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Lieut. Myakishev ^a

^a Pacific Squadron , Russian Imperial Navy

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THE CAPTURE OF THE TAKU FORTS.

By *Lieut. MYAKISHEV, Flag Gunnery Officer of the Pacific Squadron,
Russian Imperial Navy.*

Translated from the "*Morskói Sbórník*," No. 2, February, 1901.

AT the fifth conference held on board the "*Rossia*," on the 3rd (16th) June, at nine o'clock in the morning, it was decided:—

1. That the command of the Allied Forces in the river, in case of hostilities, should, in accordance with the official report of the preceding conference, be entrusted to Captain Dobrovolsky, who was to assemble all the commanding officers of the gun-boats, and together with them draw up a plan of operations.

2. If, by two o'clock in the afternoon of the 4th (17th) June, no reply shall have been received from the commandant concerning the surrender of the forts, the gun-boats shall immediately proceed to carry out the decisions contained in the official report.

3. The duty of the gun-boats is to prepare the way with artillery fire for the storming of the forts by an attacking column specially detailed for this object.

4. In forming the attacking column, it is necessary to keep in view the necessity of leaving a garrison at the railway station for the protection of the various buildings there and of all removable property.

Forces Concentrated in the River by the Evening of the 15th June.—About three o'clock a company of the 12th Regiment, which had arrived in the "*Admiral Korniloff*," was disembarked. At the same time the Japanese completed the landing of their 3,000 men, and the "*Hansa*," "*Hertha*," and "*Centurion*" landed their detachments. By the evening there were assembled at Tongku our detachment (184 men), 329 Japanese, 250 British, and 140 Germans. The following war-ships were in the river:—"Bobr," "Koreets," "Giliak," "Lion," "Iltis," "Algerine," the Russian torpedo-boats Nos. 203 and 207, and English destroyers.

The Japanese gun-boat "*Akaru*" could not take part in the proposed action, as her engine was damaged; and the American steamer "*Monocacy*" stood off, in accordance with instructions received by the United States admiral to remain neutral so long as the Chinese evinced no hostile intentions against himself. The "*Monocacy*" and the "*Akaru*" anchored at Tongku, close to the railway station.

The Night of the 3rd (16th) and 4th (17th) June in Taku Roadstead.—With the approach of darkness the ships in the roadstead made preparations against torpedo attack. The stations of the ships on the 3rd (16th) June was as shown on Plate 6.

About one o'clock on the night of the 4th (17th) the first shots were fired.

• On the commencement of the action the Japanese torpedo-boat destroyer, which had arrived on the previous evening, weighed anchor and began to steam in front of the bar to prevent the Chinese torpedo-boats attempting to dash out of the river, and also the closer to watch the cruiser "Hai Yung." At dawn, at 4 a.m., an explosion was observed on shore. At 5 a.m. the flags of the Allies were seen from the mast on the north-west fort. At 5.52 two more explosions were heard on shore, one after the other; one was very violent. At 6.25 a fourth explosion was heard; the shots became much fewer, and at 6.45 firing wholly ceased. At 7.20 the signal, "Forts captured," was made from the "Hansa." At the same time a similar signal was observed flying from torpedo-boat No. 207, as she steamed out of the river.

Disposition of Gun-boats in the River before the Attack on 3rd (16th) June.—On the 3rd (16th) June the vessels in the river were stationed as follows:—At the very mouth of the river, alongside Fort No. 4, was the "Algerine"; at Taku, in rear of the forts, was the "Koreets," and above her, about 2 to 2½ cable lengths, at the village of Taku, was the "Giliak." At Tongku, near the railway station, counting down the river, were the "Lion," "Monocacy," "Akuru," "Iltis," and "Bobr." On Plate 7 are shown the disposition of the ships on 3rd (16th) June, in the first period of the action and at the end of it.

The position of the "Koreets" and "Giliak" in rear of the forts requires explanation.

In view of the numerous instances of sympathy that had already occurred between the Regular troops and the Boxers, their intentional inactivity in suppressing the latter, and even their hostile actions against the Europeans, an armed resistance on the part of the forts was momentarily expected to the landing of Russian bluejackets and troops at Tongku. Besides defending the mouths of the river with mines, crowding troops into the forts, and hurriedly working on them, at each passage of the barges with the landing parties, the garrison of the forts manned the guns and pointed them at the barges.

Every moment it was expected that the forts would open fire. In view of this the gun-boat "Koreets" was stationed in rear of the forts, and on the arrival of the "Giliak" she, too, took up a similar position in the same bend of the river. Being so stationed, the gun-boats would be in the most advantageous position, the moment the forts opened fire on the landing parties; to take the greater number of guns in the forts in reverse, and thus draw off their fire from the barges carrying the troops, without in any way endangering the latter, as from their position the line of fire from the boats would pass considerably to one side of the fairway. By this fire, too, they would be able to support the attack on the forts by the land forces which were already in Tongku. In the reverse case, if the gun-boats had at this moment been stationed at Tongku, they would have been deprived of all possibility of firing on the forts, while to steam across to the above-mentioned spot up the river, would, at the

commencement of the ebb-tide, have been extremely difficult, and would have required a considerable amount of time.

It would be difficult to say what might have happened if the Chinese had made up their minds to fire on the landing parties, the greater part of which had reached the mouth of the river before the commencement of the ebb-tide, and if at this moment all the gun-boats had been at Tongku, or in any other part of the river between Tongku and that bend in the stream which had been selected for the disposition of the boats in case of war, the landing parties must have been annihilated, and the gun-boats, deprived of all possibility of replying to the fire of the forts, must have been either doomed to complete inactivity while subjected to a bombardment from the forts to which no reply was possible, or have weighed anchor and commenced to turn round in order to proceed up the river; but if in doing this one of the boats had received a hit below the water-line, or had her engines damaged, the remaining boats would have got hopelessly jammed up, and the Chinese, after having finished off the land forces, would have had no difficulty in destroying the lot. In no better position was the "Algerine," anchored as she was under the very muzzles of the guns in Fort No. 4. Without the slightest doubt she would have been one of the first to have been sunk. The "Bobr" was left at the station at Tongku to keep up communication on one side with Tientsin by means of the telephone, and on the other, with the squadron, by signals and torpedo-boats. Besides this the gun-boat supplied the troops that had already arrived with distilled water. Thus, had the Chinese acted with more energy and decision and the above measures had not been taken, we might have suffered a terrible catastrophe. The gun-boats and the detachments in the boats and barges would, in all probability, have been entirely destroyed; the landing parties in Tongku and Tientsin would have been finally and irretrievably cut off from the sea, and any attempt at capturing the forts from the front by the remaining vessels of the squadron, would, of course, have been out of the question.

Council of War.—Having received two copies of the Ultimatum and the instructions of the admiral, which had been despatched up the river at high water (about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 3rd (16th) June), the commanding officer of the "Bobr" immediately convened a council of war, composed of the officers commanding the vessels in the river. At this council the commander of the "Monocacy" announced that he could take no part in any active operations, as the Ultimatum had not been signed by his admiral. As to the "Akaru," owing to her damaged engine, she was obliged to remain at her former post at Tongku station.

Plan of Attack on the Forts.—For the six gun-boats, in case the Chinese refused to deliver up the forts, the following plan of operations was agreed upon:—

1. Previous to the attack all the gun-boats are to take up the disposition No. 1, shown on Plate 7.

2. At the commencement of the attack all the boats are to concentrate their fire on Fort No. 4, so as to prepare the way for the land forces. Those guns, however, which by reason of their angles of fire cannot be brought to bear on this fort, shall bombard one of the southern forts.

3. Fort No. 4 will be the first to be attacked by the landing parties.

4. As soon as the landing parties approach Fort No. 4 the boats are to turn their guns on Fort No. 1.

5. On the capture of Fort No. 4 the gun-boats are to stand by to weigh anchor, and on Fort No. 1 being taken they are to take up station No. 2.

6. When Fort No. 1 is taken, its guns are to be turned on to Fort No. 2, on which all the gun-boats are then to concentrate their fire.

7. As soon as Forts Nos. 4 and 1 are captured, the landing parties are to proceed to the other side of the river and attack Fort No. 2 and then Fort No. 3.

8. At the commencement of the action torpedo-boats Nos. 203 and 207, together with the English destroyers, will attack the four Chinese torpedo-boats lying in the river and take them up the stream to Tongku station. The above plan of attack was drawn up under the following considerations :—

1. Disposition No. 1, which the gun-boats were to occupy before the commencement of the action, possessed the following undoubted advantages :—

- a. By taking up this position the gun-boats found themselves in rear of Forts Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5, which gave them the opportunity of bombarding these forts on the side most disadvantageous to them. At the same time it gave them the chance of blowing up the powder and shell magazines, which could not possibly have been effected by taking the forts in front.
- b. The forts could bring fewer guns to bear on the boats in this position than in any other, except perhaps in position No. 2 ; but at the commencement of the attack this position would have been extremely dangerous to occupy, as the vessels would have come under the very muzzles of the guns in Forts Nos. 4 and 1.
- c. In this position the range of the nearest fort—not to mention that of the most distant—was such that there was every reason for hoping that the projectiles from most of the guns, in clearing the rear face of the work which was lower than the flank face, would burst inside the fort and cause an explosion of the powder and shell magazines, which, as is well known in all Chinese forts, are almost entirely unprotected in the rear. Besides this the shells would have the widest effect on the garrison.

2. The reason for concentrating the fire of the gun-boats on each fort at a time, instead of distributing it all over the forts, is self-evident.

3. It was decided to attack Fort No. 4 first for the following reasons :—

- a. This fort was protected on all sides by a comparatively high breastwork or parapet at a short distance from the fort itself. Therefore it offered much greater resistance to the guns of the boats than the other forts, for the shells in most cases would either hit this breastwork or would clear the whole fort without doing any real harm. For this reason this fort, although less powerfully armed than the southern forts, was really more invulnerable to artillery fire. Thus it was most important to capture No. 4 first, because then the other forts would be more at our mercy. To prepare the way for the land troops was not such an impossible task for the gun-boats, as it was fairly safe to count on the combined fire of all the Q.F. guns in the boats, compelling the Chinese to take shelter behind the parapets and thus, if not altogether silencing the musketry fire on the advancing storming parties, at any rate considerably reducing it.
 - b. With the gun-boats stationed according to disposition No. 1 the direction of the attack throughout its entire extent would lie outside the line of fire of the gun-boats, so that they (the gun-boats) would not have to cease firing until the attacking party were right up to the breastwork.
 - c. A double-covered way led from this fort to Fort No. 1, thus enabling the storming parties, after capturing No. 4, to move forward on No. 1, being screened the while from the guns of the south forts.
 - d. On the capture of Forts Nos. 4 and 1 the gun-boats would be enabled to draw nearer them, and, by occupying disposition No. 2, to open fire on the flanks of the south forts when the attacking parties, advancing on the south forts, would again be outside the line of fire of our gun-boats.
4. Disposition No. 2 was selected for the following reasons :—
- a. By taking up this position after the capture of Forts Nos. 4 and 1, the gun-boats would be able to concentrate their fire on the flanks of Forts Nos. 2 and 3 at a comparatively short range, while only a very few of the guns in these forts could be brought to bear on the gun-boats, as Fort No. 3 would be nearly in a line with No. 2, and the guns in Fort No. 2 would mask one another.
 - b. The gun-boats' fire ought to be particularly effective on Forts Nos. 2 and 3, as, in addition to being well exposed, these works were not provided with traverses.

Regarding that bend in the river which was selected for disposition No. 1, the following points should be noted :—

The extent of this bend of the river (see Plate 7) is six cables. Since the average length of the gun-boats was 200 feet, and the intervals between them three-quarters of a cable length, it was not possible to station more than six in this bend of the river. Thus the majority of the boats would not only have been of no real use before the occupation of disposition No. 2, but they might have done a great deal of harm, as they would have been obliged to have anchored either somewhat higher up the river or at Tongku itself, and having to fire at an object they could not see across the other gun-boats, they would have run a good chance of hitting the latter. To reduce in disposition No. 1 the intervals between gun-boats to less than three-quarters of a cable length would not have been possible, as a change in the tide during the attack would have to be counted on. To use kedge-anchors at the stern would also have been dangerous, as the hawser might be cut by a shell, which would cause the craft to turn to the current, and so bring about a collision with the next boat.

Occupation of Disposition No. 1 by the Gun-boats.—In accordance with the above disposition, the "Koreets" and "Giliak" were not to change their places. The "Bobr" occupied her station at 8.30 p.m., at the same time as the "Algerine," with both the English destroyers alongside her. The commanding officers of the "Lion" and "Iltis" notified the commander of the "Bobr" that they would take up their positions as soon as the first shots were fired.

All the ships cleared for action.

At 11 o'clock p.m. the messenger who had been sent with the Ultimatum returned. According to him the commandant of the forts announced that personally he had no reason to urge against the surrender of the forts, but that he must ask for instructions from his Government, and he hoped to be able to give an answer before the appointed time, i.e. before 2 o'clock at night.

Commencement of the Battle.—At 12.50 in the morning of the 4th (17th) June the first shot was fired from Fort No. 4, whereupon all the remaining forts opened fire, to which the gun-boats replied.

Both the British destroyers immediately weighed anchor and supported by the machine-guns of the "Giliak," seized the four Chinese torpedo-boat destroyers, and took them to Tongku.

The "Lion" and "Iltis" also weighed anchor and opening fire, as they steamed, took up their stations in the "fighting disposition," the former at 1.20 and the latter at 1.35 at night.

One of the first shots fired by the Chinese was an 8-centimetre shell, which pierced the "Giliak's" mast above the fighting top and severely wounded, with the splinters, torpedo officer Lieutenant Bogdanov, killed a torpedo petty officer, and wounded a signalman and the captain of a machine-gun. At 1.5 a.m., the same vessel was struck by a 6-inch shell, which penetrated the side and burst in an empty coal bunker, and by the force of the explosion broke in the door, bulkhead, the small pipes in the

starboard stokehold, and both the principal steam-conducting pipes, killing two and wounding six men. The electric light was extinguished and all the electric communicators ceased to act.

Recourse was had to hand work. By 4 o'clock in the morning these damages were so far repaired that steam could be got up in the three port boilers and the engines made to work at reduced speed.

At 1.30 a.m. a third shell struck the "Giliak" (also about 6-inch calibre) and made a hole $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide in the port side in the rope store room below the water-line, and then penetrated the water-tight bulkhead of the 75-millimetre bow magazine and exploding about 130 cartridges. By this explosion the gunnery officer, Lieutenant Titov, was badly burnt, while 5 men were killed and 38 wounded; while the water-tight deck was bulged out and wrenched from its bulkhead, and the main and upper decks caught fire. The fire was extinguished in fifteen minutes with the aid of the Stone pump, fire engines and buckets, since the only steam pump had been torn from its place. The explosion was so violent that the flame from it, bursting through the hatchways and elevator pipe, drew the attention of the other ships; but, in spite of it all, the after guns never ceased firing, and, as soon as the fire was got under, the bow guns also began again. The gun-boat heeled over considerably to port, the water flooded three compartments, and, pouring in through the bulkhead that had been wrenched apart, it filled the 120-millimetre magazine. In the very heat of the battle a plaster was put on and the flow stopped. About 3 o'clock in the morning the "Koreets" received her first injuries. Two of the enemy's shells, one after the other, fell into the senior officer's cabin, completely wrecked the cabins on the starboard side, and set fire to the ward-room over the after shell-room, the powder and cartridge magazines. The magazines were at once covered over and the fire put out. Gunnery officer Lieutenant Bourakov was killed by splinters from these shells. Two of the men were killed and one mortally wounded.

At 3.45 a.m. a third shell penetrated the washboard, passed over the deck-boat forward of the engine casing, ripped open the starboard ventilator, and burst in the port one; by its bursting were mortally wounded Lieutenant Dedenev and four men. The vessel was hit by a fourth shell about 4.30 a.m., by a fifth and sixth about seven o'clock. In spite of all this the gun-boat did not slacken fire for a minute. About three o'clock in the morning a German cutter passed along the line of gun-boats, and the officer in command told us that the storming column had commenced its attack on Fort No. 4.

At 3.20 a.m., in order to give the gun-boats the opportunity of finally driving away the Chinese behind the parapets, the storming column arrested its onslaught,¹ but at 3.55 again moved forward. According to a signal previously agreed upon, the gun-boats turned their fire on to Fort No. 1 and the south forts.

¹ This is not correct. The assaulting column halted because it could not advance farther with safety, the bombardment being continuous the whole time.—ED.

The lines having approached within about 500 paces from Fort No. 4 now lay down, and the Japanese land guns opened fire.¹ The bombardment of the breast-work lasted about five minutes, after which the advance began again, and in another five minutes the column with shouts of "hurrah" rushed to the assault.

In the first line were the Rifles, and in the line with them were the English.

Storming and Capture of Fort No. 4.—On reaching the moat which encircled the fort, the Rifles dashed along it to the right to the gates on the bank of the river, crossed the moat by the bridge and began to beat in the gates, which were blocked up on the inside with sacks full of sand. In this work the Japanese, who were on the right flank and now appeared in line with the Russians, took an active part. As soon as the gates were knocked in, it rushed our men first and after them the Japanese, who received point-blank a charge of grape-shot from a gun posted to the side of the entrance.²

The garrison did not wait for the bayonet but fled.

At the moment when the storming of Fort No. 4 commenced, an explosion took place in Fort No. 3.

About 5.30 a.m. Fort No. 1, which had been almost silenced by the fire of the gun-boats, was captured by the storming column.

As soon as the flags of the Allies were hoisted on it the gun-boats began, one after the other, to weigh anchor and to take up disposition No. 2.³

Occupation of Forts Nos. 2 and 3.—At 5.52 a.m. two explosions took place almost simultaneously in Fort No. 2. The Chinese rushed out of the forts, overwhelmed by the fire of the ships' Q.F. guns.⁴ The landing party was transported across the river and occupied Fort No. 2 without opposition, and after that Fort No. 3.

At 6.45 a.m. the enemy had finally disappeared, and all the forts were in the hands of the Allies.

The losses of the Allies in this affair were as follows:—

"Koreets"—killed, Lieutenant Bourakov; mortally wounded, Lieutenant Dedenev; 8 men killed, 21 wounded.

"Giliak"—wounded, Lieutenants Titov and Bogdanov; 8 men killed and 45 wounded.

"Lion"—3 men wounded.

"Iltis"—1 officer killed; 1 (commander) mortally wounded; 4 men killed, 14 wounded.

"Algerine"—2 officers and 7 men wounded.

¹ The assaulting party never paused "for the Japanese land guns to open fire," but advanced from 1,200 yards distance right up to the fort.

² No Russian troops entered the fort until it was captured by the English and Japanese. The episode of the grape shot and the Japanese is purely imaginary.

³ The gun-boats moved up the river, headed by the "Iltis" and "Algerine," as soon as Fort No. 4 was taken.

⁴ The Chinese rushed out of Forts Nos. 2 and 3, not because they were overwhelmed by the gun fire from the ships, but from panic at the explosion of their magazines, and the sight of the landing party's success in Fort No. 4.—Ed.

In the storming column the 12th East Siberian Regiment lost 2 men wounded and 1 man mortally wounded. The English lost 1 man killed and 6 wounded. The Japanese had 1 officer mortally wounded, 2 men killed, 2 mortally wounded, and 4 wounded.

The total loss in the ships and in the storming columns was:— Officers killed and wounded, 9; men, 129.

To calculate the exact loss of the Chinese was not possible. It is supposed that they must have lost between 600 and 800.¹

The "Iltis" had the greatest number of hits. One shell struck her hull below the starboard cathead, and about fifteen struck the pipes and superstructure. The bridge and chart-house suffered especially.

The "Lion" had a 15-centimetre shell in her hull under the bridge. The shell passed 1½ feet above the steam boiler and burst in the sail loft, causing a fire, which, however, was soon extinguished. Besides this some splinters of shells were found in the stern of the hull, and several injuries to the masts and yards.

The "Algerine" had several holes in her ventilators and boats.

A shell (approximately 5-inch calibre) penetrated the side of the "Whiting" and found its way into the boiler, damaging the pipes.

The following table gives the number of hits in their numerical order:—

"Iltis"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16 hits
"Koreets"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 "
"Algerine"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 "
"Giliak"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 "
"Lion"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 "
"Whiting"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 "
"Bobr"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (splinter)

The injuries to the ships' guns were very insignificant, viz., a 9-inch gun in the "Bobr" got jammed by a shell splinter after the fourth round; but was put right on the following day, and the "Iltis" had five 37-millimetre Hotchkiss guns and two machine guns put out of action.

The forces that the Allies could dispose of, and the strength of the forts, may be seen in detail from the following table:—

ARMAMENT OF FORTS.

Fort No. 1.

152-millimetre Armstrong with all-round fire and with a 2½-inch steel shield	-	-	-	-	1
120-millimetre Krupp guns with all-round fire and 1½-inch steel shields	-	-	-	-	2
6-inch Krupp on fortress gun carriages	-	-	-	-	7
6-inch S.B. cast-iron	-	-	-	-	7
8-centimetre Krupp on field carriages	-	-	-	-	3
8-centimetre Krupp on fortress carriages	-	-	-	-	2
Cast-iron mortars	-	-	-	-	1
Copper or brass guns	-	-	-	-	3
Total	-	-	-	-	26 guns

¹ Chinese loss was probably more like 100 or 200.

Fort No. 2.

150-millimetre Krupp on mountings, with all-round training and shields - - - -	1
152-millimetre Armstrong with all-round fire and 1½-inch steel shields - - - -	3
120-millimetre Krupp with all-round fire and 1½-inch steel shields - - - -	2
6-inch Krupp on fortress carriages - - - -	6
8-inch Krupp M.L.R. - - - -	1
180-millimetre short Chinese M.L.R. - - - -	2
8-inch cast-iron S.B. guns - - - -	1
Various calibre S.B. - - - -	50
8-centimetre Krupp on field carriages - - - -	2
8-centimetre Krupp on fortress carriages - - - -	3
Brass and iron mortars - - - -	3
Total - - - -	74 guns.

Fort No. 3 (New).

24-centimetre Krupp on mountings with all-round fire, without shields - - - -	2
21-centimetre Krupp, as above - - - -	2
15-centimetre Krupp, as above - - - -	2
16-centimetre Krupp on fortress mountings - - - -	4
6-inch Krupp on fortress mountings - - - -	4
8-centimetre on field carriages - - - -	4
Total - - - -	18 guns.

Fort No. 4.

120-millimetre Krupp with all-round fire and 1½-inch steel shields - - - -	4
8-centimetre Krupp on naval mountings - - - -	5
8-centimetre Krupp on field carriages - - - -	4
5-inch Vavasseur guns - - - -	2
5-inch steel M.L.R. - - - -	8
12-pounder brass guns - - - -	4
6-pounder brass guns - - - -	3
Cast-iron mortar - - - -	1
Total - - - -	31 guns.

Fort No. 5.

8-centimetre Krupp on field carriages - - - -	9
6-inch Krupp on fortress mountings - - - -	4
Various cast-iron guns - - - -	4
Brass guns - - - -	2
Mortars - - - -	2
Total - - - -	21 guns.

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"Giliak."

120-millimetre Q.F. Canet	1
75-millimetre	5
47-millimetre 1-barrel Hotchkiss	4
37-millimetre 1-barrel Hotchkiss	2
2½-inch Baronovsky	1
Machine guns	2

"Illis."

100-millimetre Q.F. guns	6
47-millimetre Q.F. guns	4
37-millimetre Maxim	3

"Algerine."

88-millimetre Q.F.	4
37-millimetre Q.F. Maxim	8
Maxim machine guns	4

Thus the total number of guns in all the ships amounted to 71

Of these there were able to fire at the forts, and actually did fire, the following :—

Q.F. medium calibre	5
Q.F. small calibre	27
Cartridge guns, large calibre	2
Cartridge guns, medium calibre	4
Cartridge guns, small calibre	5
Machine guns	5

Total of guns 48

Number of Shells fired—"Bobr."

9-inch shells	4
6-inch shells	62
9-pounder shells	202
37-millimetre shells (5-barrel)	500
2½-inch shells (Baranovsky)	30

"Koreets."

8-inch shells	100
6-inch shells	68
9-pounder shells	150
47-millimetre shells	340
37-millimetre shells	600
2½-inch (Baranovsky)	45

"Giliak."

120-millimetre shells	66
75-millimetre shells	857
47-millimetre shells	660
2½-inch shells	235
Machine guns	15,000

"Lion."

138-millimetre shells	-	-	-	-	81
100-millimetre shells	-	-	-	-	71
37-millimetre shells	-	-	-	-	1,200

"Algerine."

Fired in all 595 rounds.

"Iltis."

88-millimetre shells	-	-	-	-	658
37-millimetre shells	-	-	-	-	1,190
Machine guns	-	-	-	-	3,174

Injuries to the Forts.—*Fort No. 1.*—1. Both barbettes on which the 152-millimetre and 120-millimetre Q.F. guns were mounted were ploughed up by shells and splinters.

2. The shield of one of the 120-millimetre guns was pierced in several places by shells which burst behind the shield apparently right on the gun; the gun, however, was not damaged and was able to be worked.

3. A large explosion in the powder magazine.

4. Three 6-inch guns were disabled.

5. The parapet facing the river was badly ploughed up by shells bursting.

Fort No. 2.—1. The 150-millimetre Q.F. gun had its shield pierced, its compressor cylinder damaged, and the gun jammed. The gun was put out of action.

2. The 120-millimetre Q.F. gun nearest the river had its shield pierced in four places, besides having five dents caused by splinters; the compressor cylinder on the port side was broken, and the gun was put out of action.

3. A shell struck a 120-millimetre Q.F. gun near the revolving-plate, tearing away the bolts which fixed the foundation to the barbette. The gun was put out of action.

4. The shield of a 120-millimetre Q.F. was penetrated in two places, the compressor cylinder damaged, and the gun put out of action.

5. The training gear of a 152-millimetre Q.F. gun was damaged. The gun could not be worked.

6. Two 6-inch and one 8-centimetre were disabled.

7. Eight explosions took place in the casemates of the left parapet (that facing the sea) where the cartridges, shells, and powder were stored.

8. Great explosion in a powder magazine.

9. Great explosion in a cartridge magazine.

10. The commandant's house and various buildings were destroyed.

Fort No. 3.—1. A 21-centimetre Q.F. gun was damaged and could not be worked.

2. Explosion in a small cartridge magazine.

Fort No. 4.—1. One 120-millimetre Q.F. gun had its shield pierced in three places and its elevating gear damaged. The gun was put out of action.

2. Another 120-millimetre Q.F. had its shield pierced in two places besides receiving other injuries. The gun was put out of action.

3. Two faces of the parapet commanding the river were clean razed by shells. The massing of the shells around the 120-millimetre Q.F. guns was particularly noticeable.

4. Four 8-centimetre guns were disabled.

Fort No. 5 had no injuries.

The following analysis of the damage done by the fire from the gun-boats is given :—

1. Out of the sixteen Q.F. large and small-calibre guns which were the most dangerous to the gun-boats eight were disabled, and out of the eleven which remained uninjured, by the end of the second period of the attack, six could still be worked, five of these, however, were in Fort No. 3, which, by reason of its remoteness and its apparently limited supply of cartridges, inflicted no harm on the gun-boats. Owing to this the gun-boats generally did not direct their fire on it, yet for all that one gun in this fort was disabled.

2. Three large explosions of the powder and cartridge magazines took place, and another explosion in Fort No. 2 compelled the Chinese to fly from the fort. Eight small explosions took place.

3. Considerable amount of damage was done to the interior of the forts, especially to Fort No. 2.

Such excellent shooting, both in point of accuracy and in the distribution of the fire, allowed the plan of attack to be carried out in all its details, and thanks to it the Chinese, at the most decisive moment of the action, could only dispose of six Q.F. guns, five of which were in Fort No. 3, whose fire was made extremely difficult by being masked by Fort No. 2. In the latter fort, the most dangerous to the gun-boats, only one Q.F. gun remained that could be fired.

The author makes the following deductions :—

1. A bombardment, even of comparatively weak forts by exclusively direct fire, especially from the front, unsupported by land forces, is absolute folly. To destroy permanent fortifications from ships and silence their batteries, mortars are absolutely necessary in the ships. This is especially the case when attacking batteries on high ground when direct fire is wholly without effect.

2. Not being protected throughout their entire extent, the ammunition hoists will not work after the first few shots. An explosive shell, even of small calibre, will put the elevator out of action and so cut off the cartridge magazine from the guns it is meant to feed. To ensure the supply of ammunition being continued, beside the armour protection of the elevator shafts and in addition to the donkey engines, both electric and hand-working, there ought to be arranged :—A hand delivery through

the elevator shafts in case of any injuries happening to the engines, the hawser, or the sheaves; and in the event of the shaft itself getting damaged, there ought to be a hand delivery alongside it through specially constructed hatchways and man-holes.

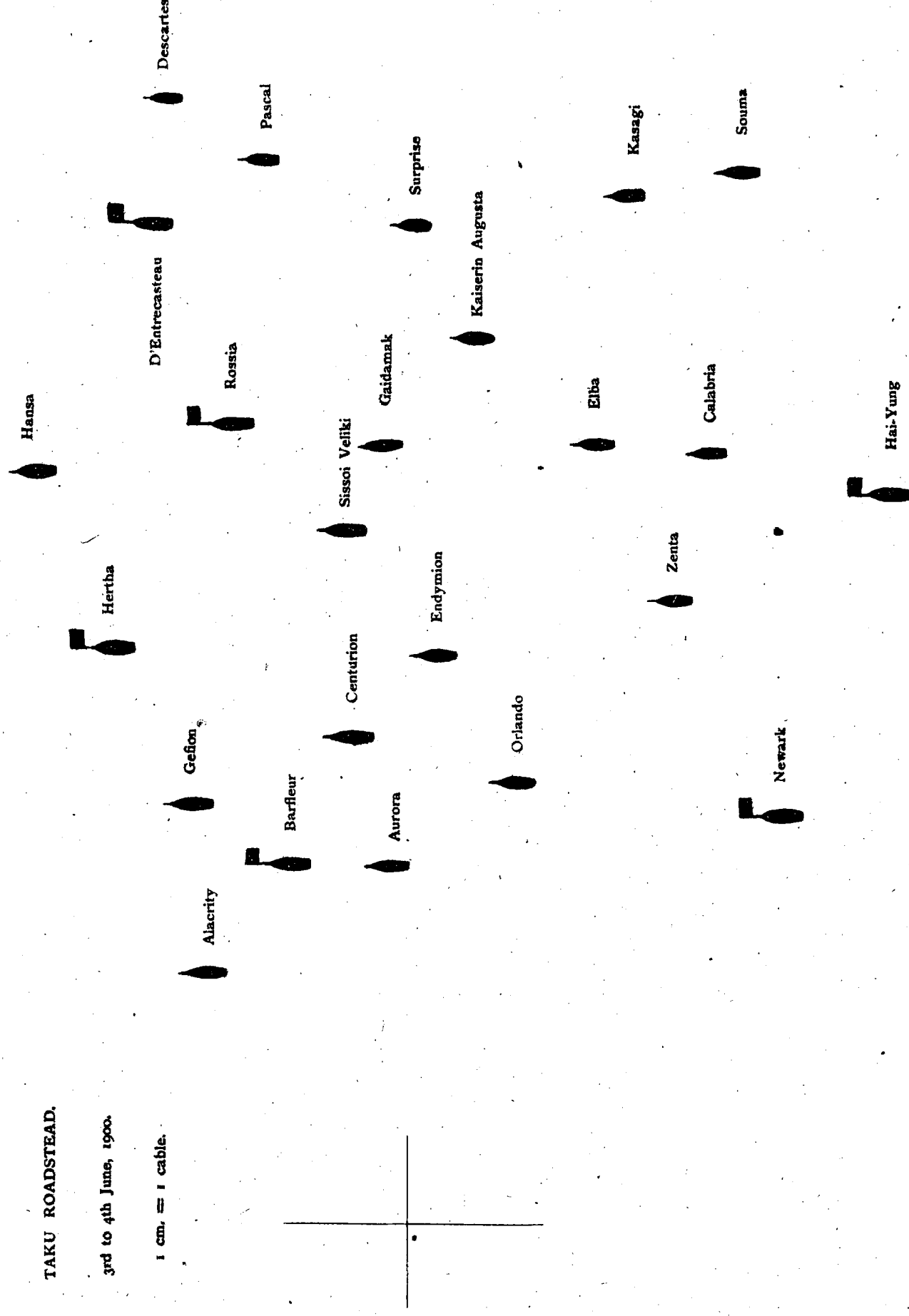
3. The fighting light arrangements generally, and the lighting of the cartridge and shell magazines in particular, should be without fail of a double nature—both electric and from some other source. For the latter compartments candle-light is not suitable, as owing to the comparatively high temperature in them the candles are likely to melt.

4. The view, often expressed, that gun-shields less than 4 to 5 inches thick afford no protection whatever to the gun's crew or to the gun itself, has been entirely confirmed. They simply serve as traps to catch the shells.

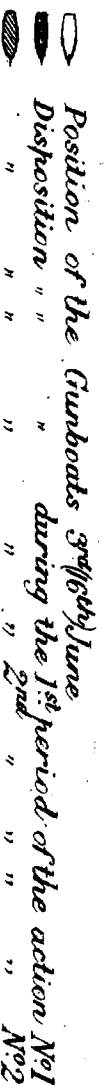
TAKU ROADSTEAD.

3rd to 4th June, 1900.

1 cm. = 1 cable.



4 June, 1900.



*NOTE. 1 good - 36 English lbs.