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Blockade.

S E A    B L O C K A D E S

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N A V A L    I N V E S T M E N T S .

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## SEA BLOCKADES and NAVAL INVESTMENTS.

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Some species of blockade have been used in almost every maritime war of modern times. The name is generic but the forms have been various.

There have been blockades of observation like those in the Napoleonic wars at Cadiz and Toulon when an inferior force watched a superior force in port, there have been blockades which were really intended to be a masking of an inferior force like the blockade of Brest, there have been commercial blockades like those of our own Civil War and best exemplified at Wilmington and, finally, there have been investments, naval and military, like our operations before Charleston in the same war, a military and naval siege one of the most famous of modern times and one destined to serve as a brilliant example of this particular form of maritime attack and defence for many years.

A commercial blockade pure and simple is a form, as I have said elsewhere, of commerce destroying and a blow at the prosperity and revenues of the state. The military blockade pure and simple is distinctly different in its aims and methods from this, though as a general thing, an effective blockade is meant to be both commercial and military, i.e. naval in its nature. Admiral Colomb of the English navy, in discussing the question of a blockade a few years since, says "It appears to me that whatever opinions may be expressed now, if we (the English) had a naval war, we should follow the example of the Federals (in our Civil War) exactly and I suppose we ought to succeed as well as they did, provided, always, we are wise enough to sacrifice everything for the command of the sea.

It is stated in a previous lecture by me that it is absolutely necessary to have the command of the sea in order to institute and prolong any form of blockade. This command alone made one great blockade a possibility and the constant hope and endeavor of the Confederates was to wrest, even if only temporarily, from us this command of the sea, by

means of some sea going and sea enduring iron clad, a prototype of the battleship of the present day, and thus tear the deadly embrace of the blockade from the coast of the doomed Confederacy.

It will not be necessary for me to repeat what I have already said as to the important effect of a commercial blockade exemplified during our second war with Great Britain, at our expense, and during the last war, at the expense of the South. Let us see, however, what would be the probabilities in case of a blockade of our own coast by an English or French naval force. We will concede its possibility-- not such a blockade as was carried on by us against the Southern Confederacy, but a blockade similar in nature to that carried on during the Franco-German war by the French upon the Baltic and the North Sea coast of Germany. This was sufficient to cause a cessation of German foreign and coastwise commerce.

The principal sea ports of the United States, classified in order of their tonnage, engaged in foreign trade are as follows:

- |                   |                  |               |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1. New York.      | 2. Philadelphia, | 3. Boston,    |
| 4. San Francisco, | 5. New Orleans,  | 6. Baltimore. |

Combining the lake ports as a whole, they rank in tonnage engaged in foreign trade as second only to New York.

Four of the six sea ports named just now, namely, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore are in such geographical proximity that the difficulty of blockade would not be such a great task. From Cape Henry to Cape Ann, the distance, in round numbers, is but 500 miles. San Francisco and New Orleans would require, of course, separate blockading operations.

It might be urged that other ports could be used for foreign commerce, and that trade could be diverted to these ports and the exports from and to the interior go on. But it will be found that the only deep water ports upon the Atlantic or Gulf coasts with even tolerable railway and other facilities, as Portland, Maine, which can be readily included

in the blockading operations covering the area just mentioned.

Upon the Pacific Coast, the other ports with deep water at the mouth of the Columbia River and on Puget Sound would be easily closed by an enemy having command of the sea upon the Pacific Ocean.

In 1893, the value of our foreign commerce was nearly two (2) billions of dollars. Of this foreign commerce, 35.24 per cent was with the United Kingdom of Great Britain alone; with the British colonies added, this foreign trade of ours amounts with the British Empire to about 44 per cent. In case of war with Great Britain, this current of trade would be stopped or diverted to other channels.

In case of a blockade of the ports grouped together from Cape Ann to Cape Henry, it is interesting to see what great staples would be affected.

First, as to imports:

We rely almost entirely upon the outer world for certain dyes and chemicals used in manufactures, also such drugs as quinine, and also important materials entering into the manufacture of explosives, as nitrates, sulphur, etc.

Such articles entering into our daily food as coffee, sugar, cocoa, tea, pepper and spices come now almost entirely by sea.

In addition, such important articles and materials entering into manufactured articles of daily use, as india rubber, raw silk, vegetable fibres for rope and twine, and tin are almost entirely received into the United States by sea and through the large sea ports just named.

In addition to this, a very serious scarcity in porcelain and glassware, in woolen and linen goods would follow a blockade of these ports.

Second, as to exports, which is of greater importance:

There are a number of very important staples, exported in large quantities, upon whose cultivation, production and transportation to the seaboard, a very large proportion of our people depend for live-

lihood and support. These are now sent by the ports named, are such articles as breadstuffs of various kinds, cattle, petroleum, meat products, tobacco, lumber, cheese and especially cotton, the products of cotton and cotton seed. Most of the cotton exported abroad goes from the large ports under discussion, though smaller ports not in the area under discussion, as Charleston, Savannah, Wilmington, N.C., Brunswick, Mobile and Galveston.

One great feature which will be prominent as a result of a blockade and command of our coast waters by an enemy will be the cessation of our great coasting trade. The magnitude of this trade can be appreciated when it is known that 6,039 vessels of a registered tonnage of 1,748,301 tons. In 1890 from records of the Census Office it is ascertained that 52,242,576 tons of freight was carried on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts by means of this trade.

As the coasting trade carries the raw and bulky materials of manufacture including fuel to the places of manufacture or to the vicinity of such places, it can be understood what difficulties would arise in carrying the same material by means of railway and canal and the problem arises whether with the resources the coast line railways and canals possess or can control in time of exigency, this coasting trade could be managed on shore or even the fuel for manufacturing purposes. There is no doubt that in time and economy there would be very grave disadvantages even if the work could be accomplished. This is shown by a table drawn up recently by a competent authority which gives the relative rates of bulky articles like grain in the various ways of transport.

By Ocean, if the rate is considered as <u>one</u> .....	1.00
By lake and river, it is .....	2.00
By lake and canal .....	2.60
By canal alone .....	4.00
By railroad .....	6.60

A tangible result of the blockade of San Francisco is shown by the very

meagre supply of coal that could come to California by land, probably not enough to keep the wheels of land transportation in motion.

It may not be out of place to mention some historical cases of blockade when the command of the sea had to be relinquished by a want of naval force.

In the war for American independence, the French squadron under the Chevalier de Tunay was virtually blockaded in Newport Harbor by a British fleet making a rendezvous in Gardiner's Bay with observation points on Block Id. in bad weather and from cruising vessels at other times. The French fleet was so anchored that with the land batteries upon Brenton's Pt. ( Ft.A), Goat Id., Rose Id. and Fort Greene, no attack was deemed possible by the British Commander-in-Chief. When the squadron under Des Touches finally left Newport for the Capes of the Chesapeake, they were observed by the British and the British vessels being copped arrived at the Capes before the French. This is an evidence of the value of a clean bottom, even in sailing ship days.

A blockade of Boston, after its evacuation, was established by a British squadron under Capt. Banks of the "Renown" which was raised on account of the difficulties in keeping it up by sailing vessels during wintry weather.

A preliminary investment and attack of Newport, R.I., in 1778, is worthy of recount. D'Estaing, soldier as well as sailor, anchored first off Brenton's Reef with 10 ships of the line, blockading the principal entrance to Narragansett Bay, then in naval and military possession of the British; two other ships of the line were placed off Beaver Tail-- blockading the West Passage-- one of them commanded by the famous Suffren(Sagittaine), while two frigates and a corvette went up the East Passage or Sakonnet River and closed that passage. On the 5th of August, D'Estaing sent the two ships of the line in the West Passage under Suffren up that passage, rounding the north end of Conanicut Id., Suffren took position between Conanicut and Rhode Id., thus extending

the investment and blockading Newport Harbor from the North. All English vessels to the Northward in Narragansett Bay were destroyed by their commanding officers, as well as those in the inner and outer harbors. Two French ships of                      took Suffren's place off Beaver Tail. On the 8th of August, the Americans being ready to cross at Tiverton, D'Estaing passed in the main entrance with 8 line of battle ships, passing the batteries at Castle Hill, Brenton's Pt., the present site of Ft. Adams and on the outer harbor finally anchoring beyond range of these guns, the vessels under Suffren joined the main fleet, the Americans crossed at Tiverton that night and the investment of the British was complete, the British lines extending from Coddington Pt. to Easton's Beach. D'Estaing finally landed 4,000 seamen and marines on Conanicut Island.

This gives a fair idea of a good investment which was broken up by the appearance of Howe's fleet off Pt. Judith.

It may be of interest to quote the opinions of two British Admirals as to the respective values of Gardiner's Bay and Newport as rendezvous and, so to speak, bases for an enemy's fleet on our coasts engaged in blockading or other operations.

Admiral Arbuthnot, in writing to Admiral Rodney, gave as his reasons for making his habitual anchorage at Gardiner's Bay that by doing so he could keep his ships constantly "wooded, victualled and watered" and if the enemy's squadron should give him the slip, he could, without losing a moment, go in pursuit. This could be done while keeping a close watch on the entrances to Newport by smaller vessels and save his own squadron from the wear and tear of cruising in bad weather.

Rodney, in remarking upon the evacuation of Newport by the British, said a great mistake was committed, as the best harbor in America was given up, one capable of containing in security the whole navy of Great Britain and from which squadrons in 48 hours could blockade the three principal cities of America, New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

The sea part of the investment of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown was made by the French fleet under Count de Grasse. This fleet was placed with the ships at anchor stretched from the Horseshoe to York Spit, the fleet numbering 34 sail of the line and a great number of frigates.

I have referred in a previous lecture to the effect of the blockade during the war of 1812. When 1814 set in, the whole Atlantic coast was under a most effective blockade. Especially was this blockade rigorously enforced upon any ports known to contain any vessels of our navy and always, of course, with superior force. A line of battle ship would blockade a frigate and a frigate a sloop and sloops privateers. In numbers also they were superior, in order to lighten the work and increase the efficiency.

An American historian says of this blockade: "On the Northern coasts in particular, the intense cold of the furious winter gales rendered it no easy task to keep the assigned stations, the ropes were turned into stiff and brittle bars, the hulls were coated with ice and many, both officers and men, were frost-bitten and crippled.

Some of our sloops would often be able to slip out at night when a gale of wind was blowing. The more severe the weather, the better opportunity, of course, to escape.

The mode of blockade was generally of coast cruising, or patrolling, in couples or in small squadrons, but there were several places more closely invested by a permanently stationed force of considerable strength. Among these places were New York, New London, Boston, the Chesapeake and <sup>the</sup> Delaware.

The mode of evading the blockade generally practised was-- if the English vessels were to leeward and a strong wind was blowing, for the fast sailing American vessels to keep to windward and slip by, even if it were daylight; but if such an opportunity did not offer, they waited for a dark night or stormy weather. Of course this meant only

vessels that were fast sailing and ready to risk capture. Ordinary commerce had to come to a stand still. In running into a blockaded port, similar methods were used--

The story of the entrance of one privateer will give an insight into the gauntlet run before a successful arrival in New York harbor. This vessel-- the "Ned"-- coming northward along the coast, was chased, when off the Chesapeake, by a "74" and a frigate. The next day, she was chased, when off the Delaware, by vessels on that blockade; the following day, she was chased off Sandy Hook by the British vessels blockading there and, on the succeeding day, she got in at the East End of Long Id. Sound, running by four or five British men of war and finally touching at New London for a Sound pilot, entered New York Bay by the way of Hell Gate and the East River.

An American flotilla of gunboats was habitually at anchor under Sandy Hook, under Commodore Lewis. This force kept constantly on the lookout, preventing raids by boats into the Lower bay and, more than once, captured tenders of the British vessels and secured the cargoes of American vessels driven on shore upon the Jersey coast near Sandy Hook. This same flotilla of gunboats, which numbered 31 in all, operated in Long Id. Sound, guarding against the raids of English privateers and escorting American vessels of the coasting trade to New London and in sight of the blockading squadron in that vicinity. A line of torpedoes is said to have been planted across the Narrows in New York Harbor and more than one attempt is recorded to destroy the vessels on blockade off the East End of Long Island Sound, by floating torpedoes and torpedo boats. The fear of torpedoes is said to have restrained the movements of the English 74's more than once in entering our waters.

At the time the frigate "President" left New York, in Jan. 1815, the blockade was kept up by the Majestic of 56 guns; the Endymion of 40 guns, the Pomone of 38 guns, and the Tenedos of 38 guns. The President

struck upon the bar in going out and, besides damaging her rudder, shifted her ballast and got herself out of trim. This force blockading New York represented the usual force of the British off Sandy Hook.

The force off New London generally consisted of a line of battle ship and one or more frigates making their anchorages in Gardiner's Bay or in Fisher's Id. Sound, and cruising in the vicinity of Gull Id. Block Id. was occupied at the time by a British party of observation, so that Newport and its vicinity could be observed from this position and signals made to the force blockading off the Eastern entrance to Long Id. Sound.

Boston was blockaded at times by a '74 and frigates and at times by frigates alone, more with respect to the American man-of-war inside rather than with a view to a commercial blockade.

The Delaware was strictly blockaded and the Chesapeake became a rendezvous and naval depot for the British. The British pressed more hardly upon the coast from Cape Cod to Cape Henry and took possession of Eastern Maine as an annexed province; the trade between all of Maine and the maritime provinces being kept up during the entire war and was not suppressed by either government. The coast defences were erected or put in order, for the most part, by the local authorities, either state or municipal, and erected often by voluntary labor. They were sufficient to deny access at Norfolk and Baltimore, when attacked, and the more northerly ports were, as a rule, then left alone.

No blockade in naval history was so remarkable as that carried on by the Federals during the late Civil War. The comparatively shoal water off the coast led to anchoring off the coast, which was not possible before the days of steam. The twenty (20) fathom line extends to a distance of from 25 to 40 miles off the coast and coal was saved by anchoring, while a constant readiness to slip the chain caused little delay in getting underway. The blockade commencing at the Capes of the Chesapeake, was subdivided into north and south Atlantic blockading

squadrons and East and West Gulf blockading squadrons. The bases used were Hampton Roads, then afterwards, Beaufort, N.C. for the North Atlantic Squadron, Port Royal, S.C. for the South Atlantic Squadron, Key West for the East Gulf Squadron, and Pensacola and afterwards New Orleans for the West Gulf Squadron. 17 feet could be carried over the bar during low water at Beaufort, 21 ft. at Port Royal, 30 ft. at Key West and 21 ft as a rule, at Pensacola. These bases provided facilities for coaling and other supplies and some facilities for repairs to hull and machinery. How much these stations for repairs were utilized can be best understood when I mention that, at one time, there were thirteen (13) steamers under repairs of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron alone.

The necessity of a base in connection with blockading operations, as well as operations partaking of the nature of an investment and siege, has greatly grown with modern times, arising, as it does, from the increased consumption and dependence upon coal, the limited capacity for ammunition and the complexity and multiplicity of machinery on board ship, with its liability to derangement. To these necessities are added those required by the torpedo boats accompanying the blockaders for water, fuel, repair and quiet refuge. All of the demands can be met only by a protected anchorage, smooth water, <sup>and</sup> fair security from an attack. This latter can be attained by batteries on shore, by certain vessels kept in readiness for movement and by submarine mines and booms or other obstructions. If the reserve force is at the base, its services are, of course, to be counted upon as a defence of the station. If the shores of the base are secure, the workshops, coal and other depots may be placed upon shore; if not, these can be arranged on board hulks and other vessels adapted for the purposes. During our Civil War, the Secretary of the Navy stated, in substance, that without our bases, not only would the blockade have been inefficient, but its abandonment would have been compelled in some cases.

The most efficient blockade on our coast is generally consider-

ed to be the one at Wilmington and a description of this blockade will give a good example of the methods employed, which partook almost of the nature of sealing up. The smaller vessels were on the inside, as near the bar and the batteries as the weather, their visibility and their draught allowed. These were pressed in by a line of larger vessels and these again in turn by the Divisional officers moving along the line. There were two Divisional officers at Wilmington. Vessels of the outer line discovering blockade runners were allowed to chase, but those of the inner lines kept their stations. All of the vessels were to be underway during the night. Wilmington is, as you know, upon the Cape Fear River, 28 miles from its mouth. The river has two entrances, one from the eastward, known as New Inlet, the other from the southward. These entrances, not more than 6 miles apart in a straight line, are separated on the sea side by a long headland and the Frying Pan shoals, making the distance by navigable waters between the entrances about 40 miles. This required a blockading force of vessels so great that, in 1864, it reached in numbers fifty steamers, all of speed and some the fastest in the navy.

Outside of the local blockade, was a chain of vessels in the Gulf Stream and 150 miles or more distant, patrolling the coast, who, as a rule, made many captures and were most successful in gaining prize money. This outside patrol and blockade extended to the Bahamas and Bermudas, both of which islands were under blockade.

Captain Wilkinson, a famous blockade runner, in commenting upon the method of blockading, states that in his opinion, a mistake was made in having too many vessels in the inner line, the vessels not only being in each other's way, but that, in firing, a friend was as liable to be hit as a foe. He also suggested that a cordon of fast steamers stationed 10 or 15 miles apart, just inside of the Gulf Stream, upon the course from Nassau and Bermuda to Wilmington and Charleston, would have been most effectual in stopping blockade running, as the stream was

generally crossed in daylight, in the afternoon, early enough to obtain a position by chronometer and eliminate the effect of the Gulf stream upon the dead reckoning. The Southern coast was low and difficult to make and its proximity was known at night by the lead and by the fires shown at the various salt works along the beach, where the evaporation was made by fire.

A drawing in toward the coast in foggy or thick weather was, naturally, made by the blockaders and a relaxation was apt to take place during moonlight nights. Off Wilmington, the latter nights were utilized as the best time to send for coal to Beaufort as many blockading vessels as could be spared. The nature of the coast which allowed the light draught blockade runners to approach the land very closely and run along its shadow, gave opportunities for making an offing or a land fall, some distance from the entrance to Wilmington, and this facilitated the escape and evasion.

The vessels engaged in the blockade of Wilmington were captured blockade runners and merchant steamers transformed into naval vessels and the faster of our gunboats and double enders. The speed attained by the blockade runners at Wilmington is given as about 13 knots. They are described as long, low side-wheel steamers of from 4 to 600 tons, of steel, with a slight frame, sharp and narrow, with length, perhaps nine times their beam. They were with feathering paddles and one or two taking telescopic funnels which might be lowered close to the deck. The hull rose only a few feet out of the water and was painted a dull gray or lead color, so that it could hardly be seen by daylight 200 yards off. The spars were two short lower masts with no yards and only a small crow's nest on the foremast. The deck forward had a "turtle back", to enable the vessel to steam through heavy seas. Smokeless coal was used and steam blown off under water. When running in, no lights, of course, were permitted to be seen. Nassau or Bermuda was left at certain times, so that moonless nights and high tides would be found at the bar of

Wilmington. (550 miles from Nassau) or Charleston (500 miles from Nassau). Keeping a sharp lookout for the vessels on the outside blockade, a wide berth was given them when seen. The blockade runner never stopped when ordered and it was as hard to hit him as to catch him. Even if gained upon, he kept on, trusting to a squall, thick weather or darkness to shield him. All imaginable devices were used. In running through the blockading fleet, it was the practice of the blockaders to fire rockets in the direction of the blockade runner. Wilkinson, a successful blockade runner, used to do the same to add to the confusion and create a diversion.

Whenever the fleet blockading the port showed any lights, the blockade runner could govern his movements accordingly, trusting in the fact that in an ordinary dark night his vessel could be seen at a distance of but 100 yards. In one case, the white water from the paddles of a blockade runner was the only evidence of her existence along the shore.

Wilkinson, in running the blockade, made the following preparations: all lights were hidden, an open light shown was with the penalty of death, leadsmen were in both chains, and a kedge and hawser hung at each quarter. Perfect silence was, of course, maintained.

The blockade runner in running the gauntlet had many advantages. Temporary lights on shore indicated the channel; he had thus his objective pointed out and he had full steam. He could make the land above and below the port and, at night, so hug the coast as to be invisible, the noise of the surf prevented the sound of the paddles or screw being heard.

Whenever he was unable to escape, if possible, the vessel was beached, with the hope of saving the cargo. Field batteries were held in readiness, with infantrymen, by the Confederates, to protect the stranded vessel and to prevent the blockading vessels from floating them. All sorts of devices were used on both sides. The relaxation of the

blockaders in the moonlight nights was taken advantage of; while, on the other side, an attempt to run down and sink a blockader was met by a boarding party from its fore-castle, which effected the capture.

Various attempts were made to break up the blockade, both as a whole by iron clad vessels built in Europe which never reached American waters; and also by improvised iron clads. Among the latter were the attempts of the Merrimac at Hampton Roads, of the Albemarle at Plymouth, N.C., the feeble efforts of the ram at Wilmington, of the rams at Charleston, and of other vessels at the passes of the Mississippi and the Bay of Galveston. The moral effect of these vessels was great on the blockaders and this effect, coupled with that of torpedo boats, will continue to be effective in blockades of modern times.

The blockade of the peninsula of Florida, from its nature, required different management from that of the other ports. There was no large commercial port and no interior country of military or general value. But there were a great number of bays and inlets, difficult of access, but where small vessels could enter and remain unobserved. The best that could be done was to scour the coast and cutting out or destroying vessels by boats whenever they were discovered. Numberless little affairs resulted that are not recorded and now forgotten but that were worthy of the days of the French wars.

The wear and tear of vessels, especially with regard to their machinery, was very great. Admiral Dahlgren shows in his journals the constant anxiety and care needed to keep the vessels under repair and to keep the coal supply full. The machine shop and store ship at his Port Royal base proved their value and while the beaching of the monitors served in place of dry docking and gave opportunity for cleaning their bottoms.

As to obstructions used by the Confederates, I will mention as typical, the obstructions in Charleston Harbor. They were at first

a double row of timber piles. As these became decayed, they were subject to a washing away from high seas and had to be renewed frequently

A second obstruction was that used in the narrow channel of Trino Inlet of cribs with ballast and, farther in, of the trunks and branches of live oak trees.

A third obstruction was booms in sections, weighted and connected by iron and anchored to the bottom. This was found to be of use only in still water.

A fourth obstruction was three cables, with ratlines connecting them, like the shroud of the rigging of a ship; the upper and lower cables had ropes 15 ft. long, connected, and streaming out with the tide, for fouling propellers. The cables were hung from or buoyed by ordinary beer barrels. Afterwards, one cable only, duly buoyed, was used with loose ropes for fouling.

The fifth plan was the planting of torpedoes.

In the Baltic blockade of 1854 and 1870, much difficulty was found in carrying out a blockade, from the want of light draught vessels suitable for those shallow waters. In the Anglo-Russian war, Cronstadt was defended by submarine mines, booms, inclined piling and vessels anchored with springs or cables, so as to cover the entrance. Supporting all these were forts of great strength.

The obstructions at Kiel during the Franco-German war were four parallel cables with net entanglements, a floating barricade, a double row of chains suspended from ships, the whole being supported by submarine mines and covered by fortifications.

An establishment of a military or commercial blockade requires the command of the sea, either by the defeat of the enemy, his withdrawal or the non existence of naval force upon his part. By a command of the sea is not meant and absence of all of the enemy's vessels from the high sea, it is almost impossible to prevent their existence upon the seas or some evasion of a blockade, but when they are upon the seas or do evade a blockade, they do it as fugitives and whatever damage is done or duty performed by an enemy, it is only in that way and temporary or moderate

in degree, it can have no permanent effect upon the war, unless by the continual harassment or diminution of forces it so places the power in command and investment in such a position that the weaker power can be justified in meeting force with force and so gain an important victory over his fleet or any material portion engaged in operations in the locality. Either should cause or accelerate a definite conclusion of the war.

This, of course, contemplates a purely naval war, which is likely to be the nature of a war between the United States and any European war, except Great Britain and Spain. With any American country, save Mexico, the war on our part is likely to be a naval one, at first, with combined expeditions and land warfare following. In case of war with Great Britain, the war is likely to be defensive with them, so far as their Canadian possessions are concerned or, in other words, upon land; while, on the contrary, it will be offensive so far as our coasts, our trade and naval forces are concerned, in other words, upon the sea.

As to the conquest of Canada, a military<sup>writer</sup> of our army of ability and reputation sums up a study of the situation in a recent paper by saying "that a complete conquest as the result of operations of war alone uninfluenced by external troubles, foreign alliances, or financial difficulties on one side or the other, could probably be effected by us only when we had provided ourselves with a naval force superior to any armada that Great Britain could send to the American waters. (Capt. Wagner. Milty. Geog. of Canada.)

The first step to be taken for the establishment of a blockade, whether commercial or military in its nature, after the command of the sea is assured, is the securing of a base near the field of operations. The distance between our bases on the Southern coast during the Civil War were nearly equal, i.e. from Hampton Roads to Port Royal, Port Royal to Key West and from Key West to Pensacola or the passes of the Mississippi. The distances, following the coast lines, being in round numbers 550 miles.

For a commercial blockade, England has in Halifax, a base distant 580 miles from New York and 730 miles from Bermuda, while Bermuda is 690 miles distant from New York, 630 miles from the Capes of the Chesapeake, 840 miles from Savannah and 870 miles from the Bahamas. The Bahamas, which can take at Nassau and its neighboring anchorages a draught of less than 20 ft., is 750 miles from Savannah and 315 miles from Key West. For ordinary commercial blockade, the bases of Great Britain upon the Atlantic and Carribean, supplemented by Tortugas for the Gulf, for deep water craft, seem to be enough; but where strong or aggressive naval resistance is anticipated, as at New York or in the Chesapeake, a base closer at hand is required, for the blockade of the Chesapeake and New York Harbor will be so vital in its effects upon us that a commercial blockade will require so much support as to become, in fact, a military investment or blockade. For this reason, a blockade or operations aimed against these places would require a closer base, which would be, most probably, Gardiner's Bay for New York and some point in the Bay like Tangiers Sound for the Chesapeake. The Tortugas will be near enough for the Passes of the Mississippi and will provide a depth of water for the largest craft, which no port in the Bahama group can afford.

With the establishment of a base, proper protection must be afforded for the supplies and facilities established there for the quiet and safety needed in receiving the supplies and undergoing the repairs. A supply of coal would be, of course, of primary importance. This would mean a plying to and fro of colliers for any other base but Halifax. This line of communication must be protected and, either by convoy or by the masking of any ports on the flanks of the line, safety must be provided.

And now as to the force and arrangements of a military blockade or investment. It is to be assumed, of course, that the port invested is sufficiently well fortified to deny entrance to the blockading force

without future operations of a combined nature, which would be practically a siege, to which, of course, the blockade or investment already established would serve as preliminary, as the blockade of Charleston, Mobile and Wilmington served as a necessary preliminary to the attack upon or siege of those places.

In investing or blockading a place, one of the first things to do is to clear away from neighboring waters all small craft and to make certain that no vessels of the enemy, large or small, torpedo boats or gunboats, are hidden away in any inlets or bays. This should be done by the smaller craft and in this and in all other cases of this nature, the lighter guns should be used and the ammunition of the heavy guns husbanded.

In taking a position, in strength, off a place, it is not necessary to display the heavier vessels. As in draught so in strength the fleet should be placed in inverse order. The torpedo and patrol boats in day and at night should be nearest the entrances and the outer line of fortifications. These little vessels, the advanced guard, as it were, can be placed at the distance of two miles from the outer batteries by day; and at night or during thick weather they can creep in very much closer. The number of pickets or patrols will, of course, depend upon the circumstances, but they should be increased at night.

At some little distance in rear or outside of the picket boats, say one mile, should be placed several (4?) light draught cruisers, gunboats or torpedo catchers, one slightly in advance of the others. The most rapid should be in advance. The vessels support the pickets, to whom they serve as an advanced base. Next outside, at a distance of from 1 1/2 to 2 miles come what might be called the main line or line of battle, consisting of at least three battleships. This arrangement contemplates, of course, the existence and possibility or probability of an attack by armored vessels of the enemy from the outside or inside. These vessels are all under way and with all fires lighted, if the attack

is expected; if not expected, they may be at anchor, ready to slip, in day time and underway at night.

At a distance off to one side or along the coast, within signal distance (if an attack in force is possible), should be anchored the reserve with half of the fires lighted. If an attack from seaward is possible, cruisers should be stationed some distance outside of all, night and day. For the purposes of commercial blockading, it must be borne in mind that great value attaches to an outside blockade patrol some distance off the coast, between the blockaded port and the nearest friendly port or entrepôt. At night, it must be borne in mind that any vessel of the reserve at anchor should have torpedo nets out and their small boats patrolling and all vessels should have the rapid firing guns of all calibre ready. In some cases, it would be well to have search lights shown across the channel ways by flanking gunboats or torpedo boats.

By one of the best French naval writers--Degony-- a decided distinction is made between a naval or combined investment and a blockade

An investment, he considers as preliminary to a siege and to consist of a complete investment or isolation of the place, to prevent all communication with exterior forces. The investment terminated, the siege begins-- or, it may be, the bombardment.

A blockade he considers as a substitute for the siege, if a siege fails or if the place be insular and small in extent-- a method of reducing a place by starvation.

Such investments can be rarely carried out and need a certain control of the country as well as of the sea. The instance quoted of Narragansett Bay, while answering fully to the definition first given for investment, is very exceptional in its nature.

It is not likely to occur in our country, with the great possibilities upon our part of large land forces. A sea investment is, however, possible to us in several insular positions and territories of

ours, when the command of the sea is in the hands of the enemy.

They are noticeably such places as Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, Key West and the Tortugas, and the Santa Barbara Is. and San Juan group on the Pacific Coast.

The influence of the naval command of even a comparatively thin thread of water was well shown during our own Civil War when, after the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the command of the Mississippi River became ours and the Confederacy was divided into two unequal portions. As a result of this, the Trans-Mississippi Country, with its population, resources and armed forces shrank into insignificance and became no longer a factor of importance in the war.

Investments of vital points are no longer probable with us, but blockades must be anticipated with war existing against strong naval powers. Without going into the detail of how such blockades should be raised or dissipated-- a subject which should and, doubtless, will receive great attention from the officers in attendance while solving the problem of the course-- let me finish this lecture by a pertinent and cogent quotation from one of the works of the late President of this college-- works which combine Naval History with original strategical studies of war upon the ocean and with general philosophical examinations of the part sea power has played in the history of the world.

This quotation from the "Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution" shows, to my mind, the most effective rôle for an inferior navy in war. It is stated to be-- "To assume a menacing attitude at many points, to give effect to the menace by frequent and rigorous sorties, to provoke thus a dispersion of the enemy's superior force, that he may be led to expose detachments to attack by greater numbers-- Such must be the outline of conduct laid down for the weaker navy-- But that such a course may be really effective, that the inferior may, as in some of Bonaparte's wonderful campaigns, become ultimately superior, there must be at some fitly chosen point of the sea frontier a concen-

trated body of ships, whose escape, if effected, may be the means of inflicting a great disaster upon the enemy by crushing one or more of the exposed fractions of his fleet". (Vol. I., p.180.)