

1 November 1914

At the outbreak of war, the German East Asia Squadron posed a threat to British trade routes in the Pacific. A squadron under Rear Admiral Cradock was dispatched to hunt down von Spee and destroy his squadron.

At least, those were the orders as Cradock understood them. Miscommunication, miscalculation, and some plain bad luck resulted in the British engaging the Germans at a numerical, speed, and firepower disadvantage. The opposing squadrons met off the western coast of Chile on November 1st. Cradock hoped to at least damage the German cruisers enough to force them back to Germany.



von Spee's squadron

British Briefing

CA Good Hope, CA Monmouth, CL Glasgow, Liner Otranto

- +1 VP if Nurnberg or Leipzig have a shaded hull box but not sunk
- +2 VP if Scharnhorst or Gneisenau have a shaded hull box but not sunk
- +2 VP for sinking Nurnberg or Leipzig
- +4 VP for sinking Scharnhorst or Gneisenau

Optional Forces

In a famous bit of miscommunication, Admiral Cradock believed that a modern cruiser, CA Defence, was due to arrive at any moment. He had not been told that the Admiralty diverted Defence to patrol the Atlantic. Belatedly, two days after the battle, Defence arrived off Uruguay. For an interesting "what if" scenario, add CA Defence.

Cradock did receive the pre-dreadnought battleship Canopus, which he chose to leave behind due to her slow speed. If Defence is not added to the scenario, OBB Canopus can be included as another option.

German Briefing

CA Scharnhorst, CA Gneisenau, CL Nurnberg, CL Leipzig, CL Dresden

- +1 VP if all five German ships escape the battle
- +2 VP for sinking Glasgow or Otranto
- +3 VP for sinking Good Hope or Monmouth (or Defence and Canopus, if included)



Vice Admiral Maximilian von Spee

Coronel



Set Up Notes

6'x4' table or larger. The squadrons should begin at least 48" apart. The British win ties on Initiative rolls.

SPECIAL RULE: GIVING CHASE

The Germans may attempt to disengage from the battle by leaving any table edge except the one they entered. One time during the scenario, the British player may shift the battle zone by up to 3' in any direction to keep the Germans on the table. All ships are moved the same amount in the direction determined by the British player. Any ships—including British—that are shifted off the table because of this move are considered disengaged and out of the battle.

Historical Outcome

Radio traffic from the harbor at Coronel alerted both squadrons of each other's presence on the morning of October 31st. The following day, at 4:17p, Leipzig spotted smoke from the British line and von Spee accelerated to engage. Admiral Cradock turned south to move away from the approaching enemy, leading to a 90-minute chase.

Unwilling to abandon the slower HMS Otranto, Cradock finally determined to fight. The squadrons jockeyed for position until firing commenced near sunset. HMS Good Hope, the most capable British ship present, was hit almost immediately. The action continued until darkness allowed two British ships to slip away. But Cradock had lost Good Hope and Monmouth, along with 1,660 sailors. Coronel was Britain's first naval defeat since the War of 1812.

