

Five Serious Charges of Inefficiency of Our Navy

Congressman Gardner's "Wake Up, America," Speech Supported by Further Disquieting Accusations Made to the Senate Naval Committee.

THE warnings of Representative A. P. Gardner in his notable speech in Washington last week on the unpreparedness of the United States for war has had a wide-spread influence in waking up other members of Congress. Congressman Gardner did not attempt much more than a general survey of the situation; he did not go into searching details to show exactly where our army and navy are insufficient and inefficient.

Mr. Gardner's speech has served to call attention to another notable address recently made to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee by Mr. Willard S. Isham, a military engineer and expert, and the inventor of a torpedo shell. Mr. Isham makes five very specific charges of inefficiency against the United States Navy. These charges were made on September 26, publicly, and in the presence of high officials of the navy, and they have not been challenged, explained nor denied.

The gravest of Mr. Isham's charges can scarcely be overestimated. If they are unjustified they ought to be proved untrue by the navy experts; if they are true our navy administration needs immediate investigation and reorganization.

Here is an official copy of Mr. Isham's address to the Naval Affairs Committee of the Senate:

Gentlemen—The main purpose of this brief presentation is to direct attention to some of the many defects in the material of our navy which, neutralizing many good points, destroy the efficiency of our navy as a means of national defense. A further purpose is to disclose some of the contributing causes that have resulted in present conditions in the expectation that when these are fully considered a searching investigation of our national defenses will result.

Since the time when our Government was established it has been recognized that an efficient navy operating on the high sea was the most practical means for the protection of our long coast lines against hostile invasion. A navy to accomplish this purpose must be able to intercept and overcome any convoyed force before a port suitable for a base could be secured and made defensible, and since it is obviously impossible to determine in advance the objective point of attack of an enemy it is necessary that our navy, to be efficient, must possess eyes, as it is recognized that a blind fighter could never accomplish much in a combat with an active enemy.

Hence an important adjunct to a fleet consists in scout ships for scouring the seas and ascertaining the strength, location, direction and speed of an enemy's expeditionary force, so that he may be met by a suitable force at such a point and at such a time that a tactical advantage may be secured and a favorable result obtained. We possess no ships capable of cruising as scouts at a distance from our battle fleet which could not be quickly destroyed by the faster and more powerfully armed battleships and battle cruisers of other navies. Hence at the door of those responsible for the condition of our navy is laid charge number 1.

1. Our navy is inefficient because of its inability to scout out an enemy on the high seas. Our battle fleets are made up of battleships in which speed has been sacrificed for armor plate and from a strategic or tactical standpoint are no better than floating fortresses, as they can never force a battle upon an unwilling enemy or interfere with any of his movements. Moreover, no part of a battle fleet can must possess the force necessary to meet at any time or place the maximum force which an enemy can concentrate against them. This condition also results from the second defect in our navy.

2. We possess no ships capable of operating at such a distance from our battle fleets as to screen its formation and strength from the scout ships of an enemy.

Because of this defect our fleets are compelled to be always ready and are as a consequence never ready to meet an enemy at the best advantage. This defect makes the de-

fense of our fleets impossible at night, since it permits a hostile torpedo flotilla to hover about them at sundown like a pack of coyotes around a campfire ready to rush in when the conditions are favorable. Against this attack he safely detached as a flying base for cruisers, destroyers or other fast ships acting as scouts, since they might be cut off and destroyed by a concentrated force of ships having superior

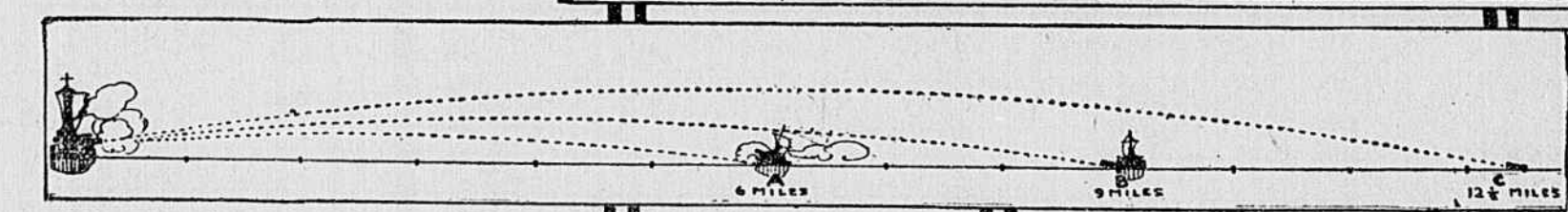


Diagram showing how the armor-piercing shells used by our navy are limited to close-range fighting, and, as Mr. Isham claims, places our navy far below the standard of efficiency. The point (A) is the maximum distance (six miles) that the armor-piercing shell is capable of destroying a ship of an enemy. (B) The same shells at this range (nine miles) may make many hits, but have lost their destructive power, while if a shell of the torpedo type is used it will still have its destructive power and tear a hole in the ship many times the shell's diameter. C represents the maximum distance of shell accomplished by the battleships of our navy, using a shell weighing 870 pounds; yet, as Mr. Isham points out, they are not capable of totally destroying a battleship at one-half this distance.

speed and armament. Hence it is that our battle fleets must operate as an entity and our battleships are powerless, as shown by Lord Charles Berosford in The Betrayal, page 62:

"No guns, heavy or light, will protect a battle fleet from torpedo attack at night. The only effective method of protection is to employ a large number of small cruisers to clear a wide area about the battle fleet at sundown. These cruisers do not exist in the requisite number. . . . The small cruiser force must be disposed so that they form a protecting screen distant one hundred and twenty or one hundred and forty miles on all sides from the battle squadron. By no other means it is possible to move a battle squadron at night without risking its destruction by the attack of torpedo craft."

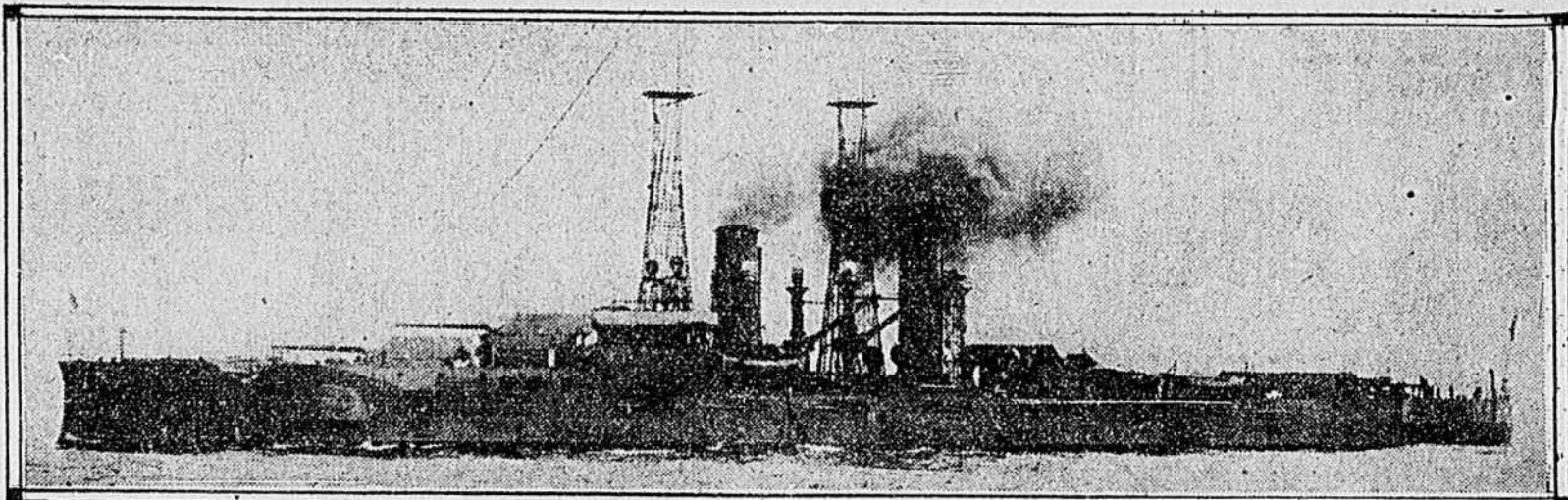
Rear Admiral Twining, late Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, stated in the House hearings, March 12, 1912, page 907:

"The torpedo boat continues to be held in great favor as a weapon of underwater attack, and it must be admitted that no navy has at present an adequate system of defense against such attack if efficiently delivered. Torpedoes have been designed which can cut, penetrate or displace the nets. The searchlight is ineffective, since a torpedo may be successfully launched at a range beyond its reach. Gunfire is ineffective against an invisible target, and the torpedo boat can launch its weapon while still invisible to the gun."

The great naval expert, Percy Scott, who formerly championed the construction of battleships, now declares them to be worthless and defenses against underwater attack. The European war thus far has shown that no commander dares to expose a battleship to underwater attack. Hence the charge is laid and should be investigated:

3. Our battleships are defenseless in a fog or at night.

Moreover, the results thus far obtained as to the naval operations in the European war seem to indicate that heavy ships are defenseless by day against underwater attack. Notwithstanding this accumulation of evidence, our technical boards still propose to construct



The United States Ship Delaware, the most formidable type of Dreadnought and pride of the American Navy. This type, as well as those now building, according to Mr. Isham, is so far outclassed by ships of foreign nations that they are obsolete, and from a strategical standpoint "no better than floating fortresses," in which speed and armament have been sacrificed for armor plate.

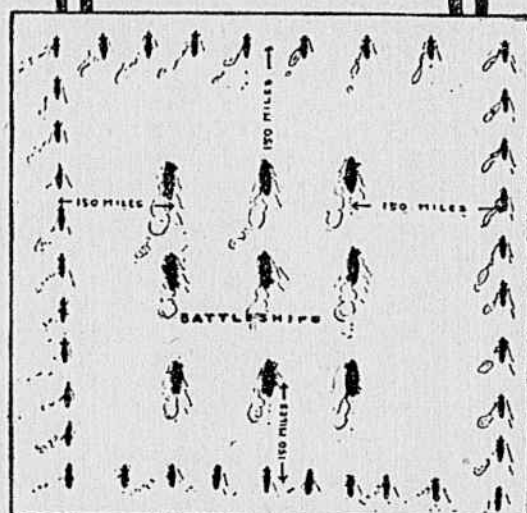


Diagram illustrating the only means by which our slow battle fleets may be moved on the high seas with a convoy of many small fast cruisers forming a protecting screen at a distance of one hundred and twenty or one hundred and fifty miles on all sides of the battle fleet. By no other means it is safe to move a squadron of battleships, especially at night, without risking its destruction by the attack of an enemy's torpedo craft.

slow battleships, and one week from to-day bids will be opened for three such ships that will cost \$45,000,000 and that an investigation will show to be as worthless and as antiquated as the flintlock musket.

These defects in our battleships result from the sacrifice of active aggression for passive resistance, a vital sacrifice in speed for an unnecessary increase in armor plate. Because of this our ships are compelled to fight fleets, which make them an easy prey for the torpedo and which fired at the line of battleships will in one case out of four hit and sink a ship. The Napoleonic maxim that "The thicker the grass, the faster it is mown," applies with especial force to naval warfare. This is one of the fruits of armor plate domination in the construction of our navy. Had our battleships been constructed with such speed that they could cruise as fighting units they would have nothing to fear on the high seas from torpedo attack. Let us examine the advantages which this excess armor plate has given our ships.

Since the remotest ages the art of war and the implements of warfare have developed according to certain immutable principles. For example, the boy David slew the giant Goliath where his sling was destructive, but which the slow-moving Goliath could not lessen so as to make his ponderous sword and spear effective. This principle has been expounded for centuries and employed to secure victories in all ages, and it was recently re-affirmed as the basis of an argument for the sale of the

Idaho and Mississippi that they were outraged by the larger guns of foreign fast ships. Hence charge 4 is laid and should be investigated:

4. Thirty-two of our older battleships, carrying guns of equal or lesser power than those in the Idaho, are inefficient for the purposes for which they were designed because they are outranged by foreign ships having guns of superior range and possessing superior speed.

A corollary of this principle is that the effect of a missile weapon is not dependent upon its ultimate range, but upon its destructive range. The guns of the Idaho and Mississippi and our other thirty-two ships having the same armament fire shell weighing 870 pounds about 25,000 yards, yet these shells cannot destroy a battleship at even one-half this range, which general fact is stated not only in the last British Naval Annual and in other technical journals, but also has been proven by tests carried out by a special committee of Congress and reported to Congress by the chairman, Captain Hobson, on April 30, of the present year. Admiral Twining, in testimony referred to, stated that hits could be made at a range of 16,000 yards. The British navy, last December, sunk the battleship Empress of India at over 16,000 yards, and the account of the test in the Naval Institute Proceedings for April of the present year states that "holes were blown in her like lock gates," showing the employment of torpedo shell, since A. P. shell never make a hole larger than their diameter. Since then torpedo shells are used abroad that are effective at 16,000 yards or up to the limit of range fixed by visual conditions, as stated by Admiral Twining.

The question naturally arises why these thirty-two battleships of our navy are not supplied with such shells so as to prevent them from being outranged, as it is stated they would be in combat with foreign ships. Several types of torpedo shell were brought out in this country nearly twenty years ago. The War Department perfected one. I presented one, but neither type has been adopted. The cry of danger was raised against one of these types. That charge would have been accepted as honest had either of the other types of torpedo shell been adopted and against which no such charge could be brought. Either of these shells could destroy any battleship without even exploding in contact with it, as was established by experiments carried out by General Abbot nearly twenty years ago. It was also proven by tests made with the army shell against a caisson representing a battleship and furnished by the Navy Department, an account of which test is contained in Ordnance and

Gunnery, by Lisak, page 583, which shows that this shell would destroy a battleship at even a distance of fifteen feet from it. Hence charge 5 is laid and should be investigated:

5. Ordnance officers of this country for the past fifteen or twenty years have been in possession of safe torpedo shell that could destroy any ship at any range within the limit fixed by visual and other conditions, but, notwithstanding this, such shell have not been adopted for the service and our ships have not been constructed either to employ them or meet the change that would result if other navies adopted them.

Tests of these shells have shown that by means of them not only can ships be sunk at extreme ranges, but also irrespective of their armor protection, as their most favorable point of attack is below the water line. Has this recognized destructive effect of torpedo shell which discounts the use of armor plate been the cause of the vigorous opposition to their adoption? Has their use been opposed because their adoption would at once extend the destructive range of all the primary guns on all our battleships and thereby prevent such ships from ever becoming obsolete? Has their use been opposed because their adoption would destroy the basis of the permanent naval building programme so dear to many? Those back of this opposition should be permitted to give the reasons therefor, and these reasons should be weighed and tested by a searching investigation.

The immediate cause for this request for a hearing in the hope of securing an investigation has been the arrogant act of the Naval Chief of Ordnance, who has refused to carry out tests with either of two types of torpedo shell in which I am interested and as requested by the House Subcommittee on Ordnance Tests, but who has at the same time carried out a test with one of these shells in utter disregard of the wishes of either the House committee or myself, which for high-handed disregard for the interests of the navy and of this country stands without parallel in the history of his department, and I am informed, having thereby secured the material for an unfavorable report, the caisson employed in the test was blown up and destroyed, thereby preventing further tests to disprove the inaccuracy of the report and conclusions obtained and uttered by the department.

It is recognized that a saw may be proven to be worthless if tested as a means to drive nails. Likewise a hammer may be proven worthless as a means for cutting off timber; but a test to prove their efficiency should be made under such conditions as they are designed to be used, and I am informed by many Members of Congress who received invitations to be present at a test requested by the House Committee on Ordnance Tests that they expect such test to take place. I am also informed that if the subterfuge of blowing up the caisson has been resorted to in order to prevent the result of an honest test from stopping contracts for battleships or shell the blame will be placed where it belongs.

The issue is not the Isham shell or anybody's shell in particular. The question is whether the ordnance officers shall prevent the use of any torpedo shell because they lessen the demand for armor plate and for new ships. This issue, it is submitted, should be decided by an investigation and by honest tests, and it is believed that it will be so decided.

Believing that the few serious charges herein made can be established by the honest officers composing 95 per cent of those in the service, and that a searching investigation will result in great good to our navy, I respectfully request that such an investigation be made.

The Conquest of the Brigand

COSMA RACOARE was really a most marvelous fellow. At dawn he reached his house and again seated on his gray horse with his sunburned face, his heavy drooping moustache and his eyes like blue steel.

He treated with his four remaining followers. At dawn he reached his house while Vasilii was waiting. "That woman beat us all off, Vasilii. Two gold coins now if you can find a better plan."

"Quick, quick, tell me what it is. I will give you seven. Her eyes have set me mad."

Racoare came three days later. Nicholas was sitting in his garden under a lime tree smoking his chibouque. Cosina was dressed in his most picturesque costume, with his famous long gun, and was leading his horse by the bridle.

come back here right away." "One cup will be enough," said Cosina. "I never drink coffee."

"Have you settled the conditions?" he asked. "Vasilii," said Nicholas, "go and get my purse from under my pillow."

and I will count the money." "Just what I thought," said Vasilii. "Cosina would bring you the devil if you asked him to."

Well, as I said, Nicholas Zampridi was madly in love with her, but she would not look at him, and told him a thousand times that she despised the Greeks. But Nicholas could not give her up, and one day he called his old overseer, Vasilii, who knew all about his love affair, and said: "What am I to do, Vasilii?" "I will give you a gold coin."

"I should like nothing better than to help you, master, but..." "I will give you a gold coin." Vasilii scratched his head. "You might promise me two, three, four gold coins. What good would it do when I cannot think of anything?"

"Oh, there you are," said Nicholas, as if aroused from a dream. "Vasilii, have them bring some coffee and come back here right away."

Nicholas was sitting in his garden under a lime tree smoking his chibouque. Cosina was dressed in his most picturesque costume, with his famous long gun, and was leading his horse by the bridle.

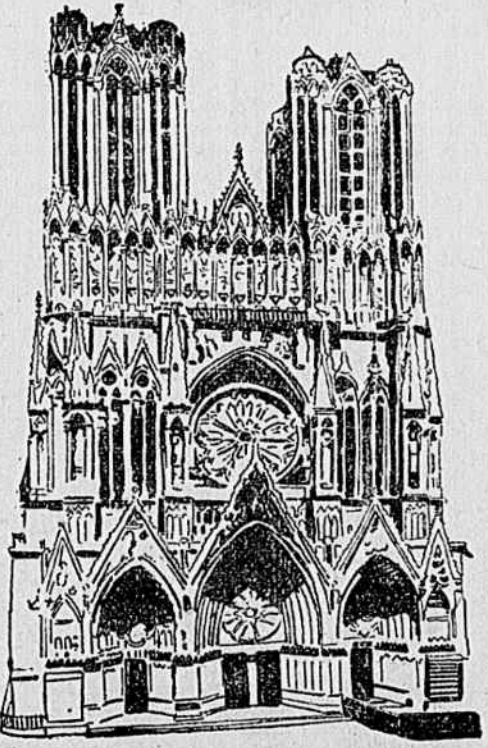
"That will do it," said Racoare stolidly. "Vasilii came back, hiding a smile."

"Good," said Nicholas. "That is an understanding. You had her to me."

Cosina entered the yard, which was empty. He tied his horse and entered the house. Sultana appeared in the doorway of her chamber, dressed in her night dress, sword in hand, and said: "Who are you and what do you want?"

The Cathedral ... By Edmond Rostand

(From the original French of the distinguished poet's sonnet on the mutilation of the Rheims Cathedral by German guns.)



CREATIONS do not perish which a ruffian mars; Only a little more immortal yet they stand. Inquire of Rodin, or of Phidias demand, If works of theirs are less esteemed for vandal scars.

The fortress, once dismantled, irretrievably is gone; The broken temple, made more noble, lives again; The eyes, remembering that roof with mild disdain, Prefer to view the heavens through lacework of stone.

Let us give thanks. Now envy in our hearts is still— Envy of what the Greeks have on their Golden Hill: Their Symbol without price which Insult consecrates!

Our thanks to those who urged the stupid cannon on, Since from their German skill forever there awaits But shame for them—for France a Parthenon!

