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THESIS

"DESTROYER TACTICS" AS EMPLOYED BY DESTROYERS (BOTH  
GERMAN AND BRITISH) IN THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND AND  
THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE.

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DESTROYER TACTICS AT JUTLAND

The close of the World War found the United States Navy in a most unbalanced state as regards types of ships. The urgent need of vessels designed to counter the German submarine warfare caused the construction of a large number of, what was at that time, fast seakeeping destroyers, capable of operating with the fleet and of cruising long distances. This destroyer force is still unequaled in numbers, by any other naval power.

In order to nullify our apparent preponderance in destroyer strength the other two principal naval powers have built up strong light cruiser forces and until we can construct and learn to operate a correspondingly large light cruiser force we will have to learn to utilize the power which we now have in destroyers.

Not only must we learn to make the best use of our destroyer force against the destroyer's normal objective, the capital ship, but also against the cruiser and the submarine. This utilization of destroyer power embraces more than the ability to shoot the guns or to make the torpedoes run straight, rather, it includes the ability to arrive at a firing position at the crucial moment. It includes not only the ability to carry out true destroyer operations but also the ability to do the screening, scouting and destroyer support work of the cruiser.

It is essential, therefore, that we know thoroughly the tactical uses of destroyers and to that end certain phases of the Battle of Jutland might be examined.

In all the descriptions of the Battle of Jutland, both British and German, there is a vagueness concerning the destroyer operations. There are certain phases or fragments of destroyer action though, that can be positively identified as to the task, the method of accomplishment and the results obtained.

The Battle of Jutland naturally falls into five phases :-

- (1) The contact, approach and Battle Cruiser action.
- (2) The engagement of the Battle Fleets.
- (3) From the first retirement of the German Fleet until nightfall.
- (4) Night.
- (5) The morning of 1 June 1916.

--- THE FIRST PHASE ---

In the initial contact at the Battle of Jutland chance played the customary large part. At about 1400 31 May 1916 the ELBING, the westernmost ship of the German Battle Cruiser screen, sighted a Danish merchantman and sent two destroyers, B-109 and B-110, to search the vessel. Twenty minutes later the British Light Cruiser GALATEA, which was in the British Battle Cruiser screen, sighted the merchantman and the two German destroyers and so reported. At 1435 the GALATEA reported smoke "as from a fleet" bearing ENE and Admiral Beatty immediately changed the course of his squadron to SSE. Admiral Hipper in the

LUTZOW, flagship of Scouting Division One, had received a contact report and had changed to a southwesterly course. By this time the approach dispositions were assumed. At 1535 Admiral Beatty ordered the 13th Flotilla to take station ahead and at 1545 the British Battle Cruiser Fleet deployed to a battle course ESE. At 1548 the two Battle Cruiser fleets opened fire on each other at a range of 18500 yards.

During the first part of the Battle Cruiser action the destroyer forces on each side were engaged in taking their assigned positions. It was at this time that a division of the 9th Flotilla, which was trying to pass up the engaged side of the British Battle Cruiser line, into a favorable position for attack, seriously hampered with its smoke, the fire of the PRINCESS ROYAL and TIGER. Shortly after this, at 1555, Admiral Beatty signalled to the thirteenth flotilla, which was in position ahead of the Battle Cruisers, "Opportunity appears favorable for attacking."

Twenty minutes later the 13th Flotilla plus four boats from the 9th and 10th Flotillas started their attack. The twelve boats were divided into three groups, the first consisting of the NESTOR, NICATOR, NOMAD, NARBOROUGH and PELICAN; the second OBDURATE, NERISSA and TERMANGENT; and the third, PETARD, TURBULENT, MOORSOM and MORRIS. At this time the German Battle Cruiser Fleet was about eight miles away bearing NE. During the approach the Light Cruiser NOTTINGHAM cut across the destroyer formation forcing out the PETARD and TURBULENT. Consequently these two destroyers followed by the MOORSOM and

MORRIS had to defer their attack until sometime later.

At the same time the German Flotilla IX received the order to attack. The Flotilla Commander had anticipated the order as a result of the rapidly closing range and had crossed the line ahead of the LUTZOW when the attack signal was executed. Flotilla IX was divided into four groups; first, V-28, V-26 and S-52; second V-27, S-36 and S-51; third, V-29 and S-35; and fourth V-30, S-34 and S-33. As the first group emerged from the smoke of the German Battle Cruiser line the British destroyers were sighted coming up for attack. A nasty melee started between the two destroyer forces. Not only gun fighting took place but also torpedoes were used by destroyers on each side against enemy destroyers. The primary mission, to attack the enemy Battle Cruisers, seems to have been temporarily forgotten by both sides.

Seven of the British destroyers were diverted from the attack on the German Battle Cruisers so that, although they did finally arrive within torpedo range and fired when about 7000 yards away, they did not have the opportunity afforded the NESTOR, NOMAD and NICATOR. These three ships had not permitted themselves to be delayed by the action with the German destroyers, had pushed in their attack to short ranges against the German Battle Cruisers, then had sighted the High Seas Fleet approaching and proceeded to attack this fleet. The NESTOR and NOMAD were sunk by the Battleships. The NICATOR followed the NESTOR in, attacked the High Seas Fleet and, by chasing the German salvos, escaped undamaged. The PETARD, soon thereafter, had come up and fired three torpedoes at the German Battle Cruisers the last shot hitting the SEYDLITZ.

The German destroyer action during this phase of the battle is even more difficult to follow than the British. That the German destroyers ever got in to an effective firing range seems improbable. Quoting Groos, page 67, line 3, "Owing to these fights with the larger and faster British destroyers, the other boats of Flotilla IX were unable to approach the enemy ships closer than 7000 to 8000 meters." Ten torpedoes were fired, however, none taking effect. During the melee the V-29 was hit by a torpedo from the PETARD and the V-27 was sunk by the V-26 after being disabled by gunfire, probably from the 5th Battle Squadron which was approaching.

Sir Julian Corbett makes the following comment in connection with this destroyer action, Vol. III page 342, "Though twenty torpedoes had been fired, this ( the hit on the SEYDLITZ ) was the only harm done to the German Fleet, yet, small as was the result, the whole affair must ever stand as an exemplary piece of flotilla work in battle." Only partly so. The British did get through to a firing position of sorts, but they delayed in getting there long enough to give Admiral Hipper a chance to turn through sixteen points and avoid the attack. And when they did reach position they were not in any kind of formation and their attack was not effective. Quoting Frost in Groos' account, page 75, bottom, "In this particular attack there can be no doubt but that the British destroyers excelled the German, despite the disorganized character of their attack. The initiative of the British captains compensated for the failures of their higher leaders." They did prevent an effective attack being delivered by the German destroyers but that would seem to be the function of the destroyer support not the attacking de-

stroyers. The greatest accomplishment of the 13th Flotilla was that it caused Admiral Hipper to make a radical turn away just when Admiral Beatty had to turn his Fleet to get clear of the High Seas Fleet.

At 1643 recall was signalled to the 13th Flotilla from the LION and Admiral Beatty brought his Fleet to the reverse course, north, making best his way to join the British Main Body. He had sighted the High Seas Fleet. Meanwhile Admiral Hipper's Squadron turned in succession and by some very smart work came up to a northerly course ahead of the High Seas Fleet, keeping in contact with the British Battle Cruisers. At this time all of the British destroyers had not answered their recall and it was during the German Battle Cruisers' turn that the PETARD and TURBULENT got in their torpedo fire, one of the PETARD'S torpedoes hitting the SEYDLITZ.

From the time of Admiral Beatty's recall until the close of the Battle Cruiser action there were numerous individual destroyer attacks such as that of the MORESBY and ONSLOW. Corbett calls these attacks "brilliant adventures." They were brilliant adventures, heroically executed but they were not effective.

--- THE SECOND PHASE ---

The two Main Fleets were now, at 1755 approaching each other. The Grand Fleet deploying on the left flank division with the destroyer flotillas in position ahead and on each flank.

As soon as Admiral Jellicoe received the information that Admiral Beatty was engaged he ordered

the Third Battle Cruiser Squadron under Admiral Hood, to go to Admiral Beatty's assistance. Admiral Beatty was about fifteen miles further to the westward than the information received by Admiral Jellicoe seemed to indicate and for that reason when the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron arrived in the battle area Admiral Hood found himself on the unengaged bow of the enemy. This was inconvenient, not only for Admiral Hipper but perhaps more so for Admiral Scheer.

Along with the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron were four destroyers, SHARK, ACASTA, OPHELIA and CHRISTOPHER. When the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron appeared it was attacked promptly by the German Scouting Division II consisting of four Light Cruisers, the WIESBADEN having been damaged to an extent which made her incapable of maneuvering. Scouting Division II had made a torpedo attack on the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron and was being badly damaged by gunfire when the four destroyers attached to the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron stood out to attack. At the same time the German 12th Half Flotilla joined the fight in two groups. The first group got off its torpedoes at the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron but only one of the second group, the V-45, was able to fire her torpedoes because Scouting Division II threatened to cross the line of fire. The remaining destroyers of the second group then abandoned their attack against Admiral Hood's squadron and turned their attention to the British destroyers, using torpedoes in addition to gunfire. By this time Flotilla IX had come up to attack the 3rd Battle Cruiser

Squadron but becoming involved in the melee between the British destroyers and the German Half Flotilla XII, only the leader and two others, the S-52 and S-34 got in to an attacking range. Shortly thereafter Flotilla II followed by G-101, G-102, G-103 and G-104 came up to attack but Half Flotilla XII succeeded in masking the target. As a result there was one destroyer only, the G-104, which was able to fire one torpedo at the second ship of the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron at a range of 7000 meters.

By this time Scouting Division I, Admiral Hipper, was coming up and the destroyers had to move on out of the way. With the Battle Cruisers of Scouting Division I came the REGensburg, flagship of the second leader of destroyers. This vessel hoisted, "Follow the leader" and proceeded on clear of the German Battle Cruisers with her destroyers forming up in her wake. The SHARK had been disabled during the melee and was lying nearby. As the REGensburg with the German destroyers following passed her they fired on her with guns and one torpedo, leaving her in a sinking condition.

Thus the only loss during this entire destroyer action was one British destroyer. The importance of this particular action, however, lies in the fact that the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron with its accompanying four destroyers had drawn the German destroyer attacks which had been ordered against Admiral Beatty and had thereby permitted Admiral Beatty to carry on the enveloping movement of the German van.

During the ensuing half hour the destroyers, generally, were engaged in taking their assigned positions with their respective fleets with the exceptions of the

ONSLOW and ACASTA. These two destroyers again got away from their superiors and delivered individual, ineffect-ive attacks against the German capital ships.

--- THE THIRD PHASE ---

In the meanwhile the capital ship action was rapidly becoming more violent. Admiral Jellicoe had completed his deployment of the Grand Fleet getting an awkward knuckle in his line; the Battle Cruiser Fleet under Admiral Beatty had come charging across between the British and German fleets to take position in the van, masking the fire of some of the British ships, making Admiral Jellicoe slow the entire fleet and forcing Admiral Jerram, in command of the van division, to haul over out of the line to gain more searoom. Admiral Hood had brought the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron up about two miles ahead of the British Battle Fleet and Admiral Evan-Thomas had placed the 5th Battle Squadron at the rear of the line. The High Seas Fleet was steering in an easterly direction headed about for the center of the British line and rapidly getting into a most difficult position.

At 1826 the British fire commenced to become very heavy, particularly on the LUTZOW and KONIG. Admiral Scheer had to do something quickly to get out of the unten-able position in which he found himself and at 1833 the signal was made, "Ships right about". Meanwhile Commodore Michelsen in the ROSTOCK with Flotilla III and the First Half Flotilla had taken up position in the lee of the German Fifth Division. When the High Seas Fleet started

its "ships right about" the LUTZOW, which was at the head of the line, had been damaged to such an extent that she could not carry out the signal and was steaming off to the SW. Commodore Michelsen immediately ordered his destroyers to lay a smoke screen for the protection of the LUTZOW and to obscure the movements of the German fleet. At 1850 the G-39, flagboat of the First Half Flotilla, went alongside the LUTZOW and took off Admiral Hipper and his staff for the purpose of getting him to another of the Battle Cruisers. At the same time the G-40, G-38, V-45 and G-37 laid a smoke screen just in time to save the LUTZOW. Three destroyers, V-73, G-88 and S-32 went on through the screen and fired torpedoes at a range of 8000 yards. After the screen was laid but before it could effectually cover the LUTZOW she was hit four times. Number two turret was put out of action and number four had to shift to hand operating gear, in addition a great deal of minor damage was done.

At this time Half Flotilla VI with the V-48 and S-54 came up and laid a smoke screen which mixed with the one laid by the First Half Flotilla and effectually screened the movements of the Fleet. Shortly after the laying of these smoke screens by the German destroyers the MARLBOROUGH was hit by a torpedo and the REVENGE, next astern, thought she saw the tracks of torpedoes. These may have come from the First Half Flotilla or from the mass of burning wreckage which that had been the WIENBADEN. The exact source from these torpedoes came was never determined.

The laying of the smoke screen by Flotilla III was particularly well timed. Had it been a few minutes later the LUTZOW and the DERFFLINGER would almost certain-

ly have been sunk because both of them had received considerable damage and at the moment, both were busily engaged clearing their torpedo nets which had dropped into position likely to foul their propellers. In addition, this smoke screen coupled with Admiral Beatty's unavoidable interference in getting into position at the head of the British line, probably kept the German van from being seriously damaged during the ships right about movement.

And now Admiral Scheer was confronted with a problem requiring a decision which would either creditably crown his many years of preparation and training or would make his long service sterile. If he continued on his present course, west, and if the British followed his turning movement the ensuing action would be in the nature of a retreat with all its attending disadvantages. It would not only be a retreat but it would be a retreat directly away from the German Bight and the German bases. The Admiral decided, "To strike another blow at the enemy by means of an energetic advance and to drive home a powerful destroyer attack," (Scheer:Germany's High Seas Fleet in the World War, page 225). Hence at 1855 the High Seas Fleet again received the order, "Ships right about." At this same time the British Fleet turned south some ten miles to the eastward of the German Fleet. The movements of the German Fleet had been followed and reported by Commodore Goodenough in his flagship, the SOUTHAMPTON.

When Admiral Scheer ordered his fleet to come about he also ordered Flotilla III to go to the assistance of the WIENSBADEN and attempt the rescue of her crew. While attempting to carry out this order, however, Flotilla

III came under such heavy fire from the British Fleet that it was forced to abandon the attempt and turn away toward the German line. While turning the V-73 fired one torpedo and the G-88 fired three torpedoes at the 5th and 6th British Battleship Divisions at a range of about 6000 meters. Soon thereafter the third ship of the 5th Division, the NEPTUNE, saw the tracks of three torpedoes. She turned with rudder hard over and since the next astern, the ST. VINCENT, held her course, the NEPTUNE was forced to cease firing. At the same time the 4th Division went ships left twenty degrees in order to avoid torpedoes reported by the NEPTUNE.

By 1913 the British fire had become so intolerable that, quoting Groos, page 126, "Admiral Scheer decided to attack with Battle Cruisers, without regard to possible losses, so that, with their help, the mass attack of torpedo boats could be brought as close to the enemy line as possible while, under the protection of this maneuver, the Battle Fleet could be turned for the third time on the reverse course and thus withdrawn from the enemy envelopment for the second time." At 1913 the signal, "Battle Cruisers turn together toward the enemy; attack with full strength", was made. Three minutes later came the signal to the Battle Fleet, "Ships right about."

The British and German accounts of the destroyer operations at this time do not coincide, however, at 1921 Admiral Scheer ordered, "Destroyers attack" and again at 2000 he ordered, "All Flotillas attack." Before the signal had been received though, Commodore Heinrich in the REGENSBURG, second leader of destroyers, had decided that the situation had become so serious for the ships

at the head of the column that a torpedo attack by all the Flotillas was necessary if these ships were to be saved from destruction and, therefore, had started the order for attack. The destroyer attack seems to have been made in three waves. The first, by the 11th and 17th Half Flotillas plus the V-73, G-88 and one other boat of Flotilla III, a total of thirteen destroyers. This first group was accompanied by the REGENSBURG up to the head of the line, the DERFFLINGER, then the REGENSBURG returned to bring Flotilla II up for attack. Half Flotillas Eleven and Seventeen passed on through the smoke screen which had been laid for the protection of the LUTZOW and immediately sighted the British battle line, "An iron ring of about twenty-four battleships on course ESE and SSE accompanied by numerous light cruisers and destroyers." The German attacking destroyers immediately came under heavy fire and, since the range was only about 7000 meters, it became necessary to fire the torpedoes before all the attacking boats were destroyed. All boats launched from one to three torpedoes then turned and retired behind a smoke screen to their Main Body. They had been under very heavy fire from 1910 to 1925. The V-28 and S-51 were damaged to such an extent that their speed was reduced to about seventeen knots and the S-35 was sunk.

In the meantime Flotilla III was coming up for attack. This Flotilla had to break through the German battle line and then pass through the smoke screen laid by the retiring destroyers of the preceding wave. Upon emerging from the smoke they sighted no enemy capital ships but did sight enemy light forces in overpowering number. After a sharp brush with these light forces the

German destroyers retired behind a smoke screen. The S-54 had joined Flotilla III in the attack but being considerably behind position she passed the turning point of Flotilla III and advanced further to the eastward. She sighted the British battle fleet but was unable to close nearer than 9000 meters, at which range she fired one torpedo and turned to rejoin Flotilla III.

The third attack was made by Flotilla V. Flotillas V and VII had made the turn to the westward with the fleet and were making all possible speed toward their positions at the head of the column when they received the signal from the Commander-in-Chief to attack. They were unable to see what was transpiring at the other end of the line near the Battle Cruisers and the 3rd Battle Squadron. For this reason the Commander of Flotilla VII felt that any attack which his Flotilla might make would be useless and, therefore, he remained in the lee of Battle Squadron II. Immediately upon receipt of the signal to attack Flotilla V turned toward the ROSTOCK, first leader of flotillas, and received orders from the ROSTOCK to attack at once on course ESE. At 1950 Flotilla V passed through the smoke screen to the eastward of the Battle Cruisers but sighted nothing except British Light Cruisers and Destroyers which opened fire on them at long ranges. Nothing could be seen beyond these British Light Forces due to the smoke so at 1952 Flotilla V headed back for the German Battle Fleet after firing a salvo of torpedoes at the British Light Cruisers.

A total of one hundred and fifty-one rounds from main battery guns and eight hundred and eighty-seven

rounds from secondary battery guns were fired by the British Battle Fleet at the German destroyers during these three attacks. Two destroyers, the S-35 and the V-48, were sunk. The former by a 12 inch shell probably from the NEPTUNE. The latter was hit by a 12 inch shell but probably was sunk by the first division of the 12th Flotilla. Three other German destroyers were damaged but not fatally.

No torpedo hits were made during this attack although the destroyers of the first wave fired twenty-one torpedoes, nineteen of which were seen to cross the British battle line but were avoided by maneuvering. Although no torpedo hits were made the German destroyers accomplished their mission of protecting the battle line in a masterly manner. Their torpedoes caused the British fleet to turn away sharply and their smoke screens were laid quickly and well. This destroyer action was probably the deciding factor in the Battle of Jutland. Admiral Jellicoe's overpowering fear of torpedoes caused him to lose contact with the apparently almost panic stricken German fleet just when most decisive action was called for.

During this phase of the action all British destroyers were on the unengaged side of the British battle line except the 12th Flotilla which assisted the 4th Light Cruiser Squadron in driving off the attacks of Flotillas III and V.

As a result of the turn away of the German Fleet, the destroyer attacks and the increasing darkness, all firing had stopped and both Fleets were engaged in repairing damage and in regaining their assigned positions.

During this interval Commodore Heinrich,in the REGENS-BURG,second leader of flotillas,reassigned the various flotillas keeping Flotilla II and three boats of the 12th Half Flotilla for night attack work. None of these boats had fired any of their torpedoes. Quoting Groos page 141,top," At 2010 he ( Commodore Heinrich ) changed the assigned search sector of Flotilla II to ENE around to ESE,while the three available boats of the 12th Half Flotilla were ordered to search in sector ESE to SE. In order to give the boats a starting point free from smoke and mists he proceeded with the Flotilla to a point in rear of the column to the northward. He had scarcely arrived at this point and dispatched the flotillas on their mission, when a message was received from the Commander-in-Chief,ordering all boats to attack and placing these operations under the direction of the first leader of destroyers. Commodore Heinrich,who had foreseen this order,had therefore restricted his operations to the tactically unfavorable northern sectors in order that his forces might not interfere with the search operations of the first leader of destroyers. He,therefore,reported immediately by radio to Commodore Michelsen,stating the disposition he had ordered for Flotilla II and the 12th Half Flotilla. The latter decided against giving any further orders in order not to delay the operations of the boats during the short period of darkness, and for the time being held back the boats of Flotillas V and VII and the 18th Half Flotilla which were concentrated near the ROSTOCK."

This long quotation is given for one purpose only,to attempt to show the manner in which the minds

of the German subordinate commanders functioned. Commodores Michelsen and Heindrich were destroyer leaders. When they received orders they carried them out but when orders were lacking they did what their training dictated.

At this time Admiral Jellicoe was not at all certain as to what the German fleet had done when it turned behind the smoke screen. He had received conflicting reports from the LION and SOUTHPDEN but finally at 1954 Admiral Beatty signalled, "Submit van of battleships follow battle cruisers. We can then cut off whole of enemy's Battle Fleet." At 2007 the Second Battle Squadron was ordered to follow the Battle Cruisers but unfortunately, the 2nd Battle Squadron did not know where the Battle Cruiser Squadron was at that time, however the course was changed to SW.

At 2015 the CASTOR with the 11th Flotilla, supported by three light cruisers, sighted twelve German destroyers, Flotilla V. The British opened fire on Flotilla V and pursued them to the northwest. Flotilla V rejoined the ROSTOCK and followed this vessel through the German battle line. At 2026 the pursuing British forces suddenly found themselves about 7300 meters from the German battle line and shortly afterward they were under fire from the German battleships. The destroyers turned off immediately without firing a single torpedo although it would appear that conditions were excellent for a torpedo broadside. One of the British light cruisers, the CALLIOPE, fired one torpedo and, in return, was hit five times before she could turn and get away.

While this was going on the British Battle Cruisers had made contact with the German Battle Cruisers at the head of the German line and were severely damaging the already badly crippled SEYDLITZ and DERFFLINGER. While at the rear of the line the German destroyers, Flotilla II and the 12th Half Flotilla, which had started their night search operations from the rear of the German line, made contact with the British 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron, which was forming the screen at the rear of the British Fleet. The V-48 was taken under fire by the SOUTHAMPTON and DUBLIN, was hit amidships and was later sunk by the British 12th Flotilla. At 2050 Flotilla II was forced to retire from four British light cruisers and the 12th Flotilla. At 2052 the German 12th Half Flotilla came within gun range of the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron and was forced to retire to the westward. In this brush the S-50 was hit by a shell which, although it did not explode, broke a main steam line, reduced the speed of the vessel to twenty-five knots and put the generating plant out of action.

Shortly before this the second division of the 4th Light Cruiser Squadron, CAROLINE and ROYALIST, was joined by the CASTOR and the British 11th Flotilla in their position as advanced screen of the British Fleet. At 2045 these ships sighted three German battleships bearing northwest and gradually closing the British line. This contact was reported to Admiral Jerram in the KING GEORGE V and, at the same time, the CAROLINE and ROYALIST started a torpedo attack. Admiral Jerram ordered the attack to be discontinued because he thought the ships being attacked were the Battle Cruisers under Admiral

Beatty. The ROYALIST and CAROLINE continued the attack however, but were able to get off only one torpedo each at 7300 meters before they were forced to retire. The 11th Flotilla had followed the CAROLINE in but made no attempt to fire torpedoes, probably because of Admiral Jerram's interference in ordering the attack discontinued.

There was now no doubt in Admiral Jellicoe's mind as to what the German fleet had done when it turned behind the protection of the destroyer attacks and smoke screens. Nor was there any question as to the exact position of the German fleet. He knew that the German fleet was slowly approaching the British line and that by holding the course he was on he would soon bring on another engagement. This he was not willing to do even though his fleet was still superior to the German fleet and notwithstanding the fact that his destroyers still had practically their full equipment of torpedoes.

Admiral Jellicoe had several reasons for not closing the German fleet. First, he knew that the British system of recognition signalling during night attacks was inferior to the German system. He was afraid, therefore, that his ships would be subjected to disastrous fire and torpedo attacks not only from the Germans but also from vessels of his own fleet. Secondly, his secondary battery fire control was inadequate. He had repeatedly demanded that this defect be corrected but labor and other difficulties had kept the necessary work from being done. Thirdly, he thought that a retiring fleet would most certainly have excellent opportunities for using

mines and torpedoes against the pursuers. He had a most profound and often expressed respect for torpedoes and mines. And lastly, he felt that by keeping his fleet well in hand he could intercept the enemy and complete his action against them in the early morning of the next day off Horn Reefs. For these reasons at 2101 he changed course to south.

Admiral Scheer, on the other hand, had one thing open for him to do, that was, get through the British line and into his base past Horn Reef Light as quickly as possible. The leading ships had been continually turning away from the course and finally at 2108 when the CAROLINE and ROYALIST had caused the German van to turn off again Admiral Scheer sent the peremptory signal, "Main Body course SSE 1/4 E; maintain course (Durchhalten!); speed 16 knots." He was determined to get to Horn Reefs by daylight, torpedo attacks notwithstanding.

--- THE FOURTH PHASE ---

At nightfall Admiral Jellicoe stationed his destroyer flotillas about five miles astern of the Battle Fleet in the order from west to east; 11th, 4th, 13th 9th and 10th together, then the 12th. The reason for concentrating practically his entire destroyer strength astern appears to have been that he wanted them to make concentrated attacks on the enemy if the German fleet attempted to cross to the eastward astern of the British fleet.

The German destroyers had been assigned the search sectors; Flotilla II and 12th Half Flotilla

from ENE to SE, Flotilla VII from SE to S by E and Flotilla V from S by E to SSW. Groos, bottom of page 159, has the following to say regarding this assignment of sectors, "A further difficulty was that owing to the uncertainty of their position they had to count on coming into the attack sector of one of the other flotillas or even advancing into the area of their own fleet, since the course of the latter converged dangerously with the assigned search bearing of Flotilla VII in particular. Therefore when contact was made there would be great uncertainty whether the vessel sighted were friend or foe." This possibility of being mistaken for enemy destroyers by their own forces, added to the likelihood of meeting strong enemy forces, resulted in orders to the various flotillas to keep together in their assigned sectors. When Admiral Scheer ordered the night attack of the destroyers he undoubtedly considered the possibility of having the destroyers separated from the Main Fleet to such an extent that it would be impossible for them to rejoin in time to take part in the expected daylight engagement. He seems to have been willing to accept this risk. Commodore Michelsen, however, sent radio instructions at 2230 for all boats to rendezvous at Horn Reef at 0300 June 1. These radio instructions were picked up by the British Admiralty and relayed to Admiral Jellicoe. Commodore Heinrich had already given Flotilla II instructions that if they were forced off their course they could return via the Skagerrak to their base. Flotilla II was the strongest German flotilla and if there had been a morning engagement Flotilla II would have been badly needed.

At 2130 the HANOVER, Battle Squadron II, sighted and reported the British 2nd Cruiser Squadron bearing dead ahead. Commodore Michelsen in the ROSTOCK with the 18th Half Flotilla ordered the destroyers to attack, the ROSTOCK joining Scouting Division IV. At the same time Flotilla VII passed astern of Battle Squadron III, was mistaken for the enemy and was fired on by one ship of that Squadron. No damage was done but the Flotilla Commander changed course to SE. in order to get further away from his own fleet. Twenty minutes later Flotilla VII sighted the British 1st Half Flotilla of the 4th Flotilla led by the TIPPERARY and shortly thereafter the six boats of the 2nd Half Flotilla of the 4th Flotilla led by the BROKE. At first these British destroyers were mistaken for the German Flotilla II but when the recognition signal was not answered the four leading boats of Flotilla VII each fired a torpedo. The British destroyers turned away and vanished from sight before the remaining boats of Flotilla VII could fire. No hits were made. The only British destroyer to open fire was the GARLAND, who also reported the contact by radio at 2202.

From this time until 2330 brushes occurred between the various cruiser and destroyer forces. At 2330 the British 4th Flotilla under Captain Wintour sighted to starboard, a line of large ships on a southeasterly course. Whether these were enemy or not he could not determine and the Flotilla maintained course until they approached to within a thousand meters. Then the destroyers flashed the recognition signal. The leader, the TIPPERARY, was immediately a mass of burning wreckage. The SPITFIRE, the next astern of the leader, and the three following boats

turned away firing torpedoes at 900 meters. The BROKE, leader of the 2nd Half Flotilla, approached and fired one torpedo, then turned and was nearly rammed by the ship astern. The remaining boats held their torpedo fire thinking that the 1st Half Flotilla had attacked their own battle line. One of the German searchlights happened to pass over its own line, however, and all doubts were dispelled. Thereupon the rear boats of the 2nd Half Flotilla fired torpedoes. The flaming pyre that had been the TIPPERARY was passed, sinking. The faintly outlined line of large ships was the German Battle Fleet. The British 4th Flotilla had been given an opportunity such as had never been given to destroyers.

During this engagement the STUTTGART from a position off to one side illuminated the targets and spotted the firing ships on. In desperation the British retaliated by shooting at the German searchlights and did an immense amount of minor damage in a very short time. The German line returned to their course and stood on. The SPITFIRE, blinded by the glare of the burning TIPPERARY, was rammed by the German battleship NASSAU and, while hanging on the bow of the latter ship, had her bridge, searchlight platform, and forward stack blown away by the blast of the NASSAU'S guns which could not be depressed far enough to hit her. Her bow was stove in for a distance of about twenty-five yards but she got clear and managed to make a home port.

About five minutes later the BROKE gathered up seven other destroyers and turned to course south. A few minutes later the BROKE sighted a large vessel bearing about six points to starboard. The recognition signal was again answered by searchlights and a withering fire. The

ship sighted was the ROSTOCK which was about a thousand yards on the port beam of Battle Squadron I. At 2350 the RHEINLAND and WESTFALEN of Battle Squadron I joined in the fire on the British destroyers and shortly thereafter turned short to the west to avoid torpedoes. Within forty-five seconds after the ROSTOCK had opened fire the BROKE'S forecastle and bridge were afire and she was forced to turn away to port without getting off a torpedo. The SPARROWHAWK was following astern of the BROKE and the two collided, the BROKE hitting the SPARROWHAWK just forward of the bridge, cutting through to the keel. All the rest of the group following cleared the two vessels which were hanging together except the CONTEST which sliced off about six feet of the SPARROWHAWK'S stern. While all of this was going on the German battleships were pouring in a rain of shells. It is not known how many torpedoes were fired but the ROSTOCK was hit by a torpedo which was running on the surface and sometime later was abandoned and sunk.

Commander Hutchinson of the ACHATES now took command of the remaining British destroyers and had just headed south to rejoin his fleet when another battleship was sighted. He, thinking that some British cruisers were between him and the enemy, held his fire until too late to attack. The AMBUSCADE managed to get off two torpedoes before she and the ACHATES were driven off to the eastward by German cruisers. The next astern, ARDENT, followed by the FORTUNE, PORPOISE, GARLAND and CONTEST continued the attack. The GARLAND and ARDENT each fired a torpedo at the leading enemy at a range of 1800 meters. By this time the FORTUNE was in flames and sinking. The PORPOISE was hit by a shell which exploded an air flask, cut a

main steam line, put the steering mechanism out of commission and disabled the engineeroom telegraphs. She got out of range, however, by retiring behind the smoke and steam made by the FORTUNE. During this part of the action the CONTEST, with her bent bow, lost contact with the rest of the flotilla. The GARLAND had been damaged but eventually joined the CONTEST and together they drew away from the German fleet. A few minutes later the ARDENT, sighting smoke ahead and thinking it came from the rest of her flotilla, made for it. Instead of British destroyers, however, she made out the outlines of a battleship. She immediately fired a torpedo. Instantly a deluge of shell poured in and in about a minute the ARDENT was a sinking wreck.

Sir Julian Corbett comments on this action as follows, "So ended the work of the gallant 4th Flotilla. Alone they had borne the brunt of the whole German battle fleet, and not a man had flinched. Again and again as a group of the enemy tore them with shell at point blank and disappeared they sought another, and attacked till nearly every boat had spent all her torpedoes or was a wreck. Such high spirit and skill had they shown that one thing was certain - the failure of the flotilla to achieve all that was generally expected from it was due to no shortcoming in the human factor. It was the power of the weapon itself that had been overrated." This comment is, in part, incorrect. Getting away from the sentimental attitude, the criticism of Captain Redlich, commanding the WESTFALEN, seems to cover the case more clearly, "All attacks of the British destroyers showed very little train-

ing in the methods of making the approach to attack, inability to estimate the situation and the counter maneuvers of the vessel attacked. All attacks were executed individually and after approach, and even though it is not in accordance with British tactics to fire during the approach, the destroyers came too close to the German ships before turning and were thus picked up and fired on before they/able to get into action". Commodore Michelsen who had observed the attacks from his flagship, ROSTOCK, stated that, "All attacks were made with noteworthy boldness, but with an audacity which indicated a lack of knowledge of the proper attack methods ". Captain Redlich and Commodore Michelsen had had much experience in destroyer tactics.

This action between the 4th Flotilla and the German battle fleet had another result aside from, and for the Germans, more important than, the destruction of the 4th Flotilla. Orders from the fight with the 4th Flotilla had been falling near the 13th Flotilla and Captain Farie in the CHAMPION, leader of the 13th Flotilla, thought that his flotilla was under fire. He, therefore, turned to the eastward, forcing the flotillas to the eastward of him to turn also in order to keep clear. This action on the part of the 13th Flotilla opened up a clear way for the German fleet and with the exception of a few minor brushes the night fighting was finished.

The German destroyer night work may be disposed of by quoting Commander von Hase, Kiel and Jutland, page 219, " It is remarkable and much to be regretted, that throughout the whole night our destroyers searching for the

English Grand Fleet failed to find them, although they knew exactly where they were last seen".

--- THE FIFTH PHASE ---

There was now only one unit of the British Fleet left to bar Admiral Scheer from his base, the 12th Flotilla, which had been forced about thirty miles to the northeastward of the British Fleet when the Champion had sheered off to port to get away from the German Fleet when it was supposedly firing on the 15th Flotilla but was actually engaged in the annihilation of the 4th Flotilla.

The 12th Flotilla led by Captain Sterling in the FAULKNOR, consisted of twelve destroyers and two leaders. At 0145 the FAULKNOR sighted a long line of large ships and, being sure that they could not be his own fleet, Sterling Captain ordered the 1st division, OBEDIENT, MINDFUL, MARVEL and ONSLAUGHT, to attack. At the same time he reported to the Commander-in-Chief that the enemy fleet was in sight. In the meantime the Germans had turned away six points to avoid the attack and had disappeared from sight. Thereupon Captain Sterling ordered the 1st division to take position astern of him and proceeded at full speed to the southeast to get into an attacking position ahead of the enemy.

About ten minutes later he swung his flotilla around through 180 degrees to deliver his attack. This maneuver had just been completed when the enemy appeared on the port bow, six KAISER class leading with old battleships following. The FAULKNOR fired two torpedoes, one at

the second enemy ship and one at the third. The OBEDIENT followed with two, the MARVEL and ONSLAUGHT with four each. The MINDFUL had hauled over out of position due to inability to make the speed. After firing the division drew away under cover of a smoke screen. The German Fleet had opened up with a vigorous fire but the rear destroyer, the ONSLAUGHT, was the only one hit. One German ship, the POMMERN, was hit by a torpedo. She was an old ship and sank almost immediately after being hit. The German Fleet immediately turned away and contact was lost before the other destroyer divisions could get in an attack.

This delay of the second and third divisions was caused primarily by the fact that the MAENAD leading the second division, believing that Captain Sterling intended to attack to starboard, had trained the tubes out on the wrong side and could not get them around to port in time.

About this time the CHAMPION, Captain Farie, followed by the OBDURATE and MORESBY heard the firing and at 0215 turned toward it sighting the MARKSMAN. At 0225 the CHAMPION turned south and sighted ships ahead, but at 0234 she headed back to the eastward for some unknown reason. The MORESBY did not follow but instead, hauled out to port and fired a torpedo which sank the German destroyer V-4.

This was the last attempt. The German Fleet proceeded on inside of Horn Reefs. Soon thereafter Admiral Jellicoe started his squadrons back to their respective bases.

--- REVIEW OF DESTROYER HANDLING ---

BRITISH

The organization of the British destroyer force consisted normally, of flotillas of four divisions each with four boats in a division. At Jutland, however, there were only three flotillas which had all four divisions present and in two of these there were several boats missing.

The chain of command does not seem to have been standard throughout the destroyer force. In two flotillas all divisions operated directly under the flotilla commander who was in a light cruiser. These two light cruisers were too slow to operate with the destroyers so as a consequence the flotilla commander had practically no control over his boats. In three flotillas a half flotilla organization was used with the flotilla commander leading the first half flotilla in a special flagship, either a destroyer leader or a light cruiser. The commander of the second half flotilla led his group in a destroyer leader in each case. To indicate the manner in which this organization worked the following typical attacks are reviewed.

At 1555 Admiral Beatty informed Captain Farie, Commander of the 13th Flotilla, in the CHAMPION, that, "Opportunity appears favorable for attacking." For some unknown reason the CHAMPION did not order the attack until 1615. The Flotilla Commander in the CHAMPION exercised no control whatever and the attack was a free for all affair. Due to the initiative of the individual Commanding Officers the attack resulted in somewhat of a success in that it caused the turn away of the German Battle

Cruisers at the crucial moment when Admiral Beatty had to turn to escape from the German Battle Fleet. In this destroyer attack there appears to have been no attempt made to keep the boats of divisions together nor was there any effort made by division commanders to control torpedo fire.

At 2330 the 4th Flotilla, which was organized into two half flotillas, sighted three cruisers on the starboard beam, steaming in the same direction, distance 800 yards. The 4th Flotilla, through no effort on their part, found themselves in an excellent position for attack but, instead of firing a full broadside of 72 torpedoes, they fired eleven. The total damage done to the Germans was the ROSTOCK hit by a torpedo and the ELBING hit by the POSEN while maneuvering to avoid the attack. The 4th Flotilla was destroyed either by collisions between themselves or with the German battleships or by gunfire from the German Fleet.

At 0200, 1 June, the 12th Flotilla, twelve boats led by the FAULKNOR and MAENAD, attacked the German Fleet on a parallel and opposite course at a range of 3000 yards, target angle about 270 degrees. There were only seventeen torpedoes fired. No attempt was made to renew the attack after passing the first time nor was there any attempt made to keep in touch with the enemy. As a result of this action the German battleship POMMERN was sunk and the British destroyer ONSLAUGHT was put out of action.

Conditions here seem to have been as nearly ideal as will ever be had for a destroyer attack. The

light was unfavorable for the antidestroyer batteries since the time was just before dawn and the weather was hazy. The destroyers were attacking from a good position on the bow of the enemy. The range, 3000 yards, was excellent. The destroyer divisions were intact and were expecting to attack. It is not clear why they did not strenuously and repeatedly push home positive attacks. It would appear that a sort of passive spirit had permeated the British Fleet right down to the last destroyer flotilla.

GERMAN

The German tactical unit was the flotilla consisting of a flotilla leader and two half flotillas of five boats each. Three flotillas were grouped together under the light cruiser REGensburg and three and a half, under the light cruiser ROSTOCK.

This system gave excellent control. There were several cases, such as that of Flotilla IX at 1630, where the Flotilla Commanders anticipated the orders for attack, indicating thorough indoctrination. The attacks between 1930 and 1955 constituted the best destroyer work in the entire battle. The boats of the flotillas and half flotillas held together well and accomplished their mission admirably. The chief criticism might be that the first wave should have attempted a greater column of torpedo fire. All torpedoes ran on approximately parallel courses, whereas if they had made a criss-cross pattern they would have been a great deal more difficult to avoid.

In the night disposition it seems that both Leaders of Flotillas overstepped their authority. When

the Commander-in-Chief ordered the night attacks by the destroyers he had undoubtedly considered the fact that the destroyers would probably not be with the fleet in the event of a renewal of the fleet action at daybreak. In view of this circumstance it is difficult to understand why Commodore Heinrich gave Flotilla II permission to return through the Skaggerak or why Commodore Michelsen ordered all destroyers to be at Horn Reefs at 0300 June 1. This seems to be the only case of nonaccomplishment of orders by the Leaders of Flotillas.

In this narrative of the Battle of Jutland extreme accuracy was not striven for. The major vessels were brought in merely as a sort of skeleton upon which the destroyer actions could be placed to make a presentable picture of the Battle. No effort was made to include all of the destroyer operations since there were many that had no bearing whatever on the outcome of the various major engagements.

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