SCAPA FLOW

VICE-ADMIRAL VON REUTER

SCAPA FLOW

THE ACCOUNT OF THE
GREATEST SCUTTLING
OF ALL TIME

Translated from the German by
LIEUT.-COMMANDER I. M. N. MUDIE, R.N.

Introduction by
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FOREWORD

THERE has been a long expressed wish for an account of the last few months of the existence of the German High Seas Fleet. In the following work I try to fulfil this wish and endeavour to give full details to justify the scuttling.

The political state of the country obliged me to keep back and suppress details of the current situation at the time; I have kept myself from embellishing the story. In planning this book I have put the little-known part first, the events from the signing of the Armistice to the scuttling being treated as one inclusive period; the second part, the justification of the sinking, confined principally to the information and records I collected with this object.

The true story and motives of the German and Enemy Governments in their treatment of the interned Fleet are not clear to me to this day; accordingly I have until now had to build up my conclusions on bare facts which perhaps may not appear to be very pertinent to the uninitiated.

Apart from the scuttling itself, the period of internment has nothing dramatic, nothing outstanding about it; there were of course daily disputes which, however, were only on that account important as they were over the struggle to keep the Fleet for the country, and when that had become hopeless, they again cast their shadows over the last step towards the preservation of the welfare of the State.

Particular thanks are due to the printers and to Vice-Admiral von Ammon and to Commander Brehmer for their expert advice regarding the printing of the book, as well as to Captain Oldekop and Admiralty Judge Loesch for the materials and diary so readily supplied.

LUDWIG VON REUTER,
Vice-Admiral (*Retired*).

SAUERNITZ, *Spring* 1921.

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE great pleasure in writing an Introduction to this book, as I feel it may be of interest to the general reading public.

I first came across the book, written in German, when cruising in the Baltic in 1930, and thought it might be of interest to my brother officers if I obtained a translation. I therefore asked Lieut.-Commander Mudie, who had recently served with me, to undertake the translation, which he kindly consented to do. My best thanks are due to him.

The translation is purely a literal translation, no attempt having been made to embellish, or to improve, the English.

The publication of this book at the present time seems very opportune when every effort should be made to bring home to the World the mentality of the German peoples; many of the German characteristics emerging from the present war may be found in Admiral von Reuter's book, notably the utter contempt for Agreements and the scuttling of ships at any price.

There are many statements and insinuations, not based on facts, which may be counted as propaganda, a method of attack much favoured by Germany.

It must be remembered by those who read this book that Admiral von Reuter was an officer of the former Imperial German Navy, for which we had a great esteem and regard.

There can be little doubt that the Admiral was actuated by a stern sense of duty and honour—a quality which appears to be non-existent in the German peoples of the present day—in taking over the command of the ships to be interned, feeling that by so doing he was best serving his country to combat the revolution which had Germany in its grip. In the circumstances it must have been an extremely repugnant task for the Admiral and the officers under his command, and one cannot but admire their action, which was obviously prompted by feelings of loyalty to the former Imperial Germany, even to the extent of scuttling the interned ships without orders and with complete indifference to possible terms of any agreements which might be made.

It would appear that officers of Admiral von Reuter's calibre are now probably only found in the concentration camps, whereas the men of the calibre of those forming the Soldiers' Council have again taken charge of the German State and are responsible for the ruthlessness of the present war, for the utter neglect of every International Law and Covenant, and last, but not least, an entire disregard of the brotherhood and customs of the sea.

It may seem contradictory in one and the same breath to accuse Von Reuter of mis-statements and offensive propaganda and at the same time to hope for the return of his type in the New Germany. Actually this is not so. It must be remembered that the Admiral was placed in an extraordinarily difficult position and wrote the book when the bitterness of the war was still uppermost in his mind.

Is it too much to hope that men of Von Reuter's type will rise again before it is too late and take over the helm and so save the German Ship of State wrecking herself

on the rocks towards which she is speeding under misdirected power, and thus avert a world catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude ?

E. J. HARDMAN-JONES,
VICE-ADMIRAL (*Retired*)

April 3rd, 1940

CHAPTER I

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE ARMISTICE TO THE ANCHORING IN THE FIRTH OF FORTH

ON the 10 November it became known in Wilhelmshaven that an Armistice with the Powers of the Entente was being brought to a successful conclusion. Under a row of articles, ordering the disarmament of the German Forces on land and water, appeared the particular one affecting the battleships, cruisers, and torpedo boats of the High Seas Fleet in which we are interested here. This was Article 23 of the Armistice terms. It runs:

'The Warships of the German High Seas Fleet indicated by the Allies and U.S.A. will at once be dismantled and then interned in neutral ports, or in default, in ports of the Allied Powers. The ports will be indicated by the Allies and U.S.A. They will remain there under the superintendence of the Allies and the U.S., only shipkeepers will be left on board.

The specifications of the Allies extend to:

6 Battle-cruisers.
10 Battleships.
8 Small Cruisers (of which 2 are minelayers).
50 Destroyers of the latest type.

All ships indicated for internment must be ready to leave the German ports seven days after the signing of the Armistice terms. The route for the voyage will be ordered by W/T.'

The non-fulfilment of the Armistice terms would be answered by the Allies by the blockade of Heligoland. A few days later it was spread about Wilhelmshaven that the North Sea river estuaries were also threatened. Were this even just a rumour, sooner or later the Entente, to judge by their previous behaviour and what we expected, would stiffen their terms immeasurably. And the rumour did not fail to have an effect on the leading over to the Firth of Forth of the High Seas Fleet.

Out of the conditional composition of the Orders for internment the bad faith of the Entente came clearly forth; it was through the pressure which the Entente could and did practise on the neutrals, that they could find no neutral ports for the German ships. They had, with the exception of Spain, whose harbours could not be brought into the question for our ships, never once thought it worth the trouble to worry over the preparation of a neutral harbour. They were certain that they would be able to get away with this omission concerning the German State. The request to the Spanish Government also was so worded that it was obvious that what was wanted was a refusal. The Entente has left the Armistice conditions unfulfilled and with premeditation, with the imprisonment of the German ships at Scapa Flow.

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To hasten the demanded dismantling, the ships of the High Seas Fleet were divided between the ports of the North Sea and Baltic corresponding to their Home Ports. The German Naval Command thought that the ships would leave these ports, either singly or groups, for the voyage to the neutral ports imagined to be in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Holland. For the dismantling and for the voyage to these ports, it was essential

that the ships' officers, who, with few exceptions, either because of a refusal of the ship's company or through the hoisting of the Red Flag, had left their ships, should be reinstated on board. It was assumed that a certain limit of authority would be assured, so that ships' companies would no longer refuse to have officers and that the relation between the Government-appointed Soldiers' Councils and their officers would be regulated. The Fleet Commander succeeded in coming to an agreement with the 21st Committee of Delegates; the officers, under him alone, were responsible for the seamanlike conduct of the ships, in the internal affairs of the Service the co-operation of the Soldiers' Councils had to be taken into account; in their own affairs the independence of the officers from the Soldiers' Councils was assured; the right of the men to refuse an officer was withdrawn. Even while these discussions were taking place the great majority of the officers returned to their ships, either through an overwhelming sense of duty or because they had been begged to return by their men.

The conditions of disorder on board and the many filthy doings of the Soldiers' Councils, and their incompetence to deal with the complicated organization of ship's life, often left undone for days, had become intolerable to the crews. It need scarcely be said that the settlement of the Fleet Command was not recognized by all ships nor was it known how long it would last.

Due to the general unwillingness to work the disarmament of the ships only proceeded slowly, and that the hoisting-out of the disarmament gear was done with no care goes without saying; it says a lot for the excellence of our naval ammunition that no catastrophe arose out of its supremely careless handling.

During the disarmament came the news, though the

order for the taking of the German ships to the English harbours had not yet been included in the Entente's Armistice conditions, that in the taking of the ships over to England a proof of the agreed and stipulated disarmament would be held. How, and how far, the German Government opposed this new demand has not become known; the remonstrances addressed to the English Command by the C.-in-C. were not taken notice of. This new demand forced the ships to concentrate at Schillig Roads near Wilhelmshaven again. From here, commanded by the Senior Officer, they were to be led over to the Firth of Forth; a few days later came the demand from the English side that an Admiral should take the ships over.

This order, to take the unbeaten German High Seas Fleet to the port of an enemy, set the Corps of Officers a new and peculiar problem. This was a performance of duty demanded of them which lay outside all obligations of calling and position. This put before the officers a question of conscience, of extraordinary importance and difficulty! The solution of this question had to remain the affair of each individual officer. True, the superior officer can decide in his own mind on the solution and expect obedience from his officers, but still he cannot deny the right to the officer of differing in such a case.

The answer to the question was therefore dependent on each individual officer's appreciation of 'honour': Is the honour of an officer a thing in itself or is it interlocked with the good of the State or subject to it? Both points of view must be given an equal standing. For both, precedents can be found in the history of the Prussian Officers Corps. For the former can be cited the behaviour of Von der Marwitz: when ordered by Frederick the Great to plunder the castle of Hubertusburg during the Seven

Years' War, he repudiated the order as being against his honour; he retired from the Service. For the latter: the Treaty of Tauroggen which York concluded with the enemy, the Russians: the Prussian Officers Corps demanded of the King that York should be brought before a Court of Honour; the King declined.

I decided personally, therefore, as the question of the appointment of an Admiral for the leading over of the Fleet to the Firth of Forth had become a burning one for me, that honour, in this case, was to serve for the good of the State. I considered that the blockade of Heligoland and the North Sea estuaries would be such a serious thing, that I personally could play no part in the harm this would do the German State, if I could avoid it.

There was no question in my mind that through the blockade of the North Sea ports and Heligoland the Entente would seize the German Fleet as well, and that this would take place without hindrance from the ships' companies of the High Seas Fleet, observing the state and temper they had been brought to by the Revolution.

Further, the Armistice only ordained that the High Seas Fleet would be taken over to an English port to prove their disarmament. From there they would be sent on to be interned in neutral ports.

That the ships to be taken over were to be brought to ruin was to be anticipated from the English character. Anticipation is however no certainty. The knowledge that we would be betrayed had first to be a matter of fact. The betrayal would give us back our freedom of action; we could then do what we liked with our ships, we could also sink them.

To sink the ships before the voyage to England was unhappily out of the question, because of the temper of the crews and by the total loss of authority of the officers.

Time, however, could alter the situation appreciably and better it.

Were the Officers Corps not to participate in the leading of the ships over to England and to leave their ships, then would the crews in their aversion to a fresh outbreak of war, themselves have taken the ships over to the enemy or else would have handed them over in German ports. In both cases it seemed certain the Entente would not fail to profit by the least opportunity to take the ships into their own possession and apparently legally. The revolutionary German crews had hounded the officers out of the ships. Their Press would then, of course, have announced to the whole world that the English Admiral, owing to the inattention of the German officers to their duty in having deserted their ships, was with regret compelled to seize the German ships, as on no account could these be left in the hands of a lot of murderous sailors. A great part of the German Press had without question, made announcements in this vein. The announcements of the newspapers happily had not influenced the sea officer. For him his instinct alone could guide him; what is done to the ships of the High Seas Fleet, is done through the officer—he would enter for an issue of honour.

I had myself come to a clear conclusion the officer must take charge himself of the leading over of the Fleet.

In this way a certain amount of discipline and order would be kept on board the German ships, and thus would deny the Englishmen the opportunity of seizing the ships under the pretext of the lack of discipline on board. Should the question of who should take the Fleet over come my way, I would not refuse provided no suitable Admiral for this unhappy task could be found. I did not come to this decision easily.

I will not say that at this time I had not already had the idea of taking a personal part in the sinking of the High Seas Fleet; I thought far more of returning to the Homeland before the beginning of the voyage from the Firth of Forth to the neutral ports. Plans at that time, therefore, could not of course be laid as what to aim for next. However, soon after the voyage on to Scapa Flow, the suddenly dominating feeling grew in me that I should provide for a way out of internment worthy of the High Seas Fleet. In the prosecution of my resolve, to take over the leadership of the Fleet, I had to exact the compliance of the officers. Similar trains of thought seem to have exercised the mind of the late Commander-in-Chief, Admiral von Hipper, whilst he was himself preparing the High Seas Fleet for the voyage over to England; later too I found many officers in the Fleet whose convictions differed little, if at all, from mine. I must again emphasize here, thiat f it is said or written that the German Fleet was surrendered and delivered over to the enemy by German sea officers, we officers knew what we were doing!

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The Allies still had to give instructions for the carrying out of the Armistice conditions regarding the sea forces. The English C.-in-C. on the 12 November therefore requested that the German C.-in-C. would send an Admiral to the Firth of Forth for a conference. Rear-Admiral Meurer was appointed for this duty. He reached the Firth of Forth on board the light cruiser *Kœnigsberg* on the 15 November. The conferences took place on board the English Flagship *Queen Elizabeth* on this day and the next. The results were communicated to Admiral von Hipper by Admiral Meurer during the

forenoon of the 18 November. These, in substance, comprised the following:

(*a*) Proceed to the Firth of Forth and anchor in the Outer Roads for confirmation of the ships' disarmament.

(*b*) Rendezvous 40 nautical miles due east of May Island on the 21 November at 8 a.m. G.M.T.

(*c*) To get there steer for position 'S' (a particular point on the track which led through the North Sea mine-fields) and the South Dogger Light Ship.

(*d*) Course of approach 270° at 10 knots. Formation: ships in line ahead, battle-cruisers in the van, then battleships, light cruisers, with the destroyers in the rear.

(*e*) Guns to be secured for sea, trained fore and aft.

(*f*) A suitable (English) force will receive the German ships at the rendezvous and conduct them to the anchorage.

(*g*) In each case an English light cruiser, with a blue flag at the mast-head, will place herself at the head of each group of German ships and lead them to the anchorage.

(*h*) Plan of the anchorage in the Firth of Forth.

(*i*) 1. Fuel required: For 1500 nautical miles at 12 knots from Schillig Roads; in addition, sufficient for auxiliary machinery until the 17 December.
2. Provisions required: For 10 days for the steaming party and until the 17 December for the ship-keepers.

Incidentally, it appears that the English C.-in-C., Admiral Beatty, was informed at this conference that the battleship *Kœnig* and the light cruiser *Dresden* would not

be ready to sail at the appointed date, but would follow over as soon as possible. They joined the Fleet at Scapa Flow on the 6 November. (Note by Translator.—This should be '6 December' surely.) The *Mackensen* which had been selected as the sixth battle-cruiser was still building, the negotiations in regard to her took some time to come to a conclusion, but eventually, in January 1919, the battleship *Baden* was delivered at Scapa Flow in her stead.

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On the evening of the 17 November the C.-in-C., Admiral von Hipper, requested my presence on board the Flagship. He disclosed the English demand that an Admiral should lead over the German fighting forces to the Firth of Forth. Out of the admirals of the High Seas Fleet the name of Admiral Meurer and mine were in question for selection for this duty. As it was uncertain, in the prevailing foggy weather, whether the former would be back in sufficient time from the Firth of Forth, he requested me, in these circumstances, to take over the leadership of the Squadron; it was only for the short time necessary to take the ships over to the Firth of Forth, and then after interning them in neutral ports I would return home again. I pointed out to him the grounds on which it made it hard for me to take over the Squadron; yet I placed myself at his disposal for this duty in the event of Admiral Meurer being unable to get back in time; I held that this officer was the more suitable as he had conducted the negotiations with the English C.-in-C. and therefore was best qualified to judge what the English requirements would be and whether these demands should be met or opposed. Admiral Meurer got back on the morning of the 18 November and therefore with plenty of time to take over the leadership

of the Squadron. In spite of this the C.-in-C., during the forenoon of the 18 November, requested me to take over the Squadron, as Admiral Meurer had been chosen as a delegate for the Armistice Commission in Wilhelmshaven and could not be dispensed with or removed from this duty.

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At noon on the 18 November I took over the Squadron. It lay scattered in various harbours. On the 19 November, at 12 noon, the Squadron was due to leave Schillig Roads on the voyage to England. An enormous amount of work had still to be got through in the few remaining hours.

From the C.-in-C., Admiral von Hipper, I got the following written orders:

1. . . .
2. The ports of internment selected, after the search of the ships in the Firth of Forth and after taking the English escort aboard, are not known. All steaming parties will remain aboard until their ships enter the ports of internment. Only ship-keepers will remain on board when the ships are in the ports of internment, the remaining portion of the steaming party will be sent back by transports. Admiral Beatty has assured me that the names of the ports of internment and the dates on which the transports must reach these ports will be communicated to me in plenty of time. Suitable reports and orders will then be issued.
3. After the taking over of the squadron by the English cruiser escort (40 nautical miles east of May Island) all W/T traffic is to cease, unless the leader of the escort, or, later, the C.-in-C. Grand Fleet, allows it by orders mutually agreed.

Signed: VON HIPPER.

Admiral Meurer explained to me verbally the written arrangements he had come to with the English Commander-in-Chief and gave me his personal impressions which induced me to exercise the utmost care and reticence in my dealings with the English Fleet Commander. Admiral Meurer mentioned that in his opinion the English had not the slightest intention of allowing our ships to go to neutral ports; I learnt for the first time many months later that Admiral Beatty did not appear to have reckoned on the German Fleet reaching the Firth of Forth intact; this knowledge, however, would have been of no use to us officers in our then state of helplessness and it would only have made the hard road to the Firth of Forth even harder.

The staff for the Squadron was quickly collected. Commander Ivan Oldekop was won over for the duty of C.O.S. He was of the utmost service to the Squadron; I had the utmost trust in him and his practical personal character made work with him easy and stimulating. The load of the work was never too heavy for him, and although he stood daily 'in the line of fire,' in disputes with the radical elements, his attitude and services never became disagreeable. He has a full share of the successful results in the Squadron. Let me here express my warmest thanks to him and to the gentlemen of my Staff for their self-sacrificing co-operation in the little-extolled problems of the Squadron; on this last journey of the High Seas Fleet they have again given of their best and by their personal conduct made my duty bearable. In particular, I must mention the leader of the torpedo craft, Commander Herman Cordes—in him were united all the personal and service attributes in the highest degree, which a leader of torpedo craft should have. The fresh gaiety and depth of his character, his high understanding and

aptitude which he displayed in his leadership and handling of officers and ships' companies, were of the utmost use to the Squadron and will bring him honour for all time.

The Squadron had the name of *Uberfuhrungsverband*—(Note by Translator.—Literally, 'Leading-over-band.')—and was considered as a Squadron detached from the High Seas Fleet. The battleship *Frederick the Great* was chosen as Flagship.

The taking over of the Command was made known to the Squadron in the following words:

'I have to-day taken over the Command of the Squadron. I know that I am at one with the ships' companies, in that for the voyage over everyone will do his duty, so that the Fatherland will soon have Peace.'

During the evening of the 18 November I embarked in the *Frederick the Great* with my Staff. She took us, still by night, to the Schillig Roads. A portion of the Squadron was already assembled there, but it was hardly possible to name them owing to the prevailing disorder; further, it was not known if they were disarmed according to the regulations nor if they were provided with the requisite amount of fuel and provisions. It was impossible to interfere with this and it had to be left to lucky chance whether at the appointed time—at nine o'clock in the forenoon of the 19 November—all the ships and torpedo craft would be at the appointed place and ready for the journey over. On the morning of the 19 November it became apparent that the lucky chance had come to pass and that the Squadron was assembled.

At a meeting I instructed the Senior Officer and the commanding officers of the ships briefly on the principles which were to guide the conduct of the Squadron. I had taken over the Squadron purely so that the bitterly

necessary order and quiet of the State could not again be in question. I put the same motives before the officers of the Squadron. The many points agreed upon between the Fleet and the 21st Committee of Delegates were then gone over, especially that the seamanlike handling of the ships remained in the hands of the executive officers and that the Soldiers' Councils were excluded from this. A question which had not been cleared up was what colours were to be worn; no naval officers would have gone to sea under the Red Flag; it was arranged to hoist the War Ensign, a red emblem was indeed hoisted at the foremast, but following the motions of the Flagship it was hauled down. Finally, orders were issued regarding the dress and conduct of the ships' companies during the run into the Firth of Forth and about the intercourse on duty between us and the English naval authorities; in this, owing to the disapproval of the English side, the Soldiers' Councils were not to have any part. The German officers were to reject permission were it proffered to them during the internment. They were to tell their ships' companies that I would shield any member of the Squadron, as Germans, in relation to the English. However, the officers were ordered to be circumspect towards the men and abstain from propaganda; this would lead to no success and only give instigators the opportunity to agitate against the officers.

After this meeting a similar one of the Soldiers' Council took place to choose the Squadron delegate, or Head Soldier Councillor as he called himself later. A head man and two delegates were chosen. The first had never been on board a ship before. He must have been smuggled on board the Flagship by the machinations of the local revolutionary authorities in Wilhelmshaven with a forged order from the Admiralty. To understand the ideas

which the Soldiers' Councillors had of themselves, the words with which one of them greeted the Chief of Staff after election are typical: "Well, I have now taken over the command of the Squadron, and you are my technical adviser." The Chief of Staff explained the consequences of hoisting the Red Flag to the Soldiers' Councillors; that it was a pirate's flag and would be fired on immediately, and the ship wearing it destroyed, anywhere on the high seas. This damped their enthusiasm to cross the North Sea under the Red Flag to such an extent that the Soldiers' Councillors turned repentantly back to the better protection of the old and tried War Flag; they thought, however, that they could not give up a small red emblem at the foremasthead; the enthusiasm for this too died down soon after leaving the Jade and it was hauled down.

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Voyage to the Firth of Forth.

The time for the Squadron to put to sea was fixed for 12 noon. It had to be postponed for two hours, as one of the large cruisers could not raise steam in time.

A sunny, quiet autumn day. The long row of ships and torpedo boats got into formation, in the van the five battle-cruisers *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, *Derfflinger*, and *Von der Tann*, then the Fourth and Third Squadrons, led by the *Frederick the Great*; these were followed by the light cruisers, and these again by the torpedo boats. They steamed out into the North Sea as they had so often done during the War, silently majestic, only, this time, not to fight for home and people.

We passed Heligoland, lit up by the rays of the sinking autumn sun—it glowed in all colours. Heligoland was worth this journey! That was a consolation to us officers. Then we passed over the battle-field of the 17 November 1917, ever further towards England.

The track we were instructed to follow led us through the mine-strewn waters. Shortly before, lightships were laid out for us so as to make navigation by night safe, and the course was arranged to keep us clear of mines. Nevertheless, torpedo boat V 30 struck a mine and sank. The casualties were two dead and three wounded; the crew was taken on board another torpedo boat. To replace this torpedo boat, which was lost purely by accident, the English nevertheless demanded a substitute, and this was supplied by the German Armistice Commission.

The 20 November was again a sunny day, only somewhat misty. The monotony of the day was broken by the sending of a dispatch boat with letters from the Fleet Command to the English leader, and during the evening by the news that the light cruiser *Koln* had leaks in all her condensers, but would attempt to follow us. Another small cruiser was told off to stand by the *Koln* and if necessary to take her in tow.

And now, dawn of the 21 November, the day settled for our arrival at the Firth of Forth. This day too was sunny, but still very misty as well. Our hope that fog would hide us unfortunately did not come true. All the time the mist diminished the most impressive part of the picture for the enemy. Punctually at 8 o'clock the rendezvous was made with the English forces which were to lead us through the obstructions. An English cruiser took station at the head of the line of heavy cruisers and battleships and with increased speed headed for the Firth of Forth. Ever more English ships, and ships of the Entente, appeared out of the foggy background, taking station ahead of us or shutting us in, on both sides. Even a French warship appeared, an unusual sight in the North Sea. Over us cruised airships and aeroplanes. All

the English ships were cleared for action. The enemy could hardly believe that the victor of the Battle of Jutland, this most feared German Fleet, really was disarmed, and, further, would not use this last opportunity to overwhelm the English Fleet treacherously. Still, for such a design the very elements were lacking in the Squadron, as they could not maintain a higher speed than 11 knots.

Again and again the wind brought us the noise of the English cheering. We had the feeling that a sense of shame should have drowned this ecstatic shouting, to have the unconquered Fleet delivered into their hands which had shattered England's historic mastery of the sea at Jutland.

The English announcements reflected most unfavourably on the deportment of our ships' companies and on the appearance of the ships. Only English presumption could expect that we would dress up our crews in their Sunday best and paint up our ships solely to do them honour. The ships kept their station as well as was possible for the officers to achieve it, considering the unreliability of the boilers and engines; unfortunately a bunching of the line did take place which caused one or two ships to sheer out. A short time before anchoring, the English ships filed past their Fleet Flagship and gave their Admiral Beatty three cheers. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Squadron anchored in the anchorage allocated to them: the anchoring itself proceeded with no particular trouble.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon a W/T signal arrived from the English C.-in-C. which read: 'The German Flag will be hauled down at 3.57 in the afternoon and is not to be re-hoisted without permission.'

English politics favour the dramatic gesture. By this

order England wished to announce her final victory over the German Fleet to the world.

Considered in the light of international right, the hauling down of the Flag could not be considered as deciding the issue of the sovereignty of the German ships. The sovereignty of the Squadron remained as it was, as they kept their 'Command Flags'; the Admiral's Flag and the Captain's pendants. It is to be presumed that the principal part of this gesture, the hauling down of the Command Flags,' must have been overlooked. In the later judicial examination, on the sinking of the German ships, initiated by the English Government, real surprise was expressed at this omission.

This view of the Squadron with respect to international usage accepted until now, e.g. in the Russo-Japanese War, that it was not customary for interned ships to haul down their flags, was the cause of the lodging of both written and oral protests against this striking of the flag. We called on his feeling of chivalry as well, that between worthy foes such presumption was not customary. The protest was answered with a refusal based on the allegation that a state of war still existed between England and Germany. This decision was declined in a further letter to the English C.-in-C. At the same time the German C.-in-C. was informed of the protest in the following W/T message; it is here given from memory as the letter of protest itself was lost in the sinking: 'The English Fleet Commander ordered the War Flag to be hauled down at evening parade on the 21 November and that it was not to be re-hoisted without permission. I have protested against this; this is an internment. Neutral and enemy harbours according to the Armistice stipulations are parallel cases. As the hauling down of colours in neutral ports would not follow, this should not be allowed to

happen in enemy ports. The English Fleet Commander has answered with a refusal; only hostilities have ceased, the state of war still exists. No enemy ship can be permitted to wear her flag in British ports as long as they are under supervision. I have not been able to accept this decision.'

On the very evening of our arrival the Second in Command of the Grand Fleet, Admiral Madden, sent his Chief of Staff, Commodore Hodges, with some officers and interpreters, on board my Flagship. He gave me the instructions for the German ships:

(*a*) For state of readiness of machinery, shackles of cable to lie at, boat traffic in the Firth of Forth, lights to be displayed at night, W/T traffic, censorship, signal communications with the English ships, and the postal instructions.

(*b*) For the proofs of disarmament; on the 21 November a preliminary search was to take place, and on the 22 November a thorough examination.

The delivery of these to the individual ships was undertaken by the English Admiral. In the conversation with Admiral Hodges it emerged:

1. That there were no cases of infectious disease, such as influenza, in the Squadron. Serious cases were to be sent to an English hospital-ship as previously indicated by the English Admiral.
2. That the light cruiser *Koln* had not arrived, and that the extent of the damage to her machinery was not known at all in the Squadron.
3. A verbal protest against the order to haul down the colours was lodged. Admiral Hodges himself made out that he knew nothing about this order of the English C.-in-C.

VICE-ADMIRAL VON REUTER

ENGLISH AIRSHIP GUIDES THE GERMAN SHIPS TO SCAPA FLOW

SCAPA FLOW

4. The letters of the German C.-in-C. were handed over. I impressed on the mind of the Fleet Commander the necessity for maintaining the number of men in the ship-keeping parties for particular ships.
5. In answer to my question as to which of the neutral ports we would be interned in, came the reply that they were not known.
6. The English Admiral informed me that should I wish to speak to him I should announce my wish to him. I had in the meantime no reason for doing so.

In the instructions regarding boat traffic it was laid down that boat communication from ship to ship was forbidden and that no boats were to be lowered. Fire would be opened on any boats lowered in contravention of these orders. This regulation was at once made known to the ships to avoid incidents. In spite of this a torpedo boat which had not yet received the order and did not know about it blundered. After an investigation by the English Admiral I was informed by him, late at night, that the matter had been cleared up and settled.

The 22 November was given over to the examination of the ships. The English Examination Commission consisted of a collection of naval officers, warrant officers, petty officers, and men, all together. They appeared to be drawn from English ships of similar classes to the ones of ours they were to search. The English ordered that the German ships' companies were to remain on deck, away from the guns, that all spaces and lockers were to be left open, that plans of the ships, states of the ships' companies, interpreters, and guides were to be kept ready.

The examination for confirmation of disarmament was carried out thoroughly. For instance, in the bunkers the coal was turned over, in the magazines the chests and boxes which happened to be stowed there were opened.

The English appeared to have approached the duty of examination with the confirmed idea that the disarmament had not really been carried out; they could not give us the credit for carrying this out to the letter. They found nothing to take exception to; in fact, it appeared that the disarmament had been too thorough in that breech-blocks, gunnery and torpedo control communication pipes had been removed. The Englishmen could not disguise a real surprise at the excellence of our materials. As an example of this I quote the opinion of an American naval officer as given to the Captain of the *Bayern* after he had been over her a little later on: 'You could not possibly have realized what a weapon you held, in the shape of your Fleet, against England. Had you known this and made use of it events would have turned out very differently. No English ship can compare with yours, in particular do I refer to the *Bayern*.' Now, *we* knew what our ships were like; it was not the good fortune of the naval officers to see what they wished carried out, that was how things stood: we had to drag round the leaden weight of falsely-understood, foreign-led politics with us; in addition, after Jutland the enemy had avoided a further battle with us, he fell back on the use of his favourable geographical position and spared his Fleet.

The personal conduct of the individual delegates of the Commission was very varied, it ran the whole scale from the utmost coldness to a lively sympathy for the position and condition of the German naval officers. The Soldiers' Councillors had posted themselves at the gangway with white armlets and red rosettes. Their forwardness was looked on with the utmost disfavour by the English officers and men. This cold douche annoyed them, but they learnt nothing from it. The attempted fraternization by the German crews, which unfortunately took place

despite the exhortations of the German officers, evoked no response.

During the time of our stay in the Firth of Forth a more or less thick bank of fog hid most of our ships from the eyes of the English public. Few excursion steamers showed themselves. The English public, as far as we could understand, in the Flagship, kept quiet about it and restrained themselves ; only one ' lady,' who passed us by, raised her fist in anger.

The outward show of anxiety by the English over the poor protection of the Roads we were in, against easterly gales, was extraordinary. However, they put this anxiety well in the foreground when pressure was brought to bear to move the German ships as soon as possible to a more sheltered harbour. It was quite true to say that the Roads afforded little shelter against easterly gales, but this was known beforehand, a more enclosed anchorage, therefore (e.g. Scapa Flow), would have served for this inspection. Yet it is not the principle of English politics to do anything clumsily ; England knows by long experience that she should be more kind to people than to dogs, to cut off their tails bit by bit instead of all at once. The moving to a more sheltered port—Scapa Flow was selected—only indicated a further docking of the naval ' tail ' from the German People's body. The demand for the taking over of the German Fleet to the Firth of Forth was recognized as the first step in the betrayal, which we have set out to prove, and this closely followed by the second and third steps, the journey to Scapa Flow and the internment.

The English C.-in-C. had sent a W/T message to the German C.-in-C. on the 20 November, informing him that the steamers for bringing back the surplus members of the ships' companies were to be sent to Scapa Flow. The

Squadron Command did not know of this wireless signal as it was not intercepted by the *Frederick the Great*. Not till the 22 November did we know for certain where our next port of call was to be. Two English regulations, dated 22 and 23 November, came to hand regarding formation, course, action in fog, during the transit through the Pentland Skerries and for anchoring at Scapa Flow. The latter confirmed the order of the Fleet as for the coming over. The torpedo boats started on the 22 November. On the 24th the large cruisers followed, on the 25 November the Fourth Squadron, on the 26 November the last ships left the Firth of Forth. At 12 noon on the 25 November the Fourth Squadron weighed and sailed in misty, later thick foggy, weather from the Firth of Forth. Our escort consisted of the English Flagship, battleship *Emperor of India*, which took station in the van as guide, and four more battleships of which two took station to port and two to starboard. One ship would have been ample to guide us through the English minefields, but it suited the English design that through this strict supervision they would bit by bit accustom us to the fact that we had been captured by England in battle.

The next morning we ran into the bay of Scapa Flow through a triple boom defence of hawsers and spars, and provisionally anchored in the north-western part. Later on an English officer came on board to lead each ship singly to its final anchorage further westward. About midday the *Frederick the Great* was really somewhere near her appointed anchorage after two abortive attempts to reach it; the other ships had equally little success. Had the English officers only been permitted to disclose the positions of the anchorage to our officers, the anchoring, which in such undisturbed waters was no great feat of art, would certainly have taken only half the time.

CHAPTER II

INTERNED IN SCAPA FLOW—FIRST REDUCTION OF CREWS —CONSIDERATIONS OF THE POSITION—MY JOURNEY HOME

THE bay of Scapa Flow is enclosed by seven large and small islands of the Orkneys group. The basin is roomy. Several narrow channels join it to the sea. The terrific and extraordinarily strong currents outside are hardly noticeable inside the bight. The islands are mountainous and rocky. The lower parts of the land showed signs of rude cultivation, trees and shrubs were nowhere to be seen; most of it was covered in heather, out of which stuck the naked rock. Several fishing villages were just in sight on land in the far distance—apart from which here and there on the coast stood unfriendly-looking farm-houses built of the grey local stone. Several military works, such as barracks, aeroplane sheds or balloon hangars, relieved the monotonous sameness; in ugliness they would beat even ours at a bet. A meteorological station adorns the top of one of the many hills. Due to the influence of the Gulf Stream the weather is very changeable, during the winter heavy storms are the rule; except for one at Christmas-time we escaped them, small storms on the contrary occurred quite frequently. The climate is extraordinarily bracing; never very cold and never very warm. The bay is well suited as an exercising area for warships due to its roominess and

sheltered waters. It makes a forbidding and grim impression on the visitor.

The German ships and torpedo boats were anchored or lying at buoys about the small island of Cava in the south-westerly part of the bay. An English Squadron and destroyer flotilla remained stationed in the bight to guard them, the former lay at anchor east of Cava about three miles from us, the latter close to our own torpedo boats. A collection of armed drifters and fishing boats who cruised round our ships day and night showed what a close watch was being kept. They scrutinized the German ships and reported at once if any irregularity appeared to be taking place. Even the thickening of smoke from a funnel would raise their suspicions.

These stifling measures of supervision and security made every man of the ships' crews realize that the gate to freedom, to the journey to a neutral port, and to the return to the Homeland was firmly closed.

Without much prompting from outside the name of the Squadron from being the 'Squadron to be led over to the Firth of Forth,' became 'the Scapa Flow interned Squadron.'

That the German Government could or wished to dispute this fact was not apparent, as she had forsworn 'Might' as a foreign policy and substituted 'Right' in its stead. For the interned Squadron there only remained this fact and the sad consequences to reckon with and to prepare itself for a long stay at Scapa Flow. The replenishment and next supply of provisions, tobacco, soap, clothing, and money, had to be arranged and regulated. The supply of provisions, tobacco, and soap, to which England was bound, of course against payment, was refused, although the blockade of Germany, which still held good, was taken into consideration. These essentials

of life had to be brought from Wilhelmshaven. Due to the at first unfavourable means of getting them over many of these valuable things were lost. As soon as a steamer, at the instigation of the Squadron, was detailed for this duty and came over regularly once a month, order and honesty were attained in the supply. The post and passenger service was maintained direct with the Homeland by a light cruiser or a torpedo boat. They ran once a week to collect and deliver mails to Scapa Flow. The mails at that time were not censored by the English authorities. The direct delivery of wireless messages was forbidden us; they had to be turned over to the English Admiral on the spot to be forwarded.

We lacked coal, water, oil, materials, and gear of all sorts sufficient to keep us ready for sea. Coal and water were supplied by England, against payment, everything else had to be brought over from Wilhelmshaven. The utmost meanness in these things had to be fought against by the Squadron.

In the condition of readiness for sea that the ships were in, the last glimmer of hope, that we should once again turn our backs on the captivity of Scapa Flow, was snuffed out; we also put forward to our enemies the written legal claim in the Armistice undertaking which we on no occasion wished to see violated, that contrary to truth and honesty the ships were to be allowed to fall into unserviceability. The state of readiness for sea of the material was well kept, up to the last days before the sinking, and the state of readiness of the personnel up to within a few days of this, against all attempts at opposition.

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The German ships' companies were forbidden any intercourse by the English between their own ships or with the

English crews and were forbidden to go ashore. There was little opportunity for intercourse with the English: the English dispatch boats bringing the mails did not come alongside, they used to come just close enough not to drop the bags into the water, and throw them on board as they sheered past; the English dispatch boats only lay alongside the Flagship during the forenoons. Here soon, by reason of a luxuriantly up-springing trade in barter, a way was broken for a real intercourse between the two enemy countries, and, as in the later course of the internment the strict orders of the English were somewhat relaxed, it came occasionally to pass, that individual guard-boats went alongside German ships at night and carried on a trade with the crews.[1]

Whether this barter by night, which seemed somewhat questionable, was not somehow organized by the English Admiral himself, to get an idea of our nightly activities and to win over our crews by spirituous intercourse, I am not certain; it would not be impossible. There was no reason to oppose this trade in barter, as it was only to be wished for that the enormous quantity of brandy should be reduced and thereby increase in value.

The efforts of the English to prevent any intercourse between our crews and theirs as much as possible showed that they themselves were none too sure of the loyalty of their own ships' companies. We learned through the English Press and from the stories of the drifters' crews that waves of unrest to the prejudice of discipline were passing through their Fleet and that only by timely and

[1] They exchanged what they possessed for that which they thought most necessary for the heightening of their joy in life. The article most in demand everywhere was brandy, which in spite of all orders to the contrary we had on board regrettably in excessive quantity due to the administration of the Soldiers' Councils, whilst we lacked soap and tobacco almost completely.

indiscriminate shooting of agitators had this been kept down. The lower English ratings showed a definite interest and curiosity ; they appeared to have approached the Squadron Soldiers' Council delegates and listened to the detailing of their revolutionary organization and to what advantage they had gained by their struggles. The English crews were at that time claiming a rise of pay. The English Government did not consider the combined demand of the lower grades of the Navy personnel to be quite so harmless as it appeared, as it at once doubled the pay of men and officers without having obtained previous parliamentary sanction.

When it became clear that the English order against fraternization was due in the first place to the fear that the Germans might spread their revolutionary propaganda amongst the English Fleet and people, the motive for the idea that the German crews should be made to feel that they were prisoners instead of being interned, was also evident. This type of unworthy and disdainful treatment which was contrary to every usual international custom was meant to show England in the full glory of the judgment of the world and to degrade the German seamen before the English people and before the whole world. They tried to impart a particular brilliance to this glorification by inviting a great number of dignitaries and representatives of the Press to view the Fleet.

The forbidding of intercourse between German ships due to the revolutionary propaganda, which was still cultivated by a portion of the German ships' crews, especially the baiting of officers, was not found to be entirely oppressive by the Squadron Command, as it served in this way to help in the maintenance of discipline and order when required ; against the foregoing I felt the sense of humiliation with every single member of the

crews, at the denial of shore-going. We needed this to keep body and soul healthy. I never tired in again and again attempting to get permission for this. The local naval commanders were not against it personally, but were refused by the Admiralty in London, and they had to stand by this refusal as a matter of principle.

At my request I, personally, was allowed to inspect the various ships under my orders between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., using my own barge for these visits, though I still had to submit the names of the ships to be visited to the English beforehand. This permission was later extended to the officers of my Staff. The breaking through of the chief Soldiers' Councillor, who had smuggled his delegates into my barge as the crew in order to exercise a personal and mostly mutinous influence on the other ships, later compelled me to use an English dispatch boat instead of my barge for visits of inspection. Later on, individual captains and ships' officers were allowed to be fetched on board my Flagship after notice had been given. I was able to keep personal contact with my officers and men in different spheres through these concessions.

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In accordance with the Armistice conditions ship-keepers were to be detailed to remain aboard the ships and torpedo craft and the surplus portions of the crews were to be sent back to the Homeland.

The proposals of the German C.-in-C. on the subject of the strength of the care and maintenance parties appeared to the English C.-in-C. to have been set at too high a figure. On the 23 November he gave the following basis to be worked on to the German C.-in-C.:

'The total numbers in the care and maintenance parties to be left on board the interned ships, including officers, must not exceed the following: battleships 175, battle-cruisers 200, light cruisers 60, torpedo craft 20. These numbers exceed by a considerable amount the totals that would be required in British ships of similar classes, and can therefore be still further reduced as found necessary later on. The repatriation of all, except the numbers shown above, must be prepared for at once. Inform me of the earliest date on which the transports can sail.'

The Squadron Command had requested the ships to understand and announced that the most important point was that at all times the ships should be ready to steam at 10 knots, so that they could steam at this speed to neutral ports or Wilhelmshaven, or in the case of accident, e.g. parting of cables in a gale, they would be able to manœuvre. Of course, the demands of heat, light, care and maintenance of engines and boilers had to be taken into consideration, with the number of hands available. The officers who were to remain behind were: aboard battleships and heavy cruisers, one Junior Staff Officer or Senior Lieutenant-Commander, as Captain, two Executive Officers, two Assistant Engineers, one Medical Officer, one Administrative Officer; on board light cruisers, a Senior Lieutenant-Commander, as Captain, one Executive Officer, one Assistant Engineer, one Medical Officer, and one Administrative Officer. The leader of the torpedo craft was to give the necessary orders for his flotilla. Even my Staff was rigorously reduced. Apart from the battle-cruisers and torpedo boats, who requested for a slight increase in strength, the units of the Squadron agreed with the numbers laid down by the English. My very small request for a slight increase in these numbers was refused in a verbal interview with the English naval

commander, although I had expected all along that my proposals would not be accepted. A definite object, which we could not see through clearly, was apparently kept in mind by Admiral Beatty, which seemed so important to the Admiral on the spot that he thought himself constrained to refuse our proposals for the very slightest increase in numbers.

The care and maintenance parties were not established on board the ships and torpedo boats without friction. The surplus personnel, several thousands in number, were preparing for their journey home; everywhere on board busy activity ruled, clear of politics. The home-going transports which had been detailed kept us waiting.

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Although only a few weeks had gone by since I took over the leadership of the Squadron, the period had already been full of achievements and impressions. I had gained a correct perspective, and relying on this, could be clear on the points of view and the lines on which the Interned Squadron should be led. My object was, henceforward, to preserve this assembled portion of the High Seas Fleet for the German State, whose property it was.

It was unbelievable to me that the Entente would appropriate our ships, even formally (after they had made quite certain of theirs in the fastness of Scapa Flow during the War!), without producing very valid reasons for the step. These reasons might arise externally, for instance, if the War were to break out again, or internally, if the orders given by the English to the Interned Squadron were not complied with. Again, they might arise if grave disorders or excesses on board by the revolutionary crews led to the disregard of their officers, whom the English regarded as the supporters of discipline and order, and

who were made responsible for the carrying out of the English regulations.

I could rule out the external contingency; as it was inadmissible that the German Government would allow of a resumption of hostilities, all signs pointed too openly against it. By my estimate of their character I took it also to be out of the question that they would resist the appropriation of the Fleet for an internal reason; they would not have gone further than a single protest. I have not been able to rid myself of the idea that the Government had already given up the Interned Squadron at the time of the Armistice; their conduct at the Armistice negotiations and their acquiescence at the detention of the German ships at Scapa Flow all point to this. It therefore appeared to me that the preservation of our possession of the ships was placed entirely in the hands of the Commander of the Interned Squadron.

It was essential, in order to defend our right of possession, to let the enemy understand that we held firmly and unconditionally to our ships. This could be done by keeping our ships and torpedo boats in a state of readiness for steaming and by emphasizing our views should any attempts be made against them. A proof of our right of possession lay in the fact that the English had left us to fly our 'Command Flags'—pendants and Admiral's Flag—and had just as much left to me the higher jurisdiction which was entailed in my appointment by the High Seas Fleet, and this had not been disputed on the English side. Jurisdiction is the sign of sovereignty, this was therefore left to me despite the internment. I could admit no deviation from the last two standpoints.

In order to keep the ships in our possession we had to follow the English regulations. This could only be done by the officers again taking full charge of the men and by

the re-establishment of their authority. The Soldiers' Council delegates, with their radical adherents, would not only bitterly oppose these endeavours, but would fight them, even to the knife. In this way serious disorders might arise and by laying aside the authority of the officers, endanger our right of tenure of the ships. Might and right, to put aside the Soldiers' Councillors or to render them impotent, were lacking. This vicious circle counselled foresight and caution. When might fails to guide the path of evolution in a given direction, we must arm ourselves with patience and wait for opportunities; eagerly awaited opportunities come to pass of themselves; one must then, only be able to recognize them, to seize them vigorously and not shrink from any fights or conflicts. It seemed to be the easier course—in the interests of our right of tenure—not to create any trouble until the required opportunity arose, and if once begun not to allow it to grow to too large a dimension.

However much it was to be wished for, to instruct the officers of the Squadron in my aims and the methods of achieving them, this could not be carried out because of my isolation from my ships and because of the unbelievable mistrust of the men in the doings of the officers whose every step they watched and using any happening out of the ordinary as a pretext for unruliness. The letter post was also under the secret watch of the radical elements so that messages by this channel, as soon as they contained anything except on a subject of indifference to them, went irremediably amiss. This censorship had, amongst other things, compelled me also to forgo the sending of any written reports to the authorities at home. Our correspondence outwards and in the Squadron itself, following the saying of Talleyrand: 'A written word—and I bring the man to the gallows,' was reduced to a bare minimum

and what was left divorced from any semblance of politics. The reticence in correspondence laid on us the pleasant compulsion of always telling the truth ; we were careful to instruct our memories ; facts remain in the mind, lies disappear ; in this way we avoided getting inextricably involved in traps by keeping a sharp look out.

Luckily I could renew my hopes of bringing my officers into the picture. The preparations for the journey home provisionally occupied the attention of the crews. After the reduction, which left only a small number on board, through which many minor dissensions were bound to fall away, the old order between officers and men might possibly re-establish itself of its own accord. Yet in this was I badly mistaken. Thus it came to pass, later on, in the first months after the reduction, that the revolutionary elements and agitators directed their attentions almost entirely on the Fleet Command and that trouble actually broke out on board the Flagship. Thus I got the conclusive counter measures into my hands.

In that connection how that agent of the English Government, the Admiralty in London, and the local English Commander at Scapa Flow, would act was still under the veil.

It was to be expected from the Admiralty that they would be led solely by the interests of England and that they would not allow us to extract ourselves by a so-called sympathy for our position or any other knightly feeling. The interests of England then lay : to make certain of the watch on the Interned Squadron at the least expense, to prepare and smooth the way for the taking over of the Squadron by the English or Entente with no great stir either through some particular occurrence or by the conclusion of peace, and, finally, through the resumption of

hostilities, the seizure of the ships to make them harmless for the Entente.

The English Admiralty must have known that on board the German ships the relationship between officers and men was rather strained. In accordance with the popular English system it was just this tension which had to be fostered in order to keep the two parties on opposite sides in a state of equilibrium without waste of strength or money. Should the equilibrium be disturbed by the greater weight of one party, they had only to add a little weight to the rising scale, through their Admiral at Scapa Flow, for a state of equilibrium to be re-established. The local English naval commander of the guard-ships would have liked the course of affairs to have followed this line. His support could therefore be relied on to add to the weight of the officers, if need be, but only within the boundaries set to keep a state of equilibrium and never beyond them. The knowledge of these boundaries had the effect of restraining me from seeking the support of the English to re-establish the authority of my officers. It was also repugnant to me in my own mind to rely on others, particularly hostile-minded ones, rather than on myself. In this connection I could very well foresee a case—foreign politics which I could not attempt to review at Scapa Flow might bring one up at any moment —by which the very fact of my going to the English Admiral for support would supply the long-wished-for pretext to the Entente for the seizure of the ships.

During the further course of the internment at Scapa Flow it appeared at times that the English Admiral was ready to take over completely our authority from us. This did not fail in influencing me not to rely on the English Admiral. I have, however, never seen him make a greater effort than that needed to balance the officers'

side of the scale which he perhaps rated at a higher weight than it in reality was, with that of our revolutionary opponents in the Squadron ; it is possible, though, that this was through the fear that the disorderly conduct of the Germans would have an effect on his own ships' companies. In any case, I withstood all blandishments and allurements to lean on the English Admiral for support. That did not, however, prevent me from using him on occasion, indirectly out of the respect which was due to him as the representative of the unscrupulous English might, to counter the evil-minded amongst those serving under me.

I kept to the principle, in all my dealings and doings, of keeping my attention directed on the English Admiralty—they always had the last word in any decision. They took us officers and, since the War, the revolutionaries in the Fleet, to be the hostile working elements in the minds of the Entente. In any case, it appeared to me better to maintain a frankly hostile attitude towards them rather than a precariously friendly one. It seemed to me wiser, in order not to imperil our ownership of the ships, to conceal any disorders from the English Admiral or to let them appear harmless, so as to restrain him from seizure of the Squadron—still one had not to overlook the fact that such a thing might go too far and thus precipitate a most unforeseen situation, which, solely on the grounds of prestige by which the English lay such a store, might get irrevocably out of hand.

I thought that the legal prosecution of English methods would serve best in the view that the English Admiral at Scapa Flow should be kept at a distance ; further, it also seemed favourable to break a way for a trusted relationship towards him.

The more confidence I was able to win personally, the

more could I expect not to be interfered with and supervised. In this way I kept the possibility of being able to settle disturbances without outward stir and render them sterile. I had also to strengthen my position in the tolerable relationship towards the English Admiral whilst the radical elements in the Squadron tended to worsen it by lording it over me. I had my choice ready of which attitude I should assume towards the English Naval Commander and towards the head Soldiers' Councillor. The head man of the last party had informed me, a few days after our arrival at Scapa Flow, that the first steps towards fraternization had been taken towards him by the English petty officers and men and whether he should now distribute the necessary propaganda for the incitement of the English Fleet to mutiny. The proposal seemed at first very tempting, but did not bear close scrutiny; I could not credit the news of the head man with any good intentions, nor did the propaganda promise any great following, the victory of their system of government stood too clearly before the eyes of the English ships' companies by the internment of the German Fleet; the pride in their land and Government would have been stronger than any leaning towards internationalism, pacifism, and such very un-English actions. Above all these considerations, however, my feelings as an officer warned me to have only the bare minimum of dealings with the radical elements. Their way of thinking and their actions had proved not to be bound by any sort of code of morals, so that they had to be treated with the deepest distrust. We officers had nothing in common with the Revolution, and we wished to have nothing in common with those whose doings had plunged our land in immeasurable sorrow and deepest shame. So I forbade propaganda.

It seemed important to me to have a knowledge of how the English would behave in the case of disorders taking place. I had already put out a feeler. The answer did not quite please me; my question was probably misinterpreted; it became involved with the question of the loyalty of the officers, which was never in question. I would never have approached the English Admiral on this account. In order to make it appear that this question was not urgent I allowed the matter to drop, provisionally.

A row of questions, which would have better been talked over between the English Admiral and myself, delayed its settlement.

The leader of the torpedo boat flotilla had informed me that during the search of the ships in the Firth of Forth, English officers had expressed the opinion that the German officers of the Squadron were thought to be revolutionaries, more or less, as well. They had based this view on the grounds of the fact that we officers, in mutual agreement with the mutinous crews, had led the ships over to the Firth of Forth. I did not want to leave this stigma on the officers. It happened by sheer good fortune, that Admiral Madden, who had informed me in the Firth of Forth that I could interview him at any time, was on guard with his Squadron at Scapa Flow. I now requested a conference; it was arranged for the 27 November. In company with my Chief of Staff and with a Staff Officer as interpreter I went on board the English Flagship. I opened the conversation by bringing unambiguously forward the fact that we officers had nothing in common with the revolutionary crews, and refused any familiarity with them. The reasons which moved us to take a part in the leading over of the Squadron had been to maintain peace and order in the German State, to guard our country against even greater misfor-

tunes than the sorry state to which the Revolution had brought us. At the conclusion of my statements Admiral Madden answered: "I understand your position."

The following subjects were then discussed:

1. The reduction of the crews and the number of hands in the care and maintenance parties. My proposals were taken into consideration, but they remained, as previously related, unheeded.
2. Responsibility for the seaworthiness of the ships. This depended on the strength of the care and maintenance parties; as this strength was settled by the English side, the English Government was then bound to take over this responsibility. For certain reasons I retained the responsibility for their seaworthiness so as to retain my independence of the English Admiral in my leadership of the Squadron. It was apparently left to me as it was before. Distress signals were to be given me.
3. Shore leave. I sought to have the previous written orders on the subject altered, so that permission would be granted to the crews for shoregoing. I would not agree to a one-sided arrangement of leave for officers only. Requests to the Admiralty were set in motion. Their decision would be forwarded to me later.
4. Commissariat. I dwelt on the badly provisioned state of the ships and asked for help as necessary. Although I had called attention to a promise of Admiral Beatty that he would not let the German crews starve, the question still remained unsettled. A wireless message sent to the C.-in-C. High Seas Fleet by Admiral Madden without my knowledge, ordering provisions to be sent, demonstrated the way in which Admiral Beatty was endeavouring to guard us from starvation.

During these negotiations, as well as at the later ones, I spoke German, my remarks were translated into English by an English interpreter, and vice versa, what the English Admiral said was translated for me into German. The formality which was observed towards me was of a cold nature, but it was not without a certain courtliness.

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The two first transports, the *Sierra Ventana* and the *Graf Waldersee*, for the repatriation of the surplus members of the crews, arrived at Scapa Flow on the 3 December. Four more followed, in pairs, a few days later. On the 13 December the last home-going transports left Scapa Flow. I joined this party on board the steamer *Bremen*.

As I have already related, I wanted to return to the Homeland after the Squadron had been interned, as there did not appear to be any further field of activity for me once the working for the organization of the care and maintenance parties had been arranged. I had taken the necessary steps for this immediately after our arrival at Scapa Flow. In the further course of the internment it was more and more apparent that an Admiral in Command of the Squadron, and under the direct supervision of the 'Navy Office,' was unnecessary. I could scarcely hope to succeed by merely written representations all the way from Scapa Flow: to put in a personal appearance at home seemed to me to be imperative. My journey home was therefore synonymous with my retirement from the leadership of the Squadron. I would rather that this could have been avoided as I had meanwhile grown accustomed to my work and had found a circle of willing helpers. I was, therefore, glad, when on the 11 December the two wireless messages, shown below, reached me, which made my return to Scapa Flow possible. The text

is given here again as they are yet noteworthy in another sense : in that this well-meaning telegram of the Armistice Commission tacitly acknowledged, though unintentionally of course, their apparent acquiescence in the internment of the German Fleet at Scapa Flow. Paragraph 3 was unnecessary as no censorship existed. The answer of the English Commander-in-Chief avoids going into the principal question which is in Paragraph 1, and is chiefly remarkable for the manner in which he thought to settle the German demands.

' W/T message from WAKO.

' The terms in Article 23 of the Armistice conditions lay down, in the first place, that an internment of German ships in neutral ports must be accepted. Contrary to the clear meaning of these terms the ships' companies (care and maintenance parties) of the interned ships are being treated as prisoners of war in the English ports.

' I therefore request first of all, that the following regulations come into force at once :

' 1. The care and maintenance parties will not be treated as prisoners of war, and in consequence accelerated postal service including German newspapers without censorship.

' 2. Confirmed leave conditions for going home by permission of Commanding Officers, and free travelling facilities for this purpose.

' 3. The quickest possible establishment of an uncensored postal service.

(*Signed*) GOETTE, Vice-Admiral.

To this the English Commander-in-Chief made the following reply on the 11 December :

' Leave for officers and men to travel back to Germany

will be continued in so far as German transport facilities and general circumstances warrant.'

I was therefore only taking leave to go to Germany, and the next Senior Officer, Commodore Dominik, took over my duties.

During the time I was collecting the opinions of the crews regarding the sending home of the surplus numbers I had no thought at any time of leaving the Squadron for good.

Once back at home I transmitted my proposals to the then Deputy Secretary of State for the Government 'Navy Office' for the placing of the Squadron directly under his orders. The business on this subject and on one or two other untoward points delayed my return to Scapa Flow. It was not till the 25 January that I got back there.

CHAPTER III

AGAIN AT SCAPA FLOW—PROTEST OF THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE INTERNMENT—THE RADICAL CREWS AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICERS—THE RED GUARD AND DISCIPLINE—PURGING OF THE SOLDIERS' COUNCIL

DURING my absence at the end of December, for no apparent reason, a censorship of our out-going mails had been established. Further, at the end of January the Armistice Commission had addressed a strong protest to the Entente, at the instigation of the Secretary of State for the Navy Office, against the retention of the German ships in internment at Scapa Flow. This would perhaps have worked more impressively had the German Government been able to decide not to let the battleship *Baden* put out until the subject of the protest had been settled. So the protest was not answered at all. The fact that there was no answer fettered the German Government. I had the feeling that the protest, however earnest it was meant to be by the Navy Office, was only intended by the Government to save its face. This was indeed how it was understood by the Entente.

What sadly disturbed me, above all else, on my return was that the change in the internal situation in the ships did not appear to have led altogether to a re-establishment of orderly conduct and loyal discipline. Considerable disorders had taken place, amongst others, while the

Commanding Officer of the Flagship was away, for a matter of an hour or two, and had left a warrant officer in charge: the Head Soldier's Delegate of the day was replaced by one who was even more radical; further, a collection of men amounting to about a fifth of the crew of the Flagship, under the leadership of a 'Spartakist'-minded leading stoker, had formed themselves into a Red Guard.

The internment was fruitful ground for the growth of unrest. The isolation from the outside world and the spiritually monotonous and physically easy round of duty which left them plenty of time to themselves had considerably increased their desire for the sensational. The wireless news, the Press, and letters, with their accounts of the street fighting which had occurred during January 1919, in Berlin and other parts of Germany, but particularly the news of the death of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, had evoked universal excitement. From this attitude of mind a strong resentment had grown up against all persons, who, the masses took for granted, did not understand their exaggerated desires and would refuse and hinder them; the officers were, of course, reckoned on being the chief of those in opposition to them.

The major portion of the crews thought themselves well entitled to unusual privileges. They lived in the belief that with the leading over of the ships and the taking over of the internment responsibility by the Government, they had proved of the utmost service and, indeed, as they no longer considered themselves liable for military duties they merely carried on voluntarily. They awaited to be singled out before all the rest of the personnel of the Navy, in keeping with the spirit of the times, for a special reward.

Through letters from home one learned that the con-

ditions for the men had been enormously bettered without any consideration having been given to the interned ships' companies. Many of the men felt themselves to have been deceived, abandoned, and degraded. The political agitators had fostered this grievance and had used it, as far as necessary, to depose the Head Soldiers' Councillor whom they did not consider active enough and replace him by a new one who knew what to aim for. Further, a committee formed by the most radically-minded men was formed and sent with the errand to the Secretary of State for the Navy Office in Berlin, there to push through their financial and political ideas, to fulfilment. The minutes of the meeting, which took place verbally in the Navy Office, and conducted by this party, are given below:

Demands of the Delegation.	*Decisions of the Secretary of State.*
1. The recognition of the Head Soldiers' Councillor of the interned Fleet.	1. The Head Soldiers' Councillor is recognized as he is designated in accordance with the Central Council of the German Republic for the exercise of the judicial authority.
2. The retention of Soldiers' Councils on board the interned ships until they return home or until the return of the crews.	2. The Soldiers' Councils may remain as may be found necessary for the exercise of their authority. In this connection it is to be noted: (*a*) For each ship the Committee shall consist of a maximum of three delegates.

	(*b*) For each torpedo boat flotilla until further notice 10 to 12 boats, one committee of a maximum of three delegates.
3. Members of the crews of the interned ships only to be relieved of their duty with the consent of the Head Soldiers' Councillor of the Interned Squadron.	3. It will be understood that the extraordinary position due to the numbers of the crews being reduced to barely sufficient strength must be taken into consideration. The Station Commander will be instructed to keep the local authorities in the Interned Squadron informed of any impending important changes in personnel, and he will draw up a scheme to this effect.
4. (Immaterial.)	4. (Immaterial: not dealt with.)
5. Installation of an 'Interned Party' at Wilhelmshaven so that supplies can be guaranteed. Recall of a representative from the Interned Squadron to take charge of it.	5. As a party for the Interned Squadron already exists in Wilhelmshaven, there is no objection to a representative of the Interned Squadron being detailed on the grounds of the extraordinary situation in Scapa Flow, to go there. For this object a suitable representative from the ships of the Interned Squadron may be selected. There is no objection to

	a representative travelling in the link ships to turn over orders and to watch over their safe delivery.
6. That in the retention of a People's Navy, the first consideration will be given to the professional soldier element in the Interned Squadron.	6. It is a matter of course that the members of the professional personnel in the Interned Squadron who do their duty will be given every and full consideration; that they in all cases should receive particular consideration above all others cannot be considered in view of economic reasons. But it is confirmed that this matter will be kept in mind.
7. Stabilization of the emoluments of the short and active service personnel: (*a*) Pay and allowances as before, in addition 'Interned money' for men, officers, and officials, at the rate of 5 marks a day, payable as from the 21 November. (*b*) A gratuity on discharge for civilian clothes. (*c*) Confirmation of leave of absence, including pay and allowances, for four weeks on return. (*d*) Increase of the victualling allowance by half a	7. (*a*) Pay and allowances as before. From the 1 January onwards an addition of 2 marks will be paid daily to all men, including warrant officers, at the same time a single gratuity of 225 marks will be payable for the part taken by them in leading over the Fleet. (*b*) Discharge money and clothes will be continued in accordance with the regulations. (*c*) Agreed provided the internment lasts at least four months. (*d*) From the 1 February

mark a day, and the serving out of ' Mess savings ' which have been withheld up to date.	onwards the crews of the interned ships will be paid half a mark more victualling money than the rate of victualling allowance in force at home. The free issue of the Mess savings, which originated in the years 1914–1915, cannot now continue on its old footing, as these savings arose in consequence of the establishment of too high a rate of victualling allowance, and not through a reduction in the victuals supplied to the men.

Approved.

BERLIN, 24 *January* 1919

Signed.

The Interned Squadron was neither interested in these proceedings nor did it have any knowledge of the claims set out above. It need hardly be stated that the Committee were not empowered or authorized to put forward demands in the names of officers, as they had done in Paragraph 7 (*a*).

Parallel to these efforts aimed at economic advantage ran strong currents of politics. They arose out of a desire to keep the forces of ' reaction ' at a distance. They were afraid of being robbed of the ' Fruits of the Revolution ' by these forces, that is, to lose the personal and financial advantages which the proletariat, to which one was answerable, had obtained by a struggle at the expense of the public. The officer appeared to them to embody the

spirit of reaction. The fight was aimed at him. These ideas guided the actions of the head Soldiers' Councillor and the many radically-minded Soldiers' Councils in the ships and were urged on them by their following amongst the men whose creed it was. They would never admit the reinstatement of the officers in their former predominating and unassailable position. They would have preferred to dispense with the officer altogether; but this could not be obtained as in the eyes of the English Admiral the officer was the representative of the Squadron and of the ships, to which official position—much to their chagrin—they were debarred by the English Admiral, and, because of his professional knowledge, in which the great majority recognized the only safeguard for their safety on board, the officer was seen to be indispensable. In this way the radical elements had to put up with the continued presence of the officers, though they made efforts to make the officers subordinate to themselves and to make them merely their tools.

Apart from the interests of caste the certain retention of our rights of possession of the ships demanded that the officer should be reinstated in his old position towards the men in order to re-establish his authority. The aims of the officers and of the Soldiers' Councils were bitterly opposed. The establishment of the Soldiers' Councils could not be disregarded as it was ordered by the proceedings of the 24 January to continue until the end of the internment. Besides legal remedies, the power to uproot this harmful decision was also absent. So a means had to be sought by which the radicals might be displaced from the unassailable position they had held until now. This aim could only be entirely realized if we succeeded in helping the small number of loyal petty officers and men to a greater influence and in winning back the

majority to regarding the officer in a trustworthy light. By means of new elections better-minded delegates for the Soldiers' Councils might then perhaps be won, and it might be—in favourable circumstances—that the men themselves would express the wish to give up the establishment of Soldiers' Councils.

To increase the influence of the loyal sailors much was done by the leader of the torpedo craft and one or two energetic and luckily-placed commanders; in this connection Lieutenant-Commander Elze of the *Emden* must be especially mentioned. A party began to form in the Squadron at once which offered opposition to the doings of the radical Soldiers' Councils. It gained force somewhat in the torpedo craft, in two or three cruisers, and in two battleships.

Contrary to this, the signs of winning over the greater part of the men seemed unfavourable. In their efforts to gain confidence the officers must have been in a very difficult position. Their confidence was entirely governed by their ruling thoughts at the time and the desire for economic gain. Whoever provided them with the most, or even only just promised it, had their confidence. In this connection the radical is in an easy position, as he does not feel bound to fight against economic advantage on moral grounds; he has, and holds, the confidence of the masses. The officer in his idealism, on the other hand, feels himself bound to consider the good of the State, to be answerable to the whole people; he is not in a position to suppress harmful economic struggles. There lies the great unsurmountable weakness of his position, its tragedy, that he, in times like the present, governed by economic stresses, unlike former days when knightly thoughts still moved the people, can place himself as champion at the head of the agitation. He must from his point of view as

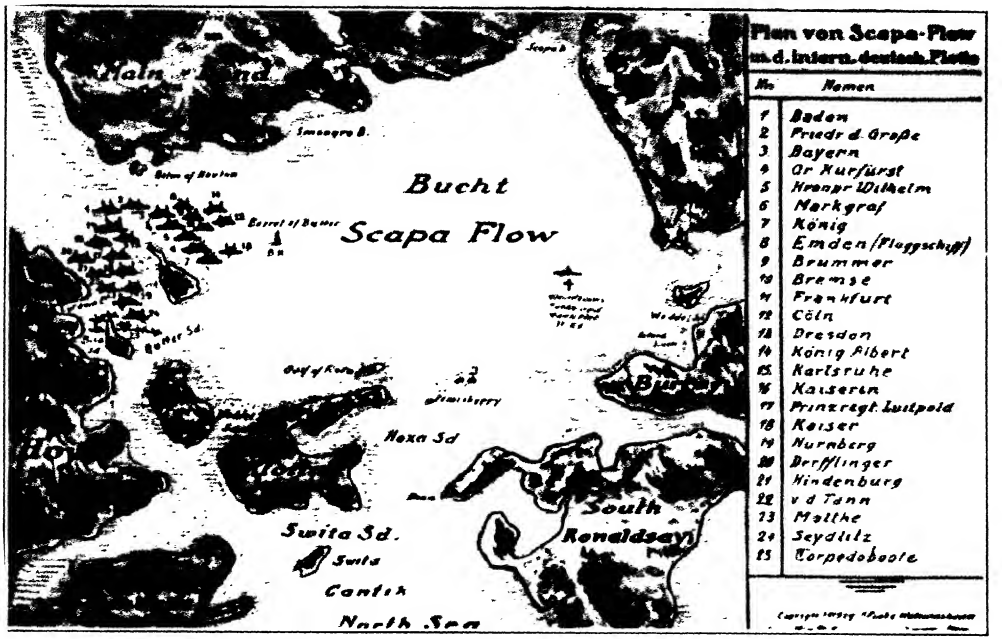
an officer fight against this new agitation led as it is by this economic aim ; yet it will just be this fight which will lose him the confidence of the masses. These considerations were but little expected by me on the part of the masses. It were better to attempt to strengthen the position of the officers by the separation and sending home of those of the men who were tending to follow the new economic ideas of the radicals. Of course, such sendings home to a great extent and, on the other hand, hindrances and reductions, rather put it out of the question to attempt to keep the state of readiness for sea of the personnel up to the necessary mark.

The revival of the authority of the officers would also serve the higher jurisdiction which I had at the beginning requested and had now assigned to me. Co-operation with the Soldiers' Councils was excluded from this ; in this way I had at least a shadow of right to my hand which was the only one at my disposal. In January I could still award punishments for infractions of discipline. Permission for such a thing had come from the ship's company, who wanted a certain amount of order and security of personal property. The lawyer of the Squadron had modified the punishment orders which had been upset by the Revolution and placed at the will of the men. The punishments of arrest, whose award and execution on land was met with much opposition and which was not altogether possible, were replaced by money fines or done away with altogether. The new disciplinary punishment code was held in universal esteem by high and low and the men accustomed themselves again to the idea that infractions of discipline were to be atoned for by punishments. After the installation of the new Government the earlier punishment code, which did not mention fines, was brought into force again. The Navy Office would not

S.M.S.s *Von der Tann, Kaiser, Moltke, Nürnberg, Seydlitz* and Torpedo Boats.

SCAPA FLOW. SUNSET OVER 'BRING' HILL

Ships reading from left: S.M.S.s *Kaiser, Hindenburg, Derfflinger, Prinzregent, Kaiserin, Karlsruhe, König Albert.*



PLAN OF SCAPA FLOW WITH THE INTERNED GERMAN FLEET

promise to leave the Squadron their code as it was. I therefore had no option but to put the code into force which had obtained before the Revolution. The result was that punishments were only awarded on board ships whose general conduct allowed it. The award and execution of a cell punishment on board a battleship, which did not meet with general approval, led to serious rioting, which at least jeopardized our right of ownership of the ships. My higher jurisdiction, which had been safeguarded until then, disappeared with the change of code. Not only was my authority in the Squadron weakened by this course of action, but the only apparent sign of its sovereignty was imperilled. Eventually I succeeded in inducing the Navy Office to give me back these powers in spite of themselves, on the grounds of the re-establishment of my jurisdiction.

Naturally, we could not rigidly adopt one or the other means of raising the position of the officers due to the complicated nature of the service with which we had to grapple and the shrinkage in the strength of the crews, but rather that everything which tended towards it should be fostered and used. In the further course of the internment the position did indeed better itself; we were successful in obtaining delegates true to the Navy and State as Head Soldiers' Councillor and also a few other Councillors. Still we could not gain a sufficient following to throw out the influence of the radicals. The sinking was the first sign in the change of tone for the upholding of Government, Fatherland, and officers.

I must not let it go unrecorded that a number of warrant officers, petty officers, and men maintained their loyalty in their personal intercourse with their officers in the way which was usual before the Revolution in spite of all threats and intimidation. Especially so was the

conduct of the junior ratings of my Staff; well indeed did the Signal personnel, under the leadership of the excellent Senior Petty Officer, shed the light of their assiduity and devotedness to duty over all the other ships and thereby ensured that the whole of the Signal organization of the Squadron worked smoothly. The admirable sentiments of the people of my Staff is one of the few pleasant memories I retain of my period of command at Scapa Flow.

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In order to raise the contentment of the men, I put a request before the local English Naval Commander that he should seek by personal interview to have the orders for the forbidden shore leave and for the censorship of our letters rescinded; there were also other requests, but of less importance, which I mentioned to him. During the course of the conversation it transpired that on the subject of authorizing the shore leave the English Admiral himself had nothing against it, but still he would first have to ask the Admiralty. As I knew what the views of the Admiralty were, I knew perfectly well that the suggestion would again be refused. Concerning the censorship of the mails he proposed to meet my request by installing the censor's office on board one of his own ships. This arrangement had the result of establishing the censor's office shortly afterwards, but unfortunately it also soon came to an end, at least for private correspondence.

I sought, further, for an English dispatch boat to attend on me on the routine visits to my ships, as to my regret I could not be certain that my barge would not be used by others behind my back and unknown to the English. The request was agreed to.

Finally, I once again obtained the confirmation of the fact, from the English Admiral, that for his part the Soldiers' Councillors did not exist and that he would have no dealings with them.

. . . . . .

Matters came quickly to a head at the beginning of February through demonstrations on board my Flagship by the 'Red Guard.' The serving out of alcohol was forced. The repellent state of affairs induced by the liberal issues of spirits was treated with disapprobation by the better part of the crew. The stopping of the issue of spirits was imminent ; the last straw was when a petty officer, newly returned from Wilhelmshaven with his lurid Spartakist portrayal of the situation at home, greatly excited the ship's company. As a result there arose a quite understandable difference of opinion between the radicals and the better elements. In order to assure myself of the attitude of the English Admiral in the event of this difference of opinion coming to blows, and if our right of possession would be jeopardized by such a conflict, I informed him of my intended visit. The unusual time of day at which this occurred may perhaps have made the situation appear more serious than it in reality was. He took me off in a boat lowered from an armed steamer. I had reckoned somewhat on this display of arms and had promised myself to make a profound effect on the radical elements, which must have been greatly enhanced really by the unusual time chosen for my visit to the English Admiral—it was already night. I was not wrong either.

I informed the English Admiral of the occurrences on board, that a Red Guard had been formed, and that a serious difference might quite conceivably arise during the

night between them and the orderly portion of the crew. The officers were robbed of their weapons by the Armistice Terms and so were unable to restore order by force. I therefore set myself the task of finding out what action he thought fit to take under such circumstances. I was careful to emphasize that my question was not put with the object of assuring the safety of the officers. I explained that I should be best served if the Red Guard could be removed from the ships as a German mail vessel to take them home was not in harbour at the time and would not arrive at the earliest for three days. I gave him to understand that I would like them to be interned somewhere, in the same way as on board, till this vessel sailed for home. The English Admiral answered that he had no accommodation for them on land, but that he would rather take them off at once as prisoners of war and confine them as such on board his ships. Further, he was ready, as I was responsible for the maintenance of discipline, to support my authority with all the power at his disposal and to maintain it. I was to tell my men that he would take the most drastic steps if they went so far as to disobey me and, if necessary, would place armed guards aboard our ships. As I could not permit my men to be taken as prisoners, and above all things did not want an English guard on board as they put the German right of possession of the ships into question, I sought a way out of this suggested solution which would yet support me in case the Red Guard refused to go home in the next mail boat as would be ordered by me. The English Admiral gave me this promise with the assurance that he would place as many destroyers at my disposal as I wanted. Further, during that very night torpedo craft would be in readiness to come alongside *Frederick the Great* if the signals arranged between us were made.

After my return on board I was able to secure general quiet. I informed the crew of the gist of the conference I had had. The next forenoon a meeting of the ship's company took place; the Red Guard declared itself as ready to take the next transport home; they promised not to disturb order and discipline in the meanwhile, but begged that they would not be put on board the steamer by an English armed guard. I promised this and informed the English Admiral. The Red Guard kept their promise. When a destroyer, cleared for action, came alongside, it surprised me too. But I could do nothing to alter it. However, the Red Guard were finally put on board the transport in an unarmed boat.

The appearance of the destroyer was not without its good, however, as a portion of the ship's company who observed the incident expressed loathing and disgust that, due to the unbelievable conduct of a few Germans, such a measure should become necessary.

At this time the dispatch of wireless messages was forbidden us by the English, and by the removal of essential parts of the apparatus it was also sought to make this impossible. I informed the Navy Office of this, leaving it to them whether a protest should be lodged on this account. This prohibition was not entirely unfavourable to the Squadron, as it held the daily and provoking Press bulletin away from the men.

It is worthy of note that a period of peace now ensued for *Frederick the Great* and the rest of the Squadron.

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The establishment of a constitutional Government in February 1919 was received with thankfulness by the men, which was expressed in a telegram of allegiance addressed to the Chancellor. The dispatch originated in

the cruiser *Emden* and copies were distributed for signature among the crews of the ships and torpedo boats. Only very radical crews had abstained from signing, including the Head Soldiers' Councillor. Much to his discomfiture, in spite of this the telegram reached the Chancellor and the Press.

Immediately after the installation of the new Government the Soldiers' Councils at home were removed from their position; in their place trustworthy men were installed, with various powers. For the Interned Squadron the order of the 24 January still held good, and the Soldiers' Councils remained in power.

I had thus to concentrate on getting the permission of the Government to exercise the power of command in the internal functions of the Squadron, at least, within reason.

The Head Soldiers' Councillor had co-operated somewhat in the broad headings under which the actual command of the ships was exercised, as he thought it more clever in this way to attempt to hide his hate of the Government, which fact we already knew. I was certain that he would try to put a spoke in my wheel if ever he got the opportunity of making my orders unworkable. It therefore appeared now all the more important to sift the Head Soldiers' Council of its more radical delegates who neither served the interests of the Squadron nor were suited to the times. But their following in the Squadron was still too strong for this to be achieved by new elections. The two occasions on which these delegates had interfered with my authority, in a way to which they were not entitled, did not appear to me to be suitable ground on which to pick a quarrel with them. Then came my opportunity, when two of the most radical delegates committed a breach, of not only my orders, but of the English regu-

lations as well. I was therefore able to proceed against them with the sure knowledge of getting rid of them : not only did I have right on my side, but might as well. I dismissed them from the position of delegates to the Head Soldiers' Council and ordered them to return to Germany by the next mail boat.

According to the regulations I was not entitled to dismiss delegates from this Council. The German Senior Officer in Foreign Waters must surely have the right to throw out incompetent delegates whose conduct endangers the friendly relations with the ' Host ' State. I could now get a decision on this question too.

My methods aroused a storm of indignation in the Squadron, except only in the torpedo craft, in two light cruisers and two battleships who remained undisturbed. The ship's company of my Flagship saw fit to refuse their duty ; one or other of the Soldiers' delegates proposed that I should be dismissed ; besides this, in the usual radical manner, personal remarks against me were not spared. I informed the English Admiral that on account of the upheaval caused by the action I had taken, I would take no further steps against the offenders.

The decisive step for the putting aside of the unsuitable delegates had now been taken ; there was, therefore, no point in fostering further dissension in the Squadron. With this object I assured them that I would recall my consent, for the proceedings to go any further, from the Minister of State concerned. The upheaval then subsided somewhat and the crew of my Flagship resumed their duty.

The report to the Minister of Defence, who would deal with the circumstances, had to pass the censorship of the English Admiral. Thus he gained an insight into the business. The Soldiers' Councils reproached me for this,

but I could easily justify my action; had I evaded the censorship I would have exposed not only myself but also the two delegates to a breach of the English regulations and thus left us defenceless.

I requested a decision by W/T from the Minister of Defence and sought further to clear up the question of various Squadron proceedings (weekly correspondence service home: unsuitability of dealing with such subjects by W/T) which had not been settled, including whether I had the power to dismiss delegates of the Head Soldiers' Council if they contravened English regulations.

Meanwhile the torpedo craft and the loyal ships had ranged themselves in opposition to the agitation raised against me and were gaining ground. The unfortunate part was that until the decision of the Minister of State was received, days and weeks might go by during which time the strife about my person would not abate.

Then appeared an unexpected solution. The English Admiral sent me two officers one night a few days after this occurrence with orders to deliver up the two ring-leaders at once; if, however, I had good reasons for disagreeing with this order he would not insist on it. I had no idea of giving them up, conforming to my promise that I would hold my shield over any German whatever his offence. I gave them both the choice: either to cease any kind of action in the Head Soldiers' Council as well as the agitation against the Fleet Command and to leave the ship without stir by the next transport home —or to be delivered up. I gave them time to think it over; they decided on the former course. By their promise I had a strong grip on the situation; were they to push their agitation any further I could still deliver them up. The order of the English Admiral had a further and happy result for me, in that if the Minister of Defence

did not agree to my proposals to get rid of the two delegates my views would prevail just the same. I therefore conveyed to the English Admiral that I bade leave to differ on the question of delivering up the offenders as he had not learned of the infringement of the English regulations through his own people but through me; I myself had only wished to make it clear that I did not countenance such infringements. On these grounds the delivery of these men was not at all wished by me; I would, however, send them back to Germany for punishment. I undertook that they would leave the ship on the very next opportunity of a passage. After about a week and the evening before the sailing of the German mail-boat to Wilhelmshaven I received the answer by wireless from the Minister of State:

'Book-number 1780. Navy Office.

'In accordance with paragraph 11 of the Official Gazette of the 24 January, No. 18, H.... H.... and M.... M.... are punishable for insubordination. As loyal co-operation not established, send both home first opportunity. Letter follows.'

I did not receive the expected letter until three months later. From it I learned that my power of dismissing delegates to the Head Soldiers' Council had not been approved. This decision astonished me.

On the day of departure the two refused to leave the ship in spite of their promise; they demanded a delay until the following trip home, as they said they had to arrange for their substitutes and had not yet packed their effects. I told them that the question of substitutes had nothing to do with them and that I would deal with it and that they were to embark in two hours at the latest. I had to inform the English Admiral that they apparently

did not want to leave the ship on account of the arrangements for the English postal service and because their passage home had been announced. This had the result of bringing an English destoyer and an armed steamer, both cleared for action, to lie off the *Frederick the Great* when the time came for them to leave the ship. They now left the ship without further incident. This business, which was witnessed by a number of ship' companies, again aroused indignation. The supersession of both the delegates was therefore final and yet considered completely in accordance with the regulations by the greater proportion of the ships. The torpedo boats had made known their trust in their delegate to the Head Soldiers' Council. He and a further delegate of the Head Soldiers' Council, whom I would have liked to have kept on account of their loyalty to the Navy, resigned from their positions and wished to avail themselves of the transport home. A fifth delegate was already prepared to exchange for a billet in the Interned Squadron party at Wilhelmshaven. Thus had the Head Soldiers' Council dissolved.

As I was compelled to order the election of a new Head Soldiers' Council in accordance with the proclamation of the 24 January, and as the crews had not yet altogether become of one mind on the subject of which line to follow, I thought it necessary that in the new elections it was to be strived for, that only delegates who would promise, in the interests of the State, to work for the Navy and the Interned Squadron would be elected to the Head Soldiers' Council. Pending the holding of the new elections which took place a few weeks later, the Soldiers' Council of my new Flagship provided me with an upright and loyal petty officer for the post of Head Soldiers' Councillor. The newly elected Head Soldiers' Council turned out to be immeasurably better than its pre-

decessor. The majority of its delegates were loyal to the Navy and animated by the best spirit to do good. As the Head Soldiers' Council was really opposed to the agitation against the Squadron Command, it lost the following of the radical elements as soon as it ranged itself on our side, whilst it was just what the loyal-minded, who were attached to their officers, wished. The new Head Soldiers' Councillor was unable to prevail over this internal dissension as well. Two of his delegates relapsed into the bad old ways of their predecessors but aroused such a hostile feeling amongst the stokers of my new Flagship that they decided to clear out voluntarily and return to Germany. The remaining delegates who were loyal to the Navy withdrew from the Head Soldiers' Council of their own accord or were withdrawn, and in the last days of the Interned Squadron the petty officer mentioned above representing the Head Soldiers' Council acted in its stead. This development of the Head Soldiers' Council made my task of administration easier during the remaining course of the internment and was of benefit to the whole Squadron; the officers of the remaining ships had also improved their status as a result of these proceedings.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGE OF FLAGSHIP—SECOND REDUCTION OF CREWS

THE time had come, with the turning out of the Head Soldiers' Council, for the changing of my Flagship which I had contemplated since the end of January but did not carry out at the time owing to the then situation. It took place on the 25 March. I chose the light cruiser *Emden* as it was the only ship which had offered to place itself at my disposal in that capacity. Her ship's company were able to remain loyal to the Navy under the tactful and energetic leadership of their recently recalled Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Commander Elze. It affected me much at that time as particularly pleasant that the whole ship—from the officer to the stoker or sailor—should ask me to change my flag to her.

For outward appearances a larger ship would have been more suitable as a Flagship. To the English Admiral, who inquired privately why I had chosen a light cruiser rather than a large ship, I replied that as a former light-cruiser leader I felt happier in such a ship than in any other. My staff and I never regretted the decision—Captain, officers, warrant-officers, and men made our life on board as pleasant as it was possible under the given conditions.

The change of Flagship was made known to the crews by the following circular letter:

'Many rumours are current concerning the change of Flagship. To clear the situation the following is brought to your notice. A portion of the ship's company of the *Frederick the Great*, for some time past, have not behaved towards me in the manner which I, at least, had to and must insist on. I became aware of insolent action against me. To stay on board was therefore distasteful to me; all remonstrances in the ship were useless.

'After much hesitation I left the ship on the 25 March to hoist my flag in another on whose ship's company I could rely to behave loyally. A whole number of ships with these qualifications were available to choose from. My choice finally settled on the *Emden* for the following reasons:

'The ship is in a conveniently central position for administrative purposes and for signals. The living accommodation of a light cruiser designed as a flagship appeal to me, particularly as I lived aboard such a ship for a long time as Commander of the Scouting Forces.

'There are no other reasons for the change of Flagship.

'It is mischievous and laughable to suggest that I have changed my Flagship in order to lead the Squadron in any way differing from the former system. I have more than once announced—and in particular to the Head Soldiers' Council—that I stand by the Government order of the 19 January 1919. This attitude supports without question the instructions B 1637 of the 22 February 1919 (continuation of Soldiers' Councils) as these were put into force for the Squadron.

'Inasmuch as I carry out these orders and their obligations under reciprocal safeguards for my remaining rights, so must all others discharge their duty and retain their rights.

'This basis must above all else be the line of conduct in the pettiest work of the Squadron Command and the Head Soldiers' Council.

'For the reason that the Head Soldier's Council's pro-

ceedings until now have been of an unruly character, I am not in a position to work in co-operation with a new Head Soldiers' Council which is not prepared to abide by the proclamation of the 19 January 1919.

'I must therefore stipulate that for the delegates to be elected to the new Head Soldiers' Council, they must adhere to the proclamation of the Government regarding the powers of command, dated the 19 January 1919.'

I was not much helped by the removal of the two ringleaders alone from the Head Soldiers' Council. I still had to get rid of a great number of these disaffected people from the Squadron. As they had predominated in their representation in the previous times of turmoil they had to be got rid of. We could do without a further 150 men in the Squadron without impairing our readiness for sea. A scrutiny of the lists showed that we could dismiss this number on the basis of the complements up to the year 1914 inclusive. It was arranged on the strength of these figures to send home this surplus at the first opportunity.

CHAPTER V

THE 'SCUTTLING' IDEA

IN the first few days after my return to the Interned Squadron I had mentioned the idea of sinking the Fleet to my Chief of Staff. As the waves of revolutionary passion were then running high we came to the conclusion to let the matter rest for the time. The interlude of peace, in things political, after our transfer to the *Emden* brought it again more into the foreground, and this was stimulated by the English Press in which an idea of the Peace terms to be imposed on Germany had leaked out. At the end of February I had received a letter from Commodore Heinrich, the Naval Delegate to the Peace Commission, which substantiated the idea that the object of the Commission was the surrender of the ships. I was positive that this energetic and able officer would do his best to defeat this object, but I had to take into consideration that his goodwill was bounded by the decisions of the Government. This latter, judging by its surrender to any and every demand of the Entente, promised no good to the ships of the Interned Squadron.

At the beginning of March the English Admiralty took the first steps towards a further reduction of the care and maintenance parties on board our ships and torpedo boats. The reduction ordered was considerable; for instance, battleships and heavy cruisers with a strength of about 200 to be reduced to 78 so as to correspond

roughly to a figure comparable to English ships of the same class when laid up out of commission. The Squadron Command could not agree to this reduction for reasons of safety and because reasonable living conditions had to be maintained. We requested a reduction of between 5 and 20 in accordance with the size of ship. The English Admiralty, after our counter-proposals, did not proceed with the business, but allowed the whole matter to drop.

We could not foresee what motives underlay this preliminary action by the English Admiralty. Either they wanted to reduce the crews because of the previous disorders which had occurred or they wanted to create a favourable preliminary military condition for some sort of seizure on the occasion of the signing of Peace, or perhaps they wanted a harmless excuse for not dividing the ships up amongst Allied ports, as the reduction of crews would have the result of impairing the readiness for sea of the ships. The Entente Press at that time were already quietly discussing the seizure of the ships when Peace was signed and rather more openly debating the therefore necessary dividing up of the ships amongst the various Entente ports. Judging by the discussions in the English Press we had come to the conclusion that England had very little wish to divide up our unusually high-class ship-material amongst the Allies. It was also apparent to us, knowing the English character, that this distribution of ships, through which England would have to provide herself with material to oppose an opponent of equal strength in a future war at sea, was as un-English as possible. The English Press recommended instead of dividing up the German ships, to sink them, and of course this would be done by England alone.

This preliminary attack on our crew-strengths made us surmise that England would never again let go of the

interned ships when Peace was signed. We set our minds on this solution and in quiet pondered over the necessary steps which would have to be taken. Before I, myself, could come to a definite decision on the question of the sinking, I had to await the delivery of the Peace conditions to Germany, and await their reception and effect on the country. The position now arose that the idea of sinking the ships, which had untold numbers of advocates amongst the naval officers of the Interned Squadron, should not be allowed to leak out by any hasty sign which would attract the attention of the men and therefore of the English and thus frustrate the sinking itself. Many officers came to see me on the subject. They had to be sharply reprimanded, in spite of my inner feelings on the question. Had I given the slightest sign of approval it would have touched a train right round the Squadron, the sinking would have been discussed in the ward-rooms of the Fleet, the men would have got to know about it, a single traitor need only be amongst them for the English to hear about it. I was therefore naturally scarcely understood in my detached attitude—but I had to contribute my mite for the common good.

CHAPTER VI

INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNMENT ON THE SHIPS' COMPANIES

OUR duty was really not uninteresting and never without tension, but it was hardly ever elevating; the joys which life has to give and which warmed and lightened our existence from outside were thirstily accepted.

The absolute isolation from the land had indeed an unhappy effect on the minds of the ships' companies in spite of all efforts to find suitable diversions. The life aboard the big ships was, however, always more endurable than that in the torpedo boats. Aboard the former there was at least room for lectures, for spiritual and professional welfare, for exercise and sport of all kinds, and the majority of the crews had always one delegate or another with the talent to entertain and refresh the mind. The torpedo boats were living in quite different circumstances; here arose the peculiar discomfort from the fact that the slightest seaway rolled each pair of boats, which lay lashed together, against each other, and the heavy thuds, as well as the ensuring of the safety of the boats, kept the crews awake on most nights. Nevertheless these very ships' companies, from officer to man, met all these efforts and privations in a spirit which has been too little known; they always appeared to be sprightly, cheerful, and full of good spirits, with the shining example before them all of their leader, Com-

mander Cordes. The number of senior officers and petty officers should also be noted particularly, who put up with this confinement in a very limited space and in spite of this carried out their duty with all their old loyalty. In particular do I think of Engineer-Commander Faustmann in this connection, who in the double duty of Squadron Engineer Officer and Chief Engineer of the *Markgraf* was always at his post. Nothing was able to destroy his sense of humour and cheerfulness in his duty. He served the Squadron well, and finally, after his worthy Captain had fallen, he brought the sinking of the *Markgraf* to a successful conclusion. The monotony of the internment did not affect the keenness or attention to duty of the senior members of my Staff either: Staff Surgeon Doctor Lange, Naval Magistrate Losch, and Paymaster Habicht. Their sound way of thinking and their personal character, varied though these were, stimulated me and brought me into close personal touch with them.

The efforts to get films sent out for diversion and entertainment were for a long time unsuccessful, and the first few only began to arrive just before the sinking. They were received with rapture. Tooth troubles worked their depressing influence far and wide; in spite of urgent representations the Navy Office were unable to provide a dentist until the Fleet was already sinking. To be welcomed was the fact that the spiritual needs of the Navy were looked after by Chaplain Ronneberger, the Protestant, and Chaplain Esterkand, the Catholic minister, who were both equal to their task and did much to lift the general tone of the Fleet.

All ranks and ratings, officers, sailors, and stokers, were filled with anxiety for the future due to the gloomy and confused conditions in the State which appeared to have a tendency to drag us still lower. The news from

home gave one the not quite unjustifiable feeling that those who were away from home would not be sufficiently regarded in the re-modelling of the Navy. Due to this general attitude the head of the Admiralty, whose good intentions were without question—he gave them expression by sending an officer to the Interned Squadron to make a note of our wishes—could not do enough for the Interned ranks and ratings to allay their anxiety.

The internment weighed so heavily on the men that they reached a state in which the slightest incident would have driven them to disorders and disturbances. These incidents were seized on by the political agitators; they nursed these grievances so that the Squadron had no peace till the last big reduction just before the sinking and our right of possession of the ships was endangered during all this time. I will only mention two especially grave incidents out of the total. In the one case a number of men had gathered during the night in a previously well-behaved battleship and hoisted the Red Flag at the jackstaff with a great deal of noise; then, as an English patrol vessel approached, attracted by the commotion, it was hauled down again. The ship's company, indignant at this occurrence, demanded the severe punishment of the ringleaders. As the carrying out of cell punishment in the Squadron (as was the case, too, at home) did not seem sufficiently certain, they underwent their punishment in an English prison at Perth and were thereafter sent back to Germany, as this kind of imprisonment, coupled with a journey through the Scottish Highlands, was a pleasant break in the internment and might encourage further disorders. The second case occurred on board another battleship and dragged on from the end of April to the middle of May. It finally culminated in serious disorders; these, deservedly, could be met by cell punish-

ment, but this was opposed by the crew, who were led by Communist agitators. The instigators were soon unmasked and at my request were kept in custody as awaiting court martial on board an English battleship until the next mail-boat left for Wilhelmshaven. This disorder was the reason for the last big reduction of the crews.

The impulse to escape from the internment had become so strong that many men created trouble with the sole idea that, in accordance with court-martial procedure, as a verdict could not be given at Scapa Flow they would be sent back to the Homeland. This way out of the internment seemed all the less difficult for them, as it was the talk of the Squadron that those awaiting inquiry by court martial on their return home were at once given long leave and that the court martial might subsequently not take place at all.

As on board most ships it was impossible to carry out cell punishment, and as money fines could unfortunately not be inflicted, there was nothing else left to do in the Squadron, if its seaworthiness was to be maintained, except to overlook the transgressions rather than send the men home; in this way a great number of men escaped their well-deserved punishment. To have attempted to exchange the interned crews for fresh personnel from Germany was out of the question, as the experiences we had had with the personnel already sent back to Scapa Flow had been very troublesome in a political sense.

They forced me to isolate Scapa Flow, apart from the officers, as regards reliefs.

The internment weighed on us all. Still, what comradely friendship could not give us, and what the hate of the enemy could not rob us off, was the Wonder of Nature at Scapa Flow.

The scenery around us was really harsh and desolate. Water, mountains, otherwise nothing. And yet this forgotten corner of the earth had its attractions, its beauty—not by day, during glaring sunlight or when the rain-clouds painted everything grey on grey, but in the evening or by night. Then it was that the Northern Lights would cast their rays like searchlights over the clouds and light them to a yellow hue, then again pour themselves over the whole firmament in a single sea of fire. And the sunsets, wonderful in their coloured splendour! It was during a May evening, the sun sank to the horizon at a late hour, and all the colour of which it seemed possessed was poured over the evening sky; the spectacle was overpowering and enchanting. And then, as though this were not of sufficient splendour, the Northern Lights flung their fiery streams into the blaze —the clouds were fired and in their flaming fire rose the dark, naked cliffs of the mountains of Orkney. There is yet a God!

CHAPTER VII

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SCUTTLING—LAST REDUCTION OF THE CREWS

ON the 11 May the Peace Terms imposed by the Entente became known in the Interned Squadron through the reports in the newspapers. For a day or two it lay like lead on the minds of the men. Then, however, their German unconcern and insouciance, countering the anxiety for the welfare of their own country, won the upper hand, and the hope that the internment would now soon be over helped further to draw attention away from the extraordinarily severe conditions of the Peace Terms. Now had come the time when I had to study the possible consequences of the refusal or acceptance of the Peace Terms by the German Government and appreciate the situation, in order to reach conclusions which would guide my actions.

That I should be left entirely to my own devices was quite clear to me. I had refused orders and instructions, as I alone and no one at home could judge and appreciate the situation in the Interned Squadron.

There were three possible ways in which the Peace Terms might be treated: the German Government might refuse the conditions; they might negotiate, which was the most probable; or they could at once accept the conditions, which seemed unlikely by the very severity of the terms.

(*a*) *Refusal*

In this case the renewal of hostilities had to be reckoned on. That England would permit the German ships, which in spite of internment in England had remained in German hands, to journey back to Germany would not have seemed possible even to the most rabid German pacifist or socialist. It was much more likely that England would not only take possession of our excellent ships but rather that she would take this step against us with a particular and malicious joy and with great enthusiasm. To allow England to take possession of the German Fleet would therefore be treason. The unreadiness for action of the ships and their defenceless state would have made this treachery appear even worse. For us officers it was unthinkable to surrender defenceless ships to the enemy. As, at the beginning of the War, this had been again emphasized by a decision of the All Highest, this could well be taken as sufficient support for the action of the officers; at the threat of danger of war or the renewal of hostilities we officers were bound by this decision of the All Highest to destroy the German ships, to sink them. It had not been repealed by the new Government. Our right and our duty to sink the ships was beyond question. As the ships had remained in the possession of the German Government, we were responsible to it alone for what we did with them and never answerable to the Entente! If the Allied port were damaged by the sinking, the Entente itself would be to blame as they had cheated us in the carrying out of the Armistice arrangements by which the German ships were to have been laid up in neutral harbours.

Two obstacles thereupon arose in the carrying out of the sinking: the restriction of our postal service with the

German Admiralty and the state of mind of the crews of the interned ships.

From the 8 May onwards, that is from the date the Peace Conditions were made known to Germany, the strictest censorship was imposed on the Interned Squadron. The date of the re-imposition of these restrictions shows beyond question that they were intended to keep us in the dark regarding the Peace negotiations and particularly as regarded the threat of war or renewal of hostilities by cutting us off from communication with the homeland. The new censorship regulations, amongst other things, laid down that the outgoing mail from Germany, which until then had gone straight from the mail-boat uncensored to the ships, had now to go through the English censors in London. This deviation of the mail meant a delay of from three to four weeks! The protests made against this were not entertained: the British Government considered it 'essential' that the censorship should be carried out only in London. The delay in the mails, as was emphasized in the protest, could only worsen the state of mind of the crews, which was already bad enough owing to the long internment. Perhaps this was a further cunning move on the part of the English to break the spirit of the crews and thereby to bring pressure on the German Government to reduce the numbers of the men. Then when the Entente had made the stealing or taking over of the ships all the easier, or by emphasizing the hardships had convinced the German Government, the Government might soon be glad to get rid of this unhappy Squadron. In any case the tightening of the censorship seemed such an extraordinary measure to me that it impressed me with the idea of keeping the sharpest watch where England was concerned.

It became apparent that the English Admiralty were doing all they could, at the very moment when matters were coming to a head and the danger of hostilities being resumed was imminent, to prevent any further news from reaching me from Germany. I had therefore to reckon on the fact that the English Admiral might try to surprise me at any moment, seize the ships, and confiscate them. It goes without saying that no steps would be too drastic, whatever the consequences, to make certain of sinking the ships, even though it had to be delayed till the last minute. I put my trust in my captains, so that even though the enemy tried to take us by surprise we should remain masters of the situation.

The second obstacle: the state of mind of the ships' companies made it seem improbable that they would be won over to co-operate without exception in the sinking, under the very muzzles of the English guns. Certain preliminary steps to prepare for the sinking were unavoidable, and it was to be feared that someone or other would give away our intended operation to the English Admiral. But even if the preparations could be got through without the knowledge of the men, they might still try and prevent it or even counter it under the influence of the English gun-fire on the actual day. The officers, in such a case, would not have been able to carry through their intentions due to their loss of authority and because they had been deprived of their arms.

This obstacle could only be disposed of by reducing the strength of the crews. At that time the reduction of the men could not even be considered as it might have been a stab in the back for the German Government which might then be engaged in the negotiations for the return of the ships. The reduction would have been construed in English circles as showing that the idea of

returning the ships, which until then had been kept in a state of readiness for sea, had been given up by the Squadron. Had we, the internees, ourselves given up the idea of the homeward journey of the ships it would have suited the machinations of the Entente most admirably —in fact our attitude would clinch the belief that the Government were behind us and that their official views should not be taken too seriously. Out of these considerations I decided to issue no orders on the subject for the present. Of course, I ran the risk that the Government might curtly decline the proposed Peace Terms, though this was indeed no great risk; judging by their mentality they were far more likely to choose the way of negotiation. I could still wait and see; it seemed to me wiser than reducing it all to a gamble by trying to force the play.

(*b*) *What should the Interned Squadron expect to be the Outcome of the Negotiations over the Peace Terms?*

It was possible that the German Government might use the ships as an asset in bartering, e.g. in exchange for a free hand in the Baltic or to ensure the emancipation of the Saar district. In such a case the German Fleet would have fulfilled an object and could have been handed over to the enemy. This solution would, of course, have been an unpleasant one for us officers, but for the future and welfare of the State we should have brought ourselves to this sacrifice. Whether the Government intended to pursue such a course was for me the one and only question which gave me no peace until the actual day of the sinking. All my verbal inquiries for information remained unanswered. That the Fleet might be

offered for sale did, of course, not come into our deliberations; we could not believe such a solution by the Government could be proposed. It was possible, of course, that the Government was already pledged to sell the ships and that they kept us officers, indispensable to them for the moment, in the dark as to their intentions as they knew, quite rightly, that we would not lend a hand to such an undertaking and would sooner refuse duty.

Further, it was possible that the German Government was not greatly exercised over the surrender of the ships and attached no great importance to it. Honour and the rights and responsibilities of the Nation meant nothing to them. This being so it was hopeless to think that the Fleet would ever return. Our naval representative could not very well do much to alter this. Army and Navy interests were opposed to each other and at the head of the Peace Commission was the Minister of the Foreign Office. The latter had always handed a portion of the blame for any mistakes he made on to the Fleet. We could therefore be certain that the President of the Commission in particular would put in no word for the maintenance of the German Fleet if its importance were weighed against that of the Army. On the contrary, the German Fleet would be sacrificed without a second thought in the same way that the U-boat war was treated.

As in the question of the considerations up to Paragraph B it seemed wisest for the moment to wait and see how things would shape.

(c) *The Effect of the Immediate Acceptance of the Peace Terms*

did not need to be considered, as by all reports of happenings in the homeland published in the English Press,

this was the last course which was to be expected; however, the Squadron Command was bound, also in the event of a later acceptance of the Terms, not to fulfil any conditions, particularly the surrender of the Fleet without the express order of the German Government. There could be no question of the English taking possession of the ships purely on the grounds of the Peace Treaty being signed, as, by my isolation from the German Government, I had always to consider the possibility of the ships being bartered. Any attempt to take possession of the ships without my express consent would have had the immediate consequence of the ships being sunk.

. . . . . .

At the end of April the serious disorders already mentioned broke out on board a battleship.

This occurrence and one or two incidents of a less grave character on board other ships might have been the result of the long internment and proved the need for a change. A circular letter, originated in another battleship, addressed to all ships' companies, which came to our knowledge at the end of May, confirmed this supposition; in it, it was suggested that to shorten the internment it was no use arranging for isolated ships to refuse duty, the men should go on strike together; that would have a profound effect on the German Government to secure their release.

Such a 'General Strike' at this time, when the whole destiny of the Interned Squadron had reached its last crisis, might yet in the end bring about the seizure of the ships by the English. In face of this danger all misgivings about the reduction of the number of men which had held sway until then had to be cast aside and the lesser evil accepted. My Chief of Staff therefore suggested

that I should send all those who were weary of the internment back to Germany. As I myself had almost reached the same conclusion, and as it would work in with the important scheme for the sinking of the ships, I gave my approval to the suggestion. The reduction would be carried out with enough severity to ensure that the sinking would be completed with certainty. The state of readiness for sea was thereby dropped.

The numbers of the crew were to be reduced as follows: for heavy cruisers by 75 hands, battleships by 50, light cruisers by 20; the leader of the torpedo boats would fix the numbers by which the T.B.s' crews were to be reduced.

We were supported in our reduction of the numbers of the men by the fact that the nights had become as bright as day which made artificial lighting in the spaces which were lit naturally unnecessary. The few remaining men could be accommodated in these spaces. Further, as the English were supplying the drinking and boiler water it was no longer necessary to keep steam in a boiler. The steam galleys could be supplied by the steam pinnaces. Coal and provisions were to be had in profusion, care and maintenance work no longer had to be reckoned on. It was therefore only necessary to keep as many men aboard as were required for cooking, and for letting go or weighing the sheet anchor.

The following proposals for reduction were sent to the German Admiralty—the English Admiral was informed officially through the usual channels:

'WIRELESS MESSAGE ADDRESSED TO THE ADMIRALTY, BERLIN

'It is now of the utmost importance to relieve the interned crews without delay, at the latest the first batch

of 2700 men must be sent home at the beginning of June. As a preliminary measure reliefs will not be insisted on. The personnel remaining on board will suffice for the maintenance of the safety of the ships, and will be sufficient to ensure that the right of possession to the interned ships and T.B.s of the German Government is not impaired. The readiness for sea of the material will be maintained as far as possible with the means at our disposal. Reliefs for the personnel remaining behind must be arranged at once so that they, too, can be sent home with little delay after the first batch. A reply by return, by wireless, that the return home of the men is approved is absolutely necessary.'

The German Admiralty willingly consented to our proposal, as did the English, and after a few days I got the official permission to proceed with the reduction. The English Admiralty were, of course, only too pleased, as it fitted in most opportunely with their previously formulated designs for seizing the ships. The German Admiralty made preparations for the selection of transport vessels. These kept us waiting longer than we cared for, but taking the upheavals in Germany into consideration it was impossible to expect them at Scapa Flow earlier than between the 15th and 17th of June.

The disorders previously mentioned, then, supplied the basis, out of which grew the practical possibility, of effecting the sinking which was to save us from dishonour and shame.

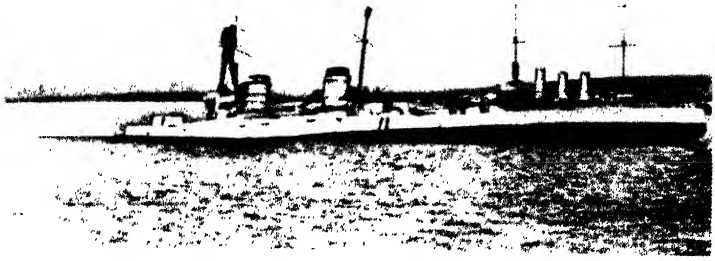
The order for the reduction was received with approval in the Squadron. Only one of the ships' companies, that of a heavy cruiser, gave rein to their indignation, as expressed in a letter they circulated amongst the other ships, and this indignation was because they said the Admiral had dared to give an 'order' to four thousand

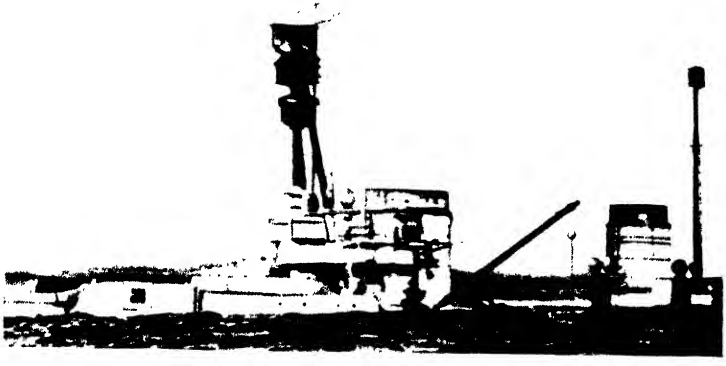
men! Eventually they too preferred to conform to my orders and not give up the journey home.

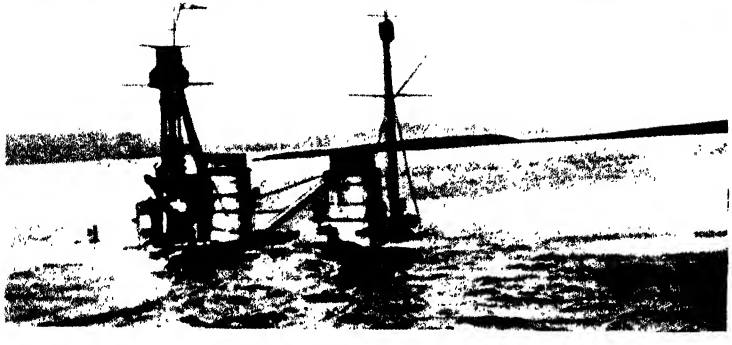
The proposed numbers of men to be dispensed with were not quite reached, as I did not then want to instruct the various commanders as to my final intention—the sinking. The counter proposals of the various commanders, with few exceptions, did not greatly exceed the numbers to be retained, that I had in view. The conclusions the various commanders of ships reached, as regards the number of men to be kept, to ensure satisfactory living conditions, naturally varied. Where the figures appeared to be much too high they were brought down to a more reasonable number.

The 31 May, and with it the festival of the victory at the Battle of Jutland, approached. Rumours reached us in the Squadron Command that the English were contemplating seizing the ships at about this time, and from the English drifters' crews we learnt that preparations were going forward on board the English ships for the accommodation of the German crews. The Squadron Command could attach no credence to these reports, the ships being seized purely because it was the 1 June[1] was not possible. Still the attitude of the German crews on this day might perhaps furnish them with an excuse, and in the strained atmosphere of the times might lead on to the seizure and confiscation of the ships. For this reason the commanding officers were ordered to be prepared to sink their ships if the enemy attempted to seize them, and by keeping a careful watch to avoid being surprised; on no account were the men to gain an inkling of the steps being taken. For the men an open order was issued to the Squadron that they might worthily celebrate the

[1] The 1 June counts as a day of victory in the English Fleet.

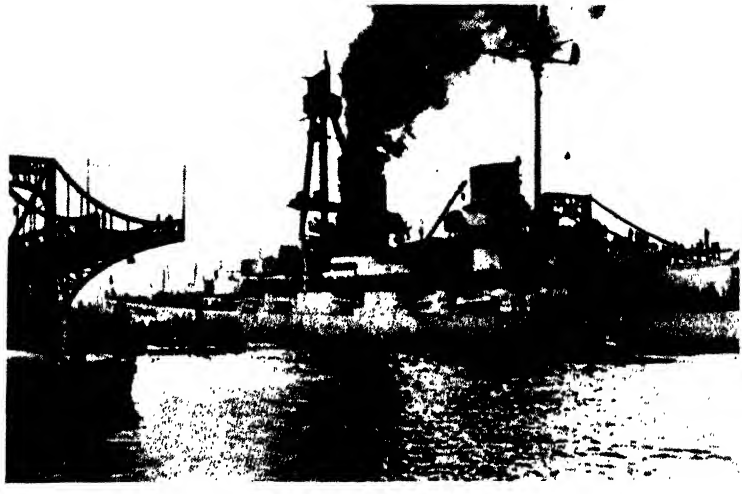






S.M.S. *HINDENBURG*

(*a*) Half an hour after the order for scuttling, with S.M.S. *Nürnberg* in background.
(*b*) In sinking condition.
(*c*) In sunk condition.



S.M.S. *DERFFLINGER'S* LAST OUTWARD VOYAGE

THE FIRING ON THE DEFENCELESS CREWS BY THE ENGLISH

(From a drawing by an American eye-witness.)

occasion down below, but were to avoid all open display which would show from outboard. This appeal to the men was not responded to; they were not to be persuaded from this on the 31 May of all days, and made the celebration as open as possible with flags and illuminations, that is both by day and night. The day passed, in spite of numerous interferences by the English guard boats, without the German ships being seized.

At the beginning of June I learned that the crews of the T.B.s were making preparations for the sinking of their boats. These preparations, had they become known in the Squadron, might have made the sinking of the Fleet impossible. I sent for the leader of the T.B.s on board the *Emden* and told him of my appreciation of the situation and of my intentions. He announced his agreement. He succeeded in keeping his preparations secret not only from the English, but from the rest of the Squadron as well, not an easy thing to do by any means.

Weeks of extreme tension followed. We were entirely dependent on the English Press for information as to the progress and substance of the Peace negotiations as our mails, both letters and papers, had to pass the English censorship in London and only reached us after a delay of from three to four weeks; even the English newspapers, at the best, were four days old and their assertions were contradictory, sensationally coloured, unreliable, and filled with hate. It was difficult to appreciate the state of the negotiations and particularly to gather what attitude the German Government and people had taken up. The German mail and provision vessels, although always begged to bring over newspapers, usually only had a copy of the paper issued on the day they sailed. I received nothing from the Admiralty; of course, they themselves were not in the picture and had no information

to give. At last I did at least receive a much-asked-for German copy of the Peace Conditions. In this I saw that at the conclusion of Peace the German ships were to be surrendered to the Allied Powers. It was not clear whether the ships were to be handed over at the conclusion of the preliminary negotiations or whether this was to be done after Peace had been officially ratified. I therefore adopted the same attitude both for myself and on behalf of the Interned Squadron that the Entente would in its execution of official Peace, that is, in the ratification by the three States, i.e. I would not have admitted the right of the English Government to seize the ships at the conclusion of the preliminary acceptance of Peace unless, of course, the German Government had previously furnished me with orders to the contrary. Such an attempt on the part of the Entente I would have regarded as an act of violence and would have answered it by sinking the ships. Up to the very day of the sinking of the Fleet the German Government gave me no direction as to whether the preliminary Peace or the ratified Peace was to be taken as the decisive occasion; perhaps the mail-boat which arrived at Scapa Flow after the sinking had such a letter for me; possibly the letter is still detained by the censor in London. Judging by the conversations of the drifters' crews with our men I was certain that the English Admiral would take possession of the German ships on the day the preliminary Peace was signed. The correctness of my judgment was inadvertently proved by the English Admiral himself in his speech condemning the sinking given on the 22 June. In it he mentioned the letters which were just being completed to inform us of the conclusion of Peace; one letter would have sufficed for this; by the very numbers of the letters it undoubtedly proved that they were to be

directed to all the ships and were to make the seizure of the ships quite plain.

In case I were prevented, on the day of the signing of Peace, from giving the order to sink the ships myself, the later order for sinking the ships was added to Paragraph 6 as a concluding sentence; this made certain that they would be sunk in spite of hindrances. This concluding sentence runs as follows:

'A demand for the surrender of any ship by the English, unless with my express approval, is to be regarded as a forcible attempt at seizure, and is therefore to be answered by the scuttling of the ship.'

The speech of the Minister of State, Scheidemann, in the Reichstag, on the subject of the Peace Treaty, with the slogan of 'the withered hand,' had gradually filtered through to us, and according to that it seemed likely that we would have to reckon on the refusal of the German Government to accept the terms. The little we were able to glean from the knowledge of the officers in the mail-boat made it also appear not improbable that hostilities would be resumed if our counter-proposals were not accepted. The Squadron Command, in accordance with this appreciation of the situation, committed their intention to paper in the orders for the scuttling. The orders were to be sent to the leader of the torpedo boats and to the commanding officers of the ships as soon as the reduction of the crews had been effected. The tension grew the longer the transport steamers were delayed. The Peace negotiations seemed to be getting perilously close to their conclusion; we were full of anxiety in case the transports should not arrive in time, as on this depended the reduction and on that the successful carrying out of the sinking! At last, on the 15 June, the first

transport appeared and on the 17th the second. The men were quickly sent on board and the ships sailed. On the 17 June, as soon as the transports had sailed, the orders were brought into force. The distribution of the orders was only partly carried out by my barge, as I thought a general distribution might awake the interest of the enemy. I therefore ordered the letters to be sent round by the English D.S.B. The order[1] read as follows:

'Interned Squadron Command 17 *June* 1919.
'Reference Number P. 39.

'To pass through the hands of Officers only!

'PERSONAL!

'TO ALL C.O.S AND THE LEADER OF THE T.B.S

'1. The necessary preparations are to be made at once to ensure that the ship can be sunk as quickly as possible on the receipt of an order.

'2. Complete preparations are to be made as soon as the surplus men are disembarked. It is left to individual commanders to decide how far individual men are to be called in to help, and how much they should be allowed to know of my intention without in any way imperilling the scheme, e.g. by treason to the English.

'3. The following preliminary steps are to be taken; all doors down below and scuttles are to be left open, such as bulkhead doors, bunker doors, all doors in longitudinal and athwartships bulkheads, gangway hatches, ventilators, square ports, etc. Depending on the opinion of the commanding officers the following further steps may be taken: the necessary measures for the

[1] (Note by the Author). This order is translated back into the German from an English newspaper as the original fell into English hands at the sinking.

rapid opening of the torpedo-tubes, the opening of a condenser, the opening of valves and sluices, to the sea with the exception of the last, etc.

'4. Boats. If possible not more than one boat—for rescuing the crew—is to be cleared away ready for lowering. A flag of truce is to be prepared to take away in the boat. The boats with the crews on board are to make for the nearest land; they will remain together under the orders of their officers.

'5. The scuttling will take place:

(*a*) In the case of unprovoked seizure by the English.

(*b*) On the receipt of an order to that effect from me.

'6. Add to 5 (*a*). Commanding officers are carefully to consider the necessary steps to be taken to ensure that the ships are sunk for certain, in case the English should attempt to take the ships by surprise. A demand for the surrender of any ship by the English, unless with my express approval, is is to be regarded as a forcible attempt at seizure, and is therefore to be answered by the sinking of the ship.

'7. Add to 5 (*b*). Orders may be given either (*a*) to sink the ship at once, or (*b*) to sink the ship at a certain definite time.

'8. Signals. For immediate sinking as in 7 (*a*), the following signal will be made:

'"To all C.O.s and the T.B. Leader. Paragraph 11. Acknowledge. Chief of the Interned Squadron."

This signal is to be passed on by every means possible. The sinking of the ships is then to be begun at once.

'For sinking the ships at a certain definite time as in 7 (*b*), the following signal will be made:

'"To all C.O.s and the T.B. Leader. Paragraph 0, 9, 1, 3. Acknowledge. Chief of the Interned Squadron."

'In this signal the first two figures refer to the date, i.e. the 9th and the two last figures to the hour, at which the sinking is to commence. The time will be reckoned from noon to noon (astronomical).

'9. Acknowledgment. The receipt of the signal is to be acknowledged as follows:

'"To the Chief of the Interned Squadron. Paragraph .... is acknowledged.

C.O., *Emden.*"

'10. As the negotiations for the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Peace Terms have now reached their crisis, and the resumption of hostilities may be imminent the next few days are particularly critical. From Wednesday the 18 June on, increased watchfulness by day and night will be necessary, not only for any suspicious move on the part of the English, but also for signals from the *Emden*. As absolute reliance cannot be placed on the men, the officers themselves must take over the necessary look-out duties.

'11. It is my intention to sink the ships only if the enemy attempts to seize them without the consent of our Government. Should our Government agree to the Peace conditions in which the ships are to be surrendered, the ships will then be handed over, to the lasting shame of those who put us in this position.

'12. Commanding officers are to keep this document locked up; it must not fall into the hands of the enemy.

'(*Signed*) VON REUTER.'

The secrecy of my intention to carry out the sinking was kept in all but two ships.

During the forenoon of the 20 June I received a report from the C.O. of a heavy cruiser that his ship's company was following his preparations for sinking the ship with mistrust and dogging his footsteps wherever he went in the ship. He therefore requested permission to acquaint his men with the orders for the sinking so that he might complete the preparations. My Chief of Staff recommended the approval of the request, though I thought myself that it would be better to let this heavy cruiser drop out of the scheme rather than jeopardize the whole secret. On top of this the C.O. of a battleship informed me that four petty officers in his ship had guessed my intention by the preparations which had been made; that they wished to have nothing to do with it, and had requested to be sent home at once; if their request were granted they would not give away the preparations for the sinking. Regarding secrets between Germans a variation of Goethe's saying can be quoted: 'And holds he but a tenth he holds the town entire.' If the men did not receive the news about the sinking officially, but through these petty officers, that is by way of the backstairs, they would naturally be mistrustful, reluctant, and spoil the scheme. The men had now to be informed of the sinking for the very reason of avoiding treachery.

The order which was soon passed to the men changed their outlook considerably and restored their spirits, and

the new order was passed round to the ships and T.B.s that afternoon by the English dispatch boat.

. . . . . .

The composition and the making of copies of this second order for the sinking had occupied the Squadron Command well into the afternoon, so that it was not until the evening that I could attend to the news in the English papers. *The Times* of the 16 June 1919 had the following item :

'OFFICIAL SUMMARY

'Under the proviso of a financial arrangement, Germany is prepared to surrender not only the surface warships demanded, but all ships of the line.'

Judging from this it was apparent that the German Government, on the supposition of a sale, were prepared to surrender not only the surface warships demanded, but all ships of the line as well, and in this were included the ships of the Interned Squadron. The German Navy in this way was being humiliated for a second time in its short history by being again offered for sale.

What wounded me most was that we had been led to believe, in the months gone by, that the Government would insist on the ships returning home ; instead of this they had immediately offered to surrender more ships than the Entente had demanded !

I did not want to soil my hands in this dirty business and found that my officers and officials shared my views —let the Government send out their own agents whose sense of honour was perhaps less sensitive. I originated a wireless message to the German Government, saying that we officers and higher officials protested against the sale of the Fleet, that we would have no hand in it, and

demanded that before the sale we should be recalled and sent back home.

The above W/T message would not reach the English Admiral, in accordance with the English regulations, before the next morning, Saturday the 21 June, between 8 and 9 o'clock, and that, by the first English dispatch boat. The English ships had already weighed when my message was sent to the Admiral and were on their way out of harbour. He had been asked to transmit it with as little delay as possible. I do not think it was ever passed on to the German Government; the events of the day probably prevented it.

The same copy of *The Times*, referred to above, gave us the further news, on page 11, that the German Government would receive a respite of five days after the answers to the German counter-proposals had been received, during which the Peace Treaty was to be signed or its terms refused. The three days settled for the Armistice were to be included in the period of respite. As it also appeared from the English Press that England had given her answer to our counter-proposals on Monday the 16 June it was to be assumed that the Armistice would automatically cease without further warning on the Saturday. I pondered over it and assumed that the Armistice would expire at noon on Saturday, as it was natural that an Armistice should come to an end at midday to allow for the necessary advance of troops to be made by daylight.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCUTTLING

MIDSUMMER'S Day—sunshine and calm heralded a wonderfully warm and still summer's day.

At about 10 o'clock in the forenoon Commander Oldekop informed me that the English Admiral, with battleships and destroyers, had left harbour for the open sea; that the noisy English Press advocated the refusal of the Entente to buy the German ships, demanding their unconditional surrender instead, and that the German postal torpedo boat was due at Scapa Flow the next day at noon. I gave the order to make the prearranged signal for 'Ships to be sunk at once.'

As, at this time, owing to the reduced personnel, signals were only exchanged between certain hours and communication had to be re-established, a certain time elapsed before the signal had been passed round the Fleet and was acknowledged by the ships and the leader of the T.B.s. At about half-past eleven the acknowledgments began to arrive.

I held back the order to sink my Flagship, *Emden*, for the moment. Two English dispatch boats lay alongside, as usual, and besides them a water-boat which had started to pump its supply of water into the *Emden's* tanks. The crews of these boats could not have failed to notice the suppressed excitement of the *Emden's* ship's company

had I given the order at once. They would have made a noise, attracted the English Admiral back, and have prevented the sinking of the remaining ships.

Shortly after 12 o'clock the *Frederick the Great* took up more and more of a list whilst steadily sinking deeper, her boats were already lowered and lay off aft—now the loud and vigorous tones of single strokes of the ship's bell sounded across the water, the signal for 'Abandon Ship.' We saw the crew man the boats and shove off. *Frederick the Great* heeled more over on her side, torrents of water poured into her through her opened ports—then, in a few minutes, she capsizes and sinks into the depths, the air expelled through the funnels throwing up two spouts of water—then all is quiet, small fragments of wreckage float in the empty berth. The time is sixteen minutes past twelve.

The signal by the bell appeared to wake up all the remaining ships at one stroke—as though they had just been awaiting this sign—increased activity was evident on all sides, here boats were being lowered, there men could be seen hauling their heavy bags of clothes on to the quarter-decks; again, as elsewhere, boats were being manned and shoved off from their ships with farewell cheers. There was, besides, an English guard boat, which for some time had been lying near the *Frederick the Great*, whose anxiety must have been aroused by the bell signal and the simultaneous manning of the boats; indeed, it must have observed the unusually heavy list of the ships with attention and anxiety. It became so panic-stricken when suddenly the gigantic vessel close before its eyes capsized and sank, that with never a thought it opened a wild fire on the unarmed, weaponless occupants of the boats, despite the fact that these held white flags up to it. At the same time it set its steam siren in action

—its anxious-sounding tone frightened the crews of the remaining English guard boats out of their day-dreams, which on a warm summer's morning and in the absence of the Admiral were only too understandable, and, as was to be expected, the sudden change from idyllic peace to the utmost tumult had the usual effect on untutored minds; they lost their heads and raged blindly against everything which did not appear to them to follow the usual routine. A panic had broken out amongst them, in which the destroyers which had remained in harbour also joined. Under the influence of this panic, acts of ferocity were committed against the unarmed German crews, which remove any English right to be indignant over German violators of the rules of war. A fortunate point was that as the consummation of the sinking proceeded—*King Albert, Moltke, Brummer* quickly followed *Frederick the Great*, others were on the point of sinking—the number of boats with shipwrecked crews grew to such an extent that the English boats in their perplexity often appeared not to know which boat they were to shoot at first. For this reason they quickly changed from one boat to another; due to this incessant change of target their fire did not have very grave consequences.

The sinking of the *Frederick the Great*, and of the *Brummer* which lay close astern of the *Emden*, had also aroused the English boats lying alongside us. The *Emden's* ship's company themselves, as they were down below at dinner, did not yet know of what was going on in the harbour; now, however, it was also time to give the order to sink the *Emden*. Under the direction of the Commanding Officer the valves and underwater broadside torpedo tubes were opened, the water poured in. One of the English dispatch boats wanted to shove off, as they were afraid of being drawn down into the depths

with the *Emden*; I kept it fast just long enough to embark the *Emden's* crew.

As the English fire on the German boats did not cease, in spite of the white flags displayed, I decided to go ashore and see the Admiral Commanding to get him to stop the firing. Unacquainted with the whereabouts of this Admiral's office and not knowing the landing place, I transferred, with my Staff, to the other English dispatch boat, which was the one kept ready for me for my visits of inspection. It landed us in a rocky bay. Already from a distance I had noticed a motor car approaching the spot at full speed. In it sat a young gentleman dressed in tennis clothes. The coxswain of the drifter indicated him as commanding on land. To me he seemed much too young. I requested him to have the firing stopped at once. He was exceedingly angry, hardly listened, and really didn't understand a word I had to say; he ran away, returned shortly afterwards with a camera, threw himself into a speed-boat lying ready for him and drove out of the bay; I took it that he would stop the shooting. But there I was wrong. The English drifter was to take us back to the *Emden*. Whilst leaving the bay—the tide was still on the ebb—we ran hard and fast on a shoal. All efforts, that is on our own initiative, failed to float the clumsy and heavily-built boat. The hillocks round the bay hid our ships, only my Admiral's Flag, hoisted in the *Emden*, showed above the chain of hills—it would not, would not disappear! We had to sit on that shoal, cut off from all happenings in the world, for about an hour; at last with the setting in of the flood we floated and could steer out of the bay.

What a sight! In front of us the *Grosse Kurfurst* reared herself steeply into the air. Both cables parted with a loud clinking; she fell heavily to port and cap-

sized. The red coating of her bottom shone wide over the blue sea.

Many berths were already 'vacated' for the journey to the bottom.

English destroyers with foam at the bows steered into the bight. One of them goes alongside *Emden* and makes efforts to slip the cable so as to tow her into shallow water. The *Emden* sinks first a little deeper. I gave up heading for the *Emden* and ordered the drifter to close the *Bayern*, whose men lying and sitting on life-saving rafts, were floating about near their ship. We took them on board. Immediately after this the *Bayern* heeled over and the water poured below in torrents through the scuttles and ports which, here again, were wide open. In a few minutes the quarter-deck was awash. The mighty ship then turned over and sank to the bottom with the German flag flying. Three cheers from her crew give her the tribute of honour on her last journey. The feeble wind now bears over to us the sound of the salvoes fired by the English destroyers who are trying to prevent our work of destruction amongst the torpedo-boats. A hard and hot engagement is being fought over there. Once again the gay battle-spirit of these wonderful officers and men is aroused—not this time are weapons their helpers; they have none, except their sense of duty. On the strength of this alone they carry out their work of destruction in the face of the heavy fire of the enemy destroyers and guard boats. The Sixth Flotilla had an especially difficult task. They did not get the signal, through untoward circumstances, till much later on, at a time when the English who had at first lost their heads were beginning to come to their senses again.[1] Out of

[1] See the account of the sinking by the leader of the T.B.s in the Appendix.

fifty boats forty-six were sunk, a wonderful performance! I want to go over to them. Now the English battleships are appearing in the bay. They storm in at full speed, cleared for action with their 38-centimetre guns trained on the remains of my Squadron. Now is the time to go to this English Admiral to get him to put an end to these acts of hostility. The firing dies away and is gradually silenced. In the background the heavy cruisers are fighting their dying battle. *Seydlitz* capsizes. *Derfflinger* and *Von der Tann* soon have their quarter-deck or forecastle awash; it cannot be much longer before they disappear. Only *Hindenburg* still floats foursquare on the water, although she too rides deeper; I remember that her C.O. wished to sink her on an even keel to make the disembarkation of the crew more certain. Of the battleships only *Baden* with a list, and *Markgraf* apparently intact, are still floating. *Emden* floats, as does *Nürnberg*. *Frankfurt* appears to be on the verge of sinking. Then the *Bremse*, taken in tow by an English destroyer, capsizes. Her gallant commander, Lieutenant Schacke, has succeeded in sinking his ship in spite of the English sailors who seized the vessel. On my journey to the English Flagship, boats of survivors were also taken in tow.

I was deeply moved and full of thankfulness towards my brave officers and their valiant men, who had carried out the work ordered in such a brilliant fashion. All these wonderful ships and torpedo boats had gone, sunk, once the pride of the German People: mighty work of the German ship-builders' art, how much thought, how much military experiment and experience had been united in them! A development of an importance without equal was here arrested and sunk into the grave.

Alongside the English Flagship, which had just anchored, a condition akin to that caused by 'send all

boats to the Flagship' reigned: patrol boats, drifters, guard boats, and ships' boats, all crowded alongside, impatient to announce, to report, that the German Fleet had gone to its grave. At last my drifter succeeds in breaking a way for itself and to range alongside. A ladder is put over for me. I step on board the *Revenge* and am met by the English Vice-Admiral, Sir Sidney R. Fremantle.

CHAPTER IX

JUSTIFICATION OF THE SCUTTLING—IN PRISONER-OF-WAR'S CAMPS AT NIGG, OSWESTRY, AND DONNINGTON HALL —RETURN HOME

THE first part of my duty, the sinking, was completed. Now began the second, to point out the justification for the sinking to the enemy. My Chief of Staff and I alone held the key to the events of the day.

I started by telling the English Admiral that I had caused the Fleet to be sunk, and that I alone would be answerable for everything that had happened. The English Admiral declared that my action was an 'Act of Treachery' and told me that I was a prisoner of war. A cabin was allotted to me. The reproach of 'Treachery' I left unanswered at the time owing to the angry spirit reigning on board; there would yet be time to clear this reproach. I requested the English Admiral to allow me my Flag-Lieutenant, Lieutenant Schilling. It was approved. The starboard side of the quarter-deck was cleared for me. After about ten minutes I was taken along by a guard of three Royal Marines with fixed bayonets to my quarters. They were the Admiral's cabins on the bridge. My luggage remained untouched.

My Flag-Lieutenant and I enjoyed the wide view of the now empty Scapa Flow through the big square ports of the Admiral's cabin. Only *Baden* and *Markgraf* and one or two light cruisers were still visible. Not far from us

the wreck of the capsized *Seydlitz* towered out of the water. When we again looked out, after about half an hour—it must then have been about four-thirty—at the ships still afloat, we could only see two big white columns of water where the *Markgraf* had been. *Markgraf* must have sunk at this moment. I did not then know what a tragedy had been enacted on board.[1] The Commanding Officer, Commander Schumann, and two very brave petty officers, fell victims to the murderous bullets of an English drifter coxswain. This man had exceeded the very exact English regulations, which were also circulated to us, which were in force for the guarding of the Interned Squadron, in that he fired at members of the crew of a ship on board their own vessel.

At this time a long signal from the English Admiral was being sent to the English Squadron from near us on the signal platform. Each word of the signal was called out so loud that we could not fail to hear and understand it if we wanted to or not. In the signal the English officers, amongst other things, were ordered to treat the German crews who had been saved with as much consideration as was consistent with bare humanity, as they had thrown away any right to special consideration by their traitorous conduct; their gear was to be searched thoroughly. That meant in German, therefore, that the men were to be treated as badly as possible and that their baggage was to be robbed. My supposition was afterwards confirmed, one or two English ships had at first received the soaked and shivering crews with real consideration; this

[1] The wife of the Commanding Officer wrote to me a few weeks before the sinking, as German officers' wives will, without much complaint: 'I have four children and am alone, you know what this means in these times, everything else I leave to you.' I went over to her husband in the *Markgraf* at once—he was angry at the letter: of course, he would stay on in Scapa Flow, he wouldn't leave his ship. He kept his word. Honour him!

treatment was then suddenly reversed. Officers and men were badly treated. They had to surrender their baggage and pile it in heaps on the quarter-decks, where it was thoroughly gone through and robbed by the English crews. My cloak fell a sacrifice to this plundering on board the battleship *Royal Oak*—I missed it badly in the cold weather there at the time; to-day I no longer need it, I present it to its present possessor so that from now on he can boast about his legal ownership before his English friends. I am convinced that it was only because of the financial straits to which the English Empire was reduced, announced as being desperate at the time by the English Press, that the English Government did not fulfil their duty of honour in restoring the petty goods and chattels which the German crews had so pitifully saved.

The signal mentioned above induced me now to clear up the reproach of 'Treachery.' The English Interpreter Officer was sent for. I caused the English Admiral to be asked, through him, how he arrived at the so-called 'Treachery.' Considering our previous relations I could not understand how he could make such a reproach to me. I was of the opinion that war had broken out again. That in accordance with our instructions: 'It is the wish of the All Highest that disabled ships should be sunk,' I was bound to sink the ships. I entreated him not to allow the ships' companies to suffer for what I had ordered. The English Admiral sent me his answer through the interpreter, that the good relations between us, speaking not only for himself, but for the other English Flag Officers as well, was recognized—though only until this day! He was compelled to maintain the reproach of 'Treachery' as I had broken the Armistice which had been extended for two days, that is, till Monday. I thereupon let him be told that I should have been

informed by the English Admiralty at once of this extension of the Armistice owing to my isolation from home; that I had no idea of this extension, otherwise the sinking would not have taken place. Due to the fact that the English Admiralty had concealed the extension of the Armistice from me the whole situation was now altered in our favour. The English Admiral, through the interpreter, then caused more information to be sought, which I got together to that end, as follows: that following the rejection of the German counter-proposals to the Peace Conditions I had to assume that the state of war would be resumed; the Armistice, I assumed, would cease automatically without previous warning. As I had had no notice of the prolonging of the Armistice period it was my bounden duty, and that too without requiring to ask the English Admiral for information, to deal with the matter on my own and sink the Fleet. News, in so far as I had received any at all, I had gathered from the English Press supplied me, and there it was shown as 'official.'

It was now dark. After a game of picquet we, my Flag-Lieutenant and I, went off to bed. I confess, it was a long time since I spent such a restful night as this. The familiar and what in former days was the friendly noise of the anchor being weighed woke us up. The English Squadron of battleships weighed and proceeded from Scapa Flow. When we again came to an anchor it was midday and we were in Cromarty Firth. The English ships, I presume to celebrate the sinking of the German Fleet, had dressed ship. A signal from the incoming Admiral informed them that this finery was to be hauled down again. At noon the German naval officers were called on to the quarter-deck of *Revenge*. A detachment of sea-soldiers with fixed bayonets were fallen in there in

a square, further away were the officers and men of *Revenge*, the C.O.s of the German ships, the leader of the T.B.s, and my Staff were also there—even I received an order to take a part. After a certain time the English Admiral appeared. He read out the following speech which the interpreter translated for us into German:

'ADMIRAL VON REUTER!

'Before I hand you over to the military authorities I should like to bring to your notice the reasons for my indignation at your act.

'This act is contrary to all feelings of propriety and honour. It is a traitorous action, a breach of trust, which you have committed and a disgrace to you!

'You have committed an act of war by hoisting your war flag and, at the same time, sinking the ships at a time when the Armistice was in full force.

'One sees from this that the spirit of the new Germany is no different from the old. Anyone who has not believed it until now, will now be convinced.

'How your act will be understood in your own country is beyond my comprehension.

'If you, however, Admiral von Reuter, maintain that the Armistice had expired, this was only based on an unfounded and false assumption. The letters were just completed and signed by me which would have informed you in accordance with the instructions from my Government, whether Peace had been signed or not. How could you believe that I would take my squadron to sea for exercises if this day had been such a critical one?

'In the same way that Germany started the War by a military Treaty violation in the invasion of Belgium, you have ended it by a similar naval violation!

'The honour-loving seamen of all nations will be unable to comprehend this act, with the exception perhaps, of yours.

'You will now be handed over to the military authorities who deal with prisoners of war.'

I could only shake my head during the speech. I had a feeling that the speech was being given on behalf of the reporter of *The Times*, who was present. He must have been on board the English ships already, by Saturday the 21 June, presumably to report on the seizure of the German ships.

This speech, delivered with a background of military pomp, was, of course, meant to represent an important State ceremony. The English revel in such theatrical displays. To the higher standing German mind these displays are in bad taste. To us this treatment appeared to be more in the nature of a film display. It even fell short of the realm of comedy and inspired our compassion. I was sensible of the fact that this theatre *coup* was uncommonly unpleasant and humbling for the English Admiral who appeared to be a sound and high-thinking man.

I answered in German, facing the interpreter: "Tell your Admiral that I am unable to agree with the purport of his speech and that our comprehension of the subject differs. I alone carry the responsibility. I am convinced that any English naval officer, placed as I was, would have acted in the same way."

We were then landed. Ashore, a car was placed at my disposal and we drove off through the beautiful Scottish country-side. Trees and bushes stood on either side of the road, and they were green, a long-missed sight!

After about half an hour's run we drove into the camp at Nigg. A Scottish officer led my Flag-Lieutenant and me to a barrack room. The extensive camp lies in a bay on the slopes of a gradually sloping hill.

High mountains are all around. From our barracks we enjoyed a view over the Scottish Highlands, which are

incomparably beautiful. In default of anything else to sit on we settled down on the steps of our barrack room and smoked and waited. 'Waiting' in the days to come was to become our most serious occupation. Gradually the officers and men began to arrive. I could only nod my thanks to them from the distance for their truly loyal fulfilment of duty.

The night was awful and although the Scottish Camp Commandant had produced a bed for me the four blankets supplied were so thin and full of holes that I was bitterly cold in the storm then blowing. At last it was morning. We washed ourselves at the pump and refreshed ourselves on corned beef, nibbled hard bread, waited, and froze.

It was in the camp here that I first learnt how the sinking had been carried out in the individual ships: in the case of *Emden*, *Baden*, and *Nürnberg* the time from when the order was given to the time of seizure by the English was not sufficient to fill the ships sufficiently to make sure that they would sink. Besides this, on board *Emden*, as I knew already, we were unable to make any large preparation owing to the English dispatch boats constantly lying alongside, whom we feared might discover what was going on. The crew of the battleship *Kaiserin*, after much trouble trying to get a boat out, had to jump overboard before the ship capsized. German boats hurrying to the rescue were in most cases driven away by the English so that the work of rescue was dragged out to half an hour; in spite of this it finally succeeded and all were rescued.

The toll exacted by the irresponsible firing on the part of the English amounted to: 10 killed, including Commander Schumann, Commanding Officer of the *Markgraf*, and about 16 wounded, amongst them Staff Engineer Rogge of the *Bayern*.

I take this opportunity of remembering with thankfulness all those various gifts which poured in to me for the survivors and which at least alleviated their most pressing needs.

During the afternoon a car took my Chief of Staff and me to the railway station, which lay some distance away. The Scottish Camp Commandant accompanied me. His behaviour won my regard.

It must have been about 5 o'clock in the afternoon when we—my Staff and I—were lodged in a comfortable and suitable first-class compartment and steamed off to an unknown destination, though a whisper had leaked through early that it was to be Oswestry Camp. The night, with the exception of one hour, was as light as day. The journey lay through the middle of the Scottish Highlands; a wonderful trip, which we appreciated.

English newspapers gradually began to reach us, most of them did not remark kindly on the sinking. That was understandable. A few of them, in opposition to this view, did justice to us and expressed themselves as owning our right to the sinking. Had anybody then really been injured by the sinking? Surely the wishes of all parties were fulfilled in a way that is seldom achieved: the pacifists must have rejoiced that a number of nasty war machines were destroyed; the English must have been pleased not to have to worry over the distribution of the ships between her brothers of the Entente and they, in turn, must have been pleased that England herself could no longer just annex them; and finally, Germany could remain happy in the knowledge that the honour of her Navy and at the same time that of the Government had been saved.

The English Admiralty, of course, cannot hide a real feeling of shame that this last undertaking of the German

Fleet was prepared and carried out under the very eyes of the guard boats and truly without it being given away before the appointed time as it happened so many times during the War.

We entered the Oswestry Camp during the forenoon of the 24 June. A car again fetched me from the train and took me straight to the Camp Commandant. He greeted me politely and took my German money from me. The pitifully few pounds I obtained in exchange impressed on me for the first time the depth to which the German exchange value had fallen in a most unpleasant way. A woman driver then drove me to the camp proper. I could hardly recognize her as such at first as the characteristics of her sex, due either to the effect of the U-boat war or to the masculine garments she effected, were effaced. It was not until she removed her cap in the inquiry room that the rich abundance of her hair declared her femininity. She and a ' Tommy ' then undertook the examination of the contents of my hand-bag.

In the camp we were warmly greeted by the senior officer of the prisoners of war, Major Nau, and the other German officers. The comradely fellow-feeling of the Rittmeister Von Dresky prompted him to supply me with a sorely missed overcoat. He does not guess how gratefully I thought of him in the next seven months. My cubicle was in a barrack room. Like all barrack rooms, it was cold, draughty, though not uninhabitable. The stove had to be kept red-hot day and night in the cold, wet weather then prevailing.

In connection with the sinking, right was on our side. The German Government to start with, as they had absolutely no knowledge of what our reasons were, could

take no steps in the matter ; we had to take the initiative. I composed a letter to the English Admiralty on that very day. It runs :

24 June 1919.

' I informed the senior British naval officer at Scapa Flow, Vice-Admiral Sir Sidney R. Fremantle, that I, personally and alone, am responsible for the sinking of the interned German ships and torpedo boats.

' The officers and men can therefore not be held answerable for the sinking.

' On these grounds I request that you will again accord them the privileges due to internees.

' The reason for my not requesting the same advantages for myself is purely a practical one, as I do not want to bring myself into the question as this might endanger the acceptance of this proposal.

' I have sent a copy of this letter to the Swiss Embassy with a request that they will telegraph it to the German Government.'

I had requested the interned status to be reimposed on the German crews—the assumption that war had broken out again was my mistake—as treating them as prisoners of war was unauthorized. Accepting the idea that I would immediately be arraigned before an English judge, I gave no more information on my motives : I did not want to be committed to anything in writing. Further, I proposed that a representative of the Swiss Embassy should be sent to me so that through him, as representing German interests, I could get into touch with the German Government. This proposal came to nothing as unrestricted intercourse between the Embassy and the German Government was not permissible. My stay at Oswestry did not last more than a week. On the 30 June the Camp Commandant accompanied me to the concentra-

tion camp at Donnington Hall, a castle which lies about in the middle of England, in a big park with age-old oaks where all manner of red and fallow deer, rabbits, crows and birds lead a contemplative existence. The transfer to Donnington Hall was no doubt intended to separate me from my officers on account of the forthcoming trial; in that connection the exertions to make certain of my conviction must also have played a part. I had nothing really to complain of in the change except for this difficult parting with my officers.

After a journey of several hours, third class this time, and after numerous changes, we arrived at Donnington Hall amidst the cheers of the German officers. Behind me and my Flag-Lieutenant the gates closed for seven months. An unexpectedly long time!

The life in a prisoner of war's camp, whose many sorrows and few joys of captivity have so often been described, need not be gone into in detail here. I found much true and devoted friendship; it was this which brought the sun into the daily greyness of the prisoner's life. The promise that Graf Kageneck, the senior officer in the camp, made me, in the name of all officers on the occasion of their departure from Donnington Hall, was kept to the letter; our departed comrades did not forget us who had been left behind, did not omit to make strenuous efforts to ensure our repatriation, and contributed greatly in dispelling our feelings of loneliness in the most understanding and pleasant way by sending us letters and parcels, particularly at Christmas-time. I remember particularly thankfully the demonstration of disinterested friendship displayed by Gusow, Ruffhold, Duren, Weimar, and Bremen. In the camp I had the extreme pleasure of meeting several Coburgers, sons of the town in which I had been brought up, amongst whom I

would like particularly to mention the brothers Beck; my intercourse with them was the recreation of the day for me. The English Camp Commandant and his officers were thoughtful and kind in their interpretation of the regulations towards me. Nevertheless, I was more carefully watched than my fellow-prisoners. My announcement, that I had no thought of escaping, as it would jeopardize the establishment of the justification of the sinking which I wished to impress on England, did not relieve the anxiety of my jailers for a long time.

My thoughts were chiefly concentrated on how I could possibly get a report through to the Admiralty in Berlin. Finally an opportunity presented itself; Lieutenant Lobsien, of the reserve of officers, was due to be sent home at the beginning of July to record his vote in Schleswig-Holstein. To entrust a written report to him was too dangerous. So for eight days we hammered away at the report out loud till he knew it by heart; fortunately he hailed from the coast, so that naval expressions and terms were familiar to him. By bad luck he was detained in a concentration camp with others awaiting repatriation for four weeks, so that he could not deliver my report before the middle of August at the Admiralty in Berlin.

The report was as follows:

'DONNINGTON HALL,

'15 *July* 1919.

'TO THE HEAD OF THE ADMIRALTY.

'The reasons for my action at Scapa Flow on the 21 June 1919 were the two instructions:

'1. A naval Commander-in-Chief in foreign waters, who is not in touch with the Homeland, is to act on his own initiative as best meets the needs of the State and the honour of the Navy.

'2. German ships must on no account be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy in time of war.

'The sinking of the interned ships was therefore considered in the case of an attempt at seizure or in case hostilities were resumed due to the Peace Treaty not being signed. The surrender of the ships was envisaged if the Treaty were signed, as it could not be foreseen what consequences the refusal to surrender would have on the sorely pressed German Government, about which I received no information. The necessary orders have already been published, and apparently must have been found out by the English. They cannot be held against me.

'On Friday, the 20 June, during the afternoon, I learned from *The Times* of the 16 June, the official text of the German counter-proposals. In them, the German Fleet was to be used as an object of barter. That evening I had a wireless message sent to the German Government requesting that the officers might be relieved of their duty before the surrender.

'This wireless message was sent by the first available opportunity to the English Admiral in Scapa Flow, Sir S. R. Fremantle, on the 21 June for transmission.

'After the sending of this message the English newspapers of Tuesday the 17 June arrived. In them was the official text of the final reply of the Entente to the German Government. It contained the refusal to take the interned Fleet into consideration as an object of barter, and expressed its absolute refusal of the German counter-proposals. In *The Times*, it also said that the German Government was to give a definite answer within five days from the reply to her counter-proposals, and that during the last three days of this five-day respite the Armistice would automatically expire. As this reply was made on the 16 June, I had to conclude that if the Peace Treaty were not signed by Saturday the 21 June, a state of war would again be in force. Judging by the tone of refusal of the final note of the Entente and by the speech

of the Government spokesman in the German National Assembly and the attitude of the German Press, I was entitled to assume that the Treaty would not be signed, and therefore that a state of war would be resumed on the Saturday.

'I would like to mention in this connection that I received no information of any sort either from the German or the English Governments about the extension of the Armistice period as given in the note of the 16 June, or of any views the German Government held, in general. My only sources of information were the English newspapers, which, as a rule, I received four days after their publication.

'In the belief that the state of war had been resumed I gave the order to sink the interned German Fleet on Saturday the 21 June.

'I first learned of the extension of the Armistice period to Monday the 23 June, on board the English Flagship *Revenge* during the afternoon of the 21 June, through the interpreter to Vice-Admiral Sir S. R. Fremantle. In my opinion, therefore, no reflection can be cast on me for a violation of the Armistice. The proceedings were then only made possible by the fact that I was isolated from all Government news of the Armistice and Peace discussions.

'I was bound to carry out the sinking in accordance with the order issued at the beginning of the War, which forbade that any German ship should be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. It was therefore not a business of the exercise of my own initiative as is represented in the French Prime Minister Clemenceau's note, but rather, solely a proceeding to which I was in duty bound as an officer in accordance with the above quoted Government order which has not been cancelled. The sinking only shows my efforts, as good as they could be without any news, to carry out my duty as an officer towards my Government.

'My order to carry out the sinking was obeyed with the utmost devotion. The actual losses I do not know more certainly than is given by the English Press. I want to call special attention to the fact that no armed measures were used against the English military forces and, indeed, due to our lack of weapons this was quite impossible. For this reason there was not a man wounded or killed on the English side, so no act of violence or war was committed against the English armed forces. As regards the sinking it was a matter of indifference that the greater part of the English guarding force, as was actually the case, had gone to sea.

'Further, referring to Article 31 of the Armistice conditions, it is only laid down that the material, etc., is not to be destroyed *before* delivery, at the Armistice; what must not be done with the ships after this delivery is not stated. In consequence of this omission, a loop-hole is left by which alone the sinking can be justified, the more so as it concerns German property and not that of the enemy.

'I would like to take this opportunity of acknowledging the practical support accorded me on the part of my Chief of Staff Captain Oldekop, and of the Leader of the Torpedo Boats, Commander Cordes.

'Lieutenant Lobsien of the Reserve, acquitted himself of this commission with aptitude and punctuality.'

In the middle of July I caused a letter to be sent to the German Government through the representative of the Swiss Embassy, of which only the first paragraph is of interest:

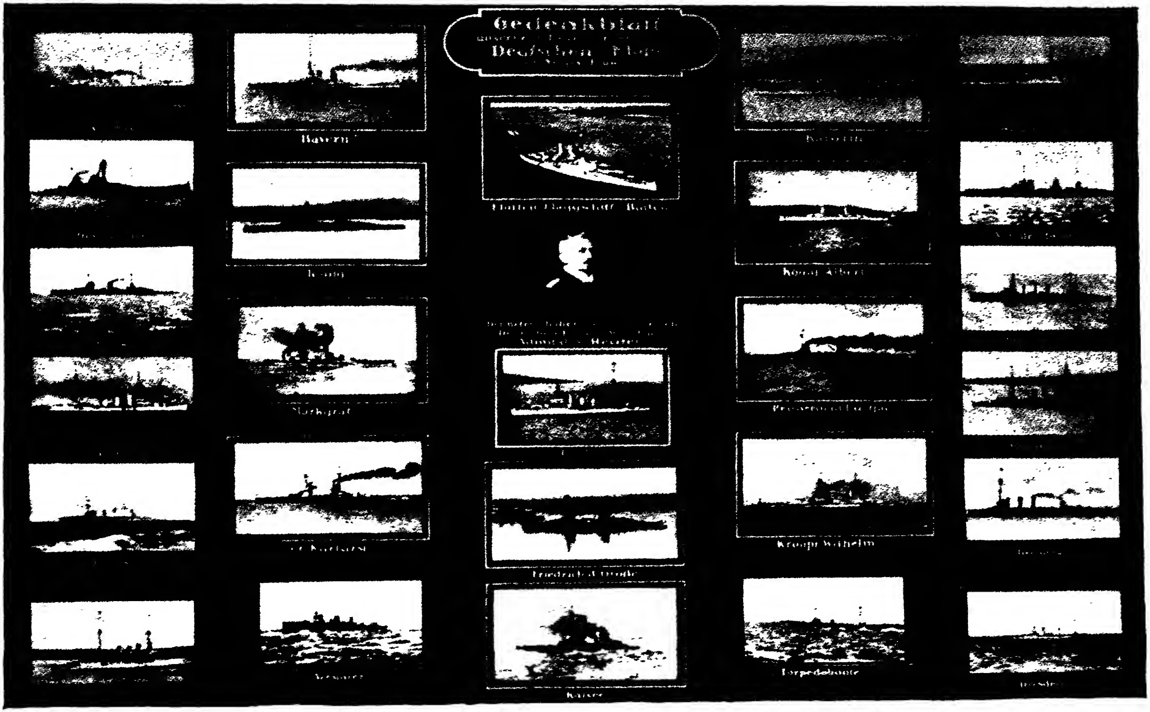
'I beg to state that the repatriation of the crews will probably come about, as the justification for taking them prisoner, the renewal of hostilities, has not in fact taken place. Internment is therefore, now as before, the only permissible measure that can be taken against them:

up to the present the internment of the men has really amounted to holding them as prisoners of war.'

As I had waited several weeks in vain for the password from Lieutenant Lobsien that was to tell me that he had delivered the report at the Admiralty, I decided to send a duplicate of the report direct through the post to the Admiralty in Berlin. My Flag-Lieutenant, who during all the months at Donnington Hall was a useful helper due to his admirable spirit, character, and a judgment beyond his years, sent this letter to the care of his address.

About the middle of July a wireless message was intercepted in Germany, the text of which was that the proceedings at Scapa Flow were not to be inquired into by the courts. We had also read this in the English Press. This wireless message must have misled the Government into not taking any steps—at least none as far as we could see—to set forth clearly the justice on the side of Germany in the question of the sinking and to have us set free. As the German Government, including the Admiralty, was absolutely without responsibility for the sinking, they should have demanded my release in order to bring me to trial before their judge. This omission must have had something to do with the attitude the Entente subsequently took up in blaming the German Government for abetting the sinking. Soon after my departure from the Oswestry camp a few individual officers and men were interrogated about the sinking. They confined themselves to the statement that they had done no more than carry out my orders. My legal officer, whom the Commission of Inquiry sounded most carefully, replied, during the discussion on the question of sovereignty over the Interned Squadron, showing that he was ready to fight the point, that although it was true that we had been ordered to haul down our ensigns,

HIS EXCELLENCY VON TROTHA GREETS THE HOMECOMING GERMAN MARINERS


Gedenkblatt
Deutschen Flotte
Bayern
König
Kronpr Wilhelm
Friedrich d Große
Kaiser
Torpedoboote

SOUVENIR

yet our 'Command' pendants—commissioning pendants and Admiral's flag—were left alone and these were the signs of our sovereignty. This was confirmed by the English naval officer assisting at the inquiry by the remark he made to the examining legal official, which was something to this effect: 'There you are, I told you the same thing.' I, myself, was never given a hearing. A court martial was never held: an acknowledgment, therefore, that the Admiralty could find nothing against me nor against the steps I took. A court martial deciding impartially would have exposed England's guilt in isolating the Interned Squadron from its home authorities and in not informing it of the extension of the period of the Armistice. How far the German Government went in the use of the strength of my position remains unknown to me.

. . . . . .

On the 24 June the Peace Treaty was signed by Germany. The repatriation of all the German prisoners of war was to follow as soon as three Great Powers had ratified the Treaty. To judge by the English Press that might be delayed for yet many months. The English newspapers, as far as those were concerned who did not absolutely belong to the Northcliffe group, complained that, owing to the bad English financial position where the possibility of every economy ought to be studied, hundreds of thousands of prisoners were still being held captive in English camps. I studied these reports and came to the conclusion that for financial reasons the English Government would be glad to be rid of the prisoners of war—not on your life for reasons of humanity! They were, anyway, in none too strong a position and Lloyd George's nerves seem to have given way, as appeared more particularly by his extended holiday and

the postponement of the economy legislation. On one side the English Government was urged by its own and the French vindictive Press to have nothing to do with Germany for settling the question of the prisoners of war; on the other side it was assailed by the Press of the Left and urged to send the hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war back to their homes. I decided, therefore, on the strength of being the most senior of the prisoners of war in England, to make a preliminary attempt on Lloyd George in the interests of the prisoners of war. In this letter I pointed out to him how expensive and how inhumane it was to keep the German prisoners of war still captive now that Peace had been declared. To make their repatriation dependent on the ratification by three Great Powers meant a long and unforeseen delay. The tension amongst the German prisoners of war was such that any further extension of their captivity was really more than they would be able to endure.

The German Government, in accordance with the Peace Terms, had nominated a delegate to the Commission for the repatriation of prisoners of war immediately after signing the Treaty. As, however, close on eight weeks had elapsed since this nomination was made without our becoming aware of any action being taken by this delegate, I was confirmed in the belief that after the action of nominating this delegate with the utmost correctness, the German Government would wait with its hands in its pockets until the Entente or Heaven itself would be benign enough to initiate the repatriation of the prisoners of war, so I decided, personally, again to appeal to the German Government. The German Press was silent.

The cold attitude of the German Government on the question of repatriation was not only apparent to us prisoners of war, as the English Camp Commandant,

who at this time—about mid-August—had returned to the camp from the War Office, described his conversations with them to us, whereby the holding back of the prisoners was only due to the German Government. The latter apparently took no interest in the repatriation; the English War Office would have been only too pleased to be rid of the German prisoners of war. This news I condensed in the form of a telegram to the German Government. Before I finally sent it off, I forwarded it in the form of a letter through the camp post office addressed to the German Press for publication, as without this precaution the telegram would most probably have disappeared without trace into some official's pigeon-hole. The telegram was not sent off to the German Government until it had been received by the Press; an English general who happened to stop in the camp, even re-cast it for me in good English, so that it would pass the English censors more quickly! It passed through them remarkably quickly and so to the German Government: the latter were offended and began to rage, and try to vindicate themselves. We were not served by that alone. A commission was now formed in the camp under the direction of Captain Gillmann, which with much speed, tact, and energy bombarded the German Press with propaganda for our repatriation. Every inmate of the camp was to send two letters, one to the Press of his home neighbourhood and the other to the member of the Reichstag representing his constituency, in which he was to complain bitterly that the Press and the Government had done nothing towards the repatriation of the prisoners of war. Other camps were urged to take similar steps, some had already done so on their own volition. In this way a torrent of complaint was poured over the Government and German Press and started a storm in the paper

world. This perhaps aided in inducing Lloyd George to oppose the French and similar vindictive Press concerning the liberation of the prisoners. The removal of my comrades from Donnington Hall was delayed for several weeks more due to the Transport Strike which had broken out in England. Not till the end of October did we part from one another. Consequently the German prisoners of war may have achieved their release from captivity on their own account by true Baron Munchhausen methods. Only we, of the Scapa Flow Interned Squadron, had yet to endure the hospitality of England for an indefinite time.

The necessary written details of the sinking were again entrusted, this time to a naval officer, containing the same information as the previously described report of the 15 July. In this way he would be in a position to inform the Admiralty how the English Government could be influenced by the German Press and was then to make certain that real use was made of this. This seemed to me all the more important as the spectre of an indemnity for the sunk Fleet was being brought up by the English and French newspapers.

I forwarded a protest against our exclusion from the scheme of repatriation to the English Prime Minister. It read:

'23 *October*, 1919.

'TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

'SIR,

'I have just learnt that I, Lieutenant-Commander Wernig and Lieutenant Schilling, as well as six ratings of the German Fleet, lately interned at Scapa Flow, have been excluded from the general scheme of repatriation of prisoners of war to Germany from the camp at Donnington Hall. I conclude from this fact that a similar procedure

will be adopted with the remaining officers and men of the Interned Fleet. This would indicate a breach of the undertaking given by the English Government, that the German prisoners of war would be repatriated even before the Peace Treaty was put into force. Against this exceptional treatment, which would dispense with the elements of justice, reasonableness, and humanity, I wish to record my protest.

'I base my protest on the following:

'1. As the representatives of the Entente themselves publicly announced in the Press, the internment of the German Fleet was itself a mistake. Neither I, nor my officers and men can be reproached for this mistake, nor is it reasonable to make us suffer for this mistake.

'2. The English Government kept me at Scapa Flow, isolated from my Government in spite of my protests. I only received written news, under the most favourable circumstances, after an interval of three weeks' and wireless messages after several days' delay, that is insofar as the English censorship allowed them through at all. The English Government should in all honesty, under these circumstances, have kept me currently informed over the Progress of the Peace negotiations, particularly as far as the notice and termination of the Armistice was concerned.

'It is laid down for me by my regulations that I, as Commander-in-Chief, am bound to deal with any quarrel on my own in the best way in keeping with the needs of the State and the honour of the Navy, in all cases of necessity or danger. I received information on the Peace negotiations neither from the English nor from my own Government, nor could I expect to, latterly, in the short respite where the situation was constantly changing. Consequently the principle of having to act on my own account was, for me, strengthened.

'The only sources of information available to me were

the English newspapers. Their news was only of importance to me, however, where it was of an official nature and dealt with the (to me) critical days of the 20 and 21 June. This news was about the German counter-proposals to the Peace Treaty and the refusing of the former by the Entente. In accordance with the knowledge thus acquired through the English Press and the refusal of the German counter-proposals, I concluded, as a certainty, that hostilities would be renewed on the 21 June; the German Prime Minister on his part had even declared in the national Assembly that he would rather his hand withered than sign this Peace Treaty; I could also not think it possible as an officer, that such a Treaty could be signed. Danger and war now lay before me; they compelled me, as an officer and man of honour, to act in accordance with my instructions, henceforth independently, to the best of my judgment and conscience. I do not believe that an English naval commander would have had any different instructions nor would he have acted any differently.

'3. With a state of war a further regulation came into force as far as I was concerned: "Ships put out of action are not to be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy." The ships placed under my orders were disabled; the only thing left for me to do was to sink them. That I did. It did not affect my decision in the least whether the greater part of the English guarding forces were at sea or not. I am convinced that English Commanders-in-Chief have the same instructions and would act as I did.

'4. The conclusion I came to, that the War had been resumed on the 21 June, was founded on the basis and scrupulous proof of the English newspaper reports before quoted. Yet, although this conclusion of mine proved to be incorrect later on, as the newspapers referred to did not mention the two-day extension of the Armistice, I how-

ever sank the ships in the firm belief that it was again a time of war. I did not obtain a knowledge of the extended Armistice till the night of the 21 June on board H.M.S. *Revenge*. I can never be reproached with a wilful and guilty violation of the Armistice. As we have been declared prisoners of war in spite of this, war must apparently have broken out again as I had assumed. We have had to compromise with this. It would now, therefore, be all the more unfair if we were to be deprived of benefiting by the scheme of repatriation now being carried out and treated worse than the prisoners of war.

'5. If paragraphs 1 to 4 inclusive be appreciated, it will be understood that we now, as we see ourselves excluded from repatriation, feel strengthened in the feeling that we, who, after all, have only carried out our duty, will not be treated with right, fairness, and the chivalry of war, but will be offered purely as a sort of sacrifice to the spirit of revenge. I cannot believe that this is the intention of the English Government.

'I therefore request that the discrimination exercised against us in the matter of transporting us home be removed and that my repatriation, as well as that of the officers and men of what was the Interned Squadron at Scapa Flow, be ordered.'

Meanwhile the Entente had actually approached the German Government on the question of an indemnity for the German ships sunk at Scapa Flow. I really thought that the German Government in this case would leave no stone unturned to bring me before a German, international, or English court martial and thereby gain an impartial decision on the question of the sinking. They knew that right was on my side, and I should have been able to testify that I had sunk the ships without the slightest influence from the German authorities being brought to bear on me. I did not understand why the

German Government, in this question of compensation, did not stir up the German Press with energy; I had particularly impressed upon them the use to which the Press might be put. It surely was not agreeable to England that the German naval war material left over should be surrendered, as this would have the effect of re-opening the question of the division of spoils which had been closed, so happily for England, on the 21 June. The division amongst the remaining Allies of the harbour materials, by which they would become competitors of England, was also opposed to English interests. The German Press had an easy task before it; but indifferently led and not unanimous in its opinions it had to be content with a very varied following in the compensation question. In any case I deny most emphatically the blame attributed to me for the subsequent surrender of the German harbour material. The hundreds of the Entente's commissions travelling round Germany after the autumn of 1918 must surely have reported that we still had a lot left which could be taken from us to the advantage of the Entente. In order to cloak this robbery it was made out to be a punishment for the Scapa Flow incident which, accidentally, seemed to offer a better excuse than some arrears or other in the fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles.

I assured the English Government of the fact that the German Government had not yet been informed of the facts of the sinking in the following letter:

'12 *December* 1919.

'To the Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland.

'1. I have received no word on the subject of the sinking of the German ships either from the German Government or from any one of its representatives.

'2. The letter by the German Rear-Admiral von Trotha, published in the English Press could, neither by its wording nor by its implication, have any influence on my way of acting.'

A copy of this letter was sent to the German Government.

. . . . . .

On the festival day at the end of November I was reunited with my Chief of Staff and the officers, as well as a number of men, of the Interned Squadron. We spent two and a half months more of suspense at Donnington Hall, and once again I enjoyed the savour to the full of that which is held locked up, through things held in common in a united body of officers, in their spirit, in their feeling of comradeship, and in their tireless enthusiasm for their profession. The Naval Corps of Officers thus seemed to me to be the last and noblest blood of that which the much decried but yet so very prosperous militarism of the Hohenzollerns put into motion.

In the last days of January the hour of our freedom struck. On the 29th, just after midnight, the prison doors of Donnington Hall were opened. A special train brought us to Hull. There lay the German steamer in which we were to embark and which was to take us to Wilhelmshaven.

Harsh and unreconcilable was the passage from victorious England, the country where patriotism, order, and cleanliness ruled and where a man's standing was taken for granted, to beaten Germany. Even the steamer gave one an idea of the low state to which Germany had sunk. Still, it was going homewards. On the night of the 29 January the anchor was weighed and we left Hull.

After a voyage of a day and a half we steered into the Jade by the grey light of dawn. Once again, and for most of us probably for the last time, the North Sea had shown herself to us in all her harsh beauty. Sky and sea grey and hard, misty the horizon: like our future! A long swell made our steamer pitch and roll heavily. In the Jade the iron flotilla saluted us, a first welcome greeting! At noon we entered the lock at Wilhelmshaven to the strains of the Admiral's musical honours. The Head of the Admiralty, the officers of the station, members of the War Associations, detachments of troops, and the inhabitants of the towns of Wilhelmshaven and Rustringen all bade us a friendly welcome.

The day of homecoming brought reunion with all the good comrades who had shared sorrow and happiness for so many long months. 'Dead is that friendly distress . . .' For many now commenced that struggle for existence in a new calling. But few were selected to serve their land further in the Reichswehr Navy. They know that the sinking of the Fleet only represents a portion of their duty. The other, greater—its reconstruction—lies before them. Whether it will be their lot to survive the first birth pangs of the third German Fleet, who can to-day say? But yet their duty will be fulfilled if they bear a share in maintaining the splendid spirit of the second Germany Navy, that wonderful, vigorous Fleet which off the Skagerrak belied the hundred-year-old saying: 'Britannia rules the waves.'

Unconquered it lies in the harbour of Scapa Flow sunk in its self-chosen grave.

God-speed the third German Fleet!

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE TORPEDO BOATS ON THE SCUTTLING BY COMMANDER HERMANN CORDES

THE Armistice expires at noon to-day, Saturday the 21 June 1919! Due to the confiscation of the wireless apparatus we are cut off from home and from the Government. Any hour may bring a change, an important alteration of the situation, of which we will know nothing.

The English keep us in ignorance with malice aforethought. The German Admiral is dependent on the English newspapers whose news is at least four days old.

The leading German statesmen, the President of the Reich, and the Prime Minister, have all emphatically declared that the signing of the Peace is impossible!

The English Senior Officer of the British Squadron guarding us, Vice-Admiral Fremantle, must have been informed of the extension of the delay allowed for the signing of the Treaty. Propriety and honourable dealing prescribed that the Germans should have been informed of this extension of the Armistice.

He did not do it! Whether this was on the advice of his Government or not has not been decided.

We were kept in the dark!

Much to our astonishment the English Squadron puts out to sea for exercises with accompanying destroyers, leaves the bay, and turns over the duty of guarding us to two duty destroyers and the remaining drifters.

Harmlessness or knavery?

Union with other Squadrons? Return in battle array and seizure by destroyers laid alongside under the cover of salvoes of heavy guns?

Or absence with the purpose of deluding us with certainty, to show us 'the hour is not critical, no sort of important development is to be expected'?

We cannot say, although by the statement of an English petty officer of the *Royal Sovereign* (as we were being taken prisoner) the intention was to take possession of the ships and torpedo boats, by force, on Monday the 23 June!

Surmises and considerations of this sort were suddenly interrupted.

At eleven-twenty in the forenoon the signal 'Sink at once' comes from the *Emden*.

The die is cast!

The nearby groups are informed by light—proclaiming the order: 'Clear away for sinking ship,' and after a given time, in which the transmission and passing on of the message appears to be established, comes the pre-arranged executive signal:

'Carry on, "Z"—sink.'

As far as we can see from where we are, new War Ensigns and unblemished commissioning pendants are hoisted close up in all the torpedo boats.

The word is also passed to the Sixth Flotilla, despite the difficulty of observation from them due to intervening land.

The keys of the Kingston valves and the inspection doors of the condensers fly overboard; the heavy inrush of water gurgles and roars, soon the floor plates in all holds are awash.

The boats are heeling! The opened scuttles incline nearer to the surface of the water. The water pours in eagerly!

Here a boat cants sharply up and then down. A

second, with a noise of splitting and crashing, capsizes on to her neighbour. A third and fourth sink on an even keel!

In the part of Scapa bay visible to us the ships are capsizing and sinking.

Frederick the Great, who has much to atone for, is the first and is almost too quick!

'Belaying' the order—even had we wanted to—was now impossible.

The crews gather on the decks of the sinking ships, give three cheers for the German Fatherland, and hoist out the boats, destined to bring them, in some cases, to their sacrificial death. They man the cutters peacefully and in an orderly manner, with the prescribed gear which they have had ready for days, in order to row to the land in accordance with their orders, where they would assemble and sit down to await the further sequence of events.

The published order, to conduct themselves towards the English guard boats or towards the military posts on shore with no sign of active or passive resistance, without any attempt to escape or movement which might be construed as such, was everywhere followed to the letter.

Nevertheless, from all sides came at full speed: drifters, who had been lying in peace alongside *Sandhurst* and *Victorious* and had cast off in a sort of panic of haste, armed fishing steamers, tugs, auxiliaries, and the two guard destroyers *Vega* and *Vesper*, whose commanders, in a foaming rage, cast off from their buoys, and, storming along among the unarmed German life-boats, they all opened fire in defiance of all rights of international law and humanity, with their rifles, revolvers, and machine-guns.

The English seamen acted like madmen. Sailors, stokers, officers, and civilians shouted and bellowed at one another.

There was no question of anyone being in charge. They shot wildly all around, aimed at one life-boat, then left

off the next minute in order to haul down and trample on the War Ensign of a boat sinking in the vicinity, or indiscriminately to collect 'souvenirs' from the cabins and below decks, to steal and to pillage.

They hold a second and third rowing boat under deliberate rifle fire, recklessly direct their fire on the unarmed and helpless men jumping overboard and on those already in the water surrounded by the dead, and leave the wounded to their fate to make for another half-sunk torpedo boat in an attempt to cast off or cut its buoy adrift so as to get it into shallow water on the rocky shore.

Meanwhile the steam sirens of the drifters blare out, in the morse code: 'German ships are sinking.'

The only thing that can be understood out of the shooting, the wild shouting, and the furious gesticulations is the order: 'Back to your ships at once—stop the sinking or you'll go to Hell!'

A few crews under the menace of weapons are compelled to return to their ships. Life-boats and the life-saving jackets they wore are taken away and the crews, on explaining that they have no means of preventing the sinking, are held back on board the sinking boats by the rifles presented at them at the closest range and have "Then you shall die on board" shouted at them.

Captain MacCean, in the Flotilla Leader *Spenser*, rushes in from sea at full speed, no doubt as a result of some wireless signal reporting the situation, runs alongside S 132, and orders the German Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Commander Oskar Wehr, to come to him aboard his ship; there he tells him that every German officer whose boat sinks will be shot on the spot, gives devilish-sounding, earnestly-meant, and unmistakable orders to his officers and has him and the remaining officers put in the bows of S 132—opposite them is a detachment of Royal Marines with loaded rifles.

An English civilian presents a pistol at the head of

Sub-Lieutenant Lampe, when the latter has got separated from his men and is just about to call out something to them, and pulls the trigger. The pistol goes off, the bullet grazes his temple.

V 126's cutter, with Sub-Lieutenant Zaeschmar in charge, is fired at and hit by two English sailors who had climbed aboard V 45 and also by a drifter which happens to be in the vicinity.

In spite of stopping at once, and in spite of shouts of surrender, the shooting continues.

In this way Torpedo Artificer Markgraf is killed by a shot in the head, and Chief Stoker Beike by one in the chest, while Chief Stoker Pankrath is so severely wounded that he dies the same day; three more petty officers are wounded, as are two stokers.

Lieutenant Karl Hoffmann, after returning on board his boat under compulsion, has a pistol held to his chest; he is ordered to prevent his boat sinking; some of his men are forced down to the engine and ammunition spaces at the point of the pistol to take counter-measures or drown.

The three cutters of the group, under Sub-Lieutenant Kluber, are stopped by the English destroyer F 09, who has all her weapons, including her depth charges, manned, and cleared away. He is compelled to turn back by the revolver shots at short range fired by the English officers from their bridge.

The destroyer F 15, hurrying to the scene, is also shooting, and greets the jumping overboard of the crew of a cutter, which has just been hit by one of her salvoes, fired at a range of 150 metres, with a bellow of cheering; and then directs her fire on a number of already wounded swimmers, who are crying loudly for help, at a range of 50 metres—a motor boat takes part in this shooting too.

A stoker is severely wounded by a shot in the stomach, Torpedo Artificer Peil by one in the leg, and other stokers are less badly wounded in the hands.

The English afford no sort of help to the wounded! They are meant to be drowned, to die like beasts.

The crews of the boats in the north exit from Gutter Sound now gather on the beach of the island of Fasa, and those of the Third and Fourth Flotillas on board the *Sandhurst* and *Victorious* after the English have ceased their slaughter. Here they place themselves at the disposal of the English Admiral in charge of the drifters and auxiliaries, a naval officer of the old school whose courteous and humane attitude is reported by Lieutenant-Commander Steiner of the Third Flotilla.

As resistance was nowhere offered—we were unarmed, as any attempt at escape was recognized as useless, and all orders, as far as they could in any way be followed, were carried out—the behaviour of the English cannot be described in any other way than as premeditated and bestial murder.

It is absurd to maintain that they were justified in using arms because we, who were the submissive ones, were supposed to have committed an act of war.

We began no fight. We did not break the Armistice. We disposed of our German property as seemed requisite to Admiral Von Reuter in accordance with the political situation and in his position of supreme commander of a naval Squadron, which should, by all appropriate rules of war, not be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy.

Out of the torpedo boats there were :

Sunk at their buoys in deep water . .	32 boats
Sunk in shallow water, part of the boats above water	14 ,,
Fate uncertain, but with important spaces flooded	2 ,,
Salved, but damaged by water . . .	2 ,,

The casualties to be deplored are : 4 dead, 8 wounded, all of the Sixth Flotilla.

Appendix II

REMARKS ON MATTERS SPIRITUAL AT SCAPA FLOW BY NAVAL CHAPLAIN RONNEBERGER

My tour of duty, lasting nearly five months, as Chaplain to the Interned Squadron, was under conditions as changeable as the weather in the Shetlands, between rain and sunshine.

It was a peculiar duty, rich in surprises and unusual features, but not without its uses to my office and person. Only he, who himself has, for months at a time, day by day, oscillated so many paces forward and then the same number backwards on board his ship, who for months at a time has had no personal intercourse with another ship, although the ships were within hail and lying impotently at their cables, can exactly understand what Scapa Flow meant to us internees. Always the same comfortless surroundings; cliffs, rocks, mountains, without ever a tree or shrub. The shore so alluringly close and yet with no means of being reached. No freedom of movement, always the same people with the same sorrows and cares, and among them so very many men, psychologically sick, who, in the November days of the Revolution, had counted on fraternization with the English. And now what a disillusionment! Nothing of international unity! Taken prisoner and scorned! And what's more even after the example given by the Soldiers' Council organization at home, which sowed anxiety and dissension, when above all things a conscious unity in attitude should have been the case. In this atmosphere I came as a sort of compensatory impetus. I was not received with joy, but

rather in a spirit of mistrust. How could it, however, be otherwise when, even before my arrival, the Head Soldiers' Council of the Interned Fleet caused a circular letter to be sent to all ships, in which they pointed out the danger of the presence of a chaplain and in which they agitated against me personally. And why? Because I had directed the publication, during the War, of the war newspaper *On Outpost Duty* in the national interest. 'Naval Chaplain Ronneberger was the Editor of the paper *On Outpost Duty*,' is how it stands in the circular letter sent to the ships' companies. The man is not to be trusted politically. So have a care! And these are the lines on which the Head Soldiers' Council decided my work was to be carried out: 'His activities extend only to purely Church and instructional subjects. Politics are forbidden him by us. The Soldiers' Council exercises the sharpest control in this connection and is authorized to refuse him permission to speak in case of non-compliance with their injunction, or [prudently a loophole was left here] other counter-measures will be taken. Attendance at church services and at lectures, etc., to be voluntary.'

That was the greeting I received as I entered on my office. My arrival was announced to the ships in the daily routine orders, and they were told to communicate with me direct as regards requests for church services. But in the first fourteen days I was left undisturbed. No ship expressed a wish for any sort of church service. But, after their mistrust had been overcome, the desire for more services made itself felt, at first gradually, but increasing as time went by, so that for the Easter Festival twenty services were announced and confirmed officially in the daily routine orders. Out of twenty-six battleships and cruisers, twenty-two had Divine Service. Four ships gave up all claim to my offices. In all, in four months, fifty-two services, twenty-five lectures, and thirty instructional classes were held. The attendance at Divine Service was always voluntary and amounted to 75 per

cent on an average in certain ships, especially in the torpedo boats, where it rose to 95 per cent. As regards the form they took, it was found necessary to adapt them to circumstances. It was found very disagreeable having to dispense with any musical accompaniment; for this reason, where men's choirs could not be organized, concertinas, accordions or violins have to supply the accompaniment. A part of the services which came to be usual was a sort of talk in which professional and family affairs, and questions of provision for the future, were discussed.

Apart from the above only burials came into my province, in regard to which I had to interview the English Naval Commander three times. In two cases, which occurred before my arrival, the English Naval Chaplain had officiated at the burial. After my arrival I was charged with this duty and had permission to go ashore for this purpose. In this way our comrades were laid in their last sleep according to the German custom, although in foreign soil in the Naval Cemetery of Linnes of Hoy. No German was permitted to take a part, neither officer nor man, except for me, personally. Another of those endearing characteristics which the English at that time displayed to us! I rendered the honours to the departed quite alone. As my last visit to the cemetery showed me that the German graves were left quite uncared for I suggested to the men that a worthy monument was needed to embellish the graves. A collection, which was carried out on board all the ships, produced the gift of 1500 marks, with which I bought a memorial stone on my return to the homeland. It was, however, sunk with the Fleet, as it had not then been landed.

Finally it may be of interest to note the Soldiers' Councils, stimulated by the Soldiers' Council on board the light cruiser *Emden*, occupied themselves with the question of the retention of chaplains in the Navy. For those days, since the Revolution, when anything to do

with divine worship had, so to speak, been degraded by routine orders, when it was considered good form to be thought a free-thinker, it was a noticeable step forward that the men directed by their comrades ordered a collection in order to have a part in the funeral. In a circular letter issued by the Soldiers' Council of the *Emden* ' to all ' on the 26 April it stood as follows :

' It must be appreciated that it is possible that the Church will be disestablished in Republican Germany and thus we shall eventually be deprived of our chaplains in the Fleet. The attendance at Divine Service is voluntary and should also remain voluntary in the State Navy for all time. Here especially, at Scapa Flow, many members of the crews have taken the opportunity of attending voluntarily from time to time at Divine Service. In order that we may be certain of having a Fleet and Squadron Chaplain in the new State Navy, who will not be privately but publicly appointed by the Government, as was the case in former days, we would like to approach the Squadron Commander and the Head Soldiers' Council, after confirmation by individual ships and torpedo boats, with the request that immediate steps be taken in conjunction with the Admiralty and the Government so that chaplains may be provided for in the establishment of the Navy, not only for ships at home but also for those abroad. The chaplain should not only be responsible for holding services but should also give lectures of a non-political kind. An example of how necessary a chaplain is, is provided by the funerals of three of our comrades who were buried ashore here. Chaplain Ronneberger was present and officiated. They were buried as true German soldiers with military honours.'

Appendix III

TIMES AT WHICH THE SHIPS WERE SUNK ON THE 21 JUNE 1919

	Ships		*Time of the Sinking.*
A.	Sunk :—		
	Battle-cruiser	*Seydlitz*	1.50 p.m.
	,,	*Moltke*	1.10 p.m.
	,,	*Von der Tann*	2.15 p.m.
	,,	*Hindenburg*	5.0 p.m.
	,,	*Derfflinger*	2.45 p.m.
	Battleship	*Kaiser*	1.25 p.m.
	,,	*Prinzregent Luitpold*	1.30 p.m.
	,,	*Kaiserin*	2.0 p.m.
	,,	*Konig Albert*	12.54 p.m.
	,,	*Friedrich der Grosse*	12.16 p.m.
	,,	*Bayern*	2.30 p.m.
	,,	*Grosser Kurfurst*	1.30 p.m.
	,,	*Kronprinz Wilhelm*	1.15 p.m.
	,,	*Markgraf*	4.45 p.m.
	,,	*Konig*	2.0 p.m.
	Light Cruiser	*Koln*	1.50 p.m.
	,,	*Karlsruhe*	3.50 p.m.
	,,	*Brummer*	1.05 p.m.
	,,	*Bremse*	2.30 p.m.
	,,	*Dresden*	1.30 p.m.

B. Not sunk :—

Battleship	*Baden*	Towed to land in a sinking condition.
Light Cruiser	*Emden*	
,,	*Frankfurt*	
,,	*Nürnberg*	Cable slipped and driven ashore still floating.

Torpedo Boats

A.	Sunk at their buoys	32	T.B.s
B.	In shallow water, and partly above water	14	,,
C.	Fate uncertain but important compartments flooded (S 60, V 80) . . .	2	,,
D.	Beached, but apparently damaged under water (S 132, G 102)	2	,,

Appendix IV

List of the Interned Ships and Torpedo Boats and their Commanders and Leaders

Staff on board 'Emden'

Officer commanding the Interned Squadron	Rear-Admiral von Reuter
Chief of Staff . .	Commander Oldekop
Admiral's Staff Officer .	Lt.-Com. Lautenschlager
Flag-Lieutenant . .	Lieutenant Schilling
Squadron Paymaster . .	Staff Paymaster Habicht
Naval Advocate . .	Naval Advocate Loesch (Lieutenant of Militia)

On board 'Markgraf'

Squadron Engineer . .	Fleet Engineer Faustmann

On board 'Prinzregent Luitpold'

Squadron Surgeon . .	Staff Surgeon Dr. Lange

Flagship 'Emden'

Commanding Officer . .	Lt.-Com. Ehlers

Battleships	*Commanding Officers*
Baden	Commander Zirzow
Friedrich der Grosse . .	Commander von Wachter
Kaiser	Lt.-Com. Wippern
Prinzregent Luitpold . .	Lt.-Com. von Reiche
Kaiserin	Commander Viertel
Konig Albert . . .	Commander Bohmer

Bayern	Lt.-Com. Meissner
Grosser Kurfurst	Lt.-Com. Beer
Kronprinz Wilhelm	Lt.-Com. Becker
Markgraf	Commander Schumann
Konig	Commander Junkermann

Battle-cruisers	*Commanding Officers*
Seydlitz	Lt.-Com. Brauer
Moltke	Lt.-Com. Erelinger
Derfflinger	Commander Pastuszyk
Hindenburg	Commander Heyden
Von der Tann	Lt.-Com. Wollanke

Light Cruisers	*Commanding Officers*
Karlsruhe	Lt.-Com. Ruville
Nürnberg	Lt.-Com. Georgii
Koln	Lt.-Com. Heinemann
Frankfurt	Lt.-Com. Beesel
Brummer	Lt.-Com. Prahl
Bremse	Lieutenant Schacke
Dresden	Lt.-Com. Fabricius

Torpedo Boats

Leader of the Torpedo Boats	Commander Hermann Cordes aboard S 138
Flag-Lieutenant	Lt.-Com. Schniewind aboard S 138
Squadron Engineer	Engineer Halwe aboard H 145
Squadron Paymaster	Paymaster Horn (of the Reserve) aboard S 138

First T.B. Flotilla

Leader . . . . Lt.-Com. Henrici aboard G 40

G 40, 86, 39, 38, V 129, S 32

Second T.B. Flotilla

Leader . . . . Lt.-Com. Mensche aboard B 110

G 101, 102, 103, V 100, B 109, 110, 111, 112

Third T.B. Flotilla

Leader . . . . Lt.-Com. Steiner aboard S 54

S 53, 54, 55, 91, V 70, 73, 81, 82

Sixth T.B. Flotilla

Leader . . . . Lt.-Com. Wehr aboard V 44

Half-leader (Eleventh Half-Flotilla) Lt.Com. von Bonin aboard S 131

V 43, 44, 45, 46, S 49, 50,
V 125, 126, 127, 128, S 131, 132

Seventh T.B. Flotilla

Leader . . . . Commander Hermann Cordes aboard S 138

Half-leader (Thirteenth Half-Flotilla) Lt.-Com. Roslik aboard S 56

Half-leader (Fourteenth Half-Flotilla) Lt.-Com. Reimer aboard S 136

S 56, 65, V 78, 83, G 92,
S 136, 137, 138, H 145, G 89

Seventeenth T.B. Flotilla

Half-leader . . . Lt.-Com. Ganguin aboard V 80

S 36, 51, 52, 60, V 80

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