

A

EXAMPLES, CONCLUSIONS, AND MAXIMS
OF
MODERN NAVAL TACTICS.

ILLUSTRATED BY TWENTY-SIX FULL-PAGE DIAGRAMS.

BY
COMMANDER WM. BAINBRIDGE-HOFF,
UNITED STATES NAVY.

OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE,
BUREAU OF NAVIGATION,
NAVY DEPARTMENT, U.S.

1885.

GRIFFIN AND CO., 2, THE HARD, PORTSMOUTH.
(Booksellers to H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.)

LONDON AGENTS :
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

P R E F A C E.

IN placing these thoughts and remarks upon Naval Tactics before those who may be interested in the subject, I feel obliged to acknowledge a certain lack of experience, in a practical way, that must necessarily exist in a navy where an evolutionary fleet is not kept up.

Those nations which have always maintained large navies, and whose history and prestige date back to glorious pasts, have ever had great commanders and intelligent writers, who have made this branch of naval science a life-long study, both practically and theoretically. Upon the experience of these men, and from the writings of their naval editors, I have endeavoured to give certain examples, deduce certain conclusions, and formulate certain maxims.

Naval Tactics means more than the handling of squadrons. It means the whole science of the conduct of vessels, whether they act singly or in concert ; how to keep them together at sea ; how to operate along a coast ; how to conduct them through the inland waters of an enemy's country ; how best to govern them in regard to any peculiar environment, whether of wind, weather, or adversary ; whether to attack or to retreat, and, if the former, how best to employ their weapons of offence and defence.

The tactical integer is at all times changing according as the mechanical arts make prominent some one point in naval science, whether it be artillery or torpedoes, or the construction of the vessel itself. With wooden walls, broadside guns, and sails, it was the great fleet of many vessels. To-day, with the armour-clad and its all-round fire, torpedoes, and ram, it is the single ship.

Formerly the ship was a component of the fleet. To-day the fleet is a combination of ships.

Our own Navy has but marked its first century, yet its past history is filled with examples which teach startling and important lessons to the tacticians of older organisations.

During the war of 1812 a knowledge of this branch of naval science enabled us to add in nearly every equal encounter the name of the enemy's ship to our list of prizes.

The war of 1861 taught the lesson how to maintain the blockade of an enormous extent of coast, and the feasibility of riding out the heaviest

gales of wind, anchored in the open sea, almost anywhere on available soundings. In this war, too, was developed the tactics of the torpedo flotilla, likewise the passing of fortifications with vessels lashed together; also the carrying on of campaigns up the hardly navigable rivers of the enemy, with the peculiarities incident thereto.

With all the memories of the past clustering about us, we can only hope that the nation will once more seek to rehabilitate its marine defence. Should it do so, with our new ships there will be much for us to learn, and the following pages may serve to awaken an interest in a greatly neglected, yet very vital, subject.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I WISH to acknowledge my great indebtedness to the authors and naval authorities whose opinions, as set forth in the following works, have been largely quoted and embodied :

- Naval Tactics on the Open Sea with the Existing Types of Vessels and Weapons. By Captain the Hon. EDMUND R. FREMANTLE, R.N.
- The Gun, Ram, and Torpedo. By Commander GERARD H. U. NOEL, R.N.
- Essay on Naval Tactics. By JNO. KNOX LAUGHTON, M.A. naval instructor, R.N.
- Steam Tactics in a General Action. By Lieut. CHARLES CAMPBELL, R.N.
- Études Comparatives de Tactique Navale. By Monsieur E. FARRET, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, M.F.
- Problems in Naval Tactics. By Vice-Admiral RANDOLPH, R.N.
- Éléments de Tactiques Navale. By M. le Vice-Amiral PENHOAT, M.F.
- Remarks on the Manœuvres of Two Vessels in Action. By Lieutenant G. R. BETHELL, R.N.
- Maritime Power and its Probable Application in War. By Captain R. H. HARRIS, R.N.
- La Guerre Maritime et les Ports Militaires de la France. By M. le Contre-Amiral AUBE, M.F.
- The Manœuvring Powers of Ships. By Captain P. H. COLOMB, R.N.
- Essai sur la Tactique de Combat, et sur l'Usage à faire des Moyens d'Attaque et de Défense. By M. le Capitaine L. RIVER, M.F.
- The British Navy, its Strength, Resources, and Administration. By Sir THOMAS BRASSEY, K.C.B., M.P., M.A.
- La Guerre d'Escadre et la Guerre de Côtes. By Monsieur P. DISLÈRE.
- Ocasional Papers, Landing Parties, and Naval Brigade. By Lieutenant T. B. M. MASON, U.S.N.
- Étude sur les Combats de Mer. By M. BESSON, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, M.F.
- Attaque par les Torpilles et Défense à Opposer (Analysé de l'Anglais). By M. FONTAINEAU, M.F.

And to the many writers of articles published in home and foreign professional pamphlets.