

appeared in the Channel and were, by the most remarkable coincidence in all history, fully ready and mobilised when war broke out.

This is the fleet which, two weeks after hostilities began, won four notable victories without firing a shot:

1. It frustrated Germany's elaborate scheme to produce a panic in England.

2. It strangled Germany's overseas commerce. There were 2,000 German steamers of 5,000,000 tons gross afloat when war began. Practically all were captured or interned, and the heart of the German mercantile navy stopped beating.

3. British trade went on in its normal course owing to the confidence of ship owners and shippers.

4. The British Expeditionary Force was transferred to the Continent unmolested and Britain was able to avail herself of the help offered by the Dominions and by India.

Next let us look at the relative strength of the fleets involved in this terrible struggle. The following table shows the number of effective fighting ships belonging to the chief belligerents in commission and building at the outbreak of hostilities:

CLASS OF SHIP	Britain.	Germany.	Russia	France	Austria
Super Dreadnoughts and Super Battle Cruisers.....	14	...	...	...	...
Dreadnoughts and Battle Cruisers.....	18	18	11	12	12
Pre-Dreadnoughts.....	70	30	8	21	3
Armoured Cruisers.....	34	9	6	28	3
Protected Cruisers.....	15	31	16	...	...
Light Cruisers.....	87	12	...	4	8
Destroyers.....	227	152	141	84	12
Torpedo-boats.....	109	45	26	187	8
Submarines.....	75	40	48	76	7
Mine-layers.....	7	2	...	...	...
Total.....	656	339	256	412	53

The story of the naval campaign may be divided into two parts: events in the North Sea and events on the high seas. In the North Sea we know that our Home Fleet forced the German ships to skulk behind the powerful fortifications at Heligoland, Wilhelmshaven, Cuxhaven and Kiel, while their mine-layers violated every international and humane law by sowing mines broadcast over the sea and by abusing the