

Born Soldiers Who March Under the Rising Sun: The Russo-Japanese War, Britain's
Military Observers, and British Impressions Regarding Japanese Martial Capabilities
Prior to the First World War

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Japan's military triumphs during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-'05 influenced British opinions regarding the ability of the Japanese military as well as the decision to strengthen the military dimensions of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the spring and summer of 1905. Utilizing reports and assessment from British Army and Royal Navy observers to the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy it is shown how these men, and by extension their superiors in London and New Delhi, were given a new appreciation for the potential role played by Japanese soldiers and sailors should a subsequent conflict have erupted between the Russian Empire and the Anglo-Japanese coalition in the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War.

List of Abbreviations Used

ADM	Admiralty
CAB	Cabinet Office
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
FO	Foreign Office
H.E.	High Explosive
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
IRN	Imperial Russian Navy
NSL	National Service League
PRO	Public Records Office
R.A.	Royal Artillery
R.E.	Royal Engineers
RN	Royal Navy
WO	War Office

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Chapter I

Introduction

On March 29, 1905, a mere nineteen days after the decisive triumph of the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) at the Battle of Shenyang (then commonly known by its Manchu name: Mukden), a Conservative member of the British parliament, Claude Lowther, proposed that the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance be renewed and expanded to include an obligation for Japanese soldiers to actively contribute to the defense of India's frontier in the event of a future Anglo-Japanese war against Russia.¹ Although this one MP had little control over the British Empire's defense policies, his sentiments were soon echoed by many policy makers in the British Admiralty as well as the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), and it was not long before British diplomats were attempting to negotiate this arrangement into a new treaty a full two years before the first was due to expire.² On August 12, 1905, after months of negotiations, and despite Japanese reluctance to commit to Indian defence, a new alliance greatly extended the duration and scope of the original 1902 agreement.³ Interestingly, less than a year after fighting so hard to get a Japanese agreement to contribute to Indian defense, the CID decided that, due to potential logistical issues and fears that putting India's defense in the hands of an Asian power might inflame the cause of the region's nationalist groups, it was impractical for the British to request a Japanese expeditionary force for service on the North West

¹ Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907* (London: The Athlone Press, 1966), 303.

² Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 306-307.

³ Articles III and IV of the 1905 Alliance were created due to the predicted outbreak of a revanchist war by Russia directed at either Britain or Japan. In the case of this war breaking out, the signatories agreed to send a force of unspecified strength to protect one another's imperial interests. For the British this meant dispatching a large naval force to the Pacific to help in the defense of Japan's claims in Korea, while the Japanese were expected to send an army expeditionary force to help defend Britain's Central Asian frontiers in India. *Ibid.*, 331-332.

Frontier.⁴ Despite the relatively quick abandonment of the grand military schemes which had prompted the 1905 Anglo-Japanese agreement, a major question arises: what impelled British policy makers to so passionately favour relying on the Japanese army for British imperial defense in 1905? This thesis focuses on how, through the reports of army and navy observers, the British were given a new sense of the formidability of Japan's ground and sea forces, as well as their potential utility in British imperial defence in the decade prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

Despite its important place in the diplomatic atmosphere of the early twentieth century, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, as well as Anglo-Japanese relations in general, had been largely overshadowed in western academia in favour of studies concerning the diplomatic relationships and imperial rivalries between Britain and its continental European neighbours. Thankfully, in the late 1960s British historian Ian Nish applied his knowledge of the Japanese language to the task of canvassing Britain and Japan's national archives in order to create a series of pioneering monographs chronicling the complicated diplomatic relationship between the two nations between 1894 and 1923. Although nearly a half century old, any scholar of twentieth century Anglo-Japanese relations owes Nish's *Anglo-Japanese Alliance* and *Alliance in Decline* a debt of gratitude as they still stand as some of the best secondary works available concerning a topic which languishes in relative historiographical obscurity among European scholarship.

⁴ Instead it was decided that it was in the best interest of both parties to fight against Russia in their own separate theaters in Manchuria and India. CID minutes, 15 February 1906, FO/371/85, 2; Philip Towle, "The Russo-Japanese War and the Defense of India," *Military Affairs* 44, no. 3 (Oct. 1980): 116.

With the importance of Nish's work properly acknowledged, when looking through the list of primary collections utilized in the research for *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, one realizes that these documents are nearly all related to the respective British and Japanese foreign offices and other civilian bodies of government. Although these institutions played the vital role in drafting and securing the final agreement during the negotiations for both the 1902 and 1905 Anglo-Japanese Alliances, these were military treaties and would not have been pursued without the input or general consent of either nations' military hierarchy. If British military authorities had believed Japanese forces to be mismanaged, unfit, or poorly suited to the rigours of modern war they would not have lent their voices to those demanding an agreement for Japanese soldiers to serve on the Indian frontier.

In fact, Nish does mention that among the first official proposals for the extended use of Japanese troops in British imperial defense came from Captain Charles Ottley, Britain's director of Naval intelligence, when he sent a memorandum to the Admiralty on 8 April 1905 recommending that the Japanese be obligated to send "a large contingent of (say) 150,000 troops" to India in the event of a Russian attack.⁵ Although Nish mentions that Ottley, a naval officer, was among the first to make this unprecedented proposal which would evolve into the full-fledged policy pursued in both the CID and Foreign Office, he does not explore what may have prompted naval and military men like Ottley to believe that the Japanese army was a force which could be utilized to hold back the Russians in the hostile terrain of the Indian frontier. For confirmation concerning the potential merits and faults of the Japanese military as an ally in a potential coalition war

⁵ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 306.

against the Russians, these officers were given virtually everything they could want or need to know from the constant and diverse reports from Britain's official military observers to the current conflict between Japanese and Russian forces. Given its omission in Nish's extraordinary work, this thesis restores part of the vital martial narrative behind what prompted the strengthening of the Anglo-Japanese partnership in 1905.

Although appearing on the surface to be a regional conflict between the two belligerent nations involved, the Russo-Japanese War was one of the most globally significant events to occur in the decade prior to the First World War. On the battlefields of Manchuria the use of modern machine guns, quick firing artillery, and the tactics of trench warfare not only reaped immense casualties on both sides but also served as a grim, if largely unheeded, forerunner to the realities faced by European armies a mere decade later.⁶ Meanwhile, at sea the clash between Russian and Japanese navies signaled the birth of twentieth century naval warfare, with the 1905 Battle of Tsushima being particularly notable as the largest and most significant maritime action in the era of the pre-dreadnought battleship.⁷ Apart from the nature of its battles giving the world a glimpse of horrors to come, the war resulted in dramatic shifts in the established balance of power in Asia. The Russian government, humiliated on the battlefield, utterly devastated at sea, and facing dangerous social instability in its westerly metropole, was forced to give up its ambition of full hegemony in Manchuria and Korea, while the Japanese, assured in their newly found imperial status, began to quickly consolidate their position as the primary military power in East Asia. Among all these factors and

⁶ Yigal Sheffy, "A Model Not to Follow: The European Armies and the Lessons of the War," in *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, Rotem Kowner, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 262.

⁷ Rotem Kowner, "The Impact of the War on Naval Warfare," in *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, Rotem Kowner, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 271.

outcomes of the war, the dramatic military ascension of Japan undoubtedly made the largest impression upon policy makers in Britain who, even before the war's conclusion, worked feverishly to get the most out of Japan's newly realized potential via a revised and expanded Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

For many living in the twenty-first century it may seem unusual that British politicians and military officers, who in the first decades of the twentieth century were leading the largest, wealthiest, and most populous empire in the world, would feel it necessary to negotiate for the direct military intervention of a small, relatively up-start, independent nation like Japan in order to defend its imperial frontiers. To understand this turn of events, one must realize the precarious geo-political situation faced by British policy makers in the decades leading up to the First World War. Although it was a point of pride for many, particularly Anglo-Saxon, British subjects that their empire was the largest and most populous in the world, these same facts proved to be a headache for those concerned with the Empire's defense. As the Empire grew, so did the demands upon Britain's relatively small professional army which was spread thinly in order to both suppress the empire's subjected peoples as well as defend the empire's far-flung frontiers from the machinations of Britain's primary colonial rivals, Russia and France.

In order to overcome their small army's inability to effectively patrol the distant corners of their empire, the British often relied upon their navy to defend and maintain order within the colonies. Although in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars the nineteenth century passed without the Royal Navy (RN) having to engage in any major fleet actions, the global presence of British ships ensured that, in the event of a geopolitical crisis, the British government could always supply a quick response in the form of warships,

marines, and plenty of fire power.⁸ Despite Britain's continuing status as the largest naval power in the world, by the 1890s the senior service also found its resources stretched to the limit as it attempted to oversee the empire, maintain a global presence, and keep a "two power standard" in home waters and the Mediterranean.⁹ In addition to the issues surrounding the limited resources and manpower possessed by their army and navy, the efforts of British defense planners were also severely hampered by the financial burden already imposed by existing defense expenditures. Such were the economic restraints faced by the CID that, during the 1897 and 1902 Colonial Conferences, it was repeatedly proposed that it was now necessary for the self-governing Dominions, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to begin actively contributing manpower and resources to the cause of Imperial defense.¹⁰ It was also in these desperate last years of the nineteenth century that, in addition to attempting to convince their dominions to take a more active part in imperial defense, British policy makers began to seriously consider an alliance of mutual defense with a power outside the empire.

After over a decade of attempting to quietly overcome the limitations posed by dangerously overstretched military resources, the British Empire's precarious situation would be revealed to the world with the 1899 outbreak of the so-called Boxer Uprising. Occurring at the same time as Britain's unexpectedly lengthy and costly war to conquer

⁸ Such was the British Empire's faith in the power of the RN that nineteenth century British Prime Minister Viscount Palmerston would suggest that the best peace-keepers in the world were not diplomats but rather "...well-armed British ships." Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: BTL Books, 2012), 32.

⁹ The "two power standard" was devised by the Admiralty in 1889. The policy stated that one of Britain's national priorities should be the perpetual maintenance of a navy large enough to face the combined strength of the next two largest contemporary fleets. At the time this policy was adopted the second and third largest fleets belonged to France and Russia respectively. Kowner, "The Impact of the War on Naval Warfare," 271.

¹⁰ Phillips Payson O'Brien, "The Titan Refreshed: Imperial Overstretch and the British Navy before the First World War," *Past and Present*, no. 172 (August, 2001): 151.

and suppress the South African Boer Republics, the British found themselves unable to offer a substantial military response to the threat posed by the Boxers to Britain's subjects and economic interest in Northern China. These realities came as a severe knock to British prestige in China and showed how British influence in the region, which had since 1842 been nearly undisputed by her imperial rivals, began to wane in the face of imperial overextension and budgetary restrictions.¹¹ Thus, instead of dealing with the crisis on their own, the British Army and RN were forced to work with the militaries of the "Eight Nation Alliance" which included, among others, some of Britain's top imperial rivals such as France, Germany, and the United States. Although relying on the direct intervention offered by the above mentioned powers was not a thought relished by the British government, it was the overwhelmingly large Russian response to the crisis that particularly disturbed contemporary British policy makers.

As well as supplying a large contingent of troops to aid in the Eight Nation Alliance's efforts to relieve the besieged foreign delegation in Beijing, under the pretense of protecting their citizens and interests in Manchuria, the Russians also dispatched a massive force of over 100,000 men into the Manchurian provinces bordering Russian territory.¹² Despite making short work of the poorly led and ill-supported Boxer forces situated near Russian frontiers, there was substantial disagreement between Russian ministers and military officers regarding when, or even if, Russian forces should leave the provinces now under their military occupation. By dragging their heels in withdrawing this substantial force from territory already cleared of Boxer activity it

¹¹ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 81.

¹² David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 177. For more on this

appeared to British and Japanese observers that the Russian army intended to remain in, and possibly annex, these territories.¹³

Perturbed by the threat of Russian opportunism as well as the possibility that the intervention of other imperial rivals might entitle them to greater claims in the region at the expense of British interests, the British Foreign Office was keen to garner the active military intervention of a power with which there was no existing geopolitical conflict of interest. The obvious candidate for the position was the increasingly Anglophilic nation of Japan. As an up and coming power which maintained a large, though relatively untested, modern military force near the area of conflict, Japan appeared to be in a perfect position to lend immediate support to the effort of anti-Boxer forces. Although Anglo-Japanese relations had encountered some strain at the beginning of 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War,¹⁴ the British government had generally been sympathetic to Japan when, during the 1895 peace negotiations, Russia, Germany, and France pressured the Japanese to give up claims to the strategically important Liaodong Peninsula, an act which Lord Gray denounced as “harsh and uncalled for.”¹⁵ Due in part to the atmosphere of British

¹³ Britain’s First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Selborne, spoke for many of his compatriots when he stated that due to a history of “Russian army people... [indulging in] a Saturnalia of lies... and dishonorable tricks,” in order to extend Russia’s frontiers, it would seem that within both the courts of Russia and China, there would be “no one [who could] prevent [Russia] from absorbing Manchuria.” Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun*, 182.

¹⁴ The most dramatic crisis that arose between Britain and Japan during the course of the 1894-1895 conflict occurred early in the war when a Japanese cruiser *Naniwa* sank the *Kow-Shing*, a British owned and crewed merchant vessel which was at the time being used as a transport for Chinese soldiers. Despite the legal ambiguity surrounding the *Kow-Shing*’s act of transporting belligerent soldiers, the sinking was denounced throughout the British government and military as, in the words of British Vice-Admiral Edmund Fremantle, an “act of atrocity” for which the Japanese government was heavily pressured to make, and eventually did offer, acceptable recompense. “Fremantle to the Secretary of the Admiralty,” 15 August, 1894, ADM 1/7200; Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 37.

¹⁵ Despite their sympathy, Britain was unwilling to escalate the situation by openly declaring in favour of Japanese claims in the region and, as a result, Japan was forced to forego her claims rather than risk an unwinnable war against the combined power of France, Germany, and Russia. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 33.

sympathy toward the Japanese during periods of tension with other Western powers, in the wake of Japan's victory over the Qing the relationship between the two empires continued to strengthen as each considered the other to be a friendly power whose interests were mutually imperilled by the expansion of Russian influence in East Asia.¹⁶

Given their particularly cordial relationship with Japan it was not surprising that it was the British who led the diplomatic effort to have the Japanese commit an approximately 30,000 man expeditionary force to fight alongside the western powers in China.¹⁷ The British proposal to utilize Japanese troops was met with a lukewarm reaction from the other European members of the alliance.¹⁸ This reaction, coupled with the fact that Boxer efforts were explicitly anti-Western and anti-Christian rather than anti-Japanese, meant that many in Japan were themselves reluctant to take part in the endeavour.¹⁹ While the latter factor in Japanese reluctance would be overcome when the Boxers murdered and decapitated Japan's head clerk at their Beijing legation, it was the job of British diplomats to dismantle the obstacle of Western reluctance and resistance to a significant Japanese military presence, an objective which was completed when, through tireless lobbying, the British were able to secure a mandate from the other powers requesting Japanese assistance.²⁰

By most accounts the Japanese forces performed well during the campaigns to seize the Dagu Forts and relieve Beijing, with British observers complimenting both the courage of Japanese soldiers and sailors as well as the commenting on how their two

¹⁶Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁰ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 84-85.

nations worked closely together to achieve their objectives.²¹ As well as their martial prowess on the battlefield, the Japanese greatly impressed the British by the prompt withdrawal of their soldiers from Chinese soil in the wake of the uprising's suppression.²² Meanwhile, despite constant assurance from their government regarding their withdrawal, large bodies of Russian troops continued to occupy Manchuria giving both British and Japanese officials anxiety regarding St. Petersburg potentially achieving major political and territorial concessions from the Qing's increasingly decrepit administration.²³

By the end of 1901 the British had been able to weather the imperial crisis of having to juggle the responsibility of simultaneously waging a war to expand their interests in South Africa while also being forced to protect their citizens and investments in China. Although the British had emerged from this hectic period as still the most powerful global power, the Boxer Uprising had made London aware of three important realities. The first was that, due to the gradual decay of the control and power exerted by the Qing administration, the Russians were coming into an increasingly favourable position to challenge Britain's interests in Northern China and the Yangtze Delta. The second lesson learned was that, due to shortages in manpower and defense expenditure, British forces could most likely not defend their position in both South and East Asia from Russian assault without the aid of a capable ally in at least one of these theatres. Third, it was now understood that the Japanese, due to the potential shown by their young

²¹ In a letter written by RN officer Christopher Craddock to Read Admiral James Bruce, RN, it was mentioned how, during the seizure of the coastal Dagu forts, the courage and determination of Japanese and British sailors and marines was shown as "the two nations [scaled] the parapets together" and wrested the fortifications from Chinese control. Christopher Craddock, "Christopher Craddock to Robert Bruce," 17 June, 1900, ADM 125/109/95.

²² Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 90.

²³ W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 77.

military in two wars in China and because of their obvious opposition to Russia's East Asian expansion, would be Britain's best hope for an ally in a coalition aimed at stemming any further ambitions Russia might have in Asia.

With the above realities either revealed or confirmed by the 1899-1901 period crisis, on January 30 1902, after months of negotiations between their respective foreign office representatives, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Lansdowne, and Baron Hayashi, Japan's ambassador to London, put their signatures and seals to an official, if limited, alliance between their two nations.²⁴ This defensively minded agreement was purportedly forged with the primary objectives of preserving peace in East Asia and, ironically in retrospect, guaranteeing "the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Korea."²⁵ Although the treaty was significant in marking Britain's break from its former diplomatic policy of "splendid isolation," there were some in the British government who openly criticized the agreement's limited geographic scope which pledged the two nations to come to one another's direct aid only in the event that one of the signatories' territories or interests in the East Asia were targeted by the aggressive actions of two or more hostile powers.²⁶ Despite removing a British need to dispatch large bodies of troops to defend her position in Asia and the Pacific in the event of a major conflict, to its British critics the alliance

²⁴ "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance," 4.

²⁵ The irony of an Anglo-Japanese pledge toward guaranteeing Chinese and Korean autonomy was made evident in the document itself. In Article I it is stated that, although the British and Japanese would work together to prevent any attempts by a third power to wage aggressive war against, or otherwise exert political or territorial hegemony against China or Korea, the alliance still recognized "[the signatories'] special interests" in these states, "of which those of Great Britain relate principally to China, while Japan, in addition to the interests which she possesses in China, is interested in a peculiar degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Korea." "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance," 1.

²⁶ The treaty also included a secret note which obligated signatories to maintain a combined naval presence in the East Asia greater than the most powerful third power in the region. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 218.

seemed to be unfairly balanced toward the benefit of Japan. Although Britain would have to help defend Japan's position in Korea if it were threatened by a rival coalition, the Japanese were not be obliged to provide Britain assistance in the event that a Franco-Russian coalition attacked Britain's imperial frontiers in Africa and, perhaps more importantly, India.²⁷ Despite scattered misgivings regarding the agreement between Britain and Japan, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was otherwise widely accepted in both nations as a sensible joint solution to the threat of Russian expansion in East Asia.²⁸

In retrospect the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was a major impetus for the events which led to outbreak of Japan's war against Russia. Armed with a guarantee of British assistance in the event they were threatened by more than one enemy at a time, the Japanese could now put direct pressure on Russia to cede its claims to political hegemony in Korea and withdraw its troops from Manchurian soil with a greatly diminished possibility of the French or Germans threatening to directly intervene on Russia's behalf as they did in 1895.²⁹ Regarding the issue of the Russo-Japanese rivalry over Korean and Manchurian hegemony, the British were predictably more sympathetic to the claims of their ally, whose government was generally considered faithful advocates of the "open door" free trade policy in China favoured by British and American, and

²⁷ Arthur Balfour, who would become Britain's Prime Minister shortly after the alliance's signing, had been a particularly vocal advocate for the inclusion of an article which required Japan to directly aid Britain in the event of the Russians attacking India, but these calls were largely dismissed by both British and Japanese negotiators. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 204.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

²⁹ At first the Anglo-Japanese Alliance appeared to have a profound effect on Russia's policy in Manchuria as, the following April, they concluded a treaty with the Qing government promising the gradual evacuation of occupied territory within 12 months of the document's signing. Although the first phase of evacuation appeared to go as promised, in the period after October 1902 the Russians began to drag their heels on the withdrawal. With Russian minister, and chief architect of Russia's economic expansion in East Asia, Sergei Witte admitting in 1904 that it had never been the intention of the Tsar's government to carry out a full evacuation. This apparent duplicity of Russian policy further frustrated the relations between St. Petersburg, Tokyo, and London. Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1985), 140-142.

generally opposed by Russian, policymakers.³⁰ British sympathy toward Japan continued to increase as the Russians not only appeared to be unwilling to withdraw their troops from Manchuria, but seemed to be making overt overtures into the Korean peninsula under the façade of increasing their lumber interests along the Yalu River. The apparent Russian threat to Korea, combined with the Tsar's appointment of the arrogant and high-handed Admiral Yevgani Alekseyev as Viceroy of the Russia's East Asian territory, turned the British Foreign Office's opinion firmly against the Russian position in the debate over the region.³¹ Thus, when in February 1904 the frustrated Japanese government withdrew its ambassadors in St. Petersburg and launched a surprise attack against the Russian fleet at Port Arthur (Lǔshùn), the move was generally regarded by the British government as an understandable action provoked by Russia's aggressive policies not only threatening Japanese interests in mainland Asia, but Japan's national survival itself.³²

Although the British were sympathetic to the Japanese cause and deemed that Japanese forces were not waging an aggressive war but rather defending their interests after years of Russian encroachment and provocation, as Japan was only fighting one enemy the alliance did not entitle them to directly intervene as Japan's military ally. However, while declaring a policy of strict neutrality the British pledged that if the French or any other third power joined Russia's war effort, Japan could rely on Britain to

³⁰ Shortly after the outbreak of the war in 1904, a British scholar of international policy Thomas Lawrence stated that continued Russian hegemony in Manchuria would inevitably lead to a full Russian annexation of the area into its Empire, which would result in grave consequences to the economic interests of Britain and other foreign powers. Meanwhile, Lawrence believed that if Japan succeeded in pushing the Russians out of the region, Qing control would be restored and free trade would prosper. T.J. Lawrence, *War and Neutrality in the Far East* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1904), 24.

³¹ Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun*, 188, 195.

³² Lawrence, *War and Neutrality in the Far East*, 18.

come to its ally's aid.³³ Meanwhile, the British kept their military on high alert throughout the conflict and were not above using a policy of stern, if polite, intimidation in order to ensure that nations like France did not aid in the Russian war effort.³⁴ Thus, while this thesis will show how the war impressed British observers with the formidability and potential utility of Japanese forces as allies on the battlefield, diplomatically the war had also reinforced the Japanese appreciation for the benefit of having their British ally standing behind them during periods of war or crisis.

Certainly compared to the immense corpus of works regarding British foreign policy toward major powers in Europe, Anglo-Japanese relations in the first fourteen years of the twentieth century has not proven to be a particularly popular field of study amongst English language historians. Even when one looks through the works available, they will find that a large portion concern the interwar period, when growing animosity between the two empires laid the ground work for the outbreak of the 1941-1945 war between Japan and the western democracies.³⁵ As mentioned previously, it was not until the 1966 publication of Ian Nish's *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance* that there was any

³³ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 283.

³⁴ The most dramatic demonstration of British willingness to use strong arm diplomacy in order to prevent French intervention in the conflict came during what is commonly called the "Kam Ranh Bay Incident." This incident culminated when the Russian Baltic Fleet, during its globetrotting journey to its eventual destruction at Tsushima, used as the French naval facilities at Kam Ranh Bay in, what is today, Vietnam. This breach of neutrality so close to the theatre of war prompted protests from the Japanese to both the French and British foreign offices. Although the French largely ignored the Japanese protests, they seemed more impressed when Lord Lansdowne told a French minister that if the French continued to allow Russian ships to use their ports "serious international complications should arise." Lord Lansdowne, "The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie," April 19, 1905, FO/46/668.

³⁵ These works include Shigeru Akita and Nicholas J. White, Eds. *The International Order of Asia in the 1930s and 1950s* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2010); Ian Nish, Ed. *Anglo-Japanese Alienation, 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Malcolm Duncan Kennedy, *The Estrangement of Great Britain and Japan, 1917-35* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Richard W. Fanning, *Peace and Disarmament: Naval History and Arms Control, 1922-1933* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015); Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War: A Study of British Policy in East Asia, 1937-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

notable English language work offering an in-depth exploration of the relationship between these two nations at the turn of the twentieth century.

Sir Julian Corbett's *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905* remains valuable as one of the most comprehensive British interpretations regarding the war's naval dimension. Released in two volumes in 1914 and 1915, Corbett's *Maritime Operations* was originally a confidential document which was used as a reference for officers serving in the RN and, as a result, was barred from general publication until many decades after the author's death.³⁶ Contained within the pages of Corbett's work is a detailed, event by event, retelling of every action that occurred between the Japanese and Russian navies during the war. Published a mere ten years after the conflict's conclusion, *Maritime Operations* reads like an official history from a British perspective and, as a result, reveals some of the ways Britain's naval thinkers were influenced by Japan's war at sea. To Corbett in particular, Japan's victory appeared to affirm his belief that the role of a nation's navy in a modern war is not to seek out and engage the enemy in a decisive fleet action, but rather to work in conjunction with the army by prioritizing the containment of enemy sea power, the transportation of troops, and the protection of shipping lanes and lines of seaborne communication.³⁷ While reading Corbett's work, one receives a distinct impression of how, in the first battles between twentieth century navies, Japan's near total victory created distinct impressions upon Britain's naval theorists.

³⁶ Julian Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Vol. 1* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), X.

³⁷ Julian Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Vol. 2* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 385.

While Corbett's two-part work offers interesting insights into the events and potential lessons of the war's sea battles from among the most influential scholars in the field of naval history and theory, his works are still myopic enough in their concentration that they fail to provide the reader with the full picture of the impression made by Japanese forces on British contemporaries. Just as Nish ignores the effect of the war's military dimensions on Anglo-Japanese politics, Corbett does not address how the military actions he chronicles affected prior Anglo-Japanese agreements on mutual defense. As well, neither Nish nor Corbett give in-depth consideration to the IJA's extensive campaign in Manchuria and Korea which, more than the battles at sea, appeared to confirm the potential utility of Japanese forces as defenders of the North West Frontier.³⁸

In addition to their respective specializations creating sizable voids regarding how the conflict fits into the context of Anglo-Japanese relations, both authors neglect using primary sources which appear key to understanding the Russo-Japanese War from both a British and military context. One of the most important collections which both authors completely ignore are the reports left by Britain's numerous military observers to Japanese forces during the Russo-Japanese War. Acting as the British government's eyes and ears during the conflict, these attaches witnessed, assessed, and reported, often with immense candour, the performance of both Japanese and Russian forces on land and sea. Despite the potential utility of these reports, it seems that Nish, whose entire *Anglo-*

³⁸ In fact, the land campaign of the war was covered by a five part *Official History of the Russo-Japanese War* published by the British general staff between 1906 and 1910. Although these works are extensive in their coverage of the war, they mainly function as a play by play chronicle of the events and lack the analysis of the combatants' intentions, performance, and strategy found in Corbett's coverage of the war at sea.

Japanese Alliance primarily concerned the establishment and evolution of a military alliance, completely ignore how future ideas of military cooperation were fostered through the presence and observations of Britain's military observers regarding the performance of Japanese forces in Manchuria and surrounding waters.

Britain was not alone in having observers report from the frontlines. Indeed the United States and most major European powers maintained sizable cadres of military observers attached to the headquarters of both Japanese and Russian armies in the field.³⁹ British observers, however, were unusual in that their nation's foreign policy held a particular interest in the war's progression and outcome. From the outbreak of hostilities Britain and its observers were caught in the precarious position of attempting to maintain a position of strict neutrality while at the same time generally demonstrating moral support for the struggle of their Japanese ally. This bias was only made more unsurprising due to the well-known, if officially un-stated, fact that the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance was originally drafted as a countermeasure to Russian imperial expansion in East Asia.⁴⁰ As mentioned above, there was a general opinion among Britons regarding the Russian Empire as an unenlightened, autocratic, and socially backward power which, in many ways, embodied the antithesis of British democratic liberty.⁴¹ As well, nearly a century of imperial rivalry in Central Asia had sown a deep legacy of bitter diplomatic feelings between the two massive empires.⁴² Given their nation's antagonistic relationship to the Russians, as well as the cordiality of its alliance

³⁹ Sheffy, "A Model Not to Follow," 256.

⁴⁰ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 205.

⁴¹ Lawrence, *War and Neutrality in the Far East*, 18.

⁴² Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 314.

with Japan, it should not come as a surprise that British observers had polarized experiences depending on what side of the battlefield they were assigned.

British observers to the Russian Army were never given the illusion that they possessed even the slightest degree of trust from their handlers. When initially exploring the reports of attaches to the Russian army, one is immediately faced with a disclaimer explaining that, while Russian commanders allowed for the presence of British observers and journalists among their forces, the atmosphere of Russian suspicion meant “that the facilities for acquiring information afforded to British attachés were the smallest possible compatible with courtesy and hospitality.”⁴³ Paranoia within the Russian command was further stoked by the unexpected success of Japanese forces, with Captain H.C. Holman claiming that, while he was assigned to the Russian forces, there was a widely held rumour claiming some Japanese units were being led by British officers, thus explaining their ability to continuously best the Russian army.⁴⁴ Holman lamented that, due to these preposterous allegations compounding general Russian ill will, he and his fellow British observers were forced to base their reports on the limited action they were permitted to witness supplemented by information provided by foreign observers from nations the Russians deemed friendlier to their cause.⁴⁵ These realities, coupled with the fact that the number of British observers attached to the Russians was dramatically smaller than those assigned to Japanese forces, meant that British reports from the Russian side of the conflict are considerably more limited in scope and of a different character than those dispatched from those shadowing the Japanese.

⁴³ H.C. Holman, *Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Hockler and Captain H.C. Holman, D.S.O, Attached to the Russian Forces in the Field, Part I* (London: General Staff, 1906), XIII.

⁴⁴ Holman, *Russian Forces in the Field*, XIII.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Due to the limitations placed on the information provided to them, the compiled reports from Britain's observers attached to the Russian army only encompass two short volumes which merely relay the broadest impressions made upon the officers by Russia's wartime performance. In contrast, when reading the observer reports dispatched from those British officers attached to the IJA, one is struck by the sheer scope and coverage that these reports provide on nearly every aspect of the campaign. With an observer attached to almost all of the Japanese divisions in the field, the British had eyes and ears gathering information on nearly every clash between Japanese and Russian forces. Even when it was impossible to directly observe an action, either due to danger or simply the inability to be in two places at once on a sprawling battlefield, British observers made considerable effort to attend to the aftermath of a missed action as soon as the smoke had cleared. They would then compile their reports based on their impression of the terrain, their survey of the scars left over from the battle, and through interviews with the officers and enlisted men who had survived the actions. With officers repeating this combination of personal observation and thorough investigation in every division to which they were attached, the British War Office, after amassing these different reports, were presented with a detailed panoramic assessment of the entirety of Japan's Manchurian odyssey which they confidentially published in the years immediately following the war. When compiled together, the material left by British officers attached to the Japanese amounted to nearly 3,500 pages of daily action summaries, reports, observations, and analysis, all of which generally commend the excellent performance of the Imperial Japanese Army on campaign.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The ubiquity of the British observers to the Japanese campaign in Manchuria, as well as the impression they made upon the Japanese public, was represented with the 1904 release of a Japanese made movie titled

The officers attached to the IJA during the course of the Manchurian campaign were notable in the diversity of their military backgrounds. In addition to infantry officers such as Lieutenant-General Ian Hamilton and Lieutenant-Colonel Aylmer Haldane the British mission to the IJA also included, among others, Captain Berkeley Vincent of the Royal Artillery (R.A.), cavalry officers Captain James Jardine and Colonel Henry Birkbeck, Royal Engineers (R.E.) officer Lieutenant-Colonel E. Ager, and Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. MacPherson representing the Royal Army Medical Corps. Coming from their own specialized backgrounds, each of these men lent a different expertise to their assessment of the IJA's organization and performance on campaign. Meanwhile, Captain William Pakenham, by maintaining nearly uninterrupted presence aboard ships in the IJN battle fleet, provided detailed assessments regarding the war at sea.

Recognizing the value of their reports to military planning and diplomacy, and given the lack of recognition they have received in some of the most prolific British perspectives regarding the war, this thesis relies heavily on the unique insights conveyed by Britain's numerous military attaches to both the Japanese and Russian armies. The diverse career backgrounds possessed by each of these men allows for many to bring a uniquely specialized point of view to the events being witnessed. For example, Commander E. W. Wemyss of the RN paid particular attention to the speed and efficiency of Japanese ship-to-shore transport procedure while reporting on the March 3rd landing of IJA forces at the Korean port of Incheon (termed Chemulpo by the

The Great Russo-Japanese War Film. As well as featuring a number of, rather poorly, staged battle scenes dramatizing the war in Manchuria the film featured an actor who is obviously dressed up to resemble Sir Ian Hamilton, who was widely recognized due to his rank and seniority as being the *de-facto* leader of all foreign officers attached to Japanese forces in the field. Naoka Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28-29.

observers).⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Captain B. Vincent of the Royal Artillery, while watching the disembarkation of the Imperial Guards Division fifteen days later, focused a large portion of his report on the seemingly low quality of Japanese artillery horses who appeared to be “cruelly ill-treated” by officers and men who seemed inadequately trained for the difficulties of driving artillery horses in the field.⁴⁸ These differing voices from the early days of the war not only reflect the priorities and focus of the individual attaches. Vincent’s critical report on the quality of Japan’s equine resources, as well as the apparent lack of horsemanship in the artillery branch of the IJA, reveals an honesty in reporting which seemingly defied any bias fostered by the presence of a formal Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Unlike the previously mentioned published secondary works regarding the era surrounding the Russo-Japanese War, British historian Philip Towle has dedicated some of his, rather diverse, historical research to British observer reports in order to compose a few short works on the subject of their endeavours during the conflict. Culminating in a number of journal articles and as contributions to historical compilations regarding the Russo-Japanese War or the topic of general Anglo-Japanese relations, Towle has done more research than any of his contemporaries on the undertakings of Britain’s numerous war correspondents and military observers assigned to the battlefields of Manchuria.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ E.W. Wemyss, “Report by Commander E.W. Wemyss, R.N.” in *Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I* (London: War Office, 1907), 1-2.

⁴⁸ B. Vincent, “Notes by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery, Pingyang, 19th March, 1904,” in *Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I* (London: War Office, 1907), 10.

⁴⁹ These works include Philip Towle, “British War Correspondents and the War,” in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5: Centennial Perspectives*, Volume I, Rotem Kowner, ed. (Folkstone: Global Oriental, 2007); Philip Towle, “British Naval and Military Observers to the Russo-Japanese War,” in *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Volume III, J.E. Hoare, ed. (London: Japan Library, 1999); Philip Towle, “The Russo-Japanese War and the Defence of India,” *Military Affairs* 44, no. 3 (Oct. 1980): 111-117; Philip Towle, “British Observers of the Russo-Japanese War,” Paper Presented at the Aspects of

This said, the content of Towle's works mainly concern the interactions and conflicts encountered by the observers both among themselves and with their Japanese hosts as well as how their reports and input contributed to the creation of the War Office's *Official History of the Russo-Japanese War*. Although this information was undoubtedly helpful in understanding the politics and challenges facing the men attached to the Japanese army, it does not venture to demonstrate in-depth how the observer reports reflected British attitudes regarding the merits of Japan as a fighting nation and military ally.

When reading through the collections of observer reports it is evident how these dispatches, though tempered with some minor if persistent critiques, reflected the Japanese martial performance had elicited a nearly universal positive appraisal among the observers on the ground. That said, it is less obvious how, despite a number of instances where the observers suggested their superiors learn from the lessons offered by the IJA on campaign as well as the war's events in general, these reports were read and interpreted by their superiors in London or New Delhi.⁵⁰ Although sometimes the reaction to the reports is overt and well documented the reports' effects on other aspects of British military and political comprehension and policy must be gleaned from less obvious developments in the years leading up to the First World War.⁵¹ This included

the Russo-Japanese War Symposium, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, February 1998.

⁵⁰ New Delhi was the headquarters of the British Indian Army to which Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton, the senior foreign military observer attached to Japanese forces, represented and directly answered to.

⁵¹ To many RN officers, Pakenham's reports from the Battle of Tsushima and other actions appeared to confirm the primacy of heavy armaments in mass fleet actions. As well, Sir John Fisher cited Pakenham as giving proof that the Japanese had owed the scope of their victory to the superior speed of their ships, which he used to attack those in the Admiralty who dismissed speed as "the weapon of weaker navies." Arthur Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era 1904-1919, Volume I: The Road to War 1904-1914* (Annapolis, M.D.: Seaforth Publishing, 2013), 60-61.

when Lord Kitchener, Britain's premier soldier and commander of forces in India, initially gave his full support to the proposal that the Japanese contribute soldiers to the defense of India in the event of a future war between the Russians and the Anglo-Japanese coalition.⁵² As well, despite the wide historiographical critique that the great European nations failed to learn lessons from the war that they obviously could have applied in the early days of the First World War, there is evidence to suggest that reports by British observers did directly influence the War Office to adopt a number of reforms in the way in which British soldiers were equipped and armed in the years immediately prior to the First World War's outbreak.⁵³

The Russo-Japanese War not only saw a massive shift in geo-political power dynamics in East Asia, it was also an event which signaled a significant, if relatively brief, high point in the relationship between Britain and Japan. Due to the overwhelmingly positive reports being received from their observers on the ground and at sea, the British government and military received a new appreciation for Japanese soldiers and sailors, as well as the military machine in which they served. This new respect would, in 1905, inspire the efforts of British diplomats to extend and expand their agreement with Japan. Thus, due in part to the understanding of Japanese military might

⁵² In addition to benefiting from having access to the official reports being sent from the battlefields of Manchuria, Kitchener also maintained a direct private correspondence with Hamilton in which the latter often revealed his own private musings regarding Japanese daily events and his opinions regarding his hosts and fellow observers. Copies of Hamilton's share of the correspondence is now housed at the British National Archive (BNA) in microfiche and will hopefully soon be given wider availability through the BNA's vast digitization efforts. These letters, though interesting in shedding light on the more personal aspects of the observers at war, do not give a great deal of additional insight into how the observers represented the Japanese army as a fighting force, and thus have not been used as a point focus in this thesis.

⁵³ For example, these influences varied from the ammunition used by the heavy guns fielded by the Royal Artillery down to the design of the bayonets utilized by the British in hand to hand combat, all of which will be further explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

fostered by the diverse perspectives of Britain's military observers, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was officially transformed from a relatively limited treaty of mutual defense in North East Asia to a far reaching agreement in which the signatories agreed to offer direct support to each other anywhere in Asia where Russian aggression might occur.

Chapter II

“An Evident Manifestation of Sympathy”: The Relationship between the British Press and Japan at War

To appreciate the significance of the reports of Britain’s observers to the Japanese armed forces, one must first understand the context of how these reports conformed to certain trends surrounding British popular opinion regarded Japan in the early twentieth century. Despite the relationship between the two nations enduring strain in the early decades succeeding Japan’s opening to the west in 1854, the years following the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance witnessed a gradual improvement in British public opinion concerning Japanese culture and society. This Edwardian fascination with Japan ranged from an appreciation and emulation of Japanese art and aesthetics to admiration for the Japanese nation as a miracle of modernized industrialization and coordinated state efficiency.¹ The outbreak of war between Japan and Russia, and the resulting Japanese martial success, was given considerable coverage among Britain’s most widely circulated media outlets which, regardless of partisan affiliations, appeared to generally sympathize with and celebrate the exploits of the Japanese army and navy. Just as Britain’s ministers and military elite were receiving new insights into the Japanese war effort through the confidential accounts of their observers on the ground, the British public was given a less detailed version of events through the reports of war correspondents. The pro-Japanese stance of these politically polarized media outlets showed that Britain’s policy makers could generally rely on the support of their informed populace when, inspired by official British military reports of Japanese martial prowess, they endeavoured to expand and

¹ Chika Tonooka, “Reverse Emulation and the Cult of Japanese Efficiency in Edwardian Britain,” *The Historical Journal* 60, No. 1 (2017): 98.

lengthen their alliance to the unprecedented point of entrusting a lion's share of India's defense to the soldiers of Japan.

Popular British opinion regarding Japan and its people varied greatly over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the end of Japanese isolation in the mid-nineteenth century, many of those living in Victorian Britain showed some curiosity regarding the culture, society, and people of a nation which had recently been in a state of near complete isolation. To these Britons, the Japanese and their culture initially appeared to be the unblemished embodiment of the exoticism and novelty of the "Orient." As well, due to their late entry into the global community, the Japanese were often characterized by their British contemporaries as living an essentially medieval way of life. Although one would initially assume this assessment to be a critique of the Japanese, in fact it was a point of admiration toward the belief that the Japanese lived in a traditional society which was still dominated by notions of "chivalry and honour," ideals which some British writers believed had been corrupted in the west due to the encroachment of industrialism and the capitalist economy.² Although superficial and often misguided, the British appreciation of traditional Japanese culture, aesthetics, and society made a profound impact on the British cultural climate during the latter half of the nineteenth century.³

Although an appreciation for the traditional art and culture of Japan was widespread among Britain's metropolitan population, opinions were much more divisive

² Joseph McLaughlin, "'The Japanese Village' and the Metropolitan Construction of Modernity," *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, No. 48 (November 2007): 1.

³ Perhaps some of the most notable examples of this impact could be seen in the Japanese inspired art of Aubrey Beardsley or the setting of the Gilbert and Sullivan 1885 comic opera *The Mikado*. Brian Jones, "Japan in London, 1885," *W.S. Gilbert Society Journal* 22 (Winter 2007): 688.

regarding the astounding rate at which the Japanese attempted to industrialize and westernize their economy in the wake of the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Unwilling to be economically or politically subjugated by the west in the same manner as their Chinese neighbours, Japanese ministers and statesmen dedicated themselves to creating a modern and industrialized nation state capable of defying European and American colonial aspirations. The result of these endeavours astounded many western commentators as, by 1900, Japan had gone from having a population primarily engaged in a medieval style agrarian system to sporting the most well developed industrial base in East Asia.⁴ While the Japanese achieved this rapid rate of industrialization through the aid of British and other Western advisors, in Britain Japanese advancement was greeted with the admiration of some and the scorn of others.⁵ While some applauded the Japanese eager reception of western influence and technologies as a confirmation of the primacy of these methods and the Euro-American way of life, an 1896 article in the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* lamented the fact that “unfortunately, there can be no doubt that Japan is rapidly becoming a serious economic rival to this country.”⁶

Although British policy makers generally agreed that Britain and Japan had few conflicting interests geopolitically in the late nineteenth century, and despite the British tendency to romanticize Japan’s medieval past, in regard to issues of manufacture, markets, and trade many within the British population were becoming concerned with the

⁴ Of course, despite these great leaps in industrialization, Japan at the dawn of the twentieth century still lagged behind most of the contemporary great European powers, with approximately 50% of Japan’s population still farming much in the same manner as their ancestors had in previous centuries. Philip Charrier, “Paradigms of Development: British Perspectives on Social and Economic Change in Japan, 1900-41,” *Japan Forum* 12, no. 2 (2000): 183; Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, 5.

⁵ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 7.

⁶ “Japanese Industrial Progress,” *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, June 2, 1896, 4.

idea of Japan as a modern industrial nation state.⁷ British anxieties regarding potential Japanese industrial and economic competition were not assuaged with the coming of the twentieth century, and still loomed large enough when the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed that Lord Lansdowne later commented how he had been surprised the agreement had been “taken so well” by Britain’s population.⁸ Although the treaty had not elicited mass protests across the British Isles, it should be noted that neither did it inspire the mass public nor press enthusiasm for Japan demonstrated during the course of the Russo-Japanese War.⁹

While the two-year period which elapsed between the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia saw a gradual improvement in popular British opinion regarding their nation’s ally in East Asia, there were still questions in the press regarding the value of possessing a military alliance with a nation whose army and navy was “as yet untested against Europeans.”¹⁰ These popular doubts regarding the value of Japanese forces appeared to continue until the eve of the outbreak of war. In one particularly despicable quote which reflected both British misgivings regarding their ally’s potential as well as the rampant racism of the era, one press commentator claimed in 1905 that “last new year’s day [January 1, 1904] the Japanese were [considered] ‘Yellow Monkeys.’”¹¹ Although this sort of racist sentiment toward the Japanese would certainly have remained alive among sectors of the British public, from the outset of Japan’s war with Russia, Britain’s most popular media outlets,

⁷ Tonooka, “Reverse Emulation and the Cult of Japanese Efficiency,” 99.

⁸ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 226.

⁹ Tonooka, “Reverse Emulation and the Cult of Japanese Efficiency,” 99.

¹⁰ “The Treaty with Japan,” *The Economist*, February 15, 1902, 242.

¹¹ “Progress of the World,” *Review of Reviews* 31 (1905): 2.

through the daily reports of their battlefield correspondents, were encouraging Britain's population to admire and appreciate the valour and determination of Japanese soldiers and sailors as they proved their mettle against a European foe.¹²

In order to build one's understanding of a foreign war which was being waged on the other side of the world, the average Briton was completely dependent upon the reports of war correspondents employed by the paper to which they subscribed. Just as the militaries and governments of the world's primary powers dispatched their official observers to the battlefields of Manchuria, major print news publications from around the globe dispersed battlefield correspondents across the armies and fleets of both belligerents. Although many of the journalists sent to document the Russo-Japanese War would eventually fade into historiographical obscurity, figures like the Americans Jack London, whose experience with the Japanese Army was both brief and unpleasant, and Frederick Palmer still loom quite large in the history of literature and combat journalism respectively.¹³ Perhaps the most noteworthy correspondent from Britain was Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, a man who would become better known for his coverage and criticism of the 1915 Gallipoli Campaign. Reporting for *The Times*, Ashmead-Bartlett was attached to the Japanese Third Army during the five month campaign to seize Port Arthur, later publishing a book from his observations titled *Port Arthur: The Siege and Capitulation*. Although he was a vocal critic of the immense casualties suffered by Japanese forces during the course of the siege, through his articles, book, and a popular lecture tour in the summer of 1905 Ashmead-Bartlett gave the British public an

¹² "Japan's Brilliant Successes," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and the Illustrated Times*, February 13, 1904, 2.

¹³ Rotem Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 212.

impression of the supposed unsurpassed courage and tenacity of Japanese soldiers as well as the superior organization of their army's intelligence and communication networks.¹⁴ Although some, like Ashmead-Bartlett, would become public figures through the publishing of books and lecture tours on their experiences, due to the fact that their names were rarely attributed to the articles they published, most of the Russo-Japanese War's foreign correspondents would remain anonymous to the readership whom it was their job to both inform and influence.

From the war's outset British correspondents showed a strong support for the Japanese cause as well as admiration toward the performance of Japan's forces. Although the press of many foreign powers regarded the IJN's decision to launch a surprise attack against Russia's Port Arthur fleet without a declaration of war as either controversial or downright dastardly, it appears neither *The Times* nor the *Manchester Guardian* considered this action to be a target for criticism.¹⁵ As seems to be the case in many traditionally conservative publications of the era, *The Times* and its associated publications were especially over the top in celebrating the Japan's decision to launch its attack against the Russia's East Asian fleet. In an article titled "Japan's Brilliant Successes," *The Penny Illustrated Times* applauded "gallant little Japan" for taking the initiative against Russia in "the defence of her very existence."¹⁶ As well, this issue was notable in giving the British people one of their first proper introductions to the figure of Admiral Tōgō, whose account of the action is published and celebrated for the modest

¹⁴ "The Story of Port Arthur," *The Times*, June 27, 1905, 15.

¹⁵ Lawrence, *War and Neutrality in the Far East*, 27.

¹⁶ "Japan's Brilliant Successes," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and the Illustrated Times*, February 13, 1904, 2.

way in which it describes “such a undoubted and unqualified victory.”¹⁷ Although the *Manchester Guardian* was more subdued in its accounting of the first days of the war, it still maintained that no one in the international community could rightfully accuse the Japanese of an underhanded deed and instead celebrated the Port Arthur raid as demonstrating “a vigour and audacity which justifies many of the flattering things said about their naval prowess.”¹⁸

The initial Japanese success at sea during the raid on Port Arthur and the clash between IJN and Imperial Russian Navy (IRN) cruisers at Incheon had, in the words of one *Times* journalist, “only whetted the general curiosity” of Britons waiting “impatiently for news of the first decisive contact between the combatants on land.”¹⁹ As the Russians were generally more admired for their army than their naval prowess there appeared to have been doubt whether the IJA would prove as much of a match for Russian forces on the ground. This doubt would soon be assuaged with the Russian Army’s first major reversal on the Yalu River between April 30 and May 1, 1904. The way in which Japanese soldiers had outflanked and routed the Russian force from “carefully prepared position of its own choosing,” confirmed to press commentators that the Japanese had proven “more than a match for the redoubted European foe.”²⁰ Interestingly, in this same article in which *The Times* celebrated the first demonstrations of the quality of Japanese forces in the field, the author ends the piece by commentating on the apparent benefit Japanese success will have on British interests in East Asia, pointing to the fact that, after the capture of Andong, the Japanese had invited the American consul to take his position

¹⁷ “Japan’s Brilliant Successes,” 2.

¹⁸ “Summary of News,” *The Manchester Guardian*, February 10, 1904, 4.

¹⁹ “The Dimensions of the Battle of the Yalu,” *The Times*, May 3, 1904, 9.

²⁰ “The Dimensions of the Battle of the Yalu,” 9.

in the city, something which the previous Russian occupiers had dissuaded. To the author of the article this appeared as a good sign that “with the advent of the Japanese there also comes the open door” to Manchurian markets.²¹

The Japanese success on the Yalu was also well received in other popular British publications, with the *Economist* claiming that the initial potential shown by Japanese forces on the Yalu stood as ample assurance that it would be wise for British financiers to aid in floating a £10,000,000 loan in order to aid Japan in waging its war against Russia.²² The *Guardian*, though again more subdued in its reporting than its conservative counterpart, admitted that the Russians certainly found themselves “beyond a doubt out-generalled” by their Japanese opponents on the Yalu.²³ As well, the *Guardian* also recognized with approval the Japanese invitation extended to Andong’s American consul as a hint that a Japanese victory boded well for Anglo-American trade in the region.²⁴ Based on how it was reported to the British people, the victory on the Yalu showed that Japanese forces were capable of inflicting a decisive defeat upon a European foe under modern conditions. That said, the war had only just begun and a complete Japanese victory was far from guaranteed. While the Yalu confirmed to the British public that their ally could fight, the subsequent stream of unbroken victories would give the impression of the IJA as a virtually unstoppable military machine.

As 1904 progressed the British press followed the Japanese closely as their armies advanced north and south toward Shenyang and Port Arthur respectively. In late May the Second Japanese Army seized the first line of fortifications north of Port Arthur after a

²¹ “The Dimensions of the Battle of the Yalu,” 9.

²² “The Financial Position of Japan,” *The Economist*, May 7, 1904, 776.

²³ “The Combined Japanese Attack,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 7, 1904, 6.

²⁴ “Antung Evacuated and Burned,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 3, 1904, 7.

determined and costly assault on the formidable Russian position at Nanshan. It was during this encounter that the British papers began celebrating the merits of the IJA on the attack. Although *The Times* correspondent gave a clear picture of the immense losses suffered by the Japanese in the first attacks on the fortified hills, describing how “two battalions ceased to exist except as a trail of mutilated bodies at the foot of the Russian glacis,” he pointed out that through excellent artillery support the works were made “practicable for a general who had such infantry as the Japanese” who rushed forward to drive back the Russians at bayonet point.²⁵ Conversely, the *Guardian* attributed the seizure of the “virtually impregnable” fortifications at Nanshan to a mixture of Japanese reconnaissance as well as the stamina and formidability of Japanese troops who, despite suffering grievous losses, were still able to make the decisive push after being “under fire for sixteen hours.”²⁶

After absorbing the reports from Nanshan and other subsequent battles it appears that the staff of *The Times* was enamoured with the Japanese national education and spirit of sacrifice which, it stated, played a massive part in defeating their Russian foes. Around a month after the conclusion of the battle for Shenyang in March 1905, *The Times* published an editorial summarizing the political significance of the battle as well as how it showed in the Japanese “evidence of national education in its highest and most complete form.”²⁷ According to this editorial, the Japanese were victorious in a “battle which... cannot find parallel in authentic, and hardly legendary, history,” because their staff and soldiers showed a “combined intelligence and physical endurance,” nearly

²⁵ “The Battle of Kin-Chau,” *The Times*, June 3, 1904, 5.

²⁶ “Description of the Assault,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 28, 1904, 7.

²⁷ “We Publish Today from the Pen of Our Tokio Correspondent,” *The Times*, April 25, 1905, 7.

unseen anywhere else in the modern world.²⁸ As mentioned above, these high standards were supposedly achieved due to the way in which Japanese society educated its citizens to work selflessly and diligently toward their national aspirations and encouraged the creation of a collective and “invincible moral.”²⁹ As well as being shown by the staff of *The Times*, these same sentiments were also expressed by some readers through their published letters to the editor. One of the most radical of these, signed simply “a sailor,” lionized the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice of the Japanese soldier as being the key behind the Japanese ability to achieve victory on a modern battlefield.³⁰ Pointing unfavourably to the performance of British forces during the Second Anglo-Boer War, the reader claims that British forces could have achieved swifter and more decisive victories if they had been more aggressive and if the British public was less sensitive to the thought of British forces sustaining mass battlefield casualties.³¹ Claiming that the Japanese soldier and sailor had surpassed the British in his estimation of fighting capability, the opinion piece was ended by claiming that, due to “sordid and effeminate doctrines... [which are] disseminated through [British] society,” it was doubtful that the British nation would have been able to carry “out the campaign as the Japanese have in the last six months.”³²

Many of the sentiments demonstrated by *The Times* were also repeated within the *Guardian*. An example of these opinions being shown occurred when, speaking on the events surrounding the battle of the Shahe (often anglicized to Shaho), the *Guardian*

²⁸ “We Publish Today from the Pen of Our Tokio Correspondent,” 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ “To the Editors of *The Times*,” *The Times*, September 2, 1904, 12.

³¹ “To the Editors of *The Times*,” 12.

³² *Ibid.*

regaled its readers with stories of courage being shown by the forces on each side of the battlefield, but paying closer attention to the courage and tenacity shown by the ever victorious forces of Japan. Lionizing the IJA as a “wonderful army,” the *Guardian*’s staff described how “with the coolness and precision that distinguished their magnificent infantry” Japanese soldiers assaulted a hill whose slopes seemed “swept by a horizontal sheet of [Russian] lead.”³³ Although it looked “as if further advance was impossible” the reporter claimed that “there seems to be nothing that can stop the Japanese infantry, whose courage only rises the more in the face of difficulties that appear insuperable” allowing them to eventually push the Russians off the position at the point of their bayonets.³⁴ The admiration shown in the British press for Japanese skill and courage in offensive operations was amplified with the fall of Port Arthur in January 1905. The culmination of five months of siege which cost both sides dearly in dead and wounded, the eventual capitulation of the fortified sea port was received with mass celebration across Japan and was equally well received among the population of London who, though unsurprised by the news, greeted the dispatches confirming the rumoured capitulation with “great excitement.”³⁵ Commenting on the news surrounding the capitulation, British military critics told the *Guardian* that the feat was achieved due to the Japanese fighting “with almost unprecedented tenacity and skill.” Major B.F. Baden-Powell, brother of “the defender of Mafeking” and Boy Scouts founder Robert Baden-Powell, stated that the Japanese had made him rethink his earlier assertions that no army could seize modern

³³ “Amazing Assaults by the Japanese,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 22, 1904, 9.

³⁴ “Amazing Assaults by the Japanese,” 9.

³⁵ “Reception of the News,” *The Manchester Guardian*, January 3, 1905, 7.

fortifications through direct assault, claiming that “Japanese troops are something above the ordinary and are sufficiently determined to be able to accomplish anything.”³⁶

With their hard won victories at Port Arthur, and later Shenyang, in the early months of 1905, the Imperial Japanese Army had virtually broken the back of the Russian ability to immediately wage war in Manchuria, and had given the British press and public a belief what the superior spirit and skill of the Japanese infantryman could accomplish when utilized for the Japanese national cause. Although the Japanese victories on land had continued to receive significant coverage in *The Times* and *Guardian* throughout the war, it was the dramatic way in which the Japanese had concluded their war at sea that grabbed at attention of a population which, for a century, had been born and raised in the shadow of Horatio Nelson. Alternatively termed the Battle of the Sea of Japan or the Battle of Tsushima in British press publications, the action was fought on May 27, 1905 between the main Japanese battle fleet and Russia’s former Baltic Fleet, which had steamed halfway around the world in a vain attempt to relieve Russia’s original Pacific Fleet. As the war’s only decisive battle between the combatants’ battle fleets, the action resulted in the near complete destruction of the Russian Navy’s available strength and secured for the IJN virtually complete control of the seas surrounding the area of operations.³⁷

During “Trafalgar year,” which commemorated a century since Nelson’s decisive posthumous victory against a Franco-Spanish fleet, it was claimed by a correspondent from *The Observer*, a sister publication to the *Guardian*, that the crushing naval victory of “another island empire” could not help but “fire the imagination and draw forth the

³⁶ “Reception of the News,”7.

³⁷ Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume I*, 59.

sympathy of Britons.”³⁸ At the heart of this new stimulation of the British imagination stood Admiral Tōgō, whose leadership during the battle earned him a reputation as a man of destiny among the British public, as reflected in the title of the “Nelson of Japan,” awarded him by commentators in both the conservative and liberal British press.³⁹ In the wake of this victory, much was made in the press regarding Tōgō’s paraphrasing of Nelson’s most famous signal when his flagship flew the flags telling his ships’ captains and their men that Japan expected every man to fulfill his duty to the fullest.⁴⁰ As well as the pride in Tōgō use of “Nelsonian” allusions and traditions, the British public was encouraged by their press institutions to look on the victory as a reflection of the RN’s own technology and doctrines.⁴¹ Acknowledging that “British seaman and British constructors have been responsible in a large measure for the excellence of the Japanese navy,” *The Times* regarded the complete victory of the IJN using British-built ships, as well as the tactics and training conceived by British naval officers as “unanswerable proof” of the soundness of British naval doctrines and technology.⁴²

As well as assuring Japan’s control of the seas and demonstrating the value and primacy of British naval traditions and technology, the way in which the Japanese themselves reacted to the news from Tsushima appeared to have a profound impact on British press commentators. As recorded by *The Times* correspondent in Tokyo, the Japanese people reacted to this “epoch making triumph” with an atmosphere of humble

³⁸ “The Week of Victory,” *The Observer*, June 4, 1905, 4,

³⁹ “The Week of Victory,” 4; “The War in the Far East,” *The Times*, June 7, 1905, 6.

⁴⁰ “The Week of Victory,” 4.

⁴¹ “The War in the Far East,” 6.

⁴² For more information regarding how the RN viewed the war as a confirmation of its supremacy see also Richard Dunley, “‘The Warrior has Always Shewd Himself Greater than his Weapons’: The Royal Navy’s Interpretation of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05,” *War and Society* 34, no. 4 (October 2015): 248-262; *Ibid.*

gratitude which had no trace of “vulgar clamour... no triumph over a fallen enemy,” going as far to say that if the Japanese people were reflective of “the yellow peril, may the fates grant that we catch the infection of it by closer and more effective alliance with a people so worthy of our warm regard.”⁴³ Among the Japanese populace who greeted the victory in such an impressively subdued and respectful manner, the reaction of Tōgō himself was cited as the most impressive in its humility. Called “the most silent of her [Japan’s] sons” by the *Observer*, *The Times* reflected this statement when claiming that “the modesty of Tōgō’s reports of his great and historic victory is as remarkable as the valour, skill, and tenacity by which it was obtained.”⁴⁴ Likewise, the *Guardian* was impressed with Tōgō as a personification of Japanese national chivalry when he visited and paid compliment to the captured Russian Admiral Rozhstvensky as he recovered from wounds received during the battle.⁴⁵ Given the high esteem allotted to Tōgō and his victorious fleet, it came as little surprise that there was considerable excitement among the British press regarding the post-war possibility of Tōgō’s “famous ships [and]... gallant sailors” paying a visit to Britain in the near future.⁴⁶

British newspapers were not only used as a way for the British public to receive reports regarding the success of Japanese forces on land and at sea, they also reflected how Britain’s charitable sympathies lay with the cause of the Japanese people. As was often the case in the atmosphere of noblesse oblige and philanthropy which permeated British society in the first two decades of the twentieth century, individual citizens were

⁴³ “The War in the Far East,” 6.

⁴⁴ “The Week of Victory,” 4; “The War in the Far East,” 6.

⁴⁵ “Togo Visits Rojestvenski,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 5, 1905, 7.

⁴⁶ “Japanese Fleet Reported Forthcoming Visit to England,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 6, 1905, 12.

encouraged by the popular press to show their support for the Japanese war effort through charitable donations. Perhaps the most notable and popular of these endeavours came in the form of the “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund.”

Supposedly the brainchild of Viscountess Hayashi, the wife of the Japanese minister to Britain, and a number of wives from the Japanese delegation, the fund was created at the beginning of the war in order to raise money for the families of those Japanese servicemen who had been killed in action, as well as for the activities of the Japanese Red Cross.⁴⁷

Advertised heavily in both the *Times* and *Guardian*, every week these papers would publish a select list of those who had contributed to the fund since the war’s beginning.⁴⁸ By examination of one of these lists one is given a demonstration of the diversity of those members of British society who, both in great and small quantities, actively contributed to the fund. This included a Reverend H. Roswell (£1.10), “the officers and ship’s company of the HMS *Bonaventure*” (£11.14), and an anonymous donation from “A few Englishmen” (£0.12).⁴⁹ By the end of the war’s combat phase in late May of 1905, sympathetic Britons had contributed a combined sum of £31,537 to the relief of the families of those killed in the war against Russia.⁵⁰ The overwhelming amount of individual and group support for this cause appeared to greatly impress the organizers at the Japanese legation which, in form letters published in the editorial pages

⁴⁷ “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 5, 1904, 10.

⁴⁸ “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund: Thirtieth List of Donations (Up to and including 2nd Jan., 1905),” *The Times*, January 4, 1905, 6.

⁴⁹ “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund: Thirtieth List of Donations (Up to and including 2nd Jan., 1905),” 6.

⁵⁰ With inflation this amount would be the equivalent to the, not inconsequential, sum of £3,532,144.00 in 2017. “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund, *The Times*, May 31, 1905, 5.

of the *Times* and *Guardian*, expressed their gratitude to “the fact that there have been such numerous donations of small sums” which demonstrated “an evident manifestation of sympathy on the part of the [British] public in general.”⁵¹

While both the conservative and liberal press applauded the astounding victories achieved by the Japanese army and navy over the course of the war, during the initial stages of the discussion regarding the renewal and radical expansion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance partisanism appeared to work against a universal opinion being expressed in the *Times* and *Guardian*. The discussion surrounding the future of the alliance appeared to have initially reached the public sphere in early March 1905 with the publication of a statement by Liberal politician Sir Edward Grey claiming that he and his party cohorts had been happy with the outcome of the alliance so far and that there was a good possibility the treaty would be renewed with a Liberal electoral victory.⁵² A few days later, fellow Liberal Lord Rosebery echoed these sentiments during a speech made regarding the domestic and foreign policies of a potential Liberal cabinet, claiming that the original Anglo-Japanese Alliance “is not a Tory policy,” and that “if the alliance is to be renewed on terms not unfavourable to this country, in all probability... [Liberals] would feel it in their duty and their honour to continue that treaty.”⁵³ Despite these initial statements by prominent Liberal politicians in favour of the continuation of the alliance and atmosphere of national sympathy toward the Japanese, there were some elements within the Liberal party who were opposed to the proposals that the scope of the alliance should, in the words of the radical Liberal Member of Parliament Sir Charles Dilke, be

⁵¹ “Japanese Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Widows and Families Fund,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 10.

⁵² “Japan and England,” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 6, 1905, 7.

⁵³ “The Next Government and Its Policy,” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 10, 1905, 8.

extended to the point “by which foreign troops would be used for the defense of the Indian frontier.”⁵⁴ Dilke’s sentiments appeared to reflect a common mindset among some of the more radical Liberal politicians and press outlets, with the *Daily Mail* claiming that, in potentially using Japanese soldiers to defend the Indian frontiers, the Balfour government was taking “a lower measure of the military capacity of [Britain] than any previous administration.”⁵⁵

Despite the misgivings voiced by the above mentioned radical Liberal members of the parliament and press, it appeared that the many in the Liberal party were supportive of the expansion of the alliance’s scope, with Henry Asquith repeating Edward Grey’s earlier statements in favour of a revised treaty “in the most ample and unmistakable terms.”⁵⁶ According to *The Times*, the validation granted to the revision and extension by the majority of Britain’s Liberal hierarchy showed that the “alliance was welcomed by Englishmen without distinction of party.”⁵⁷ Despite the initial protestations amidst some of those in their ranks, a brief article in the *Guardian* demonstrated support for the revised treaty among even radical Liberal MPs, with the radical Joseph Walton declaring that “the overwhelming majority of members on both sides of the house were of opinion that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance might with advantage to the whole world be renewed on more extended lines.”⁵⁸ Indeed, when the *Guardian* did a review of how major Liberal and Conservative Press outlets reacted to the Alliance’s revised terms, it was generally shown that, with the exception of the *Daily Mail*, the new agreement, and

⁵⁴ “Summary of News,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1905, 6.

⁵⁵ “Press Opinions on the New Treaty,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 27, 1905, 12.

⁵⁶ “The Emphatic Endorsement by Mr. Asquith of the Policy of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance,” *The Times*, September 4, 1905, 7.

⁵⁷ “The Emphatic Endorsement by Mr. Asquith of the Policy of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance,” 7.

⁵⁸ “House of Commons,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1905, 8.

especially the promise of a potential Japanese military intervention in South Asia, would be a valuable tool in deterring further Russian imperial aggression, as well as future large scale conflicts, on the Asian continent.⁵⁹The pro-alliance sentiment shown within both the Conservative and Liberal camps stands as evidence supporting Ian Nish's assertion that "the renewal of the alliance... was to some extent an issue above party" and that the agreement's expanded terms were "not a serious point of criticism on the part of the opposition or the press."⁶⁰

Through their daily newspaper the British public was given frequent updates regarding the war between Japan and Russia. Those interested enough to keep up to date with these daily reports would have developed an impression of a struggle that heralded the elevation of their ally to the status of a world power which, through the courage and national discipline of their military personnel and civilian population, had shown itself worthy of an even stronger alliance with the British Empire. The sympathy and admiration for the Japanese as demonstrated and encouraged by the popular British press created a precedent of public enthusiasm which, combined with the detailed and glowing reports regarding the Japanese rendered the decision to increase the defensive scope of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance an especially obvious one for British decision makers in 1905.

⁵⁹ "New Treaty and World Peace: Press Opinions," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 27, 1905, 7.

⁶⁰ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 299.

Chapter III

“Surely the Lacedaemonians at Thermopylae were not braver than these Men”:

British Observers and the Character and Ability of the Japanese Soldier

Pioneers at the crossroads of nineteenth and twentieth century warfare, both Japanese and Russian forces were forced to adapt to the new battlefield realities characterizing the war in Manchuria. Ultimately, of the two combatants, the IJA would prove itself the more successful on the early twentieth century battlefield. Either through adaptability, determination, or a combination of both, Japanese soldiers managed to continuously defeat their Russian counterparts. The character and performance of Japanese soldiers throughout the war’s long and demanding land campaigns did much to impress Britain’s military attachés and observers assigned to both sides of the frontline. Through their glowing reports one can see how, during the course of 1904 and 1905, policy makers in London were imbued with a new respect for the formidability of the average Japanese soldier, as well as the potential utility of Japanese ground forces in the future defence of Britain’s massive Asian empire.

The early twentieth century was an era where theories of scientific racism were common amongst governments, as well as the general populations, of Europe, the United States, and white settler societies across the globe. In order to legitimize their vast colonial enterprises, imperialists often fell back upon notions of inherent European superiority over the indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas.¹ Although the Japanese had effectively resisted European and American attempts to dominate their

¹ Daniel Renshaw, “Prejudice and Paranoia: a Comparative Study of Antisemitism and Sinophobia in Turn-of-the-Century Britain,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 1 (2016): 39; See also Robert Bickers, “Shanghaianders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937,” *Past & Present*, no. 159 (May 1998): 161-211.

nation's economy and diplomatic affairs, throughout the nineteenth century the Japanese people were not exempt from the racial prejudices of Europeans. The evolution of the Japanese home islands from a system of medieval agrarian feudalism to a modern and rapidly industrializing European-style nation state was viewed with a great deal of suspicion and, in some severe cases, dread by many Europeans and North Americans watching these developments. Prompted by the perceived threat posed by both East Asian immigration and the rise of Japan as a force within international affairs, a fear arose that the very fabric of Western Civilization could soon be threatened by the encroachment of the numerous and increasingly modernized populations of East Asia.² Promoted by such notables as Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II, the concept of the "Yellow Peril" swept through the societies of Europe, North America, and Australia.³ Although the British metropole did not experience the same anxieties from Japanese immigration felt in its overseas dominions of Canada and Australia, British opinion was not free from suspicion regarding the rapid rise of Japan. Between the 1870s and 1890s some Britons held to the belief that Japan, while adopting many of the outward auspices of Westernized modernity, still retained "un-civilized" traits and characteristics, which potentially put them at odds with European, and particularly British, culture and values.⁴

Although the idea of the "Yellow Peril" would maintain its momentum amongst western societies through the entirety of the early twentieth century, British opinion regarding Japanese foreign policy, and the Japanese people in general, would soften considerably in the years leading to the signing of the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance in

² Renshaw, "Prejudice and Paranoia," 47.

³ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 201.

⁴ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 9.

1902. Amid this shift in opinion came an appreciation of the ability and professionalism of the soldiers serving in Japan's newly westernized national army. Achieving their baptism of fire during the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the men of the IJA had shown themselves capable and effective soldiers when fighting the disorganized and ill-equipped soldiers of the Chinese Qing dynasty.⁵ The reputed fighting effectiveness of the Japanese soldier would be further bolstered in British circles by the professionalism, courage, and efficiency shown by the Japanese expedition sent to cooperate with Western forces in quashing the 1900 Boxer Uprising. During the course of this conflict British forces not only witnessed the courage and tenacity of Japanese forces, but actually fought side by side with them in battles against a common enemy.⁶ Indeed, it appears that an appreciation for the formidability and professionalism of Japanese troops in the face of Chinese forces, combined with a mutual antagonism toward Russian ambitions in East Asia, played a considerable role in convincing the Committee of Imperial Defence of the wisdom behind a formal military agreement between the two powers.⁷

Although Japanese troops had displayed their martial prowess to foreign observers during their clashes with the Qing and the Boxer insurrectionists, there were still foreign military men from a number of nations who, due to misguided principles of race, dismissed the common Japanese soldier as inevitably inferior in a war against any

⁵ For further information on the 1894-1895 war between Japan and China refer to Sarah Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95: Power, Perceptions, and Primacy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 26.

⁶ Among the members of the Eight Nation Alliance created to put down the Boxer movement, the British and Japanese appeared to have cooperated most frequently. As a testament to the impressions formed by this cooperation the commander of the British forces defending the foreign delegations in Beijing, Major-General Alfred Gaselee, reported the determination and "gallant bearing" of the Japanese troops his British forces fought alongside. *Ibid.*, 91; Edward Stedman, "Edward Stedman to Alfred Gaselee," 15 November 1900, WO 28/302.

⁷ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 91.

European foe. This racialized dismissal of Japanese capabilities was especially common amongst Russia's aristocratic military hierarchy, where Japan's army was often dismissed as an "oriental horde" which, even in its current state of modernization, could not hope to compete against the soldiers of the Tsar.⁸ After observing a Japanese training maneuver in 1902, Major General Mikhail Ivanov dismissively reported the Japanese as an "army of children" who mistakenly think that "after twice beating the Chinese... they have an army with which they can overturn the whole world."⁹ Around the same time, a Cossack Captain named Petr Krasnov was reporting in the Russian military paper *Russkii Invalid* that "the military deed did not suit the Japanese" and, although they did show an indifference toward their own lives and safety, both Japanese enlisted men and officers inherently lacked initiative, cunning, marksmanship skills, and formidability on campaign.¹⁰ These sentiments were not only endemic to Japan's Russian rivals, as a French Lieutenant-Colonel Picard wrote to the *Journal Des Sciences Militaires* in 1905 how he and his contemporaries in the French army had previously dismissed the Japanese as "a youthful race and a second rate power" only to, in the face of Japan's unbroken chain of victories against the Russians, claim that "the whole of Europe... [must] admit its astonishment at the revelation of the military power of Japan."¹¹

⁸ Bruce W. Menning, "Miscalculating One's Enemy: Russian Military Intelligence before the Russo-Japanese War," *War in History* 13, no. 2 (2006): 150.

⁹ Menning, "Miscalculating One's Enemy," 156-157.

¹⁰ Krasnov's denunciation of the common Japanese soldier's character proved so inflammatory that many in the Russian high command dismissed it as excessive. That said, the Tsar was impressed enough to personally support Krasnov's reports on the defensive situation in Central Asia and East Asia. As well, through his articles in *Russkii Invalid*, Krasnov's opinions were widely consumed by the junior Russian officers who would eventually find themselves directly opposed to the Japanese in Manchuria. *Ibid.*, 157-158.

¹¹ W. Malleson, *Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War: Translated in the Intelligence Branch, Army Headquarters, India, From the "Journal Des Science Militaires" of January 1905, For the Use of Officers of the Indian Army by His Excellency the Commander in Chief* (1905), WO 106/181.

Although both British society and foreign policy was prey to a fierce sense of ethnocentrism at the turn of the twentieth century, the military alliance with the Japan in 1902 reveals that British politicians and military men generally did not carry the same dismissive views as their continental contemporaries regarding the capabilities of the average Japanese soldier.¹² That said, victories against the disorganized, corrupt, and poorly equipped forces fielded by the Qing and Boxers were not the equivalent of contending with a globally respected military power such as the Russian Empire. The outbreak of war in 1904 was, therefore, the first opportunity for the British to observe how the army employed by their new ally handled the pressures and challenges of fighting a Great Power on a modern battlefield. Over the course of the subsequent battles waged across Manchuria, British observers interacted extensively with both the IJA's junior officers and enlisted men and, having witnessed their ability and professionalism both at the front and behind the lines, conveyed to Britain's government and military hierarchy a deep respect for the martial aptitude and fighting spirit of the average Japanese soldier.

By 1904, the Imperial Japanese Army had adopted most of the features of an early twentieth century European model army in terms of equipment, weapons, and organization.¹³ That said, the typical Japanese soldier still retained many cultural habits which appeared unusual to the majority of the observers from Europe and the United States. In the case of British observers, being attached to the IJA gave a unique cultural education regarding their ally on the other side of the world. This resulted in numerous occasions in which observers would use their official reports to remark on what they

¹² Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 91.

¹³ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 13.

considered to be the novel habits which reflected a cultural dissonance between the Japanese soldier and the British Tommy.

Among the idiosyncrasies reported by British observers was the tendency for all ranks in the IJA aspiring to at least one hot bath a day, a desire which Captain Berkeley Vincent characterized as nearly religious in nature and deriving from the fact that “among even the poorest of classes in Japan, a daily bath in water at very nearly boiling point is considered almost as great a necessity as food.”¹⁴ Even when billeted near the frontlines, Vincent was struck by how Japanese soldiers would improvise in order to satisfy their compulsion to bathe; often gathering the large (four feet by two feet) earthenware containers found outside Manchurian dwellings in order to turn them into makeshift bathtubs.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. MacPherson of the Royal Army Medical Corps was equally amazed at the ability of the Japanese soldier to bathe in water that he considered to be “hotter than is usually capable of being borne by Europeans,” while also being fascinated by the novel way in which the Japanese take care of all of their soaping and washing outside of the bath water.¹⁶

As well as the seemingly compulsive need to bathe, British observers found it unusual that Japanese soldiers appeared to universally prefer drinking hot water whenever possible, even in the summer.¹⁷ Although the boiling of water was officially ordered by the IJA high command as a method of purification, a policy which was also

¹⁴ B. Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Field Artillery, Tokio, 17th May 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 134.

¹⁵ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May 1905,” 134.

¹⁶ W.G. MacPherson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, 24th April 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 241.

¹⁷ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May 1905,” 135.

followed universally by British forces on campaign, Vincent noted that, while British forces would boil their water “in large quantities with a view to allowing it to get cold,” Japanese soldiers, in order to ensure they would have access to freshly heated water, would often use their own individual water bottles or mess tins for the task.¹⁸ While observing the performance of the Fifth Division at Shenyang, Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot also considered it novel that Japanese soldiers would use their time during lulls in the fighting to partake in “the national habit of drinking very hot water” which he, somewhat mistakenly, claims was “not as a precaution against disease, but simply because he likes it better hot than cold.”¹⁹ Though relatively minor, Japanese bathing and drinking habits were only a sampling of the little cultural dissimilarities which indicated that the men of the IJA were from a different cultural background than those hailing from modern armies of the west.

Although the Imperial Japanese Army had been issuing western style uniforms to its soldiers since the late 1860s, British observers noted how the average Japanese conscript frequently had trouble with wearing the same footwear in which a western soldier would be relatively at home. While on the frequent long marches which accompanied the campaign in Manchuria, Japanese soldiers would often remove their boots in favour of *waraji*, a traditional grass sandal worn by Japanese peasants.²⁰ According to Vincent, this was often done “when a soldier becomes so footsore that he cannot march in boots” but had to be first permitted by the “authority of an officer.”²¹

¹⁸ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May 1905,” 135.

¹⁹ A.H.S Hart-Synnot, “Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart Synnot, D.S.O., The East Surrey Regiment, Mukden, 2nd May 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 175.

²⁰ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May 1905,” 136.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Another seemingly minor detail regarding the unique habits of Japanese soldiers on campaign, among British imperial forces the ability of soldiers to wear European style boots said a great deal about their native society's level of modernization. For instance, prior to the First World War *askaris* serving in native African contingents were not even issued boots due to British assumptions that their feet would not be able to adapt to the wearing of such footwear for extended periods of time.²² Considering this, to a British observer the preference for *waraji* stood as a symbol of the antiquated, and nearly medieval, agrarian character of most Japanese soldiers' lives prior to conscription.²³

A more official characteristic of the IJA frequently reported by British observers was the strict adherence to cremating fallen Japanese soldiers. Although MacPherson noted that Japanese culture was dominated by Buddhist and Shinto beliefs, both of which had different policies of interment, the Japanese army on campaign exclusively committed a large amount of effort and resources to ensure their soldiers received the traditional Buddhist custom of cremation.²⁴ Fascinated by a process he described as "decorous and [partaking] essentially of a religious rite," MacPherson felt this practice, though influenced by an aspect of traditional Japanese funerary custom, also had the bonus benefit of "much sanitary value."²⁵ In contrast to MacPherson's positive reception toward the potential benefits of cremation as a method of removing bodies, Vincent,

²² James K. Matthews, "World War One and the Rise of African Nationalism: Nigerian Veterans as Catalysts for Change," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, no. 3 (Sept. 1982): 498.

²³ A. Ivanov and P. Jowett, *The Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2004), 45.

²⁴ W.G. MacPherson, "Disposal of the Dead: Translation of Regulations by Lieut.-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, Tokio, July 24th 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 418.

²⁵ W.G. MacPherson, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, Liao-Yang, 8th September 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officer Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 422.

while assigned to the Second Division at the Battle of Liáoyáng, claimed he found the process of cremation overly long as well as needlessly intensive in both labour and resources.²⁶ Vincent believed that it would be better if the Japanese abandoned these rites and merely buried their dead in the conventional European fashion (as was done for all Russian corpses recovered by the Japanese), as he felt the endeavour has the potential “to be a demoralizing sort of task for the fatigue parties [involved].”²⁷

Whereas many of the uniquely Japanese cultural aspects of the IJA were reported by British observers in the manner of anthropological curiosity, many of the British officers attached to Japanese units were deeply impressed by how Japan’s supposedly ingrained culture of patriotic service and sacrifice drove the mindset of seemingly every Japanese soldier regardless of rank or background. Although, in reality, the Japanese national spirit of service and self-sacrifice was a relatively new concept fostered by Japan’s national government in the latter half nineteenth-century, British observers were quick to accept it as an established aspect of Japanese culture.²⁸ As, throughout the war, British observers not only demonstrated the utmost admiration for the Japanese fighting spirit, they even openly expressed envy when comparing it to the mindset of the soldiers serving in their own army.

During nearly every battle fought in Manchuria, British observers frequently noted the bravery displayed by soldiers on both sides. In regard to the Russians, observers recorded the many exceptional deeds committed by the “brave, enduring,” but tragically

²⁶ B. Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Field Artillery, 12th November 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 383.

²⁷ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 12th November 1904,” 383.

²⁸ Naoko Shimazu, “The Myth of ‘The Patriotic Soldier’: Japanese Attitudes toward Death in the Russo-Japanese War,” *War and Society* 19, no. 2 (2001): 70.

misled Russian enlisted men.²⁹ Regarded as a product of their stalwart peasant upbringing, British observers noted how, despite defeat after defeat, it seemed nearly impossible to destroy the morale of Russian troops who were, until Shenyang, never forced into a full scale disorganized rout.³⁰ Despite the high level of respect afforded to the courage and stalwartness of the average Russian soldier, it was generally agreed amongst the British that Japanese soldiers' national "spirit of self-effacement for the public weal, mingled with fervent patriotism" was a key factor in their continual triumph over Russian forces.³¹ Although, prior to the Meiji Restoration, there was an established Japanese culture of expected military service, these expectations were primarily reserved for the relatively small samurai class, rather than the general Japanese population.³² This system changed dramatically with the creation of a modern national army and the introduction of universal conscription in 1873.³³ In 1882, nearly a decade after the conscription act, the publication of the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors further contributed to the myth of a Japanese service tradition.³⁴ Due in part to the above events and documents, Japanese society saw a shift in its ideas as the importance of offering one's service, and possibly one's life, to the well-being of the nation as well as the Emperor himself was pressed upon all male Japanese subjects by teachers and other such

²⁹ H.C. Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman, D.S.O., Attached to the Russian Forces in the Field, Part I* (London: The War Office, 1906), 6.

³⁰ A. L. Haldane and W.G. Nicholson, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff Headquarters, Second Japanese Army, 8th November, With Covering Letter; Remarks by Lieut.-General W.G. Nicholson, K.C.B.; Tokio, 20th November 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I* (London: The War Office, 1907), 253.

³¹ A.L. Haldane, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff Headquarters, Second Japanese Army, 6th July 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II* (London: The War Office, 1907), 86.

³² Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, 87.

³³ Yasuma Takata, and Gotaro Ogawa, *Conscription System in Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1921), 10.

³⁴ Shimazu, "The Myth of 'The Patriotic Soldier,'" 70.

authoritative representatives of the state.³⁵ After nearly years of Japanese society being exposed to this culture of national service and sacrifice, both veteran and new soldiers in the Imperial Japanese Army of 1904 would have spent much of their lives being educated on their sacred duty to “be prepared to take up arms when required to do so.”³⁶

The social indoctrination toward a spirit of national service and patriotic sacrifice appeared to have prompted every Japanese soldier and officer to fight to the absolute limit of their ability on both the defensive and attack. As a testament to the formidability of the IJA when in defense Lieutenant-Colonel C.V. Hume reported how, during a Russian counter attack at the Battle of Liáoyáng, a few outnumbered and isolated companies of the Japanese Guards Division “had few cartridges left... but put their faith in the bayonet and awaited the enemy.”³⁷ A few months later in January 1905, during the Russian Army’s attempted offensive at Hei-Kou-Tai, a similar situation developed where a village garrisoned by a company of Japanese infantry was completely cut off and surrounded by the enemy.³⁸ As reported by Lieutenant-Colonel Aylmer Haldane, with seemingly no hope of relief and an order from “their general to ‘fight to the last man’”

³⁵ This is not to say that every single Japanese soldier was overjoyed at the prospect of fighting and dying in the name of his nation and Emperor, with many diaries presenting a picture of Japanese conscripts who, upon being called up for service, were very much torn between the national expectations of sacrifice and their own anxiety regarding their uncertain futures imperilled by death on the battlefield. This said, these private anxieties did not appear to have an overwhelming impact on the tenacity of the IJA in battle, nor did they seem to come to the attention of observing British officers, who filled their reports with stories of a universal Japanese willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their Empire’s War aims. Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, 58,

³⁶ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 86.

³⁷ This particular action was resolved when, after two hours of savage hand to hand combat, the Russians eventually broke the attack and the beleaguered companies were relieved. C.V. Hume, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 374.

³⁸ A.L. Haldane and J.W.G Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff Headquarters, Second Japanese Army, Mukden, 3rd May 1905. With Remarks by Colonel J.W.G. Tulloch, Indian Army,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Officer, 1907), 36.

the defenders “had steeled themselves to obey his order to the word.”³⁹ Although the men were eventually saved from complete annihilation by a relief force breaking the Russian siege, Haldane was convinced that it was due to their willingness to fight to the death that the besieged Japanese soldiers were able to hold out long enough to be relieved.⁴⁰ Even when relief truly did prove impossible, British observers were impressed at how Japanese soldiers really would fight to the last man. Such was the case during the Battle of Shahe when Captain James Jardine described thirty Japanese soldiers who fought to the death against an overwhelming Russian assault. Using the classical references common to educated men of the era, Jardine asserts that “surely the Lacedaemonians at Thermopylae were not braver than these men.”⁴¹

As determined and effective as Japanese soldiers were when defending a position, over the course of the war the IJA was more frequently playing the role of the attacker. While visiting the entrenched and static frontline that developed along the Sha River in the months following the October 1904 Battle of Shahe, Haldane noted how the respective defensive works reflected “the military characteristics of the two nations;” with the Russian line being an intimidating mass of numerous obstacles and complex fortifications, while the Japanese trenches, though effective in the hands of tenacious Japanese defenders, were “mere footholds” in comparison.⁴² Haldane explained that the reason behind the rudimentary character of Japanese entrenchments was not a lack of diligence on the part of the high command or the individual soldiers, but rather was

³⁹ Haldane and Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane...3rd May 1905...,” 37.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ J.B. Jardine, “Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, D.S.O., 5th Lancers, Yen-Tai Colliery, 3rd February 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Officer, 1907), 659.

⁴² Haldane and Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 3rd May 1905...,” 19.

consciously done in order to conform to the IJA doctrine of prioritizing the instillation of an offensive spirit among its ranks.⁴³ Much like French and British Imperial forces on the First World War's Western Front, the Japanese viewed their trenches as temporary fighting positions from which to launch their next attack and, as a result did not put the same amount of effort into their construction as their more defensively minded adversary.⁴⁴ Imbued with this doctrine of perpetual aggression and pressing the attack, when given the order to seize an enemy position Japanese soldiers impressed upon British representatives the seemingly herculean way in which the fighting spirit of the IJA allowed for the seizure of even the most intimidating and heavily fortified of objectives.

Although there are a number of instances where British observers noted the use of creative strategies and tactics by Japanese commanders in order to overcome the unique challenges of attacking on a modern battlefield, the vast majority of reports attribute the IJA's continuous offensive success primarily to the speed and determination of the soldiers involved.⁴⁵ In fact, after following the actions of the Second Japanese Army through almost the entire conflict, Haldane makes the point that although the Second Army's "methods have been lacking in some of the refinements of the art of war" due to

⁴³ Haldane and Tulloch, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 3rd May 1905...", 19.

⁴⁴ H.P. Willmott, *World War I* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2009), 110.

⁴⁵ An example of high praise being given to the imaginative tactics employed by Japanese commanders comes from after the first major clash of the war, the Battle of the Yalu. While reporting on this battle Sir Ian Hamilton praised the Japanese use of decoy pontoon bridges, as well as planting of fir trees as concealment along a previously exposed hillside road. Comparing these activities favourably to those utilized by Boer commandos, Hamilton notes that these deceptions did a great deal to off-set the Russian defenders and later laments that such novel tactics "are too apt to be lost sight of in the routine peace training of a regular European Army" C.V. Hume and Ian Hamilton, "Lecture Given by Japanese General Staff Officer; reported by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, Antung, 13th May 1904, and Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Ant-tung, 13th May 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Army in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 22.

the willpower of its soldiers “the results they have achieved have been astounding.”⁴⁶ As they watched Japanese soldiers advance across the rugged hills and open fields that composed the majority of Manchuria’s south eastern terrain, British observers were impressed by the resolute manner in which Japanese soldiers moved toward their objective. As enemy shrapnel shells (the only kind utilized by the Russians) burst above the attacking units the observers noted how Japanese soldiers would keep rushing forward rather than hit the dirt or seek cover.⁴⁷ At the end of the war Japanese soldiers were even observed charging into their own supporting artillery fire, as Japanese commanders now subscribed to a tactic of shelling the Russian positions “until the Japanese flag displayed by assaulting infantry showed that it was no longer necessary.”⁴⁸ Japanese commanders justified the use of this risky tactic by noting that their soldiers had a better chance of surviving their own artillery fire than that of the Russian rifles and machine guns which the artillery forced into a state of suppression.⁴⁹ This said, observers noted that the only way in which such a risky tactic could succeed was due to the willingness of Japanese infantry to maintain their offensive momentum while charging into an enemy position engulfed in artillery fire.⁵⁰ It was this seemingly general disregard for danger and dedicated courage under fire that Haldane claimed made the Japanese

⁴⁶ Haldane referred particularly to the IJA’s “peculiar characteristic” of throwing its full strength behind attacking an enemy’s strongest points without first attempting to probe for paths of less resistance. He added yet again that this strategy nevertheless succeeded due to superior fighting quality and morale of the soldiers making the attack. Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 132.

⁴⁷ When asked about this, most Japanese soldiers agreed that they believed to seek cover would merely interrupt the momentum of the advance for the limited extra safety they believed the cover would provide. D.S. Robertson, “Report by D.S. Robertson, Royal Scottish Fusiliers, Tokio, 19th June 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 209.

⁴⁸ Robertson, “Report by D.S. Robertson... 19th June 1905,” 218.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

some of the best soldiers in the world to entrust with a head on attack as it was “inconceivable that an attack once entered upon by them could, unless under the most exceptional circumstances, be broken off, and the moral [sic] of every man engaged... [be] shaken if not temporarily destroyed.”⁵¹ After witnessing the Japanese offensive and defensive success at Liáoyáng and the Shahe respectively, Haldane hyperbolically proclaimed the Japanese as Russia’s “invincible foe.”⁵²

Reports from British officers regarding the impressive ways in which Japanese soldiers overcame seemingly insurmountable Russian fortifications and concentrations of firepower had a profound effect on the mindsets of many of those serving in the British Army’s High Command. With continually rising tensions between themselves and their continental rivals, British staff officers were constantly considering the best strategy to pursue in the likely event they found themselves at war with another industrialized world power. Faced with this question, many British officers, along with officers across Europe, began subscribing to a so-called “cult of the offensive,” which maintained that the key to twentieth century martial success was not overwhelming firepower, but rather concentrated mass assaults by infantry who possessed a superior sense of morale and fighting ability.⁵³ While recognizing that modern industrialized European war would entail the use of unprecedented amounts of ordnance, advocates for the “cult of the offensive” believed that it was of paramount importance to train their soldiers to become masters of the “psychological battlefield” which would allow for them to steel their

⁵¹ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 85.

⁵² A.L. Haldane, “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff; Tokio, 23rd January 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 457.

⁵³ Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, The Western Front, and The Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (London: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1987), 38.

resolve in order to charge unwaveringly through intimidating storms of enemy bullets and shells in order to push the decisive offensive home.⁵⁴ To those in the British army staff committed to this ideal, the frequent reports regarding the offensive success of the unwavering Japanese infantryman over his deeply entrenched, and often well-armed, Russian foe seemed to provide excellent empirical evidence in favour of their beliefs.⁵⁵ Even when considering the heavy casualties suffered by Japanese soldiers during these attacks, British officers argued that this was simply the cost of a quick and decisive victory and that, in addition to hardening the psychological resolve of the soldiers on the frontline, British society should, like the Japanese, begin to instill in its citizens a mindset of patriotism and self-sacrifice which would allow them to accept the necessity of potentially losing tens of thousands of Britain's manpower in the name of victory.⁵⁶

As a nation with practically no modern tradition of mandatory military service, British military men typically had a low opinion of the quality and character of soldiers found in contemporary European conscript armies.⁵⁷ It struck British observers as all the more impressive that the Japanese Army, in which nearly all enlisted men and many officers were conscripted, functioned with universal dedication and unwavering professionalism while on campaign.⁵⁸ Haldane believed this level of quality was possible

⁵⁴ Travers, *The Killing Ground*, 69.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Even in the midst of a manpower shortage during the First World War there was a lively debate amongst British military and political leaders regarding whether or not Britain should institute conscription, with those against claiming that the pressing of unwilling men would simply work to degrade the fighting effectiveness of British forces. John Turner, "The Challenge to Liberalism: The Politics of the Home Front," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, New Edition, Hew Strachan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 173.

⁵⁸ British officers were seemingly unanimous in condemning the way in which the Russian high command wasted the potential offered by the "splendid raw material" of the average Russian peasant through inadequate training as well as an indifferent, unqualified, and largely incompetent aristocratic officer class whom, the British officers believed, held more loyalty to their own careers and social placement than to the

only due to “the whole [Japanese] nation---unlike Great Britain--- [being] well discipline[d].”⁵⁹ After personally witnessing the degree to which ideals of discipline and patriotism permeated Japanese society, Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton, while writing his memoir regarding his time in Manchuria, *A Staff Officer’s Scrapbook* (1906), complained how he found the British education system to be profoundly “anti-military” creating a professional army that merely “fought for wages.”⁶⁰ In contrast, he claimed, “the Japanese have behind them the moral character produced... by generations of mothers and fathers nurtured in ideas of self-sacrifice and loyalty” and, if the British ever dreamed of having “every man in the nation a potential fighter...they must,” like the Japanese, “begin at the beginning, and put the right ideas into babies as soon as they begin to toddle.”⁶¹ Through these comments the observers showed how their interaction with both the Japanese army, as well as Japanese society in general, seemed to establish the Japanese as a model of the patriotic, self-sacrificing society they desired within their own Empire.⁶²

Reports regarding the seeming effectiveness of the Japanese system of military education and conscription appeared to have made deep impressions on some prominent figures within the British Army. Most notable of these was the recently retired Field Marshal Frederick Roberts who, as head of the pro-compulsory service association known as the National Service League (NSL), had been advocating for the adoption of a similar system of military indoctrination in Britain’s school system. In one of his many

nation they served. Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, XIV.

⁵⁹ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 86.

⁶⁰ Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer’s Scrap-Book during the Russo-Japanese War* (London: 1906), 14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Hart-Synnot, “Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905,” 180.

passive aggressive letters written to Prime Minister Balfour in the autumn of 1905, Roberts implied that the success of the Japanese had shown the supremacy of the “nations in arms.” As long as the British refused to institute some form of compulsory military education, if not service, their army would have no hope of ever being able to independently face the forces of their continental rivals.⁶³ Despite the divisive nature of national service proposals, the determination and high standing of those who claimed membership in the NSL meant that, in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, the departments within the British government and CID did seriously explore the prospect of expanding the manpower potential of Britain’s ground forces through new systems of educational indoctrination and required military training. Given the esteem expressed in the reports by Haldane and Hamilton regarding the martial success achieved by Japan’s militarized and service centered society, it was unsurprising that, when they compared and contrasted the existing systems of compulsory national service employed by foreign states, Japan featured prominently as one of the four states compared -- Germany, France, and Russia being the other three -- which offered applicable lessons for Britain to potentially follow.⁶⁴

So impressed were some members of Britain’s political and military elite with the reported role played by the Japanese education system in building the fighting spirit and formidability of the IJA that, in February 1906, the British military requested that the Japanese government and military allow Colonel A.M. Murray, R.A., to be dispatched to Japan for the purpose of extensively studying Japanese methods of military education and

⁶³ Frederick Roberts, “Frederick Roberts to Arthur Balfour, November 25, 1905,” CAB 17/17, 7.

⁶⁴ “Note on the Incidence of Military Service in the Case of Certain Powers,” CAB 17/17, 1.

army training.⁶⁵ Due in part to the immense hospitality shown to him by Japan's military hierarchy, Colonel Murray's trip was deemed both highly successful as well as educational.⁶⁶ These sort of exploratory initiatives taken in the immediate wake of both Japan's victory and the extension of the alliance aid in demonstrating the immense enthusiasm and esteem felt by the British toward their triumphant ally in the East Asia, as well how member of the British military were clearly eager to learn more about the factors which allowed the Japanese to field some of the finest soldiers in the world.

Writing in the ethnocentric and imperialist tone which often characterized European mindsets at the turn of the twentieth century, a few British observers paused in their reports to compare the supposed physical traits and merits which differentiated the Japanese from the Russians, as well as other soldiers of European descent. Just as Lieut.-Colonel MacPherson was impressed by the Japanese ability to take prolonged baths in water which he considered scarcely tolerable by the average European, there were numerous other instances where British observers noted the impressive way in which Japanese soldiers, through a mix of physical stalwartness and discipline, could seemingly ignore pain which would incapacitate even the stoutest British soldier.

Captain Vincent reported an anecdote about a Japanese soldier who, after seemingly being killed by a bullet piercing directly above his heart cavity, suddenly stood up in the midst of battle and casually walked himself to the dressing station, all the while stopping in order to show the wound off to his companions.⁶⁷ Although MacPherson

⁶⁵ "Visit of Colonel A.M. Murray to Japan," FO 371/85, 1.

⁶⁶ "Visit of Colonel A.M. Murray to Japan," 1.

⁶⁷ Ian Hamilton and B. Vincent, "Reports by Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Head-Quarters First Japanese Army, 25th July 1904, and Captain B. Vincent, Royal Field Artillery, Lien-Shen-Kuan, 20th July 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, Eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 157.

praised the efficiency of Japanese regimental stretcher bearers and divisional bearer battalions, the immense casualties reaped under modern battlefield conditions contributed to numerous reports of wounded Japanese calmly walking their way from the fire of the battlefield to dressing stations and, later, to larger field hospitals.⁶⁸ After watching a large number of wounded deliver themselves to the dressing stations during the Battle of Shenyang, Hart-Synnot noted his opinion that “with European soldiers very many more would have to be carried for the Japanese soldier bears pain well” in comparison.⁶⁹ Among the observers, Vincent appeared to be the most impressed with the spirit shown by wounded Japanese soldiers, recording how moved he was when, after a vicious night action during the Battle of Liáoyáng, he spoke with wounded Japanese soldiers who despite their fresh wounds and “a wretched night crowded together in dirty Chinese houses... [were in] the best of spirits” as they hobbled down to a nearby river to bathe, ending the anecdote by stating that “they are splendid material these infantrymen of the Second Division.”⁷⁰

As well as the Japanese soldier’s supposedly superior physical ability to bear some of the most painful wounds with apparent apathy, British observers made frequent note of the unusually high state of stamina and fitness which seemed to characterize every combat soldier within the Japanese army. While observing Japanese soldiers attacking across open country and hillsides, British officers were convinced that their casualties would have been much higher had a Japanese soldier not shown a superior

⁶⁸ Hart-Synnot, “Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905,” 153.

⁶⁹ He then goes on to illustrate his point by comparing Japanese soldiers who would not “show pain even when it is very bad” to the Russian wounded whom he observed would “scream even before they were touched” by a surgeon. Hart-Synnot, “Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905,” 174-175.

⁷⁰ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 12th November 1904,” 383.

ability to, in the words of Hamilton, cross “a space of six hundred yards of plough... in one rapid rush with all his heavy equipment on his back,” further noting that “this no European can do.”⁷¹ Hamilton’s awe regarding the endurance of Japanese soldiers was shared by other British observers all the way to the Battle of Shenyang. While observing attacks made by the inexperienced Eighth Division, Captain Robertson made note of how, despite often fighting in their heavy packs, Japanese soldiers had perfected the timing and speed of their rushes against Russian positions.⁷² The superior physical endurance of Japanese soldiers was primarily attributed to a combination of the disciplined society in which they were raised as well as the fact that the Japanese military was extremely selective in a conscription process in which “only the most suitable material is chosen” for the combat services overseas.⁷³ For British officers, the “wonderful level of physical stamina and intelligence” shown by Japanese enlisted men and field officers in Manchuria was a testament to the Japanese Military’s wisdom of maintaining unusually high conscription standards.⁷⁴ These standards, apparently unchanged in the face of the casualties brought on by the war, showed the British that they could rely on their ally to be meticulous in fielding a highly effective fighting force, even in times of crisis.

⁷¹ Dipping deeper into fanciful ethnography, Hamilton further adds that Russians, being “the slowest of all Europeans” were at a particular disadvantage when fighting, especially offensively, against the Japanese. Ian Hamilton, “Battle of Sha Ho. – First Japanese Army. Operations from the 6th September to the 15th October 1904. Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O.,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I* (London: The War Office, 1907), 571.

⁷² Robertson noted that these large, heavy packs were of great utility during an advance as Japanese soldiers could use them as effective makeshift cover when tasked with providing rifle fire for their advancing compatriots. Robertson, “Report by D.S. Robertson... 19th June 1905,” 210.

⁷³ Vincent also attributed the low rate of disease amongst Japanese troops as being a product of the army only conscripting men of proven robust health, combined with the belief that “Japanese soldiers... are naturally very cleanly in their habits.” “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May 1905,” 135-136.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

Although British observers made much of the supposedly inherent superior characteristics of those chosen for service in the IJA, they also appear to agree that these soldiers' physical and mental faculties were made truly formidable by the IJA's excellent training program. Since its creation in the late 1860s, the Imperial Japanese Army had made an effort to give its men the best and most up to date training the west could offer. In fact, so dedicated was the Japanese high command to procuring the best training that, after France's disastrous 1871 defeat by the North German Confederation, the Japanese eventually dismissed their French military instructors in order to employ German officers whose training and tactics they believed had been proven superior in the field.⁷⁵ Toughened by Prussian-style professionalism and given the advantage of learning from an army which was supposedly on the cutting edge of modern military tactics, the soldiers of Japan often demonstrated the superiority of their training methods over the haphazard training offered to Russian forces.

When comparing the training of the two forces in Manchuria, one of the starkest distinctions made by British observers concerned the vast difference in marksmanship techniques shown by the respective armies. Fresh from their experience fighting against well-trained marksmen among the Boer Commandos, British officers in Manchuria appeared to agree that a large part of an army's strength lay in the ability of its individual riflemen. Given the contrasting manner in which the Japanese and Russians practiced their marksmanship, it must have seemed that no conflict could have better proven the British right regarding their dogma of independent fire. From the first clash on the Yalu

⁷⁵ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 8.

to the final triumph at Shenyang it was consistently reported that Japanese riflemen generally proved much more accurate and deadly than their Russian opponents. This is mainly attributed by Hamilton as being a product of the Russians still directing their soldiers to use antiquated methods of volley fire, for which their men trained by practicing their shooting in open fields without targets.⁷⁶ The poor quality of Russian marksmanship training was further testified to by observers in the Russian Army, with Captain Holman claiming that, although the hunting lifestyle of Siberians made them generally good shots, the poor training and lack of practice allotted to the rest of the Russian enlisted men meant that they ranked among, what he considered to be, the worst shots of Europe's major armies.⁷⁷ In contrast, individual Japanese soldiers were considered by British officers to be generally deadly marksmen, with Hamilton claiming this was mainly due to Japanese high command placing emphasis on modern notions of precise individual fire.⁷⁸ Hamilton was quite impressed by a report from Liáoyáng of seven Japanese riflemen infiltrating the Russian left flank and, through the use of accurate enfilading fire, causing massive confusion and panic amongst the Russian troops, thus allowing for a frontal assault by the main force to proceed with few casualties. This development appeared to be partial proof of a concept Hamilton had

⁷⁶ Hume and Hamilton, "Lecture Given by Japanese General Staff Officer; reported by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, Antung, 13th May 1904, and Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 13th May 1904," 46.

⁷⁷ As a testament to how unfamiliar the Russian soldiers were with their rifles, Holman mentions how there were numerous instances in which Russian soldiers, while caught in the heat of battle, would continue to pull the trigger and work the bolt of their rifle long after expending all their ammunition. Holman attributes this to the fact that these soldiers, oblivious to the lack of recoil, would mistake the din from their comrades' rifles for their own. Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, 49-50.

⁷⁸ Hume and Hamilton, "Lecture Given by Japanese General Staff Officer; reported by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, Antung, 13th May 1904, and Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 13th May 1904," 46.

devised while in South Africa, where he believed that “the power of the magazine rifle was now so great upon anything fairly exposed to its action, that if even half-a-dozen men could penetrate and enfilade the line held by an army, they might cause such local loss and confusion as to enable a frontal assault to be delivered across the open without excessive casualties.”⁷⁹

The observers were also impressed how, in hand-to-hand combat, the Japanese were repeatedly able to best their often physically imposing Russian foes.⁸⁰ The success of the IJA’s doctrine of aggressive action seemed to confirm that the bayonet still held pride of place on the modern battlefield.⁸¹ Although bayonets and other hand to hand weapons only accounted for .66% of casualties suffered by the Japanese Second Army during the Battle of Liáoyáng, as the war progressed this statistic rose dramatically with 6.1% of Second Army casualties during the Russians’ failed October 1904 offensive on the Shahe being a result from hand-to-hand combat.⁸² By the time the four Japanese Armies assaulted the Russian defenses at Shenyang, it appeared that the bayonet or sabre, properly supported by the modern weapons of war, was an essential factor in finally

⁷⁹ Ian Hamilton and W.G. Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., with Remarks of Lieut.-General Sir W.G. Nicholson, K.C.B., Tokio, 28th September 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Vol. I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 185.

⁸⁰ In one of his characteristic, though perhaps unintentional, racist comments regarding the character of the men fielded by his ally, Hamilton makes the point that a Japanese soldier “is four times as difficult to hit as a European... because he is half the size [of a Russian soldier].” Hamilton, “Battle of Sha Ho...6th September to the 15th October 1904,” 571.

⁸¹ Sheffy, “A Model Not to Follow: The European Armies and the Lessons of the War,” 260.

⁸² MacPherson notes that the unusually high percentage killed and wounded by bayonets and sabres at the Shahe was mainly due to the fact that many of the major actions were waged at night, when lack of visibility greatly decreased the effect of rifle and artillery fire. W.G. MacPherson, “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, Manchuria, 30th October 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 151; W.G. MacPherson, “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, Headquarters, Manchuria, 22nd February, 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 172.

forcing an army to break and yield its defenses.⁸³ Although the First World War would ultimately prove that the bayonet had indeed lost its primacy on the modern battlefield, in 1914 it was proclaimed by British General Altham that “the Manchurian campaign has wiped out the mistaken inference from the South African experience that bayonet fighting belonged in the past.”⁸⁴ Indeed, cold steel still appeared to be a key element of a successful offensive doctrine, with the Imperial Japanese Army presenting itself as the model for training a force in the particulars of melee combat.

Being among those who celebrated the Japanese proficiency with bayonet and sabre, Haldane was surprised to learn that, up until a few years prior to the war’s outbreak the IJA had put little emphasis on training its soldiers in bayonet drill or melee combat in general. Despite its late adoption, individual Japanese soldiers generally proved masterfully efficient when engaging in “the fights for localities, which... clearly point to the necessity of making men expert in the use of the bayonet.” Their proficiency was explained by Colonel John Tulloch as being a product of training and “personal activity on the part of the infantry soldier, a quality which is not to be found developed to nearly so high a degree in any European army, including our own.”⁸⁵ In addition to rigorous bayonet drill and frequent coordinated mock attacks on fortified positions, British officers noted Japanese soldiers would often use their free time in the billets to organize wrestling

⁸³ When first glancing at MacPhersons statistics regarding Second Army Casualties at Shenyang one would assume the number of men wounded from “bayonets and side arms,” a mere 37 cases across all four divisions, to be slight when compared to the 13,578 wounded by rifles and machine guns. Although this would initially suggest that most of the fighting was done from afar, MacPherson explains that this is only a record of the men who survived long enough to reach the field hospital, with “wounded from rifle fire survive[ing] the most, and wounded from bayonets and side arms the least.” W.G. MacPherson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, Manchuria, July 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 208.

⁸⁴ Travers, *The Killing Ground*, 45.

⁸⁵ Haldane and Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 3rd May 1905...,” 15, 12.

tournaments and sports festivals, thus taking it upon themselves to hone many of the skills which would become essential in a close encounter with formidable Russian enlisted men.⁸⁶ The combination of official training and physically challenging leisure activities, in the words of Hamilton, allowed the Japanese soldier to be “more at home than a European” in a “rough and tumble [sort of battle].”⁸⁷ While Japanese enlisted men were expected to make a concerted effort to become experts with their bayonets, Imperial Japanese officers impressed British observers with the skilled swordsmanship they shown when wielding their European-style sabres.⁸⁸ Such was the supposed success of Japanese swordsmanship, and the apparent value of swords visual symbols of authority in which to rally troops, that Tulloch and Haldane went so far as to suggest that British officers resume the practice of carrying the weapons into battle.⁸⁹

British observers were not only impressed with the way in which Japanese training made soldiers highly effective in the use of their weapons, they also noted how much of their resilience on campaign was a product of the way in which Japanese soldiers were trained in maneuvers. According to British officers, there was a common opinion among both Russian military leaders and western observers that Japanese soldiers, being from a nation which generally enjoyed a rather mild climate, would find

⁸⁶ C.J. Burnett, “Report by Lieut.-General C.J. Burnett, C.B., Head-Quarters Third Army, 14th July 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 506.

⁸⁷ Hamilton, “Battle of Sha Ho...6th September to the 15th October 1904,” 569.

⁸⁸ A.L. Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff, Second Army Head-Quarters, 18th July 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Vol. I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Officer, 1907), 88.

⁸⁹ Although, as shown in the First World War, the Russo-Japanese War would not ultimately lead to the British army re-adopting swords for combat, Tulloch mentions how the successful use of the Type 30 sword bayonet by Japanese troops influenced American and British military authorities to cease experiments with spike pattern bayonets. This decision would ultimately contribute to the development of American and British emulations of the Type 30; designated M1905 and P1907 respectively. Haldane and Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 3rd May 1905...,” 12.

their fighting ability severely compromised during Manchuria's inhospitable winters.⁹⁰ Given this perception, it came as a great surprise that, when the Russians attempted a winter offensive against the Japanese left flank, they found Japanese troops seemed quite at home fighting in "almost arctic" conditions.⁹¹ Apart from the racialized opinion regarding "the natural hardiness of the Japanese," Haldane attributes the Japanese soldier's ability to fight so effectively in adverse winter conditions as being a reflection of the inclusion in his training of many "marches and maneuvers which [were]... severe enough to add to his endurance."⁹² This conditioning not only benefited the Japanese soldier's performance in the frigid Manchurian winter, as it was also noted how quickly and effectively Japanese troops maneuvered across Manchuria's sun baked hills during the summer of 1904. The value of Japanese peacetime conditioning was first reported during the Battle of Dashiqiao (written by British officers as Chiao-Tou) in July 1904, when Jardine was astounded to witness elements of the Japanese Twelfth Division march across "villainous" country in the hot summer sun in order to attack the strong Russian right flank. Despite the severe heat and tough terrain Jardine commended the Japanese troops for being able to pull off a maneuver that was "well-conceived, well timed, and well carried out."⁹³ Later, Hamilton was equally impressed by the performance of the First Division when fighting at Liáoyáng, where the soldiers performed admirably in

⁹⁰ Haldane and Tulloch, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 3rd May 1905..." 48.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 48.

⁹³ J.B. Jardine and Ian Hamilton, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, D.S.O., 5th Lancers, Head-Quarters 12th Japanese Division, 27th July 1904; With Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Head-Quarters First Japanese Army, 7th August 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Vol. I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 170.

intense heat and terrain which he considered “almost as breakneck and impracticable as Afghanistan.”⁹⁴

The earnestness with which the Japanese practiced their peacetime maneuvers helped them to adapt to inclement climates and terrain, and maintain their composure and ability during the prolonged periods under fire which characterized numerous battles during the Russo-Japanese War. Although the British had experienced prolonged sieges during the course of the Second South African War, most of their war experience was of one to two day pitched battles between British regulars and Boer guerillas. In contrast, the major battles between Japanese and Russian forces in Manchuria could stretch on for weeks with few chances of reprieve for the men engaged.⁹⁵ Impressed by the ability of Japanese troops at Shenyang to persevere after being cut off from rations and water and remain “in the open under a deadly fire for perhaps 12 hours or more,” Haldane attributed this to the “careful training in times of peace” which “alone prepare[d] them to undergo [these hardships] successfully.” In Haldane’s mind the British were too lax on their men during peacetime training maneuvers; allowing them to drink from their canteens, smoke while on the march, have them fed generous rations every evening, and be “accompanied to the maneuver ground by sutlers selling refreshments.” Haldane warns that, if British soldiers are to be ready for the privation and strain of the modern battlefield “an excellent

⁹⁴ Considering that a few months after these reports were dispatched the British government began to display eagerness in utilizing a Japanese forces to defend the Indo-Afghan frontier from a future Russian attack, reports of the IJA’s success against Russian forces in conditions comparable to the North-West Frontier seem particularly portentous. Ian Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Head-Quarters, First Japanese Army, 12th November 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Vol. I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 283.

⁹⁵ Willmott, *World War I*, 19.

lesson might be learned” from the Japanese in being denied many of the comforts they had come to expect in their peacetime training.⁹⁶

Although the IJA’s training was modeled on authoritarian Prussian style and demanded discipline from its troops, British officers noted that Japanese soldiers were not treated any more harshly by their superiors than was normal in the British army. In contrast to the IJA of the interwar period, where a soldier’s mistake could often be corrected by severe beatings from his superior, the IJA of 1904 was noted by British observers as operating on much the same dynamic as their own army.⁹⁷ In his special report regarding the general lifestyle of Japanese soldiers in wartime, Burnett notes that, during training and when on the parade ground, the Japanese were “very strict on duty, and in all matters of duty; but, when off parade, there is a spirit of *camaraderie* and kindly feeling between all ranks,” thus allowing for atmosphere of “mutual affection, respect, and confidence” between all IJA personnel “from the field marshal down to the private soldier.”⁹⁸

From the very beginning of the conflict British observers were struck by how disciplined and conscientious Japanese soldiers were when carrying out their orders. These impressions are first exemplified in early reports regarding the initial disembarkation of Japanese forces at Incheon in February 1904, when an IJN taskforce had successfully swept away Russia’s small naval presence at Incheon Bay during a brief skirmish on February 9. Even when unopposed the mass debarkation of an army’s men on a foreign shore is usually accompanied by a certain degree of initial confusion and

⁹⁶ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 85.

⁹⁷ Dennis Showalter, “Storm Over the Pacific: Japan’s Road to Empire and War,” in *The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbour to Hiroshima*, Daniel Marston, ed. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005), 22.

⁹⁸ Burnett, “Report by Lieut.-General C.J. Burnett... 14th July 1905,” 509.

logistical complications.⁹⁹ No doubt familiar with at least some of the many inherent difficulties presented by the amphibious landing of soldiers, Commander E. W. Wemyss of the RN, while unofficially observing the debarkation of the Japanese Twelfth Division on February 17, was amazed by the “most perfect” efficiency and discipline shown by the Division’s 21,000 men while moving ashore from their transports to Korean soil.¹⁰⁰ Along with noting the large degree of logistical preparations made by the Japanese high command which allowed the division to be landed without anything having “to be borrowed or purchased from the shore,” Wemyss was especially impressed by how quiet and orderly the Japanese enlisted men were when landing and proceeding to their billets with “every man seeming to know at once on landing where he had to go, and going there.”¹⁰¹ This display of discipline and soldierly bearing was not only noticed by Commander Wemyss, with Lieutenant A.C. Barnaby of the Royal Marine Light Infantry similarly noting how the speed, efficiency, and “total absence of noise and trouble on the part of the coolies [consisting mainly of IJA reservists] and soldiers employed was remarked upon by everyone.”¹⁰² If there was any criticism from observers regarding the obedience of Japanese soldiers it was that they were maybe too obedient when given certain signals. Hamilton was especially concerned with the tendency of entire Japanese units to obey blindly signals relayed to them by bugle during the heat of battle. Hamilton worried that a clever Russian commander could order a bugle to blow the Japanese

⁹⁹ Julian Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Volume 1* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 49-50.

¹⁰⁰ E.W. Wemyss, H. Edwards and A.C. Barnaby, “Reports by Commander E.W. Wemyss, R.N., Lieutenant H. Edwards, R.N., and Lieutenant A.C. Barnaby, R.M.L.I., of HMS *Talbot*. Chemulpo, 3rd March 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, Eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 1.

¹⁰¹ Wemyss, et al., “Reports by Commander E.W. Wemyss... 3rd March 1904,” 1-2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 3.

“retire,” and feared what “these brave soldiers [would] do then when they have been so highly praised for their prompt obedience to a bugle call.”¹⁰³

In addition to the high level of conscientiousness shown by Japanese troops during the course of debarkation, Barnaby further notes how, once settled amongst the population of Incheon, Japanese officers and enlisted men were the epitome of civility, and records that all of Incheon’s “foreign residents were unanimous in praising the behaviours of the Japanese and I saw no case of drunkenness or bullying by the troops.”¹⁰⁴ These last comments by Barnaby are especially interesting given how a decade earlier, during the First Sino-Japanese War, there were a number of complaints regarding alleged abuses committed by Japanese soldiers against British and other foreign nationals residing in Korea.¹⁰⁵ The contrast between British assessments of Japanese discipline and attitude in 1894 and 1904 appears to establish a sense of appreciation for the maturation of Japan’s relatively young national armed services.

Over the course of the conflict British observers made particular note of the good behaviour and temperance of Japanese troops. During times of war, Japanese enlisted men were regularly supplied with a relatively generous rations of one pint of *sake* every three days, which was proclaimed a personal gift from His Majesty the Emperor.¹⁰⁶

During the course of the war the *sake* ration appears to have become so important to the

¹⁰³ Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 319.

¹⁰⁴ Wemyss, et al., “Reports by Commander E.W. Wemyss,”

¹⁰⁵ The most serious of these allegations claimed that Japanese sentries had stopped, and then roughly handled, the British Consul General to Korea while he was on a walk. Although the British government was assured there would be a full investigation into the incident, many in Britain were irritated by the lack of apology from both the Japanese military and foreign office. “Consul Bristow to Mr. O’Connor, July 17, 1894,” ADM 1/7200.

¹⁰⁶ Although this ration was to be shared between three soldiers, Lieutenant-General C.J. Burnett comments that enterprising soldiers would often acquire more by trading their ration of sweets or cakes, which were also gifts from the Emperor Meiji, in exchange for another comrade’s share of alcohol. Burnett, “Report by Lieut.-General C.J. Burnett... 14th July 1905,” 507.

morale of Japanese troops that, despite official IJA regulations forbidding the consumption of spirituous liquors when there was risk of frostbite, it was being freely issued and consumed in the trenches during the frigid, operationally static, winter of 1904.¹⁰⁷ Despite access to a regular supply of alcohol both behind the lines and, when possible, at the front there do not appear to be any accounts from British officers of an incident where a Japanese soldier became intoxicated to the point that he could not perform his duties if called upon. In fact, it appears that drunkenness among the IJA was made conspicuous by its near total absence, with Lieut.-General Burnett seemingly amazed when he reported that, over the course of his attachment to the Third Army, he had “not seen a single drunken man...” and although he had “seen men who undoubtedly had been drinking...these could be counted on the fingers of two hands.”¹⁰⁸ Observations regarding a lack of drunkenness among Japanese soldiers on campaign is important given popular Edwardian fears concerning the central part played by alcohol in the supposed physical and moral degradation of Britain’s working class population.¹⁰⁹ As well, it was also held that regular soldiers, even British ones, were among the worst culprits, with Britain’s imperial garrison cities across the globe being considered hotbeds of drunkenness and lechery.¹¹⁰ With this prevalent perception in mind, British officers were impressed by how Japanese enlisted men not only avoided excessive drinking, but also rarely displayed symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, leaving British officers

¹⁰⁷ W.G. MacPherson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel W.G. MacPherson, C.M.G., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, 29th November 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 388.

¹⁰⁸ Burnett, “Report by Lieut.-General C.J. Burnett... 14th July 1905,” 509.

¹⁰⁹ Vanessa Heggie, “Lies, Damn Lies, and Manchester’s Recruiting Statistics: Degeneration as an ‘Urban Legend’ in Victorian and Edwardian Britain,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 63, no. 2 (2008): 191.

¹¹⁰ David Hood, *Down But Not Out: Community and the Upper Streets of Halifax, 1890-1914* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing, 2010), 25.

with the impression that the Japanese rarely engaged in liaisons with the local women.¹¹¹ As well, there does not appear to be any reference to raping, pillaging, or any other war crime being reported by the British observers, as Burnett noted that during his time with the IJA he was never privy to any case of a Japanese soldier ill-treating either Russian prisoners of war or the region's native population.¹¹² In fact, far from being propagators of chaos, as interwar Japanese soldiers proved themselves to be, Hart-Synnot reported how, after the Russian withdrawal from Shenyang, the Japanese handled mass looting of Russian property by the native population in a humane and efficient manner.¹¹³

Over the course of the war in Manchuria, British officers were given a unique chance to witness and directly interact with a diverse cross-section of IJA personnel. The result of these diverse experiences and observations was a mosaic of reports which came together to form an in-depth, and overwhelmingly positive, picture of the men who composed the army of Britain's only military ally. To the decision makers reading these reports in London, the men of the Imperial Japanese Army were portrayed as some of the most perfect soldiers an ally could possess. Represented as dedicated, disciplined, tough, and conscientious, Japanese soldiers were lionized repeatedly as men who, thanks to a mix of "careful training and unsurpassed bravery, seldom fail to overcome every obstacle" created on the modern battlefield.¹¹⁴ In action after action, these men proved themselves superior to Russian forces who, though poorly led, were still considered the

¹¹¹ Vincent claims that one of the major factors that dissuaded sexual encounters between Japanese soldiers and Manchurian women was that the IJA had an official policy of levying a severe fine upon any soldier found to have contracted an STI, as well as what the Japanese perceived as a lack of cleanliness among the local population. Vincent, "Report by Captain B. Vincent... 17th May, 1905," 136.

¹¹² Burnett, "Report by Lieut.-General C.J. Burnett... 1st July, 1905," 509.

¹¹³ Hart-Synnot, "Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905," 173.

¹¹⁴ Haldane, "Report by Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 23rd January 1905," 453.

“finest imaginable aggregation of organic matter” by British observers.¹¹⁵ With these perceptions of the prowess of the individual Japanese fighting man repeated across the reports arriving from the front, it was no surprise that, with a deep fear regarding the possibility of a Russian attempt to reclaim its military prestige on the North West Frontier, London began to perceive the battle-proven Japanese soldier as an excellent choice for a potential defender of India from Tsarist aggression.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Towle, “The Russo-Japanese War and the Defense of India,” 111.

Chapter IV

“Russia’s Invincible Foe”: Estimations of British Observers Regarding the Performance of the Imperial Japanese Army

Although many British observers stressed that a great deal of the IJA’s strength lay in the discipline, skill, and character of its infantrymen, they still recognized that victory in a modern war cannot be achieved through the use of infantry alone. With this in mind, British observers took extensive notes on many of the other aspects exhibited by the IJA in Manchuria. From reviewing the competence and strategic sense of the Japanese general staff, to commenting upon how the Japanese organized and utilized their rear echelon support troops, British observers reported on practically all aspects of the Japanese military machine on campaign. While reading through these reports, one is given the picture of the IJA as a well-organized and adaptable, if imperfect, organization which demonstrated many strengths, as well some significant weaknesses, during the course of the war. After a year of witnessing and assessing the performance of all facets of the IJA at war, British observers made it clear that they believed Japanese ground forces to be a proven and valuable asset to the Anglo-Japanese alliance. As well, after assessing both the Japanese army’s triumphs and missteps on the road to defeating the formidable Russian army, British observers were vocal in advocating for closer military cooperation between the two allies, admitting that their own army had “so much to learn from Japan, [while] she has a little to learn from us [as well].”¹

¹ Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 320.

As stated above, the collective strength and determination of Japanese enlisted men and field officers rightfully garnered much of the praise attributed to the Japanese army on campaign. That said, it was also recognized among the British observers that the men on the ground benefited greatly from the strategies formulated by, and quick thinking of, a well-organized and efficient general staff. Recognizing that Japanese forces often faced overwhelming odds in terms of enemy superiority in numbers and weight of firepower, British officers maintained that this handicap was overcome through the creativity, forethought, and “determination on the part of the [Japanese] commander[s]” combined with the “self-sacrificing bravery of [Japanese] troops,” which frequently appeared to turn nearly guaranteed defeats into resounding victories.²

While the Russian officer corps was often composed of amateur aristocratic dilettantes, whom Holman characterized as incompetent, petty, and lacking in any serious degree of initiative, Japanese officers were often recognized to be astute professionals who, during times of peace, diligently dedicated themselves to education in modern military theory.³ In addition to the dedication and professionalism which characterized Japanese staff officers, the Japanese method of staff organization, based directly on the German model as taught by Major Klemens Meckel, proved highly efficient on campaign.⁴ Thus, just as the lack of leadership capabilities and strategic imagination among Russian officers was given much credit in compromising the military potential of Russia’s enlisted men and NCOs, the shrewd methods and initiative displayed by many in

² Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 18th July 1904,” 73.

³ Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, 5; Ivanov and Jowett, *The Russo-Japanese War, 1904-05*, 45.

⁴ Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism*, 36.

the IJA's leadership appeared to have accentuated the capability of the already formidable Japanese infantrymen under their command.

Among the many positive attributes credited to the IJA's staff officers, one of the most discussed among British observers concerned the superior planning demonstrated by Japanese commanders prior to each battle. While bearing witness to the clash between Japanese and Russian forces on the Yalu, Hamilton was impressed by how Japanese officers devised novel and elaborate methods of deceiving their enemy.⁵ Although undoubtedly some of these ruses were improvised in relation to the situations which developed on the battlefield, the more elaborate maneuvers, such as the nocturnal planting of an entire grove of fir trees to conceal the movement of Japanese men, supplies, and artillery, were the products of a much deeper level of creativity, planning, and forethought.⁶ Similarly, in the wake of the decisive Japanese victory at Liáoyáng, Jardine mused that the Japanese came out on top due to their officers "not omit[ting] the smallest detail that may contribute toward success."⁷ Among these little details to which Jardine speaks was the order that there be placed white sticks directly in front of the Japanese trenches, written on these sticks would be the distance between the trenches and

⁵ Hume and Hamilton, "Lecture Given by Japanese General Staff Officer; reported by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, Antung, 13th May 1904, and Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton...13th May 1904," 22.

⁶ The ingenious use of artificially planted vegetation to deceive Russian observers was not only isolated to the First Army at the Yalu, with Major C.M. Crawford being impressed with the Third Army artillery's habit of "very cunningly concealing mountain gun [batteries] behind artificially planted millet stalks" during the Siege of Port Arthur. *Ibid.*; C.M. Crawford, "Port Arthur – Diary of the Officers Attached to the Third Japanese Army from 29th July 1904 to the Fall of the Fortress. Compiled by Major C.M. Crawford, 5th Gurkhas, Port Arthur, 11th July 1904 to 2th January 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 384.

⁷ J.B. Jardine, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, D.S.O., 5th Lancers, Yü-shu-lin-tzu, 13th August 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 212.

various landmarks thus allowing for the men at the front to relay more accurate and devastating rifle fire upon attacking Russian forces.⁸

When reflecting on the habits of the Japanese while on the offensive, Haldane claimed that the IJA was not overly revolutionary in terms of the tactics it employed to seize Russian positions.⁹ Instead, it was stated that the Japanese subscribed to relatively conventional strategies of frontal assaults and supporting feints initiated in close cooperation with divisional artillery support; a strategy which Haldane conceded may be the only option when attacking "...against an enemy occupying a strongly defended position, the extent of which makes the operation of maneuvering him out of it nearly impossible."¹⁰ This said, the Japanese command's subscription to the "cult of the offensive" did not mean that Japanese staff officers were launching their attacks without the benefit of forethought and careful planning. Haldane did concede that the IJA was unique in the careful and deliberate methods of reconnaissance which its armies and divisions carried out before an assault. Impressed by the way in which Japanese commanders and field officers appeared to be intimately familiar with every natural and man-made feature of a battlefield prior to an attack, Haldane credited this phenomena to the "exact information which is frequently... obtained by Japanese reconnoitering parties... [in which] both officers and men... have been thoroughly trained... [to] understand how to utilize their power of observation to the best advantage."¹¹ Once

⁸ Jardine, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine... 13th August 1904," 212.

⁹ Haldane, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905," 132.

¹⁰ Though of course he did not know it, through the above quotation Haldane was giving an accurate foreshadowing of the exact situation he and fellow European officers would face on the First World War's Western Front. A.L. Haldane, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff, Tokio, 1st October 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 519.

¹¹ Haldane, "Report from Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... Tokio, 1st October 1905," 513.

Japanese commanders were confident that they had achieved the best possible understanding of enemy dispositions and the potential obstacles in the path of their infantry they would then proceed to methodically plan out their attack and logistical needs to the extent that, in the words of Hamilton, “every detail was worked out down to the last grain of rice.”¹² It was this dedication to proper reconnaissance, and the subsequent preparations that followed, that allowed for attacking Japanese forces to use the local terrain to their advantage in order to facilitate the rapid pace of their advance, which was often credited as one of the key factors in their offensive success on campaign.¹³

Another habit of Japanese commanders impressing British officers was their ability to plan and execute successful night attacks, a strategy which, according to Haldane, was not emphasized among contemporary British military strategy.¹⁴ Executed when attacking a particularly formidable Russian position or when previous daylight assaults had proven unsuccessful and costly, the Japanese command’s decision to launch night attacks was met with initial apprehension by observing British officers.¹⁵ These initial misgivings would eventually give way after observing the discipline and effectiveness demonstrated by Japanese forces when attacking in the dark, with Vincent commenting on “the absolute silence of Japanese troops [during a night attack]” as they “moved like ghosts” across no-man’s-land to engage and wrest the Russians from their

¹² Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 306.

¹³ Jardine and Hamilton, “Report by Captain J.B. Jardine... 7th August 1904,” 171.

¹⁴ Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 226.

¹⁵ The first mention of the Japanese deciding on a night attack was made by Hamilton who, while musing over General Kuroki’s decision, admitted that “whatever opinion may be entertained as to the wisdom of such a plan everyone must admire the splendid boldness of the idea.” Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 284-285.

entrenched positions.¹⁶ Although the success of night attacks was heavily attributed to the uncommon discipline of the soldiers involved, Haldane makes it clear that he believed that these operations would have been much less effective had Japanese commanders not ensured that extensive reconnaissance and preparations were carried out.¹⁷ So it was that, despite the initial strategic distaste for night attacks, as the ability and effectiveness of Japanese troops was shown when carrying out such assaults, British observers began to recommend that their own army consider training British officers and men in the strategies and methods relating to nocturnal operations.¹⁸

As well as being impressed by how the Japanese used the darkness of the night to their advantage on the attack, Haldane noted that Japanese commanders also made excellent use of offensive entrenchments, a strategy which was officially denounced as impossible by the British Army.¹⁹ According to Haldane, one of the most ingenious strategies employed by the Japanese was, when being forced to halt during an attack, to dig simple entrenchments in which to take cover from Russian artillery and rifle fire.²⁰ Celebrating the Japanese for employing “entrenchments in their attacks to a degree probably unparalleled in any earlier campaigns,” Haldane noted how while manning these crude forward entrenchments the Japanese troops would “fire from cover while

¹⁶ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 12th November 1904,” 379.

¹⁷ According to Haldane, this reconnaissance allowed for the advancing Japanese forces to have a “precise knowledge of the enemy’s strength and position,” as well as “a knowledge of the character of the ground to be passed over in the advance.” These two vital pieces of knowledge allowed for the attacking Japanese forces to effectively direct their strength without becoming lost, disconnected, or injured in the dark. A.L. Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff, dated H.Q. Second Army, 1st June 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 521.

¹⁸ Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 226.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 227.

²⁰ Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 227.

their artillery silences that of the enemy and shakes the moral of his infantry.”²¹ Although this strategy would become less successful when attempted in the frozen soil of Manchuria’s frigid winters, Haldane still considered it to be an ingenious approach when attacking fixed positions across open terrain, crediting it with saving many lives among the infantry during the battles waged during the summer and autumn of 1904.²² Criticizing the hesitation of European officers to employ strategies of offensive entrenchment, Haldane stated that the successful use of “these trenches stand as proof of... patience and deliberation” as key ingredients to offensive success in a conventional modern war.²³ Such was Haldane’s admiration for these methods, and the successes they achieved, that he made a serious recommendation that the British high command recognize the utility in issuing each British soldier in the Empire a personal entrenching tool and making it standard doctrine to teach British tacticians the methods of offensive entrenchment utilized by the IJA in Manchuria.²⁴

²¹ Haldane further notes that, while the artillery and small arms fire from the entrenchments keep the Russians suppressed, Japanese commanders will often rush fresh troops to help bolster the final assault. A.L. Haldane, “Report from Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff, 25th November 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 269.

²² Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 6th July 1905,” 85; Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 227.

²³ Haldane, “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 23rd January 1905,” 453.

²⁴ Haldane was not the only observer who felt the Japanese experience in Manchuria called for a reconsideration of the equipment being issued to British soldiers. Colonel Tulloch also voiced a concern that, when compared with the Japanese and other contemporary armies of the day, the personal equipment worn by British soldiers was quite inadequate for a modern war. At the time, British enlisted men were being issued with the Pattern 1903 equipment which had no entrenching tool or large pack component. Like Haldane, Tulloch found the former omission as problematic due to the inability for British soldiers to dig in under fire, while the lack of a large pack meant that British soldiers were dependent on baggage trains to carry a large portion of their equipment, making the army an unwieldy force on campaign. Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 227; J.W.G. Tulloch and W.G. Nicholson, “Report by Colonel J.W.G. Tulloch, Indian Army, Head-Quarters Second Japanese Army, 9th November 1904; with Lieut.-General Sir W.G. Nicholson, K.C.B., Tokio, 20th November 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 666-668.

Despite the Japanese command garnering a reputation for thorough planning and preparation, there were still events in which their best laid plans would go awry due to unforeseen variables. Although such situations would obviously not be ideal, British observers noted that the Japanese staff officers proved apt at amending their orders to suit the situation at hand. In order to accomplish this, the British noted that the IJA utilized a unique policy in which an army's head-quarters would assign a liaison officer to each divisional staff.²⁵ These officers would oversee attacks and gather reports from the divisional and regimental officers prior to and during battles, all the while filing frequent reports to the Army's commander via telegraph or telephone.²⁶ This was credited by the British observers as creating a better sense of cohesion and cooperation between the different levels of command, as well as allowing for greater compromise between the initial plans prepared by an army's staff and the amendments which were required in the face of previously unforeseen realities and challenges faced by Japanese troops on the frontline.²⁷

Far from the often petty and apathetic aristocrats which composed the Russian officer class, British reports present the IJA's command as being composed of energetic and dedicated professionals who often successfully subscribed to tactics and strategies which were widely dismissed by their contemporaries in Europe and the United States. Utilizing these unconventional strategies, and armed with unparalleled levels of staff preparation and combat reconnaissance, the commanders and staff of the Japanese field armies and divisions were universally celebrated by British officers for their ability to

²⁵ Haldane, "Report by Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 23rd January 1905," 455-456.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 456.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

command the IJA's superior infantry and sweep over fierce Russian resistance like "swelling waves that will not be denied."²⁸ Inspired by the success of the methods employed by commanding Japanese officers during the course of the campaign, it appears that British observers were not only assured of the professionalism and competence shown by their ally's commissioned ranks, they were also convinced of the potential benefit these strategies and command techniques could have when applied within the British Army itself. Unfortunately, the dynamic within British high command often carried more similarities to the Russians than their Japanese allies. As claimed by historian Tim Travers, the British Army's officer corps often suffered from its own toxic culture of petty factionalism and anti-intellectualism in the decade immediately prior to the First World War. This meant that it often proved difficult to convince British staff officers to accept Japanese inspired reforms to existing British organization and strategy.²⁹

As previously discussed, British observers had little but praise for the character and performance of the infantry arm of the IJA. That said, like all other modern armies operating in the early twentieth century, the infantry was merely the largest of three primary combat branches composing the Japanese Army on campaign. Attached to every Japanese division were two brigades each of supporting artillery and cavalry; the performance of both also received a great deal of attention in the reports of British observers.³⁰ Although the British reported on their activities with less frequency and universal acclaim than when covering the exploits of the Japanese infantry, the reports on

²⁸ Haldane and Nicholson, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904," 252.

²⁹ Travers, *The Killing Ground*, 40.

³⁰ G.G. Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars* (London: John Murray, 1911), 243.

the IJA's artillery and cavalry reveal how observers saw reflected in these branches many of the strengths, as well as some of the major flaws, within the Japanese military machine.

There were many aspects of the Imperial Japanese Army which British observers consented were either on par, or even superior, to the standards accepted by contemporary European military powers. That said, observers continually made it clear that they believed the Japanese cavalry arm, along with Japanese horseflesh in general, to be of a much lower calibre compared to the armies of the west. Despite the popular twenty-first century perception that the use of mass horsepower in warfare was already an anachronism by the first decades of the twentieth century, even into the Second World War the Japanese, along with many other major military powers, still relied heavily on horses for supply, transport, and reconnaissance.³¹ As well as these practical methods of utilizing horses on the twentieth century battlefield, there were many western military thinkers who, perhaps misguidedly, held to the belief that there was still a place for mass cavalry charges in the age of machine guns and quick-firing artillery.³² With horses still

³¹ Leland Ness, *Rikugun: Guide to Japanese Ground Forces, 1937-1945*, Volume I: Tactical Organization of Imperial Japanese Army and Navy Ground Forces (Solihull, UK: Helion & Company Limited, 2014), 54.

³² While reflecting on some of the critiques levelled against the predominantly mounted infantry tactics utilized by the Japanese cavalry during the Russo-Japanese War, Sir Ian Hamilton complained that the British high command still placed too much emphasis on the power of a mass cavalry charge. To illustrate the folly of this mindset, Hamilton recounts how, during an 1899 training maneuver in Britain, the infantry brigade he commanded was ordered to form a hollow square in preparation for a potential cavalry charge. Although Hamilton felt the adoption of this formation on a modern battlefield was as antiquated as seeing "Harold at the head of a hollow wedge, or a Macedonian phalanx marching over the hills to take part in the proceedings," a cavalry unit did eventually appear to charge his formation of modern infantry before being quickly "declared by an umpire to have ceased to exist." Hamilton ends this anecdote by claiming that British cavalry officers were still indoctrinated with the belief that their primary duty was to attain decisive results through the charge, something which Hamilton believes cannot generally be achieved in the age of modern weaponry. J.B. Jardine and Ian Hamilton, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, 5th Lancers, Yen Tai, 16th November 1904; with Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Dated Headquarters First Japanese Army, 16th November 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 529.

playing a central role in the workings of all contemporary military forces, British observers paid close attention to both the quality and quantity of the horses and horsemen fielded by the opposing forces in Manchuria.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the renown afforded to their famed Cossack regiments, British observers entered Manchuria with a generally high opinion of Russian cavalry forces.³³ This initial confidence in the potential of Russian cavalry was further boosted by their superior numbers, as well as the supposedly perfect cavalry country presented in south eastern Manchuria's many expanses of rolling hills and valleys.³⁴ Due to these high expectations, it came as a great surprise to the British when the Russians continually failed to utilize their mounted superiority over the course of the campaign.³⁵ From the early battles on the Korea frontier to the final clash at Shenyang, British observers attached to the Japanese persistently wondered why the Russians failed to use their cavalry to take advantage of gaps in Japanese defenses and formations. For example, Hamilton was amazed when, during the Battle of Liáoyáng, Russian cavalry failed to take advantage of the terrain and circumstances which could have easily allowed

³³ Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, 15.

³⁴ As an illustration of the overwhelming numerical superiority of Russian cavalry it is pointed out that, by the Battle of Shenyang, the Russians were fielding a total of 150 cavalry squadrons to the Japanese total of 60. W.H. Birkbeck, "Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck, C.B., Manchuria, 10th April 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 231.

³⁵ This failure was noted very early in the war, with Vincent reporting how, after witnessing the ease with which Japanese troops advanced from their initial disembarkation at Incheon, it seemed to him "incomprehensible that the [Russians] do not utilize the natural advantage of Northern Korea to seriously delay the Japanese advance." It would later be revealed that the inactivity of the Russian cavalry in Korea was a result of an order from the Tsar that his forces not seriously engage Japanese forces in Korean territory, with the unlikely hope that the Japanese may have limited their ultimate objectives to merely securing the Korean peninsula. B. Vincent, "Notes by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery, Pingyang, 19th March 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 12; Richard Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear: Russia's War With Japan* (London: Cassell, 1988), 66.

them to both destroy Japanese pontoon bridges and potentially overrun the forward position of the First Army's commander, General Kuroki, and his staff.³⁶ As well as apparently lacking the dash and initiative necessary to make the most of their offensive capabilities, Hamilton seemed even more shocked by the failure of Russian cavalry troops to even effectively screen the flanks of Russian positions. One instance that particularly stunned Hamilton was when, on October 12 1904, a unit of Cossacks ceded a vital hill position on the Russian left flank.³⁷ With the Cossacks withdrawing without a fight, the Japanese Second Cavalry Brigade quickly had machine guns emplaced on the position thus exposing the Russian troops below to a devastating enfilade of automatic fire from the heights.³⁸ Due to this complete lack of offensive initiative, and with the above mentioned defensive blunders being relatively common, it is unsurprising that, while rating the effectiveness of the Russian Army's three combat branches, Captain Holman placed Russia's supposedly formidable cavalry far below the infantry and artillery.³⁹

While the British in Manchuria were generally surprised by the ineffectiveness of the Russian cavalry during the course of the war, they entered the conflict with seemingly

³⁶ Hamilton, "Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904," 314.

³⁷ Hamilton, Battle of Sha Ho...6th September to the 15th October 1904," 567.

³⁸ After reflecting on the resulting havoc reaped upon Russian forces due to the apparent cowardice shown by the hill's Cossack defenders, Hamilton claimed that this event made even the worst British blunder in South Africa seem trivial by comparison. Hamilton, Battle of Sha Ho...6th September to the 15th October 1904," 567.

³⁹ It is of interest to note that, among the British observers, there was a debate regarding how the Russians could have best utilized their cavalry forces. Hamilton was a firm believer that the Russian cavalry failed because it was not effectively utilized in a mounted infantry capacity, which he believed was the future lot of modern cavalry forces. In contrast, both Holman and Birkbeck believed that the Russian lack of initiative was a result of their over reliance on a mounted infantry spirit, with Birkbeck proposing "that the Russian dragoon has been so emasculated by his training as to have lost all *elan* and enterprise of the true cavalry soldier." Hamilton, "Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904," 314; Birkbeck, "Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905," 231; Holman, ...*Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, XIV.

no similar illusions regarding the cavalry fielded by the Japanese. Although obviously hyperbolic in nature, many European officers and politicians were ready to at least partially believe prewar reports of Japanese cavalry squadrons being tossed from their mounts *en masse* when attempting to bring their horse to a simple trot.⁴⁰ Fueled by similar stories of incompetence on maneuvers, British officers were quick to dismiss the quality of Japan's mounted forces, with Vincent, after only witnessing their debarkation at Incheon, making the assessment that the Japanese "cavalry is...very weak, so [the IJA] will have to depend almost entirely on the infantry, which has the reputation of being very good."⁴¹ These negative first impressions would generally not improve as Japanese horsemen entered combat, with Colonel William Henry Birkbeck, a career cavalry officer, claiming that it seemed obvious the men in these formations were not "natural horsemen."⁴² Similarly, Captain Hart-Synnot, an infantryman, characterized the Japanese as generally poor and uncomfortable horsemen who seemed unwilling, unless under the most desperate situations, to bring their horses to anything more than a walk.⁴³ This supposed lack of riding ability was reflected at Shenyang when, in a rare attempt to force a Russian position through a massed cavalry charge, a Japanese unit moved slowly and hesitantly while advancing across open terrain toward their objective and thus became an easy target for the Russian artillery.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 27.

⁴¹ Vincent, "Notes by Captain B. Vincent...19th March 1904," 10.

⁴² In regard to the comparatively poor riding ability of Japanese officers, Jardine stated that this stemmed from them not being given the same opportunity to recreationally learn riding as aristocratic British officers do "in the hunting field, on the polo ground, or after pig in India." Birkbeck, "Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905," 231; Jardine and Hamilton, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, 5th Lancers, Yen Tai, 16th November 1904, 540.

⁴³ Hart-Synnot, "Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905," 175.

⁴⁴ B. Vincent, "Report by Captain B. Vincent, R.A., 22nd May 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 288.

As well as the apparent lack of horsemanship shown by the officers and men of the Japanese cavalry formations, British observers had a universally low opinion of the horses the Japanese bred. Describing the horses employed in the cavalry as “mere ponies,” Birkbeck dismissed their small size and indifferent nature as making them completely “ill-suited for cavalry [service].”⁴⁵ As poorly suited as the Japanese cavalry horses were to their task, observers noted that they were still the comparative pick of the equine resources procured by the IJA, with frequent reports regarding the Japanese artillery and pack horses being so poor that they constituted a near liability to the army’s effectiveness in the field. Described as “squealing, biting transport stallions,” the horses utilized in the vital roles of moving supplies and heavy ordnance left much to be desired in British eyes.⁴⁶ After an unusually poor placement of Japanese artillery during one of the war’s minor sorties Hamilton placed all the blame upon the inability of the “small and weedy” Japanese artillery horses to traverse the tough terrain.⁴⁷ Hamilton was not alone in this sentiment as Lieutenant-Colonel Hume, himself a career Royal Artillery officer, witnessed the same battle and similarly lamented how the “want of ‘horse-power’ in [the] Japanese field artillery... was severely felt” when the Japanese attempted to give their guns any advantage in placement.⁴⁸ Although he was equally unimpressed with the state of Japanese horses, Lieutenant-General Nicholson believed that, considering the mountainous terrain and limited agricultural space available in their island nation, the Japanese had not the space to develop an effective horse breeding industry.⁴⁹ In the minds

⁴⁵ Birkbeck, “Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905,” 231.

⁴⁶ Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 12th November 1904,” 379.

⁴⁷ Hamilton and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 28th September 1904,” 186.

⁴⁸ C.V. Hume, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery. Head-Quarters, Guard Division, 20th August 1904,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 201.

⁴⁹ Hamilton and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 28th September 1904,” 175.

of British officers, the only solution Japan could take to overcome this weakness in the quality of their horses was to invest heavily into the purchasing of foreign bred beasts, preferably from Canada.⁵⁰ Until these arrangements could be achieved, Nicholson and other British officers grudgingly conceded that, despite their small size and general distemper, Japanese horses showed a surprising hardiness when exposed to the elements of Manchuria and the dangers of modern combat.⁵¹

In spite of the generally low opinion regarding Japanese cavalymen and their mounts when employed in a cavalry charges or the pursuit of routed enemy formations, the observers noted that the Japanese were themselves painfully aware of these failures in their service and, as a result, made diligent attempts to correct them.⁵² According to Birkbeck, the Japanese primarily attempted to develop their cavalry potential through improving the character of their personnel, which went through an even more selective process than the already discerning system for the infantry. Claiming that only “the most intelligent among the recruits of the year are drafted to the cavalry,” Birkbeck stated that these chosen men were further given the benefit of the “most thorough” program of “individual training” available to Japanese forces.⁵³ This training allowed Japanese cavalry units to develop a doctrine which emphasized the initiative and dash of the individual to a point that was apparently unseen among the regulations of the more communally minded infantry. Although Birkbeck stated that when used in a traditional

⁵⁰ Jardine and Hamilton, “Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, 5th Lancers, Yen Tai, 16th November 1904, 535.

⁵¹ Hamilton and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 28th September 1904,” 175.

⁵² Although the Japanese undoubtedly achieved a great victory at Shenyang, the apparent inability of the Japanese cavalry to mount an effective pursuit of routed Russian forces greatly insulted the cavalryman sensibilities of Jardine, who believed the Japanese missed a valuable opportunity to completely break the back of Russian resistance. J.B. Jardine, “Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, 5th Lancers, Tokio, 8th July 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 311.

⁵³ Birkbeck, “Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905,” 231.

massed cavalry role, “the Japanese cavalry [remained] collectively inferior in quality to the other two arms,” the reforms to training and personnel appear to have made the average individual Japanese cavalymen “most daring and intelligent scouts and good fighters,” a fact which was attested to during a number of audacious Japanese mounted raids which took place during the winter of 1904-'05.⁵⁴

After the consolidation of their positions after the Battle of Shahe in October 1904, the Japanese First, Second, and Fourth armies dug in and waited while the Third Army slowly worked toward the capitulation of Russia’s Port Arthur garrison.⁵⁵ What resulted was a long and static front line, not dissimilar to those that were created in Europe during the First World War. Although both combatants attempted to circumvent the static front through long range raids, the Japanese cavalry proved themselves to be more effective than their Russian counterparts in successfully utilizing the initiative, speed, and survival skills of their personnel to bring about disruptions to the enemy’s lines of transport and communication.⁵⁶ Mounted on the best horses available, and armed with 200 rounds of ammunition per man as well as a cumulative sum of 10,000 yen for the purchase of food and to otherwise bribe the local populace, 304 Japanese cavalymen set off on January 15 with a broad objective of causing general havoc behind the Russian lines. As chronicled by Jardine and Haldane, the resulting raid was a triumphant testament to the fact that, what Japanese cavalry lacked in comparative horsepower and

⁵⁴ Birkbeck, “Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905,” 231.

⁵⁵ Haldane and Tulloch, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane...3rd May 1905...,” 21.

⁵⁶ British observers were particularly unimpressed by the lack of planning and foresight shown when the Russians, under the command of Lieutenant-General Pavel Mischenko, attempted their own massive winter raid. One of the most obvious blunders the observers pointed out was the fact that the Russian raiders, unconfident in their ability to survive off the land, brought with them a herd of cattle and sheep to supplement their rations. This livestock, along with a few units of infantrymen, greatly compromised the raiders’ speed, thus removing one of the primary ingredients needed for a successful raid. *Ibid.*, 13.

dash in a conventional cavalry charge, they made up for in their individual courage and intelligence when tasked with waging irregular warfare. Surviving ably off the meager resources offered in the Manchurian winter, the Japanese raiders continuously hit the Russians where they least expected, often causing localized routs and large scale confusion.⁵⁷ Even when challenged by Cossack units tasked with protecting key communication hubs, the Japanese raiders often were able to achieve the upper hand, demonstrating in Jardine's mind how the "thorough preparations and endurance on the part of the [Japanese]" had made "dealing with an enemy as ignorant as the Russian Cossack" a relatively easy feat.⁵⁸

Although clearly lagging behind many of the more glowing aspects of the Japanese army on campaign, the conventional failure of the cavalry in Manchuria still showed the Japanese ability to learn from their experience and adapt accordingly. Their supposed collective ineffectiveness aside, the Japanese cavalry arm was much too small to effectively engage with the full brunt of the Russians' massive mounted force already deployed in Manchuria. With this reality in mind, the Japanese high command realized that their cavalry could not be utilized in the same aggressive, high casualty, offensive actions as the numerous and determined infantry. Instead, in order to conserve, and make the most of, their limited numbers the Japanese worked to emphasize the initiative and efforts of the individual cavalymen to a degree generally unseen throughout the rest of the IJA. This emphasis on the efforts of small units and individuals not only made the

⁵⁷ J.B. Jardine, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, 5th Lancers, Tokio, 19th July 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 60-61, 68.

⁵⁸ In fact, so impressed was Jardine with the efficiency and formidability shown by Japanese cavalry raiders that he questioned how long the war would have lasted had the Japanese, and not the Russians, maintained a superior number of mounted formations in Manchuria. Jardine, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine... 19th July 1905," 59.

Japanese cavalry excellent raiders, it also produced highly mobile and intelligent mounted infantry which, by Shenyang, were making vital contributions through screening and defending vulnerable positions on the Japanese flanks.⁵⁹ In addition to confirming the effectiveness of their cavalry in unconventional warfare, lessons gained while facing the Russians in Manchuria did a great deal to convince the Japanese to greatly expand and improve the capabilities of their cavalry arm after the war, with the 1908 British army handbook on the IJA claiming that, since the war's conclusion, "the brigades are serviceable and formidable units... animated by the truest spirit of cavalry."⁶⁰

Reports concerning the apparent lack of conventionally effective equine resources within the IJA appeared to have made a deep impression upon those in the British War Office. Evidently spurred by the generally lackluster reviews regarding the failure of Japanese cavalry, as well as the IJA's complete lack of horse artillery, members of the British General Staff suggested that, in the event of renewed war between Russia and the Anglo-Japanese coalition, the British, and British India, should dispatch to Manchuria an expeditionary force composed entirely of cavalry and horse artillery.⁶¹ Since the earliest days of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance representatives from the IJA had attempted to secure a guarantee that, in the event of a coalition war against the Russians and French, the British would prepare an entire army corps to fight alongside Japanese forces in Manchuria.⁶² Although Britain's military representatives in 1902 had been extremely hesitant toward the prospect of committing to the dispatch of troops to Manchuria, with

⁵⁹ Birkbeck, "Report by Colonel W.H. Birkbeck... 10th April 1905," 232.

⁶⁰ The handbook also states that Japanese cavalry formations continued to be stocked with the best men in regard to their "superior intelligence, and education (especially the last)." The General Staff, *Handbook of the Japanese Army* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1908), 101-102.

⁶¹ CID, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defense, February 15, 1906," 2.

⁶² "Report of a Conference Held at Winchester House, War Office, on 7th July, 1902, Between British and Japanese Naval and Military Representatives, to Discuss Concerted Actions in War," FO/37/185, 4.

the 1905 extension of the alliance, and the possibility of a potential IJA expeditionary force being sent to defend India's frontiers, this cavalry force most likely seemed like the most cost effective way, in both money and manpower, to repay the Japanese for any efforts on the North West Frontier.⁶³ The fact that this force would be composed entirely of cavalry and horse artillery, two branches within the IJA which British observers continuously reported as either lacking or non-existent, stood as yet another reflection of the way in which observer reports and opinions influenced the mindsets of British policy makers when regarding the military of their Japanese ally.

While the reviews of the Japanese infantry and cavalry branches were polarized in regard to how they compared to their counterparts fielded in Europe and the United States, the performance of Japan's artillery failed to elicit the same amount of either over the top celebration or scathing critique. The war between Russia and Japan was one of the first times two armies with extensive modern artillery resources met on the field of battle and, as such, the question of how to best utilize these weapons was still being explored. Though, as stated above, British observers were more subdued in their assessment of the potential displayed by Japanese batteries, most still agreed that, between the two combatants, the Japanese proved more innovative in their use of artillery support under modern conditions.

⁶³ Although it was generally agreed that this force would most likely not make a great deal of difference to the strategic outcome of a campaign, the IJA high command was still warmly receptive to the political symbolism which would result from a force of British cavalry serving alongside Japanese forces in Manchuria. Ultimately the CID deemed the dispatch of this cavalry force to Manchuria as inadvisable. The reasoning behind this was diverse, with some members protesting that these forces could not be spared from defending British possessions, while Viscount Esher felt uncomfortable with the thought of British or Indian soldiers being commanded by "Orientals." CID, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defense, February 15, 1906," 2-3.

After witnessing nearly every battle in which the Japanese First Army had been engaged during the war, Hamilton concluded that of all the lessons that could be learned from the conflict those that concerned the use of artillery were the most pertinent.⁶⁴ Hamilton justifies this assertion by claiming that artillery was the only arm where the two combatants were consistently equal in capabilities; pointing out how the Russians began with, and maintained, a considerable numerical superiority in cavalry forces, while Russia's "second rate [infantry] troops" could hardly compete with the infantry of Japan, which he asserted were "the best foot soldiers in the world."⁶⁵ Interestingly, the equality between Japanese and Russian artillery capabilities was achieved through both services having their own respective strengths and weaknesses when compared to one another. Throughout the war, the total amount of artillery pieces fielded by Japanese forces was considerably larger than what the Russians had assigned their forces in East Asia.⁶⁶ That said, British observers pointed out that, despite superior numbers, the majority of Japanese guns were at a disadvantage when compared to the range and rate of fire shown by Russian artillery.⁶⁷ Due to these drawbacks in the nature of their guns it appears that, despite the numerical superiority of Japanese artillery, there are few battles in which British observers felt that either side had a distinct advantage in artillery power.

⁶⁴ C.V. Hume, B. Vincent, W.G. Nicholson, and Ian Hamilton, "Field Artillery: Reports by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery and Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery; with Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir W.G. Nicholson, K.C.B., and Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O.," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 560.

⁶⁵ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 561.

⁶⁶ In early 1904 the IJA possessed approximately 650 modern field guns that were to be divided between twenty-four battalions attached to the twelve front-line divisions earmarked for service in Manchuria and Korea. This initial number of available guns would be further supplemented by 150 slightly antiquated field guns from the mobilized army reserve, bringing the total to around 800 artillery pieces. Meanwhile, the Russians in the Far East only possessed 266 pieces of artillery, with the rest of their ample artillery resources scattered across their vast empire. Ivanov and Jowett, *The Russo-Japanese War*, 24-42.

⁶⁷ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 567.

Although technologically outclassed, British observers were nearly unanimous in praising the amount of care and training shown by Japanese artillerymen while servicing their guns. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first thing British officers noticed while observing the IJA's artillery in combat was how accurate and efficient their fire was. While watching the first major clash between Japanese and Russian forces during the crossing of the Yalu River, Lieutenant-Colonel Hume was impressed with how effectively Japanese artillery batteries suppressed the entrenched Russian forces, making it possible for Japanese infantry to cross a long stretch of bare ground and the flooded Yalu in order to successfully storm the Russian trenches on the opposite bank.⁶⁸ Even more impressed with the accuracy of Japanese guns was Hamilton who, prior to another Japanese assault on the Yalu, witnessed IJA artillery swiftly wipe out a Russian battery after a brief artillery duel.⁶⁹ Although Hamilton admits that the Russian artillery was at a disadvantage due to the fact that it had neglected to dig in or use concealment, this incident still prompted him to offer the Japanese gunners high praise, claiming that "the Japanese artillery shoot much better than our own artillery, which I had always supposed to be the best in the world."⁷⁰

As the war progressed the British noted that the quality of Japanese gunnery shown on the Yalu did not slacken in later battles.⁷¹ Meanwhile, the Japanese dedication

⁶⁸ Hume and Hamilton, "Lecture... 13th May 1904," 18-19.

⁶⁹ C.V. Hume and Ian Hamilton, "Lecture on the Operations of the First Japanese Army from 1st March 1904 to 1st May 1904, by a Japanese General Staff Officer; reported by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, 25th May 1904; with Remarks by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., 24th May 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Army in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 47.

⁷⁰ By using British gunners at the pinnacle of a scale with which to rate the skill of Japanese artillerymen, this quote also gives a brief glimpse into the climate of British ethnocentrism which had been embedded in the British military in the decades leading up to the First World War. *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 570.

to deliberate and accurate fire was contrasted by the Russians' distinct lack of training or finesse when manning their own superior guns. Despite being able to fire faster and hit further than their Japanese counterparts, British observers noted how these advantages were often rendered moot by the Russian artillery's lack of fire discipline which resulted in both inaccurate shooting and an immense waste of shells.⁷² There are numerous reports coming from nearly every battle in which British officers commented how, following a heavy barrage from Russian guns, the amount of Japanese casualties suffered would often amount to fewer than ten men wounded or killed.⁷³ This frequent failure of Russian gunnery to produce results was normally attributed to two factors: the tendency of Russian gunners to fire too high above their targets and the unreliability of the ammunition they used.⁷⁴

Although Russian guns were of a better manufacture than those used by Japan, the Japanese did have an advantage in that their shrapnel shells were of a much higher quality.⁷⁵ As well, another major characteristic which separated the Japanese and Russian artillery forces was the fact that Japanese batteries stocked high explosive (H.E.) shells in addition to the more commonly used shrapnel shells, which the Russians solely utilized.⁷⁶ Although initially skeptical of the utility of these shells in a traditional pitched battle in

⁷² Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 570.

⁷³ Such a case occurred during the battle of Liáoyáng where Vincent claimed the Russians poured thousands of shrapnel shells on an artillery position only to have wounded six men and killed one, the battery's Sergeant-Major. Similarly, during the siege of Port Arthur, the Russians shelled Japanese positions on a hill known to the Japanese as Manju-Yama. As with the above mentioned event at Liáoyáng, the Russians expelled thousands of shells which burst either too high or behind the position, resulting in only five Japanese soldiers wounded. Vincent, "Report by Captain B. Vincent... 12th November 1904," 399; Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 564.

⁷⁴ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 564-570.

⁷⁵ Hume noted that Russian shells were manufactured in such a way that, though they possessed heavier balls, they detonated so that these balls were dispersed in a much wider area with a great deal less force than the shrapnel dispersed from a Japanese made shell. *Ibid.*, 573.

⁷⁶ Around 25% of an average Japanese artillery battery's stock of ammunition was composed of H.E. ordnance. *Ibid.*, 568.

open country it was generally agreed among the British that Japanese H.E. was highly effective when used to smash the static fortifications and trenches utilized by the Russians during virtually every battle in Manchuria.⁷⁷ Although they were impressed with the destruction reaped by H.E. on structures and entrenchments, British observers with the Japanese did not appear to be aware of the unique effect H.E. had on Russian soldiers themselves. Holman recorded that, while attached to the Russian army, he had witnessed the profound influence H.E. had on the morale and health of entrenched Russian soldiers. Holman particularly noted the way in which the concussion from H.E. severely rattled the resolve of Russian forces who sustained prolonged shelling, often causing the “rupture of surface blood vessels, frequently followed by violent and prolonged headaches.”⁷⁸

As well as the utility of H.E. in smashing fortifications, British observers noted how the use of H.E. was practical in establishing the accuracy of a battery’s fire. After watching the Russians continually fail to achieve accurate fire with their guns, British officers concluded that it was difficult to adjust a gun’s fire using only air burst shrapnel as a reference. In order to solve this problem, the Japanese would begin most of their bombardments with a few shots of H.E., they would then observe how close to the intended target these shells impacted and adjust their fire accordingly.⁷⁹ As well, Vincent, who generally dismissed the foreign press’ tendency to exaggerate the destructive power of H.E., still suggested that, given its effect on fortifications and its ability to extend the

⁷⁷ The supposed lack of practicality of H.E. in a pitched battle in the fields of either Manchuria or Europe was primarily attributed by Vincent to the fact that the H.E. utilized by the Japanese would often fail to detonate when impacting the soft soil of a “cultivated plain.” *Ibid.*, 600.

⁷⁸ Holman, *The Russo-Japanese War: Joint Report by Major G.H.G. Mockler and Captain H.C. Holman*, 42.

⁷⁹ Hume, et al., “Field Artillery,” 564.

ordinary range of Japan's smaller calibre guns, the R.A. should begin stocking high explosive ammunition at a ratio of around 2:10.⁸⁰

Although all four Japanese field armies utilized their numerically superior light artillery resources in every major battle fought during the course of the war, according to British witnesses the shining moment for the arm was during the course of the five month siege of Port Arthur. It was during this struggle that the static nature of the frontline allowed for the Japanese Third Army to requisition and utilize every available heavy siege gun in the entire Imperial Japanese arsenal.⁸¹ While witnessing the frequent Japanese barrages against Russian positions, Colonel W. Apsley Smith was impressed by the destruction reaped upon both the Russian trenches and concrete redoubts by the heavy Japanese 11-inch howitzers and land based 6-inch naval guns.⁸² In addition to their higher calibre and longer ranges these heavy siege batteries, the presence of which augmented the usual light artillery and mountain guns fielded during other Japanese operations, were equipped with special "armour piercing" ammunition which proved particularly effective when used against the numerous concrete redoubts to which the Russians anchored their fortifications.⁸³ It was generally reported that the accuracy of the Third Army's artillery support greatly outclassed their Russian opponents, with observer Major C.W. Clawford reporting that, after watching the pre-attack bombardment of a Russian position by over

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 600-601.

⁸¹ W. Apsley Smith, "Port Arthur – Epitome of Operations of the Third Japanese Army from the Battle of Nan Shan on 26th May 1904, to the End of the Siege, by Colonel W. Apsley Smith, C.B., Royal Field Artillery, Tokio, 14th February, 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 363.

⁸² Apsley Smith, "Port Arthur – Epitome of Operations of the Third Japanese Army from the Battle of Nan Shan on 26th May 1904, to the End of the Siege," 365.

⁸³ These armour piercing, high explosive shells contained a 4 pound bursting charge as opposed to the more common Japanese H.E. which possessed a bursting charge of 2 pounds. Clawford, "Port Arthur- Diary of the Officers Attached to the Third Japanese Army," 376.

120 Japanese guns, the accuracy of the Japanese artillery showed that their gunners' training and "practice was excellent."⁸⁴

As well as demonstrating the potential formidability of the Japanese artillery arm when fielding heavier than average ordnance, the Siege of Port Arthur revealed the immense value in the intimate cooperation of an army's infantry and artillery arms. While writing a general reflection on the Japanese experience during the trench warfare which characterized battles like the ones fought around Port Arthur, Haldane was convinced that, when faced with such circumstances, "victory can only be won by the closest co-operation of artillery and infantry."⁸⁵ Haldane was not alone in his conclusion, with Claford, amazed by the way in which a September 9 attack by Japanese forces was able to dislodge Russian forces from the formidable "G" works with a mere 150 casualties, attributed this victory to the Japanese dedication to the latest "scientific principles" of warfare, the key ingredient of which he claimed was a strong artillery barrage perfectly synchronized with a swift and determined infantry assault.⁸⁶ As mentioned in the previous chapter, British observers were especially fascinated by the Japanese tactic of bombarding an artillery position until their troops had actually entered the works. It was generally agreed that the Japanese were able to fully utilize the maneuver's potential not only due to the bravery and offensive determination of their infantry involved, but also due to the close attention paid by the Japanese to theories of close communication and co-operation between assaulting infantry and their supporting guns.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Claford, "Port Arthur- Diary of the Officers Attached to the Third Japanese Army," 388.

⁸⁵ Haldane, "Report by Lieut.-General A.L. Haldane... 1st October 1905," 519.

⁸⁶ Claford, "Port Arthur- Diary of the Officers Attached to the Third Japanese Army," 388

⁸⁷ C.A.L. Yate, "Report by Captain C.A.L. Yate, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Before Port Arthur, 11th January 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 445.

While their heavy siege guns had proven highly useful to the Third Army during the course of the Port Arthur siege the other three Japanese armies relied entirely on their much lighter field and mountain guns during the war's other pivotal battles. Despite frequent reports of the Japanese overcoming the inferiority of their guns through superior tactics and disciplined fire, British observers were still convinced that the IJA could have been even more successful had they benefitted from a general increase in artillery firepower.⁸⁸ Interestingly, the question surrounding the Japanese ability to field more powerful guns returned to the problem posed by the inferiority of their artillery horses, with Hume claiming that, given the poor quality of the horses available, the IJA would be physically unable to deploy and position heavier guns with any semblance of mobility.⁸⁹

While Hume acknowledged that their guns' obvious deficiencies in range and weight, as well as the lack of horsepower capable of hauling potentially larger pieces, would stand out as the most serious lesson for the Japanese in the wake of their artillery experience during the war, it appears that British observers agreed their own R.A. command also stood to learn a few lessons from what they witnessed in Manchuria.⁹⁰ Just like their Japanese allies, one of the most obvious lessons the British gained from their time in Manchuria was the need for their army to increase their investment in larger and more powerful field artillery pieces, with Vincent stating that artillery parity was to be

⁸⁸ Hamilton was particularly impressed with the way in which the Japanese successfully utilized their mountain guns as substitutes for conventional howitzers. That said, he still believed that the increased range afforded by actual howitzers would allow for the same effect without having to bring their crews into closer, and more perilous, positions. Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 565.

⁸⁹ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 585.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 569.

one of the key ingredients in countering any future threats from Britain's continental, specifically Russian, rivals.⁹¹

As well as inspiring suggestions of equipment reform, the use of artillery in Manchuria influenced Hamilton to suggest that the R.A. make significant changes to the tactics they utilized. Similar to his opinions regarding the dated use of cavalry in the British Army, Hamilton believed that there were far too many British staff officers who advocated the antiquated use of artillery in the same mobile, direct fire role utilized at Waterloo.⁹² After witnessing the painful lessons learned by the Russians through the complete decimation of their non-entrenched and unconcealed batteries on the Yalu, Hamilton was convinced that, in all future conventional wars, "much of the time now spent by our field.... artillery in trotting or galloping smartly into action in the open, had better, in the future, be devoted to teaching officers and men to dig entrenchments and to sink as rapidly from view as possible."⁹³ As far as the utilization of cover and concealment was concerned, British observers felt the Japanese, who had been carefully entrenching and concealing their guns from the Yalu onward, presented a perfect role model for the placement of artillery.⁹⁴ In fact, so well-conceived was the Japanese system

⁹¹ This was mainly in response to the fact that, though the Japanese artillerymen proved the more proficient gunners throughout much of the war, the threat posed by the superior range of Russian guns, as well as the increased accuracy and concealment shown by Russian gunners as the war progressed, meant that Japanese batteries often found themselves kept at arm's length by their Russian counterparts. Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 585-597.

⁹² Using his typical literary style, Hamilton reports that his experience attached to the IJA had given him "no doubt whatever (in my mind) that the days of artillery driving up and unlimbering in the open are as dead as would be the battery which attempted to resuscitated them in battle." *Ibid.*, 561.

⁹³ As it would turn out, Hamilton's calls for artillery entrenchment and concealment were largely ignored among the British army's staff. As, during a 1913 maneuver on the Salisbury Plain, British guns were still being utilized in direct support roles from unfortified and unconcealed positions. *Report on Army Exercise, 1913* (London: The War Office, 1913), 13.

⁹⁴ After observing Japanese forces at the Yalu and the June 1904 Battle of Delisi (written as Te-li-Ssu), Jardine praised the way in which the Japanese prepared their artillery positions with superior forethought, claiming that the "gun pits [were] excellently made and position well chosen, as is always the case with the Japanese." J.B. Jardine, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine, D.S.O., 5th Lancers, Sai-ma-Chi, 12th July 1904,"

of entrenching their guns that, by the battle of Liáoyáng, Hamilton was reporting that captured Russian documents revealed orders direct from General Aleksey Kuropatkin, the supreme commander of Russian forces in East Asia, directing his officers to “carefully [watch] the Japanese, and [copy] their tactics and methods” regarding the entrenchment and use of artillery resources.⁹⁵

Occurring a mere decade after the war in Manchuria, the battles waged between the great European powers during the First World War ultimately demonstrated the immense devastation and loss of life which artillery, and particularly high explosive shells, could achieve when both utilized in an offensive and defensive capacity.⁹⁶ Accounting for more men killed than any other weapon utilized during the course of the war, artillery became regarded by strategists such as Erich von Falkenhayn and Sir Douglas Haig as a central ingredient in the complete destruction of an enemy’s strength, resolve, and ability to make war.⁹⁷ Interestingly, though the attritional value of modern artillery would become obvious with the experience of the First World War, it appears that, after witnessing the use of artillery in Manchuria, some British officers felt the war had shown the opposite conclusion. Though all British observers appeared to agree that the use of artillery was an important factor in many of the Japanese victories against the Russians, it appeared to some that the war had proven that artillery fire, unless used on an enemy caught completely in the open, was more valuable for its suppressive and

in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 139.

⁹⁵ Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 327.

⁹⁶ Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, “Eastern Front and Western Front, 1916-1917,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, New Edition, Hew Strachan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 183.

⁹⁷ Prior and Wilson, “Eastern Front and Western Front,” 184.

demoralizing effect on the enemy rather than the actual number of men it killed or maimed.⁹⁸

It appears that Vincent was frustratingly alone in advocating his belief that the artillery barrage had massive potential in decimating an enemy unit's numbers, citing numerous instances during the course of the war in which he witnessed the aftermath and significant effect of accurate artillery fire against even deeply entrenched enemy forces.⁹⁹ Committed to this belief in the deadly potential of artillery fire, Vincent was dismayed that, when speaking to veteran Japanese infantry officers and men, they generally agreed that Russian shrapnel shells posed little threat to soldiers caught advancing out in the open, with some going so far as to say "that the bullets even at medium range only stun or bruise, but do not penetrate their clothes."¹⁰⁰ Although concerned by the prevalence of these attitudes among the highly respected Japanese infantrymen, Vincent remained unconvinced of these conclusions, claiming that the root of this dismissal of artillery power derived primarily from the poor performance of Russian gunners when practicing concealed indirect fire, adding that if the British high command were to direct their attention to the instances where the Russians were caught in the open under the smaller, but more skillfully serviced, Japanese guns they would see how devastating a weapon shrapnel can be.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 583.

⁹⁹ Vincent claimed that he had come across many captured Russian trench works where there was evidence that Japanese shrapnel shells, detonating immediately above the position, had accounted for significant amount of defenders killed and dismembered. *Ibid.*, 599.

¹⁰⁰ B. Vincent, "Additional Report by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery, Headquarters First Japanese Army, 30th April 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume III*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1905), 440-441.

¹⁰¹ Vincent, "Additional Report by Captain B. Vincent," 442.

Of the three primary combat arms, the IJA's artillery certainly possessed the greatest duality of character. Despite boasting superior training, numbers, and initial strategies when compared to their Russian counterparts, the Japanese artillery could rarely achieve complete fire superiority due to the limitations imposed by the small size of their guns and the poor quality of their transport horses. Thus, for British observers, the use of Japanese artillery was not merely a demonstration of their ally's achievements and limitations regarding long range firepower, it also offered valuable lessons regarding the future role of artillery on the twentieth century battlefield. Astute British officers such as Hamilton, Hume, and Vincent took note of the superior Japanese methods of entrenching and concealing their batteries, as well as their effective utilization of H.E., and suggested that these practices be emulated within their own artillery service. That said, these same officers were convinced that, if a future war did formulate between Russia and the Anglo-Japanese coalition, the experience in the Russo-Japanese War had shown the need for both allies to invest in the increased calibre of their available guns.

In spite of the great amount of attention paid to the performance of Japanese soldiers serving in the primary combat arms, the IJA, like any modern army, was not merely composed of those whose sole duty it was to directly, or indirectly, engage with the enemy. For every soldier firing a rifle or piece of artillery, there were a multitude more men tasked with a diverse group of specialized and support roles ranging from logistical transport to combat engineering. Despite their duties and deeds being generally considered less heroic and harrowing than that of the combat infantryman, the organization and methods of the IJA's diverse supporting forces did not escape the attention of British observers in the field. Impressed by both their ingenuity as well as the

energy in which they carried out their duties, many of the reports written by British officers attributed a good portion of the Japanese success on campaign to the efforts of these supporting elements operating within their army. As well, it was frequently noted how the British army could benefit from the example presented by these services.

Among the support services fielded by the IJA, their pioneer corps was perhaps the most highly celebrated by British observers. As mentioned above, as the war progressed the British were impressed by the Russian ability to prepare their defensive lines with increasingly elaborate and imposing field works and entrenchments.¹⁰² Although extensive trench warfare was not an entirely new concept, the trench warfare waged in Manchuria was distinct from these prior conflicts due not only to the implementation of bolt action rifles and heavy machine guns for defense, but also due to the mass implementation of barbed wire directly in front of their defenses.¹⁰³ Utilized alongside obstacles which had been used since antiquity, such as sharpened wood abatis, barbed wire was first encountered by the Japanese at the Battle of Nanshan in May of 1904 and, when combined with Russian machine gun fire, immediately posed a potentially serious problem for attacking Japanese troops.¹⁰⁴ Noting how initial attempts by Japanese infantry to use dynamite to destroy barbed wire emplacements met with poor results, Haldane lamented that, by July of 1904, the Japanese had yet to have developed a “satisfactory method of destroying” the threat posed by barbed wire and machine gun

¹⁰² Apparently the Russian aptitude for entrenchment was not a complete surprise to the British, as Royal Engineer Officer Lieutenant-Colonel E. Ager stated that an “extensive use of field works, combined with a strong national tendency to act on the defensive, have always been marked characteristics of Russian troops.” E. Ager, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel E. Ager, Royal Engineers, January 1906,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Army in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 633.

¹⁰³ Ager, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel E. Ager... January 1906,” 640.

¹⁰⁴ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 18th July 1904,” 60.

emplacements.¹⁰⁵ Despite some initial missteps in their attempts to solve the riddle posed by Russian field obstacles, the Japanese soon found a solution in the form of the highly skilled members of the IJA's pioneers.

During the early month of the campaign in Manchuria, British reports regarding the Japanese engineers emphasized their efficiency and ability in erecting logistical constructs behind the lines. These vital structures included a series of temporary debarkation piers at Incheon, the erection of which Commander Wemyss described as being so well planned and efficiently carried out that everything was "constructed in one night."¹⁰⁶ Shortly after playing a vital role in the efficient debarkation of their compatriots, Japanese pioneers proved that they could also compose themselves under fire as they constructed pontoon bridges across the Yalu under the fire of Russian guns.¹⁰⁷ While the above efforts showed the skill and discipline of the Japanese pioneers, as well as the vital role they played in building and maintaining the army's logistical infrastructure, these actions were comparatively banal in relation to the duties of a nation's military engineers and, as such, did not appear to illicit a considerable amount of enthusiasm from British observers. However, as the war progressed and Russian fortifications became increasingly elaborate, British observers became highly enthusiastic regarding the way in which necessities caused by the war's events, especially the Siege of

¹⁰⁵ After bearing first hand witness to the problems caused by these two factors of modern warfare, Haldane stressed the importance that "the matter [of overcoming barbed wire and machine guns should be]... receiving due consideration in England and India." *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Wemyss, et al., "Reports by Commander E.W. Wemyss... 3rd March 1904," 2.

¹⁰⁷ Vincent was impressed with the calm composure shown by the pioneers as shrapnel shells burst around them. Noting how they would bolster their spirits by collectively exclaiming "banzai" whenever a shell burst too near. B. Vincent, Ian Hamilton and W.G. Nicholson, "Report by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery, with Covering Remarks of Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., 5th June 1904, and of Lieut.-General Sir W.G. Nicholson, K.C.B., Tokio, 20th June 1904," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume I*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 51.

Port Arthur, had turned Japanese pioneers from logistical construction workers into specialized shock troops.

When first beginning the advance toward Port Arthur in the summer of 1904, General Nogi Maresuke, commander of the Third Army, had expected a quick and easy victory such as the one he had witnessed when the IJA had wrested the port from the Chinese a decade prior.¹⁰⁸ Contrary to these assumptions, when the Third Army reached the mountainous outskirts of the settlement they found the Russians had, since their initial occupation of the Peninsula in 1897, built a series of formidable, mutually supportive lines of concrete fortifications and entrenchments stretching across the entirety of the Liaodong Peninsula.¹⁰⁹ The extensive nature of Russian fortifications, coupled with the difficult terrain and lack of space that would allow the Japanese to maneuver and turn the flanks, meant that the static frontline surrounding Port Arthur became vaguely reminiscent of the situation which developed on the Gallipoli peninsula in 1915.¹¹⁰ With no hope of outmaneuvering the Russians and achieving a quick and decisive victory, it fell upon the Japanese infantry to push the Russians slowly and methodically back toward Port Arthur trench by trench, fort by fort. Often encountering significant stretches of barbed wire and other battlefield obstacles between them and their already intimidating objectives, British observers noted how the assaulting infantry relied heavily on the support offered by volunteers from the pioneer corps.

¹⁰⁸ Apsley Smith, "Port Arthur – Epitome of Operations of the Third Japanese Army from the Battle of Nan Shan on 26th May 1904, to the End of the Siege," 362.

¹⁰⁹ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 207.

¹¹⁰ Historian Richard Connaughton claims that the front at Port Arthur could be characterized as a microcosm of "the [line] of the next decade running from Switzerland to the sea," with the main difference being the fact that the Russian garrison had the disadvantage of being surrounded by Japanese forces both on land and by sea. Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 207. Despite this assessment, I feel that, given the small area and rough terrain, the situation could be more aptly compared to the ground fighting during the campaign in the Dardanelles than the Western Front.

Typically employed as the initial wave in a major attack, small parties of pioneers would be dispatched into no-mans-land in order to cut the “thick belt of wire entanglements” or dismantle other obstacles in the path of the incoming main attack.¹¹¹ This task would often be done in full view of Russian positions and, despite Japanese guns often providing “furious and concentrated” covering fire, these clearing parties seemed to have invariably suffered heavy casualties.¹¹² Despite the heavy losses suffered, British observers claimed that due to their skill and spirit of “upmost gallantry,” these small parties of assault pioneer rarely failed to make clear a vital path for their oncoming infantry.¹¹³ Described as being conditioned to the same level of peak physical fitness aspired to in the Japanese infantry, British observers were impressed by the energetic rapidity with which Japanese combat pioneers advanced and went about their tasks.¹¹⁴ Inspired by the vital role played by the Japanese combat pioneers when attacking fortified positions, Haldane suggested that the R.E. should begin training their sappers to offer direct combat support to future attacks by British infantry.¹¹⁵

While it was commonly conceded that the British army could stand to learn a few things from the way in which the Japanese had deployed, organized, and commanded

¹¹¹ Clawford, “Port Arthur- Diary of the Officers Attached to the Third Japanese Army,” 375.

¹¹² It was not unusual during either the battles around Port Arthur, or later at Shenyang, for Japanese assault engineers to lose 50% or more of their strength when taking part in these wire cutting parties. *Ibid.*; Vincent, “Report by Captain B. Vincent... 22nd May 1905,” 267.

¹¹³ Clawford, “Port Arthur – Diary of the Officer Attached to the Third Japanese Army,” 375.

¹¹⁴ A.L. Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane, D.S.O., General Staff, Tokio, 15th October 1905,” in *The Russo-Japanese War: Reports from British Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field, Volume II*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1907), 514.

¹¹⁵ This said, Haldane was not completely comfortable with the average casualties suffered by assaulting pioneers. As a result, he had numerous suggestions as to how both Japanese and British forces could conceal and protect these men while they went about their vital tasks. After witnessing the concealing nature of dust thrown up by heavy artillery barrages, Haldane had a particularly revolutionary suggestion that they should work on producing shells “which on ignition would raise a cloud of thick smoke.” The utility of this suggestion would be later realized in the creation of smoke shells utilized in the First World War. Haldane and Nicholson, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 8th November 1904,” 226.

their army during in Manchuria, it was also pointed out that the Japanese could have performed better had they paid closer attention to some of the British army's more innovative practices. Although impressed by the way in which the Japanese had created a modern army based on the teachings of their continental, mainly German, influences, Hamilton complained that, with the "continental army taken as her model by Japan," many in the Japanese high command regard "the British army as nullity – a myth and non-existent." As such, Hamilton believed the IJA was not fully benefiting from the many lessons learned by British officers who, for nearly a century, had been fighting numerous, if primarily unconventional, campaigns on nearly every continent.¹¹⁶

Considering this bitter sentiment that the British Army's accomplishments were being overlooked by their ally, a number of British observers were pleased by the fact that, after their first battles against the Russians, Japanese infantry were being encouraged by the high command to adopt British-style methods of open formation on the advance, as opposed to the German-style closed attack which they were taught during peace time manoeuvres.¹¹⁷ The direct British inspiration for this change in formation was most blatantly stated by Hart-Synnot who claimed the Japanese gradually changed over from closed order to, what the Japanese called, "Boer tactics" of extensions of "five to six paces" which was "copied from [the British]."¹¹⁸ As well, it was acknowledged by British observers that the Japanese decision to replace their dark blue winter uniform with a new

¹¹⁶ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 563.

¹¹⁷ This transition was first noted in the reports by Jardine in June 1904 at the Battle of Mo-Tien Ling and would further be commented upon by Hume in July, where he characterized the advance as being "carried out in well-extended order, such as we should employ in similar circumstances," and Hamilton at the Battle of Shahe. Jardine and Hamilton, "Report by Captain J.B. Jardine... 27th July 1904," 171; Hume, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume... 20th August 1904," 197; Hamilton, "Battle of Sha Ho...6th September to the 15th October 1904," 549.

¹¹⁸ Hart-Synnot, "Report by Captain A.H.S. Hart-Synnot... 2nd May 1905," 152.

khaki variant, as well as the replacement of their white canvas gaiters with woolen puttees, was directly inspired by the more practical service-dress worn by their British allies.¹¹⁹ Even with this acknowledged, Hamilton felt that the Japanese had still failed to learn a crucial lesson from the British in regard to communication and signaling in the field.

As previously stated, the turn of the twentieth century was an era in which both civilian and military technologies were advancing at an extraordinary pace. Recognizing this, it appears that the IJA's high command was keen to keep their forces up to speed with the cutting edge technology utilized by the German army and other major continental European powers. Among these technologies the Japanese appeared particularly keen to invest in the field of telecommunication, with all Japanese forces in Manchuria relying almost entirely upon the telegraph and telephones for communication between the general staff and frontline officers.¹²⁰ On the surface it would appear that the mass use of modern telecommunication devices would give the Japanese a marked advantage in coordinating their forces in the field, but British officers, particularly Hamilton, argued that this was not the case. With wireless radio transmitter and receiver systems still in their infancy, the Japanese found their primary means of communication and coordination relied heavily upon the survival of thin, and relatively fragile, cables.¹²¹ The reliance on this system had some obvious drawbacks, one of the biggest being that it

¹¹⁹ Hume, et al., "Field Artillery," 563; C.V. Hume, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume, D.S.O., Royal Artillery, Tokio, 15th June 1905," in *The Russo-Japanese War: Medical and Sanitary Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field*, The General Staff, eds. (London: The War Office, 1906), 515.

¹²⁰ Hamilton, "Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904," 320.

¹²¹ Although Hume described Japanese telephone wires as thin and delicate, he did argue that their small size made them much easier to conceal and harder to hit with indirect artillery fire. Hume, "Report by Lieut.-Colonel C.V. Hume... 20th August 1904," 202.

was nearly impossible to maintain telephone communication between assaulting forces and their commanders in the rear echelon.¹²² As well, Hamilton felt shocked that there were cases where “Japanese armies within twenty miles of one another were unable to work in concert because a telegraph line had been cut.” Hamilton felt that the Japanese reliance on modern devices of communication were a symptom of their continental influence, which primarily prepared and organized their armies for a war in Europe, thus neglecting what was required for battles in, what Hamilton characterized as, “uncivilized countries of vast extent” such as Manchuria.¹²³ In order to achieve the best level of coordination in the above described locales, Hamilton felt that, as their ally, the Japanese should defer to the British Army’s immense experience in colonial warfare and adopt the systems of “heliograph and flag signalling” which Hamilton insisted had been invaluable to British unit coordination in South Africa.¹²⁴ Despite Hamilton’s confidence that the Japanese would adopt British models of communication in future wars, it appears he would ultimately be disappointed in this prediction, as the 1908 British Army handbook on the IJA presents an army still heavily relying on telegraphy in the field.¹²⁵

An obvious question which arises when reading any primary source collection concerns how these documents fit in to the wider events and narratives surrounding the era in which they were written. Unsurprisingly, similar questions arise when absorbing the reports of the British officers serving in Manchuria. That is to say, did these reports actually receive the attention of British military and political leaders in London, or were

¹²² In these cases, infantry and artillery commanders would keep tabs on their attacking forces through the traditional method of dispatch runners and observation through field glasses or telescopes, with Japanese infantry units carrying various sizes of Japan’s national *Hinomaru* flag to aid commanders in identifying their progress. Haldane, “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 23rd January 1905,” 455.

¹²³ Hamilton, “Report by Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton... 12th November 1904,” 320.

¹²⁴ Hume, et al., “Field Artillery,” 563.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; The General Staff, *The Handbook of the Japanese Army*, 141-142.

they merely received and then buried under the countless other pieces of army intelligence being received from other agents of the King abroad? Aside from the obvious way in which the positive impressions of the Japanese army's performance as portrayed by the observers was becoming widely disseminated among a number of policy makers and military officials, there is substantial, if at times subtle, evidence that the opinions, observations, and suggestions of British officers in Manchuria were being widely consumed and considered in London. The diverse group of officers sent to Manchuria were neither there unofficially nor on their own volition. These men were chosen by their superiors for their expertise and potential ability to think critically and form useful impressions of what they would experience while observing the deeds of their ally at war.

For some of the observers, most notably Ian Hamilton, it was obvious that they possessed a number of friends and contacts within the higher echelons of Britain's military hierarchy. Hamilton, as the sole representative of the British Indian Army, was virtually Lord Kitchener's direct link to the fighting in Manchuria, a fact which is emphasized by extensive correspondence maintained between the two men during Hamilton's service. Within this private correspondence Hamilton would mix together banal descriptions of his daily life with official observations reflecting those within his reports.¹²⁶ Due to these connections among some of the most notable members of Britain's defense planning staff, it seems unlikely that Hamilton's reports, observations, and suggestions would have been easily ignored by his superiors. As well, prior to his

¹²⁶ The topics of these correspondence could range from such non-military topics as observation regarding of locals of Yokohama, including such off putting remarks regarding the "funniest, most delicious little girls [seemingly his term for young Japanese women] trotting about smiling on little high wooden shoes," too more professional assessments regarding the superior carrying capacity of Japanese soldiers on the march. Ian Hamilton, "Sir Ian Hamilton to Lord Kitchener, March 15, 1904," PRO 30/57/37; Ian Hamilton, "Sir Ian Hamilton to Lord Kitchener, March 17, 1904," PRO 30/57/37.

departure from Japan to Korea, Hamilton personally forwarded combat reports made by Berkeley Vincent, who was already serving with the Guards Division on the continent, to Lord Kitchener for review. This demonstrated his desire that Kitchener stay completely informed and up to date on the exploits of the Japanese army as seen by Britain's officers on the ground.¹²⁷

Although not every British officer was as well connected as Hamilton, there is still evidence that their reports were consumed and considered by their superiors in London. Popular historiography tends to look down upon Europe's leading military thinkers as failing to learn strategic lessons from the Russo-Japanese War which would have perhaps saved lives if utilized in the First World War. Although this is in many instances true, there is evidence that, at least within the British Army, there were staff officers who heeded the lessons and advice offered by their observers, even if it was in regard to matters which were less important in regard to the bigger strategic picture. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it appears that observer reports were instrumental in convincing the British to adopt the Japanese style of edged sword bayonet and it was not long after the Japanese shown the utility of high explosive shell that the British began to equipped many of their artillery batteries with Vincent's recommended ratio of around 2:8 H.E. to shrapnel based ordnance.¹²⁸ Unfortunately, observer analysis regarding the bigger pictures of strategy would often fail to be implemented not due to fact they were not read or regarded, but rather because of the often Machiavellian rivalries and divisive

¹²⁷ Hamilton, "Sir Ian Hamilton to Lord Kitchener, March 15, 1904."

¹²⁸ Unfortunately, with the advent of the First World War this 2:8 ratio would still prove inadequate for the trench warfare at hand, especially since the British high command believed that H.E. should be reserved for heavy batteries leaving their 13- and 18-pound guns armed entirely with shrapnel in the first months of the war. Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Volume I: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1000.

politics which plagued the British officer corps in the years leading up to the First World War.¹²⁹ This factionalism meant that, due to the intervention of well-connected reactionary officers resistant to significant changes, the implementation of new tactical or strategic doctrines, even if proven viable during a conflict such as the Russo-Japanese War, were more than often slow to be adopted. Thus, although it was easy to convince their superiors of the fighting quality of the IJA in the field, it was a much more difficult endeavour to instigate change or emulation of these qualities at home.

When reading the reports of British officers in Manchuria, one is struck by how deeply these men explored every facet of the Imperial Japanese Army on campaign. Reporting on everything from the strategies they employed to the ammunition they stocked, it is obvious that the British were keen to take full advantage of this rare opportunity to receive a first-hand education regarding all of their ally's strengths and weaknesses in a conventional war. Ultimately, it would appear that the British were generally not disappointed with what they witnessed. Led by clever and methodical commanders employing effective tactics and strategies, the IJA as a whole operated with an efficiency and adaptability seldom seen among even the most celebrated of European armies. Even where the British saw conventional weaknesses, such as in regard to the Japanese cavalry, they conceded that Japanese commanders used their war experience to recognize these shortcomings and work on effective means to, at least partially, overcome them. The diverse but accumulating experiences and observations made by Britain's observers not only stressed the wisdom in maintaining their superbly organized and professional Imperial Japanese allies as the British Empire's defender in Asia, they also

¹²⁹ Tim Travers, "The Hidden Army: Structural Problems in the British Officer Corps, 1900-1918," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 3 (July 1982): 525.

note the fact that the British Army and, at times even the IJA, could both learn a thing or two from the way their respective ally operated on the battlefield.

Chapter V

A Most Impressive Pupil: Captain William Pakenham, R.N., and the Performance of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the War's Maritime Operations

Over the course of the war the IJA managed to impress and inspire British observers by repeatedly defeating the powerful, yet mismanaged, Russian army in Manchuria. This said, despite winning victory after victory on land, throughout the war it was universally recognized by contemporary strategic thinkers that, no matter how well the Japanese army performed, all their success on the continent could have been fatally imperilled by a single major defeat at sea. From the IJN's first nocturnal torpedo raid on Port Arthur in February 1904 to the May 1905 destruction of Russia's Baltic Fleet during the Battle of Tsushima, the Japanese and Russian navies waged a tense game of chess where the loss of one or two ships could, and did, decisively shift the maritime balance of power in the region. Assigned to observe and report upon the IJN's drawn out campaign for maritime superiority was the RN's Captain William Pakenham who, while attached to the staff of the Japanese fleet's C-in-C, Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō, bore witness to nearly every major fleet action of the conflict.¹ Through his frequent and detailed reports sent to London, Pakenham wrote on a plethora of topics concerning what general lessons could be learned from this demonstration of a modern war at sea, as well as his specific impressions regarding the Japanese navy's technology, tactics, organization, and seamanship. Far from letting the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the traditional links between the RN and IJN bias his opinions, Pakenham's reports are candid in weighing

¹ As shown in his reports, as well as in later secondary resources, Pakenham became one of Tōgō's most enthusiastic Western admirers and supporters. It also appears that this sentiment was reciprocated, with Tōgō coming to treat Pakenham as a close friend and confidant. Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 69.

the strengths and weaknesses of Japan's relatively young naval service, creating the impression of a courageous, well-handled, but imperfect force whose wartime experience offered many lessons for both itself and the RN.

Following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the Japanese began to concentrate significant resources to creating the nucleus of a modern, western-model navy practically from scratch. As with the army, the Japanese created their navy by working closely with instructors from the western power they believed to be the strongest in that area of warfare. Unlike the army, which would be compelled to change the national character of its practices and advisors due to power-shifts in Europe, the navy remained secure in trusting its development in the hands of the unchallenged naval supremacy of Great Britain.² Beginning in 1870, the IJN came officially under the tutelage of RN officers resulting in much of its methods and organization being directly based upon the British model.³ In addition to sending men to advise and train the IJN from 1873 to 1882, the British also allowed for a number of Japanese officer candidates to serve and train aboard British war vessels and study at the Greenwich Naval College.⁴

As well as utilizing the British for their knowledge and experience in modern naval theory, the Japanese were also reliant on Britain's thriving ship-building industry in order to provide their navy with the physical tools of war. Although it was catching up at a rate which alarmed many of its western contemporaries, until the 1910s Japan's industrial development was still in its infancy and the Japanese lacked the dockyards and

² Julian S. Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*, Volume I (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 26.

³ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 12.

⁴ Among the Japanese naval officers trained by the Royal Navy in Britain was the future Rear-Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō, who attended Greenwich between 1871 and 1878. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 8.

factories necessary to produce the vessels and naval ordnance required to arm a modern national navy.⁵ Faced with these realities, the Japanese were keen to utilize British shipyards, which already had a reputation for producing the most powerful fleet in the world, to build a fleet capable of both defending their shores and asserting their local hegemony in the region.⁶ Settling their first contract with British shipyards in 1870, by the time Japan engaged in its 1894 war against China the IJN benefited from a fleet of 28, primarily British built, modern war vessels which, commanded by British trained officers, quickly destroyed the China's fledgling modern navy.⁷ Although, by the turn of the twentieth century, Japan had grown past the need for an official RN presence in the form of advisors or naval academy instructors, close cultural and doctrinal ties, combined with a continuing material reliance on British factories and shipyards guaranteed that senior Japanese naval officers were among the most vocally supportive groups regarding a potential Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902.⁸

Although they still possessed ties of shared traditions, ceremony, and methods of education, the strongest factor connecting the Imperial Japanese Navy to their British mentors in 1904 was the fact that the majority of Japan's ships and heavy ordnance were still the product of British shipyards and factories. This relationship was particularly vital due to the fact that victory in naval warfare has always been arguably more dependent on the procurement and proper application of material and technological advancements than battles which are fought between terrestrial armies.⁹ Although the armies in Manchuria

⁵ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 8.

⁹ Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 293.

were keen to acquire and make use of such innovative weapons as machine guns and quick firing artillery, as shown in the previous chapters, the majority of the Russo-Japanese War's land battles were believed to have been won due to the endurance, discipline, and morale of the men either manning or opposing these weapons, rather than the weapons themselves. By contrast, a naval battle is primarily a contest between intricate and expensive implements of war, the destructions or crippling of which would make further resistance impossible. With this reality in mind, estimations regarding a nation's capability to make war at sea rested heavily on the ships and guns they possessed, as well as their ability to repair or replace these weapons when they were damaged or destroyed. This considered, it comes as little surprise that, although he was primarily dispatched to report on the performance of the IJN at sea, Pakenham's first major report was concerned with the state of Japan's repair bases and naval infrastructure, with which he appeared to have been impressed.

In the wake of Japan's victory over the Chinese in 1895, and their subsequent territorial humiliation at the hands of Russia, Germany, and France, the Japanese began an accelerated construction program aimed at exponentially increasing their available naval tonnage.¹⁰ Once again relying primarily upon British shipyards for the materials and manufacture of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and their various mounted armaments, this era of naval expansion solidified Japan as, in the words of Pakenham, among "Great Britain's best customers for naval material."¹¹ That said, while visiting the docks and factories being constructed in the Japanese port of Kure in April of 1904, Pakenham was struck by how, in only a few years, the Japanese had made great progress

¹⁰ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 17.

¹¹ William Pakenham, "Visit to Naval Establishment at Kure," April 2, 1904, PKM 2/1/1, 1.

in expanding the facilities necessary for the building of a fleet equipped completely through domestic channels. To Pakenham, the near completion of these endeavours in a nation which had, only fifty years prior, existed in a state of nearly complete geo-political isolation and medieval agrarianism stood as a symbol of the inherent “genius of a progressive people.”¹² This advancement meant that, although by the beginning of the war the Japanese were still short of being able to launch their own domestically built battleships and cruisers, by the conflict’s end Pakenham was given confidential access to the plans and dimensions of six new domestically built capital ships which were either planned or already under construction at the naval yard in Kure and Yokosuka.¹³ As well, it was noted that, even at the war’s commencement, the Japanese possessed a naval repair infrastructure which far surpassed anything the Russians could muster in either Port Arthur or Vladivostok.¹⁴

Despite the immense progress made by the Japanese in building up their domestic maritime industry and infrastructure, Pakenham noted that these accomplishments were often dismissed by European commentators. Throughout the early twentieth century there was a common notion among western observers that the impressive modernization of Japan’s education, industry, and military during the Meiji era and beyond was merely the result of the Japanese emulating western technologies and practices, all the while

¹² Pakenham, “Visit to Naval Establishment at Kure,” 2-3.

¹³ William Pakenham, “Japanese Armoured Vessels – Building or Projected,” September 28, 1905, PKM 2/1/57, 1.

¹⁴ The Japanese were also quick and efficient to transfer some of their repair infrastructure to forward bases utilized by their fleet in Korea and nearby islands. This allowed for Japanese ships, especially the more operationally limited smaller craft, to partake in almost constant patrols and sorties “under the most trying conditions,” and still remain “in good running order.” According to the commentaries of Aston, Japan’s successful utilization of their superiority in bases of operation stood as confirmation of Alfred Thayer Mahan’s belief that “command of a maritime region is ensured primarily by a navy, and secondly by positions suitably chosen upon which the navy rests, and from which it can exert its strength.” Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 277, 242.

dismissing the Japanese themselves as lacking the forethought and creative spirit necessary to introduce and contribute their own innovations to the world stage.¹⁵

According to Pakenham, the dismissal of the Japanese ability to invent was also expected to apply to their naval ship building industry, a sentiment with which, after an extensive tour of their ship yards and emerging naval infrastructure, he did not entirely agree.¹⁶

Although he did concede that, by 1904, Japan had “originated no fundamental innovation in the construction of war-vessels,” he quickly added that “neither have the other late starters in the race: the Americans and the Germans.” Additionally, Pakenham was convinced that, due to what he had seen in the factories and dockyards in and around Kure, the Japanese had demonstrated a “spirit of inquisitiveness and experimentation,” which would in the near future allow them to introduce many innovations to how future navies were built and utilized.¹⁷

During his time living among Japanese officers who were, prior to the First World War, among the few recipients of first-hand experience fighting a modern naval war, Pakenham was often fascinated by their insights regarding what could be done to improve upon the way in which various classes of ships were designed and built. This appears to be especially true regarding the design of armoured cruisers or “minor battle-ship[s]” which, if they were to remain an effective part of a battle fleet, it was suggested

¹⁵ This suspicion and dismissal of Japanese innovation had, in the mid to late nineteenth century, also been commonplace among even their future British allies. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 9.

¹⁶ From his early reports it seems clear that Pakenham was contemptuous of the rampant anti-Japanese sentiment which permeated contemporary western society. Such was the case when he reported an incident in which Japanese ships narrowly avoiding Russian mechanical mines which had broken from their moorings and set adrift. At end of this report, Pakenham complained that, had it been Russian ships threatened by drifting Japanese mines, “a good deal would probably have been said about ‘yellow peril’ and ‘methods of barbarism.’” in media outlets and diplomatic circles throughout Europe. William Pakenham, “29 April, 1904,” PKM 2/1/4, 2.

¹⁷ Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Visit to Naval Establishment at Kure,” 3

they be redesigned to be faster and harder hitting than the models currently in service. Noticing that both the Japanese and Russians attempted to strengthen their battle fleets with the addition of lesser armoured vessels, Pakenham believed this to be an act of folly as the ordnance of these ships would be immediately outclassed by that of the battleships and their superior speed was not enough to overcome this handicap. Thus, armed with his observations and suggestions from his associates in the IJN's officer class, Pakenham suggested that both the IJN and RN explore the possibility of creating an armoured cruiser which could achieve superior speeds due to limiting its armour only to the vitals, such as along the waterline and around the guns, and was equipped entirely with heavy ordnance, as Pakenham was under the impression that medium guns were being proven obsolete in modern war.¹⁸ Although the RN would never construct a cruiser based entirely on Pakenham's suggested specifications, his opinions regarding the primacy of heavy guns proved to be popular among his British compatriots with some citing his reports in order to back up the decision to limit the number of secondary armaments planned for their revolutionary *Dreadnought* design.¹⁹

Other inspirations for future ship designs came in the form of the French, Italian, and German-built ships in service with the IJN. Through the presence of these ships Pakenham was given a first-hand demonstration of how the ships constructed by Britain's rivals performed in active operations, as well as what could be learned, and possibly emulated, from their designs.²⁰ Among the features demonstrated by these foreign-built

¹⁸ William Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Lesser Armoured Ships: A New Type Wanted," January 1, 1905, PKM 2/1/30, 1, 2, 7-8.

¹⁹ Arthur Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, Volume I, 60.

²⁰ Admittedly, most of these observations were rather banal in nature. Including commentary regarding the difference between the French and German built destroyers in Japanese service. It was found that the propulsion system utilized by the destroyers built by the French Normand shipyard left a great deal of waves in its wake while those constructed at the German Schichau docks made virtually no waves at all.

craft, what seemed to most appeal to Pakenham were the guns featured on the recently acquired Italian-built cruisers *Kasuga* and *Nisshin*. Built with the ability to elevate their guns beyond anything capable of contemporary British-built vessels, the *Kasuga* and *Nisshin* were able to achieve a high enough angle of fire to effectively bombard shore based targets without exposing the ships to return fire from enemy shore defenses. Despite it not reaping a significant amount of physical damage upon Port Arthur, Pakenham celebrated a bombardment made by the *Kasuga* and *Nisshin* due to its potential moral effect and because of the long distance from which the ships were able to land shells accurately within the inner harbour. In fact, so impressed was Pakenham by the demonstration made by these two ships in combat that he advocated that the RN emulate Italian designs when building the heavy guns for their future battleship projects.²¹

Although the IJN was equipped with modern and intimidating vessels born in British ship yards, and possessed some of the most efficient and well developed repair yards in the western Pacific, throughout most of the war Pakenham's reports echo a constant anxiety regarding Japan's naval prospects against the Russians. This anxiety mainly stemmed from the fact that, as long as hostilities were ongoing, the Japanese would be unable to replace their finite number of, what Pakenham termed, "primary ships."²² At the beginning of the war the IJN had achieved relative parity with Russia's

This fact was of particular note due to the presence of waves doing much to compromise the French-built destroyer's stealth during nocturnal operations. Pakenham, "29 April, 1904," 7.

²¹ Pakenham, "29 April, 1904," 2, 4.

²² According to Pakenham, "primary ships" refers to any modern armoured vessel, such as battleships and armoured cruisers, whose main duty is to engage in "primary operations," which mainly encompasses conventional fleet actions. This was in contrast with "secondary ships," a broad category which encompassed all antiquated, unarmoured, and otherwise expendable ships, ranging from modern destroyers to outdated Chinese battleships captured in 1895, which would be best utilized in "secondary operations"

East Asian Fleet in regards to their respective first-class battle fleets, with the Japanese possessing a combined number of fourteen battleships and armoured cruisers while the Russians had eleven such ships present in Port Arthur and, to a lesser extent, Vladivostok.²³ This acknowledged, the obvious fact remained that while Russia's East Asian Fleet was only a portion of the IRN's combined material strength, the loss of which would potentially just spell a bit of humiliation and a minor strategic inconvenience before the ships were replaced by Russia's incoming Baltic fleet. Meanwhile, the Japanese brought all of their battleships and armoured cruisers immediately to bear in 1904 and, had a large number of these ships been lost or damaged to the point that they could not be repaired in Japanese dockyards, they had no such reserve with which to replace them. With this in mind, Pakenham noted that Admiral Tōgō was faced with the delicate situation of attempting to decisively defeat, or otherwise contain, Russia's local naval presence while keeping the damage to, and loss of, his "primary ships" to an absolute minimum.²⁴ A task for which, through wisdom and restraint, Tōgō and his fleet proved to be more than adequately prepared.

Understanding the delicate strategic position they were required to maintain at sea, and aware of the disastrous consequences their nation would face if the Russians were to gain naval superiority, Pakenham was impressed at how Tōgō and his staff utilized their resources to allow for the least amount of risk. Perhaps agreeing with Pakenham's assessment that their nation could "better spare 20,000 [soldiers] than a

including patrols, harbour defense, and escort duties. William Pakenham, "Russo-Japanese War: Utilization of Secondary Ships," PKM 2/1/10, 5.

²³ Although they had a slightly smaller number of primary vessels available, the Russians did have slight advantage in available battleships, seven to the Japanese six, with the IJN making up the difference in their superior number of smaller and less heavily armed cruisers. The General Staff, *The Russo-Japanese War, Part I*, 23; Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 256.

²⁴ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: August 10th, 1904," 18-19.

single battleship,” Tōgō and his staff devised a method of assigning duties according to the relative strategic value of the ships in their fleet.²⁵ As mentioned above, Pakenham created his own system which categorized all ships in the Japanese war fleet as either “primary” or “secondary” vessels. As the physical preservation of the former category was deemed a matter of national priority, these primary vessels were relegated to a reserve position until the Port Arthur battle squadron either sortied out for a decisive fleet action or attempted its escape.²⁶ While these first-line battleships and armoured cruisers were placed in a state of vigilant reserve, the IJN allotted all other naval operations to those ships Pakenham deemed “secondary.”²⁷ According to Pakenham, there was a prevailing mindset among western, including British, naval thinkers deeming these “secondary” vessels as too lightly armoured or antiquated to play any useful role in a twentieth century maritime campaign. That said, the way in which these, supposedly useless, ships relieved the main battle fleet of responsibility for such un-glamorous, hazardous, but no less vital, tasks as blockading Port Arthur and protecting Japan’s maritime lines of communication and supply, instilled in Pakenham a belief that “ships

²⁵ William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army (1/5/’04 to 7/5/’14),” PKM 2/1/6, 10.

²⁶ To better serve this purpose, Tōgō’s battle fleet made the, according to Pakenham, unprecedented decision to move its entire base of naval operations from a port on the Korean coast to a group of islands near the Liaodong Peninsula. Claiming that “a more complete instance of a sudden change of both [a navy’s base and naval front], brought about by the seizure of a harbour on the coast of the enemy, is not to be readily found,” Pakenham noted that Tōgō was now in a perfect position to quickly counteract any attempt by the Russian fleet to wage operations outside the shelter of their harbour. Pakenham, “Japanese Change of Front,” 1-2.

²⁷ Pakenham mentions that, though the Russian East Asian Fleet also possessed “secondary vessels,” their potential was wasted due to never being utilized independently of the main battleships and armoured cruisers. Instead, it appears that the Russians wanted these lighter vessels to play a support role in a major naval battle by maybe scoring a lucky hit with a torpedo. Such lucky hits did not end up transpiring and Pakenham dismissed the use of these ships in a clash between primary battle fleets as wasteful and only serving “to swell the [Russian] casualty list, without answering any good purpose.” Pakenham, “Russo-Japanese War: Utilization of Secondary Ships,” 6.

are like boots in that, if they can be preserved, a use can be found for those of every age and every description.”²⁸

According to Pakenham, the paramount reason why main battleships and armoured cruisers could not be spared for such duties as blockades and shore bombardments was due to the risk posed by the relatively new threat of modern sub-surface weapons such as mines, torpedoes, and submarines. Although the anxiety surrounding the latter two of these weapons turned out to be relatively unfounded during the course of the war, Pakenham often reported that mechanical mines proved to be an effective, if controversial, weapon in the new age of mechanized naval warfare.²⁹ Although the modern sea mine had been used for a number of decades prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, with the IRN pioneering their development and deployment during its maritime campaigns against the Ottomans in both 1853 and 1877, their reputation as a practical weapon of modern warfare appeared to be secured by a crucial event which coincidentally occurred during Pakenham’s first cruise with Tōgō’s battle fleet off Port Arthur.³⁰ On April 13, 1904 Pakenham bore direct witness to one of the IJN’s most intricate attempts to lure out and decisively engage the Russian Port Arthur fleet.³¹ Although the Russians withdrew their ships before they could be

²⁸ Pakenham, “Russo-Japanese War: Utilization of Secondary Ships,” 1.

²⁹ Although submarines had been utilized in previous RN wargames, and both sides attempted to add them to their naval strength, neither the Japanese nor Russians successfully deployed the small number of submarines available to them. As well, even under ideal condition, Japanese destroyers only achieved very limited success with torpedoes during their surprise February ninth attack on Russia’s Far Eastern Fleet. Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 62; Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Volume I*, 73.

³⁰ Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War*, 238.

³¹ In a “scheme [which] was carried out in every particular,” Tōgō planned to lure the Russian fleet out with a comparatively weak force of ships. When pursuing these ships the Russians would be forced to cross a minefield which had been secretly laid the night before. If they succeeded in traversing the mines unscathed, the Russians would then be lured out to sea into the guns of waiting Japanese battleships and some hidden armoured cruisers. Tōgō hoped that the Russians would then either attempt to engage him or

decisively engaged by the Japanese battleships major results were still achieved when, while retreating through the Japanese minefield at the mouth of the harbour, the Russian flagship *Petropavlovsk* struck a mine and swiftly sunk, taking with it Admiral Stepan Makarov, the talented commander of Russia's East Asian Fleet.³²

The sinking of the *Petropavlovsk* and the loss of Admiral Makarov were regarded as huge blows to the fighting potential of Russia's naval strength in the East Asia and, in the view of Pakenham, represented a shift in the nature of modern naval warfare. While many naval thinkers would criticize Tōgō for not carrying on the attack amidst the chaos caused by the *Petropavlovsk's* sinking, Pakenham celebrated the restraint of Tōgō and his officers in not giving in to the temptation of rushing “in and attempt[ing] to reap glory in its more sensational and traditional form,” an action which Pakenham believed would have only succeeded in causing the Japanese to take unnecessary, and potentially irreparable casualties “under the guns of the [Russian] shore-batteries.” Instead, through the adept placement of mines, and aided by careful planning and strategic deception on the part of Tōgō and his staff, the IJN was able, according to Pakenham, achieve “‘Nelsonian results’ but at the cost to the victors infinitesimally small[er than]...that of historical victories of similar value.”³³

Two month after the IJN's successful use of mines against the *Petropavlovsk*, the Japanese would suffer an even more potentially disastrous material loss when, on May 15, the battleships *Yashima* and *Hatsuse* were both destroyed in a Russian minefield.³⁴

be forced to beat a hasty and dangerous retreat over the minefield. William Pakenham, “Operations of Japanese Fleet off Port Arthur. 12th & 13th April 1904,” PKM 2/1/2, 1.

³² Pakenham, “Operations of the Japanese Fleet... 12th & 13th April 1904,” 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁴ William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Japanese Naval Losses,” PKM 2/1/8, 3.

Despite the public outcry in many European press publications following the loss of the *Petropavlovsk* to the “infernal machines,” Pakenham made it clear in his reports that the sinking of a ship by a mine attached to its original mooring constituted a legitimate, if perhaps regrettable, act of modern warfare.³⁵ The combined loss of these three expensive and, especially for the Japanese, irreplaceable warships to an attritional weapon such as a contact mine confirmed Pakenham’s belief that it was now crucial that modern navy’s preserve their battle fleets by recognizing that “in maritime war the new weapon is the most effective,” and that “heavy vessels should not venture within its [operational] sphere of activity.”³⁶ Interestingly, although their success was used by Pakenham to prove the destructive potential of new sub-surface technology, and despite the fact that they accounted for more major ships sunk during the war than torpedo craft, he actually dismissed mines as having the least potential of all naval warfare’s “new weapons.” Dismissing the rapid loss of these three ships as being the result of a simple fluke, Pakenham claimed that since mines can only legally be used as an immobile and passive weapon they can only serve to “deny the ground it... occupies... to battleships” and therefore were incapable of truly decisive results.³⁷

³⁵ Pakenham further claimed that “none could regret [the circumstances surrounding the *Petropavlovsk*’s sinking] more sincerely on humanitarian grounds than did the Japanese” whose seamen and officers quickly went from initial jubilation to “sympathetic murmurs as the probable significance of such an event as was just witnessed, was realized.” William Pakenham, “Bombardment of Port Arthur by *Kasuga* and *Nisshin*,” April 10, 1904, PKM 2/1/3, 9; Pakenham, “Operations of the Japanese Fleet... 12th & 13th 1904,” 3.

³⁶ “New weapon” was Pakenham’s umbrella term referring to all sub-surface weapons, including mines, torpedoes, and submarines, which could potentially be fielded by a modernly equipped naval force. William Pakenham, “Battleship, small-craft, and underwater attack,” PKM 2/1/9, 9.

³⁷ As well as mines being dismissed by Pakenham for being too passive in nature to be strategically decisive, he also echoed many contemporary observers, such as British international law specialist Thomas Joseph Lawrence, when criticizing their potential to break their moors and drift into neutral shipping lanes, thus allowing regional wars to threaten the wider global community. T.J. Lawrence, *War and Neutrality in the Far East*, 108; Pakenham, “Battleship, Small-Craft, and Underwater Attack,” 3; Pakenham, “Bombardment of Port Arthur by *Kasuga* and *Nisshin*,” 9.

Over the course of the war, but not including those launched during initial surprise attack on Port Arthur, the Japanese had launched a total of 370 torpedoes, only eleven of which hit their targets. According to naval historian Arthur Marder, this rather lackluster statistic had done little to ingratiate the RN's high command to the potential of these weapon. However, although Pakenham had borne first hand witness to the constant failure of torpedoes, he seemed to maintain his faith in the importance of their utility on the modern naval battlefield. Meanwhile, Britain's First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet John "Jackie" Fisher, and many of his compatriots had differed with Pakenham in believing that, due to the swift sinking of three capital ships, mines had been proven the much more practical implement of war.³⁸ No matter which weapon British naval thinkers deemed more dangerous, many RN officers appeared to agree that the events of the Russo-Japanese War as relayed by Pakenham had confirmed his argument of the potential primacy of "modern weapons" in twentieth century naval warfare. With the acknowledgement of these lessons being later reflected in how, when blockading the majority of the Imperial German Navy's strength in the North Sea, the fear of enemy mines and torpedo craft forced the British to maintain their blockading fleet in a formerly uncharacteristic "distant blockade" maintained far from the minefields, torpedo boats, and submarines operating in Germany's coastal areas.³⁹

Along with the war's demonstration of the valid anxieties caused by mines and torpedoes, according to Pakenham and other contemporary British commentators, the war

³⁸ Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume I*, 328-329.

³⁹ On their part, the effective use of sub-surface weapons during the Russo-Japanese War appeared to have made its own impression upon the German admiralty. Understanding Britain's superiority in numbers, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's initial strategy was to utilize torpedo craft and mines in an attritional effort to destroy British capital ships and even the odds for an eventual fleet action. Paul G. Halpern, "The War at Sea," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, New Edition, Hew Strachen, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 103.

against Russia showed that the British naval establishment, which had hitherto gone fifty years without taking part in a major naval action, now stood to learn a few valuable lessons from the practical experience gained by their protégé in the east. According to Pakenham's firsthand reports and the 1911 commentaries of Royal Marine officer George Aston, one of the most important lessons the British could stand to learn from the IJN concerned the excellent way in which they collaborated with their counterparts in the Imperial Japanese Army, allowing for the execution of highly successful combined operations against Russian opposition. To any foreign observers the parallels between the strategic positions of Japan and Britain in their respective geographic spheres seemed fairly obvious as, according to Aston, they were both "island power[s] possessing interests on continental territory" which were potentially threatened "by a land power, with a vast army in communication by land with that territory."⁴⁰ For British strategists, these realities meant that their army and navy should, in the event of war with one of their continental European rivals, be prepared to cooperate in order to launch successful amphibious operations.⁴¹ Although wargames and peacetime maneuver appeared to confirm the wisdom of many of the concepts devised by the army and navy's top theorists, it was argued that much could be learned from Japan's experience during the war, as the coordination "of fleets and armies by Japan to attain a common object provide[d] the most wonderful example... in history."⁴²

⁴⁰ Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 211-212.

⁴¹ The British interest in concepts surrounding amphibious combined operations in a modern war was shown with an April 1904 wargame maneuver in which two army corps were made to simulate a landing on the British coast. Through this activity the British services attempted to test out their latest theories regarding the best manner in which the army and navy can cooperate to effectively carry out an unopposed landing in either the territory of a continental ally or enemy combatant. Wilfred Henderson, "2nd Army Corps Staff Ride: The Naval Share of the Operation," ADM 144/28, 7.

⁴² Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 212.

Throughout the previous two centuries, major military powers throughout the western world had suffered from varying levels of inter-service rivalry and discord between their army and navy personnel. Often permeating every level of their military organization, the effect of these rivalries could be as innocuous as an isolated brawl between opposing gangs of rowdy soldiers and sailors on the streets of a garrison port, or as important as incidents in which antagonism between generals and admirals would seriously hamper a nation's operational effectiveness. It was in this more serious latter capacity that the forces of Imperial Russia were affected in the first decade of the twentieth century as the staff officers in both services shunned each other's operational support and showed no sign of coordinating, or even sharing, their respective prewar strategies for the defense of Russia's East Asian interests.⁴³ By contrast, it was frequently noted how both the officers and enlisted men of Japan's military and navy appeared to exist in an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony.⁴⁴ According to Aston, the respect held between the two services allowed for the army and navy to offer each other a superior degree of mutual support in areas where their respective spheres converged. The resulting success of Japan's combined forces, coupled with the resulting failure of their Russian counterparts to offer an effective inter-service response, showed how important it

⁴³ This venomous rivalry between Russia's two major military services further compounded the equally damaging jealousies which frequently occurred between high ranking officers within the same service. These jealousies were often the result of many Russian officers in both the army and navy owing their ranks, positions, and postings to court intrigue and popularity. Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 237-238.

⁴⁴ This seemingly harmonious state of affairs may come as a surprise to those more familiar with the more historiographically well tread topic of Japanese military politics in the period between the two world wars, an era marked by serious disagreements between the two services regarding resource allocation and matters regarding both local and grand strategy. H.P. Willmott, *The Second World War in the Far East* (London: Cassell & Co., 1999), 35.

was that the British discourage the rivalry between the officers in their own armed services.⁴⁵

According to an official report written by RN commander Wilfred Henderson, during the course of a British amphibious exercise in April 1904, the naval planners involved agreed to a number of assumptions regarding the limitations faced by naval assets during combined operations. One of the most significant of these assumed limitations pertained to the fact that the long-range guns of capital ships would prove too inaccurate to support an opposed landing of troops, thus making such a landing highly inadvisable, if not suicidal for the troops involved.⁴⁶ Along with the assumption that their guns would be rendered useless in lending fire support to the landing of the troops on the beach, British planners believed that an amphibious invasion could only succeed if the attacking nation possessed complete maritime supremacy in the region.⁴⁷ Thus, without being required to deal with threats by land or sea, it was expected that the main contribution by the navy during an amphibious invasion would be the rather banal task of

⁴⁵As mentioned in previous chapters, the British officer class, much like their Russian contemporaries, suffered from personality clashes, as well as both inter-service and intra-service rivalries due to an antiquated system in which promotion and placement was often the direct result of, according to historian Tim Travers, “court patronage and social connections.” Travers, “The Hidden Army: Structural Problems in the British Officer Corps, 1900-1918,” 525.

⁴⁶ Although the report concedes that opposed landings were successfully carried out by British forces in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it stated that in those eras the limitations in range and accuracy inherent in smoothbore muskets and artillery prevented the enemy from unleashing deadly fire until British forces had already established themselves on the beach. The advent of rifled bolt-action and automatic weaponry, combined with quick firing artillery, meant that planners felt that landing forces would suffer from unacceptable casualty rates before they stepped foot on land. As well, the threat posed by modern heavy artillery was predicted to keep the escorting fleet positioned so far off the coast that its fire would be rendered completely useless. These supposed realities meant that planners considered it of the utmost importance that any amphibious invasion be launched against a beachhead which was guaranteed to be free of enemy resistance. Henderson, “2nd Army Corps Staff Ride: The Naval Share of the Operation,” 6-7.

⁴⁷ Henderson is eager to point out that the definition for complete naval supremacy necessary for an invasion differed slightly from “complete command of the seas’... to the sense to which it is employed when referring to purely naval warfare.” In the latter sense, a navy is proclaimed to have achieved naval supremacy when they have defeated the squadrons of capital ships possessed by their enemy; whereas in the former, true supremacy could not be achieved until the area is also cleansed of any torpedo craft which could potentially threaten, or otherwise harass, the safety of the transports involved. *Ibid.*, 5.

supplying “a large number of boats... [and] men accustomed to boat work” required to ferry the soldiers to their destination.⁴⁸

In regard to theories involving the limited application of naval resources during an amphibious operation, it appears that Pakenham was a proponent. He stated that if, like the Japanese, the attacker has not destroyed the enemy’s naval power, in the event of an amphibious invasion “the primary duty of the navy... is to over awe [*sic*] the enemy to such an extent as to keep [his battleships and cruisers] in port.”⁴⁹ In this obvious principle of amphibious warfare the IJN conformed to the policies touted by Pakenham and RN staff: ensuring that, during the debarkation of the Second Army on Liaodong peninsula in May 1904, energetic measures were taken to guarantee that the main body of the Russian Port Arthur fleet could not break out and wreak havoc upon transports.⁵⁰ This said, aside from ensuring against the intervention of Russian capital ships, during the course of the Second Army’s landing the Japanese successfully engaged in an amphibious operation under conditions which, according to the principles set down by Britain’s naval planners a mere month before, should have generally been avoided.

Among the most pressing of the supposed requirements for an amphibious invasion ignored by Japanese military planners was the belief that a landing must only be attempted along a beachhead on which it is guaranteed that there will be no resistance or chance of an immediate counterattack by the enemy upon the recently landed and, presumably, unconsolidated forces. Such guarantees were not in hand when the Second Army chose to disembark in an inlet on the Liaodong peninsula a mere 60 miles north of

⁴⁸ Henderson, “2nd Army Corps Staff Ride: The Naval Share of the Operation,” 5.

⁴⁹ Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

the main enemy base at Port Arthur, and only 20 miles from the sizable Russian military garrison at Dalian.⁵¹ Faced with the very real possibility of resistance to their landing, but determined to reap the potential benefits gained from claiming a forward foothold so close to their strategic objectives, the Japanese expanded the scope of their combined operations beyond what British maneuvers envisioned. Instead of their navy playing a relatively passive role in the invasion process, the IJN took center stage in this operation by providing 800 men from a specially trained naval landing brigade to take part in an initial amphibious assault on the beachhead which they would then subsequently defend while the army disembarked.⁵² Although the landing brigade encountered no Russian resistance on the beach and the Second Army would successfully land with no immediate interference from the enemy, the fact that the IJN had trained a relatively large number of its personnel for major amphibious manoeuvres under fire demonstrated a differing mindset than that of early twentieth century British officers claiming that the days of landing a force under fire had ended with the advent of the bolt-action rifle. As a result of this risk being taken, the Japanese were able to quickly advance upon the nearby railway station and telegraph office, thus cutting off all land-based communication between Port Arthur and all Russian forces outside of the Liaodong Peninsula.⁵³ Although Pakenham felt that the Japanese were “playing a bold and dangerous game” at sea by exposing their capital ships to potential torpedo attack while escorting the invasion fleet, he celebrated their decision to attempt a potential landing by assault, claiming that they had taken part in “a combined

⁵¹ Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵³ Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 7.

operation, which, in its magnitude and in its probable influence upon the futures of the two continents is perhaps without historical parallel.”⁵⁴

The cooperation between the Second Army and the IJN did not end with completion of the former’s debarkation. Instead, according to Pakenham’s reports, the cooperation between the army and navy would reach new levels of importance as the army’s advance toward Port Arthur collided with the first line of determined Russian resistance at Nanshan. As mentioned in the previous chapter, British Army observer Aylmer Haldane noted the formidability of the Russian defenses at Nanshan, which included such foretastes of the First World War as large tangles of barbed wired preceding entrenched machine gun positions.⁵⁵ Despite their determination and courage, the Japanese forces facing these positions suffered significant drawbacks, especially during their assaults against the formidable Russian left flank, the defense of which Pakenham compared to “the fanatical outbreaks of religious madness of half civilized peoples such as the Soudanese [sic].” Ultimately this dogged Russian resistance on the left flank was broken through a combined operation in which the intervention of fire from the ordnance of IJN gunboats, closely coordinated with a determined assault by the IJA’s infantry, allowed for the Japanese to smash through the Russian flank and subsequently precipitate a general Russian retreat from the rest of their defences along their Nanshan line of defense.⁵⁶ As a tribute to the cooperation between Japan’s two services, Pakenham

⁵⁴ Ultimately the Japanese decision to risk landing the Second Army on the Liaodong peninsula would allow them to advance down the peninsula at a much more rapid rate than the Russians expected. Thus, after the battle Nanshan, the Russians were forced to evacuate the crucial port of Dalian before they had a chance to destroy its vital docking facilities. Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 8; William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. Naval Proceedings, from the Capture of Kia-Chow to June 15th, 1904,” PKM 2/1/13, 7.

⁵⁵ Haldane, “Report by Lieut.-Colonel A.L. Haldane... 18th July 1904,” 60.

⁵⁶ Pakenham, “Narrative of Naval Proceedings from the Landing of the Second Army to the Capture of Kinchow,” 7-8.

reported that General Oku Yasukata, the Second Army's Commander, openly credited the IJN's support as being the key difference between his army's success and defeat in the battle.⁵⁷ The cooperation shown at Nanshan was not unique during the early part of the conflict, a period where a number of land engagements occurred in close proximity to the navy's realm of operation. Even during the first clashes between Russian and Japanese ground forces at the Yalu, Japanese gunboats progressed up river in order to aid in the army's dangerous crossing by supplying vital fire support on the Russian right flank.⁵⁸

Combined operations between the army and navy did not only directly benefit Japan's efforts on the ground; the army also offered its own support aiding the IJN's war at sea. Pakenham's reports note it was common knowledge among the ranks of the army that their continued success could only be guaranteed if the IJN maintained supremacy over their maritime lines of supply, reinforcement, and communication.⁵⁹ Due to this understanding, Pakenham cites numerous instances in which the IJA coordinated with their naval compatriots to deal with potential threats from the seas and coastlines around the Liaodong Peninsula. One such incident most celebrated by Pakenham occurred after

⁵⁷ The fact that Pakenham was so impressed and surprised by the fact that an army officer would admit that he owed his victory to naval support does much to hint at how prevalent inter-service rivalry was among the armed forces of contemporary western nations. Pakenham, "Narrative of Naval Proceedings from the Landing of the Second Army to the Capture of Kinchow," 8.

⁵⁸ This fire from the Japanese gunboats was used to both successfully force the retreat of Russian artillery resources and to bluff Russian commanders into falsely believing the main Japanese assault was to occur farther down river. *Ibid.*, 9-10; B. Vincent, et al., "Report by Captain B. Vincent, Royal Artillery, with Covering Remarks of Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., 5th June 1904," 51-52.

⁵⁹ In order to illustrate the understood dependence IJA operations had on Japanese success at sea, Pakenham compared the situation to "an old fable" where the "Japanese fleet in the Yellow Sea may be compared to a tortoise, on whose back... stands an elephant supporting the world." In Pakenham's mind the elephant represents the army while the world represents all of Japan's national aspirations and interests. This allegorical arrangement meant that, regardless of the elephant's strength and sure footing, if the tortoise were to collapse so too would the elephant and the world it supports. William Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Naval Proceedings from November 10th to December 5th, 1904," PKM 2/1/56, 1.

Japanese soldiers captured of the heights at Dalianwan. Up until this point Japanese ships had been having a difficult time performing the dangerous job of clearing sea mines from the approaches to the recently captured harbour at Dalian; this situation was altered when, through the aid of signals and directions transmitted from elevated army observation posts on Dalianwan, Japanese ships were able to quickly and efficiently clear the minefield with much fewer losses than when they had previously attempted the task alone.⁶⁰ In addition to this relatively minor example of the army supporting the navy's efforts to consolidate the surrounding seas, it was recognized that the entire siege of Port Arthur, an operation which cost the Third Army tens of thousands of soldiers killed and maimed, had been a coordinated effort aimed at eliminating the immediate threat posed by the Russians at sea.⁶¹ As well, although Pakenham and his Japanese associates initially expected the gradual encroachment of Japanese forces to force the Russian fleet to attempt to break out and be destroyed by the IJN's waiting battle fleet, in the end it would be the Third Army's heavy artillery, directed by spotters on hotly contested 203-Meter Hill, which would either sink or prompt the scuttling of Port Arthur's once proud Far Eastern Fleet.⁶²

⁶⁰ Due to the angle at which they could look down at the surrounding sea, the soldiers on Dalianwan could better see Russian mines lurking under the surface than sailors keeping look out from the deck of a gunboat or destroyer. William Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Naval Proceedings, from the Capture of Kia-Chow to June 15th, 1904," 7.

⁶¹ During and immediately after the war, it was generally agreed upon by British strategic analysts that the capture of Port Arthur itself held little importance to Japan's overall strategic objectives during the war. Instead, it was the presence of, and threat posed by, the Russian fleet which prompted the Japanese Second, and later Third, armies to sacrifice so much blood and effort to in the many months spent besieging the fortress. Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 258.

⁶² According to Pakenham, there was an air of disappointment among Japanese naval personnel following the sinking of the Port Arthur fleet through long range army artillery fire. Like all officers raised in the British tradition of the decisive Nelsonian set-piece battle those serving aboard Japanese capital ships were hoping that they would be given the opportunity to prove their mettle by having the honour of destroying Russia's naval power in the region. Although Pakenham was sympathetic to these sentiments, he had spent months fretting over the potential fate of Japan's irreplaceable battleships, of which the loss of one or two would likely occur as a result of even a victorious fleet action. With the pending arrival of Russia's former

During the course of 1904, the high-commands of the Japanese army and navy had managed, through an atmosphere of mutual respect and a system of close cooperation, to work together toward the nearly complete dismantling of Russian sea power in East Asia. Although this objective was achieved through a long and drawn-out campaign which lacked any of the pretensions of glory which accompanied a quick and decisive fleet action, Pakenham was convinced that, having destroyed the Russian fleet without losing a single ship, the Japanese had achieved a much more satisfactory and noteworthy conclusion than could ever have been achieved through a conventional clash between battleships.⁶³ During the course of the campaign on and around the Liaodong Peninsula, the armed forces of Japan demonstrated a superior degree of collaboration between its two primary services in pursuing the single, and mutually beneficial, objective of securing maritime supremacy in the region. Pakenham's reports regarding the effectiveness of this collaboration, as well as the demonstration of its obvious importance to maintaining the expeditionary power of an island nation like Japan or Britain, had a profound effect on the theories and opinions of contemporary military and naval theorists such as Royal Marine officer George Aston and Julian Corbett, both of

Baltic Fleet, Pakenham appeared to be relieved that the two Japanese services had been able to cooperate in such a way as to eliminate the naval threat from Port Arthur without further loss to Japan's precious battleships and cruisers. William Pakenham, "Naval Proceedings from November 10th to December 12th, 1904," PKM 2/1/28, 8.

⁶³ Although Pakenham was satisfied with the relatively light casualties suffered by the IJN in terms of men and, more importantly, material, he was not blind to the fact that the Third Army itself suffered horrific casualties in the pursuit of diminishing the Russian fleet. That said, he was convinced that, in light of their nation's strategic position and due to Japanese society's supposed patriotic acceptance and lionization of military sacrifice, the Japanese could much better afford tens of thousands of soldiers dead or maimed than lose a single battleship. Pakenham, "Naval Proceedings from November 10th to December 12th, 1904," 8.

whom regarded the war as an excellent argument for the necessity of combined operations in British military planning.⁶⁴

Although coming close on two occasions, the IJN was able to destroy Russia's initial naval presence without ever engaging in a decisive fleet action. Instead, as has been shown above, the Japanese achieved full maritime supremacy through their army and navy waging a prolonged combined operation which, through gradual attrition, eventually ended in the complete collapse of the IRN's ability to immediately exert its strength in the Pacific. Despite this form of attritional warfare making up the majority of the Russo-Japanese War's naval losses, as well as composing the vast amount of Pakenham's reports, to most of those familiar with the war's events, the drawn out destruction of the Port Arthur fleet was eclipsed a few months later by the much more dramatic, decisive, and, in regard to the actual balance of power at sea, possibly less important Battle of Tsushima. Two months after the rout of the Russian army at Shenyang, Tsushima would turn out to be the last major clash between Japanese and Russian forces during the war and, as such, has been immortalized as the coup de grace which supposedly brought the Tsar and his ministers to their knees.⁶⁵ Due to it being the final significant confrontation of the war, Tsushima is often cited as proof that the

⁶⁴ While writing his official British history of the maritime aspect of the war, Corbett concluded that one of the most pertinent lessons that could be learned by British naval thinkers was that, when waging a continental war against a power with sizable naval strength, island-bound powers must prioritize a defensive policy directed at working with the army in order to protect an expeditionary force's lines of supply and communication. This is not to say that Corbett believed a decisive fleet action should have been entirely avoided, he simply advocated that such an action should ideally be fought as a defensive measure rather than the defending navy risking everything by seeking out such an action in the hopes of guaranteeing a quick and decisive path to maritime supremacy. Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Volume II* 382-384.

⁶⁵ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 338.

“decisive fleet” action still held primacy as the best way to turn the tide in a contest between naval powers.

Given the RN’s traditional dedication to the cult of the “decisive fleet action,” one would have expected that Pakenham would have shared in the popular mania surrounding the supposed significance of Tsushima. In reality, though highly impressed with the way in which the Japanese were able to destroy the Baltic Fleet with negligible losses to themselves, Pakenham regarded Tsushima as merely the final nail in the coffin for the IRN rather than the war’s decisive turning point.⁶⁶ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Pakenham’s reports prior to December 1904 maintain a near constant anxiety regarding the possibility of Japan losing the war at sea. Much of this anxiety stemmed from the possibility that, even in the event of a victory against the Russia’s Port Arthur fleet, the loss of two or three Japanese battleships would potentially put the Japanese at a grave disadvantage come the arrival of Russia’s reinforcements from the Baltic.⁶⁷ Thus, when the Port Arthur fleet was destroyed with minimal losses to Japan’s capital ships, Pakenham’s former anxiety appeared to be almost completely alleviated as he and his hosts were given months to prepare for the highly publicized arrival of Russia’s inexperienced Baltic Fleet.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ In one of his reports regarding the battle, Pakenham claims that “if at Tsushima success was more sensational,” actions against Port Arthur in the summer of 1904 “had tested Japanese military qualities more severely.” William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. The Battle of the Sea of Japan. May 27th, 1905. Witnessed from the *Asahi*. Kobe Time,” PKM 2/1/41, 1.

⁶⁷ Pakenham, “Naval Proceedings from November 10th to December 12th, 1904,” 8.

⁶⁸ During the months that elapsed between the fall of Port Arthur and the arrival of the Baltic Fleet, Pakenham had the opportunity to speak with some of the captured officers from Russia’s formerly proud Port Arthur fleet. These men almost universally declared that the Baltic Fleet’s mission was folly and that the IJN was “too strong and clever” for their compatriots to defeat. William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. Various Naval Subjects,” PKM 2/1/50, May 26, 1905, 12.

During the long wait for the Baltic Fleet's arrival, Pakenham noted how it was common for Japanese politicians and officers to openly show skepticism regarding the possibility of the Baltic Fleet doing anything to disrupt the momentum of Japan's war effort.⁶⁹ Although, on its surface, this dismissal of the Russian naval threat may seem like bravado born from the Japanese navy's success and good fortune to this point, these assessments were most likely already ingrained within the IJN based on nearly a decade of threat assessment from their RN allies. These assessments had established that the IRN, despite having pockets of brilliance, was thoroughly mismanaged and at a severe disadvantage against a navy organized and equipped on the British model.⁷⁰ Given the success Japan had achieved in keeping the Pacific Fleet effectively bottled up in Port Arthur, it would have probably appeared to both the Japanese and British admiralty that these threat assessments were in many ways correct. Although his anxieties had been softened after the fall of Port Arthur, and though he admitted that "the former strategic blindness of the Russians give[s] grounds for hope," Pakenham still cautioned that the Japanese should not completely dismiss the threat posed by the Baltic Fleet, especially if they showed the same proficiency for gunnery as their compatriots at Port Arthur. That said, Pakenham seemed to doubt that the Baltic Fleet would achieve the complete annihilation of Japanese sea power in one battle and that, as a result, the most they could hope for was the achievement of temporary maritime supremacy. Pakenham further theorized that as long as the army in Manchuria achieved a major victory before the

⁶⁹ In fact, Pakenham noted that many Japanese, especially politicians, claimed that due to its inevitable destruction, the arrival of the Baltic Fleet in the Sea of Japan would be a stroke of luck for Japan. William Pakenham, "Interview with Ministers, etc.," January 30, 1905, PKM 2/1/32, 11.

⁷⁰ Matthew S. Seligmann, "Britain's Great Security Mirage: The Royal Navy and the Franco-Russian Naval Threat, 1898-1906," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 6 (December 2012): 867.

fleet's arrival the Japanese military position on the continent would not be unduly hazarded by any major IJN setback at sea.⁷¹

Although it appears that Pakenham believed the naval war had swung decisively in Japan's favour with the destruction of the Port Arthur fleet in December 1904, his reports from the Battle of Tsushima, which he witnessed from the deck of the battleship *Asahi*, still reflected important insights regarding the future of fleet actions in the twentieth century. The first of these insights revealed the great distances at which the battle had been fought. Whereas in the fleet actions of previous centuries, the nature of gunnery had meant that fleets were required to engage one-another at close range and in relatively tight formations, the clash between the Japanese and Russian fleets had frequently been waged at distances between 5000 meters (5 kilometers) and 8000 meters (8 kilometers) from one another.⁷² Aside from preventing him from possibly witnessing every event on this massive battlefield, these distances, combined with a heavy mist prevailing throughout the day, meant that Tōgō and his staff were unaware of the true totality of their victory until nearly a day after the fleets had disengaged. This state of affairs prompted Pakenham to proclaim this clash against an "imperfectly seen enemy," as having an almost unreal quality which he felt entitled it to the poetic nickname of the "battle of shadows."⁷³

In addition to revealing a new atmosphere of uncertainty during battle, the great distances in which Tsushima was waged appeared to Pakenham as proof of the primacy of big guns in any battle between capital ships. Pakenham noted that, although the

⁷¹ Pakenham, "Interviews with Ministers, etc.," 11-12.

⁷² Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. The Battle of the Sea of Japan. May 27th, 1905," 22, 28.

⁷³ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. The Battle of the Sea of Japan. May 27th, 1905," 32.

Russians were able to score a number of hits with their 6-inch ordnance at vast ranges, the damage caused to the battleship's structure by these shells was considered negligible.⁷⁴ This fueled opinions in Britain which claimed that future primary vessels should have their secondary armaments limited, if not removed altogether.⁷⁵ In addition to the obvious power of the heavy guns utilized during Tsushima, Pakenham credited the uniquely excellent effect reaped by the Japanese guns to their use of the much publicized Shimose pattern H.E. shells. Previously Pakenham had expressed disinterest in the potential of these shells during operations around Port Arthur, where they had caused more damage to Japanese ships through premature detonation than they did to the Russians. Since then the Japanese had "through the rejection of shells of inferior manufactures, by better protection of base-fuses, and by stricter precautions against overheating," been able to eliminate the problem of premature detonation during the Battle of Tsushima. As well, Pakenham claimed that the addition of new delayed fuses, mixed with the Japanese ability to sustain accurate fire allowed the shells to rapidly pierce the armour of Russian battleships. Due to these reforms in the utilization of this ordnance, Pakenham claimed the Shimose shells had gone from a relative non-starter, to "exceeding all its fondest admirers had formerly predicted."⁷⁶

While Tsushima had shown the new realities of long range gunnery on the modern naval battlefield, Pakenham noted that the battle had also demonstrated that some fleet action principles remained relatively unchanged. One of the most prominent of these

⁷⁴ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. The Battle of the Sea of Japan. May 27th, 1905," 7.

⁷⁵ Commenting on a scheme proposed by Japanese officers to have the 6-inch guns replaced on their battleships with slightly larger 8-inch guns, Pakenham believes that they should go even further and have all batteries of 6-inch guns replaced with additional heavy 10-inch ordnance instead. William Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Various Naval Topics," PKM 2/1/52, May 20, 1905, 13.

⁷⁶ William Pakenham, "Some Factors of Japanese Success," PKM 2/1/44, 22-23.

principles was regarding how fleets maneuvered. Throughout the entire battle, Pakenham noted that Tōgō's main battle fleet maintained a typical line formation. Pakenham concedes that, though this form of manoeuver may seem unimaginative, "so long as fleets will not venture within torpedo range of one another, it is difficult to conceive any other way of breaking the formation of the enemy than by gun attack exerted from a distance," and, as such, a collective broadside from ships organized into a line remained the most effective method of delivering the greatest amount of firepower possible.⁷⁷

As the sole naval conflict fought between the turn of the twentieth century and the outbreak of the First World War, the Russo-Japanese War stood as a proof of a number of concepts which were previously regarded as hypothetical amongst naval thinkers around the globe.⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, the campaign around Port Arthur had demonstrated the formidability of mines and, to a lesser extent torpedoes, as weapons capable of menacing even the largest of capital ships in a coastal area of operations. As was previously mentioned, the sinking of the *Petropavlovsk*, *Yashima*, and *Hatsuse* weighed heavily on British naval planners in the years leading up to the First World War, leading them to agree maintain an unprecedentedly wide blockade of Germany's North Sea ports during the war. This cautionary attitude was not adopted without good reason, as the effective use of sub-surface weapons during the Russo-Japanese War had also inspired the German admiralty which, understanding Britain's superiority in numbers, utilized torpedo craft and mines in an attritional effort to destroy British capital ships and even the odds for an eventual fleet action.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. The Battle of the Sea of Japan. May 27th, 1905," 39.

⁷⁸ Rotem Kowner, "The Impact on Naval Warfare," *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, Rotem Kowner, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 269.

⁷⁹ Halpern, "The War at Sea," 103.

While the events around Port Arthur served to show the practical use of some of the newer methods of naval warfare, the Battle of Tsushima was seen by most western thinkers as a confirmation of the battleship's prime place in a fleet's order of battle. As the late nineteenth century saw the advent of more and more effective models of mechanical mines and torpedo craft, there arose critics who questioned if it was even in a nation's interest to invest the massive amount of money and materials necessary to create a battleship if, in the end, this investment might just end up being destroyed by accidentally striking a mine or receiving a hit from a torpedo launched from a destroyer or cruiser, both of which were relatively economical in their construction.⁸⁰ While the blockade of Port Arthur seemed to have temporarily demonstrated the primacy of the small torpedo craft in maritime warfare, Pakenham claimed that the events of the blockade did not prove that the battleship was obsolete, it merely established that, in order to avoid destruction, a nation's battle fleet could no longer take part in coastal actions which might make them the victims of torpedo boats or mine collisions. Instead, Pakenham proposed that battleships be kept in reserve until they were given the opportunity to do what they were meant to, engage in decisive battle on the high seas.⁸¹ Having proven Pakenham's assertions correct, the Battle of Tsushima showed that, when a nation needed to achieve decisive results at sea, the battleship was still the weapon best suited to the job. This reality worked to inspire the subsequent battleship-focused direction of naval development in both Britain and Germany in the years between 1905 and 1914, and had, during the First World War, encouraged a belief among their

⁸⁰ Kowner, "The Impact on Naval Warfare," 270.

⁸¹ Pakenham, "Battleship, Small-Craft, and Underwater Attack," 1, 6.

respective officers that one day of fighting between their capital ships could decide which nation would attain mastery of European seas.⁸²

Although its sheer size did not allow Pakenham to witness every aspect of the Battle of Tsushima, his reports gave interested parties in Britain an intimate demonstration of the new realities surrounding the twentieth century fleet action. A battle which was entirely settled through the large ordnance of capital ships, Tsushima demonstrated the utility of the battleship and heavy cruiser in an era where the advent of torpedoes and mines had brought their continued existence into question. The triumph of the speed and heavy guns of Tōgō's ships proved inspirational to British naval policy makers who, though they had already set forth to build their revolutionary *Dreadnought* battleship, had used Pakenham's reports from Tsushima as a confirmation of the factors included in its design.⁸³ Despite the factor played by Japanese hardware during the battle, Pakenham conceded his belief that "the warrior has always shewed [*sic*] himself greater than his weapons," and that, at Tsushima as well during the entire war, the greatest factor behind the IJN's victory was the courage, determination, and aggression of the Japanese officers and enlisted personnel.⁸⁴

After observing the naval war fought between the Japanese and Russians, Pakenham appeared to be convinced that the string of Japanese victories was not due to the Japanese possessing any sort of technological or tactical superiority over their Russian foes, both aspects of which Pakenham believed the IJN had not, overall, proven any more remarkable than the other major naval powers of the era. Instead, just like his

⁸² Kowner, "The Impact on Naval Warfare," 269.

⁸³ Kowner, "The Impact on Naval Warfare," 275.

⁸⁴ Dunley, "The Warrior has Always Shewd Himself Greater than his Weapons," 260.

contemporaries attached to the Japanese army, Pakenham believed that much of the Japanese success could be attributed to the skill and courage shown by all levels of the IJN's personnel. In fact, so impressed was Pakenham with the success of Japanese sailors and their officers that he proclaimed the primary lessons to be gained from the Russo-Japanese War at sea was that, though he and his contemporaries were living in the age of steam and long range cannons, ultimately "it is still the man who counts in war."⁸⁵

With this in mind, and because their training and organization were so heavily influenced by the example set by his own RN, it should not come as a surprise that a substantial portion of Pakenham's reports concerned the skill and character of both the IJN's commissioned and enlisted personnel. Much like the IJA, one of the most obvious differences between the IJN and contemporary British military services was the fact that the majority of its men were conscripted rather than volunteers.⁸⁶ After passing just as selective a recruitment process as that possessed by the army, a Japanese naval conscript was expected to serve eight years on active service.⁸⁷ During this eight year period, the sailor was relied upon to perfect his trade, with Pakenham reporting that both the IJN's enlisted men and officers frequently exhibited a superior degree of skill, discipline, and dedication in the execution of their duty.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Pakenham, "Interview with Ministers, etc.," 4-5.

⁸⁶ The General Staff, *The Russo-Japanese War, Part I* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), 23.

⁸⁷ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 36.

⁸⁸ The celebration of the skill and experience of Japanese sailors stood in direct contrast to the reputation of their enlisted Russian counterparts. Many of the men in the Russian Pacific Fleet were recently called up reservists who, though exhibiting unparalleled courage while fighting both at sea as well as on land, suffered from a severe lack of practice when manning the fleet. According to Aston this lack of experience and skill became especially obvious when, in March 1904, the Pacific Fleet suffered a three-way collision when attempting a basic maneuver within the confines of Port Arthur. Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 289-290.

As mentioned in the second chapter, through a combination of social pressures and Meiji-era educational reforms, nearly all men in Japan had spent their entire lives being indoctrinated with the belief that it was their sacred duty to render dedicated military service to, as well as potentially sacrifice their lives for, their nation and emperor when required. Although pressed into a different service, the IJN's draftees were, through their childhoods and adolescence, subject to the same education as their army counterparts and, as a result, showed much the same spirit of sacrifice and determination when engaged in battle at sea. In fact, Pakenham claimed that it was "the chivalrous spirit of courage and self-sacrifice (*Bushido*) [his parenthesis] exhibited by all [sailors and officers] in the field" which allowed for the Japanese navy to achieve the success it did in the face of often overwhelming odds.⁸⁹

During the course of the IJN's campaign for maritime supremacy, there were numerous instances in which Pakenham made mention of conspicuously courageous or decisive acts performed by men of all ranks serving aboard Japanese vessels. One of the greatest displays occurred during one of the most unconventional manoeuvres associated with the Russo-Japanese War at sea. Inspired by an ambitious idea proposed by an IJN Commander named Arima Ryokitsu, Tōgō decided it might be possible to resolve, if only temporarily, the threat posed by the Port Arthur fleet by purposely sinking antiquated merchant ships in the harbour entrance and, in the words of historian Richard Connaughton, "virtually turning the harbour into a lake."⁹⁰ The Japanese would attempt

⁸⁹ Pakenham, "Interview with Ministers, etc.," 5.

⁹⁰ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 53.

two nocturnal blocking operations, and though both would be unsuccessful, Pakenham was awed by the determination and bravery shown by the men in their attempts.⁹¹

Considering the men who took part in the second blocking attempt in June 1904, Pakenham was impressed how, even when separated from one another by heavy seas, the crews of these nine ships “seemed to have behaved with equal gallantry” while steaming full speed toward the harbour beneath the guns of the Russian shore batteries.⁹² Claiming that their “courageous self-devotion is beyond all praise; [and] even more so [their] fortitude,” the men and officers of the blocking action exhibited courage, seamanship and “a feat of heroism which, by itself, would adorn the naval records of any country.”⁹³ Although the deeds of the blocking ships were celebrated at length, Pakenham later noted that the admirable traits shown by the men performing this unusual task were also common amongst those manning the torpedo boats and destroyers which maintained the Port Arthur blockade.⁹⁴ Facing often unimaginably inclement conditions in the frigid Yellow Sea during the autumn and winter of 1904, Pakenham marvelled at the fortitude of the men manning the IJN’s torpedo fleet as they “cheerfully exposed themselves night after night to a miserable death... [while] they were [also] enduring much physical suffering” from the elements around them.⁹⁵ So banal was this courage and perseverance

⁹¹ Among the seventy sailors who manned these blocking ships the enlisted men were all volunteers who joined the mission despite it being generally assumed there was little prospect of them returning alive. Despite the danger, over 2,000 applications were submitted, some of which were reportedly written in the applicants’ blood. Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 53.

⁹² Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 10.

⁹³ Pakenham later compares the deeds of the blocking ships to the bold actions committed by the USS *Merrimac* during the War of 1812, claiming that the latter’s deeds seemed “an exhibition of childish folly” by comparison. Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War: Narrative of Naval Co-operation with the Transport and Landing of the Second Army,” 14.

⁹⁴ William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. Naval Proceedings from July 6th to July 10th, 1904,” PKM 2/1/18, 15.

⁹⁵ William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. Attacks by Japanese TBTs upon *Sevastopol*, 12/04,” April 19, 1905, PKM 2/1/37, 2.

shown by Japanese sailors in the face of danger and death that it was reported how, much like in the Japanese army, feats which would have garnered great fanfare in Britain appeared to be taken for granted among the Japanese.⁹⁶

Although Pakenham was impressed with the courage and decisiveness demonstrated by all those serving in the Imperial Japanese Navy, he was particularly inspired by the superior training and courage of those serving in the IJN's officer class. Whereas officers in the IRN were largely dilettantes who were given their positions based on "who they knew rather than what they knew," the officers in the IJN were imbued with the same professionalism and dedication to their education as their counterparts in the IJA.⁹⁷ As well, unlike the IRN which has been described as being "not a happy service" possessing an atmosphere of distrust and contention between officers and their sailors, relations between the IJN's commissioned and enlisted ranks were characterized as remarkably genial, thus fostering a spirit of faithful loyalty generally unseen among their Russian counterparts.⁹⁸ One of the traits which Pakenham felt particularly distinguished Japanese naval officers from many of their European contemporaries was the way in which the commanding officers of the ships in Tōgō's fleet were encouraged to use independent thinking and action in order to potentially make the most of any opportunities that presented themselves. This appeared to be particularly true with the officers serving aboard the fleet's destroyers and torpedo boats, whose collective deeds

⁹⁶ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: Naval Proceedings from July 6th to July 10th, 1904," 17.

⁹⁷ Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 36.

⁹⁸ One way in which the Japanese navy encouraged close relations between their officers and men was through the organization of sports days where both the men and junior officers would compete against each other. According to Pakenham, the most popular of these contests between the ranks were judo competitions which he characterized as a "most excellent form of wrestling... [which possessed] none of the brutality inseparable from boxing" and which he suggested "would be an admirable game for the youth of the British navy." Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: Naval Proceedings from July 6th to July 10th, 1904," 15; Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 21.

held prominent place in Pakenham's reports during the "neither glorious nor attractive, but none the less important" duty of blockading of Port Arthur.⁹⁹

Although their duties lacked many of the traditional ideas of naval glory, and despite the fact that it was widely acknowledged that assignment to the "torpedo flotilla" was a guaranteed slow path to further promotion, knowledge of which Pakenham claims would have demoralized the officers of a western navy, it was noted how the officers aboard these vessels did not seem deterred by the nature of their service or lack of prospects of rank advancement and continued to "render unequalled service" regardless of these facts.¹⁰⁰ Celebrated for their ability to maintain a state of logistical and command self-sufficiency while partaking in operations away from the supervision of Admiral Tōgō and his staff, the officers and crew of the "torpedo flotilla" never slackened in their duty despite the fatigue of being frequently called upon to suddenly take part in minor but furious actions.¹⁰¹

As well as being celebrated for their dutiful service and the self-sufficient nature of the vessels they commanded, Pakenham was impressed by the way in which Japanese naval officers bore their commands with immense courage under pressure. One demonstration of the seemingly unshakable courage and determination of Japanese officers occurred when, after the sinking of the battleship *Hatsute* by a mine, Captain Nashiba, the ship's commanding officer, was picked up by the dispatch vessel *Tatsuta*

⁹⁹ Pakenham, "Narrative of Naval Proceedings from the Landing of the Second Army to the Capture of Kinchow," 1.

¹⁰⁰ The superior service rendered in the face of banal duties and poor career prospects speaks largely to a statement later made by Aston when celebrating Japanese society's subscription to *Bushido* as a "doctrine... based upon self-sacrifice, and not upon self-advancement... in which so large a portion of the population of western countries is educated." Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: Naval Proceedings from July 6th to July 10th, 1904," 16; Aston, *Letters on Amphibious Wars*, 215.

¹⁰¹ Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: Naval Proceedings from July 6th to July 10th, 1904," 16-17.

and, unfazed by his near death experience, ordered all remaining vessels to make full steam toward a group of Russian destroyers which were dispatched to take advantage of the confusion.¹⁰² Similarly, Pakenham was also greatly impressed by the bravery shown by some of the officers attached to the blocking ships who, after grounding their vessels, led their men in storming the nearest position in the Port Arthur fortifications. Although this action was obviously futile, Pakenham still claimed it was an excellent demonstration of the spirit of valour and self-sacrifice which he believed pervaded the IJN's personnel, and which he would have welcomed among the ranks of the RN.¹⁰³

As previously mentioned, Pakenham initially credited much of the Japanese naval success during the course of Port Arthur's blockade to the superior courage and determination of their naval personnel rather than to any superiority in their gunnery or in maneuver.¹⁰⁴ This would remain Pakenham's assessment throughout the war until, after witnessing the Battle of Tsushima, he conceded that the men of the Japanese navy had used their prior battlefield experiences in order to greatly improve upon the more lackluster aspects of their service. Crediting the decisive victory achieved at Tsushima as being "in the first place a triumph of the gunner and the gun," Pakenham was impressed with the improvement in accuracy shown by the IJN's gunnery officers and ratings.

¹⁰² This sudden act of determined aggression on the part of the Japanese vessels would immediately cause the Russian destroyers to withdraw, something which Pakenham claimed was a cause of great disappointment for vengeance-minded Nashiba. William Pakenham, "Japanese Change of Front. Blockade of Port Arthur," PKM 2/1/7, 8A.

¹⁰³ Pakenham, "Narrative of Naval Proceedings from the Landing of the Second Army to the Capture of Kinchow," 3-4.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, after witnessing the clash between the Japanese and Russian fleets on August 10, 1904, Pakenham appeared to be rather unimpressed with the state of the Japanese gunnery when compared to the Russians. Pointing out that, although the Japanese were technically victorious in that they forced the majority of the Russian fleet back into Port Arthur, the ratio of only 15 confirmed hits with their long-range guns out of a total of approximately 400 shells fired left much to be desired. William Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War: August 10th, 1904," PKM 2/1/21, 25.

Pakenham credits this increase in accuracy as being the result of the IJN taking advantage of the naval war's five month hiatus between the surrender of Port Arthur and the battle of Tsushima to feverishly train and drill their men on improved gunnery techniques which were devised by their officers, who made "shooting... the principal topic of thought and conversation for months."¹⁰⁵ Thus, much like their compatriots in the army, the Japanese navy showed to their British allies that they possessed a degree of self-awareness that allowed for them to recognize the critical weaknesses in their service and thereby take effective measures to correct them.¹⁰⁶

Although Pakenham credited the IJN's success to the efforts of personnel at every level of its establishment, there was one particular figure whom he believed was owed more credit than any other for the victories Japan achieved at sea. As with most modern militaries, all Japanese forces in the field or at sea were each overseen by a single supreme commander and his staff. Interestingly, Marshal Oyama, the supreme commander of Japanese ground forces in Korea and Manchuria, garnered relatively little mention in the reports of the British army officers assigned to Japan's four field armies. Instead, it was the decisions and deeds of the various Japanese field army commanders -- Generals Oku, Kuroki, and Nogi -- that garnered the most coverage in the army observer reports. This divided attention meant that neither Oyama, nor any of these other three men stood out in the same tradition as Britain's historical military heroes such as the

¹⁰⁵ Pakenham, "Some Factors of Japanese Success," 24.

¹⁰⁶ One small, but interesting, technique used to motivate the gunners aboard the battleship *Mikasa* related directly to the Japanese admiration for the allies in the RN. According to Pakenham, one of the *Mikasa's* senior officers had a picture published in *The Graphic*, a British illustrated newspaper, posted up on the ship's notice board. The picture was of a RN seaman standing beside a canvas target with a caption, which the officer had translated into Japanese, stating that King Edward himself had celebrating the man's ability to score seven out of eight hits with a 6-inch gun. Pakenham claims that this particular article was posted in order to "excite the emulation of the captains of guns," so that they might receive such praise from their own divine Emperor. Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Various Naval Subjects," 10.

Dukes of Marlborough or Wellington. That is to say, none of these men, despite the success of their individual armies, were characterized as figures to whom Japan's overall victory was nearly singlehandedly attributed. Despite the ground war's lack of a single "man of destiny," Pakenham, and eventually the rest of the world, appeared quick to attribute nearly all of Japan's naval success to the decisions and actions of one man: the fleet's commander-in-chief Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō.

In the five months that elapsed between the fall of Port Arthur and the decisive clash with Russia's so-called Second Pacific Fleet at Tsushima, Pakenham used the long lapse in naval operations to reflect on his experiences and composed what were essentially essays regarding what lessons could be extracted from how the Japanese and Russians handled their respective naval resources. Among these papers written for the consumption of his superiors was a piece titled "Togo; The Admiral of Today," which explained how, given his victories in the face of the challenges brought on by his nation's comparative limitations in materials, Tōgō had proven himself to be the perfect example of a modern twentieth century admiral. Although Pakenham had a number of reasons for considering Tōgō an inspirational fleet commander, the primary reason given for this status was his ability to adapt to the modern system in which recent advancements in communication technology allowed for the admiral at sea to be in nearly constant contact with his superiors in the admiralty. This arrangement meant that admirals such as Tōgō were primarily expected to loyally carry out the big picture strategies prepared by the admiralty staff, as well as follow any orders which might have been sent through wireless telegraphy. Although Pakenham conceded that the Japanese admiralty drafted an effective maritime strategy for Tōgō to enforce, what made him an exceptionally

successful admiral was his ability to quickly adopt his own strategies and tactics in the face of events and circumstances which would have been previously unforeseen by his deskbound superiors in Tokyo.¹⁰⁷

One event frequently cited by Pakenham as an example of Tōgō successfully demonstrating superior instinct in direct opposition to official orders from the admiralty occurred on June 23, 1904, when he prevented the first attempt by the Russian Pacific Fleet to escape the Japanese blockade around Port Arthur. Prior to this action Tōgō had been expecting to face an enemy which had been greatly weakened through attrition, but instead found a fleet possessing superior numbers to his own.¹⁰⁸ According to Pakenham, had Tōgō blindly followed the overall strategy laid down in Tokyo, he would have attempted to preserve his battle fleet by declining to battle the larger Russian formation, thus allowing the Russians to escape their Port Arthur prison and potentially threaten Japanese maritime supremacy in the region.¹⁰⁹ Rather than withdraw and risk the potentially disastrous outcome that would result from the Russian fleet being free of the confines of Port Arthur, Tōgō ordered that his ships meet the Russians head on and offered his officers and crew a brief, obviously Nelsonian inspired, address in which he claimed that the coming battle would decide the fate of their country followed by an order that “everyone will do his best.”¹¹⁰ The result of this bold action was the Russians losing their nerve and retreating back into Port Arthur without the Japanese even firing a

¹⁰⁷ William Pakenham, “The Russo-Japanese War. Togo; the Admiral of Today,” PKM 2/1/34, 17.

¹⁰⁸ William Pakenham, “June 23rd, 1904,” PKM 2/1/14, 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ After examining Russian documents after the war Corbett concluded that the Russian orders on June 23 were actually not to mount an escape from Port Arthur, but rather to take a three-day cruise of the waters surrounding the Liaodong Peninsula. During this cruise, the fleet was to “assist their comrades ashore in the defense of Port Arthur” and be prepared to “engage the enemy should he be met in suitable force.” Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Volume I*, 148; Pakenham, “June 23rd, 1904,” 10.

¹¹⁰ Pakenham, “June 23rd, 1904,” 4.

shot.¹¹¹ Although this sortie would lack decisiveness in terms of the destruction of the IRN's material strength, thanks to Tōgō's unwavering determination and superior instincts, the Japanese gained an important moral victory and Russian ships were still confined to Port Arthur, thus making June 23, in Pakenham's mind, "one of the most remarkable victories in [naval] history."¹¹²

Although Pakenham recognized his superior skill and ability throughout the Port Arthur blockade, Tōgō's legacy in Japan, as well as his status as a world celebrity, would be secured through his swift and triumphant victory over Russia's Second Pacific Fleet at Tsushima on May 27, 1905, an action which would also prompt Pakenham to proclaim the admiral as an uncontested "lord of battlefields."¹¹³ Pakenham wrote compellingly about how, from the outset of this battle, Tōgō went to great lengths to demonstrate the characteristic spirit of courage and decisiveness with which he led his fleet, declining to settle for the safest route of attacking the relatively weak target presented by the enemy's cruisers, Tōgō instead steamed toward, and concentrated his fire on, the heaviest ships in the Russian fleet: an aggressive maneuver which, though risky, achieved great success.¹¹⁴ Through the use of such aggressive tactics throughout the battle, combined with the superior maneuvering and gunnery shown by the officers and men under his command, Tōgō was, in mere hours, able to achieve a victory which both decided the war at sea and,

¹¹¹ Pakenham, "June 23rd, 1904," 8.

¹¹² The fact that no Russian ships would be destroyed in this sortie was largely due to Tōgō ordering his battle fleet to not pursue the Russians in their route. Although some may have accused Tōgō of not taking full advantage of the Russian retreat, the order was celebrated by Pakenham as once again demonstrating the admiral's superior wisdom as, by practicing restraint, he had potentially prevented unnecessary losses among his battleships and cruisers. Pakenham, "June 23rd, 1904," 10; Pakenham, "The Russo-Japanese War. Togo; the Admiral of Today," 14.

¹¹³ Pakenham, "Some Factors of Japanese Success," 30a.

¹¹⁴ William Pakenham, "The Battle of the Tsushima Straits," CAB 37/78/104, 3.

combined with the IJA's victory at Shenyang and domestic anti-war sentiment in St. Petersburg, ultimately convinced the Russian government to discuss terms for peace.¹¹⁵

Although Pakenham did not directly touch upon it, as shown in Chapter One, in the wake of Tōgō's victory at the Battle of Tsushima British press outlets were keen to point out the fact that the admiral was, like most of his contemporaries in the IJN, a product of direct RN education. Papers like the *Observer* and *The Times* made much of the parallels between Tōgō's total victory and the similar achievement of Nelson a century before.¹¹⁶ These allusions connecting two men separated by one hundred years and ten thousand kilometers was made less hyperbolic by the fact that the careers of both men were formed by their respective RN educations. In the early 1870s Tōgō had been sent to serve as a cadet in the RN, receiving the exact same education given to all contemporary British admirals.¹¹⁷ Having spent his formative years serving in the RN, it is unsurprising that there were statements within the British press which pointed to Tōgō and his victories as proof that, though the RN had not yet engaged in a modern fleet action, the education and training given to the RN officers was as superior in 1905 as it had been in 1805.¹¹⁸

Having taken direct control of nearly every major confrontation between his fleet and their Russian enemies, this "Nelson of the East" had, through equal parts action and enviable self-restraint, and with relatively negligible losses, allowed for his nation to retain nearly absolute maritime supremacy in seas which surrounded both the primary

¹¹⁵ Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, Volume I*, 59.

¹¹⁶ "The Week of Victory," 4.

¹¹⁷ Dunley, "The Warrior has Always Shewd Himself Greater than his Weapons," 251.

¹¹⁸ "The War in the Far East," 6.

theatre of war as well as their own island-bound metropole.¹¹⁹ Recognizing that the primary strength of the IJN lay in the courage, skill, and decisive character of the men who manned it, Pakenham trumpeted Tōgō as a personification of these virtues claiming that “if a country was ever saved by the actions of one man, Japan was... saved by Tōgō.”¹²⁰ With these sentiments frequently expressed throughout his reports while serving with the Japanese navy, it becomes obvious that Pakenham greatly admired Tōgō not only as an asset to the consolidation of an ally’s sea-power; but also a living tribute to the primacy of British naval training and a figure whose virtues all naval officers, whether Japanese or British, should aspire to emulate.

The war fought for naval superiority in the seas and coastlines between Japan and Manchuria in 1904 and 1905 demonstrated unique lessons in nearly every aspect of early twentieth century maritime warfare. Through long blockades, amphibious landings, and a decisive fleet action the IJN, accompanied by Pakenham, experienced first-hand the effects of, and dangers posed by, such modern aspects of naval war as long-range gunnery and sub-surface weaponry. As well as commenting upon the general lessons to be learned on the future of naval warfare, Pakenham, like his compatriots observing the war on land, reflected favourably on the character and potential of a maritime power which was not only the RN’s soul ally on the seas, but also its most operationally accomplished pupil. Although faced with its own limitations, Pakenham showed that the IJN more than made up for its setbacks with the superior service rendered by its men, as

¹¹⁹ Perhaps inspired by the fact that the battle occurred in the same year as the centenary anniversary of Nelson’s great victory over the French navy in 1805, there was much talk among both British officials and the press attempting to establish parallels between Tōgō’s triumph at Tsushima and Nelson’s work at Trafalgar. Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, 307.

¹²⁰ Pakenham, “June 23rd, 1904,” 10.

well as the seemingly unparalleled leadership shown by its British educated commanders like Tōgō. By utilizing these traits to effectively decimate Russia's place as a rival to British naval power, Pakenham's reports showed to British politicians and military strategists that they could rest assured knowing that, while they committed increasing amounts of their already overextended naval power to European waters, the RN's former apprentice had faced its baptism of fire and had emerged as a proven naval power which could capably stand sentry over Britain's maritime interests in East Asian seas.¹²¹

¹²¹ Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, 124.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The Russo-Japanese War was a conflict which carried a diverse set of consequences for twentieth century. From the perspective of a historian of imperialism and Asian geo-politics the war signalled the ascension of Japan to world power status and seemingly validated the expansionist and hegemonic ambitions of the nationalist cliques which would gradually grow within the Japanese military and society. To a historian with a Russian focus, the war's main significance may be interpreted as being how the defeat and demoralization of the Tsar's forces, and the mutinies and protests that they inspired, showed some of the first major cracks in a corrupt Tsarist system which would not survive another unsuccessful war. Finally, to a historian of Anglo-Japanese relations, the war can be seen as the event which inspired a high point in the alliance between these two nations. As conveyed through the diverse perspectives of their observers on the battlefield, the numerous and nearly relentless victories achieved by Japanese forces showed to British officers and the CID that the IJA and IJN would serve as enviable allies who could offer defensive support against future Russian aggression that may be directed toward any of Britain's imperial frontiers in Asia.

As mentioned earlier, the dust had hardly settled on the battlefield of Shenyang before the head of British Naval Intelligence was sending memorandum to his colleagues in the Admiralty and CID informing them that it was in the British Empire's best interest to receive the direct support of Japanese troops in defense of the Empire's eastern frontiers.¹ This memorandum would reflect the wider sentiments voiced publicly by

¹ Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 306.

Claude Lowther in the British parliament and would quickly prompt the CID and the Foreign Office to agree that it was in the British Empire's best interest to renew and extend the Anglo-Japanese Alliance so that the IJA "should be made available for the defense of India against external aggression."²

The CID agreed that, with the combined threat of IJA and RN intervention against any third power attempting to further its territorial or political ambitions in Asia, there would be established a joint Anglo-Japanese "'Monroe Doctrine' for parts of Asia" which would dissuade Russia, as well as Britain's other imperial rivals, from further attempts to challenge the status quo in these regions.³ Although the Japanese government was initially against the idea of a national obligation to garrison the North West Frontier, Lord Lansdowne and his staff pursued the issue relentlessly, with Lansdowne telling Hayashi that without the backing of Britain's RN it was only a matter of time before Russia attempted to claim revenge by waging a future war "in such strength as to crush [Japan] completely out of existence." Lansdowne made it clear that if the RN was going to play any part in protecting Japan against this apocalyptic scenario, the British needed to be recompensed with a similar guarantee of Japanese soldiers for the defense of India's frontier.⁴ Such coercive tactics were applied by the British Foreign Office throughout the spring and summer of 1905 as the British government made the extension of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance the cornerstone of its foreign policy.

Convinced of the past diplomatic utility of their alliance during their war against the Russians, and pressured by Britain's unshakable stance on the topic of joint Indian

² CID, "Minutes of the 70th Meeting, April 12th, 1905," CAB 38/9/32, 2.

³ CID, "Minutes of the 70th Meeting, April 12th, 1905," 2.

⁴ Lord Lansdowne, "The Marquess Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald," May 17, 1904, CAB 37/77/91, 2.

defense, Japanese policy makers had little choice but to acquiesce to a renewed alliance which might see their men once again coming to grips with the Russians, but this time in the distant hills of Afghanistan. As mentioned in the introduction, despite months spent pursuing a Japanese guarantee to send troops to the North West Frontier, by 1906 the astonishing battlefield triumphs of Japanese soldiers and sailors faded into history and the CID began to dismiss such schemes as logistically untenable. That said, the undeniable martial ability of Japanese forces meant that the British never closed the door on their utility and even into 1907 Richard Haldane, Britain's Liberal Secretary of State for War and the cousin of Aylmer Haldane, was still adamant that Japanese troops would be an asset in the direct defense of India. Supported by Britain's foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, Haldane put forth a fanciful suggestion from Lord Kitchener that Japanese troops, "acting from an independent base in Southern Persia," would be an asset if used to strike decisive blows against the flanks of any potential Russian advance toward India.⁵

As it turned out, the revanchist aggression the British feared Russia would unleash in Central and South Asia never came to be, and the Russo-Japanese War turned out to be the last, and most dramatic, conflagration in the intense rivalry between the Tsar's government and the Anglo-Japanese coalition. By 1907, both the British and Japanese began to implement successful policies of rapprochement with Russia. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, though it would continue to survive until 1923, was deprived of a mutual threat and gradually lost its purpose for being.⁶ Unfortunately, due to the

⁵ CID, "Minutes of the 97th Meeting, April 25th, 1907," CAB 38/13/19, 2.

⁶ In fact the alliance would be renewed in 1911 with some minor extensions and Japan would play a limited role in the First World War under the auspices of fulfilling their obligations to the alliance with Britain. This said, the Anglo-Japanese diplomatic relationship was never as strong as it was during and immediately after the Japanese military triumphs over the Russians in 1904-'05. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, 1, 362.

dramatic events which would result in part from the over thirty years of ensuing Anglo-Japanese alienation, it appears that many have forgotten the relatively brief period between 1904 and 1907 when, armed with the insights of their military observers, Britain's generals and ministers had reached new pinnacles of appreciation for the battlefield ability of their Japanese allies.

Although the British avowed neutrality and attempted to maintain observers with both armies in the field, it was obvious from the beginning where the sympathies and support of the British military, government, and general public lay. As the Russians were defeated the British public openly celebrated the superior martial prowess and extraordinary good fortune possessed by their nation's only official military ally.⁷ In fact, so palpable was the enthusiasm shown among the British public for the Japanese war effort that, eager to capitalize on the overwhelming domestic support for the alliance, the Conservative party released election posters in 1906 depicting John Bull warmly shaking hands with a smiling young Japanese soldier with the caption of "Vote for the Conservatives who gave you the Alliance."⁸

Meanwhile, the British government and military were, through the confidential reports of their observers on the ground, forming increasingly intimate and diverse assessments of the factors behind their ally's military success and potential. Whether how they organized, the weapons they used, or the supposed nature and temperament of the men serving on the front lines, through observer reports those residing in London were

⁷ Towle, "The Russo-Japanese War and the Defense of India," 111.

⁸ Although the conservatives would lose the 1906 election by a landslide, the poster still indicates the immense goodwill and admiration felt in British society toward Japan in general, and the Japanese soldier in particular, in the wake of Japan's overwhelming success in the war, as well as the popularity of the Balfour government's decision to prematurely extend the length and scope of the alliance in 1905. E. Huskinson, *Vote for the Conservatives Who Gave You the Alliance*, Poster (London: Conservative Central Office, 1906).

given a unique understanding of nearly every minute aspect of the Japanese war machine on land and sea. Even if the British, much like their European contemporaries, can be rightfully criticized for failing to learn some of the more valuable lessons presented by the war, it should be recognized that, through the observers extensive reports, British policymakers ended the war with vastly superior understanding of and appreciation for their military alliance with Japan.

While hosted by the IJA in Manchuria, British observers were given the unique opportunity to live among, and interact with, Japanese soldiers of all ranks and backgrounds. Interacting with everyone from army commanders to transport levies, men like Berkeley Vincent, James Jardine, and Aylmer Haldane became familiar with nearly every merit and flaw to be found in officers and men serving in the Imperial Japanese Army. Reading these reports, those in London were given the image of an army whose core success was achieved through the determination, martial prowess, and seemingly unshakable courage of the men serving on the frontlines in the infantry and, to a somewhat lesser extent, its artillery and cavalry. Through these traits, combined with a seemingly inexhaustible spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice, the men of the IJA were able to continually overcome their (according to British reports) equally courageous Russian counterparts. Today, the praise and credit given to the superior determination and offensive capability of the Japanese infantryman is often criticized for bestowing pre-First World War European strategists with a false hope in the “cult of the offensive.”⁹ That said, to their British contemporaries, the skill, courage, and patriotic determination of the average Japanese soldier and sailor showed that, in the event of future conflicts,

⁹ Travers, *The Killing Grounds*, 38.

they could rely on their ally to field forces which would unwaveringly fight to protect the interests of Anglo-Japanese coalition.

While the superior soldiering character of Japanese personnel was a common theme in the reports received from Manchuria, it was only one of the many reasons given for the IJA's success on campaign. Thanks to the diverse service backgrounds from which Britain's observers were drawn, those in London were given specialist insights into the performance and organization of the specialist and support branches of the Japanese army. As Vincent used his years of experience serving with the R.A. in order to offer an expert opinion on the successes and failures of Japan's superbly-trained, but technologically lacking, field artillery, Jardine and Birkbeck, both career cavalry officers, were able to provide balanced opinions regarding the obvious weaknesses, as well as unconventional strengths, of the much maligned Japanese cavalry forces. These expert reports, combined with those being received from officers with backgrounds in the infantry, medical, engineer, and staff branches of the British Army, allowed for policy makers in London to create a uniquely complete picture of the capabilities of an ally at war. Despite the alliance these reports were extremely candid and did not attempt to hide or make excuses for the areas in which the Japanese army was found to be lacking. Although the IJA was not painted as infallible by the reports of British observers, those reading in London were nonetheless left with the impression that the armies fielded by their ally had met their baptism of fire in a major conventional war and had been proven as well led, well organized, and worthy of serving as the eastern vanguard of a strengthened Anglo-Japanese coalition.

While a relatively large cadre of British officers sent back their reactions and opinions demonstrating the factors behind the formidability of the Japanese army, judgement of the performance of the IJN often rested on the reports of Captain William Pakenham. With all their ships and heavy equipment being primarily the product of British shipyards and factories, and with a system of training and organization directly influenced by the contemporary RN, it was obvious to British observers that the IJN's performance in the first, and only, major naval campaign of the pre-dreadnought era would, in many ways, reflect directly upon the potential performance of the RN in a similar situation.¹⁰ As well, the naval war was of particular interest due to the fact that, both being island powers, the British saw much of their own potentially precarious situation mirrored in Japan's struggle to defend and maintain its sea-links to expeditionary forces fighting a continental foe. Due to these considerations, Pakenham not only sent the Admiralty and Whitehall detailed analysis regarding the state of Japanese maritime competence, he also used his observations and experiences to demonstrate what he believed the future held for naval warfare. As a representative of the most powerful naval power in the world, Pakenham's reports showed that he was a difficult man to impress, and he was quick to point out where the Japanese had made mistakes or triumphed out of pure good fortune. That said, Pakenham could be overawed by the superior grand strategy practiced by the Japanese, by the immense talent and dynamic leadership shown by Tōgō Heihachirō and his staff, as well as by the courage

¹⁰ Aside from the vast disparity in the number of ships in their fleets, the significance of which was somewhat offset by the relative sizes of the empires which they needed to defend, one of the most significant and widely recognized differences between the naval potential of Britain and Japan was the fact that Japan, unlike Russia, did not yet have the industrial infrastructure to replace its capital ships in the event they be sunk in anything less than a completely decisive victory.

and skill demonstrated by the officers and men under Tōgō's command. Through these factors, the IJN had been able to destroy a substantially more powerful naval power while sustaining minimal losses to its expensive and dangerously finite battleships and cruisers.

Nearly all the British officers assigned to observe the IJA and IJN during the Russo-Japanese War would later play active roles in Britain's war effort during the First World War. For some, such as Sir Ian Hamilton, their actions during that war, for better or for worse, would completely eclipse their experiences and reports from the battlefields of a now relatively obscure conflict in Manchuria.¹¹ Extensive in their breadth and detail, the confidential reports dispatched by these men to their superiors in London allowed for British policy makers, without joining the war, to achieve a uniquely intimate understanding of the nature and potential of a geographically distant ally when engaged in a conventional conflict against a mutual rival. Given the overwhelmingly positive nature of these reports it should not be surprising that the British government and military were eager to capitalize on the success and power of Japan's now proven military potential in order to bolster their own overextended imperial defense forces. Indeed, although their military alliance was not destined to endure, in 1905, the reports of Britain's observers reflected a significant, albeit brief, period when the Japanese military potential loomed largest in both the defensive schemes and foreign policies of Britain's generals, admirals, and policy makers.

¹¹ Hamilton, the most senior and highly decorated of the foreign observers to the Russo-Japanese War, would end up having his previously prestigious career be permanently tarnished by his role as commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force during the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign of 1915. Ulrich Trumpener, "Turkey's War," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, New Edition, Hew Strachan, Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 89.

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