

Staff

NAVAL AND JOINT OPERATIONS OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

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SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION

From the 17th century on, Russian foreign policy had been constant in its efforts to acquire ^{a port in Eastern} ~~an ice free en-~~ ~~trance to the sea in Asia.~~ ~~Asia that was free from ice.~~ In 1860 this ambition was largely realized, as China ceded to Russia the Coastal territory between the Amur River and the Sea of Japan as far south as Vladivostok.

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This was not, however, entirely satisfactory, as Vladivostok was ice-bound some four months of the year and the Japanese Empire was a potential barrier to the Pacific Ocean.

To ensure communications beyond the Sea of Japan, Russia decided to seize Tsushima, which covered the only gateway to the south. ^{and} In 1861 she landed Marines on that island. However, This did not meet with Great Britain's approval, ^{so} ~~and~~ upon the appearance of a British Squadron the Russians withdrew.

In 1875, after half a century's difference as to ownership, Russia forced Japan to cede her the southern half of Sakhalin. No wonder that the shadow of Russian aggression was very real to Japan.

Japan for some time had coveted Manchuria and Korea for both strategic and economic reasons. Now

Korea assumed vital importance, for it was, to a large extent, her granary, and in Russian hands would be a definite ~~strategical~~ threat.

Consequently in the same year - 1875- Japan extorted certain port privileges from Korea and recognized that country's independence, in order to exclude China from Korean affairs and to prevent further encroachments ~~by~~ Russia.

This action eventually brought on the Sino-Japanese War of 1894.

Japan readily defeated China and at the Peace Table demanded the cession of Port Arthur and the payment of a huge indemnity. However, a coalition of Russia, France, Germany and Austria forced Japan to give up Port Arthur and to reduce her indemnity. Her territorial acquisitions were limited to Formosa and the Okinawa Islands.

In 1896 Russia obtained rights to exploit mines, forests and industries in Manchuria and in the Liaotung Peninsula, and to maintain armed forces in certain Chinese territory. Two years later Port Arthur and Dalny were leased to her, and at about the same time Germany, Great Britain and France seized certain Chinese territory. This ~~encroachment of the powers~~ led to the Boxer Uprisings, which, though defeated, drew attention to the Manchurian

question. A promise to withdraw from Manchuria was extracted from Russia in January, 1902, that country agreeing to complete her evacuation prior to October, 1903. Instead, however, of taking any steps to fulfill her agreement, Russia proceeded with preparations for war, seeking to temporize only to gain time to complete her preparations.

Japan, fully aware of Russia's activities and their quite obvious purpose, demanded renewed assurances. Not only were they refused but troop movements into Manchuria continued on an increasing scale, and Russian naval forces in the East were being steadily augmented. Further, Admiral Alexeieff was made Viceroy of the Far East, an appointment which Japan regarded as indicative of Russia's determination to proceed with her projects. And, finally, in 1903, Russia attempted to gain a foothold in Southern Korea so as to flank Japanese access to Southern Manchuria.

Renewed proposals were forwarded to Russia in October, 1903. The reply, - which was not forthcoming until December - avoided all the points at issue, discussing merely unimportant features of Japan's interests in Korea.

The failure of that effort convinced Japan that war could not be avoided except by renunciation of her national aspirations.

The national policies of the two countries made the war a struggle for predominance in the affairs of the Far East. Japan's objectives were the expulsion of the Russians from Manchuria, a free hand in Korea and recapture of the Lia^otung Peninsula. The Russian objective was the preservation of the status quo in the Far East. Thus, from the outset, it was to be a limited war. The objectives confined the theater of action to Korea, Manchuria, Eastern Siberia and the waters of the Yellow and Japan Seas.

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POLITICAL FACTORS

The Russian government was completely despotic and honey-combed with graft. Appointments were made by favor rather than by merit. Such a government did not deign to mould public opinion in support of its war aims. Consequently, to the average citizen, the war had but little interest.

In Japan, the military element had taken full advantage of public resentment aroused by the high-handed actions of the European Powers. National spirit was at a peak and *the* victory over China had created tremendous pride in the nation's military and naval strength.

The intervention of France and Germany between China and Japan had caused the latter to consider these countries as potential allies of Russia in the Far East. This, however, was not a fact, Russia had no alliance on which she could depend for aid in a campaign in that area. Japan had established a friendly understanding with the United States and had concluded an ~~agreement~~^{treaty} with Great Britain providing that were either nation attacked by two powers the other would come to the aid of her ally.

This treaty was a masterly stroke and made Japan relatively secure against any coalition of European nations that might seek to oppose her interests in Asia.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

~~Financially~~, Russia was greatly superior to Japan, but in 1903 the latter had contracted a loan of \$80,000,000 to use in augmenting her military strength. /

Neither country was greatly advanced industrially, but Japan was again in ~~an~~^{the} inferior position, ~~and~~^{she} completely lacked facilities for warship construction.

Russia, to a large extent, was self-contained, especially in regard to raw materials. Japan required foreign trade for essential raw materials, including food-stuffs.

However, due to lack of overland transportation facilities Russia was not in a position to employ her economic

advantage in the theater of operations. Japan, as long as she could maintain her sea lanes of communication in this theater could apply her full economic strength.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The morale of the Russian forces, as well as peoples, was notably lacking in so far as a sense of consecration to a cause was concerned. The Japanese were intensely patriotic with undying devotion to the Emperor.

The Japanese naval personnel was at a high state of efficiency. For a number of years their naval officers had been educated in Europe and the United States, and there was a British Naval Mission to advise them on organization and training.

Maneuvers and gunnery practices were constantly employed, and the naval staff was well organized with competent personnel. Only capable officers were assigned to commands at sea. Furthermore, much of the Japanese personnel had ~~had~~ actual war experience.

In Russia there was no concerted effort to maintain a well trained fleet. There were occasional gun drills in port, but for months her ships lay idle and no attempt

was made to train the ~~gun~~ crews. The officers suffered equally from this inactivity and seldom had an opportunity to maneuver their ships or to gain sea or gunnery experience. In addition, many higher naval officials ~~jointly~~ arranged for the systematic embezzlement of appropriations.

In so far as training went, the Russian Asiatic Squadrons were somewhat superior to the home fleet, but even these were not comparable to the Japanese.

The national characteristics and mental attitude of the peoples of the two countries were at complete variance. This contrast was nowhere more apparent than in the naval strategy employed before and during the war. Japan appreciated and applied ^{sound} strategy; Russia repeatedly disregarded the proven requirements of successful maritime warfare.

The Russian leaders who were to occupy the more important posts varied in their ability, but none had actual war experience. With the exception of Admiral Makaroff and Admiral Rodjestvensky, they proved themselves hopelessly incompetent.

Admiral Alexeieff, Viceroy in the Far East, was in supreme command of land and naval forces in that area.

He had not been at sea for years, was often completely out of touch with the fleet, yet directed ^{it's} the major dispositions and strategy. He displayed appalling lack of foresight, enterprise and judgment.

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Vice Admiral Makaroff was the ablest flag officer on the Navy list. He was a resolute, enterprising, clear-headed leader, but unfortunately was killed before he had a chance to demonstrate his ability.

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Admiral Rodjestvensky was ^{considered to be} a strong, energetic and ^{generally} capable officer, but ^{he} appeared on the scene too late.

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On the Japanese side, Togo was experienced, able and courageous. He possessed great initiative and proved to be one of the world's outstanding leaders. Some of his actions may seem to have verged on rashness, but they were crowned with success and appear ~~and appear~~ to have been employed because of his correct estimate of his opponent's ability.

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Admiral Uriu, also experienced in war, was a graduate of our Naval Academy in the Class of 1881. He was an able officer.

CHARACTER OF THEATER OF OPERATIONS

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The general geographic features of the theater of war may be seen from a glance at the map. The Japanese Islands stretch for about 1,000 miles along the eastern coast of Asia, are ~~mainly~~ supplied with good harbors, and are in position to control the approaches to Northern Asia from any direction. The peninsula of Korea is the nearest point of the mainland, ~~separated from Japan by the Straits of Korea.~~ ^{to} About halfway across the Straits ^{of Korea} lies the Japanese fortified island of Tsushima. The Russian ports of Port Arthur and Vladivostok are about 1250 miles apart by sea and the passage is via the Straits of Korea.

The Trans-Siberian Railroad connects Moscow with Harbin in Northern Manchuria, where the railroad divides, one branch going south to Port Arthur and the other east to Vladivostok, each terminus being more than 5,000 miles from Moscow. This single-track railroad was the sole means of transport between European Russia and the Far East for all personnel and supplies, unless control of the seas could be gained. On the other hand, the Japanese centers of war supplies and personnel all lay within close and easy reach, by sea, of the prospective theater of operations.

INFORMATION

At the beginning of the war the Russian intelligence was completely faulty in estimating the intention of Japan to fight, and no proper precautions were taken. After hostilities commenced, Japan ~~kept constant watch on Port Arthur and Vladivostok and~~ was usually ^{well} promptly informed ~~if any of the Russian Navy put to sea.~~ *as to movements and dispositions.*

The Japanese squadrons were operating within easy communication distance of their home land and each other. The Russian squadrons frequently did not know of one another's position or operations.

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ARMED FORCES

For several years both sides had made great efforts to increase their naval strength. Japan devoted a large part of the Chinese indemnity to the purchase of naval vessels in Europe and the United States, with the result that at the start of the war she had a well balanced navy. It was composed of 6 battleships, 8 armored cruisers, 16 light cruisers, 33 destroyers and torpedo boats, and 5 sloops - all of modern design. In addition, there were a number of more or less obsolete vessels available for convoy and coast defense.

The Russian Fleet in Asiatic waters was composed of 7 battleships, 4 armored cruisers, 8 light cruisers and 35 torpedo craft. In European waters she had 9 battleships, 5 light cruisers and 36 torpedo craft of modern design, besides some obsolete vessels.

~~* * Numerically equal to Japanese total.~~

The Japanese ships were all in good operating order, but the Russian vessels were handicapped by general unreadiness. However, the mobility of Rodjestvensky's fleet was proven by his truly remarkable cruise when he sailed 45 vessels across the Indian Ocean and into the China Sea without anchoring between Madagascar and Cochin-China.

The Russian Asiatic Fleet was divided between Port Arthur and Vladivostok - her main force was in Europe. The Japanese Navy was concentrated in a central position. In fact, Russia's strength was rendered practically impotent by her faulty dispositions alone.

As for the land forces at the outbreak of war, Japan had ~~a force of~~ about 1,000 men in Korea, with a mobile force of approximately 250,000 men at home.

Russia was surprisingly weak in a purely military sense. While possessed of large numbers of trained soldiery, there

were only about 100,000 men in the Eastern area in February, 1904; and the total number she succeeded in throwing into the war did not much exceed 300,000.

LOGISTIC SUPPORT

Passing from the fleets themselves to the hardly less important matter of bases, we find Russia had but two naval bases in the Pacific, neither of which was sufficiently well equipped to meet the requirements of the Fleet.

At Vladivostok there was a drydock capable of taking a battleship, but the workshops were indifferent; while at Port Arthur, where the shops were good, there was but one drydock of but small dimensions. Russia had but scanty naval supplies in the vital area.

Japan's bases for repair were excellent and near at hand, but she had neither the facilities nor the trained personnel at this time to build ships. As a result, she entered a war in the unique position of having no chance of replacing lost ships, or of adding to her sea-going fleet. Russia, given time, could increase her number of ships.

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SUMMARY OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS FACTORS

In evaluating the various strength and weakness factors, we find Japan in distinctly the superior position in so far

as the character of the Theater of Operations and Political and Psychological Factors were concerned.

Russia was potentially much more powerful economically than her enemy, but for a brief and limited war this factor would not be a decisive one.

The numerical strength of Russia's armed forces was overwhelmingly in her favor, but their disposition completely neutralized this advantage, and at the beginning of the war Japan had a slight numerical superiority in the vital area. The latter country, also, was more favorably placed for logistic support of operations in the Far East.

COURSES OF ACTION

It would seem that Japan was taking the gravest risks in resorting to hostilities. Should she be defeated at sea, she would not only fail in her efforts to force Russia to relinquish her Asiatic policy, but might eventually be in danger of invasion.

Russia was risking^{only} her newly acquired Asiatic concessions - Japan risked her very existence. Furthermore, Japan must be successful on both land and sea, while success in either element could accomplish Russia's objective.

To Japan time was an all important factor. The Manchurian campaign must be inaugurated before the enemy had time

to mobilize a large Army in the Far East, and the Russian Asiatic Fleet must be destroyed before the reserves in Europe could arrive. Finally, Japan's economic position would not withstand a protracted war.

Japan therefore determined upon a bold move - to transport her army overseas, while a Russian naval force numerically equal to her own was close at hand and in a position to interrupt her vital lines of communications.

The Japanese Naval Mission, up to the fall of Port Arthur, was:- To gain and maintain control of the sea in order to insure uninterrupted prosecution of the Army Campaign in Manchuria.

Russia's national policy was a defensive one, she would await the enemy's attack. Her concept of naval policy was a "Fortress Fleet" whose objective was the protection of the fortress against the enemy's naval ^{attack} ~~operations~~; and this was to be accomplished by operating on the strategical and tactical defensive.

The Russian Naval Mission, therefore ^{appears to have been} was:- To support the Army in defending Vladivostok and Port Arthur in order to retain Russia's holdings in Manchuria.

OPERATIONS OF FIRST PHASE

Admiral Togo, in command of the Combined Fleet now in complete readiness at Sasebo, was ordered to attack the Russian forces at Port Arthur. Admiral Uriu, with a minor detachment, was detailed to escort ^{the} transports ~~to~~ ^{with} Chemulpo. *the first contingent of the Expeditionary Force.*

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Seven Russian battleships, 7 cruisers, 3 gunboats and several destroyers, under the command of Vice Admiral Stark, were anchored in the outer roadstead at Port Arthur, with no protection against torpedo attack. At midnight (February 8th), the Japanese destroyers were sent in and succeeded in torpedoing 3 ships, two of them being the enemy's best battleships.

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At daybreak the Japanese attacked with their main fleet, but, because of the shore batteries, the range was so great that their fire was ineffective. Finding he could accomplish little without great risk to his own ships, Togo ^{shortly} withdrew, ~~during the forenoon.~~

The comparatively insignificant losses on either side were no real indication of the results which had been achieved. Some authorities state that the war was largely won by this initial assertion of naval supremacy on the part of Japan.

The spirit of the Russian Fleet was broken, and from then on it acted on the defensive and elected to await attack under the guns of Port Arthur.

Admiral Togo made three attempts to blockade the ships at Port Arthur by sinking vessels in the entrance. As is usually the case, none of these operations were successful.

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Early in March, Vice Admiral Makaroff took command of the naval forces at Port Arthur and immediately began to raise the morale and efficiency of the fleet. However, on 13 April, while returning from maneuvers, the PETROPAVLOVSK was mined. The ship sank almost immediately and the Russian Admiral was among those lost.

May 15/17

The following morning two Japanese battleships were mined, and sank. This was a severe blow to Japan, as it was impossible to replace them.

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On 23 June, Admiral Vitgeft, now in command of the Russian Fleet, put to sea, in compliance with orders from Alexeieff, and Togo stood over to bring on an action. The Russian Commander, though he had the superior force, would not accept battle and returned to port. The Japanese launched 8 separate torpedo attacks, but obtained no hits.

Even when the Japanese siege guns were reaching the ships in the harbor, Vitgeft insisted in remaining in port and only put to sea when Alexeieff, with the Tsar's approval, gave him peremptory orders. ~~These orders~~ ^{These orders} appeared to have ~~in-~~ ^{been} ~~structions~~ to escape to Vladivostok, but at the same time to keep ~~his~~ ^{the} ships intact until the arrival of the Baltic reinforcements.

Admiral Togo ^{now} had 4 battleships, 3 armored cruisers and 8 protected cruisers as against the Russians 6 battleships and 3 protected cruisers. The Japanese had a total of 46 torpedo craft -- Russia had but 8.

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At 12:10 p.m., 10 August, the Battle of the Yellow Sea commenced, and by 2:00 p.m., through maneuvering and counter-maneuvering, the Russians found themselves in a position of considerable advantage, - they were ahead, and their course lay open for Vladivostok. Should the Japanese close the range, they would do so at a tactical disadvantage.

Unquestionably, it was Admiral Togo's strategy to confine the Russian Fleet to Port Arthur, where its fate would be sealed with that of the garrison, and to preserve his own ships for the inevitable battle with the Baltic Fleet. It was more to the advantage of Japan to force ^{The Russians} ~~Admiral~~ ~~Vitgeft~~ ^{their} back to ~~his~~ original base than to destroy some of

~~his~~ ^{the} ships and allow the remainder to escape. Consequently, Togo drew out of range and gained a position more suitable for cutting off the Russians from Vladivostok.

At about 4:45 p.m. the Japanese again closed and fire was resumed on both sides.

Shortly before 6:00 p.m. the TSAREVITCH was struck by two 12" shells. ^{The Russian} Admiral ~~Vitgeft~~ was killed and the ship's helm was jammed.

Admiral Togo at once took advantage of the confusion of the Russian line, altered course and concentrated a rapid fire on two of the enemy's battleships.

The TSAREVITCH made signal "Admiral transfer command." This was followed shortly by Prince Uk~~tem~~ski signalling "Follow me," and the Russian forces retired to Port Arthur.

The battle was a decisive event of history. It destroyed Russian sea power in the Orient and, although none of the enemy were sunk, none reached Vladivostok. The Russian morale was utterly destroyed. Of the 6 battleships, one was interned, two were damaged beyond the capacity of repair at Port Arthur, and the other three were not only badly hit but had expended nearly all their ammunition, which could not be replaced. Nothing remained but ~~self~~-destruction or capture with the fall of Port Arthur.

On the Japanese side, the MIKASA suffered more severely than the other ships. However, repairs were effected and the fleet was ready for action within 48 hours.

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Togo, with the Main Force, now operated to contain the Russian Fleet in Port Arthur. Kamimura, with a cruiser squadron, was to prevent the three Russian cruisers at Vladivostok from threatening the Japanese lines of communications or from joining the Port Arthur contingent. Both of these eventualities were possible when Vladivostok ceased to be ice-bound.

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In accordance with Admiral Togo's instructions, Kamimura occupied a station in the Straits of Tsushima, rather than maintaining a close blockade. This gave the Vladivostok Squadron considerable freedom of movement, but under the circumstances was advisable. The two entrances to Vladivostok and the prevalence of thick weather there would have required a larger force to maintain an effective blockade than Japan could afford to divert from the major strategical area. Furthermore, ^{by} Kamimura's remaining in the Straits the Japanese forces were in a better position for mutual support.

The disposition of the Navy left the Japanese Coast open to raids by the Vladivostok cruisers. But with wisdom, Japan realized that the bombardment of some coastal villages

would have little bearing on the war, and her important areas were fortified and could protect themselves.

On several occasions the Vladivostok squadron did get out and inflicted a small amount of damage on Japanese shipping and transports, but this was not sufficient to be of importance.

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Receiving news of the Port Arthur sortie, of 10 August, Admiral Jessen put out from Vladivostok, probably on his own initiative, seeking to effect junction with the other divisions in the Straits of Korea. He was intercepted by Admiral Kamimura's superior squadron, and on August 14th one Russian cruiser was sunk and the other two badly damaged. The Vladivostok Squadron was thereafter no longer a factor in the war.

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In the meantime, after an inexcusable delay of eight months, the Russian Baltic Fleet was given sailing orders for Asiatic waters and, on 16 October, 1904, left Europe under the command of Admiral Rodjestvensky.

Even then the Russians left an appreciable squadron in the Black Sea. These ships were not utilized because the government considered that the Treaty of Paris prohibited the employment of the Black Sea forces outside of that area. Actually, this treaty could have been disregarded without affront to any European power, for the pact was not intended

to cover war with an Asiatic country.

Rodjestvensky's cruise from the Baltic to the East was made under great difficulties. His main body proceeded via the Cape of Good hope, for reasons of safety, while some units went through the Suez Canal.

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This trip, at the very beginning, almost ended disastrously due to the attack on British fishing craft in the North Sea. The Russian psychological condition can be judged by their assuming these fishing craft to be Japanese torpedo vessels. The British Navy was immediately prepared for action, but milder counsel prevailed and the matter was settled by arbitration.

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Rodjestvensky by his indomitable will reached Madagascar shortly after the fall of Port Arthur. His feat was a truly remarkable one. Most naval powers did not consider such a trip possible, as it included coaling at sea on a large scale, which was not thought to be feasible. However, we will not describe the trip in detail here, as the Baltic Fleet did not actually enter the theater of operations until it ^{arrived} ~~anchored~~ off the Saddle Islands.

The progress of the Baltic Fleet was causing grave anxiety to the Naval General Staff in Japan. Togo was

informed that the destination of the fleet was the Pacific and that it should reach the Straits of Formosa early in January. He was also informed that the dockyards of Japan would require two months to bring the combined fleet to its full fighting efficiency, and that, whatever the situation at Port Arthur might be, the blockade must be abandoned at the end of November, in order to allow the ships to refit.

These instructions pointed to the absolute necessity of destroying the men-of-war in Port Arthur before the abandonment of the blockade.

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At this point, therefore, we find land forces assigned the rather unique mission of destroying a fleet. But the Japanese Army was equal to the task and, by heroic efforts, captured 203 Meter Hill early in December. This Hill furnished the necessary observation post to bombard the harbor, and by 1 January all of the larger Russian units were destroyed ^{mainly} by the Army's guns.

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SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION - SECOND PHASE

The first phase of the war ended with the fall of Port Arthur on the 2d of January, 1905. The Russian naval forces in the Far East were no longer in the picture and Japan had gained complete control of the sea in this theater of operations.

The Japanese land forces, although literally at the point of exhaustion, were able to assume a defensive beyond the immediate power of Russia to overcome, and to demonstrate to Russia that efforts to oust her would involve excessive cost.

However, Russia, by means of her Baltic Fleet, might succeed in gaining command of the Asiatic Seas. If this occurred, Japan would have to retire, relinquishing all the objectives ^{for} which she had already paid such a large price. With Japan thus effectually contained, Russia could proceed to overrun Manchuria, Korea, and even the more Southern provinces, thereby gaining dominance in the Far East.

The issue now depended upon sea power.

POLITICAL FACTORS

Russia's political situation had been gravely threatened by the North Sea affair, but that had now blown over. Japan had become somewhat of an international heroine, due to her successes to date, but she had not gained any actual allies.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The economic situation of Japan was ^{now serious,} ~~beginning to weaken,~~ due to the drain of war, and a rice shortage was threatening.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

However
Psychologically speaking, Japan was now even more favorably placed ^{Than at the beginning of the war.} Her victories has not only raised the morale of her nationalists and armed forces but had perfected the training and experience of the latter.

Upon arriving at Madagascar the Russian Fleet received the news of the destruction of the Asiatic Forces. As a result, their morale was even lower than at the beginning of the war.

Rodjestvensky was completely self-committed to avoiding action, if possible, and to reaching port in safety.

CHARACTER OF THE THEATER OF OPERATIONS

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With Port Arthur in the enemy's hands, Vladivostok was the only base in Asia available to the Baltic Fleet.

There were three possible routes between Saddle Island and Vladivostok:

- 1st. The direct one through the Straits of Tsushima.
- 2nd. To the Eastward of Nippon and then west via the Tsugaru Straits.
- 3rd. To the East and North of the entire Japanese Archipelago and then through the passage of La Perouse.

INFORMATION

To deprive Togo of as much information as possible, Rodjestvensky avoided steamer tracks and proceeded well to sea after leaving the Saddle Islands. He was last seen by a passing steamer on May 20th, and from then on was entirely lost as he moved ^{gradually to the} Northwest.

The Japanese had a scouting line of cruisers on patrol about 120 miles south of Masampo across the course of the approach to Tsushima between Quelpart and the Goto Islands. ~~With radio communication~~ ^{AT MASAMPO} Togo expected 10 to 12 hours notice to form his fleet for battle. In spite of his ~~very~~ excellent preparations, the week that elapsed without any news of the Russians was one of great anxiety and stress for Togo and his Fleet, but he stuck to his dispositions and waited, though the temptation to advance was tremendous.

On the night of 26-27 May, a Japanese cruiser made contact and promptly informed Togo of the position of the Russian Fleet. Shortly after dawn the Japanese scouts completely developed the enemy's tactical disposition, and Togo was, from then on, constantly aware of their dispositions and movements.

Rodjestvensky failed to drive off the Japanese scouts or to obtain any information of the enemy with his own scouts.

ARMED FORCES

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A comparison of the forces about to engage shows the two battle lines even in the number of major units. On the Japanese side were two divisions of 6 ships each; on the Russian side 3 divisions of 4 ships each. In heavy guns, above 9-inch caliber, the advantage in material was with the Russians. Tactically, the Japanese had a preponderance of 2 to 10 knots in speed. In torpedo craft and light cruisers the Japanese were greatly superior.

As a matter of fact, the Russian Fleet represented a heterogenous assemblage of new and old ships hastily commissioned; and it was in a low state of material readiness at the conclusion of an eight months cruise.

The Japanese Fleet had been reconditioned and docked.

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LOGISTIC SUPPORT.

Rodjestvensky had been informed that there were but scanty naval supplies at Vladivostok, and this led him to the grave error of burdening his fighting force with certain supply ships, as well as taking on deck loads of coal.

SUMMARY OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS FACTORS

In all ^{vital} factors Japan was now in the superior position.

COURSES OF ACTION

When Rodjestvensky left for Asiatic waters, what was his Mission?

Captain Laur of the French Navy stated that it was: "To reinforce the Pacific Fleet in order to regain naval supremacy."

Darrieus, however, states that in his opinion the motives were sentimental rather than practical, and that there was no real strategic plan.

Be that as it may, Rodjestvensky could not, now, reinforce the Pacific Fleet, although he could accomplish the purpose of Captain Laur's Mission by a successful action with the Japanese Fleet. However, the Russian Admiral fully appreciated the psychological short-comings of his command. He was certain that his fleet stood no chance of success in a decisive action.

His one ambition was to reach Vladivostok in safety, to avoid any action if possible, but if forced to engage to insure the escape of as much of his force as practicable. He, furthermore, considered a reserve supply of coal essential.

If Rodjestvensky can be said to have decided upon a Mission it was, perhaps:

To reach Vladivostok in condition to conduct possible future operations in order to save Russian prestige.

The Japanese Mission was a clear cut one: To destroy the Baltic Fleet in order to maintain control of the sea.

The Russian Admiral decided: To proceed to Vladivostok by the shortest route (with reserves of fuel) and to avoid decisive action.

Togo's decision was: To engage decisively in order to destroy the Baltic Fleet.

BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA

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On the morning of May 27th the Russian Fleet was approaching the Straits of Tsushima in line of divisions with the battleships to starboard. Togo had planned to concentrate on the heavy ships first. Consequently, upon receiving information as to this disposition, he stood to the Eastward. Rodjestvensky now deployed on his right flank and changed course to the Westward. Togo turned back to the Westward, and at about 13:30 sighted the Russian Fleet some six miles to the Southward. The Japanese Fleet crossed the enemy's course and turned to meet them; Rodjestvensky changed course again to the Northeast.

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It was here that Togo made a much criticized maneuver. The forces were closing rapidly, and to avoid passing the enemy he brought the MIKASA to a Northeasterly course, his column following like the tail of a kite.

It was a bold maneuver, and in the face of an efficient enemy would have been ruinous; but the Japanese Commander evidently judged the Russians correctly.

At about 14:00, just after the MIKASA had completed her turn, the Russians opened fire on the turning point at a range slightly over 6,000 yards; but despite their tactical advantage they made but few hits. The Japanese ships opened fire as each completed its turn. By this maneuver Togo concentrated the fire of his heavy ships against the Russian van.

The superiority of the Japanese gunnery was immediately apparent; they made three or four hits to the Russians one.

The head of the Russian column was forced to turn away at once, but the superior speed of the Japanese enabled Togo to keep up, even on the much greater radius. The turn continued until the course of the fleets was almost south.

As the turn was completed, Rodjestvensky's skull was fractured, and the command devolved upon Rear Admiral Nebogatoff, far to the rear in the third division. About the same time the flagship SOUVAROFF was damaged in her steering gear and hauled out of the line, unmanageable, and another ship was sunk by the gun fire.

It was now about 15:00, the action being an hour old.

The Russians fell into disorder and the battle became a slaughter. The lead was taken by the ALEXANDER III, and the Russian line turned and twisted to almost every point of the compass, endeavoring to escape the merciless Japanese fire, but every move was followed by the relentless enemy.

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The entire area was soon covered with smoke, not only from the furnaces of the many ships steaming at high speed

and from the gun fire, but from the heavy fires raging on many Russian ships.

Twice the action was broken off by lack of visibility, only to break out again furiously as contact was re-established. The Japanese divisions became separated as Kamimura hammered the lighter forces in the rear, while Togo clung to the heavy ships in the van.

By evening, all but one of the more formidable Russian vessels were gone. The second-rate ships had escaped destruction, but were all heavily damaged.

When darkness fell, Togo withdrew in the direction of Vladivostok, leaving the field clear for his destroyers and their torpedoes, and giving his hard-worked crews a welcome rest.

Nebogatoff, in the old Battleship NICHOLAS II, formed up the surviving heavy ships in a desperate effort to make his way through to Vladivostok.

Four of the eight remaining armored ships were so badly damaged that they could make no speed. Soon after dark the formation began to disintegrate, the damaged ships falling astern.

~~The conditions for the torpedo attack were excellent.~~
As the darkness fell, the Japanese torpedo craft closed in on the lagging ships and during the night accounted for three more heavy vessels, but at a cost to Japan of three torpedo boats sunk and the disablement of seven more, with severe casualties.

On retiring at dusk, Admiral Togo designated a rendezvous 200 miles to the Northward and on the course to Vladivostok. The retirement went on all night and into the next morning, when the Japanese Fleet reformed its scattered units.

Nebogatoff, with five remaining armored ships and a light cruiser, steamed directly for his port without any attempt at evasion. He was discovered at about 5:00 a.m. by one of the light cruisers hastening up to the rendezvous from her night's work. This contact immediately reached the Commander-in-Chief, who was then about 50 miles to the Northward.

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By 9:00 o'clock Admiral Togo had arrived and opened fire. The Russians replied by turning away, stopping their engines and striking their colors, - all except one cruiser which, being very fast, put on all speed and escaped. However, the next day she grounded and was blown up to avoid capture.

In the afternoon an old Russian coast defense ship, which had escaped contacts during the night, was attacked, and finding escape impossible her captain sank her by opening the sea valves.

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The seven light cruisers, escorting the ^{Russian} auxiliaries, had been attacked and scattered during the battle, one being sunk. Finally two of this force succeeded in reaching Manila where they were interned. Only one broke through to Vladivostok with the news of the ~~Russian~~ defeat. The

three other light cruisers were sunk by their own crews to avoid capture.

Of the destroyers that tried to reach Vladivostok independently, all were sighted the day after the battle by Japanese destroyers, and only two of the seven escaped. Four were sunk. One, after an all-day pursuit, was coming under gunfire when she suddenly stopped her engines and hauled down her colors. No resistance was offered, as on board was the wounded Russian Commander-in Chief.

A summary of the battle shows that the Japanese fought with remarkable singleness of purpose, assuming the offensive from the beginning and directing every effort toward the destruction of the Russian Fleet. On the other hand, the Russians, even after the battle was unavoidable, attempted to evade decisive action and fought throughout with the idea of escape uppermost in their minds. From the time Rodjestvensky left the Saddle Islands he was doomed to a certain defeat, yet a sound plan might have saved a remnant of his force.

As it was, the complete Russian battle line was annihilated, either sunk or captured. Of the light forces, but one cruiser and two destroyers remained to Russia. The

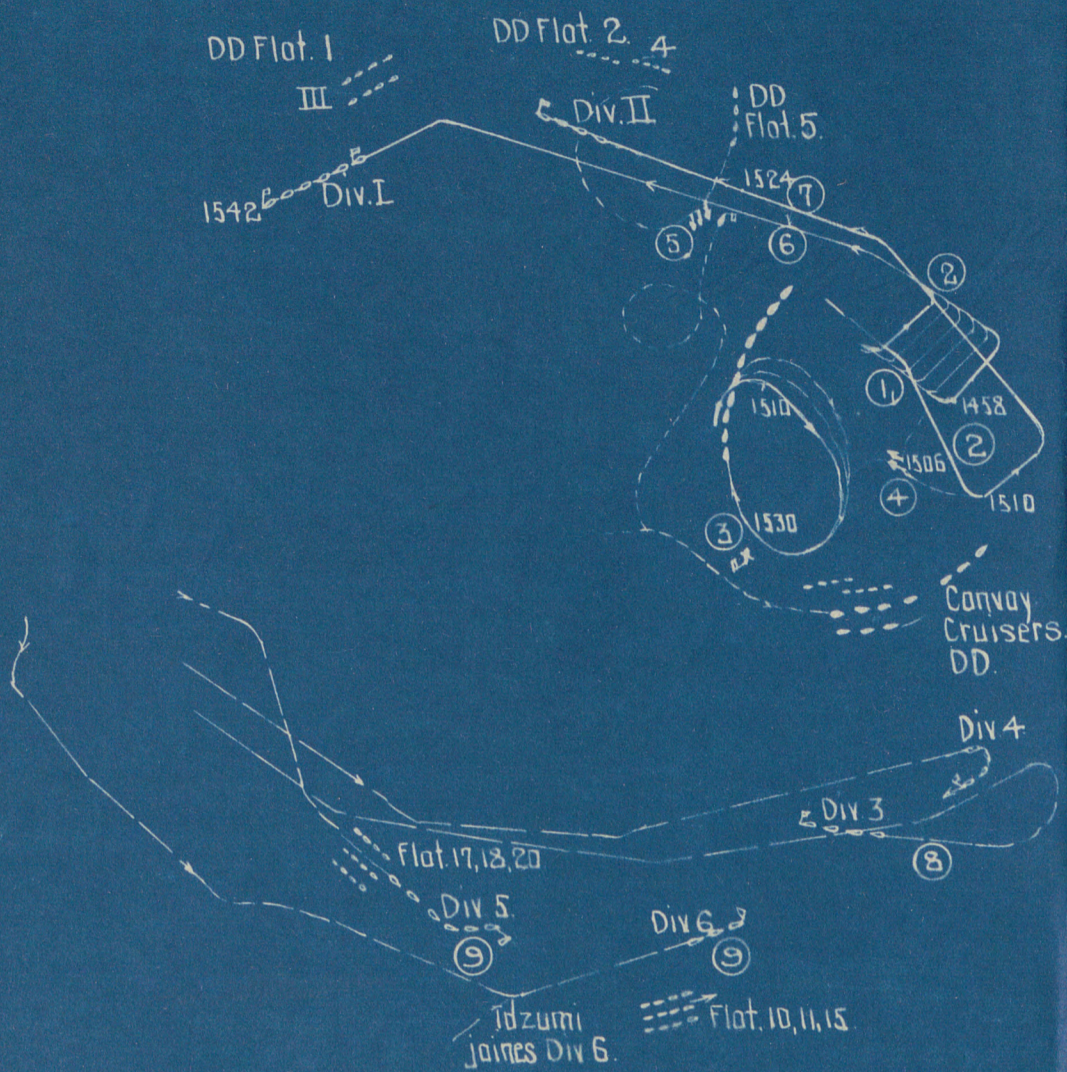
Russians lost 4,830 lives, the Japanese only 110, - a ratio of 44 to 1, - which figure has never been approached where there was not an overwhelming preponderance of force before the battle.

The Russians also suffered the loss of 278 officers and 5,639 men prisoners; and 79 officers and 1,783 men interned by neutral countries.

The Battle of Tsushima ended the war as far as the naval forces were concerned. The Japanese had gained complete control of the sea and there was no Russian naval force left to dispute it. Its results, however, were even more far-reaching, for when the news of the defeat reached Russia all hope of eventually winning the war was abandoned.

On land, the situation was a stalemate. The Japanese could not hope to drive the Russians farther back because of the lack of men and money. On the other hand, the Russian troops in the theater of operations were insufficient to overcome the enemy and the Trans-Siberian Railroad could not support a larger force.

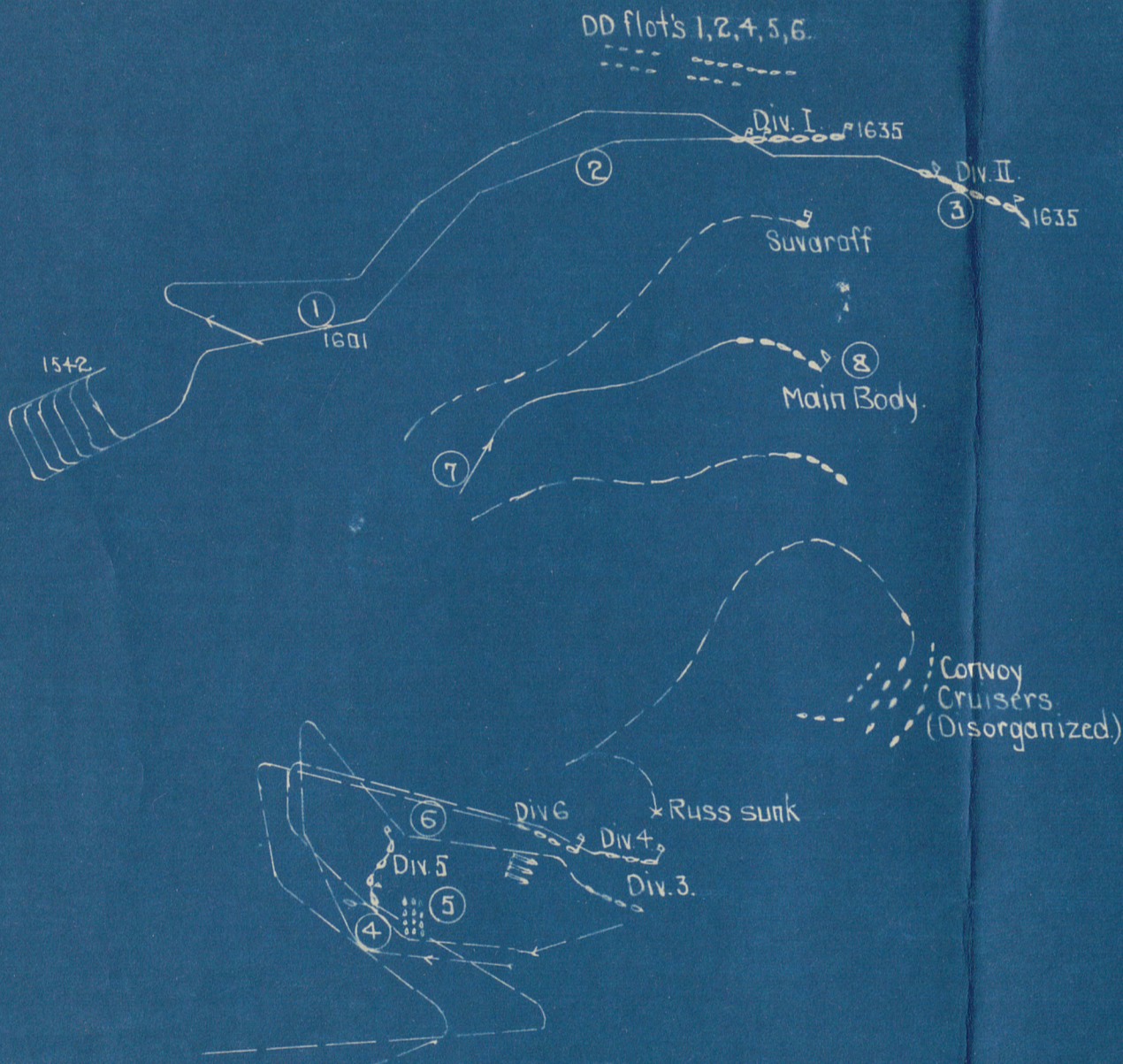
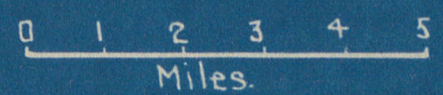
So, in June, negotiations for peace were started, and on September 5, 1905, the Treaty of Portsmouth ended the war. Japan obtained control of the Liaotung Peninsula, regained Southern Sakhalin, and was now the dominant Asiatic Power.



THE ENVELOPMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FLEET.
1458-1542 (44 min.)

- ① Togo reverses course.
- ② Divs I & II keep Russian Fleet under continuous fire during reversals of course.
- ③ Oslibia sinks.
- ④ Chihaya fired two torpedoes.
- ⑤ Chihaya & Flot. V attacks Suvaroff. fired 6 torps.
- ⑥ Yakumo fired one Torp.
- ⑦ First div. lost sight of Russians and stood to westward out of action for 18 min.
- ⑧ Divs. 3 & 4 keep Convoy under fire.
- ⑨ Divs. 5 & 6 not engaged. Out of range.

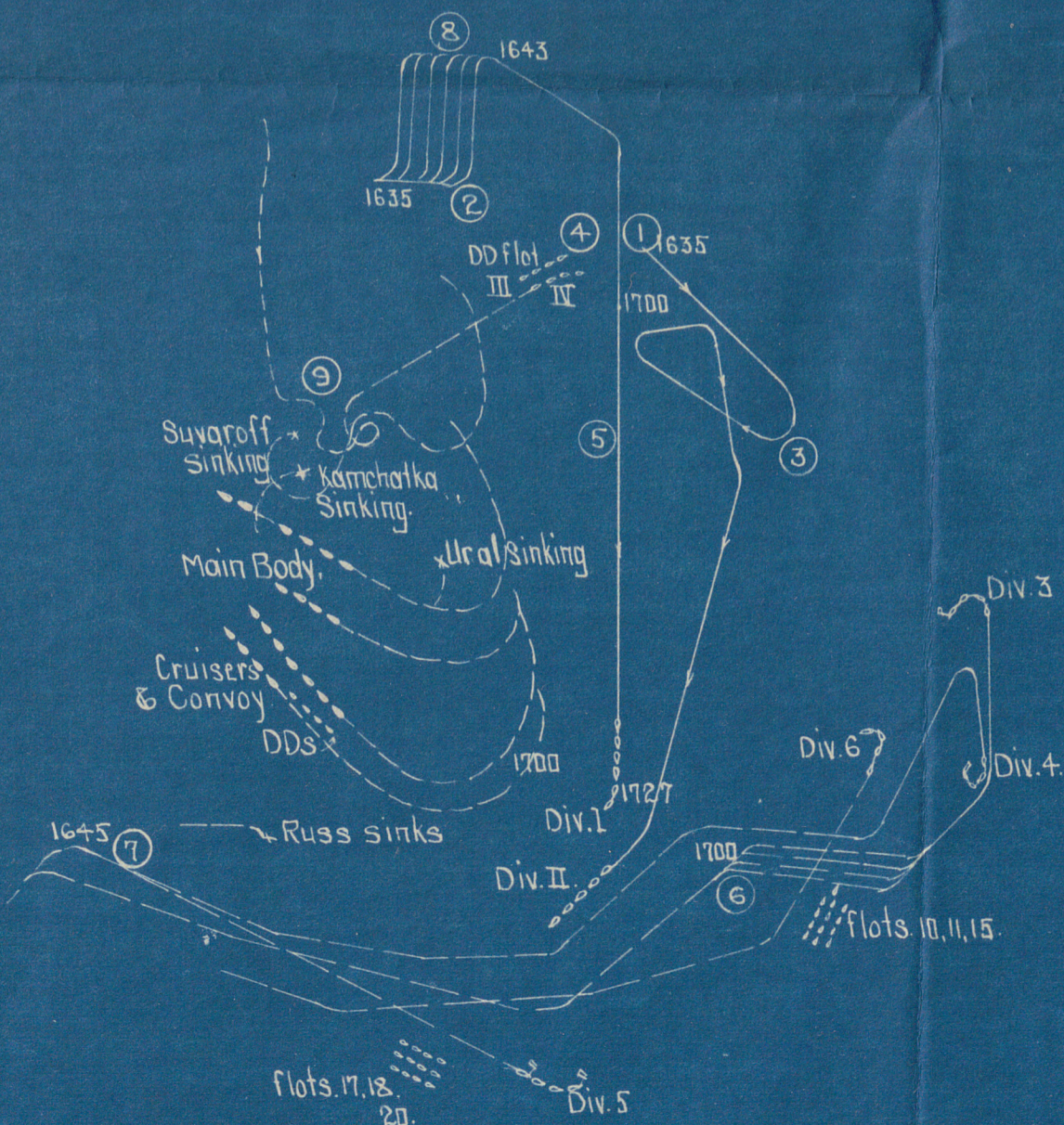
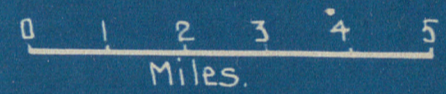
Wind W.S.W. Force 5., Sea heavy.
Vis. 7000 to 9000 yds.



THE CHASE TO THE EASTWARD
1542 to 1635 (53 min.)

- ① Division I reengages (Out of action 37 min.)
- ② Mikasa fired torpedo.
- ③ Div. II leading fleet.
- ④ Takachiko jammed steering gear.
- ⑤ Div. 5 not yet engaged.
- ⑥ Div. 6 opens fire about 1620 (2 hrs & 10 min after first fire between Main Bodies.)
- ⑦ Russians escape from Japanese envelopment.
- ⑧ Russians are again hemmed in.

Wind W.S.W. Force 5. Sea heavy.
Vis.



RUSSIAN ESCAPE TO THE NORTHWEST.
1635 to 1727 (52 min.)

- ① Div. II. loses sight of Russians and turns to SE.
- ② Togo fails to follow Div. II. Retires to North for 8 min. Loses contact until 1700. (Period of 25 min.)
- ③ Div. II seeing Togo's retirement, ceases searching for enemy and heads to join Div. I.
- ④ 1st Div. reopens fire on BB.
- ⑤ Togo engages Russian Cruisers. Loses contact with Russian Main Body.
- ⑥ Div. 3, 4, 6 withdraw from fire of Russian BB.
- ⑦ Div. 5 opens fire for the first time on Enemy Cruisers. (2 hrs 37 min after battle commenced)
- ⑧ Togo via dispatch vessel orders DD flot IV to attack
- ⑨ DD flot IV attacks Suvaroff and fires about 5 Torps.

Wind W.S.W. Force 5. Sea Heavy.
Vis. 6000-8000 yds. (misty.)

