

Imperial German Submarine Warfare Rendered Impotent by Mine Fields in North Sea 230 Miles Long, Says Daniels

By JOSEPHUS DANIELS
Former Secretary of the Navy.

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ARTICLE 6.

The German U-boat almost got the world's nerve. This hidden foe of civilization, gliding swiftly beneath the surface of the sea, and sending its missile of death and destruction without warning into the vitals of great ships, was the biggest element of terror in the war, the heaviest tax upon morale, until—

Suddenly the tables turned. News flashed through the naval and military organizations of the allied and associated powers that there was virtual mutiny in the German fleet. German sailors were refusing to obey the orders of their commanders. Submarines were lying in harbor because men declined to take them out to the hunting grounds in the ocean lanes and channels of transport.

Somehow we had got the nerve of Germany. Then we knew the end was near.

The break in the morale of the great navy of imperial Germany has no precedent in military history—unless it be found in the collapse of Russia. But Russia's vast horde, when the crash came, was an undisciplined mob compared with the organized, highly-trained, superbly-disciplined naval forces of Wilhelm Hohenzollern. German naval personnel was of high type. This was especially true of the men selected for U-boat service. Only more extraordinary pressure, some psychologically shattering phenomenon could be sufficient to produce panic in the souls of such sailors.

U-Boats Never Return.

For weeks U-boats had been putting out to sea from their nesting places on the German coast, and vanishing as utterly as the bubble which bursts in the wild watches. No trace was left of them. This was what fate befell them. The German admiralty knew only that no wireless reports came from them, that they never returned to their base. Their comrades in the dangerous game of underwater assassination missed them, and there spread through the ranks of men who went down into the deeps to wait for their prey the fear of a secret terror, a mysterious Nemesis, which tortured mind and nerve and shook the morale of the strongest.

Now and again there limped back to port a U-boat which had suffered damage from contact with this concealed peril, but which had escaped complete destruction. These survivors told a story which only intensified the dread.

They spoke of colliding with mines, hidden below the surface of the sea, implements of destruction, whose presence could not be guessed. The U-boat ran into them as a man might run into a low-stretched wire stretched across his path on a dark night. By putting together the evidence of those who came back and the unuttered testimony of those who had become forever silent, the German admiralty understood. More to the point is the fact that the sailors on the U-boats understood, and when they understood they refused to go to sea, and the spirit of their refusal spread to their comrades in other branches of the German naval service. The whole magnificent fighting organization began to disintegrate!

Mine Barrage of 230 Miles.

Across the North sea, from Norway almost to the Orkneys, there had been stretched a mine barrage 230 miles in length, was the biggest and most successful innovation in naval warfare the world had seen up to that hour. It consisted of more than 70,000 mines. It was into this barrage the U-boats were running whenever they attempted to get around the north of the British isles into the open sea.

It was now clear in the war, a surprise for Von Tirpitz. A Moloch of the sea, with big jaws, powerful enough to devour the biggest submarine, had become the unseen and unknowable terror, and the U-boat menace dwindled and disappeared before it.

But the fact that makes me proud as an American, proud to have been secretary of the navy, and proud beyond words of the fleet and the men under my direction, is the fact that the laying of this unparalleled barrage, this most extraordinary death-trap for the most dangerous foe which has ever assailed civilization, was a plan wholly of American conception, and, in greatest part, of American execution.

We had been fighting the U-boats with destroyers—so had the British and so had the French. The destroyer was a holy terror to the submarine, but the submarine was quite as hard a problem for the destroyer. And the submarine had an advantage which makes it the most difficult foe on the seas—its facility for vanishing from sight by submergence. To escape the attack of a U-boat a destroyer had to rely upon skill in navigation, zig-zagging and speed, and no ships which ever sailed the seas gave quite so good an account of themselves, not only on the score of capable direction, but also because of the pluck and daring of their crews.

The men who made the charge of the Light brigade and the men who held the pass at Thermopylae were brothers in courage to the men of the destroyers and their naval craft which hunted and outdistanced the elusive submarines.

But the trouble was that to patrol effectively the transatlantic trade routes, according to Admiral Sims, "would have taken about 25,000 destroyers." It was a matter of speeding up production to the limit of human capacity, when the war ended the British and American destroyer strength combined numbered only a few hundred.

What Defeated Submarines.

If the fighting of the submarine menace had been left to patrol by the surface craft of the allied and associated powers there might have been another finish to the war than that which gave democracy its victory. The magnificent heroism of British and French and American sailors might not have overcome the handicap of surface exposure. Just two things defeated the submarine—the convoy system and the mine barrage. In American navy made convey possible and it put through the mine offensive.

It was Admiral Joseph Strauss, head of the bureau of ordinance, who, a few months after I had become secretary of the navy, sought an ap-

pointment with me to discuss the question of mines. He said: "We have not, in our navy, given enough attention to mines. If we were to be engaged in a war one of the matters of first importance would be the mining of the approaches to our rivers and harbors to prevent entrance by enemy ships. And if we should be engaged in war away from our shores we might find that mining for the destruction of enemy craft or the protection of our own ships would be the chief need to secure victory."

Were Experts in Mining.

Joseph Strauss and George R. Marvel undertook the study of improving mines and devising better methods for laying them. The Baltimore was fitted up as a mine ship. Many new wrinkles of great value were developed in experiment. So when we entered the war we knew something about mining.

We were qualified as experts in this department of naval warfare. It was a great satisfaction to me then to reflect that, long before there had been a fleet of war clouds as big as a man's hand in the sky, I had approved this particular work of research and taken intense interest in its developments.

So immediately upon our entrance into the war—in April, 1917—the Navy department of the United States, through its bureau of ordinance, made the suggestion that a mine barrage be laid across the North sea from the Orkneys to Norway. We believed this would end the U-boat menace. We believed Germany would have to keep its undersea navy at home if we could close that 230-mile door to the Atlantic. And we in Washington believed we could close it.

There were doubters among our home strategists, but there were more who believed it possible and were willing to make the effort. But in Great Britain naval leaders regarded the proposal as impracticable.

Lloyd George With Wilson.

Two great civilian leaders—Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George—were convinced that only by some bold, unprecedented offensive could civilization be saved from the U-boat. Either the protected waters of the submarines must be sailed and destroyed, or the avenue through which they reached the high seas must be blocked. Lloyd George expressed his belief that some form of barrage would prove the most effective offensive against the U-boat, but he did not direct the British admiralty to adopt the proposal. If it had taken his advice the North sea barrage would have been laid in 1917 and hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping and weary months of anxiety would have been saved the allies. Probably the war would have ended at a considerably earlier date.

While we argued and persuaded precious time was passing. The experts across the seas said "No; it is impracticable."

Admiral Earle convinced by his experiments that the thing could be done, overcame any doubt his colleagues might have entertained, and the general board, the chief of operations and the commander-in-chief of the fleet all joined with him in urging and pleading that an effort be made to lay the barrage. Prominent American civilians employed such influence as they could exert to the same end.

Great Work Accomplished.

And so at last in the fall of 1917 opposition and prejudice gave way. Admiral Earle and his associates had convinced the doubters in our own navy and the British navy and rejoiced that their plan was to be put into effect. Admiral Strauss was put in charge of this, the outstanding naval offensive of the world war. He had a picked personnel of 7,000 officers and men of staff and skill. Our force laid 56,611 mines; their British coworkers laid 13,652. Most of our mines were of a new type, perfected in the summer of 1917. The British laid the old type of mine. However, both proved effective. Our navy made 100,000 mines and transported 30,000. It required 64 ship loads from the United States, and involved

Peace Officer Dies Following Severe Beating

Victim Mauled After He Had Slapped Young Girl; U. P. Shop Employee at Cheyenne Arrested.

Cheyenne, Wyo., April 19.—Frank F. Sinon, 62, veteran peace officer and ranchman of this vicinity, died as result of a beating alleged to have been administered Friday night by Ed F. Geesa, 22, an employee of the Union Pacific shops here. The fight occurred when Sinon went to the Geesa home, accompanied by Ethel Vansickle, 20, daughter of a former employe of Sinon while he was engaged in the hotel business, and slapped the girl's face when she refused to accompany him to his own home.

Garage Man Appeals From Award Granted On Employee's Death

Plattsmouth, Neb., April 19.—(Special.)—John F. Wolff, garage owner, has filed an action in district court appealing the award of State Labor Commissioner Frank A. Kennedy in the case of compensation for the death of Loren McCrary, an employe of Mr. Wolff, who was run over by a truck September 30, and died a few hours later in an Omaha hospital.

The hearing of the case was held here some 10 days ago, Mr. Kennedy taking the matter under advisement at that time. His award was for \$9.75 a week for 350 weeks, or a total of \$3,412.50, to the father of the young man and an additional \$150 for funeral expenses.

At the hearing it was testified that Mr. Wolff had given McCrary instructions in the morning concerning his work for the day, which included a visit to a storage battery station two blocks away, and it was claimed that in attempting to catch a ride on the moving truck he was carrying out his employer's orders, while the defendant insurance company, which has brought the present appeal action in Mrs. Wolff's name, sought to prove the accident was the result of carelessness on the part of the deceased while not engaged in his line of duties as an employe of its client.

Plattsmouth Man Has Unique Treasure Box Of Revolutionary Days

Plattsmouth, Neb., April 19.—(Special.)—C. C. Despain, aged Plattsmouth resident, has in his possession a unique treasure box which was made by his grandfather more than 145 years ago and which he will present to the state historical society.

The box is made of walnut, being some 12 inches long by 8 wide and 5 deep, and was fashioned at the time of the Revolutionary war, the pieces being fastened together with wooden plugs; A concealed lock, arranged to open only with the assistance of a long wooden key, shows the cleverness of the designer. Peter Despain, who made the box, served through the Revolutionary war, later locating in the present state of Kentucky, where the family became quite prominent, and where the sturdy pioneer died in 1865, at the age of 115 years. On his death the box was passed to his son, William, father of Albert and C. C., and who at that time resided in Plattsmouth. On William's death, the box became the property of the older brother, Albert, who died recently, leaving it to the brother, C. C. is nearly 80 years old and one of the prominent older Masons of the state.

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Whatever You Do Don't Neglect Your Eyes, Says Dr. Lewis, Who Tells How to Strengthen Eyesight 50% in One Week's Time in Many Instances

A Free Prescription You Can Have Filled and Use at Home.

Philadelphia, Pa.—Do you wear glasses? Are you a victim of eye strain or other eye weakness? If so, you will be glad to know that according to Dr. Lewis there is a real hope for you. He says neglect causes more eye troubles and poor sight than any other one thing. Many whose eyes were failing say they had their eyes restored through the principle of this wonderful free prescription. One man says after trying it: "I was almost blind; could not see to read at all. Now I can read everything without any glasses and my eyes do not water any more. At night they would pain dreadfully; now they feel fine all the time. It was like a miracle to me." A lady who used it says: "The atmosphere seemed hazy with or without glasses, but after using this prescription for fifteen days everything seems clear. I can even read fine print without glasses." It is believed that thousands who wear glasses can now discard them in a reasonable time and multitudes more will be able to strengthen their eyes so as to be spared the trouble and expense of getting glasses. Eye troubles of many descriptions may be wonderfully benefited by following the simple rules. Here is the prescription: Go to any active drug store and get a bottle of Bon-Opto tablets. Drop one Bon-Opto tablet in a fourth of a glass of water and allow to dissolve. With this liquid bathe the eyes two or four times daily. You should notice your eyes clear up perceptibly right from the start and inflammation will quickly disappear. If your eyes are bothering you, even a little, take steps to save them now before it is too late. Many hopelessly blind might have been saved if they had cared for their eyes in time.

NOTE: Another prominent Physician to whom the above article was submitted said: "Bon-Opto is a very remarkable remedy. Its constituent ingredients are well known to eminent eye specialists and widely prescribed by them." The manufacturer guarantees it to strengthen eyesight 50 per cent in one week's time in many instances or refund the money. It can be obtained from any good drug store and is one of the very few preparations I feel should not keep on hand for regular use in almost every family. It is sold in this city at all leading drug stores, including the Sherman & McConnell and the Metcher stores.

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