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AUFTRAGSTAKTIK IN THE SKY

What we know of the German leviathans is largely thanks to the spy August Bebel, who bravely supplied us with information regarding the Germans' military buildup from the time he realized the kaiser was mad with power.

Initially, German research into leviathan technology was limited to information gleaned from German spies obtaining copies of the Russian Shukov's research in 1885. Kaiser Wilhelm I, keen for any advancement in the field of battle, was particularly interested in Oblimovsky's research into *eteroid* (electroid) weapons. Detailing the respected scientist Ernst von Siemens to continue examining the properties of *eteroid*, the kaiser began discussing with the chief of the general staff how effective such weapons could be when deployed through Krupp's new 1000lb steel breechloaders.

The German program was stripped nearly to nothing when Wilhelm I died and was succeeded by his sickly son, Frederick III. The new kaiser had more pressing issues to deal with than newfangled technology and, despite Siemens' protests, allowed himself to be wooed by French promises of medicinal aid in return for the Germans' results. And so, with not a shot but a viperous whisper, the French got their hands on the secrets of the leviathans. Frederick III never saw the promised cure, dying a mere ninety-nine days after ascending the throne.

After the death of his father in 1888, Wilhelm II ascended to the position of kaiser, and his Prussian upbringing immediately shined through. Considering himself a man of the world, the kaiser had a keen interest in science and technology and was particularly interested in expanding upon the research that his father had allowed to fall into the hands of the French. But Kaiser Wilhelm II's plans were to turn asunder by two pivotal events in the following year.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION AND FLEET REVIEW

The Germans were not present at the unveiling of the *Ganymede* and *Leviathan* during the Exhibition; from their perspective, they were preparing for a more auspicious occasion. While Kaiser Wilhelm II was curious about the

The Huns have been remarkably quiet about their own leviathans, and since the loss of our informant Bebel we have little insight into the workings of their minds. The period of stagnation after the loss of the Crown Prince has put them behind the rest of the pack, but they'll catch up damned quickly now they've put their minds to it.



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concept of leviathans, he was under no misconceptions regarding the reality of their construction and manufacture. Wilhelm had come under the sway of the Admiral von Tirpitz, and it was no secret that the Imperial Navy—the *Kaiserliche Marine*—was the kaiser's preferred service.

Arriving in England for his grandmother Her Majesty Queen Victoria's birthday celebrations, the kaiser and von Tirpitz were keen to see for themselves the might of the Royal Navy at the traditional Fleet Review. When the commotion surrounding the unveiling of the first grand flyers moved attention to the newfangled contraptions hovering in the skies above London, the kaiser and his admiral nearly retired from their location at Spithead to see for themselves the new machines.

It was serendipitous that they remained to watch the review; not only was the kaiser awed by the size of the Royal Navy sailing through the Solent, he was also greeted by the sight of not one, but *three* of the new leviathan fliers brazenly flying in formation above the assembled fleet. Bebel's missives make it clear that it was at this point the kaiser's bold decision was made—von Tirpitz's plan would be changed. If the Germans could not challenge us on the sea, they would challenge us from the sky.

THE TIRPITZ PLAN

Von Tirpitz's original plan was for a massive expansion of the German fleet, to such a level that it could match and defeat the Royal Navy if need be. Whilst defending the Fatherland from a Royal Navy blockade was the primary reason for the expansion, von Tirpitz was also concerned about expanding Germany's colonial holdings, thereby assuring that Germany would become a superpower on the world stage.

The revelation of the leviathans changed this thinking. Whilst von Tirpitz would still expand the Navy, he would also oversee the creation of a new arm of the German military—the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*. Using von Siemens' work as a basis, the Germans turned their attention to creating the perfect military flier. They wanted nothing as simple as what the French or we had tried so far—the idea was to mount Krupp's 1000lb cannons on a sky platform that would allow the Germans to threaten the might of the Royal Navy no matter the numbers arrayed against them. Thus was built the SMS *Friedrich III*, the Germans' answer to the raft of fliers taking to the air in France and Britain. Four times as large as the *Leviathan*, she was built in secret outside of Potsdam, taking to the air, sans weapons and armor, for the first time in the spring of 1892.

THE DEATH OF KRONPRINZ WILHELM

Kaiser Wilhelm II's respect for the Navy had been passed onto his son, *Kronprinz* Wilhelm. But the crown prince became enamored with the idea of flight and pressured his father to be allowed to see the nascent *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*. As befitted his royal status, Crown Prince Wilhelm, a bright young man of nine years, was brought to Potsdam to be aboard the *Kaiser Friedrich III* during its first live firing test. Occupying the captain's chair onboard the German flyer, the crown prince was excited to experience the marvelous sensation of flight.

On that day in 1893, the *Kaiser Friedrich III*, as befitted a great beast of its size, rose steadily until it held a distance of four fathoms above the ground. The utmost care had been taken to ensure that no spies had infiltrated the test area,

and with a flourish, the crown prince gave the order for the magnificent flier to open fire. What happened next comes to us from Bebel, and even from that impeccable source it is only hearsay.

The *Kaiser Friedrich III* opened fire with its twin 1000lb breechloaders, weapons that had served the Prussian military well on their 1871 drive on Paris. The side of the *Kaiser Friedrich III* disappeared amidst the smoke of the discharge, and soon it became apparent something was dreadfully wrong. The force of the back blast from the massive cannon had not been offset by the additional electroid tanks dotted around the *Kaiser Friedrich III*'s hull as expected, and the massive recoil had pitched the vessel on its flank. Crewmen were seen jumping to their deaths as the massive vessel careened into the hard-packed clay of the Potsdam proving grounds—but the deaths of a few naval personnel were nothing compared to the loss of the kaiser's heir.

Immediately the grief-stricken kaiser suspended the leviathan program, declaring it “a fool's errand” and disbanding the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*. The crews in training were returned to the Imperial Navy, and the monies devoted to the development of levs was promised to Admiral von Tirpitz to expand the *Kaiserliche Marine*, with special emphasis on grand battleships that would embarrass the Royal Navy at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

MECKEL AND THE JAPANESE

With the death of Crown Prince Wilhelm and the subsequent disbanding of the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, the German leviathan program stagnated, despite the advances that both we and the French were making with our own programs, and the rumblings coming out of Imperial Russia regarding the “Rise of the Falcons.” Admiral von Tirpitz

Dr. Ernst Schmidt

A professor of Chemical Engineering at the Hahn-Meiter Institut, Schmidt is the protégé of Ernst Werner von Siemens, serving as von Siemens' assistant during the first electroid experiments at Potsdam and, since Siemen's death, as the head technical adviser to the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*. As such, Schmidt has overseen the development and production of every class of vessel in the German air service, operating from the newly constructed (and if August Bebel was to be believed, extremely well-funded) Siemens Wing of the Institut.

Schmidt came to worldwide attention during the ill-fated 1910 Race to the Pole, where he captained the German entry, the *SMS Flugboot*. Despite the contest's disastrous end and the subsequent controversy surrounding the German crew's survival, Schmidt has suffered no censure, and if anything is held in higher regard within the *Luftmarine* circle. The Siemens Wing has flourished, drawing in droves new officers from the *Luftkriegsakademie* to Berlin to learn the intricacies of leviathan technology.

The unspecified reports of the contents of the latest paper presented by Schmidt are worrying, however. Initially published in the public domain, Admiral Tirpitz quickly ordered it removed from circulation and pronounced it “Top Secret.” All that is known is that Schmidt was working with a scientist named Roentgen.

was happy to be spending the money on expanding the German fleet, and the kaiser was not open to suggestions of reactivating the program.

After the brusque and inflammatory outburst of Marshal Mikhail Skobelev in Paris in 1882, the German foreign secretariat kept a close watch on the Russian's career. Learning of his deployment to the Liaotung Peninsula

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in China, Chief of the General Staff General Count von Schiefflen saw a way of distracting the Russians whilst the German army continued its buildup for war. The Japanese, incensed at the so-called "Triple Intervention," ordered more German military supplies to bolster their army. Von Schiefflen agreed to their request, and as a show of good faith, sent General Jakob Meckel to oversee the transfer of goods.

Meckel was no stranger to Japan, having served as the German military adviser there from 1885 to 1890, and was seen by the Japanese as instrumental in their success during the Sino-Japanese War. More as a sop to von Schiefflen than a serious educational attempt, in mid-1895 Meckel gave the Japanese staff officers a series of lectures on the Siege of Sebastopol, and the bright Imperial Japanese officers soon saw a correlation between the Russians at Sebastopol, and the Russians currently occupying Port Arthur and the rest of the Liaotung Peninsula.

Regardless of his role in prompting the Japanese Army's perspective on the Russian occupiers, Meckel was apparently caught unawares when the Japanese moved against Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Despite the keen interest that the Germans had in the outcome of the fighting, Meckel played the role of observer, making only a few small suggestions. Meckel was impressed with the Japanese navy, particularly its officer corps, and relayed his admiration to Berlin. Von Tirpitz, agitating for more funding for his expanded fleet, used Meckel's telegram as a means to quiet the military officers who were questioning the amount of funds being spent on the navy.

Soon, however, Meckel's admiration for the Japanese

fleet was replaced with awe at the efficacy of the Russian leviathans arrayed against the Japanese infantry surrounding the Russian fortresses. When the *Alexander Nevsky* scoured the artillery batteries surrounding Port Arthur, Meckel sent the following cable to von Schiefflen;

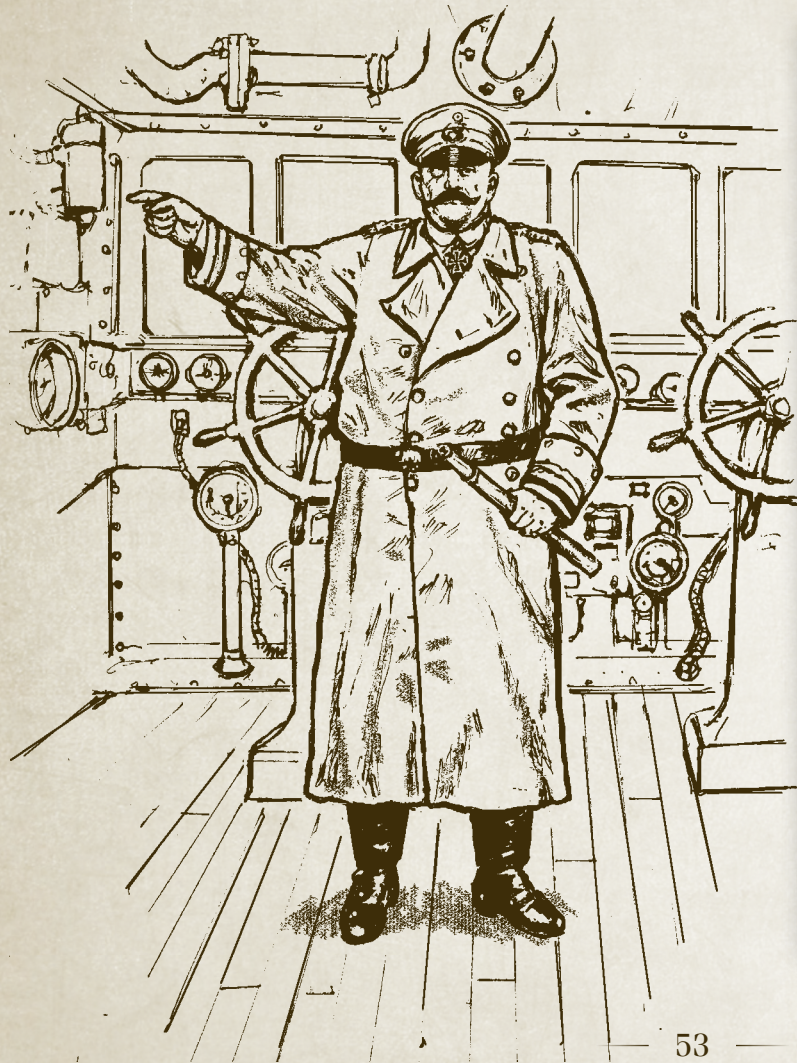
OK to send on —
If the Russians have any more
of these, your vaunted plans
will fail before we even begin.

Received by [signature]

Dismissing Meckel's assertion regarding the primacy of the leviathans, von Schiefflen ordered Meckel to concentrate on the Japanese and Russian fleets. The leviathans were a fool's errand—so the kaiser had stated—and von Tirpitz's fleet would at the very least need to supersede the Russians. So when news of Tsushima reached the general staff, von Schiefflen was in a quandary. The kaiser had made it clear that the leviathan program was a nonstarter, but the Russians had just shown how potentially ineffective even von Tirpitz's vaunted fleet might be.

In the end, he reached a compromise. Meckel was called back from Japan, and along with von Siemens was ordered to create a series of war games, or *kriegsspiele*, to train the officers of the Army and Navy in how to fight the new threat. For the moment, the Germans were out of the Great Sky Race.

Ha! The Japs kicked him out!



IMPERIAL GERMAN LEVIATHAN RANKS

OFFICER RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Admiral zur Luft
 (Admiral of the Air/Sky Admiral)
Vizeadmiral zur Luft
 (Vice-Admiral of the Air/-)
Konteradmiral zur Luft
 (Rear-Admiral of the Air/Sky Rear-Admiral)
Kapitän zur Luft
 (Captain of the Air/Sky Captain)
Luftfregattenkapitän
 (Air Frigate Captain/-)
Luftkorvettenkapitän
 (Air Corvette Captain/Sky Commander)
Oberleutnant zur Luft
 (First Lieutenant of the Air/Lieutenant Commander)
Leutnant zur Luft
 (Lieutenant of the Air/Lieutenant)
Oberdeckoffizier
 (First Deck Officer/-)
Deckoffizier
 (Deck Officer/Ensign)

ENLISTED RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Feldwebel zur Luft
 (Sergeant of the Air/-)
Vize-Feldwebel zur Luft
 (Vice-Sergeant of the Air/-)
Oberluftmaat
 (Chief Petty Officer of the Air/Chief Petty Officer)
Luftmaat
 (Petty Officer of the Air/Petty Officer)
Luftgefreiter
 (Private of the Air/Leading Airman)
Oberluftmatrose
 (Airman 1st Class of the Air/Able Airman)
Luftmatrose
 (Airman 2nd Class of the Air/Airman)

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KAISERLICHE LUFTMARINE, AGAIN

Ironically, it was the same event that had so inspired him initially that moved the kaiser to give his blessing to the leviathan program again. Accompanying him to the 1899 Fleet Review at the Solent was Admiral von Tirpitz and the German Squadron, a flotilla of vessels detached from the *Kaiserliche Marine*—a show of force designed to show us the pride of German engineering and military strength. However, the German fleet, far from demonstrating German technological superiority, compared unfavorably with their Royal Navy counterparts, and the absence of any form of German flier was noted when the skies above Spithead were filled with multiple British leviathans of various design.

Embarrassed by the poor showing of the German fleet, the kaiser again ordered von Tirpitz to develop a leviathan force. When von Tirpitz faltered in his response, von Schiefflen quietly mentioned that the Army was working on its own leviathan program and was positioned to begin production immediately. The kaiser paused and shook his head, and then turned to von Tirpitz.

"I will have no mistakes like last time—we will take our time. You promised me a fleet, Admiral: I want it to darken the sky."

As soon as von Tirpitz learned of Meckel's and von Siemens' studies, he assimilated their work into his own design bureau. Unlike us and the French, the Germans concentrated primarily on research and development rather than expanding their fleet.

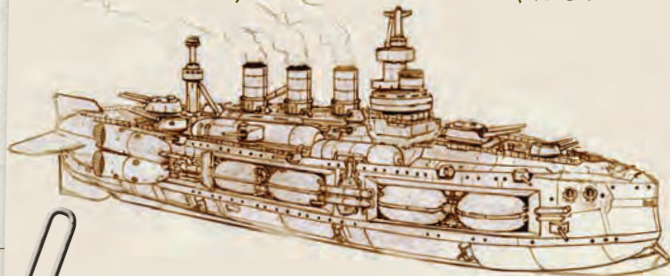
THE LOSS OF BEBEL AND THE FUTURE

a true hero

Unfortunately, the vast majority of our information regarding the Germans was cut off in 1905 when the Germans discovered that August Bebel had been feeding us information for years regarding both the Germans' naval and leviathan buildups. Since that time we have seen a steady stream of German leviathans being deployed around the world, but nothing approaching the numbers sported by the Sky Fleet, or even the French and Russians. What is most concerning to the Admiralty is the amount of funding von Tirpitz apparently continues to devote to the development of leviathan technology. We know from Bebel how much von Tirpitz had pledged to build his "Fleet in Being"; it has become increasingly apparent that the German shipbuilding has stagnated, but the funding has not been reduced by one shilling. Where is all that money going, and what are the Germans doing with it?

For the meantime, contact with the Germans warrants caution, but apart from a few minor skirmishes over the Pacific colonies the Sky Fleet has had little to do with them. As far as we can tell, neither have the French—though it is doubtful they would let us know either way.

German Battleship, name and class unknown



KAPITÄN ZUR LUFT ERICH VON STEUBEN

Unlike the majority of *Kaiserliche Luftmarine* officers, Kapitän zur Luft von Steuben is a member of the *Junkers* nobility who was drawn to the new service after time in the Imperial Navy. Indeed, it was his service aboard the SMS *Brandenburg* that first exposed him to the leviathans, where he watched as they soared above him and his fellow sailors during the Kaiser's frustrating 1899 visit to the Royal Navy's Fleet Review. Intrigued by the marvelous machines, he eagerly signed up to join the reformed *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, being assigned to the SMS *Kaiserin* as a gunnery officer.

Von Steuben earned notoriety during the Battle of Zabern when the *Kaiserin* met the *Dunquerque* over the village of Zabern in the early morning hours of 16 December 1907. What started off as a show of force soon devolved into a shooting battle after the French leviathan mistook a cigarette flare as the precursor for an attack. Because the French opening salvo ravaged the flying bridge, von Steuben assumed command and carried out the fight from his place on the conning tower, eventually driving off the *Dunquerque* and saving the lives of most of his crew.

VIZEADMIRAL ZUR LUFT GRAF MAXIMILIAN VON SPEE

Born in Copenhagen, von Spee was a member of the Rhenish nobility who joined the *Kaiserliche Marine* in 1878, rising through ranks until he was placed in command of the German West Africa fleet based at Kamerun. On his return to Germany, he moved into weapons development, which first brought him to the attention of Admiral von Tirpitz. A member of Tirpitz's "Fleet in Being" design cadre, von Spee was ultimately converted to the cause of the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, recognizing the impact such a force would have had during his days in Africa.

Von Spee is currently the senior sky-going officer in the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, second only to *Admiral zur Luft* Leberecht Maass. As such, he is currently the captain of the most recently deployed German leviathan, SMS *Kronprinz Wilhelm*. Since switching to the "flying service," von Spee has become something of an authority on leviathan tactics; the *kriegsspiele* scenarios he designs are considered the hardest part of the final exam any *Kaiserliche Luftmarine* cadet must pass at the *Luftkriegsakademie* outside of Potsdam before they can don the black eagle that signifies their membership in that elite group of fliers.

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SMS WESTFALEN

Based at Bougainville in the Pacific colony of Deutsch-neuguinea (German New Guinea), the *Westfalen* is a *Deutschland*-class leviathan built at the Kiel Canalwerks in 1903. Operating alone for the most part, the *Westfalen* has long been the image of German might in the south West Pacific region. While capable of engaging most other leviathans in stand-up combat, the *Westfalen* has yet to take part in any actual combat.



The *Westfalen* is known for the fact that it was the first non-British leviathan to visit Australia after its 1902 secession from the British Empire. The simple act of the *Westfalen* entering Port Moresby on the Australian-owned land of Papua caused a commotion, with the British Admiralty and Foreign Office threatening an expanded conflict if the Germans officially recognized the Australians' independence. Despite these threats, shortly thereafter the French formally recognized Australian independence, and the Germans soon followed suit.

Under a hastily arranged deal, the *Westfalen* continued to provide security for the Australian colony until the Republic of Australia Navy (formerly the Royal Australian Navy) took over the role in 1906.

SMS FRIEDRICH DER GROSSE

The first of the new breed of German leviathans, the *Friedrich* is the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine's* flag vessel, normally commanded by the *Admiral zur Luft*, and captained by one of the up-and-comers amongst the groups of promotable officers. Her exact armament, armor rating and speed are all unknown, and it is thought she goes in for regular overhauls to update her systems to the most recent the Germans have produced.



Despite her exalted status amongst the vessels of the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, the *Friedrich* is no stranger to combat. Her first battle came above the Skagerrak during the Royal Sky Fleet's 1909 attempt to bottle in the German navy's High Seas Fleet as a show of British force. The *Friedrich* holds the record for quickest leviathan kill, using a single salvo of its massive broadside to destroy the British flotilla's HMS *Suffolk*.

Rumors have also circulated regarding the current whereabouts of the *Friedrich*. Along with a sizable portion of the *Kaiserliche Luftmarine*, she has not been seen for many months, and speculation grows as to whether she is undergoing yet another refit or whether the Germans have something more insidious in mind.



SKOBELEV'S LEGACY



The Russians are a curious lot. They took an early lead when it came to leviathan tactics, and then showed the Nips what these flying beasts could do. Made even Whitehall sit up and take notice. But then they fell back into their old ways, and have made quite a mess of things. Still, be wary-the Russian captains are amongst the most experienced in the world.



By now, new officers should have a firm understanding of the role the Russians have played in the history of leviathans, from the deviousness of the *Okbrana* to the pivotal battle at Tsushima. But at the beginning, the Russians floundered from one failure to another. It took the insight of a brilliant general and tactician to realize the potential the wondrous fliers offered, and forever change the face of warfare.

THE WHITE GENERAL

The Russians' fortunes changed when one Lieutenant General Mikhail Dmitrievich Skobelev was informed of the progress made by Shukov and Oblimovsky in the development of the flying machines. Skobelev had proved an able commanding officer during the Russo-Turkish War, distinguishing himself during the Siege of Plevna. Famous for charging into the thickest frays in his white uniform atop a white horse, Skobelev was given the moniker of the "White General." Indeed, the gentleman was perhaps one of Russia's finest officers, going on to reconquer much of Central Asia for the tsar.

But Skobelev did not handle politics as well as he did martial matters. After being recalled to St. Petersburg from Paris in 1882 (after making some rather inflammatory remarks regarding the Germans), Skobelev suffered a malady that resulted in a severe and lengthy illness. It is believed that during his convalescence he began giving thought to the way in which the tsar's forces waged war,

*To say
the least!*

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which led him to seek further input from the scientists, and in the end subvert the *Okhrana's* prize to his own ends.

Despite his gallant victory at Pleven, Skobelev was of the opinion that the Russian forces had suffered dearly at the hands of the Turkish cannonades. Reasoning that conventional artillery was too slow (he had himself captured some ninety Turkish guns during the Battle of Shipka Pass), Skobelev moved to make the contentious leviathans a more mobile artillery force that could support his fast-moving infantry and Cossack formations. Indeed, he argued passionately regarding the project, and in the end was given leave by the general staff to carry out his experiment.

COSSACKS OF THE SKY

Skobelev was given permission to create his “airborne artillery” force, but under the proviso it be based in the unruly Argun Gorge region of Chechnya. Skobelev chose the first fortress built by Prince Baratinsky as a part of his Advanced Chechen Line to house the nascent leviathan fleet, and Vozdvizhenskoye, or “The Elevated,” was transformed from a crumbling rural bastion into a modern, industrialized town. Now that he had his base of operations, Skobelev could begin training the crews that would man the magnificent metal fliers.

Skobelev faced a hard choice. He chose his first “volunteers” from the ranks of the artillery corps, befitting his notion of creating an airborne artillery corps. But he soon found the bombardiers lacked the qualities to become great fliers, and in desperation turned to the forces local to Vozdvizhenskoye. This led Skobelev to a young officer named Ardan Tomav, a passionate *Narodnik* and commander of a group of Terek Cossacks who had helped put down the Chechen uprising of 1877. At first, Tomav was not interested, having had little experience with artillery during the course of his military career, and with the discovery of oil near Grozny, the Caucasus was primed again to become the center of action.



RUSSIAN LEVIATHAN RANKS

OFFICER RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Brigadier
(Bridadier/Sky Admiral)
Polkovnik
(Colonel/Sky Rear-Admiral)
Major
(Major/Sky Captain)
Rittmeister
(Ride Master/Sky Commander)
Stabs-Rittmeister
(Staff Ride Master/ --)
Poruchik
(Lieutenant/Lieutenant Commander)
Sub-Poruchik
(Sub-Lieutenant/Lieutenant)
Praporschik
(Flag Bearer/Ensign)

ENLISTED RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Ordinary Praporshchik
(Ordinary Flag Bearer/Chief Petty Officer)
Sub-Praporshchik
(Sub Flag Bearer/Petty Officer)
Feldfebel
(Ensign/Leading Airman)
Kapral
(Corporal/Able Airman)
Gefreytor
(Private/Airman)

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(Russian for Golden Falcon, a popular Kazakh hunting bird)

Tomav, being a hardy fellow, was keen to remain where the action was, but Skobelev knew how to appeal to the younger man. The *Narodniks* were a political movement within Russia that called for a complete detachment from the West, claiming Russia had been tainted by Western ideas. By demonstrating to the younger man that the leviathans, or *Berkuts* were the result of Russian ingenuity he secured Tomav's support and with it, his first batch of proper fliers.

Tomav took to the task with relish, eager to show both Skobelev and the world at large what his "Cossacks of the Sky" were capable of achieving. Initially, he drew troops only from his trusted Terek Cossacks, but the Cossacks' numbers were not enough for the task at hand, and reluctantly Tomav began selecting candidates from the ranks of the Imperial Navy.

The Black Sea Fleet in particular was a rich source of recruits, including a young *Poruchik* named Pyotr Schmidt, whose addition to the Russian airborne artillery would prove pivotal in the course of leviathan history.

WAR IN THE EAST

By now, Admiralty officers should have a proper understanding regarding the outcome of the Battle of Tsushima, and the series of events leading up to it, so it hardly bears further exposition here. Suffice to say, the Russians were the first to show the world the true potential of the leviathans, even if it did cost them the famed White General Marshal Skobelev, who was cut down as he led the breakout from Port Arthur. This was perhaps the moment that spurred the taciturn Tomav onto his greatest triumph; the defeat of the Japanese fleet at Tsushima.

Less well known is the outcome of the fight for those Russians involved in Tsushima. The Russian general staff, despite the information to be found in Skobelev's writings

Yevgeniy Petrovich Ermolov

A distant relative to the famous Napoleonic general, Ermolov was the tsar's principal tool for purging the Russian leviathan corps. Ermolov ordered the razing of *Vozdvizhenskoye*, as well as the detention (and rumors say, execution) of several survivors of the Schmidt Mutiny. As such, he is a feared and reviled figure amongst the survivors of the Schmidt Mutiny (see below).

The tsar has placed Ermolov in the position of Comptroller of the Navy, but in reality his only involvement is ensuring the loyalty of the remaining fliers. As Comptroller, he is also responsible for the development of and purchase of new vessels. His greatest hurdle to overcome in his role is removing the last vestiges of Marshals Skobelev and Tomav, who he deems responsible for the mutinous actions of their followers. In his mind this includes Polkovnik Sergey Grabbe, who he claims is irrevocably tainted by his time under Tomav.

and the protestations of an indignant Tomav, decided that the leviathans should function as an extension of the Imperial Navy, and detailed Tomav to serve as an instructor for the new force under Admiral Rozhdestvensky in the Baltic Sea Fleet. The existing *Berkut*-class leviathans were split amongst the Baltic and Black Sea fleets, and *Vozdvizhenskoye* was kept as the manufactory.

Ignoring our own contributions!

→ Much like our own program.

A HOUSE IN DISORDER

Much has been written about the so-called Schmidt Mutiny, and not all of it correct. From what we have been able to gather, Pyotr Schmidt was a leviathan-trained naval officer who was at the head of the uprising the Russians had to put down in Sebastopol in early 1905. A Bolshevik troublemaker, Schmidt was arrested and detained for the public good. But his detention sparked a mutiny that split the Black Sea fleet as crews fought amongst themselves and against Loyalist vessels of both stripes. The outcome of the mutiny left Schmidt as erstwhile commander of the Black Sea Fleet and in control of Sebastopol itself.

The general staff, unsure how to fight the rebel *Berkuts* Schmidt now commanded, ordered Tomav to retake the city and end Schmidt's rebellion. Tomav, who had maintained tight control over the leviathan officers of the Baltic Fleet, put out the call for Loyalist forces to follow him—forming the so-called “White Guard,” the name a nod to both the tsar and the fallen Marshal Skobelev. Made up primarily of the Baltic leviathan fleet, and several Cossack units that answered his call, Tomav moved with haste against Sebastopol, whilst Admiral Rozhdestvensky and his naval forces would follow as rapidly as they could.

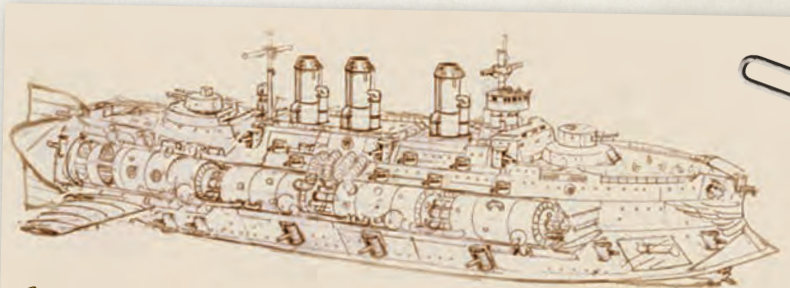
The rebels had established their base at the fortress on Tendra Island, and Schmidt commanded a force equal in strength to Tomav's force. In a mighty conflict still being studied by Admiralty analysts, the White Guard met Schmidt's mutineers on the field of battle, and the world saw its first major leviathan versus leviathan combat as the Loyalists vented their outrage at the actions of their peers. At the end of the day, the mutineers were shattered and fully half of the Russians' leviathan fleet littered Sebastopol harbor. But the biggest cost was the loss of Tomav, cut down

as he drove the *Prince Baratinsky* against the mutinous *Catherine the Great*.

And so it stands at the outset of 1910. The tsar, incensed by the betrayal of Schmidt and his fellow mutineers, detailed the *Okhrana* to gut the leviathan corps, and without the tempering influences of Skobelev or Tomav, they largely succeeded. The manufactory at Vozdvizhenskoye was razed to the ground, and the Skobelev Airborne Artillery School built in Pskov. The leviathans remain separate from the Navy, and the shattered remains of the *Berkut* fleet have much rebuilding to do before they are once again a credible threat.

That said, the survivors of the purge and the battle at Tendra Island are amongst the most experienced crews in the world, and should be treated as such.

*Bah! Hogwash!
Those Slavs
are no match
for the
High Fleet!*



Russian Battleship, name and class unknown

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POLKOVNIK GENNADY SERGEYEVICH GRABBE

One of Marshal Tomav's protégés, Grabbe managed to survive the purge carried out by the tsar after the Schmidt Mutiny. Intelligence believes Grabbe's



continued presence in the *Berkut* fleet is most likely due to his lineage; he is grandson of General Count Alexander Grabbe, a well-known scoundrel who dealt with the Chechens rather brutally.

From all reports Grabbe is a ruthless officer who treats his men little better than serfs, but his results cannot be questioned. Currently captain of his grandfather's namesake, the *RVS Count Alexander Grabbe*, Grabbe is the odds-on favorite to be the next leader of the Russians' leviathan program—a succession all but assured by his family's connections to the tsar—but Admiralty officers should not underestimate this man as a mere political appointee. Like most Russian flyers, he has extensive experience with sky warfare, legitimately claiming the death of three rebel vessels during the Schmidt Mutiny. Grabbe flies his family crest below the black ensign, and all Admiralty officers are advised to avoid contact unless absolutely necessary.

RVS PRINCE BARATINSKY

Whilst not as well known as the *Mikhail Skobelev* or *Aleksandr Nevsky II* by the majority of Admiralty officers (indeed, the mighty vessel is essentially a museum piece now), the *Baratinsky* is perhaps the most storied of the Russian leviathans. No other vessel has had quite the same impact on the public consciousness as the *Baratinsky*. From her daring dash to relieve the Pacific Fleet at Tsushima to her stand at the Battle of Tendra Island during the Schmidt Mutiny, the *Baratinsky* has forever been at the forefront of the Russian Empire's reach for the skies.



Perhaps the moment the *Baratinsky* forever etched itself into the history books was at the pivotal battle at Tsushima, where for the first time the grand fliers faced their true test. The *Baratinsky* demonstrated the power of the leviathans when she engaged and destroyed the Japanese flagship harrying the remnants of the Russian fleet. But perhaps ironically, the *Baratinsky* is best remembered as Marshal Ardan Tomav's flagship during the epic Battle of Tendra Island where the combined naval and leviathan forces of Tomav's White Guard crushed Pyotr Schmidt's abortive mutiny. Despite the hard-won victory, celebrations were subdued on the *Baratinsky*, as Marshal Ardan Tomav, the famed Falconer, lay unmoving on the deck after overseeing his most important victory.

Since that time, the *Baratinsky* has served as a living monument to the so called "Fathers of the *Berkuts*"—Mikhail Skobelev and Ardan Tomav—and is permanently moored at the Skobelev Airborne Artillery School outside of Pskov.



HEART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN



By: Foreign Service Operative
"Blooming Rose"

Working the harbors and ports under the very practical (and profitable) cover of running several brothels, gaming houses and other institutions reportedly of ill-repute, "Blooming Rose" has created a useful network for gathering intelligence on the Italian leviathan and naval operations. While I do not condone her techniques, I cannot dispute her effectiveness. For the sake of anonymity and preservation of her honor, I simply refer to her by her nom de plume. I am attaching her rather blunt report forthwith, with the comment that while she does not possess a military background, she has a firm understanding of the basic principles on which we seek intelligence.

Respectfully submitted,
Your Majesty's Humble Servant

Lord Alexander Cheverly,
Foreign Service Italy

*And a firm grasp on how to
handle a sky sailor, no doubt!*

NEWCOMER TO THE GAME

With the exception of the Italians and the Americans, most world powers felt compelled to build their own aerial fleets after the unveiling of the *Ganymède* and the debut flight of the *Leviathan*. Military planners in Italy took a wait-and-see approach when it came to flying ships.

Information gathered from members of the Royal Family who are in the Italian navy (and who frequent my establishments), makes it easy to understand their deliberate response. The reason lay in Italian history itself. The Italians were a splintered group of principalities until the 1850s and 60s. They did not even have a cohesive navy until 1861: whereas France and our own islands had a long and glorious history on the high seas before the beginning of air travel, the Italians had no history to guide them.

In some respects, coming late to the game allowed them to take advantage of the industrial age. Italy did not own an extensive fleet of wooden ships they felt it necessary to refit as ironclad war vessels, and her approach to leviathans was to observe her neighbors before committing the resources for an extensive fleet. In this writer's opinion, these two considerations mean Italy now fields one of the more modern lev fleets ... though how they deploy these strategic assets is quite different from her neighbors' approaches.

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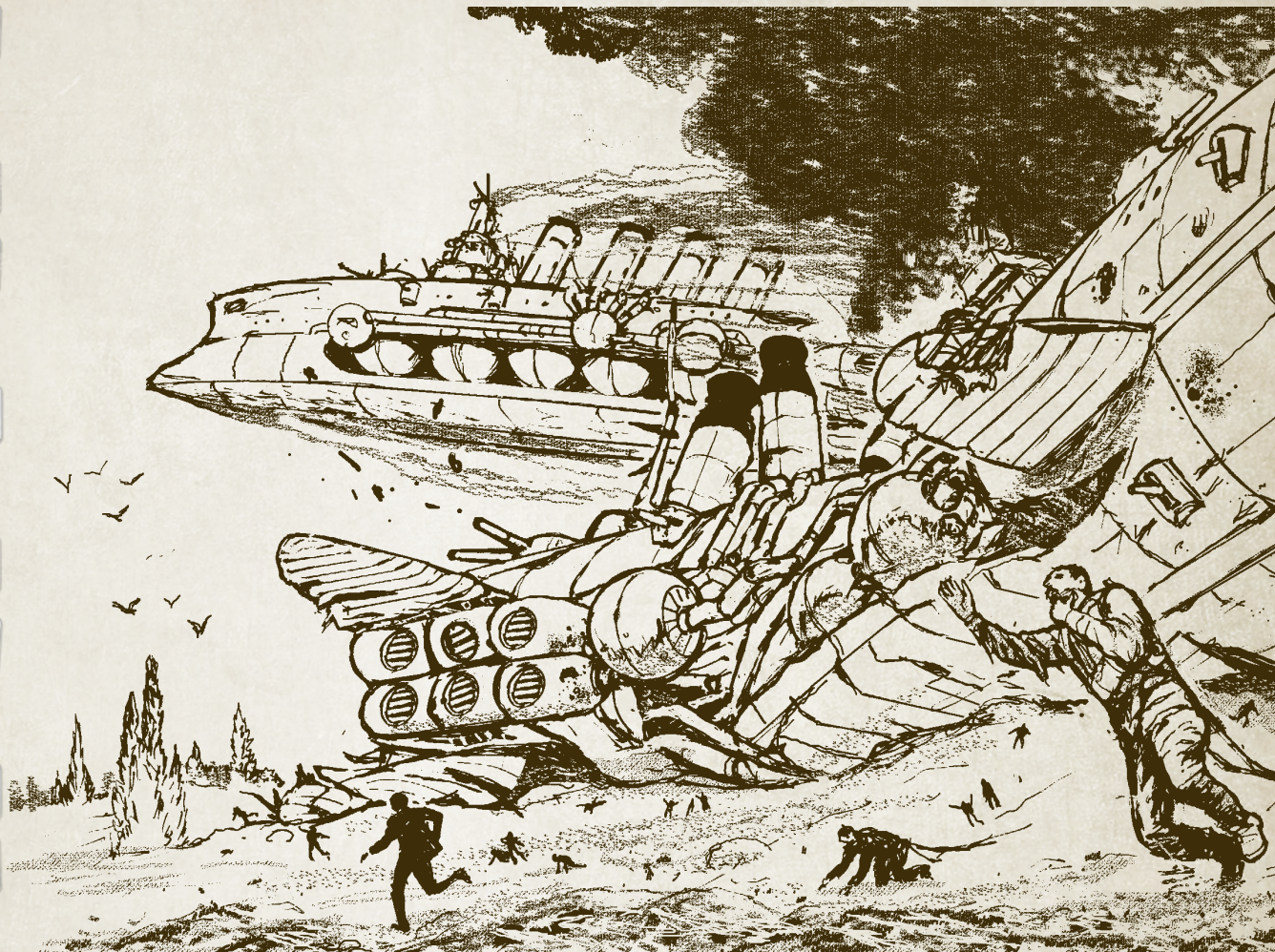
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Their first leviathan, the *Napoli*, was launched in 1895. Initially attached to the Genova Squadron, the ship was the subject of several foreign office reports. Based on intelligence from crewmen who served on the vessel, she was remarkably free of technical issues. One officer told one of my working girls that the designs for the *Napoli* were modified from the Austro-Hungarian ship *Budapest*. How the Italians secured copies of that design is a mystery—but having seen both ships, I must say there are significant similarities.

THE ITALIAN WAY

Most world powers sought to establish their lev fleets as separate entities with carefully defined ties to their wet-navy cousins, but not Italy. Their lev forces, while separate, operate

Antonio Starabba, Marchese di Rudin

Italy, while strategically located, has suffered since the Roman era for lack of a powerful navy. Italian Prime Minister Antonio di Rudin considered the risks of investing in leviathan technology as small compared to being left behind. As a result, he helped secure the political support for an Italian Air Service rather than investing resources on the high seas.

Di Rudin is a cunning political insider and is willing to broker bargains with anyone to advance Italy's stature. Some of his vessels are made with Krupp Armor, some are equipped with British guns; the Foreign Service considers such partnerships reckless in a time of war as it allows the supply line to be easily interrupted, but during this relative peace it has allowed the Italian navy quick growth at a relatively low cost.

as part of their overall naval fleets. Levs are directly tied to squadrons. While they have from time to time detached leviathans for specific operations, they are usually assigned patrols tied to the navy squadron.

From what I have been able to gather through several informal interviews with officers plied liberally with wine, they follow this structure because of Italy's natural position in the Mediterranean. The Alps in the north provide a natural shield to aerial incursions from that direction. Italy, seated in the middle of the Mediterranean, simply feels that tightly combined operations with its traditional navy allows for a more cohesive approach to battle. To the west lay the French, to the east the Hapsburgs, Greeks and Ottomans. To the south, the French and British. The Italians have not even created a separate training academy for their lev forces; instead, aviation cadets enroll in unique courses offered at the Italian Naval Academy at Livorno.

SQUADRONS OF THE ITALIAN AIR FLEET

The following are the squadrons of the Italian Fleet, each attached to their wet-navy equals.

Adriatic Fleet

- *Brindisi Squadra*
- *Valona Squadra* (They refer to themselves as the "Furies of the Otranto Straits." My girls have less gloried names for their officers. If they are as weak in the air as they are between the sheets, the Hapsburgs and Greeks have nothing to fear.)

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ITALIAN LEVIATHAN RANKS

OFFICER RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Ammiraglio

(Admiral/Sky Admiral)

Ammiraglio di Squadra

(Vice Admiral/ --)

Contr'Ammiraglio

(Rear Admiral/Sky Rear-Admiral)

Capitano di volante

(Ship of the Line Captain/Sky Captain)

Comandante di volante

(Corvette Captain/Sky Commander)

Sottocomandante di volante

(Captain/Lieutenant Commander)

Tenente di volante

(Vessel Captain/ --)

Sottotenente di volante

(First Lieutenant/Lieutenant)

Guardia marina

(Ensign/Ensign)

ENLISTED RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Capo di 1a Classe

(First Class Chief/Chief Petty Officer)

Capo di 2a Classe

(Second Class Chief/ --)

Capo di 3a Classe

(Third Class Chief/ --)

Secondo Capo

(Senior Second Chief/Petty Officer)

Sergente

(Sergeant/Leading Airman)

Sottocapo

(Under Chief/Airman)

Aviatore di 1a Classe

(Aviator Class/Able Airman)

Aviatore

(Aviator/ --)



Mediterranean Fleet

- *Genova High Seas Squadra*
- *Napoli Squadra* (referred to as "The Wild Geese")
- *Livorno Battle Squadra*
- *Livorno Cadet Squadra* (Assigned to the training leviathan *Vulcano*)
- *Palermo Squadra* (Nicknamed The Scourges. I understand the French have a reference to them that is unflattering and related to venereal disease ... a mark of the animosity between this squadron and their French counterparts. The Scourges are more known for tearing up port towns than the enemy.)
- *Venezia Squadra*
- *Catania Squadra* (The Sicilian Squadron)

The Italian naval command is the *Regia Marina*. They operate with complete autonomy from the other military branches and in recent years have had a much-needed shake-up, primarily in promoting seasoned veterans rather than desk-bound officers to high-ranking positions.

In casual conversation, several officers have indicated that the Italians are building a significant facility at Palermo for their lev fleets. This makes sense, as it is a secure area. Many of these officers have bragged that the facilities there make the French naval efforts pale in comparison.

THE ITALIANS IN BATTLE

The Adriatic Fleet has found itself sharing a narrow sea with the Austro-Hungarian (Hapsburg) fleet. Both fleets maintain cordial relations but are highly suspicious of each other. When an alleged Austro-Hungarian spy ship was sunk outside the harbor of Valona in 1901, they protested by putting their own fleet at sortie and forcing the Valona Squadron to do the same.

The Italian leviathan *Dandolo*, accompanied by the wet-navy ship *Sardengna* of the Valona Squadron, went out to confront the Austro-Hungarians. The Hapsburg lev *Sankt Georg* moved to intercept the approach of the Italian squadron.

While both sides claimed the other fired the first shot, most Italian officers are quite confident that the *Sankt Georg* fired first. The *Dandolo* lost her A turret in the second salvo but moved in to what some might assume was a deadly point-blank range. The *Sankt Georg* was riddled with shots and lost her flight trim and was forced down almost into the waters of the Adriatic. The *Sardengna* got her range and very nearly finished her off. The *Dandolo* spent six months in dock being repaired and lost 250 crewmen in the short and brutal fight. The *Sankt Georg* spent a full year being repaired.

The Battle of Valona Harbor became a matter of national pride for the Italian air navy and brought a flood of volunteers for this new service.

EYES ON LIBYA AND THE OTTOMANS

Like many world powers, the eyes of Italy are turning towards Africa. A diplomat frequenting one of our ladies of the evening revealed that the Italians have entered into an agreement with the French in regards to Northern Africa. As payment for looking the other way as the French expanded their interests in Morocco, the French would not intervene if the Italians were to make similar moves on Libya.

The Italians have begun making overtures to the local warlords in North Africa over the use of Tunis as a port for the Italian fleet and the creation of a refueling station for their leviathans. Several ships have been pulled from other squadrons, reportedly for creation of a Tunis Squadron, namely the leviathan *San Marco* which, according to several

While this information remains unsubstantiated it merits further investigation. While this does not imply an alliance between Italy and France, it does explain recent Italian naval activities.

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officers, is to serve as a flagship for this squadron. If true this marks a turning point in Italian use of leviathans, since it would be the first squadron to have a lev for a flagship.

Italy's relations with France have been tumultuous. The French seem intent on using their levs to test each of the European powers, and Italy dealt that probing a brutal blow over Sicily in 1902 in the *Altair* Affair, involving the leviathan *Ponza*. Both powers remain cordial but the incident has soured relations. Adding to this are the rumours that Italy has employed intelligence operatives to steal lev designs from their neighbors.

Our agents in the casinos of Palermo have heard rumors that the Italians are preparing for some sort of limited military action against the Ottoman Empire—a brush war of sorts. So far details have proven hard to suss out, but it is highly recommended by this operative that other elements of the Foreign Service be dedicated to the pursuit of this lead. If the Italians expand their influence in the Mediterranean it could be important for future military operations. The Ottomans, lacking a viable leviathan force, would be easy prey for the Italians if pressed into a naval confrontation.

Even if both of these avenues prove less than fruitful, both potentialities paint an image of an Italian surge in the coming years—one that is going to rely heavily on their lev assets.

CAPITANO DI VOLANTE ANTONIO GRAVA

Grava is an older officer raised in the womb of a traditional navy. His embrace of lev technology has been dramatic for an officer of his years. He has been put



in command of the Genova High Seas Squadron, the largest of the Italian squadrons and presumably the most battle-ready. From what we have been able to ascertain, this squadron will have the responsibility for breaking out of the Mediterranean in a time of all-out war and operating independently in the Atlantic.

Grava has embraced the doctrine of combining naval and air assets to work as a single entity. His military sea trials have focused on coordinating the fire missions of his naval and air vessels. While we have seen none of these trials, the word from loose-lipped naval officers in our brothels implies that Grava has all but perfected these integrated attacks.

The only thing working against this officer is his age. Now in his early 60s, Grava is due for promotion soon. This is worth noting since such an officer is bound to shape Italian naval doctrine for years to come.

Italian Battleship, name and class unknown



AMMIRAGLIO DI SQUADRA MARCOS VINCENZO

Marcos Vincenzo is a dashing and dangerous officer, probably one of the best Italian leviathan commanders. In some respects he is the opposite of men like *Capitano di volante* Grava, in that he has not embraced the Italian doctrine in the use of leviathans. As the fleet commander for Adriatic, he has on several occasions ordered his levs to operate independently of their naval cousins. The most flagrant of these incidents was his own command of the flagship *Vesuvius* during a clash with the Greek warship *Hydra*. The Greek ship had crossed into Italian waters and Vincenzo took the *Vesuvius* out to drive her off. The fight resulted in the *Hydra* barely escaping the brawl while the *Vesuvius* was hardly damaged.

The action brought the *Ammiraglio di Squadra* up on a court-martial charge, which he successfully defended against. But his actions have cost him a number of allies, who consider Vincenzo reckless and a danger to himself and his men. From our perspective, this fighting spirit and aggressiveness makes him a man to be watched carefully. As more officers inspire to his style of leadership, it could represent a shift in how levs will be used by the Italians in the future.



CESARE

This battleship was christened in 1903 and represents the pinnacle of Italian design. Many observe that the lines of the ship resemble those of French ships of the class, perhaps hinting on where the Italians obtained their plans. At present she has been posted to the Genova High Seas Squadron.

The *Cesare's* maiden voyage culminated in saving the crew of a passenger ship, the *Abraham*, an American ship that had foundered in an Atlantic storm. The *Abraham's* two hundred passengers were transferred to the *Cesare* during a horrific gale that required *Commondante di volante* Mario Pellegrini to perform breathtaking feats of flying. The story and photos of the *Cesare's* incredible rescue made Pellegrini a hero not only in Italy but in the United States, where President Roosevelt presented him with a medal for bravery. The action made the *Cesare* one of the best-known ships of the Italian lev forces worldwide.



PONZA

The *Ponza* is a heavy cruiser leviathan attached to the Napoli "Wild Geese" Squadron. The Wild Geese are known for daring, aggressive behavior, and the *Ponza* often finds itself in the midst of such actions. On 10 November 1902 a French leviathan, the *Altair*, attempted an illegal flyover of Sicily which resulted in a battle and a diplomatic incident. The French claimed that the ship had made a navigation error, but the Italians considered that extremely unlikely. There was little chance that the *Altair* was lost—Sicily is far too large to mistake for an anonymous island off the coast. The *Ponza* was in port in Messina and was dispatched alone to escort the *Altair* out of Italian territory. The two ships met along the coast and the *Ponza* opened fire when the *Altair* refused to change course.

The battle raged for an hour and both ships were badly damaged. The *Ponza* lost all of her main turrets and maneuvered to within dangerous range of the French ship in order to finally end the fight. In the end the *Altair* crashed and the *Ponza* limped back to port still ablaze, having lost her bridge in the fight and in command of a lowly *Sottocommondante di volante* by the end. The ship spent a year being rebuilt. Posting to the *Ponza* is said to be a choice assignment, despite the fact that the French have sworn revenge for the loss of the *Altair*.



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PLAYING CATCH-UP



COMPILED BY FRANCIS NIVINS,
Foreign Service, Under Seal of Purview
per the Surveillance Act of 1890

This summary report is filed as a result of two years of work incognito on the American continent, carefully observing their leviathan fleet and current operations. The military may have a jaded view of the American developments in regards to their leviathans, seeing them as latecomers to the world dance; the foreign service has taken a much broader view of our cousins across the pond. This report reflects that wider view.

SEIZING THE INITIATIVE

The unveiling of the *Ganyède* and the *Leviathan* were not enough to spark the States' involvement in the Great Sky Race. If anything, the United States initially seemed ignorant of the potential of leviathan technologies. Their prototype leviathan, the USS *Raleigh*, was plagued with technical issues. While only a destroyer-size vessel, it suffered two crash landings, which seemed to sour American interests. While they built leviathans, they still seemed focused on an ocean-based navy. Our military planning was based on this assumption—one that has changed in the last twelve years.

It would take the interests of four men to suddenly thrust the United States into the skies—Nikola Tesla, George Westinghouse, Thomas Edison and Theodore Roosevelt.

EDISON AND TESLA

Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla were friends, peers, and eventually sworn enemies. Their conflicts led to marvels of invention and an endless series of lawsuits.

Tesla was an early innovator in aviation with the introduction of his two-stage coil system. Edison saw the leviathans as a platform that generated public attention for innovation. Rather than attempt to improve on flight itself, which was Tesla's domain, Edison sought ways to exploit that technology and improve upon it. He patented several critical technologies, such as an aerial ballast control system that allows for shifting leviathans' centers of gravity



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during gunnery fire. He also created several innovations to torpedoes which, to date, have remained tightly held secrets.

Edison joined forces with George Westinghouse, who applied his vast resources to new technology. Westinghouse has reportedly created a fire-control system that is innovative and highly accurate. Members of our own foreign service are actively seeking copies of this system for our own use. Other potential innovations the Yanks possess are tightly guarded secrets.

The rivalry between Tesla and Edison grew more heated when Tesla sued his former employer over the patent rights for the ballast control system. While the case has been tied up in court for years, it is obvious that the two are constantly seeking to top each other, with the real beneficiary being the American Sky Fleet.

Alfred Thayer Mahan

While Edison and Westinghouse grab most of the headlines, Alfred Thayer Mahan is often seen as the true genius behind America's lightning-speed leap ahead in leviathan innovations and ship design. Thayer's father taught at West Point, and as a boy Alfred was befriended by young Theodore Roosevelt. He is the author of *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812*, which is required reading at the Naval Academy.

As president of the American Sky Academy in Kingston, New York, he is said to have devised sweeping strategies to maximize the assets at his disposal. While Mahan shuns publicity, in military circles he is considered something of an eccentric genius whose papers are studied worldwide.

RECRUITMENT

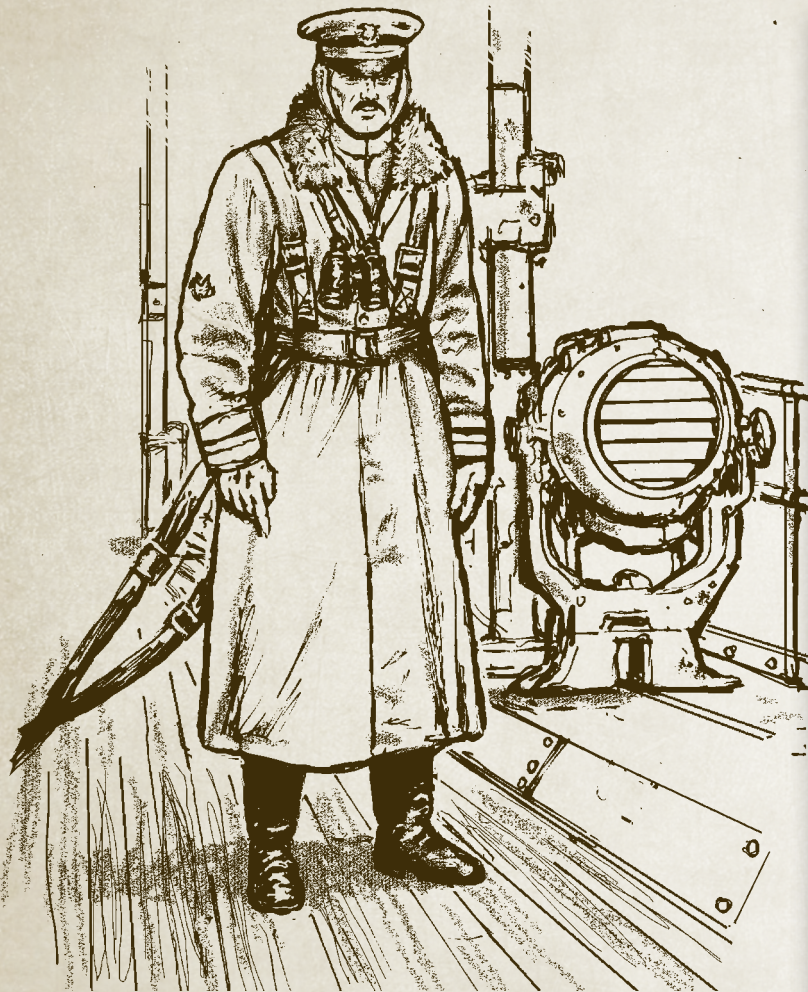
The United States has three primary bases of operations for its sky fleet. The headquarters is in Newport, Rhode Island, and St. Louis and Seattle serve as the two lesser fleet bases. In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt created the Sky Academy in Kingston, New York, claiming that it was "destined to be as hallowed a home as West Point or Annapolis." While the American Academy is no equivalent of Whale Island, it has an impressive curriculum that should not be underestimated. The emphasis is not just on combat, but also on fields such as electrical and mechanical engineering. Many students work for a minimum of two summers for Westinghouse or Edison Laboratories—further emphasizing the broad educational focus of the American fleet.

Until the turn of the century, the American Sky Fleet was small, only worthy of mention because of the technological innovations they employed. It is this ripple of innovation that has allowed the sky fleet to recruit and retain top-notch talent.

THE GREAT WHITE FLEET

President Theodore Roosevelt had only been in office for a month when he declared that the American Sky Fleet would be "the envy of the civilized world." He immediately initiated a massive building program that introduced no less than eight new models of leviathans. The president had thrown down the gauntlet to American industry to construct a fleet that would make the United States a true strategic player on the world stage. While pundits in the military would contend that the American Sky Fleet is untested in battle, no one can ignore the marvels of innovation they have incorporated.

By the summer of 1907 the new sky fleet, painted white, was displayed for the world. The USS *Kansas*, the flagship of



UNITED STATES LEVIATHAN RANKS

OFFICER RANKS (EQUIVALENCY)

Sky Admiral

(Sky Admiral)

Sky Rear-Admiral

(Sky Rear-Admiral)

Sky Captain

(Sky Captain)

Sky Commander

(Sky Commander)

Lieutenant Commander

(Lieutenant Commander)

Lieutenant

(Lieutenant)

Ensign

(Ensign)

ENLISTED RANKS (EQUIVALENCY)

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Sky Fleet

(Chief Petty Officer)

Master Chief Petty Officer

(--)

Chief Petty Officer

(Petty Officer)

Petty Officer First Class

(Leading Airman)

Petty Officer Second Class

(--)

Petty Officer Third Class

(--)

Airman Apprentice

(Able Airman)

Airman Recruit

(Airman)

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the fleet, led the Great White Fleet on a worldwide tour as proof of the commitment that America was indeed a world power. While the fleet was relatively small, the innovations the ship demonstrated impressed leaders and the public wherever the fleet appeared. The tour took just under two years to complete, and when the white ships returned to Rhode Island they found several newer ships awaiting them, including the impressive battleship USS *Hartford*.

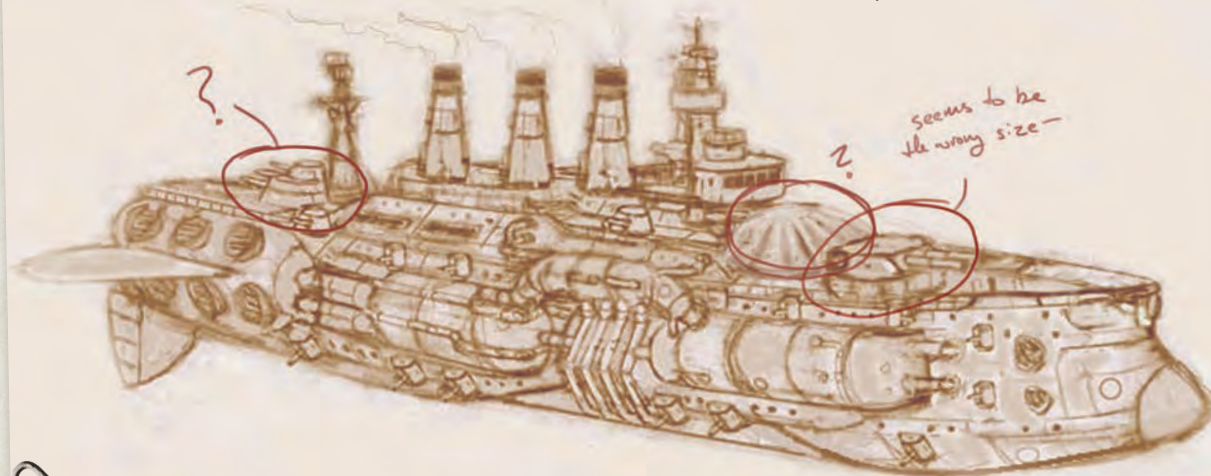
MARVELS YET UNSEEN

Perhaps because of the relative newness of their sky fleet, the Yanks maintain tight security. There are rumors that Tesla has installed special weapons on some of their ships. This rumour is further enhanced by the fact that several

ships have turrets that remain draped in tarpaulins while in port. These turrets appear much larger than standard and may, in fact, be larger-caliber guns—but if that is the case then the fire-control systems for such ships must be different than our own.

From interviews with dockyard workers we have been able to ascertain that the Americans have a number of special torpedoes in their magazines. What makes these “special” is still unknown. Likewise, there are rumours of a new secret Westinghouse weapon that is said to be installed aboard the cruiser USS *Cleveland*. Such idle chat on the docks is hardly new but, given the propensity of the Yanks to rely on innovation to make their fleet relevant, cannot be ignored.

American Battleship, name and class unknown



SKY CAPTAIN JUSTIN DANIELS

Sky Captain Daniels graduated from the first class from the Academy and taught there for a short period of time before accepting his first command, the USS *Chicago*. He sailed in the Great White Fleet and upon his return was placed in command of the USS *Hartford*, the new American battleship. The *Hartford* is seen in most circles as the most technologically innovative vessel in the world. While none of our operatives have been aboard the vessel, what we have seen of its torpedo systems seem to be a radical departure from our designs. I have included detailed sketches in a separate report on the matter. The *Hartford* has a number of hatches on the lower portion of the ship that we have not yet classified, but we assume they are some sort of new weapons systems that the Americans are deploying. The fact that they would put such a young commander in charge of such a revolutionary ship says a great deal about the skills they assume Daniels possesses.



USS TEXAS

The USS *Texas* was commissioned in 1906 and flew as part of the Great White Fleet. During the Fleet's tour of Europe, the German leviathan *Hannover* was caught in a violent storm over the Baltic and issued a wireless distress message. The *Texas*, under the command of Sky Captain Peter "Piledriver" Phillips, took off during the gale in search of the *Hannover*. As a result of sustaining several lightning strikes, the *Hannover* was foundering when the USS *Texas* arrived. Phillips ordered the ships lashed together and used his ship's buoyant systems to support the crippled *Hannover*. When they arrived in port, the press made great hay over the rescue, at which the Germans took umbrage, staunchly arguing that their ship did not require assistance. The photographs of the USS *Texas* carrying the obviously damaged *Hannover* to her home port greatly added to American pride in their sky fleet.

We have learned from operatives in Germany that the *Texas* used some sort of unique grapple system to tether and secure the *Hannover* during the rescue operation, a possibility that warrants further investigation.



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AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

In order to understand the *Königliche und Kaiserliche Luftflotte* (Royal and Imperial High Fleet), one has to understand the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And in order to understand the Empire, one has to understand its history.

The kingdom of Hungary had (by its own account) a long and glorious history before it was swallowed by the Ottoman Empire in 1526. In the mid seventeenth century, the Hapsburg Empire drove the Ottomans back to roughly their current extents, liberating Hungary in the process. The Hungarians, perhaps naively, expected to be able to pick up again as an independent state—the Hapsburgs, also perhaps naively, expected what they considered conquered territory to remain conquered. Almost two centuries of intermittent warfare ensued, with the Austrian-based Hapsburgs trying quite unsuccessfully to rule Hungary with an iron fist. Ultimately, the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 was crushed, but only with the help of the Russian Empire.

In a final attempt to replace martial strife with something more resembling marital bickering, the Great Compromise of 1867 created the Austro-Hungarian Empire as we know it today. His Royal and Imperial Majesty Emperor Franz Joseph today rules over an empire more divided than

united. Both Austria and Hungary possess their own prime ministers and parliaments, pass their own laws, and enforce their own taxes. The double-headed eagle on the Empire's flag is indeed a true reflection of the Empire's nature—one half, Austria, facing the West and its long-term rival Italy across the Adriatic; Hungary, facing East toward the hated Slavs of Imperial Russia.

CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY

In common with the European powers, the Austro-Hungarian Empire seeks to expand. Their position—trapped between resurgent Italian nationalism to the west and the Slavic colossus to the east, and without access to the world's oceans—has left them with only one direction for expansion: south.

Both halves of the Empire have backed adventures in the Balkans, most recently seizing Bosnia-Herzegovina in October of 1908. Interestingly, these new conquests are being administered as Imperial territories, rather than being assigned to one or the other of the civilian governments. This possibly marks a new trend in which the Imperial Court means to develop resources independent of the Empire's constituent assemblies.

If I wanted a bloody history lesson, I'd have hired an Oxford don! We shouldn't be relying on the FO. Bugger the Italians—we need airman officers on the spot.



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Count Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf Chief

If there was ever a man more "a model of a modern major-general" in the Hapsburg empire, I have yet to lay eyes on him. An army cadet at eleven, von Hötzendorf was a *Luftführer* and serving as an aide with the general staff by the time he was twenty-four. Best described as diligent, scrupulous and energetic (which also appears to apply to his private life, as he has fathered four children), his golden career included serving as instructor at the army's main military academy, the *Kriegsschule* in Vienna in 1892, before commanding an Imperial infantry regiment for several years. With the infantry he practiced his theories of warfare—the superiority of the attack, concentration of forces, and other theses from his academic period—before returning to the general staff. He accepted the chairmanship of the general staff in 1906.

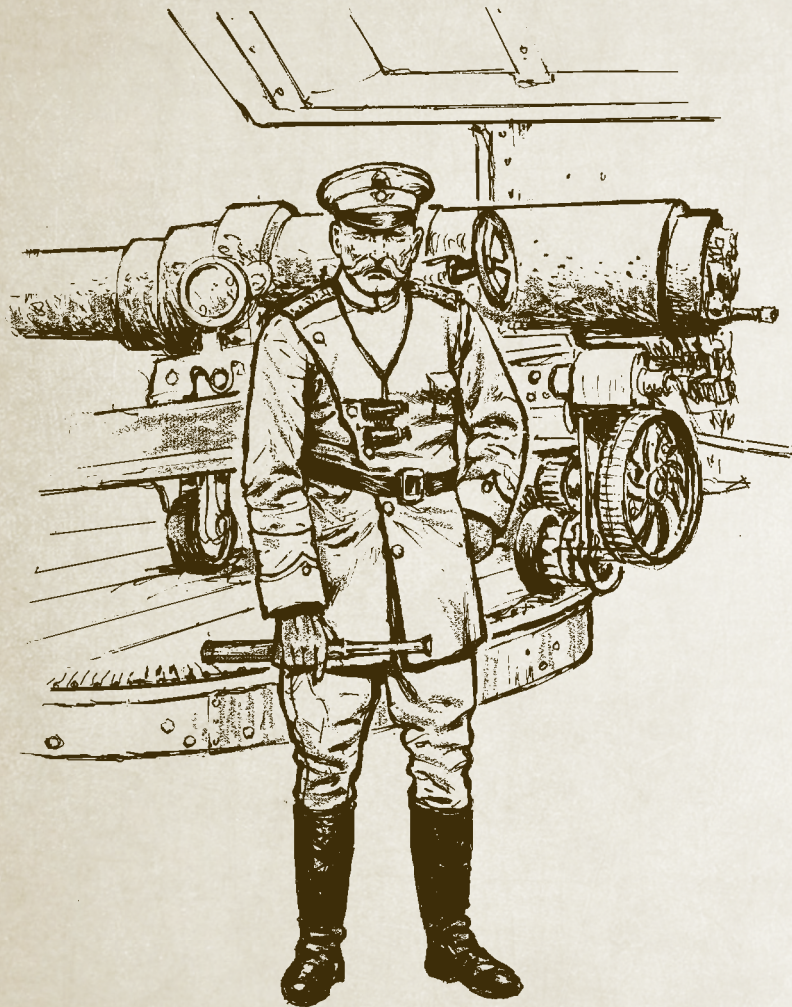
In this role, as in his previous roles, von Hötzendorf has striven to raise the quality of leadership, training and equipment in the Imperial services within the limit of the Empire's budgetary chaos. He has also been a strong supporter of the K.u.K. *Luftflotte*, intervening in its favour on a number of occasions. Unlike in his previous appointments, however, he has become overtly political and is now a serious player in the Empire's halls of power.

Which may not be a good thing for Europe. Von Hötzendorf makes no secret that he believes in the rights of the strong, and

alludes to Darwin's doctrines of "survival of the fittest" applying not just to beasts or men, but to nations. From this perspective, he sees the Slavic nations as the greatest challenge—and greatest risk—to the Hapsburg Empire, and in this light his preparations suddenly assume new meaning. His strong support of the Serbian occupation shows that he will act on his beliefs.

It should also be noted that many consider him a paper tiger, or at best a flawed generalissimo of the music-hall sort. His contemporaries are prone to comment that his plans are "brilliant on paper," but often lack in execution. He has backed the "Germanification" of the *Luftflotte*, considering the Magyar influence as a threat, but as a consequence has alienated exactly those bright young men of Hungarian extraction who would have been his natural allies against the Slavs. He has no shortage of detractors.

Despite this, it would be unwise to discount von Hötzendorf's influence. He clashes frequently with the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand over issues of ethnic autonomy, but does not suffer from loss of favour (or esteem) in the process. This alone is testament to the man's formidable political skills. Given a little more time—and a more stable budget—he will complete the transformation of the Imperial armed forces from laughable to dangerously impressive that von Tegetthoff began following the Battle of Lissa.



AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN LEVIATHAN RANKS

OFFICER RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Luftadmiral

(Admiral of the Air/Sky Admiral)

Luftvizeadmiral

(Vice-Admiral of the Air/-)

Luftkontreadmiral

(Rear-Admiral of the Air/Sky Rear-Admiral)

Linienluftschiffskapitän

(Ship of the Line Captain/-)

Luftfregattenkapitän

(Air Frigate Captain/Sky Captain)

Luftkorvettenkapitän

(Air Corvette Captain/-)

Linienluftschiffsleutnant

(Ship of the Line Lieutenant/Sky Commander)

Luftfregattenleutnant

(Air Frigate Lieutenant/Lieutenant Commander)

Luftfähnrich

(Ensign of the Air/Lieutenant)

Luftkadett

(Air Cadet/Ensign)

ENLISTED RANKS (TRANSLATION/EQUIVALENCY)

Oberstabsluftschiffsmann

(Chief Petty Officer/Chief Petty Officer)

Stabsluftschiffsmann

(Petty Officer 1st Class/Petty Officer)

Luftschiffsmaat

(Petty Officer 2nd Class/Leading Airman)

Marsgast

(Able Airman/Able Airman)

Luftmann 1. Klasse

(Airman 1st Class/-)

Luftmann 2. Klasse

(Airman 2nd Class/Airman)

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STRUCTURE OF THE IMPERIAL ARMED FORCES

Only the Imperial services—the *Königliche und Kaiserliche* (K.u.K.) *Armee* (Army), the K.u.K. *Kriegsmarine* (Navy) and K.u.K. *Luftflotte* (High Fleet) can be considered truly national forces. Even with that distinction, the armed services still depend on funds being released to them by the two separate Houses of Parliament, and major construction projects are frequently held up due to parliamentary deadlocks.

Further, the eleven distinct ethnic groups that make up the Empire create additional problems for these nominally Imperial forces. The *Armee* is divided into common (Army) units, Austrian *Landwehr* and Bohemian regiments, and Royal Hungarian regiments. The *Kriegsmarine* requires its officers to speak at least four of the languages spoken in the Empire; the *Luftflotte*, formed wisely in the British model using naval protocols, requires the same. Despite this, and possibly because of the enforcement of German as the lingua franca of the armed forces, in both the Navy and High Fleet there is a strong element of ethnic specialisation—Germans and Czechs dominate in command, signals and engineering roles, Hungarians in gunnery, and Italians and Croats make up the bulk of seamen and stokers.

*Austro-Hungarian Battleship,
name and class unknown*



KÖNIGLICHE UND KAISERLICHE LUFTFLOTTE

The shape and traditions of the *K.u.K. Luftflotte* can be traced to direct descent from those of the modern Austro-Hungarian *Kriegsmarine*. The most significant inheritance in both traditions and doctrine come from the Battle of Lissa in 1866. In this battle, Admiral Tegetthoff of the *Kriegsmarine* used his battleship SMS *Erzherzog Ferdinand Max* to ram and sink the Italian battleships *Palestro* and *Re d'Italia*, leading to decisive victory. Since then, both the marine and aerial forces of the Empire have made use of the ram in battle an article of faith, when other powers have largely abandoned its use. As a consequence, both the *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftflotte* show a tendency to concentrate on the deployment of larger vessels, backed by numbers of short-range light destroyer-class vessels.

The unveiling of electrical flight in 1890 caught the Empire in a state of characteristic crisis. Budget negotiations between the Austrian and Hungarian parliaments dragged on fruitlessly for a period of three years, during which no significant Imperial capital expenditures could be made—neither on electrical vessels, nor on naval warships. This “construction holiday,” however, ended up serving the Austrians well—by the time they began construction on their first electrical vessels, they were able to avoid many of the mistakes made by other nations. It was not until 1896 that the first aerial vessel of the *Luftflotte*, the SML *Novara*, was completed for the *Kriegsmarine*. Classified initially as an *Elektrikpanzerschiff*, the *Novara* would be recognized today as a *Luftkreuzer*, or light cruiser, with mixed armament. The *Novara* carried the characteristic ramming bow or *Schnabel*, but otherwise was of conventional aerial design. Small numbers of aerial vessels have been laid down each year as budget restrictions allow (barring budget freezes such as in 1902, and this year).

At the end of 1904 aerial forces were officially separated from the *Kriegsmarine* into their own service, the K.u.K. *Luftflotte*. With the concentration of Austrian personnel in the command and engineering roles, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Luftflotte* concentrates more on the Italian lion than the Russian bear. The *Luftflotte* shares bases with the *Kriegsmarine* at Trieste (site of their main elefactory) and Rijeka (Fiume), within easy distance of the Adriatic coast. Construction has commenced on a new *Luftarsenal* and elefactory in Zara, no doubt with an eye towards further expansion into the Balkans. The *Luftflotte* continues to purchase its large-calibre weapons from Krupp, and this situation seems quite permanent in the short term, barring some (almost unimaginable) cooling in relations between the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollern.

The *Luftflotte* fleet is small, but overall of high quality. By British standards it is top-heavy with battleships, particularly in contrast to the Italians and Russians. However, the *Luftflotte* is well suited to its purpose of exerting control over the Adriatic Sea. Workmanship is uniformly high, but production rates are low. The characteristic flat-iron shape adopted by the most recent vessels is claimed to provide greater strength and stability over traditional double-keel construction; it certainly does make for a very distinctive profile. Placement of weapons shows the emphasis they continue to place on ramming actions—a concentration on forward-facing, casement-mounted batteries over balanced turrets.

SML ERZHERZOG FERDINAND MAX

Pride of the K.u.K. *Luftflotte* and flagship of its commander, the *Erzherzog Ferdinand Max* is a first-rate battleship-class vessel displacing 11,000 tons. Its main turret of 9.4" guns is backed by numerous 7.6"ers mounted in barbettes and casements. This unremarkable design possesses a characteristic profile and is reputedly a stable gunnery platform.



SML ADMIRAL SPAUN

This *Luftkreuzer* (light cruiser) represents a change of thought in *Luftflotte* designs. For one, it is the first such aerial vessel laid down for a decade. Second, it is armed with a uniform battery of 4.1" guns. Lastly, it dispenses with the near-obligatory ram to mount two aerial torpedo bays in the bow. It is uncertain whether this is a one-off experiment, or sign of a philosophical revolution in aerial architecture.



SML CSEPCEI

The *Csepcei* (*Seawulf*) is the lead ship of the *Luftflotte*'s most modern *luftzerstorer* (destroyer-class) aerial vessels. Lightly armed by comparison with British destroyers, the *Seawulf* is solidly built (including the inevitable ram) and well-armoured and reasonably fast for its displacement, but has inadequate bunkers (by our standards) to perform much more than defensive duties.



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LUFTVIZEADMIRAL MARKGRAF MAX VON STERNER

Commander of the *Luftflotte* and heir to the tradition of von Tegetthoff, von Sterner is solidly wedded to both the naval traditions inherited from the *Kriegsmarine*, and the traditional Austrian enmity with Italy. While not personally considered tactically capable, von Sterner has navigated the murkier waters of Imperial politics, ensuring as far as possible that the *Luftflotte* gains its due share of Imperial appropriations. The *Luftvizeadmiral* raises his flag aboard the SML *Erzherzog Ferdinand Max*.



LINIENLUFTSCHIFFSKAPITÄN JORDAN ROZWADOWSKI

Born of Polish stock in Galacia in 1866, Jordan Rozwadowski joined the K.u.K. *Armee* and specialized in artillery. He served as the military liaison in Budapest before returning to field duties, where he was responsible for developing several novel approaches to artillery barrages. He was seconded to the *Luftflotte* at the specific request of *Luftvizeadmiral* von Sterner, and put in charge of all gunnery within the air fleet. His efforts to emphasise gunnery are, however, being challenged by traditionalists bound to the legacy of Lissa.

LUFTFREGATTENKAPITÄN GEORG RITTER VON TRAPP

Graduating from the Rijeka Naval Academy in 1898 at the age of nineteen, von Trapp served initially in the Far East, completing voyages to Australia and Indochina. During this time he became fascinated with aerial vessels, and transferred to the SML *Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia* serving in the Triple Intervention in China. His performance during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 resulted in his first promotion, and in 1903 his first command, the destroyer SML *E-7*. Von Trapp now commands the recently commissioned *Panzerluftschiffe SMS Admiral Spaun*, most definitely a prestige command for someone of his age.



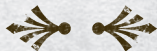
MINOR AIR POWERS



Towards the end of the nineteenth century and prior to the Great Exhibition of 1890, nations staked their claims to be major powers on the possession of their own fleets of battleships. The first flight of the *Ganymède* only raised the stakes for those wanting to play the new game of aerial supremacy—not only was the engineering mettle of a nation on show, their scientific prowess had to extend to sustain production of acceptable volumes of electroid, lest their investments in bravado sit there inert lumps.

A brief survey of the lesser players—the minor air powers—reveals two paths taken by these lesser participants. Firstly, the more self-sufficient limit their ambitions and lower their aims, producing smaller numbers of smaller vessels. Those with presences more operative than influential, on the other hand, take the *parvenue* approach, and attempt to buy their way into the game.

—JKL



SCANDINAVIAN UNION

Largest of the European minor air powers, the Scandinavian Union of Sweden and Norway draws on its extensive deposits of iron and coal, together with abundant electricity, to maintain a small but handy fleet. Three squadrons of slow cruisers form the backbone of its defenses, supported by two heavy cruisers, and a few disparate destroyer



squadrons. What is interesting about the Union fleet is that each nation officially maintains and operates its own fleet separately. Historically, the combined fleet has been so small compared to the threat of the Russians and Germans that the separate fleets have had no choice but to operate as a single entity. Given the recent setback to the Norwegian independence movement however, it is not outrageous to suggest the combined fleet has spent more time the last few years looking inwards than it has worrying about the sovereignty of each nation's territory.

As a part of operating each fleet separately, each nation purchases or builds its own vessels. With their top speeds on the order of 15 knots, the Swedish-built *Vasa*-class slow cruisers are rarely seen far from shore, and avoid the turbulent mountain terrain along Sweden's border with Norway. The

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HMS *Fylgia*, the first of the *Gustav Adolphus*-class heavy cruisers currently being constructed at the Finnroda graving yards, in association with two flotillas of modern German-built destroyers, maintains efficient and aggressive sweeps of the Baltic, maintaining a close eye on the Swedish shipping lanes to Europe.

In contrast, the Norwegian fleet is largely based on surplus British hulls, refitted with locally produced weapons and fire-control systems. The exception to this is the recently deployed PS *Norge*, a *Fasting*-class cruiser, built locally, but based on plans and equipment provided by the British shipwrights at Armstrong-Whitworth. A second *Fasting*-class, the PS *Eidsvold* is currently under construction, adding further to the tension within the combined Union fleet.

Sweden's principle aerial base is located at the capital, Stockholm, along with the Finnroda graving yards. A secondary arsenal at Gothenbourg provides support for sorties into the North Sea. There is also evidence that the Karlskrona naval yards are being converted for aerial operations, possibly to support the building of new large aerial vessels. Only the arsenal at Horten in Norway can be used to build or service aerial vessels. There are limited facilities at the capital, Christiania, but these appear to be restricted to resupplying vessels with stores and ammunition.

The Swedes are mainly concerned with making sure their iron ore gets to the furnaces of the Ruhr and the new foundries in Estonia. It'd take Mr. Nobel's finest to budge these determined neutrals onto our side—or anyone else's.

DENMARK

The Danes appear to have decided that their heritage remains on the sea, not in the sky. While the Danish Air Service maintains a squadron of light cruisers based at the capital, Copenhagen, the Danes, contrary to conventional wisdom, appear to be concentrating on the development of vessels sailing not through the air, but under the water! Two squadrons of Holland-type submersibles have been completed to date since construction began in 1904. While such toys may prove a hindrance to merchant shipping in some form, it is hard to see how these will pose any real threat in the event of hostilities with its mighty German neighbor.



HOLLAND

Holland appears to have gained the advantage of German engineers turned loose by the previous kaiser when he put the kibosh on development of leviathans in that nation. As a result of his choice, the Dutch have a neat and modern reinforced squadron of cruisers, notable for their clean lines and efficient machinery. The Dutch relationship with Germany is displayed in these vessels' armament—all (with the exception of the lightest guns) bought from Krupps. Graving yards at Helder, Rotterdam and Amsterdam provide the capacity to enlarge the air fleet should this prove an attractive option. A single flotilla of destroyers provides support for the main cruiser force.



Hard to see what they find so attractive about "pig-boats." It's not as if anyone will shed a tear if they sink an old battleship—we might even thank 'em!



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SPAIN

Spanish leviathan design has been heavily influenced by the French. As a result, their forces cannot be considered highly capable. The Royal Spanish Navy consists of one battleship, two ageing protected cruisers, and a handful of light cruisers, which operate from the heavily fortified Cartagena Aerial Yards. Their main purpose seems to be to intimidate the two equally ineffective light aerial cruisers that Spain's neighbor Portugal has been able to purchase from the Americans.



In recent years, however, a British syndicate of Vickers and Elswick has begun negotiations to develop a major arsenal at Ferrol. This site, with its solid fortifications and excellent coal supply, promises to provide a major manufacturing facility for both aerial vessels and electroid. It would also mark a major realignment of alliances on the Iberian peninsula.

GREECE

For completeness, we must include the Greeks, since their purchase this year of the *Averoff*, an Italian armored cruiser formerly named *X* and surplus to Italian requirements. The deceased millionaire Giorgos Averoff left in his will a sum approximating £300,000 for "the creation of a Hellenic air fleet" which was used to purchase the *X*, a vessel of the *Pisa* class. As is characteristic of the *Pisa* class, the *Averoff* is very fast and well armed,



but only lightly protected, leaving Greece poorly prepared to face Ottoman ambitions. As a consequence, the Greek government is currently in negotiations with the American Curtis corporation.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Ottomans also have eschewed the development of a native engineering base and balanced air fleet, and have commissioned two of the largest leviathans ever to be constructed—wisely choosing English yards for this purpose. Vickers and Elswick are in apparent competition to produce the most magnificent aerial vessels yet seen—longer and more heavily armed than the most recent HML *Leviathan*. One can only wonder what design compromises are involved in producing such magnificent, if not necessarily practical, fliers.



In the meantime, a pair of English-built protected air cruisers maintains control of the Bosphorous straits.

BRAZIL

Brazil is the undoubted aerial superpower of the South American continent. With two aerial battleships, British-built and comparable to the *Canopus* class, backed by a squadron of air cruisers and a flotilla of aerial destroyers, the Brazilian Sky Navy has a greater weight of broadside than all other South American air navies combined. Despite this, however, the



vessels are less heavily protected than European equivalents, and training is not up to English standards. Despite this, the sight of the flagship *Minas Geraes* sailing serenely over the rainforest and across the mouth of the Amazon River is something never to be forgotten.

ARGENTINA

Brazil's fiercest rival, Argentina is playing catch-up—and is not afraid to seek outside help. Currently only a squadron of protected cruisers and another of light cruisers are in action, these having been built with German assistance. However, two aerial battleships are beginning to take form in American graving yards, in an attempt to obtain strategic parity with their larger neighbor to the north.



CHILE

Chile's Air Navy consists of one slow cruiser, a squadron of light air cruisers and a flotilla of aerial destroyers. The light cruisers are of the French pattern, and while maneuverable, lack anything approaching the solidity of a properly constructed vessel. The Chileans have engaged both Brazil and Argentina, and their captains have proved adept at using the hindrances of the Andes ranges, and their greater numbers, to inflict damage out of all proportion to their weight in metal.



It may be fashionable to mock the South Americans—God knows they make it easy enough sometimes— but they've got a stranglehold on the nitrate trade. No saltpeter—no bang. And it's not as if we haven't shown them how levs work in 1902, and after. The Andes make for interesting tactical challenges. Intervention there would be bloody difficult—particularly if the Yankees make a move first.

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To whomever gets this next. Give your life to ride the Devil's Breath? You poor fool, but not exactly an orphan there. Here's what the bloody admiralty forgets to tell you, hopefully you won't need it. Forget the Channel, the real fighting is away from the public's eye—remember that and you should be right. Godspeed and Sail High for King and Country!

—Miles Brandis
Captain
HML Typhoon

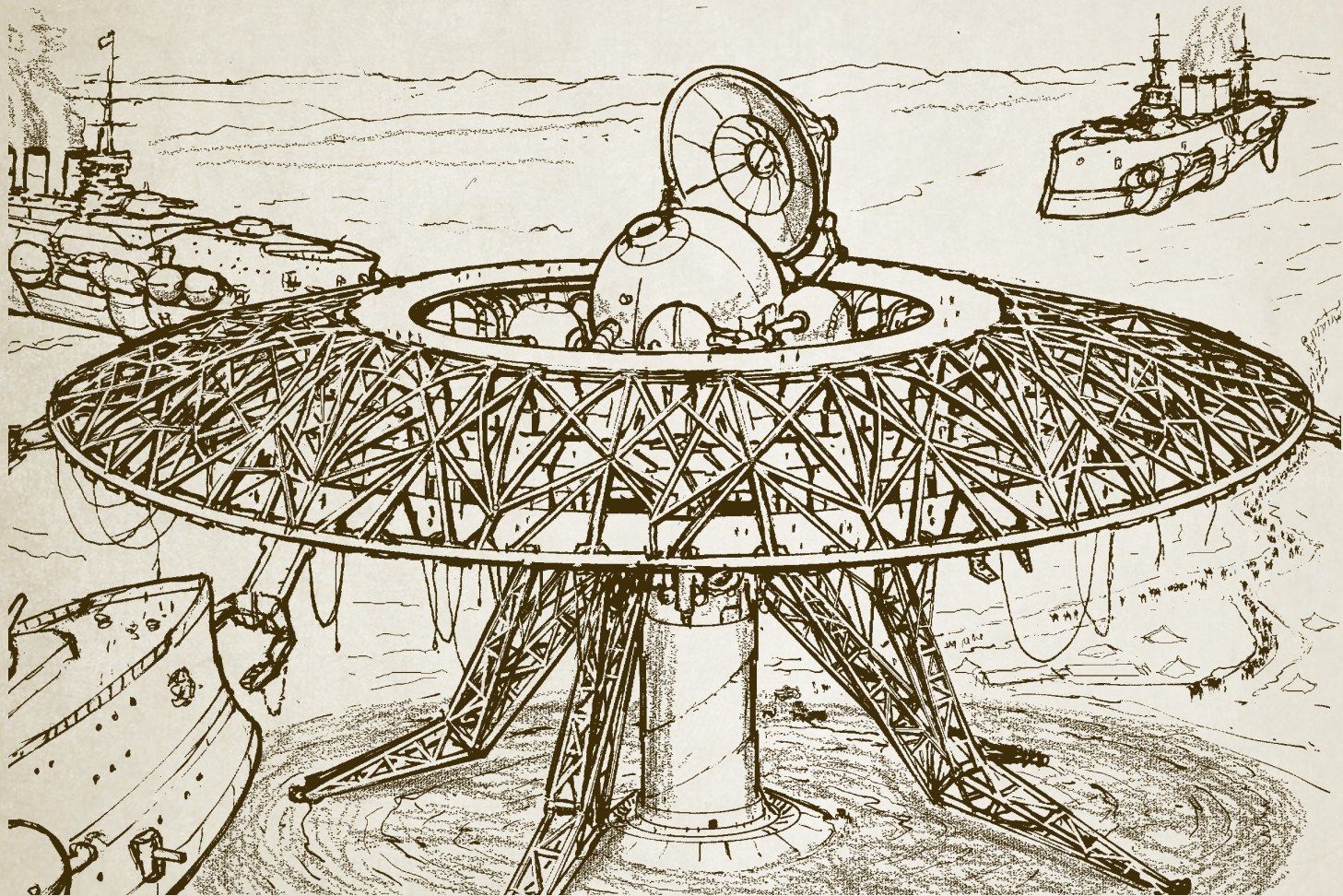
EUROPE

THE CHANNEL

What they pound into your head at Whale Island from day one—the Channel is key. And they're right, of sorts. The French got a little upset at the Salisbury Doctrine and you can always be sure of a chance of a bit of a ruckus here. During my first stint onboard the *Gallant*, we came up against the French twice in four weeks. First time was a cakewalk, the solitary French lev limping home. Second time not so easy; damned *Cigognes* showed us their mettle. Watch out for them; I heard a rumor that they're the best in the French fleet, and after that battle, I wouldn't disagree.

The biggest problem for a skyrider over the Channel? The bloody Royal Navy. The rowboats seem to have a hard time differing between good levs and bad levs, so make sure your ensign is streaming clear. Even then, the Navy loves filling the sky with fire whenever they see a lev, so just pray they're not aiming at yours.

Ah yes, the bread and butter of the sky fleet officer, right? Don't be bloody stupid. But chances are you'll end up fighting either the French or Germans, and Europe is just as good as Cameroon in my eyes.



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ALSACE-LORRAINE

You're probably not likely to end up having a stoush here, but you can bet your last bob any Frogs or Huns you come across probably have. Most contested piece of real estate in the sky, but everyone seems willing to keep the conflict small-scale. I haven't heard of a major battle here for a while, but by the time you read this, that will have probably changed.

The Germans reportedly blood their crews here, so if you meet a Hun lev out in the colonies, you can rest assured that he's served his time against the French already. Makes him dangerous. Forget all the propaganda the Admiralty throws at you regarding the dominance of the Sky Fleet. Out in the open skies, lev for lev the Germans are probably the scariest thing you'll come across. Good thing there's never very many of them in the same place.

EAST PRUSSIA AND THE SKAGERRAK

This is where the Russians and Germans have clashed in the past, and it represents a spectacular defeat for the Royal Navy—funny how they never talk about it. What I said before about the Germans being good? Well, the Russian boats are a bit naff, but their crews are amongst the best in the sky. Probably because all the lesser crews bit it in that little mutiny they had. If the Admiralty tries another blockade, you might come up against either side. Russians hunt in packs, and despite the “cordial” relations we share with the tsar, the fleet shoots first and asks questions later.

The Skagerrak is fun bit of sky to try and maneuver in. As in you can't. Show up there, and soon enough, you'll have Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Dutch, Germans and sometimes even the French arriving to accompany you

EUROPE



- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| 1 Britain | 2 Scandinavian Union |
| 3 Denmark | 4 Holland |
| 5 Russia | 6 German Empire |
| 7 France | 8 Spain |
| 9 Italy | 10 Austro-Hungarian |
| 11 Greece | 12 Ottoman Empire |

back out. It's still a major choke point for shipping, and the Scandinavian countries are a bit protective of it. Even though their fleets are not much to look at, remember it's a long way back to Whale Island if you upset them.

ASIA

RULER OF THE EAST

The big one. The one that started it all—Tsushima. It's a pretty magical place for the skyrider to fly through. Thing is, if you do, you'll probably come across the Russkies and Japs facing off. Plot a course around it. The fighting here is fierce. You really don't want to get caught up in it. Another thing, you'll find next to no surface naval presence here.

The Russians never replaced their Pacific Squadron—why bother when you've got the second largest electroid manufactory in the world right there? And well, the Japs—what surface fleet?

The Triple Intervention meant that ... you know what? I'm not good with books, so I'll give you the rub. Germans, French, Russians, us, Japanese, even the Yanks and some Hapsburgs who took a wrong turn at Istanbul show up occasionally. It's a busy place. The French mainly base out of Saigon in Nam Viet these days, so if you're coming south from Hong Kong be wary. The Germans concentrate on holding onto what they have, so if your navigator does his job, you should be right. Also, the locals are terrified of the levs, so the Admiralty has standing orders about how low you can fly. Only the Germans and French don't, so always check below you.



THE DUTCH EAST INDIES

Used to be the Strait of Malacca were a Royal Navy stronghold. Not so much anymore, what with the bloody Aussies pitching a fit and declaring independence. Good on them though, worked pretty well for the Yanks. Your biggest concern about being based out of S'pore is the fact that Saigon is not that far north, and Batavia is not that far south. The Dutch have largely kept to themselves, happy

The majesty of the Orient, right? Well, there's certainly enough of it to go around ...

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with the status quo, but they, like the Australians, have a cordial relationship with the Germans. It's not unheard of for KL levs to park overnight in Batavia.

PACIFIC COLONIES

This is where you'll see a lot of combat. Away from the eyes of Europe, it's not unheard of for "accidental discharges" to happen. The French also have a strong surface naval presence in the area, and are always aggressive about territorial infringement. Make sure your maps are up to date and your navigator knows what he is doing. There's no diplomatic

repartee out here. You accidentally cross into French sky, they shoot first and sort out the diplomatic mess later. Also, there are precious few receivers here, so if you run into trouble and you're flying solo, your chances aren't good. Also avoid typhoons—they wreak havoc with the e-tanks, and a single lightning strike can cause a lot of dramas.

THE HINDU KUSH

This has been hotting up as I've been writing this. The Russians have been pushing south through the Transcaucasus, and that has put them on a collision course with the Subcontinent. If based out of Bombay, you may see fighting here. Also, if you are here, remember that fool John Christian's actions—leveling half of Calcutta has left a lasting impression. Remind your men that when on shore leave to stay in large groups, and stay out of the shadows. Christian's rationale about the "sanctity of the white man's life" has not gone down well.

AFRICA

THE NEAR EAST

The Suez. That's pretty much it. He who controls the Suez controls shipping throughout Africa and Asia. Oh sure, you'll see minor skirmishes throughout the region, especially against the French, but it all comes down to the Suez Canal. Learn the skies around here well. The dry heat will be murder on your crew, so make sure to keep



your water supplies topped up. The boilers go through all sorts of dramas too, so make sure you check the seals on them and the e-tanks during any extended period here.

Sandstorms are another worry if you like touching dirt. The lower you go, the worse it gets. The French are quite adept at moving through the storms, something about better seals, so again, be careful and check below you as you go.

THE COLONIAL LAND GRAB

This is what it all comes down to for the penny-pinchers at Whitehall: the landgrabs to expand the Empire. Well, as one of the poor souls doing the grabbing, take heed. The French have several manufactories here, and they guard them well. The Germans are down south by Cameroon mainly, but they do like ranging north. Where you might get into trouble, diplomatically at least, is with the minor powers. Most of them lack levs in the region, but there will be hell to pay if you blast a Belgian colony on a whim.

Now we get to the distasteful part of being an officer of the Royal Sky Fleet—stamping the King's authority on the natives. Hopefully you will avoid this rather barbaric duty, but be aware; there are some who relish the opportunity to turn the power of the levs against a few black folk who have yet to see the light. Try to restrain them as best you can. I can offer you nothing more than the words of the Good Book, and urge you to trust your own judgment.

OCEANS OF THE WORLD

CONTROLLING THE WAVES

Despite the ascent of the leviathans, nearly all the world's commerce still travels over the waves of the world's oceans.

And as an officer of the Royal Navy, it's your solemn duty to make sure that commerce gets where it's going, apparently. So a substantial part of your time in service will be spent patrolling the sea lanes to make sure the French or Germans aren't doing the same.

Service over the oceans is a tricky kettle of fish, and one the beakers at Whale Island have yet to address fully. Storms at sea are a leviathan's worst nightmare, and your younger crew members will regret eating that last bowl of stew before retiring for the night. Most importantly, make sure you avoid electrical storms. Fly above them if possible, try and reach safe harbour if not. The Americans and Germans seem to have no problems flying through storms, but French and Russian vessels will retire from a fight to avoid an incoming storm.



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Also, remember fighting at sea is less about a point than it is an area. It is no use winning the battle if you lose local control, and allow the vessels under your flag to founder or be destroyed, or worse yet captured. Sometimes it makes more sense to withdraw rather than indulging in hunting down the last few stragglers of an enemy fleet. That is a particular favorite of the French Pacific fleets, who will feign defeat and “retreat” only to expose your hapless ships to the predations of their as-yet unrevealed brethren.

BLOCKADE FROM THE SKY

In addition to protecting their country's shipping from others, sometimes the skyriders will take part in a blockade of their own. The most famous example of this was the aborted attempt to blockade the Skagerrak before the German leviathans broke it wide open. The Royal Sky fleet, as befits the largest leviathan fleet on the planet, can be called upon to rapidly blockade any port of commercial shipping. As the blockader this is a simple

And remember, skyrider:

Sail High for King and Country!

task. Shoot anything trying to get in or out. As you're likely to not be alone, this is easy to achieve.

It starts getting interesting when enemy leviathans try to break the blockade. French Pacific forces will run the blockade—and they're good at it, meaning you need to have a double-layer block in place to prevent them getting in or out. Russians will simply smash their smaller levs at the blockade to make a hole for the bigger vessels to escape—Port Arthur is ingrained in every Russian flyer, and encirclement does not sit well. Germans will try to fly around the blockade before settling in to outlast it. Their larger ranged guns can accomplish it, too.

The Americans tend to blockade only non-leviathan powers, usually the smaller South American countries they are pressuring into accepting diplomatic overtures. In any case, you need to be aware of the doctrine and tactics of the levs facing you. It might save your life one day.



ATLANTIC



ARCTIC



United States

Canada

United States

Canada

NORTH PACIFIC



*Steer clear of the Arctic -
we all know how that little
escapade turned out!*

