

INTRODUCTION AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

This booklet is an introduction to Japanese Battleship and Cruiser Tactics and Doctrine. Standard cruising and attack formations are illustrated, based upon diagrams in original tactical documents. Torpedo and gunnery doctrine are discussed in depth, though the former will be treated in more detail in a destroyer manual. The white pages are taken almost entirely from primary sources. The reference section at the end details section by section the sources consulted. The pink pages are from primary and secondary sources.

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BATTLESHIP AND CRUISER DOCTRINE, IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY

I. GENERAL

At the beginning of the war the policy in the Japanese Navy was for Combined Fleet Headquarters to issue detailed operations orders. Combined Fleet was also the source of doctrinal pronouncements regarding type operations. By mid-1943 nearly two years of war experience and the influx of a large number of short service officers highlighted the need for uniform type doctrine.

On August 15, 1943 Fleet Commanders were ordered to form doctrine-tactics boards for the promulgation of tactics and doctrine. The urgency of this problem is best illustrated by the fact that the basic order enunciating this policy urged the responsible officers to forward new concepts to the fleet in rough form if deemed sufficiently important. The fact that war operations prevented combined exercises was recognized and liaison between fleets and Combined Fleet Headquarters was urged. The Commander Third Fleet was responsible for developing light force doctrine for cruisers and destroyers assigned to the carrier forces while Commander Second Fleet would issue orders to light forces assigned to the battleship, diversion attack and night operations forces.

At this time the battleship force(Main Body-old tactical designation) and cruiser forces(Advanced Force-old tactical designation) were combined into the Diversion Attack Force, a title deemed more descriptive(in carrier warfare terms) of the role of battleships and cruisers. First Fleet, the old battleship force became a headquarters force and contained only those special ships assigned to Commander, Combined Fleet, such as light cruiser OYODO.

II. BATTLESHIP DOCTRINE AND PROCEDURE

A. TACTICS-The basic evolution unit is the battleship squadron, designated by the Arabic numeral-Roman letter "S" combination which corresponds to its squadron number thus; 1S=First Squadron, 3S=Third Squadron etc. Standard distance for battleships is 800 meters. Speed signals with acceleration tables for battleships are as follows:

SPEED	STAN. 12	14	FULL 16	BS 1 18	BS 2 20	BS 3 22	BS 4 24	BS 5 26
Time required to acc. from one speed to the next	1-0	1-0	2-30	2-30	3-0	3-0	4-30	
Total elapsed time	1-0	2-0	4-30	7-00	10-00	13-00	17-30	

Time in minutes-seconds.

STAN.=STANDARD; BS=BATTLE SPEED.

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B. DOCTRINE-GENERAL-In the approach phase of a battle the Japanese battleship force will steam in an ALERT CRUISING DISPOSTION or APPROACH DISPOSITION similar to those in the sections on Diversionary Attack or Night Operations selected by the officer in tactical command. When contact is obtained the vanguard(cruisers and carriers) will proceed immediately in the direction of the enemy (of course carriers will avoid visual contact). If the vanguard and battle line contact the enemy at about the same time the vanguard will maneuver and become either the leading or rear unit depending on the overall tactical situation. It is suggested that the officer in tactical command dispatch preliminary orders for deployment when the main bodies are about 50 km(30 miles) apart, about 15 minutes before opening gunfire. The guide will normally be 1S(YAMATO, MUSASHI) and the direction of deployment(left or right) will be ordered at this time. The APPROACH DISPOSITION is a line abreast of lines of squadrons at approximate right angles to the direction of the enemy, with the order of battle being a column formation. Prior to deployment the interval between squadrons will be maintained at 4 km. unless otherwise signalled.

1. Day Action-Day actions by surface forces normally are actions on the same course with a concentration on the enemy van. At a suitable time deployment will be completed. The surface forces will proceed into the path of the enemy main force and take up a position which will permit them to overwhelm the enemy van. All forces will cooperate in cornering the enemy main force, then the whole force will concentrate and destroy the enemy. If the enemy deploys for an action on opposite course during the fight, an action on opposite course normally is carried out.

The types of day action are established as follows:

TYPES	OUTLINE OF ACTION	
DAY ACTION KO(A)	After the battleship squadron has begun the fight, at the first opening the entire force will carry out a strike.	METHOD 1 The leading unit will move out. Later it will return. At that time the deployment will be made.
DAY ACTION OTSU(B)	When visibility is very good, for a while the Battleship Squadrons will fire at long range with the angle of elevation of the main batteries at about maximum. The auxiliary(light) forces will maneuver out of effective range of the enemy main batteries. Guns of large caliber and torpedo attacks by cruiser divisions will be used to create an opening. Then the entire force will make its strike.	METHOD 2 The whole force will deploy as a unit. Unless otherwise ordered this method will be used.
DAY ACTION HEI(C)	Local superiority will be obtained by drawing up the entire force in a compact formation. One flank of the enemy main force will then be attacked.	

Thus there are five basic methods of conducting day action:

1. DAY ACTION KO-METHOD 1
2. DAY ACTION KO-METHOD 2
3. DAY ACTION OTSU-METHOD 1
4. DAY ACTION OTSU-METHOD 2
5. DAY ACTION HEI

The types of action on opposite course are established as follows:

TYPES	OUTLINE OF COMBAT
Action on Opposite Course METHOD 1	Using the greater part of the auxiliary(light)forces an advance will be made into the path of the enemy main force, then an attack will be delivered.
Action on Opposite Course METHOD 2	The dispositions of the time will be used and an engagement while circling on opposite course will be carried out. Unless otherwise ordered, this method will be used

An outline for conduct of Day Action is as follows:

Day Action Ko and Otsu, Method 1-Vanguard proceed in direction of enemy to obtain information of situation. When ordered to deploy 3S(KONGO, HARUNA) take station about 8 Km. obliquely to the rear of 1S(YAMATO, MUSASHI). 3S will maneuver so it can begin gun action against enemy MAIN BODY simultaneous with 1S. Other leading units (heavy cruisers and destroyers) will endeavor to deliver effective torpedo attacks against enemy MAIN BODY simultaneous with 1S opening fire, reporting the time of firing and running time to Commander Main Body(1S), maneuvering to take station in the order of battle after firing their torpedoes.

Day Action Ko and Otsu, Method 2-Same as Method 1, except 3S doesn't move out so far

1S will concentrate fire on the enemy van, signalling the opening of gunfire.

Smoke will be used to attempt to divide the enemy.

Detached enemy units will be taken under fire before the main gun action opens.

Van and rear guard light forces will, under their commanders, attack the enemy with guns and torpedoes as the opportunity presents itself. In the strike or mop-up phase the entire force will close the enemy attacking fiercely. Cruisers will open the way for destroyers and both cruisers and destroyers will deliver repeated torpedo attacks. Destroyers will attack the enemy main force and guard against possible reversal of course by the enemy main body.

Vigorous pursuit is recommended.

2. Dusk Action-The types of Dusk Action are as follows:

TYPES	OUTLINE OF COMBAT
DUSK ACTION KO	This type is based on Day Action KO. A single decisive action will be fought. Unless otherwise ordered this method will be used.
DUSK ACTION OTSU	Night fall will be awaited with the object of fighting a night action. Then an all out action will be joined.

In addition to the application of Day Action instructions every attempt is to be made to silhouette the enemy and take advantage of any meteorological phenomena. In Dusk Action OTSU the force remains concentrated to avoid defeat in detail.

3. Night Action-The types of Night Action are:

TYPES	OUTLINE OF COMBAT
NIGHT ACTION KO	The entire force acting as a unit will carry out a night action against a single target
NIGHT ACTION OTSU	When the enemy is divided, the entire strength will be used to attack and destroy the nearest and most powerful enemy forces. Then the rest of the enemy will be dealt with.
NIGHT ACTION HEI	When the enemy is divided our forces also will divide and carry out night action.
NIGHT ACTION TEI	The routed enemy will be pursued. He will be engaged and destroyed as in the outline of day pursuit action. One element will be designated to destroy enemy ships which are damaged.
NIGHT ACTION BO	Enemy screening forces will be secretly bypassed and night action carried out against the enemy Main Body.

Normally the fast battleship squadron (3S-KONGO, HARUNA) will be the only battleships to actively participate in night fighting, cruisers and destroyers being better adapted to night fighting. The fast battleship squadron will participate actively in night action. It will normally be responsible for the cover and advance of the NIGHT OPERATIONS FORCE.

4. Dawn Action-The types of Dawn Action are:

TYPES	OUTLINE OF COMBAT
DAWN ACTION KO	The enemy fleet will be engaged and attacked all through the night by the air and submarine forces. The surface forces will concentrate and approach the enemy. A dawn action will be carried out in accordance with Day Action HEI
DAWN ACTION OTSU	1. The Night Action of the surface forces having been broken off, fighting will be rejoined in accordance with the outline of Dawn Action KO 2. Night Action will be ended about four hours before dawn. The concentration will be based on the position of the Main Body (1S usually or force under senior commander present) as indicated by distance and bearing from the enemy main force. The order of stations for each force will be ordered.
DAWN ACTION HEI	The Night Operations Force will attack the enemy repeatedly during the night. The Main Body and Fast Battleship Force will participate in this and carry out a Dawn Action.

In actions KO and OTSU the enemy should be kept to the east if possible and gunfire opened about 30 minutes before sunrise.

In action HEI the Main Body will approach from the direction of the Night Operations Force when attacking. The Night Operations Force, if separated will avoid confusion and being destroyed in detail attempting to rendezvous with the Main Body.

5. Immediate Action-This is the euphemism the Japanese gave to being taken by surprise. In language typical of Japanese Navy tactical documents (and those of other navies though the refrain is greater in Japanese manuals) the enemy situation is to be ascertained and the tactical initiative seized by Immediate Action; excellent tactical philosophy (in fact, obvious) though practical application might be difficult. There can be no doubt that the spirit of this maxim was adhered to in the Japanese Navy.

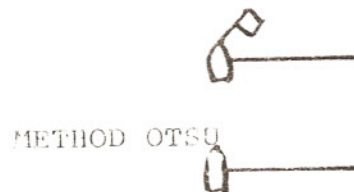
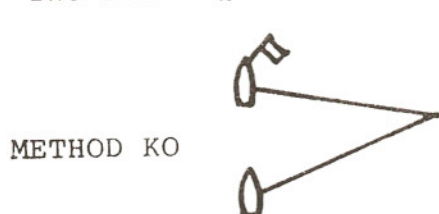
6. Narrow Waters-Action in Narrow Waters will be carried out as follows:

Not only is an engagement in Narrow Waters greatly hampered by the terrain, but very often both sides will plan to move under cover of night and launch an improvised surprise attack. It is essential therefore, to have undergone definite and detailed study and practice. In a complex and difficult place of battle it is all the more important to maintain close liaison between the various air, sea and land forces; to develop approach and withdrawal tactics adaptable to the enemy situation; to perfect identification of friendly forces, measures for meeting the attacks of enemy craft etc, and to carry out the engagement from start to finish under a well-organized unified command.

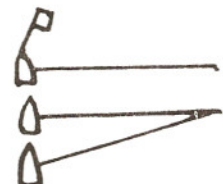
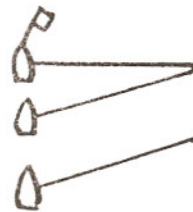
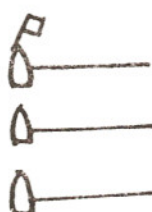
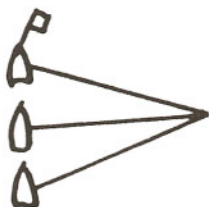
C. DOCTRINE-GUNNERY Japanese battleships are to open fire at maximum effective range, with OPEN FIRE given by Commander 1S, all ships opening fire at the same time. The range is to be closed as quickly as possible though prolonged masking of main battery turrets is not recommended. The enemy van is to be attacked unless the opposing battle lines are on opposite courses in which event the enemy rear is to be attacked. The methods for directing fire distribution are:

SQUADRON FIRE DISTRIBUTION

TWO SHIP SQUADRONS (1S and 3S)



THREE SHIP SQUADRONS (2S)



METHOD KO

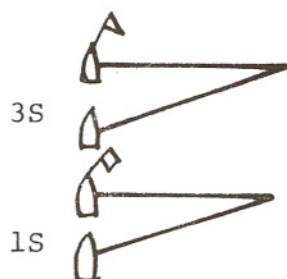
METHOD OTSU

METHOD HEI

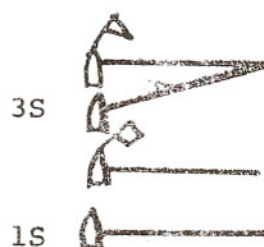
METHOD TEI

BATTLE LINE FIRE DISTRIBUTION (1S and 3S or 4 Ship Squadron)

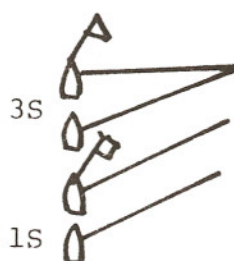
METHOD 1



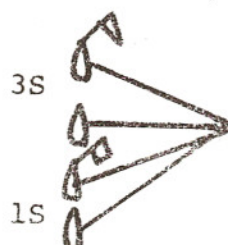
METHOD 2



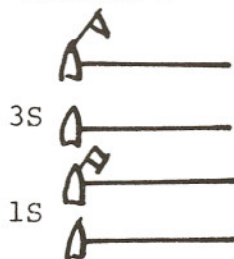
METHOD 3



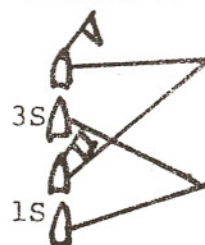
METHOD 4



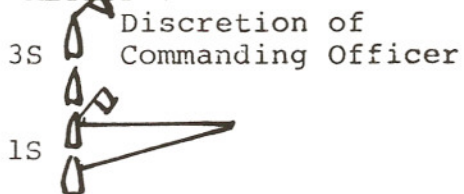
METHOD 5



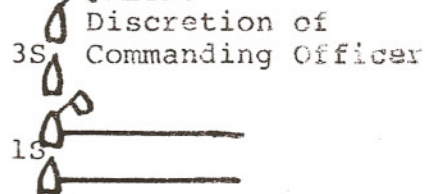
METHOD 6



METHOD 7



METHOD 8



In all firing the STANDARD TARGET (i.e. the target from which counting is begun) is the target toward which the ship in which the senior officer present is firing.

Gunfire distribution may be ordered by the fleet commander or squadron commander in the event of a change in the tactical situation.

In DAY ACTION OTSU heavy concentration on the enemy van will be the method chosen (the enemy rear may be chosen in certain conditions in action on opposite course).

At the height of combat firing will be distributed along the whole enemy line (Main Body) insofar as possible.

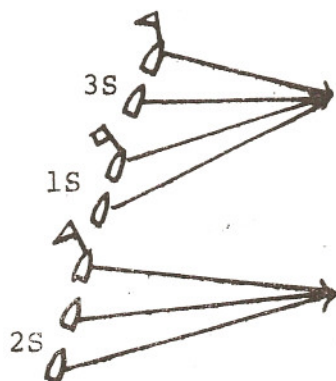
Divisions already engaged will communicate targets under fire and method of directing gunfire to units entering action.

In the event of a group withdrawal by the enemy, battleships will concentrate on the enemy rear or flagship. Enemy ships making smoke to cover withdrawal will be taken under immediate fire by the ship nearest that ship. When the enemy flees in confusion individual speedy pursuit will be conducted. In poor light enemy light forces will become the primary targets for battleship guns.

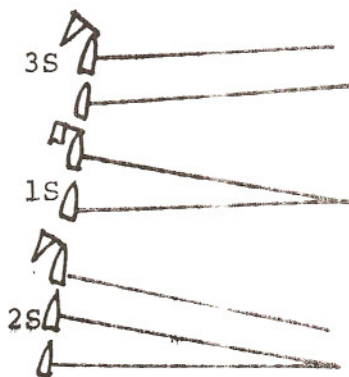
Use of main battery guns in anti-aircraft will be at the discretion of individual ship commanders.

EXAMPLES OF METHODS FOR DIRECTING GUNFIRE

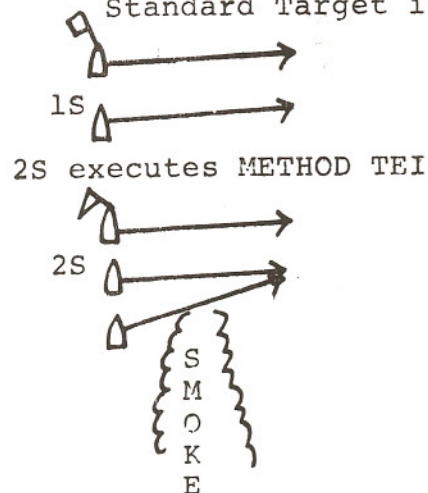
METHOD 4 Standard target is A
2S executes METHOD KO



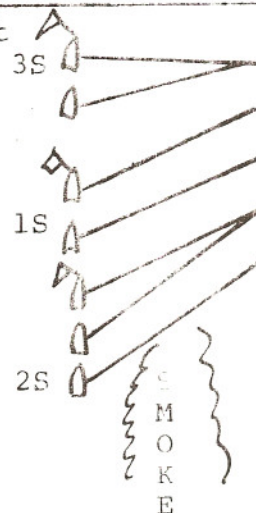
METHOD 2-Standard target is A-Target for 1S is B. 2S executes METHOD TEI



1S executes METHOD OTSU
Standard Target is A



METHOD 2-Standard target is A.
2S executes METHOD HEI



III. CRUISER DOCTRINE AND PROCEDURE

A. TACTICS-The basic evolution unit is the cruiser(usually heavy) squadron, designated by the Arabic numeral-Roman letter "S" combination which corresponds to its squadron number thus; 4S=Fourth Squadron etc. Standard distance for cruisers is 800 meters. Speed signals with acceleration tables for heavy cruisers are as follows:

SPEED	STAN 12	14	16	FULL 18	BS1 20	22	BS2 24	26	BS3 28	30	BS5 31	32	BS5 33
Time required to accel. from one speed to the next.	1-0	1-0	1-0	2-30	2-30	2-30	2-30		3-0			4-30	
Total elapsed time.	1-0	2-0	3-0	5-30	8-00	10-30	13-00		16-00			20-00	

B. GENERAL DOCTRINE

The standard cruiser squadron combat formation is the single column with the flagship in the lead though a fine quarter line may be used.

Cruisers are to provide covering gunfire for destroyers in torpedo attacks and when enemy battleships or cruisers are present launch their(cruisers') torpedoes against those major units. They are to use their guns only against enemy light forces, though the use of torpedoes against enemy light cruisers and destroyers is not prohibited if the tactical situation indicates it is proper.

1. Day Action-The types of Cruiser Day Action are:

TYPE	OUTLINE OF ACTION
DAY ACTION I	A combination of all forces will close on the enemy swiftly and destroy him at one stroke
DAY ACTION RO	In drawing out the enemy, torpedoes will first be fired secretly from long range. Normally a swift assault by all forces will develop simultaneously with the arrival fo the torpedoes at the target
DAY ACTION HA	A long range frontal engagement(TAIJISEN) will be undertaken at dusk with the object of precipitating a night action.
DAY ACTION NI	A test of strength will be avoided. A conclusive battle will be joined after the enemy has been drawn out by friendly forces.

NOTES:

1. An engagement on same course will be called METHOD 1, and an engagement on opposite course will be called METHOD 2.
2. Special orders will not be issued for METHOD 1.

The cruiser forces are responsible for screening the battle force and reporting enemy dispositions to facilitate the deployment of the battle force and exploiting torpedo opportunities. If the enemy battle line is observed deploying a large spread of torpedoes should be fired across the enemy line of advance to confuse or destroy the enemy battle line early in the action.

After deployment the heavy cruisers' primary function is to attack enemy cruisers and destroyers in their torpedo attacks on the enemy battle line. Torpedo opportunities against the enemy battle line are to be seized and in case of enemy cruiser pressure becoming too great then torpedoes should be fired against them.

Night Action-Open Sea-As darkness approaches cruisers are to do their utmost to maintain contact with and close the enemy, attacking and breaking through the enemy's outer screen. They are to fire star shells and use their searchlights to assist destroyers in their attacks. They are also to take advantage of the confusion created by the destroyers and fully exploit all gunfire and torpedo opportunities. If the Japanese fleet is under attack by enemy light forces the cruisers are charged with defeating enemy cruisers and destroyer forces.

Night Action-Narrow Waters-In narrow waters star shells and searchlights will be used freely in melee type action. Ships are to be constantly prepared for rapid changes of target.

CRUISER GUNNERY DOCTRINE

Surface Gunnery-Day-Division commanders will give fire distribution orders, though captains can direct fire on enemy ships which appear unexpectedly. The methods employed are generally similar to those used in battleship gunnery doctrine (see table that follows) with concentration on the enemy van emphasized. Discretion in changes in firing distribution orders is allowed in the following circumstances:

1. When a particularly advantageous or dangerous target appears unexpectedly.
2. When the target ship falls out of line.
3. When the target has run into an excessive concentration of fire.
4. When the range becomes too great or firing becomes difficult due to smoke and the like.

STANDARD OPENING RANGES FOR HEAVY CRUISERS ARE:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Against CV/BB/CA | |
| a. With spotting | 25,000 meters |
| b. Without spotting | 23,000 meters |
| 2. Against CL | 18,000 meters |
| 3. Against DD | 12,000 meters |

With 17,000 meters the optimum range for large combatants and 14,000 meters for light cruisers and smaller. Indirect fire is not liked though in case of enemy smoke, it will be used. In unusual circumstances independent fire will be ordered with ship captains selecting the most promising targets. Main battle line of ships is not to be split.

Method of fire direction		Method 1	Method 2	Method 3	Method 4	Method 5	(When the ships of the division cannot open fire simultaneously*)		
When unit consists of four ships	Engagement on same course								
	Engagement on opposite course								
When unit consists of three ships	Engagement on same course								
	Engagement on opposite course								
When unit consists of two ships									

*they will go into action in (1) (2) (3) (4) order, starting with the lead ship

NOTES: 1. a primary target(ship at which concentrated fire is directed).

2. a ship out of range.

3. In the absence of special orders, the leading enemy ship(or two ships) will be the primary target ship(s).

4. When it is desired a concentration of fire against any ship of the formation, the order will be given as follows: "Fire direction Method __, Primary target ship __." The fire direction methods outlined above will be used.

2. Surface Gunnery-Night-Gunfire is to be opened at 18,000 meters when star shells are used for illumination while 10,000 meters is opening range when searchlights are used (12,000 meters in the South Seas).

3. Anti-Aircraft Gunnery-Anti-aircraft cannon and heavy machine guns are to be used in surface engagements at the discretion of the ship's captain.

Standard opening ranges for anti-aircraft weapons are

CANNONS (12.7cm, 12cm, 10cm, 7.6cm)	10,000 meters day
	7,000 meters night
MACHINE GUNS (25mm, 13mm, 7.7mm)	3,500 meters

D. TORPEDOES-The center ship in the enemy's lead battleship division is the point of aim for torpedo attacks. When an enemy division contains two or four units the Number two ship will be chosen as point of aim. Torpedoes will be set at 6 meters depth for battleships and large carriers; 5 meters for heavy cruisers and medium carriers; while 3-4 meters will be used against mixed formations. The optimum ranges for firing torpedoes is considered 5 kilometers (3 miles). This, of course, applies to standard attacks. Generally #2 torpedo speed (36 knots) will be used for day or night fighting though squadron or ship commanders may make appropriate speed changes depending on the tactical situation. Concentrated salvos or spread salvos may be used depending on the tactical situation.

Single line ahead or a quarter line (line of bearing) of less than 30° are the preferred torpedo firing formations. In quarter line care is to be taken to avoid torpedoes of ships ahead in the formation.

The type 93 torpedo allows Japanese cruisers to conduct LONG RANGE CONCEALED ATTACKS. Air spotting and lookout information is to be used to insure adequate information for long range attacks. Spare torpedoes from the disengaged side are to be used as first reloads thus giving the tubes on the engaged side of Japanese heavy cruisers three shots per tube. Torpedoes are to be used liberally. In the advanced phases of a battle, the plan will be to approach as close to the enemy as possible and to fire liberally at short range without giving the enemy a chance to evade the attack. In all cases, however, continuous firing will be by all tubes.

In NIGHT LONG RANGE CONCEALED ATTACKS firing will be at the limit of the field of vision and all aids to fire control will be exploited (starshells, parachute flares, aircraft dropped float flares, radio direction finders and radar) so firing beyond the field of vision can be accomplished. Ideally concealed attacks will be timed so the torpedoes arrive at the time night attacking destroyers arrive at firing position. In carrying out concealed joint torpedo actions from both flanks of the enemy main force while in separate contact with both quarters of the enemy, the time of firing will be designated, and normally the basic course and speed of the enemy will be given by order. In order to make firing at the designated time possible, each ship will proceed toward the enemy and make timely position reports. All ships will maintain close liaison, get on the target and fire at the time designated. The angle of fire will be selected to cover a direct advance or a 40° evasive turn by the enemy. Concealed firing carried out in cooperation with friendly cruiser squadron in contact on the opposite flank will follow an outline set forth above.

E. AIRCRAFT-Japanese cruiser(and battleship) based aircraft are tactically assigned to the Cruiser Squadron Commander while they are the administrative responsibility of the ship's captain. In operations the aircraft on the windward catapult will be launched first. Unless otherwise ordered aircraft will return to their ship upon completion of their mission, conducting a short ASW search before recovery. In special cases they might be put ashore at a friendly base after their mission is completed.

The functions of cruiser floatplanes are as follows:

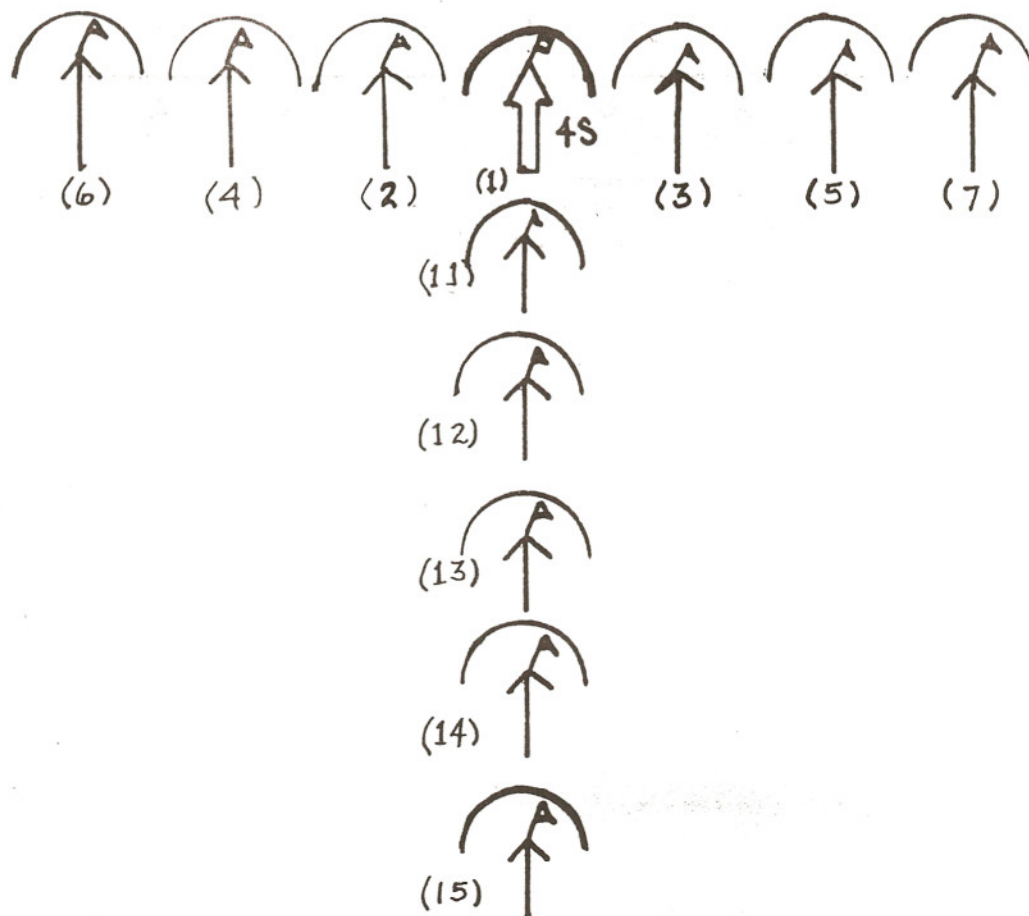
TYPE	PRIMARY FUNCTIONS	SECONDARY FUNCTIONS
Three seat aircraft (E13A & E16A)	Search, tracking, reconaissance	Attack, Anti-Submarine, Anti-aircraft Patrol
Two seat aircraft (FM)	Anti-submarine, anti-aircraft patrol, gunnery and torpedo observation, search, reconaissance.	Attack
NOTES: Other functions will be performed depending on the battle situation and other considerations.		

IV. DIVERSION ATTACK FORCE(YUGEKI BUTAI) DOCTRINE

A. GENERAL-First and Second Diversion Attack Force are the Tactical designations for the ships of Second and Fifth Fleets, respectively (after 1943) when these forces operate as surface action groups.

B. ALERT CRUISING DISPOSTIONS(KEIKAI KOKO)--There are ten basic types of Alert Cruising Dispositions(ORDERS FOR CRUISING UNDER ALERT) employed by FIRST DIVERSION ATTACK FORCE(1-YB). Unless otherwise signalled the stations in the disposition are as shown on the series of sketches under the heading ORDER FOR CRUISING UNDER ALERT. If the Officer in Tactical Command wishes to construct an Order for Cruising Under Alert he may do so by reference to the sketch entitled STANDARD ORDER FOR CRUISING UNDER ALERT and signalling his ships as follows:

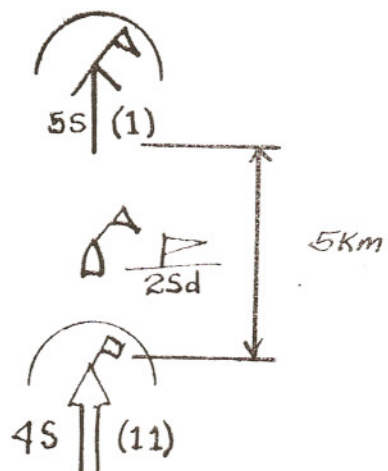
1. TYPE OF ORDER OF CRUISING UNDER ALERT PER SKETCHES IF APPLICABLE: OTHERWISE BLANK
2. GUIDE UNIT. ABSENT SPECIAL ORDERS 4S.
3. AXIS OF FORMATION(JIKU HOKO) WHICH WILL BE THE ACTUAL COURSE UNLESS OTHERWISE SIGNALLED.
4. STATIONS FOR SQUADRONS WITHIN THE FORMATION.
5. INTERCHANGING OF LEFT FLANK SQUADRONS FOR RIGHT FLANK SQUADRONS WILL BE CALLED THE ALTERNATE METHOD AND WILL BE INDICATED BY NUMERAL FLAGS(OTSU)



Any alert cruising disposition can be constructed from this chart. Numbers appearing in parentheses indicate station number for each unit or ship in the order of cruising under alert. The station of the units in line should be directly astern of the center of the units in line abreast. Absent special order A will be 6 kilometers and B will be 5 kilometers.

NOTE: The semicircles represent destroyers in a screen ahead of a formation of large combatants. The method for locating ships on the semicircle is illustrated in the diagram which follows this section and is entitled **STANDARD DIRECT ESCORT DISPOSITION**.

ORDER FOR CRUISING UNDER ALERT Y-24



ORDER FOR CRUISING UNDER ALERT Y-25

