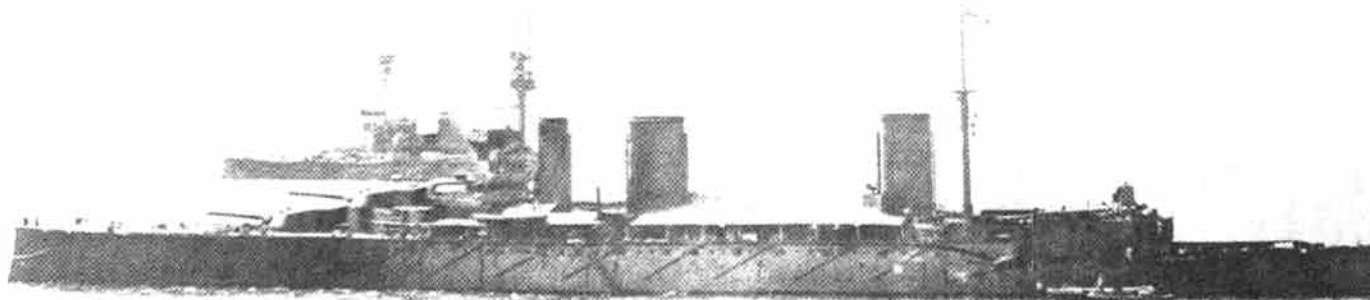


The Battle of Dogger Bank

24 January 1915



Soon after World War One began in August 1914, Britain's Royal Navy gained an advantage over Germany's High Sea Fleet that allowed them to read the orders issued to German heavy warships. Within the first four months of war, Britain had obtained a copy of all three of Germany's most important code books. Unknown to the Germans, the Royal Navy's new code breaking organization, Room 40, was listening in on their plans and preparations for fleet sorties.

Room 40's first success was detecting Rear Admiral Hipper's sortie of December 1914, the Scarborough raid. However, the exact purpose of Hipper's sortie was not stated in the intercepted wireless orders and no surface battle resulted. The Germans were concerned that the British

fleet managed to show up in the North Sea at the same time and place as the High Sea Fleet. They did not suspect that the British were reading their codes, but erroneously thought that wireless-equipped fishing vessels on Dogger Bank were reporting their ships.

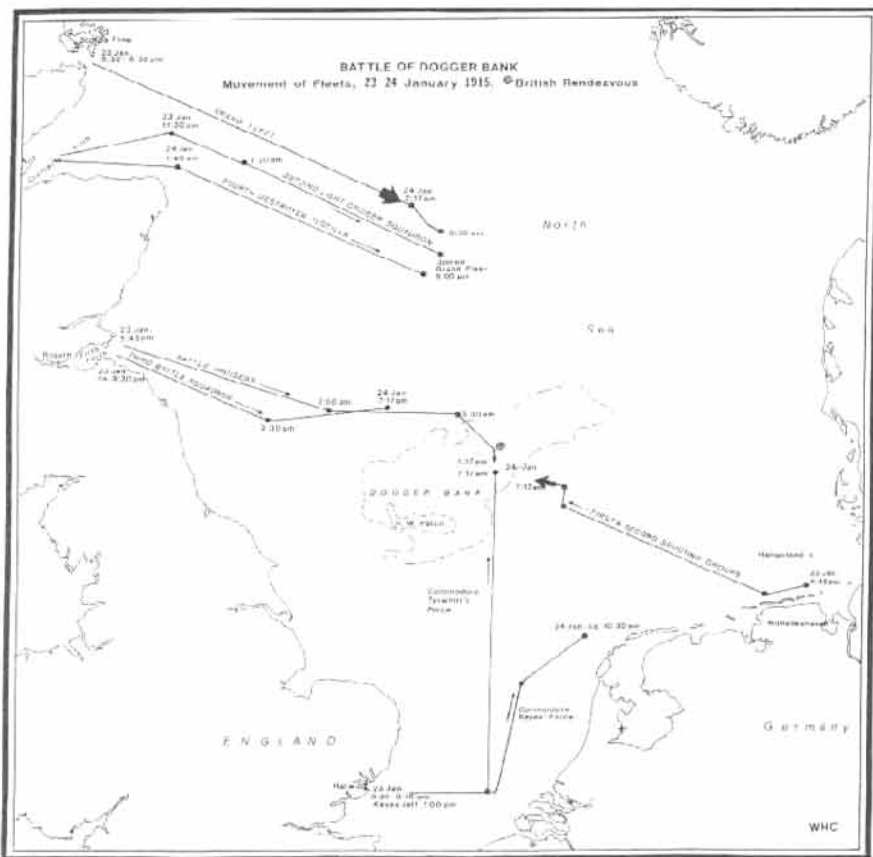
In January 1915, Room 40 read the wireless orders sending Hipper's battlecruisers to Dogger Bank. This time the British were ready and Vice Admiral Beatty's battlecruiser squadron was sent to intercept them.

The German Plan

Hipper's bombardment of Scarborough was successful, but the Germans were unhappy that they had missed a chance to

destroy a Grand Fleet battleship squadron. One result of the failure of December 1914 was that the Kaiser and the *Admiralstab* directed the fleet commander-in-chief, Admiral von Ingenohl, not to risk his ships unnecessarily. However, he was authorized to make limited attacks against inferior British forces.

The Germans still feared a blockading operation by the British too close off their bases. Their fears were almost realized on 19 January 1915 when Beatty's battlecruisers were sighted going towards Heligoland. The anticipated blocking operation did not materialize, but the Germans had other reasons to seek action. They wanted a chance to avenge the loss of cruisers *MAINZ*, *KOLN*, and *ARLADNE* and torpe-



to be closer to an intercepting position in case Hipper's battlecruisers came out again. The Harwich force and submarines would support Beatty. The Grand Fleet remained based at Scapa Flow. The Third Battle Squadron of pre-Dreadnaught battleships and cruisers would cover the route north in case the Germans went that way.

Room 40 intercepted von Ingenohl's 23 January message to Hipper authorizing the operation. Beatty was notified: the Harwich Force was able to intercept Hipper. Unfortunately for the British, Jellicoe was too far away to join the battle in time. In the Battle of Dogger Bank, the *BLUCHER* was the only ship sunk, with a loss of over 950 crew. *SEYDLITZ* was severely damaged and almost sank, suffering more than 160 casualties. British casualties were few, but battlecruiser *LION* was badly damaged and had to be towed home.

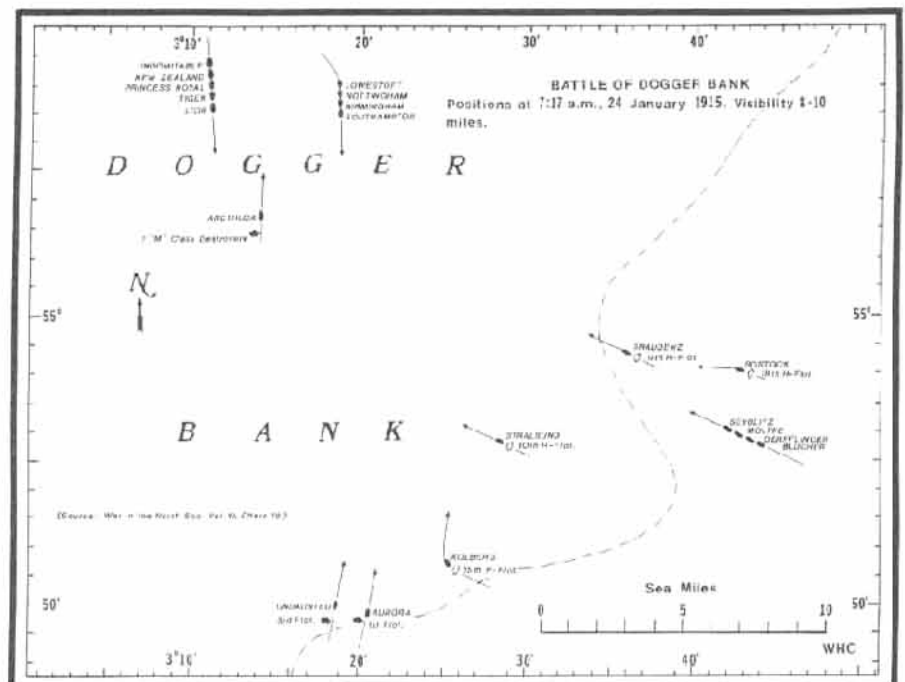
by William H. Croft

do boat *V.187* during a British raid in Heligoland Bight in August 1914. Also, British scouting ships were frequently seen operating on Dogger Bank, unsupported by heavy warships, and these were a tempting target.

Von Ingenohl authorized a raid on Dogger Bank and accepted the risk of sending Hipper's Scouting Groups out unsupported if the operation could be completed in 24 hours. The High Sea Fleet would remain in port, except that its newest battleships were sent to the Baltic for gunnery practice. Battlecruiser *VON DER TANN* was refitting, so Hipper would take the armored cruiser *BLUCHER* (capable of only 23 knots).

The British Plan

The British feared another raid on the English coast and moved Beatty's battlecruisers to Rosyth



FIRST BATTLECRUISER SQUADRON

Vice Admiral Beatty



CB *Lion*



CB *Tiger*

SECOND BATTLECRUISER SQUADRON

Vice Admiral Moore



CB *Princess Royal*



CB *New Zealand*



CB *Indomitable*

FIRST LIGHT CRUISER SQUADRON

Commodore Goodenough



CL *Southampton*



CL *Birmingham*



CL *Nottingham*



CL *Lowestoft*

HARWICH FORCE

Commodore Tyrwhitt



CL *Arethusa*



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)

THIRD FLOTILLA



CL *Undaunted*



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)



DD (GWB9)

FIRST FLOTILLA



CL *Aurora*



DD (GWB6)



DD (GWB6)



DD (GWB6)



DD (GWB6)



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GERMAN FLEET: DOGGER BANK

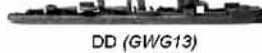
FIRST SCOUTING GROUP

Vice Admiral Hipper



BATTLECRUISER SCREEN

Left Side:
Eighteenth Half-Flotilla



BATTLECRUISER SCREEN

Advance Screen
Ninth Half-Flotilla



BATTLECRUISER SCREEN

Right Side:
Fifteenth Half-Flotilla



BATTLECRUISER SCREEN

Advance Screen
Tenth Half-Flotilla

