

Contents

PREFACE

Page
vii

PART I.

THE CHURCHILL-FISHER PERIOD,

August 1914-May 1915

CHAPTER I. OF SHIPS AND MEN (August 1914)

1. THE SETTING

Britain's geographical advantage—Constitution of Grand Fleet—The High Seas Fleet—Other British forces—The dividends of sea command.

3

2. ADMIRALS AND CAPTAINS

Milieu of the senior officers—Quality of the flag list—Churchill—Graham Greene—Hood—Battenberg and the other Sea Lords—The War Staff: Sturdee, Leveson—Jellicoe—Beatty—Madden—Battle-squadron commanders—Cruiser-squadron commanders—Burney—Tyrwhitt—De Chair—Wemyss—Colville—Quality and background of the Grand Fleet Captains—British and German officers compared.

6

CHAPTER II. THE MEDITERRANEAN: A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

(August 1914)

1. THE ESCAPE OF THE *GOEBEN*

Comparison of German and British forces and commanders—The Mediterranean naval situation—The 30 July telegram to Milne—Its consequences—Shadowing the *Goeben*—Distribution of Mediterranean Fleet, 5 August—The *Goeben* leaves Messina—A note on the *Dublin*—Troubridge in pursuit—He abandons the chase—His reasons—The *Gloucester* breaks off the chase—The Admiralty false alarm *re* Austria—The *Goeben* enters the Dardanelles.

20

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Admiralty and Milne—Admiralty reaction to Troubridge's report—The Troubridge Court of Inquiry—The Court Martial—Admiralty criticism of its finding—Degree of Troubridge's guilt—Responsibility of the Admiralty.

31

CHAPTER III. HOME WATERS: FRUSTRATIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

(August 1914-September 1914)

1. THE GRAND FLEET AND THE HIGH SEAS FLEET

Passivity of the High Seas Fleet—The reasons—Criticism of German inactivity—The Germans mismanage their Zeppelins

42

CONTENTS

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| —Expectation of battle in Britain—Churchill's 'digging-out' speech—Fleet and public impatience—Churchill's restlessness. | |
| 2. HELIGOLAND BIGHT AND THE 'CRESSYS' | 50 |
| The Keyes-Tyrwhitt plan—The action in the Bight, 28 August—Evaluation of the operation—Effects on German strategy and British morale—The sinking of the three 'Cressys', 22 September—The story behind the story—The Court of Inquiry—Admiralty reaction to its report—Public criticism of Churchill. | |
| CHAPTER IV. THE TRIPLE MENACE (August 1914–October 1914) | |
| 1. THE INVASION PROBLEM | 60 |
| The German Navy and the invasion of Britain—Admiralty confidence—The C.I.D. discussion of 7 October—The War Council replaces the C.I.D.—The November invasion scare—Naval precautions | |
| 2. THE SUBMARINE PERIL | 64 |
| Grand Fleet activity and recreation—Insecurity of Scapa Flow—Jellicoe's protective measures—Submarine scares at Scapa and Cromarty—Churchill <i>v.</i> Jellicoe on the possibility of submarine attack at Scapa—The U-boats and Grand Fleet morale—Growing security of Scapa—The submarine menace to the Fleet at sea. | |
| 3. THE MINE THREAT | 70 |
| The pre-war Navy and mining warfare—The Trawler Reserve—German minelaying—Results—Minesweeping—Invention of the paravane—Jellicoe's concern over mines—Mines, submarines, and Grand Fleet battle tactics: Jellicoe's letter of 30 October—Its consequences. | |
| 4. MATÉRIEL FIASCOS | 77 |
| British minelayers and mines—Torpedo and wireless defects—Fisher's anger at the <i>matériel</i> departments—Defensive or offensive mining?—Churchill's mining paper—Fisher urges an aggressive mining policy—Jellicoe's argument for the same—Extent of offensive mining in the Churchill period. | |
| CHAPTER V. THE REVOLUTION AT WHITEHALL (October 1914–January 1915) | |
| 1. TWO SCAPEGOATS: CHURCHILL AND BATTENBERG | 82 |
| The decline of confidence in the Navy—Anti-Churchill feeling—Churchill and the Antwerp expedition—He is held to blame—The outcry against Battenberg—The circumstances of his resignation. | |
| 2. FISHER'S RESTORATION | 89 |
| Misgivings of King George—Fisher's mental and physical fitness—How the country and the Navy received the appointment—Other appointments: A. K. Wilson, Bartolomé, Hall—Oliver replaces Sturdee—T. Jackson relieves Leveson— | |

CONTENTS

Page

Disappearance of inertia at the Admiralty—The new building programme—The *Repulse* and *Renown*—The *Furious*, *Courageous*, and *Glorious*—The pros and cons of the five—Submarine scout airships—Fisher's alarm over the U-boats—The torpedoing of the *Formidable*—Admiralty criticism of Bayly.

CHAPTER VI. ACTION IN THE FAR SEAS

(October 1914–December 1914)

1. DEFEAT AT CORONEL

101

The German surface raiders—Admiralty trade defence measures and principles—The threat posed by Spee's squadron—The Admiralty alerts Cradock—Cradock recommends two strong forces—Churchill's confidence in the *Canopus*—Her limitations—Cradock's misgivings over the *Canopus*—The false reports on her machinery—Cradock's disturbing telegram of 26 October—The Admiralty telegram of 28 October—Did Cradock receive it?—Comparison of the two squadrons—Cradock's motivations in seeking an action—The Battle of Coronel, 1 November—Results—Admiralty responsibility—Reaction to the battle in Britain and Germany—Spee's movements.

2. VICTORY AT THE FALKLANDS

118

The Admiralty reading of the situation—Fisher's bold stroke—Sturdee's voyage to the Falklands—The Battle of the Falkland Islands, 8 December—Jubilation in the country and Service—Sturdee's admirers and critics—Fisher's annoyance—Strategic consequences of the Falklands—Net result of the German commerce warfare through March 1915—A note on Sturdee's plan.

CHAPTER VII. ALARUMS AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

(December 1914–January 1915)

1. THE SCARBOROUGH TIP-AND-RUN RAID

130

The Yarmouth bombardment, 3 November—Fisher's premonition of a German move in December—Ingenohl plans a raid—The genesis of 'Room 40'—How it functioned—Ewing and Hall—The Admiralty's foreknowledge of the raid—The Admiralty's trap—The Scarborough action, 16 December—Ingenohl misses a great opportunity—The bombardment of Scarborough, Hartlepool, and Whitby—Missed British opportunities—The bitter disappointment of Beatty and Fisher—Jellicoe's criticisms—The Admiralty's observations—The German reaction—The public anger in Britain—The battle cruisers are moved to Rosyth—Churchill's letter to the Mayor of Scarborough.

2. OTHER ALARUMS: ZEPPELINS AND BATTLE FLEETS

149

The Zeppelin menace—Fisher's drastic proposal—He submits his resignation—Beatty protests his battle-cruiser inferiority—Jellicoe, Churchill, and quantitative fleet comparisons—Evaluation of their positions.

xvii

B



| | Page |
|---|------|
| 3. THE DOGGER BANK ACTION | 156 |
| <p>Hipper's reconnaissance—The Admiralty plan to intercept him—The action, 24 January—The <i>Tiger's</i> misunderstanding—Beatty's turn to port—The signalling confusion—The hit on the <i>Seydlitz</i>—The German gunnery and heavy shell—Pohl relieves Ingenohl—The 'plus' side for the Royal Navy—Criticism of the Second-in-Command and the Captain of the <i>Tiger</i>—Battle-cruiser gunnery—Post-battle improvements—The problem of the Grand Fleet's bases—The fear of mines, submarines, and torpedoes—The mood of the country and the Fleet.</p> | |
| <p>CHAPTER VIII. THE SEARCH FOR A NAVAL OFFENSIVE (August 1914–January 1915)</p> | |
| 1. CHURCHILL AND CLOSE BLOCKADE | 176 |
| <p>Churchill's Baltic strategy—He seeks Russian co-operation—He discusses the Baltic project with the Grand Fleet, 17 September—The capture of a German island comes to the fore—Bayly and pre-war plans—Churchill and early wartime projects to seize an advanced base.</p> | |
| 2. WILSON AND HELIGOLAND | 182 |
| <p>A. K. Wilson urges the capture of Heligoland—Reasons for his confidence in success—Grand Fleet reaction to Wilson's plan—Burney rejects it—Consequences of the Heligoland project.</p> | |
| 3. CHURCHILL AND BORKUM | 184 |
| <p>Fisher's disgust with the defensive—Ideas of Hankey, Balfour, and Lloyd George for an offensive—Churchill pushes for the capture of Borkum—and Sylt—Both projects fade away—The strong opposition to Borkum—Fisher's attitude.</p> | |
| 4. FISHER AND THE BALTIC | 191 |
| <p>The Fisher–Churchill disagreement over the Baltic—Fisher's belief in amphibious operations—His Baltic Scheme—Criticisms of the Scheme—Bacon's argument for it—Asquith's refusal to circulate Fisher's Baltic paper—Obstacles to all the amphibious projects—The Zeebrugge operation—The military kill it—Summary of the situation in January 1915.</p> | |
| <p>CHAPTER IX. THE DARDANELLES OPERATION: INCEPTION (January 1915)</p> | |
| 1. GENESIS | 199 |
| <p>The 1906 discussion of a joint attack on the Dardanelles—The British naval tradition <i>re</i> warships <i>v.</i> forts—Churchill arranges a joint plan for the seizure of Gallipoli—The bombardment of the Dardanelles outer forts, 3 November 1914—The War Council's discussion of 25 November—'Westerners' <i>v.</i> 'Easterners'—The Serbian and Russian situations—The Grand Duke Nicholas's appeal for a 'demonstration'—Fisher's 'Turkey plan'—Admiral Carden's opinion—Churchill's reply—Carden's 'more detailed proposals'—The <i>Queen Elizabeth</i> enters the picture—The War Council of 13 January—Fisher's</p> | |

CONTENTS

misgivings—Churchill and Fisher meet with the Prime Minister—The War Council of 28 January—Fisher's reluctant consent to the operation.

Page

2. RATIONALE

211

The widespread support for joint operations—Why a naval operation was decided upon—Churchill, the most important factor—The sources of his confidence—The misleading analogy between the Belgian and Dardanelles forts—The damage done by the excessive faith in naval guns—Other technical difficulties not foreseen—Supposing the fleet reached Constantinople . . . ?—Churchill's failure to consult with the military experts—Fisher's case against the naval operation—Why his attitude did not carry decisive weight—His silence at the crucial War Councils—Churchill at the War Councils—The damage done by Fisher's silence—Weaknesses of the War Council—The views of Churchill's other advisers—Percy Scott's view—Other naval gunnery experts are not consulted—Jellicoe's opinion—The Junior Sea Lords are ignored—Their doubts—Summary.

CHAPTER X. THE DARDANELLES OPERATION: EXECUTION

(February 1915–April 1915)

1. THE NAVAL OPERATION: FIRST STAGES

229

The defences of the Dardanelles—The problem faced by the Allies—The Allied force—Admiral Carden—Churchill sends out two battalions of Marines—Pleas for a joint operation—Other important developments—The War Council decision of 16 February—The bombardment of 19 February and subsequent action—A major joint operation is envisaged—Kitchener holds back the 29th Division—The consequences—Kitchener releases the 29th—Sir Ian Hamilton is appointed to command the troops—Inadequate preparations for a joint operation—The logistical topsy-turvy—The responsibility—Public opinion is optimistic—The War Council of 10 March—Naval operations early in March—The attacks on the minefield—De Robeck relieves Carden—His confidence.

2. FAILURE

245

The attack on 18 March—Reasons for the repulse—De Robeck's feelings—The Admiralty are not discouraged—The attitude of the Generals—De Robeck explodes a bombshell, 22 March—Churchill reads it 'with consternation'—His isolation in the Admiralty War Staff Group—Balfour and Asquith sympathize with the First Lord—Churchill appeals to De Robeck—The Admiral's reply is 'decisive'—The political and strategic considerations behind a joint operation—Churchill's epitaph on the naval phase of the Dardanelles—The 25 April landing—The War Council of 14 May assesses the situation.

3. POST-MORTEM

259

Churchill as the scapegoat—The extent of his responsibility—Later evaluation of the strategic conception—Churchill's errors—The faulty planning and preparation—The War Council is not blameless—The obstacles on the technical naval side—The question of the trawlers' crews—The sweeping system—Effect of the Dardanelles on the invasion problem.

CONTENTS

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| CHAPTER XI. THE MAY CRISIS (May 1915) | |
| 1. PERSONAL FACTORS | 266 |
| The Fisher-Churchill incompatibility—Their difference in habits—Churchill's conception of his duties—His intervention in professional matters—His methods in issuing orders to the Fleet—The Junior Sea Lords support Fisher—More on Churchill's telegrams—Why he acted as he did—Crease sums up the influence of these personal factors. | |
| 2. THE CATALYTIC AGENT: THE DARDANELLES | 272 |
| Fisher and the naval demands of the Dardanelles—The effect of the High Seas Fleet movement of 29 March and the German attitude towards Holland—Fisher expects a German move—De Robeck's telegram of 9 May—Churchill favours a 'limited operation'—The Churchill-Fisher compromise—Their last telegram, 13 May—The recall of the <i>Queen Elizabeth</i> —The War Council of 14 May—How the meeting affected Fisher—Churchill and Fisher reach an understanding on Dardanelles reinforcements—The last straw: Churchill's four minutes of 15 May—Fisher resigns. | |
| 3. THE TITANS DEPART | 279 |
| Fisher is adamant on resigning—The pressure on him to stay—Talk of a coalition Government—The press supports Fisher—The Fleet dreads his going—A. K. Wilson is offered, and refuses, Fisher's post—The High Seas Fleet movement on 17 May—Fisher's 'desertion' of his post and its consequences—Fisher's ultimatum of 19 May—Its effect—Fisher's attitude towards Balfour as First Lord—He leaves for Scotland, 22 May—His resignation is finally accepted—Churchill's fight to remain at the Admiralty—How the Navy and the country viewed his retirement—Balfour succeeds him—The problem of the choice of a First Sea Lord—Jackson is appointed—Churchill's defence of his stewardship—An estimate of his tenure as First Lord. | |

PART II.

THE BALFOUR-JACKSON PERIOD: THE FIRST YEAR (May 1915-May 1916)

CHAPTER XII. THE NEW BOARD OF ADMIRALTY

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1. BALFOUR AND JACKSON | 297 |
| Balfour, the man—As First Lord—Jackson as First Sea Lord: strengths and weaknesses—His concern with trivia—Red tape and excessive centralization—Balfour and Jackson as a combination. | |
| 2. THE JUNIOR SEA LORDS | 302 |
| No officers with recent sea experience join the Board—More Board meetings are held—The Junior Sea Lords claim a share in the formulation of war policy, November 1915—Jackson supports them—Graham Greene's comments on the functions of the Sea Lords—The fundamental position is unchanged— | |

CONTENTS

Page

Personal relations on the Board—The attitude towards Lambert, the Fourth Sea Lord.

CHAPTER XIII. THE MEDITERRANEAN: PROBLEMS OLD AND NEW (June 1915—May 1916)

I. THE DARDANELLES: LIQUIDATION

308

The failure of the military attack, August 1915—To evacuate or not to evacuate?—The Salonika landing—Its effect upon the Dardanelles—General Monro recommends evacuation—The anti-evacuationists fight back—British submarines in the Marmora—The exploits of Boyle and Nasmith—De Robeck's fleet is restless—Hankey's report—Keyes's proposals for a naval attack—How practicable was his fresh scheme?—De Robeck's reaction—Keyes pleads his case in London—He does not impress the Sea Lords—The Admiralty supports a joint operation—Kitchener confers with De Robeck and the Generals at Mudros—Kitchener recommends evacuation, 22 November—The Government shilly-shallies—The eleventh-hour scheme for a joint offensive—The French scotch it—The Cabinet decides on evacuation, 7 December—Wemyss' last-ditch fight for a fresh naval attempt—The decision to evacuate Cape Helles—The evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula—Keyes's certainty that the Navy could have forced the Straits—Was evacuation the right decision?—The military results of the Dardanelles-Gallipoli operation—The 'solid advantages' of the campaign—The naval reasons for the Gallipoli failure.

2. THE ADRIATIC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

329

The Navy's commitment in the Adriatic—The objectives of the Taranto-Brindisi Allied force—The blockade of the Otranto Straits—The net-drifter patrol is not a success—Italian naval inactivity in the Adriatic—Division of responsibilities in the Mediterranean proper—The U-boat campaign in the Mediterranean—The Allied naval conference in Paris, December 1915—The new patrol arrangements are ineffective—The Malta Conference, March 1916—It solves nothing—Reasons for the success of the U-boats—The poor inter-Allied naval co-operation—British opinions of the Italian and French Fleets—The drain of British naval strength to the Mediterranean—Jellicoe's complaints—The concentration of battleship strength in the Mediterranean—British disgust with the French naval role.

CHAPTER XIV. AGAIN THE U-BOATS, MINE- LAYERS, AND SURFACE RAIDERS (February 1915—May 1916)

I. THE NEW *GUERRE DE COURSE*

342

The submarine and international law—Use of the U-boats down to February 1915—Merchant shipping losses in the first five months—Germany proclaims a war area on 4 February 1915—The U-boat campaign, February–August 1915—The *Arabic* incident and the suspension of the campaign—A balance sheet of U-boat and shipping losses through 1915—The 1916 campaign—The *Sussex* incident forces a modification of

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------------|
| German policy, 24 April 1916—Shipping losses in 1916 through May. | |
| 2. ANTIDOTES TO THE U-BOAT | 349 |
| The Submarine Attack Committee—Early anti-submarine methods—The hydrophone—Anti-submarine weapons—The Dover Straits net barrage and boom—The Belgian coast barrage—Protection of fleet anchorages—Arming of merchantmen—Q-ships—The Auxiliary Patrol—'Offensive patrolling'—Destroyers—Submarine <i>v.</i> submarine—Mining—Aircraft—Jellicoe and Beatty urge the appointment of Bayly to direct anti-submarine operations—Bayly is appointed to the new Queenstown command, July 1915—Summary of the results of anti-submarine operations through May 1916—The Admiralty is satisfied with the results—The seriousness of the shipping situation by early 1916—The Admiralty's failure to keep the requisite statistics—The absence of a sense of urgency at the Admiralty—The real difficulty. | |
| 3. MINELAYERS AND SURFACE RAIDERS | 367 |
| Shipping and warship losses through mines—Jellicoe's fear of mines—The <i>Meteor's</i> minefield, August 1915—British offensive mining—Jellicoe's proposals to overcome the mine peril to the Grand Fleet, January 1916—The revival of surface raiders in the winter of 1916–17: the <i>Moewe</i> and the <i>Greif</i> . | |
| 4. THE BRITISH BLOCKADE | 372 |
| The naval aspect of British blockade policy—The Northern Patrol—The Declaration of London and contraband—Neutral protests—The Navy's impatience with the Government's blockade policy—The effects of the economic pressure by the end of 1916—The Navy's attitude towards blockade as strategy. | |

CHAPTER XV. UNREST IN THE COUNTRY AND THE FLEET

(December 1915–March 1916)

| | |
|---|------------|
| 1. CAUSES OF DISQUIETUDE | 378 |
| Public confidence in the Navy, summer-autumn, 1915—Causes of unrest in the winter of 1915–16: blockade policy, the <i>Moewe</i> , the <i>Hindenburg</i> , inactivity of the Fleet, the Zeppelin raids, the delays in naval construction, the alleged lack of energy and initiative. | |
| 2. FISHER, JELlicOE, AND THE ADMIRALTY | 382 |
| Fisher in his Scottish exile—He accepts the chairmanship of the Board of Invention and Research—His restlessness—The rumour of his joining the War Committee—His speech in the Lords, 16 November 1915—Strained relations between Jellicoe and the Admiralty—Fisher's campaign against the Admiralty—The Third Sea Lord and First Sea Lord examine his charges—Jellicoe's criticisms—Fisher threatens an <i>exposé</i> in the Lords—Beatty supports the C.-in-C.—Fisher sums up the case against the Admiralty—Jellicoe attends the War Committee, 17 February 1916—He renews his charges against the Admiralty—The hospital-ship question. | |

3. THE CAMPAIGN FOR FISHER'S RETURN

395

The pro-Fisher and anti-Fisher camps—The methods of the Admiral's supporters—Balfour's statement in Parliament, 7 March 1916—Churchill calls for Fisher's restoration as First Sea Lord—The reaction to Churchill's speech—Balfour's counter-attack, 8 March—The agitation for a seaman as First Lord—The last nails in Fisher's coffin: the parade of sandwich-men, his War Committee testimony, 8 March—Asquith's judgment on Fisher—The Admiral's spring campaign: new targets—The apprehension of Jellicoe and Beatty over the Zeppelins—Reflections on the agitation of 1916.

CHAPTER XVI. THE GRAND FLEET: WATCHFUL WAITING

(February 1915–May 1916)

1. THE INVASION PROBLEM

408

Churchill states the case against invasion—The joint Service conference, January 1916—The Admiralty rethinks naval invasion strategy—Grand Fleet orders of March 1916 in the event of invasion.

2. OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

412

An uneventful period for the Grand Fleet—The officers yearn for battle—Their boredom—Hankey and Richmond criticize the lack of offensive spirit in the Navy—Offensive projects and their reception—Jellicoe's strategic outlook—How the Admiralty felt about it—The C.-in-C.'s views on a Baltic offensive—The War Committee's views on naval strategy—Amphibious ideas.

3. ACTION IN THE NORTH SEA

420

Scheer succeeds Pohl—His strategic ideas—The German destroyer sweep, 10 February 1916—The High Seas Fleet sortie of 5–6 March—The British operation against Hoyer, 25–26 March—The Admiralty sums up its lessons—Jellicoe refuses to adopt a 'more active policy'—Beatty supports him—Scheer's raid on Lowestoft, 25 April—The British Tondern operation, 4 May—Beatty on the disturbing aspects of Lowestoft.

4. STRATEGICAL REDISTRIBUTION

430

Resurrection of the Scapa *v.* Rosyth problem—The arguments on both sides—The C.-in-C. vetoes Beatty's request for the 5th Battle Squadron—Effect of the Lowestoft Raid—A *pis aller* is adopted—Balfour reassures the East Coast—The Rosyth Conference of 12 May 1916.

CHAPTER XVII. THE EVE OF JUTLAND

(May 1916)

1. THE TWO LINES

436

The mood of the Grand Fleet—Capital-ship strength—The speed of the two lines—A comparison of gun-power—and torpedo attack—British deficiencies—German advantages—Light cruisers, destroyers, and airships—The British battle-squadron commanders—The battle-cruiser and cruiser-squadron commanders—Augmentation of Beatty's staff—Jellicoe-Beatty relations—Impressions of the C.-in-C.

CONTENTS

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| 2. THE RIVAL PLANS | 443 |
| Jellicoe's plan to lure Scheer out—Scheer's scheme—He is forced to substitute an alternative plan—The High Seas Fleet puts to sea, 31 May 1916—The Admiralty get wind of an enemy operation—The Grand Fleet puts to sea, 30 May—The fundamentals of Jellicoe's strategy and tactics. | |
| INDEX | 449 |