

Naval Institute Proceedings  
Vol XXI No 2 1895

1895.

DISCUSSION OF PRIZE ESSAY, 1895.

271



resents the Indiana as she would appear at 2000 yards range, only with much sharper outlines than would be the case in reality. To attain the best results *all* guns should be pointed at the middle of the enemy's ship except at *very* close range.

Lieutenant A. P. NIBLACK, U. S. N.—The questions dealt with by Lieutenant-Commander Wainwright are so much to the point that whether or not his solutions are entirely satisfactory is of less importance than that a great body of progressive officers, line and staff, should be reminded that there are such questions in the naval profession. Unfortunately we need these reminders, for they are not such live issues with us as with some other navies. To be sure, our ships are noted for their smart appearance, their double bottoms are inspected with the greatest frequency, and the numerous returns and blank forms are, in the main, very creditably filled out. Everywhere the new navy makes a good impression, and in the cuts and pictures in the newspapers and periodicals the new ships lose none of their impressiveness. But in the matter of systematic target practice, of turning circles, fleet manœuvres, torpedo drill, the school of the ship, the school of the section and the things which count for battle efficiency, our experience as a body of officers is remarkably limited. This is, however, not the fault of naval authority. Our few cruisers have been entirely absorbed in police duty for the State Department and in watching various political upheavals in remote parts of the world. We can only hope for a squadron of evolution when we get battle-ships which cannot be sent off on telegraphic notice to Kamschatka or Zanzibar, and only hope for good work out of the squadron when it goes off to some secluded body of water, for two or three months at a time, to escape the distractions from the inevitable visitors. Two ships fervently employed in the school of the ship and the school of the section for two months can give more valuable experience to the people on board than can be gained by a conventional three years cruise on any station as now conducted.

Our principal data for solving tactical problems we must glean from foreign periodicals, for our familiarity as workmen with our own tools is largely theoretical.

The following are some of the points very well worth noting in the essay under consideration:

It is evident, when considering tactical problems, that the details which are of importance are numerous, but the tactical evolutions that are required in battle are few." Our Fleet Drill Book needs revision along these lines.

"The object of the manœuvres will be to have as many guns as possible bearing on the enemy, to keep within fair range, to avoid unneces-