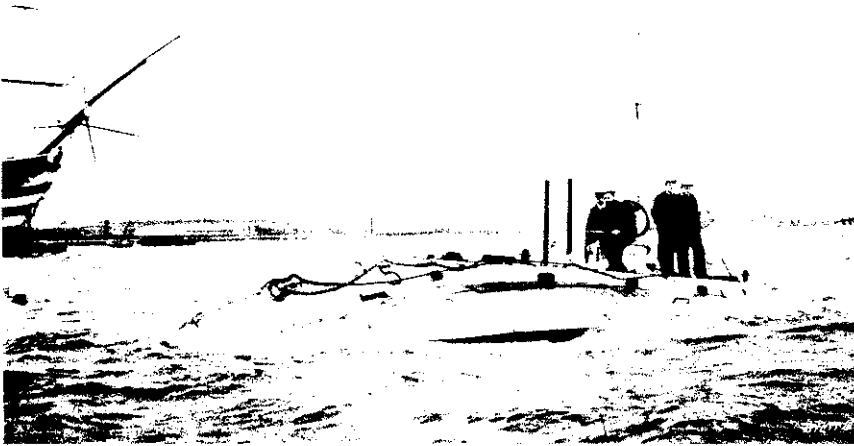


BRITISH SUBMARINES IN HEAVY WEATHER.



BRITISH SUBMARINE NO. 5.

### Modern Naval Warfare.

The following article by that very well-known writer, Herbert Russell, which was written just prior to the outbreak of hostilities will be read with interest:—

The menace of war in the Far East has brought into considerable prominence the problem of modern naval tactics, for it is universally recognised, says Mr Russell, that if the two countries come to hostilities, the issue will be determined upon the sea. Speculation is being freely indulged in as to the manner in which the opposing fleets would be most likely to fight.

Modern naval tactics are largely theoretical. I have in my possession a paper written by the late Vice-Admiral Colomb, himself held as no mean authority upon this subject, in which he seeks to demonstrate that the tactics of Nelson would be the tactics of today. I believe, however, that latterly he largely modified his views, and admitted no parallel could reasonably be drawn.

In the days of Trafalgar, the question of tactics was comparatively a simple one. The mobility of a fleet then depended entirely upon the force and direction of the wind. The first objective was to gain the weather-gauge, which is the more commanding position; the next, to cut the enemy's line in such a fashion as to bring the whole of the attacking force into play upon only a portion of the foe.

But steam has imported a condition into naval warfare which Nelson's captains never had to reckon with. Speed, and its concomitant quality of mobility, are essential factors in determining all questions of tactical distribution.

#### RULES OF SEA WARFARE.

Let the distinction between strategy and tactics be clearly drawn, for the two terms are frequently used in an erroneous sense. Strategy is the planning of a campaign; tactics are the evolutions of a battle. For the former it is impossible to lay down any general guiding rules. Strategy is an inherent quality of leadership, and no two great militant minds have ever yet proved quite in accord in plotting out a war, whether by sea or land.

But with tactics it is a different matter. In their probable application they remain, as I have said, largely theoretical; but the rules of them are reduced almost to the nature of an exact science. The rudiments of modern naval tactics aim at bringing about sets of conditions that shall respectively make for the greatest advantage to the aggressor, and militate as far as possible against the assailed.

Therefore, naval tactics are broadly differentiated under the two heads of offensive and defensive. While many of the elements of both are identical, they differ materially in their manner of employment. The primary business of an admiral before going into action is to have a clear perception of the power of his fleet in both these qualities.

He has so many battleships, so many cruisers. These represent a collective total of gun power, and a definite degree of armour resistance. If the ships conform at all to the modern standard of homogeneity, they will have a uniformity of speed under the stress of warfare. The problem, then, is how to get the highest degree of fighting value out of these distinctive features.

Naval strategists the world around seem to be agreed that the issue of a sea war can only be finally decided by the battleship squadrons of the combatants. Blockading operations, cruiser actions, commerce destruction, and the like may inflict great injury and suffering upon the contesting nations; but the accepted authorities doubt whether it is conceivable that effective submission can be attained by these means.

#### STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION.

As the Japanese fleet is organised and administered essentially upon British ideas, so are our own naval tactics those which the "little yellow men" would follow. Russia, during the course of her recent naval manoeuvres, has pretty clearly demonstrated that the tactical theories according to which her fleet would be fought are also very similar to our own.

Therefore, to discuss British tactics is equally to explain the principles upon which the threatening war in the Far East would be thrashed out.

The two elementary considerations which any admiral has to determine before deciding upon his plan of battle

THE FRENCH SUBMARINE "THE GYMNOTE" AFTER A RUN UNDER WATER.

When first tried she was very erratic, and her crew often suffered severely from her unstable motions.

## SUBMARINES—the New and Most Vital Force in Naval Warfare.