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**Jutland. The German Perspective. A New View of the Great Battle, 31
May 1916 by V.E. Tarrant**

by
Vic Jeffrey¹

It is now history that Australia's first flagship, the battlecruiser HMAS *Australia*, missed the Battle of Jutland after a collision in fog with her sister ship HMS *New Zealand*.

Australia's withdrawal for repairs saw the RAN not represented at one of the great-est naval battles of all time. However, Australian ships to have carried the battle honour "Jutland 1916", inherited from RN ships participating, have been the survey ships HMAS *Moresby* I and II, HMA Submarines *Onslow* and *Orion*, and HMA Ships *Nestor*, *Ardent* and *Attack*.

Like the still unsatisfactorily explained loss of the cruiser HMAS *Sydney* II more than 56 years ago, the 82-year controversy of who won the Battle of Jutland still arouses much debate and intrigue among students of naval strategy and history.

Surprisingly, this classic sea battle has never been studied from a German perspective previously. Now, for the first time in the English language, a unique and balanced assessment of the German view of the Battle of Jutland is possible.

Well-known British naval historian V.E. Tarrant has created a commendable new study of the Battle of Skaggerak (as the Germans know Jutland). In his normal impeccable style, Tarrant has drawn on many official archives, action reports, High Fleet Operations staff papers, many other sources and translations of documents about the battle and the results of this clash of the two most powerful navies afloat at that time.

The battle was itself inevitable after years of competition with each other in construction design and armament, which one day would lead to a final decisive showdown that would decide the war at sea.

Up until Jutland, the single decisive battle hoped for by British strategists remained elusive as the Germans carried out a series of bold hit-and-run bombarding raids on British coastal towns. This stung the pride and sense of fair play of the Royal Navy. Until Jutland, fleeting chance encounters between isolated British and German units and the missed opportunities of Dogger Bank and Heligoland Bight, saw the ultimate decisive battle remain elusive.

History records that the Battle of Jutland finally took place on 31 May to 1 June 1916 in the North Sea as the German High Seas Fleet planned precisely their concentration against the numerically superior British Grand Fleet. The time and place was of German choice, having successfully lured the bulk of the British Fleet into a trap in German waters.

A combination of bad weather, bad luck and the permanent weakness of Great War battles - poor communications - meant the battle became a confused, illogical but desperately hard-fought conflict.

The Battle of Jutland was claimed as a victory by both sides. The Germans claimed success as the Royal Navy lost more ships and men, whilst the British based their claim on the fact the German fleet never again ventured out of harbour to seek battle. In reality, it was a defeat for the German High Seas Fleet.

British losses were 6,945 (6,094 killed, 674 wounded and 177 taken prisoner) whilst German casualties were 3,058 (2,551 killed and 507 wounded). The major British casualties occurred when the battlecruisers HM Ships *Queen Mary*, *indefatigable* and *Invincible*, blew up, losing 3,309 men.

In 16 chapters this book cleverly shows the lead up to the Battle of Jutland, the action, and the aftermath. It is supported by 10 excellent appendices which cover the numbers of hits sustained, shells and torpedoes fired, casualties, ships involved, etc.

Supporting this most authoritative text are 85 detailed action maps, accurate scale drawings, and silhouettes of all major war- ships and classes from each side.

Published by the acclaimed Arms and Armour press of London, and distributed in Australia by New Holland Publishers of 3/2 Aquatic Drive, Frenches Forest, NSW, this 318-page book retails at \$54-95: not cheap but worth every cent. Apart from being a most engrossing read, "Jutland, The German Perspective", fills a void in the history and understanding of this great action.