

NAVAL RACE: Knell of Fleet-Limiting Treaties Sounds; U. S. Building Up First Line of Defense

Big Ben boomed its twelfth stroke, ushering in a new year and a new naval race. Bells in thousands of cities and towns rang out the old, rang in the new; and a post-War dream died a dismal death.

In 1922, when a halt was called on the vicious race for bigger and better battle-ships by conclusion of the Washington Naval Treaty, later supplemented by the London Pact of 1930, there were but five major sea Powers—America, Britain, Japan, France and Italy. To-day, the world picture has changed and two new faces are on the list—Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

Largely because of the sea rearmament of these two militant Powers, the signatories of the two naval limitation treaties let them expire and the race for maritime might become a question of "keeping up with the Joneses." *Uncle Sam* won't find it difficult to keep up with *John Bull*.

Rates—All in all, as the treaties end, the United States Fleet stands on a par, if not superior to, the armada of the British Empire, its only close rival in the long-predicted and long-feared naval race. The Navy's General Board, surveying the situation as the lid blew off last week, rated the seven sea Powers thus, on the basis of warcraft built, building or appropriated for:

| | SHIPS | TONNAGE |
|---------------|-------|-----------|
| U. S. A..... | 405 | 1,429,740 |
| Britain | 884 | 1,545,478 |
| Japan | 288 | 882,172 |
| France | 219 | 798,086 |
| Italy | 237 | 521,045 |
| Germany | 97 | 823,748 |
| Russia | 105 | 204,762 |

The majority of the new craft laid down or projected are submarines and destroyers, but the list includes seventeen new superdreadnoughts of 35,000 tons each with a speed of approximately thirty knots and fourteen- or sixteen-inch guns. These mammoth "battle-wagons" cost \$50,000,000 apiece.

Initiation of the new naval race came from nations classified as the "have-nots" which have experienced resurgent military nationalism in the last five years. For them, naval rearmament was part and parcel of the general rearmament incidental to demands for recognition as major Powers.

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Touch-Off—The one incident which, more than any other, started the race was Germany's launching of the 10,000-ton "pocket" battle-ship *Deutschland* in 1931. France immediately countered by building two battle-ships of 26,500 tons each. Italy followed by announcing two 35,000-ton battle-ships and France countered again with two 35,000-tonners.

Meanwhile, Germany built two more "pocket" battle-ships and is planning two full-sized fighting units of the 35,000-ton category, to which France says she will add three more for a total of five. No longer bound by the fourteen-year holiday on "battle-wagons," Japan has drafted plans for four new monsters, while the United States and Britain are calling for two each.

Limitation of the smaller categories of war-ships was wrecked by intensive Italian cruiser and destroyer building beginning five years ago out of which emerged ships of both classes outstripping in speed and power anything in the fleets of other nations. France hurriedly sought to meet these with still faster cruisers and destroyers.

Uncle Sam is away out in front in the building race, with ninety-five warcraft totaling 288,215 tons, exclusive of two projected heavy battle-ships. Other ships are: three aircraft-carriers, 54,500 tons; two heavy cruisers, 20,000 tons; nine light cruisers, 90,000 tons; sixty-three destroyers, 98,350 tons, and eighteen submarines, 25,365 tons.

More—Britain has seventy-eight war-ships building or appropriated for, totaling 332,735 tons, while Japan has thirty-one warcraft totaling 90,194 tons on the ways. The French program consists of four battle-ships, 123,000 tons; two aircraft-carriers, 44,000 tons; five light cruisers, 38,400 tons; twenty-two destroyers, 28,900 tons, and thirteen submarines, 12,528 tons. Germany is building thirty-nine ships and Italy has no fewer than sixty-six on the ways.

The Russia has made some extravagant claims about strengthening its sea power and has announced intention to build a first-class fleet, its main force is believed to be in submarines, most of the new ones being based on Vladivostok.

It is impossible to predict the size of any navy other than America's. By 1942, the United States will have a fleet of war-ships of the following numbers and purposes:

Battle-ships: Seventeen. It is the mission of these great floating fortresses of 35,000 tons to meet the enemy on the high seas and attempt to destroy him. Slow

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in speed, averaging twenty-three knots, they have powerful fourteen- or sixteen-inch guns and thick armor. In a "knock-down fight" nothing can withstand their attack.

Aircraft-Carriers: Seven. This post-War type of fighting ship, varying greatly in tonnage (12,500 to 37,000 tons in the U. S. Navy) carries a brood of planes which may be used to locate the enemy war-ships, attack a fleet from the air or bombard coastal cities.

Cruisers: Fifty. These fall into two classes—light, from 6,000 to 8,000 tons, mounting six-inch guns; and heavy, 10,000 tons with eight-inch guns. Both types perform the same mission—to form the second line behind the battle-ships in fleet engagements and, more importantly, to raid enemy commerce and protect American shipping.

Destroyers: 266. These light, fast vessels are the Navy's cavalry. Varying in tonnage from 1,500 to 1,850, they generally carry five-inch guns, form a third line of battle, raid or protect commerce and search out submarines. Tho their light armament prevents them from engaging larger war-ships, they are dangerous even to super-dreadnoughts because of their torpedo armament.

Submarines: 100. These undersea craft, used so successfully by Germany in the War, carry light armament, usually three-inch guns. Their sting is in their torpedo-tubes.

They are successful in running blockades and are dangerous alike to warships or merchantmen because of their ability to fire torpedoes and escape before they can be fired upon.

In addition to these five primary types, the Navy has scores of tankers, transports, oilers, tugs, tenders, hospital and repair ships and even floating dry docks, but these aren't considered as fighting ships.

Britain, for example, has more aircraft-carriers than the United States, but the American ships are far more efficient and modern than the British vessels and *Uncle Sam's* naval aviation, as a whole, clearly is superior to the flying fleets of any other nation.

Yet, tho aviation is a force to be reckoned with, it does not supplant the "battle-wagons." There is a place for every form of armament in the modern navy, and everything is in its place.

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| THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL NAVIES AS THE LIMITATIONS TREATIES END | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| NATION | CAPITAL SHIPS | AIRCRAFT CARRIERS | CRUISERS CLASS "A" | CRUISERS CLASS "B" | DESTROYERS | SUBMARINES | TOTAL ALL TYPES |
| BRITISH EMPIRE | 540,750 | 171,450 | 143,970 | 337,420 | 280,834 | 71,049 | 1,545,473 |
| UNITED STATES | 534,000 | 135,000 | 192,850 | 165,900 | 308,215 | 93,775 | 1,429,740 |
| JAPAN | 307,070 | 88,470 | 116,440 | 144,325 | 145,583 | 80,284 | 882,172 |
| FRANCE | 308,925 | 66,146 | 93,306 | 92,502 | 144,478 | 87,729 | 793,086 |
| ITALY | 156,532 | | 94,291 | 93,722 | 110,410 | 66,090 | 521,045 |
| GERMANY | 156,120 | 38,500 | 30,000 | 35,400 | 51,304 | 12,424 | 323,748 |
| RUSSIA | 69,878 | 8,030 | 16,060 | 25,494 | 37,300 | 48,000 | 204,762 |

Figures in upper left-hand corners, number of ships; total tonnage; black portion, new tonnage; shaded portion, old tonnage