

GERMAN SAILORS TELL HOW FLEET FOUGHT BRITISH

Graphic Accounts Are Obtained
from Men Who Reach Ber-
lin on Furlough.

ROLE OF THE WESTFALEN

Sank Several British Destroyers
in Night Battle—A Story
from the Flagship.

PRAISE FOR BRITISH SEAMEN

High German Officer Insists War-
pite Was Lost, but Commander of
That Ship Tells Another Story.

From a Staff Correspondent.
Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERLIN, June 10.—I was able to talk today with big, bronzed sailors and petty officers of the German High Seas Fleet on Berlin furlough, who, in simple straightforward sailor style, told stories covering every phase and angle of the great battle. Underofficer Dauner of the Westfalen, chief gunner's mate of the secondary batteries on the port side, told how the Westfalen had sunk six British destroyers in quick succession in the course of desperate night torpedo attacks.

"I didn't see much of the day battle," he said. "As a gun leader of medium calibre artillery, I was in the casemats. Our secondary armament played a rôle chiefly during the enemy's night torpedo attacks. That called for quick work. Our job was to destroy British destroyers at a great distance, before they could shoot off torpedoes."

"It was around 1 o'clock in the morning when the Westfalen led the long battle column turned its nose toward the home port. The night was favorable to attacks. Our commander issued the order: 'Most attention as we must figure on sharp torpedo attacks during the night.'"

"There was the utmost tension throughout the ship as we realized the British meant business. We didn't have long to wait before the English destroyer flotillas attacked. They naturally singled out our leading ship first for attack so as to throw the whole line into disorder. In manoeuvring we had to be careful to avoid throwing the rest of the line into confusion. We were going full speed. Our searchlights were only turned on when the lookouts reported something. A suspicious glare from burning ships was enough for the lookouts to see."

"At 1:30 in the morning the lookouts reported a dark object on the port side. The commander of the searchlight battery gave the order to switch on the searchlights quickly. The command was given, 'Attention! torpedo boat on port side.' Then the chief artillery officer gave us permission to fire."

"It was a large scout ship of the Botha type, and bore the number 60. The distance was quickly measured. It shot three or four torpedoes at us, but missed. We opened fire with our mid-calibre guns at 1,200 yards. Our second salvo hit the bridge and swept it away with its whole command. The tower was also shot away, and the ship was soon burning from stem to stern and glowing red hot like a furnace. The leaderless scout ship, whose machines violently were undamaged, followed us for five minutes with undiminished speed, though listing heavily. Then it started to sink slowly, bow first. It was still running wild and burning up as we left it behind."

Attack of British Destroyers.

"English torpedo boats continued to attack us at intervals of about half an hour. The second destroyer we finished off quicker. It was No. 88 as far as I could make out. We sank it in four salvos in forty-five seconds after we received permission from the artillery officer to begin firing. We were hitting up a pace of a salvo every eight seconds."

"The third English destroyer attacked us at 1,400 yards. It was Number 80. It had no time to launch a torpedo. Our first salvo shot away the whole bridge and forward mast."

"It took us four minutes to get our fourth destroyer, No. 78. It was 500 yards off when we sank it."

"Everything and everybody functioned perfectly. I've had many jobs in peace time much more difficult than here. Our commander was in high spirits and very quiet. He praised his men and officers. Once he called out: 'Come on. The more the better. Shooting off torpedo boats is our specialty.' He also humorously told the chief artillery officer to lower his fire a bit, saying, 'You always shoot the bridge away with the first salvo; that's monotonous.' The commander was on the job all the time. Several times he spotted an English torpedo boat destroyer first before even the lookouts reported them."

"We ate a hasty supper at our guns, washed down with lemonade and water. No alcohol was allowed, but we could and did smoke. No Nelsonian order about Germany expecting every man to do his duty was given, either before or during the battle, or any similar order. It wasn't necessary. There was great joy among all the men that we at last had a fight with the English."

"The torpedo attack was made on us at 3:05 A. M., a double attack from port and starboard by destroyers Nos. 27 and 008, and then a scout ship of the big Botha class, with four funnels. They came at us close behind one another. They were sighted to port only 1,000 yards away. There wasn't time to take both under fire, so our commander decided to ram the second one. The Westfalen turned toward it, but it dodged and came at us from the starboard side. It was a dangerous situation and a dangerous manoeuvre, but it was either they or we. We were now exposed to a torpedo attack from two sides, but in five minutes it was all over. Both were sunk. I only saw the destroyer on my side of the Westfalen go down. Even after the bridge had been shot away the stern gun kept

firing at us. The whole crew was crowded together on the afterdeck. Then we fired our last salvo by the light of our searchlight. I saw shreds of bodies, arms, and legs go flying in the air. We were not molested any further by torpedo attacks on the way home."

With the German Destroyers.
The part played by the German torpedo flotillas, particularly in the night attacks on the English battleship fleet, as described to me by "Torpedomatrose" Wartenburg. He said: "Our destroyer flotilla convoyed the battle cruisers going out. We saw the English shortly after 4 o'clock. Our battle cruisers took up a good position, while our destroyer flotilla took up a battle formation before them and prepared for an attack. At 5 o'clock the men were eager to be allowed to make an attack. Our flotilla chief finally gave the order to attack."

"Against the English cruisers we had to be sparing with torpedoes, because there was still a long fight ahead. Our torpedoes struck two English cruisers. We had an artillery battle with the English destroyer flotilla that came out to meet us at 1,400 yards. We bagged one English destroyer. After 6 o'clock there was a pause for us. We formed in a line of five kilometers behind our cruisers. The English cruisers, which were fourteen kilometers away, in many cases were shooting so 'long' that they nearly hit us. There was no work for us to do until 7:30, when our battleship fleet came in sight from the south and took part in the battle. The English destroyers fired so many torpedoes they looked like goldfish swimming around the water. I saw at least a hundred English torpedoes. I saw eight pass under our torpedo boat, for the English destroyers fired their torpedoes at us to a depth intended for battleships, so that they passed clean under us."

"At 9 o'clock I counted twenty English ships of the line coming from the east. They took the leading ships of our battle cruiser squadron under heavy fire. Our flotilla chief signalled, 'Children, now there's work for us to do.' At 9:25 our flotilla started to attack the English battleship fleet. We came to within five kilometers of them, and our officers estimated we were fired on by 100 heavy calibre and 140 medium calibre guns. It was almost impossible to see anything now because of the green vapor of bursting English shells and the black smoke from our funnels that covered us. Our torpedo flotillas made five successive attacks against the English battle fleet."

Flagship's Experiences.

Petty Officer Kutz, chief gunner's mate in the turret No. 1 of Admiral von Scheer's flagship, told the following story:

"We had no idea when we left the home port where we were going. We had no idea what for, though it was said we were going to make a forward thrust. It was like starting out for manoeuvres, though there was a hopeful feeling that something might happen this time. It's high time we got at the English," the men said."

"At 4 o'clock in the afternoon a wireless signal came from the front that our armored cruisers were in a fight with light English forces. The artillery officer said: 'See that the guns are in order; we will probably come to fight with English.' We were overjoyed that we were getting to the enemy. Every man went to his fighting post. A light supper was taken first. We were then some 180 miles from Heligoland. When the order came to clear ship for action every man went quietly about his work."

"At 5:45 our flagship fired her first salvo. We had six English cruisers ahead of us on the port side. The cruisers at first came toward us, but after ten minutes they turned around. Then we had a running fight. I soon ascertained that our salvos landed. I observed some good bullseyes. My glass had eighteen-times magnifying power, which brought our targets very close, so I could see plainly the effect of our fire."

"In half an hour, five to six English ships of the line of the Queen Elizabeth class hitched themselves to English cruisers. Our heavy artillery at once opened on them. I observed bullseyes on another large target. It listed and was forced to slow up."

"After an hour another large English ship blew up in a great pillar of fire about 200 yards high and 100 wide. It was a cruiser of the Lion class whose mast had previously been shot away. It was sunk and only two men were saved from it. Another cruiser lay still and could no longer move."

"I saw three of the Lion class put out of business. The firing was at a distance of about eight kilometers. Our heavy guns fired continuously from 8 till 10:30."

"The English now tried torpedo-boat attacks against our line. One of the destroyers was shot off at seven kilometers, another at nine kilometers. We turned, and shortly after 10:30 I suddenly saw the whole horizon to port filled with ships as far as my eyes could see. They were thirteen or fourteen kilometers off. We had run into the English battleship fleet."

"It was already getting pretty dark, and the continuous flame from their guns was like a great wreath of fire around us. Their shells hit the water incessantly, but went either too short of us or too long. Some of them came pretty close, within five, ten, or twenty yards of us, so we thought we were hit, but not an English shell struck the flagship."

"We wondered that the English shot so poorly. Our comrades spoke about it afterward."

"We continued firing till 11:15, till we couldn't see anything more. During the day battle we could observe how our shots went, but not in the night battle. And though we had permission from the artillery Captain to go on firing, there was no use wasting powder, and a pause set in."

"Our flagship vibrated so strongly as a result of the shells that struck close that we thought we had been hit, but we got out of the battle without any damage whatever."

"We heard the enemy still aft on the port side after nightfall. Both the English and we now launched torpedo flotilla attacks. We had the impression that our torpedo boats had prevented the English battleships from firing further at us. We believed the battle would be resumed in the morning—the English were gone. In this stadium the English destroyers were stopped by our 15-centimeter guns at from seventeen to nineteen kilometers."

"We now sailed down an avenue of fire—this was the impression made upon me as we steamed past burning English ships, shot into flames by our ships in front of us, for our flagship was in the middle of the line. First we passed a big four-funnel destroyer which was burning. I could still make out a few sailors on the bow. Then we passed a big burning cruiser. Then we came up

with a second armored cruiser, only 800 yards from us. It was burning, but still turned its guns on us. Before it could fire it was gone. Three salvos of our 35-centimeter guns sent it flying into the air."

"Fifty or sixty of the crew were crowded together on the bow with their hands held high above their heads. Then the cruiser settled. A scoutship, also burning, with two English destroyers, was alongside trying to save the crew. We needed to use our searchlights hardly at all. The fire lane was light enough to see by. Our first three ships in line shot off all the English torpedo boats that attacked during the night, leaving nothing for our flagship to do. For over two hours we steamed full speed down this avenue of fire, which must have been forty or fifty sea miles long."

"Admiral von Scheer and his whole staff were on the bridge of the flagship during the entire battle, fourteen hours long. All the buttons were torn from the Admiral's overcoat by the air pressure of English shells."

Frankfurt Pierced By Shells.
Mate Gruhn of the small cruiser Frankfurt which participated in the battle from the very first to the last moment said:

"We left Wilhelmshaven at noon, May 31. We knew we were bent on serious business, but we weren't alarmed until 4 o'clock in the afternoon when our group which was on duty put on swimming vests and smoke helmets and repaired to our battle posts where we were to remain for sixteen hours."

"Thirty minutes after the alarm the enemy came in sight. First we encountered the small cruisers, then the battle cruisers. During the fighting a piece of 34-centimeter shell struck the Frankfurt, but did no damage. It was picked up ceremoniously and handed to the commander as a souvenir. We fought on until 9 o'clock in the evening, when a shell struck aft, crashed through the mast, entered the tweendecks and came out again on the starboard side. Another shell burst in the ship's interior, making a pretty large hole above the water line."

"Now was the moment for me as a carpenter to get into the fight with my mates. I brought down the planks stored on deck for the purpose, and amid a hail of shells we succeeded in stopping up the hole within an hour."

"About midnight our wireless apparatus began to work. An English ship was calling us, mistaking the Frankfurt for a British ship in the dark. Whether and what we answered I don't know, but a very strange thing happened to us, namely, that six English destroyers came along, took us under their protection, and escorted us through the entire English battleship fleet till they encountered the German fighting units and discovered their mistake. At 3 A. M. a fresh danger threatened us when we became involved in a fight with English cruisers, but fortunately several of our larger ships appeared, and we were saved. At 5 o'clock in the morning the English had disappeared."

The Frankfurt, however, did not leave

the battlefield, but with one other cruiser steamed toward the English coast to reconnoitre. We continued our scouting voyage till noon without encountering any English ships, then laid our course for Wilhelmshaven, which we reached at 5 o'clock in the afternoon."

Ostfriesland Rushed Into Action.

An Ensign on the Ostfriesland tells the following story: "As we have done so often in recent months, our High Seas Fleet again undertook an offensive thrust in the hope of encountering the enemy. About 4 o'clock a wireless report came from our scout ships: 'Strong enemy forces in sight. We calculate that the two fleets should meet around 6 o'clock.' Further wireless reports now kept pouring in continuously. The Wiesbaden was already in action. The Frankfurt also was engaged."

"Our fleet went ahead full speed. We heard the rumble of distant cannonading gradually growing stronger, until we could distinguish the individual salvos. I was the observer on the mainmast. Full steam ahead was ordered. The first thing I saw, in addition to the light forces, were five enemy cruisers and four to five dreadnoughts of the Queen Elizabeth class."

"We were going north by east, the English on an easterly course almost parallel. The enemy came on under full steam. The distance between us had lessened to nineteen kilometers. At 6:40 my ship fired the first shot. Then salvo followed salvo."

"From my lofty lookout I could plainly observe that four enemy ships were completely covered by our fire. One after the other our shells struck home. I observed fires, which, however, seemed to be very quickly extinguished. After an hour it was reported that the second in line of the enemy's battleships was damaged and lagging behind."

"The English now turned aside and disappeared from sight. Soon, however, we noted that the enemy, greatly reinforced, was returning. Now considerably superior to us in volume of fire, he commenced to fire decidedly more and stronger. Exact observation was out of the question; the air was much too thick for that, which probably was the reason why, contrary to the English reports, our ships were not in action on this day. The English fired mainly with their heavy artillery, their medium-calibre and lighter guns remaining inactive because of the relatively great distance."

"We could tell the calibre of the water-spouts, which in the case of the heaviest shells reached a height of over 150 yards. The light continued without interruption. The ships themselves were no longer to be distinguished, only the flash of flame at the mouth of the enemies' guns flared through the fog and gave us a cue as to where the target was to be sought. The small English cruisers had gone off westward."

"The enemy had already suffered heavily through the fire of our armored cruisers. On our side no ship had sunk during the battle. The Wiesbaden, to be sure, was burnt and heavily damaged, but messages kept coming from her indicating she was still afloat. The battle continued with increasing violence despite the weather which made seeing difficult. The distance between us and the enemy had now diminished to ten kilometers. Despite bad conditions for observation, the enemy's

fire kept gaining in intensity, leading us to conclude the enemy was receiving continuous reinforcements. The flame of his guns flashed like lightning, the thunder of his salvos crashed like thunder through the night. To be sure most of his shells fell too short or too long."

Armored Cruiser Blows Up.

"Late in the evening one of his armored cruisers of the Achilles class, we couldn't tell whether the Defence or Black Prince, blew up. At 11:30 the entire fleet, which had fought principally with its port guns, had moved up and joined our armored cruisers. Until then we had fired continuously, now we made a turnabout. Our torpedo flotillas were launched in an attack on the enemy."

"The effect was immediately apparent. The English battle fleet was forced back and its fire ceased. We were intact, and waited for the enemy in hopes he would show himself again, but in vain. So we turned away and under full steam we went toward the home port. The Thüringen was just ahead of us. It was

2:15 A. M., when suddenly our lookout's searchlight discovered a big English armored cruiser hardly 200 yards away. It must have thought it was among friends, for it quietly continued its voyage. At once we and the ship behind us took the English cruiser under fire. No shot failed to hit and after five salvos the whole ship literally glowed white hot to the masthead. It had just time enough to fire one salvo over our heads when it sank. It was so near that we had to avert sharply to starboard to keep from being struck by its flying fragments."

"As we reached port the Westfalen anchored behind us, and as it was absolutely undamaged it went out a few hours later on outpost duty. Our cruisers and destroyers next day went out far beyond the scene to look for the enemy, but he was not to be seen."