

Note

Weather protects impertinent attacker
Extract "Climate Change & Naval War"
Victoria/Canada, p.277 (references not shown);
And Chapter 5_15 at: <http://www.seadimate.com/>



German battle cruiser bombards North Yorkshire's coast, 16 December 1914: The story is about weather-making by naval forces in combat missions at sea and is taken from the book 'Swept Channels' (Taffrail, 1938). The narrative tells the story of a German battle-cruiser bombarding Hartlepool, that had a battery of guns, and Whitby and Scarborough, that had not, shortly after daylight on December 16, 1914. That left 120 people killed, and over 400 wounded. A German Communiqué short time later reports about "parts of our naval forces", but does not name the vessels involved. It was claimed that one English cruiser was destroyed, others damaged. It follows the excerpt:

"The whole story is told by Mr. Winston Churchill in the *World Crises, 1911-1914, Vol. I, p. 467*. Squadrons and flotillas were moved to deal with the expected raid, and these forces actually made contact with the enemy during their retreat and opened fire. At one point the British and German battle-cruiser forces were only twenty-five miles apart, and were still closing in on each other. Further seaward there was a powerful battle squadron under the command of Sir George Warrender. The action was imminent, and it could only have one result.

Then, as it so often had happened before, the weather supervened. The wind sprang up and the sea started to run high. The North Sea mist came down until the horizon became blotted out in a curtain of thin vapor. The weather gradually thickened, the visibility dropping from 7,000 to 5,000 yards, then to 3,000. In the driving rain-squalls the area of vision was bounded by a circle whose radius was sometimes less than a mile.

Between fifteen and twenty heavy ships, and a number of light cruisers and destroyers, all steaming at high speed, were groping for each other within a space of about sixty square miles. Their wireless signals could be overheard in Whitehall, where their positions were constantly plotted on the large chart in the War Room at the Admiralty. It was like a nerve-racking game of Blind Man's Buff played in the dark, with huge ships instead of children – and the enemy escaped."

