hectometers out of range. The TIGER was struck at 10.36 at a distance between 160 and 170 hectometers, which resulted in a fire lasting some length of time but this was really only caused by the deck boats catching fire.

The turning off of the English was, according to their own statements, less due to the effect of the artillery than to the fact that Admiral Beatty always feared an attack on the part of the German torpedo boats against his head ships which were not protected by destroyers. The anticipated attack, however, did not occur and at 10.35, the artillery battle broke out anew. With the British battle cruisers, the order now was to distribute fire, ship against ship, but the INDOMITABLE was too far back to reach her target and the MOLTKE was not fired at because, contrary to the order, the TIGER also fired on the SEYDLITZ. However her fire did not count for much as for the most part, it passed far beyond her opponent.

The battle soon approached its climax. At 10:45 the SEYDLITZ was seriously hit. A 34 cm shell struck the 280 mm Barbette armorplate of the rear turret and although it did not penetrate it, it broke out a piece of the plate which flying in a red hot condition, ignited a cartridge. The result is too well known to need any further description here; both turrets burned out and only the immediate flooding of the ammunition room saved the ship from a worse fate. Almost immediately following this, a shell penetrated to the ammunition room of the LION but - an unfortunate accident - it shattered before exploding. Hardly ten minutes later, another shell struck the turret deck of the LION and put one of the guns out of commission; then a shell fired from the SEYDLITZ penetrated the armor and into the engine room. Water flooded two dynamo engines so that the current for the rear fire control and the light artillery was broken. The British flagship began to ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ put about to starboard.

In the meantime, Admiral Beatty had reduced the speed to 24 knots in order to bring the squadron closer together as the distance between the TIGER and PRINCESS ROYAL had already increased considerably and there was even a greater space between the latter and the NEW ZEALAND. On account of the rapidly increasing distance, the British cruisers were relieved a little, while the BLUCHER had to ward off several destroyers of the M class and the ships of the I light cruiser squadron approaching

on the starboard side. However, these were quickly thrown off by a few salvos of the central artillery of the German cruisers. At 11:10, Admiral Beatty again increased the speed to 26 knots but the English were scarcely within fighting range when their flagship was again struck - this time by two shells simultaneously (11:18). One of these pressed two plates of the armor belt through the wooden backing, the other penetrated the armor at the water line, burst in the torpedo broadside room and in a few moments, this with all the adjoining compartments up to the main deck, stood under water. Such an effect of the German artillery could only have been averted by the English cruisers, by the latter trusting in their superiority in numbers, speed and gun caliber, approaching closer to the enemy and forcing a decision. But as was stated in the official report of the battle, this was prevented by the presence of the German torpedo boats which were erroneously imputed with the laying of mines in the German line of retreat. Therefore, getting into their wake was to be avoided under all circumstances. The English efforts were therefore directed toward overtaking the enemy to lee and in this way force him toward the North and against the Grand Fleet. In their relative positions, this seemed quite possible - it was already early in the day, they were still over 100 nautical miles from Helgoland and the BLUCHER already began to show appreciable effects of the British fire.

As a matter of fact, a shell struck this ship at 11:25 which sealed its fate. As far as can be learned from the statements of the survivors, this shell struck the cruiser, breaking through the deck in its most sensitive place - the ammunition shoot extending for two thirds of its length, - a device which was on the BLUCHER only as an experiment. The cartridges ignited, one after another and flames burst through the shell shoots into the front side turrets, which - even as on the BRYDLITE - immediately burst into a sea of flames. All fire control apparatus, commanding elements and the rudder gear were put out of commission, shell splinters penetrating the main steam piping in the 3rd boiler room so that the speed fell to 17 knots. Now the moment seemed to the British Admiral to have arrived for approaching closer. But he had scarcely begun this, when, according to the English report, "shell after shell" struck the LION. Between the time of 11:36 and 11:50, the ship was struck no less than six times. The armor belt was again penetrated so that the cruiser made more water; then a shell exploded in the forward compartment of the ammunition room of turret A (11:48). The room itself burst into flames and the fate of the three British battle cruisers which blew up in the Battle of Skagerrak would have been fulfilled if, at the last moment, the chamber had not been flooded. At this time, the speed of the LION had decreased to such a degree that TIGER began to overtake the flagship. But between 11:49 and 11:52, the latter received the decisive hit. At this time, she was shattered from stem to stern by a shell which striking at the height of one of the boiler rooms, pressed the armor belt in and caused so much damage to the drinking water tank and the port engines, that they had to be stopped. Besides this, a short circuit shut off the light and electric power and the vessel listed to port 10°. The battle cruiser was unable to make more than 15 knots and she had to sheer off and leave the pursuit of the enemy to the others. Almost simultaneously with the last hit, Admiral sighted enemy submarines to starboard - which might not have been the fact - and, as a result, at 11:54 he ordered a turning ten points to starboard, but since this movement would have assured the Germans too great an advance, two minutes later

he gave the course signal NE, not only to avoid the wake of the German torpedo boats but to cut off the BLUCHER from the other German ships and, if possible, cause the enemy to come abreast or bring the broadside to bear.

Admiral Hipper, although he did not overlook the full effect of the German fire on the head ship of the enemy, had actually determined on this. At 11:58, that is, four minutes after the English had started to turn, he turned SE to S to the middle line and at 12 gave the order to attack the torpedo boats. But since he at the same time as the battle cruisers, turned to the enemy ever more to the south, while the British ships at a greater distance (with TIGER now apparently at the head) turned direct to the North, the prospects for an attack seemed so unfavorable on account of the great distances that the boats were immediately called back in order to avoid a needless risk. The German cruisers were now already south to west in order, by taking a circular form, to come to the aid of the BLUCHER lying four nautical miles to the north in the very midst of the fray. At this moment, the Admiral was informed that the two rear turrets of the SRYDLITE had definitely fallen out, that only 200 rounds of ammunition were left, and that there were 600 tons of water in the aft part of the ship. The German commander was therefore forced to make a very weighty decision. The following excerpt from his report will show how he viewed the situation:-

" Further supporting of H.M.S. BLUCHER by retaining the circular form of battle, would have brought the first reconnaissance group between the English battle cruisers and the squadron of line-ships probably behind them. This would have brought our own head, after having gradually reached a northern course, in a very unfavorable position to the enemy destroyers. Supporting them in a running fight at a northerly course, which was also taken into consideration, would have brought the same disadvantageous position to the destroyers which are concentrating in the north and are advancing on the BLUCHER. In the ever increasing distance from our own coast, any damage to a cruiser's machinery would lead to its destruction without the BLUCHER being helped in any way. For the battle between the battle cruiser groups took place during the most rapid movement. This might have passed by the damaged ship so badly in need of assistance but it would not have prevented the small cruisers and destroyers of the enemy, far superior in numbers and strength to our own forces, from putting the damaged ship out of commission in the meantime."

Under these circumstances to seek to renew the battle which was broken off by the enemy, and considering the probable heavy forces behind the enemy and the lack of any support, would really have been risking everything. Actually the III British battle squadron at the time was out of sight of the German ships and couldn't under any circumstances be at the scene of battle before three o'clock in the afternoon. The airship L-5 stood over the German lines since noon but devoted its attention almost exclusively to the BLUCHER while for the German commanders, it would have been far more important to know whether British forces still lay outside the range of vision with the existent possibility of soon joining in the battle. As a result, nothing occurred which could tend to lead the

German commander to change his opinion in connection with this point. Therefore with a heavy heart, he saw himself obliged at 12:12 to turn away from the enemy and direct his course towards Nordeney. After a few salvos, firing ceased between the two lines. Soon afterwards, the destroyers of the M class attacked the BLUCHER but were repulsed by a lively rapid fire from the ship which was defending herself so madly. The METEOR was struck in the front boiler room which set the fueling oil on fire. Then not only the destroyer but also the battle cruiser TIGER which for the observer on the rear ships of the German middle line (line ahead) was at this time directly in deck bearing to the destroyer, were covered by a gigantic column of smoke and flames. As a result, the Germans had the impression that the TIGER sank at this time. This came about, as was shown later, by one of the torpedo boats, the V-5 which had temporarily remained behind on account of damage to her machinery, having fired a torpedo twice, presumably against the TIGER, and the L-5 replied upon inquiry, that there were only enemy battle cruisers in sight. This was correct only the airship had failed to count the LION previously as from the beginning, the latter had not been in its range of vision. Therefore it was in the heat of faith that the Germans at that time counted definitely on the destruction of the TIGER.

The actual occurrences on the British side after the dropping out of the LION, have only been made known to us through the appearance of the second volume of Corbett's "NAVAL OPERATIONS" and the more detailed report in the admirable book by Filson Young, "WITH THE BATTLE CRUISERS". With the falling out of the British flagship, the command of the battle cruisers fell to Counter Admiral Moore of the NEW ZEALAND. But for the latter on his ship as #4 standing far to the back, the purpose of the last movements towards the north, of the cruisers in front of him, was not clear. On the other hand it was no longer possible for Admiral Beatty from the flagship which was rapidly dropping astern and was deprived almost completely not only of the wireless but all other means of signalling, to communicate his intentions to the II Admiral. But in order to give some directions for the further course of the battle, he raised two short signals on his last two flag lines, of which the first read: "Attack the enemy's rear", and the second which had been given at Trafalgar, albeit with better results, was, "Keep closer to the enemy". Unfortunately for the English, the direction of the wind made signalling difficult. The first signal was probably raised before the course signal NE had been taken down. Therefore it was understood by the NEW ZEALAND, TIGER and INDOMITABLE that the enemy's rear should be attacked in the direction NE. But there, there was only the BLUCHER. They therefore broke off the battle against the SEYDLITZ, MOLTKE and DERFFLINGER and turned to the BLUCHER although the last signal "Keep closer to the enemy" could no longer be read by any of them. Judging from the form alone, the further decisions of the Assistant Admiral and the Commanders could possibly be viewed as justified but they were hardly in keeping with the actual conditions of the battle. In order to destroy the badly disabled German armored cruiser, the INDOMITABLE, as originally intended, would have been amply sufficient.

Subjected to the fire of all the British battle cruisers, the *BLUCHER* fought for the honor of the flag. The manner in which she did this is described in the official British account (Corbett "Naval Operations", Vol. II, Page 98) in the following words:-

(Excerpt translated from the German)

"For three hours during which the ship was the centre of an overpowering concentration of fire, she did not cease for a single moment to answer the fire. Twice our light cruisers advanced in order to complete her destruction and twice she forced them to retire. As an example of discipline, courage and military spirit, her conduct during the hours of her destruction has seldom been surpassed."

At 12:45 the destruction of the ship seemed absolutely certain so that Admiral Moore was confronted with the question as to whether he should return to the *LION* which no longer answered wireless calls, or should follow the German battle cruisers. He was at this time still 80 nautical miles from Helgoland but since the battle could not be resumed again before two hours, he would have to remain close to the island and not only be in the territory of the German submarines but also in the proximity of the High Seas Fleet which, according to the wireless message of a British submarine, had already started out. Since he must also reckon with the possibility of damaged ships being subjected during the night to attacks by German torpedo boats, he considered it better to return to the *LION*. But already at 1 o'clock Admiral Beatty met him on the destroyer *ATTACK*, raised his flag on the *PRINCESS ROYAL* and immediately gave the order to advance in the direction of Helgoland. But he also soon saw that the critical half hour was lost and nothing remained but to cover the retreat of the badly damaged *LION*. On the way to the latter, he still believed he sighted enemy submarines which did not seem the most promising outlook as the *LION* was only making 12 knots and finally had to stop altogether and be taken in tow by the *INDOMITABLE*. At 3:30, the III battle squadron joined the battle cruisers and an hour later, the Grand Fleet appeared. The idea of sending at least a destroyer flotilla against the oncoming German High Seas Fleet was finally given up in order, with all the flotillas and the I and II light cruiser squadrons, to protect the "tow", headed towards Rosyth while the Grand Fleet and the battle cruisers went towards the north in order to get out of reach of the absolutely certain attack of German torpedo boats as quickly as possible.

As a matter of fact, after the breaking off of the fight, the Germans did consider sending out torpedo boats during the night against the enemy who was withdrawing towards the northwest. But since the flotillas accompanying the battle cruisers could no longer be considered in this connection on account of the lack of fuel, the I Flotilla and 16th Half-Flotilla with the advancing line-ships (squadron) were to be used for this task. On account of the bright clear night, these had to reckon on considerable counteraction from the numerous light forces of the enemy, and were therefore to be conveyed by cruisers of the II reconnaissance group. A further requirement for success in the undertaking and one which could be ascertained was whether the speed of the enemy ships had been materially reduced. Unfortunately

however, as already mentioned, L-5 had never sighted the cruiser LION and replied in the negative when asked whether any diminution in the enemy's speed had been established. Thereupon the contemplated attack was abandoned.

Of the submarines, only the U-35 and U-17 were sent out against the enemy during the night. In the morning, they were to try to attack incoming British ships at the entrance to the Humber, as the Chief of the submarine Half-Flotilla (Lieut. Commander Spindler) had the idea that the enemy's damaged ships would steer for this harbor as the nearest. Only the U-35 (Lieut. Kophenel) reached the Humber and then nearly 18 hours later than expected, after the damaged METEOR had, in the meantime, been towed in by the destroyer LIBERTY. On the same day, the line-ship BRITANNIA ran aground in the fog when entering the Firth of Perth. She was tied up for almost 36 hours and afterwards was out of commission for a long time on account of the repairs that had to be made. It was only at dawn of the 26th of January that the LION was able with great difficulties and with the help of tugs, to be brought to anchor in the Firth of Perth. This finished the operation.

The battle of January 24th, 1915, was the first encounter between large battleships in the war and in this regard, was of great value for the appraisal of the military and technical capacities of both parties, even though the superiority of the German battle cruisers in their central artillery and their especially effective torpedo armament, did not find expression on account of the conditions surrounding the battle. If one draws a comparison between the ships which opposed each other in the artillery battle, as regards their displacement (t) and the weight (shell) of the broadside of their heavy artillery (kg), it is found that the total displacement of the German battle cruisers amounted to 90,400 t as compared with the 132,400 t of the British, and that the weight of a German broadside at 10,144 kg was exactly doubled by the British 20,320 kg. In spite of the approximately equal number of shots (app. 950) during the course of the battle, the Germans fired 328 t of heavy shells as compared with the 508 t of the British. If the close-up battle against the BLUCHER is excepted, then the Germans hold the record for the greatest number of hits. It is true that on account of the smoke screen, the British battle cruisers behind the TIGER were not struck, nevertheless TIGER received at least 2 and LION (according to Filson Young) no less than 18. The English only had a total of 4 hits (SKYDLITE 2, DREFFLINGER 1, BLUCHER 1) as compared with the German record of 20.

There is no doubt whatsoever that under the impression of the enemy's greater caliber, the loss of the BLUCHER, the hits on the SKYDLITE, and the retreat, the enemy's military success was rather overestimated than underestimated by us at the time because there were no trustworthy reports for judging the results of our own artillery fire. Another factor tending towards the overrating of the British performance was the circumstance that the German losses in man power were also appreciably greater than the British. While the English only had 14 dead and 30 wounded, the Germans lost 954 dead and 80 wounded.

It must also be distinctly remembered that the British shells only had a devastating effect when they penetrated as a result of the deck's large angle of incidence, while the German side armor, apparently even on the BLUCHER, offered successful resistance to all shells even at a great distance. The much lighter German shells penetrated in at least two cases (LION) the British side armor plate, - once at 11:18 and again between 11:35 and 11:50 at distances of from 160 or 145 to 150 hectometers. In the first instance, such damage was caused in one of the machinery rooms that the machinery stopped. This tremendous effect of the German heavy armor piercing shells was all the more astounding as the muzzle-energy of the British guns was almost doubly as great. If in spite of this, the results of a comparison of the effect at the target are in favor of the Germans, the reason for this lies in the unquestionably better quality of the German armor piercing shells and the British deficiency in armor protection. If, without considering the very much greater surface extent of the armor on the German ships, one only compares the strength at the water-line, it is seen that the LION and TIGER only had 229 mm armor strength as compared with the 300 mm of the DERFFLINGER and SEYDLITZ; the PRINCESS ROYAL over 229 mm as compared with the 270 of the MOETKE, and even the NEW ZEALAND and INDOMITABLE only had 178 mm as against the 180 of the BLUCHER.

In view of the results of the battle, the English principle of a greater caliber and higher speed leaving the builder all too little weight for armor protection and floating safety, may be viewed as erroneous. This, however, was only fully recognized in the Battle of Skagerrak. The satisfaction in England over their own type of battle cruiser, after the battles of the Falkland Islands and the Dogger Bank, was no doubt very great. This inclination to self-overestimation was all the greater when they succeeded in destroying the BLUCHER. One overlooked the fact all too easily that this was no battle cruiser. Its destruction was not due to its belonging to an old class, but to the destructive effect of the shell which struck its deck and due to the large angle of incidence on account of the unusually great distance. This would have proved equally as destructive to any battle cruiser since a sufficient protection against such hits was not possible even in the new English and German types in spite of their gigantic displacements, on account of the extensive deck surface. Also the position of the BLUCHER as the rear ship of the line and its somewhat slower speed were scarcely factors in its destruction. On the other hand there is no doubt that the greater fighting power of the guns of, say, the VON DER TANN would have made a far different outcome to the battle, while the brilliant training of the gunners on the BLUCHER (used in peace time as artillery training ship) scarcely made itself felt on account of the lesser radius and effect of its 21 cm caliber.

It is and remains a fact that through the failure of the German project and the total loss of the BLUCHER, the strategical victory of the day goes to the English in spite of the ~~xxxxxx~~ better artillery performance of the Germans. The new system of defending the British coast seems to have been successful. After two unpunished attacks by the German battle cruisers against the British coast, they succeeded for the first time in confronting the Germans with a superior force and in bringing them serious losses. It was erroneously believed in England

that two German battle cruisers had been disabled, and they attached much greater significance to this suppositional result of the battle than to the destruction of the BLUCHER, considerably inferior to the battle cruisers in military value. Until these cruisers could be repaired, a new attack on the English east coast seemed very unlikely and also the danger of an invasion, which had already been taken quite seriously, decreased considerably. There also wasn't so much worry regarding the safe-guarding of the British position in Flanders, and it no longer seemed necessary to hold so many troops back in England. The first strategical result of the battle showed itself four days later in the definite decision to carry out the long contemplated attack against the Dardanelles.

The political evaluation of the military success was especially clever. In a brilliant speech in Parliament, Mr. Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, stated that the British guns and projectiles had shown themselves far superior to the German,- that up to that time they had underestimated their own marksmanship, that the English machinery had performed wonders and that the British type of battle cruisers which had already had a triumph at the Falkland Islands, had now again brilliantly demonstrated its worth. After this trial by fire, it would scarcely any longer be doubtful as to what would be the outcome of a bigger battle. If these remarks were intended in the first place to revive the fighting spirit of the British nation, after the numerous disappointments, they certainly found a remarkable response in certain Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and above all, American newspapers. The expressions of disappointment at the premature interruption of the battle and the serious damage to the LION, such as were voiced in individual English papers, were withdrawn, no less than the doubts as to the reliability of the British Admiralty reports such as were generated by the withholding of the report of the loss of the AUDACIOUS. Dutch papers which received the official German reports of the Wolff Telegraphic Agency and which contradicted the Reuter reports, were not allowed by the Censor to enter England, and were sent back to Holland.

In the British camp, great hope was laid on the very eagerly believed moral effect on the German crews, of the result of the battle. The "Times" expressed itself as follows in the already mentioned report:-

"It is quite true that as a rule, the German crews fought with great bravery and our Admiralty has admitted that Sunday's battle was stuck out well by both sides. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that a retreat of any kind has a very depressing effect on officers and men, especially when it is accompanied by heavy losses. One must also remember that the German crews have been shut up on their ships for many months, and even though this kind of politics was clever in many ways, it must have had a discouraging effect on the people."

The "Corriere della Sera" saw the results of the battles in an entirely different light and one more nearly approaching the truth. In a review of the battle of January 26, 1915, it expressed the following opinion:

"Moral, discipline, bravery and skill which all play such an important part in a victory, are equal in the two races at war - the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon. The German Navy although a product of our own period and an absolutely continental country, has shown that it has attained a

a degree of training in its personnel which is equal to that of the English Navy with a hundred years of experience behind it and is a product of the insular character of the country."
