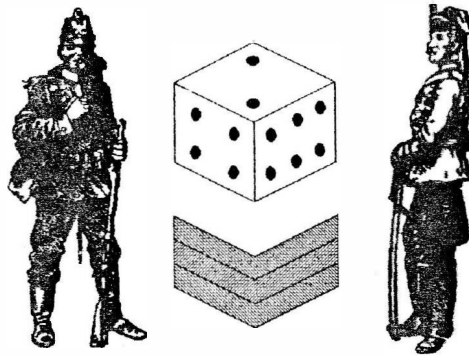


Rank and File



December 1994

Journal of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society

Issue 94/6

The Society

Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society meets every Thursday evening and each first Sunday in the month at St. Thomas Church Hall in Vale Road, Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells. Access is from the London Road (A26) turning down Doric Avenue by the Weavers Restaurant and Q8 Garage, then the first right.

The Sunday meeting normally has a lot of traditional wargaming with model soldiers going on. The Thursday meeting usually has smaller games such as DBA, Hordes of the Things, skirmish games etc., though there are also traditional wargames as well.

Please note that the January Meeting in 1995 will be held on

Sunday 8th January 1995

Membership

Please remember that you should now be thinking of renewing your membership. Details of arrangements for 1995 will be advised at the AGM in December or with this issue of the magazine if you did not attend. Contact Andrew Finch if you are unsure of anything.

A list of members will be delivered with the first 1995 magazine. Phone numbers and addresses change, and I think it is easiest to give a copy to members with each magazine. This way you can also keep up with new members. You must be a member to enjoy the benefits of the discounts offered by companies on the list.

1995 Rates

For 1995, the magazine will be published quarterly. The subscription price for 1995 is £10.00 for members and £12.00 for non-members. The price includes postage and packing. The subscription price is for a full year. If you wish to subscribe for a shorter period, please contact the Editor.

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Sunday Catering

At Sunday meetings tea and coffee making supplies will be available, and the kettle will be filled and heated up, however it is up to individuals to make their own tea or coffee, as at Thursday meetings.

Magazine delivery

Each new magazine will be available at the Sunday meeting after publication, and also to the Thursday meetings for about two weeks. After that, anyone who has not yet received a magazine will receive it by post. After all, if you are a member and have been unable for various reasons to get to a meeting, you are still entitled to the mag.

Dates for your diary

8th January 1995 (subject to confirmation)

5th February 1995

26 February **Cavalier TWWS Club Open Day**

5th March

2nd April

Other events planned by the committee are:

A Hordes of the Things 1 day campaign

One day naval battle Jutland.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the Editor.

Advertisements

Advertisements will normally run indefinitely, or until removal is requested. If you have an advert you would like putting in the "Rank and File" regularly, please drop me a line.

Rules for Sale

Naval Pre-Dreadnought rules for sale: "**Perfidious Albion**"

Contact John Hurst or Andrew Finch. £ 4.00.

Also "**Into the Laserzone**" SF Ground Rules 4th Edition being prepared at present

Contact Andrew Finch, Chris Avery, or Alan Butler. £ 4.00.

Printing Service

If you have any need for any small printing jobs, such as quick play sheets or rules extracts to make your game go more easily, or have a need for more game counters, then contact Andrew Finch for a quote.

Game damage and wreckage markers can also be produced if specifications are provided.

These can be produced in B&W or colour, as required.

Election Results - Sweeping Victory Horror Shock

Our roving reporter made redundant by Pravda following the outbreak of Truth in his homeland wired me this message from a Bunker (under the stage) in the country of Vailavenu.

"The returning officer advised cheering crowds of a record turnout of voters in the election for the Central Committee in the recently democratised state. All the candidates had offered their resignation but this had been howled down in protest by the weeping electorate, who could not bear to see those who had struggled for the cause cast aside. This overwhelming vote of confidence in the works of the Central Committee has cheered their hearts and they will lead us forward into the Glorious Future which awaits us."

Editorial

One thing has struck me recently, having been involved in two one-day campaigns (Arnhem and Tsushima). As a wargaming General or Admiral we have the benefit of helicopter vision and instant communication. I know that rules exist which cover the communication issue, but these are often very cumbersome and add nothing to the overall game play.

The recent popularity of games such as DBA and HoTT is, I think, due in part to the uncertainty in any game, no matter how good the troop type and player. All you need to roll is a 1 and, if the army has become fragmented in battle, you can be lost.

I am sure that the idea of command points in some form would add a lot to many different games in most period. You could define the possibilities based on historical general types, so the good generals would get more command points than the bad, with the possible additional nastiness of making bad troops cost more to move than the good, though of course there are arguments for making the good troops cost more than the bad, which would weigh against this, balancing it out to a 1 point per unit/brigade/platoon to move them.

This would mean that just when you want to get those units moved up in support, you roll a 1 for command, so your choices are very difficult. I would say also that there should never be enough command points to move all the individual units, if they become detached from the main body. Using the DBA system, as long as the main force is made up of one long line, column, or otherwise defined formation, you can move. When battle has joined, then the possibilities of commanding one's scattered units become well nigh impossible.

How also in a campaign can one ensure that subordinate players carry out the orders as given in the game? Of course it is totally convincing for commanders to ignore superior's orders, but usually orders would at least be followed if possible. There is no possibility of court martial in a wargames club ! Or is there ?

A Conversion

by Tim Freeman

How many WW2 gamers / model makers have actually done a conversion or scratch built a vehicle recently. Do club members still do conversions ? I know I haven't painted anything for years. The wide choice of resin or metal kits has meant that virtually anything you want can be obtained in resin or metal - if you have the money. So in the true spirit of the early days of the Club, I decided to convert a kit. My choice was influenced by reading Robert Kershaw's book "**It never snows in September**" - The German account of the Arnhem battle.

On page 155 there is a photo of a knocked out Renault, which is in fact a Char B flame-thrower. I had a ready-made Char B (Matchbox) painted in German colours so it was easy enough to add the necessary parts to make the flame-thrower version. Start by removing the rear towing hooks - keep them for re-fit later. Fix a rectangle of balsa to the rear of the tank with Unibond or UHU and allow to dry then cut/file to shape (refer to reference 2 for details).

Remove the 75mm gun and make a mounting from Milliput - refer to the photos in reference 1. When dry add the flame projector. Extend the drivers compartment to the full width of the vehicle - a piece of balsa cut and sanded to shape will do - refer to photos for the fine detail of the flame gunner's visor. Seal all balsa parts with Unibond/varnish with 2 or 3 coats. The vehicle turret is unmodified except that one source says the raised cupola was removed and a split hatch fixed instead. I would say that the photo in the Kershaw book has the split hatch but I cannot be certain. The photo in reference 2 shows the original cupola so I left mine unmodified. Reference 2 also shows a "British" smoke discharger on the turret side and an aerial on the front left-hand side. Both look like local modifications.

The finished vehicle can be painted sand or sand/green. The turret number is 133 and small crosses are painted centrally on hull sides. This is a quick and fairly easy conversion and results in an interesting vehicle.

Reference 1. **It never rains in September, p155.**

Reference 2 **Armour in Profile 58 French Infantry tanks pt 1.**

Paint it Black

by Ian Foster

If you can paint figures well or you are using black undercoat, don't waste your time reading any further.

As I am only a very average painter who finds great heaps of white metal daunting, I decided to look around for a short cut that would speed up the painting process and still give a reasonable paint job at the end. I read about black undercoating in an article and tried it on some 25mm Irish and was quite impressed.

Have a go, but don't use solid black straight from the pot, use a heavy wash. This has two advantages, it is quick to apply and the black then only goes onto those parts of the figure where it is necessary. The black then lies in the creases and undercuts but does not remain heavily on the raised areas like shoulders, shields, noses, etc. If you use black paint without first diluting some colours do not readily cover it unlike white undercoat which accepts everything, red and orange in particular do not cover properly.

If you have now finished your black wash you can now paint as normal leaving those areas that have solid black paint in them. This greatly speeds up the painting time, for instance where the red tunic of a British soldier meets the white of his cross belts you can leave a black line, which will accentuate the colour difference, and bring up the white. With a white undercoat you have to laboriously cover every visible part of the figure as no white should be left showing. Any black left showing will, however, act as shading. The black base works very well in armour, a silver or gunmetal dry brushing will bring out the separate plates or the rings on chainmail.

Give a black undercoat a try, you might be surprised at your own success !

Rapid Fire WW2 era wargames rules, a player's view.

by Andrew Finch

Alan Butler reviewed these rules in the last issue, and I have played a couple of games using them. The first thing that is immediately noticeable is that they give a very different game from George's rules. Having used both recently, they see the game from a different point of view. George's rules have a feeling for individual action, a very personal fight with each man really acting individually. The Rapid Fire rules are really centred on company actions, by which I mean that it is advisable to keep your troops together.

They offer a feel for fire and movement by keeping a company on Overwatch, a company firing, and a company advancing.

Small arms fire is simplified by doing a head-count and adding a bonus for troop type and range band. The results are applied to a similar fire chart. This means that all sorts of figures can be used, without needing to examine each to see what his weapon is. Of course, there might be scope for specific unit values in cases where assault troops are only armed with SMGs, as Clive pointed out in a game on a Thursday he has SMG armed Russians. In this case, I think I would give them 2 points per head, plus normal bonuses, but fire only at short range, for the entire company, regardless of whether some troops are armed with other guns.

There are some quirks, such as moving and firing with an AT rifle, but otherwise the games play well.

Shooting against tanks is quite nasty, if you hit and penetrate the armour (resolved with 1 dice roll) then a second roll is taken for damage, which is basically the same for all weapons. This is where you need a six !

Artillery fire is quite simple and only uses a burst template for mortars (always) and indirect HE. If there are any targets under the burst, or if firing HE direct at targets, then fire is resolved using the small arms fire table with guns having various fire points. This is very different from George's rules and removes arguments about whether or not a figure is under the burst. Clive rightly said that it does not allow for interdiction fire as George's latest rules do, but being under artillery fire has an adverse morale effect on infantry if forced to roll.

Morale plays an important part in these rules, giving firers more fire points (but not many), and requires units to keep together. Heavy Damaged and destroyed tanks force morale throws on their units, and infantry and tanks are also scared of each other (to a differing degree). This stops situations whereby troops charge bravely out into the open against tanks, and vv., unless they are suitably heroic to start with. Again here there are opportunities for house rules about John Wayne type characters giving their company +1 in morale.

I must say that I very much enjoyed playing these rules, which allowed a 2 hour game with 500 points per side. Both games were played to a conclusion (and I can say that I actually won a game against Chris Avery). I fear that it has also whetted my appetite to start WW2 again, *despite my comments in last issue's editorial*. The rules are designed to be played using forces with an order of battle, so it is possible to have various brigade sized armies, with various supporting vehicles. Stand clear of those WW2 suppliers at the open day !

Between Two Oceans - a Mini-Naval Campaign

by Russell Hanson

Time: 1942

Place: East Indies Region (see map)

General Situation

The establishment of the Japanese South east Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere proceeds apace. The armies of Nippon have successfully invaded Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya and the Philippines. Singapore and Manila have become Japanese naval bases. Borneo and the East Indies now lie wide open to invasion.

The nucleus of a British Fleet has arrived at Darwin. Most of the IJN is operating against the US in the Pacific. The only Japanese warships available for operations in the region are in harbour at Singapore and Manila.

The British Admiral realises that there is, at least, an approximate balance, overall, of forces, and despite the fact that the Japanese carrier has twice as many aircraft as the British he determines to attack, spurred on by Churchill in London.

The Opposing Forces

<u>British</u>	(in harbour at Port Darwin)
HMS Formidable	Aircraft Carrier
HMS Duke of York	Battleship (flagship)
HMS Renown	Battlecruiser
HMS Cumberland	8" gun cruiser
HMS Arethusa	6" gun cruiser
HMAS Sydney	6" gun cruiser
Tribal Class Destroyers (6)	

<u>Japanese</u>	(in harbour at Manila)
IJNS Soryu	Aircraft Carrier
IJNS Fuso	Battleship (flagship)
IJNS Atago	8" gun cruiser
Destroyers (4)	

	(in harbour at Singapore)
IJNS Ise	Battleship
IJNS Mogami	8" gun cruiser
IJNS Agamo	6" gun cruiser
Destroyers (2)	

Notes:

1. Cruisers each carry one seaplane for reconnaissance. There are seaplanes under naval control for the same purpose at Singapore, Manila (1) and Port Darwin (2).
2. The Japs are out of "Long Lance" torpedoes and will use the same standard torpedoes as the British.

Orders

Will be issued verbally. Operations commence at midnight.

Between Two Oceans - Battle Report

by Russell Hanson

Report to the Admiralty by Vice-Admiral H. de Vere Bloodlust RAN, C-in-C British Far Eastern Fleet.

May it please your Lordships. The following operations took place on 4th September.

The fleet sailed from Port Darwin at midnight on 3rd September and proceeded NW into the Banda Sea with the intention of bringing to battle the Japanese Manila Squadron before it could be reinforced by the Squadron based at Singapore. The first priority was to locate and neutralise the IJN carrier SORYU as a preliminary to surface action.

Sunrise was at 04.00. The day broke with a cloudless blue sky and a smooth sea, visibility approximately thirty miles. At 05.00, South of Buru Island a Japanese reconnaissance plane was sighted on the horizon. It shadowed us at a distance throughout the morning. Ships' companies were called to air defence stations.

Shortly after 06.00 a radio report was received from Port Darwin that a Catalina flying boat had sighted the Japanese Manila Squadron in the Celebes Sea North of the Makassar Strait, heading South.

At 08.00 HMS Formidable launched her ten Swordfish torpedo bombers, followed by the eight Seafires to provide CAP over the fleet. They had just managed to get airborne before Japanese aircraft appeared from the NW.

Over the next hour successive strikes of Japanese aircraft assailed the fleet. The Seafires missed the first wave of ten Kate torpedo bombers but the concentrated anti-aircraft fire of the fleet drove them off with severe loss.

The next strike was made by eight Val dive bombers escorted by ten Zero fighters. The Seafires engaged the Zeros. Fierce dogfights ensued from which only two aircraft survived on either side. The Vals hit Formidable with two 1000lb bombs before being shot down. Formidable's speed was reduced to seventeen knots, but fires on the hangar deck were brought under control. Undoubtedly the armoured flight deck prevented more serious damage.

By 11.00 two Swordfish returned to report the loss of the other eight in a brave but futile attack on the Japanese carrier.

As HMS Formidable was no longer a significant asset with so few aircraft left and was reducing the speed of the fleet I returned her to Port Darwin.

A further report from Port Darwin at 08.30 relayed a Catalina sighting report of the Japanese Singapore Squadron in the Java Sea proceeding East. Both Japanese Squadrons were successfully shadowed and it soon transpired that the Manila Squadron was waiting in the Celebes Sea for the Singapore Squadron. The two squadrons combined at about 14.00 and proceeded East.

At 17.00 smoke was sighted to the NW just North of the eastern tentacle of the Celebes. I immediately closed the enemy.

The main features of the ensuing engagement were first, a brisk destroyer exchange of fire and torpedoes. I regret to report the total loss of HMS Cossack and Nubian. HMS Zulu and Punjabi suffered severe damage to their upper works but were still able to make way under their own power, although their fighting capability was greatly reduced. HMS Gurkha was undamaged and HMS Eskimo suffered only minor damage. Three Japanese destroyers were seen to be repeatedly hit by shellfire. While paying tribute to the courage of destroyer captains I fear their impetuosity produced an unfavourable balance in destroyer losses.

The Japanese carrier sought to exploit the confusion of the surface action to launch another ten Kates in a torpedo attack, but they were all shot down by the guns of the fleet and caused no damage.

The Japanese battleship force was brought almost to a standstill by the 14" guns of the Duke of York and 15" guns of Renown. Duke of York suffered no hits and Renown only minor damage. Thus we had the best of the exchange of fire between capital ships, due partly to the typically too-clever-by-half manoeuvring of the Japanese fleet which had the effect of separating it into two elements, enabling me to concentrate on one with the aim of defeating it in detail.

Among the cruisers HMS Cumberland sustained minor damage, HMS Arethusa more serious damage, but

both were able to manoeuvre at full speed. The Japanese 8" gun cruiser ATAGO was repeatedly hit.

At this stage I had high hopes of destroying the enemy fleet in the remaining two hours of daylight. Unfortunately a typhoon sprang up suddenly and both fleets were driven to return to their ports. The battleship FUSO is thought to have foundered. The remaining IJN units are believed to be at Manila. I plan to return to sea as soon as necessary repairs are completed and am contemplating a raid on Singapore in the absence of the IJN.

Finally I must say that all ranks lived up to the highest traditions of the Service. The Battle of the Celebes Sea, though inconclusive, is the first check the Japanese have received in this part of the world.

Note: Vice Admiral Bloodlust has been appointed a Commander of the Bath.

Wargaming Note: For really inexpensive wargaming this sort of naval warfare is ideal. A complete 1/3000 fleet can be acquired for just a few pounds. I use DAVCO models from SKYTREX and the General Quarters rules, parts 1 and 2 which give you all the information you need for both tactical battles and campaigns in both World Wars. For anyone interested in naval history - in effect the history of England - it can provide absorbing interest and one can invent endless varieties of situations which have a flavour of authenticity.

Letters to the Editor

from Zak, Emperor of B'lot

+++ Transmission by E(ther)-mail+++

I feel that I must communicate with your magazine, which is held in high regard here on B'lot. Our scientists have monitored your 486 transmissions because we feel there is much to be learned from your ways of battle.

In the last issue of RAF, however, we were horrified to see that in one of the articles the morale of our troops was much maligned, suggesting that they had no stomach for a fight with our hated enemy, the vertically challenged biospherically conscious hominids from the other side of the planet.

Of course, not being descended from monkeys, our troops do not actually have stomachs, but we understand the slur on their fighting prowess. We are outnumbered in many fierce battles, but the great Emperor will persevere, and overcome the VCBCB, and anyone suggesting otherwise will be sent to the Uranium mines.

(Signed) on behalf of Zak, Emperor of B'lot.

from Mr. Russell Hanson

(a copy of a letter to Mr. George Gush)

I note from Rank and File that you are contemplating a new edition of (Gush 1930-45 Wargames Rules), taking account of comments from players. Herewith some further comments:

Deviation for smoke. Deviation and fire areas are surely quite different things. A deviation dice is thrown to establish the near left hand corner of the fire area, from which the latter is laid out. A fire area represents the area affected by the explosion of projectiles. If you wish to relate the point of impact of smoke to fire areas, then logically the deviation should be no more than the dimension of the fire area for the weapon concerned.

Correcting area fire. having consulted a training manual of the period on "bracketing", and recalling my only experience of directing artillery fire, in which I got an enormous "rocket" for trying to take a short cut in the bracketing process, (I suppose I'm just temperamentally impatient !) I agree with you. It was quite a laborious business which certainly justifies restricting corrections to just one direction at a time.

Amount of deviation for unobserved fire. You have convinced me. For simplicity leave the rule as it is.

British artillery observers. I am glad you agree with me that one observer should be able to observe for more than one battery. I suggest you make it a requirement that such batteries are stationary and set up together. Further, both observer and battery(ies) should be equipped with wireless represented by appropriate models - radio vehicle or signaller with set, or telephone and cable laid out. Thus casualties among signallers and equipment may lead to a break in communications, which is as it should be.

Measuring ranges. Andrew Finch disagrees with my suggestion of measuring from muzzles. A weapon with a longer barrel would have a greater muzzle velocity so should benefit thereby. But I would not go to the stake over that. I made the suggestion because I discovered people arguing about it, which is irritating and slows the game. The rules should state a suitable formula to avoid this. Perhaps measure from breeches, in the case of turrets assuming that the breach is in the middle of the turret. Batteries would measure from the centre of the gun line.

Ed. Comments: My only concern was that any set of rules should determine exactly where ranges are measured from, because small imperfections on models can lead to big arguments. Measuring from the centres of the fronts of the models is fairest (and allows also for relative movement of the combatants), with the proviso that shooting in the back of a tank should be easier to penetrate. Otherwise measure from the centre of the front of the firer to the centre of the face of the target nearest the firer. The rules in any case allow for differing muzzle velocities in the result tables.

There is a similar question regarding other types of unit. A line of archers, in one unit, could measure from the centre of its line. If this is out of range, then all are out of range, otherwise all could fire. This would simplify working out which figures can or cannot fire (though it is usually not a problem anyway).

Playing turns/move sequence. I am trying out my suggested new Para 2. This, should, for reasons I set out in rank and File, make a big improvement.

The Battle of Tsu Shima

As reported to Kyoto in a letter to the Emperor from Port Arthur

Temo !

In accordance with orders, The Imperial Fleet put out from Port Arthur and was split into two battle groups, to ensure that the Russian fleet did not sneak past to the South of Tsu Shima Island.

The First Squadron under my command in the Mikasa sailed West, while the Second Squadron under Admiral Kamimura on the Idzumo sailed South. The Third and Fourth Divisions under Admirals Dewa and Uriu were split to scout ahead of the van.

At 10.00 the armed merchant ship Sango Maru reported 10 or more enemy vessels including capital ships to my North, heading North West. This was strange, for two reasons.

Firstly: Why had the enemy taken so long to reach this point. I had by this time feared that they had passed us by. Secondly: why the North West, when their target lay to the North East. Was this a trick.

An enemy seaman captured during the engagement told us that the enemy had spent much time circling before entering the straits, for the purpose of surprising us.

I sailed at full speed in this direction, hoping to trap the fleet as soon as possible. I signalled to the Second Squadron to make the best possible speed to join us. At 10.40 the detached cruisers of Division 4/1, the Naniwa and Takachiho encountered the Russian Fleet heading towards us. They avoided combat and shadowed the enemy. At 11.30 my spotters sighted smoke to the West and battle was joined.

The Russian had placed his torpedo flotilla ahead of the battle line. They were heading straight for my ship. Of course, the heavy armament of quickfirers should have made small Sushi of these dogs, however there was something amiss with our gunners and their Sake ration has been withdrawn. They all missed.

The secondary guns managed to destroy some of these vessels, but not before they had launched torpedoes against us. Now came cries of Banzai as we went at full speed through the pattern of

these devil fish. It is of course a well known fact that fast moving vessels have nothing to fear from these devices. Our experiments with them have proved they have little effect.

Alas, this was not the truth, for both the *Mikasa* and the *Shikishima* took torpedo hits and my ship suffered steering damage for the rest of the day.

Our gunnery was, of course, proving to be a devastating force on the enemy, regrettably not causing any sinkings, but reducing them to flaming wrecks. They turned away to fight the flames and their secondary ships continued the fight. We exchanged blows for many hours.

To the North West the scout cruisers *Akashi* and *Tsushima* encountered the Russian Fast Cruisers and engaged them in a furious battle, as should all sons of Nippon. Though they managed to destroy the strategically vital Imperial Yacht, they were in the end overcome.

To my South West an engagement was taking place between the scattered vessels of the rest of the scouting group, the *Naniwa*, *Takachiho*, *Otowa*, *Mitaka*, *Kasagi* and *Chitose*, and the rear of the Russian battle line, mostly obsolete ships. I hear that this engagement was indecisive to both sides, though it put pressure on the enemy.

After a long delay, the Second Squadron appeared on the horizon, though to my fury the smoke stacks which should have been belching forth proud columns of black smoke were just showing wispy white plumes of steam, as though cruising in the shadow of Mount Fuji. My anger knew no bounds and I urged Admiral Kamimura to greater speed and even greater efforts, lest the invader escape. This was to no avail. I trust that the Tenno will show his displeasure at this.

As the afternoon shadows grew longer, the *Fuji* got separated from the rest of my line, and its captain signalled the desire to ram the enemy van. We saluted an honourable and brave compatriot, whose ship foundered, though it did cause many hits before sinking.

Our torpedo flotilla now appeared and closed with the enemy battle line. With great élan they torpedoed and sank the Admiral *Nachimov*, *Alexander III*, and the *Borodino*.

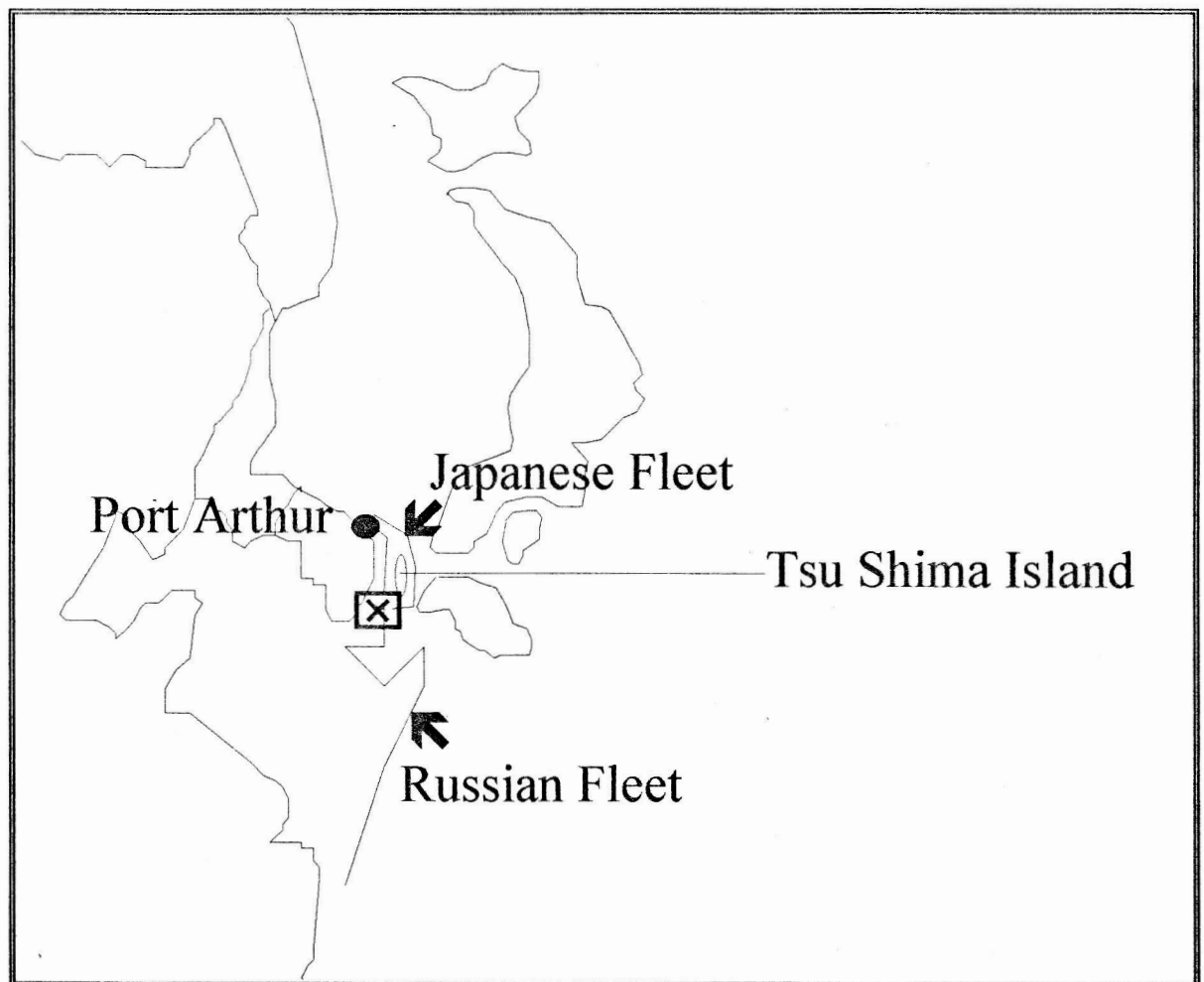
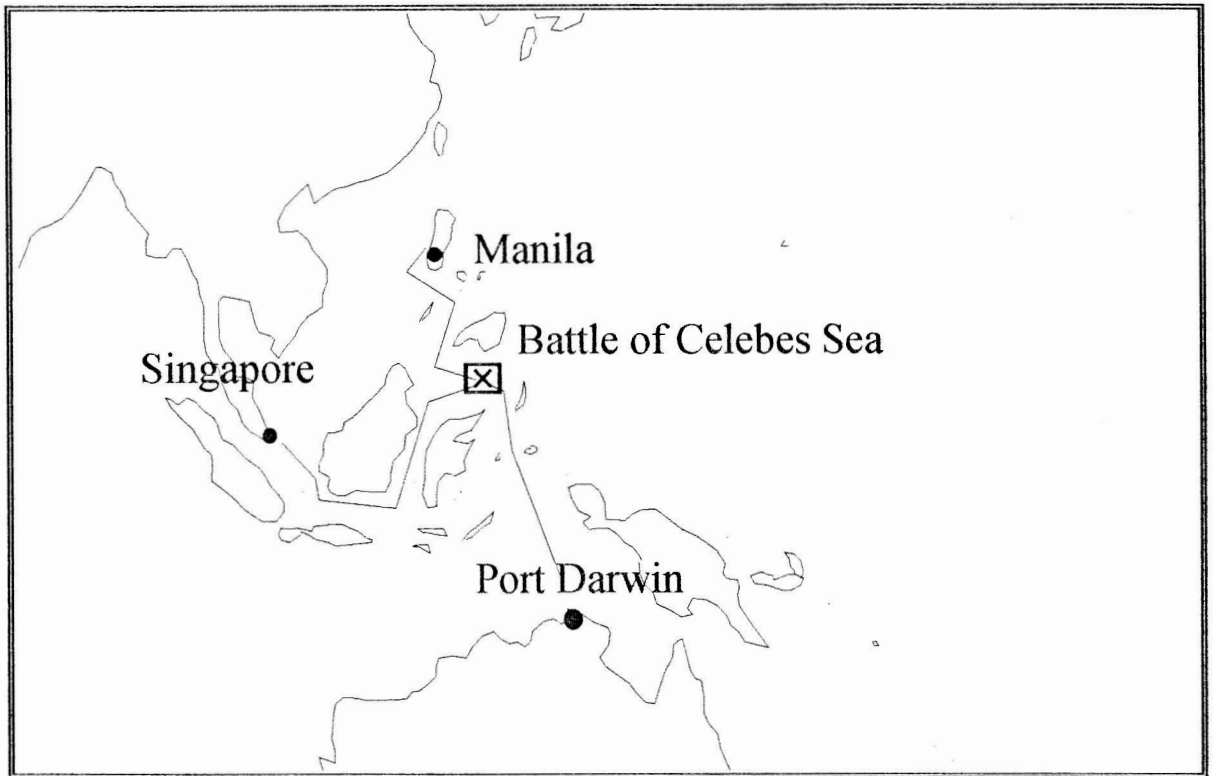
As the sun sank, I surveyed the reports of damage on the surviving vessels and deemed it wise to withdraw. I regret the loss of the *Fuji* and shall pay for this in the honourable way.

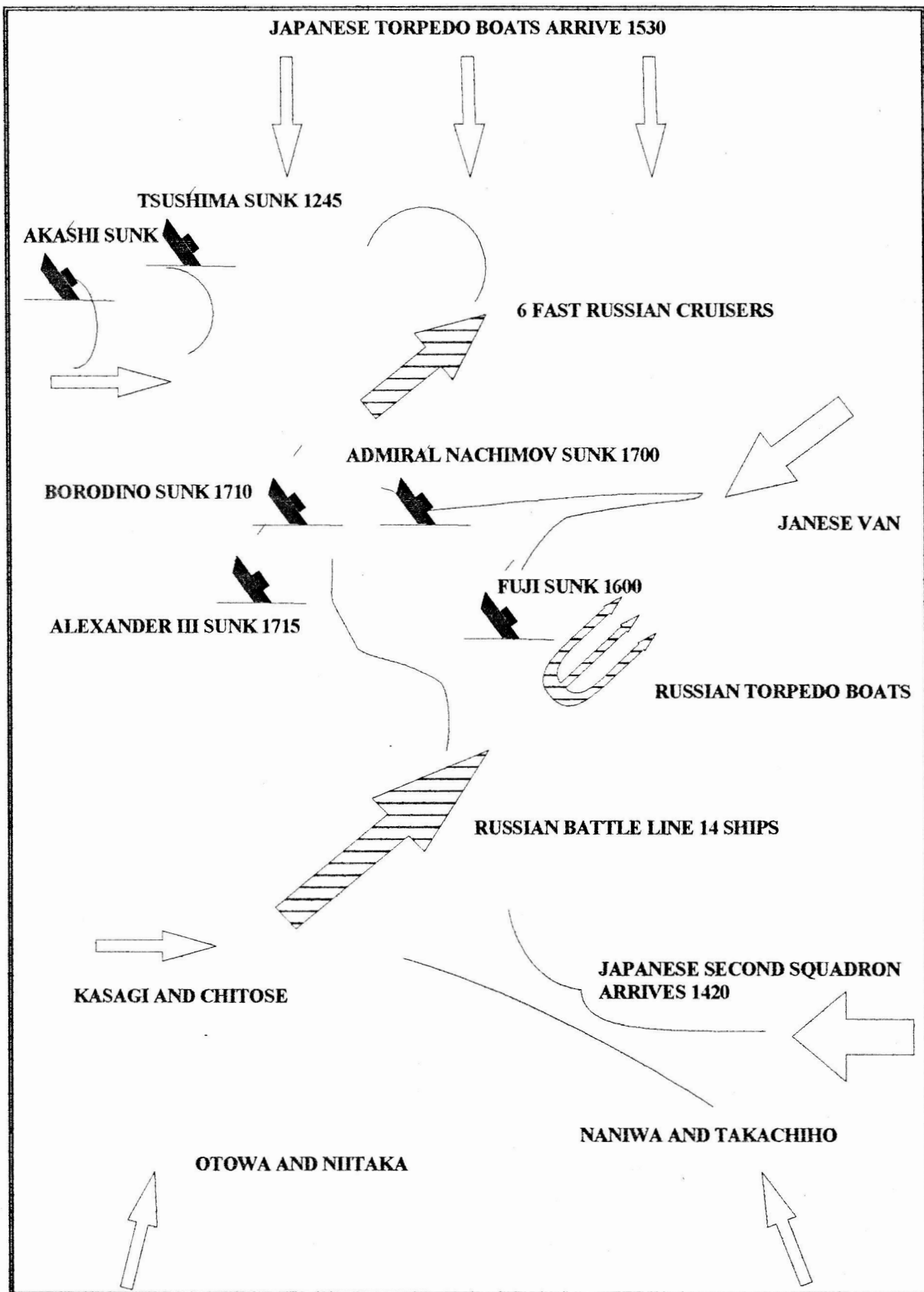
The Russian invader has suffered much damage so his fleet is going to need to be tied up in port for a while at least, during which time my successor can repair our vessels, hopefully to regain our honour.

I remain, Your obedient Servant

Togo







Tsu Shima Battle Map