

The Cunningham Decision



September 5, 1939

HYPOTHETICAL

Beaufort Number: Force 0

Sea State: < 1 foot

Wind Direction and Speed: Variable

2 - 3 knots

Game Scale: 18000 (1" = 500 yds)

Game Turn: 2 Minutes Per Turn

COVER SHEET



GERMANY

| Mittelmeer Division | | | | | | | | | | RADM Marschall | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------|---------|-----|----------|----------|----------------|-------|---|------|---|-----|------|
| CB | Gneisenau | | 0466-0 | 34900 ts | 741 ft | TS: 3 | 0x | | | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | 31 kts | 9 x 28cm SKC/34 | 37 | 44,760 yds | 89.5" | 2 x FCS | 1E3 | None | 0 | 1 | 5.1 | 2 | 7.1 | 3 | 4.1 | |
| | 3394 DP | 12 x 15cm/L55 C28 | 16 | 25,150 yds | 50.3" | 2 x FCS | 2E3 | None | 0 | 4 | 13.8 | 5 | 13.8 | 6 | 5.9 | |
| | Turn: 45 | 14 x 10.5cm/L65 C33 | 10 | 19,356 yds | 38.7" | 2 x FCS | 2H2 | None | 0 | 7 | 13.8 | 8 | 14.2 | 9 | 6.1 | |
| CL | Koln | | 0549-1 | 6650 ts | 554 ft | TS: 1 | 12x | 53cm G7a | T1 TT | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | 32 kts | 9 x 15cm/60 SKC/25 | 16 | 28,105 yds | 56.2" | 2 x FCS | 1G3 | None | 0 | 1 | 1.6 | 2 | 0.8 | 3 | 0.6 | |
| | 1481 DP | | | | | | | None | 0 | 4 | 3.9 | 5 | 2.0 | 6 | 0.0 | |
| | Turn: 60 | | | | | | | None | 0 | 7 | 1.2 | 8 | 1.2 | 9 | 0.8 | |



GREAT BRITAIN

| First Cruiser Squadron | | | | | | | | | | VADM Cunningham | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|------------|-------|---------|------------|------|-----------------|-------|-----|---|-----|---|------|
| CA | Devonshire | | 0806-1 | 10800 ts | 630 ft | TS: 2 | 8x | 21" Mk VII | TT | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | | 32 kts | 8 x 8"/50 BL Mk VIII | 24 | 30,650 yds | 61.3" | 1 x FCS | 1F3 | None | 0 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.0 | 3 | 0.5 |
| | | 1888 DP | 8 x 4"/45 QF MkV HA | 10 | 16,500 yds | 33.0" | 1 x FCS | 2G3 | None | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 5 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.0 |
| | | Turn: 45 | | | | | | | None | 0 | 7 | 1.0 | 8 | 1.0 | 9 | 0.5 |
| CA | Shropshire | | 0805-1 | 10800 ts | 630 ft | TS: 2 | 8x | 21" Mk VII | TT | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | | 32 kts | 8 x 8"/50 BL Mk VIII | 24 | 30,650 yds | 61.3" | 1 x FCS | 1F3 | None | 0 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.0 | 3 | 0.5 |
| | | 1888 DP | 8 x 4"/45 QF MkV HA | 10 | 16,500 yds | 33.0" | 2 x FCS | 2G3 | None | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 5 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.0 |
| | | Turn: 45 | | | | | | | None | 0 | 7 | 1.0 | 8 | 1.0 | 9 | 0.5 |
| CA | Sussex | | 0804-1 | 10800 ts | 630 ft | TS: 2 | 8x | 21" Mk VII | TT | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | | 32 kts | 8 x 8"/50 BL Mk VIII | 24 | 30,650 yds | 61.3" | 1 x FCS | 1F3 | None | 0 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.0 | 3 | 0.5 |
| | | 1888 DP | 8 x 4"/45 QF MkV HA | 10 | 16,500 yds | 33.0" | 2 x FCS | 2G3 | None | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 5 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.0 |
| | | Turn: 45 | | | | | | | None | 0 | 7 | 1.0 | 8 | 1.0 | 9 | 0.5 |
| CL | Galatea | | 2823-1 | 5220 ts | 490 ft | TS: 1 | 6x | 21" Mk IX | TT | | ARMOR | | | | | 1.00 |
| | | 32 kts | 6 x 6"/50 BL Mk XXIII | 17 | 25,480 yds | 51.0" | 1 x FCS | 1F3 | None | 0 | 1 | 1.0 | 2 | 1.0 | 3 | 0.4 |
| | | 1312 DP | 8 x 4"/45 QF MkXVI HA | 10 | 19,850 yds | 39.7" | 1 x FCS | 2G2 | None | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 5 | 2.3 | 6 | 0.0 |
| | | Turn: 60 | | | | | | | None | 0 | 7 | 0.0 | 8 | 1.0 | 9 | 0.5 |



THE CUNNINGHAM DECISION

September 5, 1939

G.O.D. SETUP INFO

August, 1939: Following July exercises in the Atlantic with SCHARNHORST and other units of the Kriegsmarine, GNEISENAU and cruiser KOLN are dispatched to Turkey in an attempt to entice the Turkish government into an alliance. GNEISENAU is damaged due to grounding during her passage through the narrows and is forced to remain in order to make repairs.

After the declaration of war on September 3, the German squadron is given 48 hours to depart Turkish waters or risk internment. With repairs now complete, the German force is ordered to seek refuge in an Italian port before the British forces in Eastern Mediterranean are able to make a concerted effort to stop them.

Although Italy has not entered the war, the Admiralty orders British heavy units (First Battle Squadron and GLORIOUS) to remain in a position to oppose a sortie by the Italian Fleet. Thus, in a situation eerily similar to the one faced by Rear-Admiral Troubridge in August 1914, a force of four British cruisers (under the command of Vice-Admiral J.H.D. Cunningham) is all that remains to stop the GNEISENAU. Interception occurs south of Cape Matapan on the morning of September 5, 1939.

SITUATION REPORT

5 September 1939 (0622 LCT)

Visibility is CODE 8 (VERY CLEAR)

Sunrise 7 August: 0611 Local (GMT -1)

Sea is calm

Winds are light and variable 2-3 knots

Maximum range for FC solution:

GNEISENAU to British CA 24,400

GNEISENAU to GALATEA 22,900

KOLN to GALATEA 17,300

British CA to GNEISENAU 23,200

GALATEA to GNEISENAU 20,100

GERMAN FORCES

- Course of German formation is 260-degrees
- Cruising speed of German formation at start is 25 knots
- Max formation speed is 27 knots
- Max speed of GNEISENAU is 29 knots. 30 knots may be attempted, but a roll to check for engine failure is required each turn at this speed (roll of 01-08 results in permanent loss of 5 knots speed).
- KOLN is positioned 6,000 yards directly ahead of GNEISENAU
- Initial sighting of smoke from British cruisers by KOLN is RED 20, range 30,000 yards

BRITISH FORCES

- Course of British formation is 330-degrees
- Cruising speed of British formation at start is 24 knots
- Max formation speed is 30 knots
- Interval is 500 yards

DEVONSHIRE (f)

SHROPSHIRE

SUSSEX

GALATEA



ROYAL NAVY

THE CUNNINGHAM
DECISION
September 5, 1939



Vice-Admiral Cunningham

MOST SECRET

SITUATION REPORT
5 September 1939
0622 LCT

Visibility is CODE 8 (VERY CLEAR)
Sunrise 7 August: 0611 Local (GMT -1)
Sea is calm
Winds are light and variable 2-3 knots

Maximum range for FC solution:
British CA to GNEISENAU 23,200
GALATEA to GNEISENAU 20,100

Formation is line ahead:

DEVONSHIRE (f)
SHROPSHIRE
SUSSEX
GALATEA

Course: 330-degrees
Speed: 24 knots
Maximum formation speed: 30 knots
Interval: 500 yards

ORDERS AND INTELLIGENCE:

Seek to engage the German force with the objective of inflicting sufficient damage so as to permit interception by own naval and air forces.



KRIEGSMARINE

THE CUNNINGHAM DECISION

September 5, 1939



Rear-Admiral Marschall

STRENG GEHEIM!

SITUATION REPORT

5 September 1939

0622 LCT

Visibility is CODE 8 (VERY CLEAR)

Sunrise 7 August: 0611 Local (GMT -1)

Sea is calm

Winds are light and variable 2-3 knots

Maximum range for FC solution:

GNEISENAU to British CA 24,400

GNEISENAU to GALATEA 22,900

KOLN to GALATEA 17,300

Formation is line ahead:

KOLN

GNEISENAU (f)

Course: 260-degrees

Speed: 26 knots

Max formation speed: 27 knots

Max speed of GNEISENAU is 29 knots. 30 knots may be ordered but risks permanent damage to engines.

KOLN is on station 6,000 yards directly ahead of GNEISENAU

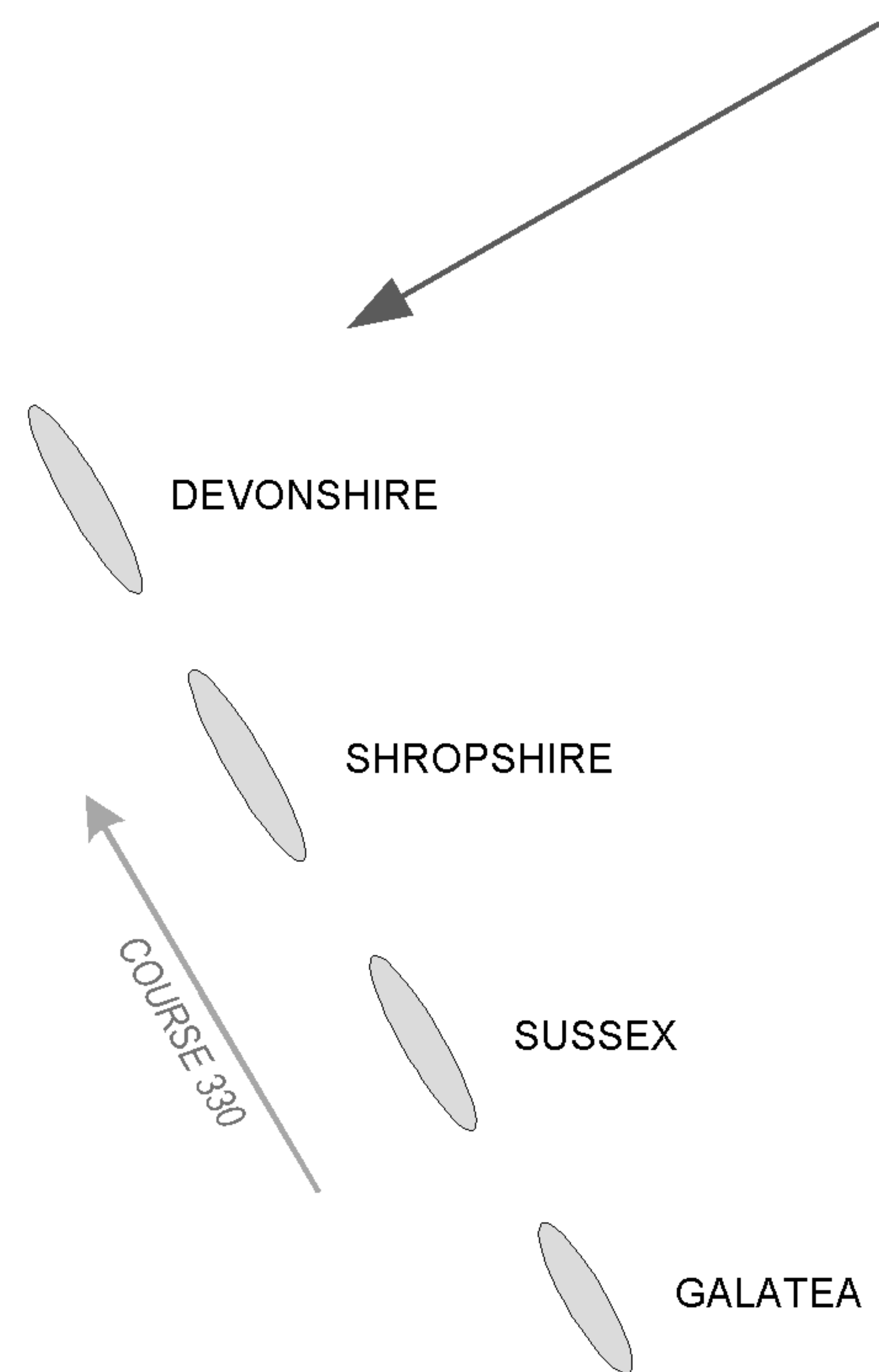
Initial sighting of smoke from British cruisers by KOLN is RED 20 range 30,000 yards

ORDERS AND INTELLIGENCE:

Engagement with superior enemy forces is to be avoided at all costs. In the event of engagement with the enemy, every effort must be taken to avoid serious damage to GNEISENAU.



*From KOLN bearing is RED 20
(240-degrees true), distance
30,000 yards*



THE CUNNINGHAM DECISION

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