

ADMINISTRATIVE CONFLICT WITHIN THE WILHELMINE NAVY:
A HISTORY OF THE GERMAN MARINE CORPS

by

Patricia Nellie Waring

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ABSTRACT

The history of the German "marine corps" is a complex one. The origins of the Prussian Mariniere were honourable and within a few years of its reconstitution in the early 1800s, the force quickly re-established its reputation for excellence. Modern training and strong leadership insured that both the infantry and the artillery branches of the service could function in a variety of naval and military situations.

With the rapid growth of the German navy after the Reichsgruendung, the future of both the See-Bataillon and the See-Artillerie seemed bright. However, the tripartite naval reorganization of 1889 which shattered administrative/command unity within the Wilhelmine navy also destroyed unity within the marine units. In the decade after 1889, infantry and artillery traditions began to drift apart as they became victims of the schism between the OKM and the RMA.

Paradoxically, the victory of the Tirpitz party at the RMA in 1898 did little to spark a renaissance within the marine corps. By that time, the See-Artillerie had become the handmaid of the navy's technical departments and played virtually no independent role. The See-Bataillon, demoralized and lacking direction, turned to the army for leadership. Thus the positive contributions of the corps to the Wilhelmine navy were largely overlooked. At the moment when the corps had the most to offer the Reich in terms of technical expertise and trained personnel for overseas projects, the service became a sacrifice to the deep divisions within the naval administration.

ABREGE

Le "corps de marine" allemande a une histoire complexe. La Mariniere prussienne a connu des débuts honorables et, peu de temps après sa reconstitution au commencement des années 1800, la force retrouva rapidement sa réputation d'excellence. Un entraînement moderne et un commandement énergique ont permis à l'infanterie et à l'artillerie de ce service de bien fonctionner lors d'engagements navals et militaires variés.

Grâce à la croissance rapide de la marine allemande à la suite du Reichsgruendung, l'avenir du See-Bataillon et du See-Artillerie paraissait brillant. Cependant, la réorganisation navale tripartite de 1889 qui détruisit l'unité administration/commandement au niveau de la marine impériale, détruisit également l'unité au niveau des unités de la marine. Au cours de la décennie qui suivit l'année 1889, l'infanterie et l'artillerie, victimes du schisme entre l'OKM et le RMA, connurent un écart de leurs traditions de plus en plus marqué.

Paradoxalement, la victoire du parti Tirpitz au RMA en 1898 ne provoqua aucune renaissance au sein de la marine. Le See-Artillerie était alors devenu le serviteur des services techniques de la marine et ne jouissait quasiment d'aucune autonomie. Le See-Bataillon, démoralisé et dépourvu de commandement, se tourna alors vers l'armée pour obtenir direction. Ainsi, la part jouée par le corps au sein de la marine impériale fut en grande partie ignorée. Au moment où le corps avait le plus à offrir au Reich en matière d'expertise technique et de personnel aguerri pour les projets d'outre-mer, ce service fut sacrifié à cause de divisions profondes au sein de l'administration navale.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Acknowledgements	i
A Note on Nomenclature	iii
Abbreviations Frequently Employed in the Text	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One	
Introduction to Bibliography	8
PART ONE -- <u>The Marine Corps in Prussia and Germany:</u> <u>1680-1888</u>	21
Chapter Two	
The Origins of the Prussian Marine Corps: 1680-1852	22
Chapter Three	
The Prussian Marine Corps in the Years before the <u>Reichsgruendung</u> : 1852-1871	31
Chapter Four	
The German Marine Corps: 1871-1888	42
PART TWO -- <u>Strategy and Administrative Conflict</u> <u>in the German Navy</u>	54
Chapter Five	
Currents of Strategy in the Nineteenth Century	55
Section One -- The " <u>Jeune Ecole</u> "	56
Section Two -- The Handmaid Theory	58
Gunboat Diplomacy -- A Footnote to <u>Guerre de</u> <u>Course</u> and Handmaid Strategy	61
Section Three -- The Mahan Theory	62
Section Four -- <u>Tirpitz and the Risikoflotte</u>	67
Conclusion	71

	<u>PAGE</u>
Chapter Six	
The Origin of Administrative Conflict within the German Navy	78
Chapter Seven	
The Strategy Debate in the German Navy	92
PART THREE -- <u>The Disintegration of the Marine Corps after 1889</u>	111
Chapter Eight	
Growing Divisions within the Marine Corps	112
Chapter Nine	
<u>The See-Bataillon and the Matrosen-Artillerie- Abtheilung after 1898</u>	137
<u>SB Engagements: 1898-1914</u>	143
Changes within the <u>MAA: 1896-1914</u>	158
Chapter Ten	
Skutari and the 1914 Mobilization	169
Conclusion	178
Appendices	
1 Organizational Heads of the Imperial German Navy	188
2 The <u>Marine-Infanterie</u> -- 1889 to 1914	189
3 Figure One -- The Growth of the Marine Corps from 1680	191
4 The Growth of Naval Command in Germany -- 1871-1918	193
5 Figure Two -- Areas of Conflict between the <u>RMA</u> and the <u>OKM</u>	194
6 Figure Three -- Battleship/Cruiser Ratio in the German Navy	196

PAGE

Appendices (Cont'd.)

7 Chronology of Important Dates in the History of the <u>Marine-Infanterie</u>	198
8 Outline of <u>SB</u> and <u>MAA</u> Uniforms	205
9 Composition and Kit of the <u>Marine-Division</u> , August 29, 1914	206

Bibliography

Published Primary Sources	210
Secondary Sources	212
Archival Sources	221

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A NOTE ON NOMENCLATURE

The standardization of nomenclature for the various branches of the marine corps has not proven an easy task. Until 1914, a system approaching chaos in corps records made the imposition of a uniform nomenclature all but impossible. Thus, although the early Prussian term "Mariniere" appears to have gone out of official usage during the 1840s, some corps members continued to employ it during the 1890s.

In an effort to clear up the confusion which this problem is sure to create for the reader, an attempt has been made to impose a consistent standard for the use of marine corps nomenclature. From 1680 to 1848 members of the Prussian marine corps detachments were known as Mariniere. From 1849 to 1857, the infantry branch of the corps was also called the Marinir-Korps. After that time, the term See-Bataillon gradually came into vogue, although the terms Marine-Infanterie and See-Infanterie appear to have been used in some circles. From 1849 to 1867, the artillery branch of the corps was called the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung. The members of this unit appear to have been called "Matrosen", although the English equivalent of this is "seamen": an erroneous translation in this instance. Wherever the term Matrosen appears in the English text, it refers to a member of the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung.

After 1867 See-Artillerie -- a term analagous to See-Bataillon -- replaced Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung. For unspecified reasons, the term See-Artillerie gradually disappeared during the 1880s and was superseded by the former Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung. For the terms of this work, See-Artillerie is used in the text for the material covering the period 1867 to 1888. After that date, all references are made to the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung. It must be remembered that these artificially imposed conventions are imposed merely to help the reader and do not reflect an accurate picture of corps terminology during the period under study. Figure One, The Growth of the Marine Corps from 1680, outlines these name changes in diagram form.

A brief outline of the duties and functions of all branches of the corps is contained in the 1873 Organisationsreglement, N.¹ 1715, RM1/v. 2785, BAMA. For the benefit of the reader, selections from the Verpflichtungen section of this document have been abstracted below. Material in brackets is from the Seemaennisches Woerterbuch.

Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung --

..die Bedienung der Kuestenartillerie, das Minenlegen, und die Bedienung der Torpedobatterien. Im Nothfall, .. zu Schiffsbesatzungen mitherangezogen werden. Im jeder Reichkriegshafen wird eine Abtheilung stationirt.

(4 Abtheilungen)

Pioniere --

(..bestimmte Mannschaften einer Landungsabtheilung, meistens Zimmerleute und Heizer. Sie bilden die Pionier-Sektion eines Landungskorps.)

Schiffsjungen-Abtheilung --

(..Marinezoeglinge vom 14-17 Lebensjahren, die zu Matrosen ausgebildet werden.)

See-Bataillon --

..zur Vertheidigung der Reichkriegshaefen bestimmt, und nimmt an der Besatzung von Schiffen Theil. Es steht direkt unter dem Chef der Marine Station d. Ostsee.

(Die zur Marine gehoerige Infanterie, bei uns aus See-Bataillon I.-II.-III. bestehend.)

Werft-Division --

..Maschinisten, Zahlmeister, Heizer, Schiffshandwerker und Schreiber... Sie Bilden ein Depot, aus welchem die Bordkommandos entnommen werden und in welches sie wieder zurueckkehren. Sie sind ausserdem bestimmt, die Werft mit Arbeitskraeften zu unterstuetzen.

ABBREVIATIONS FREQUENTLY EMPLOYED IN THE TEXT

AA	Auswärtiges Amt
AKO	Allerhöchste Kabinettsordre
M-A-A	Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung
M-I	Marine-Infanterie
MK	Marine Kabinett
OKM	Oberkommando der Marine
RK	Reichskanzler
RMA	Reichs Marine Amt
S-A	See-Artillerie
S-J-A	Schiffs-Jungen-Abtheilung
S-B	See-Bataillon

Archival Abbreviations

BAK	Bundesarchiv/Koblenz
BAMA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv/Freiburg
NA	National Archives, Washington, D.C.
ZStA	Zentrales Staatsarchiv/Potsdam

Introduction

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the schematic approach has characterized the writing of both military and naval history. Historians have traditionally divided their military studies according to established criteria: by country, by battle or by technological advance. Economic, political and diplomatic factors have rarely played a major role in the calculations of the military scholar. Thus the majority of military studies are of little practical value to the historian. Without a solid explanation of the complexities of pre-1914 politics, a study of the rise of English sea power in the late nineteenth century can only be a catalogue of splendid technological achievement. Without an outline of the realities of economic and political geography, the history of the German station at Kiaochow can be of interest to only the most dedicated of naval scholars.

Paradoxically, it has only been within the past fifteen years -- in an era when the traditional efficacy of fleet warfare is being seriously questioned -- that scholars have begun to challenge this traditional approach to military historiography. Until the early 1960s, historians continued to assess naval problems in much the same ways as their predecessors in the 1880s and 1890s had done. This seventy-five-year period, which represents the almost total separation of political and economic history from matters military, is nowhere more evident than in the field of German naval history. Until the 1960s, history of the German navy before World War One inevitably equalled the "Arms Race", the grandiose ambitions of Admiral Tirpitz and Flottenpolitik.

Despite the many telling gaps in knowledge of German naval technology, of German interest and involvement in overseas projects and of naval designs on domestic policy, these areas remained largely unexplored for decades.

This has changed dramatically within the past fifteen years. A new breed of scholar, as much militarist as historian, has begun to reassess many traditional problems of naval history and to investigate some of the long-neglected ones. This new approach to historiography, which incorporates established historical methods with the tactical and technical sciences once considered the exclusive realm of the military scholar, is proving of great value to historians and military men alike. Marine corps history is a case in point.

From an historical perspective, the institution of the marine corps has always posed a problem. A strange hybrid of military and naval traditions, the marine corps has never fitted conveniently into slots which traditional military historiography has endeavoured to create. Thus, with a few notable exceptions,¹ the historiography of marine corps evolution is meagre. In such areas as tactical development and arms design -- two factors which have decisively influenced the growth of the marine corps -- history has remained silent. It is clear, however, that the institution of the marine corps cannot be examined without an overview of technology and of the delicate inter-relationship between the marine corps and the navy.

Today, the future of the institution of the marine corps is at a crossroads: technology has rendered many of the traditional functions of marine troops obsolete and the corps is fast evolving away from its original purpose. Since 1945 most marine corps have become an elite force de frappe of front-line fighting troops. If the institution is going to survive as a truly "marine" force, it is evident that some rethinking must be done to restructure and redirect its growth.

At this juncture, the historian and the militarist must work together in order to determine how past failures and successes can shape the future of marine troops. This is all the more important since the corpus of historiography relating to the institution is so unsatisfactory.

In order to understand fully the directions in which the marine corps is evolving, it is necessary to understand its development under a multiplicity of historical conditions. For this reason, the study of the pre-1914 German marine corps is a useful one. In many respects, the German marine corps experienced some fifty years before 1945 the problems and uncertainties which now plague its successors in America and Britain. An understanding of why the German attempt to form an active and strong corps ended in failure, may give better insight into ways in which a reformation of the present-day institution can be accomplished.

Although the early history of the Prussian Mariniere was haphazard,² the force evolved rapidly into an elite and respected unit. The dynamism of the early officer corps and the sense of cameraderie among the men were in a large measure responsible for this.³ With the establishment of an independent Marineministerium in 1871, it seemed that the future of the corps was assured. Like its British counterpart, the German force was trained to lead the assault in amphibious landings, to provide guard detachments for scientific and commercial missions overseas, to act as the chief instrument of coastal defense and to serve as a ship's "police force". For some eighteen years the independent, united Marineministerium pursued this modest policy. Increases in the size of the Kaiserliche Marine led to automatic increases in the personnel of the corps. Training procedures, weapons and kit were all designed to meet the demands of short term postings on board ship. Corps officers, most of whom stemmed from the land army, instilled a military code of discipline and followed contemporary training methods.

This situation changed rapidly after 1889. In that year, the Marineministerium was dissolved into its three component parts: the Reichs Marine Amt, the Oberkommando der Marine and the Marine Kabinett. The administrative conflicts which resulted from this split not only dangerously fragmented the German navy, but also critically destroyed the unity within the evolving marine corps.⁴

The Oberkommando der Marine (operations arm) agitated for the establishment of a battle fleet. According to OKM theory, all German naval energies should be focused on that one objective.⁵ As a consequence, the OKM regarded the acquisition of fleet stations, colonial bases and strong coastal defense systems as superfluous: if a true battle fleet were constructed, all other naval programmes would be redundant.⁶ However, the Reichs Marine Amt (administrative arm) did not concur with this view. The staff of the RMA believed that a cruiser squadron fleet -- able to protect German commercial interests abroad -- would be of more practical value than the expensive battle fleet. The establishment of a fleet of cruisers would necessitate the institution of at least three overseas squadrons, each with one or more fleet stations of its own. Thus the acquisition of overseas bases was imperative to the RMA plan. Since the fleet would consist of light-to-moderate cruisers, coastal defense programmes were also an integral part of the scheme. From 1889 to 1898 this debate was at the root of virtually all RMA/OKM hostilities. At many junctures, an almost open state of war existed between the two departments: its effects on the development of morale and confidence within the imperial navy were disastrous.

In a sense, the marine corps became a pawn in this feud. As a result of conflicting RMA/OKM ambitions, the corps was expected to grow in two contradictory directions: to serve OKM interests, the corps had to continue its traditional training and growth; to fulfill RMA expectations, the marines had to develop into a colonial Schutztruppe -- an army of occupation by which the German hold on overseas possessions could be maintained. Such a development would entail a drastic change in strategic and tactical training. It would also necessitate an important change in recruitment patterns: as the marines were to act as the "civilizing force" at the foreign stations, each man would ideally possess a civilian skill or trade which would facilitate the expansion of the site.

Thus recruitment drives should be directed at skilled men who already possessed a basic knowledge of carpentry, masonry, etc. By OKM standards, however, the traditional recruitment and training of the corps were adequate: the OKM had little serious interest in overseas expansion. As a result, a marine corps composed of militarily-trained bricklayers and bakers was a manifest absurdity.

For ten years this schizophrenic approach to marine corps planning persisted and the unified development of the corps came to a complete standstill. In 1898, when the proponents of the battle fleet strategy at last invaded the RMA,⁷ these contradictory trends were halted. Despite the victory of OKM planning, little was done to repair the damage which the previous decade had wrought to the marine corps. Thus until the eve of the First World War, the German marine corps was haunted by the division which had characterized naval growth during the 1890s. This situation was made all the more uncertain by the spectre of obsolescence which was born of changing ship artillery design and improvements in seamen's artillery training.

In order to underline the importance of the RMA/OKM controversy in marine corps development, it will be necessary to sketch briefly the origins of the corps within Brandenburg-Prussia. Although these years were difficult ones for the corps, the tenacious determination of the few was enough to keep alive the spirit of the force. It is also important to outline the characteristics of the "normal" period of the corps: the years between 1871 and 1889 when the sense of permanency fostered a stable growth within the force. Because the question of high-seas strategy played such a crucial role in the eventual function which the corps would be called upon to fulfill, a brief study of naval strategy in the nineteenth century will preface the chapters which examine the RMA/OKM conflict during the 1890s. The ways in which this conflict paralyzed administrative development and growth within the navy are crucial to an understanding of the stagnation of marine corps evolution in this period.

From the post-1889 era, the marine corps must be investigated from several standpoints: the effects of the ten-year conflict on the internal administration of the corps, the various missions and duties of the corps branches from 1889 to 1914 and the reasons for the virtual abandonment of marine corps projects after 1898. The failure of the RMA to mend the damage done by the 1889-1898 period and the inability of naval leaders to define a new role for the corps in the wake of the triumph of battle fleet strategy doomed the marine corps. For this reason, the corps fell increasingly under army influence and by 1914 was little more than an appendage of the land army. Circumstance denied the corps an opportunity to function within the naval sphere and it thus seized the only option left open to it -- action as a special military task force. In essence, the German marines experienced obsolescence as a shipboard force long before technology made that obsolescence a certainty.

By an examination of the German marine corps before 1914 it is hoped that further insights into the RMA/OKM controversy will be gained. As a victim of this battle, the marine corps serves as an indicator of the problems which plagued the German navy and which demanded solution before the breach in navy ranks could effectively be healed. As neither the corps itself nor the RMA possessed the resources to close this gap, the future of German marine troops was irrevocably altered. It is hoped that this study of the changing function of the marine corps within the divided German navy will illuminate some of the difficulties which face modern marine troops in their struggle to redetermine their role as an active, elite land force.

Footnotes

1. Vide Chapter One, "Introduction to Bibliography".
2. Vide Chapter Two, "The Origins of the Prussian Marine Corps: 1680-1852".
3. Vide Chapter Three, "The Prussian Marine Corps in the Years before the Reichsgruendung: 1852-1871".
4. Vide Chapter Six, "The Origin of Administrative Conflict within the German Navy".
5. Vide Chapter Five, "Currents of Naval Strategy in the Nineteenth Century".
6. Tirpitz, Erinnerungen, vol. 1, p. 98 ff.
7. In that year, Tirpitz became Staatssekretaer of the Reichs Marine Amt. For his account of the ways in which he encouraged fellow officers from the Oberkommando to join his staff at the Reichs Marine Amt, vide Erinnerungen, vol. 1, p. 141.

Chapter One

Introduction to Bibliography

The major problem which confronts the historian who wishes to investigate the growth of the German marine corps in the pre-1914 era is the lack of secondary literature on the topic. Not only are there relatively few volumes of memoirs by marine corps officers; there also does not exist a comprehensive study of corps evolution or history. This is certainly due in part to the difficulty in assembling primary source material for such an undertaking. An abundance of archival and primary source material is available to any historian who wishes to investigate the history of the Mariniere; however, this material does not exist as a corpus and must be hunted down in the files of every department of the imperial navy. This process is both frustrating and time-consuming: perhaps this explains why no naval historian has hitherto attempted this mammoth task.

Since the secondary material which is of direct import to the history of the marine corps is so scanty, the historian must attack the problem of bibliography from another point of view. For this reason, the material to be discussed in this chapter can be divided roughly into five sections: 1. that which deals directly with the German marine corps, 2. that which deals with the development of other contemporaneous marine corps, 3. that which examines the growth of the German navy as a whole during the period, 4. theoretical or historical studies which examine the question of strategy and tactics, 5. miscellaneous political or organizational studies which can serve as a background. These divisions, which do not appear in the bibliography itself, may give the reader a further indication of the complexities of the study of the marine corps and of the ways in which the author has attempted to deal with them. It is hoped that a brief sketch of some of the outstanding literature in each of these five categories will prove instructive.

It is unfortunate that all the available secondary sources which deal with the history of the marine corps per se were either contemporaneous with the era under study or were the later literary ventures of retired corps officers. Thus, all the material which is available to the modern historian is either of the eye-witness-account genre or of the often highly-coloured and unreliable type of military memoir with which the scholar is all too familiar. Of the latter category, Arntzen's "Aus der Geschichte der Marine-Infanterie--zum 110. Geburtstag des ersten Seebataillons" (Nachrichtenblatt der Offiziervereinigung der Marine-Infanterie), and Prittwitz' "Die Marine-Infanterie von Beginn bis 1914" (Nachrichtenblatt) are probably the two best examples. Of the two, Prittwitz is the more scholarly. However, because his article was serialized in four chapters, it does tend to be choppy: there is no real continuity linking major occurrences to each other. The author jumps from high point to high point without explaining the steps in between. Although Prittwitz and Arntzen both contain a wealth of trivial detail and good sketches of the major events in corps history, neither has a sense of historical perspective and thus their accounts are seriously flawed.

Three articles, regrettably unsigned, which appeared in the Marine Rundschau in the first decade of this century are more substantial. The two installments of "Die deutsche Marine-Expedition" (1908-1909) and "Die Entwicklung der Schiffsartillerie" provide a first-hand and first-rate account of life "in the field". The 1903 article, "Mittelartillerie auf Schulschiffen", although somewhat theoretical and specialized, is also an important study of the development of onboard fighting strategy. The article concerning the development of ship's artillery is a sensitive analysis of the dilemma over personnel which faced the naval officer corps.¹ All the pieces from the Marine Rundschau display a flair for historical and tactical analysis which makes them valuable. In the same vein, Major Erich v. Hoepfner's brief memoir of the China campaign, "Erinnerungen an den Chinafeldzug, 1900" (Nachrichtenblatt) furnishes an important study about the marines in the Far East. Hoepfner's figures are reliable and his meticulously documented article explains in detail the battles and campaigns of China in which his corps was involved.

The only full-length studies of the marine corps are the contemporaneous offerings of corps members. Both A. Heye's Die Marine-Infanterie vom 23. Dezember 1849 bis Oktober 1890 and C. Huegenin's Geschichte des III. See-Bataillons follow much the same pattern. Both works are basically chronologies and contain little analytical or interpretive material. Huegenin's study, which deals with the formation and deployment of the famous "Tsingtau Battalion", is important in that it outlines the conditions of service and the skirmishes in which the battalion was engaged. Both books contain excellent plates and line drawings of uniforms and encampments. In a massive appendix, Heye lists all the commanding officers, garrisons and inspections of the Marine-Infanterie. Although this type of catalogue is sometimes very useful to the historian, in the final analysis both volumes have more interest for the collector of militaria curiosities than for the scholar.

The best study authored by a corps officer is Prittwitz und Gaffron's Die Geschichte des I. See-Bataillons. Unlike either Heye or Huegenin, Prittwitz spent some time in the preparation of the early chapters of his work and he is almost the only source for details of the establishment of the Mariniere unit in 1680. This interest in the origins of his battalion helped Prittwitz to understand many of the problems which faced the corps in the later period. Although the later sections of his study are overburdened with tedious accounts of royal inspections and celebrations, Prittwitz provides us with the earliest (1912) extensive investigation of corps history. In addition to this, the author's meticulous attention to detail and precision gives the work great importance for any study of naval history.

The second category of literature deals with the developments of other marine corps. Not unnaturally, the bulk of available material is British and American. The British material -- like the German -- tends to be of the regimental history school. It rarely provides insights into the highest levels of administration. The excellent two-volume study by Henry Blumberg, Britain's Sea Soldiers, is the one exception to this.

Blumberg's book contains an exhaustive account of British marine troop deployment from Nelson's day, and it is an invaluable guide to the growth and evolution of marine tactics and traditions.² The American literature is quite different. In the two decades prior to the First World War, the tactical and administrative studies which appeared in PUSNI were of a remarkably high calibre. During this period, many articles concerning marine corps development appeared in the journal and they remain an important source of material for study.

In his article, "Operations in North China", W.C. Davidson outlines some of the problems and successes encountered by the U.S. Marines in the Far East at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. It is interesting to compare Davidson's analysis with Huegenin's approach to the history of the Tsingtau Battalion. Davidson's study is more direct and more critical than that of his German colleague and he makes useful suggestions for improving the efficiency and morale of the corps: a phenomenon which is clearly out of place in the pious recitations of the German chroniclers. In his long essay, "In hoc signo vinces" -- which won the PUSNI prize as the best naval essay of 1887 -- C.T. Hutchins critically examines the tactics, organization and equipment of the U.S. Marines. Like Davidson, Hutchins is not above some strong criticism of his naval colleagues and many of his suggestions are wide-sweeping, if not radical. Although the Hutchins piece stirred up quite a controversy in the American navy,³ his essay is an excellent introduction to American marine corps procedure and to currents of naval planning and development which were common to all Great Powers.

In a slightly more theoretical study, W.L. Rodgers outlines emerging trends in maritime strategy in his two-part PUSNI article, "A Study of Attacks on Fortified Harbours". Although Rodgers relies heavily on American data and expertise for his examination of amphibious landing techniques, it is crucial for the student of German strategy to have this knowledge at his fingertips.

Asa Walker's "Combined Maritime Operations", although it was written for an American readership, is also valuable for the student of marine tactics. This brief PUSNI article is a pioneer study on the advantages and disadvantages of armed forces integration in time of war: Walker was among the first to advocate a totally integrated defense structure.

There are several major German works which offer insight into the evolution of naval tactics -- an important key to the complete understanding of marine corps development. The two most important works in this field are Maltzahn's Die Geschichte unserer taktischen Entwicklung and Edelsheim's Operations upon the Sea. Although these works will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter,⁴ it should be noted that both authors view the navy as an important and vital force in the shaping of foreign policy. Thus both men stress the necessity of an independent naval administration which would allow the development of naval institutions concerned with colonization, economics, etc. As the later chapters of this study will show, this thinking would irrevocably mould the marine corps into an instrument of "civilization" or colonization, rather than an instrument of attack.

Among the many modern studies of the German navy, two should be singled out for special mention. They are: Volker B. Berghahn's Der Tirpitz-Plan. Genesis und Verfall einer innenpolitischen Krisenstrategie unter Wilhelm II., and Fritz Otto Busch's Deutsche Seekriegsgeschichte. Berghahn's work is a landmark study which places Tirpitz' political and naval goals in their proper historical perspective. Of all the volumes written about the strategies and plans of the Grossadmiral, Berghahn's book contains the clearest and most lucid account of the steady erosion of the Tirpitz system. It is imperative that the student of German naval history have a thorough comprehension of the political and economic factors which helped destroy Flottenpolitik. Berghahn's study of this problem is unequalled.

Busch's work, Deutsche Seekriegsgeschichte, is a compendium of German naval development from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although Busch does not offer any new sources or substantially new interpretations, it is certainly a useful study and reference guide. Of the several "handbook" works of this type which are currently available, Busch's treatment of naval growth is probably the most accurate and the most innately historical.

The fourth category of material encompasses theoretical and historical works. First in this category must always be Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power on History. Although the work is not without flaws and is now somewhat dated, Mahan's approach to scholarly analysis of naval history remains the model. Mahan provides the basis for an appreciation of tactical development without which it would be difficult to assimilate the writings of his successors. In the light of Mahan's research, Sir Julian Corbett's Some Principles of Maritime Strategy becomes more intelligible. Corbett's work has overtly nationalistic overtones and it is fashionable today to condemn outright his bellicose and imperialistic attitudes.⁵ However, both Corbett and his colleague C.E. Callwell (Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance) wrote in the last decade before 1914. Both were ignorant of the severity of the Great War and both believed in the ultimate triumph of the naval/military machine. Corbett and Callwell were strong in their conviction that unified-force action was the best strategy and both thought that there should be naval/military input into foreign policy. Like the modern strategist August Janson (Das strategische und taktische Zusammenwirken von Heer und Flotte), they believed that it was necessary to base strategic plans on army-navy co-operation and joint action.⁶ Although this plan may seem to foreshadow the eventual obsolescence of an independent marine troop, such would not be the case. Under the proposed system, the corps would play an expanded role as an exclusively military unit under the direction of naval commanders.⁷ This theory has been revised and updated by Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, whose Maritime Strategy stands as the classic textbook for naval operations in the atomic age.

It is interesting to note that Gretton's analysis emphasizes rather than limits the role of a marine unit in any projected operation. Gretton believes that a modern-day marine corps can be a flexible and valuable unit if its numbers are kept small and if its training and equipment are maintained at a consistently high standard.⁸

The closest thing to a full-scale study of marine tactics through the ages is Alfred Vagts' Landing Operations. This book, which clearly reflects the influence of Mahan, outlines the history of amphibious landings from ancient times to the present. Although the work is often technical, it can often be important to the historian. Vagts deftly sketches the evolution of marine tactics and he uses charts and diagrams to great advantage. This is of great value to the scholar who lacks a specific grounding in military procedures and who would otherwise find Vagts' explanations over-complicated. At the end of the book, Vagts sums up the conditions on which successful amphibious operations depend and underscores the importance of historical analysis in the development of sound military tactics.⁹

James Cable's Gunboat Diplomacy is another important historical study which has overtones of military significance. This work is a valuable source for the historian; as it places gunboat strategy and its concomitants in an original historical perspective.¹⁰

The final category of secondary source material is that of organizational and political literature. Of the first type, Carl-Alex Gemzell's Organization, Conflict and Innovation stands out as the preeminent work. Gemzell attempts to set up a system of innovation probability by examining ways in which conflict and organizational problems within the German navy led, or did not lead, to change. Although his structure is complicated and his jargon is convoluted, Gemzell has produced a work of major importance for all historians in the field.

Along the same lines, Nicholas d'Ombrian's doctoral dissertation, The Military Departments and the Committee of Imperial Defense, provides an excellent organizational model. D'Ombrian has studied the conflicts within the C.I.D. and has tried to establish a quantitative correlation between them and the Committee's relative impotence. Although the study does not deal directly with the German marine corps, it is valuable to the historian from a methodological point of view.

Two interesting political studies which can help orient the historian in the milieu of the German marine corps are R.W. Bixler's doctoral dissertation, Anglo-German Imperialism in South Africa and Albert Ganz' dissertation, The Role of the Imperial German Navy in Colonial Affairs. Ganz makes a thorough study of the problems facing the German Reich overseas in the years before World War One and his conclusions concerning the naval attempts at colonization are certainly provocative. His dissertation contains an exhaustive survey of secondary sources and has merit on that count alone. Although Bixler's work suffers from having been researched over forty years ago, it is still a good examination of the similar problems which faced both nations in Africa and the telling differences in which each nation chose to solve them.

Unfortunately, there are few printed primary sources of major importance to this study. However, there are several standard works which do shed some light upon the subject. Chief among these is, of course, the Grosse Politik der europaeischen Kabinette which offers a careful and representative selection of German diplomatic documents concerning the acquisition of German colonies overseas. Further information can be found in Friedrich von Holstein's Geheime Papiere and in Bernhard von Buelow's Denkwuerdigkeiten. Although both these statesmen present the problems of colonial acquisition from a strictly political point of view, it is important to see how they assessed the role of the navy in foreign policy and how they reacted to increasing naval assertiveness. Neither makes much mention of the RMA-OKM struggle which had such a lasting effect on the thrust of naval ambitions: as neither fully understood the aspirations of certain segments of the naval officer corps, neither was prepared for the onslaught of navy interference in the political sphere.

Among the naval/military memoirs of the era, those of Tirpitz and Waldersee deserve special note. Despite the braggadocio of his writings, Tirpitz provides an informative -- if biased -- account of the RMA-OKM feud and much data on the training and problems of the torpedo arm. He is also an excellent source for the intricacies of the fleet controversy.¹¹ Waldersee is useful as a source for the problems and campaigns of the German marines in China during the Boxer Rebellion: although the celebrated Weltmarschall arrived in Peking too late to participate in any of the fighting, he knew many of the personalities who had seen action and was personally familiar with the situation in the East. The memoirs of General-Admiral von Stosch are also important. Stosch, who was the first Commanding Admiral of the newly-created Marineministerium of 1871, attempted to give the German navy some distinctly naval traditions and character. He also began the first naval review along efficient, military lines. Although the section which deals with the 1871 era is relatively brief, his memoirs do represent an important source for this crucial period of organizational evolution within the navy.

Theodor Leutwein (Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Sued-Afrika) is a useful source concerning the role of the Schutztruppe and the marines in the occupation of German South Africa. Despite the fact that the work is self-apologetic and replete with patriotic imperialism of a by-gone era, its information on the deployment of the marine corps during the Herero War is generally reliable and interesting. Otto Riedel's Der Kampf um Deutsch-Samoa is very much in the same vein. Dispossessed by the Allies in World War One, Riedel has made his account of German life in pre-1914 Samoa both nostalgic and bitter. His extreme praise of all things German and his relentless vilification of all things English make the book difficult to get through at some junctures. However, as a source for information concerning the German colony in Samoa, Riedel is surpassed only by Dr. Wilhelm Solf, long-time German governor of the colony, whose reminiscences remain unpublished.

Archival Sources

As mentioned above, the prime difficulty in assembling material for this study does not lie in the lack of data: rather the amount of data which is so dispersed throughout the German and American archives. Although the principal repository for archival material for this work is the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv/Freiburg, much of the material there is available on microfilm from either the National Archives of Washington, D.C. or from the Public Records Office in London. In addition, there is still a great deal of documentation relevant to the subject in both the Bundesarchiv/Koblenz and the Zentrales Staatsarchiv/Potsdam. It is unfortunate that only a fraction of the Potsdam material is available to North American scholars: there is a great corpus of data concerning the administrative functions of German overseas possessions which contains much valuable information relating to naval/military problems.

Much important information can be obtained on microfilm from the National Archives, Washington, D.C. This material is largely taken from the captured German documents collection of the archives and is found in folios prefaced by the letters "PG". PG files 66715 through 66718 contain the records of the Marine-Infanterie and Marine-Artillerie from 1871 to 1889. PG files 67403 through 67406 cover the records of the military engagements in East Africa, China, Samoa and Japan. As these records cover the period from 1889 to 1913, they are a major source for marine troop engagements before 1914. PG 67406 through PG 67415 encompass the records of the Schutztruppe in Africa. In later years, personnel from both the infantry and artillery divisions of the corps were called upon to serve with the Schutztruppe; these records also furnish an important source of data.

The complete holdings of the ZStA are unfortunately not yet available to the Western scholar, but several important fascicules are available which shed some light on this subject. RK 931 through 933 encompass the records of the Schutztruppe in the Far East and the South Pacific: this information fits neatly with that from the National Archives in Washington. RK 936 contains the accounts of the German military and naval expeditions to Asia during the 1890s. This material is important as a source for a military study of the German marines and it includes much data relating to the foreign political designs of the imperial navy. AA 22533 is also a valuable fascicule: it contains RMA material relating to the establishment of fleet stations overseas. This material, partially duplicated in the BAMA, is an excellent source for RMA plans to acquire an independent colonial sphere. Various administrative records of the German consulates and missions in China and Japan provide material concerning the German marine corps. Although this material is often trivial (how many men landed, and from what ship), it nevertheless gives a good perspective on the life and regimen of the marines at the turn of the century.

The majority of the archival material used in this dissertation comes from the BAMA. Although a good deal of the data in the BAMA can be found on microfilm in the National Archives, I have used the originals wherever possible: it is always preferable to rely on the actual document rather than a film copy and for bibliographic purposes, it simplifies matters considerably if a consistent numbering system can be used.

Among the most interesting material in the BAMA holdings are the RM1 files 696 through 705. They encompass a wealth of documents concerning the establishment of the Mariniere (1848-1854) and the SA/SB. Although it would seem that these data are not contemporaneous with the topic under study, this background information serves as both an anchor and a comparison for later analysis. Volumes 2778 through 2798 contain the organizational records of the navy from 1854 to 1871 and provide hitherto unknown data about the origins of the marine corps. In the same way, RM3/v. 3946 and volumes 6692 through 6696 furnish information concerning the problems of the marines in Kiaochow and the Far East.

RM5/v. 912 through 916 contain the Immediatberichte und Vortraege from 1894 to 1898. As this was a crucial period in marine corps planning and strategy, the reports and minutes collected in these fascicules are essential.

RM3/v. 10434, 10437 and 10438 contain the administrative records and copies of the Marine Rundschau. As it is difficult to find a complete run of this periodical, it is important to note that many editions are preserved in the BAMA -- not only in their library, but also in their archival holdings. Although most of the articles in the MR were published either anonymously or under initial, it is sometimes possible to make a good guess as to the author's identity.¹²

Among the many Nachlaesse and Handakten of the BAMA, several stand out as extremely important. N-224, the private papers of Oskar von Truppel, naval governor of Kiaochow, contain many interesting sidelights on the marines: vol. 6 -- Kriegstagebuch; vol. 7 -- Tagebuchnotizen; vol. 62 -- Tsingtau; vol. 65 Erinnerungen an Tsingtau and vol. 67 -- Denkschriften. N-253, the voluminous Tirpitz holding, contains the following material which is especially useful: vol. 39 -- Kampf zwischen OKM und RMA; vol. 42 -- Aufsaetze ueber Organisation; vol. 204 -- Korrespondenz an Hollmann; vol. 222 Korrespondenz an von Ahlefeld and vol. 245 -- Briefe betreffend Ostasien. The papers of Admiral Diederichs, former commander of the East Asian Squadron and governor of Kiaochow, are contained in N-255. Vols. 8, 9 and 23 are among the most interesting. N-378, the three-volume memoirs of Fritz Fauth, a member of the Truppel entourage, are also illuminating. Originally, the Fauth papers were contained in the Truppel collection, but were recently assigned an acquisition number of their own. Fauth is chiefly interesting for his painstaking account of the conditions under which the German garrison in China existed.

Footnotes

1. The relatively few chances for advancement within the small marine corps played havoc with promotion and rank for the senior officers. This question was to plague the imperial navy until 1914. For a complete discussion of the issue, vide Chapter Three.
2. Blumberg has taken special care to insure that virtually all expeditions and campaigns in which the Royal Marines participated are included in the study. He has also detailed the changing kit and gear list of the corps from the Napolionic Era to the 1920s: he has used this otherwise obscure material to help illustrate how an alteration in tactics can result in a major change in basic training and equipment.
3. Hutchins' hotly-contested theory of decentralized organization was guaranteed to raise the hackles of the military establishment when it was published in 1887. For a complete examination of the controversy, vide PUSNI, Nos. 42 and 43, 1887.
4. Vide Chapter Five, "Currents of Strategy".
5. Corbett, Some Principles, p. 54.
6. Vide, Janson, Das strategische und taktische Zusammenwirken.
7. Ibid., p. 143.
8. Gretton, Maritime Strategy, p. 100.
9. Vagts, Landing Operations, "Conclusion".
10. Vide Chapter Five, "Currents of Strategy".
11. Tirpitz, My Memoirs, vol. 2, pp. 63-65.
12. It seems, for example, that those articles which appeared on strategy and tactics under the initials "A.M." were written by Maltzahn, the author of Die Geschichte unserer taktischen Entwicklung. It is also a reasonable assumption that the marine corps selections which appeared under the initials "A.H." were the work of Heye, the author of Die Marine-Infanterie.

PART ONE

THE MARINE CORPS IN PRUSSIA AND GERMANY:

1680 - 1888

Chapter Two

The Origins of the Prussian Marine Corps: 1680-1852

The history of marine corps units is often that of a privileged military elite: the development of the Prussian marine corps was no exception to this. Despite the many problems and setbacks which the corps faced in the first 150 years of its existence, it was always respected and esteemed for the high degree of professionalism which it consistently maintained.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the nascent state of Brandenburg-Prussia was dangerously pressed from two sides -- Spain to the southwest and Sweden to the north. This was the era of burgeoning commercial expansion in Brandenburg: the constant threat to mercantile interests which Spain and Sweden posed necessitated the formation of a new type of military unit. This new unit would have to combine traditional land warfare skills with a thorough grounding in artillery practices and coastal defense procedures.¹ In order to hasten the creation of the new unit, Frederick William, the Great Elector, placed twenty experienced soldiers at the disposal of General Count von Doenhoff. The General's mandate was a difficult one: in as short a time as possible he was to mould his small, twenty-man force into a new type of fighting force which would be able to function in a variety of maritime situations. This tiny unit formed the nucleus of what later became the Prussian marine corps:

auf zwei Schiffe, welche Seine Churfuerstliche Durchlaucht nach Guinea schicken, zwanzig gute, gesunde Musquetiere nebst zwei Unteroffiziere (SIC) von denen in Preussen stehenden Regimentern zu Fusse zu geben and selbige gehoerig zu mundieren habe...²

Count von Doenhoff, picking his non-commissioned officers and his junior officers from the most experienced and capable personnel in the land army,³ was able to begin his training programme in November, 1680.

The General's programme was difficult: not only were the men required to maintain the standards of infantry training which they had followed in the land army, they were also expected to master new artillery exercises and to become acquainted with the basics of seamanship:

Die Soldaten aber soll er Schiffsarbeit lehren und mit der Zeit zu Matrosen bequem machen, weil Wir geneigt sein, selbige all Zeit zur Marine zu gebrauchen.⁴ (SIC)

Unfortunately, the actual exercise reports and assessments of this early period are no longer extant. It seems, however, that both the General and the Great Elector were pleased with the results of the initial phases of the programme: by the beginning of 1681, an additional 162 men had been assigned to the unit.

For the next two years, the unit remained almost exclusively a land force, active in coastal defense and slowly gaining more experience with the patterns of naval life. On October 1, 1684, the first official Compagnie der Marine was formed. This detachment, which consisted of troops culled from Doenhoff's unit, acted as a guard force for the newly-formed Prussian mercantile venture, the Afrikanische Compagnie. Some 100 men, 1 lieutenant and 1 captain were assigned to this detachment. Within the year, the marine corps itself was strengthened by 110 men to compensate for the troops assigned to the Afrikanische Compagnie and the corps was officially given the title "Marine-Bataillon".⁵

The rapid growth of the corps -- at its zenith it numbered almost 1200 men in four companies -- came to an abrupt halt in 1688 with the death of the Great Elector. His successor, Frederick III, was not interested in overseas ventures. As a result, the small but solid navy was allowed to decay into obsolescence and the Marine-Bataillon was cut from four companies to two. By 1720, the Afrikanische Compagnie was sold at a considerable loss to the Dutch and the two remaining companies of the Marine-Bataillon were assigned to permanent land service. In 1757 the battalion was officially disbanded and it seemed that the history of the marine corps had come to an end.⁶

Although the successors of the Great Elector did not see the need for a permanent force available for coastal defense and shipboard duty, they followed a practice of assembling ad hoc units in times of political uncertainty. These units filled the functions of the Marine-Bataillon for short periods of time. Indeed, until the re-establishment of a permanent marine corps in the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of formation/dispersement was not uncommon. As the political situation deteriorated, one or two detachments of infantrymen would be formed out of the ranks of the regular army, hurriedly drilled as a fighting unit and sent to man the coastal fortifications. As soon as the situation eased, these units would be disbanded and the men returned to their own regiments. Not unnaturally, this system was satisfactory to no one. The men were unhappy with the enforced separation from their comrades and families, the officers were dissatisfied with the hurried and often inadequate training programmes and the results of the process were correspondingly mediocre.⁷ Despite its transient character, this ad hoc unit formation represents the only continuity in Prussian marine corps history from the early period of the Great Elector to the later period in the nineteenth century.

Unlike their predecessors in the Marine-Bataillon, the troops in the ad hoc units were not encouraged to familiarize themselves with naval procedures and were instructed to function exclusively as a land force. In the event that they were stationed on board a ship as a guard detachment, they were kept strictly separate from the Matrosen and followed infantry drill patterns and army disciplinary codes.⁸

It was not until 1823 that this situation was corrected. In that year, royal order established a permanent detachment of Garde-Mariniere. The new unit consisted of volunteers from various infantry regiments and it was placed under the command of one senior non-commissioned officer and two Pioniere. Like the ad hoc units of the eighteenth century, the Mariniere were discouraged from contact with Matrosen and were expected to maintain military traditions and procedures as far as possible.⁹

Over the next twenty-five years, the Mariniere enjoyed a slow but steady growth. In 1823 there were scarcely 200 men attached to the unit: by 1848 there were 650. However, as the Mariniere were without a garrison of their own, and lacked a properly defined training programme and a steady supply of senior officers, it seemed for a time that the corps might once again be disbanded. Fortunately, the commanding officer of the corps, Major von Gaede, was a man of determination and of administrative skill. His resolute character helped bolster troop morale in times of crisis. He campaigned actively for the Mariniere with his superiors and agitated for the establishment of a permanent garrison. In July, 1848 his energies were finally rewarded. The corps received its first garrison in Stettin -- an important step in the formation of the esprit de corps which is so important a part of military life.¹⁰ At the time of its transfer to Stettin, the corps consisted of an equal number of volunteers and regular infantrymen who had chosen to complete their mandatory tour of duty in this way.¹¹

It is doubtful whether Gaede's battle for recognition would have succeeded had it not been for the interest of Prince Adalbert. The achievements of Adalbert -- who took command of the Prussian navy in 1848 -- have been largely overlooked by historians. The Prince was a tireless worker, a voracious reader and an admirer of the strategic and technological innovations which the English and Dutch navies were promoting during the era. For this reason, he was often unpopular with his Prussian colleagues who disapproved of his anglophile tendencies. Adalbert's interest in the English navy led him to the conclusion that a force similar to the "Royal Marines" might be useful to the expanding Prussian navy. Recalling the traditions of the Marine-Bataillon of the Great Elector, the Prince believed that an attempt should be made to acquaint the marine troops with the basics of seamanship. At the same time, he wished the corps to remain available for coastal defense projects: thus the men would be expected to undergo expanded artillery and weaponry training. So that this increased training could be conducted with a high degree of excellence, the Prince recruited volunteer Artillery and Ordinance officers from the land army to serve as technical supervisors and consultants to the Mariniere. This was the beginning of the artillery battalion within the Prussian marine corps.¹²

Scarcely one year later, on December 23, 1849, the Garde-Mariniere were divided by AKO into two groups -- a Matrosen- and a Mariniere-Korps. This division made Adalbert's dream possible; under the new system, the Mariniere (later See-Bataillon) could be trained as infantrymen. The Matrosen-Abtheilung (later Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung) was able to take special artillery and technical training which would eventually turn it into a crack defense force. According to the AKO, the Mariniere were to be composed exclusively of army regulars, while the Matrosen-Abtheilung, which would see more shipboard duty, was to be a corps of specially trained seamen and volunteers. This division which placed the artillery troops within the sphere of naval command and left the infantry troops in a vague limbo between the navy and the army, would have important consequences for the later development of the corps as a whole.¹³

The AKO of December 23 also changed the uniform regulations of the corps. Until 1849, all the Garde-Mariniere wore a dark blue, military style uniform with army insignia. After the division, the Matrosen-Abtheilung adopted a red tunic, similar to that of the land artillery and the Mariniere opted for the dark blue uniforms of the infantry.¹⁴

The increased weaponry training which the Matrosen-Abtheilung received after 1849 had an important effect on the personnel of the Prussian army. Until that time, it had been necessary to station a small detachment of land troops with the navy, so that trained military personnel would be on hand to spearhead amphibious assaults or landing expeditions. However the increased artillery expertise of the Matrosen-Abtheilung meant that this detachment -- which usually numbered between 125 and 150 men -- could be returned to active land service. As the existence of the force had often posed a problem in army-navy relations, its dissolution meant that a more co-operative modus vivendi between the two services could once more be established.¹⁵

Within a year of the division, Prince Adalbert attempted to re-organize both sections of the corps along the most contemporary military lines. To that end, a Matrosen-Stamm-Division¹⁶ was established and the army code of discipline was introduced in full:

Das Marinierkorps soll gleich der Armee seinen Bestand durch Ersatzmannschaften zu bestimmten Einstellungsterminen decken und so sich durch herangebildete Reserve -- I. Seewehrmannschaften den Bedarf fuer etwaigen Kriegszustand heranbilden.¹⁷

In conjunction with these improvements, a recruitment drive was initiated. According to the figures of the Personal-Etat of 1849, the two companies which made up the combined Marinier-Korps consisted of the following:¹⁸

1	Staff Officer
1	Adjutant
1	Paymaster
1	Clerk
2	Captains
2	1st lieutenants
4	2nd "
2	Sergeants-Major
8	Sergeants
10	Corporals
40	<u>Gefreite</u>
10	<u>Musicians</u>
2	Medical Assistants
260	Privates

By the end of 1850, the original two companies of the corps had become four; three of Mariniere and one Matrosen-Abtheilung. In addition, the newly-created Matrosen-Stamm-Division had just begun its first training programme for recruits. Thus within one year, the numbers of the corps had trebled: unfortunately, this rapid expansion was not without serious problems. It proved difficult to attract a sufficient number of good officers to the corps during these early years¹⁹ and the administration of day-to-day affairs was jeopardized by the terms of the 1849 division. For this reason, two companies of the corps were dissolved in 1851 and troop numbers were reduced from 1002 to the original 350 of 1849.²⁰

Throughout this troubled period, the Matrosen-Abtheilung and the Mariniere continued to grow farther apart. Their training, their uniforms and their traditions were dissimilar. While the Matrosen-Abtheilung became more closely involved with navy life, the Mariniere remained essentially an army unit. This basic difference was reinforced by an AKO of December 3, 1850:

...dass das Marinierkorps, nachdem es mobil gemacht, dem Koeniglichen General-Kommando des Gardekorps ueberwiesen werden, und zur Disposition desselben verbleiben sollte.²¹

Thus by 1851 the beginnings of a permanent Prussian marine corps had firmly taken root. Reduced in size so that administrative and supervisory problems could be solved, the corps was divided into an infantry and artillery section fulfilling both the defensive and the offensive roles which were the requirements of the growing Prussian navy.

Footnotes

1. Sandhofer, Die Koeniglichen Marinieren, unpublished MS by the Oberarchivrat of the BAMA, cited by kind permission of the author (MS is unpaginated).
2. Prittwitz und Gaffron, Die Geschichte des I. See-Bataillons, p. 3.
3. Sandhofer.
4. Prittwitz, p. 4.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Sandhofer.
8. Prittwitz, p. 5.
9. Sandhofer.
10. Prittwitz, p. 5.
11. Sandhofer.
12. Prittwitz, p. 6.
13. Heye, Die Marine-Infanterie, p. 8.
14. Sandhofer.
15. Prittwitz, p. 6.
16. Heye, p. 10.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Vide Chapter Three, "The Prussian Marine Corps in the Years before the Reichsgruendung", for an explanation of the officer problem.
20. Prittwitz, p. 5.

21. Heye, p. 12. The eventual results of the order can be traced in the movements of the Marine-Infanterie-Regimenter in World War One. At the time of mobilization, these regiments were assigned to the authority of the General Staff and were sent to Flanders. There, their ferocity and skill won them the sobriquet of Schwarze Jaeger. However, there are many who feel that this assignment was a grave miscalculation. Although there seemed to be too many naval and coastal defense troops in 1914, by 1917 this was no longer the case. It was unfortunate that the Marine-Infanterie was unable to fulfill this needed function for which it had been so thoroughly trained.

Chapter Three

The Prussian Marine Corps in the Years before the Reichsgründung: 1852-1871

By 1852 the Mariniere were well established at their garrison in Stettin and were training according to the latest infantry methods. However the facilities at Stettin did not allow much room for expansion and the corps was once again sorely pressed for space. For this reason the garrison was transferred to Swinemünde on May 1, 1852. At the same time, Major von Gaede retired from active service and was replaced by Major Burkhardt as commanding officer.¹ Barely thirteen days later, the Mariniere were given a new official title: in this way, a complete and lasting break with the Matrosen-Abtheilung (artillery) could be achieved.

Ich habe beschlossen, dem bisherigen Marinierkorps fortan die Benennung "See-Bataillon", den Marinieren aber die Benennung "Seesoldaten" beizulegen und gebe Ihnen behufs der Ausführung dieser Meiner Ordre die noethige Bekanntmachung anheim.²

In the same year, the newly-christened Seesoldaten saw their first action overseas. Two small detachments, stationed aboard the Gefion and the Amazone, voyaged to Liberia and thence to South America. During this voyage, the Seesoldaten manned batteries and took all watches and weaponry posts.³ This expedition provided the See-Bataillon with its first extended taste of shipboard life and despite the rigorous discipline and training,⁴ the men reacted to the conditions with "unbounded" enthusiasm.⁵

The early 1850s witnessed the rapid expansion of the Prussian navy. After the navy acquired the larger warships -- the Danzig, the Gefion and the Barbarossa -- both the Matrosen and the Seesoldaten began to play a more regular and a more vital role in shipboard manoeuvres.⁶

This expanded role necessitated an increase in the strength of both the See-Bataillon and the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung. On June 26, 1853 a third company of Seesoldaten was established and the peacetime strength of each company was raised from 125 to 150.⁷ In 1853 the combined strength of both divisions was 450: of this, approximately one-quarter was permanently stationed aboard His Majesty's ships.⁸

Unfortunately, the 1849 division of the Mariniere into Matrosen and Mariniere (after 1852, Seesoldaten) did not work out in practice as successfully as it did in theory. Thus the first company of Matrosen still contained a good number of infantrymen who had little inclination or aptitude for their artillery duties.⁹ After several weeks of careful study, Major Burkhardt concluded that the first company of the Matrosen should be transferred to Danzig where excellent infantry facilities existed. This was done on April 7, 1854. In their new garrison, the first company quickly assumed all infantry posts and stations.¹⁰ In order to insure that the division of 1849 would be completely successful, an AKO of July 7, 1854 laid down a new Organisationsreglement the terms of which gave the See-Bataillon and the first company of the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung a joint infantry troop status.¹¹

Das See-Bataillon ist eine Infanterie-Truppe, vorzugsweise bestimmt zum Garnisondienste an Bord S. M. Schiffe und in den See-Etablissements, zu Landungen und zum Dienst auf den Flotillen.¹²

The Reglement also outlined the conditions for promotion and advancement within the See-Bataillon and established the authority of military codes:

Auf dasselbe finden, soweit nicht ein Anders bestimmt ist, die fuer die Infanterie der Landarmee geltende Dienst-und Ausbildungsregeln...¹³

Despite the military flavour of the Reglement, an attempt was made to provide the Seesoldaten with some basic knowledge of naval procedure. Before a private could hope for promotion, he had to serve a minimum of three months on a warship and he had to furnish a certificate from his commanding officer attesting to his good conduct and familiarity with naval drills.¹⁴

In April 1856 Prince Adalbert himself turned his attention to the duties and training of the See-Bataillon ashore. In a memorandum to the commander of the See-Bataillon division at Stralsund he wrote:

Der Hauptzweck der nach Stralsund kommandirten Seesoldaten Detachements ist die Bewahrung des bei dem dortigen Marine-Depot befindlichen Koeniglichen Eigentums.

..Der Detachementfuehrer ist verpflichtet,

1. Den Anforderungen des Depot-Direktors wegen Uebernahme militaerischer Funktionen, als z.B. Aussicht beim Pulvermagazinen, beim Anfertigen von Munitionen usw., wegzulegen, (SIC)

2. Gemeinschaftlich mit den anderen, zu Stralsund kommandirten juengeren Offizieren der Koeniglichen Marine den "du jour" Dienst durch Revision der Wachen und Posten auf der Werft zu uebernehmen.¹⁵

Further, the detachment was made responsible for fire-fighting and security of all naval installations at the port.¹⁶

On August 7, 1856 the See-Bataillon participated in its first amphibious landing. This escapade, in which the doughty Prince Adalbert was himself wounded, won acclaim for the Seesoldaten throughout Europe. The famous remark of a French admiral that only the Prussians could have staged a successful landing at Cap Tres Forcas¹⁷ was a constant source of pride for the battalion in the same way that Seymour's "Germans to the front" became a rallying-cry in 1900.¹⁸ The popular and charismatic Adalbert, who seems to have known how to foster unity and esprit de corps within his troops, made sure that August 7 would long remain a holiday and day of remembrance within the See-Bataillon.¹⁹

Despite the early organizational problems of the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung, its growth continued at a slow, but steady pace. In 1854 the Matrosen had a strength of barely 150 men: in two years that number doubled²⁰ and it became imperative that the force have an organizational code and training programme of its own.

Although much of the Organisationsreglement of 1856 has been lost, it seems evident from the remaining fragments that its character was similar to the Reglement of April 18, 1862. In this document, the duties of the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung (now often referred to as See-Artillerie) were precisely outlined:

Die See-Artillerie ist bestimmt zur Vertheidigung der Hafen- und Kuestenbefestigungen und zur Ausfuehrung der artilleristischen Arbeiten der Werften und der Marine Depots.

Ihre Ausbildung ist daher derselben (SIC) Weise und Ausdehnung zu bewachen, wie die der Festungs-Artillerie der Landarmee.²¹

Although the Reglement clearly proscribed shipboard training for the See-Artillerie, the later version of 1862 encouraged such contacts.²² Further, in order to help acquaint the two companies of the See-Artillerie with coastal defense drills, each company was assigned a "parent" regiment in the land army with whom it would train:

Zu dieser Behufe tritt die I. See-Artillerie-Kompagnie mit der I. Festungs-Artillerie-Abtheilung der Ostpreussen-, die 2. See-Artillerie-Kompagnie mit der Festungs-Artillerie-Abtheilung der Pommerschen Artillerie Brigade auf nachfolgende Ort (SIC) in Verbindung.²³

Although the Reglement of 1862 did resolve many of the training problems which the See-Artillerie faced, it created many more difficulties which proved impossible to handle. By assigning each company to a sponsor land regiment, the Reglement seriously limited the mobility of the See-Artillerie. In the event that strategic or personnel changes would dictate a change of garrison, the joint artillery exercises would be hard to schedule.²⁴ In addition, the extra artillery training which the Reglement recommended was costly both in terms of weapons/munitions and officer man-hours. There were many in the Prussian army²⁵ who felt that this type of training was superfluous and that the tasks assigned to the See-Artillerie could be better carried out by the appropriate regiments of the land artillery.

Many officers of the See-Artillerie believed that such close contact between their men and the soldiers of the land army would inevitably lead to a breakdown of corps tradition and discipline.²⁶ Despite strong agitation from all sides to obtain a clear ruling on the joint exercise programme, the situation continued until 1867. In that year, a new Reglement finally resolved the problem to the satisfaction of corps officers:

Durch das vorstehend angegebene Verhaeltniss der See-Artillerie und der Festungs-Artillerie soll die Selbststaendigkeit der See-Artillerie und die voellig freie Verfuegung ueber selbige seitens der Marine-Behoerden, in KEINER Weise beschraenkt werden.²⁷

However, there was a more serious problem which plagued both the See-Artillerie and the See-Bataillon during these years. As the officer corps for both divisions was mostly chosen from the land army and was assigned to duty with either group, difficulties often arose when career officers completed their term with the marine corps and returned to the army. Robbed of important chances to serve in the field and rarely able to win promotion within the small ranks of the marine officer corps, these officers were often too old to receive substantial promotion by the time they returned to active land service. Not unnaturally, this difficulty did little to encourage high-calibre career officers to volunteer for service with either unit. In 1859²⁸ and 1860²⁹ attempts were made to find an equitable compromise so that the careers of corps officers would not be jeopardized. Unfortunately, neither the solution of 1859 nor that of 1860 proved effective. On the advice of the commanding officer, Major Burkhardt, a third compromise was adopted on July 31, 1864. According to the terms of the provision, no officer could be accepted for service with the marine corps unless he had completed a requisite number of years in the field. Burkhardt believed that by requiring each officer candidate to serve a minimum of three years in the field, he could insure that all avenues of promotion would remain open to the individual when he returned to duty with the army.³⁰ This solution was a good one and within a few years of its institution, the serious lack of competent officers for both divisions was made good.

Despite the gravity of this and other problems,³¹ the strength of both the See-Artillerie and the See-Bataillon continued to grow during these years. As long as the corps furnished detachments of men for shipboard duty, expansion in the navy led to automatic increments in corps personnel. For this reason, a fourth company of the See-Bataillon was established in June 1859³² and in August of that year each of the two companies of See-Artillerie was enlarged by 10 to 12%.³³

The major military and political upheavals which accompanied the army reform movement of 1861 played little or no role in the development of either the See-Bataillon or the See-Artillerie. Growth in both units was tightly controlled and was geared to expansion in the navy; not in the army. Thus the number of recruits to either marine unit who would have had first-hand experience with the "new" Prussian army after 1861/2 never rose higher than 10%. In the long term, the officer which was produced by the reformed Prussian army proved exactly equal to the demands of the marine units: flexible, independent and innovative, the new breed of Prussian officers seemed almost tailor-made to assume command of the Seesoldaten.

In 1864 100 men from both divisions of the corps accompanied a navy/commerce expedition to the Far East.³⁴ This successful mission, which resulted in the acquisition of trading rights at various Japanese ports, was followed in 1867 by a six-month cruise of the Mediterranean. Although only 34 Seesoldaten were chosen to take part in this expedition, it was as successful as its predecessor.³⁵ To the lasting regret of the entire corps, neither division saw much action during the Danish War. At the time of mobilization, almost 1000 men were massed in a unit which combined both Seesoldaten and Matrosen. About 400 members of this force were stationed aboard the Arcona, the Nymphe and the Loreley. This squadron did not win a decisive victory against the Danish at Jasmund, but their brave attempt to defend Prussia's Baltic coast was nothing if not a moral triumph.³⁶ Other smaller detachments, active in the campaigns of Heligoland and Dornbusch, fought equally well.³⁷

Although the 1000-man force was quickly reduced to its pre-war size after the end of hostilities, the corps was singled out by King William for special praise and recognition:

Meine neugegruendete Flotte hat sich der Landtruppe (SIC) wuerdigst angeschlossen und zaehlte in ihrem Erstkampfe nicht die Zahl der Feinde.³⁸

A bare two years later, the marine corps was again hurriedly mobilized to prepare for war -- this time, against their long-time ally Austria. The brevity of the conflict was a major reason why fewer than 100 men from the combined corps saw action. However, the "war scare" mentality which prevailed at the time of mobilization was responsible for some administrative changes and improvements after the cessation of hostilities. The annual exercise programme of the See-Artillerie was reassessed and better co-ordinated³⁹ and the small detachment of artillerymen still attached to the See-Bataillon was finally incorporated into the See-Artillerie.⁴⁰

With the changes which had been made to the See-Artillerie organization in the weeks following the Austro-Prussian War, the force was able to make an impressive showing in the spring manoeuvres of 1867. After the end of the exercises, the commanding officer of the Danzig and Stralsund Detachment filed a perceptive report with his superiors. In his study, he concluded that the See-Artillerie had more than filled the expectations of its senior officers.

Die I. See-Artillerie-Kompagnie befindet sich in beiden Garnisonen in einem guten Zustande, die kleinen Maengel an Offizieren werden leicht zu beseitigen sein...⁴¹

On the basis of the exercise performance, Commander Daelitz also suggested a change in the training schedule of the See-Artillerie:

...dass es verfuegt werden moechte, die See-Artillerie-Kompagnie nur an drei Tagen der Woche zur Arbeit heranzuziehen, um die anderen drei Tagen ungestoert zu den Uebungen verwenden zu koennen.⁴²

An AKO of October 7, 1869 raised the See-Bataillon to a fifth company of 167 men.⁴³ This increase in personnel meant that corps duties could be re-assigned on a more equitable basis. As a result, shipboard detachments were expected to serve shorter periods at sea. In theory, the increased number of shipboard expeditions would more than compensate for this: in practice, this move tended to remove the Seesoldaten ever farther from nautical experience.⁴⁴

Much to the advantage of Prussia, the campaigns of the Franco-Prussian War were all on land. At this period, the French fleet far outclassed the Prussian and it is doubtful whether the Prussian navy could have survived a major defeat at the hands of the French. Because the navy remained in German ports for the duration of the war, the 1200 men of the combined marine corps had no opportunity to get involved in the fighting except in coastal defense projects undertaken for precautionary reasons. Two small detachments of Seesoldaten (in total, less than thirty men) were stationed onboard the Nymphe and the Augusta. Both of these ships had the luck to encounter French merchant vessels shortly after the outbreak of war: thus the Seesoldaten were responsible for the seizure and protection of the captured French property until the tiny convoy reached Germany once more.⁴⁵

Footnotes

1. AKO of May 7, 1852, N 1712A, RM1/v. 691, BAMA.
2. Prittwitz, p. 10.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Sandhofer.
6. Heye, p. 26.
7. AKO of June 26, 1853, I 675, RM1/v. 698, BAMA.
8. Prittwitz, p. 10.
9. Heye, p. 34.
10. Ibid.
11. To add further confusion to the question of organization, a small detachment of the SB continued to fill artillery functions within the essentially infantry-oriented SB until 1857. From 1857 to 1867 this small detachment had a quasi-independent status between the SB and the SA. In January 1867, this detachment (which was usually referred to as the See-Artillerie-Kompagnie without the prefacing numbers of the two companies of SA) was officially joined to the See-Artillerie proper. Vide Figure One.
12. Organisationsreglement of March 23, 1854, Section Four, "See-Bataillon", without acquisition number, RM1/v. 2781, BAMA.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. April 5, 1856, Prince Adalbert -- Instruktionen fuer den Fuehrer der zu Stralsund stationirten Seesoldaten, IX. 3.i.4, RM1/v. 2778, BAMA.
16. Ibid.
17. Prittwitz, p. 12.
18. Vide Schlieper, Meine Kriegserlebnisse in China, and Chapter Nine.

19. Until recently, it was assumed that the personal and public papers of Prince Adalbert had been lost during the Second World War. However, a mis-catalogued box was discovered in September, 1976 in the BAMA which was found to contain virtually all of the Prince's papers. It is hoped that this material will soon become available for research purposes.
20. Personal-Etat-See-Artillerie, June 22, 1857, adIII. 1835, RMT/v. 700, BAMA.
21. Reglement betreffend die See-Artillerie, April 18, 1862, 2087, ad 490, RMT/v. 702, BAMA.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Promemoria, January 10, 1860, 148 IX, RMT/v. 703, BAMA.
25. Promemoria betreffend Verbindung der beiden S-A-K mit der Feld-Artillerie, 2042, April 15, 1862, RMT/v. 702, BAMA and Reglement betreffend die Ausbildung der See-Artillerie, signed von Roon, April 14, 1862, ad 852, RMT/v. 2778, BAMA.
26. Bemerkungen der 2. Abthlg. ueber d. Notwendigkeit und d. Nutzen einer S-A-K, signed Scheuerlein, May 21, 1856, RMT/v. 701, BAMA.
27. Reglement, signed v. Roon, April 16, 1867, without acquisition number, RMT/v. 703, BAMA.
28. Vide E.T.O.1478, September 13, 1859 "an den Kommando der Marine/Ostsee-Station", RMT/v. 697, BAMA.
29. E.T.O.14771, October 29, 1860, RMT/v. 697, BAMA, and E.T.O. 14771a, Giersberg to the See-Bataillon, October 25, 1860, RMT/v. 697, BAMA. An interesting examination of the problem from a young officer who himself experienced promotional difficulties is contained in I. N. 730, Strachwitz to Oberkommando, Juli ?, 1861, RMT/v. 697, BAMA.
30. Organisationsreglement fuer d. See-Bataillon, July 31, 1864, without acquisition number, RMT/v. 2779, BAMA.
31. Prittwitz, p. 20.
32. Personal-Etat of May 31, 1859, Z. 560 I., RMT/v. 697, BAMA.

33. April 27, 1858, Strehwle to the Marineministerium, I. 675, RM1/v. 698, BAMA.
34. Prittwitz, p. 17.
35. Ibid.
36. Hansen, The Ships of the German Fleets, p. 47.
37. Prittwitz, p. 17 and Heye, P. 54.
38. Prittwitz, p. 36.
39. Uebungsberichte der See-Artillerie, August 1866, 2176, RM1/v. 706, BAMA.
40. Vide footnote eleven.
41. Daelitz to Oberkommando, Kiel, April 27, 1867, zu 2176, RM1/v. 706, BAMA.
42. Ibid.
43. AKO, October 7, 1869, zu 2096, I, RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
44. Ibid.
45. Hansen, p. 54.

Chapter Four

The German Marine Corps: 1871-1888

The seventeen-year period between 1871 and 1888 may be numbered among the most productive in the history of both the See-Artillerie and the See-Bataillon. In this relatively stable era, both branches of the corps were able to expand rapidly in their separate directions. However, a steady programme of joint exercises and manoeuvres,¹ coupled with naval insistence that each branch have at least a basic knowledge of the skills and duties of the other,² meant that the two segments of the corps maintained strong ties -- both on the emotional and on the practical level. These bonds, which served to keep united two forces which were fast developing into separate branches of the naval service, were accentuated by the practice of assigning an almost equal number of Matrosen and Seesoldaten to serve in shipboard detachments.³

After 1871, the ranks of the See-Bataillon began to grow rapidly. Between 1871 and 1873 the ranks of the Seesoldaten increased some 10-12%⁴ and again the battalion was faced with the old problem of overcrowded facilities. This time, the problem was particularly acute, as projected figures for the 1873-1877 period showed an annual expansion rate of between 10 and 15%.⁵ For this reason, construction was begun on a new garrison and training camp at Wilhelmshaven in 1872/3.

During the same period, the ranks of the See-Artillerie more than doubled. From the permanent re-establishment of the corps in 1848, the See-Artillerie had remained from between one-sixth to one-quarter of the size of its brother division. This difference was substantially reduced in two massive recruitment drives in 1871/2 and 1872/3. By December of 1873, the See-Artillerie was at a peacetime strength of just over 25% of that of the See-Bataillon⁶ and this gap was further narrowed by campaigns in 1874 and 1876.⁷

There were several reasons for this rapid growth. With the establishment of the Reich in 1871, Germany began to play an increasing role in world affairs. Both pride and practicality dictated that the new Reich have at its disposal an elite force which could be deployed at home and abroad. In addition to this, a board of inquiry in 1872 finally sorted out the lingering promotional problems which had plagued the See-Artillerie officer cadre from 1848. With the standardization of officer ranking within the corps, it became easier to attract officer candidates to the unit.⁸ Finally, the new constructions at Wilhelmshaven allowed advanced instruction in gunnery/arms training and complex exercises: this dramatically increased the competency of the corps as a whole and thus, expanded its usefulness.⁹

The overnight expansion of both sections of the corps sparked some controversy as to whether the entire service should not in fact be reduced to a skeletal minimum in peacetime. In order to fairly evaluate the situation, the Marineministerium initiated two studies on the use of See-Artillerie units. The stated purpose of these investigations was to determine whether the peacetime duties of the corps were sufficient to merit its continuance. The second study included a comprehensive examination of the officer corps of the See-Artillerie and assessed its changing role in peace.¹⁰

The commission spent two years observing the Matrosen in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven and concluded that the See-Artillerie had a major role to play as firefighting units, as wharf and ship guards, as weaponry technicians and as coastal defense detachments. The report noted that there was already a serious lack of such trained personnel within the imperial navy and that therefore the eight companies of See-Artillerie ought to be expanded to sixteen.¹¹ The results of the officer corps study were similar. The commission suggested that immediate attempts be made to increase officer ranks and to provide more specialized training for all officers and officer candidates.¹²

During the early 1870s, new developments in ship design and weaponry meant that detachments of Seesoldaten were no longer a necessary part of a warship's fighting complement. However, the size of these detachments was increased, not diminished, during this period.¹³ On all ships of the Korvetten-class and above, detachments of Seesoldaten and Matrosen were included in the sailing party as expeditionary or landing forces. As their deployment on board was severely curbed by technological advance, an entirely new programme of exercises and duties was devised for them. This included gymnastics, swimming instruction, rowing and theoretical instruction in geography and tactics.¹⁴ If the goal of the expedition was primarily scientific, the detachment would be taught the rudiments of botany, zoology or geology, in order to assist with specimen collection, etc.¹⁵ In addition, the detachment continued to be responsible for all security on board: maintenance of military watches, brig duty, supervision of cargo and prisoners, and firewatch.¹⁶

Operating under stable conditions for perhaps the first time in their history, both sections of the marine corps began to take an active interest in their origins and their future. In 1877/8, a commission of senior See-Bataillon officers undertook an exhaustive, year-long study of the corps. The proposals of this commission were adopted almost wholesale by the Marineministerium.¹⁷ Henceforth, Seesoldaten were to have increased training in artillery procedures. This knowledge would allow the See-Bataillon to play a greater role in home defense and in expeditionary forces operating overseas.¹⁸ In the event that the artillerymen attached to the overseas detachments became ill or wounded, the Seesoldaten would be able to function more efficiently by manning the posts which their See-Artillerie comrades had been forced to vacate. To this end, each officer of the See-Bataillon was assigned in rotation to a month-long training course in artillery practice and one half-day per week was allotted for weaponry drill.¹⁹ Despite the maritime orientation of this training; i.e., coastal defense and naval gunnery, these courses were made possible by arrangement with the Prussian land artillery. The officers were billeted at military academies and were taught by army instructors for the duration of their training.²⁰

The spirit of optimism which had prevailed in the marine corps after the Reichsgruendung was abruptly shattered after 1878. During the month of May, two major naval disasters rocked the Kaiserliche Marine and stunned all personnel. Both incidents involved two relatively new ships. During the summer of 1878, the Koenig Wilhelm and the Grosser Kurfuerst both participated in formation exercises in the English Channel. Unfortunately, the ships collided head-on and in the ensuing commotion, both sank with all hands. The loss of life was enormous and the general shock was exacerbated by the knowledge that human negligence had caused both the collision and the bungled rescue. This disaster marked the first time that the marine corps had experienced a serious loss of personnel and the blow helped to renew the bonds between the See-Artillerie and the See-Bataillon. In the months after the tragedy, both sections of the corps established permanent memorial funds and widows' pensions for the survivors of their fallen comrades. The contributions proved so large -- both from the men themselves and from concerned civilians -- that a permanent charitable fund was established which supplemented that provided by the navy.²¹

In 1883, some sixty years after the Mariniere had begun their timid revival of marine corps tradition in Prussia, the See-Bataillon was finally presented with its own colours. This was an important occasion which placed emphasis on history and tradition: March 6, 1883 is still an anniversary celebrated by the few remaining survivors of the pre-1914 corps. In his speech to the massed companies of the See-Bataillon, Emperor Wilhelm commended the corps for its tradition of bravery:

Ich habe beschlossen, meinem im Jahre 1852 errichteten See-Bataillon nunmehr eine Fahne zu verleihen. Ich erwarte zuversichtlich, dass dasselbe dieses, von Mir anvertraute Feldzeichen unverbruechlich in Ehren halten und allezeit zu seinem und der ganzen Marine Ruhm und zum Wohle des Vaterlandes fuehren werde.²²

Once the See-Bataillon was in possession of its own colours, many members of various German and foreign princely houses were installed as honorary members of the officer corps: the official annals of the 1880s are replete with interminable accounts of such ceremonies.²³ This phenomenon was of more than merely social importance. Despite the well-earned reputation of the See-Bataillon and the high calibre of officers which it was able to attract, the "legitimation" of the corps by the royal personages gave the See-Bataillon increasing prestige and made the choice of a career with the marines an honourable alternative.²⁴ The most august personage ever to be so honoured by the Seesoldaten was undoubtedly the future Wilhelm II. In early June 1887, the ebullient Heir Apparent spent a two-day visit with the corps in Wilhelmshaven. Shortly after his return to Berlin, the extravagant Prince wrote a thank-you note to the Battalion Commander in his usual enthusiastic style:

Bin unnenndbar (SIC) gluecklich und dankbar, durch die Gnade S.M. Ihrem schoenen Korps anzugehoeren. Der so herrliche Tag wird fuer mein Leben mir unvergesslich bleiben. Bitte den Kameraden des Bataillons meine herzlichsten Gruesse zu uebermitteln.²⁵

On April 30, 1886, the fourth company of the See-Bataillon -- previously stationed at Kiel -- was transferred to Wilhelmshaven.²⁶ The duties of the Seesoldaten in Kiel were assumed by the expanded See-Artillerie and it was thus no longer a necessity to deploy a See-Bataillon company as guards and clerks in the port city. By bringing all members of the infantry unit to Wilhelmshaven, the Marineministerium hoped to consolidate and standardize all training procedures. They also hoped to make mobilization speedier and less costly.²⁷ However by transferring the fourth company from Kiel, where it had worked with the See-Artillerie, the Marineministerium removed yet another avenue of contact between the corps branches and fostered the evolution of two independent services. The programme of reciprocity in training meant that the necessity of joint deployment all but disappeared.

The massed companies of the See-Bataillon did not remain long in Wilhelmshaven; the ever-increasing size of the battalion made a major organizational overhaul imperative. From the early 1870s it had been an open secret that many members of the See-Bataillon were quietly lobbying for the establishment of a second battalion of marine infantry. During the two months that the six companies had been stationed together in Wilhelmshaven, the drain on medical, training and recreational facilities was critical. In June of 1886 the corps began to examine seriously the possibility of a trial division into two "half-battalions": this being the first step to the eventual establishment of a second, independent battalion of Seesoldaten.²⁸

On October 1, 1886, the See-Bataillon was officially split in half. The first half-battalion -- consisting of the first, second and fourth companies -- was sent to Kiel; the second -- consisting of the third, fifth and sixth companies -- remained in Wilhelmshaven. In the AKO which ordained the division, it was evident that the Marineministerium viewed this measure as purely temporary, and that two independent battalions would soon be established:

Der Fuehrer des 2. Halbbataillons hat die Befugnisse und Pflichten eines selbstaendigen Bataillons Kommandeurs und erhaelt die in Par. 10. der Disziplinar-Strafordnung vorgesehene Strafberechtigung.²⁹

..Der Fuehrer verkehrt in allen Mobilmachungs- und rein lokalen Sachen direkt mit dem Kommando der Marine Station der Nordsee.³⁰

This division was not accomplished without some difficulty. The establishment of a second garrison for the corps in Kiel was costly and it proved complicated to provide adequate medical treatment there during the first months.³¹ The choice of a commander for the second half-battalion was also difficult. Although in theory an independent commander, the ideal candidate had to be able to work closely with the senior commander (first half-battalion) until the projected establishment of a completely autonomous second battalion could be assured.³²

However, this division necessitated the doubling of Seesoldaten ranks over the next decade and made possible the permanent establishment of marine corps services -- wharf duty, clerical functions, etc. -- in all port cities of the Reich.

Die grosse räumliche Trennung der Garnisonen und die bisherige Selbstständigkeit der einzelnen Kompagnien in Wilhelmshaven, lässt es für den Mobilmachungsfall, sowie für gewisse Friedens-Dienstzweige, wie namentlich Mobilmachungsvereinigungen, schriftlicher Geschäfts-Verkehr, Bekleidungswesen und Garnisondienstangelegenheiten, dringend wünschenswert erscheinen, den in Wilhelmshafen stehenden Theilen des See-Bataillons eine gemeinsame Aufgabe (SIC) zu geben und haben Eurer Excellenz demgemäss die Theilung des See-Bataillons in zwei Halbbataillone zum 1. Oktober d.J. in Aussicht genommen.³³

On March 12, 1889, the second See-Bataillon was formally recognized and scarcely one month later, received its own colours.³⁴

The middle years of the 1880s saw many changes in the organization of the See-Artillerie. On the basis of an extensive report by Major Stallen, the Commander of the See-Artillerie, several important changes were made in exercise and drilling procedures for the Matrosen. The newly-reconstituted Inspektion der Marine-Artillerie was made responsible for development within the See-Artillerie, the Torpedowesen, the Torpedo-Depots and the Minenwesen. This was to insure greater uniformity in training and deployment.³⁵ In addition, all divisions of the above which were stationed on either the Baltic or the North Seas, were given greater autonomy and more responsibilities.³⁶ All members of the artillery and ordinance divisions were henceforth to pass twice-yearly gunnery examinations. A yearly exercise, involving all the personnel placed under the jurisdiction of the Inspektion, was initiated.³⁷ At the same time, precautions were taken so that the many branches of the naval artillery taking part in such exercises would have a clearly-defined chain-of-command pattern to follow.

The results of this programme were immediate. By 1888, Tirpitz and a commission of officers from the torpedo division suggested that a new allocation of See-Artillerie and mining personnel be arranged. This request was granted on March 14, 1888:³⁸

Mit Beginn des Etatjahres (SIC) 1888/9 werden die bezueglichen Etatsstellen (SIC) auf die beiden Marinestationen wie folgt vertheilt --

	<u>Ostsee</u>	<u>Nordsee</u>
Maschineningenieure	24	25
Torpedoringenieure	9	(1)

Thus by the end of the 1880s both the See-Artillerie and the See-Bataillon were well established as vital and independent forces. Although technological advance (notably in ship and weaponry design) had rendered detachments of marine troops obsolete as an on board fighting force, the expanded goals of the German navy and the extreme flexibility of the marine corps made possible the deployment of such detachments as guards, assault teams and firefighters. The assistance rendered by these units to German scientific missions was also invaluable. In addition, both divisions of the corps filled a number of important duties on shore, ranging from clerical to highly technical.

During this period the artillery and infantry tendencies of the corps began to diverge significantly, but the practice of joint exercises and the tradition of reciprocal training helped to foster the flickering spirit of unity and harmony between the two groups. These contacts were also facilitated by the often crowded installations of each group: medical facilities, classrooms and drill yards were shared by both groups and this engendered a continuance of the old esprit de corps which had been the hallmark of the corps before 1848.³⁹

By the end of the 1880s, both sections of the corps had successfully solved the last problems of officer ranking and promotion.

This made it easier to attract top candidates for officer training. The liberal attitude of the See-Artillerie in recognizing a special cadre of technical personnel and artificers insured that the force would attract trained technicians of the highest order. The ability of the See-Bataillon to insure land infantry officers all advantages of promotion and advancement made possible the rapid expansion of the officer corps of the battalion.

Thus the corps of 1888 -- though basically two independent units in all but name -- was able to retain some measure of internal cohesion and co-ordination. With standardization of training for both groups, it became possible to expand the duties of the corps as a whole. The rapid growth of naval installations and services provided a new and challenging outlet for corps talent. In less than a decade, the See-Artillerie responded so well to this challenge that it was termed "indispensable"⁴⁰ at navy dockyards and wharves.

Unfortunately, within a few months, events would serve to erode the high degree of excellence and enthusiasm which the 1880s had so patiently nurtured.

Footnotes

1. Prittwitz, p. 34 and June 18, 1872, Organisationsreglement, RM1/v. 2785, BAMA (unnumbered).
2. Berlin, January 1, 1874, Personal Etat -- 1874, A. 3079, RM3/v. 699, BAMA.
3. Ibid., and Prittwitz, p. 44.
4. Berlin, June 30, 1871, Militaer-Personal Etat, (unnumbered), RM3/v. 699, BAMA.
5. Ibid.
6. Berlin, January 16, 1872, Etat -- 1873/fuer d. See-Artillerie, (unnumbered), RM1/v. 705, BAMA.
7. Ibid.
8. This problem was similar to that which had plagued the SB at an earlier period. Because the SA required technicians and machinists who were masters of their craft, it was difficult to place these skilled men in equitable ranks. As the in-service training of these technicians was continued and encouraged, it became difficult to arrange promotions. So that non-skilled members of the SA could be assessed in relation to their more highly-trained comrades and so that the abilities of the technicians could be suitably rewarded, a special intermediate rank was established for all certified technical personnel. This rank, which was equivalent to NCO, was distinguished by special armbands and badges. Special mess privileges were also arranged.
9. Prittwitz, p. 40.
10. Kiel, January 16, 1872, Bericht ueber den Bedarf an See-Artillerie Mannschaften, 731, RM1/v. 705, BAMA and Kiel, July 17, 1874, Die See-Artillerie-Offizier-Korps, 37691, RM1/v. 705, BAMA.
11. Kiel, January 16, 1872, Bericht..., 741, RM1/v. 705, BAMA.
12. Kiel, July 17, 1874, Die See-Artillerie..., 37691, RM1/v. 705, BAMA.
13. Prittwitz, p. 43.
14. Prittwitz, P. 44.

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pp. 44-48.
18. Ibid.
19. Compare this with the recommendations of Strachwitz, Promemoria, January 10, 1866, 148 X, RM1/v. 703, BAMA.
20. Prittwitz, p. 44.
21. Ibid., p. 46 and Hansen, The Ships of the German Fleets, p. 63.
22. Prittwitz, p. 46.
23. Ibid., p. 47, 49, 54, etc.
24. This was especially true since the amelioration of the officer promotion problem in the SB in 1864. Vide footnotes 29 and 30 of Chapter Three.
25. Prittwitz, p. 51.
26. AKO, September 3, 1886, (unnumbered) RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
27. Ibid.
28. Berlin, October 1, 1886, AKO and accompanying Militaer-Personal-Etat, A. 5874, RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
29. Undated Vorschlaege ueber die Stellung d. am 1. Okt. zu bildenden 2. Halbbataillone des See-Bataillon, signed von Roques, A. 5614, RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., and unsigned Promemoria of September 3, 1886, RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
32. Undated Vorschlaege..., signed von Roques, A. 5614, RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
33. Berlin, September 3, 1886, Promemoria, signed von Senden RM1/v. 699, BAMA.
34. Prittwitz, p. 53.

35. Kiel, December 8, 1884, Bemerkungen, signed von Stallen, A. 6902, RM1/v. 2787, BAMA.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Berlin, March 14, 1888, AKO, zu N. 367, RM1/v. 2788, BAMA.
39. Prittwitz, p. 55.
40. Kiel, January 16, 1872, Bericht..., 741, RM1/v. 705, BAMA.

PART TWO

STRATEGY AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONFLICT

IN THE GERMAN NAVY

Chapter Five

Currents of Strategy in the Nineteenth Century

Before attempting an assessment of the RMA-OKM conflicts which are crucial to an understanding of the German navy in the Wilhelmine era, it is important to examine several major theories of naval strategy which were popular during this period. This is not intended to serve as a full-scale introduction to maritime strategy in the late nineteenth century: however, it is hoped that by analysis of several important strategists -- all of whom had a significant impact on the development of modern strategy -- a clearer picture of the dilemma which faced the German navy before World War One will be gained.

The first major school of strategic thought is that of the French "Jeune Ecole". This approach to strategy, born of the French naval optimism of the 1860s, was responsible for the beginnings of the so-called guerre de course (cruiser strategy). The second important approach is that which is now called the "handmaid" theory. The proponents of this plan believed that the navy must always play a subordinate role to the army in wartime operations.¹ In contrast to this, the concentration theory of Alfred Thayer Mahan is a radical departure. Mahan, who believed that all naval firepower should be massed for confrontation on the high seas, redefined the military term "sea power" to include all forms of civilian shipping. He thus believed that commercial and merchant ships had a large role to play in time of war.² The last contribution to naval strategy is the Risikoflotte concept of Admiral Tirpitz. Although this theory is similar to Mahan's concentration plan, it contains several key differences.³

The differing strategic alternatives which were open to the German navy are important for our understanding of administrative and operative conflict between the RMA and the OKM.

The inability of the navy to resolve these basic conflicts satisfactorily resulted in a critical collapse of strategic harmony in all naval spheres and in the eventual demise of established traditions and deployment patterns within the German marine corps.

Section One -- The "Jeune Ecole"

Although many tend to overlook the outstanding contributions of France to nineteenth century naval development, it must not be forgotten that from 1800 to 1890 France was the most innovative naval power in Europe. The French navy was creative and enjoyed widespread popular support: despite the bureaucratic difficulties of successive governmental regimes, the navy alone seemed able to pursue a policy of continuity. This policy had but one aim: to create for France a workable strategy which would make possible the defeat of England.⁴

During the 1870s, a group of young and talented naval officers attempted to find a new strategic alternative for the French navy. Called the "Jeune Ecole" to distinguish themselves from the old guard, this group proposed far-reaching changes in the French navy to make it responsive to the realities of contemporary geopolitics. Among its plans, the group (which included the brilliant Theophile Aube and the future admirals Charme and Bourgeois), advocated sweeping changes in naval administration and abolition of the naval hierarchy.⁵

Because they believed England to be France's chief naval foe, the officers of the Jeune Ecole strongly criticized existing French strategies. According to figures which economists prepared for them, the members of the group realized that England's potentially fatal weakness lay in her reliance on overseas trade for industrial materials and comestibles. If this trade could be successfully disrupted, England stood to lose 1,000,000,000 pounds per year.⁶ Thus, by the construction of a raiding fleet of cruisers and torpedo boats, the Jeune Ecole believed that England could be defeated without the assistance of a single soldier. This was the beginning of the guerre de course theory.

The implementation of such a theory had far-reaching consequences. Because the success of the venture would depend on the repeated disruption of mercantile shipping, all immunities to private property which then existed under international law would have to be ignored.⁷ Because the aim of a navy in war was "the greatest possible harm to the enemy",⁸ these raiding skirmishes would have to be ruthless and efficient.

Not surprisingly, the old guard in the French navy -- who were convinced of the superiority of battleship strategy -- were openly hostile to this plan. Not only was it a mere untested theory: its ruthless aspects might lose France the goodwill and support of modern nations if the plan were ever put into action.⁹ However, the guerre de course scheme had many powerful advocates. Because torpedo boats and cruisers cost infinitely less than battleships, it was easier to wring parliamentary approval for construction plans for the less expensive ships. The basic simplicity of the strategy, coupled with its claims to destroy the English economy in a short time without serious loss of life, made it possible for the man on the street to understand and identify with it. This popular support was intensified by the incessant and enthusiastic propaganda which the Jeune Ecole made in its organ, La Marine Française.¹⁰

The influence of the Jeune Ecole reached its apex in 1886 with the appointment of Theophile Aube as Chief of the Admiralty. Although the actual reign of the guerre de course theory in French naval planning was short (1886-1893), its influence on the direction of English and German maritime politics was incalculable.

Section Two -- The Handmaid Theory

Although at first glance the idea seems somewhat paradoxical, the handmaid theory of fleet deployment is the plan which allows a navy the greatest scope for colonial and political development. Because the handmaid theory relies so heavily on the premise of land troop deployment with only minimal maritime operations as a supplement, it is imperative that the navy and/or military possess a number of overseas base stations to give both support and strategic landing opportunities to the army. Several of the leading proponents of this theory were: Milne, Limpus, Hollmann, Edelsheim and Callwell -- the last two being ardent colonialists who openly admitted their strong pro-imperialist sympathies and who were both attached to colonial societies in their respective homelands.¹¹

According to the handmaid theory, the duties of a navy in time of war must be restricted to the following: 1. guarding the communications network and serving as floating communications centres for the land troops; 2. organization and transportation for land troops; 3. "afloat support" centres for amphibious landings; 4. establishment of a commercial blockade against the enemy. Thus the navy must concentrate its building programme on large, well-armed cruisers which would need a minimum of convoy ships. The navy should also maintain a number of light cruisers to effect a solid blockade, arrange coastal defense projects and operate as raiding squads for a modified guerre de course.¹²

As soon as war has been declared, the first objective of the navy must be to insure at least partial control of the sea for troop transport. This control should be effected with a minimum of ships and personnel, for the larger the size of the fleet deployed in such an undertaking, the smaller the number of personnel and armaments available for later phases of the plan.¹³

The goal must always be to tap as few resources as possible so that all supplies can be placed at the disposal of the land army once it has arrived on the scene. Thus the navy must not waste its energies in an attempt to annihilate the enemy's fleet: rather it should "chase" or "sweep" all belligerent vessels from important shipping routes and endeavour to confine them to port.¹⁴

In all operations carried out under the handmaid theory, the key is to keep the majority of the fleet busy on coastal defense projects and thus ready to sail as relief squads should the need arise. At no time should the fleet purposely engage the enemy unless it has been directly provoked -- military support and troop deployment must always remain the primary duties of the navy.¹⁵

In a rudimentary fashion, this theory was responsible for the growth of the "fleet in being" thesis (vide section four). Since the fleet should avoid all confrontation with the enemy, it remains an unknown factor in all calculations. Thus the enemy must decide whether to risk its continued non-interference or whether to seek it out and deliberately destroy it. In this way the fleet operates according to the handmaid theory as a perpetual cipher, a perpetual "fleet in being".

The fleet in being is one the existence of which, although inferior, on or near the scene of operations, is a perpetual menace to the more or less exposed interests of the enemy, who cannot tell when a blow may fall and who is therefore compelled to retard his operations until the fleet can be destroyed or annihilated.¹⁶

Although the actual details of the handmaid theory changed drastically after the successful introduction of torpedo and submarine warfare, the basic concept -- annihilation of a fleet is not the primary goal for a navy -- remained constant.¹⁷

A prime difficulty with the handmaid theory is that in practice, military-naval co-operation has never worked out as the theorists would like. There are several reasons for this. Most importantly, the study of inter-service action is a relatively new one (late nineteenth century) and there are still many problems which strategists have not been able to resolve. There is also a long-standing reluctance on the part of both military and naval personnel to co-operate on anything more than a strictly perfunctory level. Thirdly, the science of amphibious warfare has been a relatively amorphous one until the twentieth century: it is only modern technology and training which have rendered feasible the large-scale landings envisioned by Callwell.¹⁸ It is also important to remember that both the plans for troop deployment and minimum ship use can only be effective if the element of surprise can be introduced.¹⁹ On the other hand, both the tactics of "chasing" action and blockade must be completed before troop landings can take place. Thus it is difficult for the navy to maintain the essential surprise factor. Both Fisher and Milne grappled, somewhat unsuccessfully, with this question of increased reconnaissance necessity and both believed that it would be difficult to resolve the problem satisfactorily.²⁰

Modern military strategists -- notably Sir Peter Gretton -- have substantially revised the handmaid theory. Thus the original guerre de course phase has been replaced by a renewed emphasis on economic blockade. Large-scale troop landings have also been dropped from the revised version of the plan. Because the number of ships necessary for blockade and limited control of the seas will be greater than the number required for troop landings, Gretton has stressed the importance of a solid naval station network.²¹

As mentioned above, both the original and the revised handmaid theory offer the most persuasive arguments for navy-sponsored colonial expansion.

In order to provide optimum reconnaissance and communications capabilities, a carefully planned series of overseas stations is essential.²² These stations will also help the fleet to maximize the element of surprise in the initial phases of the operation. Squadrons based on key trade routes can be deployed almost instantly against the enemy once hostilities have begun. Such a network of bases, however, requires a great deal of long-range planning within the navy and also necessitates close naval co-operation in the foreign political sphere. Overseas stations are only possible in such cases where the navy has both the funds and the personnel to commit to administrative and development projects at foreign bases.²³

Gunboat Diplomacy -- A Footnote to Guerre de Course and Handmaid Strategy

The importance of the navy and the strength of the fleet for the maintenance of international prestige is well exemplified by the nineteenth century phenomenon of "gunboat diplomacy". Although gunboat diplomacy is difficult to define precisely (the definition changing according to the ways in which each Great Power used a show of naval strength to further its own ends), one can discern a few common characteristics which may serve as a groundwork for analysis. Thus all cases of gunboat diplomacy involved the use of maritime force -- or the threat thereof -- to protect commercial interests or the well-being of nationals.²⁴ Gunboat diplomacy never sought to bring about war: it merely attempted to coerce the enemy into abandoning certain policies or practices.²⁵

There were a number of hazards attached to gunboat diplomacy which made it a potentially dangerous course to adopt. These included: the possibility that one's opponent would risk a major confrontation by wiping out the gunboat force, the possibility that strong coastal defenses would render one's opponent impervious to the threat of limited action and the possibility that one's opponent might agree to abandon the disputed policies before the force even arrived at its destination.

The last two factors also possessed the distinct disadvantage of making the power who had attempted to use gunboat diplomacy appear either ridiculous or inept.²⁶

Thus a power always had to keep in mind two things when assessing the advantages and disadvantages of gunboat diplomacy.

1) If one's opponent readily gave way to one's demands, the pressure of international sentiment might be so great as to seriously jeopardize one's international prestige. 2) If one's opponent decided to take the offensive and to attack the small force, the situation thus created could easily escalate into war.²⁷ Any nation toying with the use of gunboat diplomacy had to be prepared to face a possible barrage of international outrage and more importantly, to risk full-scale war. This was a heavy responsibility and such an action could only be warranted if circumstance did not allow another solution.

Thus gunboat diplomacy was the proverbial two-edged sword. If it was successful, it was sound diplomatic practice. If it failed, it was neither diplomatic nor restricted exclusively to gunboats.²⁸

Section Three -- The Mahan Theory

In dramatic contrast to both the guerre de course and the handmaid theory stood the strategical analysis of the American Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan was a shy and almost unknown career officer until the publication of his masterwork, The Influence of Sea Power upon History, (1890) literally thrust him into the forefront of the strategy debate. With little exaggeration, the unassuming American has been credited with the paternity of the modern navy. Germany, Japan and Russia found in Mahan's work the major inspiration for their naval planning. England, France and America used his studies as a comprehensive guide in their own revisions of naval programming.

In the years before World War One, there was not a naval officer to graduate from any naval academy in the world who did not have a thorough grounding in Mahan's historical approach to strategy and tactics. The influence of the scholarly officer was enormous and it is only now -- some seventy years after the publication of his principal work -- that historians are beginning to assess the extent of his impact on the development of naval warfare before 1914.²⁹

In The Influence of Sea Power Mahan attempted to redefine the term "maritime strategy". To Mahan, maritime strategy included all aspects of maritime operations: both commercial and naval shipping and any maritime activities carried out in both peace and war:

Naval strategy has indeed for its aim to found, support and increase as well in peace as in war, the sea power of a nation.³⁰

On the basis of his historical research, Mahan concluded that the strength of a nation's sea power -- civilian and military -- rested on six factors:

1. geographical position
2. physical conformation
3. extent of territory
4. number of population
5. national character
6. character of government³¹

As a logical corollary to this expanded and all-encompassing definition of maritime strategy and sea power, Mahan believed that the navy must play an independent and creative role in national defense.³²

whenever a question arises of control over distant regions, politically weak, it must ultimately be decided by naval power, by the organized military force afloat, which represents the communications that form so prominent a feature in all strategy.³³

In contrast to the guerre de course and handmaid theories, Mahan believed that a definite victory could only be obtained by means of a high seas battle. Using illustrations from ancient sea warfare to Nelson's day, he concluded that guerre de course was annoyance, not menace and that the dangerous diffusion of firepower and strength advocated by the Jeune Ecole was an erroneous conception of basic military principle.³⁴ According to Mahan, the military goal of a war of attrition or Ermattungsstrategie, on which many major military operations since Clausewitz were based, was appropriate for the navy.³⁵ Thus he advocated the construction of a battle fleet which would consist largely of heavily-armed cruisers, battleships and destroyers: torpedo boats and light cruisers he dismissed as superfluous.³⁶

Military wisdom and economy, both in time and money, dictate bringing matters to an issue as soon as possible upon the broad sea with the certainty that the power which achieves military preponderance there will win in the end.³⁷

To Mahan, the economic arguments of the Jeune Ecole were specious: force and strength alone would ultimately determine the victor in any major conflict:

For in diplomacy, in international negotiation, force underlies every contention as a possible final arbiter, and of force, war is simply the ultimate expression.³⁸

Because Mahan viewed the navy as such an important part of a nation's strength, he believed that the navy had the right to participate in foreign policy decisions. In effect, war (or the threat thereof) was too important to leave to the diplomats:

The naval policy of a country as regards the power of the fleet will not be properly determined until an arrangement is made by which the foreign relations and naval factors are coordinated in some procedure in which both are considered; not only separately, but in connection one with the other. Why one annual battleship? or why two? is not a question chiefly for the navy, if at all. It is a political question in the sphere of foreign relations.³⁹

Mahan's thesis found much support -- in the so-called "Vieille Ecole" of the French navy, in some sections of the German navy and in many British circles. Fisher, Colomb and Corbett all believed that the appeal of guerre de course was ephemeral and that despite the many difficulties,⁴⁰ British naval planning should be geared for a high seas war of annihilation⁴¹ in which the nation's fate would be decided in one epic engagement. Like his American counterpart, Sir Julian Corbett was convinced that warfare limited almost exclusively to major maritime campaigns was the most rational and the most effective because one could destroy the enemy's military resources, frustrate or blockade his economic ambitions and not seriously harm his industrial/resource base. These profitable enterprises could be taken over by the conquering power at the end of the war or could be used by the loser to generate capital to pay war indemnities.⁴² This concept of warfare limited to maritime engagements was also advantageous in that it:

..does not turn on the actual armed strength of the belligerents, but on the armed strength which they are willing to deploy.⁴³

Thus both Mahan and Corbett envisioned a much stronger role for the fleet in their approaches to naval strategy. The function of the navy was not merely convoy or communications duty: rather the navy must immediately take the initiative against the enemy and either annihilate his forces on the high seas or so completely confine him to port that virtual control of the sea lanes could be assured.⁴⁴ To both Mahan and Corbett, all major powers which possessed navies had to think in terms of eventual mastery of the oceans -- commercially as well as militarily. Only through such control could the integrity of the nation and its possessions be guaranteed.

Like Corbett, Mahan argued the strategic question from an essentially British position. Thus the island-nation was not treated as a special strategic problem, but British methods were the norms to which all other strategic ideas were compared.

It is also interesting to note that both writers were at least sub-consciously aware of the concepts of aggression, survival instinct and biological imperialism which found their fullest expressions in the writings of Kurt Riezler.

Sir Julian Corbett explained the necessity of obtaining a clear decision on the high seas by means of a chart:

- I. Methods of Securing Command --
 - a. obtaining a decision.
 - b. establishing a blockade.
- II. Methods of Disputing Command --
 - a. the "Fleet in Being" thesis.
 - b. use of minor counter fleets.
- III. Methods of Exercising Command --
 - a. defense against invasion.
 - b. attack/defense of commerce.
 - c. attack/defense/support of military expeditions.⁴⁵

This table makes it clear how far the guerre de course and the battle of attrition strategies differed. Unlike the Jeune Ecole, Mahan and Corbett viewed minor counter fleets (cruiser squadrons) and the threat of the "fleet in being" as defensive, not offensive, tactics. If the mastery of the seas is necessary for protection of commerce and if such mastery is the summum bonum of naval strategy, only complete blockade or complete annihilation can guarantee victory.⁴⁶ All other measures are secondary. For Mahan and Corbett maritime preponderance was the ultimate weapon, the ultimate threat. The exigencies of sea power demanded total commitment to total maritime war.⁴⁷

Section Four -- Tirpitz and the Risikoflotte

When Mahan was preparing his pioneer studies on strategy, the future Grossadmiral Tirpitz was following a similar line of deduction in Berlin. Indeed, when Tirpitz later examined the American's work, he was astonished at the similarities between his own writings and those of Mahan.⁴⁸ Tirpitz' earliest inclinations at the Marineakademie had led him to a thorough study of historical tactics and strategy: he was able to put this knowledge to good use in 1892 when he was appointed Chief of Staff to the OKM -- with a specific mandate to design and co-ordinate a new strategy for the German navy.⁴⁹ Unlike Mahan, who wrote primarily as a scholar, Tirpitz conceived strategic problems with a view to the delineation of future domestic and foreign policy in Germany.⁵⁰ The far-ranging implications of this approach are evident in Tirpitz' definition of "sea power": a definition which carefully takes into account the importance of international prestige and consequence in the assessment of a nation's maritime strength.

Seemacht besteht aus zwei Elementen, aus Flotte und Position. Beide sind unerlaesslich, beide sind gleichrangig. Man kann sich Seemacht deshalb als ein Produkt aus Flotte und Position vorstellen. Ist einer der beiden Faktoren null, so ist auch das Produkt null. Das heisst: ohne Flotte ist eine Position nichts werth, ohne Position eine Flotte nichts. Nur beides zusammen ergibt Seemacht.⁵¹

Like his American colleague, Tirpitz believed that the primary goal of the navy must be the annihilation of the enemy upon the high seas:

Im Seekampf ist nicht Gelaendegewinn, sondern Vernichtung das einzige Ziel...⁵²

Thus Tirpitz also advocated the construction of a strong, heavily-armed battle fleet. He argued that the practical considerations which seemed to recommend the establishment of a cruiser fleet were invalid: since the role of the navy was crucial to the continued security of the Reich, political and tactical factors must triumph over sentimental demands for overseas colonies and even strong economic pressures.⁵³

In addition to the long-range goal of dominion of the seas, there were two other distinct advantages to the battle fleet theory. Any nation which maintained a battle fleet would not be forced to construct a major coastal defense system. The protection afforded by the navy would render such a programme superfluous.⁵⁴

Secondly, the large battle fleet envisioned by Tirpitz possessed a high "alliance factor" in that its potential threat to the national interests of other powers might be a means of manoeuvring some of these powers into a strong alliance. Basically, this menacing fleet (Risikoflotte) would fulfill in peacetime the same functions which a "fleet in being" fulfilled in war.⁵⁵ The Risikoflotte would be so large that to defeat it would leave any nation critically deficient in seagoing resources. There was a real danger that after destroying the Risikoflotte, a power would be easy prey for other, smaller fleets. Thus the only sure means of neutralizing the threat of the Risikoflotte was to ally with it against other powers. Such a fleet could serve as an important tool in diplomatic bargaining: it would pressure foreign powers into an alliance.⁵⁶ The one major drawback to the Tirpitz scheme was his gross miscalculation of psychology: many nations would inevitably resent such strong-arm tactics and would refuse to enter the proposed alliance network. These powers could then either ally themselves with others against the Risikoflotte or could initiate a building programme to challenge the fleet on its own terms.

Although Tirpitz' major concern was the development of a total strategy for Germany -- both naval and political -- he did not neglect the revision of elementary tactics in his studies. His years as Commander of the Torpedo Arm (in an era when torpedo warfare was in its developmental stages) had taught Tirpitz many valuable lessons about the weaknesses of training and tactics within the imperial navy.

Accordingly, he suggested four ways in which the efficiency of the navy could be ameliorated: better strategic and practical training for officers, so that they would be more flexible and reactive in battle; increasing emphasis on independent manoeuvrability within squadron lines; more naval exercises, so that all officers would be familiar with a variety of squadron positions and battle plans; and renewed stress on unit deployment (especially within the torpedo arm).⁵⁷ By pressing for the adoption of such measures as these, Tirpitz hoped to bring German naval personnel to a peerless level of efficiency.

Like Mahan, Tirpitz believed that the Entscheidungsschlacht was the goal to which every Great Power which possessed a navy should aspire.⁵⁸ Because he was convinced of the importance of this, Tirpitz campaigned intensively for unified rearmament and for the establishment of a homogeneous fleet of battleships and heavy cruisers.⁵⁹

Another prominent strategist whose ideas paralleled those of Tirpitz was the popular but controversial Curt von Maltzahn. For many years a beloved teacher at the Marineakademie, Maltzahn commanded great respect among all who knew him and there is evidence to support the view that Tirpitz feared his influence and took steps to counter it when circumstance put the two strategists at odds.⁶⁰ In his major work, Der Kampf gegen die Seeherrschaft, Maltzahn seconded Tirpitz' pleas for the construction of a full-scale battle fleet.⁶¹ For Maltzahn, dominion of the seas was the only sure way to obtain a decisive victory.

Wer einen Seekrieg fuehrt, thut dies um durch
die Seeherrschaft die Verkehrswege der See in
seine Gewalt zu bekommen und seinen Gegner
dadurch zum Frieden zu zwingen.⁶²

Maltzahn stressed the need for strong, offensive tactics -- he believed it crucial that the attacking navy should be the one to strike the first major blow. He was also convinced that the success of the campaign depended on the outcome of this initial engagement.⁶³

Ein Ueberschuss an Kraft ist also die erste Bedingung fuer die Offensive... Weitere Vorbedingungen fuer die Offensive sind: Geeignetheit des Materials der Flotte, ein genuegender strategischer Aktionsradius, worunter ich Verschiebung von Stuetzpunkten zur Versorgung der Flotte mit Vorrathen aller Art verstehe, Kriegsbereitschaft und hierin einbegriffen auf systematische Friedensausbildung gegruendetes Vertrauen in das eigene Koennen, das allein konsequentes Erfassen der Kriegsziele und ruecksichtsloses Einsetzen aller Kraefte fuer diese Ziele verbuergt.⁶⁴

On one telling issue Maltzahn did not agree with Tirpitz. While the Admiral believed that all the resources of the navy should be concentrated on the construction of a battle fleet, Maltzahn advocated a more moderate approach. He believed that the navy should maintain a sizeable number of other vessels and weaponry to deploy once the primary goal of the Entscheidungsschlacht had been accomplished. He thus favoured the continuance of the cruiser building programme on a modified scale.

Die Schlachtflotte darf aber nicht alle Mittel absorbieren, die der Staat fuer die Seekriegsfuehrung disponibel machen kann, sonst bleibt fuer die eigentliche Schaedigung des Feindes, also fuer das, was ihn dem Frieden nach unseren Bedingungen neigen soll, (SIC) nichts uebrig.⁶⁵

This modification of Maltzahn's was the origin of the conflict between the professor and the Grossadmiral. For Tirpitz, such a dangerous weakening of Schlachtflotte strength was unthinkable; for Maltzahn, such insistence on uniformity was unprofessional.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Some useful comparisons can be made between these solutions to the problem of high seas strategy. The handmaid theory assigned a passive role to the navy: in the event of war, the main obligation of the fleet would be communication/troop transportation. In this role, the navy would have to maintain a number of overseas bases to protect national interests abroad and to serve as strategic bases in the event of war. Because the most important function of the navy was to remain at the disposal of the army, it was imperative that the navy avoid possible conflict with belligerents. Limited control of major shipping lanes and limited blockade of hostile powers were the only high seas duties which the navy must undertake.

Despite the restricted fighting role of the handmaid theory, the navy is enjoined to make a considerable investment in time, money and manpower. A network of overseas base stations cannot be established in a short period. Long-range planning and a large administrative staff were essential if a power wished to commit its navy to such a plan. In addition, close co-operation between the navy and the foreign office would have to be maintained. The handmaid theory also demanded that naval and military strategists work in close harmony on tactical planning and reconnaissance work.

The guerre de course theory -- which had little practical application outside its anti-English manifestation -- was difficult to assess accurately. At the time of its inception, the materiel and ships for its implementation were new and untried: guerre de course seemed plausible on paper but lacked solid credentials.⁶⁷ However, a navy which chose to adopt the guerre de course would not be faced with a huge capital outlay for battleships -- vessels which become obsolete more quickly than cruisers or torpedo boats. In addition, such a scheme virtually liberated the military from responsibility for national defense and left it free to pursue continental ventures.

In contrast, the Mahan theory assigned a more important role to the navy. Mahan believed that the might of a nation rested on its sea power -- i.e., on all national shipping, mercantile and naval. By mustering this combined force effectively, Mahan was convinced that a nation could completely destroy an enemy's resistance. This could be accomplished either by total annihilation of the belligerent's navy or by a tight economic blockade which would end all possibility for trade and commerce. Thus Mahan and his English successor, Corbett, believed it imperative to engage the enemy upon the high seas and to break decisively his maritime strength as soon as possible. The goal of this campaign would be to obtain complete mastery of the seas. The requirements of a navy which adopted this concentration theory would be very different from those of a navy operating under the handmaid or the guerre de course plan. Mahan advocated the build-up of a fleet consisting of large, heavily-armed battleships and heavy cruisers. Coastal defense fortifications, overseas bases and squadrons of light to medium-armed cruisers had no significant role in Mahan's calculations.

There are two separate strains which run in the strategic planning of Tirpitz. Like Mahan, the Grossadmiral and his colleague Maltzahn believed in the practicality and historical necessity of a Schlachtflotte. Both viewed the establishment of a network of cruiser squadrons and naval bases of secondary importance.⁶⁸ Both were convinced that in the event of war, it was necessary to destroy the enemy in a high seas battle in order to achieve a speedy victory. However, unlike Mahan, Tirpitz believed that this expanded role in national defense gave the navy the right to participate in all facets of national policy -- both foreign and domestic. Because the navy would assume in wartime such an independent and all-important function, Tirpitz was convinced that in peacetime the navy should operate as an equal partner in the realms of foreign affairs, colonial questions and domestic finance.⁶⁹

Tirpitz thus believed that the immense power and strength of the navy necessitated its inclusion in all spheres of national life. By placing this interpretation on the role of the navy, Tirpitz effectively removed the concentration theory of Mahan from the realm of scholarship and placed it in the milieu of practicality.

The second thesis which runs throughout the work of Tirpitz is that of the Risikoflotte concept. Just as the "fleet in being" represented an unchanging and omnipresent threat in time of war, so the Risikoflotte was a hazard to other powers in time of peace. Because such a fleet would be such a strong psychological menace, other powers would be reluctant to challenge it: this might dramatically cripple their own resources. Thus, the only alternative open to a nation threatened by the spectre of a Risikoflotte was to ally with it. Tirpitz believed that the advantages of a battle fleet were twofold: it could operate as the major system of defense in time of war and perhaps more importantly, it represented a tangible "alliance factor" for a strong and aggressive foreign policy.

It is not difficult to understand why the debate over the respective merits of these theories became so acrimonious: each had political, economic and strategic advantages to recommend it. However, all entailed administrative changes which reached to the very root of naval planning and decision-making. For this reason, the question of strategy choice became the overwhelming concern during the arms build-up of the late nineteenth century.

Footnotes

1. Vide Julian S. Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, p. 13, p. 54, etc.
2. Alfred T. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History, p. 28 ff.
3. Alfred Tirpitz, Memoirs, vol. 1, chapter six.
4. Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power, p. 83.
5. Gemzell, Organization, Conflict and Innovation, p. 52.
6. Marder, p. 84.
7. Gemzell, p. 52; Marder, p. 87.
8. Marder, p. 84.
9. Gemzell, p. 56.
10. Ibid., p. 52.
11. The obvious colonial and nationalist bias of Edelsheim's Upon the Sea caused many circles of the Germany navy no little embarrassment at its publication in 1901. It was hastily explained that Edelsheim had no official connection with either the RMA or the OKM and that the opinions which he had expressed did not necessarily reflect the official policies of either department.
12. Edelsheim, p. 21 and Callwell, Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance, p. 163.
13. Callwell, p. 164.
14. Ibid., p. 163.
15. Edelsheim, p. 36.
16. Callwell, p. 203-204.
17. Ibid., p. 211.
18. Vide A. Vagts, Landing Operations, Harrisburg, 1965.
19. Ibid., p. 28.

20. Marder, p. 90.
21. Gretton, Maritime Strategy, p. 3 and p. 100.
22. Edelsheim, p. 14, Gretton, p. 100 and Callwell, p. 164.
23. Callwell, p. 234.
24. Cable, Gunboat Diplomacy, p. 19.
25. Ibid., p. 20.
26. Ibid., p. 71.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 20.
29. Vide Michael Hanke, Das Werk Alfred T. Mahans.
30. Ibid., p. 9.
31. Ibid., p. 28 ff.
32. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power, p. 415.
33. Ibid., p. 416.
34. Marder, p. 90.
35. Gemzell, p. 53.
36. Marder, p. 90.
37. Mahan, p. 416-417.
38. Mahan, Armaments and Arbitration, or the Place of Force in the International Relations of States, edited by Peter Karsten, p. 35-36.
39. Ibid., p. 72.
40. Marder, p. 483.
41. Ibid.
42. Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, p. 54.

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 87.
45. Ibid., p. 168.
46. Ibid., p. 285.
47. Ibid.
48. Tirpitz, p. 161.
49. Ibid., p. 63.
50. Tirpitz, quoted in Wagner, Die Tirpitzsche Seestrategie, p. 237.
51. Ibid., p. 241.
52. Ibid., p. 250.
53. Ibid., p. 237 and Tirpitz, p. 65.
54. Wagner, p. 237.
55. Tirpitz, p. 130.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., vide chapter seven.
58. Gemzell, p. 53.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. 56-57.
61. Maltzahn, Der Kampf gegen die Seeherrschaft, p. 33.
62. Ibid.
63. Gemzell, p. 56-57.
64. Maltzahn, p. 41.
65. Ibid.
66. Gemzell, p. 56-57.

67. Ibid., p. 52.
68. Tirpitz, p. 65 and Maltzahn, p. 33.
69. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, February 20, 1899, In Vortrag ueber Organisation der obersten Marinebehoerden, Bd. 39, BAMA.

Chapter Six

The Origin of Administrative Conflict within the German Navy

The strategic theories which were outlined in the previous chapter played a major role in the development of modern naval practice in the post 1875 period. At the same time, the discussion of the relative merits of any of these strategies was necessarily heated; each plan entailed administrative and operational change on a large scale and each entailed the build-up of a different type of fleet structure. In a navy of long established traditions and strong administration patterns, the strategy issue was a potential source of bitter conflict. However, for a navy which was just emerging as a modern force and in which administration and command patterns were not deeply rooted, the strategy debate could easily shatter the fragile unity and harmony within senior officer ranks.¹ The imperial German navy as it was constituted after 1871 is ample proof of this.

Until the Reichsgruendung of 1871, naval affairs in Prussia were administered under a branch of the Ministry of War. This system -- which made possible a certain uniformity and harmony in military and naval planning -- was not without drawbacks. Basically, the system did not recognize the differing characters of military and naval training, command and strategy. All too often naval personnel were forced to view strategic, technical and administrative problems solely from the military standpoint: the scheme was too narrow to allow for flexibility or the large-scale changes in administration/command structures which were necessary for the continued growth of the navy. As "new kid on the block", the navy constantly felt itself relegated to an inferior position within the Ministry when it came to questions of budget, staff, etc. Not surprisingly, there were many critics of this inflexible system² who pressed for the institution of a separate naval ministry which could deal with the problems of the navy in a more responsive way.

Within a few months of the Reichsgruendung,³ navy hopes for the establishment of a separate ministry were realized. The first chief of the independent Marineministerium (after January 1, 1872, Kaiserliche Admiralitaet), was General-Admiral Albrecht von Stosch. Although a man of strong military sensibility, Stosch had an instinctive and immediate understanding for the differences of naval tradition.⁴ Despite his herculean attempts to reorganize the navy along contemporary military lines with at least a thin veneer of army structure and discipline, Stosch welcomed the growth of a naval esprit and encouraged those customs which he believed would contribute to the evolution of a naval tradition. Working with a comparatively small staff and a limited budget, Stosch was able to institute a surprising number of reforms including: standardization of training norms, overhaul/junking of obsolete vessels and development of strategic planning awareness.⁵ Stosch defined the goal of the navy as twofold: coastal defense and protection for trade and commerce overseas. For this reason, his administration began a fleet construction programme which allowed for light cruisers and battleships. Although it was often difficult to persuade the Reichstag that the vast sums needed for battleship construction were indeed well spent, Stosch remained adamant on this issue and campaigned tirelessly for support.⁶

Unfortunately, for the newly-created German navy, Stosch's successors were neither as flexible nor as supportive as the old General-Admiral had been. General-Admiral Caprivi, who assumed leadership of the Kaiserliche Admiralitaet in 1883 and who remained in control for five disastrous years, had little or no feeling for the aspirations of the navy. On more than one occasion he was heard to remark: "Ein Bataillon Infanterie waere mir lieber als die ganze preussische Marine",⁷ and it is not surprising that his years as General-Admiral were remembered with bitterness by many of his subordinates. When analyzing the situation from a distance of some twenty years, Admiral Edward von Knorr assessed the Caprivi administration in these terms:

..arbeitete General v. Caprivi von Beginn bis zum Ende seiner Thaetigkeit als Chef d. Admiralitaet, teils offen, teils auf versteckten Umwegen, an der Verhinderung jeder Vergroesserung unserer maritimen Wehrkraft und die Erwerbung unserer Kolonien geschah in dieser Zeit durch den Fuersten Bismarck trotz ihm und gegen ihn.⁸

Although it must be remembered that there was a well-known antipathy between the phlegmatic Caprivi and the hot-tempered Knorr (der "wilde" or "rote" Edward to friend and foe alike), the above assessment of the General-Admiral was by no means unique. Most senior personnel professed themselves openly disappointed with the Caprivi appointment⁹ and resented the heavy-handed way in which Caprivi forced the navy to conform to army standards.¹⁰ Despite their many pleas for imperial intervention in the dilemma, the senior officers found no sympathy for their cause in the military-minded Wilhelm I.¹¹

At best, Caprivi was a poorly-informed naval strategist. He had no real grasp of strategic problems and the direction which the navy took during his administration reflected this fact all too well. Like many more experienced officers of the day, Caprivi believed that battleship strategy was antiquated and obsolete.¹² Thus he allowed the construction of battleships to stagnate and he channelled navy resources into the construction of light-to-heavy cruisers and torpedo boats.¹³

Because he lacked the requisite naval background, Caprivi found it difficult to assess strategic questions and he thus encouraged all senior navy personnel to discuss tactical and strategical problems with him. On January 1, 1888, Caprivi circulated a long questionnaire on strategy to all staff officers. The General-Admiral hoped to use the answers which he received in order to formulate a grand master plan for naval development. In the weeks that followed, officer dissatisfaction with the Caprivi administration became increasingly evident as the questionnaires were returned covered with comments, suggestions and criticisms.¹⁴

On the basis of the questionnaire and with continuing complaints from senior officers pouring in from every side, it was decided to modify the existing system of naval administration. The ill-fated Friedrich Wilhelm was himself interested in this problem, but it was his son, Wilhelm II, who was finally responsible for the changes.¹⁵ Much has been written about Wilhelm's obsessive love for "his" navy and it is probably true that he often caused more problems than he solved by his determined meddling in naval affairs.¹⁶ However, it is certain that during the early years of his reign, Wilhelm II was accessible and sympathetic to naval personnel. At his "Naval Evenings" he encouraged discussion and argument and he urged all those present -- no matter how junior in rank -- to speak frankly and to enter the conversation.¹⁷ Although some of the old guard deplored this habit which they believed would lead to a loss of respect and discipline within the officer corps, this exercise did have the advantage of bringing into the open many differing views. Indeed, it was at such a conference as this that the forthright young Tirpitz came to imperial attention for his strong statements on naval strategy and planning.¹⁸

In less than a year after Wilhelm's accession, the reorganization of the navy was detailed in an AKO.¹⁹ According to the new plan, the unified administration/operations system which had functioned under Stosch but which had collapsed under Caprivi's leadership was abolished and was replaced with a tripartite organization reminiscent of the superstructure of the Prussian army.²⁰ According to this system, command and administration were separated -- each being an autonomous department with independent section heads whose only common superior was the Emperor himself.²¹ A third body was also established: the Marine Kabinett.²² The Marine Kabinett was to be an independent, consultative body whose function was to advise the Emperor on naval personnel matters and special development projects. The establishment of this third organ completed the army analogy in which the Reichs Marine Amt (administration) paralleled the Prussian Kriegsministerium, the Oberkommando der Marine (operations) paralleled the General Staff and the Marine Kabinett paralleled the Militaerkabinett.²³

This division made decentralization the key to further naval development and its tripartite character gave the navy equal administrative importance with the army. Each department was designated an Immediatbehoerde: this meant that its head was responsible to the Emperor and had the right to submit written reports, etc. directly to the Crown. In 1889 seven departments were designated Immediatbehoerden: the Staatssekretaer of the Reichs Marine Amt, the Commander of the Admiral Staff, the Chief of the Marine Kabinett, the Commander of the Marine Station der Nordsee, the Commander of the Marine Station der Ostsee, the Chief of the Highseas Fleet, the Inspekteur des Bildungswesens and the Chief of the East Asian Squadron all possessed the right to approach the Emperor directly.²⁴ In some circles, this was regarded as a tragedy. Before the question of competencies even arose, it was evident that there were too many Immediatbehoerden and that the concept of decentralization had been taken to an extreme.²⁵ In addition to this, while in theory the seven Immediatbehoerden headed autonomous departments responsible only to the Emperor, there was a disturbing anomaly. The Staatssekretaer of the Reichs Marine Amt was at once subordinate to the Emperor and to the Imperial Chancellor. As the navy budget had to be approved in the Reichstag, the SSdRMA was in the curious position of possessing departmental autonomy on the one hand, and being bound to the financial constraints of the Reichstag on the other. This confusion would lie at the heart of much future interdepartmental conflict and rivalry.²⁶

Another problem which arose from the new system concerned the amorphous role of the Marine Kabinett. Although in theory the competencies of this body were strictly limited, in practice it wielded enormous influence. Close to the monarch at all times, it was often able to assume a middle position between him and the other naval institutions. Because it was a small group whose members tended to remain in their positions for long periods, the Marine Kabinett soon became a trusted and indispensable ally of the Crown.²⁷

The Marine Kabinett worked primarily through correspondence and it used its considerable influence to solicit opinions and to exert pressure in a variety of situations where it had no legal basis to do so. This divide et impera policy made the Marine Kabinett assume awesome importance and in later RMA/OKM disputes, the Marine Kabinett played a major role; siding with one and then the other to further its own ends. The longtime chief of the Marine Kabinett, Gustav von Senden-Bibran, (1889-1906) was at first an ally of Tirpitz, but after the latter's appointment to the RMA and his ruthless dissolution of the OKM, Senden broke with him. Thereafter, he always supported the weakened Admiral Staff against the RMA as a point of policy and his relationship with Tirpitz became stormy.²⁸ Senden's successor, Georg Alexander von Mueller also continued this policy and his relationship with Tirpitz was never easy.²⁹

The main problem created by the 1889 division was the lasting problem which it posed for a smooth working relationship between the administrative and the command arms. Excessive decentralization, the anomalous position of the Staatssekretaer, the undue importance of the Marine Kabinett -- all these problems could have been resolved in time had it not proved impossible to sort out the differences between the RMA and the OKM. The basic disagreement arose over the question of jurisdiction. Although the AKO of 1889 made a fairly clear statement of competencies for each department, the system did not work out as well as had been originally hoped.³⁰ According to the AKO, the jurisdictional divisions were to be as follows:

1. Das RMA ist die oberste Reichsbehoerde fuer die Verwaltung der Kaiserlichen Marine.
3. Der Geschaeftskreis der Marineverwaltung umfasst im Sinne ohne Ausnahmen alle Angelegenheiten, welche die Einrichtung, Erhaltung und Entwicklung der Marine betreffen. Hierher gehoeren:

Die Aufstellung und Durchfuehrung
des Wirtschaftplans der Marine,
sowie die Leitung der Verwaltung
im engeren Sinn,

die Entwicklung der Technik,

die Organisation der Marine,

die endgueltige Feststellung
und Herausgabe aller allgemeinen
Dienstvorschriften.

4. Dem SSdRMA faellt die Herbeifuehrung aller
fuer den Dienstbetrieb in der Marine
erforderlichen Allerhoechsten Ordres zu.
5. Dem SSdRMA sind unterstellt:
 - a). die Verwaltungsbehoerden,
 - b). die technischen Behoerden, Institute
und Anstalten,
 - c). die Kommandobehoerden, welche gleich-
zeitig eine Verwaltungstaetigkeit
ausueben,
 - d). alle Behoerden in Bezug auf Invaliden
und Ersatzangelegenheiten, das
Bildungswesen in Bezug auf Organisation,
 - e). ...Probefahrten und Technische Versuche
in Dienstschiffen..,
 - f). die zu seinem Ressort kommandirten
Seeoffiziere, Offiziere der Marine-
Infanterie, Maschinen-Ingenieure und
Sanitaetsoffiziere.
7. In allen wichtigen Fragen organisatorischer und
technischer Natur sowie bei Erlass militaerischer
Dienstvorschriften, hat der SSdRMA den Kommandi-
renden Admiral gutachtlich zu hoeren.
9. Der SSdRMA ist verpflichtet, den Kommandirenden
Admiral in technischen Fragen soweit unterrichtet
zu halten, wie derselbe seiner Mitwirkung in
diesen Fragen bedarf.³¹

The duties and jurisdiction of the OKM were established in the AKO
in a similar fashion.

1. Das OKM ist die oberste Kommandobehörde und der Admiralstab vereinigt. An der Spitze des OKM steht der KA. Ihm fällt hiernach zu:
 - a). Der Oberbefehl über sämtliche Kommandobehörden und Marinetheile sowie die Leitung des Seeoffizierkorps, des Offizierkorps der Marine-Infanterie, des Maschinen-Ingenieur-Korps und des Sanitätsoffizierkorps...
2. Der Oberbefehl schließt ein: die Führung der Streitkräfte im Kriege, die Ausbildung und sonstige Vorbereitung für den Krieg und die Stellung der Aufgaben für die im Dienst befindlichen Schiffe.
 Die Vorbereitung für den Krieg hat sich auf die Entwicklung der Taktik und auf die Ausbildung des unterstellten Personals im Rahmen der gegebenen Organisation zu erstrecken.
5. Der KA ordnet in einem Befehlsbereich die Kommandierungen und Versetzungen der Personen des Soldatenstandes zu den Behörden und Marinetheilen an, soweit dadurch die Spezialität-(Vertheilung des Personals) der Marinetheile nicht berührt werden und soweit die Kommandierungen nicht der Allerhöchsten Entscheidung vorbehalten sind.
6. In der Hand des KA liegt die Oberste Leitung der Personalangelegenheiten der ihm unterstellten Offiziere der unter "Ia" genannten Korps.
7. Die Admiralstabsgeschäfte erstrecken sich auf die Verwendung der Streitkräfte im Kriege und auf die hierzu erforderlichen Vorarbeiten im Frieden.
10. Der KA ist verpflichtet, dem SSdRMA alles Material zur Verfügung zu stellen, welches derselbe zur Bildung seines Antheils in den Fragen bedarf, die sich auf ihm nach para. 2, 3 und 4 zufallende Thätigkeit beziehen.³²

It is not difficult to understand why the system which evolved under the terms of this Organisationsreglement proved unworkable. A few examples may serve to illustrate this. The RMA had control of personnel recruitment and training: the OKM had control of materiel and personnel deployment. Not surprisingly, the OKM felt that it should have more input into training, as it was the organ ultimately responsible for personnel performance. On the other side, the Militaerische Abtheilung of the RMA agitated for stricter control of personnel deployment because that section had a heavy stake in recruitment and training. The list of administration/operations disputes was almost unending and ranged from minor issues (the assignments of medical assistants) to questions of crucial tactical importance.³³ It was inevitable that personality conflicts crept into these showdowns between the RMA and the OKM; this in turn made it even more difficult to heal the breach and to foster a spirit of unity in the navy.³⁴

A second reason which helped break apart the two leading organs of the navy stemmed from the very terms of the 1889 division. As each branch was largely independent under its own chief, so each branch evolved a different outlook or ethos. As mentioned above, the RMA had to rely on parliamentary approval for the navy budget; thus, of necessity, that institution had to become attuned to the demands and constraints of public and government opinion.³⁵ On the other hand, the OKM was responsible only to the Emperor: the Commanding Admiral was never forced to go to the Reichstag, cap in hand, to secure funds. This basic difference in the two organs was another source of conflict. At the RMA, members of the OKM were considered interfering and impractical³⁶ and at the OKM, RMA officers were held in almost overt contempt -- paper sailors who had traded naval tradition for a slot in the bureaucracy.³⁷ Of course, there were elements of truth in both arguments, but this realization did little to promote a spirit of compromise.³⁸

Almost from the beginning it was evident that this overly decentralized system would never work. Within a few months, every small problem threatened to become an epic confrontation and it was apparent to many that sweeping reforms would have to be made. Through amendments during the early 1890s, the strength of the RMA was increased while the powers of the OKM were more strictly defined and limited.³⁹ In an unpublished memorandum on the question, the young Tirpitz voiced his approval for the changes:

Durch die AKO von 21. Oct. d. J. ist das RMA zur leitenden Stelle in der Marine bestimmt worden. Gegenueber dem bisherigen Zustande, bei welchem es zwei gleich starke Stellen gab, ist dies ein grosser Fortschritt, den man durch Ausgestaltung der Machtbefugnisse des RMA bis an die aeussersten zulaessigen Grenzen zu einem moeglichst vollkommenen _____ (illegible) machen sollte. Je mehr dem RMA Entscheidungen in militaerischen Dingen zufallen, desto schneller schwindet die Gefahr, dass der SSdRMA die Marine vom Standpunkt des Verwalthungsbeamten nur ansieht.⁴⁰

Tirpitz concluded that other amendments should be made so that the role of the OKM and its chief could be precisely defined and controlled. He believed that such a step would ameliorate the situation between the RMA and the OKM. He also suggested that the duties of the OKM chief be restricted to four:

..die als Kommandirender der Marine (als Truppe),
die als Leiter das in seiner Einheitlichkeit zu
belassende Offizierkorps, (SIC)
die als General-Inspekteur der Marine,
die als Chef des Generalstabes der Marine.⁴¹

Unfortunately, these changes did not prove sufficient and administrative problems continued to plague the navy during the 1890s. During the early 1890s, the RMA attempted to take a closer interest in technical implementation and military manoeuvres: the OKM viewed this as a further infringement on its powers and relations between the two departments became exceedingly hostile.⁴²

After the seizure of Kiaochow in 1897, the RMA arranged to have the administration of the new leasehold under its own jurisdiction. Both historical precedent and the spirit of the Organisationsreglement suggested that the administration of Kiaochow should be overseen by the OKM and Admiral Knorr fought bitterly against the RMA claim.⁴³

Thus the institution of divided administration/command within the navy resulted in the growth of three serious problems: jurisdictional overlapping, increased probability for personal and institutional rivalries and evolution of differing methods of operation within the one service. In questions of small importance, the conflicts generated by these problems might be counted as trivial annoyances of the system -- in larger matters, the inability of the naval institutions to work in tandem frustrated at all levels the growth of a strong and unified navy.

Footnotes

1. Gemzell, p. 44.
2. Edward von Knorr, unpublished memoirs contained in cover F7591, volume 6, BAMA and Tirpitz, vol. 1, p. 59 ff.
3. June 15, 1871.
4. Stosch, Denkwuerdigkeiten, vol. 1, p. 320.
5. Ibid., and Knorr, F7591, vol. 6, BAMA.
6. Gemzell, p. 44 ff.
7. Knorr, F7591, vol. 6, (p. 263), BAMA.
8. Ibid., (p. 267).
9. Ibid., and Tirpitz, vol. 1, p. 35.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Gemzell, p. 45.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 54.
15. Tirpitz, vol. 1, pp. 200-204.
16. Ibid. Among the more persistent and troublesome schemes of Wilhelm II was his plan to solve the cruiser/battleship debate. In his indefatigable way, the Emperor "designed" a ship which incorporated features of both the battleship and the cruiser. It was only with great difficulty that Tirpitz persuaded him to bury this ludicrous plan. Vide Chapter Seven.
17. Gemzell, p. 54.
18. Ibid.
19. March 30, 1889.

20. Gemzell, p. 38. For a short period in 1859, the administrative and command branches of the Prussian navy had been split. This experiment seems to have ended in failure, as it was abruptly abandoned. AKO, June 1, 1859.
21. Tirpitz, p. 170.
22. Organisationsreglement f. d. Kaiserliche Marine, zu A 57214/N, RM1/v. 2787, BAMA.
23. Gemzell, p. 39.
24. Ibid., p. 39 ff.
25. Ibid., p. 117.
26. Ibid., p. 39.
27. Ibid., p. 117.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 119.
30. Tirpitz, p. 59.
31. Organisationsreglement.., zu A 57214/N, RM1/v. 2787, BAMA.
32. Ibid.
33. Vide Figure Two.
34. Tirpitz, p. 122 ff.
35. Gemzell, p. 42.
36. Hollmann, draft memorandum of March 17, 1893, R 2529, PG 66700, NA.
37. Knorr to Tirpitz, January 12, 1898, K. 1296, PG 66700, NA.
38. Gemzell, pp. 42-44.
39. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 42, Aufsätze ueber Organisation, Berlin, December 12, 1890, draft Pro Memoria -- Stellung d. Kommandirenden Admirals.
40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.
42. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 2, Aus der Zeit als Chef des Stabes, Hollmann to Goltz, Berlin, January 2, 1892, BAMA.
43. Ganz, The Role of the Imperial Navy in Colonial Affairs,
p. 170 ff.

Chapter Seven

The Strategy Debate in the German Navy

Under the conditions which flourished in the wake of the 1889 re-organization, it was inevitable that German naval planning of the 1890s was characterized by personal rancour, departmental rivalry and petty jealousy. In trivial instances this climate made the smooth running of business difficult: in important matters like the colonial debate and the strategy question, harmonious co-operation between the three naval departments became all but impossible.

The question of strategy was the most crucial problem which faced the RMA and the OKM during this period. The adoption of a new strategical programme usually entails dramatic changes in long-range construction plans, personnel recruitment, training and munitions: unless all branches of the naval service are prepared to work together to effect these reforms, the efficacy of the new strategy will be severely jeopardized. Unfortunately, the situation which prevailed in the German navy rendered the task of achieving compromise between the RMA and the OKM on these issues extremely arduous.

The dilemma which faced the navy was a simple one. If the handmaid or the guerre de course strategies were adopted, long-range plans would require the construction of troop carriers, light-to-medium cruisers and the establishment of coastal defense fortifications. If either the Mahan or the Tirpitz plans were followed, the construction of battleships would assume primary importance. From the establishment of the tripartite system in 1889, the RMA and the OKM were bitterly divided over this issue. The RMA -- susceptible as it was to pressure from civilian groups and parliamentary lobbies and involved with its own complex plans for colonial expansion overseas¹ -- opted for the construction of a cruiser (guerre de course) fleet which could service colonies around the world and protect German commerce on the high seas.²

The OKM staff, who assessed the claims of the guerre de course proponents in terms of history and tactics, categorically rejected this strategy and campaigned for the building of a full-scale battle fleet.³

Admiral Edward von Knorr, from 1890 head of the OKM, had little but contempt reserved for his colleagues who supported the guerre de course. As these included Admirals Galster, Valois and SSdRMA Friedrich Hollmann, there is little wonder that bitter disputes arose between the two departments.⁴ Knorr's own positions -- made all the more intransigent by his stubborn and fiery temper -- were reinforced in 1892 by the appointment of Alfred Tirpitz as Chief of the Admiral Staff for strategic planning. Tirpitz had long been notorious for his outspoken support of the battle fleet programme. Since his cogent and forthright answers to Caprivi's strategy questionnaire of 1888 had first brought him to general attention,⁵ the young officer had continued to campaign vigorously for the construction of a fleet of annihilation. On January 3, 1891, Tirpitz (then Chief of the Kiel Station), prepared a memorandum in which he demanded improvements in OKM strategic planning which would eventually make possible the establishment of an "Entscheidungsflotte".⁶ Several months later, this memorandum was expanded and published under the title: Unsere maritime militaerische Fortentwicklung.⁷ In the fall of 1891, Tirpitz followed this with another persuasive and strongly-worded plea for naval reorganization: Ueber die Neuorganisation unserer Panzerflotte. In his conclusion, Tirpitz stated that:

..Vernichtung das unverrueckbare Ziel bei unserer Taktik, bei unserer Personalausbildung und bei unserer Organisation sein muss.⁸

During this same period, the young Tirpitz was also making a name for himself at the "Navy Evenings" which were so beloved of Wilhelm II. These gatherings of senior and up-and-coming naval officers were often weekly occurrences at court.

In the course of these evenings, many pressing questions were argued from all sides and the Emperor enjoyed the heated discussions which he deliberately provoked. Junior staff officers were particularly encouraged to participate in the debate and in this way, many promising career officers first came to prominence.⁹

In January 1892, the three years of Tirpitz' agitation were rewarded when he was appointed to the position of Chief of Staff at the OKM. Although circumstance and personality would later make Knorr and Tirpitz opponents, the initial decision to send Tirpitz to the OKM was an excellent one. Both Tirpitz and his determined superior believed implicitly in the advantages of battle fleet strategy and they worked in perfect accord on this issue. In addition, Tirpitz brought with him a staff of similar-minded young officers who had worked for him during his years in Kiel. These men -- who included the talented Ahlefeldt and Herringen -- all agreed with the Tirpitz view of strategy and worked tirelessly on his projects.¹⁰

Like his superior, Tirpitz had little use for the cruiser squadron proposals of the RMA and he had a low opinion of the senior men in that department: especially the luckless Hollmann.¹¹ Despite his outstanding record of the 1870s, Hollmann was never able to command the respect which he needed in his capacity of SSdRMA. In his Memoirs, Bernhard von Buelow described the unfortunate Hollmann as "undignified" and stated that no one was able to take the SSdRMA seriously.¹² This seems to have been true in even the highest circles. The Emperor, who rather liked Hollmann, could not resist tagging him with the moniker, "Hollmannikin" -- a patronizing nickname which plagued the Admiral to the end of his career.

Tirpitz was convinced that the problems in the German navy were basically the fault of the reorganization of 1889 and he believed that the RMA should expand its powers in the military sphere and thus closely circumscribe the powers of the OKM.¹³

This was a policy which Tirpitz himself would later pursue with a vengeance. However during his years at the OKM, the future Gross-admiral was forced to watch the incompetent RMA staff become increasingly paralyzed by administrative and jurisdictional disputes. This inability to command and to take a strong stand on any issue is well exemplified in the following letter which Hollmann sent to the OKM. Hollmann, who was hoping to get fuller OKM co-operation in military and technical matters, seems to have been unable to force the issue with the OKM: a serious defect when dealing with men of the stature of Knorr and Tirpitz.

..weshalb ich eine Mitwirkung des RMA bei der Anlage von Manoevren notwendig halte.

Diese Entwicklung ist meiner Auffassung nach, nicht trennbar in eine militaerische, technische oder administrative Frage -- sie ist eben unteilbar und stellt in ihrer Gesamtheit die Hebung der Kriegstuechtigkeit der ganzen Marine dar.

Die Spezialanlage und die militaerische Durchfuehrung auf Grund des vereinigten Zwecks und der vereinbarten Mittel wuerden Eurer Excellenz zufallen und das RMA dabei nur soweit betheilligt sein, als ihm durch Entsendung von Offizieren Gelegenheit geboten wird, an Ort und Stelle im lebendigen Anteil dem Verlauf der Manoever zu folgen, um Zeuge der Entwicklung zu sein, die auftretenden Fragen, ..zu studieren und an die Ergebnisse ein aus eigener Anschauung gewonnenes Urteil zu knuepfen. (SIC)¹⁴

Although Tirpitz was often disgusted by such dithering in the RMA and although his working relationship with Knorr became difficult, his years at the OKM were far from unhappy or unproductive. His careful first-hand observations of the RMA/OKM conflict provided him with material and ideas for later improvements in naval administration.¹⁵

His tactical and strategical studies -- although no longer considered as innovative as they were originally -- were sound and prolific.¹⁶ His meticulous attention to detail served as an example for a whole generation of the officer corps. His personal interest and aptitude in mining and installations helped to lift those branches of the service from their poor sister roles and to bring them to the forefront of naval development.¹⁷

Despite this impressive record, Tirpitz' chief, Edward von Knorr, was of two minds on the work of his impetuous subordinate. Although Knorr had long deplored the problems of the unified naval ministry, his constant battles with the RMA and that institution's insistence on guerre de course made him bitterly dissatisfied with the reorganization of 1889.¹⁸ Although he was opposed to the colonial machinations of Hollmann and his staff,¹⁹ Knorr was unwilling to appear completely uncompromising on the battle fleet question. A seasoned and expert officer, Knorr believed that one must show at least a little moderation in the strategy debate.²⁰ Not surprisingly, Tirpitz disapproved of Knorr's approach and the working relationship between the two men gradually deteriorated. Both men were hot-headed and both seemed to relish a good fight; indeed, for many years Tirpitz was genuinely in awe of his superior's terrible wrath and Knorr was one of the few who could bring the flamboyant officer to heel.²¹ Knorr felt compelled to keep a relentless watch on Tirpitz and often blue-pencilled his more extravagant statements, making them more palatable for public consumption.²² Small wonder that Knorr did not trust Tirpitz and was displeased with the latter's quick rise to preeminence.

During the middle years of the 1890s, Tirpitz began in earnest his long and fruitful relationship with Wilhelm II. The Emperor warmed almost immediately to the visionary officer who spoke in grandiose terms and who promised to deliver a navy which would be the envy of all Europe.

According to Tirpitz, had it been possible for him to deal directly with the Emperor on the strategy question, the dilemma would have solved itself in short order. In Tirpitz' view, proximity to the dedicated guerre de course proponent Hollmann and to members of the Marine Kabinett served to make the Emperor dangerously ambivalent on the strategy question.²³ In his Memoirs, Tirpitz described a particular evening during which the Emperor was slated to speak on the strategy issue. Apparently, Tirpitz and others had taken care to have Wilhelm II well briefed on the dangers of the guerre de course plan and were convinced that the thus enlightened Emperor would be sympathetic to the battle fleet concept in his speech. Unfortunately, members of the Marine Kabinett spoke to Wilhelm shortly before his address and as a result, the beleaguered man became confused. When he rose to speak, he departed from his prepared text and spoke extemporaneously in the vaguest of terms.²⁴ Thus, what should have been the occasion of a major policy statement became another wasted opportunity for both sides. Once again, the decentralized system which allowed too much direct access to the Emperor frustrated attempts to institute a coordinated and well-defined policy.

During the summer of 1896 there was a persistent rumour that Tirpitz would replace Hollmann at the RMA in a matter of weeks. Hollmann, who enjoyed a sound relationship with the Reichstag and whose efforts in the Kiaochow affair²⁵ served to keep him in favour with Wilhelm II, was able to forestall this change for about a year.²⁶ During the interim, Tirpitz was posted to the Far Eastern Squadron -- a change of pace which he found exhilarating.²⁷ Despite his disappointment with the delay in his posting to the RMA, he was able to make good use of his time away from Berlin and to plan in detail his course of action upon his return.²⁸

Tirpitz' former superior could have been under no illusions about the fate of the OKM once Tirpitz was appointed to the state secretaryship. Not only was the tenor of his administrative plans well known from 1891, (in that year he pressed for increased unity of command and for a more precise delineation of RMA and OKM duties),²⁹ but Tirpitz also sided with the RMA in the Kiaochow administration question. Despite the legitimate claims of the OKM that the administration of the new leasehold should fall into their sphere, Tirpitz supported RMA claims and after his appointment (January 2, 1898), he proceeded to make them a reality.³⁰

Shortly after he became settled at the RMA, Tirpitz communicated with Knorr about the state of RMA/OKM differences. On the basis of the Organisationsreglement of 1889, Tirpitz believed that harmonious co-operation would remain an impossibility and he suggested that Knorr's proffered plan of "consultative interaction" was unworkable.³¹ Knorr, who could have relished neither the tone nor the import of the letter, retaliated with a long epistle in which he outlined his grievances with the RMA. According to Knorr, the RMA was the "bureaucratic" arm of the navy and should therefore make every effort to take into consideration the suggestions and wishes of the OKM.³² Although Knorr's points were by and large well taken and it is easy to sympathize with his difficult position, his interpretation of the function of the RMA was a case of wishful thinking. Tirpitz took great delight in pointing this out to his former commander in another long and acerbic letter.³³

Although Knorr guessed correctly that the days of a strong OKM were numbered, Tirpitz hastened to assure him that some type of Oberkommando would be maintained. In January of 1898 Tirpitz prepared a massive memorandum in which he outlined his reasons for preserving an Oberkommando. This document, entitled "Gruende welche fuer die Beibehaltung eines Oberkommandos mit kraeftigen Befugnissen sprechen", contained the kernel of the new SSdRMA's plan for the reorganization of the navy. As he often did, Tirpitz began his analysis with an historical study of the 1889 plan:

Die Organisation der Marine hat in ihrer ganzen Jugend an dem Zwiespalt gekraenkt, der entsteht durch die Bedingungen der Seestreitkraft und der bestehenden Organisation eines Binnenvolkes und einer glorreichen Landarmee. (SIC)³⁴

Tirpitz then proceeded to outline three reasons why any naval reorganization must maintain the role of a strong Commanding Admiral:

1. dass die Vorbedingungen fuer einen Flottenfuehrer und einen Vertreter im Parliament bei der Eigentuemlichkeit des Berufes selten, in der Regel nie in einer Person vereinigt zu finden sind;
2. dass die Materie, welche mit der Gnade S.M. noch zunehmen wird, zu umfangreich und vielseitig fuer eine Person wird;
3. dass der Krieg das Vorhandensein von zwei oberen Behoerden erfordert, und es wuenschenswerth ist, nach Moeglichkeit unsere Friedensorganisation derjenigen des Krieges anzupassen.³⁵

Within a few weeks of his appointment to the RMA, Tirpitz began his rigorous programme of reform in the naval administration. By January 1899, the function of all Immediatbehoerden outside Berlin was strictly limited to the submission of written reports. These reports had to be submitted to one of the three naval departments headquartered in the capital: it was then the function of these institutions to decide which reports should be acted upon.³⁶ In this way, direct access to the Emperor was lost for the majority of the Immediatbehoerden. However this reform did insure that the three bureau chiefs -- especially the SSdRMA -- could exercise tighter control over the use and presentation of Immediatbehoerden material.³⁷ At the same time, the process of information gathering and communication within each Immediatbehoerde was standardized throughout the navy. The institutions of Referat and Dezernat were strengthened and all interdepartmental communication was forced to go across the desk of the bureau chief.

This was another attempt to maintain tighter control of all departments within the navy and to undo some of the harm which the 1889 decentralization scheme had caused. This system also had another advantage. As all matters, however trivial, had to be cleared with the bureau chief, junior officers were constantly kept before the eyes of their superiors. This made it possible for a senior officer to follow closely the career of a promising officer and to monitor the actions of an inferior one.³⁸

Tirpitz' chief administrative goal -- the abolition of the OKM and its replacement with a strong, but definitely subordinate Admiralty Staff -- was not accomplished without incident. On May 12, 1898 Tirpitz presented his first drafts for a revision of the naval constitution. In his Vorschlag he made five suggestions:

1. Die Schaffung selbstaendiger Aktionskommandos muss spaeteren Erwaegerungen vorbehalten bleiben.
2. Die Bestimmungen ueber Organisation des Bildungswesens kommen besonders zur Vorlage.
3. Die Abgaben von Personal und Aktenmaterial der Abthlg. A.I des OKM an das RMA wird nothwendig.
4. Die Kommando-Abtheilung des OKM ist um ein Dezernat zu verringern.
5. Es treten 7 Seeoffiziere des OKM zum RMA.³⁹

Less than two weeks later, Knorr sent a copy of his reactions to the scheme to Tirpitz: in his view, the plan was totally unworkable and if implemented would seriously jeopardize the efficiency of the OKM in peace and in war.⁴⁰ Knorr's personal reaction to the document was even less enthusiastic than his professional analysis: on his own copy he scribbled a hearty obscenity beside Tirpitz' five points.⁴¹

The day after he received Knorr's negative communication, Tirpitz wrote to the Emperor to plead for freedom to pursue his administration without OKM interference.⁴²

In his letter, Tirpitz stressed the importance of a smoothly-run RMA by outlining the difficulty in separating RMA and Auswaertiges Amt affairs and he persuasively argued that diplomacy made the speedy solution of the RMA/OKM conflict essential.

Wo liegen die Grenzen zwischen der vom SSdRMA beabsichtigten "groesseren Marinepolitik" und der reinen auswaertigen Politik? Wie schwierig diese zu bestimmen sind, davon gibt England in der Stellung und Thaetigkeit Chamberlains neben Salisbury gerade jetzt einen wichtigen Fingerzeig. Bisher hat E.M. das Auswaertige Amt ALLEIN verantwortlich gehalten fuer die wachsame Beobachtung und Durchfuehrung E.M. politischen Intentionen und die Marine nur als militaerisches Werkzeug in politischem Dienste gestellt. Was heisst es also, wenn gesagt wird, ein Zusammenarbeiten zwischen OKM und RMA sei nur moeglich, wenn die politischen Angelegenheiten und Aufgaben der Marine einem Behoerde dem RMA zugetheilt werden? KEINE. (SIC)

Dass ueberdies das RMA als Regierungsorgan E.M. in solchen politischen Fragen nicht ausgeschaltet werden koenne, erachte ich fuer einen zweiten Trugschluss, der E.M. in verhaengnisvoller Weise binden koennte.⁴³

In February of 1899, Tirpitz again presented more proposals for the reorganization of the navy. In his new report, he modified some of his earlier positions and advocated that more senior officers be trained in administration practices.⁴⁴ He reiterated again his belief that the command arm of the navy must be reduced in importance and placed under an "amenable officer with whom the Emperor could associate without problem".⁴⁵ This was another obvious attack on Knorr who, although his days were numbered, was resolved to put up a good fight to the bitter end. In conclusion Tirpitz wrote:

Durch diese Organisation wuerde nebenbei das RMA den Vortheil haben, mit der ganzen Front in unmittelbare Fuehlung zu kommen, mit den einzelnen Stellen direkt (SIC) verkehren; die Entwicklungsstelle braucht enge Fuehlung mit der wirklichen Front. Ich glaube, dass die Organisation unter wesentlich verminderter Friktion funktionieren wird.⁴⁶

On March 4, 1899 Tirpitz' ambition was finally achieved. The OKM was dissolved and was replaced by the Admiralstab der Marine under Rear Admiral Bendemann (later Admiral Diederichs). This new institution was strictly limited in its functions and caused little trouble for the RMA during the twenty years of its existence. In the same year, the RMA was reorganized and its competencies were expanded to include some of those functions which had formerly fallen within OKM jurisdiction. These expansions were continued in 1906, 1908 and 1910. By that year the competencies of the RMA ranged from budget/development to personnel, military development and technical testing/implementation.⁴⁷

Of course, important though it was, the reorganization of the naval administration was only a means to a strategic end in the Tirpitz plan. With his appointment as head of the RMA, the victory of battle fleet strategy within the German navy was assured. Within a few months of his promotion, Tirpitz began to lobby with the Reichstag for the first of the long-term budget grants which would virtually give the navy carte blanche in its construction programme of heavy cruisers, battleships and reconnaissance vessels.⁴⁸ On April 10, 1898 the first Flottengesetz made possible the following reordering of the fleet:

Sollstaerke:

117 Linienschiffe, dazu 2 Reserve
8 Kuestenpanzerschiffe
9 Grosse Kreuzer, dazu 3 Reserve
26 Kleine Kreuzer, dazu 4 Reserve

Ersatzzeiten:

Linienschiffe nach 25 Jahren
Grosse Kreuzer nach 20 Jahren.⁴⁹
Kleine Kreuzer nach 15 Jahren

Despite the drive of Tirpitz and his subordinates and their undeniable successes in the Reichstag, the victory of battle fleet strategy was not accomplished without cost. Tirpitz' triumph was made possible only through the suppression of the OKM and the fragmentation of the officer corps.

Many members of the corps still believed wholeheartedly in the guerre de course scheme which Hollmann had tried in vain to implement. Only a few months after the passage of the first Flottengesetz, Vice-admiral Viktor Valois published a book in which he made a strong case for the advantages of commerce warfare. In his work, Seemacht, Seegelung und Seeherrschaft, Valois openly criticized Tirpitz and his Entscheidungsschlacht strategy and he called for a return to Hollmann's policies.⁵⁰ Although Valois was retired from active service by the time his book appeared, it nevertheless caused an uproar. The controversy was further fanned when the writings of the prestigious Curt von Maltzahn were published several months later: it took all of Tirpitz' considerable strength and influence to silence the barrage of criticism which was levelled at him by many of his distinguished and respected colleagues.⁵¹

On June 14, 1900 the second Flottengesetz was passed: this allowed for the practical doubling of the number of ships of the line and made a substantial increase in the number of medium-to-heavy cruisers at the disposal of the navy.⁵² Not unnaturally, the disaffected officers who still clung to the ideals of guerre de course were further enraged by the second Tirpitz victory. The plodding Admiral Koester now joined the Valois/Maltzahn camp and helped create vicious anti-Tirpitz propaganda, claiming that the RMA scheme to design a master Schlachtflotte would unduly antagonize England and the other Great Powers.⁵³

Thus the Tirpitz appointment, while it did go a long way in solving the administrative problems of the navy and in insuring the introduction of a well-integrated strategy at all administrative and operational levels, it did nothing to close the gap which had opened in the ranks of the officer cadre. In 1904 the Emperor made a personal attempt to intervene in the dispute to reach a compromise: this ended in abject failure.⁵⁴ This was also the era of the charismatic "Jackie" Fisher -- his successes with reform and innovation in the Royal Navy undoubtedly spurred the Tirpitz faction to greater ambitions and forced them to take an increasingly intractable position. In 1906, 1908 and 1912 Tirpitz wrung from the Reichstag permission for the unilateral continuance of the battleship programme.⁵⁵ This triumph, which was only possible through the adroit system of administration which Tirpitz had established in his busy first years at the RMA, further fragmented the ranks of the officer corps.⁵⁶

The appointment of Tirpitz to the RMA assured the victory of the battle fleet strategy in Germany and allowed for a thorough reorganization of the administration/command superstructure of the navy. However by incorporating more and more departments within the RMA octopus, Tirpitz was still not able to come to grips with the root problem. The tripartite system of 1889 had fostered an independence of spirit and thought which administrative rearrangements could not altogether abolish. Thus the Tirpitz victories held together on the surface but beneath the mask of harmony, his reforms were frustrated and eroded by a fundamental disunity which ran deeper than departmental loyalty.

The ambivalent climate of the post 1889 navy caught the officer cadre at its most vulnerable. The strategy question, which under the best conditions could be expected to produce divisions -- or at least provoke debate -- within the officer corps, shattered the remains of the decentralized and leaderless system which had been born of the tripartite reorganization. Not even a Tirpitz could expect to cement together the crumbling structure which he had inherited.

In this atmosphere of suspicion and bitterness the role of both the See-Bataillon and the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung became increasingly difficult. The lack of solid administrative framework for the German marine troops meant that compromise and adaptability had to be their watchwords: in the post 1889 era the inflexibility which characterized almost all administrative levels rendered impossible the ordered evolution of the marine units.

Footnotes

1. Tirpitz and Hollmann to Marschall, Berlin, 17.4.1895, RM2/v. 1835, BAMA.
2. Tirpitz, vol. 1, p. 119 ff.
3. Gemzell, p. 58-59.
4. Ibid., p. 54, and Tirpitz, p. 76.
5. Gemzell, p. 54.
6. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 39, BAMA.
7. Gemzell, p. 55.
8. Ibid., p. 56.
9. Tirpitz, p. 200-204.
10. Gemzell, p. 94.
11. Tirpitz, p. 122 ff.
12. Buelow, Memoirs, vol. 1, p. 684.
13. Tirpitz, p. 59 ff.
14. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 2, BAMA, Hollmann to Goltz, Berlin, January 2, 1892.
15. Gemzell, p. 94 ff.
16. Ibid.
17. Tirpitz, p. 67.
18. Ibid., p. 59 ff.
19. N-F7591, Nachlass Knorr, vol. 6, BAMA.
20. Ibid.
21. In volume two of the Tirpitz Nachlass (Aus der Zeit als Chef des Stabes), the memoranda and documents are all covered with the pithy and sometimes acerbic comments of the sorely-tried Knorr.

22. Ibid.
23. Tirpitz, p. 200 ff.
24. Ibid.
25. Ganz, p. 170 ff.
26. Tirpitz, p. 76.
27. Ibid., p. 90 ff.
28. Ibid.
29. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 42, Berlin, December 20, 1890, Pro Memoria, Die Stellung des Kommandirenden Admirals, BAMA.
30. Ganz, p. 170 ff.
31. Berlin, December 26, 1897, Tirpitz to Knorr, A. 7677, PG 66700, NA.
32. Berlin, January 11, 1898, Knorr to Tirpitz, K. 1296, PG 66700, NA.
33. Berlin, January 16, 1898, Tirpitz to Knorr, PG 66700, NA.
34. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 39, Kampf zwischen OKM und RMA, revision of the February 1, 1891 memorandum "Gruende..", forwarded to Knorr during the spring of 1898, BAMA.
35. Ibid.
36. Gemzell, p. 43 ff.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Bd. 39, Berlin, May 12, 1898, Vorschlag ueber die Neuorganisation der obersten Marine-behoerden, BAMA.
40. Berlin, May 21, 1898, Knorr to Tirpitz, "Aeusserung zum Neuorganisationsvorschlag", contained in N-253, Bd. 39, BAMA.
41. Ibid.

42. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, Berlin, May 28, 1898, Tirpitz to Wilhelm II, appended to Bd. 39, BAMA.
43. Ibid.
44. N-253, Nachlass Tirpitz, February 20, 1899, Im Vortrag ueber Organisation der obersten Marinebehoerden, Bd. 39, BAMA.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. These documents of reorganization, entitled "Gliederung des RMA", are all contained in RM3/v. 10205, RMA/Nachrichtenbuereau, BAMA. The most important and most radical changes were contained in the Gliederung of May 31, 1906 (MI 4883):

Chef Der Staatssekretaer des RMA

1. Zentralabthlg.
2. Allgemeines Marinedepartement.
 - a. Militaerische Abthlg.
 - b. Seetransportabthlg.
 - c. Sektion fuer Mobilmachungsangelegenheiten.
 - d. " " Pensionsangelegenheiten.
 - e. " " Justiz & Versorgungsangelegenheiten.
 - f. Dezernat fuer Bearbeitung der militaerischen Fragen der Schiffskonstruktion.
3. Werftdepartement.
 - a. Abthlg. fuer Verwaltungsangelegenheiten.
 - b. Sektion fuer Torpedowesen.
 - c. Dezernat fuer Minen-und Sperrwesen.
 - d. " " Personalien der technischen & Betriebsbeamten der Werften.
 - e. " " Schiffsausruestung.
 - f. " " Instandhaltung der Schiffe & Schiffbaubetrieb.
 - g. Dezernat fuer Instandhaltung der Schiffsmaschinen & Schiffsmaschinenbaubetrieb.
 - h. Dezernat fuer Land-und Wasserbauwerke.
 1. " " Verwaltung der zur Torpedobootsneubaubestimmten Mittel.

47.
 4. Konstruktionsdepartement.
 - a. Abthlg. fuer Schiffbauangelegenheiten.
 - b. " " Maschinenbauangelegenheiten.
 - c. Dezernat fuer Probefahrten und militaerische Bauangelegenheiten.
 - d. " " Verwaltung der zu Schiffsneubau bestimmten Mittel.
 5. Verwaltungsdepartement.
 - a. Etatsabthlg.
 - b. Abthlg. fuer Unterkunftsangelegenheiten.
 - c. Abthlg. fuer Verwaltungsangelegenheiten.
 6. Waffendepartement.
 - a. Abthlg. fuer Handwaffen und Artillerie Konstruktion.
 - b. " " Aufstellung & Behandlungen d. Artillerie materials an Bord.
 - c. Dezernat fuer Angelegenheiten der Kuestenbefestigungen.
 - d. " " Artillerieverwaltungsangelegenheiten.
 7. Nautische Abthlg.
 8. Zentralverwaltung fuer das Schutzgebiet Kiautschau.
 9. Medizinalabthlg.
 10. Justizariat. (SIC)
 11. Nachrichtenbureau (Abthlg.)
48. Roehr, Deutsche Marinegeschichte, p. 99 ff.
49. Ibid., p. 99.
50. Gemzell, p. 56 ff.
51. Ibid.
52. Roehr, p. 102.

53. Gemzell, p. 56.
54. Tirpitz, p. 200 ff.
55. Marder, p. 483 ff., and Roehr, pp. 104-114.
56. Gemzell, pp. 54-56.

PART THREE

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE MARINE CORPS

AFTER 1889

Chapter Eight

Growing Divisions within the Marine Corps

The 1889 reorganization affected all branches of naval service: not merely the main administrative departments. (Vide Figure Two). The decentralization which was symptomatic of the tripartite system destroyed the unity of command within the marine corps and drove a wedge between its artillery and infantry branches. This was all the more unfortunate in that earlier suggestions concerning the reorganization of the navy would have guaranteed that the See-Bataillon (SB) and the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung (MAA) would evolve together. In this way, a fundamental unity of command and coordination of planning could have been maintained.

For many years after 1871 it was evident that the ad hoc development of both the artillery and infantry units was confusing and inefficient. As the size of both units grew, it became clear that the marine corps -- which had hitherto operated upon the most informal of bases -- would have to be reorganized along modern lines. In 1884/5, plans reflecting this attitude were incorporated in a proposal for the redrafting of the naval constitution. Although attempts to pass the reforms proved abortive as neither Admiralty Chief Caprivi nor Wilhelm I were in sympathy with naval complaints about the cumbrous system, the projected reorganization is significant. Even a brief examination of the draft proposals shows the excellence of the scheme in terms of marine corps administration -- an administration in which the estrangement of artillery and infantry units would have been all but impossible.

According to the 1884/5 draft, the navy would have been divided into two sections: that of the naval departments (including executive departments, administrative sections and commissions) and that of the naval divisions.¹

These naval divisions or Marinetheile would be designated as those "on land" or those "at sea".² The Chief of the Admiralty would be responsible for the coordination of both naval divisions and their subsequent integration with the naval departments.

Der Chef der Admiralitaet fuehrt nach der Anordnung Seiner Majestaet des Kaisers den Befehl ueber die gesamte Marine. Alle Marinebehoerden und Marinetheile sind ihn unterstellt.³

In this scheme, both the SB and the MAA would have been administered in the "land division" of the navy. In this way, overall coordination between the two could have been insured.⁴ In all, the land division would consist of the following:

die Matrosen-Division,
die Werft-Division,
das See-Bataillon,
die Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung,
die Schiffsjungenabtheilung.⁵

Ample provision was made in the draft for the technical expansion of the MAA. In order to supervise the development of this unit, a separate Inspektion fuer die Marine-Artillerie was established.⁶ In this Inspektion, all facets of military and technical knowledge which pertained to naval development would be supervised. The draft reorganization listed precisely the prospective jurisdictions of the Inspektion:

1. Der Inspektion der Marine-Artillerie (SIC) sind die MAA, das Artillerie-Schulschiff, die Artillerie-Seeminen und Torpedo-Depots und das gesamte Zug- Feuerwerk- und Torpedo-Personal unterstellt.
2. An ihrer Spitze steht ein Kontre-Admiral oder Kapitaen zur See als Inspekteur. Derselbe hat die allgemeinen dienstlichen Befugnisse und Pflichten eines Brigade-Kommandeurs der Armee. Einen Anspruch auf hoeheren persoenlichen Rang begruetet der Ernennung eines Kapitaens zur See zum Inspekteur der Marine-Artillerie nicht.⁷

This interesting compromise, which would have replaced the 1871 structure with a tightly-controlled administration and not with the amorphous and decentralized system of 1889, might have proven an excellent solution to the problems of the navy in general and of the marine corps in particular. By coordinating the two marine corps branches in the one division and by allowing the MAA to develop its technical expertise in community with the other more technically-oriented branches of the navy, this system would have guaranteed an important measure of unity while it permitted a sufficient degree of latitude for development within the individual units. Unfortunately, the hostile reception which this draft received from Caprivi's office insured its hasty demise. When interest again turned to naval reorganization in 1888/9, many officers, including Monts and Hollmann, were convinced that decentralization, not amalgamation, should be the watchword for naval reorganization. As a consequence, the 1884/5 draft played almost no role in the preparations for 1889.⁸

The Reglement of 1889 shattered forever all levels of unity within the Wilhelmine navy. The danger of the trend to over-decentralization was apparent within the first few sections of the document. According to the Reglement, the duties of the Commanding Admiral (Kommandirende Admiral) of the OKM were laid down as follows:

1. Der OKM ist die oberste Kommandobehoerde und der Admiralstab vereinigt.
An der Spitze des OKM steht der Kommandirende Admiral; ihm faellt hiernach zu:
 - a). der Oberbefehl ueber saemmtliche Kommandobehoerden und Marinetheile, sowie die Leitung des Seeoffizierkorps, des Offizierkorps der Marine-Infanterie, des Maschineningenieurkorps und des Sanitaetsoffizierkorps,
 - b). die Leitung der Admiralstabsgeschaefte.

2. Der Oberbefehl schliesst ein: die Fuehrung der Streitm Kraefte im Kriege, deren Ausbildung und sonstige militaerische Vorbereitung fuer den Krieg und die Stellung der Aufgaben fuer die im Dienst befindlichen Schiffe.

Die Vorbereitung fuer den Krieg hat sich auf die Entwicklung der Taktik und auf die Ausbildung des unterstellten Personals im Rahmen der gegebenen Organisation zu erstarcken.

5. Der KA ordnet in einen Befehlsbereich (SIC) die Kommandirungen und Versetzungen der Personen des Soldatenstandes zu den Behoerenden und Marinetheilen an, soweit dadurch die Spezialitaets-Vertheilung des Personals der Marinetheile nicht beruehrt werden und soweit die Kommandirungen nicht g.g. die Allerhoechsten Entscheidungen vorbehalten sind.⁹

In direct contrast to this, the duties of the newly-created RMA were to include a multitude of technical and military matters, as well as the coordination of various technical officer ranks:

5. Der SSdRMA sind unterstellt:
 - f). die zu seinen Ressort (SIC) kommandirten Offiziere, Offiziere der Marine-Infanterie, Maschineningenieure und Sanitaetsoffiziere,
 - g). die Torpedo-Ingenieure, Zug- Feuerwerk- und Torpedo-Offiziere, sowie das sonstige Militaerpersonal der Artillerie und Minen-Depots, der Torpedowerkstatt und der Bekleidungsaeemter.¹⁰

In one stroke, this removed the officer corps of the MAA (and indeed of all the important technical branches of the navy) from the control of the OKM and placed it within the jurisdiction of the RMA. This immediately created a contradiction: the RMA had the responsibility for technical development; yet the OKM was responsible for testing and implementation of all new technical improvements. (Vide Figure Two for a complete listing of areas of conflict between the two departments.)

By the terms of the Reglement, the OKM was responsible for all preparations for war; unfortunately, no precise explanation of what these preparations entailed were written into the reorganization. Thus, a potential difficulty could arise whereby the SB under the command of the OKM might be assigned a function according to a specified mobilization plan while the MAA, operating under the RMA, might not be included in the scheme. If one were to operate according to the precise terms of the Reglement, this absurdity would be a very real threat.

Inevitably, this division between the SB in the OKM sphere and the MAA in the RMA camp caused a breakdown in communications and coordination between the two units. Even if relations between the OKM and the RMA had been smooth, it is probable that the diminution of contact between the SB and the MAA would have resulted in serious alienation. However, as we have seen in Part Two, in the years after 1889 it proved impossible for the RMA and the OKM to reach a lasting modus vivendi on even trivial matters: as a result, their communications breach provoked a similar gulf between the SB and the MAA.

This trend to the alienation of the SB from the MAA was further heightened in the description of SB and MAA functions which accompanied the Reglement. For the first time in corps history, the duties of the units were delineated. Those of the MAA included:

1. Bedienung der Kuestenartillerie, das
Minenlegen und die Bedienung der
Torpedobatterien.
Im Nothfall koennen sie zum Schiffs-
besatzungen mitherrangezogen werden. (SIC)
In jedem der beiden Reichskriegshaefen
garnisonirt eine Abtheilung.

As part of this specific delineation of MAA duties, the post 1889 navy adopted one measure which had been advocated in the abortive 1884/5 draft: the establishment of a strong Inspektion to supervise military and technical development in the navy.¹² This body was able to give the MAA the sense of direction and means of adaptability which guaranteed its survival.

Unfortunately for the marine corps, the 1889 reorganization ordered an incorporation of MAA officers into the officer corps of the station in which they were garrisoned.¹³ Although this was a sound step from an administrative and budgetary point of view, it made it increasingly difficult for the MAA to maintain its feeling of separateness from the rest of the navy and correspondingly, to foster ties with the SB.

The Organisationsreglement also described the functions of the SB and set down the training and drill which the Seesoldaten were to follow:

1. Das SB ist zur Vertheidigung der Reichskriegshaefen bestimmt und nimmt an der Besatzung von Schiffen theil (SIC). Es steht direkt unter dem Chef der Marinestation der Ostsee.
2. Seine Ausbildung umfasst den Infanteriedienst, das Exerzieren an (SIC) Geschuetz, wobei der Mann jedoch in der Regel nur an einem Kaliber auszubilden ist, und das Bootrudern.
In der infanteristischen Ausbildung sind die fuer den Festungsdienst wichtigeren Dienstzweige in den Vordergrund zu stellen. Dem Turnen und Schwimmen ist besonderer Werth beizulegen.
5. Mit dem SB ist eine Bekleidungswerkstatt fuer die Marine verbunden.¹⁴

The same sort of imprecision which plagued the descriptions of RMA and OKM competencies is evident in this brief outline of SB tasks. The conditions for service on board ship are set down only in the vaguest of terms and there is no clear formula for training procedures.

Thus the Organisationsreglement attacked the integrity of the marine corps from three sides: it separated the MAA and the SB and permitted these two units to evolve apart; it brought about a critical communications breakdown within the higher ranks of the naval administration which resulted in a lack of attention being given to the marine corps in general; and it contained critical omissions in the outlines of SB and MAA functions.

Unlike the MAA, whose officer corps was to be absorbed into the officer corps of the station, the officer corps of the SB was to form a separate and distinct body:

4. Die Offiziere des SB ergaenzen sich durch die Infanterie-Offiziere der Armee. Sie bilden ein Offizier-Korps in sich.¹⁵

This measure immediately put the MAA at a disadvantage: while its officer corps was assimilated into the greater corps of naval officers, the SB corps remained separate. This allowed the SB greater possibilities for the maintenance of individual corps traditions and spirit. Because the officer corps of the SB was chosen from the officer corps of the army and was allowed to remain isolated from the naval officer corps, the gap between the MAA and the SB was further widened. The military officers of the SB tended to promote a military type of orientation within the ranks of the Seesoldaten and within a few years, the SB was to lose its unique naval flavour.

Thus the twin problems of over-decentralization and lack of coordination which beset the naval hierarchy after 1889 afflicted the marine corps in two ways. Directly, the same autonomy and independent character which was fostered in the naval administration was also promoted in relations between the SB and the MAA; indirectly, the results of the schism between the OKM and the RMA played havoc with the orderly development of both units.

Throughout the 1890s, the results of the division became increasingly evident, as the SB began to play an expanded role as an emergency overseas police force and the MAA evolved into a highly technical organization which fulfilled a variety of functions under the aegis of the RMA. From the beginning, the policy division between the OKM and the RMA made itself apparent in the marine corps. Although the SB training during the nineties did not deviate from the standards laid down in 1889,¹⁶ the SB was often called upon to act as a special force de frappe to supplement or even supersede the foreign-staffed Schutztruppen in the German colonies. This function was entirely in keeping with the ideas of Admiral Hollmann and the proponents of guerre de course. However, as no one at the OKM was enthusiastic about this scheme and as no supreme body existed to coordinate the efforts of the RMA and the OKM, no attempt was made to adapt SB training procedures or to equip the Seesoldaten to serve more efficiently overseas. Lacking basic training in jungle warfare, desert warfare and survival techniques, and without the specialized tropical kit and uniforms necessary for their duties, the SB was expected to serve under dangerous and rigorous conditions. It is a credit to the discipline of the Seesoldaten and to the resourcefulness of their officers that they performed so ably.

On March 12, 1889 two battalions of SB were formed by AKO.¹⁷ Virtually all officers of the SB were in favour of this move which had been foreshadowed in November 1886 with the division of the existing battalion into two half-battalions. According to the AKO of 1889, the SB I. was to be garrisoned at Kiel and the SB II. was to be posted to Wilhelmshaven. The Admiralty Chief was given the responsibility for the posting of senior corps personnel. In order to administer this larger organization, a separate Inspektion der See-Bataillone was created. The Inspektion had a mandate to supervise training and discipline within the 575-man force.

Beide Seebataillone werden einer zu bildenden Inspektion unterstellt. Diese besteht aus einem Inspekteur, einem I. Lieutenant als Adjutant und den erforderlichen Unterpersonal. Stabsquartier der Inspektion ist Kiel.¹⁸

Within a few days of its reorganization, the SB saw its first tour of overseas duty under its new guise. In German East Africa the Arab slave dealers revolted against German attempts to end their lucrative trade. On orders from the Auswaertiges Amt, the navy ordered the corvette, Sophie, which was sailing in the area, to land its Seesoldaten detachment in the colony. The attempts of this small landing party of less than 35 men proved futile against the stronger and determined Arabs. In addition, the Seesoldaten were not equipped with a proper tropical kit or uniform. After a year of unsatisfactory results, the landing parties of the cruisers Carola and Schwalbe were dispatched to assist the sorely-pressed men of the Sophie. These detachments massed with the coloured police force of the area (under the command of Major Wissmann) on April 5, 1890.¹⁹ Two days later, the German force was victorious in a bloody but decisive battle at Kilwa-Kiwindje. On the tenth of April, the insurgents were driven out of the capital and order was restored.

Both the coloured troops under Major Wissmann and the Seesoldaten forces under Major Bach suffered enormous losses -- over 18%. This was due in part to the early reports on the scope of the rebellion which grossly under-represented the strength of the rebel cause and to the lack of tropical kit and necessary medical supplies which plagued the SB.²⁰

Within a few months, men from the SB again saw action in Africa. When the natives of the Wuri River region in the Cameroons rose up against German rule in July 1890, the 30 Seesoldaten stationed aboard the gunboat Habicht were dispatched to bring the situation under control.

Their presence in this area was crucial as the forces of the colonial Schutztruppe in the Cameroons were small and were entirely unequal to the threat of rebellion. The lack of organized police protection in the Wuri Region prompted the commander of the African Squadron, Rear Admiral Deinhard, to assign some seventy seamen to assist the SB detachment. Fortunately for the Germans, the intelligence reports had greatly exaggerated the dangers of the revolt: the natives were poorly-armed farmers who had no modern weapons and no leader. Within twenty-four hours the entire area was again secure in German hands and the landing party was able to reembark. A handful of Seesoldaten remained in Cameroon for approximately three weeks: they assisted the Schutztruppe with tactical and light weapons training.²¹

On August 28, 1891 the combined detachments of the cruisers Alexandrine, Leipzig and Sophie were landed at Valparaiso under the command of the redoubtable Admiral Viktor Valois. A revolution there appeared to be threatening the economic interests of the German community in the city and accordingly, that group requested help from Berlin. Although details on this action are few, it appears that the German contingent worked together with the Chilean navy in order to protect the European settlements in the city. A "demonstration of force" was followed by the occupation of the European suburbs by the Seesoldaten and men from the Chilean armed forces. Despite the brevity of the German presence in Valparaiso (a mere two days), the European community there began a navy fund to contribute to the continued success of the German navy.²²

On October 18, 1891 the two unarmoured gunboats Habicht and Hyaene were forced to return to Cameroon. Working together with the small native police force, the combined landing parties quelled a small uprising of natives in the Abo region. As had been the case in the Wuri district, genuine resistance collapsed almost with the first sight of European troops and guns. In under twenty-four hours the Abo tribe submitted to the imposition of German rule in their region and the Seesoldaten were able to return aboard ship.²³

In the fall of 1892, the first combined manoeuvres incorporating all ships within the navy were held. As most of the emphasis in this exercise was placed on line tactics, the Seesoldaten played no significant role in the manoeuvres. The MAA, whose duties were almost exclusively confined to work in naval armament shops or exercises in coastal defense, was also denied a chance to participate in the manoeuvres. This oversight was never corrected and neither unit was ever integrated into manoeuvre programmes.²⁴ This is yet another example of how the lack of coordination within the senior levels of the navy affected the MAA and the SB. As the use of the marine infantry became more oriented toward colonial service, the shipboard duties (military watch, manning heavy guns, ship discipline) of the SB became a thing of the past. Increased training of the seamen and improvements in weaponry meant that the Seesoldaten were no longer needed at sea. Thus the SB spent its time during cruises practising calisthenics and rowing in stationary sculls. This was not only inefficient, it was demoralizing. If better coordination between the MAA and the SB could have been achieved by the navy, these two units could have been reunited and formed a single corps with specialized training in overseas conditions and heavy gunnery. As circumstance would prove, this was precisely the type of force which the Reich needed; however, the rift in OKM/RMA thinking made the formation of such a unit impossible.²⁵

Throughout 1893 and 1894 the SB saw much diverse action overseas: usually in small detachments of between 25 and 40 men. These detachments composed the nucleus of a ship's landing party. If the situation merited stronger support, senior ratings from the crew would be posted for duty with the Seesoldaten. A typical action was that performed by the landing party and crew of the corvette Arcona. During a coup d'état in Brazil in December, 1893, the rebels seized six German barges in the port of Rio.

Repeated attempts to regain control of the barges by diplomacy failed and at length, the Arcona landing party disembarked at Rio and forced the insurgents to give up the German barges. This small skirmish took place in the morning and during the afternoon, the Arcona Seesoldaten "liberated" European and German passengers who were being held aboard a steamer in the port.²⁶ This was the type of action at which the SB excelled: lightning operations during which the men would be on land for twenty-four hours or less to resolve a limited and well-defined problem.

A similar operation took place in Cameroon on the twentieth of December, 1893. Part of the small Schutztruppe in the region was composed of natives from Dahomey. These men were manifestly dissatisfied with their lot in Cameroon and began to agitate for improved conditions and the opportunity to return to their homeland. On December 20, the Hyaene landing party marched into the capital and shot the leaders of the mutineers. Within hours, resistance collapsed and the Seesoldaten were able to return to the Hyaene during the morning of the 23rd. When Berlin had first learned of the mutiny, the OKM had scrambled to compose an expeditionary force from the SB I. in Kiel. By the time that this force was ready for transport (December 26), the mutiny was over and it was possible to disband the expeditionary corps.²⁷ Again, one can attribute the success of the Hyaene party to its ability to act quickly, efficiently and independently. The Schutztruppe outnumbered the detachment by more than three to one and possessed at least a superficial veneer of European training and tactics. Yet the Seesoldaten easily defeated the mutineers and did not suffer one casualty in the process.²⁸

While the Seesoldaten were occupied with police duties throughout the German colonial Reich, the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung was fast becoming a useful arm of the RMA.

This versatile unit, which could fill any number of odd jobs and staff vacancies in the mining, installations and armaments divisions, was also useful at dockside: in firefighting, mechanical work, etc.²⁹ On March 27, 1893 AKO created a fourth company of MAA at Cuxhaven.³⁰ This was the first addition to the unit since 1867 and it reflects the importance which the MAA had in the eyes of the RMA. Blessed with a strong Inspektion and well integrated with its companion services (mining, torpedo depots, etc.), the MAA was able to achieve a reputation for flexibility and reliability which would serve it in good stead in coming years.

With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the landing party of the unarmoured gunboat Iltis was immediately put on alert status. The Iltis was cruising in the Yellow Sea and rescued the Chinese crew of a troop transport which the Japanese had sunk. A few days later, the landing party was disembarked in Seoul and immediately surrounded the German community there to protect it from the hostilities.³¹

From 1890, the Far Eastern Squadron had been agitating for a larger contingent of Seesoldaten: not only was the scope of German mercantile interests in the Far East on the rise, but also the RMA was seriously contemplating colonial expansion in China.³² Thus a large detachment of marines could serve a twofold function in the Far East: they could protect German property and they could assist with plans for the extension of German colonial and naval interests there.³³ Thus although the Sino-Japanese War never seriously threatened German lives or property, it served as a convenient excuse to augment the landing parties attached to the ships of the Far Eastern Squadron by some 100 men.³⁴ This increase was done on the suggestion of both RMA and OKM staff: when the Far East was at last given an official, permanent cruiser squadron in 1895, some 45 were culled from the SB I. and about 60 were recruited from the SB II. for long-term assignment with the Squadron. In their early months in Asia, the Seesoldaten assisted RMA plans for the occupation of a fleet station by collecting basic meteorological and botanical data.³⁵

The startlingly easy defeat of China at the hands of a modernized Japan forced the Great Powers to send an international expeditionary force to oversee the maintenance of European settlements in north China. This corps of just under 1000 British, American, French and German marine infantry left Chifu on January 24, 1895 and proceeded to all major European settlements in the Shantung Peninsula. This combined force, which was under the de facto command of Admiral Hoffmann, leader of the Far Eastern Squadron, did not have any type of mandate to participate in the hostilities: the force was formed merely to protect European commercial interests and lives in the event of serious fighting. Small detachments of this combined force went to Amoy, Tientsin and other trading towns where the European population was significant.³⁵ As part of this action, the landing party of the cruiser Irene disembarked in Formosa to hold off Japanese attempts to capture that strategic island. It is important to note that for this venture, the RMA had sent 14 artificers from the MAA to join with the Seesoldaten from the Irene.³⁶

It was only at this late date, when the SB had been serving for several years as a de facto colonial police force, that any thought was given to the redirection of Seesoldaten training procedures. During the summer of 1896, the OKM ordered a new series of training exercises for the SB: these improvements were welcomed by all corps officers who had been advocating such changes for some time.³⁷ The new procedures were to include instruction in camp and fortification construction, training in bush and jungle warfare and a basic study course on the geography and anthropology of German overseas possessions. In addition, the overseas kit issued to the Seesoldaten was to be lightened and ameliorated. Medical supplies such as quinine tablets were included in the new kits and cooler, tropical uniforms were designed.³⁸

In the wake of the hostility shown by both Tirpitz and Knorr to the colonial plans of Hollmann, Valois and the RMA, this action should not be interpreted as a sign of compromise on the critical strategy issue by the OKM. While neither Tirpitz nor Knorr were convinced that the fleet station plan advocated by the guerre de course proponents was a correct one (a theory which depended to a large extent on a network of bases staffed and guarded by marine troops), both men were interested in the potential of a naval settlement in China. If such an enterprise were well run, the commercial and industrial revenues which would revert to naval coffers would prove an excellent source of independent income for naval development. Thus both men were more than willing to co-operate with Hollmann and the RMA in this one instance.³⁹ For this reason, the expanded training programme for the SB was hastily implemented by August 1897: barely three months before Germany made her successful bid to seize the port of Kiaochow (Tsingtau). The long-time commander of the SB I., Max von Prittwitz, assessed the new reforms in this way:

Im Laufe des Sommers 1897 wurde zum ersten Male die Ausbildung der SB im Kolonialdienst betrieben, da ihre Verwendung, wenigstens teilweise, in ueberseeischen Laendern sehr im Bereiche der Moeglichkeit lag, wie dies die Geschichte der Bataillone auch spaeterhin noch mehrfach beweisen sollte. Diese besonderen Uebungen wurden dabei gemacht: Kriegsmaersche im dichten Busch, Angriffe an afrikanischen Befestigungen, Uebersetzen ueber Flusslaeufer unter Anwendung von Kochgeschirren, Zeltbahnen, usw., und Lagerbauen. Schliesslich wurde diese neue Art der Ausbildung durch eine Besichtigung seitens des Inspektors Oberst von Hoeppner beschlossen.⁴⁰

Although this training went a long way to obviate some of the problems which the Seesoldaten faced overseas, the OKM stopped short of forming the SB into a full colonial force.

Thus, while the new training centred on practical means of survival in the bush and jungle and while men were encouraged to take up a civilian skill which might prove valuable in a new base or colony,⁴¹ the prevailing mentality of the unit did not reflect this approach. Recruitment was geared to young men who had a taste for adventure: many signed up in the hopes of a career of swashbuckling adventures in the style of French Foreign Legion thrillers: instead, these eager young men found themselves fighting fires in Kiel and digging canals in Kiaochow.⁴² Not surprisingly, the men who had come to carry the sword and banner of Saint Michael were embittered by the banality of their existence within the corps. "We came to China with bayonets and they've given us spades",⁴³ was a remark symptomatic of the discrepancy between reality and recruitment promises. As a result, the incidence of alcoholism in the SB rose alarmingly during the 1890s and the general morale of the Seesoldaten decayed noticeably.⁴⁴ If either Knorr or Hollmann had had a clear mandate in their respective spheres, perhaps this situation could have been avoided. Again the communications breakdown between the OKM and the RMA drained away the strength and efficiency of the navy as a whole. The severe rifts in the officer corps caused by the strategy debate and exacerbated by the power struggles at top administrative levels meant that no one was able or even willing to step into the breach and to undertake a full-scale reorganization of the SB. As a result, the unit which was fast becoming indispensable in German colonial matters floundered where it should have flourished.

After a scant three months of survival training, a combined force of both SB I. and SB II. personnel was sent in November 1897 to seize and secure the prospective station at Kiaochow. The detachment was a large one and it strained the ranks of both battalions to the limit to provide the joint force of 30 officers, 77 NCOs and 610 men.⁴⁵

It is significant that in the year preceding the Besitzergreifung, the RMA had planned to deploy a full company of MAA troops and at least one of the two battalions of Seesoldaten. Until the last moments, the OKM insisted that the RMA plan was too vague and ambitious and consequently, they could not guarantee the availability of troops for the project. Indeed, throughout the summer of 1897 the entire project was on the verge of postponement over this impasse. It was only the murder of the German missionaries on November 4, 1897 that forced the hand of the OKM: imperial and public outrage were so extreme that Knorr was not able to stall on his commitments any longer.⁴⁶

On November 14, 1897 the marine troops from the cruisers Kaiser, Prinzess Wilhelm and Cormoran under the command of Rear Admiral Diederichs disembarked at the port of Tsingtau and sent a message to the Chinese garrison in Kiaochow. Unless the Chinese complied with the stiff terms of an ultimatum which was simultaneously being transmitted to Peking, the Germans intended to occupy the region. To German surprise, the Chinese acquiesced at once to the outrageous terms which included permission to step up missionary activity in Shantung and payment of a large indemnity. Unflustered by the Chinese acceptance of the ultimatum, Diederichs and his men sent a second message to the Kiaochow garrison: unless the troops withdrew in twenty-four hours, the Germans would seize the town of Kiaochow and open fire on the port of Tsingtau from the ships anchored in the harbour. Surprised and in disorder, the Chinese withdrew and the Germans entered Kiaochow on November 15, without having fired a single round of shot.⁴⁷

The joint Auslandstruppe formed from the SB I. and the SB II. left Darmstadt on November 29, 1897. This was the largest overseas force of Seesoldaten which had ever been assembled and even the previously unenthusiastic OKM was excited about the possibilities for colonial expansion which awaited the men in Shantung. According to the RMA plan, a Marine-Artillerie-Detachement was formed from MAA volunteers.

Together, the Seesoldaten and artillerymen were to relieve the small landing corps from the Far Eastern Squadron and begin the occupation and exploitation of Kiaochow in earnest.

It is significant to note that although the SB and MAA troops were transported to China together, the MAA detachment was assembled in Krefeld, not Darmstadt. This is all the more puzzling in that both the Seesoldaten and the Matrosen received the same kit for the journey; including the heavy woolen underthings and socks necessary for the north China winter. In addition, both groups were issued with the newly-designed M.88 rifle; a weapon not as yet in general use in the army. Both in Krefeld and Darmstadt practice drills with the new weapon were begun immediately and during the voyage to China, the units spent most of their time familiarizing themselves with the modern rifle.⁴⁸ Although there is no direct information on the subject, it seems probable that the decision to keep separate the MAA and the SB units until transport was at least partially dictated by the consideration that the first service was administered by the RMA and the second, by the OKM.

The arrival of the Auslandstruppe in Kiaochow on January 26, 1898 was hailed as a holiday in the new German protectorate.⁴⁹ Before their departure from Germany, the men had been showered with gifts and congratulations: a similar display greeted them in Shantung, where plans were already being drawn up for the establishment of a subscription library for the "moral and intellectual stimulation" of the Seesoldaten.⁵⁰ On June 13, 1898 the expeditionary force was officially created as the SB III. (Tsingtau) and was permanently garrisoned in Kiaochow. In October of the same year, a Stammkompanie for the SB III. was established in Kiel and the new battalion received its own regimental colours.⁵¹

From the first, the SB III. lived under almost domestic conditions -- belying the bellicose propaganda and sentiments which had accompanied the men on their voyage to China. Within a few weeks, the Seesoldaten were settled into a prosaic routine of road building, guard duty, camp construction and railroad improvement.⁵² Men and officers were encouraged to bring their families to the leasehold and the navy published a type of "get acquainted with Kiaochow" pamphlet which covered every eventuality from the price of eggs to the problems which would confront European furniture and pianos in the humid climate.⁵³ This cozy approach was a manifest disappointment to many who believed that they had signed on with the SB on the basis of false information. Indeed, the cost of eggs and vegetables in Kiaochow was far removed from the SB III.'s unofficial motto:

Kaisertreu am Chinastrand,
Wir kaempfen fuer das Vaterland.⁵⁴

Within a short time, the major foes which the Seesoldaten battled in Shantung were neither the "Yellow Peril" nor the oppressive climate: alcoholism and venereal disease were the medical problems most often brought to the attention of corps medical personnel.⁵⁵ Abortive attempts to interest men in temperance movements and other similar crusades failed miserably. In part, the isolated monotony of life in Kiaochow was responsible for this: Kiaochow never became the great commercial centre of the East which Tirpitz and Knorr had planned. The port served as a home base for the ships of the Far Eastern Squadron, but it never became a serious rival to Hong Kong for a share of Asian trade. The highlight of the social calendar at the fleet station appears to have been the Anglo-German tennis matches held every August. For that month, the German leasehold enjoyed the reputation of a Chinese "Riviera"; however, for the rest of the year, Kiaochow was notoriously quiet.⁵⁶

Under such circumstances, even the officers did not take Berlin's well-meant attempts to bring temperance to the ranks of the Seesoldaten seriously. Inspired by an idea of Wilhelm II's, the officers were occasionally supposed to read temperance sermons to the erring troops. This quasi-official "suggestion" does not appear to have been acted upon very often. In fact, the Kiaochow Seesoldaten enjoyed a rather dubious reputation for hard drinking up and down the Shantung coast. A well-known English joke of the day ran something like the following:

"The German administration would like to deny officially and categorically the rumour that Kiaochow's major export is empty bottles." ⁵⁷

A proposal by the medical personnel of the station to encourage more family immigration and to supervise the running of SB brothels was never put into effect.⁵⁸ Although the medical records of the SB III. are no longer available in their entirety, it is evident that on their own initiative corps doctors began to treat local prostitutes for T.B. and venereal disease. However as the funds for the running of the leasehold were cut back after 1905/6, this discreet scheme was dropped after that date.⁵⁹

During the ten years immediately following the reorganization of 1889, an effective wall was built between the MAA and the SB. The different social orientations of the officer corps, the first to the navy, the second to the army, insured that the attitudes and traditions fostered in each unit would be vastly different. The artillery and mechanical skills which were encouraged in the MAA gave that group a community of interest with other technical service branches like the mining and installations divisions. This community of interest in the technical services was encouraged by the RMA which had complete control of the development and deployment within these branches. The RMA practice of assigning men from one branch to replace temporarily a vacancy in another helped to cement this union.

In addition, the type of individual who served with the MAA was unusual. Many were skilled mechanics who were masters of their trade. Not a few of the MAA officers were trained as professional engineers. During the course of their service with the MAA, many artillerymen were trained as metal-workers, machinists and munitions personnel.

On the other hand, the duties and spirit of the Seesoldaten were alien to this. While the MAA usually remained in Germany and worked at various workshops and ports, many Seesoldaten still served aboard ship and saw action overseas. Even though the terms of SB life on board were not completely satisfactory and the conditions under which the battalion fought were often difficult, the opportunity for overseas service further underscored the differences between the two units. Despite evidence to the contrary, the SB maintained a cinematic image. This was consciously promoted by corps officers whose monthly magazine gave an often distorted view of SB exploits.⁶⁰ There is no way in which the professional and technical interests of the MAA could be identified with this.

As we have seen, the false image projected by the SB for what may be considered recruitment and social purposes did not serve the battalion well in China. There, life in modern barracks, a heavy infusion of distinctly non-military tasks (including gardening and carpentry) and the isolation on the Shantung coast exacted a heavy toll from the general morale of the unit. Had closer contact with the MAA been maintained throughout the decade before 1900, it is probable that this discrepancy between SB lore and SB reality would not have occurred. If the reorganization of 1889 had allowed the MAA and the SB to remain as two branches of the one service instead of separating them at every level, it would have been necessary to compromise on mythology in order to maintain a basic unity of tradition and goal.

Although the differing tasks of the two units would have made this difficult, there can be little doubt that efforts would have had to be made to keep unit orientations consistent. In this way, the glamorous image of the SB might have at least partially disappeared in the attempt to form a unified corps. Close supervision at senior administrative levels could have made certain that false recruitment propaganda was superseded by more balanced information.

Thus the wedge between the MAA and the SB resulted not only in a massive communications gap between the two units: it also encouraged the lack of coordination within the Seesoldaten administration. From 1889 the SB was supervised by the OKM: a body which had no real interest in insuring that training programmes reflected actual Seesoldaten tasks or that the infrastructure of the corps was solid. Solid administration and leadership were two qualities which the MAA possessed in abundance. Through closer contacts with the MAA, the SB might have learned from association or example how better to design a comprehensive programme reflecting the realities of its function. This needed contact was manifestly impossible under the conditions of the tripartite system of 1889.

Footnotes

1. Vorschläge fuer die Neuorganisation der Kaiserlichen Marine, 1884/5, RM1/v. 2791, BAMA.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Organisatorische Bestimmungen, Anlage A, zu A. 5744/N., RM1/v. 2791, Spring(?), 1889, BAMA.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. AKO, Berlin, March 12, 1889, PG 66716, NA.
18. betreffend die Inspektion des See-Bataillons, (SIC), Berlin, April 23, 1889, zu 3024, PG 66716, NA.
19. Prittwitz, p. 63.
20. Ibid.
21. Roehr, p. 94.

22. Ibid., p. 95.
23. Ibid.
24. Prittwitz, p. 70.
25. Ibid.
26. Roehr, p. 96.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 96-97.
29. AKO, Berlin, May 27, 1893, A. 2083/237-93, PG 66715, NA.
30. Ibid.
31. Roehr, p. 97.
32. Ibid.
33. Tirpitz, vol. 1, p. 140.
34. Ganz, p. 57-59.
35. Roehr, p. 97.
36. Ibid.
37. Prittwitz, p. 74.
38. Ibid.
39. Vide, P. N. Waring, M.A. Thesis, "The Approach of the Reichs Marine Amt to Chinapolitik", Chapter Two.
40. Prittwitz, p. 74.
41. Ganz, p. 210. Among other requirements, future Seesoldaten had to be at least eighteen years of age, have attained a minimum height of 1,67 metres and had to be prepared to serve for a minimum of three years. In practice, most candidates were encouraged to remain in the service for at least six to ten years. It is also interesting to note that over one third of all prospective candidates were rejected on the basis of poor physical condition.

42. Ibid., p. 210-211.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. and Nachlass Fauth, N-378, BAMA.
45. Prittwitz, p. 80-82 and Berlin, June 9, 1898, Tirpitz to Senden-Bibran, PG 66716, NA.
46. Prittwitz, p. 82 and Waring, "The Approach ...", Chapter Five.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p. 80.
49. Ibid.
50. This abortive project, which was under the personal direction of Kapitaen zur See Adolf von Mensing, seems to have been finally abandoned about 1900. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace a complete history of this subscription programme which was less than successful.
51. Roehr, p. 91.
52. Ganz, p. 140-141.
53. Vide Nachlass Fauth, N-378, BAMA.
54. Ibid.
55. The medical records of the SB III. are unfortunately incomplete after the year 1907/8. They are contained in cover PG 66718, NA.
56. Vide Nachlass Fauth, N-378, BAMA.
57. Ganz, p. 220.
58. Vide medical reports of the Tsingtau Battalion in cover PG 66718, NA.
59. Ibid.
60. The Hefte of the Offiziersvereinigung der Marine-Infanterie (Kaiserliches See-Bataillon) reflect all too well a penchant for romanticized history. Most officers of the SB were keen amateur historians and wrote at least one or two articles for their journal during their careers. All too often, these stories contain historical errors and omissions which tend to glamourize SB actions and ignore the more prosaic side of SB duties. There are no "professional" articles in the Hefte which explore developments in military science. It is purely a vehicle for hagiographic literature.

Chapter Nine

The See-Bataillon and the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung after 1898

The serious problems which the 1889 reorganization had caused in the ranks of the SB and the MAA did not go unrecognized in either the OKM or the RMA. Not unreasonably, many believed that the corps' difficulties could be more thoroughly settled if the strategy and inter-departmental conflicts which plagued the navy had been first laid to rest. No one was more aware of the serious nature of this problem than Tirpitz. As Germany's most vocal proponent of the battle-fleet programme, he believed that the colonially-oriented marine infantry of Hollmann's dreams was unnecessary. However, as a staunch supporter of the Kiaochow project, he did recognize the need for the maintenance of a small military unit permanently attached to the navy.¹ By the same token, his own considerable interest in the torpedo and mining branches led him to value the technical expertise of the MAA.²

As early as February, 1898, the new Staatssekretaer attempted to make a preliminary decision about the direction of the marine infantry and artillery units. In a brusque memorandum to Knorr, Gruende, welche fuer die Beibehaltung..., Tirpitz tackled head-on the future difficulties faced by the MAA and the SB:

..Vollkommenes wird nicht erreicht werden koennen und wuerden die Matrosen-und Werft-Divisionen bestehen bleiben muessen, aber dieselben wuerden etwas zusammenschrumpfen und mehr den Charakter von Organisationen annehmen koennen, die den Ausgleich zu bewirken und fuer solches Personal zu dienen haben, welche nicht in jene Waffen- oder Truppengattungen unterbringen werden koennen.³

Tirpitz' erstwhile nemesis, the stubborn Knorr, for once agreed with his former subordinate. He pencilled on the top of his copy of the document:

Das ist gewiss richtig; alles, was in der
Landformation ist, und bleibt (SIC) ein
Uebel.⁴

In his analysis of the question, Tirpitz concluded that the only way to solve the problem was to regroup the military units of the navy and to consolidate their training and administration as much as possible.⁵ If all the military questions affecting the navy were supervised by one department or commission, Tirpitz believed that it would be a relatively simple matter to bring the goals and objectives of the two military units into harmony.⁶

Shortly after he completed this large and thoughtful memorandum, Tirpitz prepared for himself a series of personal notes concerning the future expansion of the RMA. From these notes, which are often sketchy, it is still clear that Tirpitz intended to award the supervision of both the MAA and the SB to the RMA, and not the OKM. In his outline, Tirpitz set out the major military and political goals which the RMA could realistically hope to achieve:

Schutz und Foerderung der Hochseefischerei,
sowie aller fuer die Seefahrt arbeitenden
Gewerbe;
Schutz des deutschen Handels und der Deutschen
im Auslande;
weitere Ausdehnung des Kolonialbesitzes ?; (SIC)
Schaffung und Vertheidigung einer Kette von
maritimen Stuetzpunkten.⁷

It is evident that if Tirpitz hoped to have the RMA carry out any or all of these goals, some sort of naval infantry/artillery unit would be indispensable. As part of his attempt at restructuring the marine corps, Tirpitz asked a number of senior officers to prepare reports concerning the value of SB and MAA units in a modern navy.⁸

Unfortunately, major naval programmes like the March, 1898 navy reorganization and elemental conflicts within the officer corps like the resurgence of the strategy debate after 1898 kept the bulk of these reports from reaching completion. The only significant report which reached Tirpitz on this issue was that of Admiral Jaeschke. As it stands, Jaeschke's study is woefully incomplete and vague. However, it remains the only "important" report on the status of the marine units. Although Jaeschke did not cite statistical data or historical example, he wrote that the SB had proven itself to be a significant factor for the maintenance of German overseas shipping. The Admiral also pointed out that the MAA had proven itself to be an important resource body for the RMA during the past decade. On this slim and superficial evidence, Jaeschke recommended that the marine units be maintained.⁹

It is perhaps indicative of the administrative problems within the German navy that this type of unprofessional and unscientific analysis counted as a major study on the marine units. In 1898, the future of both the SB and the MAA was in doubt. By the same token, a quick survey of German newspapers from 1889 to 1898 would have shown that the SB had proved its value as an overseas police unit on numerous occasions. Clearly, whatever decision was taken on the fate of the SB and the MAA would be an important one, affecting as it did the ultimate integrity of the German colonial Reich. Incredibly, no single department or office existed wherein information concerning the ongoing duties of the units could be collected. At a time when the continued existence of the units was in doubt, there was no individual who, on the basis of his constitutional authority, could order a thorough examination of the corps and present a reasoned case for its maintenance.

On March 14, 1899 the old OKM was dissolved by AKO. At that time, the RMA took the opportunity to absorb many of the military and technical functions which had formerly lain in the exclusive jurisdiction of the OKM. These included:

7. Von dem OKM ressortiren insbesondere die folgenden Angelegenheiten:
 - i). der direkte Verkehr mit dem Auswaertigen Amte in allen Dingen, welche die den Schiffen im Auslande zufallenden politischen und militaerischen Aufgaben betreffen;
 - k). der Dienstbetrieb an Bord und der Marinetheile am Lande;
 - l). der Garnisondienst;
 - m). die Personalien der Personen des Soldatenstandes;
 - n). die Ausbildung des militaerischen Personals.¹⁰

By loss of control over training, records and land/sea deployment of the military personnel of the navy, the newly-created Admiralstab was robbed of authority over the SB.¹¹ In addition, the Admiralstab was assigned a number of functions concerning the SB which it was to exercise jointly with the RMA. These shared duties ranged from the supervision of recruitment drives to the perparation for and formation of the Besatzungsetat and to the selection of men for shipboard detachments.¹² In cases where extreme haste was deemed necessary, this last function could be carried out by the RMA alone.¹³ However, it is clear that, since the RMA was given complete authority over records and training by the AKO of 1899, the actual "participation" of the Admiralstab in determining the Besatzungsetat or in arranging shipboard detachments could never be significantly active.

Thus the direct influence of the Admiralstab on the development of the SB after 1899 was severely restricted. The only major responsibilities which were not assigned to the RMA were those of a purely administrative nature:

1. Organisation der Marinetheile am Lande,
2. Personalien und Kommandirungen der Mannschaften der Marine-Infanterie,
3. Dienstbetrieb der Marine-Infanterie,
4. Dienstbetrieb, Ausbildung, Exerzier und Dienstreglements fuer den Dienst am Lande der Marinetheile -- ausschliesslich der Marineinfanterie (SIC) und der Schiffsjungenabtheilung,
5. Inspektion der Marinetheile am Lande -- ausschliesslich der Marine-Infanterie, welche in dem militaerischen Ressort gehoert.¹⁴

In addition, the Admiralstab, which was given responsibility for the creation of the navy's mobilization plan, had to design this plan in close co-operation with the military department of the RMA. Although in theory both institutions could initiate change or revision of the mobilization plan, in fact, only the RMA was ever powerful enough to begin changes or to block unpopular Admiralstab suggestions.¹⁵

Thus the March 14 AKO gave the RMA greater control of SB development and deployment. By assuming responsibility for all the military forces of the navy, the RMA assured itself a key role in the day-to-day running of the SB. This was a position which potentially gave the RMA carte blanche in redesigning the long-range plans of the marine infantry.¹⁶

In the same way, the RMA was able to gain complete control over the MAA by its decision to reintegrate and consolidate all technical forces of the navy. The old OKM had possessed some measure of authority over torpedo and mining programmes in that the OKM had been responsible for implementation of new technical improvements and their subsequent integration into tactical and strategical planning: this was swept away after 1899 and the RMA was made solely responsible for all technical questions and developments.

At the same time, a new provision was made so that the RMA could, at any time, make good a lack of personnel in other areas by assigning MAA technicians to the appropriate sections.¹⁷ Thus MAA mechanics and machinists might be assigned to duty with the torpedo workshop or the mining depot on a semi-permanent or even permanent basis.

After gaining such authoritative control over both the marine artillery and infantry, Tirpitz and his subordinates were then in a position to reshape those cadres as they saw fit. However, after 1899, Tirpitz almost completely ignored the SB and it was allowed to flounder much as it had done during the early 1890s. It is not difficult to understand why this was the case. The scope of the major problems which confronted the Staatssekretaer was enormous: the overhaul of the German fleet (Vide Figure Three), head-on conflicts with the Reichstag over budget appropriations, fundamental divisions within the officer corps concerning the thrust and direction of naval planning strategies and the so-called "Arms Race" contest with England were among the most pressing questions which faced the determined Admiral. For this reason, Tirpitz decided to shelve the marine infantry/artillery question until such time as he could give it his full attention.¹⁸ Although he realized that a major policy decision concerning the SB and the MAA could not be put off indefinitely, Tirpitz hoped that, left to their own devices, the units would at least partially solve their own problems. If the MAA were to lose a significant number of personnel to postings in other branches, it would cease to be important as a separate unit. In the same way, by encouraging the SB to limit recruitment and thus let attrition take its toll, the Seesoldaten could be effectively eliminated as a force majeure.¹⁹

The tragedy of this "wait and see policy" is that it was unnecessary. If the AKO of March 14, 1899 had gone one step further in creating a separate department for marine infantry/artillery affairs -- under the aegis of the RMA -- the Staatssekretaer would have been able to maintain close supervision of any projected reforms in the SB and MAA without taking valuable personnel hours away from other programmes.

The results of this wait and see approach could not have been more disappointing: although the RMA possessed de jure control of the SB after 1899, its lack of interest in the unit allowed the infantry great latitude in development. Since the officers for the SB were chosen from the officer corps of the land army, they naturally instilled a more military-oriented approach in the Seesoldaten when denied firm naval guidelines from above. As the history of the SB during the years immediately preceding World War One shows, the SB was able to carve out an independent role for itself, despite the passivity of Tirpitz and his subordinates on its behalf.²⁰

SB Engagements: 1898-1914

In the years following the seizure of Kiaochow, the SB enjoyed a kind of renaissance in importance and popularity. Unfortunately, because no institution existed within the RMA administrative framework for the coordination of the SB, the full effects of this revival were never felt.

The creation of the SB III. (Tsingtau) in 1898 seriously depleted the ranks of the Seesoldaten in Germany. Thus there was a grave lack of SB personnel at all levels: dockside workers, firefighters, etc. It was necessary to launch a major recruitment drive in March of 1898 despite the hope of Tirpitz that attrition would naturally solve the problem of the marine infantry. The goal of the drive was to replace as many of the 634 men who had been sent to China as possible.²¹ As part of the drive, appeals were sent to the land army in early April for willing officers who might be eligible to transfer to SB duty. Reports of growing dissatisfaction with the corps in China and the well-known malaise within the SB in Germany insured that neither of these calls would be well answered. Despite intensive recruitment efforts and despite the general enthusiasm in Germany for anything which was remotely connected with the Kiaochow project, SB ambitions to restock its cadres were frustrated.

By December, 1898 only 132 men had come forward to join the ranks of the Seesoldaten and no prospective officers had volunteered for service with the corps.²² This was a serious blow to both battalions, for they had severely overreached themselves in sending a 600-man force to China.

The gravity of this chronic manpower shortage was further underlined in October, 1898 when a reserve battalion for the SB III. was established in Kiel by AKO. The effects of the 132 new recruits were scarcely felt in the German cadres, as 114 men were assigned to duty with the new Stamm-Bataillon.²³ This was clearly another example of poor planning and coordination at the top level of the naval administration. It took nearly ten years for the two battalions of Seesoldaten to make good the loss of 634 men and throughout the decade after 1898, the ranks of the SB were strained to the limit to provide even the smallest detachments for overseas service.

In the years after 1898, circumstance contrived to make the difficulty in recruitment more serious. Up until January 1899, all boats the size of light cruisers and above had possessed permanent marine infantry detachments. These parties had performed a number of functions including manning of heavy guns, guard duty and staffing of all military watches. As mentioned above, these functions gradually became obsolete during the 1890s, as improved training and weaponry made it possible for the ratings to assume responsibility for these tasks. Since no body or department existed to re-assess the shipboard role of the SB, the presence of Seesoldaten on smaller ships rapidly became a problem. For this reason, the RMA decided that after January 1, 1899, no SB detachments would be assigned to cruiser duty.²⁴ In theory, the same decision guaranteed that terms of sea duty on the larger vessels would be shortened so that all Seesoldaten could have a term at sea: in practice, the coveted places were almost always assigned to senior men.

This made promotion difficult, for a three-month tour of sea duty was mandatory for any member of the SB who wished promotion.²⁵ Not unnaturally, this classic vicious circle contributed significantly to the lowering of morale within the ranks and did little to encourage new recruits. If serious efforts had been made to integrate the SB with the navy as fully as possible, two alternatives might have suggested themselves to planners at the RMA. Instead of removing SB detachments from small cruisers, efforts could have been made to find new shipboard functions for the men. Secondly, the regulation requiring a three-month tour of sea duty could have been amended or lifted altogether. Thus, the most junior men would have gained some prospect of fairly quick promotion through the ranks.

Indeed, until 1906 no attempt was made to reorganize SB training in the light of its diminishing nautical role. Until that date, men were still trained for cruiser conditions and were taught to use weapons which they would almost certainly never see, much less use.²⁶ This is another anomaly which can be laid squarely at the door of the RMA.²⁷ Although Tirpitz made no secret of the fact that he considered the SB too unwieldy, he needed a minimum number of men to staff the Kiaochow station and to carry out "force de frappe" actions throughout the German colonial Reich. It was thus both illogical and inefficient to adopt a laissez passer approach to the SB administration.

In the face of these many problems, the fact that the SB managed to survive during the years before World War One seems remarkable. However, the one ace-in-the-hole which the SB possessed was its proven expertise as a colonial emergency force. The 1187 men who composed the three battalions of Seesoldaten in 1899 had to combat official indifference, poor administration and badly designed training programmes. On the other hand, their units made a tangible contribution to the maintenance of German integrity overseas. This fact alone was enough to guarantee their survival as a separate unit.

In addition, all three battalions of Seesoldaten had powerful supporters at court. The Emperor was honorary colonel of the SB II. and his brother, Prince Henry, took a personal interest in the men of the SB III. On his return from China in February, 1900, the Prince gave a speech to a gathering of the Kolonialverein. He mentioned the work of the SB III. in some detail and concluded that the formation of this battalion had set a military precedent. In his view, the SB III. was the first military unit to work closely with the navy on a major project.²⁸ Although many historians would hasten to remind the Prince that the SB was not exclusively a "military" unit and that its origins as a naval force reached far back into Prussian history, there can be little doubt that the support and enthusiasm of men like Prince Henry helped to keep the spirit of the Seesoldaten high during this difficult period.

With the outbreak of the Boxer rebellion, world attention was focused on the Seesoldaten. The Tsingtau Battalion was mobilized immediately and small detachments were sent from the leasehold throughout Shantung. Amoy, Chifu and Taku were among the principal sites where the Seesoldaten protected European settlements and tried to stave off Boxer inroads. Shantung was a veritable hotbed of insurgents and within a few days it was painfully clear that the able but small SB III. was in dire need of reinforcements. The ships of the Far Eastern Squadron all sent their landing parties into Shantung. This combined force, under the command of Admiral Bendemann, was composed of men from the Kaiserin Augusta, the Iltis, the Hansa and the Gefion. About one-third of the men were sent immediately to Taku to supplement the beleaguered SB III. forces.²⁹ The remaining men were marched to Tientsin where Boxer atrocities against the European community had reached an alarming level and where a handful of Seesoldaten were defending the Christian missionaries from inside the local Catholic church.³⁰

The scope of the uprising indicated that stronger measures were necessary and accordingly, Germany began to prepare an expeditionary force to relieve the detachments in Shantung.³¹ In order to free as many seasoned men as possible for overseas duty, an Ersatz-Bataillon was formed by AKO in Wilhelmshaven. This was filled with the newest recruits and was slated to remain in Germany to carry out only the most essential guard and security tasks. The remainder of the SB I. and SB II. was hurriedly prepared for transport to China.³² When the SB I. and II. returned to Germany after the end of the Rebellion, the men of the Ersatz-Bataillon helped to make up the deficiency of personnel which had plagued the corps since 1897.³³

On June 10, a combined international force of 2117 German, American, Russian, French and British soldiers began a slow but steady march to Peking from the North China coast. Resistance to the European force was great and the journey toward the beleaguered European legations barricaded within the capital was fraught with danger. The professional conduct and courage of the German contingent, under Kapitaen zur See Ulrich von Usedom, won the Seesoldaten the admiration of their international colleagues.³⁴ The British Admiral Seymour, who had command of this large and disparate force, contributed his own share to the building of Seesoldaten traditions during the arduous journey. Just a few days short of the capital, the troops were surprised by a contingent of Boxers. Seymour yelled for SB troops to come to the front to relieve the battered British men who were taking the worst of the surprise onslaught. Although this was almost certainly a mere order called out in the heat of battle, Seymour's "Germans to the fore" was taken by the Seesoldaten as a sterling tribute to their fighting ability.³⁵ "Germans to the fore" remained the rallying cry of the Seesoldaten until the end of World War One.

During the week of June 15, the town of Tientsin fell to the Chinese, despite the heroic efforts of the SB III. and the landing party from the Far Eastern Squadron. Conditions in the town were terrible: there was little food and ammunition was in short supply.³⁶ The Boxers committed great atrocities against the European missionaries in Tientsin and a major slaughter of all European residents seemed imminent. A division of Seymour's men was hastily dispatched to Tientsin. Their journey was difficult, as many rail lines had been captured or destroyed during the fighting and they were compelled to go on foot for much of the distance. On the 22nd of June, this force captured the Imperial Arsenal at Tientsin which stood on the outskirts of the town. During the next afternoon, the Russian troops and the remainder of the SB III. freed the town from Boxer rebels and occupied all strategic centres in the area. Both the Russians and the Germans considered the liberation of Tientsin to be one of their greatest victories during the Rebellion. Unfortunately, the Germans did not have long to savour their success for, within a week, reports reached Tientsin that the Boxers were coming closer to Kiaochow and the Seesoldaten made hurried plans to return to their garrison. However, the battle-scarred flag of the Tsingtau Bataillon which was retired after the victory at Tientsin and the hard-won victory there was a genuine source of pride to enlisted man and officer alike.³⁷

On July 27, the specially formed Ostasiatische Expeditionskorps left Bremerhaven for Tientsin. This force, which was under the command of "Weltmarschall" von Waldersee, consisted of a brigade of MAA volunteers and technical personnel, a few remaining Seesoldaten, a Feld-Batterie, a Pionier-Kompagnie and a telegraph detachment. In all, Waldersee's force numbered just over 2000 men.³⁸ On the eve of their departure from Bremerhaven, the Emperor delivered a speech to the Expeditionskorps in which he enjoined the men to give their "all" for the Vaterland. In typical Wilhelmine style, his speech was a model of exaggeration:

Pardon wird nicht gegeben. Gefangene werden nicht gemacht. Wie vor tausend Jahren die Hunnen einen Namen gemacht, (SIC) so moege der Name Deutscher in China auch tausend Jahre durch Euch in einer Weise bestaetigt werden, dass niemals wieder ein Chinese es wagt, einen Deutschen auch nur scheel anzusehen.³⁹

Unfortunately for the luckless Waldersee, by the time his corps landed in Tientsin on September 1, the fighting was all but over. A great international force of some 18,000 American, British, Russian, French and Japanese liberated Peking on August 18. In the last stages of their fight, the men were helped by the remnants of Seymour's international force which had scurried back to Peking from Shantung in order to help the European forces. The Seesoldaten thus managed to participate in the liberation of the capital, although they were not members of the actual "liberation" contingent.⁴⁰

When Waldersee arrived in Shantung, the entire affair was rapidly becoming déjà vue. Indeed, in his first act as supreme commander in China, Waldersee demanded to see the commander of the Tientsin garrison: he had gone to Peking for the liberation and had left no instructions for Waldersee's reception. Undaunted by circumstance, Waldersee resolved to lead a few military expeditions to the North: diplomatic pressure from the Americans and the Russians forced him to abandon this move and the cheated Weltmarschall was forced to content himself with looting Chinese observatories and sending his prizes back to Berlin for study.⁴¹ This did not prevent the Expeditionskorps from exploiting its China adventures to the full. From the moment of their "triumphal" reception in Berlin on December 16, 1900, the men of the corps were busy with memoirs, articles and accounts of experiences in China. Most of these publications would have been better left unwritten, but Paul Schlieper's study of life with Seymour's force, Der China-Feldzug, had the benefit of being both factually reliable and literarily interesting.⁴²

After the end of the Boxer Rebellion, it was decided to strengthen the German forces in Asia: despite their excellent record throughout the uprising, the Tsingtau Bataillon had proven that it was not large enough to handle major outbreaks of anti-European sentiment in North China. For this reason, the fourth company of the MAA (Cuxhaven) was transferred to Kiaochow and was permanently garrisoned there on October 1, 1901.⁴³ Interestingly enough, this joint service in Kiaochow effected a kind of de facto union between the MAA IV. Kompagnie and the SB III. (Tsingtau): the men were barracked together in the Seesoldaten compound in Kiaochow and worked together on a number of construction projects (expansion of military facilities and defenses, etc.). Over the years, the strength of the MAA presence was gradually increased and a Feld-Batterie and a telegraphic detachment were added to its resources.⁴⁴

On January 12, 1904, the Herero Uprising began in German South-West Africa. Unfortunately, the Schutztruppe of the colony was small and was entirely unequal to the forces of the rebels. The first help on the scene was a party of seamen from the gunboat Habicht.⁴⁵ On January 17, the Emperor gave orders for a full mobilization of the SB and some 500 men from the SB I. and SB II. departed from Wilhelmshaven five days later. Unfortunately, the speed with which the corps was prepared for transport meant that the troops were lacking in adequate medical, military and nutritional supplies.⁴⁶ The uniforms sent along with the corps were heavy, winter ones: no attempt was made to provide the Seesoldaten with a tropical kit. In addition to a tropical helmet (the only concession made to the African climate) each man carried 7 sets of woolen underwear and winter overshoes.⁴⁷ Despite early intelligence reports which mentioned the severity of the revolt, the Seesoldaten were provisioned with a mere 120 rounds of ammunition: the 6400 reserve rounds were not available at the time of departure and did not follow for several weeks.⁴⁸

The day after the Emperor ordered the formation of the expeditionary force, the Habicht party secured control of the railway line and began to effect repairs on it. On February 9, the expeditionary corps landed in Swakopmund. The force, under the command of Major von Glasenapp, was formed into a Marine-Infanterie-Bataillon comprising of two companies from each SB. In addition, the corps was accompanied by a gunnery detachment from the MAA.⁴⁹ Upon arrival in the rebellion-torn colony, the corps immediately divided itself into three sections and proceeded to march to the chief trouble-spots. With the arrival of Glasenapp and his troops, the landing party of the Habicht returned to sea duty.⁵⁰

The Marine-Infanterie-Bataillon did not fare well in German South-West Africa. The rapidity at which the expeditionary corps had been formed meant that the Seesoldaten were operating with minimal supplies. In addition, the climatic conditions in the interior of the colony were intolerable. Within a month of their arrival, the men were beset by serious epidemics of typhus and malaria. Although the corps was accompanied by two doctors and a number of medical assistants, they were among the first to succumb to the climate, leaving the men unattended.⁵¹ The division of the corps which had been sent eastwards to Owikokerero was particularly badly hit by illness. With casualties tallying over 18%, the unit was forced to return to Swakopmund in order to regroup in the relative ease of the conditions there. In the meantime, the west division made slow but steady progress towards Omatakoberg. The eastern division set out once again from Swakopmund towards the British border. Although illness was still a major problem, the unit managed to put down all the leading pockets of revolt between Windhuk and the British border. After this brave feat, the eastern division was dissolved and the men returned to Swakopmund where they were treated for severe cases of typhus and malaria.⁵²

With the eastern division decimated by contagion, the burden of suppressing the Hereros fell squarely on the shoulders of the two remaining units: the western and the central divisions. Shortly after the dissolution of the eastern division, the central unit won a victory at Okatumba and resistance there crumbled. Thus by the late summer of 1904, most of the colony was again in German hands. In November, the exhausted and demoralized troops were sent some relief in the form of the cruiser Vineta. The ratings of that cruiser were landed to assist with the final "mopping up" of resistance and they brought with them much-needed medical supplies and ammunition.⁵³ In combination with the Vineta force and the local Schutztruppe, the revitalized SB corps was able to quell the remaining pockets of rebellion and by March 6, 1905, the Expeditionskorps was ready for transport to Germany and for reassignment with the individual battalions from whence it had been formed.⁵⁴

During the first week of August 1905, the native population of German East Africa became restive. Because the Schutztruppe was on assignment in the interior of the colony, the SB detachment from the strongly-armed Bussard was immediately landed and sent to the capital, Lindi.⁵⁵ Despite the considerable successes that Major Bach and his men scored against the native population, the heretofore unsuspected scope of the rebellion made it imperative to call for reinforcements from the closest ships: so many seamen from the Bussard had been pressed into service with Bach's unit that a mere seven of them remained aboard the ship as she lay docked near Lindi.⁵⁶

For this reason, a 172-man force was formed from the SB I. and SB II. and sent to Dar-es-Salaam from Germany on September 15, 1905. In addition to the 172 Seesoldaten, the transport from Germany brought additional ratings to man the neglected Bussard.⁵⁷

Further help arrived in the form of two landing parties from the cruisers Thetis and Seeadler. This combined party consisted of 150 seamen, 4 officers, 1 doctor and 4 field gunners. This unit hurried to the support of Major Bach and his Seesoldaten and furnished them with additional food and medical supplies.⁵⁸

Because the climatic and geographical conditions in German East Africa were so adverse and because the Seesoldaten and seamen fighting there had little experience with these conditions, it was decided to limit the operations of the combined force to the coastal areas. The unit could guard the chief port and capital, Lindi, and protect railways and roads along the coast. By remaining in this region, the troops were close to their ships, where more extensive medical help and military support were always available.⁵⁹ However, the native Schutztruppe proved woefully deficient in its task of subduing the interior: thus a large number of German Seesoldaten were sent inland to protect the strongholds of Muansa and Wangoni.⁶⁰ Although there were some casualties due to illness as a result of this move (approximately 5%), the troops in German East Africa did not suffer a major outbreak of disease.⁶¹

Upon their arrival in the interior, the troops suppressed the insurgents with efficiency. Within a short time, the rebellion had been quelled and the ranking participants executed. An unidentified native member of the Schutztruppe assessed the contribution of the Seesoldaten in these terms:

Ohne Uebertreibung kann man behaupten, dass es nur der Entsendung weisser Soldaten zu verdanken ist, wenn kein Aufstand in Usukuma ausbrach. Jeder einzelne Europaeer, ob Beamter oder Privatmann, wird es gern bezeugen. Mit diesem Erfolge hat die Marine-Infanterie (SIC) ihre Aufgabe jedenfalls zum Segen des Landes aufs beste geloest.⁶²

Although it is doubtful whether a native actually penned this neatly-phrased encomium, there can be little dispute that the See-soldaten did play a major role in suppressing the forces of rebellion in German East Africa -- despite the climate and despite their lack of manpower. By the end of January 1906, the first detachments were ready to return to their ships for transport to Germany. As they had done elsewhere in Africa, some 30-40 men remained for a few weeks in the capital to assist the Schutztruppe with tactical training and drill.⁶³

Despite these occasional sorties into Africa, the SB continued to spend most of its time on land in Germany. Most of the opportunities for duty overseas (especially in China) were strictly limited to older men.⁶⁴ In 1909, the skeletal occupation force which had remained in the European quarters of Peking and Tientsin after the Boxer Rebellion was dissolved and its men returned to Germany for posting with either the SB I. or the SB II. To replace this force, which had remained in China largely for "window dressing", small parties from the SB III. (Tsingtau) were sent to these cities on rotation. There, they remained for a few weeks in the European quarter at special barracks which had been constructed by the occupation forces. The repatriation of these occupation troops reduced even further the chances for overseas duty in the SB I. and SB II.⁶⁵

In the early fall of 1909, the annual High Seas Manoeuvres were held. This was the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of manoeuvres ever staged by the German navy and incorporated the 16 ships of the line and 17 armed cruisers which Tirpitz constructed under the first Flottengesetz of March 28, 1898. In addition, full scope was given by the manoeuvre planners to the growing range of German torpedo ships. The unequivocal star of the exercises was Germany's first Dreadnought, the Nassau, built in Wilhelmshaven in 1908.⁶⁶

For the first time in naval history, the resources of the SB were deployed to a significant extent in the manoeuvres. Although the actual shipboard duties of the SB were practically non-existent by 1909, the grandiose nature of the exercises insured that a full complement of ratings would be occupied at sea. Accordingly, the Seesoldaten undertook a multiplicity of shore duties including manning of watches and guard posts, communications and coastal defense exercises in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven.⁶⁷ Although it is true that none of these tasks reflect the nature of most SB operations of the era, this occasion is significant in that it marked the first serious attempt to incorporate the Seesoldaten into fall manoeuvres.

Indeed, despite the avowed disinterest of Tirpitz and the uncoordinated nature of SB planning, the last years before the outbreak of war witnessed a revival of the Seesoldaten. There were several reasons for this. Tirpitz, although he believed that marine infantry troops were fast becoming obsolete in the historical sense, had little interest in redirecting the outlook of the corps. Thus, this well-trained body was left without adequate supervision and was consequently able to assume many types of responsibilities and duties. In order to preserve its independence as a separate unit, the SB willingly accommodated itself to these new functions. In short, the Seesoldaten proved themselves indispensable on land as a kind of resource pool for most of the non-nautical duties of the navy. In addition, circumstance furnished the SB with several outstanding opportunities to serve overseas -- in China, German South-West Africa and German East Africa. In all instances, the SB fought with valour and helped maintain Germany's hold over her colonial possessions. Should Germany ever wish to enlarge or consolidate these holdings, a force de frappe unit like the SB would be an invaluable tool. Thus the corps was able to survive in the face of adversity. The very absence of structure and set goals which made the day-to-day administration of the corps so frustrating was in large measure responsible for its continuance.

Renewed interest in the SB was reflected in the attempts to solidify corps administration and resources in the final years before 1914. In the summer of 1910, the Tsingtau Bataillon received its own Pionier-Kompagnie and a Feld-Batterie.⁶⁸ During the same summer, the first official calendar of the SB year was laid down. According to the schedule, the year was divided along the following lines:

November 1	--	installation of recruits
April 1	--	troop exercises/shooting
Summer	--	field exercises
September 1	--	fall manoeuvres. ⁶⁹

As part of this solidification of corps procedures, SB training in heavy gunnery was abolished: for a number of years the MAA had been large enough to handle all requirements for heavy gunnery and it was no longer necessary to train Seesoldaten to man gunnery positions.⁷⁰ At the same time, the MAA increased its shooting requirements considerably and undertook the testing and (where necessary) retraining of its artillery personnel.⁷¹ Although this move was an excellent one in terms of efficiency, it further separated the branches of the marine corps. Indeed, by 1914 the only joint exercise in which significant numbers of SB and MAA personnel participated was an annual Festungsgeschuetz exercise. In 1913, it was suggested that this type of training was rapidly becoming obsolete and several leading theorists advocated that such programmes be abandoned by 1917.⁷²

Such plans spelled the end of any hopes for the eventual reunion of marine infantry and artillery personnel. The duties of the SB became increasingly oriented towards land duty, while the MAA became closely involved with naval development. Use on land meant that the SB units had to be familiar with army drills and standards wherever possible.

For this reason, SB instructors were sent on annual training seminars to army installations. There, the officers learned calisthenics, light gunnery drill and modern survival techniques.⁷³ These courses were all taught by the premier army specialists and not surprisingly, this type of training tended to reinforce the army outlook of the Seesoldaten. Since all SB officers came originally from army cadres and since SB training was developing along military lines, it is small wonder that the marine infantry rapidly lost most of its naval connections in the years before 1914.⁷⁴

From 1911, the SB was deployed in a number of ways which reflect the new army orientation which was evolving in its ranks. In 1911, a combined party from the cruisers Emden, Nuernberg and Planet, as well as the SB detachment from the armed cruiser Cormoran landed at Ponapé and successfully put down a small revolt there. In the next year, 125 men from the SB were sent to China to strengthen the Tsingtau Bataillon, which was not only the principal means of defense in the leasehold, but which also served as a ready-made corps for road-building, communications and railway construction.⁷⁵

In April 1913, a force was sent to Constantinople aboard the heavily-armed cruiser, Goeben. This 110-man detachment of Seesoldaten was part of an international force dispatched to secure and guarantee the maintenance of persecuted Christians living in the Turkish capital.⁷⁶ Less than one month later, it was decreed that part of the Goeben Seesoldaten unit would remain at the disposal of the Mediterranean Squadron. This detachment was to be stationed aboard the cruiser Breslau; the remainder of the Goeben party was returned to Germany.⁷⁷ Although it had not been RMA policy to station SB detachments aboard light cruisers, the deteriorating situation in the Balkans and the uncertainty of the Turkish political climate necessitated this move.

On June 29, 1914, ten Seesoldaten from the Breslau were landed in Durazzo to protect the German legation in the newly-created country of Albania. This operation did not entail any type of military action: the party merely moved into the German complex and supervised the establishment of regular diplomatic services in Albania.⁷⁸

During the two decades before the outbreak of war, the SB was busy with a number of overseas "police actions". Although the duties of the MAA in this time period were substantially different, naval artillerymen were as much in demand as their infantry comrades. The MAA served the navy with distinction both abroad and in its home ports and the unit made a real contribution to the international technical renown of the German fleet.

Changes within the MAA: 1896-1914

The history of the Wilhelmine MAA is of necessity briefer and less glamorous than that of the SB. After he assumed control at the RMA, Tirpitz first hoped to solve the problem of the MAA by assigning its personnel to serve with other branches of the naval service (especially with the torpedo arm and the mining depots).⁷⁹ As a result, the history of the MAA during the last twenty years of its existence must remain largely unwritten: because it did not remain an independent force with a separate officer corps like the SB and because it tended to be assimilated into other technical units, the MAA has achieved a surprising level of anonymity.

As early as the spring of 1896, it was suggested by many senior men that the excellent artillery and mechanical skills of the MAA were not being used efficiently. At this time, Tirpitz himself studied the problem and concluded that if the RMA were able to acquire a stronger grip over technical development and implementation, the MAA would play a more important and better integrated role in certain facets of naval development. These areas of expansion included primarily the staffing and maintenance of artillery and mechanical workshops and the responsibility for weapons testing.⁸⁰

Tirpitz was not alone in his desire to see more effective use made of MAA resources. In May of 1896, Admiral Knorr submitted a long list of recommendations concerning the future of technical services in the navy. Although his study reflects the Admiral's preoccupation with the growing spectre of RMA dominance over OKM preserves, Knorr did make a number of interesting points. He believed that the MAA, which possessed a strong and smooth-running Inspektion system, should assume all responsibility for the direction and development of the ordnance division of the navy.⁸¹ Like Tirpitz, Knorr was convinced that only through consolidation could maximum efficiency of personnel and materiel be achieved.⁸²

..da die planmaessige Ausbildung eines so verschiedenartig verwendeten Personals nur von einer Stelle aus uebersichtlich geleitet werden kann.⁸³

In 1898, Tirpitz attempted to establish a basis for an integration of artillery and other related branches of the navy. In his memorandum on the subject, he suggested that all ordnance, artificer, marine depot and torpedo personnel should be administered jointly with the MAA by the RMA. This could be readily accomplished if an Inspektion der Marine-Artillerie were created.⁸⁴ Because the skills and duties of these branches were similar, it would be cheaper and more efficient if all researches and programmes could be coordinated. In addition, the MAA, which was garrisoned in both the Baltic and the North Sea Stations, could provide an already established administrative framework for the Inspektion. Finally, because the administrative system established by the tripartite reorganization of 1889 had left a critical gap in the delineation of MAA functions, many members of the unit had spent the previous decade working at non-skilled tasks. If the MAA itself were placed under a stronger Inspektion, this state of affairs could be halted and proper use made of MAA personnel.⁸⁵

Tirpitz believed that an efficient use of these technical resources was imperative if the navy were to develop along the most modern lines:

Besonders einzutreten hat .. die Entwicklung der militaerischen Seite der Marine, deren Resultat auf dem Schlachtfeld unserer Gesamt-Seestreitkraft zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden wird. (SIC) ⁸⁶

Tirpitz was convinced that the technical and ordnance sections of the navy had to be coordinated under one overall policy: one which would furnish those branches with an unprecedented guideline for development and growth. ⁸⁷

There was much support for this plan throughout the navy. As early as 1896 the Chief of the Baltic Station had written to Knorr suggesting a similar scheme. In his letter, Vice-Admiral Thomsen had recommended that the institution of the Marine-Inspektion be expanded to include the supervision of all technical branches and he had further outlined a plan whereby all technical and mechanical personnel within the navy be given standard training norms, etc. ⁸⁸ Thomsen's ideas were acted upon in part after the change in administration of 1898. All rankings, insignia, uniforms and training procedures were standardized throughout the technical sections. ⁸⁹

This standardization was merely a preliminary step in the total reorganization of all technical services. In June 1901, the Inspektion der Marine-Artillerie was expanded to include responsibility for the torpedo and mining units. ⁹⁰ By clarifying the role of the Inspekteur and by giving him increased authority in the technical sphere, the navy was adopting a progressive and far-sighted approach to the implementation of a unified technical policy.

Unfortunately, this increase in the jurisdiction of the Inspektion proved to be a mixed blessing. With the greater responsibilities which were given to the Inspekteur, it became difficult for him to coordinate the large number of technical personnel placed under his command in 1901. This task was made all the more difficult by the growing number of torpedo ships and mining depot equipment which were being added to the navy during this period.⁹¹ Within a few short years, it became clear that if the standards on all branches of technical service were to remain high, a new type of reorganization would have to be made:

1. Am 1. Oktober d.J. wird die Inspektion der Marine-Artillerie geteilt in eine Inspektion der Schiffs-Artillerie und eine Inspektion der Kuesten-Artillerie und des Minenwesens.
2. Standort fuer die Inspektion der Schiffs-Artillerie wird Sonderburg, Standort fuer die Inspektion der Kuesten-Artillerie und des Minenwesens, Cuxhaven.⁹²

This new type of flexibility within the two newly-established Inspektions allowed for the growth of technical programming along the sensible lines of maritime and land orientation.

In the same year, a more rigorous test for shooting ability was devised for use in the MAA. The SB training in heavy gunnery was discontinued and it was decided to allow the MAA to assume full responsibility for heavy weapons. The first results of the testing were disappointing: the conditions under which the tests were administered were not uniform and many contestants were not prepared for the trials.⁹³ However, by 1905 there was a noticeable improvement in the scores -- both in heavy and light weapons.⁹⁴ This improvement continued to register during the following years and the Chief of the Baltic Station (Wilhelmshaven) reported to Berlin that by 1907, the performance of the MAA in its shooting trials was exceptional.⁹⁵

In the spring of 1907, a Schiffs-Artillerie-Schule was established. Both ratings and naval artillerymen trained side by side in this school and unlike similar training programmes in the SB, the inspectors and teachers of the Schule came from the officer corps of the MAA and other technical branches.⁹⁶ In this way, progress in the MAA was not unalterably linked with military infiltration: such was the case in the SB. Indeed, repeated attempts to employ army artillery instructors in the MAA during the 1890s had met with such resistance that after a few months, the practice was abandoned.⁹⁷

In 1905 an independent Minenkompagnie was established in Cuxhaven under the aegis of the Kuesten-Artillerie-Inspektion.⁹⁸ The commander of the fourth company of the MAA possessed disciplinary responsibility for the Minenkompagnie and the administrative side of the new unit fell under the command of the MAA bureaucracy:⁹⁹

Die Minenkompagnie untersteht unmittelbar dem Inspekteur der Kuestenartillerie und des Minenwesens. Die niedere Gerichtsbarkeit ueber das Personal der Kompagnie uebt der Kommandeur der IV. MAA aus. Die Rechnungslegung fuehrt das Rechnungsamt der IV. MAA.

Der Kommandant der Minensuchreservedivision beziehungsweise Chef der Minensuchdivision hat die Urlaubs- und Disziplinarbefugnisse eines Chefs einer Torpedodivision. Die niedere Gerichtsbarkeit ueber das Personal der Minensuchreservedivision uebt der Kommandeur der IV. MAA aus.¹⁰⁰

On May 13, 1911 the Artillerieverwalthung Helgoland was created as an independent Artilleriedepot by AKO.¹⁰¹ Basically, the same system was used then as had been begun with the Minenkompagnie in 1905. The Artilleriedepot Cuxhaven remained administratively in control of the new Depot and the Cuxhaven commander was charged with the supervision of the Helgoland personnel.¹⁰²

The change in function for the MAA, coupled with its use as a resource corps for other technical branches administered under the RMA, helped the artillery unit to survive as a kind of "support arm" for the RMA. Gradually, these support or relief functions -- including replacement in other branches, clerical work, firefighting, etc.) superseded the actual artillery duties of the MAA. As these new tasks became a major part of MAA function, coastal defense training and fortifications construction played a correspondingly smaller role in artillery training and practice. However, as these new duties were supervised by naval officers and as new training programmes were implemented by naval teachers, the close intimacy of the MAA with the navy was not affected by these developments.

The technical and naval tenor of the MAA administration helped to preserve its integrity as an independent unit. Although both these factors contributed to the widening of the gap between the MAA and the SB, they insured that the unit retained sufficient flexibility and adaptability to render it invaluable as the technical service arm of the Wilhelmine navy.

Footnotes

1. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, Gutachten zum Ordre Entwurf, K. 5387C, BAMA.
2. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, Notizen fuer die Organisation im Allgemeinen, 1898/9, BAMA.
3. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, Tirpitz to Knorr, January 11, 1898, Gruende, welche fuer die Beibehaltung..., BAMA.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, Gutachten zum Ordre Entwurf, K. 5387C, BAMA.
8. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, draft memorandum by Admiral Jaeschke, Die Bewegungen der Schiffe im Auslande, May 3, 1898, BAMA.
9. Ibid.
10. AKO, March 14, 1899, draft entitled Grundzuege der Neu-Organisation der Marine, RM1/v. 2790, BAMA.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Berlin, March 4, 1904, memorandum entitled Organisation und Weiterentwicklung des Torpedowesens, M. 4838, PG 66714, NA.
19. Ibid.

20. Prittwitz, p. 69 ff.
21. Ibid., p. 80.
22. Roehr, p. 100.
23. Prittwitz, p. 82.
24. Ibid.
25. Organisationsreglement -- "Neu-Organisation der Marine", Marinetheile am Lande -- Ausbildung --, in RM1/v. 2786, BAMA.
26. Prittwitz, p. 147.
27. Berlin, March 4, 1904, memorandum, M. 4838, PG 66714, NA.
28. Prittwitz, p. 85.
29. For a complete history of the Tsingtau Bataillon in the Boxer Rebellion, vide Schlieper, Der China-Feldzug. Roehr, p. 100-101.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Prittwitz, p. 146 ff.
33. Ibid.
34. Usedom, preface to Das Marine-Infanterie Regiment and Schlieper, p. 12.
35. Ibid.
36. Roehr, p. 100-101.
37. Ibid.
38. Prittwitz, p. 146.
39. Fabritzek, Gelber Drache -- Schwarzer Adler, p. 27.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., p. 28.

42. Schlieper's account is the only one available by a member of Seymour's force. As such, his comments are invaluable and his integrity as a witness is high.
43. AKO, Berlin, October 1, 1901, PG 66715, NA.
44. Roehr, p. 102.
45. Ibid., p. 105.
46. AKO, Berlin, January 17, 1904, PG 67415, NA.
47. I. Beiheft zur Marine-Rundschau, "Thaetigkeit des Landungskorps waehrend des Herero-Aufstandes", part one, 1905.
48. Ibid.
49. Roehr, p. 105.
50. Ibid.
51. Prittwitz, p. 147 ff.
52. Roehr, p. 106.
53. Ibid., p. 107.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 108.
56. Ibid.
57. Prittwitz, p. 156.
58. Roehr, p. 108-109.
59. Ibid.
60. Prittwitz, p. 157.
61. Roehr, p. 110.
62. Prittwitz, p. 224.
63. Ibid.
64. Ganz, p. 141.

65. Roehr, p. 111
66. Hansen, p. 90.
67. Prittwitz, p. 262.
70. Ibid.
71. Vide Schiessberichte, contained in PG 67260, NA and PG 67261, NA.
72. Unsigned RMA Vorschrift, ?, 1913, RM3/v. 10205, BAMA.
73. Prittwitz, p. 262 ff.
74. Ibid.
75. Roehr, p. 113.
76. Ibid., p. 114.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., p. 116.
79. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, January 11, 1898, Gruende..., BAMA.
80. Ibid.
81. Berlin, May 7, 1896, Knorr to Hollmann, A. 2560, RM1/v. 2790, BAMA.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Tirpitz memorandum of May 30, 1898, N. 2741/73, Anlage 23, RM1/v. 2790, BAMA.
85. Tirpitz, vol. 1, p. 76.
86. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, February 2, 1898, BAMA.
87. Tirpitz, p. 76-77.
88. Kiel, May 30, 1896, Thomsen to Knorr, RM1/v. 2790, BAMA.

89. AKO, Berlin, June 30, 1901, 81797, PG 66715, NA.
90. Ibid.
91. Hansen, p. 90 ff.
92. AKO, Rominten, September 29, 1904, 1285, PG 66715, NA.
93. Berlin, January 21, 1905, A. III. 5093, Tirpitz to Wilhelm, PG 67260, NA.
94. Berlin, January 28, 1905, Heye to Tirpitz, PG 67260, NA.
95. Ibid.
96. AKO, March 30, 1907, 409, PG 66715, NA.
97. Vide A. 6035, A. 3530, etc. 1894/5, PG 66715, NA.
98. AKO, Berlin, February 14, 1905, A. I 2303, PG 66715, NA.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Roehr, p. 111.
102. Ibid.

Chapter Ten

Skutari and the Mobilization

During the course of the Second Balkan War, a detachment from the SB was sent to Skutari to assist with the lifting of the Montenegrin siege of the town.¹ This relatively small force, known as the Marine Detachement Skutari, consisted of 107 men and 4 officers from both the SB I. and the SB II.² After the Montenegrins had been successfully repulsed, the Marine Detachement Skutari occupied the town and assumed a peacekeeping role. Under the command of the energetic Major A. Schneider, the force dug itself into the Balkan town in short order: this was entirely consistent with the "police" role which the SB had slowly but determinedly adopted during the previous decade.

With the outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans in the late summer of 1914, the existence of the Marine Detachement Skutari became a problem. Opinion was divided as to whether the force ought to be recalled to Germany or whether it should be temporarily assigned to assist the Austrian troops in the region in their fight against Serbia. Schneider and his men were enthusiastically in favour of the latter plan and the Major prepared his troops for transport to the town of Sarajevo: if reassignment in the Balkans were imminent, Schneider believed that it would be strategically sound to keep his men close to a major communications centre.³ Upon arrival in the ill-fated town, Schneider telegraphed his impressions of the mood in the region to Berlin:

Detachment Skutari in Sarajevo eingetroffen.
Auf dem ganzen Wege von Kroaten Slovenen
Tschechen begeistert. Mit Hochrufen auf
unsere Kaiser begrüsst. Habe mich zur
Verfügung des Armee Kommandos gestellt.
Bitte um Befehl.⁴

The Austrians, who do not appear to have been informed of the Detachment's arrival in Sarajevo, telegraphed the German Auswaertiges Amt from Vienna and asked that the force be quietly withdrawn, avoiding all contact with local inhabitants.⁵ Later the same day, the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin specifically asked for the recall of the Detachment and promised full Austrian support for the evacuation procedures.⁶

Later that same evening (August 10), it was learned that Schneider and his troops had reached Sarajevo without incident.⁷ Since the Seesoldaten had placed themselves in the very eye of the hurricane, the Austrians had little choice but to change their plans and accordingly, they telegraphed Berlin asking for the temporary loan of the detachment. The Austrians hoped to have the benefit of the SB in a projected campaign against the Serbs. Once this intelligence was transmitted to Sarajevo, the German consul there feted the Seesoldaten and then supervised their transport to the Serbian border. Shortly before their departure, Schneider composed a typically ebullient telegram to Wilhelm II:

Bis zum juengsten Seesoldaten ein jeder von
uns gluecklich ist, in der Reihe der kaempfenden
oesterreichisch-ungarischen Waffenbrueder zu
stehen.⁸

Five days after their rousing send-off from Sarajevo, Schneider and his 110 men fought in the Battle of Vizegrad. The Austrians were impressed with the calibre of the Marine Detachment Skutari personnel and with the excellence of their kit. According to Austrian military and journalistic sources, the Detachment played a considerable role in the Austrian victory at Vizegrad. Despite the ferocity of the fighting, the Detachment lost a mere three men, while Austrian casualties topped 12%.⁹

After the conclusion of the hostilities at Vizegrad, the Austrians again asked for the recall of the German SB unit. Although the force had been an undisputed factor in the victory against the Serbs, it is not difficult to understand why the Austrians made this move. The small unit of SB formed an elite troop; its officers were generally allowed a wide degree of latitude in decision-making. Coordination between the Austro-Hungarian forces and such a group must have been a problem. In addition, the difficulties in arranging separate transport and maintenance for the Detachment must have proven burdensome for the hard-pressed Austrians who were scarcely able to hold their own in the Balkans.¹⁰

The ever-resourceful Schneider, who was determined that not one particle of German kit should remain behind his departing men, made the task of the Austrian support personnel assigned to assist with the evacuation a nightmare. After a circuitous journey -- which Schneider recorded in his pedantic way -- the Detachment finally reached German soil on August 29. In less tragic circumstances, the dogged account of Schneider's return to Germany would make comical reading: despite the transport problems, even pack animals which had been purchased in Skutari and which had become superfluous weeks before, made the journey to the Vaterland. In the face of the grave problems which were to confront Austria in the Balkans, the dispatch of a thorn like Schneider must have been a relief.¹¹

With the outbreak of the war, the RMA and the Admiralstab had to decide quickly how best to employ the combined resources of the SB and the MAA. For years, the two units had drifted: adapting themselves to a number of tasks overseas without an official mandate to do so. For the moment, there was no prospect of returning substantial numbers of Seesoldaten to overseas service.

At the same time, the unique strategic problems which faced the High Seas Fleet could not be solved or even lessened by the SB. With the declaration of full-scale war in 1914, the basic lack of organization and planning within the SB and the MAA was exposed. Neither unit possessed a preordained plan of action in case of war. Overnight, both became superfluous.

It was decided to form a Marine-Division from the ranks of the SB and the MAA. This newly-created force could be deployed by the land army wherever it was needed. In this way, the excellent infantry and artillery skills which had been cultivated by both types of marines could be put to use. This scheme was also an effective means of removing a major administrative headache from the navy.

1. Es ist moeglichst beschleunigt eine mobile Marine-Division zu formieren, bestehend aus Truppen der Marine-Infanterie, Marine-Artillerie (SIC) und Matrosen-Divisionen mit den erforderlichen Spezialisten in ungefaehrter Staerke einer mobilen Felddivision der Armee.
2. Die mobile Marine-Division wird der Heeresleitung unterstellt. Sie soll zunaechst fuer die Aufgabe ausgeruestet werden, als Belagerungs- und Besatzungstruppe einen Teil des mobilen Feldheeres, welches Belgien besetzt haelt, abzuloesen. Gleichzeitig ist die Vorbereitung des Kleinkrieges gegen England von der belgischen Kueste und nordfranzoesischen Kueste aus im weitgehenden Masse zu betreiben.¹²

This combined force, which would remove all but a minimum of marine troops from Germany, necessitated the installation of seamen at a number of crucial port functions: firewatch, defense, weaponry maintenance, etc.¹³

Admiral Capelle, who arranged the details of the establishment of the Marine-Division, was determined that the new unit be ready for transport as soon as possible. On the same day that the formation was announced, Capelle drew up a departure timetable which was staggering in its demands. The men were to assemble in Wilhelmshaven where they were transported by rail to the Belgian border. At that point, the field command of the army would assign precise destinations to the various units. For the most part however, the Marine-Division was assigned to key areas along the Franco-Belgian border, including Arras, Ypres and Nieuport. In addition, many men of the Marine-Division found themselves at once in the thick of the battle along the hotly-contested Marne.

The composition of the Marine-Division was as follows:

1. Staffel -- rund 3000 Mann SB
Abfahrt -- 31. August
2. Staffel -- rund 8000 Mann SB, MAA und Matrosen
Abfahrt -- 3. September
3. Staffel -- Rest -- 3000 Mann
Abfahrt -- Ende September 14

As Commander for this combined force, Admiral Schroeder, à la suite des Stabes, had the unenviable task of preparing the division for duty and gearing it for the unaccustomed rigours of prolonged land service in Europe. According to Capelle's timetable, Schroeder was to remain in Germany until the departure of the third unit: this would give him the time to familiarize himself with marine corps procedures and to arrange for suitable replacements for the posts which were being vacated by the departing men.¹⁵ In his order to Schroeder informing the Admiral of his new command, Wilhelm II attempted to calm the new Commander of the Marine-Division, whose disappointment with his new post was well known.

Ich ernenne Sie hierdurch in Vollem (SIC)
Vertrauen auf Ihre waehrend Ihrer vieljaehrigen
Dienstzeit geleisteten treuen und guten Dienste
zum Kommandeur der mobilen Marine-Division.
Die Ihnen hierdurch zufallenden Aufgaben werden
Sie meist in Verbindung mit Meiner Feldarmee zu
loesen haben. Es wird sich nicht dabei vermeiden
lassen, dass Sie mit Ihrer Truppe unter das
Kommando eines vielleicht juengeren Generals
der Armee treten muessen.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, Schroeder was not happy with this appointment and he protested that his knowledge of tactics and army procedures was insufficient. Indeed, that Schroeder's tenure as commander of the Marine-Division in Flanders was so successful was a tribute to his native ability and to the discipline and training of his men. At first glance, sending an admiral in command of a rag-tag division to fight in a hotly-contested strategic area does not appear to be a sound move. Although the SB was an army-oriented institution and had been functioning as a land force for some years, they had never waged a long campaign against European troops and under European land conditions.¹⁷

Schroeder was not the only man to realize the potential disasters which might lie ahead. Both Capelle and his superior, Tirpitz, were convinced that the Marine-Division would need close military assistance and supervision in the field of strategy. For this reason, Capelle arranged to have two experienced military men attached to Schroeder's staff -- another fact which could not have pleased the hapless Admiral.

Zur Vervollstaendigung des Stabes der mobilen
Marine-Division wird die Kommandirung eines
Generalstabsoffizieres (hoechster Rang: Major)
als Ratgeber des Befehlshabers in landtaktischen
Angelegenheiten, sowie eines Ordonnanz-Offizieres
fuer erforderlich erachtet.¹⁸

Over Schroeder's misgivings and despite the incredible speed with which the Marine-Division was supposed to prepare itself for deployment, all three units were ready for departure on the days laid down in Capelle's timetable. The Marine-Division fought with ruthless efficiency in Flanders and earned itself the sobriquet "Schwarze Jaeger".¹⁹ However, time would prove that the original decision to ship the Marine-Division out of Germany had not been a good one: by 1918 it was abundantly clear that a unit of Seesoldaten might have played an important role in the suppression of mutiny within the navy.

Footnotes

1. Roehr, pp. 115-116.
2. Ibid.
3. Sarajevo, August 10, 1914, Schneider to Admiralstab, A. 4983/3, PG 75213, NA.
4. Ibid.
5. Vienna, August 10/11, 1914, Tschirchky to Auswaertiges Amt, A. 4983/8, PG 75213, NA.
6. Ibid.
7. Sarajevo, August 10, 1914, Schneider to Admiralstab, PG 75213, NA.
8. Vizegrad, August 15, 1915, Schneider to Admiralstab, 4820, PG 75213, NA.
9. Auswaertiges Amt Berlin to German Minister/Constantinople, August 24, 1914, 4820, PG 75213, NA.
10. Berlin, August 29, 1914, Admiral Berlin to Schneider, 5591, PG 75213, NA.
11. Wilhelmshaven, September 10, 1914, Schneider to Admiralstab, 9825/4, PG 75213, NA.
12. AKO, Mobilmachung d. Marinekorps, August 29, 1914, PG 68234, NA.
13. Ibid.
14. Berlin, August 29, 1914, Capelle pro Tirpitz, "betreffend die Marine-Division", 5704, PG 68234, NA.
15. Ibid.
16. Berlin, August 30, 1914, Wilhelm II to Schroeder, PG 68234, NA.
17. Prittwitz, p. 103.
18. Memorandum, RMA to MK, September 1, 1914, 5207, PG 68234, NA.

19. Usedom, Das Marine-Infanterie Regiment I., p. ix.

Despite his reservations about the position as Commander, Schroeder literally threw himself into his work. His first telegram to G.H.Q. upon assumption of authority reflects this. (September 2, 1914, 5160, PG 68234, NA).

Habe Kommando uebernommen.

Erste Staffel zwei Batl. M-I. Gesamt-Staerke 69 Offiziere, 2753 Mann, 80 Pferde. Nach Luettich in Marsch gesetzt.

Zweite Staffel ist transportationsbereit: 3. Sept.

7500 Mann M-I und M-A.

Dazu 200 Matrosen mit 28 Maschinengewehren. Ferner 2 Landwehrfeldbatterien, eine Landwehrpionierkompagnie und 200 Mann Landwehrkavallerie.

Conclusion

The history of the marine infantry and artillery units of the Wilhelmine navy presents a paradox. Throughout their existence, both units were plagued by lack of funds, poor administration and official indifference. Despite these problems, the SB and the MAA managed to survive. Yet at the very moment in their history when the units were placed under a unified authority which could make long-range plans for the corps, the marine artillery and infantry floundered and drifted apart. Both the SB and the MAA survived the disinterest of the RMA -- but at a high cost in morale and developmental opportunities.

From the earliest beginnings of the Great Elector's Prussian Mariniere, the marine troops earned for themselves a reputation of excellence. Their esprit de corps and professionalism enabled them to survive official indifference during the first half of the nineteenth century and to triumph over the very real problems of officer recruitment and poor facilities which jeopardized their attempts at expansion.¹ During this early period, the men were drilled in both artillery and traditional infantry skills: this made possible a unity within the corps which permitted the service to exist with only one officer cadre and one administrative framework.

In the general naval revival which took place under the aegis of Prince Adalbert, the Prussian marine corps was given its first official support since the days of the Great Elector. Adalbert recognized the value of this elite unit and he personally supervised their reformation into two groups: a See-Artillerie (later MAA) and a See-Bataillon. Although this division along functional lines might have spelled the end of unity within the Prussian Mariniere, this was not the case. The men trained together and participated in a number of joint exercises. In addition, each unit was required to be familiar with the duties and drills of the other.

The MAA and the SB of this era were able to perform "double duty", if circumstance dictated it. By assigning each branch of the marine corps a parent or sponsor company in the land army, an important attempt was made to insure that both units would be kept up to date with modern advances in military science.²

This system was not without problem. Chiefly, as the units grew in size, it became difficult to maintain contacts between the artillery and the infantry arms. As the SB and the MAA were not garrisoned in the same ports, it proved difficult to continue the practice of joint training and frequent artillery/infantry exercises. In addition, it proved almost impossible to have each separate unit train with its parent company in the land army: the cost and difficulties of transportation during the 1850s and 1860s made this scheme all but unworkable. However, enough of these attempts at joint exercises and reciprocal training were made to insure that each unit maintained at least an adequate knowledge of the procedures of the other. Another key factor in the maintenance of contacts between the two units was the practice of assigning equal numbers of MAA and SB personnel to make up shipboard complements. Although the actual number of overseas operations in which marine troops saw action was limited, this custom helped foster a sense of unity within the corps.³

With the establishment of the German Reich in 1871, the SB and the MAA entered what might be termed a "normal" period of development. Increases in the size of the new German navy led to automatic increases in the ranks of both the SB and the MAA. In addition, the MAA made itself a reputation for its technical and professional excellence during this period and was often called upon to assist in other types of naval projects -- including the mining and torpedo arms.⁴ After 1871 the practice of assigning MAA to regular shipboard parties was officially discontinued, although small artillery detachments were occasionally ordered to sea on an ad hoc basis.⁵

Thus despite the differing orientations of the two units and the growing separation between their duties, contacts between the SB and the MAA were still maintained. Both were coordinated under the Marine-Ministerium and both still participated in a number of joint exercises and manoeuvres.

With the complete disintegration of a unified naval administration after 1889, this course of evolution within the marine corps was abruptly halted. Critical decentralization left the navy with a semi-autonomous command arm and an equally independent operations branch. As the SB was assigned to the jurisdiction of the OKM (operations arm) and the MAA was assigned to the RMA (command arm), both units soon became pawns in the feud between the two departments. At the OKM, belief in the superiority of battle-fleet strategy was strong; consequently, the planners there saw little use for Seesoldaten trained in coastal defense and fleet station duty.⁶ At the RMA, where enthusiasm for guerre de course strategy was great, planners could see the need for a well-trained colonial police force. Thus the OKM showed no real interest in assuming leadership of the SB and accordingly, allowed the unit to drift along without adequate advancements in training and duty procedures. At the RMA, every attempt was made to use the MAA as efficiently as possible and to gain as much control over the deployment of the Seesoldaten as the terms of the Organisationsreglement would allow.⁷

This problem was further exacerbated by another flaw in the 1889 reorganization. The Organisationsreglement provided only a bare outline of the functions for each unit. Thus, not only were the SB and the MAA deprived of real leadership, they were also denied a clear and specified course of action on which they could lean for at least minimal support and guidance. Very soon after 1889, both the SB and the MAA began to shift away from their original duties:

the infantry to be used as a colonial force deployed on a totally ad hoc and informal basis, the artillery to be used as a "handmaid" unit for other technical branches of the navy.⁸ Although this vagueness and flexibility in function may be considered a prime factor in the ability of the units to survive this critical period, it was also responsible for the continued estrangement of the MAA from the SB and for the inability of the SB to solve its own problem of increasing obsolescence as a shipboard force.⁹

The results of this ill-considered policy were soon apparent. Deployed overseas on a "spur of the moment" basis, the Seesoldaten often lacked important training in differing types of warfare. All too often, they were sent overseas without adequate kit and medical supplies. In Kiaochow, morale sank alarmingly as the men tried to accustom themselves to duties for which they had not been trained. As a result, alcoholism and venereal disease became a significant problem for the corps there. In Africa, abnormally high casualties resulted from the insufficient and inappropriate kit which the Seesoldaten carried. These problems, which bespeak a serious administrative breakdown, plagued the marine troops throughout the 1890s.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, this lack of direction and the vagueness of function inspired the SB to look elsewhere for support and guidance. As the officers for the SB were culled from army cadres and as deployment as a land police force dictated familiarity with army drills and procedures, it was to the army, rather than the navy, that the Seesoldaten looked for orientation. As the proportion of army instructors and army courses in the SB increased, the chances for an effective reunion with the MAA were lessened.

When Tirpitz was appointed to the state secretaryship of the RMA in 1897, the victory of battle-fleet strategy in the German navy was virtually assured. Tirpitz had long noted the deleterious effects of the RMA/OKM conflict¹¹ and was resolved to put the situation right. Within a year of his appointment, the OKM was dissolved and was replaced by the weaker Admiralstab. This corresponded to a dramatic increase of powers within the RMA sphere.¹² This reshuffling of jurisdictional competence meant that the marine units would now both be administered under the aegis of the RMA. Thus, it seemed that a major opportunity had been created for the amelioration of the situation in the SB and the MAA. Unfortunately, this hope was to be frustrated. Although Tirpitz was an ardent supporter of the Kiaochow project, he was not primarily interested in colonial expansion or in the acquisition of fleet stations.¹³ Also, the construction of a battle-fleet rendered superfluous the existence of a major unit trained in coastal defense. Thus, Tirpitz was faced with a serious problem: the SB was useful as a colonial police force and the MAA had proven itself indispensable as a service corps. Both units performed "essential services" for the Wilhelmine navy, yet by Tirpitz' calculation, neither warranted the cost in funds and equipment which they were allotted. For this reason, Tirpitz realized that he would have to undertake a major study of the usefulness of the marine troops to determine their eventual fate.¹⁴

However, in the early years of his tenure as Staatssekretaer, Tirpitz lacked both the information and the time to undertake such an important decision concerning the marine corps. Beleaguered by a serious rift in the officer corps, difficult relations with the Reichstag and the problems of the "Arms Race" with England, Tirpitz decided to postpone his decision on the future of the marine infantry and artillery for several years. In the interim, he hoped that attrition and reassignment of personnel to other branches (in the MAA) would so shrink the size of the units that their continuance would no longer be a problem.¹⁵

It was at this juncture that the long-term effects of the tripartite organization of 1889 made themselves tragically felt. Under the terms of the 1889 split, there did not exist a single body which had responsibility or authority for the coordination of the marine troops. If such an institution had existed, it could have furnished Tirpitz with the material and data which he needed in order to make his decisions. In addition, the coordinating body could have furnished the RMA with statistics on the increasing use of the SB overseas. At the time Tirpitz decided to implement a wait-and-see policy, there was no easy way to garner this type of material. Thus, the Staatssekretaer made his assessment without the benefit of adequate information.¹⁶

In this way, the first moment in corps history in which an organization had gained a clear mandate over both the artillery and infantry branches became the moment in which all hope of future development was lost. By totally abdicating its role as a decision-maker at this crucial stage of marine corps history, the RMA effectively blocked any prospect for the reunification of the corps into one, strong unit. This decision not to participate in the reorganization of the marine corps also insured that no effective alternatives would be created for the SB, which was becoming increasingly superfluous as a shipboard force and which was never given an official prospectus of duties to compensate for the loss.

Although Tirpitz had hoped that attrition and reassignment would gradually thin the ranks of both the SB and the MAA, the plan was not successful. In the case of the SB, the easy access to military training and materials insured that the unit would identify itself more closely with army ideas and projects. Although the corps was left without responsible direction from navy administrators, it was able to make a position for itself which assured it guidance and support in basic military matters.

This quasi-military, independent role was reinforced by the growing importance of the SB in colonial matters. Despite Tirpitz' avowed hopes that the unit would eventually fade from the military scene, the Seesoldaten were important props of the colonial Reich in the years between 1900 and 1914. Ironically, it was under the state secretaryship of Tirpitz -- who was so opposed to the colonial and fleet station plans of Hollmann -- that the SB saw the largest part of its action overseas. In the Far East, in German Africa and in the South Pacific, the Seesoldaten made a tangible contribution to the success of German colonial aspirations.

Paradoxically, the one unit of marine infantry permanently garrisoned overseas -- the SB III. (Tsingtau) -- was the unit in which the most acute problems of morale and dissatisfaction were registered. This was in large part due to the lack of harmony in SB training and deployment: clearly, a unit trained as a force de frappe was ill-suited for long-term service as canal and railway builders in North China.¹⁷ In China, the duties and obligations of the marine infantry were fairly well coordinated. Thus it was in China, where the vague flexibility which prevailed in the day to day running of SB cadres did not exist, that the strains of poor training and administration made themselves felt. In China, the precision of duties and the regularity of conditions underlined the crucial communications gap which existed between the corps and the naval administration. For this reason, the major overseas project of the Seesoldaten was also their major failure.

At the same time, the wait-and-see policy also helped to complete the breach between the SB and the MAA. Increasingly, the MAA became identified with the torpedo/mining/installations branches of the navy. The linkage was heightened by the fact that MAA officers were part of the naval officer corps and that all artillery training was carried out at navy installations and with naval instructors.¹⁸

Throughout the later period the chances for MAA personnel to serve as part of a shipboard detachment became more and more remote. This also served to alienate the MAA from its brother unit. With the abolition of marine corps landing parties on all but the largest cruisers and battleships, the opportunities for joint MAA/SB action were considerably diminished. By 1914 the only major co-operative action by the two units was an annual exercise in Festungsgeschuetz: with the decision to drop SB training in heavy gunnery in 1905, even the future of this manoeuvre was called into question.¹⁹

Thus the very moment which should have seen a resurgence of the marine infantry and artillery within the Wilhelmine navy saw instead their collapse. Alienated from one another (and in the case of the infantry, the SB I. and SB II. were remote from the SB III.), both units struggled to maintain a semblance of independence and integrity. In the SB, continued survival was possible because of RMA disinterest and the flexibility of the corps. In the MAA, the reverse was true: although plans were made for the eventual incorporation of the unit into other technical branches, the importance of the MAA skills insured its survival.

The tragedy was that even if a decision to keep the forces separate -- and by 1900, it is doubtful whether a union approaching that of Prince Adalbert's days would have been possible, or even beneficial -- the organization did exist under which both units could have been successfully coordinated and reformed.

The reorganization of 1899 gave the RMA a strikingly clear mandate for the control of both the artillery and the infantry. At the same time, the expansion of RMA jurisdiction in the military and operational sphere laid the basis for a strong Militaerische Abtheilung.

As early as 1899-1900, this department could have been expanded or enlarged to include a section for the administration of marine artillery and infantry affairs. Another alternative would have been to incorporate the MAA more fully with either the Waffendepartement or the Werftdepartement. If the decision had been made to separate the two marine units completely, the SB could then have been placed under the authority of general Abtheilung fuer Verwaltungsangelegenheiten or the Militaerische Abtheilung.²⁰ In this way, sensible, long-range plans for both units could have been undertaken and the size and direction of the corps could have been altered to meet the needs of the burgeoning Risikoflotte.

The mistake made by the planners of the Wilhelmine navy was in not recognizing the importance and potential which the MAA and the SB could assume for a variety of naval and non-naval functions. The blame for this oversight can be laid squarely at the door of the tripartite reorganization of 1889: under that decentralized system it was not possible to focus the goals and operations of either unit adequately. Thus, the excellent contributions of the marine infantry and artillery to the success of the Wilhelmine navy and the German colonial Reich tended to be underplayed. For this reason, the RMA readily abandoned the corps in the period when it desperately needed official direction and guidance in the development of a modern programme of training and function.

Footnotes

1. Vide Sandhofer and Prittwitz, pp. 4-6.
2. Heye, p. 10.
3. Prittwitz, p. 10.
4. Heye, p. 34.
5. Prittwitz, pp. 44-48.
6. Tirpitz, quoted in Wagner, p. 237.
7. Vide Chapter Eight, "Growing Divisions within the Marine Corps".
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. An excellent, if "between the lines" account of Seesoldaten problems and dissatisfaction in Kiaochow is contained in Nachlass Fauth, N-378, BAMA and in the medical records contained in PG 66718, NA.
11. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 42, Pro Memoria of December 12, 1890, Stellung d. Kommandirenden Admirals, BAMA.
12. Nachlass Tirpitz, N-253, Bd. 39, February 20, 1899, Im Vortrag ueber Organisation der obersten Marinebehoerden, BAMA.
13. Tirpitz, p. 200 ff.
14. Tirpitz, Berlin, March 4, 1904, memorandum entitled Organisation und Weiterentwicklung..., M. 4838, PG 66714, NA.
15. Ibid.
16. Vide Chapter Nine, "The See-Bataillon and the Matrosen-Artillerie-Abtheilung after 1898".
17. Vide Nachlass Fauth, N-378, BAMA.
18. KO, March 30, 1907, 409, PG 66715, NA.
19. Unsigned RMA Vorschrift, 1913, RM3/v. 10205, BAMA.
20. Vide Chapter Seven, "The Strategy Debate in the German Navy", footnote 47.

APPENDIX I

Organizational Heads of the Imperial German Navy

RMA

Heusner	1889-90
Hollmann	1890-97
Tirpitz	1897-1916

MK

Senden-Bibran	1899-1906
Müller	1906-1910

OKM

von d. Goltz	1888-1895
Knorr	1896-1899

-----AMALGAMATED IN 1919-----

ADM

Bendemann	1899
Diederichs	1899-1902
Büchsel	1902-1908
Baudissin	1908-1909
Fischel	1909-1911
Herringen	1911-1913
Pohl	1914-1915
Bachmann	1915
Holtzendorff	1915-1918
Scheer	1918-1919

KA

von Stosch	1871-1883
von Caprivi	1883-1888
von Monts	1888-1889

APPENDIX IIThe Marine-Infanterie -- 1889 to 1914Commanders (! = Commander of Bataillon)

von Roques	1.	4.	1889	-	24.	3.	1890
von Natzmer	24.	3.	1890	-	9.	2.	1891
von Mützscheffel	14.	2.	1891	-	15.	7.	1893
von Fransecky	15.	7.	1893	-	16.	6.	1896
von Hoepfner	16.	6.	1896	-	22.	3.	1902
Dürr	22.	3.	1902	-	20.	7.	1904
Wynehen	20.	7.	1904	-	4.	4.	1908
von Glasenapp	4.	4.	1908	-	18.	10.	1908
von Bodungen	18.	10.	1908	-	19.	7.	1911
von Wickmann	19.	7.	1911	-	25.	12.	1914 !

Commanders of the First See-Bataillon (! = Commander of MIR I)

Lüthöfffel	1.	4.	1889	-	14.	5.	1894
von Hennigs	14.	5.	1894	-	12.	9.	1896
Dürr	12.	9.	1896	-	1.	8.	1898
von Madai	1.	8.	1898	-	12.	10.	1901
von Barsewisch	12.	10.	1901	-	16.	3.	1905
von Glasenapp	16.	3.	1905	-			1908
von Schelcha			1908	-			1910
Lessing	20.	4.	1910	-	7.	9.	1916 !

Commanders of the Second See-Bataillon (! = Commander of MIR II)

Gresser	1.	4.	1889	-	22.	5.	1893
von Boetticher	26.	5.	1893	-	20.	5.	1896
Kopka von Lossow	21.	5.	1896	-	17.	12.	1897
von Madai	1.	4.	1898	-	1.	8.	1898
Christ	24.	2.	1900	-	19.	3.	1900
von Kronhelm	19.	3.	1900	-	6.	6.	1901
von Glasenapp	4.	3.	1902	-	16.	3.	1905
von Schelcha	16.	3.	1905	-			1908
von Below	4.	4.	1908	-	30.	1.	1909
von Lettow-Vorbeck	1.	3.	1909	-	1.	10.	1913
von Goetze	1.	10.	1913	-	24.	9.	1916

APPENDIX II CONT'D.Commanders of the Third See-Bataillon (Tsingtau)

Kopka von Lossow	17. 2. 1897 - 1. 8. 1898
Dürr	1. 8. 1898 - 19. 3. 1900
Christ	19. 3. 1900 - 14. 2. 1902
Hofrichter	1. 3. 1902 - 10. 11. 1903
von Frobel	12. 11. 1903 - 1907
Credner	1907 - 1909
von Below	1909 - 1912
von Kessinger	1912 - 1914

Commanders of the Third Stamm-See-Bataillon (! = Commander of MIR III)

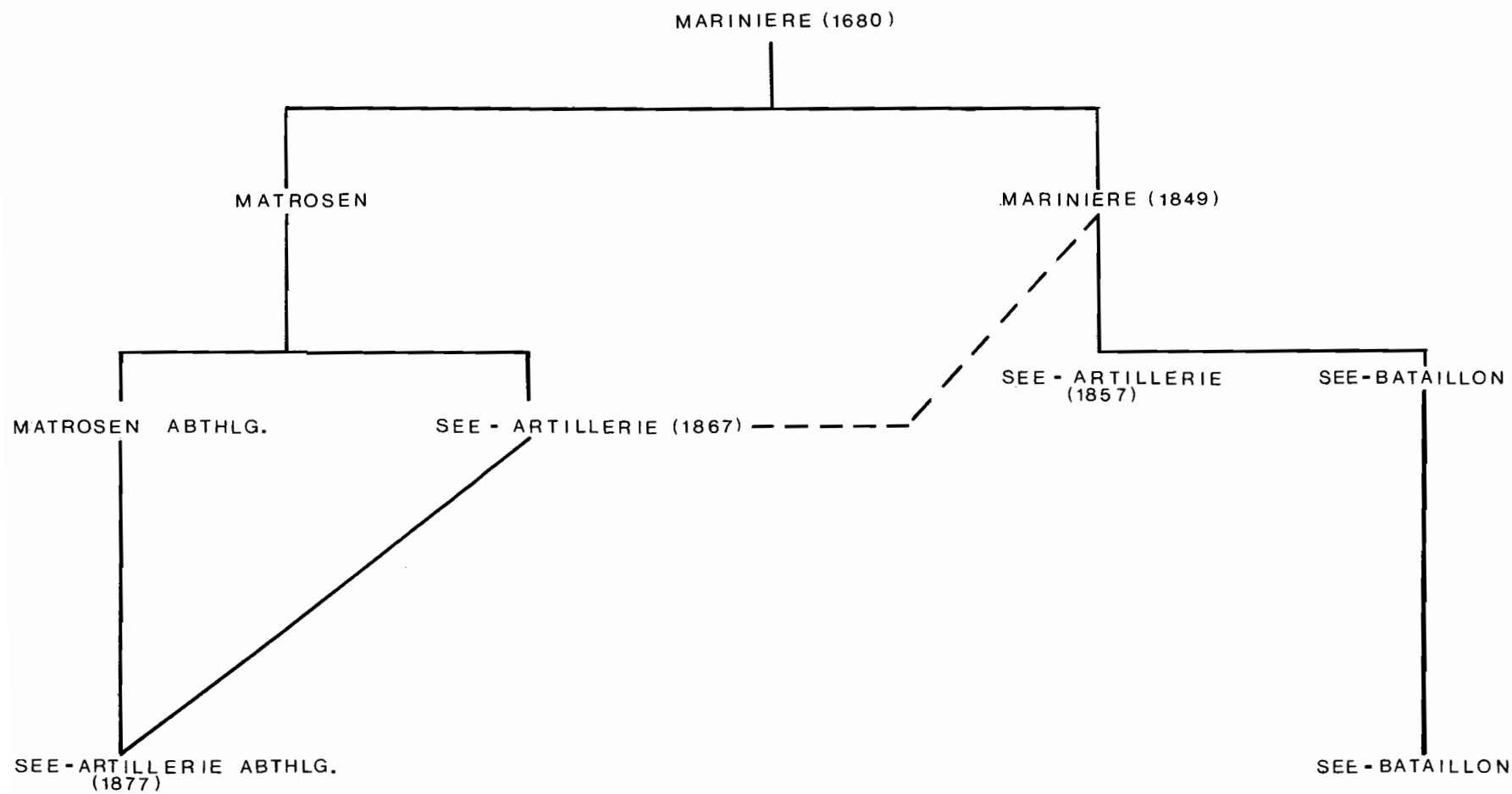
Credner	1905 - 1906
von Frobel	1906 - 1909
von Liliencron	1909 - 1912
von Bernuth	1912 - 18. 3. 1918

APPENDIX III

Figure One --

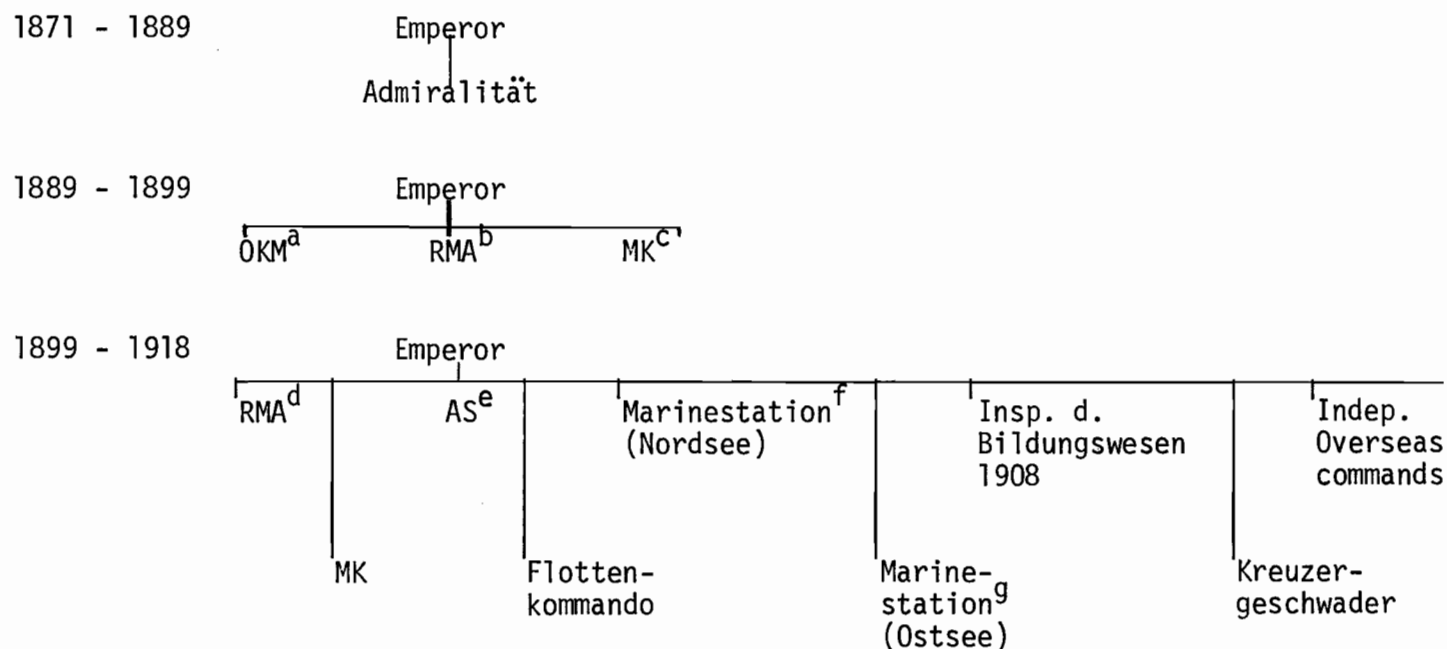
THE GROWTH OF THE MARINE CORPS FROM 1680

THE GROWTH of the MARINE CORPS from 1680



APPENDIX IV

Chart Tracing the Growth of Naval Command in Germany, 1871 - 1918 ^I



- a -- direction of naval forces
operative preparations in both peace and war
- b -- naval armaments
- c -- personal assistance to Emperor -- esp. in appointments
- d -- operations study and planning and some OKM duties
- e -- operations study and planning
- f & g -- independent operations and planning for each station

^I Gemzell, op. cit., p. 39.

APPENDIX V

Figure Two --

AREAS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE RMA AND THE OKM

RMA

IMPERIAL NAVY OFFICE

(Secretary of State for Naval Affairs)

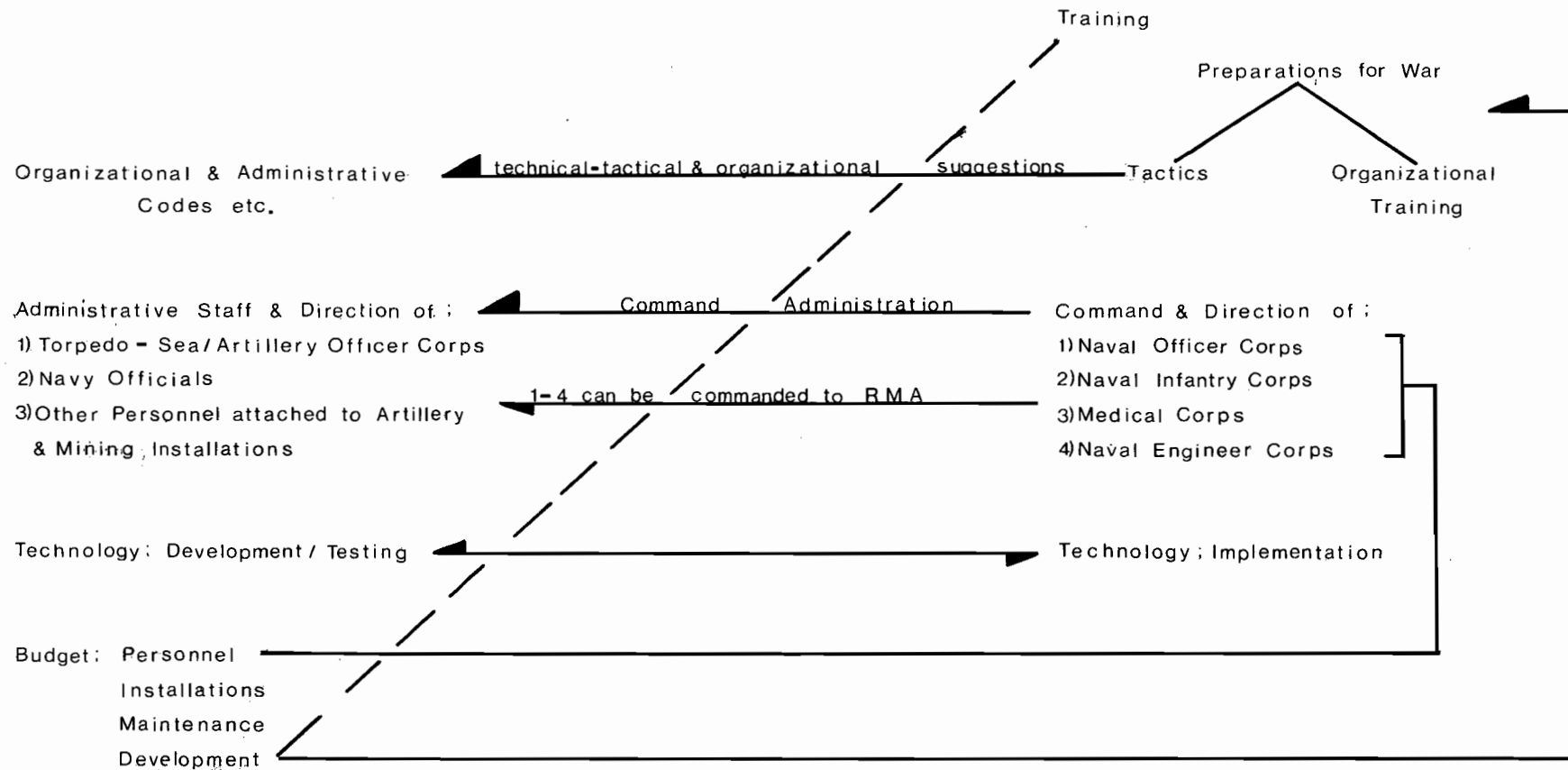
OKM

NAVAL HIGH COMMAND

(Commanding Admiral)

Admiralty Staff (War)

Personnel & Materiel Deployment



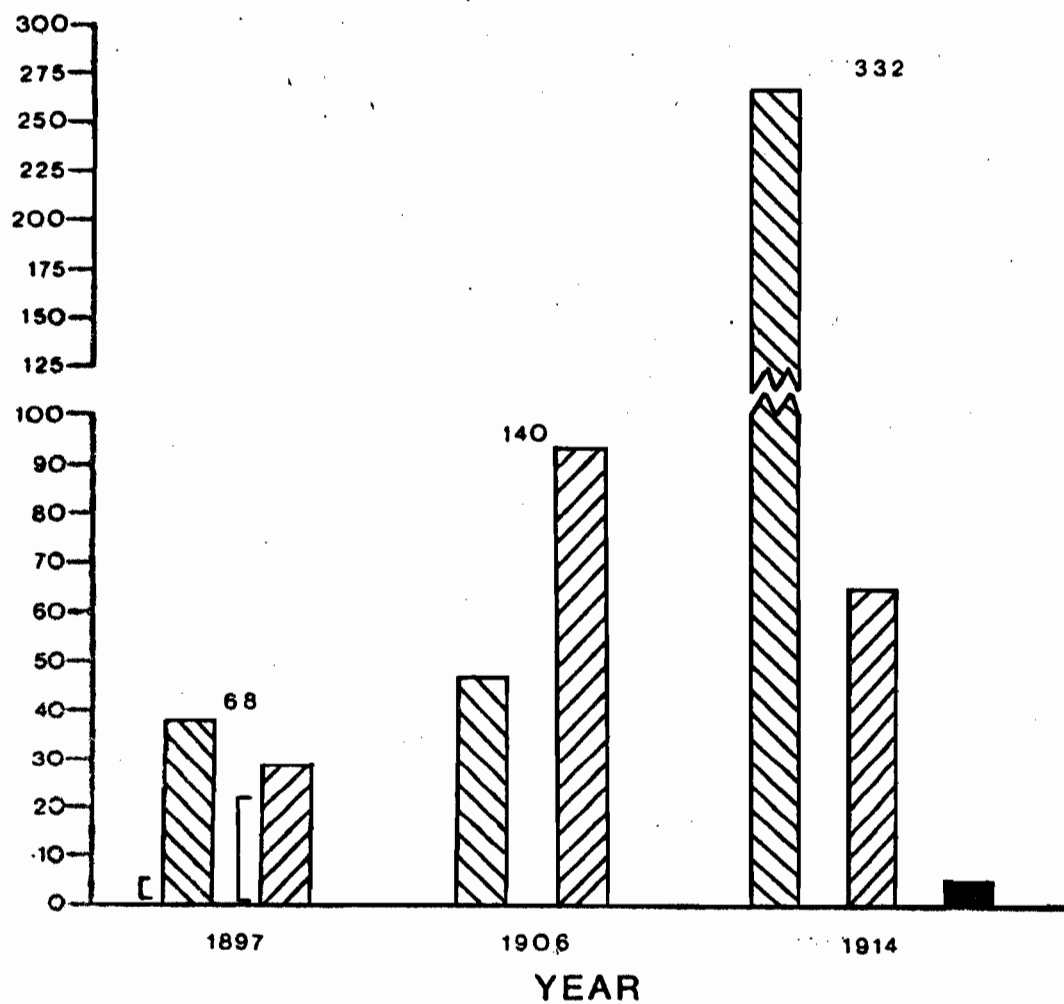
APPENDIX VI





Figure Three --

BATTLESHIP/CRUISER RATIO IN THE GERMAN NAVY

BATTLESHIP / CRUISER RATIO

NUMBER
OF
SHIPS



 BATTLESHIPS
 CRUISERS
 MISC.
 OBSOLETE

APPENDIX VII

Chronology of Important Dates in the History of the Marine-Infanterie

1848 - 1859

<u>1848</u>	5. 9.48	establishment of a <u>Küstenflotille</u> under a <u>Marinekommission</u> (Prinz Adalbert)
<u>1849</u>	23.12.49	division of <u>Marinekorps</u> into <u>Matrosen</u> and <u>Marinierkorps</u>
<u>1850</u>	3.12.50	<u>Marinierkorps</u> placed under the command of the <u>Generalkommando</u> two companies of <u>MK</u> were sent to Stettin
<u>1851</u>		
<u>1852</u>	1. 5.52 13. 5.52	transfer of <u>Marinierkorps</u> to Swinemünde <u>AKO</u> -- definition of term " <u>Seesoldat</u> "
<u>1853</u>	6.53	formation of a third company transfer of Stamm-division to Stralsund
<u>1854</u>	17. 4.54 7. 7.54	<u>AKO</u> -- 1. Company of the <u>See-Bataillon</u> moved to Danzig <u>ORGANISATIONS-REGLEMENT</u> (<u>See-Bataillon</u> = <u>Infanterie-truppe</u>)
<u>1855</u>	14. 3.55	Staff, 1-2-3 companies of <u>Marine-Infanterie</u> moved from Kiel to Danzig
<u>1856</u>	7. 8.56	3. company/Danzig landed at Cap Treforcas
<u>1857</u>	31.10.57	<u>AKO</u> -- establishment of <u>See-Artillerie</u>
<u>1858</u>		
<u>1859</u>	1. 6.59	establishment of fourth company of infantry/Danzig

APPENDIX VIIA CONT'D.1860 - 18691860

1861 2. 1.61 AKO -- establishment of the Marineministerium
(Roon)

1862

1863 dramatic expansion within the Prussian fleet

1864

1865 24. 3.65 Ostseestation moved to Kiel
1. and 3. companies of Marine-Infanterie moved
to Friedrichsort

14. 6.65 Staff, 2. and 4. companies Marine-Infanterie
moved to Danzig

4. 9.65 1. and 3. companies of Marine-Infanterie moved
to Kiel

13. 9.65 Staff and 4. company moved to Kiel

1866 31. 7.66 expansion of See-Bataillon officer corps
solution to "advancement dilemma"
summer expedition to Yokahoma

1867 spring expedition to Mediterranean

3. 1.67 AKO -- establishment of independent See-Artillerie-
Abtheilung
3. company of See-Artillerie formed

1868

1869 1.10.69 AKO -- establishment of 5. company of Marine-
Infanterie

APPENDIX VIII CONT'D.1870 - 187918701871

1.10.71 AKO -- establishment of 6. company/Kiel,
Marine-Infanterie

15.10.71 1. company Marine-Infanterie moved to
Wilhelmshaven

1872

1. 1.72 establishment of Kriegsmarine under Stosch

5. 6.72 establishment of Marine-Akademie/Kiel

6. 5.72 Denkschrift by Stosch -- "Hauptziele d. deutschen
Kriegsmarine"

7. 5.72 AKO -- Engineers and Technical officers and
personnel received permanent rankings

1873

1. 6.73 2. company Marine-Infanterie moved to
Wilhelmshaven

187418751876187718781879

APPENDIX VII CONT'D.1900 - 1909

<u>1900</u>		China expedition (3. company of <u>See-Bataillon</u>)
	19. 6.00	mobilization of 3. Bataillon/Tsingtau
<u>1901</u>	15. 8.01	1. and 2. <u>See-Bataillone</u> sent to China
<u>1902</u>		
<u>1903</u>		
<u>1904</u>	17. 1.04	two companies from the 1. and 2. <u>See-Bataillon</u> en sent to Deutsch-Südafrika AKO -- 1. <u>See-Bataillon</u> transferred from Kiel to Gaarden
<u>1905</u>	9. 2.05	400 men from <u>See-Bataillon</u> sent to Ostafrika
<u>1906</u>	14. 3.06	return of Südwestafrika contingent to Europe
<u>1907</u>		AKO -- 2. <u>See-Bataillon</u> transferred from Wilhelmshaven to Heppens
<u>1908</u>	1.10.08	each bataillon instituted a signals corps
<u>1909</u>		establishment of Peking and Tientsin <u>Marine-Detachements</u>

APPENDIX VII. CONT'D.1910 - 1914

<u>1910</u>	6. 3.10	<u>AKO</u> -- fifth company of <u>Matrosen-Artillerie</u> established in Helgoland
<u>1911</u>	13. 1.11	detachment sent to Ponapé
<u>1912</u>		<u>AKO</u> -- 3. <u>Stammбатаillon</u> transferred from Wilhelmshaven to Cuxhaven (in entirety)
<u>1913</u>	8. 7.13	<u>AKO</u> -- formation of 111-man <u>Marine-Infanterie-Detachment</u> to participate in blockade of Skutari
<u>1914</u>	22. - 28. 2.14	<u>See-Bataillon</u> force sent to Neu-Mecklenburg

APPENDIX VIIIUniforms Worn by the German Marines (See-Bataillon)

- Service uniform -- gray. bell cap with black visor. greatcoat possesses civilian collar. breeches, leggings. tan boots. shoulder straps.
- Dress uniform -- black shako with red plume. blue tunic with stand-up collar. epaulets without fringe. blue breeches with white piping.
- Overseas uniform -- khaki cotton. same cut as service dress. khaki helmet replaces bell cap.
- Enlisted men -- same cut as officers' uniforms. epaulets are replaced by white shoulder straps on dress uniform. For service dress, cap has no visor and buttons on tunic are metal, not cloth-covered.
- Insignia -- rank and regimental insignia are those of German army.

APPENDIX IXKit of the Marine-Infanterie-Division5208, 1.9.14.

Berlin, den 29. August, 1914.

Befehl Nr. 1

fuer

Marine-Division

Ich habe auf Allerhoechsten Befehl mit dem heutigen Tage das Kommando ueber die zu bildende Marine-Division uebernommen.

I. Kriegsgliederung:Stab

Kommandeur	Admiral von Schroeder
Admiralstabsoffizier	Frhr. von Bibran
2 Generalstabsoffiziere	noch zu ernennen
Adjutant	Kapitaenleutnant Erich Edgar Schul
Ordonnanzoffizier	noch zu ernennen
Maschinenwesen	Mar. Chef-Ing. Breitenstein
Divisionsarzt	Oberarzt Dr. Staby
Divisionsintendantur	Intendant Adm. Rat Reuter Adm. Rat Frerichs Feld-Intend. Rat Dr. Bolleri Intend. Ass. Dr. Meissner
Feldjustizbeamte	Mar. Kriegsgerichtsrat Zaepfel " " von Seemen
Bauwesen	Marinebaurat Nuebling

APPENDIX IX CONT'D.Marineinfanteriebrigade: Generalmajor von Wichmann

I. Mar. Inf. Regt. (Kiel)	3000	Mann
1. Landwehr-Feld-Art. Abt.	300	
Landwehrkavallerie (Kiel)	50	
Pioniere	100	
II. Mar. Inf. Regt. (Wilhelmshaven)	4000	
Landwehrkavallerie	160	
<u>Matrosenartilleriebrigade</u>	3500	
<u>Matrosenregiment</u>	3000	
	<hr/>	
	14110	
<u>Flottenstammdivision</u>	850	
Kompagnie Kiel	200 Mann	seem. Personal
	150 "	tech. "
Kompagnie		
Wilhelmshaven	200 Mann	seem. Personal
	300 "	tech. "
<u>Pionier-Torpedo-Kompagnie</u>		
	(wird spaeter formiert)	
<u>Tross</u>	300	
<u>Flug-und Luftschiffwesen</u>	110	
	<hr/>	
	15370	Mann

APPENDIX IX CONT'D.AnlagenArtillerie --1. Maschinengewehre

20 Maschinengewehre auf Werft Wilhelmshaven
Flottenstammdivision Kompagnie Wilhelmshaven
bildet 10 Zuege à 2 M.G.

Bespannung: 1 Pferd pro Geschuetz

20000 Schuss pro Gewehr

8 Maschinengewehre in Kiel
Flottenstammdivision Kompagnie Kiel bildet
4 Zuege à 2 M.G.

Munition, Bespannung wie oben

2. 6 cm Boots-und Landungskanonen

Die 6 cm Bootskanonen-Werft Kiel 14, Wilhelmshaven 6 --
werden vorlaeufig nicht mitgenommen, sondern bereit
gehalten, auf Befehl nachgeschickt zu werden.

3. Munitionstransport

Munitionswagen (auch Patrone packwagen) mit zwei
Pferden bespannt oder Lastautos.

Ausruestung1. Offiziere

Blaue Muetzen, Jacketts, Beinkleider
Gamaschen, schwarze oder braune Schuhe,
Braune Handschuhe,
Saebel,
Pistole,
Ein Rock,
Schaerpe,
Ueberzieher,
Sporthemd, langer schwarzer Schlips,
Doppelgas, Kompass, Uhr, Kartentasche, Meldekarten,
Batteriepfeife, Feldflasche,
Hoechster Anzug: Dienstanzug mit Orden

APPENDIX ~~IX~~CONT'D.2. Mannschaften

Ein blaues Paeckchen,
 ein Arbeitszeug,
 zwei Unterzeuge, Struempfe,
 zwei blaue Muetzen, zwei Baender,
 Gamaschen,
 Exerzierkragen,
 Stiefel, ein Paar schwarze Schuhe,
 Ueberzieher,
 wollene Decke,
 Rucksack oder Zum Tragen eingerichtete Haengematte,
 Verbandpaeckchen, Erkennungsmarke

Bewaffnung

Faehnrichte zur See und Seekadetten: Saebel bzw. Seitengewehr
 der T.D. Pistole

Mannschaften: Gewehr 98

Mit Pistole sind nur Leute zuzuruesten, die mit
 Pistole ausgebildet sind.

Munition:

100 Patronen pro Pistole,

400 Patronen pro Mann einschliesslich der Munition, die auf den
 Munitionspackwagen mitgefuehrt wird.

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- 97 Briefwechsel mit Bülow
- 99 Briefwechsel mit Wilhelm II, (Hefte 3 & 4)

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 513
 542-549
 593
 605
 632-633
 686

PG 66700	Küstenverteidigung
PG 66714	Organisation, Bd. 1, von 1890
PG 66715	Flottengesetz 1905-1914
PG 66715A	Organisation, Bd. 4, bis 1889
PG 66716	Organisation
PG 66717	Organisation (Technische Institute)
PG 66718	Organisation (Marine Sanitätswesen)
PG 66219	Übungsberichte, Bd. 1, 1899-1911
PG 67260	Schiessberichte, Bd. 4, 1905 bis Ende
PG 67261	" , Bd. 5, 1906
PG 67305	Kiautschau, Bd. 1, 1895-1898
PG 67306	" Bd. 2, 1898 (June)
PG 67307	" Bd. 3, 1898-1899 (April)
PG 67308	" Bd. 4, 1899-1900
PG 67309	" Bd. 5, 1901-1908
PG 67310	" Bd. 6, 1909-1914
PG 67311	" Bd. 7, Miszellen

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- PG 67403 Kriegerische Aktionen im Auslande, Bd. 1, 1889-1897
(Ostafrika, China, Japan)
- PG 67405 Kriegerische Aktionen im Auslande, Bd. 2, 1900-1913
(Samoa, China, Japan)
- PG 67406 Schutztruppen, Bd. 1, 1890-1891, Organisation und
Verwaltung
- PG 67407 Schutztruppen, Bd. 2, 1891-1892, Afrika
- PG 67408 Schutztruppen, Bd. 3, 1892-1893, Afrika (Organisation)
- PG 67409 Schutztruppen, Bd. 4, 1893-1894, Verwaltung
- PG 67410 Schutztruppen, Bd. 5, 1894-1895
- PG 67411 Schutztruppen, Bd. 6, 1895-1896
- PG 67412 Schutztruppen, Bd. 7, 1896-1897
- PG 67413 Schutztruppen, Bd. 8, 1898-1905 (Ostafrika)
- PG 67414 Schutztruppen, Bd. 9, 1906-1914, (Verwaltung der
Truppe in Ostafrika)
- PG 67415 Schutztruppen, Bd. 1, Expeditionen nach Ostafrika
- PG 67416 Berichte in militär-politischen Angelegenheiten,
Bd. 1, 1906-1908
- PG 67417 " " " " , Bd. 2, 1909-1910
- PG 67418 " " " " , Bd. 3, 1911
- PG 67434 Venezuela, 1902-1903, Blockade
- PG 68087A Berichte d. Korvetten-Kapitäns mit Oberstlieutenants-
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Preussen, 1897-1898 (Kiautschau)
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- PG 75213 Krieg zwischen Deutschland und Russland, Frankreich
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- RK 931
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1893-14. V. 1899

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AA 51618	Das kais. Konsulat in Hong Kong
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RM1/v.

696	Die Organisation der Marinier-Corps, Bd. 1, Okt. 1848- Jan. 1854
697	Die Organisation der See-Bataillon, Bd. 1, Juni 1855- März 1871
698	" " " " " ", Bd. 2, Jan. 1854- Dez. 1866
699	" " " " " ", Bd. 3, Jan. 1867- Dez. 1889
701	Die Errichtung einer See-Artillerie-Kompagnie, Bd. 1, Juni 1856-Jan. 1867
702	" " " " " " ", Bd. 2, Juni 1856-März 1864
703	" " " " " " ", Bd. 3, Apr. 1864-Juni 1867
704	" " " " " " ", Bd. 4, Juli 1867-Juli 1871
705	Die Errichtung einer See-Artillerie-Kompagnie, Bd. 5, Nov. 1871-Apr. 1877

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv/Freiburg cont'd.

RM1/v.

2778	Die Organisation der Marine, Juli 1854-Jan. 1863
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2782	" " " " , Nov. 1856-Dez. 1861
2783	" " " " , Jan. 1862-Juli 1862
2784	" " " " , Aug. 1860-Dez. 1871
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2786	" " " " , Juni 1873-Nov. 1887
2787	" " " " , Dez. 1884-Dez. 1885
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2793	" " " " , 1884-1885
2794	Die Verhandlungen d. Admiralität-Rathes, Juni 1861-Dez. 1867
2795	" " " " " , Sept. 1861-Feb. 1884
2797	Die Errichtung eines OKM, Jan. 1868-Mai 1871
2797	" " " " , Mai 1859-Mai 1871

RM2/v.

1835	Kiautschau, 1895-1898
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RM3/v.

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6692	Erforschung und Erwerbung in Ostasien, März 1895-Okt. 1896
6693	" " " " , Nov. 1896-Okt. 1897
6694	" " " " , Nov. 1897-Jan. 1898
6696	Besetzung der Station in China, Nov. 1897-Jan. 1898
10198	RMA-Nachrichtenbüro -- Werften -- Aug. 1905-Juli 1914

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv/Freiburg cont'd.

RM3/v.

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10205	" " " -- Organisation der Marine, Okt. 1899-Aug. 1919
10265	" " " -- Organisation der Marine, (Aufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika), Aug. 1905-Mai 1907
10425	Die Marine Rundschau, Dez. 1891-Okt. 1893, Bd. 3
10434	" " " , Nov. 1898-Jan. 1900, Bd. 2
10437	" " " , Juli 1896-März 1897, Bd. 3
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912	Immediatberichte und Vorträge, Okt. 1894-Apr. 1895
913	" " " , Mai 1895-Okt. 1896
914	" " " , Nov. 1896-Mai 1897
915	" " " , Mai 1897-Dez. 1897
916	" " " , Jan. 1898-Okt. 1898
1643	Nachrichtswesen für den ostlichen (SIC) Kriegsschauplatz Jan. 1897-Juli 1914

Nachlasse

N-168	Büchsel	4/Militärische Laufbahn, 1889-1915 6/Einzelne Schreiben, 1890-1904 7/Amtliche Denkschriften, 1903-1906 10/Korrespondenz, 1897-1900 11/Korrespondenz mit Tirpitz, 1897-1899
N-224	Truppel	6/Kriegstagebuch -- Kiautschau 7/Tagebuchnotizen 13/Ausarbeitungen für die Presse 27/Privatkorrespondenz, 26. II. 1924-21. I. 1927 30/" " , 23.III. 1910-16. I. 1917 62/Tsingtau 65/Erinnerungen an Tsingtau 67/Denkschriften, Mai 1915-Dez. 1917

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv/Freiburg cont'd.

- N-253 Tirpitz 2/Aus der Zeit als Chef d. Stabes des OKM
 3/Aus der Zeit vor der Berufung als Staatssekretär
 34/Taktische und strategische Dienstschriften
 35/12 Taktische Fragen
 39/Kampf zwischen OKM und RMA
 42/Aufsätze über Organisation
 56/Eine Neuorganisation unserer Panzerflotte
 57/Beilage
 58/Beantwortung der 12 taktischen Fragen
 204/Korrespondenz mit Hollmann
 207/" " Müller
 222/" " von Ahlefeld
 225/" " von Holtzendorff
 228/" " von Senden-Bibran
 230/Seekriegsrecht und Seekriegsführung im Weltkrieg
 245/Briefe betreffend Ostasien und Kiautschau
- N-255 Diederichs 8/Privatkorrespondenz, 1875-1898
 9/" " , 1898
 23/"Briefe aus der Kiautschau Bucht"
- N-378 Fauth 1/Erinnerungen
 2/"
 3/"
- N-159 Müller Personal-Nachläß
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- | | | | |
|---------|-------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Behncke | F7580 | Tagebücher, April 1883-Juli 1905 | (5 Bde.) |
| | F7581 | Vor der Staatssekretärschaft | (8 Bde.) |
| | F7582 | Ostasien | (5 Bde.) |

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv/Freiburg cont'd.

Behncke	F7583	Dienstreisen	(1 Bd.)
	F7585	Wiederaufbau unserer Flotte	(13 Bde.)
Capelle	F7635d	Wiederaufbau unserer Flotte	(1 Bd.)
Hollweg	F7589	Miszellan	(2 Bde.)
Knorr	F7591	Erinnerungen	(6 Bde.)
	F7592	"	(3 Bde.)
	F7593	Miszellan (SIC)	(9 Bde.)

Hefte aus der Hausbibliothek

Heft	683	<u>Jahresbericht, Kassenbericht und Mitgliederverzeichnis der "Verein der Offiziere der Matrosen-Artillerie", Berlin, 1913.</u>
Heft	684	<u>Satzung des Vereins -- "Vereinigung der Offiziere der Matrosen-Artillerie, eingetragener Verein", Berlin, 31. X. 1907.</u>
Heft	687	<u>Offizier-Vereinigung der Marine-Infanterie (Kaiserliche See-Bataillone), Stand vom 1. VII. 1960.</u>