

Sample file

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
FLEET ACTIONS 1880-1945



**ADMIRAL
OF THE
FLEET**

FLEET ACTIONS 1880-1945

by
Richard R. Sartore
and
Jack L. Joyner

**SCENARIOS
VOLUME I**

NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT
NO ONE ATTACKS ME WITH IMPUNITY

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
FLEET ACTIONS 1880-1945

COPYRIGHT © 2022 Richard R. Sartore. All rights reserved. No part or section of ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior written permission from Richard R. Sartore.

FIRST PRINTING, 2022

CONCEPT AND DESIGN

Richard R. Sartore
Jack L Joyner

TEXT AND DIAGRAMS

Jack L Joyner

COVER DESIGN

Richard R. Sartore

SHIP LOG DATA

Richard R. Sartore
Jack L Joyner

PRE-PRODUCTION REVIEW

Paul Risner	Dale G. Gutt
Jason H. Bellman	Keith Hunsinger
Joe Czarnecki	Don Carlucci

This publication is best printed using a laser printer capable of duplex printing and page scaling set to NONE

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET is part of the **SEEKRIEG** line of products

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	.....	iii
Introduction	.....	v
The Battle of Tsushima (1905)		
Background & Maps	.....	1
Setup	.....	6
Order of Battle	.....	9
Bibliography	.....	12
The Battle of Crete (1898)		
Background & Maps	.....	13
Setup	.....	17
Order of Battle	.....	19
Bibliography	.....	20
The Battle of Dogger Bank (1915)		
Background & Maps	.....	21
Setup	.....	27
Order of Battle	.....	29
Bibliography	.....	32
The Battle of the Komandorski Islands (1943)		
Background & Maps	.....	33
Setup	.....	38
Order of Battle	.....	41
Bibliography	.....	42
The Battle of Jutland – Run to the South (1916)		
Background & Maps	.....	43
Setup	.....	49
Order of Battle	.....	51
Bibliography	.....	55
Illustration Sources	.....	56

Sample file

INTRODUCTION

Veteran and many novice naval gamers as well, have been refighting historical naval battles for over a hundred years, and while many of those battles were small to medium size actions, refighting the larger engagements was often limited by the complexity of the rules being used and the available playing area. It is for that reason that most miniature naval games provide only a selection of the historic battles in order to introduce the players to their game system.

For example, one of the designers of AOTF used to get together with his high-school friends to play SEAPOWELL II. Unfortunately, with few starter scenarios and without many books or the internet available to us to provide details on any engagements other than Savo Island, First Guadalcanal, Denmark Strait, North Cape, Surigao Strait and the like, we were forced to resort to fantasy battles that allowed us to play with all of our 1:1200 ships in a single day-long game. It typically postulated a different outcome to WW2 and often ended up with the Germans and Japanese fleets fighting the Americans and British in a winner-take-all battle. As one might imagine, you can only do that a few times.

Keeping the spark of interest alive in a novice gamer is often a challenge, so we decided to embark on a different approach to the scenarios we use to introduce gamers to ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET. While in-depth historical information is included for all the classic naval engagements in each volume of scenarios, the same is included for the hypothetical scenarios, many of which include ships that may be gathering dust on the shelves of some of the most enthusiastic naval gamers. Those of you owning models of the many French pre-dreadnought era battleships and cruisers, the Italian battleship Lepanto, the British cruisers Powerful and Terrible, most of the Austro-Hungarian Navy as well as a huge portion of Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" can certainly understand our point.

Admiral of The Fleet (AOTF) scenarios were created to support the design concepts, rules and combat system included in the game, but are also adaptable to other naval wargaming systems, providing backgrounds, maps, orders of battle and game components that add the impact of signaling to the outcome. The scenarios comprise a variety of categories including:

- Historical events, including some that may be less familiar to players,
- Semi-historical actions where alternative forces or environmental conditions potentially alter the balance of play and,
- Counterfactual "what-if" situations than employ scholarly research to create interesting conflicts involving ships rarely used in naval wargames.

The scenarios are "idealized" to match the focus of AOTF: Fleet Actions during The Battleship Era. For this reason, formations will rarely include non-warships and destroyer flotillas are represented by a single counter in both the formation diagrams as well as on the game table. The AOTF rules don't address the intricacies of submarine warfare or air operations, although the effect of these can be simulated in an abstract manner within a given scenario if the designer desires it. The effect of signaling on naval combat is the focus of game and although the combat system is based on data developed over nearly five decades, the mechanics of combat resolution are both accurate and uncomplicated by design and the scenario design reflects this.

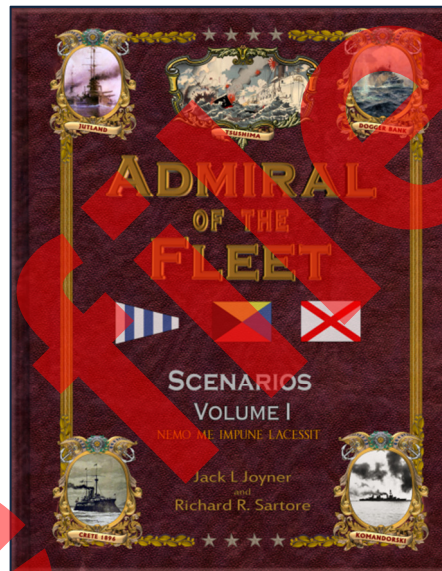
Volume I includes scenarios for Crete 1898 (a counterfactual battle), Tsushima, Dogger Bank, Jutland - The Run to The South and Frankendorski (a semi-historical action based on the historical Battle of the Komandorski Islands). These and future AOTF Scenario Volumes will typically comprise several components:

1. A synopsis of the engagement, including the historical background, significant naval and governmental personalities, key events in the battle, weather and visibility conditions, noteworthy technical details, and interesting but often little-known facts related to the action
2. An Order of Battle (OOB) of the combatants, including the ship class, the commanders of the fleets and captains of the individual ships
3. Strategic maps and diagrams focused on the location of the battle
4. A setup diagram and detail sheet showing the starting positions of the formations
5. Ships logs for each combatant
6. A bibliography and Illustration credits

It is our sincere hope that you will find the scenarios interesting, entertaining and maybe even a little thought-provoking. Our intent is to not only enhance your knowledge and understanding of historical naval battles, but also to introduce you to a history in which certain events that never happened, came stunningly close to occurring and might even have changed history as we know it.

Good Luck and Engage the Enemy More Closely!

Jack Joyner and Rich Sartore



Sample file



BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA

MAY 27-28, 1905

Scenario Background

On 13 April 1904, the battleship PETROPAVLOVSK struck three mines and sank during a sortie from Port Arthur, the heavily fortified Russian deep-water naval base located on the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria. Shrapnel from the blast decapitated Admiral Stepan Makarov, a highly respected officer who had been sent to improve the port's defenses and revitalize morale after a surprise attack by the Japanese Imperial Navy on the night of 8–9 February. This attack, which represented the de facto commencement of the Russo-Japanese War, was followed by a formal declaration of war the following day.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts to block the harbor entrance, the Japanese landed forces on the Liaodong Peninsula due in part to the inactivity of the Russian fleet and in August began the siege of the port. The deteriorating situation in the Far East led Czar Nicholas II to order the formation of the Second Pacific Squadron, comprised of five divisions of the Baltic Fleet, including eleven of its thirteen battleships. It was also decided to include the Third Pacific Fleet, comprised of a collection of older, obsolete warships which would further complicate the six-month journey required to relieve Port Arthur, the longest coal-powered battleship fleet voyage in recorded history.



Vice-Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky

The obstacles facing Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky were formidable. His newly-formed fleet was untrained and the voyage would be the shakedown cruise for some of his newest battleships. Coaling and repairs could not be done in neutral ports and would take place at sea and lack of maintenance of engines and hull bottoms reduced maximum speed of the Russian fleet to eleven knots. While the shallower draft of the older ships of the Third Pacific Fleet allowed them to transit the Suez Canal, the Second Pacific Fleet was forced to make the longer journey around the tip of Africa.

Poor morale and communications caused Russian crews to react to fictitious reports of Japanese torpedo boats operating in the North Sea by firing on British fishing trawlers operating near the Dogger Bank at night for twenty minutes, killing several British fishermen, sinking one trawler and damaging another six. The Russian gunfire even fired upon two of their own vessels, killing some of their own crewmen. Highly inaccurate Russian gunfire prevented greater loss of life. Only diplomatic intervention prevented war with Great Britain and the mission was delayed until the Russians accepted responsibility for the incident, compensated the fishermen, and removed officers who were suspected of misconduct.

During the voyage the commander of the Third Pacific Squadron, Dmitry von Fölkersahm, died of cancer, which was kept secret in a vain attempt to prevent loss of morale. The two fleets along with a small number of units from the Black Sea Fleet finally met in May 1905 at Cam Ranh Bay. Training efforts during the long voyage did little to improve crew quality and morale, which had plummeted with the traumatic news that the objective of their mission to break the blockade of Port Arthur had been made useless by its capture by the Japanese in January.

The tired and thoroughly demoralized Russian Fleet would now be forced to attempt to slip past the waiting Japanese Fleet and unite with the remaining units of the First Pacific Squadron at Vladivostok. On the night of 26-27 May 1905 the Russian fleet approached the Tsushima Strait which was blanketed with thick fog. At 0245, the Russian hospital ship OREL was sighted by the SHINANO MARU. Mistaking her for a friendly Russian vessel, OREL signaled that she was part of a larger formation and chose not to notify the rest of the fleet. After sighting additional Russian ships, SHINANO MARU signaled the contact to Admiral Togo Heihachiro via wireless telegraphy, a technological advantage that was to play a major role for the Japanese during the entire battle. While both opponents were equipped with wireless equipment, Russian vessels used German-built units which crews found hard to use and maintain, while the Japanese fleet employed systems developed by their own navy which were effective to distances up to 70 miles, a distinct advantage given the limited visibility that characterized much of the battle.



Admiral Togo Heihachiro

By 0500, it was clear to the Russians that they had been discovered and were being shadowed.

At 0634, the forty vessels of the Japanese fleet sortied with Togo's flagship Mikasa in the lead. Wireless reports from shadowing cruisers allowed the Japanese to close to sighting distance by 1340. Japanese cruisers and destroyers had shadowed the Russian formation aggressively and raised fear that mines would be laid across the formations' line of advance. Frustrated with Rozhstvensky's inaction against enemy units within range, battleship OREL opened fire with her six-inch battery on her own authority with other units in range joining based on the assumption that a signal had been given to commence the attack. A cease fire signal from SUVAROV followed by "Do not waste ammunition" against units out of effective range. The crews were sent to dinner, convinced they had driven the frightened enemy away.

With re-appearance of the shadowing Japanese cruisers, Rozhstvensky issued the first of two orders that impacted the overall effectiveness of his entire formation, signaling his 1st Division move to a line-abreast formation to maximize fire from their forward batteries. The ensuing confusion caused the order to be rescinded and the Russian fleet to resume a formation of two columns in line-ahead with the 1st Division led by SUVAROV and the newer units in the starboard column and slightly in advance of the older units of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions to port. The confused Russian formation was on a course roughly north-northeast when Togo's main battleline was sighted.

The Japanese formation had approached from a northeasterly direction which appeared to be advantageous to the Russian fleet as Rozhstvensky's signals had somehow ensured that the SUVAROV and her more modern sisters would lead the attack. Togo's forces were primarily arrayed in a single line-ahead formation, four battleships in the van followed by the 2nd Division's armored cruisers. After determining the weakness in the disposition of the Russian formation, Togo ordered a course change to starboard to "cross the T" of the enemy forces while still out of effective range of most of the enemy units.

Togo held fire while completing the action, choosing to order targeting after his maneuvers were complete. SUVAROV opened fire on at 1349 at a range of 6400 yards scoring the first of 15 hits in MIKASA received in the first five minutes of combat. Russian fire was initially surprisingly good, but became poorer as fatigue and inexperience took their toll. After completing his initial movement, Togo ordered a 180° turn to starboard and continued to parallel the Russian formation.



Signal Flag Zulu

At approximately 1355, Togo ordered the hoisting of the Z flag, issuing a preplanned signal to the entire fleet: "The Empire's fate depends on the result of this battle, let every man do his utmost duty." The signal was a reflection of the seven years

Togo studied naval tactics in Great Britain as well as his admiration for the achievements of Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson. Finally, orders were signaled to open fire, with Mikasa and the three other 1st Division battleships concentrating on SUVAROV with OSLYABYA the target of the heavy cruisers. The disposition of the Russian formation and Togo's maneuvers prevented most of the 2nd Division from taking any real part in the early part of the battle and limited the participation of SUVAROV's sisters.



Signal XGE: Surrender

Japanese fire eventually took its toll and at 1415, MIKASA scored a hit on SUVAROV that started a serious fire that typified the effect that Japanese use of high-explosive shells filled with Shimose explosive had during the entire battle. OSLYABYA was the first Russian ship to succumb sinking roughly 90 minutes after the battle began. A direct hit by FUJI ignited BORODINO's magazines and she sank with all hands. In addition, SUVAROV and IMPERATOR ALEKSANDR III were lost during the daylight portion of the battle. Four Japanese ships were damaged, but none were lost.

As night fell, Togo's 21 destroyers and 37 torpedo boats attacked the Russian formation, now broken into small groups continuing to struggle northward. Ironically, the three-hour attack was aided by the Russian use of searchlights turned on in an attempt to spot their attackers. NAVARIN was torpedoed four times after striking a mine and sank. SISSOI VELIKI and ADMIRAL NAKHIMOV were damaged by torpedoes and VLADIMIR MONOMAKH by a collision with a Japanese destroyer; all were scuttled the following day. Japanese losses consisted of three torpedo boats.

Владимир Иосифович Бэр



THE CAPTAIN WHO
BECAME AN ADMIRAL
IN AN AFTERNOON

Following the death of Admiral Dmitry von Fölkersahm on May 24, Rozhstvensky appointed the captain of Fölkersahm's flagship, OSLYABYA, Vladimir Iosifovich Bir (spelled Baer in some sources), to command the Second Division.

Born on November 12, 1853 in Yelnya, he joined the naval service in 1871 and rose through the ranks, eventually attaining the rank of Captain 1st Class in April of 1899. On May 17, 1904, he was appointed to command OSLYABYA.

Reportedly very brave, he was also something of a martinet, having been brought before the naval court of Kronstadt in December 1894 for misdemeanors stipulated by the naval code on punishments. Later, he refused a promotion to Rear-Admiral in order to remain captain of the OSLYABYA.

While there is no official record of a promotion and Fölkersahm's flag still flew on OSLYABYA during the battle, there is no question that Captain Bir was commanding the Second Division at the Battle of Tsushima. He died along with many others of the battleship's crew, refusing to leave the bridge.

**“I ACTUALLY WATCHED
A STEEL PLATE CATCH
FIRE FROM A BURST”**

[COMMANDER SEMENOFF]

This and other statements from Russian survivors of the effects of Japanese gunnery detail the effect of *Shimose* powder, a type of explosive comprised of pure picric acid. Because an instability issue was overcome without the need for stabilizing additions like those used in *Melinite* or *Lyddite*, shells filled with *Shimose* powder detonated more powerfully and at a higher temperature than other projectiles causing greater damage and more fires. On impact, these shells not only tore open steel plates, killing or wounding crewman with masses of splinters, but also set fire to painted surfaces and coal stored on the Russian ships' decks making spotting and signaling difficult.

The Russian Navy did not employ high-explosive shells during the war.

At 0930 on 28 May, the surviving Russian ships, now under the command of Rear-Admiral Nikolai Nebogatov, were surrounded by Togo's forces and taken under fire. Hopelessly outranged and demoralized, the order was given for all ships to hoist “XGE”, the international signal for surrender, but fire continued, even after white tablecloths were additionally hoisted as the Japanese codebooks in use lacked a code for surrender. Eventually, officers on *MIKASA* found a codebook explaining the signal, firing ceased and the Russian surrender was accepted.

Reported Russian battle casualties totaled 4,830 killed with another 5,907 captured. Every Russian battleship involved in the battle was lost: *OSLYABYA*, the first all-steel battleship to be sunk by gunfire, was sunk along with *IMPERATOR ALEKSANDR III*, *KNIAZ SUVOROV*, *BORODINO*, *NAVARIN*, *SISSOI VELIKI* and the coastal battleship *ADMIRAL USHAKOV*. The badly damaged battleship *OREL* was captured as was *IMPERATOR NIKOLAI I* and the coastal battleships *ADMIRAL SENYAVIN* and *GENERAL-ADMIRAL APRAKSIN*. These units served in the Japanese navy as *IWAMI*, *IKI*, *MISHIMA* and *OKINOSHIMA*.

Five cruisers and six destroyers were also sunk or captured. Three cruisers were interned at the U.S. Naval base at Manila and one destroyer was interned by the Chinese. Every auxiliary unit was sunk, captured, or interned except for *ANADYR* which escaped to Madagascar. Only three Russian warships reached Vladivostok: the armed yacht *ALMAZ* (classified as a second-class cruiser) and two destroyers.

Casualties for the Japanese totaled 700 killed or wounded. Three torpedo boats were lost. Most heavily damaged was the flagship *MIKASA* which survived more than 30 large-caliber hits, suffering 100 casualties.



Battle Damage to OREL

