The BATTLE of the SKAGERRAK

Jutland 1916
The Battle of the Skagerrak

An extract from

Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War

by

Admiral Reinhard Scheer

© Mark Davies

www.battle-of-jutland.com
Prelude to the Battle

The bombardment of April 25 had not failed to make an impression in England. The expectation that the fleet was bound to succeed in warding off all German attacks on British shores had repeatedly been disappointed. On each occasion the English main fleet had arrived too late—in December, 1914; in January, 1915; and now again this year—so that, to the great annoyance of the English, the German “raiders” got away each time unpunished. Wherefore Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Admiralty, felt called upon to announce publicly that should the German ships again venture to show themselves off the British coast, measures had been taken to ensure their being severely punished. However, we were ready to take our chance.

The question was whether it would be advisable to include Squadron II in an advance which in all probability would involve us in a serious battle. Early in May, I ordered the squadron temporarily into the Jade Basin that I might have an opportunity of discussing with the Squadron Commander the action to be observed in battle under the most varied conditions.

Military reasons entered into the question as to whether the squadron should be taken out or left behind, as well as consideration for the honour and feeling of the crews, who would not hear of being reduced, themselves and their ships, to the second class. For battleships to have their activity limited absolutely to guarding the German Bight without any prospect of getting into touch with the enemy—to which they had been looking forward for a year and a half—would have caused bitter disappointment; on the other hand, however, was the responsibility of sending the ships into an unequal fight where the enemy would make use of his very best material.

I cannot deny that in addition to the eloquent intercession of Rear Admiral Mauve, the Squadron Commander, my own former connection with Squadron II also induced me not to disappoint it by leaving it behind. And thus it happened that the squadron played its part on May 31, and in so helpful a manner that I never had cause to regret my decision.

The repairs on the Seydlitz, damaged on April 24, were not completed until the end of May, as the reconstruction of the mine-shattered torpedo tubes necessitated very heavy work. I had no intention, however, of doing without that battle-cruiser, although Vice-Admiral Hipper, Chief of the Reconnaissance Forces, had meanwhile hoisted his flag in the newly repaired battle-cruiser Lützow.

The vessels belonging to Squadron III were also having their condensers repaired, as on their last trip there had been seven cases of damaged machinery in that squadron. The advantage of having three engines, as had each of these ships, was proved by the fact that two engines alone were able to keep up steam almost at full speed; at the same time, very faulty construction in the position of the engines was apparent, which unfortunately could not be rectified owing to limited space. Thus it happened that when a condenser went wrong it was impossible to conduct the steam from the engine with which it was connected to one of the other two condensers, and thus keep the engine itself working. It was an uncomfortable feeling to know that this weakness existed in the strongest unit at the disposal of the Fleet, and how easily a bad accident might result in leakages in two different condensers and thus incapacitate one vessel in the group!

The object of the next undertaking was a bombardment of the fortifications and works of the harbour at Sunderland which, situated about the middle of the East coast of England,
would be certain to call out a display of English fighting forces as promised by Mr. Balfour. The order issued on May 18 in this connection was as follows:

"The bombardment of Sunderland by our cruisers is intended to compel the enemy to send out forces against us.

For the attack on the advancing enemy the High Sea Fleet forces to be south of the Dogger Bank, and the U-boats to be stationed for attack off the East coast of England.

The enemy’s ports of sortie will be closed by mines. The Naval Corps will support the undertaking with their U-boats. If time and circumstances permit, trade war will be carried on during proceedings."

The squadrons of men-of-war had made over the command of prizes to the torpedo-boat flotillas, as torpedo-boats are the best adapted for the examination of vessels, but have not a crew large enough to enable them to bring the captured vessels into our ports. The First and Second Scouting Divisions were placed at the disposal of the Chief of Reconnaissance, and the Second Leader of the torpedo-boats with Flotillas II, VI, and IX. Scouting Division IV and the remainder of the flotillas were with the Main Fleet.

Sixteen of our U-boats were told off for the positions of attack, with six to eight of the Flanders boats. On May 15 they started to reconnoitre in the North Sea, and from May 23 to June 1 inclusive were to remain at the posts assigned to them, observe the movements of the English forces, and gain any information that might be of use to the Fleet in their advance; at the same time they were also to seize every opportunity to attack. Provision was also made for the largest possible number of our airships to assist the enterprise by reconnaissance from the air. The fact that the U-boats could only remain out for a certain period put a limit to the execution of the plan. If reconnaissance from the air proved impossible, it was arranged to make use of the U-boats, and so dispense with aerial reconnaissance.

As the weather each day continued to be unfavourable and the airship commander could only report that it was impossible to send up any airships, the plan was so far changed, though without altering other preparations, that it was decided to embark on a campaign against cruisers and merchantmen outside and in the Skagerrak, with the expectation that the news of the appearance of our cruisers in those waters would be made known to the enemy.

With this object in view, they had been told to keep in sight of the coast of Norway, so that the enemy might be notified. In further describing the course of this undertaking, which led to the Battle of the Skagerrak, I shall keep strictly to the official report I sent in.

In judging the proceedings it must be borne in mind that at sea a leader adapts his action to the events taking place around him. It may possibly reveal errors which can only be accounted for later by reports from his own ships or valuable information from enemy statements. The art of leadership consists in securing an approximately correct picture from the impression of the moment, and then acting in accordance with it. The writer of history can then
form a tactical inference where obvious mistakes were made, or where a better grasp of the situation would have led to a more advantageous decision.

In this event a certain reticence should be observed in making definite assertions that a different movement would have been more successful, for armed efficiency plays the chief part in success and cannot be determined with mathematical precision. I have in mind one hit that did so much damage to our battle-cruiser Seydlitz on January 24, 1915, that one almost came to the conclusion that such ships could not stand many shots of such heavy calibre, and yet the following battle proved the contrary. At all events, a good hit can seal the fate of a ship, even one of the strongest. A naval battle may be open to criticism as to why it happened thus, but anyone who asserted that it might have happened otherwise would be in danger of losing his case.
On May 30, as the possibility of a long-distance aerial reconnaissance was still considered uncertain, I decided on an advance in the direction of the Skagerrak, as the vicinity of the Jutland coast offered a certain cover against surprise. An extensive aerial reconnaissance was an imperative necessity for an advance on Sunderland in the north-west, as it would lead into waters where we could not allow ourselves to be forced into giving battle. As, however, on the course now to be adopted, the distance from the enemy points of support was considerably greater, aerial reconnaissance was desirable, though not absolutely necessary.

As already stated, our U-boats were in position, some of them in fact facing Scapa Flow, one boat off Moray Firth, a large number off the Firth of Forth, several off the Humber and the remainder, north of the Terschelling Bank, in order to be able to operate against enemy forces that might chance to come from a southwesterly direction. The combination of our total forces taking part was as follows:

A list of warships which on May 30 to June 1, 1916, took part in the Battle of the Skagerrak and the operations connected therewith:

Chief of the Fleet: Vice-Admiral Scheer on board Friedrich der Grosse.
Chief of Staff: Captain von Trotha (Adolf).
Chief of the Operating Section: Captain von Levetzow.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Quaet-Faslem (Hans).
Commander of Friedrich der Grosse: Captain Fuchs (Theodor).

Squadron I
Chief of Squadron: Vice-Admiral Ehrhard Schmidt on board Ostfriesland.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Wegener (Wolfgang).
Admiral: Rear-Admiral Engelhardt on Posen.
Ostfriesland: Captain von Natzmer.
Thüringen: Captain Küsel (Hans).
Helgoland: Captain von Kameke.
Oldenberg: Captain Höpfner.
Posen: Captain Lange.
Rheinland: Captain Rohardt.
Nassau: Captain Klappenbach (Hans).
Westfalen: Captain Redlich.

Squadron II
Chief of Squadron: Rear-Admiral Mauve on board Deutschland.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Kahlert.
Admiral: Rear-Admiral Baron von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels on board Hanover.
  Deutschland: Captain Meurer (Hugo).
Pommern: Captain Bölkken.
Schlesien: Captain Behncke (Fr.).
Schleswig-Holstein: Captain Barrentrapp.
Hanover: Captain Heine (Wilh.).
Hessen: Captain Bartels (Rudolf).

Squadron III
Chief of Squadron: Rear-Admiral Behncke on board König.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Baron von Gagern.
Admiral: Rear-Admiral Nordmann on board Kaiser.
  König: Captain Brüninghaus.
  Grosser Kurfurst: Captain Goette (Ernst).
  Markgraf: Captain Seiferling.
  Kronprinz: Captain Feldt (Constanz).
  Kaiser: Captain Baron von Kayserling.
  Prinz Regent Luitpold: Captain Heuser (Karl).
  Kaiserin: Captain Sievers.

Chief of the Reconnaissance Forces: Vice-Admiral Hipper on board Lützow.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Raeder (Erick).

Scouting Division I
  Seydlitz: Captain von Egidy (Moritz).
  Moltke: Captain von Karps.
  Derfflinger: Captain Hartog.
  Lützow: Captain Harder.
  Von der Tann: Captain Zenker.

Scouting Division II
Leader of Scouting Division II: Rear-Admiral Bodicker on board Frankfurt.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Commander Stapenhorst.
  Pillau: Captain Mommsen.
  Elbing: Captain Madlung.
  Frankfurt: Captain von Trotha (Thilo).
  Wiesbaden: Captain Reiss.
  Rostock: Captain Feldmann (Otto).
  Regensburg: Captain Neuberer.

Scouting Division IV
Leader of Scouting Division IV: Commodore von Reuter on board Stettin.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Weber (Heinrich).
  Stettin: Captain Rebensburg (Friedrich).
  München: Captain Böcker (Oskar).
  Frauenlob: Captain Hoffmann (Georg).
  Stuttgart: Captain Hagedorn.
  Hamburg: Captain von Gaudecker.

Torpedo-Boat Flotillas
First Leader of the Torpedo-Boat Forces: Commodore Michelsen on board Rostock.
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Junkermann.
Second Leader of the Torpedo-Boat Forces: Commodore Heinrich on board *Regensburg.*
Chief of Flotilla I: Commander Conrad Albrecht on board *G 39.*
Chief of 1st Half-Flotilla: Commander Conrad Albrecht on board *G 39.*
Chief of Flotilla II: Captain Schuur on board *B 98.*
Chief of 3rd Half-Flotilla: Captain Boest on board *G 101.*
Chief of 4th Half-Flotilla: Captain Dittamar (Adolf) on board *B 109.*
Chief of Flotilla III: Captain Hollmann on board *S 53.*
Chief of 5th Half-Flotilla: Commander Gautier on board *V 71.*
Chief of 6th Half-Flotilla: Commander Karlowa on board *S 54.*
Chief of Flotilla V: Captain Heinecke on board *G 11.*
Chief of 6th Half-Flotilla: Commander Hoefer on board *V 2.*
Chief of 10th Half-Flotilla: Commander Klein (Friedrich) on board *G 8.*
Chief of Flotilla VI: Captain Max Schultz on board *G 41.*
Chief of 11th Half-Flotilla: Commander Rümann on board *V 44.*
Chief of 12th Half-Flotilla: Commander Laks on board *V 69.*
Chief of Flotilla VII: Captain von Koch on board *S 24.*
Chief of 13th Half-Flotilla: Commander von Zitzewitz (Gerhard) on board *S 15.*
Chief of 14th Half-Flotilla: Captain Cordes (Hermann) on board *S 19.*
Chief of Flotilla IX: Captain Goehle on board *V 28.*
Chief of 17th Half-Flotilla: Commander Ehrhardt on board *V 27.*
Chief of 18th Half-Flotilla: Captain Tillessen (Werner) on board *V 30.*

**Submarines**
Leader of the Submarines: Captain Bauer on board *Hamburg.*
Admiralty Staff Officer: Captain Liitzow (Friedrich).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submarine</th>
<th>Commander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>U 24</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Schneider (Rudolf).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 32</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Baron Spiegel von und zu Peckelsheim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 63</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Schultze (Otto).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 66</em></td>
<td>Lieut. von Bothmer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 70</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Wünsche.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 43</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Jürt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 44</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Wagenführ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 52</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Walther (Hans).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 47</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Metzger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 45</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Hillebrand (Leo).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 22</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Hoppe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 19</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Weizbach (Raimund).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>UB 22</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Putzier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>UB 21</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Hashagen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 53</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Rose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U 64</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Morath (Robert).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Airships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airship</th>
<th>Commander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>L 11</em></td>
<td>Captain Schutze (Viktor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 17</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Ehrlich (Herbert).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 14</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Bocker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 21</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Dietrich (Max).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 16</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Sommerfeldt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 9</em></td>
<td>Captain Stelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L 22</em></td>
<td>Lieut. Dietrich (Martin).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vice-Admiral Hipper, Chief of the Reconnaissance Forces was ordered to leave the Jade Basin with his forces at 4 a.m., May 31, to advance towards the Skagerrak out of sight of Horns Reef, and the Danish coast, to show himself off the Norwegian coast before dark, to cruise in the Skagerrak during the night, and at noon the next day to join up with the Main Fleet.
The ships under his command comprised the Scouting Division I and II. To the latter was attached the light cruiser *Regensburg*, flagship of the Second Leader of the torpedo-boats; under his command were the Flotillas II, VI, and IX. The Main Fleet, consisting of Squadrons I, II, and III, of Scouting Division IV, the First Leader of torpedo-boats, in the *Rostock*, and Torpedo-Boat Flotillas I, II, V, and VII, were to follow at 4.30 A.M. to cover the reconnaissance forces during the enterprise and take action on June 1. The sailing order of the battleships was as follows: Squadron III in van, Squadron I following, and Squadron II in the rear.

The *König Albert* was absent from Squadron III, having been incapacitated a few days previously through condenser trouble. Notwithstanding the loss of this important unit, I could not bring myself further to postpone the enterprise, and preferred to do without the ship. Squadron II was without the *Preussen*, which had been placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic forces to act as guard-ship at the south egress from the Sound. *Lothringen* was deemed unfit for service. Scouting Division IV, and the Leader of Torpedo-Boats in the light cruiser *Rostock*, together with the Torpedo-Boat Flotillas I, II, V, and VII, were attached to the battleships.

To the west of the Amrum Bank a passage had been cleared through the enemy minefields which led the High Sea forces safely to the open sea. Visibility was good, with a light north-westerly wind, and there was no sea on. At 7.30 A.M. *U 32* reported at about 70 miles east of the Firth of Forth, two battleships, two cruisers, and several torpedo-boats taking a south-easterly course. At 8.30 a second wireless was received stating that she had intercepted English wireless messages to the effect that two large battleships and groups of destroyers had run out from Scapa Flow. At 8.48 A.M. a third message came through from *U 66* that about 60 nautical miles east of Kinnaird Head, eight enemy battleships, light cruisers, and torpedo-boats had been sighted on a north-easterly course.

These reports gave no enlightenment as to the enemy’s purpose. But the varied forces of the separate divisions of the fleet, and their diverging courses did not seem to suggest either combined action or an advance on the German Bight or any connection with our enterprise, but showed a possibility that our hope of meeting with separate enemy divisions was likely to be fulfilled. We were, therefore, all the more determined to keep to our plan.

Between 2 and 3 P.M. *L 9, 14, 16, 21* and 23 ascended for long-distance reconnaissance in the sector north to west of Heligoland. They took no part in the battle that so soon was to follow, neither did they see anything of their own Main Fleet, nor of the enemy, nor hear anything of the battle.
The First Phase of the Battle-Cruiser Engagement

At 4.28 P.M. the leading boat of the 4th Torpedo-Boat Half-Flotilla, B 109, reported that Elbing, the west wing cruiser on the Chief of Reconnaissance’s line, had been sent to examine a steamer about 60 nautical miles west of Bovbjerg, and had sighted some enemy forces. It was thanks to that steamer that the engagement took place; our course might have carried us past the English cruisers had the torpedo-boat not proceeded to the steamer and thus sighted the smoke from the enemy in the west.

As soon as the enemy, comprising eight light cruisers of the Caroline type, sighted our forces, he turned off to the north. Admiral Bodicker gave chase with his cruisers. At 5.20 P.M. the Chief of the Reconnaissance then sighted in a westerly direction two columns of large vessels taking an easterly course. These soon showed themselves to be six battle-cruisers, three of the Lion class, one Tiger, and two Indefatigables, besides numbers of lighter forces.

The Chief of Reconnaissance called back Scouting Division II, which he had sent to give chase in the north, and prepared to attack. The enemy deployed to the south in fighting line. It was Vice-Admiral Beatty with the First and Second English Battle-Cruiser Squadrons, consisting of the Lion, Princess Royal, Queen Mary, Tiger, New Zealand, and Indefatigable. That the enemy deployed to the south was a very welcome fact for us, as it offered the possibility of inducing the enemy to fall back on his own main fleet. The Chief of Reconnaissance therefore followed the movement, manoeuvred to get within effective firing range, and opened fire at 5.49 P.M., at a range of about 130 hm. [Edward Beatty gave a range of 18,500 yards].

The fighting proceeded on a south-easterly course. The Chief of Reconnaissance kept the enemy at effective distance. The batteries fixed their aim well; hits were observed on all the enemy ships. Already at 6.13 P.M., the battle-cruiser Indefatigable, the last in the line of the enemy cruisers, sank with a terrible explosion caused by the guns of the Von der Tann.

Superiority in firing and tactical advantages of position were decidedly on our side up to 6.19 P.M., when a new unit of four or five ships of the Queen Elizabeth type, with a considerable surplus of speed, drew up from a north-westerly direction, and beginning at a range of 200 hm., joined the fighting. It was the Fifth English Battle Squadron. This made the situation critical for our cruisers. The new enemy fired with extraordinary rapidity and accuracy with the greater
ease as regards the latter that he met with almost no opposition, as our battle-cruisers were fully engaged with Admiral Beatty’s ships.

¹ According to English accounts, it comprised the Barham, Warspite, Valiant and Malaya. Mention is made of four ships only. According to various observations on our side (by Squadron III and the leader of Scouting Division II) there were five ships. If Queen Elizabeth, or a similar type of ship, was not in the unit it is possible that another recently built man-of-war replaced her.

At 6.20 P.M. the fighting distance between the battle-cruisers on both sides was about 120 hm., while between our battle-cruisers and those with Queen Elizabeth the distance was something like Position at 5.49 P.M. 180 hm. At this stage Torpedo-Boat Flotilla IX was the only one of the flotillas under the Chief of Reconnaissance that was in a position to attack. The Second Leader of Torpedo-Boats, Commodore Heinrich, on board the Regensburg, and some few boats belonging to Torpedo, Flotilla II, were getting up steam with all speed in a diagonal line from the Chief of Reconnaissance’s furthest point. The cruisers of Scouting Division II, together with the remaining torpedo flotillas, were forced by the Queen Elizabths to withdraw to the east to escape their fire and had, therefore, in spite of working their engines to the utmost, not been able to arrive in position at the head of the battle-cruisers.

In view of the situation, the Second Leader of the Torpedo Boats ordered Torpedo Flotilla IX (whose chief, Captain Goehle, had already decided on his own initiative to prepare to attack) to advance to the relief of the battle-cruisers.

At about 6.30 P.M. Torpedo Flotilla IX proceeded to attack, running through heavy enemy firing. Twelve torpedoes were fired on the enemy lines at distances ranging between 95—80 hm. It was impossible to push the attack closer on the enemy, as at the same time that Flotilla IX got to work, eighteen to twenty English destroyers, covered by light cruisers, appeared on the scene to counter-attack and beat off our torpedo-boats. The result was a torpedo-boat fight at close range (1,000—1,500 m.).

The Regensburg, together with the boats of Torpedo-Boat Flotilla II that were with her, and the centrally situated guns on the battle-cruisers, then joined in the fight. After about ten minutes the enemy turned away. On our side V 27 and V 29 were sunk, hit by shots from heavy calibre guns. The crews of both the boats were rescued in spite of enemy fire, by V 26 and S 35. On the enemy side two, or perhaps three, destroyers were sunk, and two others so badly damaged that they could not get away, and fell later into the hands of our advancing Main Fleet. The enemy made no attempt to rescue the crews of these boats.
had disappeared. Whether the destruction was the result of artillery action or was caused by a
torpedo from the battle-cruisers or by a torpedo from Torpedo-Boat Flotilla IX can never be
ascertained for certain, but most probably it was due to artillery action which caused an
explosion of ammunition or oil on board the enemy vessel. It was not until night that I heard of
the destruction of the two battle-cruisers.

The attack by Flotilla IX had at all events been successful in so far that for a time it
checked the enemy’s fire. Admiral Hipper took advantage of this to divert the cruisers to a
north-westerly course and thus secure for himself the lead at the head of the cruisers in the new
phase of the fight. Immediately following on the attack by the torpedo-boats, the German Main
Fleet appeared on the scene of battle just in the nick of time to help the reconnaissance forces in
their fight against considerably superior numbers.
At 4.28 P.M.\(^2\) about 50 nautical miles west of Lyngvig, on the Jutland coast, the first news of the sighting of enemy light forces was reported to the Main Fleet proceeding in the following order: Squadrons III, I, II, the flagship at the head of Squadron I, on a northerly course, speed 14 knots—distance between the vessels, 7 hm., distance between the squadrons, 35 hm., the torpedo-boats as U-boat escort for the squadrons, the light cruisers of Scouting Division IV allotted to the Main Fleet to protect their course.

\(^2\) In comparing the time given in the German and English accounts it must be remembered that there is a difference of two hours, for the reason that we reckon according to summer-time in Central Europe, while the difference between ordinary Central Europe and Greenwich time is one hour. Therefore 4.28 German time corresponds to 2.28 English time.

At 5.35 the first report was sent that heavy forces had been sighted. The distance between the Chief of Reconnaissance and the Main Fleet was at that time about 50 nautical miles. On receipt of this message, the fighting line was opened (that is, the distance between the squadrons was reduced to 1,000 m., and between the vessels to 500 m.), and the order was given to clear the ships for action.

In the fighting line the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet is not tied to any fixed position. When there is a question of leading several squadrons it is not advisable to take up a position at the head of the line, as it is not possible from there to watch the direction in which the fight develops, as that greatly depends on the movements of the enemy. Being bound to any such position might lead to the Commander-in-Chief finding himself at the rear instead of at the head of his assembled line. A position in the centre or at a third of the line (according to the number of units) is more advantageous. In the course of events the place of the eighth ship in the line for the flagship has been tested and approved of.

During the whole time that fighting was going on I had a clear look-out over the whole line and was able to signal with great rapidity in both directions. As the fighting line of the warships was more than 10 km. long, I should not have been able to overlook my entire line from the wing, especially under such heavy enemy firing.

The message received at 5.45 P.M., from the Chief of Reconnaissance that he was engaged with six enemy battle-cruisers on a southeasterly course showed that he had succeeded in meeting the enemy, and as he fought was drawing him closer to our Main Fleet. The duty of the Main Fleet was now to hasten as quickly as possible to support the battle-cruisers, which were inferior as to material, and to endeavour to hinder the premature retreat of the enemy.
At 6.5, therefore, I took a north-westerly course at a speed of 15 knots, and a quarter of an hour later altered it to a westerly course in order to place the enemy between two fires, as he, on his southerly course, would have to push through between our line and that of the battle-cruisers. While the Main Fleet was still altering course, a message came from Scouting Division II that an English unit of warships, five ships (not four!) had joined in the fight.

The situation thus was becoming critical for Scouting Division I, confronted as they were by six battle-cruisers and five battleships. Naturally, therefore, everything possible had to be done to get into touch with them, and a change was made back to a northerly course. The weather was extremely clear, the sky cloudless, a light breeze from N.W., and a calm sea. At 6.30 P.M. the fighting lines were sighted. At 6.45 P.M. Squadrons I and III opened fire, while the Chief of Reconnaissance, with the forces allotted to him, placed himself at the head of the Main Fleet.

The light enemy forces veered at once to the west, and as soon as they were out of firing range turned northwards. Whether the fire from our warships had damaged them during the short bombardment was doubtful, but their vague and purposeless hurrying to and fro led one to think that our fire had reached them and that the action of our warships had so surprised them that they did not know which way to turn next.

The English battle-cruisers turned to a north-westerly course; Queen Elizabeth and the ships with her followed in their wake, and thereby played the part of cover for the badly damaged cruisers. In so doing, however, they came very much nearer to our Main Fleet, and we came on at a firing distance of 17 hm. or less. While both the English units passed by each other and provided mutual cover, Captain Max Schultz, Chief of Torpedo-Boat Flotilla VI, attacked at 6.49 P.M., with the Eleventh Torpedo-Boat Half-Flotilla. The result could not be seen.

The fighting which now ensued developed into a stern chase; our reconnaissance forces pressed on the heels of the enemy battle-cruisers, and our Main Fleet gave chase to the Queen Elizabeth and the ships with her. Our ships in Squadron III attained a speed of over 20 knots, which was also kept up on board the Kaiserin. Just before fire was opened she had succeeded in repairing damage to one of her condensers. By the Friedrich der Grosse, the Fleet Flagship, 20 knots was achieved and maintained.

In spite of this, the enemy battle-cruisers succeeded soon after 7 o'clock in escaping from the fire of Scouting Division I. The Queen Elizabeth and her sister ships also made such good way that they were only under fire from the ships of Scouting Division I and of the Fifth Division (First Half of Squadron III). The hope that one of the ships pursued would be so damaged as to fall a prey to our Main Fleet was not fulfilled, although our firing was effective, and at 7.30 P.M. it was seen that a ship of the Queen Elizabeth type after she had been hit repeatedly, drew slowly out of the fighting line with a heavy list to leeward. Two modern destroyers, the Nestor and Nomad, were all that fell to the share of the Main Fleet; they were hit.
and badly damaged in the attack by Torpedo-Boat Flotilla IX, and were overtaken and sunk by us; the crews were taken prisoner.

At 7.20 P.M., when the fire from Scouting Division I and from the ships of the Fifth Division appeared to grow weaker, the leaders of the Fleet were under the impression that the enemy was succeeding in getting away, and gave orders to the Chief of Reconnaissance and to all the fighting forces “to give chase.”

Meanwhile, the previously clear weather had become less clear; the wind had changed from N.W. to S.W. Powder fumes and smoke from the funnels hung over the sea and cut off all view from north and east. Only now and then could we see our own reconnaissance forces. Owing to the superior speed of Beatty’s cruisers, our own, when the order came to give chase, were already out-distanced by the enemy battle-cruisers and light craft, and were thus forced, in order not to lose touch, to follow on the inner circle and adopt the enemy’s course. Both lines of cruisers swung by degrees in concentric circles by the north to a north-easterly direction.

A message which was to have been sent by the Chief of Reconnaissance could not be dispatched owing to damage done to the principal and reserve wireless stations on his flagship. The cessation of firing at the head of the line could only be ascribed to the increasing difficulty of observation with the sun so low on the horizon, until finally it became impossible. When, therefore, enemy light forces began a torpedo attack on our battle-cruisers at 7.40 P.M., the Chief of Reconnaissance had no alternative but to manoeuvre and finally bring the unit round to S.W. in an endeavour to close up with the Main Fleet, as it was impossible to return the enemy’s fire to any purpose.
The Third Phase of Fighting: The Battle

I observed almost simultaneously that the admiral at the head of our squadron of battleships began to veer round to starboard in an easterly direction. This was in accordance with the instructions signalled to keep up the pursuit. As the Fleet was still divided in columns, steering a north-westerly course as directed, the order “Leader in Front” was signaled along the line at 7.45 P.M., and the speed temporarily reduced to 15 knots, so as to make it possible for the divisions ahead, which had pushed on at high pressure, to get into position again.

As long as the pursuit was kept up, the movements of the English gave us the direction, consequently our line by degrees veered round to the east. During these proceedings in the Main Fleet, Scouting Division II, under Rear-Admiral Bodicker, when engaged with a light cruiser of the Calliope class, which was set on fire, sighted several light cruisers of the Town class, and several big ships, presumably battleships, of which the Agincourt was one. Owing to the mist that hung over the water, it was impossible to ascertain the entire strength of the enemy. The group was at once heavily fired on, returned the fire, discharged torpedoes, and turned in the direction of their own Main Fleet. No result could be observed, as artificial smoke was at once employed to protect the cruisers. In spite of the fog, the Wiesbaden and Pillau were both badly hit. The Wiesbaden (Captain Reiss) lay in the thick of the enemy fire, incapable of action.

A smokescreen is laid to protect the High Sea Fleet cruisers

The Chiefs of the 12th and 9th Torpedo-Boat Half-Flotillas who were stationed behind the cruisers, recognising the gravity of the situation, came to the front. Both came under fire from a line of numbers of big ships on a N.W. course, and fired their torpedoes from within 60 hm. of the enemy. Here, too, it was impossible to observe what success was achieved, as dense clouds of smoke hid the enemy from view directly they veered round. But both the above-mentioned commanders reckon that they met with success, having attacked under favourable conditions.

While this encounter with the advance guard of the English Main Fleet was taking place, we, on our flagship were occupied debating how much longer to continue the pursuit in view of the advanced time. There was no longer any question of a cruiser campaign against merchantmen in the Skagerrak, as the meeting with the English fighting forces which was to result from such action had already taken place. But we were bound to take into consideration that the English Fleet, if at sea, which was obvious from the ships we had encountered, would offer battle the next day. Some steps would also have to be taken to shake off the English light forces before darkness fell in order to avoid any loss to our Main Fleet from nocturnal torpedo-boat attacks.
A message was then received from the leader of Scouting Division II that he had been fired on by some newly arrived large ships. At 8.2 p.m. came a wireless: “Wiesbaden incapable of action.” On receipt of the message I turned with the Fleet two points to larboard [port] so as to draw nearer to the group and render assistance to the Wiesbaden. From 8.20 onwards there was heavy fighting round the damaged Wiesbaden, and good use was made of the ship’s torpedoes. Coming from a north-north-westerly direction, the Queen Elizabeth ships and also probably Beatty’s battle-cruisers attacked (prisoners, however, stated that after 7.0 P.M. the latter took no part in the fight).

Despite being heavily damaged, the Wiesbaden battled on using her torpedoes.

A fresh unit of cruisers (three Invincibles and four Warriors) bore down from the north, besides light cruisers and destroyers. A further message from the torpedo-boat flotillas which had gone to support Scouting Division II, stated that they had sighted more than twenty enemy battleships following a southeasterly course. It was now quite obvious that we were confronted by a large portion of the English Fleet and a few minutes later their presence was notified on the horizon directly ahead of us by rounds of firing from guns of heavy calibre. The entire arc stretching from north to east was a sea of fire. The flash from the muzzles of the guns was distinctly seen through the mist and smoke on the horizon, though the ships themselves were not distinguishable. This was the beginning of the main phase of the battle.

There was never any question of our line veering round to avoid an encounter. The resolve to do battle with the enemy stood firm from the first. The leaders of our battleship squadrons, the Fifth Division turned at once for a running fight, carried on at about 13,000 m. The other divisions followed this movement on orders signalled from the flagship.

By this time more than a hundred heavy guns had joined in the fight on the enemy’s side, directing fire chiefly at our battle-cruisers and the ships of the Fifth Division (the König class). The position of the English line (whose centre we must have faced) to our leading point brought fire on us from three sides. The Queen Elizabeths fired diagonally from larboard [port]; the ships of the Main Fleet, which Jellicoe had brought up, from the forecastle starboard. Many shots were aimed at the Friedrich der Grosse, but the ship was never hit.

During this stage of the fight the cruisers Defence, Black Prince, and Warrior came up from the north, but were all destroyed by the fire from our battleships and our battle-cruisers. Fire from the Friedrich der Grosse was aimed at one of the three, which in a huge white cloud of steam was blown into the air, at 3,000 m. distance. I observed several enemy hits and consequent explosions on the ships at our leading point. Following the movement of the enemy they had made a bend which hindered free action of our Torpedo Boat Flotilla II stationed there.

I could see nothing of our cruisers, which were still farther forward. Owing to the turning aside that was inevitable in drawing nearer, they found themselves between the fire of both lines. For this reason I decided to turn our line and bring it on to an opposite course. Otherwise an awkward situation would have arisen round the pivot which the enemy line by degrees was passing, as long-distance shots from the enemy would certainly have hit our rear
ships. As regards the effectiveness of the artillery, the enemy was more favourably situated, as our ships stood out against the clear western horizon, whereas his own ships were hidden by the smoke and mist of the battle. A running artillery fight on a southerly course would therefore not have been advantageous to us.

The swing round was carried out in excellent style. At our peace manoeuvres great importance was always attached to their being carried out on a curved line and every means employed to ensure the working of the signals. The trouble spent was now well repaid; the cruisers were liberated from their cramped position and enabled to steam away south and appeared, as soon as the two lines were separated, in view of the flagship. The torpedo-boats, too, on the leeside of the fire had room to move to the attack and advanced.

The High Sea Fleet turns as one away from the massed guns of the British Navy

While the veering round of the line was proceeding, two boats of Torpedo-Boat Flotilla III (G 88 and V 73) and the leading boat of Torpedo-Boat Flotilla I (S 32) had attacked. The remaining boats of Torpedo-Boat Flotilla III had ceased the attack on an order to retire from the leader. The weakening of the enemy fire had induced the First Leader to give the order, being persuaded that the enemy had turned away and that the flotilla, which would be urgently needed in the further development of the battle, would find itself without support.

Owing to the shortening of the line at the head, the boats of the other flotillas were not able to attack. One division (Torpedo-Boat Flotillas IX and VI) had just returned from the 8 o'clock attack. The enemy line did not follow our veer round. In the position it was to our leading point, it should have remained on, and could have held us still further surrounded if by a simultaneous turn to a westerly course it had kept firmly to our line.

It may be that the leader did not grasp the situation, and was afraid to come any nearer for fear of torpedo attacks. Neither did any of the other officers on the enemy side think of holding firmly to our line, which would have greatly impeded our movements and rendered a fresh attack on the enemy line extremely difficult.

Immediately after the line was turned the enemy fire ceased temporarily, partly because the artificial smoke sent out by the torpedo-boats to protect the line—the battle-cruisers in particular—greatly impeded the enemy's view, but chiefly no doubt on account of the severe losses the enemy had suffered.

Losses that were observed for certain as sunk were: a ship of the Queen Elizabeth class (name unknown), a battle-cruiser (Invincible), two armoured cruisers (Black Prince and Defence), the light cruiser Shark, and one marked O 24. Heavily damaged and partially set on fire were: One cruiser (Warrior, sunk later), three light cruisers, three destroyers (of which the Acasta was one).
On our side V 48 was the only destroyer sunk, the *Wiesbaden* was rendered incapable, and the *Lützow* so badly damaged that the Chief of Reconnaissance was subsequently compelled at 9 P.M. to leave the ship under the enemy's fire, and transfer to the *Moltke*. The leadership of Scouting Division I was thus made over to the *Derfflinger* (Captain Hartog) until 11 P.M. The other battle-cruisers and the leading ships of Squadron III had also suffered, but kept their place in the line. No one reported inability to do so; I was, therefore, able to reckon on their being fully prepared to fight. After the enemy was forced to cease firing on our line steering S.W., he flung himself on the already heavily damaged *Wiesbaden*. The ship put up a gallant fight against the overwhelmingly superior forces, which was clearly to be seen as she had emerged from out of the clouds of smoke and was distinctly visible.

Admiral Hipper transfers his flag to the *Moltke*

It was still too early for a nocturnal move. If the enemy followed us our action in retaining the direction taken after turning the line would partake of the nature of a retreat, and in the event of any damage to our ships in the rear the Fleet would be compelled to sacrifice them or else to decide on a line of action enforced by enemy pressure, and not adopted voluntarily, and would therefore be detrimental to us from the very outset. Still less was it feasible to strive at detaching oneself from the enemy, leaving it to him to decide when he would elect to meet us the next morning. There was but one way of averting this—to force the enemy into a second battle by another determined advance, and forcibly compel his torpedo-boats to attack. The success of the turning of the line while fighting encouraged me to make the attempt, and decided me to make still further use of the facility of movement. The manœuvre would be bound to surprise the enemy, to upset his plans for the rest of the day, and if the blow fell heavily it would facilitate the breaking loose at night. The fight of the *Wiesbaden* helped also to strengthen my resolve to make an effort to render assistance to her and at least save the crew.

Accordingly, after we had been on the new course about a quarter of an hour, the line was again swung rounds to starboard on an easterly course at 8.55 P.M. The battle-cruisers were ordered to operate with full strength on the enemy's leading point, all the torpedo-boat flotillas had orders to attack, and the First Leader of the torpedo-boats, Commodore Michelsen, was instructed to send his boats to rescue the *Wiesbaden*'s crew. The boats told off for this purpose were compelled to relinquish the attempt. The *Wiesbaden* and the boats making for her were in the midst of such heavy fire that the leader of the torpedo-boats thought it useless to sacrifice his boats. In turning to go back, V 73 and G 88 together fired off four torpedoes at the *Queen Elizabeths*.

The battle that developed after the second change of course and led to the intended result very soon brought a full resumption of the firing at the van which, as was inevitable, became the same running fight as the previous one, in order to bring the whole of the guns into action. This time, however, in spite of "crossing the T", the acknowledged purpose was to deal a blow at the centre of the enemy line. The fire directed on our line by the enemy concentrated chiefly on the battle-cruisers and the Fifth Division. The ships suffered all the more as they could see but little of the enemy beyond the flash of fire at each round, while they themselves apparently offered a good target for the enemy guns. The behaviour of the battle-cruisers is
specially deserving of the highest praise; crippled in the use of their guns by their numerous casualties, some of them badly damaged, obeying the given signal, “At the enemy”, they dashed recklessly to the attack.

The conduct of Squadron II (Rear-Admiral Behncke) and the action of the ships of the Fifth Division are equally worthy of recognition. They, together with the battle-cruisers, bore the brunt of the fight, and thus rendered it possible for the torpedo-boat flotillas to take so effective a share in the proceedings. The systematic procedure of our ships in the line was a great help to the flotillas on their starboard side in opening the attack.

The first to attack were those ahead with the cruisers, the boats of Flotillas VI and IX. Next came Flotillas III and V from the Main Fleet. Flotilla II was kept back by the Second Leader of torpedo-boats, for fear it might be left unprotected behind VI and IX. This action was justified by the course of events. The 1st Torpedo Half-Flotilla and a few boats from Flotillas VI and IX were occupied in covering the damaged Lützow. There was no longer any opportunity for an attack by Flotilla VII which had been in the rear of our fighting line. As they advanced, Flotillas VI and IX were met by the heavy enemy fire that until then had been directed against the battle-cruisers; they carried the attack to within 70 hm. against the centre of a line comprising more than twenty large battleships steering in a circle E.S.E. to S., and opened fire under favourable conditions.

In the attack S 35 was hit midships and sank at once. All the other boats returned, and in doing so sent out dense clouds of smoke between the enemy and our own Main Fleet. The enemy must have turned aside on the attack of Flotillas VI and IX. Flotillas III and V that came after found nothing but light craft, and had no opportunity of attacking the battleships. The action of the torpedo-boat flotillas had achieved its purpose.

At 9.17 P.M., therefore, the line was again for the third time swung round on to a westerly course, and this was carried out at the moment when the flagship Friedrich der Grosse was taking a southerly course close by the turning point. Although the signal to swing round hung on the starboard side and was being carried out by the neighbouring ships, I made the Chief of the Friedrich der Grosse carry out the turn to larboard [port].

This might have led the ships following behind to think that there was a mistake in the signalling. But my intention to get through and save the ships in front of the Friedrich der Grosse from a difficult situation in carrying out the manoeuvre was rightly understood by Vice-Admiral Ehrhardt Schmidt in the Ostfriesland, the Leader of Squadron I. He did not wait, therefore, for the carrying out of the movement from the rear—which is the general rule to avoid all danger of collision—but himself gave the lead in the turning of his squadron by starting the turn to starboard with the Ostfriesland and thus forced his ships round. This action was a very satisfactory proof of the capable handling of the ships and the leaders’ intelligent grasp of the situation.

After the change to a westerly course the Fleet was brought round to a south-westerly, southerly, and finally to a south-easterly course to meet the enemy’s encircling movement and keep open a way for our return. The enemy fire ceased very soon after we had swung round and we lost sight of our adversary. The enemy’s casualties at this stage of the fighting cannot be given.

Excepting the effects of direct hits which we were able to confirm from the flames of explosions, the enemy has only admitted the damage to the Marlborough by torpedoes.³ On our side all the ships were in a condition to keep up the speed requisite for night work (16 knots) and thus keep their place in the line.

³ Admiral Jellicoe admits that torpedoes reached his line, but claims to have escaped further damage by the clever handling of his ships. Our assumption that he had already turned back before the attack by the torpedo-boats is thus confirmed.
Night Movements and Battles

Twilight was now far advanced, and it was only by personal observation that I could assure myself of the presence and external condition of those ships that chiefly had been under fire, and especially that the Lützow was able to keep with the unit. At 9.30 the battle-cruiser was seen to larboard [port] of the flagship, and had reported that she could do 15 knots. The report made by the torpedo-boat flotilla as to the enemy's strength and the extension of his firing line made it quite certain that we had been in battle with the entire English Fleet. It might safely be expected that in the twilight the enemy would endeavour by attacking with strong forces, and during the night with destroyers, to force us over to the west in order to open battle with us when it was light. He was strong enough to do it. If we could succeed in warding off the enemy's encircling movement, and could be the first to reach Horns Reef, then the liberty of decision for the next morning was assured to us.

In order to make this possible all flotillas were ordered to be ready to attack at night, even though there was a danger when day broke of their not being able to take part in the new battle that was expected. The Main Fleet in close formation was to make for Horns Reef by the shortest route, and, defying all enemy attacks, to keep on that course. In accordance with this, preparations for the night were made.

The Leaders of the torpedo-boats were instructed to arrange night attacks for the flotillas. At 9.20 a southerly course was ordered. In changing to this course Squadron II had fallen out on the starboard side as the leading ship of Squadron I fell into the new course, not being able to fix the position of Squadron II. Owing to the latter's inferior speed it fell behind the ships of Squadrons III and I in the last part of the day's battle. Squadron II now attempted, at full speed and manoeuvring to larboard [port], to resume its place in front of Squadron I, which was its rightful position, after the Fleet had been turned. It came, therefore, just in time to help our battle-cruisers that were engaged in a short but sharp encounter with the enemy shortly before it was quite dark. While Scouting Divisions I and II were trying to place themselves at the head of our line they were met at 10.20 by heavy fire coming from a southeasterly direction. Nothing could be seen of the enemy beyond the flash of the guns at each round. The ships, already heavily damaged, were hit again without being able to return the fire to any purpose. They turned back, therefore, and passed in between Squadrons II and I to leeward of the firing.

The head of Squadron I followed the movements of the cruisers, while Squadron II (Rear-Admiral Mauve) stood by and took the enemy's fire. When Squadron II became aware that the failing light made any return fire useless it withdrew, thinking to attract the enemy to closer quarters with Squadron I. The enemy did not follow, but ceased firing.

Almost at the same time, the Leader of Scouting Division IV Commodore von Reuter, under similar conditions, had been engaged in a short encounter with four of five cruisers, some of them ships of the Hampshire class.

Following on this attack, we took a south-easterly course which the situation at 10.30 P.M. was at once seen to be necessary and adopted by Squadron I, bringing Squadron II again on the starboard side of the Fleet. In view of the fact that the leading ships of the Main Fleet would chiefly have to ward off the attacks of the enemy, and in order that at daybreak there should be powerful vessels at the head, Squadron II was placed in the rear. At 11 P.M. the head of the line stood at 36° 37' North latitude, and 5° 30' East longitude. At 11.6 P.M. the order for the night was “Course S.S.E. 1/4 E, speed 16 knots”.

Out of consideration for their damaged condition, Scouting Division I was told off to cover the rear, Division II to the vanguard, and the IVth to cover the starboard side. The Leaders of the torpedo-boat forces placed the flotillas in an E.N.E. to S.S.W. direction, which was where the enemy Main Fleet could be expected. A great many of the boats had fired off all their torpedoes during the battle. Some were left behind for the protection of the badly damaged
Lützow; others were retained by the flotilla leaders in case of emergency. The rescue of the crews of the Elbing and Rostock was due to that decision.

The Second, Fifth and Seventh, and part of the Sixth and Ninth were the only flotillas that proceeded to the attack; the boats had various nocturnal fights with enemy light forces. They never sighted the Main Fleet. At 5 A.M. on June 1, L 24 sighted a portion of the Main Fleet in Jammer Bay. It was as we surmised—after the battle the enemy had gone north. Flotilla II, which had been stationed at the most northerly part of the sector, was forced back by cruisers and destroyers, and went round by Skagen; at 4 o’clock when day broke the other flotillas collected near the Main Fleet.

The battleship squadrons proceeded during the night in the following order: Squadron I, Flagship of the Fleet, Squadron III and Squadron II. Squadrons I and II were now in reversed positions; that is to say, the ships previously in the rear were now at the van.

Other attempts to bring the admirals ahead were abandoned owing to the darkness and lack of time. The conduct of the line was entrusted to Captain Redlich on the Westfalen. The enemy attacked from the east with both light and heavy forces during the night almost without ceasing. Scouting Divisions I and II and the ships in Squadron I in particular were to ward off the attacks. The result was excellent. To meet these attacks in time, bring the enemy under fire and by suitable manoeuvring evade his torpedoes, demanded the most careful observation on board the vessels. Consequently the line was in constant movement, and it required great skill on the part of the commanders to get into position again, and necessitated a perpetual look-out for those manoeuvring just in front of them. Very little use was made of the searchlights. It had been proved that the fire from the attacking boats was aimed chiefly at these illuminated targets. As our light guns and the navigation control on the ships were close to the searchlights, and because of the better view to be obtained the officers and men on duty there would not take cover, several unfortunate casualties occurred. On board the Oldenburg the commander, Captain Höpfner, was severely wounded by a shell, and several officers and many of the crew were killed.

Utterly mistaking the situation, a large enemy cruiser with four funnels came up at 2 A.M. (apparently one of the Cressy class), and was soon within 1,500 metres of Squadron I’s battleships, the Thüringen and Ostfriesland. In a few seconds she was on fire, and sank with a terrible explosion four minutes after opening fire. The destruction of this vessel, which was so near that the crew could be seen rushing backwards and forwards on the burning deck while the searchlights disclosed the flight of the heavy projectiles till they fell and exploded, was a grand but terrible sight.

Squadron I reported during the night that after carrying out an evading manoeuvre the Nassau had not returned in her place, and as she did not answer a call it was feared she had been torpedoed. Towards morning, however, there was a faint wireless from her reporting that she was standing by the Vyl Lightship at Horns Reef, and during the night had rammed and cut through a destroyer. After this exploit the commander preferred not to return to our darkened line but made for the morning’s rendezvous.

A careful estimation showed that during the night one battle-cruiser, one light cruiser and seven destroyers were sunk on the enemy’s side, and several battle-cruisers and destroyers badly damaged. The 2nd Division of Squadron I at the head of the line were specially successful in the defence they put up against torpedo attacks, as they themselves accounted for six destroyers. On our side the old light cruiser Frauenlob, the battleship Pommern and V 4 were sunk; Rostock and Elbing were abandoned and blown up. At 12.45 A.M. the Frauenlob (Captain Georg Hoffmann), during a fight between Scouting Division IV and four cruisers of the Town class, was hit by a torpedo and, according to the accounts of the few survivors, went down fighting to the last.
The light cruiser *Frauenlob* and the battleship *Pommern* were sunk during the night action.

The *Pommern* (Captain Bölken) was torpedoed at 4.20 A.M. and went down with a violent explosion. Unfortunately none of the crew could be saved, as the wreckage drifted away so quickly that nothing was seen on the water by a ship following at 500 m. distance.

At 4.50 A.M. *V 4* struck an enemy mine; the crew was not saved. At 1.30 A.M. the *Rostock* and *Elbing* to the larboard [port] of the head of Squadron I were engaged in a fight with destroyers, but had finally to withdraw from the enemy’s torpedoes and break through Squadron I’s line, so as not to impede the firing from the ships of the line. While doing this the *Rostock* was hit by a torpedo, and the *Elbing* and *Posen* collided. Both cruisers were put out of action. The *Rostock* kept afloat till 5.45 A.M., but as enemy cruisers were then sighted she was blown up, the entire crew and the wounded having previously been taken off by the boats of Flotilla III. The crew of the *Elbing* was also taken over by a boat belonging to Flotilla III. The Commander, Captain Madlung, the First Officer, the Torpedo Officer and a cutter’s crew remained on board to keep the ship afloat as long as possible. When, however, enemy forces were sighted at 4 A.M. the *Elbing* was also blown up. The remainder of the crew got away in the cutter and were subsequently picked up by a Dutch fishing-smack and returned home via Holland.

The *Lützow* was kept above water until 3.45 A.M. The *König*, the rear ship of the Fleet, lost sight of her at 11.15 P.M. The vessel was at last steered from the stern. All efforts to stop the water pouring in were fruitless; the fore part of the ship had been too badly damaged, and she had at least 7,000 tons of water in her. The screws revolved out of the water, and she had to be given up. The crew with all the wounded were taken off by the torpedo-boats *G 40*, *G 37*, *G 38* and *V 45*, and the *Lützow* was sunk by a torpedo. Altogether the four boats had 1,250 men from the *Lützow* on board. Twice they encountered enemy cruisers and destroyers, but on each occasion, led by the senior officer, Commander Beitzen (Richard), they attacked and successfully made their way into the German Bight. In the last engagement *G 40* had her engines hit and had to be towed.
The crippled battle-cruiser Lützow was eventually abandoned and scuttled by torpedo.

When this report reached the Main Fleet, the Second Leader of Torpedo-Boats on the Regensburg turned at once, regardless as to whether he might meet with superior English forces or not, and took over the towing party. S 32, Leader of Flotilla I (Captain Fröhlich), was hit in her boiler at 1 A.M. and rendered temporarily useless. By feeding the boiler with sea water the captain succeeded, however, in taking the boat into Danish waters. From thence she was towed through the Nordmann Deep by torpedo-boats dispatched to her assistance.

These events prove that the English Naval forces made no effort to occupy the waters between the scene of battle and Horns Reef.

It was only during the night that there was opportunity for the ships to report on the number of prisoners they had on board and to gather from them some idea of the enemy's losses. Then I learned that the Warspite, which we had observed to be badly damaged in the battle, was sunk. Among other vessels reported sunk were the battle-cruisers Queen Mary, Indefatigable, and Invincible. This was all news to me, and convinced me that the English losses were far more considerable than our own.

On arriving at Horns Reef at 5 A.M. I decided to remain there and await the Lützow. I had not then heard of her fate. From 11:30 P.M. on, the vessel had been able to do 13 knots. The last report from her was at 1:55 A.M.—transmitted by convoy-boat G 40—stating that she was making very slow way, that the means of navigation were limited, that the gun power was reduced to a fifth, course south, station E 16. At 5:30 A.M. came a message that the Lützow had been abandoned at 4 A.M.

After that I had no difficulty in drawing my own conclusions. As the enemy did not come down from the North, even with light forces, it was evident that he was retiring, especially as nothing more could be seen of him notwithstanding that his torpedo-boats were about until dawn.
**The Situation on the Morning of June 1**

L 11, 13, 17, and 22 had gone up during the night for an early reconnaissance. At 5.10 A.M. L 11 reported a squadron of twelve English battleships, numerous light craft and destroyers on a northerly course about the centre of the line Terschelling—Horns Reef, and immediately afterwards enemy battleships and battlecruisers north of the first unit. The airship was heavily fired at but kept in touch until compelled to retire and lost sight of the enemy in the thick atmosphere. The airship's reports taken from its diary are as follows:

**Reconnaissance Trip of L 11 on June 1, 1916**

“On June 1 at 1.30, after midnight L 11 went up at Nordholz with the following orders: As fourth airship to cover flank of High Sea forces, course N.W. to W. by Heligoland. Full crew on board, fresh south-westerly wind, visibility limited owing to ground fog and later to a fog-like atmosphere high up extending over 2 or at most 4 nautical miles. Heligoland was not visible through the fog. At 5 A.M. clouds of smoke were seen north of the ship in Square O 33 B and were made for. At 5.10 it was possible to make out a strong enemy unit of twelve large warships with numerous lighter craft steering north-north-east full speed ahead. To keep in touch with them L 11 kept in the rear and sent a wireless report, circling round eastwards. At 5.40 A.M. east of the first unit, the airship sighted a second squadron of six big English battleships with lighter forces on a northerly course; when sighted, they turned by divisions to the west, presumably to get into contact with the first unit. As this group was nearer to the Main Fleet than the first one, L 11 attached itself to it, but at 5.50 a group of three English battle-cruisers and four smaller craft were sighted to the north-east, and, cruising about south of the airship, put themselves between the enemy Main Fleet and L 11. Visibility was so poor that it was extremely difficult to keep in contact. For the most part only one of the units was visible at a time, while, apparently, the airship at an altitude of 1,100—1,900 m. was plainly visible to the enemy against the rising sun.

At 5.15, shortly after sighting the first group of battleships, the enemy opened fire on the airship from all the vessels with anti-aircraft guns and guns of every calibre. The great turrets fired broadsides; the rounds followed each other rapidly. The flash from the muzzles of the guns could be seen although the ships were hidden by the smoke. All the ships that came in view took up the firing with the greatest energy, so that L 11 was sometimes exposed to fire from 21 large and numbers of small ships. Although the firing did not take effect, that and the shrapnel bursting all around so shook the ship’s frame that it seemed advisable to take steps to increase the range. The firing lasted till 6.20 A.M. At that time the battle-cruisers bearing down from S.W within close distance of L 11 forced her to retire to N.E. to avoid their fire. At the same time the visibility became worse and the enemy was lost to view.
L. 11 again took a northerly course and went as low down as 500 metres, in the hope of better visibility. It was impossible to see beyond 1 to 2 nautical miles, and as under these conditions no systematic plan for keeping in contact could be made, N. and S. course was followed so as to keep between the enemy and our own Main Fleet. The enemy did not come in sight again.

At 8 A.M. the Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet dismissed the airship, and L. 11 returned. On the way back the ship came across a number of our own torpedo-boats exchanging bases, and messages were given for further transmission. The airship remained close to those boats as far as Sylt. Landed at Nordholz at 2 P.M."

At 4 A.M., 50 nautical miles west of Bovbjerg, L 24 sighted a flotilla of enemy destroyers, was fired at and returned the fire with bombs, then got away further north, and at 5 A.M. discovered a unit of twelve ships in Jammer Bay, steaming rapidly to the south. It was impossible to keep in contact for further reconnaissance as there was a bank of cloud as low down as 800 m.

From the Main Fleet itself, no signs of the enemy were visible at daybreak. The weather was so thick that the full length of a squadron could not be made out. In our opinion the ships in a south-westerly direction as reported by L 11 could only just have come from the Channel to try, on hearing the news of the battle, to join up with their Main Fleet and advance against us. There was no occasion for us to shun an encounter with this group, but owing to the slight chance of meeting on account of visibility conditions, it would have been a mistake to have followed them.

Added to this, the reports received from the battle-cruisers showed that Scouting Division I would not be capable of sustaining a serious fight, besides which the leading ships of Squadron III could not have fought for any length of time, owing to the reduction in their supply of munitions by the long spell of firing. The Frankfurt, Pillau and Regensburg were the only fast light cruisers now available, and in such misty weather there was no depending on aerial reconnaissance. There was, therefore, no certain prospect of defeating the enemy reported in the south. An encounter and the consequences thereof had to be left to chance. I therefore abandoned the idea of further operations and ordered the return to port.

On the way back, west of List, the Ostfriesland, at 7.30 A.M., struck a mine, one that evidently belonged to a hitherto unknown and recently laid enemy minefield. The damage was slight; the vessel shipped 400 tons of water, but her means of navigation did not suffer, and she was able to run into harbour under her own steam. I signalled, “Keep on.” The last ships passed through the area without coming across further mines.

Several submarine attacks on our returning Main Fleet failed entirely, thanks partly to the vigilance of the airmen who picked up the Main Fleet over List, and escorted them to the mouth of the river. During the course of the day all the ships and boats were safely in their haven. Special mention must be made of the bringing-in of the Seydlitz (Captain von Egidy) badly damaged at her bows. That the vessel ever reached the harbour is due to the remarkable seamanship of her commander and crew. Finally, she was run astern into the dock at Wilhelmshaven.

The U-boats lying off English harbours were told to remain at their posts a day longer. At 6.20 P.M., 60 miles north of Terschelling, the U 46 came across a damaged vessel of the Iron Duke class (the Marlborough). She was, however, so well protected that it would have been impossible to get within firing distance of her. A torpedo was fired, but failed to reach the objective. Among the U-boats lying off enemy harbours, the U 21 on May 31 and U 22 on June 1 both succeeded in hitting a destroyer. In each case, however, the sinking could not be observed owing to enemy counter-action. Besides this, one of our minelayers, occupied in laying mines west of the Orkney Islands, achieved an important success. The English armoured cruiser Hampshire (11,000 tons) struck one of these mines on June 5 and sank; with her perished Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener and all his Staff.
## British Losses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>TONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dreadnought Battleship of Queen Elizabeth class</td>
<td>28,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle-cruisers (Queen Mary, Indefatigable and Invincible)</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armoured Cruisers (Black Prince, Defence, Warrior and one of the Cressy type)</td>
<td>53,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Cruisers</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 169,200

## German Losses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>TONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battle-cruiser (Lützow)</td>
<td>26,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Dreadnought Battleship (Pommern)</td>
<td>13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Cruisers (Wiesbaden, Elbing, Rostock and Frauenlob)</td>
<td>17,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torpedo-boats</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 60,730

The enemy's were almost complete losses, whereas we had rescued the crews of the Lützow, Elbing, Rostock and half of those of the torpedo-boats. [In my first report of the battle sent to the Admiralty at Berlin the loss of the Lützow was mentioned. The announcement of this loss was suppressed by the Naval Staff, though not at my request. The enemy could not have seen the ship go down. In the interests of naval warfare it was right to suppress the news. Unfortunately the secrecy observed produced the impression that it was necessary to enlarge our success to that extent.]

Our losses in personnel amounted to: 2,400 killed; 400 wounded. The enemy's losses may be estimated at over 7,000 killed. According to a list which he added to his report of June 18, 1916, Admiral Jellicoe endeavoured to exaggerate our losses in the following manner:

### Battleships or Battle-cruisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Correct Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Battleships, Dreadnought type (certain)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Battleship, Dreadnought type (probable)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Battleship, Deutschland type (certain)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Battleship or Battle-cruiser (probable)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Light Cruisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Correct Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Light Cruisers (certain)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Large ship or Light Cruiser (certain)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Torpedo-boat destroyers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Correct Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Torpedo-boat Destroyers (certain)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Torpedo-boat Destroyers (probable)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Submarines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Correct Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Submarine (certain)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Submarines (probable)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to the submarines he was totally mistaken, as none took part in the battle. I sent my final impressions of the battle in a written report of July 4, 1916, to His Majesty the Emperor as follows:

“The success achieved is due to the eagerness in attack, the efficient leadership through the subordinates, and the admirable deeds of the crews full of an eminently warlike spirit. It was only possible owing to the excellence of our ships and arms, the systematic peacetime training of the units, and the conscientious development on each individual ship. The rich experience gained will be carefully applied. The battle has proved that in the enlargement of our Fleet and the development of the different types of ships we have been guided by the right strategical and tactical ideas, and that we must continue to follow the same system.

All arms can claim a share in the success. But, directly or indirectly, the far-reaching heavy artillery of the great battleships was the deciding factor, and caused the greater part of the enemy’s losses that are so far known, as also it brought the torpedo-boat flotillas to their successful attack on the ships of the Main Fleet. This does not detract from the merits of the flotillas in enabling the battleships to slip away from the enemy by their attack.

The big ship—battleship and battle-cruiser—is therefore, and will be, the main strength of naval power. It must be further developed by increasing the gun calibre, by raising the speed, and by perfecting the armour and the protection below the water-line.

Finally, I beg respectfully to report to Your Majesty that by the middle of August the High Sea Fleet, with the exception of the Derfflinger and Seydlitz, will be ready for fresh action. With a favourable succession of operations the enemy may be made to suffer severely, although there can be no doubt that even the most successful result from a high sea battle will not compel England to make peace.

The disadvantages of our geographical situation as compared with that of the Island Empire and the enemy’s vast material superiority cannot be coped with to such a degree as to make us masters of the blockade inflicted on us, or even of the Island Empire itself, not even were all the U-boats to be available for military purposes.

A victorious end to the war at not too distant a date can only be looked for by the crushing of English economic life through U-boat action against English commerce. Prompted by the convictions of duty, I earnestly advise Your Majesty to abstain from deciding on too lenient a form of procedure on the ground that it is opposed to military views, and that the risk of the boats would be out of all proportion to the expected gain, for, in spite of the greatest conscientiousness on the part of the Chiefs, it would not be possible in English waters, where American interests are so prevalent, to avoid occurrences which might force us to make humiliating concessions if we do not act with the greatest severity.”
I followed up my report on the battle with a more detailed account on July 16, 1916, after Admiral Jellicoe's report had appeared in the English Press. I quote here from the above mentioned account:

“Admiral Jellicoe's report, published in the English Press, confirms as follows the observations made by us:

**Grouping of the English Forces**

**Under Vice-Admiral Beatty:**
- 1st and 2nd Battle-Cruiser Squadrons
- 5th Battle Squadron (Queen Elizabeths)
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons
- 1st, 9th, 10th and 13th Destroyer Flotillas

**Admiral Jellicoe led:**
- 1st, 2nd and 4th Battle Squadrons (Fleet Flagship at the head of 4th Battle Squadron)
- 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron (Invincibles)
- 1st and 2nd Cruiser Squadrons
- 4th Light Cruiser Squadron
- 4th, 11th and 12th Destroyer Flotillas

**Intervention in the Battle by the English Main Fleet**

When he first had news that the enemy was sighted, Admiral Jellicoe was north-west of Admiral Beatty's forces. He thereupon advanced at full speed in column formation on a S.E. course, put the 1st and 2nd Cruiser Squadrons for reconnaissance at the head of his formation, and sent forward the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron (apparently reinforced by the Agincourt), to support Admiral Beatty. The 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron passed east of Admiral Beatty's leader at 7.30 P.M.; they heard in the south-west the thunder of guns, and saw the flashes, sent out the light cruiser Chester to reconnoitre, and themselves took a N.W. course.

Shortly before 8 o'clock the Chester encountered our Scouting Division II and was set on fire by them. After pursuing the Chester, Scouting Division II came across the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron, which opened fire on them. The attacks at 8 P.M. by our Torpedo-Boat Flotilla IX and the 12th Half-Flotilla were launched against this 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron.

Admiral Beatty sighted the 3rd Battle-cruiser Squadron at 8.10 P.M., and at 8.21 P.M. had it ahead of the 1st and 2nd Battle-cruiser Squadrons he was leading.

At 7.55 P.M. Admiral Jellicoe sighted the fire from the guns. It was impossible for him to make out the position of our Fleet. The difference between his and Admiral Beatty's charts added to the uncertainty in judging of the situation. The report says it was difficult to distinguish between friend and foe. At 8.14 P.M. the battleship squadrons turned east into the line between the 1st and 2nd Battle-cruiser Squadrons and the 5th Battle Squadron. At 8.17 P.M. the 1st Battle Squadron opened fire on the leaders of our ships of the line. Up to 10.20 P.M. those squadrons, with some few pauses, took part in the fighting.

Shortly before the battleship squadrons arrived, the 1st Cruiser Squadron, together with light forces from the Main Fleet, joined in the fighting. At 8.50 P.M., therefore, between our first and second blows, Admiral Beatty put the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron in the rear of the 2nd. At 9.6 P.M. the leaders of the battleships made for the south. The total impression received by us of the battle is made more complete by the statements in the English Press, and is not altered.
The Enemy's Action during the Night

At 9.45 P.M. Admiral Beatty had lost sight of our forces. He sent the 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons to reconnoitre in the west, and at 10.20 P.M. went to their support with the 1st and 2nd Battle-Cruiser Squadrons, also on a westerly course. Immediately after came the encounter described in my report with the leading ships of our Main Fleet, consisting of Scouting Divisions IV and I and Squadron II. The fact that our forces turned westward must have led the English Admiral to assume that our Main Fleet had taken a westerly course, and made him follow in that direction. The fact that we at the same time put Squadron II in the rear, and with the new leader, Squadron I, again took a S.E. course, resulted in Admiral Beatty's forces passing west in front of us and ultimately losing contact.

It was obvious that after the battle the English Main Fleet was divided into two. Admiral Jellicoe's report makes no mention of this. The one portion, consisting of large battleships and light craft, took apparently northerly and easterly courses, as one group of ships was sighted by L 24 at 5 A.M. on June 1 in Jammer Bay, close under land. It may perhaps have been both those rear squadrons which made off on the attack by our Torpedo-boat Flotillas VI and IX, and then apparently lost touch with the Main Fleet. The other portion, under Admiral Jellicoe, consisting, according to observations by L 11, of eighteen large battleships, three battle-cruisers (probably the 3rd Battle-cruiser Squadron) and numerous light forces, had, up to 10.46 P.M., been steering south and then south-west. It would appear, from intercepted English wireless messages, that he covered 15 nautical miles. Based on these courses and the speed, he must have crossed our course at midnight, 10 to 15 nautical miles in front of us, and have taken later a course to the centre of the line Horns Reef—Terschelling, where he was seen at 5 A.M. by L 11 on a N.N.E. course.

The Consequence of the Enemy's Action during the Night

Admiral Jellicoe must have intended to resume the battle with us at dawn. It is inexplicable, therefore, why a portion of the Main Fleet made for Jammer Bay during the night. Nor can it be understood how it was that the enemy's light forces, which were engaged with our Main Fleet up to 4.36 A.M. and thus were in touch with us the whole night, could find a way to inform Admiral Jellicoe and Admiral Beatty of our course and navigation. But even apart from that, it must be assumed that the fire from our guns and the enemy's burning cruisers and destroyers would have pointed out the way to the English Main Fleet.

In any case it is a fact that on the morning of June 1 the enemy's heavy forces were broken up into three detachments; one in the North, a second with Admiral Beatty in the North-west, and the third with Admiral Jellicoe South-west of Horns Reef. It is obvious that this scattering of the forces—which can only be explained by the fact that after the day-battle Admiral Jellicoe had lost the general command—induced the Commander to avoid a fresh battle.
On June 1 at 3 P.M. the Friedrich der Grosse anchored in the Wilhelmshaven Roads. Meanwhile the crews on all our ships had attained full consciousness of the greatness of our successes against the superior enemy forces, and loud and hearty cheers went up as they steamed past the flagship of their leader. Though they had been under such heavy fire, very little external damage on the ships was apparent; none keeled over or showed an increased draught. On a closer inspection, however, considerable damage was disclosed, but the armour-plating had so thoroughly served its purpose of protecting the vital parts of the ships that their navigating capabilities had not suffered.

The König and Grosser Kurfürst went into dock as their anchor cables had been shot away. The battle-cruisers were also docked to find out to what extent repairs would be necessary. In their case the exterior damage was considerably greater. It was astonishing that the ships had remained navigable in the state they were in. This was chiefly attributable to the faulty exploding charge of the English heavy calibre shells, their explosive effect being out of all proportion to their size. A number of bits of shell picked up clearly showed that powder only had been used in the charge. Many shells of 34 cm. and 38 cm. calibre had burst into such large pieces that, when picked up, they were easily fitted together again. On the other hand, the colour on the ships’ sides, where they had been hit, showed that picric acid had been used in some of the explosive charges.

A technical Commission from the Imperial Naval Department made a thorough investigation of the effects of the shots in order to utilise the experience gained. We arrived immediately at one conclusion—a final decision on the much-debated question of protective torpedo-nets for the Fleet to the effect that the nets must be done away with. On most of the ships they were so damaged as to make it impossible to remove them after the fighting; they hung, for the most part, in a dangerous fashion out of their cases and it was a wonder that they did not get entangled in the propellers, an occurrence which, during the battle—or at any time for that matter—might have greatly inconvenienced the Fleet. The total impression produced by all the damage done was that by their splendid construction our ships had proved to be possessed of extraordinary powers of resistance.

The heavily-damaged battle-cruiser Seydlitz after the battle

The next step was to make arrangements for the repairing of the ships as the docks at Wilhelmshaven were not able to cope with all the work, and it was essential that the Fleet should be brought as quickly as possible into a state of preparedness for action. The Wilhelmshaven yard was entrusted with the repairs of the Seydlitz, and the ships of Squadron I, of which the Ostfriesland—owing to a mine explosion—and the Helgoland—hit above the water-line—had to be placed in dock. The Grosser Kurfurst, Markgraf, and Moltke were sent to Hamburg to be repaired by Blohm & Voss and the Vulcan Works. The König and the Derfflinger, after the latter
had been temporarily repaired in the floating-dock at Wilhelmshaven, proceeded through the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal to the Imperial Yard and Howaldt's yard at Kiel.

The Imperial Dockyards at Kiel under the management of Vice-Admiral von Henkel-Gebhardi, and those at Wilhelmshaven under Rear-Admiral Engel, as well as the private yards occupied on repairs, deserve the greatest credit for the excellent work done in restoring the Fleet.

If the English Fleet had fared as well as the English Press accounts led us to believe we might count on their immediately seizing the opportunity for a great attack. But it never came off. Our efforts were centred on putting to sea again as soon as possible for a fresh advance. By the middle of August the Fleet was again in readiness, with the exception of the battle-cruisers Seydlitz and Derfflinger. But a new ship, the Bayern, had been added to the Fleet, the first to mount guns of 38 cm.

Immediately after the battle joyful messages and congratulations on the success of the Fleet poured in from all divisions of the army in the field, from every part of the country and from all classes of the people. I welcomed with special gratitude the many sums received towards the support of the families of the fallen and wounded, which showed in a touching manner the sympathy of the donors, and which, in a very short space of time, reached the sum of one million marks.

Kaiser Wilhelm II visits the Friedrich der Grosse to congratulate the High Sea Fleet

The first honour paid to the Fleet was a visit from His Majesty the Emperor on June 5, who, on board the flagship, Friedrich der Grosse, made a hearty speech of welcome to divisions drawn from the crews of all the ships, thanking them in the name of the Fatherland for their gallant deeds. In the afternoon the Emperor visited all the hospitals where the wounded lay, as well as the hospital ship Sierra Ventana, where lay Rear-Admiral Behncke, Leader of Squadron III, who was wounded in the battle, and who was able to give the Emperor a detailed account of his impressions while at the head of the battleships. Several of the German princes also visited the Fleet, bringing greetings from their homes to the crews and expressing pride in the Fleet and the conduct of the men. The Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and of Oldenburg came directly after the battle and were followed very soon after by the Kings of Saxony and Bavaria.

All this afforded clear proof that no other organisation in the Empire was so fitted to signify its unity as the Navy, which brought together in closest contact those belonging to all classes in the Fatherland and united them by common action in fortune and misfortune. Apart from the inspection of the ships, these visits also offered an opportunity of gaining information respecting the general duties of the Fleet and the plans for the impending battle that was expected, for, as those visits proved, the battle had greatly enhanced the interest in the Fleet throughout the whole country.

The development of the battle and its lessons were thus summarised by me at the time:
“The battle was brought about as a result of our systematic efforts to attract the enemy out of his retirement, especially of the more drastic operations which culminated in the bombardment of the English coast. England’s purpose of strangling Germany economically without seriously exposing her own Fleet to the German guns had to be defeated. This offensive effort on our part was intensified by the fact that the prohibition of the U-boat trade-war made it impossible for us to aim a direct blow at England’s vital nerve. We were therefore bound to try and prove by all possible means that Germany’s High Sea Fleet was able and willing to wage war with England at sea and thus help to establish Germany’s claim to independent overseas development.

The German idea incorporated in the founding of the Fleet had to hold its own in battle in order not to perish. The readiness to face a battle rests on the fundamental idea that even the numerically inferior must not shirk an attack if the will to conquer is supported by a devoted staff, confidence in material, and a firm conviction of perfect training.

A preliminary fight between cruisers lasting about two hours, which proved the superiority of our guns, was followed by the engagement with the vastly superior enemy Main Fleet. The clever attempts made by the English to surround and cut us off from home by their Main Fleet were turned into a defeat, as we twice succeeded in pushing into the enemy formation with all our strength, and in withdrawing from the intended encircling movement. In spite of various attacks during the night we forced a way for ourselves to Horns Reef, and thus secured an important strategical point for the following morning.

The enemy suffered twice as much material loss and three times as many losses in personnel as we did. English superiority was thus wrecked, for the Fleet was unable to keep in touch with us at the close of the day-battle and its own formation was broken.

After an encounter with our leading ships, as darkness came on the English battle-cruisers lost touch with us in a mysterious way. They advanced into an empty North Sea.

At the end of the battle the English Main Fleet had lost touch with its other units and they only came together again the following day at 6 P.M.

After a continuous, and for the English very disastrous, night’s fighting, Jellicoe did not seek us out the following morning, although he possessed both the power and the requisite speed to do so.

We have been able to prove to the world that the English Navy no longer possesses her boasted irresistibility. To us it has been granted to fight for the rights of the German Nation on the open seas, and the battle proved that the organisation of our Navy as a High Sea Fleet was a step in the right direction. The German national spirit can only be impressed on the world through a High Sea Fleet directed against England. If, however, as an outcome of our present condition, we are not finally to be bled to death, full use must be made of the U-boat as a means of war, so as to grip England’s vital nerve.”

I expressed these views to the Imperial Chancellor, who visited the Fleet on June 30 in company with the Under-Secretary of State, von Stumm, and laid great emphasis on them in my report of July 4, as I noticed from communications from the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Naval Cabinet that efforts were on foot for resuming the U-boat warfare in its inadequate form. The Imperial Chancellor gave me a detailed but gloomy picture of the situation which forced him for the time to ward off any further enemies from Germany, who, he was convinced, would soon show themselves on the proclamation of unrestricted U-boat warfare. I explained to him the military reasons which would render ineffectual the carrying on of the U-boat war on a cruiser basis.

Whether political circumstances would permit us to employ the most effective weapon against England was, however, a matter for the Cabinet to decide, and for my part as Chief of the Fleet I would not attempt to exert any pressure in that direction, as that was the business of the Naval Staff. But I could not approve of carrying on the U-boat campaign in a milder form, for
that would be unsatisfactory from every point of view. The Imperial Chancellor agreed with me, but declared, for various reasons, that he could not embark on a course of unrestricted U-boat warfare, because it was impossible to avoid incidents which might lead to complications, and the result would be that the fate of the German nation might lie in the hands of one U-boat commander. Before leaving Wilhelmshaven he met at dinner all the admirals then stationed there, and on this occasion he expressed the hope that in this war we should succeed in making good use of all the weapons of the Navy.

After this visit, however, it became abundantly clear to me that for the time being we were hardly likely to resume the active U-boat campaign against English commerce. In a long interview with the Imperial Chancellor that afternoon, I gathered from his remarks that he was very anxious not to incense England further, or to provoke that country to “war to the death.”

Very soon all sorts of rumours arose concerning this visit: the Chancellor had gone with the object of persuading the admirals to weaken their attacks upon the British; he had more especially objected to the airship raids. All these reports were absolutely unfounded, for these matters were never touched upon, and moreover, I could not have considered it within his province to give me advice as to the manner in which war was to be waged.

Until the active operations of the Fleet were resumed, the torpedo-boats continued their efforts to get in touch with the enemy. As the base in Flanders offered better opportunities for this, while the Fleet was restricted in its activities, a flotilla was dispatched there. This arrangement was continued later. At first detachments of the various flotillas were sent in turn, in order as far as possible to afford all boats the opportunity of becoming familiar with the methods of attack from that point. Later on, it appeared more advantageous to place a single flotilla for this purpose under the control of the Naval Corps, so as to make full use of the knowledge they had acquired of the local conditions.

At the beginning of August it was possible to resume the air raids again, as the nights had by then grown darker. The first attack was made in the night of the 2nd and 3rd, and was directed upon the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. London, too, was extensively bombed. In the night of August 8-9th there was another attack, this time upon the Midlands; and at the end of the month, in the night of August 24-25th, there was a third raid upon the City, and the south-west district of London, as well as upon Harwich, Folkestone and the roads at Dover. One army airship took part in this. In spite of active opposition the airships returned safely from all three expeditions.

We learnt that the English defences had been decidedly improved, which rendered our attacks more difficult. The greater the effort England made to maintain her army on the Continent and in the other theatres of war, in order to do her part in forcing the decision against us on land, the more embarrassing she must have found it to organise a strong defence against airships.
Between these two periods of attack the airships were placed at the service of the Intelligence Department in connection with an attack which was planned as soon as the ships had been made ready, and which was to be again directed towards Sunderland. No change in the strategic disposition of the English Fleet had been observed. The U-boat campaign against commerce in the war-zone round about England was still in abeyance, and the U-boats were ready to be used for military purposes. These two weapons, the airships and the U-boats, would, I thought, make up for the superiority of the English Fleet in other respects.

The disposition of U-boats outside British ports on May 31 in accordance with the plan we had adopted had resulted in no success worth speaking of; it was bound to fail if the English Fleet was already at sea when the flotilla put out. Nor was their method of attack satisfactory. Before the Firth of Forth each of the seven U-boats which had been dispatched thither had a certain sector assigned to it, and these sectors radiated from a central point at the mouth of the estuary. The nearer the boats came to the estuary, the nearer they approached each other in the neighbourhood of this central point, so that they were liable to get in each other's way, or mistake one another for hostile craft. If they stood farther out to sea, the distance between them was increased and they lost their formation, thereby making it easier for the enemy to get through.

The matter was, therefore, reconsidered, and new arrangements made which promised greater success. Trial was first to be made of the method of a movable base line in the direction of the probable approach of the enemy, on which line the U-boats were to take up positions. The boats in commission in the middle of August were divided into three groups, two of which consisted of boats belonging to the Fleet, and the other of boats attached to the Naval Corps in Flanders. The two former were first to take up positions indicated in the accompanying plan by U-Line I and U-Line III. In this way they afforded protection to the Fleet on either flank when proceeding to attack.

The U-boats of the Fleet took up a position of defence for flank and rear against possible attacks from the Channel. In addition to the Lines I and III, other positions had been provided, which the boats were to take up either after a certain interval of time, or upon a prearranged signal. In order that the boats should be directed in accordance with the aims and movements of the Fleet, the officer commanding the U-boats was on board one of the battleships for the duration of the Fleet's attack.

End