

Command was largely absorbed in the question of a Great Landing there, and the project filled a large place in the Admiral's mind.¹

All sorts of arrangements had to be made, the details of which were apparently worked out by the Admiral himself; pontoons had to be designed, tanks tested on a sea-wall, and a force was finally segregated in the Swin to practise the scheme. It is not unreasonable to assume that in the interest and expectancy developed in the Great Landing project the question of closing the Straits was relegated to a secondary place.² In any case the capture of the Belgian coast was urged by Dover as the answer to the submarine, and here there is discernible a very evident divergence both of opinion and of effort. While Dover³ was concentrating thought and effort on attacking the submarine by capturing its bases in a Great Landing, the Admiralty and Naval Staff were concentrating thought and effort on attacking the submarine at sea and were becoming more and more convinced that the closure of the Straits was a matter of primary importance and the greatest urgency. There can be no question that between April and December, 1917, the Navy was fighting the submarine, not merely for command of the sea, but for the life of the nation. All this time submarines continued to pass Dover with entire immunity, and the passage saved a Flanders boat 8.3 days in the double journey to the West of the Channel out of its cruising period of 14 days. In the latter part of 1917 the Flanders boats were contributing to the monthly losses some 20 ships sunk in the Channel, and as reports of the inefficiency of the barrage piled up side by side with the tale of ships sunk, the question became more and more acute.

In October, 1917, a mine net operation devised by the Plans Section had met with exceptional success and had resulted in the sinking of three large submarines,⁴ and the Plans Division, under Rear-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, was called upon to prepare a plan on the same lines to be carried out at Dover. This was submitted on October 20. Briefly, it proposed two lines of mine nets and a strong patrol in the passage N.E. of the Varne between Dungeness and the southern end of the Ridge, each line to be ten miles long and the two lines five miles apart. The nets were to be patrolled at night by two T.B.D.s and 20 trawlers, the destroyers using their searchlights and sweeping with them. It was hoped that this would not only force submarines to dive but get them into the habit of diving, and by dissuading them from

¹ "Dover Patrol," i. 228, also Cap. IX.

² It seems a question for consideration whether any such project should not be regarded as a special operation with a separate command and staff of its own.

³ Cf. "Dover Patrol," i. 228.

⁴ *U.50, U.66, U.106* by H.S. Operation, October, 1917. The operation was based on a careful observation of the mean track of submarines up the North Sea and simply consisted of strong patrols and mine nets forcing submarines down into a deep minefield.

using the passage north of the Varne, drive them into the passage between Cape Gris Nez and the Varne where the deep minefield was shortly to be laid. So that even if no submarine were caught by the mine nets and patrols, still a final advantage would accrue. The nets were all ready for laying and an officer was despatched to confer with Dover on October 27. The Vice-Admiral did not, however, concur in it. He was of opinion that it might lead to aircraft observation and betray the laying of the deep minefield, and it was not carried out.

5. Channel Barrage Committee's Report.—Two opinions as to the best form of barrage were now beginning to crystallise. On the one side the Plans Division of the Admiralty were in favour of a deep minefield powerfully illuminated and strongly patrolled; it did not believe in the mine net barrage and thought it quite useless. The Dover Command acquiesced in the deep minefield, but was opposed to illumination until bulged vessels could be provided for the purpose (a matter of a couple of months). The Vice-Admiral was not in favour of an intensive patrol and wished to maintain the old mine net barrage. On November 8, 1917, he forwarded a report on the state of the latter, in which he explained its utility and pointed out that "the barrage altered its nature to meet requirements," and was "always in a state of improvement and modification to meet altering conditions," that "it was of great value in the defence of the Channel," and that "the Belgian coast and North Goodwin barrages had done excellent work," and he had every confidence that "as the barrages were strengthened and improved they would limit more and more submarine and destroyer activity."¹

These views were not held by the Naval Staff, where the opinion was hardening that the mine net barrage was utterly ineffective.² This divergency of opinion led to the appointment of a strong Channel Barrage Committee³ on November 13 to consider the subject and report within a fortnight. Its interim report, signed by all its members, was ready on November 29.⁴ It pronounced the mine net barrier completely ineffective.⁵ The Committee suggested the extension of the Varne to Gris Nez

¹ M. 015042/1917. Appendix No. 3.

² On the grounds of the Tracker's reports from the Submarine Movements Section of the I.D., directionals, information from prisoners, and C.B. 01370, OXO.

³ Chairman Rear-Admiral Roger Keyes, Director of Plans Division, Captain C. M. Fuller (Operations), Colonel Gibbs (Engineering and Organisation), Captain Learmonth (Nets), Captain Litchfield-Speers (Mines), and Mr. W. McLellan (Engineering).

⁴ Report of Channel Barrage Committee, November 29, 1917.

⁵ A conservative estimate furnished by the N.I.D. showed that 253 passages had been made by submarines through the Straits in 1917. The submarines destroyed in the Dover Area in 1917 were *U.C. 46* (February 8, 1917, H.M.S. *Liberty*), *U.C. 26* (May 9, 1917, H.M.S. *Milne*), *U.C. 61* (stranded Gris Nez, July 26, 1917), *U. 48* (November 24, 1917, stranded Goodwins), none of which could be attributed directly or indirectly to the mine nets.

deep minefield, which was being laid at the time, and was in favour of a proposal recently made by Vice-Admiral Bacon to lay a shallow minefield between Gris Nez and the Varne. It also advocated strongly the intermittent illumination of the deep minefield by means of searchlights and flares from an adequate number of British patrol craft. It was opposed to laying the parallel line of buoys with a surface obstruction as suggested by the Vice-Admiral, Dover.

On November 23, while the Barrage Committee was sitting, Admiral Bacon amplified his suggestions into the following form:—

- (a) Extend the present deep minefield from the French to the English coast.
- (b) Lay a double line of shallow mines 8 ft. below L.W.O.S. from one mile S.E. of Folkestone Gate to two miles N.W. of Gris Nez (*i.e.*, practically right across the Channel), flanking the N.E. limits of the deep minefield.
- (c) Provide three searchlights each at Folkestone and Gris Nez—one fixed beam and two wandering beams.
- (d) Provide three shallow draught small vessels with bulges to be moored in the Straits, each with four searchlights, two 12-pdr. or 4-in. guns and two 8-in. howitzers.¹

The Barrage Committee agreed with the suggestion of a shallow minefield,² but the provision of bulged searchlight vessels would take at least two months, and the Admiralty felt that some other means must be adopted in the meantime. Accordingly, on December 5 instructions were sent to Dover that, pending the provision of searchlights operated from Gris Nez and Folkestone and of moored light vessels, the deep minefields were to be intermittently illuminated by means of searchlights and flares from patrol craft. The proposal to lay shallow mines had been abandoned, but an extra line of mines 30 ft. deep (instead of 8 ft.) was to be added from Folkestone to Gris Nez.³

On December 7 Dover was again asked to state what steps had been taken to patrol and illuminate the minefields, which was regarded as of great importance.⁴ In reply it was stated that by December 12 the minefield would be sufficiently extended to warrant the use of searchlights, but that this would require care to avoid their being torpedoed. In the meantime, while the weather permitted, 15 drifters were stationed from the South Goodwins to the N.E. Varne and from Colbart to Gris Nez with motor launches and destroyers.⁵

¹ V.-A., Dover, November 23, 1917, 3781/C/106/M.

² Traffic had now become thoroughly habituated to passing only by what was called the Folkestone Gate, and the provision of a shallow minefield across the Channel presented little danger to it.

³ M. 00252/17.

⁴ Admiralty telegram No. 412 of December 7, 1917.

⁵ V.-A., Dover, to Admiralty telegram No. 455 of December 7, 1917.

On December 8 the Vice-Admiral, Dover, sent a further letter stating that for the present he thought it better not to use searchlights but to try and make submarines dive between Gris Nez and Le Colbart by the sight of patrol vessels. The use of searchlights would be tried after the 12th. The danger of destroyer raids must not be overlooked, and the matter was one requiring much thought.¹

The minelayers had been at work since November 21. Two lines were down from Gris Nez to Le Colbart and two lines from the Varne to Le Colbart, and the whole was expected to be completed by December 12.² Meanwhile the question of stopping submarines was growing more acute, and had become the crucial question of the hour.

In the first week of December, 11 ships were sunk in the Channel, and on December 9 a telegram was sent to Dover urging the Vice-Admiral to put in force that very night arrangements to try and prevent the daily passage of submarines. This was followed by a letter on December 14³ pointing out that information showed that between November 1 and December 9 35 submarines had passed the Straits, and that it was essential that the attention of the Dover Force must be mainly directed to anti-submarine measures and to provide the strong patrols necessary for the purpose. The Belgian coast barrage patrol, and, if necessary, the Goodwins-Dunkirk, must be discontinued. Patrol craft were to be provided in sufficient numbers in the vicinity of the deep minefields to force enemy submarines to dive. The area was to be densely patrolled and "P" boats were to use their searchlights and drifters to use flares.⁴

To this the Vice-Admiral replied in a long letter on the 15th making various suggestions and asking for the acceleration of moorings, and also stating that he did not think it advisable to use flares. He concluded the letter by stating that the whole matter was one of compromise and difficulty and must be run on practical experience and not on preconceived notions.⁵

However, a stronger patrol was instituted, and the result was evident on December 19, when the minefield took its first toll in *U.B.56*.

6. Fresh Methods Adopted.—On January 1, 1918, Rear-Admiral Roger Keyes was appointed to the command of Dover and instituted an intensive day and night patrol in conjunction with a strong illumination of the minefield. This exposed the Straits to a raid, but so long as the minefield was efficient

¹ V.-A., Dover, to Admiralty, December 8, 1917.

² Minefields Z24, Z25, Z26, Plan V.

³ Admiralty to V.-A., Dover, telegram No. 434 of December 9, 1917, and letter M. 00262/17, December 14, 1917. Appendices Nos. 9 and 10.

⁴ M. 00262/17.

⁵ The letter is given in "Dover Patrol," ii. 406-9.

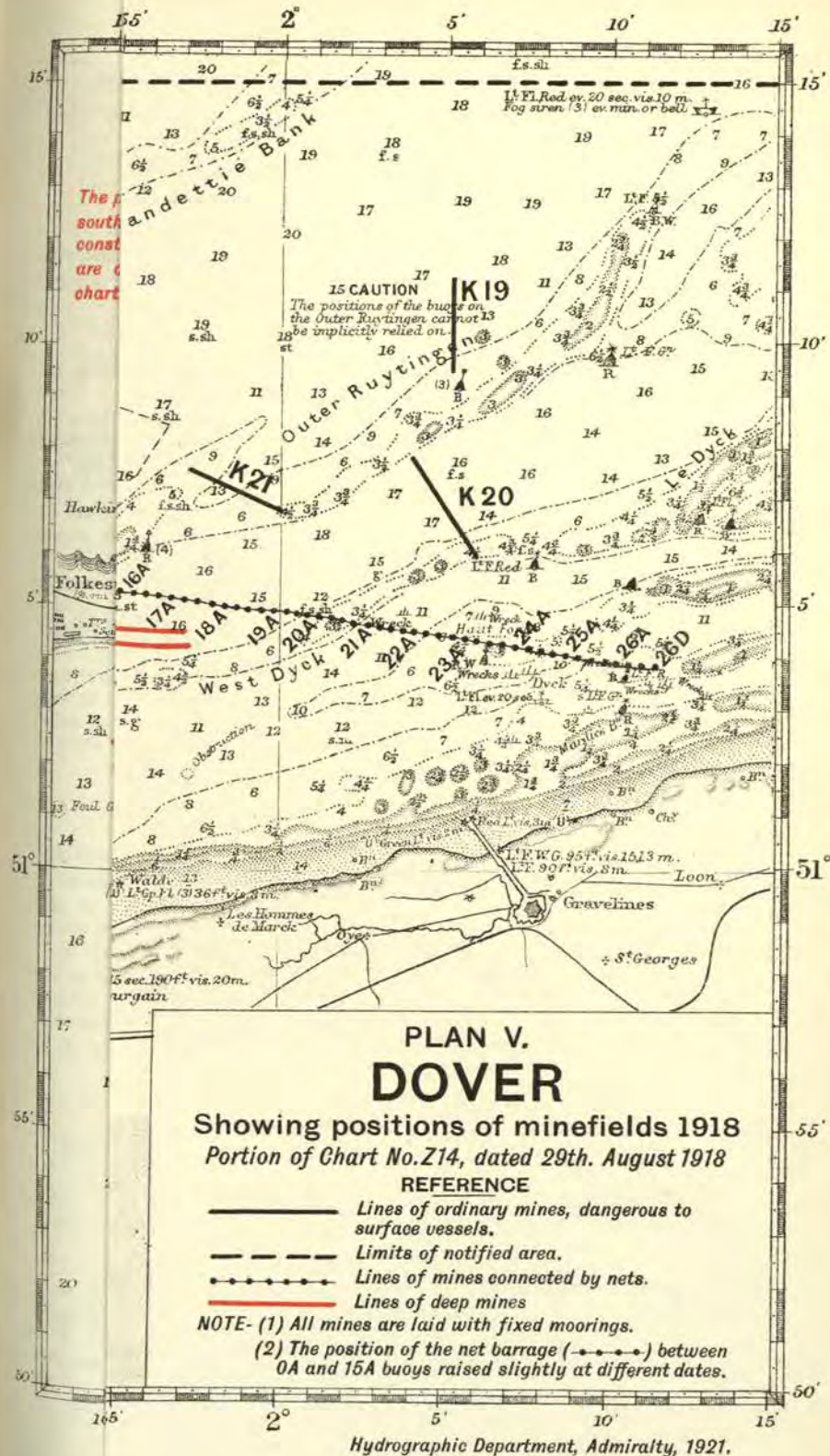
the risk had to be accepted in order to attain the primary object of closing the Straits. That it was efficient was quickly proved. In four months 7 submarines were destroyed in the area.¹

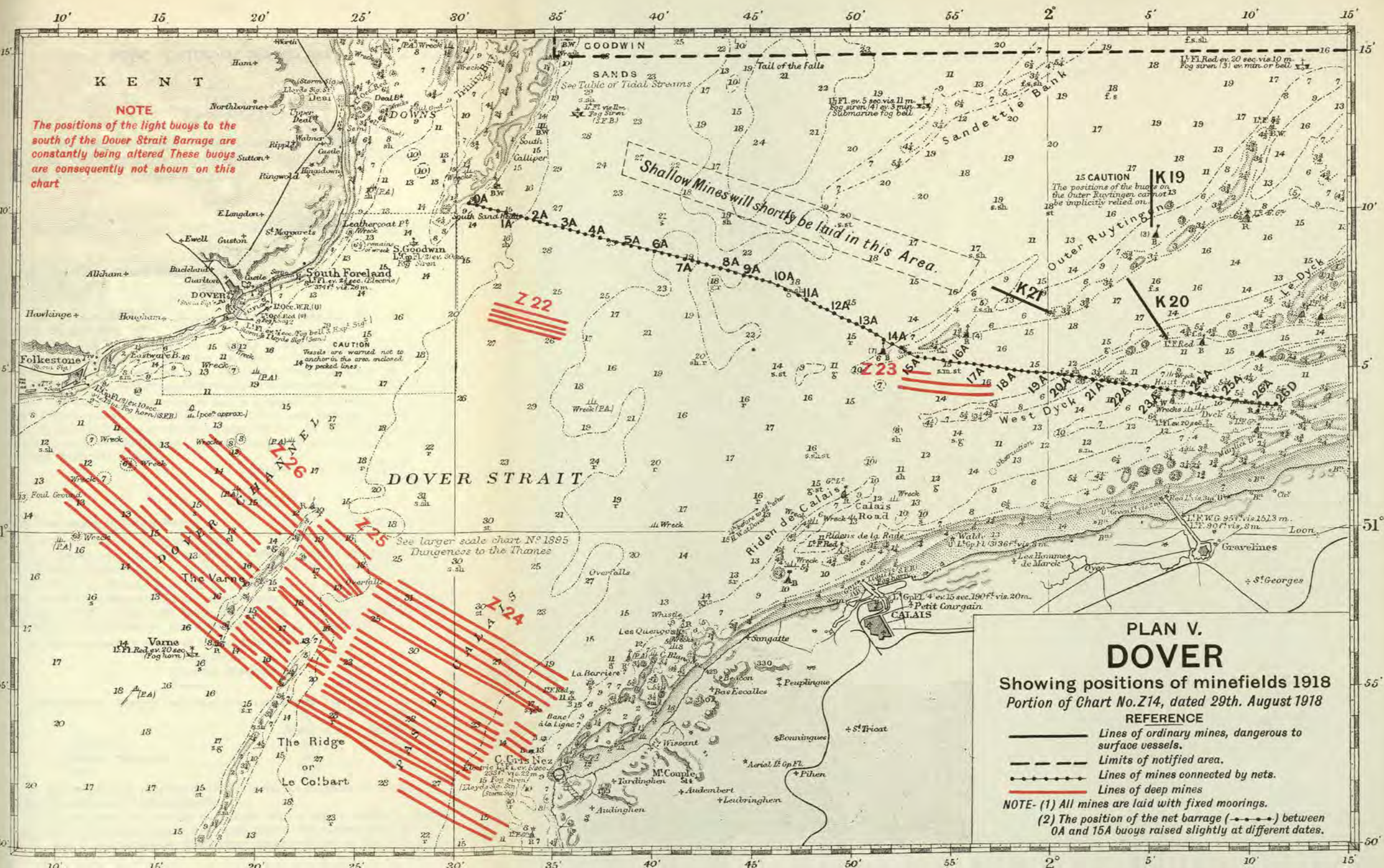
In February the Bight boats took fright and ceased to use the Straits. In April the Flanders boats began to follow suit and their activity was enormously reduced, the blocking of Zeebrugge contributing to this result. The losses in the Channel were reduced to six a month, and the minefields laid by Flanders boats fell from 404 in 1917 to 64 in 1918, or from a monthly average of 33.6 to a monthly average of 6.4.

The problem of the barrage had been solved and it continued to develop. The use of "loop" mines was extended, and two large concrete islands were under construction at Shoreham for this purpose when the war came to an end.

The history of the Dover Barrage contains some of the most useful lessons of the war. The solution of the strategical problem in that area lay in the mine, and the whole of our strategy was cramped by technical disabilities in this direction. It remains a conspicuous instance of the influence of a technical question on strategy. It will also remain a standard instance of the influence of military operations in a Naval Command. There was a constant pull at Dover towards Flanders. Rear-Admiral Hood had felt it in the case of the bombardments and had endeavoured to set limitations to it; Vice-Admiral Bacon endeavoured to encompass it; and it is not too much to say that it absorbed too much of the attention of the Dover Command, and for over a year a barrage remained stretched across the Straits that was for all practical purposes useless in effecting a purpose which was for Great Britain and the Allies a matter of life and death.

¹U.B. 35, January 26, 1918; U. 109, January 26, 1918; U.C. 50, February 4, 1918; U.B. 38, February 8, 1918; U.B. 58, February 10, 1918; U.B. 33, April 11, 1918; U.B. 55, April 22, 1918; also U.B. 31, May 2, 1918; U.C. 78, May 2, 1918; U.C. 64, June 20, 1918; U.C. 77, July 10, 1918; U.B. 109, August 29, 1918, and U.B. 103, September 16, 1918.





**PLAN V.
DOVER**

Showing positions of minefields 1918
Portion of Chart No. Z14, dated 29th. August 1918

- REFERENCE**
- Lines of ordinary mines, dangerous to surface vessels.
 - - - Limits of notified area.
 - Lines of mines connected by nets.
 - Lines of deep mines

NOTE- (1) All mines are laid with fixed moorings.
(2) The position of the net barrage (•••••) between 0A and 15A buoys raised slightly at different dates.

THE DOVER BARRAGE.

APPENDIX.

Correspondence and Telegrams between Admiralty and Vice-Admiral, Dover, relative to passage of Straits of Dover by German submarines, July-December, 1917.

No. 1. PROPOSALS FOR LAYING DEEP MINES OFF GRIS NEZ.

SECRET.

From The Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol.
To The Secretary of the Admiralty.
July 7, 1917. No. 2133/C/105/M.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward herewith proposals for laying deep mines off Gris Nez.

2. The spot is chosen as it is across a natural deep water run for submarine boats if they pass the barrage. I have kept a more or less constant patrol between the N.E. end of the ridge and Gris Nez for the last three months, so that an increase in patrol here would not be noticeable.

3. The number of mines to be laid is a matter of expediency, but four depths are required, viz., 125 ft., 100 ft., 75 ft., and 50 ft. in the 30-fathom portion and three lines in the 20-fathom depth. As the mines will be laid 50 to the mile, or 125 ft. apart, it is advisable to have, if possible, two sets or even three sets of lines.

(Signed) R. H. BACON,
Vice-Admiral.

No. 2. SECRET.

The Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol. October 8, 1917.

With reference to your submission of July 7 last, No. 2133/C/106/M, I am to inform you that it is proposed to lay a minefield off Cape Gris Nez on the lines proposed by you, to commence about the middle of November.

2. The type of mine that will be used is the H4 with Mark XI sinker, but in order to ensure obtaining the necessary numbers in time a certain number of H2* mines with Mark XII sinkers may have to be included. A total of 4,500 mines for this minefield has been arranged for.

3. The minelayers that will be available are :—

Amphitrite.
Princess Margaret.
Paris.

The numbers of mines each ship can carry are as follows :—

	H4	H2*
	Mark XI.	Mark XII.
<i>Amphitrite</i>	450	375
<i>Princess Margaret</i>	563	420
<i>Paris</i>	109	79

4. The minelayers employed will be based for supplies on Portsmouth, where the mines are being collected.

5. It was hoped to provide the mines with a safety switch to render them safe, if from any cause they were nearer the surface than 48 ft. to 60 ft., but it is improbable that many mines will be so fitted in time ;

orders have been given that as many safety switches as possible are to be provided. No mines fitted with a safety switch should be moored shallower than 60 ft. from the surface.

6. I am to request that you will submit for Their Lordships' approval a detailed plan for this field, stating which of the above minelayers you would propose should be detailed for the operation.

7. I am to observe that at a later date it may be practicable to reinforce this field with a combination of H mines and "A type" destructors.

BY COMMAND OF THEIR LORDSHIPS.

No. 3.

From Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol.

To The Secretary of the Admiralty.

November 8, 1917. No. 3614/081.

Herewith the plan asked for,¹ together with explanatory notes by the Captain of the Drifter Patrol, and the dates of repairs, in compliance with A.L.M. 014234 of 30th ultimo.

2. The whole of the single line barrage has been laid for some time and now the laying of the intermediate buoys is in progress and continues daily when the weather permits; this, as will be seen, has reached No. 3B buoy.

3. A short history of the barrage will indicate best its progress. In its early life great trouble was experienced with the buoys dragging; this was overcome, but considerable labour and experiments were necessary. Originally it extended only to the Ruytingen, but evidence accumulated that the destroyers passed east of the barrage on some of the raids last winter, and that submarines frequently did so.

(b) Experience with the west half showed that the maintenance of the east half would be comparatively simple; it was therefore continued up to the Snouw Bank. A deep minefield was laid to catch boats diving under.

(c) The evidence of the prisoners in the raid where the *Swift* and *Broke* were engaged showed that the destroyers passed to the west, and that submarines did so also, so a wing net was thrown up the side of the Goodwins. As the mining on the French coast continued, similar wing nets were thrown out by the Snouw Bank.

(d) The deep mines were found to be dragging into the nets, endangering the drifters. The barrage had, therefore, to be lifted and the mines swept up. The whole western portion was relaid to the south-west of its old position to clear any mines that may have been left.

(e) Evidence was obtained that submarine boats probably passed over the nets, hence provision was made to double the number of buoys to reduce the sag of the nets and also to take off half the strain of the drag off the present buoys and moorings, and, further, to lay a second parallel line of buoys 500 yds. apart. In the meantime the charges were lifted near the top of the nets. The barrage was also extended right on to the Goodwins.

(f) After the submarine fouled the nets on September 27, the boats probably took again to diving, and evidence was obtained that they did this at a depth of about 20 fathoms. The barrage is now being altered so that alternate fleets of nets have a 30-ft. net with its centre at 100 ft. This, in a tideway, should catch such boats.

4. It will therefore be seen that the barrage alters in nature to suit requirements, and the fact that the manner of passing has been varied by the submarines shows that reasons have arisen for that variation, and in all probability vessels have had bad experiences.

¹ i.e., a plan of the mine net barrage.

5. The questions in Admiralty Letter M. 014234 are difficult to answer precisely, as the barrage is always in a state of improvement and modification to suit altering conditions and methods of avoidance on the part of the enemy.

6. The whole single barrage is laid from the Goodwins to the Snouw Bank.

7. The buoys are being duplicated to add flotation and support.

8. The double line has been commenced experimentally, but the doubling of the buoys must be completed before the second parallel line of barrage is laid; at all events it must be doubled as far as the Ruytingen.

9. As regards experiments in laying the double line which recommend its completion, there is one outstanding experiment, viz., that the present barrage with 60 ft. nets stands the sea and tide, hence a horizontal obstruction, which only need be a 20-ft. net, can be floated and maintained with experience.

10. The net result of the main barrage is that since its extension on to the Snouw Bank, mining on the north coast of France has fallen almost to nil, instead of being one of the worst mined places, and destroyers have never ventured to cross into the channel.

11. Several suspicious cases of loss of submarines have occurred, although none sufficiently definite to claim owing to depth of water and strong tide. I look on this obstruction,¹ when completed, as of great value to the defence of the channel.

12. As to the extent of the nets of the barrage in actual first-class condition, I cannot form an estimate any more than the Germans, but I would be sorry for any of my destroyers to attempt to cross it at night.

13. The barrages on the Belgian Coast and North Goodwins are also shown; these have done excellent work. The result of these barrages is now being felt, and I have every confidence that as they are strengthened and improved they will limit, more and more, submarine and destroyer activity.

14. A close study of the figures showing the work done will indicate to the Board the hard work of the Drifter Patrol and his boats during the last eighteen months. The whole has been laid and kept in order with the resources of the patrol, with the assistance of a Trinity House steamer.

15. It is requested that the enclosed print may be traced, and sun-printed, and six copies supplied for my use.

(Signed) R. H. BACON,
Vice-Admiral.

No. 4. SECRET.

From The Vice-Admiral, Dover.

To The Secretary of the Admiralty.

November 23, 1917. No. 3781/C/106/M.

Herewith a proposal to extend the present deep minefield off Gris Nez to deny passage to enemy submarines.

Deep minefields fail usually from three causes:—

1. The shallow mines have to be sufficiently deep to pass deep draught ships, hence submarines can pass over them when diving.

2. Routes passing over the line cannot be swept and so cleared of enemy mines. It is usual therefore to leave such routes free of deep mines which in turn leaves gaps in the defence.

3. Difficulty in ensuring submarines diving and not passing over the field on the surface.

¹ i.e., the Goodwin-Snow barrage.

In the present proposal these are guarded against in the following way :—

1. For nearly three years passage to merchant vessels has been denied between Folkestone and Gris Nez except by two routes—one through Folkestone Gate, the other within $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile of Gris Nez. It is therefore safe to lay mines within 8 ft. of Low Water Ordinary Springs across the remainder of the area.

2. If searchlights are provided at the points where routes cross the deep minefield enemy submarines cannot lay mines at night on the surface, as the patrol vessels will prevent this and also surface laying. If they lay submerged they will run the chance of getting into our minefield. Hence these portions of the trade routes may be looked on as immune from minelaying and need not be swept.

3. If continuous beams are kept up across the channel, combined with wandering beams and patrol vessels, submarines cannot pass on the surface without attack and must therefore not pass, or must dive.

The general scheme therefore is :—

1. Extend the present deep minefield from the French to the English coast.

2. Lay a double line of mines 8 ft. below Low Water Ordinary Springs from 1 mile S.E. of Folkestone Gate to 2 miles N.W. of Gris Nez, flanking the N.E. limits of the deep minefield.

3. Provide three searchlights each at Folkestone and Gris Nez, one fixed beam, two wandering beams.

4. Provide three shallow draught small vessels with bulges and moor them on the principle of light ships to divide the distance across the Channel. Each to have four searchlights, two 12-pdr. or 4-in. guns and two 8-in. howitzers (short range).

The searchlights will be used as follows : each ship throws two fixed beams, one N.E. and one S.W., to meet those of the next ship. The other two searchlights sweep the N.E. and S.W. segments.

These should show up and follow any enemy boats for the patrol boats to hunt and force under water. The searchlights should show up to the patrol boats all submarines which are on the surface up to a distance of three miles from the source of light.

The 12-pdrs. or 4-in. guns are for the protection of the light ships in daytime. The 8-in. howitzers with time fuse shells (H.E.) are for the protection from bombing at night.

These ships should have bulges—it is always of much importance to frustrate a first attack on the part of the enemy—a first success means repeated attempts, a frustrated one will probably not be persevered in.

Four ships if available would be better than three.

The patrol vessels will vary their patrol to keep clear of the shallow mines at low water.

They should, however, be able to pass over them at all tides except in a sea.

(Signed) R. H. BACON,
Vice-Admiral.

No. 5. SECRET.

The Vice-Admiral, Dover.

December 5, 1917.

With reference to your submission of the 23rd ult., No. 3781/C/106/M, and in continuation of Admiralty telegram 359 of the 3rd instant, I am to observe that, as the deep mines are not fitted with switches, it will be very necessary to ascertain with certainty what danger there is

of their dragging their moorings. You should therefore ascertain by sweeping about one mile each side of the minefield, or nearer if possible, whether any of the mines have dragged.

2. Deep mines near Folkestone and Cape Gris Nez, over which the traffic passes, should not be less than 50 ft. deep.

3. Pending the provision of searchlights operated from Folkestone and Cape Gris Nez and from moored light vessels, which is being arranged, the deep minefields should be intermittently illuminated by means of searchlights and flares from an adequate number of patrol craft.

4. In view of the proposed arrangements for lighting the area and of the possible laying of the surface obstruction, it is not considered necessary to lay shallow mines, but that in order to increase the depth of the mine barrage a line of mines 30 ft. deep should be added between a position one mile S.E. of the Southern Folkestone Gate lightship and a position three miles from Cape Gris Nez.

6. The question of marking the minefield by buoys will be subsequently considered.

— BY COMMAND OF THEIR LORDSHIPS.

No. 6. TELEGRAM.

From Admiralty.
To V.-A., Dover.

No. 412.
December 7, 1917.

412. Referring to A.L. Secret of December 5, M. 00252, what steps do you propose to take *re* illumination and patrolling of deep minefields to which great importance is attached ?

No. 7. TELEGRAM.

From Admiral, Dover.
To Admiralty.

No. 455.
December 7, 1917.
Received 9.29 p.m.

455. Your 412. The urgent matter is to get lights at Cape Gris Nez and Folkestone so that I can mine traffic route, *vide* my letter 3904/C/106/M, December 2. By December 12 the minefield will be sufficiently extended to warrant the use of searchlights from patrol boats, but this will require great care in order not to run the risk of their being torpedoed. In the meanwhile, when weather permits, I line with 15 drifters from South Goodwin L.V. to North-East Varne and Colbart Light Vessel to Cape Gris Nez to tideward of the minefield with motor launches or destroyers, the former to shepherd the boats to eastward and the latter to make them dive. I am most anxious not to use searchlights from destroyers longer than necessary as in a week or two they will be stalked and torpedoed. I will write more fully on this to-morrow, Saturday.

No. 8. MOST SECRET.

From The Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol.
To The Secretary of the Admiralty.
December 8, 1917. No. 3960/C/106/M.

With reference to Admiralty letter M. 00252 of December 5, 1917, Admiralty telegram No. 412, and my reply No. 455, the matter stands as follows :—

2. By the 12th instant the minefield between 2 miles N.W. of Gris Nez and the Varne should be completed, and two lines laid between the Varne and 2 miles from Folkestone pier. At present only the Gris Nez to Colbart, and two lines from Varne to Colbart are completed.

3. For the moment I think it better not to use searchlights, but to try and make submarines dive between Gris Nez and Colbart by seeing patrol vessels.

This I try and do by posting drifters between N.E. Varne and South Goodwin and destroyers between Gris Nez and Varne, or this disposition reversed.

The Gris Nez-Varne boats keeping always to tideward of the minefield, as submarines try always to pass through with the tide.

4. I am most anxious to get the Gris Nez and Folkestone lights installed.

I wrote about the latter on December 6, 1917, and I submit immediate action be taken to borrow the portable light.

I asked Admiral Ronarc'h about a light at Gris Nez, and he has a wandering light which he will put up temporarily. As soon as these are in place I will mine close inshore.

5. The use of searchlights by patrol vessels will be tried after 12th instant, but I am strongly against this continuing too long, as I am convinced when the enemy tumble to what we are doing they will instruct their submarines to stalk the destroyers.

The use of an intermittent light is not really effective, as the submarines can lie nearly submerged till the light is extinguished and then make a dash.

The danger of destroyer raids must not be overlooked, and if on dark nights I keep destroyers spread out using searchlights intermittently, I shall incur the danger of having them attacked in detail, in the same manner that led to the loss of the *Flirt*.

The matter is one requiring much thought, and I am not prepared to give an opinion straight off as to the best method of giving effect to the proposals.

6. With reference to paragraph 3 of letter M. 00252, I trust that the proposals for a surface obstruction will be forwarded for my remarks before approval, as the combination of patrol vessels and surface obstruction in strong tides may lead to disasters.

7. As regards paragraph 4, it is noted that a 30-ft. double line should be laid.

8. As regards paragraph 1, I do not consider that there is the slightest chance of the mines dragging up hill. Sweeping our present transport route and the direct route to Calais will give early warning if mines are dragging along the deep channel.

9. I sincerely trust that paragraph 2 may be reconsidered. At high tide, say 16 ft. rise and mines 50 ft. deep, submarines can comfortably dive between the surface and the mines. Their normal depth is 8 to 10 fathoms, so that the defence will be useless at these places, and they can mine this portion of our trade route while submerged, which will be very dangerous as we cannot sweep. It will be far better to mine at 40 ft. and if necessary stop traffic in bad weather at dead low water springs.

(Signed) R. H. BACON,
Vice-Admiral.

No. 9. TELEGRAM.

To V.-A., Dover.

December 9, 1917.

434. Very heavy losses are taking place owing to submarines passing Dover Strait and arrangements should be put in force to-night to try and prevent submarines passing between Varne and Gris Nez on surface.

No. 10. MOST SECRET.

From Vice-Admiral, Dover Patrol.

To Secretary of the Admiralty.

December 9, 1917. No. 3971/C/106/M.

In continuation of my letter No. 3960/C/106/M of December 8, the best temporary arrangement I have been able to devise, and which I am putting into operation, is as follows:—

TWO PATROL BOATS to patrol, one from North-East Varne to No. 8 buoy, the other from North-East Varne S.S.E. towards Gris Nez. To exhibit their searchlights for five minutes every ten minutes and sweep tideward of the Folkestone-Gris Nez line.

ONE LINE OF DRIFTERS, parallel, and two miles to the South-West.

ONE DIVISION OF DESTROYERS cruising from No. 9 buoy on a North-North-Westerly—South-South-Easterly course.

2. By this means the destroyers do not exhibit lights, but cover the "P" boats and drifters. Drifters preserve their approximate stations by observing the searchlights, and are kept clear of the destroyers.

(Signed) R. H. BACON,
Vice-Admiral.

No. 11. MOST SECRET.

To the Vice-Admiral, Dover.

December 14, 1917. M. 00262.

With reference to your telegram No. 455 of the 7th instant, and letters of the 8th instant, No. 3960, and 9th instant, No. 3971, I am to inform you that enemy submarines are continuing to pass the Straits of Dover in very large numbers, and that information in the Admiralty shows that between November 1 and December 9 35 submarines certainly passed through the Straits, of which 21 have passed through since the deep minefield was laid, and it is more than probable that an additional 15 also made the passage.

2. The submarine menace is the greatest danger with which we are faced, and all other considerations must give way to combating this menace and to denying the Straits of Dover to the enemy's submarines, in addition to which it is of course of the first importance to destroy as many of them as is possible in the process.

3. In order to carry out this policy, it is essential that the attention of the Dover Force should for the present be mainly directed to anti-submarine measures, and to provide the strong patrols necessary for this purpose, the Belgian Coast barrage, and, if necessary, the Goodwin-Dunkirk barrage, must be discontinued.

4. Patrol craft are to be provided in sufficient numbers in the vicinity of the deep minefield to force every submarine that is attempting to pass to dive into the minefield, and a great number of drifters will be required, in conjunction with "P" boats and old destroyers, to effect this object. The dispositions mentioned by you in your submission of December 9 (3971/C/106/M) are not considered adequate for the purpose, and the number of vessels must be largely increased.

5. The use of a very large number of drifters and "P" boats or old destroyers in the vicinity of the deep minefield will necessitate a strong destroyer to safeguard them against attack by the enemy's destroyers based on Zeebrugge, and pending the provision of the proposed boom

vessels, fitted with searchlights, it is considered necessary for the "P" boats and destroyers to use their searchlights intermittently, the drifters using flares.

6. The information obtained from captured documents shows quite distinctly that the area must be very densely patrolled in order to ensure forcing the submarines under, as without a dense patrol the submarine on the surface sights the patrol vessel before being sighted herself and merely alters course.

7. Their Lordships desire that the arrangements indicated above should be put into force at the earliest possible moment, and I am to request that you will forward your scheme of patrol to the Admiralty at a very early date, reporting at the same time to what extent it will be necessary to abandon the existing barrages. It is recognised that the discontinuance of the Belgian Coast barrage may lead to increased activity of minelaying submarines off the East Coast.

BY COMMAND OF THEIR LORDSHIPS.

HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS ISSUED.

1. Operations leading up to the Battle of Coronel.
2. The German Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific.
3. Operations leading to the Battle of the Falklands.
4. Escape of *Goeben* and *Breslau*.
5. Cameroons, 1914.
6. Passage of British Expeditionary Force.
7. Patrol Flotillas to November, 1914.
8. The Scarborough Raid, December, 1914.
9. The White Sea Station.
10. East Africa to July, 1915.
11. The Action of Heligoland Bight.
12. The Action of the Dogger Bank.
13. Summary of Grand Fleet Operations, 1914-1916.
14. The First Australian Convoy.
15. Mesopotamia to the Fall of Kut.
16. The China Squadron and *Emden* Hunt.
17. The East Indies Squadron, 1914.
18. The Dover Command, Vol. I.
19. 10th Cruiser Squadron, 1914-16.
20. The Cape of Good Hope Squadron, 1914. (In preparation.)
21. Home Waters, August, 1914. (In preparation.)
22. Mediterranean, 1914-15. (In preparation.)
23. The Atlantic, 1914. (In preparation.)

TRAINING & STAFF DUTIES DIVISION,
NAVAL STAFF,
October, 1921.

Printed by H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE PRESS, HATFOW.

CONFIDENTIAL. Copy No 2.

Attention is drawn to the Penalties attaching to any infraction of the Official Secrets Act.

~~C.B. 935.~~

OU 5473

THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON

during the

COMMAND OF ADMIRAL DE CHAIR.

1914-1916.

(Short Title:—"TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON I.")

Monograph No. 19.

NAVAL STAFF,
TRAINING AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION,
September, 1921.

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NOTE.

To ensure accuracy and completeness in the Historical Monographs, officers who were concerned in the matters described and who detect obscure points which they can elucidate, or statements which require correction, are requested to furnish Additions and Amendments. It should be borne in mind that these Historical Monographs are based entirely on official documents, and no amendment which is not substantiated by such documents can be accepted. Remarks should be addressed to the Director of Training and Staff Duties, Admiralty, S.W.1.

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THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON
during the
COMMAND OF ADMIRAL DE CHAIR.
1914—1916.

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THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON
during the
COMMAND OF ADMIRAL DE CHAIR.

INTRODUCTION.

This monograph is intended to give an idea of the personal side of the work of the Northern Patrol. The technical, statistical, and legal aspects of the operations of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron are dealt with elsewhere. The actual blockade of Germany was the result of the efforts of almost every branch of the public service. In this volume will be found only a description of the operations of the officers and men of the Northern Patrol. Mr. Carless Davis, late of the Foreign Office, has in preparation a confidential History of the Blockade, which will show the part played by that Office in the reduction of Germany's resistance. Lieutenant Arnold-Forster, late R.N.V.R., has written a monograph, "The Economic Blockade," issued as C.B. 1554, which gives in short form most of the results of the measures taken.

As the Admiralty Records have not yet been arranged beyond 1916, it was necessary to find some point at which to conclude the present monograph; and a convenient full stop appeared to be the moment when Admiral de Chair left the Squadron to take up the newly-created appointment of Naval Adviser to the Minister of Blockade. With his departure the present monograph comes to an end. The last years of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron will form the subject of another paper at some later date when the material is more readily available.

NOTE ON SOURCES.

H.S. 185 and 259 give the Reports of Proceedings of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron to the end of 1916. They have been the chief source of information, and are the authorities for all statements where no foot-note reference is given. They form a continuous diary, except that there is generally a gap when the flagship was in harbour.

H.S. 50-82 contain Home Waters telegrams for 1914 arranged in chronological order. They have been the chief sources for the accounts of events in the first three chapters.

H.S.A series

G.F.S.P. The Grand Fleet Secret Packs. These are the records of the Commander-in-Chief's Office, which deal principally with operations. They have been bound by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and are temporarily in the custody of that Section.

G.F.N. Grand Fleet Narrative. This is a daily diary of the operations of the Grand Fleet sent in by the Commander-in-Chief.

Large numbers of unbound Admiralty papers have been examined. They deal mostly with particular episodes or suggestions, and when used have been quoted by their Record Office title or Registry number.

I.D. Historical Section papers. In the account of the *Alcantara-Greif* action reference is made to this collection, which consists of the war records of the Intelligence Division of the Naval Staff.

The German Official History. *Der Krieg zur See. Nordsee, Band I.*—This covers only the North Sea up to the end of August, 1914. It has been used in preparing the first two chapters.

Gayer : *Die deutschen U-Boote* gives a brief and apparently truthful account of the operations of German submarines.

THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORK OF THE "EDGARS."

1. In the distribution of the Fleet for the initial stages of the war with Germany, as laid down in the War Plan, the Northern exit of the North Sea was to be watched by a Squadron designated "Cruiser Force B," or the "Northern Patrol Force." The function of this force, as defined in its War Orders,¹ was to intercept German merchant vessels, to stop neutrals proceeding to German ports with contraband,² to take or destroy any men-of-war or armed merchant vessels passing in or out of the North Sea, and to deny the anchorage in the Shetlands to the enemy. A subsidiary function was the gaining of intelligence from passing vessels. The principal coaling base for the squadron was to be Scapa Flow, to which place captured vessels were to be sent. Between the Northern Patrol and the enemy bases would be the Grand Fleet, which, by the War Plans, was to operate normally from Rosyth³; the Commander-in-Chief, in cases of over-riding necessity, might call on Cruiser Force B for certain particular services, but as soon as these were performed the force was to return to its stations. In general, it was to work independently of the Commander-in-Chief.

The area in which the Northern Patrol was to operate was not strictly defined by latitude and longitude, but it was to be between the Shetlands and Norway to the East and between the Shetlands and the coast of Scotland to the Southward. The passage between the Shetlands and Orkneys is some 40 miles wide, while from the Shetlands to the nearest point of Norway in latitude 61° N. is about 150 miles. The coast of Norway is so fringed with islands that vessels seeking to avoid capture can utilise territorial waters for several hundreds of miles. In latitude 62° N., however, vessels making their way either North or South along the Norwegian shore must emerge from territorial waters and the War Orders of Cruiser Force B specially indicated this

¹ Appendix A.

² "The possibility that our enemy would . . . make use of Scandinavian ports had not been fully considered. We had expected that the expense of sending goods to Germany by this circuitous route, and the inadequacy of the transport services between Scandinavia and Germany, would confine the traffic within narrow limits." Carless Davis, *History of the Blockade*, p. 4.

³ See Monograph 6, *Naval Movements, August, 1914*. C.B. 1537, p. 60, line 5.

position as a fruitful one to patrol. On the outbreak of war the Force was to proceed to sea in two divisions, one of which was to cruise from the Orkneys to the North of the Shetlands, while the other was to go straight across to Norway and patrol near the shore between $61\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N. and $62\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N.

2. The ships detailed for the Northern Patrol were the *Edgars*, the oldest cruisers in our list. These eight vessels, built in 1893-94 under the Naval Defence Act of 1889, had all undergone an extensive refit and rearmament, except the *Royal Arthur*. The eight ships—*Edgar*, *Royal Arthur*, *Hawke*, *Endymion*, *Grafton*, *Crescent*, *Gibraltar*, and *Theseus*—were of 7,350 to 7,000 tons, carried either two 9·2-in. and ten 6-in. or one 9·2-in. and twelve 6-in., and could get a speed at sea of 17 knots. To the squadron was attached the *Dryad*, a first-class gunboat. The *Edgars* were on a Third Fleet basis, but as they were employed as a boys' training squadron they carried full nucleus crews and extra hands for the special training duties; they could not, however, be fully manned for war service until after the order to mobilize Naval Reserves had gone out. Thus they could not be expected to arrive on their stations till some days after the issue of the warning telegram.

3. As soon as war appeared to be inevitable, anxiety was felt lest the enemy should effect a landing in the Shetlands, and as early as July 28 four destroyers of the Eighth Flotilla with a light cruiser were ordered there.¹ The Army Council were particularly anxious that the military authorities in the Shetlands should organise combined defence arrangements in conjunction with the Navy, and on August 3 the *Forward* and four destroyers left Scapa for the islands. To add to the anxiety, intelligence was received on August 3 that three German transports full of troops had passed out of the Baltic two days previously. On learning this the Admiralty ordered the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleets, to take steps to frustrate any attempt on the Shetlands, and he accordingly sent off a squadron (*Antrim*, *Argyll*, *Devonshire*, *Cochrane*, and *Achilles*) under the R.A. Third Cruiser Squadron at full speed to the islands, supported by the battle-cruisers stationed South of Fair Island; and, although war had not yet been declared, the *Forward* was authorised to use force to prevent any landing in the Shetlands.²

4. In addition to the possible despatch of German transports there was reason to suppose that Germany would send out armed merchant cruisers to break out into the Atlantic, and in view of this menace the Admiralty, early on August 4, ordered the Commander-in-Chief to sail with the First Fleet to sweep as far as 100 miles from Norway. Accordingly, the whole Grand Fleet left Scapa between 8 and 8.30 a.m. on August 4 to execute a broad sweep towards Norway, returning to Scapa on the 7th. Intelligence from Christiania received on August 5 reported a

¹ H.S. 50, p. 139. ² H.S. 51, pp. 351, 497, 534, 586, 596, 659 and 690.

German base somewhere North of 62° N. This needed investigation; and with the Admiralty's permission the Commander-in-Chief withdrew the cruisers at the Shetlands and sent them across the North Sea to search the Norwegian coast between 60° and $62\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, to be followed by destroyers if they failed to discover the base. In the course of this sweep the cruisers approached within 20 miles of the coast near the Stavanger Fjord, but saw nothing of the supposed base. Throughout the opening weeks of the war our agents in Norway furnished a succession of reports concerning this supposed base, placing it sometimes in the Lofoten Islands, and sometimes to the southward; they also provided an imaginary submarine base in Stavanger Fjord, to find which the Third Cruiser Squadron and a destroyer flotilla carried out a search on the 11th. Naturally, these operations so close to their coasts offended the Norwegian Government, and the Commander-in-Chief suggested we should apologise to them and not repeat the searches, unless we had definite information of the presence of enemy ships. The rumours of the base at the Lofotens and of the submarines in Stavanger Fjord were both denied by Norwegian officers; and further stories emanating from the Russian Admiralty that five German cruisers were near the White Sea received no credence.¹

5. Meanwhile, quite unreported, a German merchant cruiser had succeeded in getting out and had started operations against commerce. The *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, a North German Lloyd liner of about 14,000 tons, had been armed and commissioned in the Elbe, and on August 4 at 7.30 p.m. received orders to proceed at once with the mission of raiding commerce in the Atlantic. Her course took her within sight of the Norwegian coast. When her captain considered he had cleared the line of British patrols he headed for Iceland, and passing round the Northern shores of the island at 7 p.m. on August 7 fell in with and captured the British steam trawler *Tubal Cain* about 50 miles off the Western promontory.²

Had the Northern Patrol Force been in position from August 5 onwards there is reason to suppose they might have met the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, though the German Staff appear to have formed the opinion that our blockading squadrons would be on the Peterhead-Ekersund line, and the raider at 6 p.m. on the 5th altered course for Iceland when in 61° N., 3° E.,³ before reaching the station of our patrol off Norway in 62° N. However, the circumstances of the case had precluded any possibility of the Squadron being in place when the *Kaiser Wilhelm* passed.⁴

¹ H.S. 51, pp. 665, 866; H.S. 52, pp. 350, 361, 388, 562, 622, 656, 671, 752, 806, 849; H.S. 53, pp. 437, 453, 490, 593, 664, 702, 724, 828, 859, 862;

² German Official History *Der Krieg zur See. Nordsee*, Vol. I., p. 65; also *Kreuzerjagd im Ocean*, translated in I.D. 1170.

³ *Der Krieg zur See, Karte 32.*

⁴ The *Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse* was sunk by the *Highflyer* on August 26, in the Rio de Oro, Spanish West Africa.

6. The eight *Edgars* detailed for the Northern Patrol were at the time of mobilisation in various ports; the *Crescent*, *Edgar*, and *Grafton* were at Portsmouth; the *Endymion*, *Theseus*, and *Gibraltar* at Devonport; the *Royal Arthur* at Chatham; and the *Hawke* at Queenstown refitting. Rear-Admiral Dudley de Chair, who had been selected to command the patrol was at the Admiralty, when at 2 p.m. on August 1 he received the order to mobilise. He proceeded at once to Portsmouth and hoisted his flag on board the *Crescent* as Rear-Admiral Commanding Tenth Cruiser Squadron. The next day the Naval Reserves were mobilised, and Admiral de Chair received his War Orders, by which his squadron became Cruiser Force B, and the *Dryad*¹ also came under his orders. As the result of extraordinary efforts, the *Crescent*, *Grafton*, and *Edgar* were ready by August 3, and Admiral de Chair proceeded at once, hoping to be joined at sea by the three ships from Devonport. In this he was disappointed, and he continued with the three Portsmouth ships up the Irish Channel. Off the Mull of Cantire they made their first capture, a small German steamer, *Wilhelm Behrens*, and continuing arrived at Scapa at 8.30 a.m., August 6. In the course of the afternoon the *Endymion* and *Theseus* came in; they had been diverted for a time to Falmouth to watch a German vessel there. The *Gibraltar* arrived at 6.30 p.m., having been delayed by capturing a German steamer, the *Marie Glaeser*, off the Isle of Man. As soon as the ships were coaled they proceeded by orders of the Commander-in-Chief to patrol between the Orkneys and Shetlands, and it was not till noon on August 8 that the *Edgar*, *Theseus*, and *Gibraltar* left that area to patrol off the Norwegian coast between 61½° and 62½° N. Thus, apart from the cruiser sweep in search of the reported German base, the Norwegian coast was free to German vessels running for home till about August 9, five days after the declaration of war.

Strangely enough, it seems that few, if any, prizes were missed. The German policy towards their own merchant marine was the opposite of ours; as early as July 31 German ships at sea were recalled to neutral ports, and in the early days of August vessels in the North Sea hurriedly put in to Norwegian harbours and lay up there. An analysis of the arrivals given in Lloyd's "Enemy Vessels in Neutral Ports" shows that no vessels passed that part of the Norwegian coast in 62° N. which had been specially indicated to Admiral de Chair; ships already north of the parallel ran for Trömso, Narvik, and Trondhjem, while those to the south of it put in to Bergen, Christiansand, and Sarpsburg. Most of these vessels were small steamers, but at Bergen was one of the largest of the North German Lloyd liners, the *Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm* of 17,000 tons and 17½ knots; she was on our list of vessels convertible into cruisers, and her presence there, combined with the usual crop of rumours with regard to her arming, drew a good deal of attention to Bergen.

¹ A gunboat which was used as Squadron Messenger.

7. It must not be supposed that the enemy had not foreseen our blockade measures. After a good deal of discussion, the German Staff had come to the conclusion that we should use our blockading squadron to maintain a line across the North Sea and Skagerrak, and that we should station our main force between it and the German Bight. The only point on which they were uncertain was the exact position of the blockade line; the conclusion they reached was that it would stretch between Peterhead and Ekersund. To make sure of this, they decided to make a complete sweep with ten submarines seven miles apart in line abreast as far as the Scapa-Bergen line; from there they were to turn back to the Scapa-Stavanger line. The flotilla started before dawn on August 6, and on the voyage out the submarines sighted nothing. On arrival at the northern limit the Senior Officer, Lieut.-Commander Spindler, decided, as he still had time, to send one boat further on as far as the Shetlands-Norway line. U.18 (von Henning) was selected, and during the night of August 8-9 got as far as 60° N., but she saw nothing, and having no time to wait had to return at once. It was not till dawn of August 9, when the flotilla was about midway between Scapa and Stavanger that they saw any British men-of-war, and here they came across the cruisers and destroyers of the Grand Fleet then at sea during the passage of the Expeditionary Force. The course of the German submarines seems to have taken them to the Eastward of the Grand Fleet, which was then cruising in 59° N. between 1° W. and 1° E.¹ They failed to do us any damage, and lost two boats—U.15 rammed by the *Birmingham*, and U.13, of whose fate nothing was then known. The result of the cruise did not give the enemy much information as to our methods of patrol; on the contrary, it confused them. Their fixed idea was that we should be permanently occupying a definite line of patrol; and as the only vessels which they could reasonably consider as fulfilling this function were the destroyers and light cruisers they had found in 58° N., they were led to the false conclusion that this must be the blockade line.²

The *Hawke* and *Royal Arthur* joined Admiral de Chair on August 10, and he thereupon organised his force into two divisions:—

First Division.	Second Division.
<i>Crescent</i> (Flag).	<i>Edgar</i> (Senior Officer).
<i>Grafton</i> .	<i>Royal Arthur</i> .
<i>Endymion</i> .	<i>Gibraltar</i> .
<i>Theseus</i> .	<i>Hawke</i> .

In general, the First Division took the Southern, or Shetland, end of the patrol, while the Second Division patrolled off Norway.

¹ Monograph 6, para. 26.

² This paragraph is based on the German Official History. *Der Krieg zur See. Nordsee I.*, pp. 72-78 and Karte 9.

8. By August 9 the Faeroe Islands became suspected as a German base, and on the 11th the *Drake* (Rear-Admiral W. L. Grant, Commanding Sixth Cruiser Squadron) was ordered there to investigate, the *Endymion* and *Gibraltar* being attached to him temporarily by the Commander-in-Chief. Nothing suspicious was found in the Faeroes; indeed, no German vessel other than trawlers had been to the islands for over two years, but the three cruisers patrolled between the Faeroes and Iceland for a time.¹ The Commander-in-Chief in removing the two cruisers from their war station had been influenced by the fact that there did not appear to be much work for the Northern Patrol Force to do. The outbreak of war had for the time completely paralysed the shipping trade all over the world, and it was some weeks before vessels of any nationality put to sea at all in any numbers²; in the North Sea no traffic seemed to be passing. In his next sweep into the North Sea, therefore, he called upon the Squadron to join him, and from August 15 to 17 the *Crescent*, *Grafton*, *Theseus*, and *Edgar* watched on the Eastern flank of the Fleet in case any enemy ships should come from the Skagerrak. The *Royal Arthur* and *Hawke* were at the time on the Norwegian patrol. At the conclusion of the sweep, which had been a very heavy strain on the engines of the Squadron, the division with Admiral de Chair went in to Lerwick to coal.³

9. Once again, a sweep by the Grand Fleet had synchronised with a German effort to find the blockade line. The German Admiralty had given up the idea of a search by submarines in line abreast on a northerly course; it required too many boats, and few could stand the long voyage. Accordingly, the scheme of operations was changed. Only two of the best boats—U.20 (Lieut.-Commander Droscher) and U.21 (Lieutenant Hersing)—were selected; they were to go straight up to Ekersund, and from there sweep across to Peterhead, and get as much information as they could. Besides her own Commanding Officer, U.20 had on board Lieut.-Commander Albert Gayer, Senior Officer of the half-flotilla. Off the Norwegian coast she sighted a cruiser and a destroyer at 4 a.m. on August 16, and again another destroyer at midday. She had to submerge, and did not reach the Ekersund-Peterhead line till 8.30 a.m. on August 17. There she sighted four black buoys, which she presumed to be navigation marks for our patrol vessels. At this point her engines and compass began to give trouble. At 11 a.m. she sighted another destroyer. Altogether, it seemed unlikely that she could manage the prescribed voyage, and Gayer decided to return to Heligoland; the presence of destroyers made him think we were carrying out systematic destroyer sweeps which would make long voyages difficult for submarines. Next morning, however, as the engines

¹ H.S. 53, pp. 177, 267, 292, 517, 807; H.S. 54, pp. 170, 201, 203, 283, 456a, 687.

² See Fayle: *Seaborne Trade*.

³ G.F.N., August, 1914.

were running well he tried once more to carry on with the operation, but was continually forced to dive, and finally abandoned it. U.21, on the other hand, was able to carry out the whole operation unmolested, though she sighted no men-of-war till off Kinnaird Head, where she arrived at 6 a.m., August 18. From there she made her way homeward. The reports from these two submarines led the German authorities to the conclusion that the blockade line did not, as had been presumed, run from Ekersund to Peterhead; but they threw little light on its real position. The failure of the submarines to gain positive information on this and other points, such as the base of the Grand Fleet, and the consequent assumption that objects worthy of attack were beyond reach brought about a definite decision to abandon submarine operations against the Grand Fleet for the time.¹

10. The submarine operation just concluded happened to be carried out at the very time when our blockading cruisers were absent from their station taking part in a Grand Fleet sweep. This diversion of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron from its position in the War Plan appeared undesirable to the Admiralty, who telegraphed:—

To Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleets.

500. It is considered important to continuously maintain the Northern Patrol to prevent ships getting in or out of the North Sea. Four armed merchant ships are being sent up as soon as ready to assist in making the Patrol more effective. The Patrol can spread in any direction you propose.

(Sent 0050, 18.8.14.)

In accordance with this, the Norwegian and Shetlands patrols were re-instituted. In the Norwegian patrol the eastern-most ship was to steam N. 33° E. (mag.) from the position in 61° 30' N., 4° 8' E., the other ships to be spread five miles apart on a line of bearing West (mag.) from the eastern ship. During darkness ships were to turn 16 points together at prearranged times so as to preserve the line of bearing. This appears to be the first time a patrol on a line of bearing was tried by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.² The ships of the Shetlands patrol, however, steamed in line ahead between Muckle Flugga and 61° 30' N., 3° E., where they met at intervals the vessels of the Norwegian section.

The first of the armed merchant cruisers, the *Alsatian*, joined the Squadron on August 18, and worked on the Shetlands Patrol for a week, after which she was temporarily attached to the *Drake* to maintain a patrol off Jaederens Point, Norway. Another armed merchant cruiser, the *Mantua*, arrived on the 24th, and patrolled along the sixtieth parallel. The third merchant cruiser, the *Oceanic*, joined on August 27.³

¹ *German Official History*, pp. 92 to 98.

² H.S. 185, p. 24. The best formation for a patrol against contraband has been the subject of much experiment; in the Northern Patrol, this line of bearing, or line-abreast, system was frequently used.

³ *Oceanic* was taken up from her owners on August 2, *Alsatian* and *Mantua* on August 4 (M.01267/14).

CHAPTER II.

THE "EDGARS" AS GRAND FLEET CRUISERS.

11. So far, the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had sighted no German ships on the Northern Patrol. From this the Commander-in-Chief judged that either German vessels passed them at night, or went up inside the fjords, or were not moving.¹ He felt that in the present position the force was not being fully utilised, and telegraphed on August 25:—

202. A more effective use could be made of the cruisers if the Tenth Cruiser Squadron came South to cover an area to Southward and Eastward of Kinnaird Head where they would not require support, freeing more powerful cruisers for offensive work further east and south. The watch off Kinnaird Head is necessary for covering movements of vessels to and from and in Scapa Flow and Cromarty Firth, and at present is performed by valuable cruisers. Armed merchant cruisers will be kept off Shetland Isles. Tenth Cruiser Squadron would join any large operation southward.

From this time onwards for several weeks the Tenth Cruiser Squadron became practically part of the Grand Fleet. On August 26 the Commander-in-Chief issued a new allocation of cruiser squadrons to areas and patrols; previously there had been five areas of patrol, of which area V. had extended between 120 and 200 miles from Rattray Head. This was now prolonged eastward to within ten miles of the Norwegian coast, and the Second and Third Cruiser Squadrons were told off to patrol it daily. In addition, a new area VI. was instituted; its base line ran from 20 to 130 miles N. 50° E. (true) of Buchan Ness, the area to extend 50 miles S. 40° E. (true) from the base. In this area the Tenth and Sixth Cruiser Squadrons were to work under R.A. Sixth Cruiser Squadron, who was to arrange that there should be always eight ships patrolling. The Norwegian part of the original Northern Patrol was abandoned; but the Shetlands end was to be taken by the armed merchant cruisers, and the Islands themselves were to be patrolled as before by the *Forward* and the four destroyers.² A further reason which weighed with the Commander-in-Chief was the desirability of preventing the enemy from mining the exits from the Grand Fleet base. The new patrol was instituted to "cover the area through which the minelayers proceeding to mine the vicinity of the Pentlands would pass a few hours before dark and after daylight," a necessity which immediately became apparent when, in the evening of August 26, minefields were discovered off the Tyne and Humber. Cruisers occupying the area were directed to be on the outer limit at 4 a.m. steaming towards Scapa Flow, and on the inner limit at 6 p.m. steaming to seaward, at other times cruising as necessary.³

¹ They were not moving. See Fayle: *Seaborne Trade*.

² H.F. 0022/5 of 26.8.14 in G.F.N.

³ Cruiser Force B. Report of Proceedings, 31.8.14, H.S. 185.

The *Edgars* worked in Area VI. till October, and during this period used Cromarty as base. Their duty was to intercept, board, and examine all trade; to protect Fleet bases against minelayers and submarines; to examine areas where floating mines or other suspicious objects had been reported; and to give notice of the approach of and to engage any enemy cruisers encountered. At the end of August the *Theseus* was detailed with a convoy of merchant ships bound for Archangel with coal and guns for Russia. The Russians from the first had been nervous about their trade to that port, and on August 26 had suggested that two cruisers should be detailed to protect the trade route between England and Archangel. We could not spare vessels for this purpose, but arranged for this one trip for political reasons, and as some sort of recognition of the work the Russian Baltic Fleet was doing in holding part of the German Fleet.¹

On September 19 the *Sappho*, a light cruiser attached to the Grand Fleet, joined the patrol in Area VI. After September 24 the vessels on patrol worked in the eastward portion of the area during the day so that they might be clear of the track of submarines making for Cromarty and the Pentlands.² A further alteration was made in their beat two days later, and they took Area I., between Rattray Head and Area V., cruising to the southward during daylight hours. They returned to Area VI. on September 30.³

12. The armed merchant cruisers at first patrolled the Shetlands half of the original area of the Northern Patrol; on September 1 the *Oceanic* was detached to the Faeroes, and on return to the Shetlands went ashore on Foula Island on September 8 and became a total wreck. From September 17 to 21 the *Alsatian* and *Mantua* took the Norway Patrol under the *Drake*. The fourth armed merchant cruiser, the *Teutonic*, joined them on September 20.⁴ At this period there was a plentiful crop of intelligence reports that the *Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm* intended to escape from Bergen; and another German merchant vessel, the *Brandenburg* from America, having arrived at Trondhjem ~~early in September~~, kept our patrols busy watching that port lest she should escape. By September 28, however, we were satisfied with the action taken by the Norwegian authorities,⁵ and the armed merchant cruisers returned to the Northern Patrol, except the *Teutonic*, which remained off Bergen to intercept the *Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm*, till that ship was definitely reported on October 3 as laid up for the winter. Spitzbergen also was reported to have a German W/T Station, and the *Gibraltar* was told off

¹ Papers titled *Foreign Office*, 26.8.14 (M.01697/14, etc.).

² G.F.N. 23, 24.9.14. ³ G.F.N. 25, 30.9.14.

⁴ *Teutonic* was taken up on September 3, and was intended for the Atlantic trade routes. She was, however, sent up to the Grand Fleet but was assigned to C.-in-C., H.F., not definitely to the Tenth C.S. (M.01750/14.)

⁵ H.S. 52., p. 149. We had an understanding with Norway that we would support her in case Germany seized a base in her territorial waters.

on August
31. (H.S. 72/
1055)

to destroy it. In this matter, again, we were reassured by the Norwegian Government, and the *Gibraltar* was recalled.¹

The loss of the *Cressys* on September 20 drew attention to the danger of ships being stopped while at sea, and on September 30 the Commander-in-Chief issued a memorandum containing instructions with regard to ships stopping to examine merchant vessels. West of longitude 3° W. and north of the line Sumburgh Head-Karmo, except in the close vicinity of the Shetlands, could be regarded as places where the submarine menace was slight; and in these areas cruisers and the older battleships might stop to lower boarding boats when no smaller vessels were available, but should keep on the move while the boarding boat was away. Where submarines could be expected, the examination of merchant vessels was to be done only by the boats of smaller vessels.²

Early in October the first Canadian Contingent crossed the Atlantic, and the Grand Fleet took up dispositions to cover its passage against attack by the German Fleet. In these dispositions the station of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron was at first in Area V., with the Second and Third Cruiser Squadrons; after October 9 they took Area VI. again. The merchant cruisers and *Sappho* patrolled to northward of Muckle Flugga, in conjunction with the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, while various other squadrons of the Grand Fleet occupied the space between the Orkneys and Norway.³

13. It was while occupying Area VI. that the Tenth Cruiser Squadron suffered its first loss. On October 15 the Squadron was cruising in the order—*Endymion*, *Hawke*, *Theseus*, *Edgar*, *Grafton*, at intervals of ten miles. After 9.30 a.m. the *Hawke* stopped to get mails from the *Endymion*, which afterwards went on to take mails to the other ships. As soon as she had got her mails the *Hawke* resumed her course at 12 to 13 knots. At 1.12 p.m. the *Theseus*, then in 57° 50' N., 0° 33' E., observed a torpedo approaching from five points abaft the starboard beam; it passed 200 yards astern, and warning the Squadron she made off N.N.W.⁴ The Senior Officer in the *Edgar* ordered a course of N.W., first at 14 knots and then at utmost speed. When he heard of the presence of the submarine, the Commander-in-Chief at 2.30 p.m. ordered the *Edgar* to collect her ships in the northern corner of Area VI.; it was the order which revealed disaster, for the *Edgar*, receiving replies to her signals from all except the *Hawke*, judged from her silence that something was wrong.⁵ Reporting this to the Commander-in-Chief, he gave her 11 a.m.

¹ H.S. 63, pp. 767, 837; H.S. 64, pp. 139, 182, 185, 186, 280, 582, 672, 892; H.S. 65, pp. 109, 147, 241; H.S. 66, pp. 184, 710, 756; H.S. 67, pp. 165, 215, 286; H.S. 68, pp. 354, 383, 405, 427.

² Memo. H.F. 0019 of September 30, 1914.

³ The disposition of the Fleet on October 15 is shown in Plan 9 of Corbett's *Naval Operations*, Vol. I.

⁴ Log of *Theseus*.

⁵ H.S. 68, pp. 574, 581, 594, 608.

position as 57° 47' N., 0° 12' E., to which position the Commander-in-Chief, after unsuccessful attempts to get into touch with her, despatched the *Swift* and a division of destroyers.¹

After a search all night the *Swift* at 9 a.m. sighted a raft, from which she rescued Lieut.-Commander Rosoman and six ratings. While searching for more she sighted a submarine at 10.53 a.m., and a torpedo passed astern of her. Nevertheless, she continued the search till next morning, when she shaped course for Scapa; again the submarine was sighted, but was forced by gunfire to dive.² Altogether she brought back one officer and 20 men. The gunner and 49 men who had got away in one of the boats that floated were picked up about five hours later by the Norwegian S.S. *Modesta*, which then steamed back to the place where the *Hawke* had sunk. A submarine was sighted, and at midnight the Norwegian, which had been unsuccessful in saving any more men, steered for Peterhead. Before reaching that port she transferred the survivors to the trawler *Ben Rinnes*, who brought them in to Aberdeen.³ From Lieut.-Commander Rosoman, the senior surviving officer, it was learned that very soon after resuming her course with the mails brought by the *Endymion*, the *Hawke*⁴ was struck by a torpedo at 10.30 a.m. abreast of the foremost funnel on the starboard side. She took an increasing list to starboard, and 15 minutes later⁵ she turned bottom upwards and went down bows first. None of her consorts was in sight, and she made no signal for help, and it was only by such boats and rafts as floated that any survivors could save themselves. There was no steam on the boat hoist, but both sea boats were lowered; one drifted away with some men in her, and was later met by the Norwegian steamer; the other was crushed by the ship. Four rafts floated, and by them the remaining survivors were saved. Lieut.-Commander Rosoman had spoken to Captain Williams in the water, and learned from him that the track of a torpedo had been seen.⁶ This was true; the torpedo had been fired at long range by Otto von Weddigen in U.9, who a month ago had torpedoed the *Hogue*, *Aboukir*, and *Cressy*.⁷ By this fourth victim he added 500 more to the 1,400 officers and men he had drowned in those three ships.⁸

¹ G.F.N., October 16.

² Log of *Swift*.

³ X.3441/1914. The Admiralty rewarded all the members of the crew of the *Modesta*.

⁴ Capt. Hugh P. T. Williams.

⁵ The gunner says five minutes, X. 3441/14.

⁶ Rosoman's Report, M. 02832/14.

⁷ A. Gayer: *Die deutschen U-Boote*, Heft I., pp. 13, 14.

⁸ Though it was not while she was actually picking up mails that the *Hawke* was torpedoed, the Admiralty felt constrained to point out to the C.-in-C. and to Admiral de Chair, the danger of remaining stopped in waters where ships were liable to attack by submarines. X. 3441/14 and C.I.O. 146/14.

CHAPTER III.

THE "EDGARS" PAID OFF.

14. After the loss of the *Hawke* the Commander-in-Chief withdrew the whole Fleet from the North Sea. The Tenth Cruiser Squadron joined the older battleships of the Third Battle Squadron in patrolling N.N.W. of the Shetlands with the Third Cruiser Squadron to westward of them. The *Alsatian* worked with Admiral de Chair, while the *Mantua* was detached from October 11 to 28 with the *Drake* to fetch gold from Archangel. The battleships of the Third Battle Squadron left for Lough Swilly on October 17, leaving the Tenth and Third Cruiser Squadrons under Admiral de Chair to continue the patrol N.N.W. of the Shetlands.

On October 22 the arrangements for stopping German trade and the passage of contraband in neutral bottoms were as follows¹ :—

- (1) A cruiser force working North of the Shetlands, occasionally visiting the Norwegian coast.
- (2) One or two armed merchantmen to the Southward of the Faeroes.
- (3) A group of battleships in the area midway between the Faeroes and the Orkneys to act as a second line that must be passed, and also a force to act in the North Sea or elsewhere to intercept enemy armed vessels.
- (4) A squadron off the North-West end of the Hebrides to intercept trade passing the Flannan Islands.
- (5) Some ships stationed South of the Hebrides to intercept trade passing North through the Minch.
- (6) Two or three minesweepers to intercept trade passing between Sule Skerry and the Orkneys.

It will be seen from this that the interception of ships was not delegated entirely to the Tenth Cruiser Squadron; in fact, that Squadron occupied only a portion of a scheme in which the lighter forces of the Grand Fleet were employed.²

15. In the absence of our patrols from the Norwegian coast occurred the first loss of a merchant vessel by submarine action. On October 20 the British steamship *Glitra*, bound for Stavanger, was sunk by U.17 about 14 miles from Skudesnaes, and intelligence reports of submarine activity on the Norwegian coast began to

¹ Papers titled X. 3895/1914.

² The interception of trade was one of the continual pre-occupations of the Grand Fleet; this monograph deals only with that part in it played by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, and the subject as a whole will be considered in the projected series of monographs dealing with the Grand Fleet.

multiply. Our Minister at Christiania proposed the use of disguised merchant vessels as a trap for the submarine reported to be operating off Bergen; this was an echo of a rumour that Germany intended to send out a fleet of such vessels.¹ But the attention of the Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief was attracted rather to the passage North of the Faeroes, where a large traffic in contraband was reported to be passing. The patrol there was taken by the armed merchant cruisers; there were only three of them, and the Commander-in-Chief asked for at least two more.² The Admiralty, in compliance with his request, took up the *Otway* and *Cedric* as additional vessels, and the *Virginian* to replace the wrecked *Oceanic*.³

16. On October 28 the loss of the *Audacious* revealed the fact that a minefield had been laid off the North Irish coast, and the Commander-in-Chief ordered the Third and Tenth Cruiser Squadrons to spread in order to intercept the vessel which had laid the mines; accordingly Admiral de Chair ordered his Squadron, consisting of the *Edgar*, *Endymion*, *Theseus*, *Gibraltar*, and *Royal Arthur*, to take up positions on a base line N.E. true from Muckle Flugga, the inner ship to be seven miles from the point, the remainder to be ten miles apart; they were to cross the base line, steering S.E. true at midnight, and alter course 16 points every two hours. The Third Cruiser Squadron was to prolong the line to N.E.⁴ The *Crescent* was coaling at Swarbacks Minn, and when, on the 29th, Admiral de Chair arrived on patrol, he found that the base had been altered to one running N. true from Muckle Flugga, the southern ship to be 30 miles from shore, the remainder ten miles apart. At half-past four a suspicious steamer was sighted and followed; she out-paced the old *Edgars*, whose engines were becoming increasingly unreliable, and though the Admiral ordered "General Chase," even by 7 p.m. the steamer was only just in sight. At 10.45 p.m. the Commander-in-Chief ordered the First Light Cruiser Squadron to assist if required, and Admiral de Chair ordered them to the Norwegian coast to intercept the quarry; but at 12.27 a.m. on the 30th the *Endymion*, which had been chasing at full speed all the time, overtook her and boarded her in 60° 28' N., 3° 22' E. She proved to be the Norwegian liner *Bergensfjord* on her usual voyage from New York to Bergen, and had on board the German Consul-General from Korea.⁵ The Commander-in-Chief ordered her in to Kirkwall for examination, and she was escorted there by the *Endymion*, in spite of an energetic protest from a high official of the Norwegian Parliament, who also was a passenger. Nothing was seen of the minelayer, and after the episode of the *Bergensfjord* the Tenth Cruiser

¹ H.S. 68, p. 1036; H.S. 71, p. 230.

² H.S. 69, pp. 1060a, 1191; H.S. 70, pp. 14, 140; H.S. 73, pp. 268, 332.

³ Papers titled *Admiralty 7.11.14*, M. 03425/14, etc.

⁴ H.S. 185, p. 60.

⁵ It was known that he was on board and orders had been sent on October 16 that he was not to be molested. (H.S. 68, p. 861.)

Squadron returned to its normal beat N.N.W. (true) from Muckle Flugga, where they patrolled in line ahead 20 miles apart. A German armed merchant ship named *Berlin* arrived at Trondhjem on November 16, and after some diplomatic correspondence decided next day to disarm and be interned by the Norwegian Government.¹ According to the tales of her crew she had laid the mine which the *Audacious* struck.

17. During the chase of the *Bergensfjord* several of the ships had broken down, and it was clear by this time that the old *Edgars* could no longer carry on without refitting. Moreover, a gale on November 11 drew attention to their lack of seaworthiness, and their unsuitability for the hard work of the Northern Patrol during the winter months. Heavy seas had wrecked the *Crescent's* fore-bridge, swept overboard the Admiral's sea cabin, and carried away the ventilating cowl of the foremost stokehold, a considerable amount of water getting down below and putting the fires out; the woodwork of the deck failed to hold the hawser reels and other fittings, some of which were swept overboard. Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief called Admiral de Chair to Scapa and informed him that it had been decided to refit half the Tenth Cruiser Squadron at a time in Clyde Yards. The three chosen were the *Crescent*, *Royal Arthur*, and *Grafton*, and they were ordered to leave the patrol for the Clyde. The *Endymion* was already making good defects at Scapa; the *Theseus*, *Edgar*, and *Gibraltar* were sheltering from the weather at Busta Voe, and making good defects. The only portion of the Northern Patrol at sea consisted of two merchant cruisers between Iceland and the Faeroes; although there were three of these, the distance of Liverpool, their coaling base, from their patrol area necessitated an absence from station of about 11 days, so that one ship was always away. They were joined by the *Drake* on the 16th; no ships were sighted and probably nothing was passing. On November 16 the three *Edgars* at Busta Voe proceeded for a new patrol station W.N.W. of the Hebrides.

18. The Commander-in-Chief was beginning to doubt the utility of the patrol. Of the ships boarded since the beginning of October, 25 had been sent in to Kirkwall, besides others into other Northern ports, and of them all only one had been permanently detained, while one other had had to land part of her cargo. The remainder had all been released, though they were bound for Baltic and Dutch ports with such cargoes as copper, grain, petroleum, sulphur, and coal, some of which were actually stated to be going to Germany. The Squadron, he felt, could be better employed than in the risky and destructive work of boarding ships which, after all, were only released; and he suggested that the practice of boarding should be entirely discontinued. The Admiralty in reply pointed out that there were great legal difficulties in dealing with neutral ships trading between neutral

¹ H.S. 75, pp. 55, 63, 101, 313, 398.

ports; satisfactory guarantees had been obtained that most of the cargoes were for neutral consumption and would not be re-exported. Such guarantees could not have been obtained except by bringing in the ships; and the arrest of these vessels had already produced valuable results in restraining shipowners from embarking contraband and underwriters from insuring it. Many neutral States were prohibiting the export of objectionable articles. All this pressure on German trade was a direct consequence of the delay, anxiety, and extreme inconvenience caused to neutrals by the Fleet's interference.¹

19. So important did the Admiralty feel the Northern Patrol to be that when they learned the real condition of the *Edgars* they determined to replace them by a large squadron of more suitable vessels. They telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief:—

321. The following arrangements are in hand and will be completed with the utmost despatch in order to put the Northern Patrol on a more satisfactory footing.

The Patrol will consist of 24 Armed Liners constituted as follows :
3 already on patrol,

4 now commissioning with full crew and armament,

17 further vessels which are now being taken up. Their speed will be 14 to 17 knots; tonnage 4,000 to 6,000 tons; a somewhat reduced armament. These vessels will be manned by the crews of the *Edgars*, supplemented where possible by R.N.R. Firemen.

The *Edgars* will be paid off as the liners become available.

These 24 vessels will be under the command of Rear-Admiral de Chair, and will be employed exclusively for patrol duty.

(Sent 8.35 p.m., 18.11.14.)

The seventeen vessels had been taken up on November 17², and soon the Clyde, Liverpool, Avonmouth, London, Hull, and the Tyne were busy fitting them out.

On November 20 the Admiralty ordered the *Edgars* to return to their home ports and pay off, only sufficient work being done to enable them to make the voyage safely. In accordance with this the Commander-in-Chief recalled the four on patrol. Two days later the Admiralty ordered the three in the Clyde to be paid off there and laid up with care and maintenance parties. Admiral de Chair hauled down his flag in the *Crescent* at Clydebank in the evening of December 3, and the work of the *Edgars* on the Northern Patrol came to an end.

Up to this period the Tenth Cruiser Squadron and the armed merchant cruisers had boarded at least 309 ships, and many others had been examined without boarding on the numerous occasions when the weather was too bad for a boat to be lowered.³ The work carried out by the Squadron in face of difficulties of every kind was so valued by the Commander-in-Chief that on

¹ H.S. 74, pp. 381, 700, 701.

² M. 03752/14.

³ X. 3262/14.

November 12 he sent to Admiral de Chair a letter of appreciation, in which he said—

“The work of intercepting and examining neutral vessels has been most successfully carried out and the ships have kept the sea in spite of their age and the difficulty which I know has existed in keeping the machinery efficient. I desire that you will make known to the Captains, Officers and Men my keen appreciation of their efforts, and congratulate them on the success which has attended them.”¹

20. During the period through which the *Edgars* had been carrying out the Northern Patrol the nature of contraband had been considerably modified. At the outbreak of war all ships were furnished with a Naval Prize Manual, dated January, 1914, which was in general accord with the provisions of the Declaration of London of 1909. It defined as absolute contraband articles of an exclusively military character; and as conditional contraband foodstuffs and articles capable of being used by the civil population, as well as the armed forces of the enemy country. Conditional contraband could be seized only when destined for the use of fleets, armies, or Government Departments of the enemy State. A ship carrying absolute contraband was to be detained when she was to touch at an enemy port, was out of her course as shown by her papers, or in other suspicious circumstances. A ship carrying conditional contraband was not to be detained unless she intended to call at an enemy port or meet the enemy fleet; in addition, she could be detained, although she herself might not be proceeding to the hostile country, if the goods were consigned to the enemy Government or to a fortified base in hostile territory; or, again, if she were out of her course. A great many articles were excluded from either contraband list.

By an Order in Council of August 20 these regulations were modified, and conditional contraband became liable to seizure, even though consigned to a neutral port, if the consignee of the goods was an agent of the enemy State or a person under the control of that State. This extended the principle of “continuous voyage” to conditional contraband.

On August 26 it was reported that the German Government had taken control of all foodstuffs, thus constituting them contraband if consigned to places in Germany through neutral ports. In September, by the Order in Council of September 21, copper, rubber, and iron ore were transferred from the free to the conditional list, and ships carrying them were to be sent in unless it was certain the goods were not for the use of the enemy Government. A later Order in Council of October 29, promulgated as a concession to the United States, the principal dealer in contraband, made further modifications; it added copper, rubber, lead, and other metals to the absolute list, and permitted neutral ports, if abused, to be treated as enemy bases; but its wording

¹ X. 3920/14.

allowed any consignee in neutral territory to receive contraband, although he might be a known enemy agent. In effect, conditional contraband could be seized in a vessel bound for a neutral port only if the goods were consigned “to order,” if the ship’s papers did not show who was the consignee, or if he were in enemy territory.

In actual fact, the German Government had not taken control of foodstuffs at that time. Consequently, food ships sent in had to be released; in addition, the Order of October 29 set free many other vessels detained in good faith; and it was through the operation of these Orders that the arduous work of the Northern Patrol had so little result in preventing the arrival of goods into Germany.¹

CHAPTER IV.

FORMATION OF THE ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER SQUADRON.

21. One of the principal reasons for increasing the efficiency of the Northern Patrol was that the Admiralty had made an important decision. There could be no doubt that a minelayer had got out from Germany, and laid the minefield on which the *Audacious* was lost on October 27. The Admiralty at the time concluded that these mines, and also those off the Tyne and Humber must have been laid by merchant vessels flying a neutral flag; and, in order to prevent the possibility that more ships of the kind could pass undetected, they now decided to declare the North Sea a military area, through which trading vessels should not pass except in strict accordance with Admiralty directions. The intention was that no ship should escape some sort of examination. To secure this, on November 2² they announced that from November 5 onwards all ships passing a line drawn from the Northern point of the Hebrides through the Faeroes to Iceland did so at their own peril; and they advised vessels trading with Scandinavian countries to use the Straits of Dover, whence a route, safe so far as we were concerned, would be given them.³ No sooner had the announcement been made than the shipping companies which were in the habit of using the northabout route began to send in applications for special permission to continue to pass the prohibited line. In many

¹ C.B. 1554, *The Economic Blockade* deals fully with this question. See also Fayle: *Seaborne Trade*, Vol. I., Chapter IV.

² This was before the *Berlin* had arrived at Trondhjem.

³ The text of the declaration is in X. 3768/1914.

cases¹ this was granted, subject only to the condition that the favoured ships called at Kirkwall for examination on each voyage. Vessels eastbound were to keep North of the 60th parallel till they reached 3° W., whence they were to proceed direct to Kirkwall; while those from Europe were to make 60° N., 3° W., and then keep North of the 60th parallel until they were well clear of the British Isles. Sailing ships were to keep 50 miles North of the Shetlands, and any neutral vessels which had not received permission to use the northabout route were advised to call at Kirkwall.²

This limitation on the number and routes of vessels using the northabout passage should lighten the work falling to the new Squadron. The object of the force was now to deter neutral vessels from using the northabout route, or, if they felt compelled to come that way, to force them to call voluntarily at Kirkwall. The ships of the companies which had received permits need not be examined, boarded, or escorted in, as they would presumably call at Kirkwall. Nor need other neutrals be examined; the fact that they had no permit rendered them suspect, and they were to be sent in under a prize crew without examination. The resulting inconvenience should be enough to deter any but the most persistent of innocent vessels from continuing to come that way.²

22. It was obviously desirable to have the blockading squadron in place as soon as possible, if only in order that passing vessels might report it to be at work. To be suitable for the Northern Patrol it was considered a vessel should have fair speed with moderate size. As the need for the 17 new cruisers was urgent only ships actually in port or soon due could be taken up; all likely ships were carefully considered, and the following were selected: *Patia*, *Patuca*, *Bayano*, *Motagua*, *Changuinola*, belonging to Elders & Fyffes; *Ambrose*, *Hilary*, *Hildebrand*, of the Booth Line; *Caribbean* and *Orotava*, of the R.M.S.P. Co.; *Eskimo* and *Calypto*³, owner T. Wilson & Co.; *Oropesa*, of the P.S.N. Line; *Digby*, belonging to Furness, Withy; *Columbia*⁴, Anchor Line; *The Viking*⁵, which cruised with tourists to Norway; and the *Clan McNaughton*, belonging to the Clan Line. The Elders steamers were the newest, *The Viking* the oldest; speeds ranged from the *Eskimo* with 17 knots to the *Clan Macnaughton* with 11; the largest was the *Hildebrand* of 7,000 gross tons, and the smallest the two Wilson liners, which were of 3,326 and 2,876 respectively.⁶

¹ Danish United Shipping Company; Danish East Asiatic Company; Norwegian-American Line; Norwegian-Mexican Gulf Line; Swedish-South American and Australian Lines (also called Swedish Transatlantic Company); Swedish-American-Mexico Line; Johnson Line; Swedish-East Asiatic Line.

² Admiral de Chair's Memo. 038/7 of 17.12.14 in *Grand Fleet Secret Packs*, Vol. XXXI, and X. 3768/14.

³ Renamed *Calyx*.

⁴ Renamed *Columbella*

⁵ Renamed *Viknor*. ⁶ Papers titled X. 2857/1915 and H.S. 185, p. 107.

These were all officially requisitioned on November 23, and the work of preparing them as cruisers was hurried on. At the suggestion of the Commander-in-Chief, the new Squadron was given the name of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.

Admiral de Chair hoisted his flag on board the *Alsation* at Liverpool on December 4. Apart from the *Teutonic* and *Mantua*, patrolling to the West of the Hebrides, all his armed merchant cruisers were fitting out at various ports; even the *Alsation* was being rearmed with 6-in. guns. As it was hoped they would all be ready by the end of the month, the Admiral organised a base office at Liverpool under Rear-Admiral Stileman,¹ from which orders and communications could be distributed to the 17 ships which it had been decided should use that port for coaling and repairs.

23. The new Squadron was not to occupy the area originally assigned to the Northern Patrol Force. The station of the armed merchant cruiser squadron was now to be North and West of the Shetlands, and the base lines of the patrols were to be—

- (A) Between the Faeroes and Iceland, the Eastern base to be the meridian of 5° 30' W
- (B) North of the Shetlands on the meridian of 1° W.
- (C) South of the Faeroes, the Eastern base to be the line joining Sydero and Sule Skerry.
- (D) West of the Hebrides, the Eastern base to run N.½ W. from St. Kilda.

The base lines would be constantly moved in order that the actual position of the patrols should not become known to the enemy; and it was the Commander-in-Chief's intention after a time to shift the whole of the patrol areas considerably, to minimise the chance of a successful cruiser raid on the armed liners. The Admiralty had expected the trawler patrol in the Fair Island passage and the cruiser squadrons of the Grand Fleet to work in association with the new Tenth Cruiser Squadron. This could not at the time be carried out, since the trawlers were mostly concentrated round Scapa to protect the battle fleet from submarine attack, and the cruiser squadrons of the Grand Fleet were insufficient to allow of a regular blockade patrol. The Commander-in-Chief, however, intended to keep one squadron generally in the vicinity of 60° N., 5° W., to support the liners. Traffic through the Pentlands was dealt with chiefly by the armed boarding steamers based on Scapa. It was hoped that by the summer complete control of shipping would be established.²

24. In the interval between the departure of the *Edgars* and the arrival of the armed merchant cruisers, the watch on the Northern approaches had to be abandoned, except for occasional

¹ Then S.N.O., Liverpool.

² M. 084/15.

movements carried out by the Grand Fleet. From November 17 to 20 the Second Battle Squadron cruised South of the Faeroes, while the battle cruisers watched North of the Shetlands; these movements were in view of possible enemy activity on the 18th. On the 20th a submarine attack on the Shetlands was expected,⁵ and the Commander-in-Chief ordered the base at Swarbacks Minn to be evacuated; this had been used by the *Edgars*, and the Commander-in-Chief had asked that a submarine obstruction should be put up there, but so far nothing had been done.¹ He sent a division of destroyers to the Shetlands to hunt the submarine, but they saw nothing, and were recalled next day.² At the end of November the only vessel definitely looking out to intercept shipping was the *Teutonic*, cruising to West and North-West of the Hebrides. She was joined there on December 3 by the *Otway*. The entrance to the North Sea was thus entirely destitute of patrol when a German collier, the *Rio Negro*, passed into it on her way homewards, with an important cargo—no less than the survivors of the commerce-raider *Karlsruhe*, which had been operating in the Atlantic near the Equator. The *Karlsruhe* had blown up, and all that remained of her crew had embarked in the *Rio Negro*, which, after making a wide detour, put in to Aalesund (Norway, latitude 62½°) on November 29. A few days later she arrived at Kiel.

Another incident on the Norwegian coast occurred a week or two later. On December 8 two German vessels, the *Alma* and the *Marie*, put in to Thamshavn, near Trondhjem, and began to load copper ore for Hamburg. This information was wired to the Commander-in-Chief, but the name of the place was read as Thorshavn, in the Faeroes. The *Teutonic* was sent to watch that port; she was alone, as the *Otway* had had to return to Liverpool for fuel. When at last it was discovered in the Fleet that Thamshavn was meant, the Commander-in-Chief thought it was too late to take action. Meanwhile, the two German ships were loading, but it was not till the 13th that the *Alma* left, the *Marie* following on the 18th.³ In point of fact, armed merchant cruisers could have been sent in time, but they were occupied in endeavouring to intercept a Danish steamer bound from Iceland for Copenhagen with ponies. The *Teutonic* was joined by the *Mantua* and *Cedric* on December 13, and the three patrolled the meridians of 6, 7, and 8 W. from 62° 30' to 100' North of it for this purpose.⁴

25. The area to the North-West of the Hebrides, which the Commander-in-Chief considered the best place in which to intercept trade, was occupied after December 7 by the *Sappho* and some armed boarding steamers, based on Loch Ewe. A fortnight later they were relieved by the *Hildebrand*, *Oropesa*, *Hilary*,

¹ H.S. 78, p. 1102.

² G.F.N., November, 1914.

³ H.S. 79, pp. 191, 200, 297, 361, 487, 562, 568, 680, 761, 1070, 1089, 1099; H.S. 81, p. 161.

⁴ G.F.N., December 14, 1914.

⁵ H.S. 75, p. 873.

and *Ambrose*, and moved to Scapa, whence they patrolled to guard the Fleet base.¹

The merchant cruisers as they became ready² proceeded to one or other of the patrol lines, and when, on December 26, the flagship *Alsatian* arrived with Admiral de Chair on the Faeroes patrol, the disposition of the Squadron was:—

<i>A Patrol.</i>	<i>C Patrol.</i>	<i>D Patrol.</i>
North of Faeroes.	South of Sydero.	West of Hebrides.
<i>Teutonic.</i>	<i>Otway.</i>	<i>Hildebrand.</i>
<i>Cedric.</i>	<i>Oropesa.</i>	<i>Patuca.</i>
<i>Columbella.</i>	<i>Hilary.</i>	<i>Calyx.</i>
<i>Mantua.</i>		<i>Ambrose.</i>
<i>Virginian.</i>		

There were no vessels on the B Patrol line North of the Shetlands. Very few vessels had been intercepted North of the Faeroes, in spite of the report that contraband in large quantities was coming that way, and on account of the long winter darkness it was difficult to tell whether much traffic was passing. The *Teutonic* was due for coaling, and went off to Liverpool, and Admiral de Chair sent the *Cedric* to take B Patrol line as far as 62° N. with the *Caribbean*, which was on passage up from Liverpool to join. The *Clan Macnaughton* arrived on December 26 and was attached to D Patrol. At the end of the year 11 ships were on the various patrols; five were away coaling; the *Bayano* and *Viknor* were on the way up to join the Squadron; and four were still being got ready, having been delayed by labour disputes.

Severe weather prevails almost continuously in northern latitudes during the winter months, and the period of the formation of the Northern Patrol by the armed merchant cruisers proved no exception. A gale blowing from the S.W., with driving snow and hail, caused many of the ships to ease down or lie to between December 27 and 28. The *Clan Macnaughton*, off the Hebrides, rolled 45° and lost her aerial, but did not leave her patrol.³ Two days later almost similar weather conditions necessitated the taking of several intercepted neutral vessels to a position under the lee of the land before prize crews could be put on board with orders to proceed to Kirkwall.

The question of a base for the Squadron was not easily solved. The Admiralty's intention was that Swarbacks Minn should be used for coaling, and an official was on his way to report on the method of defence of that harbour. The Commander-in-Chief, however, considered Swarbacks Minn unsuitable for armed merchant cruisers, and on his representation, made on December 28, it was decided that the proposed submarine obstruction there should not be proceeded with, and instead, that Loch Ewe should be provided with a boom.⁴ This could not be ready for some time,

¹ G.F.N.

² For dates of commissioning and Captains' names see Appendix C.

³ M. 0282/15.

⁴ H.S. 82, pp. 542 and 732.

and meanwhile the Squadron had to use Liverpool, although that port was 600 miles from the Shetlands, and the voyage there and back occupied four days. The distance of their base from the area of operations had the result that half the ships of the Squadron were generally away from their patrol duties.¹

Among the difficulties with which the Squadron had to deal were the presumed danger from submarines if they escorted vessels in to Kirkwall,² and the short-handed condition arising when any considerable number of suspected vessels were sent in with prize crews. The recovery of these had to be effected by sending one of the cruisers in to Kirkwall; she picked up all the prize crews, and then distributed them to their own ships as she met them. The boarding of vessels in these latitudes during the winter months was a trying and dangerous proceeding, the difficulties of which were increased by the unsuitability of the lifeboats of some of the merchant cruisers; these proved to be leaky, heavy, and unmanageable; they would return to their ships full of water to the thwarts.³ Communications between the widely separated patrols also proved a difficulty owing to the short range and small power of the Marconi wireless apparatus with which the vessels had been fitted.⁴

By January 10, 1915, all the new vessels⁵ had joined, except the *Motagua*, still fitting out at Avonmouth. A special effort was to be made to intercept the *Bergensfjord*, which once more was suspected of unneutral service, in that she had been reported to be carrying German reservists with neutral passports. Accordingly, the Squadron was disposed as follows:—

B Patrol, North of the Shetlands—*Cedric*, *Patia*, *Teutonic*, *Viknor*, *Orotava*, with the *Alsation* to the eastward on the Bergen track.

C Patrol, South of Sydero—*Otway*, *Bayano*, *Oropesa*, *Hilary*, *Digby*.

D Patrol, West of the Hebrides—*Hildebrand*, *Patuca*, *Clan Macnaughton*.

Coaling at Liverpool were the *Columbella*, *Virginian*, *Mantua*, *Calyx*, and *Caribbean*; while the *Ambrose* and *Changuinola* were on their way to join.

¹ Jellicoe: *The Grand Fleet*, p. 74.

² According to Gayer the only submarines which came near the Orkneys and Shetlands during the first six months of the war were U.16 which once visited Lerwick, U.22 which twice searched the Scottish coast as far round as the Minches, and U.18 which, after achieving what was considered a masterpiece of navigation (Navigatorisches Meisterstück) in getting in to Scapa Flow, ran aground and was captured. None of these three saw any men-of-war, except destroyers, and their reports helped little to enlighten the enemy's ignorance of our movements. Gayer: *Die deutschen U-Boote*, I. p. 16.

³ Grand Fleet Secret Packs, XXXI, p. 122.

⁴ H.S. 185, p. 95.

⁵ The *Dryad* was no longer part of the squadron; she had been found unsuitable and on December 30 was ordered to Portsmouth to pay off without relief, X. 2980/14.

The Grand Fleet was also at sea, having left Scapa that morning for gunnery and tactical exercises to the westward of the Orkneys and Shetlands. At the same time, a watch was to be kept for the *Mjølner*, a Danish steamer from Christiansund to the west of Ireland, suspected of ill-intent. The Commander-in-Chief ordered the *Drake* and *Donegal* to cruise N.E. of Sule Skerry, while four gunboats watched the track from Cape Wrath to the Butt of Lewis.¹

The *Bergensfjord* was faintly heard at 6.30 a.m., January 10, communicating with Bergen. Nothing more was heard of her till 8.30 a.m., January 11, when the *Viknor* reported she had intercepted the Norwegian ship in 62° 10' N., 2° 24' W., some 90 miles N.N.W. of the Shetlands. There was still the *Mjølner* to be found, and Admiral de Chair ordered D Patrol to steam in line ahead on a line 334° from St. Kilda and B Patrol in line ahead on a line 340° from 61° N., 1° 20' W., with ships 30 miles apart. Having arranged this, he proceeded in the *Alsation* for the *Bergensfjord* with the *Patia* and *Teutonic*, and found that the boarding party from the *Viknor* had discovered in the *Bergensfjord* a Baron von Wedel travelling with a neutral passport in the name of Spero. He, six stowaways, and one passenger, aged 60, thought to be a reservist, were transferred to the *Viknor*. The *Bergensfjord* had passed North of the Faeroes by night, apparently with the direct object of avoiding our patrols, and with no intention of calling at Kirkwall, although she was one of the vessels permitted to use the northabout route. Admiral de Chair, therefore, ordered the *Viknor* to put a prize crew on board her and escort her to Kirkwall, afterwards proceeding herself to Liverpool to land the prisoners and complete with coal. In spite of the protests of the Norwegian Captain who claimed that as he was carrying International mails he could not be sent into harbour, the prize crew took charge, and brought the *Bergensfjord* into Kirkwall escorted as far as Fair Island Channel by the *Viknor* who there turned her over to the destroyer *Garry* and parted company for Liverpool.

27. This was the last time the *Viknor* was seen. The last message from her was made at 4 p.m., January 13, when she reported her position as 56° 18' N., 9° W., course S.21° W., 10½ knots.² From there her route was to be West of 9° W. till she reached the latitude of Tory Island; she was to pass south of that island and Inishtrahull, and proceed from there to Liverpool.³ This was the usual route for vessels proceeding to Liverpool to coal, and it had been used so far without accident.

Nothing more is known of her; wreckage and bodies drifted ashore at Portrush, and ultimately she was presumed lost either by foundering or by striking a mine from the field laid at the end

¹ G.F.N., January, 1915. The *Mjølner* was brought in to Lerwick by the Shetlands patrol on January 27. The arrangements for intercepting her are fully given in G.F.S.P. XXXVI, pp. 206-221.

² Grand Fleet IN Telegram intercepted, January 15.

³ Grand Fleet Secret Packs, XXXIX, Loss of *Viknor*.

of October off Tory Island. Her career had been brief; she had joined the Squadron only on January 1, and this was the first time she had been detached from patrol for coaling. The *Otway* took the same route next day and arrived safely at Liverpool. They were the last vessels to come that way; for the Admiralty, although at the time they knew nothing of the loss of the *Viknor*, on January 14 issued an order that men-of-war passing North of Ireland in daylight were to use the Oversay-Skerryvore route, and not to go near the Irish coast.¹

Another attack on the Northern Patrol was expected on January 18, and to meet it the Commander-in-Chief altered the patrols to run:—

- A. 80 miles 360° from 62° 20' N., 10° W.
- B. 80 „ 360° „ 61° 10' N., 1° 15' E.
- C. 80 „ 360° „ 59° 40' N., 9° W.
- D. Eastern line to be 80 miles 335° from St. Kilda.

All ships were to maintain 13 knots and to zigzag constantly.² No submarines were sighted at that period by the patrol. The ships north of the Shetlands were sent by the Commander-in-Chief across to Norway on January 19 with a view to intercepting the *Brandenburg*, which was expected to leave Thamshavn. They kept out of sight of land by day, but at night or in thick weather went in to about five miles from shore on the parallels of 62° N., 62° 10' N., and 62° 20' N. A submarine was reported off Skudesnaes on the 19th, but was not seen by our ships. This watch was abandoned two days later, and the Shetlands patrol was reinstated on the new base line on the meridian of 1° 15' E. between 61° 10' N. and 62° 30' N.

In spite of the feeble light and the other disadvantages of their station, the armed merchant cruiser squadron intercepted 122 ships between December 24 and January 24, in no case missing a ship which the Admiralty wished brought in. The weather had been permanently bad, and in view of the exceptionally arduous nature of the work the Admiralty, at the Commander-in-Chief's suggestion, sent the Squadron a letter of appreciation.³

¹ Telegram 134 to C.-in-C., H.F. sent 6.22 p.m., 14.1.15.

² G.F.N.

³ M. 01648/15.

CHAPTER V.

THE GERMAN SUBMARINE ZONE.

28. At the end of January a new peril made itself felt. The *Alsatian*, *Caribbean*, *Bayano*, *Oropesa*, *Orotava*, and *Calyx* were all at Liverpool when, on January 30, a submarine sank three merchant ships off Liverpool Bar. The six merchant cruisers were kept back for a whole week by the Admiralty, who would not let them sail till the moon, then full, waned; the other merchant cruisers due for coaling were sent to Loch Ewe or the Clyde. Coaling facilities at Loch Ewe proved to be unsatisfactory, but from this time onwards the Clyde became a base for the Squadron in addition to Liverpool, where the congestion of shipping was becoming serious. The cruisers in Liverpool left after dark on February 6, and when proceeding to rejoin their patrols gave the Isle of Man a wide berth to avoid two German submarines reported waiting there. On the way north floating mines were sighted by both the *Alsatian* and the *Bayano* near Skerryvore; a report was current at the time that a Norwegian steamer had laid a minefield on February 3 between Barra Head and Coll Island.¹ As a result of this further danger the centre line of B Patrol was shifted to longitude 3° W.

Another report from Norway, this time that the *Alma* was about to leave Trondhjem, had caused the Commander-in-Chief on February 1 to send the *Otway* and *Hilary* from this patrol across to the Norwegian coast for three days.² During the month Grand Fleet cruiser squadrons made occasional sweeps across to Norway.³

29. The dangers to which the Squadron as a whole was exposed were emphasised by another loss following soon after that of the *Viknor*. On February 2, in one of the worst gales experienced by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, the *Clan Macnaughton*, then on patrol in 58° 47' N., 9° 27' W., Westward of the Hebrides, failed to reply to signals and disappeared. The *Hildebrand*, *Patuca*, and *Digby* searched the vicinity for a week, but found no trace of the missing vessel, beyond a certain amount of wreckage. There seemed no reason to doubt her stability as she had been accustomed to trade to the East⁴; moreover, drifting mines had been reported off the Hebrides; but the loss in quick succession of two vessels of the Squadron raised the whole question whether the severe conditions under which they were employed had been fully realized by the Admiralty when deciding on the type of vessel to be taken up; and when, a few weeks later, Admiral de Chair reported the

¹ H.S. 185, pp. 121, 122.

² G.F.N.

³ Jellicoe: *The Grand Fleet*, p. 203.

⁴ M. 01232/15 in Papers titled X. 2857/1915.

Columbella, *Caribbean*, *Orotava*, *Calyx*, and *Eskimo* as unsuitable for various reasons, the vessels eventually taken up to relieve them were all larger than the 17 requisitioned in November after our closing of the North Sea.¹

The arrangements with the Scandinavian Shipping Lines were not in every case carried out by them. The Norwegian-American Line, to which the *Bergensfjord* belonged, had already broken its agreement that its vessels should voluntarily call at Kirkwall; the *Frederick VIII.*, of the Danish United Shipping Company, was caught after a chase on February 11, and gave as her reason for evading the patrol that she was unaware of the necessity of calling at Kirkwall when westward bound. On the 13th another of the Norwegian-American Line endeavoured to avoid the patrols by passing North of the Faeroes, and she also was sent in with a prize crew. Next day the *Oskar II.*, of the Danish United Shipping Co., from New York, was stopped after a four hours' chase and was sent in; her Captain made a written protest, although, as Admiral de Chair remarks, she belonged to one of the steamship lines which were allowed to use the northabout route on the understanding that their vessels called at Kirkwall, which, however, they appeared not to have the slightest intention of doing. Many more vessels than those authorised were using the northabout route, and he considered few, if any, of them were likely to call at Kirkwall unless sent there in charge of prize crews.²

30. A large increase in the number of vessels using the northabout route seemed probable as a result of an announcement made by the German Naval Staff. Our policy in declaring the North Sea a closed area was not to pass unchallenged; on February 4 appeared the German answer. Over the signature of Von Pohl, Chief of the Admiral Staff, was issued the following statement:—

... Just as England has designated the area between Scotland and Norway as an area of war, so Germany now declares all the waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland, including the entire English Channel, as an area of war, thus proceeding against the shipping of the enemy. For this purpose, beginning from February 18, 1915, it will endeavour to destroy every enemy merchant ship that is found in this area of war. . . . Neutrals are, therefore, warned . . . that it is advisable for their ships to avoid entering this area. . . . At the same time, it is especially noted that shipping North of the Shetland Islands, in the Eastern area of the North Sea, and in a strip of at least 30 sea miles in width along the Norwegian coasts, is not in peril. . . .

Our announcement had declared the passage north of the Shetlands as particularly dangerous; the Germans stated the northabout route to be the only safe one. Neutral vessels had thus no choice but to disregard the warning of one or other of the

¹ X. 9317/15.

² Admiral de Chair's Letter of Proceedings, H.S. 185, pp. 127, 136.

belligerents. The German Staff, three days before, had stated that all military means at Germany's disposal were about to be used against our transports to France; and as this was calculated to induce neutrals to accept the recommendation of a route round Scotland in preference to taking the risks of a passage through the English Channel, it was only to be anticipated that the work of the Northern Patrol would increase as a result of this declaration.

To meet the situation the patrols were rearranged so that they ran¹:—

- A. North of the Faeroes. Eastern base 5° 30' W.
- B. North of the Shetlands. Eastern base 1° W.
- C. South of the Faeroes. Eastern Base, the line Sydero-Sule Skerry.
- D. West of the Hebrides. Eastern base N. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. from St. Kilda.

The ships patrolled 20 miles apart, zigzagging at 13 knots on a mean course about at right angles to the base; this they crossed, steering westerly, at 7 a.m.; at 6 p.m. they turned 16 points. The southern ship of Patrol A was 20 miles north of the Faeroes, of Patrol B 15 miles from Muckle Flugga, of Patrol C 45 miles from Sule Skerry, and of Patrol D 15 miles from St. Kilda.²

From the middle of February onwards it became the practice for one of the Scapa boarding steamers to bring out the prize crews³ who had taken ships into Kirkwall. The necessity for some such arrangement had long been felt, for sometimes as many as 18 prize crews were away at one time.⁴

The *Eskimo* operated with the Tenth Cruiser Squadron for the first time on February 12, when she joined D Patrol; amongst the duties she had been performing was that of escorting the cable ship *Colonia* to Alexandrovsk.

31. A submarine again appeared off Liverpool on February 20, sinking two ships. By this time the Admiralty had decided to obstruct the North Channel, between Ireland and the Mull of Cantire, by a net similar to that in the Dover Strait, and a few days later five miles of the North Channel were blocked by indicator nets towed by drifters.⁵ The Commander-in-Chief, in addition, sent four destroyers, the *Garry*, *Thorn*, *Dee*, and *Dove*, to operate from Liverpool against submarines. He also proposed an anti-submarine boom in the Clyde in connection with its use as a base for the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.⁶

On February 18 a report was received that 30 German trawlers, loaded with mines, had passed the Skaw westward the day before. To give a better chance of intercepting these, the Commander-in-Chief recalled the First Cruiser Squadron, which had been

¹ G.F.N., February.

² H.S. 185, pp. 124, 125.

³ These should have been described as armed guards, T. & S.D.D.

⁴ H.S. 185, p. 125.

⁵ M. 01729/15.

⁶ M. 01698/15.

cruising between 1° E. and the Norwegian coast, and stationed them on a line running 360° from Muckle Flugga as far as the 100-fathom line; from there the B Patrol of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron prolonged the line northward, sweeping as far as 2° E. during the day. The ships on C Patrol worked on the southwest side of the line joining Sydero and 60° N, 5° W., altering course 16 points at midnight and every two hours. The weather had been bad for a week and boarding was impossible. A small boarding steamer, bringing back thirteen prize crews from Scapa, did indeed arrive at the proper rendezvous, but the sea was so bad that she had to return with the prize crews still on board her. Nothing was seen of the reported minelaying trawlers, and on the 21st the normal patrols were resumed.¹

The base lines of the various patrols were continually being shifted, either because intelligence reports led the Commander-in-Chief to expect submarine attack on the merchant cruisers, or for the purpose of intercepting some vessel suspected of attempting to evade the patrol. The presence of drifting mines also brought about changes in the positions of the base lines. On the average, however, they remained as before throughout February and March. At the end of February the Commander-in-Chief gave orders that west-bound ships should be sent in only if suspected of laying mines or acting as submarine tenders; this was to prevent the more westerly patrols from sending ships back long distances when clearly on their way to America.

A new development had arisen with regard to vessels from the United States. Two German oil-tankers, the *Kiowa* and *Prometheus*, changed their names and registry to *Pioneer* and *Cushing*, of New York, and came across under American colours with petrol for Sweden and Copenhagen. They were both stopped and sent in; but the transfer of flag, though subsequent to the outbreak of war, was recognised on the grounds that the former owners—the Deutsche Amerikanische Petroleum Gesellschaft—was a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company. Consequently both vessels were released. Another case which created some stir was that of the *Dacia*, a Hamburg–Amerika Liner, whose transfer we had not recognised. She left the States with a cargo of cotton for Rotterdam as a test case. There was some idea that she might try to evade the blockade, and on February 27 dispositions were made to meet this. The patrol north of the Faeroes formed a line ahead patrol 300° from Myggenoes Light; the Shetlands line was shifted to 350° from 60° 35' N., 3° W., steering to make good 240°. The *Dacia*, however, made no secret of her movements, and was duly arrested by the French in the mouth of the Channel and condemned by the French Prize Court. In the course of our movements in the north the *Patuca*, on patrol off the Hebrides, carried out an operation which gives some idea of the normal work of the squadron. At 2.25 a.m. on February 27 she

¹ H.S. 185, pp. 130 to 132 and *Grand Fleet Narrative*.

sighted the American s.s. *Navahoe* from Bremen for Norfolk, Virginia, steaming West, a course which she immediately changed to East on sighting the *Patuca*. When overhauled she stopped, but it was too rough for boarding, and when told to follow our cruiser under the lee of the land she replied that her condenser had broken down and would require three hours' repair. At the conclusion of this time, her Captain signalled: "Condenser ready; no contraband; refuse to follow you." The *Patuca*, however, remained in touch, and in a few hours the Captain reconsidered his decision, and was taken to St. Kilda. In a very heavy squall the boarding boat was swamped alongside, and had to be cut adrift; but the officers and crew managed to get on board the *Navahoe*. The gale was too bad for the hatches to be lifted for examination, and as, in addition, the master reported that he was short of water, Admiral de Chair ordered the *Patuca* to take her in to Stornoway for examination. This was done; nothing suspicious was found and the ship was released.

32. During this operation the *Patuca* had necessarily spent a good deal of time stopped or at slow speed. This might have been dangerous for her had the *Navahoe* incident occurred a few days later, for U.27, under Lieut.-Commander Wegener, left the Ems on February 25 with orders to proceed northabout and operate on the West coast of Scotland and in the Irish Sea north of the Isle of Man.¹ She appears to have been the first submarine to try the northabout passage since the announcement of the German blockade. Wegener was at work by March 11. At 5 a.m. off Corsewall Point he torpedoed and sank the *Bayano*, then outward bound from the Clyde to rejoin her patrol²; the *Ambrose* (Commander Bruton), on the way to Liverpool, was three times attacked by a submarine off Oversay Island between 1.20 and 2.20 p.m. Although a slow ship, the *Ambrose* was skilfully handled by Commander Bruton, and avoided the torpedoes fired in the first two attacks. In the third attack a conning tower was seen and fired at, and a hit was claimed.³ Two other ships of the Squadron—the *Caribbean* and *Columbella*—had passed over the same waters going North two hours previously, but saw nothing of the submarine.⁴

As a result the other ships—*Digby*, *Hildebrand*, *Changuinola*, *Patia*—in the Clyde were detained till March 15, and even then the *Digby* was chased by a submarine 25 miles South of Skerryvore, and took refuge in Tobermory Harbour till a destroyer escort from Larne could arrive to screen her out.⁵

The Squadron had now lost three ships—*Viknor*, *Clan Macnaughton*, and *Bayano*; the *Calyx* and *Eskimo* were ordered

¹ Gayer, II, 14.

² There were so few survivors from the *Bayano* that no Court of Enquiry was held; according to the midshipman of the watch she was going 8½ knots. M. 02018/15.

³ M. 02086/15.

⁴ G.F.N.

⁵ M. 02258/15.

to be paid off on March 12 and 18; and only 18 ships were left. Moreover, the increasing number of vessels sent in with prize crews led to a serious shortage in the ships' companies; the Admiral asked for an increase in all ratings, and for six more ships to bring his Squadron up to the 24 originally laid down. This was all the more necessary in view of a new order concerning contraband issued by us on March 11, which would presumably have the effect of largely increasing the work of interception to be done by the Squadron.

CHAPTER VI.

STOPPAGE OF GERMAN TRADE.

33. The Order in Council of March 11, 1915, declared that no vessel would be allowed to proceed to any German port; vessels which sailed from German ports must hand over to the Allies all goods embarked in those ports; goods with an enemy destination, or which were enemy property, must be discharged in a British or Allied port; and that vessels which proceeded to an enemy port after being allowed to pass ostensibly for neutral destinations would be liable to condemnation if captured on a subsequent voyage. This order aimed at the complete isolation of Germany in so far as that was possible through the operation of a naval blockade; its effectiveness was contingent on the action of the blockading squadrons, and though it removed some of the complications arising from previous orders, it could only increase the amount of work—at least until traders with Germany should find the game unprofitable.

All ships intercepted at sea were now searched. In the case of Allied merchant vessels which could readily be identified, an interchange of signal was considered all that was necessary. But neutral vessels were all boarded, their papers examined and a summary of them and of any suspicious circumstances reported to the Senior Officer of the patrol. In a large majority of cases it was then decided to send the ship in to an examination harbour with an armed guard. There the Customs officials examined manifests, bills of lading, and other documents and made a complete analysis of the cargo. This information was telegraphed to London and dealt with by one of two committees. Eastbound ships came before the Contraband Committee; westbound ships were considered by the Enemy Exports Committee.

The Contraband Committee had originally consisted of two members from the Trade Division of the Admiralty and one from the Foreign Office. After October, 1914, it increased to five members—two from the Foreign Office, one from the

Admiralty, one from the Board of Trade, and one legal member from the Office of the Treasury Solicitor. With this Committee rested the decision whether a ship should be released or not and whether the whole or part of its cargo should be put in the Prize Court. The evidence on which its decisions were based was prepared in the Trade Division. In January, 1915, a special department called the War Trade Intelligence Department had been set up which sifted and arranged every scrap of intelligence concerning enemy trade activities, and by means of a colossal card index was able to supply complete up-to-date information about every firm mentioned in the ship's papers. An extremely valuable source of information was found in intercepted correspondence, which often, though of an apparently disarming and domestic nature, proved when decoded to contain important intelligence of contraband shipments.

The Order of March 11 made German exports contraband, and to deal with these another body, the Enemy Exports Committee, was formed. "A few severe examples were enough to convince neutral shipowners that they would incur grave inconvenience by carrying goods which were of German origin; and by July there was hardly one neutral line which would knowingly accept German cargo."¹

34. The squadron continued to operate on the four patrol lines till April 11, when, to meet the altered conditions due to the approaching summer, with its short nights and a free passage round the North of Iceland, the Commander-in-Chief rearranged the patrol areas. The patrols north of the Shetlands and west of the Hebrides were withdrawn, and the new lines ran as follows:—

"A" Patrol.—North of Faeroe Islands. Cross base line 360° from lat. 62° 55' N., long. 5° W., at 8 a.m. daily, steering to make good 225°, ships 25 miles apart from south to north—*Otway, Columbella, Mantua, Teutonic, Alsatian*. To be increased to six ships when available.

"B" Patrol.—North of the Shetlands withdrawn.

"C" Patrol.—South of Faeroe Islands. Cross centre line 13° from lat. 58° 30' N., long. 8° W., at noon daily, steering to make good 240°, ships 25 miles apart from south to north—*Ambrose, Patuca, Hilary, Patia, Virginian, Orotava, Oropesa*.

"D" Patrol.—West of the Hebrides withdrawn.

"E" Patrol.—North of Iceland. Six ships when available.

"F" Patrol.—South of Iceland. Four ships when available.

¹ Carless Davis: *History of Blockade*, p. 11.

"G" Patrol.—Coast of Norway. On Meridian 3° E. between lats. 62° and 63½° N. Three ships when available and one cruiser from the Grand Fleet. *Caribbean* working temporarily on this patrol.

This re-arrangement required 27 armed merchant cruisers. At the time only 18 were available; but six more vessels were in course of preparation for work with the squadron. These had been taken up in response to Admiral de Chair's representations that six of his vessels were unsuitable,¹ and were all larger ships than the 17 requisitioned when the armed merchant cruiser squadron was instituted in December. They were the *Ebro*, 8,464 tons; *India*, 7,940 tons; *Alcantara*, 15,831 tons; *Orcoma*, 11,546 tons; *Andes*, 15,620 tons; *Arlanza*, 15,044 tons. Their speed was 15 to 16 knots and they could go 30 days at 13 knots without coaling except the *India*, whose endurance at that speed was 24 days.

35. About this time (April 15) the Commander-in-Chief forwarded information to Admiral de Chair from which it appeared that a Reserve Officer and 16 other Germans of military age had succeeded by the use of false Norwegian passports in reaching Christiania in the Norwegian steamer *Bergensfjord*, although she had been boarded by the *Otway* on March 29 and sent into Kirkwall with a prize crew. These facts came as a great surprise to Admiral de Chair as he was under the impression that the sending of a ship into port with a prize crew ensured not only a thorough examination of her cargo, but also of her passengers as well.² The *Bergensfjord* had twice previously been sent into Kirkwall, and each time attempted to evade the patrols. But this incident was not to be the last in connection with un-neutral service on the part of the *Bergensfjord*. On her very next trip from New York to Bergen she was intercepted in 61° 49' N., 12° 50' W., on June 20 by the *Motagua* and sent into harbour. On this occasion she had on board 473 passengers, including two German naval officers, seven German women, and a notorious propagandist, Dr. Dernburg. Her cargo was general and mostly of a suspicious nature.

While at Liverpool about a fortnight later Admiral de Chair learned what had happened in the case of the *Greenbrier*, an American steamer, which had been sent into Kirkwall by the *Cedric* during January and subsequently released. She had then proceeded to Bremen, where 14 Germans left the ship and the Chief Engineer, of British nationality, was interned. The American papers at first expressed indignation at the capture; but later, when they realised that she was full of contraband cargo and had Germans on board, they marvelled at the fact

¹ X. 9317/15.

² The examining staff at Kirkwall consisted only of three officers.

that she had been released and allowed to proceed. One informant remarked in a manner not too complimentary, "The case of the *Greenbrier* became the laughing-stock of the Southern States." On the other hand, the greatest care had to be exercised to avoid offence to neutral susceptibilities.

36. In accordance with directions from the Admiralty, Admiral de Chair proceeded in the *Alsation* on April 5 to West Loch Roag, in the Island of Lewis, Hebrides, with a view to reporting on the suitability of the anchorage as a coaling base for the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. After examining the harbour he came to the conclusion, and the Commander-in-Chief concurred in his views, that Busta Voe and Olua Firth in Swarbacks Minn were better protected as well as more land-locked and altogether more suitable for a coaling base than West Loch Roag. The harbour of the former was very much easier of entrance and exit; while the berthing of ships would not require tugs as at Loch Roag. The supply of water at Swarbacks Minn was infinitely better and more abundant. The Commander-in-Chief informed the Admiralty that failing Swarbacks Minn he considered Loch Ewe would be a better base than Loch Roag.¹

For another reason the Hebrides was likely to prove a dangerous site for a base. Early in April, U.32, on the way to her cruising ground in the western approaches to the Channel, became entangled in the nets at Dover; she managed to free herself but decided to come home northabout. After this, all High Sea Fleet "U" boats were ordered to avoid the Dover Straits and to make for their areas in the west by the northern route.² The increased submarine traffic soon became apparent, and on May 2 the Commander-in-Chief directed Admiral de Chair to move "C" Patrol 40 miles to the westward.

The Rear-Admiral himself went in to Swarbacks Minn to observe for himself its suitability as a northern base; he found there was room for seven of his cruisers to lie at single anchor. While there he was able to carry out a practical demonstration of the value of its central position. He received a report that the United States oil tank steamer *Petrolite* had been seen in 60° 30' N., 4° 20' W., steering north-east; she had apparently evaded the patrols. Hastening from Busta Voe at 18 knots the *Alsation* captured the tanker at 3.30 p.m., May 6, and sent her in to Kirkwall with a prize crew.

It was possible that vessels wishing to avoid examination might be passing North of Iceland, and to clear up this point the *Alsation* and *Alcantara*, in the middle of May, investigated Denmark Strait between Iceland and Labrador. They found it still full of ice and were informed by the captain of a sealer that no vessels were passing. After some further examination of the

¹ Report on West Loch Roag, M. 02797/15.

² Gayer, II, 21.

ice the Admiral sent the *Alcantara* over to the Norwegian coast where she relieved the *India*, which had recently been stationed there for intercepting the iron ore traffic between Narvik and Rotterdam.

37. The winter was now practically over. The work of the patrol had been very arduous and trying. In the smaller vessels, officers and men had not only had to keep their watches and look-outs in blizzards of snow and hail, but they often found it impossible to obtain sleep or rest when off watch. In each ship the captain was on the active list, and the executive officer or gunner was on the active or retired list; but the other officers and all the men were from the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, or were specially entered mercantile ratings. Admiral de Chair in a letter to the Admiralty¹ expressed his high appreciation of the excellent spirit, devotion to duty and good discipline shown by all ranks. "The officers and men under my orders," he says, "would, I know, far rather serve in men-of-war designed to fight those of the enemy; yet they have without exception cheerfully carried out their duties." That these duties had their dangers was shown by the fact that 80 officers and 1,185 men of the squadron had been lost, "all of whom died in the performance of their duty."

From December 24 to May 5 the armed merchant cruisers had boarded and examined 926 vessels and had sent in 258 of these with prize crews. Between March 7 and April 19 (44 days) they had intercepted 364 vessels, including fishing craft. The total number of merchant ships which passed through from one neutral port to another without being intercepted was 29 east-bound and 26 westbound; and of these only three were vessels whose arrest was particularly desired.²

38. The number of vessels intercepted by the squadron was, however, falling off, and in Admiral de Chair's opinion the reason was that in the new dispositions there was only one patrol south of the Faeroes; on his suggestion "B" Patrol North of the Shetlands was re-instituted and on May 14 the *Teutonic* and *Patuca* were detailed to form it. This patrol would also have a chance of intercepting vessels which had evaded our cruisers watching north of the Faeroes, a passage which we learned from a Norwegian steamer had been followed by certain Scandinavian vessels homeward bound.³

39. Reports of the presence of submarines on the North and West Coasts of Scotland continued to increase. The long-distance German boats were using the northabout passage for the journeys to and from their areas of operations in the Western approaches, and in addition, U.21 which had been ordered to

¹ See H.S. 185, pp. 455-499. ² H.S. 185, p. 174. ³ M. 03093/15.

the Mediterranean took the Fair Island passage.¹ The lines of the patrols and the routes of cruisers to Liverpool were frequently changed in accordance with the submarine reports. Instances also occurred of submarines boarding and examining neutral vessels within the area patrolled by the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.² From the West of Scotland there were many authentic reports of submarine activity, and the masters of ships stopped outside the declared German blockade zone frequently protested against being sent in to it for examination at Kirkwall. On June 14 three vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron encountered submarines. The *Motagua*, off the Flannan Islands, sighted a steamer in a sinking condition with a submarine near; she drove off the U-boat but failed to save the merchant vessel. That night the *India*, on the way to the Clyde, saw a periscope and was missed by a torpedo some 40 miles north of the Butt of Lewis. Next day the *Orotava* rescued a Danish steamer by driving off a submarine in much the same vicinity. In view of the presence of this submarine the patrols up to 60° N. were shifted to north and west for a time.

These incidents on the West Coast of Scotland emphasised the desirability of a base in the north. The Admiral went to Swarbacks Minn on June 19 for a conference with Rear-Admiral Fawckner who had been appointed S.N.O., Swarbacks Minn, on May 14. Representatives of the Works and Store Departments were also met and arrangements were made for coaling and watering 24 ships. The squadron consumed 1,200 tons of coal and 150 tons of water a day. In the six months since December 25, 1914, the *Alsatian* had steamed 35,758 miles and had been under weigh 138 days; she had consumed 20,796 tons of coal and 13,322 tons of water. These figures Admiral de Chair considered typical of the work performed by his squadron as a whole.³

40. So far, the Northern Patrol had been worked by armed merchant cruisers only, but an incident on the Norwegian coast led to the addition of other classes of vessel. The *Teutonic*, then off-shore in 64° 30' N., sighted a German steamer, the *Konsul Schultze*, and gave chase. The steamer naturally made for territorial waters and reached Trondhjem in safety; but Admiral de Chair had little doubt that a submarine in place of the *Teutonic* would have captured or sunk the *Konsul Schultze*. The Commander-in-Chief agreed and arranged with the Admiralty for an E-class boat to be sent. The boat selected was E.13. She left Yarmouth at 2.30 a.m., June 25, with orders to cruise off Stadlandet in lat. 62° 10' N. for seven days. She reached her station in the morning of the 27th. The weather was bad; during the next three days it showed no signs of improving, and as, moreover, the external exhaust pipe which

¹ Gayer, I. 23.

² H.S. 185, p. 194.

³ H.S. 185, pp. 209, 214.

had broken adrift was hammering hard on the hull, E.13, which had sighted nothing but one Norwegian and one Danish steamer, decided to return to Harwich.¹ This was the only attempt at a submarine patrol in 62° N. during the year 1915.

Though the submarine had not achieved any result, an armed trawler, the *Tenby Castle*, sent at the same time by the Commander-in-Chief to work with the Norway Patrol had better success. The patrol now consisted of two armed merchant cruisers, one being from "C" Patrol, where her place was taken by the armed boarding steamer *Royal Scot*. The senior officer of the patrol was Commander F. H. Walter, R.N., in the *Victorian*, an armed merchant cruiser originally working with Cruiser Force I in the neighbourhood of the Canary Islands. She had been found too slow for that area, and after being paid off was armed with six 6-in. guns and recommissioned on June 9, mostly with the crew of the *Caribbean* whose place in the Tenth Cruiser Squadron she took.² This was her first turn of patrol duty. The *Tenby Castle* (Lieut. J. S. Randell, R.N.R.), soon made a capture. On June 30 she sighted the German steamer *Pallas* just outside territorial waters off Kya Island; she refused to stop till a shot was fired across her bow and even then headed for the shore. Finally, Lieut. Randell put two men on board as armed guard. Meanwhile, the *Pallas* was drawing nearer the shore, and when the *Victorian*, to whom the *Tenby Castle* had signalled, came up, the prize was within 2½ miles of land.³ She was now in territorial waters; moreover, the incident had been witnessed by several other vessels, including the Norwegian patrol boat, and when the Norwegian Captain requested Commander Walter to release the *Pallas* he had no alternative but to comply.

41. One of the vessels the Admiralty wished brought in was the Swedish steamer *Oscar II*, 2,637 tons, from Buenos Aires for Christiania with a general cargo. She was intercepted by the *Patuca* about 100 miles north-west of the Flannan Islands soon after 2 a.m. July 1. In the process of examination the two ships collided, and considerable damage was caused to both vessels; that to the *Oscar II* being the more serious. Water entered her engine and boiler rooms, putting the fires out, and the crew abandoned the ship and boarded the *Patuca*. The *Columbella* and *Digby* were ordered to the assistance of the *Patuca*, and at 10.40 a.m. the *Royal Scot*, which had been detached for the purpose, commenced to tow the *Oscar II*, escorted by the *Digby*, the *Patuca* having meanwhile gone to the Clyde for repair; but the progress throughout the day was slow on account of the tow parting and the vessel being so low in the water. Throughout the night and the following morning (July 2) the difficulty was

¹ Report by Capt. (S.), H.S. 294, p. 139.

² X. 3669/1915; Capt. W. 178/1915.

³ M. 05715/15.

accentuated by a rising wind and sea, and at 11.30 a.m. all hands had to leave the *Oscar II*; but she remained in tow completely waterlogged until 9 a.m. July 3, when the last tow parted in a heavy sea. Attempts to pick up the tow were unsuccessful, and at 7 p.m. the *Oscar II* sank in lat. 59° 11' N., long. 7° 37' W. The owners preferred a claim against the Admiralty for the vessel, and in February, 1921, it was decided that her loss should be a charge on the Naval Prize Fund.

42. It was not long before the trawler *Tenby Castle* achieved a further success. On July 8 she sighted the German steamer *Friedrich Arp* off the Huso and Haran Islands on the Norwegian coast, and firing a shot across her bows, ordered her to steer south-west by west. The German captain ignored this order and steered towards the land; whereupon the trawler fired a shot into the steamer's stern. She stopped then, but still refused to steer as directed, although warned that she would be sunk unless she obeyed orders. In a short time she again made for the shore. The *Tenby Castle* fired 16 rounds into her starboard quarter and she sank in 67° 47' N., 14° 15' E. The crew and pilot were rescued and transferred to the *India*. The *Friedrich Arp* was bound to Stettin from Narvik with a cargo of magnetic ore. This success led to the establishment of a regular trawler patrol off the Norwegian coast, and on July 25 the Commander-in-Chief issued the necessary orders.¹ Six trawlers were placed under the orders of the Admiral Commanding, Orkneys and Shetlands; they were based on Lerwick, and it was expected that at least two, and possibly three, would be maintained on patrol. They were to operate in certain areas—T.1 off Stadlandet; T.2 north-west of the position 64° 38' N., 10° 40' E.; and T.3 off Husobarren in 67° 42' N., 14° E. Their duty was to intercept German and neutral ships carrying iron ore and bound south from Narvik. The merchant cruisers, of which two or three should always be on patrol, had four stations—the areas round G.1 in 63° 5' N., 6° 40' E.; G.2 off Lundo in 64° 10' N., 9° 30' E.; G.3 on the parallel of 66° 30' N.; and G.4 on the parallel of 67° 15' N., between 11° 30' E. and 13° 30' E. Thus one ship of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron should always be within 100 miles of the trawlers to support them. The crews of the trawlers were to cultivate friendly relations with the local fishermen and endeavour to keep their own movements and positions from the enemy.

43. The fact that we were attempting to interfere with the iron ore traffic did not long escape the attention of the Germans. They became aware, through the report of an agent, that one of our armed merchant cruisers was operating in the Vestfjord in 67° N., and U.22 (Lieut.-Commander Hoppe) left Borkum on August 3 for that destination. After arrival on August 8 he had not long to wait. The *India* was seen approaching, and as

¹ M. 05834/15.

soon as she came near enough Hoppe torpedoed her.¹ She sank in five minutes in the position 67° 24' N., 13° 44' E. Most of the boats were swamped. Of the 189 survivors, 157 had either dived or went down with the ship. Two boatloads pulled ashore, while the remainder were picked up by the armed trawler *Saxon* and a Swedish steamer *Gotaland*.

Commander W. G. A. Kennedy, in his report,² places on record his "admiration at the magnificent behaviour of the officers and men, as notwithstanding the appalling swiftness of the catastrophe, the most perfect discipline prevailed until the end." The *Gotaland*, with the men she had saved, proceeded for Narvik; she was followed by Commander Kennedy in the *Saxon*, who anticipated that, if he steered southward for the *Virginian*, the submarine would follow and torpedo her too. The Norwegian authorities were quite willing to let the *Saxon* go to sea again with all she had saved; but as there was no food or accommodation and everyone was worn out, reluctantly, Commander Kennedy decided upon internment. The internment camp was finally fixed at Jorstadmoen, Fuaborg, near Lillehammer.

(before the disaster had) We now know that the submarine which sank the *India* had been sent so far north for that special purpose; but intelligence received ~~at the time~~ led us to suspect a submarine base within reasonable distance of the White Sea. To search for this the *Columbella* was ordered to go with a sloop and two trawlers and search Bear Island (74° N., 19° E.), Spitzbergen, and the coast between the North Cape and the White Sea.³ Accordingly the trawlers *Arley* and *Mafeking* left Scapa on July 27, followed by the *Columbella* and *Acacia*. The *Columbella* was back at Scapa by August 26, and her report of the cruise, which had produced no positive evidence, tended rather to discredit the idea that a submarine had ever really been in the White Sea.⁴

CHAPTER VII.

THE AUTUMN OF 1915.

44. In the home areas of the Northern Patrol enemy submarines were more and more frequently reported. Not only did the merchant cruisers expect attack, but the armed guards sent in with suspected ships ran a similar danger. The officers and men forming these guards were in an unpleasant

¹ Gayer II, 42, 43. He remarks that this is one of the rare instances where information received from spies turned out to be accurate.

² Report on Loss of *India*, H.S. 185, pp. 330-340.

³ Orders for Operation M., H.F. 0016/6, G.F.S. P. XXX.

⁴ G.F.S. P. XXX.

position. Their duty was to compel the master of the neutral ship in which they were embarked to conduct his vessel into port for examination. As these examination ports were all within the zone declared dangerous by the Germans, there was a possibility that the guards might encounter a submarine; and to guide their conduct in such a case the Commander-in-Chief issued on March 28 the following rules:—

- (a) The officer in charge must endeavour to arrange for the neutral ship to escape.
- (b) The officer must not use the neutral ship as a weapon for attacking the submarine unless actually attacked by her.
- (c) The prize crew¹ must not fight on the deck of the neutral ship unless the submarine has committed a hostile act against the neutral ship. In the latter event the prize crew are justified in fighting to the last.

He referred these rules for confirmation to the Admiralty where they gave rise to a lengthy discussion in which the Foreign Office and the Law Officers of the Crown were included. Before a decision had been reached it was discovered that the German Naval Attaché in Sweden had announced that the Germans considered they had a full right to torpedo every neutral vessel with a prize crew on board. In view of this, the Commander-in-Chief asked that the prize crews should be supplied with lance bombs and directed to attack any submarine which might come alongside, without waiting for action on her part.² It was recognised at the Admiralty that the position of an armed guard on board a ship flying a neutral flag was one of great difficulty. Should the Germans board the ship and the guard not resist they would be carried into a German port as prisoners; if, on the other hand, they did resist, in order to do so successfully they must initiate a hostile act such as throwing a lance bomb from the deck of the neutral ship. In effect this would be to commit an act of war under the neutral flag,³ an action that was without precedent and would undoubtedly raise serious complications with neutral States. There was even the suggestion made to discontinue the practice of placing an armed guard on board a ship sent in for examination and to substitute a system whereby a bond should be taken for the ship proceeding as ordered.⁴ The opinion of the Law Officers, however, was that a guard placed on board a ship to compel the master to bring a neutral vessel into port had the same right of resistance as a prize crew which was in possession of a ship seized as prize.

¹ These rules are in X. 9400/15. They are written as for officers in charge of prize crews but presumably applied to armed guards as well.

² Telegram 43 from C.-in-C., H.F., 21.5.15.

³ By Admiralty Weekly Order 89 of 22.1.15, the neutral flag was not to be lowered in vessels sent in for examination.

⁴ X. 9400/15.

Accordingly, the Admiralty informed the Commander-in-Chief that "an attempt by the enemy at hostile action towards the neutral ship proceeding for examination, such as the flying by the enemy submarine of a signal 'abandon ship' . . . justifies the neutral ship in taking immediate steps in self-defence to attack the submarine instantly, whether by ramming or by the use of bombs from the neutral's deck."

This letter¹ was not written till August 27 and meanwhile the armed guards had been having experiences. On July 6 a large submarine accosted the Danish sailing vessel *Maren* on passage to Kirkwall with an armed guard from the *Columbella*, but did not molest either the ship or the guard.

On July 28 the Norwegian steamer *Trondhjemsfjord* was in 61° 30' N., 3° 42' W., proceeding towards Kirkwall with an armed guard from the *Hildebrand* on board when a submarine opened fire on her, the shot passing over her bows. The master altered course to bring the submarine astern and proceeded at full speed. After a chase of half an hour the submarine fired a second shot and the steamer, which was being rapidly overhauled, stopped. The submarine then ordered the master on board with the ship's papers. Before leaving his ship, he arranged for the disguise of the armed guard, while his wife provided the officer in charge with some of her husband's clothes in place of his own which she put with her own effects for removal. The rifles and gear of the guard were concealed in the fore peak. Soon after the master had got aboard the submarine, the German officer in command made the signal to the steamer to abandon ship immediately, and as soon as the boats were clear fired a torpedo into her amidships from a distance of about 130 yards. A large quantity of sulphuric acid amongst the cargo burst with a loud explosion and flew high into the air. The ship sank shortly afterwards. The submarine then towed the boats for a distance of about four miles until she met the Norwegian barque *Glance*, which she ordered to embark the boats' complements. The captain of the submarine showed every courtesy and explained that his chief reason for sinking the vessel was the fact that she had been British-owned and purchased by the Norwegian company since the outbreak of hostilities. While on board the submarine the master denied that he had an armed guard on board or that he had even been boarded. The armed guard eventually reached Thurso after transfer to a trawler.

Comparable with this experience was that of an armed guard from the *Motagua* aboard the Norwegian steamer *Fimreite* on July 23 in 60° 17' N., 8° 43' W. About 4 a.m. a submarine, afterwards identified as U.36, was sighted on the port bow making for the vessel at full speed. The *Fimreite* stopped, and the master went alongside the submarine. Meanwhile, the officer in charge of the

¹ N.L. 31521/15 in X. 9400/15.

guard ordered his men to take off their uniforms and assist in turning the boats out. On return to the *Fimreite* the master stated he had given Hull *via* Kirkwall as his destination, and had replied to a question as to whether he had an armed guard on board: "Yes, one officer and four soldiers." The submarine captain then told him that he would sink his vessel for trading with the English, and with regard to the armed guard shouted: "Don't let them go into the boats. Let them sink." However, when the master returned he found all his crew as well as the guard in the boats.¹ The officer of the guard had ordered his men to remove everything in the way of uniform clothing before getting into the boats and to disguise themselves as much as possible, taking only their revolvers in their pockets. After sinking the vessel the submarine at once left the vicinity. During the afternoon of the same day the Norwegian barque *Springbank* picked up the crew and armed guard and transferred them later to the *Caliban* on passage to Stornoway.²

Still another case was that of the armed guard put aboard the *Pass of Balmaha*. This vessel, an American full-rigged ship, was stopped on July 21 by the *Victorian*, than on "C" Patrol; and an armed guard consisting of a sub-lieutenant, R.N.R., one petty officer and four men, was put on board with instructions to take her to Lerwick or Kirkwall as the wind should suit. Two days later in about 60° 18' N., 7° 5' W., they sighted a large submarine sinking several vessels; next morning this submarine, U.36, came alongside the *Pass of Balmaha*, which was flying American colours, and demanded her papers. By this time the armed guard had changed into borrowed clothing and had stowed themselves in the fore peak, relying on the chance that the submarine would release the ship. But instead, she ordered the vessel to Cuxhaven, put a warrant officer on board and remained alongside till relieved by another submarine, which kept in touch all the way to Heligoland. The guard remained below the whole time, hoping a British patrol would turn up; but no British man-of-war was sighted, and on arrival at Cuxhaven on August 1 the officer in charge of the guard gave himself up and was made a prisoner of war.³

45. The Northern Patrol now extended from the Lofoten Islands to the North of Iceland, and the value of Swarbacks Minn as a coaling base is easily appreciated. The work there was proceeding well. A loch above Olna Firth was found to yield a fair supply of drinking water. Boiler water to the extent of 150 tons per day for the ship's boilers would be required and this amount could be led through a conduit pipe to the shore

¹ N.I.D., 9602/15.

² Rules of conduct for boarding officers and officers in charge of armed guards are contained in "Instructions for Boarding Officers and Prize Officers in War-Time."

³ M. 06829/15.

whence lighters could convey it to the ships. These arrangements necessitated the provision of four 100-ton steam hoys fitted with the requisite hoses.

With reference to coal, it was considered that with the large consumption of the squadron (1,600 tons a day) four colliers should always be available at any moment, and that a moored coal hulk should be provided for supplying yachts, drifters and harbour craft. The *Gibraltar*, already at this time in process of being fitted out as a depôt and repair ship, arrived on August 3, and moored in a position that enabled her guns to command the boom which had been finished on July 20.¹ Look-out stations connected by telephone were erected and a pair of minesweeping trawlers provided to keep the channel open in the event of enemy minelaying. On July 28 Admiral de Chair again anchored in Swarbacks Minn for a conference and found the work in hand well on its way towards completion. The boom defence between Papa Little Island and Muckle Roe Island was in place with the gate in operation. A portion of the outer net defence had been supplied though it was not yet in place. Five colliers with a total of 14,942 tons of coal lay in the harbour together with the salvage vessel *Zepher* for mooring net defences. The coaling of the *Patuca* in the first days of August showed the great advantage gained by the new organisation at the base. Arriving at 5 a.m. August 4 she took in 1,000 tons of coal, filled up with water, received fresh provisions, swept boiler tubes, and left on August 7. The actual coaling which was carried out with the assistance of 100 R.N.R. stokers from the *Gibraltar*, an augmentation in complement specially made for this purpose, occupied 50 hours. Thus the use of this base necessitated a period of four days for coaling, provisioning, etc., in comparison with the eight to ten days required by a visit to the Clyde or Liverpool. And further, the ships did not leave their sphere of operations. Swarbacks Minn could not, however, entirely take the place of the former bases; and ships still continued to visit Liverpool or the Clyde every three months or so.

46. Iceland was acquiring importance as a possible source of supply for Germany, and information reached the Admiralty of various forms of enemy activity in the island. The *Digby* visited Reykjavik early in August and found that vessels were boasting of having evaded the British blockade. It was understood by our Consul that wool and hides exported from there were intended for Germany *via* Denmark.² A new Danish line had been inaugurated apparently to deal with this traffic, and on August 30 the *Orcoma* intercepted and sent to Kirkwall with an armed guard the *Gullfoss* of the new line from Reykjavik to

¹ This was only a temporary measure. The position was inconvenient for a depôt ship and later she moored elsewhere, the defence of the entrance being taken over by auxiliary patrol vessels. G.F.S. P. XXX.

² X. 8933/15.

Copenhagen with ponies, wool, fish, cod-oil and 25 passengers. Her master said he was proceeding *viâ* Kirkwall, and then protested against being sent in on account of the danger of submarines—a line of conduct somewhat inconsistent. The Foreign Office brought pressure upon the Icelandic authorities, and upon the owners of the vessels trading with Iceland, to induce them to arrange that all vessels should call at a port in the United Kingdom for examination. As a result of their efforts, the United, Thor, and Iceland Shipping Companies, all of Denmark, and trading regularly to Iceland, agreed to the suggestion; and Admiral de Chair was informed that he need not, as a general rule, send in the vessels of these companies. But, nevertheless, occasions arose when it was considered advisable to do so. The *Orcoma*, for instance, some time later intercepted the *Island* of the United Shipping Company bound from Reykjavik to Leith and Copenhagen with meat, fish, sheepskins and 15 passengers, one of whom was German. In view of the suspicious character of the passengers it was thought desirable to make sure of a thorough examination being carried out and an armed guard proceeded in the vessel to Lerwick.

Part of the trade of Iceland consists of herrings carried in small sailing vessels, and these when met were frequently sent in with armed guards. The discomforts suffered by these during the winter were varied and unpleasant; frequently the food ran out before port was reached, and they had to subsist on salt herrings out of the cargo. In bad weather, which was almost continuous, they manned the pumps and trimmed the sails as necessary; they were constantly wet through and frequently had to sleep in their saturated clothes—a chilly experience so near the Arctic Circle. In particular, the armed guards in the intercepted sailing vessels *Valand* and *Haugar* received Their Lordships' commendation.¹

47. On September 11 at night, in a dense fog, the *Patia* and *Oropesa* collided in 58° N., 11° W., west of the Hebrides. The *Oropesa* got off lightly; but the *Patia's* bows were so badly damaged that her captain preferred to steam stern first, though her speed that way was only three knots.

The Admiral ordered her to the Clyde with the *Ebro* as escort, and later, when the *Oropesa* was found to be leaking, he despatched her there also. By 3 p.m. on the 12th the *Patia* had made so little progress that the Commander-in-Chief sent out tugs from Stornoway to tow her in to East Loch Roag for temporary repairs. At 2.40 a.m. on the 13th, by which time the damaged ship had reached only as far as 10° W., she sighted a submarine. The *Ebro* attempted to ram but failed to hit the enemy. The *Patia* turned round and went ahead at 13 knots, and finding that this was safe, the Commander-in-Chief ordered her direct to the Clyde

¹ H.S. 185, pp. 361-371.

instead of East Loch Roag. Shortly after midnight on the 14th she reported another submarine attack, but the torpedo failed to hit her and she arrived safely in the Clyde at 11 p.m.

48. Submarines off the west of Scotland had so far made that area specially dangerous for the Tenth Cruiser Squadron; but that peril was shortly to be removed. On September 20 an order from the Kaiser forbade further U-boat warfare on the West Coast and in the Channel,¹ and consequently the only submarines likely to be found there would be those on passage to the Mediterranean. The bases at Liverpool and the Clyde should henceforth be safe.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WINTER OF 1915-1916.

49. The approach of winter necessitated a change in the arrangement of the patrols, and on November 1 this came into force. In view of the increased hours of darkness the line abreast patrol system was substituted for that of line ahead. The new positions and arrangements generally were as follows:—

"A" Patrol.—North of the Faeroes. Centre line 315° from lat. 62° 30' N., long. 5° W. Ships 40 miles apart, crossing centre line at noon daily, steering to make good 280°, turning in time to cross again at midnight, steering 100° until time to turn again.

"C" Patrol.—North from St. Kilda. Centre line meridian of 11° W., southern ship being in lat. 58° 6' N. Ships 25 miles apart, crossing centre line at 11 a.m., steering to make good 280°, turning in time to cross again at 1 a.m., steering 100° until time to turn again. The southern ships were ordered not to approach St. Kilda or the Flannan Islands within 40 miles.

"F" Patrol.—In the vicinity of Hvalsbak, Iceland. Lat. 64° 36' N., long. 13° 15' W., keeping outside 100-fathom line in thick weather.

¹ Gayer, II, 55. *Am 20 September, 1915, ging beim Führer der U-Boote der Nordsee und bei der U-Flotille Flandern der Allerhöchste Befehl ein, jede Art U-Bootskrieg an der Westküste Grossbritanniens und im Kanal einzustellen.*

The establishment of Lerwick as an examination port had by now been completed and a large percentage of vessels intercepted were sent in there. Between October 13 and November 2, of the ships sent to Lerwick, five were placed in the Prize Court, four were awaiting decision and eight were cleared.

The disposition of the squadron on November 7 was as follows:—

"A" Patrol.—*Motagua, Ebro, Oropesa, Alsatian.*

"C" Patrol.—*Otway, Victorian, Hildebrand, Hilary, Almanzora, Teutonic.*

"F" Patrol.—*Andes.*

"G" Patrol.—*Alcantara, Orcoma, and an armed trawler.*

The *Changuinola* and *Columbella* were coaling at Swarbacks Minn, and the *Cedric* was on her way there. The *Virginian* was coaling at Liverpool; and the *Mantua, Patuca, Digby, and Patia* were coaling in the Clyde. The *Arlanza* had gone to Archangel with General Wolfe Murray and other officers; on the return journey she struck a mine on October 22, but was towed into Kola Inlet, where she was safely moored and left for the winter.¹ The *Orotava* was on the way to the White Sea to get in touch with her.

50. The *Digby* and *Oropesa* were soon to leave the squadron. In order to make clear to the United States and to other neutral countries that our policy with regard to trade was also that of the Allied Powers, it was felt that, if possible, the French should take part in the blockade operations. When asked, they proposed at first to send their auxiliary cruiser *Atmah*; but she was only of 1,664 tons gross and obviously unsuitable for such work as the Northern Patrol had to perform. They were prepared to provide only a small complement, and ultimately it was decided to turn over to them the *Digby*, as the smallest vessel on the patrol. She left the station, and on November 23 reached Brest, where she was commissioned with a French crew and renamed *Artois*. The French then asked for a second ship of her type; the nearest was the *Oropesa*, which left the Northern Patrol and reached Brest on November 29. She was there commissioned with a French crew and renamed *Champagne*; she did not rejoin the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, but was used as a regular monthly packet between France and Archangel.²

51. The Norwegian-American Line continued to give trouble. Another of their vessels, the *Kristianiafjord*, was sent into Kirkwall in the middle of November. She had been intercepted at night and as she was steaming at high speed with all lights out it was fortunate she was not sunk by gunfire in mistake for a hostile minelayer. The Admiral suggesting that strong measures were

¹ Full details of the occurrence are in G.F.S. P. XXX.

² Papers titled X. 9261/15, X. 9416/15.

necessary in dealing with this line, urged that the vessel should be seized; but in point of fact we had recently concluded an agreement with that Company whereby the *Kristianiafjord* and *Bergensfjord* would not be required to call at a British port for examination provided they followed a fixed course in order that they could be intercepted and brought in if necessary.¹ On the other hand, the Company agreed to abide by the "Conditions of Supply of Bunker Coal," which enabled us to exert a good deal of control over the operations of neutral shipowners. The effect of these "conditions" was marked, and they served to lighten considerably the work of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. The numbers of neutral vessels calling voluntarily for inspection increased from 32 per cent. in October to 53 per cent. in December; the percentage evading the patrols decreased from 20 per cent. to 11 per cent. in the same period.²

52. The end of the year provided an occasion for analysing the work performed by the Squadron. During 1915 the armed merchant cruisers patrolled without intermission an area of 220,000 square miles in all weathers, and in circumstances rendered especially difficult by the presence of enemy submarines. During this time 3,098 ships had been intercepted and carefully examined; 743 of the number found with contraband or other suspicious cargo were sent in to a British port for further examination and confiscation if considered desirable by the authorities. Though during the last five months of 1915 Norway and Denmark received 77 cargoes, of which our authorities had no particulars,³ out of an aggregate of 3,800 vessels passing through the patrol area, only eight whose interception was considered important evaded the patrol.⁴

Two of the merchant cruisers were lost by submarine attack (*Bayano* and *India*) and one (*Clan Macnaughton*) foundered in heavy weather; the *Arlanza* had been mined and was awaiting repair in Russia; the *Viknor* had been lost with all hands. The casualties among the personnel of the squadron for the year amounted to 63 officers and 800 men. This was out of an estimated total complement of 9,000.⁵ Of the 365 days of 1915, the *Alsatian* had been 262 days at sea. She had steamed 71,500 miles and had burned 40,287 tons of coal; and this record the Admiral considered to be typical of the whole squadron.

Of the armed guards, one was taken prisoner, one carried to Norway (where their prize, the American barque *Andrew Welch*, was retained, while they were allowed to proceed to England), and two had their prizes sunk under them by submarines. The

¹ C.I.O. 100/1916.

² See C.B. 1554: *The Economic Blockade*, Chapter XXVIII and Appendix.

³ Carless Davis: *History of the Blockade*, p. 208.

⁴ For Analysis of Vessels intercepted see Appendix B.

⁵ H.S. 185, pp. 415, 517.

Admiralty had issued new orders as to the conduct of armed guards. It was now thought that an attempt on their part to attack a submarine was not likely to be effective, and was not, in fact, advisable for political reasons. The Admiralty, therefore, on December 17 asked the Commander-in-Chief to issue orders that resistance should not be offered by armed guards to submarines or other vessels.¹ Admiral de Chair in reporting the work of his squadron drew attention to the "cheerful willingness of these young officers and men who take this constant risk without the satisfaction of being allowed to strike a blow in defence of their own safety." The Commander-in-Chief endorsed his remarks and added that he considered "the work of officers and men merits the very highest commendation. They deserve all that their country can do for them."²

The advent of 1916 was accompanied by a series of north-westerly gales; during the worst of these, on January 15, the boom gate vessel at Swarbacks Minn dragged her anchors and blocked the entrance. The shore end of the boom net defence, which was secured round a large rock, also carried away, due to the rock splitting under the strain.³

During these westerly gales several sailing ships sent in with armed guards had been unable to make either Kirkwall or Lerwick and had been driven over to the Norwegian coast. Permission was now given for such vessels to make any British port except fleet bases.⁴ It should be noted that the armed guards were not detained by the Norwegian Authorities.

The winter weather was proving too much for the trawlers on the Norwegian coast, and at the end of 1915 they were transferred to the Fair Island Channel, where submarines were continually reported.

53. At sea the crews of the Northern Patrol force were continuously engaged in arduous and dangerous work, but ashore, especially at Liverpool, labour troubles frequently delayed the sailing of ships to relieve their hardworked consorts; and it was with some indignation that the Admiral heard on December 28 that his vessels in the Clyde could not sail on account of the workmen's Christmas holidays. The Commander-in-Chief wrote specially to the Admiralty drawing attention to this matter, but it seems that nothing could be done.⁵

54. Among the vessels that got away from Liverpool after the Christmas holidays was the *Artois* (late *Digby*); she left on January 14 to join the patrol, and from that time onwards acted with the Tenth Cruiser Squadron. She put in to Swarbacks Minn to coal on the 20th, and an officer was lent to her for ten days to advise as to the routine and work to be done. On completion she proceeded to "C" Patrol. There, on February 2,

¹ M. 08686/15 in X. 9400/15.

³ H.S. 298, p. 16.

² H.S. 185, pp. 416, 437.

⁴ H.S. 268, p. 77.

⁵ H.S. 298, pp. 32, 33. The holidays were considered necessary as the men had been working overtime and on Sundays.

she intercepted the Danish sailing vessel *Vigilant*. This vessel had lost her foremast and was in such a bad state that the master asked for his crew to be taken aboard. The transfer was effected with difficulty on account of the weather, and attempts were made to tow the derelict. Nothing could be done till the 4th, when the weather slightly improved; the *Artois* had been standing by all this time and then took her in tow and proceeded for Stornoway. She arrived on the 6th, having sighted a submarine; the wind had by that time risen to a full gale. This was the French crew's initial experience of the routine of the Northern Patrol in the winter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE "ALCANTARA"—"GREIF" ACTION, FEBRUARY 29, 1916.

55. So far the Tenth Cruiser Squadron had been exposed to three chief dangers. The weather had claimed at least one victim; enemy mines had destroyed two more; submarines had sunk three vessels. The squadron had not yet encountered any surface craft, though this form of attack had been met by ships of the Grand Fleet. On August 8, 1915, the *Ramsay*, one of the Grand Fleet boarding steamers, was in the act of lowering a boat to board a vessel flying Russian colours, when the latter opened fire from concealed guns and sank the *Ramsay* with a torpedo. The enemy had looked perfectly innocent and no sign of guns had been visible even at 80 yards distance; the surprise was complete. The incident was the first of its kind, but the Commander-in-Chief considered it certain to be repeated and issued special orders dated August 24, 1915, to deal with such a contingency. In these orders the chief interest for the Tenth Cruiser Squadron lay in the following paragraph:—

"Care is required when closing vessels for boarding or examination, and the gun and torpedo armament instantly ready. Bearings from which torpedoes can be fired should be avoided; a good position from which to approach is on the quarter, as the rudder and screw can be watched and early indications of the suspect's intentions will be obtained; if the ship has been acting suspiciously, is thought to be armed, or manœuvres for position, she should be stopped with a warning gun, an offing kept, and the master ordered to bring his papers aboard. If the weather is too bad for boat work, the ship is to be ordered to steer for a sheltered position, a vessel of the patrol escorting her. Fire should be opened in case of non-compliance with orders.

"Where suspicion exists, another patrol vessel should be informed and, if considered necessary, called to support."¹

¹ G.F.S.P. 0042/2.

These orders were still in force when on February 28, 1916, at 11.38 a.m., the Admiralty warned the Commander-in-Chief that a German decoy ship had been off the Skaw at 7 that morning proceeding westward at about 10 knots. On receipt of this he ordered two light cruisers and four destroyers from Rosyth to patrol the area covering the Skaw—Farn Island and Naze—May Island trade routes, one light cruiser with two destroyers to operate on each route. From her proceedings in the Baltic it was thought the enemy might have a submarine with her, and this patrol was warned that great precautions were essential when boarding steamers, in view of possible attack from the decoy ship or submarine. They were to go as far as the meridian of 5° E. during daylight, patrolling west of the meridian of Greenwich after dark to prevent minelaying. The vessels sent from the Forth were the *Inconstant*, *Cordelia*, and four destroyers. In addition, the Commander-in-Chief sent the light cruisers *Calliope*, *Comus*, and *Blanche* from Scapa, each with a destroyer, to search during daylight between 57° 20' N. and 60° N. and the meridian of 2° E. and 4° E.; at night they were to patrol the meridian of Greenwich.¹

Shortly after midnight directional bearings of a German wireless signal placed the transmitting ship in 58° 17' N., 5° 47' E., near Ekersund at 8.20 p.m., and the Commander-in-Chief accordingly signalled to the three Scapa light cruisers that they should be on the circle with radius 200 miles long from that point at 10 a.m. The *Comus* was to search 40 miles in the direction 50° from 61° N., 1° 10' E.; the *Calliope* 40 miles in the direction 230° from the same point, while the *Blanche* was to make for 61° 30' N., 0° E., at 18 knots, sending back her destroyer in view of the weather.

The *Columbella* on "G" Patrol was about to return to Swarbacks Minn to coal,² but the Commander-in-Chief ordered her and the *Patia*, which was on her way out to that area, to patrol for 60 miles 50° from 61° 30' N., 0° E. between 3 p.m. and dark on the 29th. They were to be 30 miles apart in line ahead.³

Two other ships of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron were in the same neighbourhood; the *Andes* (Captain G. B. W. Young, R.N.), which had just arrived, and the *Alcantara* (Captain T. E. Wardle, R.N.), which was to proceed in the afternoon of the 29th for Liverpool.⁴

Before leaving his station Captain Wardle arranged a rendezvous with the *Andes* for 9 a.m. on the 29th in 61° 45' N., 0° 58' E. in order to transfer secret papers. He was near this spot when

¹ For the detailed orders see H.F.S. O. 33 in X. 9473/16.

² *Teutonic* W/T Signal Logs (Deptford Nos. 24840/24841) No. 722.

³ *Teutonic* Signal Log No. 768.

⁴ *Teutonic* Signal Log 744.

soon after 8 a.m. he received from the Senior Officer of his Squadron by wireless :—

Alcantara not to leave patrol pending further orders. Armed disguised enemy merchant auxiliary from the southward may pass patrol line to-day.¹

Accordingly, Captain Wardle shifted his men into clean under-clothing and took precautions to see that, as far as possible, his guns were ready for instant action.²

56. At 8.45 a.m., when heading about N.N.E., he sighted smoke on his port beam and shortly afterwards received from the *Andes*, which was to the northward of him but not yet visible, "Enemy in sight steering N.E. 15 knots," followed by a further signal understood in the *Alcantara* as stating the enemy had two funnels.³ Captain Wardle at once increased to full speed and turned to N.W. which took him between the *Andes* and the smoke of the stranger; by this time he had made her out to be a steamer with one funnel, flying Norwegian colours, which were also painted on her sides. In a few minutes he sighted the *Andes* on his starboard bow, apparently steaming away fast in a north-easterly direction; his duty, he considered, was that he should investigate the steamer before proceeding to help the *Andes* with the enemy.⁴ After he had fired two rounds of blank the steamer stopped and hoisted her number, M G V I; this, however, could not be identified and Captain Wardle called his ship's company to action stations and kept his guns trained on her. By this time, 9.20 a.m., he had received from the *Andes* "Enemy has altered course to S.E."⁵ and he saw that the *Andes* had also altered course to S.E. As he could not see anything that the *Andes* might be chasing, he signalled to her by searchlight, "Am intercepting suspicious vessel. Is enemy still in sight?"⁶ No immediate reply being received and the outward appearance and answers of the stranger agreeing with the name *Rena* painted on her stern, of which ship the particulars and voyage were known, he determined to put an armed guard on board and then go off to help his consort. Accordingly, at 10.14 he signalled, "Is enemy still in sight? This ship is *Rena*. Armed guard on board." The *Andes* made the unexpected reply, "This is the suspicious ship."⁷

¹ This is entered in *Andes* Signal Log (Deptford No. 21494) as received 8.18 a.m.

² Capt. Wardle's Second Report, dated March 21, 1916, in X. 9473/16.

³ There is no mention of funnels in *Andes* Signal Log till 9.30—"Vessel steering North when sighted then altered to North-East. Painted black, black funnel, two masts, speed about 15 knots, 0910." The times given in Capt. Wardle's report appear to be about 20 minutes less than those in *Andes* Signal Log

⁴ Capt. Wardle's Second Report.

⁵ *Andes* Signal Log has: "9.39, *Andes* to *Alcantara*. Vessel apparently altered to East."

⁶ Logged in *Andes* Signal Log as received 9.45.

⁷ In making his first signal Capt. Young intended to use the phrase "suspicious ship," and it was not till afterwards that he found the word "enemy" had been made. Court Martial Proceedings, p. 164.

57. The warning came too late. The *Alcantara* had closed the stranger's stern to about 1,000 yards. Just as the boarding boat was about to be lowered from the port side with its armed guard on board, the *Rena's* ensign staff dropped over her stern; her steering box on the poop opened to disclose a gun; flaps in her sides dropped down, revealing guns in position; and she opened fire on the *Alcantara* from all guns which would bear. With her first few shells she wrecked the boarding boat and cut all the electrical communications and the pipes for the telemotor steering gear. From the bridge of the *Alcantara*, which was being peppered with machine gun fire, Captain Wardle sent his messenger to order the after steering gear to be connected up; but the messenger was killed and it was some ten minutes before the ship was under control. During this interval she continued to close the enemy, who by this time was going ahead again.

The *Alcantara* had opened fire immediately and was doing great execution in spite of the fact that the training gear of some of her guns was so bad that they had to be pushed round.¹ After about a quarter of an hour boats were seen to be leaving the enemy, which was enveloped in a cloud of smoke and had stopped firing. Captain Wardle also ceased firing. His own ship was in no better condition than the German; the *Alcantara* was listing to port and by 10.45 a.m. was undoubtedly sinking. He, therefore, decided to abandon her and gave the orders for boat stations. A quarter of an hour later she had listed to 90°, and in this position she sank with her keel horizontal.

58. Meanwhile, Captain Young in the *Andes* had been firing whenever he had not been screened by the *Alcantara*. When the enemy commenced action he had been 7,500 yards off, and throughout the engagement he had maintained 6,000 yards in order to keep out of torpedo range.² Just as the enemy and the *Alcantara* ceased fire the *Comus* (Captain Alan Hotham) and her destroyer, the *Munster*, came in sight. Captain Hotham, having taken in the *Andes'* signal announcing the enemy in sight had steered towards her, gradually working up to 27 knots; but he was not on the spot till the *Alcantara* sank, and it was the *Munster* who rescued Captain Wardle and his crew.

The *Andes* had turned away. Her lookout had reported a submarine between her and the *Alcantara*, and Captain Young was compelled to stand off at the moment when his consort sank. The submarine was duly reported astern³ and Captain Young, learning from Captain Hotham that the *Munster* would rescue the men in the water, joined the *Comus* in deliberate firing on the enemy, which was still afloat with the German ensign flying. It was not till 1 p.m. that the raider sank. Captain Young then proceeded to pick up the British and German survivors. While

¹ Court Martial Proceedings, pp. 78, 85.

² In this part of the action *Andes* fired 98 rounds of 6-in. Court Martial Proceedings, pp. 166, 168.

³ The evidence of the German survivors implies that no submarine was present.

so engaged another submarine was reported to him. He went full speed for a few minutes and the *Comus* opened fire; but the supposed submarine turned out to be wreckage and the work of rescue was resumed. The *Calliope* and her attendant destroyer, the *Magic*, had by that time come up, but learning that they could be of no assistance they returned to their patrol line.

59. The German survivors stated that the enemy had not come from the Baltic at all. But this was already known. The Admiralty at 11.35 a.m., just after the *Alcantara* sank, had informed the Commander-in-Chief that the vessel at the Skaw had gone back to the Sound. There remains the vessel near Ekersund to be accounted for. This could not have been the raider just sunk since she could not have travelled the 240 miles from Ekersund in the time. It is possible that this vessel was the earlier raider *Möwe* which, slipping through the patrol line at the end of 1915, had been operating in the Atlantic and just at this period was on her way home again.¹

From the prisoners it was learned that the sunken vessel was named *Greif*. She had been built in 1914 as an ordinary trader named *Guben* for the German-Australian Line, but early in 1916 had been fitted out very secretly at Hamburg with four 15 cm. guns and two torpedo tubes, and commissioned as the *Greif* with a crew of about 360. She had left Germany on February 27; she was to proceed round the North of Iceland to raid commerce in the Atlantic, and then, if she could not get back, to make for German East Africa.²

60. The sinking of the *Alcantara* after so short an action was attributed to a torpedo. The evidence on this, as on other points, is conflicting; but from the German prisoners it was ascertained that the *Greif* got rid of two torpedoes, and certain survivors from the *Alcantara* consider they felt the shock of one exploding. Two officers and 67 men were missing. Captain Wardle reported that his crew fought with great gallantry and coolness and that perfect discipline was kept throughout. As an example of this, at the time of abandoning ship the men making their way up to the deck stood aside and helped carry up the wounded, most of whom got away dry in the boats.³

No attempt is here made to give a detailed account of the action. The only evidence available is that of Captains Wardle and Young, which differs in almost every respect, such as bearings, ranges and courses. The plans of the action sent in by these two officers are attached; from them the divergence of evidence can be estimated.

¹ *The Two Cruises of the Möwe*. I.D. 1171. The Germans were so pleased at her safe arrival that they struck a medal, dedicated to Admiral de Chair, showing a seagull (*möwe*) with a fish in its mouth flying over a chain guarded by two sleeping sea-lions. Beneath this picture is printed "Wie die Möwe der Seelöwen spottet." One of these medals is now in possession of Admiral de Chair.

² I.D. Historical Section, Vol. 508.

³ Court Martial Proceedings, p. 106.

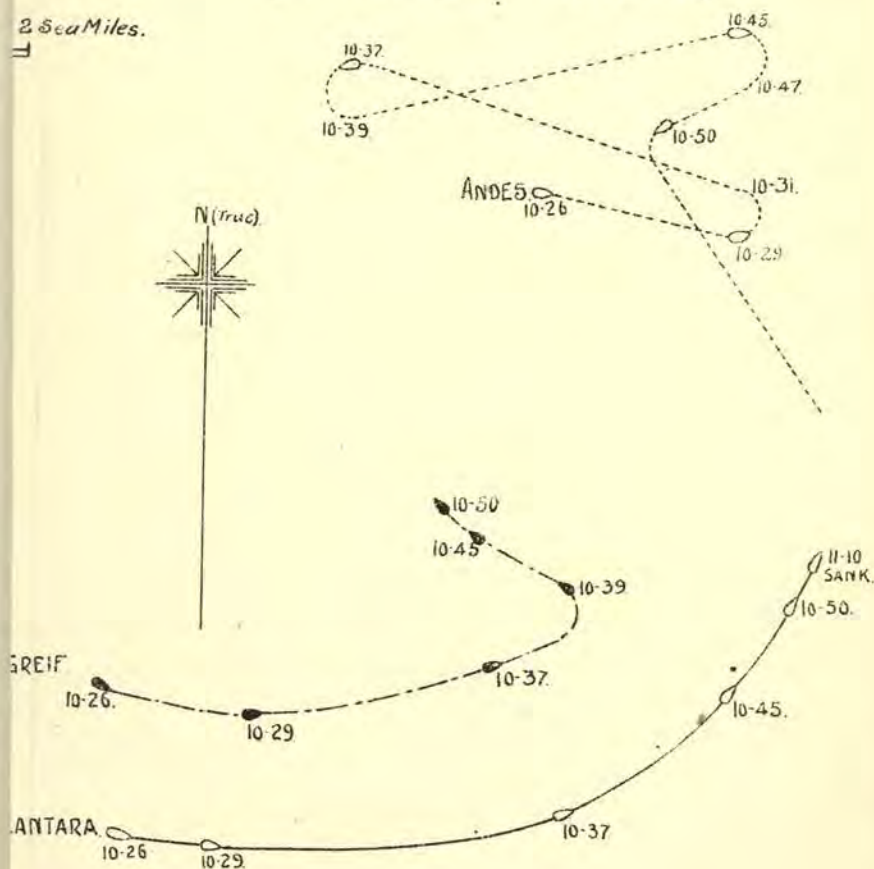
How the
seagull
jumps at
the sea-lions

ON.

CAPT. YOUNG'S PLAN.

(ALCANTARA'S positions approximate).

2 Sea Miles.



RANGES - ANDES TO GREIF.

10-26	-	6700 YARDS.
10-29	-	6700 "
10-37	-	6030 "
10-45	-	5680 "
10-50	-	4260 "

CAPT. WARDLES PLAN.

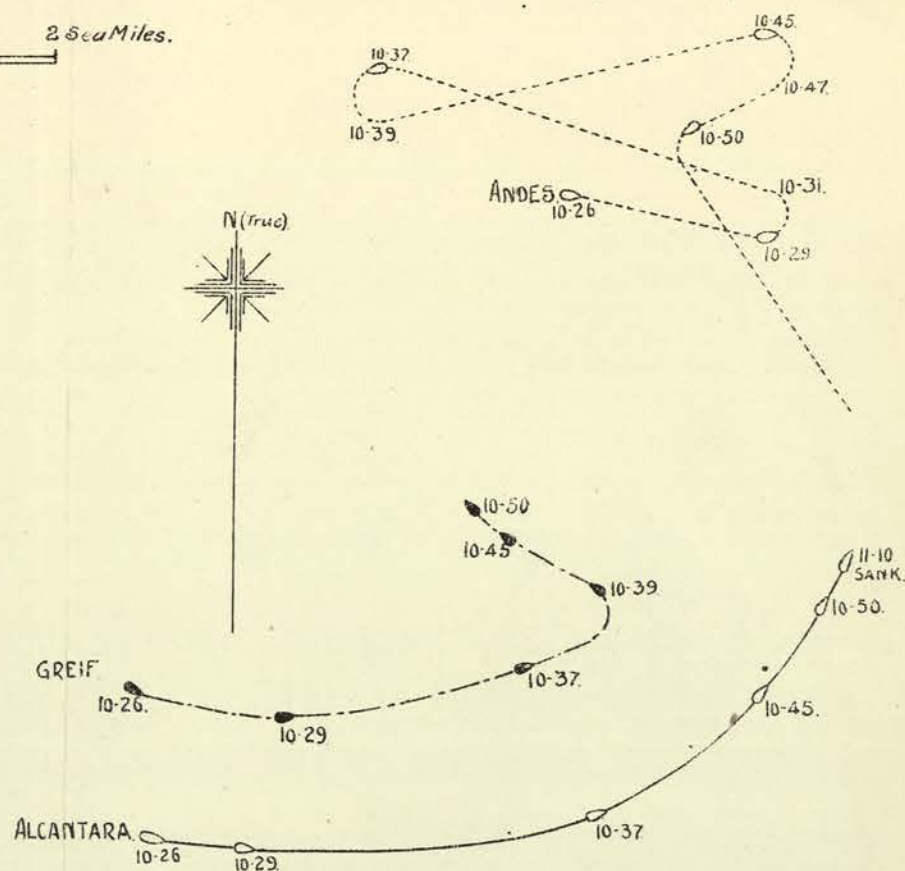
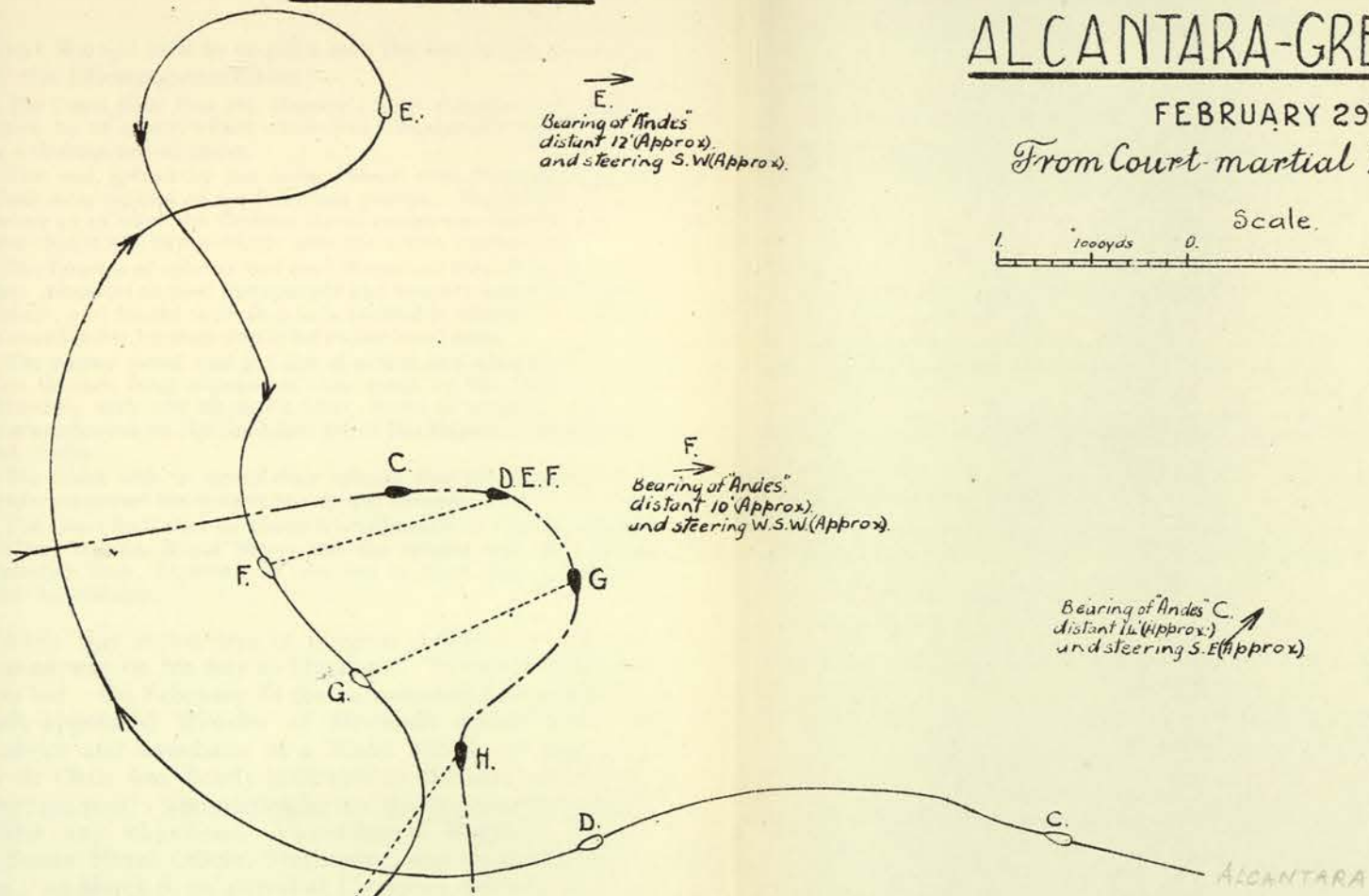
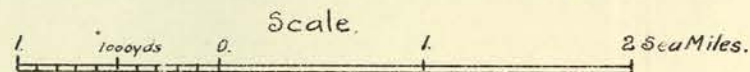
ALCANTARA-GREIF ACTION.

FEBRUARY 29TH 1916.

From Court-martial Proceedings.

CAPT. YOUNG'S PLAN.

(ALCANTARA'S positions approximate.)



REFERENCE.

- ALCANTARA.
- GREIF.
- C ALCANTARA closing while signalling
- D " " " " "
- E Course altered to close and board.
- F GREIF opens fire 10 a.m.
- G Torpedo reported passing under stern of ALCANTARA.
- H Course altered starboard guns in action.
- I 10-25 a.m. ALCANTARA commenced to list to starboard.
- J 10-32 a.m. ALCANTARA sheering to port "Cease Firing".
Enemy abandoning ship.
- K ALCANTARA listing and turning to starboard.
- L ALCANTARA sinking enemy on fire

RANGES - ANDES TO GREIF.

10-26	-	6700	YARDS.
10-29	-	6700	"
10-37	-	6030	"
10-45	-	5680	"
10-50	-	4260	"

L (Lat: 6° 48' N. Long: 1° 40' E of Greenwich)

A Court Martial held to enquire into the loss of the *Alcantara* came to the following conclusion :—

The Court finds that His Majesty's Ship *Alcantara* was sunk in action by an enemy vessel which was subsequently ascertained to be a German armed raider.

Fire was opened by the enemy vessel over Norwegian colours which were painted on her bows and quarter. The evidence is conflicting as to when the German Naval ensign was hoisted, but it is clear that it was flying shortly after the action commenced.

The Court is of opinion that the Officers and Men of His Majesty's Ship *Alcantara* showed promptitude and resource under the circumstances, and fought their ship in a creditable manner until forced to abandon her by their ship lying on her beam ends.

The enemy vessel was put out of action and abandoned by her crew through being engaged at close range by His Majesty's Ship *Alcantara* with His Majesty's Ship *Andes* in support. She was afterwards sunk by the combined fire of His Majesty's Ships *Comus* and *Andes*.

The Court wish to record their opinion that His Majesty's Ship *Andes* supported her consort in a proper manner.

The Court finds that no blame is attributable to Captain Thomas Erskine Wardle, Royal Navy, and the officers and crew of His Majesty's Ship *Alcantara* for the loss of their ship and acquits them accordingly.

61. While this action was in progress Admiral de Chair in the *Alsatian* was on his way to Liverpool. It was to be his last voyage in her. On February 24 the Government had asked that the newly-appointed Minister of Blockade should have the expert advice and assistance of a Naval Adviser of flag rank. Admiral de Chair was clearly indicated as the best selection for this important post¹; and neither he nor the Commander-in-Chief could raise any objections. Vice-Admiral Reginald Tupper, C.V.O., Senior Naval Officer, Stornoway, was appointed as his successor; on March 6, on arrival at Liverpool, Admiral de Chair hauled down his flag and severed his direct connection with the Tenth Cruiser Squadron.

APPENDIX A.

WAR ORDERS.

(War with Germany.)

THE COMMANDING OFFICER, CRUISER FORCE B.²

1. With these Orders is enclosed a copy of the General War Plans³ under which it is the intention of Their Lordships to conduct operations in the event of a state of war arising with the German Empire.

2. On completing to full crews and being in all respects ready for sea, the Squadron is to assemble at Scapa Flow, whence it will proceed to sea as soon as possible in two divisions, which are to cruise, one in the vicinity of the Shetland Islands between latitudes of 59° N. and 61° 30' N., and the latter in the vicinity of the coast of Norway between the latitudes of 61° 30' N. and 62° 30' N.

3. The principal object of the squadron will be to intercept German merchant vessels, to stop neutral vessels proceeding to a German port with contraband of war on board, to endeavour to take or destroy any man-of-war or armed merchant vessels passing in or out of the North Sea, and, assisted by local forces, to deny the anchorages in the Shetlands to the enemy.

4. You should endeavour to obtain information of the enemy from all passing vessels, and in the event of receiving certain intelligence of any importance, you are to transmit it with the least delay either to the Commander-in-Chief of Home Fleet or to a signal station according to the nature of the intelligence.

5. The divisions are to cruise at such distance from the Shetland Islands and the coast of Norway as you and the Senior Officer of the other division shall judge to be most proper for carrying out the object of the squadron. If at any time you should receive information that ships of the enemy may be intercepted to the northward or southward of the limits of your station, you are at liberty to extend your cruise in order to seek or pursue them, returning to your stations as soon as the service for which you left has been performed.

¹ Telegram 514 to C.-in-C., H.F., 24.2.16, 8.50 p.m.

² Part of M. 0053.

³ The War Plans are given in full in C.B. 1537. Monograph 6—*Naval Movements*, August, 1914.

6. Enemy merchant vessels are to be seized from the day war breaks out, but the ultimate disposal of those captured before the expiration of the Days of Grace will depend upon the treatment accorded to British ships in enemy ports in this respect. Captured vessels are to be sent to Scapa Flow. You are to be guided by the instructions set forth in the Naval Prize Manual¹ in all dealings with merchant vessels, whether enemy or neutral.

7. Your principal coaling base will be at Scapa Flow. You are to arrange to send vessels in rotation in such a manner as to keep the maximum number of ships continually at sea.

Admiralty, July, 1914.

EXTRACT FROM THE WAR PLANS.²

"... Except under extraordinary circumstances the coast patrol flotillas and Northern Patrol Force are not to participate in drives or sweeps by the Grand Fleet. . . ."

"... Cruiser Force B, working in two divisions, will be employed for the purpose of intercepting German merchant ships passing between the Shetland Islands and the coast of Norway and Scotland, supporting local forces in those islands and denying their harbours to the enemy. This Cruiser force will operate independently of the C.-in-C., but in case of over-riding necessity may be employed by him, returning to their stations so soon as the particular service for which they were withdrawn has been performed. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM WAR STATIONS No. 1 UNDER THESE PLANS.³

(GERMAN FLEET IN NORTH SEA PORTS OR VICINITY.)

"... Cruiser Force B will assemble at Scapa Flow and immediately proceed to patrol from the Orkneys to the Shetlands and from the Shetlands to the limit of Norwegian territorial waters in the vicinity of Lat. 62° N. At this latter point vessels following the coast line are compelled by outlying dangers to emerge from territorial waters and may be captured. This force of cruisers, which is to work in two divisions the ships of which are not to spread out of supporting distance, will be known as the Northern Patrol, and will be established chiefly with a view to intercepting the passage of the enemy's merchant shipping and reporting movements of the enemy, and denying the use of the Shetlands to the enemy. Captured vessels are to be sent to Scapa Flow, which will be the coaling anchorage of the Northern Patrol Force. . . ."

¹ A summary of the Naval Prize Manual is given in paragraph 20 of this monograph.

² Extracted from M. 0053/13.

³ Extracted from M. 0053/13. War Stations No. 2 dealt with the modifications to be adopted in the event of an Anglo-French alliance, but these did not directly affect the stations for Cruiser Force B.

APPENDIX B.

ANALYSIS OF VESSELS INTERCEPTED AND SENT IN BY
TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON DURING THE YEAR 1915.

Nationality.						Intercepted	Sent in.
<i>American.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	55	47
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	35	7
<i>Other Neutrals.</i>							
<i>Norwegian.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	469	271
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	380	25
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	8	—
<i>Swedish.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	183	131
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	117	35
<i>Danish.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	345	191
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	259	20
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	2	1
<i>Dutch.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	5	3
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	3	—
<i>Spanish.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	1	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	—	—
<i>Argentine.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	1	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	—	—
<i>British and Allied.</i>							
<i>British.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	135	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	124	—
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	5	—
<i>French.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	7	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	10	—
<i>Russian.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	78	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	44	—
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	2	—
TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD ..						2,268	731

Nationality.						Intercepted	Sent in.
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD ..						2,268	731
<i>British and Allied—cont.</i>							
<i>Belgian.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	2	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	—	—
<i>Italian.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	—	—
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	—	—
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	1	—
<i>Nationality Unknown.</i>							
Eastbound	..	..	..	..	..	1	1
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	5	—
Direction unknown	..	..	..	..	..	1	—
<i>Fishing Craft.</i>							
Norwegian	..	..	..	..	..	81	2
Swedish	..	..	..	..	..	6	3
Danish	..	..	..	..	..	90	5
Dutch	..	..	..	..	..	29	—
British	..	..	..	..	..	603	1
French	..	..	..	..	..	5	—
Russian	..	..	..	..	..	3	—
<i>Enemy Vessels.</i>							
<i>German.</i>							
Westbound	..	..	..	..	..	3	—
TOTALS ..						3,098	743*

* 38 without Armed Guards.

"*Alsatian.*"

February 10, 1916.

Enclosure to Tenth Cruiser Squadron Letter No. 421/35 of 31.12.15.

APPENDIX C.

VESSELS OF THE TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON IN
ALPHABETICAL ORDER.

- Alcantara*.—Commissioned April 16, 1915. Commander T. E. Wardle.
Sunk February 29, 1916, by German Raider.
- Alsatian*.—Commissioned August 11, 1914. Captain V. E. B. Phillimore,
D.S.O.; succeeded January, 1915, by Captain G. Trewby.
- Ambrose*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander C. W. Bruton;
succeeded May, 1915, by Commander V. L. Bowring. Paid off
October 20, 1915.
- Andes*.—Commissioned April 22, 1915. Commander C. W. Trousdale;
succeeded January, 1916, by Captain G. B. W. Young.
- Arlanza*.—Commissioned April 24, 1915. Captain D. T. Norris. Wrecked
by mine October 22, 1915.

- Bayano*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander H. C. Carr. *Sunk by submarine March 11, 1915.* ^{U27}
- Calyx*.—Commissioned December 4, 1914. Commander T. E. Wardle. *Paid off March 27, 1915.*
- Caribbean*.—Commissioned December 12, 1914. Commander F. H. Walter. *Paid off June 9, 1915.*
- Cedric*.—Commissioned December 7, 1914. Captain R. E. R. Benson. *Paid off January 20, 1916.*
- Changuinola*.—Commissioned December 24, 1914. Commander H. C. R. Brocklebank.
- Clan Macnaughton*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander R. Jeffreys. *Lost with all hands, February 2, 1915.*
- Columbella*.—Commissioned November 30, 1914. Captain H. L. P. Heard; succeeded July, 1915, by Captain A. Bromley.
- Crescent*.—Captain G. Trewby. *Paid off December 4, 1914.*
- Digby*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander R. F. H. H. Mahon; succeeded October, 1915, by Commander A. G. Warren. *Handed over to the French, December, 1915, and re-commissioned as Artois.*
- Dryad*.—Lieutenant B. E. Prichard. *Left squadron January, 1915.*
- Ebro*.—Commissioned April 12, 1915. Commander E. V. F. R. Dugmore.
- Edgar*.—Captain C. F. Thorp. *Paid off December 5, 1914.*
- Endymion*.—Captain H. L. P. Heard. *Paid off November 28, 1914.*
- Eskimo*.—Commissioned December 9, 1914. Commander C. W. Trousdale. *Paid off March 31, 1915.*
- Gibraltar*.—Captain R. A. Hopwood. *Paid off November 28, 1914.*
- Gloucestershire*.—Commissioned February 8, 1916. Captain N. L. Stanley.
- Grafton*.—Commander C. E. W. Pyddocke. *Paid off December 9, 1914.*
- Hawke*.—Captain H. P. E. T. Williams. *Sunk by submarine October 15, 1914.*
- Hilary*.—Commissioned December 6, 1914. Commander R. H. Bather.
- Hildebrand*.—Commissioned December 5, 1914. Captain H. Edwards; succeeded December, 1915, by Captain J. F. Grant-Dalton.
- India*.—Commissioned April 12, 1915. Commander W. G. A. Kennedy. *Sunk by submarine August 2, 1915.* ^{U22}
- Mantua*.—Commissioned. Captain C. Tibbetts, M.V.O.
- Moldavia*.—Commissioned February 1, 1916. Commander A. H. Smyth.
- Molagua*.—Commissioned December 31, 1914. Captain V. E. B. Phillimore, D.S.O.; succeeded February, 1915, by Captain J. A. Webster.
- Oceanic*.—Commissioned August, 1914. Captain W. F. Slater. *Wrecked September 8, 1914.*
- Orcoma*.—Commissioned April 20, 1915. Commander C. W. Bruton.
- Oropesa*.—Commissioned December 8, 1914. Commander N. L. Stanley. *Handed over to the French December 2, 1915.*
- Orotava*.—Commissioned December 17, 1914. Commander G. E. Corbett.
- Otway*.—Commissioned November 23, 1914. Captain E. L. Booty, M.V.O.
- Patia*.—Commissioned December 22, 1914. Captain G. W. Vivian; succeeded November, 1915, by Commander V. L. Bowring.
- Patuca*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander C. H. France-Hayhurst; succeeded May, 1915, by Commander P. G. Brown; succeeded September, 1915, by Commander T. Dannreuther.
- Royal Arthur*.—Captain A. H. Williamson, M.V.O. *Paid off December 6, 1914.*
- Teutonic*.—Commissioned September 12, 1914. Captain H. Chatterton; succeeded February, 1915, by Captain G. C. Ross; succeeded October, 1915, by Commander A. H. Smyth; re-commissioned January 21, 1916, Commodore R. E. R. Benson.
- Theseus*.—Captain H. Edwards. *Paid off November 27, 1914.*
- Victorian*.—Commissioned June 9, 1915. Commander F. H. Walter.
- Viknor*.—Commissioned December, 1914. Commander E. O. Ballantyne. *Lost with all hands February 13, 1915.*
- Virginian*.—Commissioned December 10, 1914. Commander H. H. Smith.

HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS ISSUED BY THE NAVAL STAFF.

1. O.U. 6031—Operations leading up to the Battle of Coronel.
2. O.U. 6029—The German Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific, 1914.
3. O.U. 6038—Operations leading up to the Battle of the Falkland Islands, November, 1914.
4. O.U. 6040—Operations in the Mediterranean, 4th to 10th August, 1914.
5. O.U. 6039—Naval Operations in the Cameroons, 1914.
6. C.B. 1537—Naval Movements, August, 1914, associated with the Transport of the British Expeditionary Force.
7. C.B. 1549—The Patrol Flotillas at the Commencement of the War.
8. C.B. 1552—Naval Operations connected with the Raid on the North-East Coast, 16th December, 1914.
9. C.B. 1555—A History of the White Sea Station, 1914–1919.
10. C.B. 1558—Naval Operations on the East Coast of Africa, August, 1914, to July, 1915.
11. C.B. 1571—The Battle of Heligoland Bight, 28th August, 1914.
12. C.B. 1573—The Action of Dogger Bank, 24th January, 1915.
13. C.B. 923—Summary of the Operations of the Grand Fleet, August, 1914, to November, 1916.
14. C.B. 926—The First Australian Convoy, 1914.
15. C.B. 931—Naval Operations in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, from the Outbreak of War to the Fall of Kut, 29th April, 1916.
16. C.B. 930—The China Squadron, 1914 (including the *Emden* Hunt).
17. C.B. 929—The East Indies Squadron, 1914.
19. C.B. 935—The Tenth Cruiser Squadron during the Command of Admiral de Chair, 1914–1916.

IN PREPARATION.

18. C.B. 936A—The Dover Command, Vol. 1.
20. C.B. 939—The Cape of Good Hope Squadron, 1914.
21. ————Home Waters, August, 1914.
22. ————The Mediterranean, 1914–1915.

TRAINING AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION, NAVAL STAFF,

September, 1921.

TENTH CRUISER SQUADRON AREA OF OPERATIONS.

(Part of Chart No 2282)



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of the Official Secrets Act.

~~C.B. 939.~~

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1078

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SQUADRON, 1914.

(Short Title:—"CAPE, 1914.")

Monograph No. 20.

NAVAL STAFF,

TRAINING AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION.

November 1921.

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NOTE.

To ensure accuracy and completeness in the Historical Monographs, officers who were concerned in the matters described and who detect obscure points which they can elucidate, or statements which require correction, are requested to furnish Additions and Amendments. It should be borne in mind that these Historical Monographs are based entirely on official documents, and no amendment which is not substantiated by such documents can be accepted. Remarks should be addressed to the Director of Training and Staff Duties, Admiralty, S.W. 1.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SQUADRON, 1914.

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PLAN.

Area of Operations of the Cape Squadron, 1914 at end

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SQUADRON, 1914.

(Short title—"CAPE, 1914.")

INTRODUCTION.

The operations on the Cape Station during 1914 fall into two distinct sections, the attacks on German East Africa and German South-West Africa respectively. The operations against German East Africa have been described in Monograph 10: *East Africa*. The present monograph deals only with the Naval operations on the South and West coasts of the station.

Military details of the expedition to South-West Africa and of the rebellion are not mentioned.

NOTE ON SOURCES.

H.S. 9 and 13 contain the telegrams dealing with the Cape Station from July 27 to December 9, 1914. Colonial Office telegrams of naval interest are also in these volumes.

H.S. 8 contains the Letters of Proceedings sent in by the Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Station during 1914, with certain miscellaneous papers dealing with the Station.

Papers titled *Colonial Office, August 14, 1914*, contain official correspondence between the Admiralty and Colonial Office on the subject of German South-West Africa. Copies of all important telegrams and minutes in this collection are also to be found in H.S. 9 and 13.

T. 6187/1914 is a bound collection of Transport Department papers dealing with the conveyance of troops from South Africa to England.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SQUADRON, 1914.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Cape of Good Hope Station included the whole coast of South Africa from Kismayu on the Equator, at the northern boundary of British East Africa, to the Kunene River, which was the northern limit of German South-West Africa. Eastward it extended to Mauritius and the Seychelles; westward it was bounded by the meridian of 15° W., thus having St. Helena in its northwest corner.¹ Within its limits were two large German colonies, German East Africa and German South-West Africa. On the east coast of the station the northernmost country was British East Africa, with Mombasa in 4° S. as its capital and principal port. Next came German East Africa, with its ports Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam (the capital) flanked by the British island of Zanzibar. Between 11° S. and 26° S. lay Portuguese East Africa, its principal ports being Mozambique and Lourenço Marques. East of this Portuguese possession stretches the French island of Madagascar, with Diego Suarez at its northern end and the port of Majunga in 16° S., 45° E. Southward of Portuguese East Africa and round to the Orange River in 29° S. on the West coast stretches the Union of South Africa; and from the northern boundary of the Union to the limit of the station extended German South-West Africa.

The coast of German South-West Africa lay between the Orange River in 28½° S. and the Kunene River in 17° S.; its two principal ports were Lüderitzbucht, formerly known as Angra Pequena, in 27° S., and Swakopmund in 23° S.² In the very middle of this German coastline and adjoining Swakopmund was the small British possession of Walfisch Bay, consisting of a little settlement and a patch of territory some 30 miles along the coast and 10 miles deep. The British and German towns are only 20 miles apart. Off the southern part of German South-West Africa are some islets which also are ours; the two southernmost have the truly British names of Roast Beef and Plum Pudding. From Swakopmund a railway ran inland some 200 miles to Windhuk, where a high power German wireless station had been erected. The station had been completed on

¹ H.S. 9, p. 10.

² See map at end of this Monograph.

June 11, 1914, and could communicate with the German station at Kamina in Togoland, and perhaps, in highly favourable circumstances, with Berlin direct.¹ From Windhuk the railway turned south, parallel to the coast, and met another line coming out eastward from Lüderitzbucht. South of the Orange River is Cape Colony, while north of the Kunene is Angola, a Portuguese possession.

2. Although included in the limits of the Cape Station were these two important German colonies, the German naval force on the spot in July, 1914, consisted only of the gunboat *Eber*² for the West Coast; while on the East Coast were the surveying vessel *Möwe*³ and the light cruiser *Königsberg*.⁴

Against this small display of force, of which only the *Königsberg* appeared to have any fighting power, we had in the Cape Squadron three old cruisers. These were the *Hyacinth* (Captain D. M. Anderson, M.V.O.), *Astræa* (Captain A. C. Sykes) and *Pegasus* (Commander J. A. Ingles). The *Hyacinth*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral H. G. King-Hall, C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., Commanding the Cape of Good Hope Squadron, dated from 1900; she was of 5,600 tons, 19 knots trial speed, and carried eleven 6 in. guns. The *Astræa*, almost the oldest light cruiser afloat, dated from 1894; she was of 4,360 tons, 19½ knots trial speed, and carried two 6 in. and eight 4.7 in. guns. The *Pegasus*, half her size, carried only eight 4 in. guns. None of these had speed enough to catch the *Königsberg*, but the deficiency should soon be redressed by the arrival of the *Nottingham*, a modern light cruiser, which was to leave England for the Cape Station about August 31 and relieve the *Astræa* at St. Helena.⁵

By the War Orders of the Cape station⁶ it was intended that one cruiser should guard the trade focus off the Cape of Good Hope, while the remaining two should deal with the situation in East Africa.

3. The squadron was engaged on a cruise on the East Coast in the latter half of July, 1914, when the attitude of Russia and Germany became threatening; and it was not till August 7, three days after the declaration of war, that the Admiral in the *Hyacinth* arrived at Durban, having left the *Astræa* and *Pegasus* to operate against the *Königsberg* from their base at Zanzibar.⁷ At Durban, where the defences were to be organised by the

¹ From September onwards throughout 1914, no message from Berlin direct was understood by Windhuk. I.D.H.S., Vol. 1338, No. 280.

² Two 4.1 in. guns.

³ Three 1 pdr. guns.

⁴ Completed 1907; 3,350 tons; 23 knots designed; ten 4.1 in., one 7 pdr. guns; two 18 in. submerged tubes.

⁵ Appendix H. 1.

⁶ A full summary of these is given in C.B. 1558, Monograph 10: *East Africa*, Appendix B. 1.

⁷ The movements of the squadron during this period are given in Monograph 10: *East Africa*, paras. 8-10.

Union Government, nothing had yet been done. The Admiral, however, arranged that the 6 in. gun lent by the Admiralty to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve should be put up on an extemporised mounting, and erected on the breakwater a searchlight from a French surveying vessel. These, with four 15 pdr. field guns, also a searchlight and another gun on railway trucks, were the best defences he could arrange at the moment, and he considered them satisfactory.¹ The *Hyacinth* then left for Simonstown.

So far the West Coast had been entirely without naval protection. The German gunboat *Eber* had left Capetown hurriedly on July 30, but she seemed so far to have taken no advantage of her opportunity to attack ships on the trade route from the Cape to Europe. The Admiralty had ordered the merchant vessels armed for self-defence to be supplied with 15 rounds for each 4.7 in. gun carried, and learned on August 8 that four vessels had been given their ammunition at Simonstown. The instructions handed to the masters of these vessels when their ammunition was put on board were to the effect that they were to avoid conflict if at all possible; they were on no account to fire first, and if chased or stopped were at once to report the fact and their position by wireless.² At the same time the Admiralty had suggested to Lord Rothschild that he should temporarily suspend shipments of gold from South Africa.³ Advice had been issued to all merchant vessels to abandon their regular tracks, reduce their lights, and complete their voyages without bunkering if possible.

The Admiral disembarked at Durban and went by train to Bloemfontein, where he met General Smuts, Minister of Defence, and a representative of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.⁴ He discussed with them various matters in which they could co-operate, and arranged a temporary transposition cypher for the Consular Codes G and M which had been compromised. He then left for Simonstown, and arriving on August 10 rejoined the *Hyacinth*. While there, he arranged for a 4.7 in. gun to be mounted to protect the wireless station, which was much exposed.⁵

The British settlement at Walfisch Bay was also without protection of any kind. Admiral King-Hall on August 1 proposed to the Union Government that they should provide it with guns and a garrison; this suggestion was reinforced by a letter from the Admiralty to the Colonial Office in a similar

¹ Letter of Proceedings, H.S. 8, p. 11.

² H.S. 9, pp. 31, 63, 75.

³ H.S. 9, p. 72.

⁴ Lt.-Gen. Sir. J. W. Murray, K.C.B.

⁵ L. of P., H.S. 8, p. 12.

sense; but the latter office questioned the soundness of this proposal, apparently on good grounds, and it was not proceeded with.¹

Another urgent necessity was the provision of a garrison for St. Helena. Most of the local inhabitants volunteered for service and were formed into a militia. A portion of the Cape Garrison, 200 infantry, were got ready to embark, at first in a transport and later in the *Hyacinth*, and arrangements were made for artillery men to be sent from home.²

4. But besides these two measures of defence, other military questions had arisen which were to have a vital effect on the operations of the Cape Squadron. The Union Government had undertaken to be responsible for its own defence, and had made, moreover, declarations of loyalty which permitted the removal of the British troops in the Union³ to Europe, where their presence was urgently required. One matter, therefore, calling for arrangement was the transport and escort of these troops homeward. The numbers to be carried were five battalions of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, one brigade of artillery and two companies of Army Service Corps; but they could not all be ready at the same time. If escort would not be required from the Cape three⁴ transports could sail on the 23rd, 25th and 26th respectively, but the fourth⁵ was not likely to be ready till September 3.⁶

At the time no action as regards escort seemed immediately required, though between the Cape and home there were known to be two German cruisers, the *Karlsruhe* and *Dresden*, both in the West Indies at the outbreak of war; but in the early morning of August 12 the Admiralty learned that the *Dresden* had stopped three British ships off Alcantara on the North coast of Brazil, and they accordingly decided that the transports must be escorted from their point of departure. They cancelled their instructions for Admiral King-Hall to take the St. Helena Garrison when convenient, ordering him instead to escort with the *Hyacinth* the first three transports, which must leave in one convoy on the 26th⁷. The *Leviathan*⁸ had been sent to search the Azores on account of rumours of enemy action there. The Admiralty on the 12th ordered her down the trade route to meet and take over the convoy to be brought up by the *Hyacinth*, which on relief could return for the fourth transport.⁹ Next day they

¹ H.S. 9, pp. 33, 38, 39.

² H.S. 9, p. 41; H.S. 8, pp. 213-219, 291, 292.

³ Appendix H. 2.

⁴ *Kenilworth Castle, Briton, Dunluce Castle.*

⁵ *Guildford Castle.* ⁶ H. 6.

⁷ The arrangements for the defence of St. Helena are in papers titled R. 99/14 and *Misc. Office, July 28, 1914.*

⁸ Capt. Marcus R. Hill: 1899; 14,100 tons; 23 knots; two 9.2 in., sixteen 6 in.

⁹ H. 6, 7, 8.

ordered the *Astræa* from the East coast to the Cape instructing her to keep a look-out for the *Königsberg* when off Inhambane in Portuguese East Africa, where she had been reported. Cypher messages to Swakopmund, thought to come from the *Königsberg*, led Admiral King-Hall to think she was making her way South. He therefore ordered the *Hyacinth* to patrol a line 50 miles South from the Cape of Good Hope; but the Admiralty countermanded this patrol, ordering him instead to proceed to Durban and cover the trade there while waiting for the transports to be ready.¹ He recalled the *Hyacinth*, re-embarked in her, and sailed for Durban in the morning of the 14th about the same time as the *Astræa* left Zanzibar, where the *Pegasus* remained alone on the whole East Coast of Africa to carry on as Senior Officer.

As was to happen with the other Commanders-in-Chief on Foreign Stations, the complexity of the work involved in the management of a widely spread squadron, and the arrangements to be made with shore authorities on transport questions, led Admiral King-Hall to ask the Admiralty to allow him to remain ashore at Simonstown.²

5. At the moment when he was making this request, there was still another matter awaiting his co-operation. The day after the outbreak of war a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was appointed, with Vice-Admiral Sir Henry B. Jackson, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., late Chief of the Admiralty War Staff, in the chair, to consider suitable overseas objectives for our armed forces. Among the recommendations of this Sub-Committee was that of destroying the wireless stations on the coast of German South-West Africa with the co-operation of the Government of the Union of South Africa. The Colonial Office therefore suggested to that Government that it should "seize such part of German South-West Africa as would give them command of Lüderitzbucht, Swakopmund and the wireless stations there or in the interior."³ It was recognised that the seizure of Windhuk, though of great importance, would be a serious military undertaking and had better be postponed, effort at first being concentrated on seizure of the coast by a joint naval and military expedition, while raids across the land frontier might take place simultaneously in order to divert the Germans from the coast.⁴ The suggestion received a cordial welcome, and the Union Government began to make preparations. Information was received on August 12 that the Germans had evacuated Swakopmund and Lüderitzbucht after blowing up the jetties and sinking all harbour craft. According to

¹ H. 10, 11.

² H. 12. Compare Monograph 10: *East Indies*, para. 37, and Monograph 16, *China and Emden*, para. 30.

³ H. 2.

⁴ H. 5.

other intelligence reports the enemy had a number of guns and were strongly entrenched at the waterholes inland; and the Union urged the Home Government to allow the British artillery to remain for the expedition. This the Army Council could not grant as the guns were urgently required at home; but they pointed out that even without a strong force of artillery the Union forces could seize the points of main importance.

6. The *Hyacinth* was available at the Cape. The Admiralty considered that if a start was made at once she could escort the Union troops, assist in the landing and be back in time to escort the transports with British troops for home due to leave on August 26. They urged, therefore, that the expeditions to seize the two coast stations should not be delayed till artillery was available; their information pointed to the improbability of resistance at either port and it seemed possible to defend these on the land side by light guns.¹ The Union Government accepted this view and asked Admiral King-Hall to arrange for escort. This request he received a few hours after he had asked permission to take up his quarters ashore. He now suggested that the *Hyacinth* should return to the Cape leaving the *Astræa* to search for the *Königsberg* which had been reported off the South coast of Portuguese East Africa. This report was by this time known to have been based on a mere guess that a ship seen in the distance might be the German cruiser; the Admiralty were therefore less anxious about the trade focus at Durban and they approved his proposal. The Admiral then recommended that even if the *Astræa* did not meet the *Königsberg* she should join the *Pegasus*, whose situation alone on the East Coast he considered very risky. However, the safety of the troop transports seemed all-important and on August 17 the Admiralty ordered him to use both *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* for their escort, the *Pegasus* accepting what they considered the slight risk of remaining at Zanzibar.²

The Admiral returned to Simon's Bay at 7.30 a.m. on August 17. He found that the British troops to be escorted would now fill six ships,³ which were all to be ready by August 26. The *Astræa* in pursuance of her latest orders left Durban on August 20 for Cape Town where the transports were being got ready. Information had been received from the G.O.C. that the 10th Hussars were also to go home, though five days previously the Admiral had been told that they were not to embark. He reported this to the Admiralty, with the remark that no ship could be got ready for them till September 6, as all available labour both at Cape Town and Durban was fully engaged on

¹ The Colonial Office telegrams and correspondence on this subject with the Admiralty are in H.S. 9, pp. 69, 91, 101, 106, 108, 121, 137-140.

² H. 13, 14, 15.

³ *Kenilworth Castle, Briton, Dunluce Castle, Guildford Castle, Goorkha, Balmoral Castle.*

the transports sailing on August 26; if the horses were left behind the men could sail on the 29th in the *Balmoral Castle*, but if not, the whole convoy must be delayed.¹ Orders were sent out from home for the sailing of *Balmoral Castle* on the 26th with the 10th Hussars, and the Admiral's suggestion that she should wait till the 29th so as to embark the women and children and then catch up the convoy at St. Helena was not carried out. Ultimately she sailed with the rest of the convoy.²

Any danger to be apprehended from the *Königsberg* was rendered more remote when it was learned, on the 21st, that the German ship *Zieten*, which had arrived at Mozambique two days before, had brought news that the enemy cruiser had captured a British ship, the *City of Winchester*, in the Gulf of Aden and was on the Arabian coast on the 10th. This disposed of the rumour that she had been off Inhambane at that period, and she was hardly likely to make the voyage to South Africa in time to attack the convoy in view of coaling and other difficulties. The *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* arrived at Simonstown on the 23rd, and the *Leviathan* was due at St. Helena on the 31st, when she would relieve the *Astræa* for return to the Cape; and thus the escort arrangements were all complete.

7. On August 26 the convoy of six transports³ left Cape Town, escorted by the *Hyacinth* and *Astræa*, the Admiral remaining at Simonstown. The horses of the 10th Hussars⁴ and about 1,000 men were to leave about September 1 in the Transport *Ingoma*, without escort, as she would be following the track of the first convoy and would be met by the *Astræa* and later the *Hyacinth*. The voyage of the first convoy continued without any incident of importance as far as St. Helena, which was reached at 9.30 p.m. on September 1. There they found the *Leviathan* waiting; she relieved the *Astræa*, and the convoy proceeded at 1.0 p.m. on the 2nd with the *Hyacinth* and *Leviathan* as escort, making a detour through 14½° N., 20° W.,

¹ H. 16.

² T. 7104/14 in T. 6187/14.

³ *Guildford Castle, Briton, Kenilworth Castle, Goorkha, Dunluce Castle, Balmoral Castle*, carrying over 5,000 men, 700 women and children, and 889 horses. For names of regiments see H.S. 9, p. 368.

⁴ The difficulties experienced by Admiral King-Hall in making arrangements is shown by a *précis* attached to his letter of August 25 (370/058/11 in T. 9041):—

August 10, from G.O.C., 1,039 horses to go; August 12, from G.O.C., 1,360 horses to go; August 13, from War Office, 2,048 horses to go; August 13, from G.O.C., add 840 officers and men; August 14, from G.O.C., add 450 women and 765 children; August 14, from G.O.C., subtract 10th Hussars; August 15, from G.O.C., add 450 mules; August 17, from G.O.C., subtract 280 mules; August 18, from G.O.C., add 10th Hussars; August 19, from G.O.C., 10th Hussars to go September 6; August 19, from G.O.C., no mules to go; August 21, from G.O.C., 10th Hussars to go August 26; August 23, from G.O.C., women and children to come out of *Balmoral Castle* and follow by mail.

and 32° N., 20° W., well away from the trade route. The *Astræa* returned from St. Helena southward without delay, but the *Hyacinth* continued with the convoy as far as 22° 6' N. (halfway between the Cape Verde Islands and the Canaries), where she was relieved by the *Europa* on September 11.

The convoy reached Southampton safely eight days later.

CHAPTER II.

8. The return of the *Astræa* to the Cape was being awaited by the Expedition against German South-West Africa, which, though not ready before the departure of the British troops, was now approaching completion. According to the plan drawn up by the Union Government, there were to be three simultaneous expeditions—one to seize Swakopmund and Lüderitzbucht from the sea with naval assistance, the second to land at Port Nolloth and advance across the Orange River, and the third to attack over the frontier inland at Kakamas;¹ but by August 22 nothing had been done to secure the destruction of the coast wireless stations, which the Admiralty had represented as an urgent necessity; and in the hands of the Union Government the force to be employed had grown to the dimensions of a large expedition for the invasion of the German colony from the sea and the capture of the inland station of Windhuk, rather than, as the Admiralty had at first hoped, merely the rapid seizure of the coast stations.² Further delay was caused by difficulty in providing escort. The *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* were occupied with the transports of the Cape Garrison, but two armed merchant cruisers were on their way out from home to join the Cape Squadron, and could be used either for escort or as transports. These were the *Armadale Castle*³ and *Kinfauns Castle*,⁴ each of which carried eight 4·7 in. guns. The *Armadale Castle* left St. Vincent, Cape Verde, on August 21. The fitting out of the *Kinfauns Castle* at Southampton had been delayed by the departure of the British Expeditionary Force to France, and she had not left home till August 15. As the expedition against the coast stations would be in five transports and was relying on naval assistance, the Union Government considered an armed merchant cruiser insufficient escort; and, though the force would be ready to sail on September 5, they decided to wait for the return of the *Astræa* about a week later before undertaking that part of the operations.

¹ H.S. 9, p. 184.

² Captain O. F. Gillett, R.N.

³ H.S. 9, p. 247.

⁴ Captain D. B. Crampton, M.V.O., R.N.

9. The second part, that is the Port Nolloth Expedition of 1,500 men and 1,300 animals, left Cape Town on August 30 without escort;¹ their landing place was in Union territory, and the Admiral had no ship to send with them, but he had ordered the *Armadale Castle* from St. Helena, where she arrived on August 28, to proceed to Port Nolloth direct (1,500 miles) and cover the expedition's landing.² Attack from the *Königsberg* was hardly to be expected, for she had been reported off Majunga in Madagascar at the same time as the Port Nolloth Expedition left.³

10. Besides the large force for the seizure of Swakopmund and Lüderitzbucht which was calling out for escort, there was another transport for home to be convoyed. This was the *Dover Castle*, which, after bringing out a company of R.G.A. to reinforce the garrison of St. Helena, had then come on to the Cape, where she was to embark a half battalion of the Essex Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the East Lancashires. At the same time the War Office was pressing for the other half battalion of the Essex Regiment to be brought to the Cape from Mauritius, where it was to be relieved by a regiment from India. To meet this requirement Admiral King-Hall proposed to send the *Kinfauns Castle* for the half battalion from Mauritius after the Port Nolloth Expedition had landed; but as the Admiralty wished the *Kinfauns Castle* to join the *Astræa* in supporting the Lüderitzbucht Expedition, they refused to allow this,⁴ and that particular half battalion had to wait till it could join an Indian convoy at Aden.⁵

In point of fact, the demands of the Army for convoy were so great as to cause considerable anxiety, since practically the whole strength of the Navy on both sides of the Cape Peninsula was engaged in escort duty. As Admiral King-Hall pointed out,⁶ at the end of August there was nothing on the African coast south of the Equator except the *Pegasus* at Mombasa and the *Armadale Castle* at Port Nolloth, while in the Indian Ocean north of the Equator the whole of the East Indies Squadron was engaged in convoying troops. The important trade centre at the Cape was quite unprotected, and he asked that a cruiser

¹ The S.N.O. had been given discretion as to this. See M. 01626/14 in papers titled *Colonial Office, August 14, 1914*.

² L. of P., H.S. 8, p. 16.

³ H.S. 9, pp. 328, 330.

⁴ H. 18, 20.

⁵ H.S. 8, pp. 148-155. The War Office had apparently made arrangements for this move without any reference to the Admiralty, who informed the War Office that it was quite impossible to provide convoy for the half battalion from Mauritius, and asked that any further oversea movements of troops requiring escort might be the subject of personal conference between representatives of the Army General Staff and the Naval War Staff rather than of official letters.

⁶ H. 19.

equal to the *Astræa* should be detailed to patrol it till the *Königsberg* had been dealt with; but the Admiralty felt themselves unable to provide this, and no steps were taken to strengthen the Cape Squadron till several months later, when a greater danger appeared to be threatening.

11. At the moment there were two conflicting claims for escort from two different convoys, one the remainder of the Cape Garrison bound for home, and the other the Union Government's Expeditionary Force for operations against the coast of German South-West Africa. As regards the latter, the Union Government refused to allow their expedition to leave unless it had as much escort as the transports containing the Imperial troops. The Admiralty quite concurred in this view, and endeavoured to arrange that the *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle*, with the Essex and East Lancashire Regiments, should sail with the Lüderitz-bucht Expedition on September 12 under the escort of the *Astræa*, which was to cover the landing of the Union Forces and then come on to St. Vincent with the Imperial convoy.¹ Unfortunately, on account of the weather conditions at Port Nolloth, the transports, which on their return were to embark the Lüderitz Bay Expedition, were reported unable to get clear of stores till the 14th, and were hardly likely to start from Cape Town till more than a week later. The Admiralty reply to this information was that the expedition must wait, and the Imperial troops come home without delay, escorted by the *Astræa*.² This action caused some ill-feeling in South Africa. The Union Government felt disposed to cancel the whole expedition, pointing out that if the seizure of the coast wireless stations was an "urgent necessity," as they had been led to believe, the Admiralty must provide a proper escort. This not unnatural attitude on the part of the Union, which had taken up the Admiralty's suggestion with so much unexpected enthusiasm, raised the whole question as to which convoy had the prior claim to the only escort available. It seemed a question of comparative urgency. The War Office were asked whether one and a half battalions of regular infantry were so urgently required at home that they could not be delayed a week in order to complete the landing of an offensive expedition to destroy the three important wireless stations in South Africa. The result was that Lord Kitchener agreed to the postponement of the Imperial troops' departure,³ and the *Astræa* was told off to escort and cover the Union Expedition.⁴ She arrived at Cape Town on September 10, and at the Admiral's suggestion it was decided that the *Hyacinth*, which was relieved on the 11th by the *Europa* about half way between the Cape Verde and Canary Islands, should come direct to Walfisch Bay and take over the *Astræa*'s covering duties, so that she could proceed

¹ H. 20.

³ H.S. 8, pp. 158-168; H. 24.

² H. 22, 23.

⁴ H. 25.

with the *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle*.¹ The Port Nolloth Expedition had been covered by the merchant cruisers. The *Armada Castle* came back to Simonstown on September 6; her place was taken by the *Kinfauns Castle*, which the Admiral had ordered there on her way south from St. Vincent. The *Kinfauns Castle* remained till the 11th, when she returned to Simonstown with a prize, the German barque *Heinz*, captured off Port Nolloth.

Having received a report that German steamers had been seen off Swakopmund, the Admiral sent the *Armada Castle* to cruise off that port, and return within a fortnight, as she was to embark part of the expedition. On September 14 she completed the destruction of Swakopmund Wireless Station and went on to Walfisch Bay, where she embarked the officials and their families in view of a possible German raid. She remained there till relieved by the *Kinfauns Castle* on the 21st.

12. The Lüderitz Bay Expedition in four transports left Capetown on September 15 escorted by the *Astræa*, arrived on the 18th, and meeting with no opposition occupied the town next day. So far, then, the expeditions seemed to be meeting with success.

13. But on September 20 two serious events took place. The first was the destruction of the *Pegasus* at Zanzibar by the *Königsberg*, which escaped undamaged to the southward; and the second, a political event, was the resignation of General Beyers, Commandant General of the Union Forces, on the grounds that the expedition for invading German South-West Africa was uncalled for, since the Germans had no quarrel with the Dutch. He published a manifesto of a strongly anti-British character, calculated to stir up racial strife in the Union itself. He was called upon to resign, and thenceforth became an active rebel. The result of his defection was really good since General Botha himself took up the supreme command of the expedition, a change which was in every way a gain.

In view of the destruction of the *Pegasus*, the only ship on the eastern half of the station, Admiral King-Hall proposed that the *Hyacinth*, instead of relieving the *Astræa*, should go with the *Kinfauns Castle* and hunt for the *Königsberg*. Such a move would delay the Imperial troops about a fortnight, but to get the one and a half battalions speedily home seemed of less importance than the destruction of the *Königsberg*.² His suggestion was made in ignorance of Admiralty dispositions; a division consisting of the *Chatham*, *Weymouth* and *Dartmouth* had been formed for the express purpose of hunting for the German cruiser.³ In reply he was told that the sailing of the convoy of Imperial troops was to proceed as arranged. The

¹ H. 26.

² H. 27.

³ See Monograph 10: *East Africa*, para. 20.

last decision, it will be remembered, was for the *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle* to accompany the expedition to Walfisch Bay, and be taken on from there by the *Astræa* as soon as she could be relieved by the *Hyacinth*; but the discharge of stores was so much delayed by weather that it was seen to be impossible for the expedition to start before October 1. The Admiral accordingly ordered the *Hyacinth* direct to Simonstown with the intention of embarking in her and overtaking the convoy at Walfisch Bay. She left St. Helena on September 26, and as the distance to Simonstown is about 1,700 miles, she could not be expected till about October 2. The *Astræa*, having seen her convoy safely landed at Lüderitz Bay, returned to Simonstown on September 26 to prepare for the fresh convoy of Union and Imperial troops.

14. Her report and that of *Armadale Castle* brought Admiral King-Hall to the conclusion that a landing at Swakopmund would be a much longer and more difficult operation than the occupation of Lüderitzbucht; neither he nor the British G.O.C. had been consulted by the Union Government, and such information as he could gather as to the plans for the invasion of the German Colony seemed to show that they were inadequate for an operation of much the same magnitude and nature as we had undertaken in the Boer War. Moreover, a strong party in the Union was out of sympathy with the whole idea of the operations, and any large reverse would have most serious consequences. He felt that he could not protect Walfisch Bay from attack if he had also to safeguard the passage of reinforcements and supplies to Lüderitz Bay. Lüderitz Bay was a well found base, easy to defend if all the artillery available were employed there and not divided between it and Walfisch Bay, whereas the latter was geographically ill-suited for defence, Swakopmund was inconvenient for landing men and stores, and its distance from Cape Town, the base, was half as long again as to Lüderitz. In these circumstances, the Admiral felt constrained to urge these considerations on the Governor-General,¹ late as it was, in view of the advanced state of the preparations.²

CHAPTER III.

15. In addition to the geographical disadvantages of Walfisch Bay as a base for the fourth branch of the expedition there were other reasons for reconsidering the question of scattering the Union forces. So far, three separate expeditions were in train—Force A, under General Lukin, had landed at Port Nolloth and advanced across the Orange River; Force B,

¹ Viscount Gladstone.

² H. 28, 29.

under Colonel Maritz, was operating towards Upington, near the south-east corner of the German Colony; and Force C, for Lüderitz Bay, was at Cape Town ready to sail, its advance party being embarked in the *Armadale Castle*. Of Forces A and B the news was bad; an advanced party sent on by General Lukin had been captured at Sandfontein on the 26th and the loyalty of Colonel Maritz of Force B was under suspicion. In the circumstances and in view of Admiral King-Hall's objections the Union Government agreed to abandon for the time their intention of forming a fourth branch to the expedition, and decided to divide the troops prepared as Force D between General Lukin on the frontier and Colonel Beves at Lüderitz Bay. The idea of sending a force to Swakopmund was temporarily abandoned.¹ That port had meanwhile been kept under observation by the *Kinfauns Castle* which, when the Germans made a small raid on the British Settlement at Walfisch Bay, destroyed the Swakopmund pier and threatened to bombard the town if Walfisch were again molested.² It was now decided to bring her from Walfisch Bay after embarking all the white residents so that the settlement should be temporarily abandoned, but her actual recall was delayed in order that the Germans, under the impression that Swakopmund was to be attacked, should not concentrate on the force landed at Lüderitz Bay before the arrival of reinforcements.

16. The advance part of these (total strength, 1,368) sailed at 11 p.m. on September 29 on board the *Armadale Castle*,³ which, while waiting, had patrolled for two days off Cape Agulhas. The remainder of the reinforcements (total strength, 1,365)⁴ under General Mackenzie sailed at daybreak on October 1 in seven transports. They were escorted by the *Astræa* and were accompanied by the *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle* in which were the Essex and Lancashire Regiments, for home. At Lüderitz Bay the *Hyacinth*, which arrived there from the north that day, was to take over the duty of protecting the landing, while the *Astræa* proceeded with the British troops northward until relieved by a cruiser from Cruiser Force D. The advance party in the *Armadale Castle* reached Lüderitz Bay the same evening, and commenced disembarking next morning. The remainder, under General Mackenzie, reached Lüderitz Bay late on October 3, the *Astræa* continuing northward with the *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle*. She remained with these till the 20th when she was relieved off St. Vincent, Cape Verde, by the *Kent*.

17. Admiral King-Hall was thus left with only the *Hyacinth* and the two armed merchant cruisers for the six weeks of the *Astræa's* absence. He had represented to the Union Government that one reason for his objection to Walfisch Bay as a

¹ H. 30 and H.S. 9, pp. 624-626, 630.

³ H.S. 13, p. 9.

² H.S. 8, p. 44.

⁴ H.S. 13, p. 14.

base, was the inadequacy of his squadron to carry on such an addition to its normal work as the protection of the long line of sea communication that would be entailed by the passage of supplies to Swakopmund. To increase the Cape Force Admiral Sir Henry Jackson at the Admiralty suggested that the *Challenger*, then conducting naval operations at the Cameroons, should be sent down from Duala, while to reduce Admiral King-Hall's responsibilities the East Coast of Africa should revert to the East Indies command.¹ The latter part of this suggestion was adopted, and on October 1 Admiral King-Hall was sent—

198. In order to relieve pressure on your resources the East Coast of Africa, North of latitude of Delagoa Bay, has been transferred for all purposes to East Indies Station. Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, has been informed.

(Sent 8 p.m., 1.10.14.)

Admiral King-Hall's representation to the Governor-General had been made on the assumption that Walfisch Bay was to be the base; and he now submitted to the Admiralty—

274. In view of decision of Union Government not to use Walfisch Bay and the convenient and defensive possibilities of Lüderitz Bay I am satisfied I can deal with the situation and request the reconsideration of the reduction of my command.

(3.10.14.)

But the Admiralty adhered to its decision; and the East African operations were definitely removed from his control. The latest intelligence from there was a report he had received on October 1 from the *Chatham* that the *Königsberg* was rumoured to be using the Rufiji River as an anchorage; on the 7th, an intercepted telegram from the Portuguese Governor at Lourenço Marques indicated that the *Königsberg* was anchored off Caldera Island near Angoche, and this the Admiral passed to the *Dartmouth* with the suggestion that she should proceed there at once. A search of the group failed to locate the enemy; she remained undiscovered, and apparently inactive, for some time longer.

18. The last Imperial convoy having left Cape Town, and being relieved of the control of the East African operations, Admiral King-Hall's chief pre-occupation was with the expeditions against German South-West Africa. The plan of campaign had been altered; General Lukin's force could not advance from Port Nolloth owing to transport and water difficulties, and it was now proposed to send the bulk of it also to Lüderitz Bay, in addition to the two batches of reinforcements.² Although the troops in the *Armada Castle* had disembarked in one day, and she had arrived on October 5 at Simonstown with prisoners and German women and children from Lüderitz

¹ H.S. 9, p. 608.

² H.S. 13, pp. 33, 50-53.

Bay, the force under General Mackenzie was estimated to take about a fortnight to clear the seven transports which had been brought up by the *Astræa*.¹ The *Kinfauns Castle* left Walfisch Bay on the 7th bringing all the white population of the settlement; but next day was ordered by the Admiral to return as he had been informed that the new plan entailed a landing of 3,000 men and a large railway construction party at Walfisch preliminary to a simultaneous advance on Windhuk from Swakopmund and Lüderitz Bay. He pointed out to the Admiralty that these operations could not be undertaken unless both the *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* were held available solely for convoy and covering duties.²

The *Hyacinth* came in to Simon's Bay on October 9 for five days' repairs. The *Astræa* with her convoy was ordered on from St. Helena to Sierra Leone, the Rear-Admiral Commanding in that area being instructed to relieve her before she reached St. Vincent, if possible, as she was wanted back at the Cape. She would be in time, since the new Force D for Walfisch Bay would not be ready to embark till November 16. Further, the Governor-General of the Union suggested that the *Armada Castle* should, during the operations, be available to carry troops as well as to give protection, and in view of the naval participation in the proposed scheme called Admiral King-Hall to a consultation in Pretoria; he left Simonstown on October 9 having instructed his flag-captain to act as Senior Naval Officer in his absence.³ At Pretoria he learned that Colonel Maritz had at last definitely joined the Germans with most of his force and now threatened to invade the Union.

19. Besides the reverse suffered by General Lukin's force and the defection of Maritz, which it was feared might have the effect of inducing some of the Dutch to rise against British rule, there was the further possibility of attack from the sea on the bases of the expedition against German South-West Africa. At the outbreak of war there had been scattered at various points in the Pacific Ocean a German Squadron under Admiral von Spee consisting of the armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the light cruisers *Leipzig* and *Nürnberg*.⁴ It now seemed most probable that these had concentrated and were making their way towards the Straits of Magellan with the intention of coming into the Atlantic; and it was reckoned they could be off Montevideo by October 18. Among possible objectives was an attack on the sea bases of the Union Expedition, and since in the Cape Squadron there was nothing capable of withstanding the 8 in. guns of the large German cruisers the Admiralty decided to have ready the battleship

¹ H.S. 13, p. 43.

² H. 31.

³ H. 32.

⁴ For details of the operations of this squadron, see Monographs, 1, 2, and 3.

Albion, which was then acting with Cruiser Force D. On October 12 they ordered her from St. Vincent, Cape Verde, to Ascension, and informed Admiral King-Hall that she was to be under his orders with the object of safeguarding the expeditions to German South-West Africa at their ports of disembarkation, in conjunction with his other vessels, and any local defence guns that may be mounted at Walfisch Bay and Lüderitz Bay. Everything was to be done to hasten the formation of these bases and transport of stores to them, in conjunction with Union Government, and also the placing of guns for their defence.¹

20. The Union Government were not contemplating a forward movement until the internal situation cleared, but, hoping soon to stamp out the incipient rebellion, asked the Admiral to keep the *Armada Castle* and *Hyacinth* in readiness for the purposes of the expedition when the despatch of troops to Walfisch Bay became possible. He ordered the *Albion* there to relieve the *Kinfauns Castle*, which had been maintaining a strict watch over Swakopmund since her return on October 7, but owing to some delay over stores the *Albion* did not leave St. Vincent till the early morning of the 14th. That day there was a small scare caused by a report from the Portuguese Administrator at Port Alexandre² that seven warships had been seen near there on the night of October 12/13. The news telegraphed from the Admiralty to Admiral King-Hall induced him to recall the *Kinfauns Castle* from her unprotected position at Walfisch Bay, but on enquiry he found that the ships in question were whaling craft, and on the 15th he ordered the *Kinfauns Castle* back again to await the *Albion*. In the meantime the Admiral sent the *Armada Castle* to bring away the women and children from Walfisch Bay who were still on board the *Kinfauns Castle*; she arrived there on the 18th at 3 p.m., embarked her passengers, sailed again at 7 p.m., and arrived at Cape Town on the 21st.

On that day the *Astræa*, having been relieved of her convoy, left St. Vincent, Cape Verde, to rejoin the Cape Squadron, and the *Albion* also sailed from Ascension to join Admiral King-Hall's command. He had ordered her to Walfisch Bay to relieve the *Kinfauns Castle*, which was still actively watching Swakopmund. As natives had reported that the Germans were moving stores, and occasionally soldiers had been seen on the mainland, Captain Crampton of the *Kinfauns Castle* sent a letter by native carrier to the Governor, who had retired to the frontier, demanding his personal assurance that the removal of stores would cease, and that all German troops in the Walfisch Bay district would be withdrawn. An acknowledgment of the letter was received from the Governor, but as it contained no

¹ H. 33.

² Just north of the Kunene River.

definite compliance with the demand the *Kinfauns Castle* proceeded to Swakopmund again on the 24th and fired 37 rounds at the Custom House and pier. From that time to October 30 the *Kinfauns Castle* made almost daily visits to Swakopmund, now apparently quite deserted; on her last visit she burned 20 tons of stores which were found stacked ready for removal. She was relieved on the 31st by the *Albion*, and proceeded via Lüderitz Bay for the Cape with the *Armada Castle*, which had arrived the day before with stores for the *Albion*.¹

Some activity had been reported among the German merchant ships at Loanda and other ports, and the *Hyacinth* and *Armada Castle* had for a few days patrolled to 180 miles South of Cape Point to intercept any German colliers which might be attempting to pass. On the 28th, when the *Armada Castle* sailed for Walfisch Bay, the *Hyacinth* continued patrolling between the Cape and Durban.²

21. The internal situation in the Union was much improved by a signal defeat inflicted by General Botha on Beyers, in which the rebels were driven off in a "headlong rout."³ Against this, in the Orange River Colony Christian de Wet had called up commandoes to establish a Boer Republic.

On the East coast there was also improvement. The *Königsberg* had at last been located by the *Chatham* at Sarari, six miles up the Rufiji River, and the naval operations in that district could now be concentrated on that one estuary. To assist in the final destruction of the enemy cruiser, Admiral King-Hall received the Admiralty's permission to send the hydroplane he had purchased for use at the Cape, and when the *Kinfauns Castle* arrived on November 3 she embarked the seaplane and left with it three days later, being absent from the Cape on this service for three weeks. As the *Königsberg* was unlikely to get out again, and operations against her could be carried on only by shallow draught vessels, the Admiralty on October 31 ordered the *Goliath*, which was at Mombasa, to prepare to proceed with all despatch to the Cape, where she would be of more use to protect the expedition's bases against the German cruisers.

22. Admiral King-Hall had asked on October 25 that two more 6 in. guns might be sent him to mount at Walfisch Bay, but as two battleships would shortly be on his station the

¹ Reports of Proceedings at Walfisch Bay, H.S. 8, pp. 42-83.

² H.S. 8, p. 36.

³ Governor-General to Colonial Office, H.S. 13, p. 290.

Admiralty now thought the guns unnecessary and telegraphed as follows :—

247. No more guns will be sent you from home at present, but full use should be made of your existing resources, including reserves, to assist Union Government. With *Albion* and *Goliath* available, the necessity for mounting coast defence guns is not understood. Their services at the Cape are temporary and reserve guns are available at home if required. Report progress of expeditions on the coast.

(Sent 8.30 p.m., 2.11.14.)

This made no reference to telegram 214 of October 12,¹ in which he was told to mount guns at both Walfisch Bay and Swakopmund; it appeared to contradict that order. To clear up the point he telegraphed :—

356. With reference to telegram 247 I am not clear what Their Lordships desire to be done in regard to defence of the base of the Union Government Expedition. My request for guns was made on receipt of Admiralty telegram 214,² which directed me to hasten the placing of guns for defence of base.

In Admiralty telegram No. 247 received to-day, following occurs: "with *Albion* and *Goliath* available necessity for mounting coast defence guns is not understood," which apparently cancels orders in Admiralty telegram 214.

But further in Admiralty telegram 247 I am informed that services of *Albion* and *Goliath* are temporary only, in which case apparently base should be fortified. Request instructions.

In regard to progress of expedition on the coast matters are at a standstill. Governor-General informs me it is impossible to estimate when will start as this will not be until rebellion is suppressed or reduced to manageable dimensions.

(Sent 3.45 p.m., received 5.1 p.m., 3.11.14.)

But to this the only reply was—

Your 356. Act in accordance with Admiralty telegram No. 247.

(Sent 12.45 p.m., 4.11.14.)

No further definition of the defence of the bases for the Union Expeditions was given.

23. A short time after the despatch of the above telegram it became evident that immediate steps must be taken to deal with the possibility of attack from the German cruisers. Rumours had been afoot that our South American Squadron had met with disaster, and these were confirmed by a telegram received from our Consul-General at Valparaiso, announcing that Admiral Cradock's Squadron had met Von Spee off Coronel on November 1, and had suffered defeat, with the loss of the flagship *Good Hope* and another cruiser, the remainder of our force escaping southward in the darkness. The German Squadron had apparently suffered no damage of importance, and had the way clear before it into the Atlantic, where the only

¹ H. 33.

² H. 33.

cruiser of greater power than the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* was the *Defence*, then with Admiral Stoddart off the coast of Brazil.

The Admiralty at once took steps to strengthen the forces at the various objectives considered likely for the German Squadron. One of these was German South-West Africa, where the Cape Squadron as it stood was no match for the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*; to render forces more equal, at 2.50 p.m. on November 4 the light cruiser *Dartmouth*¹ was ordered from East Africa to Simon's Bay, and at 8.45 p.m. the *Goliath* was instructed to proceed to Simonstown as soon as possible to refit. Neither of these was suitable for bringing the Germans to action, but within reach and probably capable of arriving in South Africa in time was the *Minotaur*,² an armoured cruiser of the same class as the *Defence*; she was convoying the Australasian contingent which had left Albany for Colombo on November 1.³ Her presence with the convoy, in addition to a powerful Japanese cruiser and two Australian light cruisers, had been considered necessary in view of possible attack from the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. But there was now no probability of the enemy catching up with the convoy, and on November 6 the Admiralty sent her *via* the Cocos Islands, in which neighbourhood she was, orders to proceed to Simon's Bay at once, coaling at Mauritius if necessary; after coaling at Simon's Bay she was to join the *Albion* off South-West Africa in view of a possible raid by the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*. In addition, the departure of the *Goliath* was postponed, and she was retained in East African waters.

24. In the Admiralty's view at that time, Admiral Cradock's defeat had been due to his having detached the *Canopus* from his battle line owing to her inability to keep up with a cruiser squadron. Fearing lest Admiral King-Hall might repeat the same tactics they sent him—

261. In view of possibility of *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* coming to South African waters *Minotaur* has been ordered to Simon's Bay and will arrive on November 22. *Minotaur* and *Albion* must always act in concert to avoid defeat in detail. Cape Town and Simon's Bay have defences and can look after themselves. *Minotaur* and *Albion* should protect army base in S.W. Africa. A strong force of French and British armoured cruisers is being sent down West African Coast, leaving Gibraltar on 13th, and ships on South-east coast of America are being concentrated and strongly reinforced. *Albion* should meet *Minotaur* at Simon's Bay and be ready to leave with her as soon as *Minotaur* has coaled. *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* have light cruisers and colliers and left Valparaiso on November 4. Concentrate your ships in good time and do not leave *Armada Castle* too long at Walfisch Bay unsupported.

(Sent 7 p.m., 8.11.14.)

¹ *Dartmouth*, 1911; 5,250 tons; 23.8 sea-speed; eight 6 in. guns.

² *Minotaur*, 1908; 14,600 tons; 21.0 sea-speed; four 9.2 in., ten 7.5 in. guns.

³ See Monograph 14: *The First Australasian Convoy*.

Admiral King-Hall had intended to send the *Armada* *Castle* to relieve the *Albion* at Walfisch Bay to give the battleship an opportunity for attending to small defects, but on receipt of this instruction he proceeded to concentrate his force; he cancelled the *Armada* *Castle's* orders, recalled the *Albion* to Simonstown, and ordered the *Hyacinth* to return from the patrol she was carrying out off Cape Point.¹

The Admiralty had not given him any details of the battle, and as all news of it had been suppressed he was obliged to ask on November 12 what were the losses on both sides. Captured Germans had announced that their squadron was coming to turn the British out of South-West Africa, and it seemed to him that Admiral von Spee might overrate the extent of the rebellion and consider the relief of the most important German colony a feasible operation.² The German Admiral had three good light cruisers with him; and to increase the Cape Squadron's strength in this class of ships the Admiralty now ordered the *Weymouth* from the East Indies to Simon's Bay, her transference being possible since the *Emden* had, on November 9, been disposed of by the *Sydney* at Cocos Island. The *Dartmouth* reached Simonstown on November 19, the *Weymouth* on the 21st, and the *Minotaur* on the 27th.

The total withdrawal of our ships from Walfisch Bay was viewed by the Union Government with some anxiety; they feared it might have a bad effect on the disturbed situation. Accordingly, when it was learned on November 13 that the German Squadron was still off Valparaiso, Admiral King-Hall sent the *Armada* *Castle* up there again to keep guard over Swakopmund.³

25. By November 22 the rebellion was collapsing under General Botha's vigorous blows, and the Governor-General was able to report that everywhere rebels were surrendering in large numbers.⁴ This improvement in the situation suggested a forward move, and the Union Government now proposed to send their expedition to Walfisch Bay about December 12. The Admiral had received Admiralty permission to proceed there with the *Albion* and *Minotaur* in company,¹ and as the *Minotaur* was due in a few days the move seemed possible. But the Admiral considered that until the German Squadron was located or dealt with the expedition should not start, and asked for Admiralty instructions. After some delay, in the course of which the collapse of the rebellion caused the Union Government to advance the date of despatch of the expedition to December 2, the Admiralty informed him that it would be inadvisable to send the expedition to Walfisch Bay until he was joined by the *Defence*, which was to leave Abrolhos Rocks off Brazil for the

¹ L. of P., H.S. 8, p. 84.

² H. 34.

³ H. 35, 37, 38.

⁴ To Colonial Office, H.S. 13, p. 567.

⁵ H. 36.

Cape on November 25. With the *Minotaur*, *Defence* and the rest of his squadron he could proceed; but the route would not be safe unless the transports were escorted by a force able to defeat the enemy.¹

With the remembrance of Coronel before them, they were anxious that he should clearly understand the necessity of concentration, and warned him that until the *Defence* joined, the *Minotaur* and *Albion* were not to be separated, and all his other ships were to be in company with them or under the guns of Simon's Bay. In no circumstances was he to allow himself to be engaged by the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* without the *Minotaur* and *Albion* being united. He immediately recalled the *Armada* *Castle* from Walfisch Bay.²

26. These definite instructions enabled the Admiral to put his views before the Union Government. He explained that with the present arrangements there were four principal duties devolving upon the Navy: (1) to convoy the expedition to Walfisch Bay, (2) to cover and protect Walfisch Bay, (3) to cover and protect Lüderitz Bay, (4) to guard the lines of communication by sea from Cape Town to both bases. As he was to keep his force concentrated he could not simultaneously protect both bases, neither of which could be defended from shore against the 8 in. guns of the German cruisers. He pointed out the danger of using two separate sea-bases, both unprotected and neither self-supporting, and urged that the adoption of Lüderitz Bay alone would reduce the risks by 50 to 75 per cent. In any case, he could not be ready to escort a convoy from Cape Town to Walfisch Bay before December 14. The Admiralty went even further; they fully concurred in his views, and went on to say that the expedition to Lüderitz Bay must be in one convoy, with provisions and all supplies for one month, so as to obviate the necessity of guarding the sea lines of communication. These restrictions were, of course, only till our account with the German Squadron should be settled, after which they would be glad to facilitate the operations against German South-West Africa in every possible way.³ The same views the Admiralty expressed in a letter to the Colonial Office dated November 29.⁴

In order to effect a speedy concentration, the Admiral intended to proceed with all his ships except the merchant cruisers on December 1 to Lüderitz Bay, and thence on to meet the *Defence*; after concentrating, the whole squadron would return to Simon's Bay to coal, preparatory to escorting the Walfisch Bay expedition; should, however, his protests have effect, and the Walfisch Bay Expedition be postponed, he would not come back to Simonstown but coal at Lüderitz Bay, remaining there with the whole squadron until the Germans were located.⁵

¹ H. 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, and H.S. 8, pp. 196-200.

² H. 39, 41.

³ H. 45, 46.

⁴ H.S. 8, p. 200.

⁵ H. 46.

In consequence of the remarks of the Admiral and Admiralty, the Union Government agreed to postpone the departure of the Walfisch Bay Expedition for a fortnight, in the hope that the German Squadron would then be accounted for, but as they were anxious to reinforce General Mackenzie at Lüderitz Bay with 2,000 mounted men and some guns, they proposed to take the risk of sending the transports with these singly and unescorted. At the Governor-General's suggestion, Admiral King-Hall deferred his sailing till December 7, by which time it was hoped all the reinforcements would be ready to go in one convoy.¹

The latest news of the hostile squadron to reach the Admiral was a report sent him from home on December 1 that it had left Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chile, a fortnight before, and on December 2 that four ships of unknown nationality had been seen off Iquique steaming northward. The enemy was therefore not yet known to be in the Atlantic; but on December 3 a German liner, the *Eleanore Woermann*, which had been in attendance on German men-of-war, left Buenos Aires full of provisions, which it had been ascertained were destined for South-West Africa, and she was to be followed by the *Gotha*, another suspected enemy supply ship.

27. The *Defence* left St. Helena on December 3, with orders to join the Admiral at Lüderitz Bay when he arrived with his squadron and convoy. But, as customary with convoys, the date of sailing was put off till the 8th, and even then two out of the five transports would not be ready till December 10. In view of the danger to unescorted transports from the German Squadron, which the Admiral considered to be on its way across to Africa, he proposed to wait till the 10th, leaving Lüderitz Bay open to attack; but if the Union Government wished it he was prepared to sail on the 8th with the three ready transports. The Admiralty did not agree that the German Squadron was already in the Atlantic; Admiral Sturdee's Squadron had swept the South American coast from Abrolhos Rocks almost to the Falkland Islands, where it was due on December 8. Nothing had been seen. The Union Government preferred that the two late transports should be without protection rather than the base, and the Admiral sailed on December 8 with the three transports, his squadron consisting of the *Minotaur* (flag), *Albion*, *Weymouth*, *Hyacinth* and *Astræa*. The *Dartmouth* was not with him as by Admiralty orders he had sent her to St. Helena for South America, but the *Defence* joined him in the afternoon.²

28. The internal situation in the Union had much improved. Christian de Wet and his force were captured on December 1, Beyers was drowned in the Vaal River on the 8th, and by the 9th the Governor-General was able to report the rebellion to

¹ H.S. 13, p. 651, and H. 48, 49.

² H.S. 50, 51, 52, 47.

be practically at an end. Thus the chief military obstacles to a vigorous offensive in South-West Africa were removed.

On the sea, too, the threatened danger of attack on the bases was removed by the defeat of the German Squadron by Admiral Sturdee's force off the Falkland Islands on December 8, a defeat in which the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* were sunk, only the *Dresden* escaping. To assist in the search for her the Admiralty ordered the *Dartmouth* from St. Helena to Pernambuco with orders to observe the Martin Vaz Islands on the way in case the *Karlsruhe* or *Kronprinz Wilhelm* might be there.

There was no longer any necessity for the armoured cruisers to remain at the Cape, and in informing Admiral King-Hall of the results of the battle off the Falkland Islands the Admiralty ordered the *Minotaur* and *Defence* to St. Helena, and on the 28th to Sierra Leone and Plymouth with all convenient despatch. The *Weymouth* was ordered on the 13th to dock at Simonstown and then relieve the *Chatham* in East Africa. The end of the year thus found Admiral King-Hall with the *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* of his original squadron, the merchant cruiser *Armadale Castle*, and the battleships *Albion* and *Goliath*, the latter having at last come to Simonstown to refit.

29. It is now known that after the battle of Coronel, as a result of which Admiral von Spee became temporarily predominant in the South Atlantic, the German Government seriously considered a project for sending supplies and troops to German South-West Africa. In Argentine and Chile there were 5,000 German reservists, including 100 officers; these, in view of our habit of removing them from ships in which they were taking passage, had been told to make no further effort to reach Germany. Acting under orders from Berlin the German Minister to Chile secretly organised 2,000 of them into a body of reinforcements for South-West Africa. They were to be given out as passengers to Germany and embarked with plentiful supplies in one of the German steamers at Valparaiso as soon as Chile could be induced to remove her embargo on the departure of German merchant ships. Rifles and ammunition were to be obtained locally. But before the organisation could be completed, Admiral von Spee's squadron was practically annihilated. The support of powerful cruisers was thought essential to the success of the expedition, and though at first the German Admiralty appear to have been considering whether they should send them out, by the end of 1914 they had made up their mind to abandon altogether the project of sending reservists and supplies from Chile to German South-West Africa.¹ Admiral King-Hall's opinion that the Germans after the battle of Coronel might consider the relief of South-West Africa feasible was, in fact, a singularly accurate appreciation.²

¹ See I.D., H.S., Vols. 1476, 1479.

² See H. 34.

APPENDIX H.

H. 1. From Admiralty. 25.7.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape.

54. H.M.S. *Nottingham* leaves England about August 31 for the Cape Station calling at St. Helena and Ascension. *Astræa* should meet *Nottingham* at St. Helena.

H. 2. From Colonial Office. 6.8.14.
To Union of South Africa. (Sent 6.35 p.m.)

His Majesty's Government gratefully accept your offer to take over defence and internal order yourselves and to release Imperial troops from South Africa. All which are not actually required in duties which cannot otherwise be performed will accordingly be recalled.

Secret.—If at the same time your Ministers desire and feel themselves able to seize such part of German South-West Africa as will give them the command of Lüderitzbucht, Swakopmund and the wireless stations there or in the interior we should feel that this was a great and urgent Imperial service

H. 3. From Admiralty. 6.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 11.25 p.m.)

74. Confer with General Officer Commanding five battalions infantry, two regiments cavalry, one brigade artillery, two companies Army Service Corps to leave South Africa. Wire earliest arrangements possible giving probable dates of sailing.

H. 4. From Admiralty. 9.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 11.45 a.m.)

76. For the present *Pegasus* to remain on East Coast. Armed cruiser (*sic*) *Kinfauns Castle* sails to-day for the Cape and will act under your orders. Leave for St. Helena with garrison as soon as you feel the situation permits.

H. 5. From Colonial Office. 9.8.14.
To Union of South Africa. (Sent 12.25 p.m.)

My telegram of August 6. Seizure of coast wireless stations Swakopmund and Lüderitzbucht regarded by H.M. Government as urgent necessity. This can only be effected in reasonable time by joint naval and military expedition up the coast. Although capture of long distance station Windhoek is of great importance this would be a serious military undertaking that will occupy some time. It might follow another expedition against coast stations or be carried out independently from interior, but this must rest with your Government. Departure of expedition up coast must depend on local naval situation when force is ready and at present it is not probable that naval escort will be available. H.M. Government suggests that coast expedition might be prepared in consultation with Senior Naval Officer, Cape. Admiralty should be informed where and when it is proposed they should embark. No doubt your Government will consider whether in order to divert defending force from coast, raids across land frontier can be arranged.

H. 6. From Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 12.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 12.28 a.m.)

102. The four transports required will be ready to sail as follows:—*Kenilworth Castle*, August 23, *Briton*, August 25, *Dunluce Castle*, August 26, *Guildford Castle*, September 3. This is assuming they will sail independently and do not require escort from here.

H. 7. From Admiralty. 12.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 12.30 p.m.)

80. *Leviathan* has been ordered to Cape for convoying transports. She is now near the Azores and is to coal at St. Vincent, Cape Verde.

H. 8. From Admiralty. 12.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 1.40 p.m.)

81. Orders about St. Helena garrison cancelled. First three transports are to start together 26th instant. *Hyacinth* to escort till *Leviathan* is met, then returns for fourth transport.

H. 9. From Admiralty. 13.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 11.40 a.m.)

86. Your 101.¹ *Nottingham* not available. *Astræa* ordered to Cape to convoy troops together with *Hyacinth*.

H. 10. From Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 13.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 12.39 p.m.)

107. *Hyacinth* proceeding to patrol line 50 miles long South (true) from Cape of Good Hope. *Königsberg's* whereabouts uncertain but Swakopmund was signalled to in cypher 11 p.m., August 12, and she may be working south. With reference to Admiralty cable 76 may I exercise my judgment as to keeping *Astræa* and *Pegasus* on coast.

H. 11. From Admiralty. 13.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 5.5 p.m.)

87. *Königsberg* reported in vicinity of Inhambane. *Astræa* ordered to leave Zanzibar for Simonstown. *Pegasus* to remain Zanzibar to cover Durban and trade from *Königsberg*; abandon patrol mentioned in your 107 and proceed to Durban.

H. 12. From Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 15.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 1.50 a.m.)

111. Your telegram 91² has been repeated to S.N.O., Simonstown, in whose hands I have had to leave arrangements on my proceeding to Durban as directed in your telegram 87. I have instructed him to arrange accordingly and report direct to Admiralty.

I submit I should be better able to control the movements and disposition of ships and conduct the general operations on this station if I can remain for the present at Simonstown and suggest that I should return there from Durban by rail.

¹ Asked when *Nottingham* would join.
² Subject: transport arrangements.

H. 13. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 15.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 4.37 a.m.)

112. Secretary of State for Colonies has requested Union Government to seize Swakopmund and Lüderitz Bay (German South-West Africa) without delay. Governor-General asked me for escort for expedition which is being prepared. I submit *Hyacinth* return to Cape forthwith and leave *Astræa* to search for and deal with *Königsberg*.

Reply:—93. Your 112. Approved *Hyacinth* to return to Cape. *Astræa* to search for and deal with *Königsberg*.

H. 14. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 17.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 5.59 a.m.)

116. I submit *Pegasus* being alone Zanzibar is very risky as *Königsberg* has just double weight broadside, superior speed and torpedoes. I recommend that instead of proceeding to Cape as ordered August 13 *Astræa* return from Inhambane if *Königsberg* should not have been met with and that she and *Pegasus* should act in company

H. 15. *From* Admiralty. 17.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 11.50 a.m.)

102. Convoy of Cape troops must be escorted by both *Astræa* and *Hyacinth*. Slight risk to *Pegasus* which is to remain at Zanzibar must be accepted.

H. 16. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 19.8.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 11.15 a.m.)

123. Very urgent. General Officer Commanding-in-Chief informed me on August 14 that the 10th Hussars were not to go home. He now informs me they are to go. It is impossible to get ship ready to take them before about September 6 owing to all available labour Cape Town and Durban being engaged on transports sailing August 26. If they left their horses behind they could be sent in *Balmoral Castle* sailing August 29. Is this to be done or shall I arrange for them to go about September 6?

I am not aware how far decision arrived at is *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* should escort convoy. If they are not back by September 6 only escort available will be *Kinfauns Castle*. If 10th Hussars are to return and all troops sail together sailing of convoy must be delayed.

H. 17. *From* Admiralty. 21.8.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 3.15 p.m.)

115. *Leviathan* due at Ascension August 28, St. Helena August 31, and is ordered to assist in escort of transports. Use your discretion about ordering *Astræa* back to Cape on *Leviathan* joining. *Astræa* then available to return for further service. *Hyacinth* will be relieved by another cruiser either at Ascension or St. Vincent.

H. 18. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 2.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 2.42 p.m.)

180. 2nd Battalion East Lancashire Regiment can if necessary leave on September 12 under escort of *Astræa*, but at present no orders as to their departure have been received by the Military Authorities.

2nd Battalion Essex Regiment cannot start from Cape until about September 29.

This can only be arranged by sending *Kinfauns Castle* to Mauritius to return here with troops dispensing with any other escort for Mauritius trip.

Kinfauns Castle can sail for Mauritius September 11 and any transports can be ready on her return but no men-of-war except armed mercantile cruisers will be available for escort.

H. 19. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 2.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 2.45 p.m.)

179. At the present time from St. Helena on the West to Mombasa on the East, a distance of 4,000 miles, there is no man-of-war, except *Armada Castle* at Port Nolloth. *Kinfauns Castle* is near St. Helena and should arrive about September 8 and then required probably for Mauritius but the important trade centre off the Cape of Good Hope is quite unprotected and I suggest that a cruiser of *Astræa* force should cruise there until *Königsberg* has been dealt with.

H. 20. *From* Admiralty. 3.9.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 3 p.m.)

144. Your 180. It is considered preferable for both *Astræa* and *Kinfauns Castle* to proceed with *Dover Castle* and the expedition to German South-West Africa. After landing the force at Swakopmund *Astræa* to escort the *Dover Castle* to St. Vincent. *Kinfauns Castle* remaining with expedition as long as necessary, troops at Mauritius must wait for another opportunity. You should consider best means of doing this and report further.

H. 21. *From* Admiralty. 5.9.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 0.55 a.m.)

145. Arrangements should be made for half-battalion Essex Regiment in South Africa to come home with East Lancashire Regiment

H. 22. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 5.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 3.30 p.m.)

185. Your 145. *Garth Castle* has been taken up for wing of Essex Regiment now in South African Colonies. Will be ready to proceed September 14 with *Dover Castle* carrying East Lancashire Regiment, escorted by *Astræa*.

Union Authorities inform me sailing of expedition may be delayed a few days beyond September 12 which was original date fixed.

Request instructions whether sailing of Imperial troops is to be delayed in order that *Astræa* may also convoy Union Expedition as ordered in your 144.

Considerable delay is probable in disembarking at Lüderitz Bay and Walfisch Bay.

If Imperial troops are not to wait for Union Expedition latter must wait return of *Hyacinth*

H. 23. *From* Admiralty. 6.9.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 12.40 p.m.)

147. Your 185. Sailing of Imperial troops for England is not to be delayed for Union Expedition to Lüderitz Bay. Inform Governor-General. Report when troops have landed at Port Nolloth.

H. 24. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 9.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 4.42 p.m.)

193. Union Government state unless a man-of-war can be detailed to cover landing at Lüderitz Bay and Walfisch Bay expedition will probably be cancelled. Expedition is ready to start on September 12.

In view of serious effect of damping enthusiasm which is at present very strong in Union I strongly recommend if a man-of-war can possibly be spared it should be used for the purpose.

Union Government not prepared to accept protection of armed merchant cruisers alone and consider same escort as required for Imperial troops necessary.

The matter from Imperial aspect is very serious and I recommend detailing of *Astræa* for the Union Expedition as the delay of the 2nd Battalion East Lancashire Regiment and 2nd Battalion Essex Regiment until arrival of another cruiser would seem preferable to effect of cancellation of expedition.

H. 25. *From* Admiralty. 9.9.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 5.10 p.m.)

149. Cancel Admiralty telegram 147 of September 6. *Astræa* is to escort Union Expedition to German South-West Africa and act as detailed in previous orders on this subject

H. 26. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 10.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 4.15 p.m.)

199. Your 149. Imperial troops and Union Expedition will sail September 14. Union Force will delay *Astræa* at least seven days in Lüderitzbucht and 14 days at Walfisch Bay. If bad weather is experienced delay may be longer. This delay can be shortened if *Hyacinth* on her return from the present convoy proceeds from St. Helena to Walfisch Bay and relieves *Astræa* who would then get away with *Dover Castle* and *Garth Castle* 10 days earlier.

Reply :—154. Your 199. Approved. Give necessary orders.

H. 27. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 21.9.14.
To Admiralty.

236. I suggest that instead of *Hyacinth* relieving *Astræa* at Walfisch Bay she should come direct to Cape from St. Helena; that *Astræa* and *Armada Castle* should remain with Imperial troops until Union Expedition is safely landed, *Astræa* then proceeding to St. Vincent, Cape Verde, with Imperial troops and *Armada Castle*; and that I should proceed in *Hyacinth* with *Kinfauns Castle* to East coast and search for *Königsberg* in co-operation with *Chatham* which has been ordered from Aden to Mombasa.

The delay caused to Imperial troops will be about a fortnight and appears less important than the destruction of *Königsberg*.

Reply :—179. Your 236. Three fast cruisers have been sent after *Königsberg* from Aden. Convoy of Imperial troops must proceed without delay as arranged.

H. 28. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 27.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 9.29 p.m.)

257. While not wishing to appear in any way an alarmist, I feel compelled to acquaint Their Lordships for information of the Imperial Government with following facts regarding operations already commenced against German South-West Africa :—

As far as I can gather there does not appear to be any comprehensive plan of campaign.

Three forces are operating now, one inland from Prieska, one from Port Nolloth, and one from Angra Pequena, and a fourth is intended to act from Walfisch Bay.

In view of my urgent representations, made without being consulted, the Naval Transport Department has been organised on a more or less workable basis but is still hampered from a want of co-ordination with a non-existent military staff. The arrangements made for supplying the various forces appear to me quite inadequate

The land transport arrangements appear to be equally unsatisfactory

There is not a good supply of ammunition available

I have offered what can be spared from Naval Ordnance Department at Simonstown.

It is contemplated to reconstruct the German railway which has been destroyed, and to lay a line from Walfisch Bay to join the line from Swakopmund. If and when this is accomplished so many men will be required to guard it there will not be much force left to operate.

Finally, a strong party in the Union is out of sympathy with the operations, and any serious reverse would have most serious consequences

In my view the campaign will resemble in character the South African War, and many more troops will be required than the Union Government seem to contemplate.

I have discussed this matter fully with General Thompson, Commanding Cape of Good Hope, and he concurs in the views expressed above and also in the necessity for placing them before the Home Authorities.

If the operations are to continue both General Thompson and I are strongly of opinion that the Walfisch Bay Expedition should be abandoned, and all forces concentrated at Lüderitz Bay.

Neither General Wolfe Murray, General Thompson or myself have been consulted as to best way to undertake the operations.

H. 29. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 28.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 3.26 p.m.)

258. Following telegram sent to Governor-General :—Begins—

Secret. In view of the information which I have received since the return of the transport convoy the expedition to Lüderitz Bay (*sic*) and the great difficulties of protecting Walfisch Bay from sea attacks so as to render it an absolutely safe base, I desire to put the following before you for consideration.

You are aware all Germans, not only from this but neighbouring stations, are not yet accounted for. You are also aware of the small force at my disposal, and of fact for some five weeks that force will be still further reduced.

In these circumstances I do not think I am justified in guaranteeing at present the safe conduct of the continuous stream of reinforcements and supplies which will be necessary for the two expeditions, and at the same time to protect Walfisch Bay from attacks.

From information now available, I am of opinion that if the two guns Q.F. 4.7, at present destined for Walfisch Bay and Swakopmund, were mounted at Lüderitz Bay in addition to guns now there, the port would be safe, and once the transports arrived there they would require no further protection. Anchorage is sheltered and safe; the pier, tugs, lighters, condensing plant house, telephone, etc., are all intact and in working order. In short, the place forms an excellent base.

Walfisch Bay, on the other hand, is so large that a number of guns and garrison is required to completely defend it. It would be difficult to suitably place guns owing to the low-lying land. Swakopmund is, from a naval point of view, very unsuitable for landing men or stores, and further the pier is destroyed.

The distance from the Cape to Lüderitz Bay is two-thirds of that to Walfisch Bay and entails less risk to safety of ships on passage.

Military reasons may make it an absolute necessity to use Walfisch Bay, but unless such reasons are imperative, I suggest the advisability of making Lüderitz Bay the principal base for the time being may be considered.

When the naval situation has improved the occupation of Walfisch Bay would entail less risk than at the moment.

I have discussed this matter with General Thompson and he is in accord with the view above expressed.

I regret that at this late period of preparation I feel it necessary to make this representation.

H. 30. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 29.9.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 12.49 a.m.)

262. My 258. Government concurs with my suggestion and have abandoned Walfisch Bay Expedition for present and will concentrate at Lüderitz Bay.

H. 31. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 8.10.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 5.11 a.m.)

283. Union Government propose a considerable modification and expansion of expedition against German South-West Africa, entailing the earlier landing of 3,000 men and a large railway construction party with materials at Walfisch Bay to enable building of a railway between Walfisch Bay and Swakopmund, preliminary to advancing from there with a still larger force to Windhoek simultaneously with an advance from Lüderitz Bay to the North.

These operations can only be undertaken providing both *Hyacinth* and *Astræa* are held available solely for convoy and covering duties.

Request instructions whether this is to be done.

H. 32. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 9.10.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 5.45 p.m.)

289. Governor-General and Ministers have expressed a desire to consult me personally on matters connected with expedition to German South-West Africa.

I consider it very desirable in view of condition of affairs set forth in my telegram 257 that such advice as I can give should be at disposal of Union Government as early as possible . . . consequently in spite of the drawback involved I am proceeding to Pretoria to-night . . .

Flag Captain will be S.N.O. in my absence . . .

H. 33. *From* Admiralty. 12.10.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 9.50 p.m.)

214. *Albion* has been ordered to Ascension to await orders. She is placed under your orders with the object of safeguarding the expeditions to German South-West Africa at their ports of disembarkation in conjunction with your other vessels and any local defence guns that may be mounted at Walfisch Bay and Angra Pequena.

Everything should be done to hasten the formation of these bases and transport of stores to them in conjunction with Union Government, and also the placing of guns for their defence. Give *Albion* necessary orders on her arrival at Ascension.

H. 34. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 12.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 1.15 p.m.)

387. Request I may be informed as to Pacific Ocean battle and what were British losses and German. All the news has been suppressed here and I know nothing except for two Reuter telegrams I was permitted to see which said *Good Hope* was sunk and *Monmouth* uncertain. Is the German Squadron supposed to be intact?

It is remarkable that on the occupation of Lüderitz two months ago Germans there confidently asserted that German ships would be there in two months and turn out British. Further a man was charged at Bloemfontein yesterday for recently saying that five German ships have arrived in South Africa. The accuracy in numbers of men-of-war seeing that no information as to German Squadron has been published here is noticeable.

It looks as if German Squadron is probably on way here to try and save their most important colony, which in view of rebellion here they may consider feasible.

H. 35. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 13.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 1.30 a.m.)

390. I informed Governor-General on November 9 that it would be necessary for me to withdraw ships from Walfisch Bay about November 13 or 14. His Excellency told me that he is telegraphing to Secretary of State on the subject, and he is anxious as to effect which the withdrawal may have and as to possibility of Germans taking advantage of it to reach Vice-Consulate at Windhoek . . . I have represented to His Excellency that the temporary suspension of expedition until the German Cruiser Squadron is accounted for is necessary, but in view of the internal situation it does not seem likely in any case this can advance for some time yet.

H. 36. *From* Admiralty. 13.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 7.22 p.m.)

268. Your 390. When *Minotaur* joins you it will be possible for you to move to Walfisch Bay taking *Albion* with you and keeping all your forces concentrated. *Dartmouth* and *Weymouth* have also been sent to join you.

H. 37. *From* Admiralty. 13.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 9.45 p.m.)

269. . . . Ten German ships were off Valparaiso early morning November 13. Eight went North-west, two came in, namely *Leipzig*, *Dresden* . . .

H. 38. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 14.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 4.48 p.m.)

394. In view of your 269 am sending *Armada Castle* this afternoon to Walfisch Bay to relieve *Albion*.

H. 39. *From* Admiralty. 22.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 6 p.m.)

284. *Defence* will leave Abrolhos Rocks on 25th for St. Helena *en route* to South Africa. Until *Defence* joins your flag *Minotaur* and *Albion* are not to be separated and your other ships are either to be in company with *Minotaur* and *Albion* or under the guns of Simon's Bay.

In no circumstances are you to allow yourself to be engaged by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* without *Minotaur* and *Albion* being united. When *Defence* joins you further orders will be issued.

H. 40. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 23.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 12.45 p.m.)
 427. Union Government inform me they propose to send expedition to Walfisch Bay about December 12.

In view of uncertainty of movements of German Squadron and dependence of Lüderitz Bay and Walfisch Bay on sea communication, I am of opinion that until German Squadron is located or dealt with expedition should not start. I request Their Lordships' instructions for information of Union Government.

H. 41. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 23.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 12.58 p.m.)
 426. Return to Simon's Bay forthwith. Addressed to *Armada Castle*. Repeated to Admiralty and Governor-General, Pretoria.

H. 42. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 24.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 9.46 a.m.)
 430. My 427. Proposed date for sending expedition to Walfisch Bay now advanced to December 2. Early answer requested accordingly.

H. 43. *From* Admiralty. 24.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 11.15 a.m.)
 288. Your 427. A reply will be sent later when further news is available of *Scharnhorst* squadron's movements.

H. 44. *From* Admiralty. 26.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 10.20 p.m.)
 295. Your 427. When *Defence* has joined your squadron it will be safe to send the expedition to Walfisch Bay escorted by *Minotaur*, *Defence*, *Dartmouth* and your squadron, but the route will not be safe without ships being convoyed by a force which can beat the enemy.

H. 45. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 28.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 2.34 a.m.)
 452. Your 295. I have telegraphed following to Governor-General:—
 Begins—

I have received a further Admiralty telegram in consequence of which I desire to place following before you for information of Ministers. The naval situation regarding the Walfisch Bay Expedition going forwards is as follows:—There are four principal duties devolving upon Navy—(1) to convoy expedition to Walfisch Bay; (2) to cover and protect Walfisch Bay; (3) to cover and protect Lüderitz Bay; (4) to guard the lines of communication by sea from Cape Town to Lüderitz Bay and Walfisch Bay. The enemy's naval force is known, and in a few days I shall be in a position to deal with it if met, but it is essential that my force be kept concentrated. It is not practicable to guarantee successful undertaking of these four duties simultaneously and it appears to me that the expedition to Walfisch Bay should be deferred until the enemy is dealt with. If I convoy a force to Walfisch Bay and remain to protect it you will see that Lüderitz Bay is at the mercy of the enemy. Conversely, if I protect Lüderitz Bay, the Walfisch Bay Expedition is open to risk of destruction. It is impossible to provide land protection at either Walfisch Bay or Lüderitz Bay fit to cope with German squadron as 9·2 in. guns will be required. I should like to be assured that Union Government realises these risks and to know which of four responsibilities mentioned they attach the greatest importance.

Personally I consider that the adoption of two separate sea bases both unprotected and neither of them self-supported is dangerous. I consider that limiting the sea work to Lüderitz Bay would reduce the risks by at least 50 per cent. and probably 75 per cent. in consequence of the shorter lines of communication to control and the fact that there is only one base to be guarded. The earliest date on which I can take a convoy from Cape Town for Walfisch Bay commanding the expedition, should it be decided to send it, will be December 14. Please send me early reply as to the decision arrived at. Ends.

In absence of further information of movements of enemy squadron propose to leave in *Minotaur* with *Albion*, *Dartmouth*, *Weymouth*, *Hyacinth*, *Astræa*, December 1 for Lüderitz Bay, proceeding thence to meet *Defence* coming from St. Helena, returning to Simon's Bay to coal preparatory to escorting expedition to Walfisch Bay if this decided, which I can then do by December 14. If expedition is abandoned or postponed I will after meeting *Defence* return to Lüderitz Bay and coal there remaining in vicinity until German Squadron is located.

H. 46. *From* Admiralty. 28.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 5 p.m.)

302. Your 452. Admiralty concur with your view that it is dangerous to adopt two sea bases neither of which can protect themselves. Inform the Governor-General of this and that Admiralty have ordered you to keep your squadron concentrated until the situation clears. Also inform him that you can convoy an expedition to Lüderitz Bay and protect the base there on the understanding that the expedition consists of one convoy with provisions and all necessaries for one month but that the sea lines of communication cannot be covered for vessels passing to and fro constantly with subsidiary supplies for the main expedition. Owing to the arrangements made in South American waters and in the Pacific it is confidently expected that the German Squadron will soon be brought to action or very much restricted in its movements, and as soon as circumstances permit the Admiralty will be glad to afford the Governor-General every facility and to co-operate in every way possible to ensure success in the operations in South-West Africa.

H. 47. *From* Admiralty. 29.11.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 3.55 p.m.)
 305. Send *Dartmouth* to St. Helena to wait orders.

H. 48. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 30.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 2.54 p.m.)
 461. Your 302 which I repeated to Governor-General. Following telegram received from him this morning:—Message begins—

Ministers are apprehensive that further delay in despatching reinforcements to Lüderitz and landing a strong force at Walfisch is likely to have most serious results. The bulk of reinforcements for Lüderitz cannot be ready by December 3 and Ministers think, therefore, will be necessary to take the risk and send them by single unescorted transports as fast as they can be shipped. By time these transports could return to Cape Town, Admiralty it may be hoped will be in a position to convoy the Walfisch Bay Expedition and to protect both bases.

Private. Could your move to Lüderitz Bay be delayed for a few days if that would enable the bulk of the reinforcements to be ready.
 Message ends.

I have replied as follows:—Begins—I will defer my sailing a few days if desired in order to convoy troops. If German Squadron is met and defeated as Admiralty hopes both bases will be safe; otherwise I fear that situation will remain as at present. Ends.

H. 49. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 30.11.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 8.30 p.m.)
 463. Following telegram sent (to Governor-General) :—Begins—
 Unless it should be necessary for me to meet German Squadron I will
 defer sailing until December 7 or 8 when troops will be ready. Ends.

H. 50. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 6.12.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 4.1 p.m.)
 482. Following telegram sent to Governor-General :—Begins—
 Naval Transport Officer informs that two transports cannot be
 ready before December 10. I am prepared to wait until they are ready,
 leaving Lüderitz open to possibility of attack, or I will sail on December 8
 with the three transports which will be ready, leaving the other two to
 come alone with the risk of being attacked.

Am inclined to think it better to wait until December 10 if military
 exigencies permit, for I consider troops unable to be convoyed run a grave
 risk, and from intelligence received the German Squadron appears to be
 on its way across, though definite confirmation has not yet been obtained.
 Please reply urgently informing me of wishes of Government.

H. 51. *From* Admiralty. 6.12.14.
To Commander-in-Chief, Cape. (Sent 9.25 p.m.)
 317. Your 482. There is no evidence that German Squadron is in the
 Atlantic.

Our squadron has swept South American coast from Abrolhos Rocks
 almost to Falkland Islands with no result.
 It will arrive at Falklands on December 8.

H. 52. *From* Commander-in-Chief, Cape. 6.12.14.
To Admiralty. (Received 9.41 p.m.)
 483. My 482. In view of reply from Governor-General I am leaving
 to-morrow as previously arranged for Table Bay, sailing thence for
 Lüderitz Bay December 8.

HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS ISSUED BY THE NAVAL STAFF.

- 1 O.U. 6031. Operations leading up to the Battle of Coronel.
- 2 O.U. 6029. The German Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific, 1914.
- 3 O.U. 6038. Operations leading up to the Battle of the Falkland Islands, November, 1914.
- 4 O.U. 6040. Operations in the Mediterranean, August 4 to 10th, 1914.
- 5 O.U. 6039. Naval Operations in the Cameroons, 1914.
- 6 C.B. 1537. Naval Movements August, 1914, associated with the Transport of the British Expeditionary Force.
- 7 C.B. 1549. The Patrol Flotillas at the Commencement of the War.
- 8 C.B. 1552. Naval Operations connected with the Raid on the North-East Coast, December 16, 1914.
- 9 C.B. 1555. A History of the White Sea Station, 1914-1919.
- 10 C.B. 1558. Naval Operations on the East Coast of Africa, August, 1914—July, 1915.
- 11 C.B. 1571. The Battle of Heligoland Bight, August 28, 1914.
- 12 C.B. 1573. The Action of Dogger Bank, January 24, 1915.
- 13 C.B. 923. Summary of the Operations of the Grand Fleet, August, 1914, to November, 1916.
- 14 C.B. 926. The First Australasian Convoy, 1914.
- 15 C.B. 931. Naval Operations in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, from the Outbreak of War to the Fall of Kut, April 29, 1916.
- 16 C.B. 930. The China Squadron, 1914 (including the *Emden* Hunt).
- 17 C.B. 929. The East Indies Squadron, 1914.
- 18 C.B. 936A. The Dover Command, Vol. I.
- 19 C.B. 935. The Tenth Cruiser Squadron during the Command of Admiral de Chair, 1914 to 1916.
- 20 C.B. 939. The Cape of Good Hope Squadron 1914.

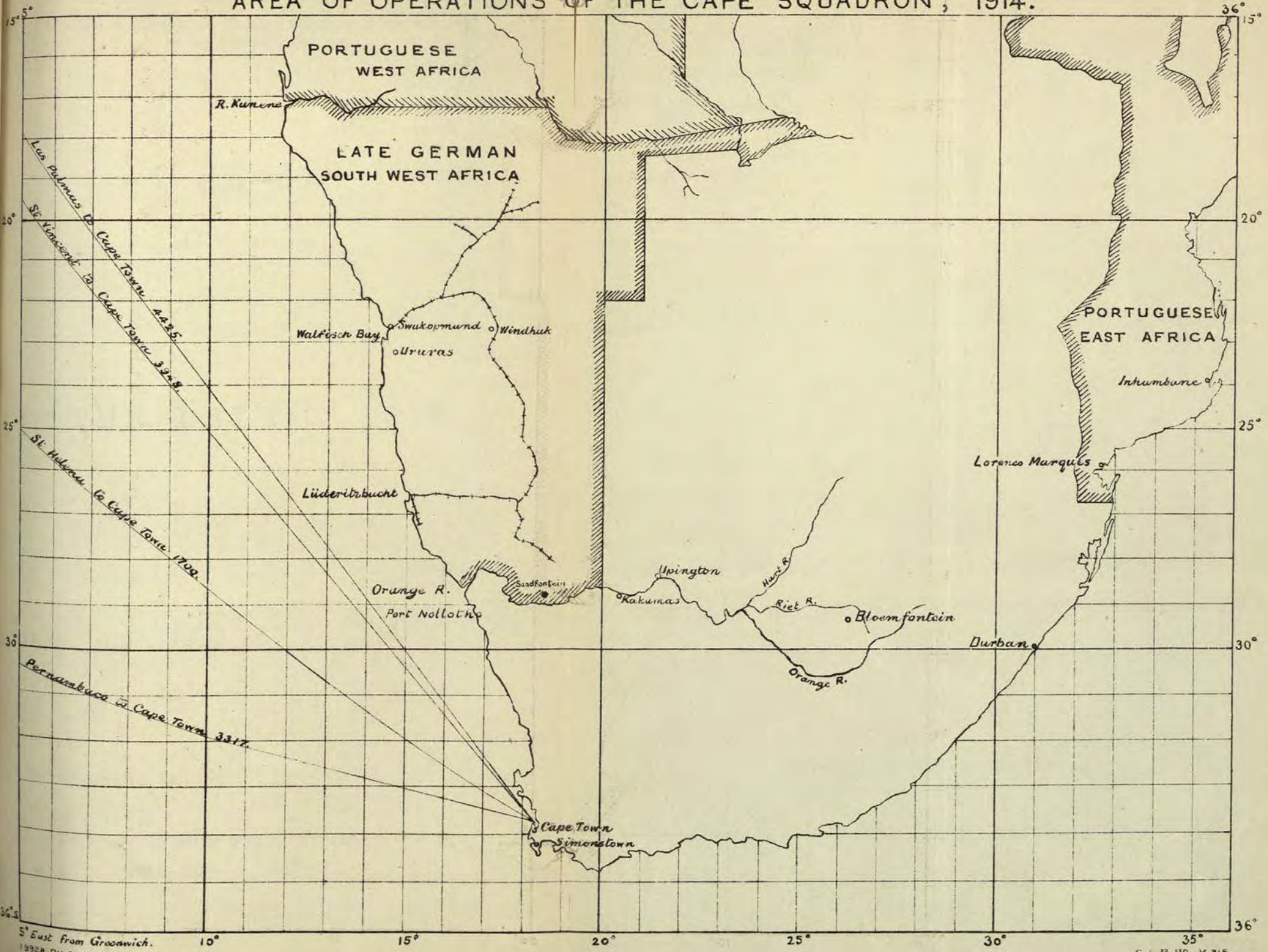
In Preparation :

21. — Home Waters, August, 1914.
22. — The Mediterranean, 1914 to 1915.
23. — The Atlantic Ocean, 1914.

TRAINING AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION.

November, 1921.

AREA OF OPERATIONS OF THE CAPE SQUADRON, 1914.



5° East from Greenwich.

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THE BALTIC, 1914.

NOTE

See also "The Russian Navy in War & Revolution" by H. Graf, C.O.
of destroyer NOVIK. (Arch. Lib. Ca 936a)

Monograph No. 25.

NAVAL STAFF,

TRAINING AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION,

August 1922.

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THE BALTIC, 1914.

INTRODUCTION.

The question of carrying out operations in the Baltic by the British naval forces was discussed on September 17, 1914, at a conference held at Loch Ewe between the First Lord of the Admiralty and the War Staff and the principal officers of the fleet. The general opinion, based largely on the danger from minefields, was that it was not at this time advisable to risk any reduction in our naval forces by eccentric movements such as an attack on Kiel by light cruisers and destroyers, though the question of the policy to be adopted when it should become possible to form two strong fleets, one in the North Sea and one in the Baltic, was to be thoroughly investigated. The despatch of submarines, however, to operate off Kiel and to attack the High Sea Fleet, portions of which were heard of constantly in the Baltic at this date, was on a different footing.¹

Six weeks later Admiral Fisher went to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord, and he at once initiated an extensive building programme of vessels designed to assist a landing operation in the Baltic by British troops.² Early in 1915, however, it was decided to come to the aid of Russia at the Dardanelles, and the Baltic project was abandoned and the vessels were employed in other areas.

Meanwhile, British submarines had been despatched to the Baltic in the autumn of 1914; and it is with the operations of these submarines up to the cessation of their activities on the incidence of winter 1914-15 that this monograph deals.

¹ G.F. Secret Pack 0022 (H.S., Vol. LIX).

² Lord Fisher, "Memories," pp. 55, 65, etc. The building programme as sanctioned comprised: 5 battle cruisers of light draught and 33 knots speed, 2 light cruisers, 5 flotilla leaders, 56 destroyers, 64 submarines, 37 monitors, 24 river light gunboats, 19 whaling steamers, 24 submarine destroyers, 50 sea-going patrol boats, 200 oil motor barges, 90 smaller barges, 36 sloops of 1,200 tons each. The project apparently included preliminary operations to clear the North Sea and to prevent the emergence of the German Fleet into that area, and the landings and feint landings were to be carried out with some 50,000 men on the coast of Pomerania. However, no details are forthcoming as to the project, and it is probable that little was committed to paper on the subject.

NOTE ON SOURCES.

Vol. H.S. 271, "Baltic Sea," contains the reports of the British submarine commanders in the Baltic and the Admiralty papers bearing on the subject. Vol. H.S. 225, "Eighth Submarine Flotilla Memoranda and Reports," contains the orders issued to the submarines for the operation of penetrating into the Baltic. The logs of the submarines, if any were kept, are not forthcoming.

On the German side there is the official history, "Der Krieg zur See, 1914-1918, Ostsee, Bd. I," Berlin, E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1921, referred to in this monograph as G.O.H. It deals only with the period up to the early spring of 1915, and since it is the sole authority on the German side this monograph has been concluded at the point where the British submarines ceased operations temporarily in the winter of 1914-15.

There is no information from Russian sources as to the Russian operations, which consisted mainly of minelaying, other than a single report from the British Naval Attaché in Petrograd.

Officers' Chart Atlas Folio (General Folio), Charts No. 2842A, Baltic Sea, Western sheet, and 2842B, Baltic Sea, Eastern sheet, will be found useful.

All times are G.M.T.

The spelling of Russian ships' names is in accordance with "War Vessels and Aircraft," August, 1914. Place-names are spelt as in Baltic Pilot (Part I, 5th edition, Part II, 5th edition, Part III, 1st edition), with the exception that such words as *renden*, *rev*, *sund*, etc., have usually been given their English equivalent: *channel*, *reef*, *sound*, etc.

THE BALTIC, 1914.

CHAPTER I.

NAVAL FORCES OF THE BELLIGERENTS AND SITUATION IN THE BALTIC UP TO THE END OF SEPTEMBER, 1914.

1. **German War Plans in the Baltic.**—In framing the war plans for a naval war against Russia, there were two extraneous factors with which the German Naval Staff had to reckon: the first, the probability that France would take part with Russia in any war against Germany, and the second, the intervention of Great Britain, either as arbitrator or belligerent. Inevitably, therefore, the Baltic Sea became relegated to the position of a subsidiary theatre of war. The naval strength of Germany, as compared with that of her possible adversaries, did not permit of the formation of a Baltic squadron of sufficient strength to ensure the destruction of the Russian Baltic Fleet, which might have to be dearly bought. More important to Germany than the destruction of the Russian naval forces was the possession herself of an undamaged fleet, for by this means alone could she hope to avert the intervention of Great Britain. Consequently, it was decided by the naval staff that in case of a war in which France was involved the German naval policy in the Baltic would merely be directed towards rendering the Russian fleet harmless.

2. **German and Russian Naval Forces.**¹—In pursuance of this policy the Germans relegated to the defence of the Baltic only such old ships and formations of little fighting value as could be spared from the war in the North Sea. The only modern vessels allotted were the light cruisers *Magdeburg* and *Augsburg* and three destroyers. The extent, if any, to which the German forces might expect to be reinforced after mobilisation depended upon the development of the situation in the North Sea.

The Russian Baltic Fleet was organised as (a) the Active Fleet, consisting of four pre-dreadnought battleships and five cruisers, with two destroyer flotillas, (b) First Reserve, consisting of a squadron of four cruisers, and (c) an Instructional Division (Second Reserve), comprising two coast defence battleships and a few gunboats and T.B.s. Of the four battleships with the Active Fleet, two only, the *Andrei Pervozvanni* and *Imperator*

¹ Appendices A and B.

Pavel I, possessed any fighting value.¹ The Fleet Flagship *Ryurik* was a powerful armoured cruiser of the *Blücher* type. The two big armoured cruisers *Gromoboi* and *Rossiya* were poorly protected,² and the value of the smaller cruisers was impaired by their low speeds. With the sole exception of the *Novik* all the Russian destroyers were far too slow for modern requirements.³

Four dreadnought battleships⁴ had been building at St. Petersburg for the past seven years, and two or three of them were expected to join the fleet by the end of the year.⁵ Although they mounted 12 12 in. guns each as primary armament their efficiency was impaired by various defects such as weakly constructed hulls and bad lines.⁶ Two light cruisers, the *Muravev-Amurski* and *Admiral Nevelskoi*, had been building for Russia at the Schichau Works at Danzig and were due to be completed in July and September, 1914, respectively. Neither of them were delivered by Germany, but instead they were taken into her own service as the *Pillau* and *Elbing* respectively. Forty-five large modern destroyers were building by Russia at the outbreak of war for the Baltic Fleet. The completion of a few of them was due in the autumn and winter of 1914, but unfortunately the more advanced of them were being built to German design and much of the material and most of the machinery was being made in Germany, so that for some time after the outbreak of war their progress was almost stopped.⁷ For similar reasons the completion of the submarines under construction was delayed owing to non-delivery of their motors.

The vessels of which Germany and Russia could dispose in the Baltic in August, 1914, stood at the following figures:—

<i>Germany.</i>			
Light cruisers	..	..	7 (5 old).
Destroyers	..	..	9 (6 old).
Submarines	..	..	3

The majority of the vessels were out of commission and would require several days after the order to commission before they could be ready for sea.

<i>Russia.</i>			
Battleships	..	..	4 (pre-dreadnought).
Armoured cruisers	..	..	5
Protected cruisers	..	..	4 (of little fighting value).
Destroyers	..	..	63 (includes 8 T.B.s).
Submarines	..	..	12 (includes 4 training boats).

¹ G.O.H., p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³ M. 04129/14, Report of Naval Attaché.

⁴ *Gangut, Pollava, Petropaulovsk, Sevastopol.*

⁵ The *Pollava* and *Sevastopol* joined the Fleet on December 14, 1914.

⁶ G.O.H., p. 8.

⁷ M. 04129/14, Report of Naval Attaché.

Against this preponderance of strength, however, the Germans by means of the Kiel Canal could bring against Russia the overwhelming strength of their High Sea Fleet.

3. Russian Naval Bases.—Since the Russo-Japanese War the Russians had practically abandoned Libau, which was too close to the German frontier for its communications to be secure, and had demolished its defences, retaining it merely as a destroyer base. For a similar reason the development of the military establishments in the Gulf of Riga was given up; and from 1909 onwards the Russians concentrated upon the development of their favourably situated positions in the Gulf of Finland, at the head of which Petrograd lies. The geographical formation of this Gulf renders it particularly suitable for defence. The channel from Kronstadt to the mouth of the Gulf is 210 miles long, and its average width is only 30 miles. Since the Russian Government claimed 12 miles as the limit of their territorial waters, most of the Gulf lay within Russian territorial limits. The numerous small islands and the nature of the north coast, which is indented with many bays and narrow inlets, afforded excellent positions from which destroyers and light craft might attack an invader. The depths of water both permitted the approach of submarines quite close to the coast and were also suitable for the employment of anti-submarine nets and mines.

Riga, the second largest commercial port, was capable of protection by the forces in the Gulf of Finland, with which latter communication was obtained through the Moon Sound behind the islands of Dagö and Ösel, both of which were undefended when war broke out. Moon Sound was, however, only navigable for ships up to 15 ft. draught and could not be used by heavy ships. The Gulf of Bothnia to the northward, where the trade with Sweden was covered by the Åland Islands,¹ was capable of similar protection by the forces in the Gulf of Finland. Thus the naval bases in the Gulf served to protect the main trade routes and the principal commercial ports.

The centre of the system of defences of the Gulf of Finland was Kronstadt, an immensely strong position. Revel was still in course of development when war broke out, being destined ultimately to serve as the main base of the Baltic Fleet. The defences were incomplete and it could only be used as a destroyer and submarine base. Helsingfors (Sveaborg), a spacious harbour on the north shore of the Gulf opposite Revel, was a second-class defended naval base and constituted the main destroyer base. In normal years Revel was free from ice during the months of January, February and March, except for about three weeks, having thus an advantage over Kronstadt, which was closed to navigation during some four or five months in the year.

¹ By the Paris Treaty of 1856 Russia agreed not to fortify the Åland Islands.

Helsingfors was not usually open between the end of January and the middle of April.¹

The Russians intended in the event of war to establish an outer line of defences at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland between Hangö and Cape Takhkona (Dagö Island). Up to July, 1914, no land fortifications had been constructed at the ends of the line, but preparations had been made for the defence of the intervening water by minefields.

The importance of the Gulf of Riga for offensive operations by the Russians was greatly impaired by the remoteness of the one large harbour, Riga, and its advanced base Dünamund, from the entrance to the Gulf. In offensive operations by the enemy against the Gulf of Finland it would be valuable as lying on the flank and threatening his communications. The entrance to the Gulf of Riga is usually closed by ice for a few weeks during January to March, though in some years it remains open during the entire winter. Libau, however, which occupies a similar position on the flank and in rear of an enemy attacking the Gulf of Finland, can with its approaches be kept free of ice throughout the winter by means of ice-breakers. Ships of 26 ft. draught and over could not enter Libau at the outbreak of war.

4. German Naval Bases.—Kiel, the strongest German naval base in the Baltic, and the only one where modern battleships of the deepest draught could enter and be secure from submarine attack, was distant 770 miles from Kronstadt, and was consequently too remote for use as a strategic base in offensive operations. Its very remoteness, however, gave security against attack. Swinemünde, backed by Stettin, provided a useful base for light forces. It was a flourishing commercial harbour, and German economic and commercial interests demanded its protection in war time. It was adequately protected against bombardment. Sassnitz, in the Island of Rügen, was an undefended harbour.

Danzig-Neufahrwasser was, from its situation, the most suitable German base for an attack on the Russian coast, but the harbour suffered from the serious drawback of shallowness, being navigable only for ships up to 23 ft. draught. Thus it was closed to battleships and armoured cruisers, particularly if their draught should have been increased by underwater damage. The fortifications of Neufahrwasser gave adequate protection against bombardment from the sea; but the remainder of the harbour defences would have offered insufficient resistance to a well equipped enemy. In August, 1914, there were no booms or nets to protect ships in the roads from torpedo attack. Prior to the war, the Imperial dockyard at Danzig had been used

¹ These dates are taken from Baltic Pilot, and are not in complete agreement with the German Official History.

only for the construction of submarines.¹ It was not equipped to meet the requirements of larger vessels, and offered no facilities for repairing and fitting out either large ships or destroyers. At the Schichau works, on the river below the Imperial dockyard, warships up to 13,000 tons and Atlantic liners up to 520 ft. in length had been built. In Pillau, on the eastern side of Danzig Bay, the Germans possessed another advanced base, suitable for ships up to 19 ft. draught. The defences were adequate to protect Königsberg from attack by sea.

Generally speaking, at the outbreak of war with Russia, the military value of the German bases in the Baltic was slight. Owing to their distance from the enemy's coast and their inadequate facilities for fitting out ships, they were of little value for an offensive against the Russian positions in the Gulf of Finland or for a prolonged blockade of the Gulf. For defensive operations, Danzig and Pillau were somewhat weakly protected; but the narrow part of the Baltic to the west of Bornholm offered more favourable conditions for the conduct of a defensive naval war; particularly was this the case with Swinemünde and the waters around Rügen.

5. German War Orders for the Baltic.—In July, 1914, the command of the German Baltic forces was in the hands of Vice-Admiral Bachmann. At the last moment, however, the distribution of commands in the Baltic provided for in the mobilisation plans was changed by the appointment on July 30 of Admiral of the Fleet Prince Henry of Prussia, Inspector-General of the Navy, to the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Forces. The Baltic Coast Defence Forces were directly under his command, as also would be any portions of the High Sea Fleet which might be sent to operate in the Baltic, though later, during the first months of the war, it was arranged that if the situation necessitated the Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet appearing in the Baltic with some of his ships he should take supreme command in those waters for the time being. Vice-Admiral Bachmann, Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Naval Station, remained in charge of the local defences, including the local protection of Kiel and its approaches, being independent of the new Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Forces.² The latter took equal rank with the Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet; consequently, the possibility was opened up of operations in the Baltic being separately regarded

¹ G.O.H., p. 26. But N.I.D. Report, No. 812, states that the light cruiser *Freya* (5,628 tons) and coast defence battleship *Odin* (3,530 tons) were built there, though this was nearly 20 years before the war.

² By mutual agreement a clear line of demarcation was fixed between the duties of Prince Henry and Admiral Bachmann with regard to the defence of Kiel further out in the Belts, which was now carried out by the Baltic Coast Defence Forces under Prince Henry.

and conducted, instead of being restricted to coast defence or to dependence on the conduct of war in the North Sea.

The War Orders for the Baltic area were issued to Prince Henry on July 31, and were to the following effect:—

- (1) The principal objective in the conduct of the war is to interrupt as far as possible any offensive operations which may be undertaken by the Russians. In addition, Kiel Bay is to be secured against British and Russian forces, and enemy commerce in the Baltic is to be damaged.
- (2) Mining operations against the Russian coast are to be instituted as soon as possible after the outbreak of war.
- (3) The temporary despatch of portions of the High Sea Forces to deliver a blow at the Russian fleet will depend on the course of events.
- (4) The war against commerce is to be conducted in accordance with the Prize Law.¹

6. The Russian Command.—In the summer of 1914 the Russian Baltic Fleet was under the command of Admiral N. O. von Essen,² who had been some six years in this command. This officer had distinguished himself during the Russo-Japanese war, and it was expected by the Germans that a spirit of enterprise would characterise his conduct of the present war. The qualities of leadership of the commander of the Battleship Squadron, Vice-Admiral Baron V. N. Ferzen,³ were not rated very high by the German Naval Staff. Like the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Forces, Admiral von Essen was subordinate to the Minister of Marine, Admiral Grigorovitch, "Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet and of the Navy."

In the view of the supreme Russian authorities the fleet was to be regarded primarily as an immediate defence force for the capital, and in other relations as solely an extension of the right wing of the main armies.⁴ This view was so pronounced that Admiral von Essen was directly subordinated to General von der Fleet, commanding the 6th Army, which was distributed in Finland and in the littoral provinces on the south of the Gulf; while the Grand Duke Nicolai Nikolaevitch was Commander-in-Chief of all Russia's forces by sea as well as on land. Even the purely naval dispositions of Admiral von Essen, when carrying out some already approved action, were occasionally interfered with by the military. In face of the overwhelming strength

¹ The German Naval Prize Regulations have been translated and printed by the Admiralty as N.L. 01918/14.

² G.O.H. gives his rank as Vice-Admiral, but "War Vessels and Aircraft," Part I, August, 1914, gives his seniority as Admiral, April 27, 1913.

³ G.O.H. gives his rank as Rear-Admiral.

⁴ M. 04129/14, Report of Naval Attaché.

which Germany could bring against Russia from the North Sea all naval enterprise was discouraged, and indeed forbidden, to Admiral von Essen by the military authorities.

The German Naval Staff appears to have been unable to forecast the probable naval action which Russia would take in the Baltic in the event of war. One decision at which they had arrived, however, was that a Russian landing on the Pomeranian coast, which was a favourite thesis of professional writers, was out of the question until Germany had suffered a crushing defeat at sea. This latter, however, the German naval command had no intention of risking, nor was it considered a likely possibility. The difficulties of effective combination between the British and Russian fleets were considered to be insuperable. In addition, a Russian victory on land was a necessary prelude to an attempted landing on the Pomeranian coast.

7. German Defence System in Western Baltic.—One of the principal preoccupations of the Germans in the Western Baltic—indeed the factor upon which the whole of their naval operations in these waters were conducted—was the protection of their great fitting out base and practising ground at Kiel from the attacks of British forces which they believed would attempt to penetrate into the Baltic, an attempt by destroyers and submarines being particularly feared.¹

The Kattegat communicates with the Baltic by three distinct channels, viz. :—the Great Belt in the centre, the Little Belt on the western side, and the Sound on the eastern side. The Great and Little Belts, the channels on either side of the island of Fyen, unite southward of that island and then communicate with the Baltic Sea through the Fehmarn Belt and Cadet Channel. The Sound, passing between the Danish island of Zealand and the Swedish coast, is the shortest and most direct route, but was too shallow at its southern end for ships of the deepest draught. At its southern end the Sound is divided by the island of Saltholm (55° 39' N., 12° 45' E.) into two navigable passages, known as the Flint and Drogden Channels (rännén).

It was necessary, in order that Kiel might be rendered impregnable from the north and British forces prevented from appearing suddenly in the southern exits from the Belts and Sound, that permanent outpost lines should be maintained in the Kattegat and Skagerrak, or that all the channels in the Belts and Sound should be blocked. As some of these channels lay within Danish and Swedish territorial waters, it was not, however, possible to make full use of them for military purposes. The southern entrance to the Little Belt was within German territorial waters and could be closed at once; but in the Great

¹ G.O.H., p. 41. Such an attempt on the part of the British on the night of August 2 was apprehended by the German Naval Staff, and measures were hastily taken to meet it.

Belt, which was navigable by large ships and was therefore of primary importance, the Germans were only able to take measures of defence at the entrance from the Southern Baltic; and this was the case also as regards the Sound.

The entire defence system of the Western Baltic was transferred by the Commander-in-Chief on August 2 to Rear-Admiral Mischke, commanding the Baltic Coast Defence Division. On the afternoon of August 2, Prince Henry was warned by the Naval Staff that British forces might attempt a surprise attack that night. The Commander-in-Chief had up to date provided chiefly against attack from the east,¹ and the forces available for the defence of the Western Baltic were now re-distributed. Admiral Mischke was ordered to push the outposts in the Belts as far north as possible, and he accordingly stationed two destroyers on the line Hjelm-Sjælland Reef² and one in the Korsör Passage in the Great Belt, north of Sprogö Island. The Sound was watched by vessels as far east as the line Möen-Trelleborg,³ and the gunboat *Panther* guarded the Fehmarn Belt. The Commander-in-Chief retained the four auxiliary mining vessels and the two submarines⁴ under his own orders, and he reserved to himself all decisions regarding the use of minefields. The forces at Rear-Admiral Mischke's disposal were barely sufficient even for outpost and reporting duties, and some of the destroyers were not fitted with W/T, which rendered the transmission of reports from the outposts a laborious proceeding.

Air reconnaissance of the Belts was carried out by seaplanes from Holtenau, on the fiord below Kiel, which had just been made the headquarters of the Naval Air Detachment, in lieu of Putzig. At this date Germany had about ten more or less serviceable seaplanes in the North Sea and Baltic,⁵ but their radius of action was small and they were unprovided with W/T, which delayed the receipt of their reports. Pending the completion of the flying bases at Haderslev (Hadersleben) and Flensburg the seaplanes were unable to reach the Kattegat, Samsö, at the entrance to the Belts, being the limit of their radius.

8. Mining of the Belts.—Two of the minelayers, the converted merchantmen *Prinz Waldemar* and *Prinz Adalbert*, carrying together 243 mines, were ready for service on August 3, and a third, the *Deutschland*, with 200 mines, on the afternoon of the following day. Their minelaying gear was clumsy; and the

¹ The defence system comprised outpost lines off Gjedser (southern point of Falster Island) and the southern entrance to the Great Belt, while the gunboat *Panther* guarded the Fehmarn Belt.

² Between the Kattegat and the Belts.

³ Fifteen miles south of Malmö.

⁴ Apparently "U.A." had not yet been taken over from the Norwegian Government.

⁵ N.I.D. 169/22.

small number of mines available necessitated laying them in positions where their use in small numbers would be comparatively effective. The forces at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief were insufficient to provide an adequate guard for the minefields. The latter would thus merely delay but not prevent any attempt by an enemy to break through, and it was therefore essential that they should be laid as far north in the Belts as possible, in order to give time for reinforcements from the High Sea Fleet to pass through the Kiel Canal from the North Sea to the Baltic.

About 6.30 p.m. on August 4, Prince Henry at Kiel, where he made his headquarters, was notified that a state of war existed with Great Britain¹ and at 6.45 p.m. he issued orders for the mining of the Belts.

In the absence of direct orders from the Higher Command, the Prince decided to disregard Danish territorial waters and to lay a minefield in the Great Belt, without awaiting the reply to a note which had been despatched to Denmark enquiring whether she intended to close the channel. The orders were acted upon by Admiral Mischke on the afternoon and evening of the following day, when a minefield of 243 mines was laid between Kjelsnor and Albuén lighthouse, in the Great Belt, and one of 12 mines at the southern entrance to the Little Belt on the line Assens Chimney-Aarö North Beacon.² The presence of the former minefield was known to the British Admiralty next day. The Assens-Aarö minefield was entirely within German waters,³ and it was guarded by S.127, which laid the minefield. This completed the closing of the Belts. The principal Danish channels in the Sound had already been mined by the Danes on August 3, the only one remaining open being the Flint Channel,⁴ part of which lay within Swedish territorial waters. The latter could only be used by vessels up to 23 ft. draught, and was forbidden to foreign ships at night. Moreover, the southern exit was at least 100 miles from Kiel, so that the necessity for closing it was not so urgent.⁵ On the afternoon of

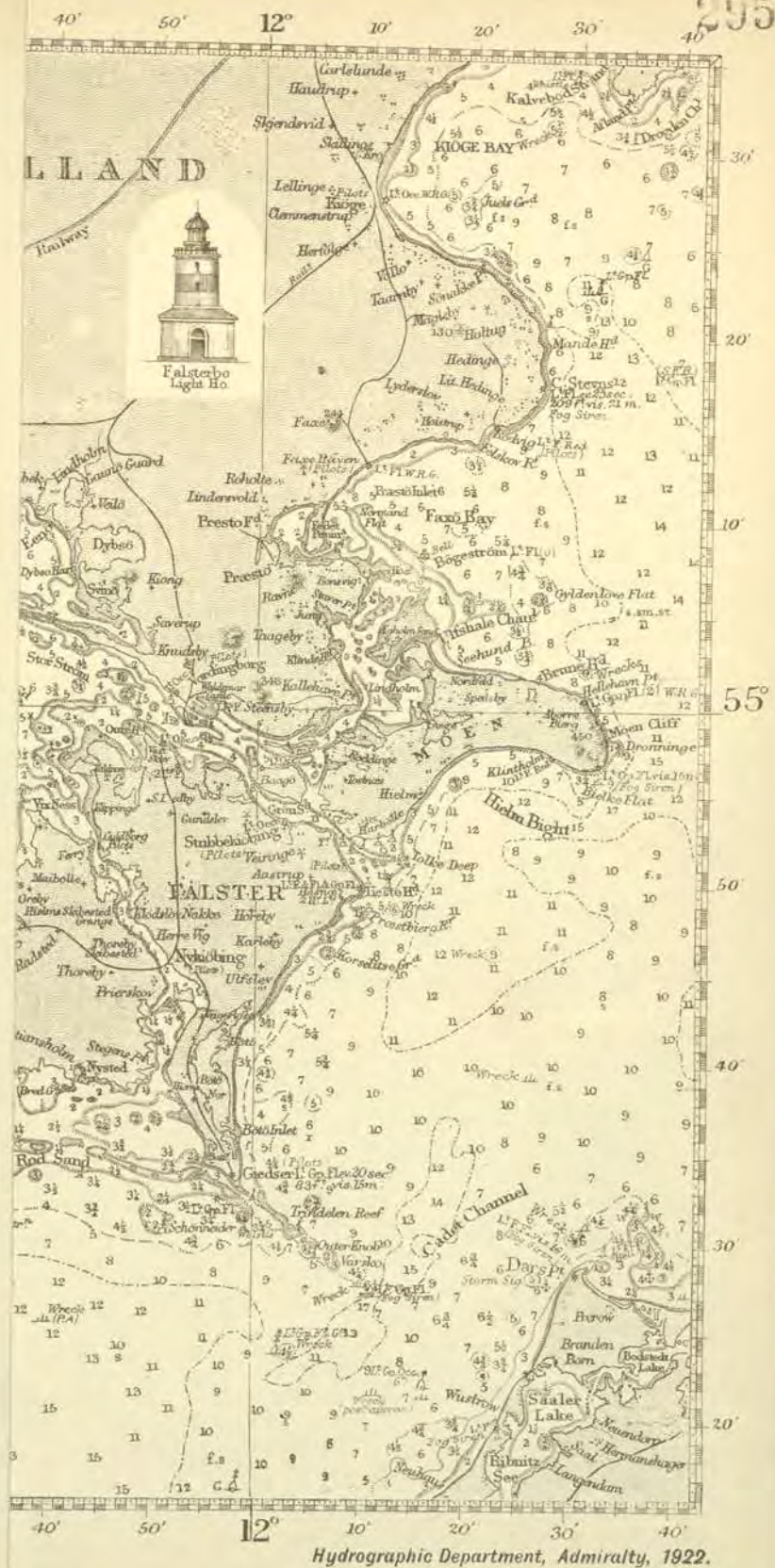
¹ G.O.H., p. 47.

² See Plan I. The Aarö Sound in the Little Belt, between Aarö Island and the Schleswig coast, which was navigable for vessels up to 27 ft., apparently remained open. It was guarded by a battery of four 5.9 guns, and at the end of August 4 blockships were held in readiness to block the channel within 20 minutes. The lights were extinguished in the middle of September, and on November 3 a boom was placed in position.

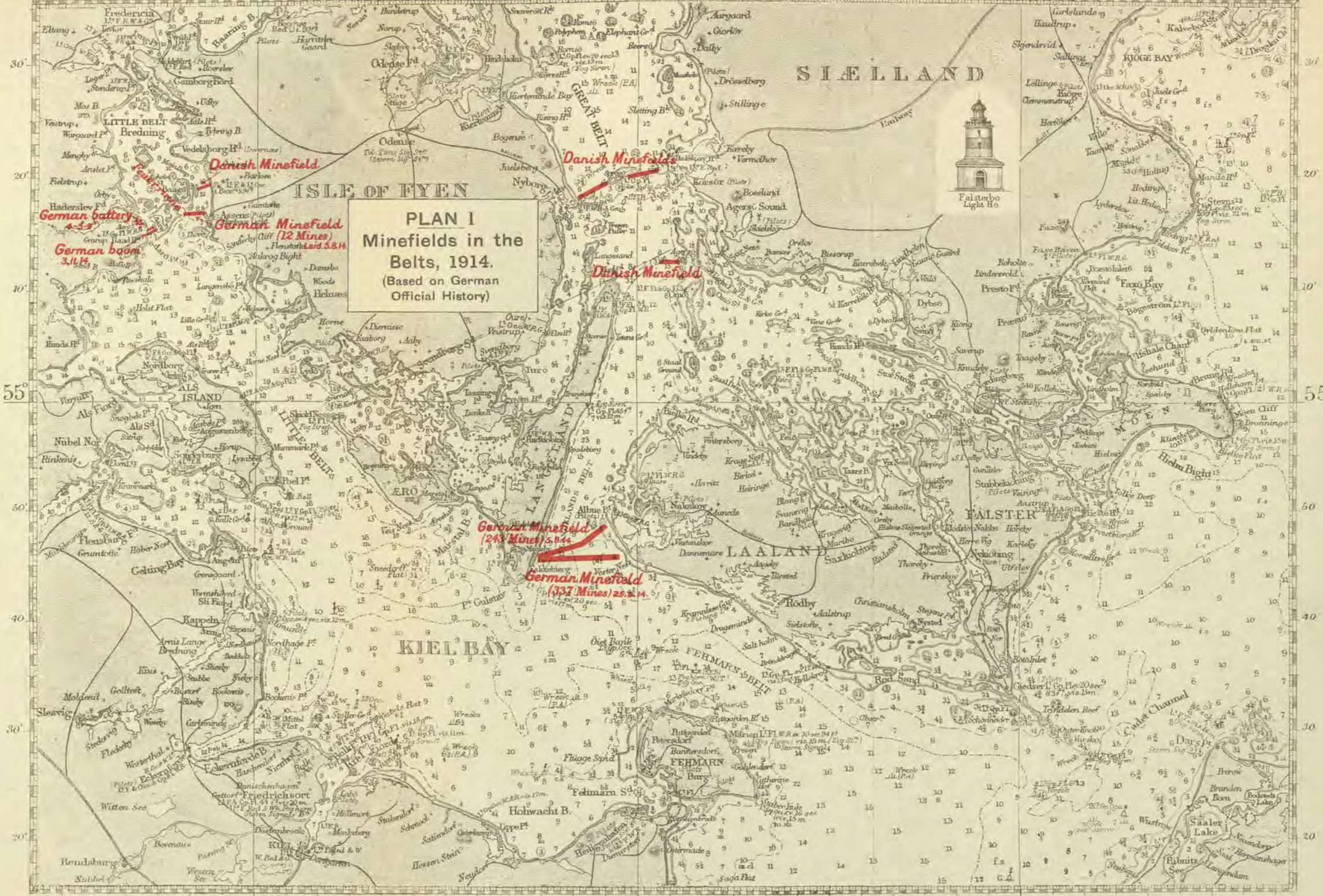
³ G.O.H., p. 50. But it would not appear to be so from the Plan.

⁴ The eastern channel, between Malmö Island and Sandholm (see Plan II).

⁵ G.O.H., p. 46. It is stated (*ibid.*, p. 166) that the Germans were concerned at this date with closing the Belts and Sound to enemy heavy ships, and that it was not until later that the importance of closing the shallower Flint Channel to submarines was recognised. On p. 41, however, it is expressly stated that on August 2 an attempt to penetrate by British destroyers and submarines was feared. The depth of the Flint Channel (23½ ft.) is given as 6 and 7 metres in two different places in G.O.H.



30° Long^e East of Greenwich 10° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 11° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 12° 10' 20' 30' 40'



PLAN I
Minefields in the
Belts, 1914.
 (Based on German
 Official History)



Falsterbo Light Ho

55°

55°

50°

50°

40°

40°

30°

30°

20°

20°

30° 40° Longitude 10° East of Greenwich 30° 40' 50' 11° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 12° 10' 20' 30' 40'

August 5 the German Ambassador at Copenhagen telegraphed to the Foreign Office that in addition to closing the Danish part of the Sound, Denmark would at once undertake the effective closing of the Great and Little Belts.¹

It was the intention of Denmark, as notified to Berlin by her Government on 6th, to maintain strict neutrality and to keep Danish waters free from warlike operations, even to the extent of employing force of arms. This was a matter of the first importance to Germany, and orders were consequently issued by the German Naval Staff that Danish neutrality was to be respected by all warships; and the destroyer patrol which had been instituted on the line Hjelm-Sjælland Riff, at the southern entrance of the Kattegat, was now withdrawn.²

Sweden, however, which like Denmark proclaimed strict neutrality on the outbreak of war, regarded her international obligations in a different light and refused to close the Flint Channel, both on the grounds of the rights of nations and the lack of necessary material. She agreed, however, to extinguish all lights and remove navigation marks from the Kullen,³ at the northern entrance to the Sound, to Falsterbo in the south, on the threatened appearance of belligerent warships in those waters, though she would not undertake to resort to force of arms should warships penetrate into the Sound with warlike intentions. Entry to her principal harbours and fiords was regulated by the laying of mines and obstructions; and belligerent war vessels were forbidden to enter certain areas in her territorial waters.⁴ With this Germany had to be content, though she notified Sweden that she reserved the right to take any measures necessary for her safety should enemy vessels penetrate into the Sound.⁵ Channels had been left in the minefields in the Belts and Sound to permit of the passage of merchant vessels, and pilotage services were instituted to take them through, in accordance with the international treaties providing that the passages were to remain open to traffic.

¹ It seems questionable whether the closing of the channels by the Danes was really effective.

² The patrol which had also been instituted in the Korsör passage of the Great Belt, between Sprogö Island and Sjælland, was presumably withdrawn when the Danes mined the channel.

³ The Kullen remained alight when the lights in the Sound were eventually extinguished.

⁴ See Notice to Mariners, No. 1518 of 1914, and H.F. 004, August 1, 1914, in H.S. Vol. "G.F. Orders and Memos." The Swedish lights were extinguished soon after the outbreak of war, but by September 12 they were, with few exceptions, again exhibited.

⁵ G.O.H., pp. 165, 166. It is stated (*ibid.*, p. 51) that the Fyr Renden (German Feuer Rinne) to the west of Baago Island, in the Little Belt, remained open, and was available for the passage of large vessels. According to the Baltic Pilot, Part I, the depths in the channel are from 4-6 fathoms only. The southern entrance to the channel was closed by a German minefield.

9. **German Operations to secure Command of the Eastern Baltic.**¹—A measure of security to Kiel having been ensured by the closing of the Belts, the Commander-in-Chief, Baltic, was free to take such action as was possible with the small forces at his disposal to secure the command of the Eastern Baltic, or at least to observe and keep touch with the Russian naval forces and so counter any attack by them on Kiel, for the success of which the element of surprise was essential. War was declared on Russia on August 1, and in the early morning of the following day the Commander-in-Chief, Baltic, was ordered to commence hostilities.

Operations were commenced immediately with the bombardment and mining of Libau, which the Germans were unaware that the Russians had hastily evacuated, and they continued throughout August and September. They were of the nature of reconnaissances and raids mainly carried out by the two faster vessels of the light forces; and the orders issued by Prince Henry on August 8 to Admiral Mischke may be taken as representative² :—

- (1) To damage the enemy, with the reservation that, for the present, the cruisers are not to accept action with superior forces.
- (2) To observe and keep in touch with the enemy if he takes the offensive (see clause 1).
- (3) To mine enemy waters.
- (4) To molest the enemy's coast and his trade.
- (5) To encourage the impression that we hold the Eastern Baltic.

At first, the various operations were unsupported by any forces in the background, though the Russians seem to have been successfully deceived. The German ships did not escape scathless, however, for on the night of August 25-26 the *Magdeburg*, one of the only two good light cruisers in the Baltic, went ashore off Odensholm, an island off the southern entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and had to be destroyed in face of the enemy. Coincident with the invasion of East Prussia during the latter half of August, the Russian Baltic Fleet showed some disposition to advance, and the weakness of the German forces in those waters, together with the importance of keeping open the Eastern Baltic, caused the Higher Command to detach part of the High Sea Fleet for service under Prince Henry for periods of a few days at a time.

The patrol line in the east, maintained by the old light cruisers, was Sweden-Gotland-Kurland. Admiral von Essen,

¹ For detailed description of these operations, see N.I.D. translation of G.O.H. (M.I.R., Nos. 31 et seq.).

² G.O.H., p. 55.





however, repressed by the military authorities, found it impossible to evince the enterprise with which the German Naval Staff had credited him, and by the end of September the Russians had made no attempt to contest with Germany the command of the Baltic.

CHAPTER II.

BRITISH SUBMARINES ENTER THE BALTIC.

10. **Decision to Despatch Submarines to the Baltic.**—At the end of September the Germans received constant reports of the presence of British ships, particularly submarines, in the Kattegat and Skagerrak, which seemed to them to presage an attempt by our submarines to penetrate through the Sound into the Baltic.¹

The possibility of sending submarines into the Baltic to operate off Kiel and to attack the High Sea Fleet was one of the questions discussed on September 17 at the conference at Loch Ewe.² Enquiries and reconnaissances were initiated to discover whether the operation was feasible, and as the upshot of them it was decided that the attempt should be made. On October 11, Commodore (S)³ received orders to carry out the operation.

11. **German Precautions against Entry of Submarines.**—The Germans themselves were only too well aware that the Baltic was not hermetically closed to British submarines. The Belts were sealed; for during the night of September 24–25, on the news that British forces, including submarines, were in the Kattegat, and, indeed, that the Grand Fleet had actually penetrated the Great Belt,⁴ a second minefield was laid off Langeland on the line Kjelsnor Lighthouse–Kappel Church, while measures had already been taken at the end of August to close the Aarö Sound instantly if need arose.⁵ The danger point was the Swedish Flint Channel, through which the Germans believed that our submarines intended to penetrate; but the only precautions which they were free to take were to increase the stringency of the watch on the southern entrance to the

¹ G.O.H., p. 203. Like ourselves, the Germans suffered from rumours of enemy submarines off their harbours.
² See Introduction to this monograph.
³ Captain Roger J. B. Keyes, C.B., M.V.O., Ad C.
⁴ The submarines were E.1 and E.5, which were making a reconnaissance preliminary to the despatch of submarines to the Baltic (see Memo. No. 0012 by Commodore (S), H.S. 225, p. 27). The report of the presence of the Grand Fleet in the Great Belt originated with a Swedish soldier, and became exaggerated by the time it was heard by a German agent.
⁵ See footnote, p. 14.

Sound and to arrange to lay a minefield in the Fehmarn Belt at half an hour's notice.¹

The patrolling forces were under the command of the Chief of the Training Cruiser Division, who had at his disposal the 2nd T.B.D. Flotilla² and the 19th Half-Flotilla. The former comprised twelve 30 knot destroyers, S.138–S.149, of the years 1907–8, armed with one 15 pdr. and three 4 pdrs., whilst the 19th Half-Flotilla had been formed during the first half of September, when the force of destroyers under Prince Henry's command in the Baltic had been increased by the substitution of S.120, S.123 and S.125³ for the old boats T.91, T.93 and T.94, and the allotting to the Baltic of the six boats G.132–G.136⁴ in place of V.186 and V.26, which were detached to the North Sea. Four of the larger destroyers, namely, G.132, G.133, G.135, and G.136, were formed into the 20th Half-Flotilla and allocated to Admiral Behring, who was placed in command of a detached force at Danzig on August 21 for operations in the Eastern Baltic. The remainder of the Baltic destroyers, viz., V.25, G.134, S.120, S.123, S.125, T.97, T.102, and T.127, were formed into the 19th Half-Flotilla under the command of Kapitän-Leutnant Graf von der Recke-Volmerstein, and allocated to the Coast Defence Division for patrol duties in the Western Baltic.

The normal positions of the patrols were as follows:—By day the available ships of the Training Cruiser Division⁵ and the 19th Half-Flotilla patrolled east of Möen, one of them being pushed forward at night to the meridian of Gydelöves Flat, patrolling between the parallels of 12° 30' and 13° E. The boats of the 2nd Flotilla patrolled off the southern exit of the Sound, the northern boat being about six to seven miles from the south end of the Flint Channel, where a submarine must pass on the surface. By night the destroyers formed two patrol lines off the southern point of the Skanör Peninsula and Falsterbo Reef Lightship respectively. These craft were based on Warnemünde and Sassnitz for coaling, etc., a half-flotilla being on patrol for 48 hours at a time.

The presence of the German patrol off the southern entrance to the Sound was known to the Admiralty, and it was also reported on October 10 that a patrol of cruisers and torpedo craft was established between Rügen Island and the mainland which stopped and examined all merchant vessels.⁶ This patrol was established by the Germans about October 7 on

¹ G.O.H., p. 183.

² Korv.-Kap. Schurr.

³ 465 tons, 27–28 knots (1904–5), three 4-pdrs., three torpedo tubes.

⁴ 480 tons, 27–(?)29 knots (1906–7), four 4-pdrs. (G.135: one 15-pdr., two 4-pdrs.), three torpedo tubes.

⁵ Apparently *Hertha*, *Hansa*, *Victoria Louise*, *Vineta*, and *Thetis*.

⁶ H.S. 225, p. 41.

account of their belief that British submarines entering the Baltic must be supported by supply ships.¹ It was also reported that German torpedo craft patrolled the Kattegat, particularly on the Danish side.²

12. "E.1" enters the Baltic, October 17.—On October 13 orders were issued to E.1 (Lieutenant-Commander Noel F. Laurence), E.9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton) and E.11³ (Lieutenant-Commander Martin E. Nasmith) to leave Gorleston on the following day and endeavour to enter the Baltic and attack the German fleet, which was said to be carrying out gunnery practices and exercises.⁴ The passage of the Sound was safe by keeping to Swedish waters, and they were instructed to pass through, all three boats during the same night, if possible, at two-hour intervals, in order to avoid being sighted by the German patrols off the southern entrance and between Rügen and the mainland.⁵ When their fuel should be exhausted the submarines were to proceed to Libau. The fact that at the end of July and beginning of August the Russians had abandoned and completely dismantled Libau does not seem to have been known to the Admiralty.⁶ The Russians had set fire to the stocks of coal and ammunition and blocked the entrance by sunken ships; and the Germans had completed the sealing of the port on August 2 by laying a minefield off the coast. The intention of the British Admiralty to despatch three submarines to the Baltic was not notified to Admiral von Essen in time, nor was he informed under whose orders they would be placed. The Russian Admiral was about to conduct a minelaying operation near Danzig when he heard of the arrival of the submarines; he had no information of their intended movements, and was consequently compelled to cancel his operation.⁷

The departure of the three submarines was delayed a day on account of defects in E.11, and they left on October 15. The first of the boats to pass through the Sound was E.1, which accomplished the passage safely by 11.30 p.m. on 17th. The sighting of a submarine in the Skagerrak had been reported to one of the boats of the 19th Half-Flotilla by the captain of a

¹ G.O.H., p. 204.

² H.S. 225, p. 42.

³ E class: 791–805 tons; surface speed, 15 knots; submerged speed, 10½ knots; 5 torpedo tubes (E.1, four tubes); E.11, one 6-pdr.

⁴ Commodore (S)'s orders gave no more definite locality for the German Fleet than "the Baltic," but it seems probable that the British submarine Commanders were told they might expect to find the enemy off Bornholm (cf. C.-in-C., Home Fleets, to Admiralty, 623, October 10, 1914).

⁵ H.S. 225, p. 40, and 271, p. 469.

⁶ Our Ambassador at St. Petersburg reported on August 3 that the Libau forts were rumoured to have been destroyed by the Russians, but enquiry does not seem to have been made on the point. Norddeich Press telegram, 9 p.m., August 2, reported (correctly) that German forces were bombarding Libau and had laid mines off the port.

⁷ M. 04129/14, Report of Naval Attaché.

merchant vessel on the afternoon of 17th, and the patrols had been warned to be specially vigilant in anticipation of an attempt to break through into the Baltic. The German suspicions were enhanced by the report of loud enemy W/T signalling in the neighbourhood between 10 p.m. and midnight on 17th. About 9 a.m. on 18th, between Falsterbo Reef and Möen, E.1 sighted a German cruiser, which was taken to be the *Fürst Bismarck*, but was actually the *Victoria Louise*, and dived to attack. An hour later, having reached a position 500 yards on the enemy's beam, Lieutenant-Commander Laurence fired two torpedoes at intervals of one minute. The first passed 50 yards astern,¹ and the *Victoria Louise* was able to avoid the second by the use of helm. After submerging for an interval E.1 came to the surface and sighted another of the patrolling cruisers, which she unsuccessfully attacked for six hours. October 19 was spent south of Bornholm without sight of the enemy, for Admiral Behring's force had just returned to harbour after an operation off the Gulf of Finland from October 10-14, in the course of which U.26 sank the Russian armoured cruiser *Pallada* off Hangö. On 20th, E.1 dived into the Gulf of Danzig as far as the entrance to Neufahrwasser. Three cruisers (part of Admiral Behring's force) were sighted in the basin, but the submarine could not get near them. On the afternoon of October 21 Lieutenant-Commander Laurence arrived at Libau and learned that the dockyard had been dismantled, and that, unknowingly, he had come right through the German minefield.

13. **Germans increase Stringency of their Patrols.**—The report of the sighting and attack of the *Victoria Louise* by an enemy submarine reached the Commander-in-Chief at 10.30 a.m. on 18th. The conclusions were immediately reached that the submarine was British, since no Russian boat was likely to be found in that position; that she was the forerunner of others; and that their objective was the exercise ground of Kiel Bay. Permission was at once requested of the Higher Command to lay a minefield off the southern entrance to the Sound. This was forbidden, both as being ineffectual in preventing the passage of a submarine, and on account of the necessity of refraining from interference with merchant shipping. There was no objection, however, to pushing the patrols forward to the three mile limit of Swedish and Danish territorial waters, and this was accordingly communicated to the patrols. The following orders were issued by the Commander-in-Chief for the safeguarding of the Western Baltic² :—

1. Rear-Admiral Jasper with the *Hansa*, *Hertha*, *Victoria Louise*, *Thetis*, 4th³ and 19th Half-Flotillas to assume command

¹ G.O.H., p. 206. Report of E.1 says it passed under the ship.

² G.O.H., pp. 207-8.

³ S.144-148.

of the Sound patrol. The patrol of the southern exit is to be strengthened, in order to prevent enemy submarines from breaking through from the north. The remaining forces to search the area between Möen-Dornbusch¹ and Arkona²-Smyge huk³ for submarines, including by night in order to capture or hinder them whilst charging batteries. Searchlights to be burned, outpost line to be kept by two cruisers.⁴

2. 17th Half-Flotilla⁵ and four training boats of 1st Torpedo Division to form an outpost line in the Fehmarn Belt under the direction of the chief of the 17th Half-Flotilla.⁶ From 6 p.m. onwards during the night Lübeck and Mecklenburg Bays and the south coast of Laaland are to be searched for submarines. At daybreak the Fehmarn Belt line is to be resumed.

3. The *Gazelle* is to assume the watch of the Langeland Belt.

4. Rear-Admiral Mischke in the *Undine* will assume the command of the forces watching the Aarö Sound.

5. P.L.19⁷ to scout as far as the line Hjedser-Darsser Ort.⁸ Aircraft to scout as far as possible towards the southern exit of the Sound.

6. Auxiliary Minelayers *Odin*, *Deutschland* and *Rügen* to be held in readiness.

All heavy ships were withdrawn into harbour from Kiel Bay.⁹ At this date the Germans possessed no depth charges,¹⁰ explosive sweeps, nets, etc., and it was considered that the most effectual method of destroying enemy submarines was to force them to remain submerged until their batteries were exhausted. For this purpose small fast craft, such as torpedo boats, were necessary; of these, however, the Commander-in-Chief was very short. The 2nd T.B. Flotilla¹¹ from the North Sea Forces had been placed at his disposal, but half of the boats were at the moment engaged in boiler cleaning, and the Commander-in-Chief was therefore obliged to fall back upon the 17th Half-Flotilla, which were commissioning and preparing for service at Kiel, and four training boats of the 1st T.B. Division, whilst Admiral von Ingenohl, the Commander-in-Chief, High

¹ North point of Hiddensee Island (Rügen).

² North of Rügen.

³ Six miles east of Trelleborg.

⁴ Later the cruisers were ordered to be withdrawn eastward out of the Sound entrance during the night.

⁵ V.25, V.26, V.27, S.31, S.32.

⁶ Korvetten-Kap. Jacobi.

⁷ Airship.

⁸ East entrance to Mecklenburg Bucht.

⁹ These comprised the 3rd and 4th Squadrons of the High Sea Fleet, which were exercising, and the newly completed *Derfflinger*, which was doing trials and working up to join the Fleet.

¹⁰ "Wasserbomben."

¹¹ S.138-S.142 and S.144-S.148.

Sea Fleet, placed at his disposal the 8th T.B. Flotilla¹ until the 2nd Flotilla should be ready for sea. During the night of 18th-19th all lights were extinguished in Kiel Bay.

The cruisers of the Sound patrol were ordered to search Hanö bugt and the coast of Bornholm and Rügen during the morning of 19th for submarine supply ships; and they were warned not to stop and hold up strange merchant vessels, lest enemy submarines should be following in their wake and seize the opportunity to attack. For the support of the destroyers watching the Sound the Auxiliary Mineseeking Division in Swinemünde was sent to Falsterbo Reef Lightship.

14. "E.9" enters the Baltic, October 18.—E.9 did not reach the Kullen until 11.30 p.m. on 17th. Lieutenant-Commander Horton considered there was not sufficient time to clear the Sound before daybreak, and also that neither of the other submarines would be able to pass through that night.² The importance of all three boats making the passage on the same night had been emphasised, and accordingly E.9 remained on the bottom until 5.20 p.m. on 18th, when she rose and proceeded on the surface through the Sound. In spite of the increased alertness of the patrols Lieutenant-Commander Horton found no difficulty in making the passage, which was safely accomplished by 11.30 p.m. A few minutes later one of the patrolling destroyers was sighted 150 yards off, $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles south-west of Drogden Light Vessel.

E.9 seems to have spent October 19 between Falsterbo and Möen,³ destroyers being sighted each time she rose to the surface, but she was not discovered. On 20th Lieutenant-Commander Horton worked south towards Cape Arkona and then eastward, with the intention, apparently, of making a sweep into Danzig Bay, from which, however, he was deterred by a defect in his main motor, and he proceeded towards Libau, which was reached at 8 a.m. on 22nd.⁴

¹ G.174 (Korvetten-Kap. Adolf Pfeiffer), G.175, S.176, S.177, S.179, V.180, V.183, S.131, S.139. The Flotilla arrived at Kiel p.m. October 19.

² E.1 had been delayed off Smith's Knoll by a defect, and had ordered E.9 to proceed independently. E.11 did not leave Gorleston until 3 p.m. on 15th, ten hours after the other two boats.

³ Her log, if any was kept, is not forthcoming.

⁴ In view of the false alarms of enemy submarines in Scapa Flow during 1914, the following account in the German Official History, p. 210, of two enemy submarines in Kiel Bay on October 19 is of interest. Neither E.1 nor E.9 was within 100 miles at the time, and it is practically certain that no Russian submarine had come as far west as Kiel Bay:—

"At 6.10 a.m. [on October 19] the 17th T.B. Half-Flotilla steamed in line abreast, boats 2 miles apart, on a zigzag course of 17 miles from Fehmarn Belt Lightship to Schleimünde [on west coast of Kiel Bay]. At 11.15 a.m. V.27 sighted the conning tower of an enemy submarine steering south, some 5,000 metres astern of her. Her position was about 7 miles S.E. of Schleimünde. V.27 opened fire with her after gun, and the

15. "E.11" attempts to Enter the Baltic.—E.11 left Gorleston at 3 p.m. on October 15, and arrived off the entrance to the Sound on the afternoon of 18th. Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith considered that with the large number of merchant vessels passing through the Sound an easier passage would be obtained with navigation lights switched on, particularly as the shore lights would undoubtedly silhouette an unlighted craft. Four suspicious merchant steamers were observed steaming in line abreast, and were avoided by Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, who was of opinion that they were sweeping or else intended to run her down when she reached narrow shallow waters. Several destroyers were observed in the Sound, apparently working in conjunction with one another, and were avoided. "Although in neutral waters," stated Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, "these vessels were undoubtedly hostile destroyers, who, although refraining from firing, attempted to sink us by ramming."¹

Failing to make the passage by night, Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith decided to retire, and after charging his batteries to attempt to get through by day. A submarine, identified to his satisfaction as U.3, was observed on the surface outside territorial waters, and Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, as he dived out of the Sound on 19th, unsuccessfully attacked her, firing two torpedoes, both of which missed.² Some hours later, while charging her batteries, E.11 was herself attacked, a torpedo being fired at her at long range, which missed. The torpedo was apparently fired from an enemy submarine disguised by

conning tower disappeared at once; the periscope was not seen. Meanwhile, S.31, which had been called up by V.27, appeared and took up the search. While so engaged, she suddenly sighted for a half minute the periscope of a second submarine, and at once opened fire and chased. The submarine fired a torpedo, the track of which S.31 was able to avoid. Two attempts to ram met with no apparent success, for the submarine, whose hull was clearly visible from the torpedo boat's searchlight platform, dived too quickly. There was no further opportunity to fire, nor was S.31 provided with depth charges. The search was taken up by seven boats of the 17th Half-Flotilla from 11.30 into the afternoon, but without success. At 3.24 p.m. the signal station at Bülk [north of entrance to Kiel Fjord] reported a submarine on the surface, 200 yards off. From Schleimünde, later in the afternoon, it was reported that about noon a Danish fisherman had sighted a submarine on the surface steering east between Aarö and Schleimünde. All these reports led to the certain conclusion that on October 18 and 19 two enemy submarines were in the Western Baltic."

¹ Report of E.11, October 24, 1914, H.S. 271, p. 468.

² The Danish Government reported that on October 19 a submarine, nationality unknown, fired two torpedoes at the Danish submarine *Havmanden*, flying the Danish flag, near the entrance to the Sound. It was established eventually that the submarine attacked by E.11 was the *Havmanden*, which had changed her appearance unknown to the British Admiralty, and now closely resembled U.3. The incident closed with an expression of regret for the occurrence on the part of H.M. Government (see papers in H.S. 271).