

Master thesis

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The consequences of World War Zero

How the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 played a role in
World War One 1914-1918.



A Japanese assault at Liaoyang 1904.



The American
military
observer John
Pershing



The British
military
observer Ian
Hamilton



The German
military
observer Max
Hoffman



The Italian
military
observer Enrico
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Introduction.

*"The day for officers to rush forward in the firing line waving their hats and yelling 'come on boys' is in this new warfare a thing of the past."*¹ This quote is written by the American military observer John. J. Pershing. Pershing was sent to Japan to learn from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. Later in life Pershing would command the American armies in France during the First World War.

In the current historiography the Russo-Japanese war is often labelled as an imperialistic war. The unrest under the Russian population is often used as a 'push factor' to support this vision. In multiple books it can be read that Czar Nicolas II was looking for a quick victory against Japan to win the favour of his people. However, this image of the war can be seen as incomplete. This might not be an imperialistic war between a European power and an Asian country, but instead it could be seen as 'World War Zero'. This concept means; "that the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was worldwide in its causes, course, and consequences."²

The concept of 'World War Zero' is already been used in two scientific works. Namely the collection of essays; *The Russo-Japanese War in global perspective: world war zero Volume I* Edited by Steinberg from 2005 and the second Volume from 2007.³ The first collection of essays gives some information about global politics but then mainly focuses on the impact of the war on Russia and Japan and the reasons for the war. The second volume has a whole different approach to the war. The focus of this work lies more on regional implications, for instance the impact on Manchuria.

This thesis will focus on the military aspect of this 'World War Zero' concept. The main question of this research is; did Western military observers, who would later command armies in the First World War, learn important military lessons from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905? During the Russo-Japanese war there were a lot of military observers from all the Western powers who came to see if Japan was able to defeat the Russians. Russia was seen as the most powerful army of its time thanks to its huge number of soldiers. However, these military observers didn't just witness an Asian country defeating a European power, which had never happened before. They also witnessed an industrialised war in which all new modern military weapons and strategies were used, and which was the perfect example of how the next big European war was going to play out. Thanks to this modern way of fighting and the global interest through the military observers the whole military side of the war could be part of the 'World War Zero' concept. The global consequences of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 can be seen in the military lessons learned by the Western

¹ D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior*. 123

² J. Steinberg ed., *The Russo-Japanese War in global perspective: world war zero Volume I* (Leiden, 2005) XXIII.

³ Ibidem. XXI and J. Steinberg ed., *the Russo-Japanese war in Global Perspective: World War Zero Volume II* (Leiden-Boston, 2007) 3-4.

military observers. Because through the lessons learned by the military observers, The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 would thus play a role in the outcome of the First World War.

Chapter one of this thesis will focus on the modern fighting of the war and immediately give the context needed for chapter two. This modern way of fighting can then also be linked to the World War Zero concept. In the works of Steinberg this modern way of fighting is already mentioned but not yet proven based on primary sources. Chapter two will then focus on the Western military observers and if they learned important lessons from the war that would later play a role in the First World War. This chapter can then conclude if the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 had far reaching global consequences.

The first three paragraphs of chapter one will look at the Russo-Japanese armies and an overview of the war will be discussed. The focus of the last two paragraphs of chapter one lays with the land siege of Port Arthur. This is the longest battle of the war in which almost every new weapon or strategy was used by either side to gain victory. The fact that this battle lasted six months and turned into a form of trench warfare makes it perfect to link it to the First World War, where trench warfare would turn out to last the entire war.

Chapter one is mainly focused on providing the context and setting needed to fully understand the second chapter. If first the war itself isn't understood, it becomes even more difficult to understand the link between the Russo-Japanese war and the First World War that is made in chapter two. However, this also gives the perfect opportunity to see if the fighting in the Russo-Japanese war was as modern as the fighting in the First World War would be. This is a sub question for this research because it is linked with the World War Zero concept.

Chapter two will focus on four military observers, who would later fight in the First World War. The first observer that will be discussed is John Pershing, who would lead the American troops in France during the first World War. The second observer is Sir Ian Hamilton, who on behalf of Great Britain would lead the Gallipoli invasion in 1915. The third observer is Max Hoffman, who orchestrated the victory at Tannenberg against the Russians in 1914. The last observer who will be discussed is Enrico Caviglia, he would crush the Austro-Hungarian forces in the battle of Vittorio Veneto 1918.

One important aspect to keep in mind with this subject is that not all of these four military observers had the same rank. They have been chosen because they all played an important role in the First World War and they are from different countries. However, Pershing was commander of the entire US army in France while Caviglia started the war as a major, which means his influence was way less than that of Pershing. The order of how these men are presented is based on the rank they held at the end of the First World War.

The last fact that plays a role in this thesis is the availability of information about these four persons. Not all of them wrote about their experiences in current day Manchuria or later in the First World War. For example, Hamilton has his '*officers' scrapbook*' from his time in Manchuria and he also kept a diary while in Gallipoli, while Pershing never kept a journal of his time with the Japanese army but did keep one while in France. Caviglia has written a lot of books about his own experiences, sadly not all of them are translated into English.

For this thesis, the basis will be a variety of primary sources. Most of these primary sources are the official military accounts of the war. These accounts will be used to research if the fighting in the Russo-Japanese war was as modern as the fighting in the First World War. The first source is *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Volume 1,2 and 3*.⁴ These books are written by the official historical section of the committee of Imperial defence. These books are from the British general staff and are written based on the information of the other British military observers and journalists.

The German official account of the Russo-Japanese war is written by Karl von Donat.⁵ This primary source is based on the information of the German military observers, including Max Hoffman who was a major general in the First World War. The most interesting part of this book is not that it was translated into English so that the British could read what the Germans thought of the war, but the fact that von Donat grants himself the liberty to voice his own opinion on the strategical choices of the Japanese and Russian generals.

This thesis will also use *the official work of the United States war Department; Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war* written by the military information division.⁶ This work, like the ones before, is based on the information given by the American military observers, including John Pershing. The work is really written to learn from the Russo-Japanese War. Therefore, it thoroughly describes new inventions such as hand grenades and searchlights.

The next primary source that will be discussed is not written by a member of the military. The work; *Japan's fight for freedom; the story of the war between Russia and Japan* is written by H.W. Wilson.⁷ This is a series of three books which together composes around 2000 pages of detailed information about the war. Wilson was a British journalist who was present in Manchuria during the war. This is a nice change from all the official military books because Wilson goes much more into detail than the previous mentioned works. Later, Wilson would become chief editor of the Daily Mail.

⁴ *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I, II and III*, Prepared by the Historical section of the Committee of Imperial Defence (London, 1910).

⁵ K. von Donat, *German official account of the Russo-Japanese War*, Prepared in the historical section of the German General Staff (London, 1910).

⁶ *Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war*, United States. War Dept. General Staff. Military Information Division (Washington, 1907).

⁷ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom; the story of the war between Russia and Japan I, II and III (1904-1906)*.

The only downside of this series is that Japan was an ally of Great Britain and this leads to Wilson being in favour of the Japanese. But if you keep this in mind while using these books, they are very useful and more detailed than any other book that has been used for this thesis.

There is also one Japanese primary source namely; '*Human bullets: a soldier's story of Port Arthur*' written by Sakurai Tadayoshi.⁸ Sakurai was a Japanese soldier who after the war wrote the story of his involvement in the siege of Port Arthur. This book gives us an even closer look at the reality of the siege of Port Arthur. This is also the only available primary Japanese source from the war, which might give an interesting difference with the mainly western sources.

For chapter two there are a variety of primary sources, about the military observers. In these primary sources this research will try to find a link between the Russo-Japanese war and the First World War. Here it will be possible to see if the military observers had learned lessons from the Russo-Japanese war that used while commanding armies in the First World War

For the American military observer, John Pershing, two books shall be used. The first is called '*My experiences in the World War*'. This book is written by Pershing himself and focuses primarily on his experience in the First World War.⁹ The book was first published in 1931, which is quite a long time after the First World War. The second book that shall be used is; '*Guerrilla warrior; the early life of John Pershing*' by D. Smythe published in 1971.¹⁰ This book is more recent than most of the other works. The reasons that this fairly recent book is used is because Smythe has used the personal archive of Pershing that had never been used before. It gives new information about Pershing and his time with the Japanese army. Pershing doesn't mention this period in his own book, so for this information the second book is used.

The first primary source used for Hamilton is his own book: *A staff officer's scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war published in 1905*.¹¹ This was the diary of Sir Hamilton who voluntarily went to Manchuria. This means his scrapbook wasn't meant for the British general staff or for the big public. It contains his own visions and ideas which makes it a one of a kind source. His diary from his time in Gallipoli; *Gallipoli Diary Volume 1/2* by I. Hamilton published in 1920, will be used in chapter two to see if there were things he learned from his time in the 'Manchuria campaign'.¹² The book '*Defeat at Gallipoli*' by N. Steel and P. Hart published in 1995 will also be used to get more specific details about the Gallipoli invasion.¹³

For the German military observer, Max Hoffman, his own book shall be used; '*The War of*

⁸ S. Tadayoshi, *Human bullets: a soldier's story of Port Arthur* (Boston, 1907).

⁹ J.J. Pershing, *My experiences in the World War*. (New York, 1931).

¹⁰ D. Smythe, '*Guerrilla warrior; the early life of John Pershing*' (New York, 1971).

¹¹ Sir I. Hamilton, *A staff officer's scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war* (London, 1905).

¹² I. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary* (London, 1920).

¹³ N. Steel and P. Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli* (London, 1995).

Lost Opportunities published in 1924.¹⁴ In this book Hoffman describes his First World War experiences and also writes about his time with the Japanese army. Originally this book was in German, next to the fact that it's been translated into English nothing changed in comparison to the original book. The book is written ten years after the First World War.

For the last military observer, Enrico Caviglia, the article; "*Enrico Caviglia – the forgotten Italian. A Life as Soldier, Writer, serving the country*", written by Giacomo Innocenti and published in 2014, will be used.¹⁵ Caviglia has written about his experiences, however everything is in Italian and almost nothing is translated into English. This article by historian Innocenti is one of the only English sources that contains translated primary source material from Caviglia himself. Thanks to this article it is now possible to read some of Caviglia's experiences from his time with the Japanese army. To make up for the language barrier when it comes to Caviglia's experiences from the First World War, the book *The Italian Army and the First World War* by J. Gooch will be used.¹⁶ Gooch has used the diaries from Caviglia, so the information that is needed is now accessible in English.

For the second chapter one article of edited volume, *The Russo-Japanese War in global perspective: world war zero Volume I* is particularly useful, namely; *military observers, eurocentrism, and world war zero* By David Jones.¹⁷ Jones explains where these military observers came from and why they were important. He also writes about the diplomatic usefulness of these observers and the reasons for Japan to let these observers join their armies. This is important information needed to fully understand these military observers.

The focus of the current historical debate lays with explaining how Japan was able to defeat the Russians. Most scholarly works focus on this topic. A couple of these scholarly works which are used as secondary sources are for example; *the short victorious war: the Russo-Japanese conflict, 1904-05* by D. Walder.¹⁸ Walder has written this book from the perspective of the 'standard' vision, that Russia needed a quick victory to gain favour of the people. The next book also thinks in this 'standard vision'. *The tide at sunrise: a history of the Russo-Japanese war, 1904-1905* by D. Warner is one of the most important books when researching this topic.¹⁹ In almost every scholarly work about the Russo-Japanese war you can find this book in the footnotes. So, there are a lot of important scholarly works that focus on the debate, but almost none of them look beyond the end of the Russo-Japanese war.

This thesis and the bigger concept of World War Zero stand directly opposed to the

¹⁴ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities* (Eschenburg, 2011).

¹⁵ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia – the forgotten Italian. A Life as Soldier, Writer, serving the country* in the collection of essays; 40th international congress of military history. (Sofia, 2015).

¹⁶ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. (Cambridge, 2014).

¹⁷ J. Steinberg ed., *The Russo-Japanese War in global perspective: world war zero Volume I* (Leiden, 2005).

¹⁸ D. Walder, *The short victorious war: the Russo-Japanese conflict, 1904-05*. (London, 1973).

¹⁹ D. Warner, *The tide at sunrise: a history of the Russo-Japanese war, 1904-1905*. (London, 1975).

‘standard’ works of Walder and Warner. The works of Walder and Warner both originated from the 1970’s while the works of Steinberg originate from the early 2000s. Here we can clearly see that forty years later there is a new outlook on the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. This means that the historiographical debate is very much alive, and this research is thus current.

The last important scholarly work is; *the Russo-Japanese war, lessons not learned* by James D. Sisemore published in 2003.²⁰ Sisemore researches the ‘Lessons not learned’ from the Russo-Japanese war. For this he describes a couple of big battles including the siege of Port Arthur. He is a military man and that shows in his used sources, he also used the Scrapbook of I. Hamilton and the books of the General staff from Britain and the USA, next to that he also uses a lot of in-depth military handbooks. However, his focus is more on the strategic lessons that should have been learned from the war. He does not connect this to the First World War. Sisemore also mentions that there were military observers but doesn’t conclude them in the idea of ‘Lessons not learned’. The big difference between his work and this thesis is the fact that this one describes the ‘lessons learned’ based on experiences from four officers during the First World War, and not ‘the lessons they should have learned.’

²⁰ D. Sisemore, *the Russo-Japanese war, lessons not learned*. (Kansas, 2003).

Chapter 1. The Russo-Japanese war.

1.1 The Japanese army.

The start of the Russo-Japanese war is a long and complicated story. There are a lot of different aspects and political involvements that all lead to the start of this war. Important to know is that Western countries such as Great-Britain, Germany and the United States of America all played important roles in the origins of this war. Political, economic and military developments originated from this war had far reaching consequences. The Russo-Japanese war was not just an imperialistic war but perhaps it should be described as World War Zero. To understand the developments in warfare and their consequences, it is important to first look at both the Russian and Japanese armies at the start of the war.

The Japanese army had two important Western trained commanders. The first being Iwao Oyama and the second was Gentaro Kodama. Both generals were first trained by French officers and later by Germans. General Oyama was sent to Europe to get a European education in war. This is why he was present at the German side of the French-German war of 1870-71.²¹ Here Oyama became quite close to the famous Prussian chief of staff Von Moltke. Thanks to this good relationship Von Moltke would send one of his most promising officers to train the Japanese army, this was Jakob Meckel.²² General Kodama worked closely with Jakob Meckel and together they formed the new 'Western styled' Japanese army. In 1890 Kodama would visit Meckel in Germany and would stay there for two years to get a European education of war.²³

The military advisor Jakob Meckel, a veteran of the German-Austria war of 1866 and French-German war of 1870, would spend three years rebuilding the Japanese army based on the Prussian model of discipline. This model was liked by the Japanese thanks to their history of samurai discipline. Even though Meckel was only in Japan for three years, his influence on the Japanese army was immense. The work of Karl Donat shows just how important the Prussian Major was. All the tactics and ways of the German military were being taught. The army was divided into divisions and regiments, just like the German army.²⁴

Meckel also introduced the German idea of 'Kriegsspielen' where Generals could test their own ideas and tactics in large scale 'play battles'. Meckel would also personally teach the 60 highest ranking officers how Germany thought about warfare and strategy. After Meckel left, other German officers stayed and trained the Japanese army until the start of the first Sino-Japanese war.²⁵ The

²¹J. Sisemore, *The Russo-Japanese war, Lessons not Learned*. 65.

²²Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 44-45.

²³B. Martin, *Japan and Germany in the Modern World*. 39-41.

²⁴Donat, *German official account*, 71-73.

²⁵Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 44-49.

victory for Japan in this war would be labelled by Japanese generals as 'the Meckel victory'. Not all the lessons from Meckel were as useful. Meckel was an enthusiast of large-scale infantry attacks. However these sorts of attacks were cut from the German manual of war in 1914, after it proved to be highly unsuccessful against the machine gun.²⁶ Japan would heavily rely on this tactic of large scale infantry attacks during the Russo-Japanese war, which can be seen as a reason for the high amount of casualties.

In February 1904 the new German styled Japanese army consisted of 250 thousand active soldiers and at the end of the war this number would increase to 600 thousand soldiers.²⁷ This modern Japanese army was formed after 1850, the year the new 'breech-loading rifle' was invented. This new rifle meant that it was now possible to fire quicker and there was no longer any loose gunpowder involved because there were now cartridges. For the Japanese army this was the first rifle they ever used. So, unlike the Russian army they never even knew about the Napoleon styled 'volley fire'.²⁸



Figure 1 Japanese army waiting for a Russian attack 1904

Another important aspect in the Japanese army was the idea of 'Auftragstaktik'. The concept was invented by the German chief of staff von Moltke, who is often described as "the embodiment of Prussian military organization and tactical genius."²⁹ The concept meant that fulfilling a military assignment was more important than the way in which the goal was achieved. In the field this gave lower ranking officers more freedom to adapt to the current situation.³⁰

The Japanese army, educated by Meckel, had great faith in large scale infantry attacks. Their whole strategy was built on this idea and speed was of great importance. Therefore, the Japanese army had few machine guns at the start of the war because the heavy machine guns slowed down the infantry. The couple of machine guns they did use were the French Hotchkiss M1897, which the American army would also use during the First World War. This French machine gun was a lot lighter than any other machinegun.³¹ Furthermore each Japanese division consisted of 36 artillery pieces. Almost half of these cannons were the old Napoleonic style cannons, which couldn't fire in the air but had to be pointed directly at the enemy. However, to the great surprise of the Russians, the

²⁶Martin, *Japan and Germany*, 40.

²⁷Walder, *The short victorious war*, 81.

²⁸Hamilton, *A staff officer's*, 113.

²⁹ Connaughton, *The war*, 17.

³⁰*Ibidem*. 17-18.

³¹Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 167.

Japanese also had the German 11cm Krupp cannons. These were some of the most modern cannons and had more reach and bigger shells than any of their Russian counterparts.³²

1.2 The Russian army.

The Russian army consisted of 1,1 million active soldiers in 1904. There were also 2,5 million reserves who could be mobilized at the start of the war. Next to this the Russians could also rely on 350 thousand Cossacks and another 700 thousand militia troops. Thanks to these huge numbers there was little military skill within the Russian army.³³ Walder even goes as far to say that; “Each Russian soldier was prepared to die for his Tsar, but none of them could match the skill of a professional Western soldier.”³⁴

The most important lessons that any Russian soldier would get is that the bayonet would eventually decide every battle. Thanks to this, the Russians soldiers are also labelled as “the worst shot of any existing great army in Europe.”³⁵ This is also one of the reasons that the Russian soldiers still relied on the old school ‘volley fire’. The goal of the ‘volley fire’ was to literally ‘shower’ the enemy with bullets. Sir Ian Hamilton has an outspoken opinion about this ‘volley fire’. He wrote; “A volley is the negation of marksmanship as far as the individual is concerned for, he never knows and never can know whether his bullet was one of those that missed or of one of those who hit. For the general purpose of war, the volley is dead as the dodo.”³⁶

The Russian army did however see the usefulness of the machinegun, which were bought in great quantities. The Russians used the English Maxim gun, which would prove to be one of the deadliest machineguns in World War One. These guns were expensive and were believed to be of great importance to the European based armies. This was one of the reasons that only a couple of machineguns were given to the Eastern divisions, while a great number of guns stayed in the Western part of Russia. During this period, the Western part was seen as the more important part of Russia.³⁷ The Russians were also busy with replacing their old cannons with new ‘quick fire artillery’. In the past, the cannons had to re-adjust their aim after each shot. With these new cannons this was no longer necessary, meaning that they could fire more quickly. Only a small part of the Russians army really understood how these new cannons worked and in a lot of cases the first shot fired with these canons was fired at Japanese soldiers, rather than at practice targets.³⁸



Figure 2 Picture showing a Russian machine gun crew during the Siege of Port Arthur.

³²Donat, *German official account*, 208.

³³Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 166-169.

³⁴Walder, *The short victorious war*, 82.

³⁵Hamilton, *A staff officer's*, 113.

³⁶Ibidem. 113-114.

³⁷Steinberg, *world war zero*, 163.

³⁸Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 167.

The last important piece of information that should be known, in order to fully understand this war and the Siege of Port Arthur lays in Siberia. The Russian army was almost seven times larger than the Japanese but there would be no battle in which the Russians could provide more than twice the number of Japanese soldiers. This is because of the huge distance between the West of Russia, where almost all the soldiers were stationed, and the battlefield in the East. There was just one railway which covered the huge distance of 8800 km, the Trans-Siberia railway. However, at the start of the war this railway wasn't even finished. This is why during the whole war only 210 thousand Russian soldiers were able to reinforce the Eastern divisions, which consisted of 400 thousand soldiers. Not only did reinforcements have to be transported across this one railway, but also ammunition, clothes, medicine and food. This had the result that there was a deficit off all these items.³⁹

To conclude the first two paragraphs, the Russian army was far larger than the Japanese. However, there were some real logistical problems in getting this huge army to the front because most of these Russians troops were stationed in European Russia. Modernisation within the Russian army happened slowly and there were no Western military advisors as was the case in Japan. Nonetheless, Russian army modernisation was underway in the prelude to the war with Japan. The Japanese army on the other hand was smaller yet more modern than the Russian army. The Japanese were trained by experienced German officers and equipped with the latest European weapons and cannons. This means that the fairly new Japanese army was well prepared for its first 'Western war'.

1.3 Summary of the war

This paragraph will give a short overview of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. This is not only needed to fully understand the links made in chapter two. It is also necessary to look at the modernity of the fighting.

On 8 February 1904 Japanese Admiral Heihachiro Togo attacked the Russian fleet in Port Arthur, without an official declaration of war. This 'first Pearl Harbour' was the start of the Russo-Japanese war. Just as with the Americans in 1941 at Pearl harbour, the entire Russian navy was present in Port Arthur and unaware of the danger that was just outside the harbour. Russian commanders were aware of the current tensions with Japan, but as long as there was no declaration of war, they were not worried. It all went according to Togo's plan and before the Russians even knew what was happening, the attack was already over⁴⁰

In 1904 Togo was the commander of the entire Japanese navy and the whole outcome of the war rested on his shoulders. If Togo couldn't destroy the Russian navy in Port Arthur, there would be

³⁹F. Patrikeeff, *Railways and the Russo-Japanese war* (2007, New York) 43-46.

⁴⁰*Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I*, 58.

no way the Japanese soldiers could cross the sea and land safely in Korea.⁴¹ In a quick attack Admiral Togo's goal was achieved. The Russian navy was damaged and disorganized. This fleet would not be able to intercept the Japanese infantry, who were already underway to land in Korea. The Japanese troops were able to land safely and moved quickly north to the border of Korea and Manchuria. The Japanese knew that if they wanted to win this war, they had to strike fast before the huge number of Russian reinforcements could arrive from the West. The first battle of the war would take place at this natural border, the Yalu river.

The Russian commander in chief of the East, Aleksey Kuropatkin, believed he needed at least six months to fully prepare his army, and then he would be able to go on the offensive. To buy himself some time he sends 25 thousand soldiers to defend the Yalu river, a front of about 250 kilometres. In 1894 the Japanese had fought at this same location against the Chinese, so they knew their battleground. The Russians didn't think very highly of their Asian foe. The idea that the Japanese would have modern cannons wouldn't have crossed any Russian officer's mind. This is the reason that the Russians took no effort to conceal or strategically place their own cannons, instead they were all stationed next to each other. It took the Japanese Krupp-howitzers half an hour to destroy the Russian guns, after which they launched a compact assault in a small area to break through the Russian line of defence.⁴² With small boats and floating bridges they completely surprised and overwhelmed the Russian defenders. After this breakthrough, the Russians retreated.⁴³

During the battle of the Yalu river the second Japanese army landed on the Liaodong Peninsula with just one goal; to capture Port Arthur. This would lead to the Siege of Port Arthur. This siege would last for over six months and would cost both sides more than 50 thousand casualties.⁴⁴ Meanwhile the first Japanese army pushed further into Manchuria after their victory at the Battle of the Yalu river. Their next big battle would take place near Liaoyang, a great city whose railway connected Port Arthur with the capital Mukden. If the Japanese could take Liaoyang it would mean that they could march on Mukden and that Port Arthur wouldn't get any more supplies. The Russians also saw the importance of this city and prepared to defend it with 158 thousand soldiers and 609 cannons. The Japanese attacked with 125 thousand soldiers and



Figure 3 Map showing the movements of the Japanese armies

⁴¹Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 183-186.

⁴²Hamilton, *A staff officer's*, 109.

⁴³Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 268.

⁴⁴ The siege of port Arthur will be discussed in 1.4 and 1.5.

170 cannons.⁴⁵ There was just one problem with the Russian defence which the British military observer Hamilton points out; “The Boers, it must be allowed, would have been invisible in these trenches, whereas the Russians where plainly to be seen, not only by the infantry of the attack, but also by the artillery, which makes a considerable difference.”⁴⁶ The Russian defenders didn’t use camouflage, which Hamilton believes was necessary in this new modern war.

Thanks to faulty information Koeropatkin believed that he was badly outnumbered by the Japanese in Liaoyang. He believed that only a “daring Russian attack” could bring him victory. After a week of fighting he decided to lead an all-out attack from the city. When this attack failed, he retreated back to Mudken and gave the well defend city of Liaoyang quite easily to the Japanese.⁴⁷ This seems like a great failure of the Russian army, however the truth has more details. The Japanese General Oyama knew he was outnumbered, outgunned and that the city had strong defences. Because of this he took a great risk and from the first day of battle he sent all his soldiers to the front lines. Normally every capable general keeps a reserve of soldiers behind in case of an enemy breakthrough or flanking manoeuvre. Oyama knew he didn’t have this luxury so he took a great risk that would eventually pay off. This is one of the reasons why the Russian Koeropatkin believed he was outnumbered while in fact he had more soldiers.



Figure 4 Map showing all the battles of the Russo-Japanese war.

“It was in accordance with Russian custom, when he, Koeropatkin, retained a strong reserve, more than a Division. A reserve is never provided for its own sake but must be engaged to the last man when the struggle for the mastery demands it.”⁴⁸ Karl von Donat also believes that Koeropatkin should have sent in his reserves just like Oyama did. The Russians lost around 19 thousand men while the Japanese lost 22 thousand, but still this was a huge Japanese victory. The fact that Japan was able to gain victory while the Russians had around 500 cannons more than they had, is a really important aspect. This is one of the few battles before the Second World War, where an army which was so ‘outgunned’ managed to defeat his enemy.

After this battle the first ‘Western’ or ‘European’ reinforcements would arrive for the Russians. Koeropatkin found new courage and believed with these new European troops he would be

⁴⁵Walder, *The short victorious war*, 99-104.

⁴⁶Hamilton, *A staff officer's*, 113.

⁴⁷Connaughton, *The war*, 166-167.

⁴⁸Donat, *German official account*, 383.

able to crush the Japanese.⁴⁹ His main goal was to break the siege of Port Arthur and save the harbour. The Japanese knew his goal and waited for him on the plains called Shaho. The Russian force numbered 210 thousand soldiers and the Japanese had 170 thousand soldiers.⁵⁰ A German military observer describes what happens next. “A plan frequently recommended by von Moltke was therefore adopted.(..) it would be much better to assume the offensive after several attacks of the enemy had been repulsed, than to attack, oneself, the enemy at great sacrifice.”⁵¹ Oyama would do exactly the same and after three Russians attacks he would go on the offensive and defeat the Russians. Although Oyama used the German strategy, Donat isn’t content as he points out that Oyama made a big mistake; “In a manner similar to Oyama, Napoleon had tried, in the battle of Wagram on July 6, 1809, at one and the same time to envelop the right wing of the Austrians and to penetrate their centre at Sissenbrunn; he succeeded only in the envelopment.”⁵² Oyama had tried to use a tactic of Napoleon, which the Germans saw as a bad strategy. This tactic indeed resulted in Oyama not being able to encircle the Russians, which would have been a much bigger victory. Now the defeated Russians could reorganize and fight another day. The Russians lost 41 thousand soldiers while the Japanese lost only 21 thousand.

During this time, Port Arthur fell to the Japanese. This meant that the second Japanese army would now be able to reinforce the first Japanese army. Koeropatkin saw the danger in the joining of these two armies and tried to gain a quick victory before the Second Japanese army would arrive. In the Battle of San-De-Pu, the Russians had 50 thousand soldiers more than the defending Japanese. However, as Hamilton puts it: “the Japanese have learned some lessons, the Russians have clearly not.”⁵³ The Russians had no better plan than to attack head on and suffered horrible losses to the Japanese machineguns. At the start of the war, the Japanese had few machine guns, but after every battle they started to incorporate the captured Russian machine guns. The battle lasted only three days because reports came in telling of the arrival of Japanese General Nogi and his second army, after which Koeropatkin decided to retreat back to Mudken. The Russians lost 23 thousand men and the Japanese lost 9 thousand men.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Walder, *The short victorious war*, 169-172.

⁵⁰Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 373.

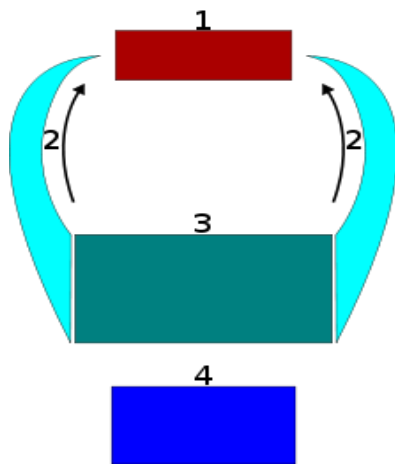
⁵¹Donat, *German official account*, 392.

⁵² Ibidem. 396.

⁵³Hamilton, *A staff officer’s*, 113.

⁵⁴*Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I*, 258-262.

The battle of Mudken would be the last deciding battle of the war. As General Oyama put it: “I need a Sedan to finish this war.”⁵⁵ He referred to the German victory at Sedan during the French-German war of 1870. Where the French army was encircled, and which directly finished



the war. General Oyama, who until now had used nothing but his familiar German tactics decided it was time for something new. He was afraid that after a year of fighting the Russians would have learned his strategies.⁵⁶ To the delight of the British military observers, Oyama chose for the ‘Horns and Head of the Buffalo’ formation.⁵⁷ This was the standard offensive tactic from the Zulu tribe, with who the British were at war in 1897. Oyama

Figure 5 This tactic meant that the attacking army would split into 3 groups. The ‘Horns, 2’ would attack the enemy flanks to pin them down. After this the ‘head, 3’ would charge the centrum of the enemy. If the battle went well the ‘loins, 4’ would move around the battle and cut off the enemy’s retreat. If the battle didn’t go well, the loins could be used to reinforce the centrum, or the ‘head, 3’.

attacked with 207 thousand soldiers, thousand cannons and 254 machine guns. The Russians force numbered 276 thousand strong, they had 1200 cannons and 54 machineguns. This would be the largest battle ever fought, until the battles of the First World War.⁵⁸

Oyama’s plan worked perfectly and after a week of fighting one of his officer’s writes: “until now I never thought it possible that we could surround the Russians and bring about a second Sedan.”⁵⁹ The Japanese did indeed manage to incircle the whole Russian army, however there would not be a second Sedan. Koeropatkin figured out what was happening and decided to focus on a small part of the battle and broke through the Japanese lines. He was now able to retreat back to Tiehiln, the next major city. In the chaotic retreat, the Russians lose almost 500 cannons and all machineguns, but the major part of the army survived and was able to keep fighting.⁶⁰

The Japanese army managed to gain a massive victory at Mudken, but Oyama believed he had failed. He wasn’t able to completely destroy the Russian army and end the war. The German Donat believes that Oyama did everything right and was not to blame for this. He believed the problem lay elsewhere, namely the lack of superior numbers; “Over and over again is seen the disadvantage of the inferior numbers of the Japanese; it deprived them also at another place of the chance of taking advantage of a situation.”⁶¹

After the battle of Mudken the Russian army would be able to get even more fresh reinforcements from Europe while Japans manpower had run out. To make matters worse for the

⁵⁵Connaughton, *The war*, 233.

⁵⁶Walder, *The short victorious war*, 268.

⁵⁷*Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.3*, 305-307.

⁵⁸Connaughton, *The war*, 17.

⁵⁹ Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 474.

⁶⁰*ibidem*. 478-482.

⁶¹Donat, *German official account*, 402.

Japanese, the large Russian Baltic fleet was about to reach Japanese waters. If Japan would lose control of the sea, the war would be lost. As Admiral Togo would say on the day of battle: “the rise or fall of the empire depends upon the result of this engagement. Do your utmost, every one of you.”⁶² The naval battle of Tsushima would last no longer than two hours. Admiral Togo, who had almost eight battleships less than his Russian foe, preformed his now famous ‘Togo Turn’, see figure 6.⁶³ This move was so daring that Russian Admiral Semenov later would write: “I looked and looked and not believing my eyes, I could not put down my glasses. HOW RASH.”⁶⁴

The Russian Baltic fleet lost 21 ships and suffered 11 thousand casualties. Admiral Togo, now nicknamed Nelson of the East, lost only four destroyers and 700 men.⁶⁵ The now famous ‘Togo Turn’ would also be used by the British during the naval battle of Jutland against the German empire in World War One.⁶⁶

Emperor Wilhelm the second of Germany send his cousin Tsar Nicholas II of Russia a telegram after the news of the defeat had reached Europe: “From the purely military strategical point of view, the defeat in the Straits of Korea ends the chances for a decided turn of the scales in your favour.”⁶⁷ Eventually the defeat at Mudken and Tsushima would lead to the peace of Portsmouth, signed on 5 September 1905.

The smaller yet more modern Japanese army was able to win land battles again and again, without gaining the upper hand in the war. The Russians were able to bring in more and more reinforcements from the West, while the Japanese army already was at its maximum strength in the Battle of Mukden. This would be an important aspect as to why Japan wanted peace. The battle at sea was a different story. Here the Japanese navy was also smaller than the Russian navy, but again more modern. On sea, Japan was able to gain the upper hand after the decisive win in the battle of Tsushima. This naval supremacy of Japan and the Russian humiliation of the battle of Tsushima would play a big role in Russia suing for peace.

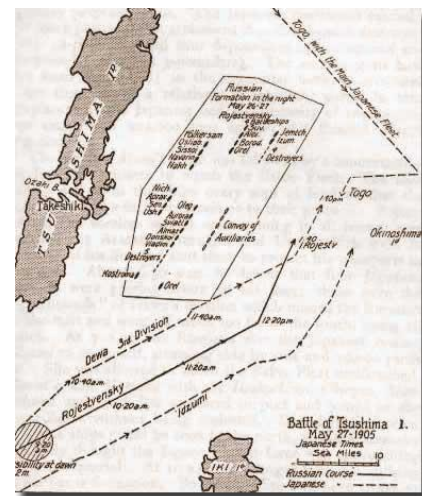


Figure 6 Togo's 'crossing the T' in the battle of Tsushima. This Togo turn means that Admiral Togo didn't use the well-known tactic of 'crossing the t'. But after moving his entire fleet to the right he came to a complete stop and turned directly to the left. This resulted in his fleet being perfectly lined up to open fire on the approaching Russians ships, who had yet to turn to be able to fire back.

⁶²Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.III, 754.

⁶³ Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.III, 756.

⁶⁴ Warner, *The tide at sunrise*, 506.

⁶⁵Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.III, 754-762.

⁶⁶Steinberg, *world war zero*, 254-258.

⁶⁷Walder, *The short victorious war*, 287.

Most importantly, this paragraph doesn't just show how the Russo-Japanese war went and how it ended. The spectacular number of soldiers and casualties combined with the large number of cannons and machineguns that were used in the battle of the Russo-Japanese war, show that the Russo-Japanese war was indeed the first large scale modern war of the 20th century. Thus, this war was the perfect opportunity for the Western military observers to learn military lessons that could have been useful in the First World War.

1.4 Reaching Port Arthur

This paragraph will deal with the Japanese invasion of the Liaodong Peninsula and the road towards Port Arthur. The fighting of the siege of Port Arthur will be discussed in the next paragraph. The reason that these beach landings and the road to Port Arthur are also thoroughly described, is because the situation and the fighting is similar to that of the British Forces at Gallipoli in the First World War. The British military observer who will be discussed in chapter two, Ian Hamilton, would lead the Gallipoli invasion. If we are to make a direct link between Gallipoli and the Road to Port Arthur, it is necessary to first fully describe the Japanese landing on the Liaodong peninsula.



Figure 7 Liaodong Peninsula

The battle for Port Arthur started just after the Japanese victory at the Yalu River. If General Oyama was not able to cross the Yalu river, the second Japanese army, led by Maresuke Nogi, wouldn't land on the Liaodong peninsula but would be sent to Korea to reinforce him. However, Oyama was able to win and cross the river, and so Nogi's second army was sent to take Port Arthur.⁶⁸

The first important battle that took place within the Siege of Port Arthur was the battle of the Nanshan hills. These hills are about 90 meters high and have a great view of everything approaching Port Arthur. Russia hired 5 thousand Chinese labourers to improve the defences in 1900. This resulted in the construction of five layers of trenches, 5 kilometres of barbed wire, a thousand landmines were placed, and two immense searchlights were constructed. Also, ten pillboxes equipped with machine guns were built and fifteen cannon positions, which protected around 90 cannons.⁶⁹ The Russians believed these defences to be undefeatable. The Russian Colonel Tretyakov was in command of 38 hundred Russian soldiers, sent to defend these hills.

The first day of battle took place on the 26th of May. General Oku commanded 35 thousand troops and 216 cannons. Oku was also able to call in additional shelling from 4 Japanese's cruisers. It took the Japanese less than 5 hours to destroy most of the Russian cannons.⁷⁰ This was mainly the

⁶⁸ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom; the story of the war between Russia and Japan I, II and III (1904-1906)*. 554.

⁶⁹ *Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war*, United States. War Dept. General Staff. Military Information Division. 15-18.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem* 20.

result of the old Russian tactics. They still believed cannons had to be as high as possible, so that they could provide direct fire upon the enemy. The new long-range artillery was able to shoot from an 'indirect fire role'. This means that thanks to its new range, the gunners didn't have to see the enemy themselves, but they could fire into the sky and still hit their targets. The Japanese did use this new way of indirect fire and thanks to this, they were able to destroy most of the Russian guns before they fired back.⁷¹

After this bombardment followed by the shelling of the four Japanese cruisers, the first Japanese infantry started to attack. It didn't take long for the Japanese commanders to see the destructive fire power of the well-entrenched machine guns combined with barbed wire. Again and again the Japanese officers asked for artillery support to destroy these guns, but thanks to their concrete protection and the strategic use of the high hills the Japanese were unable to destroy them.⁷² In the late afternoon General Oku ordered his artillery to "use every last shell if necessary" to destroy these machine guns.⁷³ While this bombardment took place, he also sent a division to swim across the sea to flank the Russian defenders. Colonel Tretyakov saw this movement and personally led a group of soldiers to protect his exposed Western flank. At the same time, General Fock believed it was time to retreat, his reasons why are unknown. After the battle, the Japanese army needed two whole days to continue their march towards Port Arthur, which indicates how difficult a beach invasion followed by an assault on a defensive position had become.⁷⁴



Figure 8 drawing giving an impression of the effect of Russian barbed wire combined with machine gun fire 1904

⁷¹H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 558-559.

⁷² *Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war*. 16.

⁷³ *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I*, 153.

⁷⁴ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 596-597.

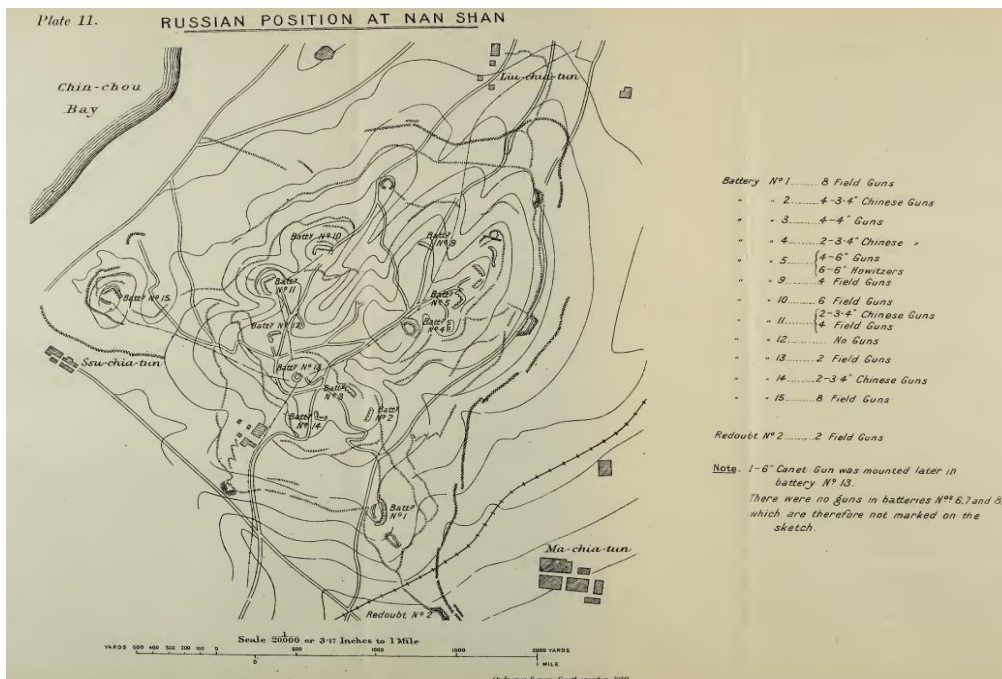


Figure 9 Russian defence positions in Nan Shan. ⁷⁵

On the 26th of June, the first big Japanese attack was launched on the last remaining hills between them and Port Arthur. The first three days Nogi attacked with almost 60 thousand soldiers but made little to no progress. Again, the trenches and barbed wire combined with well-placed machine guns seem to fully stop the Japanese attack. Nogi then decided to focus his 180 cannons strong artillery bombardment not directly on the Russians, but just in front of them. This bombardment managed to destroy parts of the barbed wire, which made the next Japanese assault easier. Were in the Battle of Nan Shin the hills had not only protected the Russians against enemy artillery, it had also protected the battlefield itself. Now this was not the case, and the craters that formed thanks to the shells provided cover for assaulting Japanese soldiers. After the first defensive position was taken by the Japanese, the Russians tried to perform a counterattack. The Japanese had quickly set up their own machineguns and this attack was stopped quite easily.⁷⁶

After the last hills were captured, the Japanese army reached Port Arthur. The Russians had used the time between the start of the war and the Japanese reaching Port Arthur well, and the defences around Port Arthur were greatly increased and modernised. The Russian defence plan was to have two defensive lines running through the hills surrounding Port Arthur. The first line of defence was supposed to be the most well protected one. This first line of defence would eventually consist of six fortified battery positions, six concrete bunkers each with four machineguns and nine smaller pillboxes with one machine gun each. Between and in front of these bunkers were trenches and ditches to provide Russian infantry with cover and force the attacker in the open. In front of each

⁷⁵ Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I, 155.

⁷⁶ Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war. 28-29.

trench barbed wire was placed. The second line of defence would consist of four concrete bunkers and a network of trenches.⁷⁷

To man these defences the Russian General Konstantin Smirnov commanded around 50 thousand soldiers. He would boost these numbers by ordering 10 thousand soldiers of the Russian Far East fleet into the trenches. Next to these soldiers, Smirnov was able to use 650 field guns. 186 of these guns were originally from ships of the Russian Far East fleet.⁷⁸

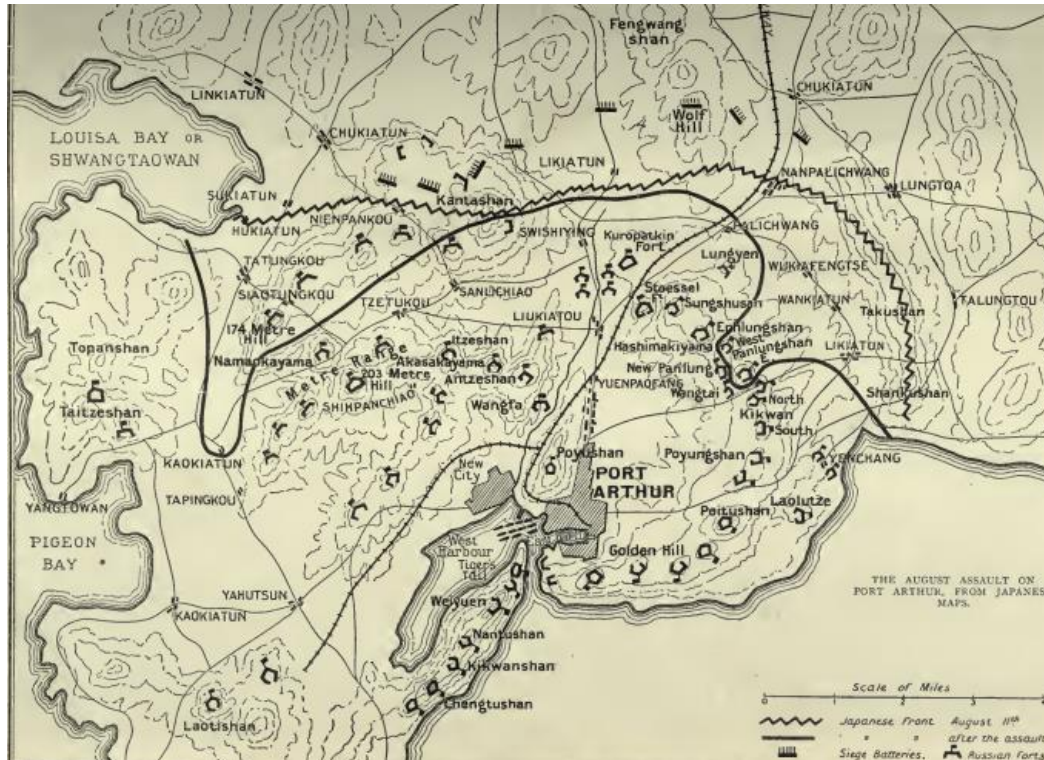


Figure 10 Russian defensive positions at Port Arthur.

The reason that this first part of the siege of Port Arthur is so thoroughly described is because the naval landing and hill battles on the peninsula closely resemble the conditions of the Gallipoli landings of 1915. Furthermore, this paragraph explicitly shows the modernity of the siege of Port Arthur. The modernity of the Russian army fighting in the Russo-Japanese war is debatable because as said in chapter one, most of the modern and well-trained soldiers would stay in Europe. However, when the modernity of the defences becomes clear, this is no longer an argument against the modernity of the Russians. The concrete bunkers and pillboxes combined with large networks of trenches and barbed wire show that this siege of Port Arthur would become a battle which the world had not yet seen.

⁷⁷ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 971-993.

⁷⁸ Ibidem. 979.

⁷⁹ Ibidem. 771.

1.5 The siege of Port Arthur

This last paragraph of chapter one will deal with the siege of Port Arthur. Here the fighting would last for more than six months and the battle would result in fierce trench fighting. This trench fighting was the same as how most of the First World War would turn out to be fought. So perhaps here the Western military observers could have learned some invaluable lessons. Again, this battle is described thoroughly to give the necessary context for chapter two, and to prove the modernity of the fighting in the Russo-Japanese war.

The first attack on Port Arthur on the 7th of August was led by General Nogi. His first goal was to capture the hills on the East side of the defences. In this battle for the Eastern hills it was the first time that the Japanese soldiers could use hand grenades in large quantity. Wilson describes the devastating effect of these hand grenades very well: “With bayonets fixed they moved over the crest, the man in the front rank flung hand-grenades into the Russian defenders. Within a blink of an eye the whole scene was nothing less than a popular representation of hell.”⁸⁰ These hand grenades proved useful in attacking the entrenched Russian soldiers. However, getting close enough to throw these hand grenades was difficult. In two days the Japanese lost 1460 soldiers in trying to take these hills while the Russian defenders lost 450.⁸¹

General Nogi was responsible for the capture of Port Arthur in 1894 from the Chinese. He captured Port Arthur with a frontal attack. As Donat puts it: “Nogi knew that only a full-scale frontal attack would give him victory, even before he landed near Port Arthur.”⁸² On the 21st of August Nogi launched his assault which would last three full days. The defences did their work and unlike in 1894, the Russians had machineguns, high impact cannons, trenches, bunkers, hand grenades and barbed wire. Sakurai Tadayoshi, a Japanese soldier, would later describe the battle; thus: “The bodies of the brave dead-built hill upon hill, their blood made streams in the valleys.”⁸³

At the end of the 24th the Japanese had made no real progress. They lost 15 thousand soldiers while the Russians lost around 3 thousand. General Nogi’s frontal assault proved to be a disaster. In the next week General Kodama was sent by Oyama to aid general Nogi in the capture of Port Arthur. Kodama understood that another frontal assault would cost him his army, so instead he chose for a siege strategy. His soldiers would start on digging trenches and he ordered heavy howitzer cannons to destroy the concrete fortifications.⁸⁴

The next two months of fighting was concentrated around the trench building of the Japanese. These trenches permitted the Japanese to move freely and relatively safe just beyond

⁸⁰ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1024.

⁸¹ *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I*, 354-357.

⁸² K. von Donat, *German official account of the Russo-Japanese War*, 39.

⁸³ S. Tadayoshi, *Human bullets: a soldier's story of Port Arthur (Boston, 1907)*. 220.

⁸⁴ *Epitome of the Russo-Japanese war*. 197-206.

Russian range. Artillery was shooting constantly at both the attacker and defender. But thanks to the solid Russian fortifications and the fact that the Japanese used indirect fire and thus were mostly out of range from the Russian canons, neither side could really damage each other's artillery.⁸⁵

The framework of trenches on both sides would slowly expand over time and in some cases bring their own line closer to the enemy. A whole new type of warfare emerged during this period. Japan had hand grenades which volunteers tried to throw into the Russian trenches, this however mostly ended with the volunteers never coming back. The Russians used a relatively old system of wood mortars which could launch explosives further than a man could throw, but the Russian explosives were less powerful than the Japanese. There are also reports that if the landscape was suitable, the Russians would tie explosives to barrels or wheels and send them



Figure 11 Japanese soldiers in a trench in the Siege of Port Arthur 1905

down into the Japanese trenches. Although these explosions wouldn't cause huge number of casualties, it was a strong psychological weapon.⁸⁶ As Pershing, seeing this trench warfare, would describe: "the time that a commander was able to lead a glorious assault is over, what a shame."⁸⁷

After fresh Japanese reinforcements had arrived, Nogi launched his second large scale attack. During this second attack on Port Arthur, the Japanese first used their new invention; the trench mortar. This new weapon was based on the captured Russian 'wood mortars'. The Japanese used a 7-inch version made of steel in comparison to the 5-inch version made of wood. This allowed the Japanese to shoot just a bit further with these new trench mortars which were immediately produced by the hundreds.⁸⁸

In the night before the attack, Japanese engineers crawled out of their trenches to cut the barbed wire in front of the Russian positions. They managed to succeed, but not without the Russians searchlights spotting them. So, when the Japanese attacked the next day, the Russians knew exactly where they would attack and welcomed them with combined machinegun and cannon fire. The Japanese had to focus almost all their artillery fire on one area to create a new opening to launch their attack. After three waves of infantry attacks, they managed to breach through the Russian trenches. This would lead to almost six hours of hand to hand combat. With fixed bayonets the Russians tried to counterattack, and with bayonets fixed the Japanese defended.⁸⁹ Although the bayonet charge was outdated and caused huge number of casualties against the modern defences,

⁸⁵ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1020-1023.

⁸⁶ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1029-1030.

⁸⁷ D. Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 123.

⁸⁸ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1154.

⁸⁹ *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.I*, 365.

both sides would use this tactic till the end of the war and it would still be used in the First World War.

In the West, the fight for hill 203 was no going so good for the Japanese. Their attack was repelled by combined machinegun- and cannon fire. A large-scale artillery bombardment combined with naval support fire should change this for the coming second attack. The next day, the Japanese believed, that after this huge bombardment, there wouldn't be much resistance left; "it came as a big shock when again the machineguns opened fire and the soldiers were cut down."⁹⁰ The artillery bombardment combined with naval support again didn't have the effect they hoped for.

On the first of October, Nogi's 11-inch Howitzers had arrived and were ready to open fire. These guns had a range of 9000 yard and could fire further than any Russian cannon. The Russian concrete fortifications weren't built to resist fire from these new 11-inch Howitzers, and they crumbled under the huge explosions. After a month of immense artillery fire, Nogi launched his third major attack. Within three days the Japanese would lose 2100 men and only capture one bunker. While the fortifications might have been badly damaged by the new cannons, the Russian defenders were still in their trenches and with their machineguns they again stopped the Japanese attack.⁹¹

One-month later, Nogi would be reinforced with a whole new division; around 15 thousand fresh soldiers. After a bombardment of artillery and trench mortars combined with hand grenades, used by front line soldiers, the Japanese attacked. At first, they managed to breach through the first trench line, which was a good sign and many officers believed this was going to be the final battle. However, in the afternoon, a daring Russian counterattack based primarily on a wild bayonet charge recaptured the forward trenches. At nightfall, the Japanese hadn't captured any of their objectives. Even when outnumbering and outgunning the Russians, it proofed to be difficult to breach trough a well-fortified trench line.⁹²

At night, Nogi asked for volunteers for what he called "a chance for glory."⁹³ Three thousand Japanese soldiers volunteered, their goal was to crouch as close as possible to the Russian lines, with no equipment other than small knives, and then quite literary 'throw themselves' at them. The volunteers were able to quietly get past two lines of barbed wire, and while they were cutting their way through the third line they were spotted by a Russian searchlight. Within minutes, Russian machine gun fire and an artillery bombardment would mean the loss of 2 thousand Japanese soldiers. Nogi's final assault had cost him 5500 soldiers, whit no ground won.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Hamilton, *A staff officer's*. 168.

⁹¹ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1288.

⁹² *Official History (naval and military) of The Russo-Japanese War Vol.III* 34.

⁹³ S. Tadayoshi, *Human bullets: a soldier's story of Port Arthur*. 218.

⁹⁴ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1199.

After this disastrous assault, Kodama was once again sent to Port Arthur, and now unofficially took command of the Japanese armies.⁹⁵ Kodama wouldn't try another large-scale infantry attack and so Nogi's chance for glory was the last large-scale assault on Port Arthur. Kodama relied much more on the 11-inch howitzers than Nogi. Kodama focused his attacks on the highest mountain in the vicinity of Port Arthur, Hill 203. In one week of fighting, these howitzers used so many shells that the top of the hill had shrunk almost 4 meters at the end of the battle. On the fifth of December, the Japanese would capture the hill for the last time and not lose it to the Russian anymore.⁹⁶

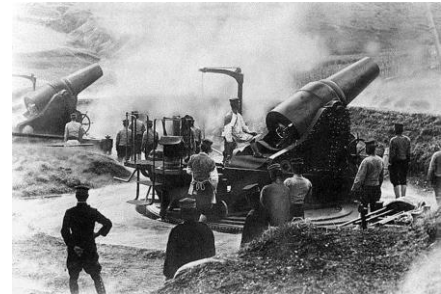


Figure 12 Japanese 11-inch howitzers cannons during the siege of Port Arthur

This Hill 203 made it possible for the Japanese to fire upon the remainder of the Russian Far East fleet, which was docked in Port Arthur. The continuous shelling of the city from hill 203 and the running out of ammunition, medicine and food had a big impact on the Russian army. When the Japanese captured one of the Russian bunkers on the 28 of January, and a second one on the 31st, Lieutenant General Stoessel surrendered Port Arthur; "The Japanese lost almost 92 thousand soldiers in the Siege of Port Arthur, which is 10 percent of the entire Japanese army. The Russian defenders lost 65 thousand soldiers and the entire Far East fleet."⁹⁷ One thing that almost all the military observers wrote about the siege was that Port Arthur showed the new lethality of modern war.

This paragraph shows the brutality of the fighting in the Siege of Port Arthur. It doesn't just show the brutality and modernity of the combat, but it also makes it clear that the Japanese didn't have a real answer to this new way of fighting. By now, both sides had learned the lethality of machine guns and artillery, and thus could have known the cost of large-scale infantry attacks. However, neither side would let go of their old tactics, and so the bayonet charges would still be used throughout the entire siege. The Siege of Port Arthur also clearly shows that from now on battles would no longer be won in a day, but instead would last way longer. This would also be the case in the First World War.

The siege of Port Arthur would be the perfect prelude to the type of fighting in the First World War. The importance of machine guns, hand grenades, trench mortars, barbed wire and artillery is clear to see. Large scale infantry attacks didn't work anymore in this new form of warfare. The Japanese army led by Nogi would at first rely on the large-scale infantry attacks, which resulted in huge amounts of casualties, thanks to the modern Russian defences around Port Arthur.

⁹⁵ I. Hamilton, *A staff officer's scrapbook*. 158.

⁹⁶ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1202.

⁹⁷ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom*. 1224.

It was only after the German trained general Kodama came to give advice, that Nogi switched his tactic and prepared for a long siege. The German trained Kodama understood that the new machineguns and artillery made fighting a defensive battle much easier then attacking. He also understood that the speed became an important factor of successful assaults. In the end, the number of casualties on both sides showed the destructiveness of modern warfare.

Chapter 2. The four military observers.

2.1 Military observers

The last chapter showed that the Russo-Japanese war was similar to the fighting of the First World War. This means that it was a good learning opportunity for the First World War. The people who had to learn these lessons were the military observers. First, the role of the military observer will be discussed. It is necessary to understand who these men were, and why they were present during the war. Then each paragraph will focus on one of the four chosen military observers who would later go on to lead armies in the First World War.

Attaching a professional soldier-representative to allied armies in wartime is an age-old practice. During the Napoleonic era, this practice gained a new boost of importance. Thanks to the many coalitions that were formed against Napoleonic France, there were closer bonds between the other European states. The British General Sir Robert Wilson was one of the first European military observers to accompany the Russian armies in 1812-1813. Sir Roberts goals and that off all the other military observers stayed the same. They were expected to study operations and report home on any "lessons learned."⁹⁸

After the 1850 's, the role of military observers expanded. It became more normal for neutral countries to send military observers to foreign wars, and it also meant that declining these military observers had diplomatic consequences. This resulted in Prussian officers being attached to French armies in Mexico and later in Algeria. Russian observers would be attached to both Prussia and Austria in their war of 1866. During the American civil war there was a lot of interest from Europe, which resulted in seven European countries sending military observers to the United States. During the German French war of 1870, the first American observer would be attached to a European army. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 it became more normal to send observers to much smaller conflicts, for example the British-Zulu war.⁹⁹

Next to the fact that these military observers became increasingly professional and more accepted as part of warfare, they also became unofficial delegates, who behaved and expected to be treated as a diplomatic protocol described. It was not uncommon for the hosting country to pamper the foreign observers. This was done to show the prestige off the hosting country. Many of these observers were promising young attachés, who hoped that these experiences of war would boost their career. These young officers came in contact, and sometimes even became friends, with other observers who often had similar goals and interests. For example, during the Russo-Japanese war,

⁹⁸D. Jones, Military observers, eurocentrism, and world war zero. in *World War Zero Volume II*. 145.

⁹⁹Ibidem. 148.

the German observer Max Hoffman became close friends with the American observer, who taught him English.¹⁰⁰ The military observers, who would often go on to rise through the ranks of the military, became a small group of elites who all knew each other. Especially during the First World War, most generals had or had been in contact with generals who were now their enemies. This can be seen in the following quote from Hamilton while he was commanding his troops in the Gallipoli campaign: “What would my friends on the Japanese General Staff say—or my quondam friends on the German General Staff—if they knew that a Commander-in-Chief hadn’t been for a fortnight in touch with his troops.”¹⁰¹

Western military observers were almost always permitted to follow the armies of countries at war. However, it is important to keep in mind that they were accepted to participate, but not asked to participate. They would and could learn only as much as the ‘parent’, the leading general, would let them see. This meant that good relationships with the ‘parent’ generals was important because they decided how close to a battle the observers were permitted to go.

Especially during the Russo-Japanese war, this would often lead to big discussions and tensions. The American observer Pershing would intentionally write to his president that his time with the Japanese army was wasted because he was not allowed to see anything up close. The fact he had never written a personal letter to his president before or that he didn’t have the correct address didn’t matter, because he fully intended the Japanese to intercept and read the letter. Which is exactly what happened, and Pershing was permitted to get a lot closer to the fighting in the next battle.¹⁰² There is also the story that Max Hoffman completely broke protocol when he was denied watching a battle from a hilltop. He proceeded to have a racist outburst in which he yelled: “that the Japanese general was nothing more than a yellow-skinned monkey, who had no right to talk to a German officer in this way.”¹⁰³ Interestingly enough, he was later on allowed to watch from the hill.

For the Japanese, these military observers were important. The leaders of Japan wanted to be seen as an equally great power and not as a lesser Asian country. The fact that all these Western military observers wanted to join their armies was a big diplomatic boost for Japan. This showed that the Japanese had a ‘Western styled army’ that the other Western powers believed was worthy of following.

The introduction showed that this chapter will focus on four Western military observers. The American John Pershing, the British Sir Ian Hamilton, the German Max Hoffman and the Italian Enrico Caviglia. All four of these observers have met each other in their time with the Japanese army.

¹⁰⁰M. Hoffman, *The war of lost opportunities*. 5.

¹⁰¹I, Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary volume 1*. 57.

¹⁰²D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior, The Early Life of John J. Pershing*. 122.

¹⁰³M. Hoffman, *The war of lost opportunities*. 6.

However, they weren't together for the whole duration of the war. For example, Hamilton left Manchuria before the end of the war, while Pershing would arrive only four months after the war had started. They also didn't necessarily see the same battles. Caviglia started as an observer of the first Japanese army of Oyama, while Hoffman arrived in Manchuria with the second Japanese army under Nogi. However, during the six months of fighting around Port Arthur, all of them visited this battlefield at some point. Even when the observers weren't actually at Port Arthur, they did receive news of it. The fate of Port Arthur was important to the rest of the Japanese armies fighting in Manchuria because it decided their whole strategy. So, if a Western observer wasn't present at Port Arthur, they would receive the news first-hand from their Japanese counterparts.

2.2 John J. Pershing

The first military observer that will be discussed is the American John Pershing. Born in 1860, he finished his military education at West Point in 1886. Soon he fought in his first war against the Apache Indians. A couple of years later, he would fight in the Spanish-American war of 1898 and one year later in the Filipino-American war of 1899. In 1904-1905 he was sent to Japan as a military observer.¹⁰⁴

Pershing was sent to Japan by the American General staff. This is also the audience for which he wrote his reports on the Russo-Japanese war. For Pershing, it is important to know that just before he was sent to Japan, he was married and personally didn't want to go to Japan; "I hope this bloody war will end soon. I am just about as forlorn as I can be."¹⁰⁵

His first reports on the Japanese army show that he wasn't as impressed with the Japanese as the other military observers were; "the Japanese are tough, eager, disciplined, and not afraid to die."¹⁰⁶ Thanks to this, some of the other military observers believed the Japanese were the best soldiers in the world; "I know for a fact that the American soldiers are the best, the best material if well trained."¹⁰⁷ His lack of respect for the Japanese was partly based on a form of racism, but also on personal beliefs that Japan might cause trouble in the future; "The white race made a mistake in permitting the Japanese-Russo war. While today there may not be even a remote intention on the part of Japan to acquire the Philippine islands there is no telling as to when in Japan's rise to power she may regard it as her ... manifest destiny."¹⁰⁸



Figure 13 John. J. Pershing.

¹⁰⁴D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior*.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem. 125.

¹⁰⁶D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior*, 122.

¹⁰⁷Ibidem. 122.

¹⁰⁸Ibidem. 122.

In a personal letter to a friend Pershing lists exactly what he believed was important in the Russo-Japanese war. For example, he writes about the importance of frontline communications in the form of telegraph. As the armies get bigger, communication becomes more and more important. His view on the 'modern' trench war that was taking place around Port Arthur is also clear for he writes; "the day for officers to rush forward in the firing line waving their hats and yelling 'come on boys' is in this new warfare a thing of the past."¹⁰⁹

He also learned the usefulness of the new artillery cannons.¹¹⁰ These really became his most important lesson of the war. Until now, Pershing had fought Indians, the Spanish and the Filipinos. All of these wars were fought in an old fashion manner. He would ride with his cavalry unit and charge the enemy with sword and pistol. Cannons were almost never used in these wars and definitely not on a scale like in the Russo-Japanese war.

Pershing also got acquainted with the modern machineguns. He however didn't believe in their use during the offensive. He was much more in favour of using artillery. He says: "To much reliance on machineguns is dangerous. Artillery can do about all machineguns can do."¹¹¹ None of these lessons were the most important to Pershing. As can be read in his official reports to the American General staff where he says: "again and again I see what is most important in this modern war, preparedness. Lack of preparedness can never be remedied when the war is started."¹¹² Here he talks about the Russian lack of preparedness and he thus believes this is one of the main reasons that Japan was able to beat the Russians.

In 1914, Pershing would lead the 'Pancho Villa-expedition' into Mexico. After the United States of America declared war on Germany and joined the First World War in 1917, Pershing was promoted to Commander in Chief of the American forces. He would build the American army that in 1917 consisted of 27 thousand soldiers into a force of 2 million strong. While training the first big American army, he relied heavily on his lessons from the Russo-Japanese war.¹¹³

The American soldier was often trained almost twice as long as his British or German counterparts during the First World War. This was primarily the result of Pershing's interaction with the well-trained Japanese soldiers and the credit they received from the other military observers; "I know for a fact that the American soldiers are the best, the best material if well trained."¹¹⁴ This already mentioned quote says is it all. Pershing believed the American soldier was the best in the world, if trained well or just as well as the Japanese soldiers.

¹⁰⁹D. Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*. 123.

¹¹⁰*Ibidem*. 123.

¹¹¹*Ibidem*. 123.

¹¹²*Ibidem*. 123.

¹¹³*Ibidem*. 280.

¹¹⁴*Ibidem*. 123.

Pershing's need for preparedness didn't stop there, every large American assault in France would only be ordered after a detailed scale of the battlefield was made so that it could be studied thoroughly.¹¹⁵ Another great example of his preparedness can be found in the soldiers' helmets. Just before the American soldiers would fight in France, the United Kingdom invented steel helmets that would offer much more protection than the caps they had worn before. For Pershing this was also a new invention, but before his troops would be sent into the trenches, he made sure that every single one of them would get these new helmets.¹¹⁶

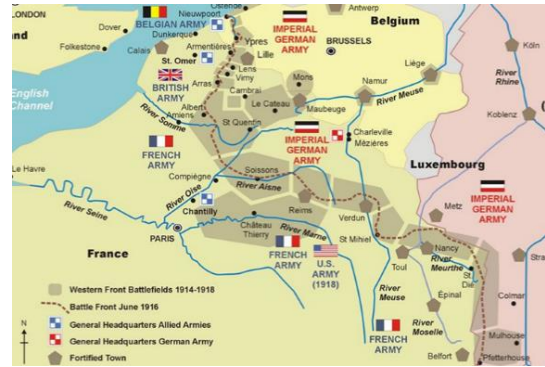


Figure 14 American positions at the Western Front 1918

During his time around Port Arthur, Pershing had seen the new trench warfare and he believed this way of fighting was “pointless and too costly.”¹¹⁷ Unlike most of his allied generals Pershing knew that large scale infantry attacks would do little, and bring huge amounts of casualties. That's why he builds up one of the biggest artillery units of the war. Pershing believed that artillery would prove decisive. He had some initial success, based on speed and overwhelming artillery bombardments.

However, in the battle of the Meuse-Argonne in 1917, it became clear that Pershing made one big misjudgement. The machinegun proved to be much more important than he believed it would be when he was in Japan. Especially, the fact that the machinegun proved useful while on the offensive was a big misjudgement by Pershing. It wouldn't take long for Pershing to realise this mistake and he immediately started buying French machineguns. These were the same French machineguns the Japanese army had successfully used while attacking, which in 1905 Pershing wasn't impressed by.¹¹⁸

Still the American casualties rose, and Pershing knew that even with these new machineguns he would still be fighting the trench warfare that he so despised. His answer to this was tanks. The tank wasn't a new American invention during the First World War since the British and French had already been using them since 1915. However, Pershing changed the role of the tank. Based on his experiences during the Russo-Japanese war, he believed that large scale infantry attacks were useless, because the soldiers were unprotected.¹¹⁹ During the battle of Saint-Mihiel, which was won

¹¹⁵J. Pershing. *My experiences in the World War*. 12-14.

¹¹⁶Ibidem. 23.

¹¹⁷D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior*, 123.

¹¹⁸Pershing. *My experiences in the World War*. 142-144.

¹¹⁹L. Kaplan and D. Wilson, *Pershing's Tankers* (2018, Kentucky). 5-8.

by the Americans, he would order his tanks to form the first and third attack wave supported by infantry. The infantry could thus find cover behind and between the tanks. Until now, tanks hadn't been used in such a large amount in a small area.¹²⁰

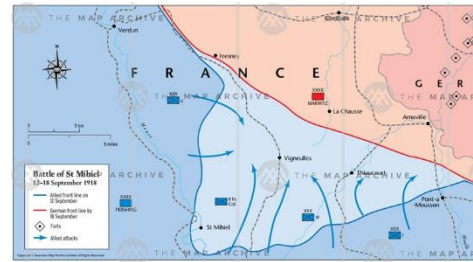


Figure 15 Battle of Saint-Mihiel

The well-trained American army led by Pershing played a decisive role in the Allied victory during the First World War. In 1920, Pershing would be promoted to the highest military rank of the United States of America: General of the armies. He would go on to mentor a couple of famous American generals, for example: Dwight D. Eisenhower, George Patton and Omar Bradley. At the start of World War Two, Pershing was a big supporter of US aid for the allies against German aggression. It is said that before D-Day, Pershing was still in contact with his 'pupils', which are listed above. Pershing died in 1948 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

To conclude this paragraph, the quote of his friend and later writer of his biography Frederick Palmer perfectly sums up the importance of the Russo-Japanese war for John Pershing: "He had gone to Manchuria an accomplished small-unit leader, a master of light tactics; he came out skilled in the management of mass."¹²¹ Before the Russo-Japanese war, Pershing had led cavalry units and never commanded an army larger than a couple of thousand soldiers strong. His time as military observer with the Japanese army showed him how to command armies of more than half a million soldiers in the modern way of war. His time as a military observer played a big role in his great performance as General of the American Armies in France.

2.3 Ian Hamilton

The second military observer is the British Sir Ian Hamilton.

Hamilton was born in 1853 and joined the Royal military college in 1870. He would fight in the Afghan campaign in 1872, and in the First Boer War of 1880. Here he was recommended for the Victoria Cross and he was invited to meet Queen Victoria herself. He would go on to lead soldiers in the Nile expedition in 1884, Burma in 1886, Bengal in 1890, India in 1895-1898 and the Tirah campaign of 1898. In 1899, the second Boer War broke out and Hamilton was invited to join the famous Lord Kitchener as his Chief of staff.



Figure 16 Ian Hamilton

¹²⁰J. Pershing. *My experiences in the World War*. 225.

¹²¹F. Palmer, *John J. Pershing, General of the Armies: A Biography*. 33.

During the Second Boer War, Hamilton also got acquainted with a young war correspondent named Winston Churchill.¹²²

Hamilton would stay in South Africa till 1903, after which he would return to India as lieutenant general. In 1904, Hamilton would go to Japan under the name of Military attaché of the British Indian army. It was Hamilton himself who decided he wanted to go to Japan, as he was curious how the Japanese army would fair against the Russians. During his time as a military observer, Hamilton kept a diary which was later published as: “a staff-officers scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war.” This ‘scrapbook’ wasn’t meant for the English General staff. It was mainly a diary for Hamilton himself, which makes it an interesting book and also a honest one.¹²³

The fact that Hamilton was with the Japanese army on his own accord immediately shows his intentions for being there. He wasn’t there to learn anything from the Japanese and certainly not from the Russians, who he disliked. He was mainly present because of his own curiosity about this new ‘UK of Asia’. In his diary it is also obvious that he gained respect and a form of admiration for the Japanese as the war progressed. At first, you can read that he didn’t think highly of them, which is probably based on a form of racism.¹²⁴

In his book Hamilton also keeps referring to the first and second Boer War. For example: “The Japanese do not shoot like the Boers, or else there would have been few of them left.”¹²⁵ In Hamilton’s mind he had already fought in a ‘modern war’, and now nothing that he saw in the Russo-Japanese war was new for him. Instead, he kept focusing on lessons the Japanese or the Russians could have learned from the Boers; “Why did the Russian great General staff disdain to take a lesson from the Boer.”¹²⁶ “The Boers, it must be allowed, would have been invisible, whereas the Russians were plainly to be seen, not only by the infantry of the attack, but also by its artillery, which makes a considerable difference.”¹²⁷

The last telling aspect of Hamilton’s diary is that in the whole book the machinegun isn’t mentioned once. He does however mention artillery guns quite a lot. Which could lead to the conclusion that Hamilton shared Pershing vision; “To much reliance on machineguns is dangerous. Artillery can do about all machineguns can do.”¹²⁸ He did however see the use in unconventional tactics such as night attacks and that cavalry would have no role in this ‘Modern war’.¹²⁹ For

¹²² N. Steel and P. Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*. 20-21.

¹²³ I. Hamilton, *A staff officer’s scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war*. 1.

¹²⁴ Ibidem. 43.

¹²⁵ Ibidem. 217.

¹²⁶ I. Hamilton, *A staff officer’s scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war*. 110.

¹²⁷ Ibidem. 113.

¹²⁸ D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior*. 123.

¹²⁹ Hamilton, *A staff officer’s scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war*. 215.

Hamilton, there was one bigger lesson that he believed the Russo-Japanese war had showed him, namely: “superior morale is all that is needed to breach a defensive position.”¹³⁰

At the start of the First World War, Hamilton was appointed as Commander in chief of the UK Home army, this meant that Hamilton was responsible for protecting the UK from any German invasion. In March 1915, Hamilton was appointed by his former Chief, and now Field Marshal, Lord Kitchener as Commander of the Allied Mediterranean expeditionary Force. The objective for the now 62-year-old Hamilton was to capture the Dardanelles and then push onward to Constantinople, the Capitol of the Ottoman Empire. The plan for the Gallipoli invasion was invented by Hamilton's friend, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. Churchill and Kitchener together made sure that Hamilton would lead this expedition.¹³¹



Figure 17 Location of Gallipoli

It must be said that in the formation of the plan for the Gallipoli invasion, Hamilton played no role at all. He was sent to Gallipoli to command his troops and follow the plan. His troops had no training in seaborne operations, Hamilton had no special landing crafts and he was not given any information about the landscape. Therefore the disastrous landings of the Gallipoli Campaign won't be discussed here, for it can be argued that there was little that Hamilton could do or was allowed to do.¹³²

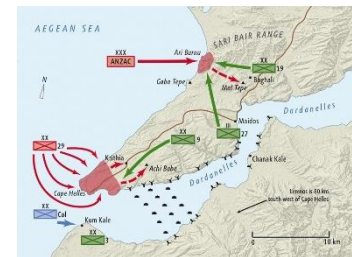


Figure 18 Invasion of Gallipoli

After the first week of the landing operations, the real trench warfare in Gallipoli started. This war on the Gallipoli peninsula lasted almost a year after, which the British would retreat from the island. Both sides would rely on endless infantry assaults on well defended trench lines with little result. After a year of fighting, the British had made almost no real progress and the Ottomans hadn't retaken any ground from the invaders. Both sides lost approximately 250 thousand soldiers in the year of fighting.¹³³ Hamilton wouldn't command this retreat from the island because he was relieved of his command in October 1915. The main reason for Hamilton being released from command wasn't the fact that the campaign had made little progress but the fact that Hamilton didn't want to even discuss the possibility of retreat. He agreed with Lord Kitchener that "a retreat would be the most disastrous event in the whole history of the British empire."¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Hamilton, *A staff officer's scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war*. 148.

¹³¹ N. Steel and P. Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*. 22-23.

¹³² N. Steel and P. Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*. 41-48.

¹³³ Ibidem. 419.

¹³⁴ I. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary II*. 132.

As can be seen in the actions and plans undertaken by Hamilton during his time as the commander in chief of the Gallipoli campaign, he was relying heavily on his former war experience. In particular, his war experience from Africa and India, where the English were able to defeat large groups of 'indigenous' troops while being greatly outnumbered. The Zulu War, where Hamilton really made a name for himself, is a good example of this. However, in this new modern way of war everything was very different, which Hamilton realised far too late. His time spend with the Japanese army could have, and maybe even should have, prepared him for this 'modern war'.¹³⁵



Figure 19 Ottoman machine gun team at Gallipoli 1915.

This paragraph shows that Hamilton was in Manchuria on his own accord but not with the objective to learn from the Japanese. This might be a reason as to why he repeated some mistakes from the Japanese, for example the reliance on naval bombardment, which in Gallipoli again proved to do little against the well dug trenches and other defences. Hamilton's believe in the use of large-scale infantry attacks hadn't changed during his time in Manchuria and would prove disastrous in Gallipoli. Almost till the end of his time in Gallipoli, Hamilton believed that; "superior morale is all that is needed to breach a defensive position."¹³⁶ This might be a reason as to why Hamilton kept ordering large scale infantry attacks against trenches with barbed wire.

There are more examples of lessons not learned by Hamilton. Especially in the Siege of Port Arthur, Hamilton could have seen that modern battles, where the enemy had prepared defensive positions, would last way longer than before. However, in the initial plan of the Gallipoli invasion, Hamilton believed he could conquer Constantinople, current day Istanbul, within a month.

The things Hamilton was personally interested in were for example the Japanese trench mortars and hand grenades. These would play a big role in the Gallipoli campaign and Hamilton had personally requested them from the British high command. He also put a lot of importance on camouflage. In his notebook from his time in Manchuria he often makes remarks stating that camouflage was important in this 'new kind of war'. When the British forces had landed in Gallipoli and trenches were built, Hamilton did indeed order his troops to use camouflage. In some cases, he even ordered new helmets to be covered with sand to make them stand out less. So, there is some real evidence that Hamilton did learn some things from his time with the Japanese army.¹³⁷ The biggest mistake, or lesson not learned by Hamilton, was the prejudice for non-European troops. An important aspect of the Russo-Japanese war was the fact that an Asian country would defeat a

¹³⁵ I. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary I*. 112.

¹³⁶ Hamilton, *A staff officer's scrapbook during the Russo-Japanese war*. 148.

¹³⁷ I. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary II*. 41.

European country for the first time. This was proof that Asian soldiers could be just as good or even better than European soldiers. When Hamilton was sent to lead the Gallipoli invasion against the Ottomans, he didn't take this lesson into account. A racist based idea would stay with Hamilton during the campaign that a Anzac soldiers was always better than "those damned Turks."¹³⁸ Even though Hamilton had seen the Japanese army being trained by German officers and knew that the Germans were now training the Ottoman soldiers, he didn't make the connection that perhaps these 'inferior' troops might prove quite a challenge.

Hamilton ended his military career right after being recalled from Gallipoli. He would spend most of his time leading an ex-service men organization called the British legion. He was also founding member and vice-president of the Anglo-German association, founded in 1928, with the goal of forging links between Germany and the United Kingdom. He was still vice-president of this organization when Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany. Hamilton described himself as a "admirer of the great Adolph."¹³⁹ Hamilton would also remain a strong supporter of British Imperial power until his death in 1947.

2.4 Max Hoffman

The third military observer that will be researched is the German Max Hoffman. Born in 1869, he joined the army in 1887. In 1898, he went to the Prussian War Academy, which was arguably the best military academy of its time. Two years later, Hoffman would join the German General staff. In 1901, he was sent to Russia by the General staff to learn the Russian language. In 1904, he was sent again on a mission by the German General staff, this time to Japan.¹⁴⁰

Although Hoffman was sent to Japan by the German General staff, his main goal wasn't to learn about this 'new modern war'. The German General staff believed they couldn't learn new military lessons from this 'modern war', which they didn't already know. The main objective of Hoffman was to find out everything he could about the Russian strengths and weaknesses. His whole military career was built around the notion that sooner or later Germany would fight a war with Russia, and that Hoffman would lead armies on this Eastern front. This is also the main reason that Hoffman had to learn the Russian language.¹⁴¹



Figure 20 Max Hoffman

¹³⁸ J. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary II*. 62.

¹³⁹ J. Kershaw, *Making friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's road to war*. (London, 2004). 138-139.

¹⁴⁰ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 4.

¹⁴¹ Ibidem. 5.

However, most of his lessons about the Russian weaknesses and strengths weren't very useful in the First World War, as can be read in the next quote from Hoffman; "The mistakes they (the Russians) had made when opposed to the Japanese they did not repeat in the campaign against us. Sadly, for then the struggle would have been much easier for us."¹⁴² These lessons on the Russian side are mostly credited to the efforts of General Rennenkampf, who didn't distinguish himself in Manchuria. However, after the war he would invest most of his time in completely overthrowing the Russian army model. No longer would the Russian army be based on a small elite force of soldiers with millions of poorly trained reserve soldiers who could be mobilized if necessary. Instead, the Russian army would mirror the French system where every couple of years these reserve soldiers would have mandatory exercises. Rennenkampf also wrote a new regulation handbook for every Russian soldier, based on what he learned from the Russo-Japanese war. This hard work of Rennenkampf really undermined the results of Hoffman's time in Manchuria.¹⁴³

Luckily for Hoffman, learning about the Russians wasn't his only objective. He was also sent to Japan to see how well the German trained and styled army would fight. Chapter one showed that the Japanese army was trained by the German officer Meckel. At first, Hoffman was really impressed by how well the Japanese army was doing. After the first two great battles, he reports: "the Japanese are justified in the trust they had placed in our military system."¹⁴⁴ However, when visiting the Siege of Port Arthur, Hoffman became less excited. Meckel, who had trained the Japanese army, strongly believed that every battle could be won with a sudden large-scale infantry attack. These attacks were repeatedly tried by General Nogi in the Siege of Port Arthur, much to the distress of Hoffman. Hoffman didn't understand why the Japanese general didn't try something else but kept attacking in the same way. It wouldn't take long for Hoffman to find out where the problem lay. Right after the war, he met with Japanese General Fuji, the chairman of the Japanese general staff. When Hoffman said that: "he was anxious to find out what changes in the Japanese Regulations would be introduced owing to their experiences in the War." Fuji replied with: "So am I. We will wait to see what new Regulations for the Service Germany will issue on the basis of the reports that the officers who have been sent here will make, and we will translate these Regulations as we did the former ones."¹⁴⁵ The problem can clearly be seen from these quotes. The Japanese officers didn't learn any lessons on their own, but blindly followed the German manual for war.

This was an important lesson learned by Hoffman, which would directly influence the First World War. The German army wasn't only training the Japanese army, it was also involved in training

¹⁴² M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 5.

¹⁴³ Ibidem. 12.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem. 9.

¹⁴⁵ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 9.

the Ottoman army, which would later be an ally of Germany in World War One. In 1913, the possibility of an Ottoman-Russian war was higher than ever. This resulted in an intensifying of the German training the Ottoman army. German General Otto von Sanders was sent to the Ottoman empire, where he would train and, after the Ottomans joined the war, also lead troops. It was Von Sanders who trained and later ordered General Mustafa Kemal, now known as Atatürk, to counter the Gallipoli invasion. The Gallipoli invasion was, of course, led by the British Sir Ian Hamilton. However, the allied forces had gravely underestimated the military organisation and power of the Ottoman empire, which thanks to the German military mission had improved immensely in just two years. This result was made possible by the lessons Hoffman learned in Japan about the real effects of German military training on the battlefield.¹⁴⁶

This wasn't the most important lesson that Hoffman had learned from his time with the Japanese army. In 1914, Germany and Russia were at war with each other. Germany planned and hoped for a quick victory in France, after which it could focus on the big Russian threat. Hoffman was a commanding officer off the 8th German army. This was the only German army located at the Russian border in 1914. The Russians attacked much sooner than the Germans had anticipated, and in the beginning the Germans were almost pushed out of East Prussia. Hoffman came up with a daring plan to rush forward and attack the First Russian army in the hope that the Second Russian army wouldn't be able to aid in time.



Figure 21 The Battle of Tannenberg

However, his commanding officer Maximilian von Prittwitz disliked the plan. The same week, commanding officer of the German 8th army von Prittwitz was replaced by Paul von Hindenburg and Eric Ludendorff. Ludendorff and Hoffman had been neighbours for almost 10 years prior to the war and knew each other well. The moment Hindenburg and Ludendorff arrived at the front, Hoffman was invited by Ludendorff to explain the situation.¹⁴⁷

The Eastern front wasn't looking good for the Germans because the First and Second Russian army, also called the Vilna and Warsaw army, were about to encircle the Germans. Both the First and the Second Russian armies were larger than the German 8th army. However, the three German generals; Hindenburg, Ludendorff and Hoffman came up with an even more detailed plan. They would rush forward and encircle the First Russian army. This was a risky move, for if the second Russian army would find out the First army was being attacked, it would of course move in to aid

¹⁴⁶ Trumpener, Ulrich. "Liman Von Sanders and the German-Ottoman Alliance." *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 4 (1966): 179-92.

¹⁴⁷ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 12.

their countrymen. This risky gamble worked, and the Germans successfully attacked and destroyed the First Russian army at the battle of Tannenberg. After this victory, the Germans immediately moved to attack the Second Russian army which was defeated a couple of weeks later.¹⁴⁸ There is still a debate about who really deserves the credit for the victory at Tannenberg. In 1920, while touring the fields of Tannenberg with his cadets, Hoffman would say: "See—this is where Hindenburg slept before the battle, this is where Hindenburg slept after the battle, and between you and me this is where Hindenburg slept during the battle."¹⁴⁹

Although there is a debate of who made the plans, it was Hoffman who made the great victory in the Battle of Tannenberg possible. The First Russian army was led by Alexander Samsonov and the Second Russian army was led by Paul von Rennenkampf. In Hoffman's time with the Japanese army, he focused more on the Russians than on the Japanese. Thanks to this, he found out that in Manchuria Samsonov and Rennenkampf had a big falling out. Samsonov was at the time commander of a Cossack division, and in the battle of Liauyang he was forced to evacuate, leaving some of his soldiers behind because his left flank was unprotected. Rennenkampf was supposed to secure this left flank, but his orders hadn't moved forward.¹⁵⁰ Based on this information, Hoffman was sure that Rennenkampf wouldn't move in to aid Samsonov's First army. "I would have risked everything, for I was sure that Rennenkampf would not go assist Samsonov for personal enmity against him."¹⁵¹

After the battle of Tannenberg, Hoffman would lead the German Eastern front together with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, until Hindenburg and Ludendorff would move to the Western front. At the same time, Hoffman was promoted to major general and would become part of the General staff of Prince Leopold of Bavaria. Together with Prince Leopold Hoffman commanded the entire Eastern front of the central powers, the German troops, but also the Austro-Hungarian troops as well as the Bulgarian troops.

In 1917, Hoffman would also be present in the peace negotiations with the Soviet Union. In his memoir, Leon Trotsky wrote that: "General Hoffmann was the only element of serious reality in these negotiations."¹⁵² It was Hoffman's idea to only take a part of Poland and create a couple of new subject states in the East. With this, Hoffman went directly against most of the other German generals who wanted all of Poland. In the end, the German Kaiser favoured Hoffman's plan, which



Figure 22 Photo from the Brest-Litovsk peace talks. Second person from the right is General Hoffman.

¹⁴⁸ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 16-21.

¹⁴⁹ M. Hastings, *Catastrophe 1914: Europe goes to war*. (New York, 2013) 275.

¹⁵⁰ H.W. Wilson, *Japan's fight for freedom; the story of the war between Russia and Japan I, II and III (1904-1906)*. 895.

¹⁵¹ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 23.

¹⁵² W. Hart, *Raymond Robins' Own Story: The Untold Story of a Political Mystery* (London, 2009) 83.

led to a big clash with General Ludendorff, who claimed Hoffman's Jewish wife was the reason for this idea. Hoffman was never sent to the Western front, as the German high command demanded, because the Kaiser believed "his experiences with the Russians were too valuable to waste."¹⁵³ Hoffman would survive the First world War and remained in the German army until 1920. A year later, he teamed up with important German industrialists to campaign for the Western powers to join together and overthrow the Soviet Union. He died in 1927.

To conclude Hoffman's time as a military observer with the Japanese army had played a big role in his career as a German major general and it played a big role in the First World War. At first, Hoffman's goals seemed to be unsuccessful. He had learned every weakness of the Russian army during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. However, the Russians themselves had also learned a lot and most of the important weaknesses were dealt with, primarily thanks to the Russian General Rennenkampf. Nonetheless, Hoffman did find out something else while he was in Japan, namely, as he put it: "The German way of war is once again successful." The German training of the Japanese army was successful, but also had some problems. The fact that the Japanese blindly followed the war manuals written by the Germans and didn't improvise was something the Germans hadn't thought of yet. When Otto von Sanders would go on to train the Ottoman army in 1913, he had new instructions which were the result of Hoffman's critique.

The most important aspect of Hoffman's career during World War One remains the victory in the battle of Tannenberg. The German army was badly outnumbered, and victory seemed impossible. Thanks to the information provided by Hoffman, that the Russian generals disliked each other and wouldn't be too keen to aid each other, a daring plan was constructed. In the end, Hoffman's assumptions proved to be correct and the Russian General Rennenkampf didn't move to aid his fellow Russian General Samsonov. This resulted in the victory at Tannenberg, which saved the German Eastern front.

¹⁵³ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 112

2.5 Enrico Caviglia.

Enrico Caviglia was born in 1862, making him the youngest of the four military observers. He entered the army on the age of fifteen in 1877. In 1885 he was promoted to lieutenant and in 1888 he would volunteer for the 'Royal Italian Colonial Army' in Eritrea. Here he would lead a small gun battery in multiple expeditions. Three years later, Caviglia would return to Italy and enter the General staff school.¹⁵⁴



Figure 23 Enrico Caviglia

Right after his graduation, he was once again sent to Africa and he was also present in the lost Battle of Adwa in 1896. This was one of the biggest defeats of the Italian army in Africa and all officers present during this battle were inquired by a military tribunal. Caviglia was cleared of any blame for he was not directly involved in the battle. A lot of other Italian officers weren't so lucky, which meant that Caviglia rose through the ranks at rapid speed. In 1903 he was promoted to major and a year later Caviglia would be sent to Japan to "study the Japanese operations against the Russians."¹⁵⁵

Caviglia was thus sent by the Italian high command to study the Russo-Japanese war. The main difference between Caviglia and the other three military observers was that for Caviglia the Russo-Japanese war was the first 'Western styled' war he experienced. After his time with the Japanese army, Caviglia would spend a year in Libya, where he would deal with some rebel tribes but not experience the Italian-Ottoman war.¹⁵⁶

On the 24th of May 1915, Italy joined the First World War against the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German Empire. Caviglia was directly promoted to brigadier general and was sent to the front lines near Karts Plateau. As brigadier general, Caviglia commanded some four thousand troops. However, he was to follow every order from high command to the letter. There was no room for what the Germans called 'auftragstacktiek' in the Italian army of the First World War. In the first battle on the Isonzo front, Caviglia was ordered to attack the enemy trench head on, Caviglia disagreed but had to obey his orders and would lose almost 70 percent of his men.¹⁵⁷



Figure 24 Austro-Hungarian postcard showing the fighting on the Italian front 1915.

On the Karts Plateau, Caviglia would fight until June 1916. Again, and again he had to follow orders with which he disagreed. The Italian commander in chief Luigi Cadorna took little notice to the objections of a brigadier general. This was further aided by the fact that Caviglia had a bitter rivalry

¹⁵⁴ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia – the forgotten Italian*. (Sofia, 2015). 393.

¹⁵⁵ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 394.

¹⁵⁶ Ibidem. 395.

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem. 396-397.

with another brigadier general, Pietro Badoglio. Badoglio, unlike Caviglia, tried hard to get on the good side of Cadorna and thus never criticised his tactics. At the start of 1917, both rivals were promoted to major general.¹⁵⁸

In 1917, Caviglia became evermore upset with the tactics used by Cardona. In his memoirs he would write: “the Italian tactics in that period were so predictable that the Austrians knew each time with adequate notice when and where the enemy offensive would be and were ready to repel it.”¹⁵⁹ This would lead to his actions in the 11th Isonzo battle. Here there were three Italian attacks and Caviglia would lead the left attack.

Caviglia made a brave decision and would not follow Cadorna’s instructions. Caviglia had always known that frontal assaults were useless and this time he would focus on manoeuvre, “just as the Japanese did.”¹⁶⁰ Caviglia used his knowledge gained from the battle of the Yalu river during the Russo-Japanese war. Here, Japanese soldiers used pontoons and floating bridges spearheaded by men in boats to cross the river. Caviglia used the night to cover his preparations and when the Austrian troops saw the Italians land the next morning, it was too late. Within three days, Caviglia had reached every single goal of his left-wing attack. Cadorna was impressed but failed to follow up the breach. Caviglia made spectacular progress but was forced to retreat because the Italian army wasn’t prepared for so much progress in such a little time period.¹⁶¹

Not long after this battle, the Austro-Hungarian forces would retake the initiative. The Russians civil war had broken out, and now there was no longer an Eastern front, which meant that new troops would arrive to fight the Italians. German ‘sturmtuppen’ would reinforce the Austrians. A young officer named Erwin Rommel would make exceptional progress with his ‘sturmtuppen’ and large artillery bombardments. In the Battle of Caporetto, the entire second Italian army was destroyed. Most of its soldiers were taken prisoner because they became encircled thanks to the speed of the German ‘sturmtuppen’. There was just one army core which made it out fairly intact; the one led by Caviglia.¹⁶²

Caviglia saw the attack coming and was the only Italian general to respond quickly and adequate. He knew of the importance of speed in the German trained Japanese army. So, when he found out that there were now German reinforcements present, he made sure his flanks were prepared so that he would not get encircled. Caviglia also tried to get the other army corpses to make the same preparations, but again no one listened to his advice.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia* 398.

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem. 398.

¹⁶⁰ Caviglia, Enrico, *Caporetto. La dodicesima battaglia*. In G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia – the forgotten Italian. A Life as Soldier, Writer, serving the country in the collection of essays*; 40th international congress of military history. 406.

¹⁶¹ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 235.

¹⁶² Ibidem. 235.

¹⁶³ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 401.

During his retreat, Caviglia sent messengers to the British army because there was no longer an Italian army in the area. The British responded and sent troops to help Caviglia defend his new position along the Piave river. Here, Caviglia and his British reinforcements would halt the Austrian army for almost a week, in which time new Italian reinforcements could arrive to take up defensive positions. If it were not for Caviglia and the British aid, the whole sector would have been breached, which could have meant the end of the war for Italy.¹⁶⁴ Caviglia was awarded the Silver Medal of Military valour. After the war, King George the 5th would make him Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, thus making him a British Sir.¹⁶⁵

However, the war wasn't over yet. And although Caviglia was able to halt the Austro-Hungarian advance, Italy was in a bad shape. The battle of Caporetto meant the loss of 320 thousand Italian soldiers, 3150 guns and 3 thousand machineguns. Cadorna was court marshalled and replaced by Armando Diaz as Commander in Chief. Caviglia's rival Badoglio became Diaz, new chief of staff, which meant that Caviglia instantly disliked Diaz as much as he had Cadorna. This is one of the reasons that Caviglia and his new 10th corps were to stay at the Piave river with British reinforcements. Here, Caviglia would defend the river until June 1918.¹⁶⁶

The new Commander in Chief Diaz had no real problem with Caviglia, he saw his strategic skills and his good relations with the British. Therefore, Caviglia was promoted to lead the entire 8th Italian army in the coming offensive. This would be the first time that Caviglia was able to make his own offensive plan as commander. He would focus on speed and manoeuvre as he had always wanted to do since the beginning of the war. Again, he would need to cross a river to attack, and again, he would use his knowledge from the battle of the Yalu river from 1904. He would use pontoons and floating bridges and attacked at night to use the dark as cover. His left flank would consist of his British allies, with who he was now fighting for over more than a year. His centre crossed the river, guarded by immense artillery fire.¹⁶⁷

On the 24th of October, the first Italian soldiers landed across the river Piave and the battle of Vittorio Veneto would start. Caviglia ordered his soldiers to not only move forward but also left and right to cover the still river crossing soldiers, which was also something he had learned from the Japanese. Once his army was across, Caviglia made a very bold decision. He would not

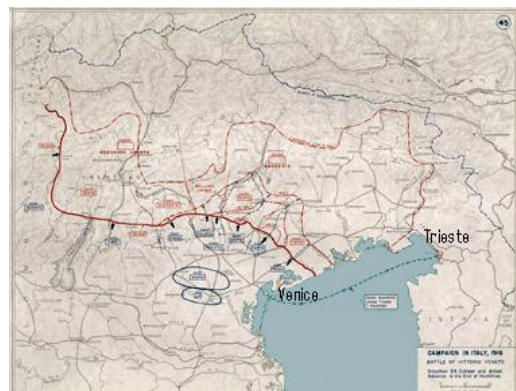


Figure 25 Battleplan for Vittorio Veneto

¹⁶⁴ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 245-246.

¹⁶⁵ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 401.

¹⁶⁶ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 248.

¹⁶⁷ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 403.

occupy enemy trenches and prepare for a counterattack like the Japanese had so skilfully done during the Russo-Japanese war. Instead, he encouraged his men to keep moving forward and to destroy the enemy artillery. In the end, the Italian Army would lose 40 thousand soldiers, while the Austro-Hungarians had 80 thousand casualties and 450 thousand soldiers were captured.¹⁶⁸

On the 3rd of November, just a week after the start of Caviglia's offensive, the Austro-Hungarian army was broken and Trieste was taken, the same day the armistice of Villa Giusti was signed. Caviglia was named as just one of the architects of the victory. Diaz and Badoglio also received much of the honour. Some of the Italian General staff, quite possibly Badoglio, would even say it was the British Lord Cavan, who command Caviglia's left flank, who made the whole plan.¹⁶⁹ In the United Kingdom however, Caviglia's leadership was undisputed and he and Lord Cavan would keep in contact for many years. This bond between Lord Cavan and Caviglia can be seen very clearly in a letter from lord Cavan to the British high command after the victory at Vittorio Veneto: "During the Battle, I was in constant touch with his Excellency, General Caviglia, under whose general direction my Army was operating. He was always most kind and prompt in assistance and advice, and I owe him very warm thanks for his generous encouragements."¹⁷⁰

Later in life Caviglia, would become a strong opponent of Mussolini and his Fascist regime. At the age of 81 he took control of the Italian military in Rome and negotiated with the German General Kesselring about Rome status of an 'open city'. If it wasn't for the old general, the Germans troops might not have left Rome, which would have resulted in a battle in the city, with all the damage that comes from it.¹⁷¹ After this last act, Caviglia would spent the rest of his days in his villa which was called 'villa Vittorio Veneto'. He died in 1945, leaving behind a diary in which he had written his critique on the Fascist party and that he "didn't recognize his beloved Italy anymore."¹⁷²

To conclude the story of the Italian military observer Enrico Caviglia is by far the most interesting one. He was sent to Japan as a young, in-experienced officer who tried to learn as much as possible from his first 'big Western war'. However, it would take until 1916 before any of these experiences could be used. From day one, Caviglia knew that the large-scale infantry attacks were useless, yet no one listened. It was until Caviglia decided to go against his orders, that he could show his strategic capabilities. However, after this big victory at the 11th battle of Isonzo, nothing changed.

When Caviglia found out that they were facing German reinforcements, he took the necessary preparations to counter their speed based encircle movements, which he had learned

¹⁶⁸ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 276.

¹⁶⁹ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 404.

¹⁷⁰ Letter from lord Cavan tot General headquarters. Page 5. Seen in the online World War one archive from Bert Spires (veteran of the British Italian army of 1918). <https://www.bertspires.co.uk/index.htm> (02-12-2019).

¹⁷¹ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 406.

¹⁷² Caviglia, Enrico, *I dittatori, le guerre e il piccolo re*. Diario 1925-1945 (Milano 2009). 612.

from the German trained Japanese army. He had also warned the other Italian generals, but again he wasn't listened to. Only after Caviglia's army core would be left to fight for themselves at the Piave river, he could really show his capabilities. It can be debated that Caviglia, together with his British reinforcements, saved the war for Italy when he stopped the Austro-Hungarian advance three times at the Piava river.

Only after this success did his superiors take notice of his military knowledge and experience. Finally, Caviglia was given command of the 8th Italian army to lead the October offensive. Together with the British at his left flank he would cross the Piave river, based on tactics he saw being used by the Japanese in the Battle of the Yalu river in 1904. This battle would become known as Vittorio Veneto, which would lead to the end of the war a week later.

2.6 The lessons.

The four military observers who have been discussed in this chapter are of course four of many more military observers from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. It is difficult to say, based only on these four military observers, if and which lessons were learned by the army's General staffs in the prelude to World War One. However, these four military observers weren't just observers, they would actively participate in World War One where their knowledge and lessons from the Russo-Japanese war played a role in their decision making while commanding armies. This paragraph will go a step further then the last four paragraphs. Here the most important lessons of the Western military observers will be discussed, and it will be debated if the lessons had a direct impact on the outcome of the First World War.

For the military observer John Pershing, it is not very difficult to define the lessons learned from the Russo-Japanese war, thanks to his personal letter in which he describes what he found important while in Manchuria. Here it became clear that Pershing believed that the new forms of communication, such as telegraphs, were important, because the armies were much larger than before. Pershing full heartily believed that artillery would decide the victor of the next war and so he pushed for the creation of a huge artillery army, which was an important strength for the American army during the whole First World War. This combined with his believe that preparedness in war was the most important aspect, resulted in a very well-trained American army. This was also one of the reasons the American soldiers would all get new metal helmets on their arrival in France, because Pershing had seen how important it was to be the best prepared, equipped army on the field.¹⁷³

However, the lessons didn't stop there. One of the most important actions of Pershing during the First World War can be credited to his time in Manchuria. During the Russo-Japanese war,

¹⁷³ D. Smythe. *Guerrilla Warrior* 123.

Pershing saw how pointless and costly the large infantry attacks were. He was fiercely against using this tactic in France, but there weren't many alternatives. Until the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, where Pershing ordered a young officer called Patton to attack with 419 tanks. The battle was an important victory and the new important role of armoured warfare was proven.¹⁷⁴ So this can all be linked back to Pershing's experiences during the Russo-Japanese war. To credit all of Pershing's victories to his lessons of the Russo-Japanese war is of course debatable. Yet, it is difficult to claim that these lessons didn't play a part in his role as Commander in Chief of the American forces. His friend, who later wrote Pershing's biography, also agrees with this vision: "He had gone to Manchuria an accomplished small-unit leader, a master of light tactics; he came out skilled in the management of mass."¹⁷⁵

It can be said that the British military observer Ian Hamilton had learned the least from the Russo-Japanese war. Here won't be a focus on the lessons that could or should have been learned, but only on the lessons that were learned. For Hamilton, these lessons mainly focused on the use of trench mortars, hand grenades and camouflage.¹⁷⁶ These three big lessons definitely played a role in his Gallipoli campaign, yet they weren't decisive. One big lesson that Hamilton believed he had also learned was that "superior morale is all that is needed to breach a defensive position."¹⁷⁷ This lesson we can now safely call a wrong lesson. Its effect was disastrous for the British forces at Gallipoli, and maybe even for the British war effort in general.

The German military observer Max Hoffman didn't learn any big strategic lessons in Manchuria. He was focused on how the Russian army operated. However, the non-combat lessons would turn out to be the most important for Hoffman. The quarrel between the Russian Commanders Samsonov and Rennenkampf, would give Hoffman the opportunity to gain a massive victory at Tannenberg and directly influence the German war effort.¹⁷⁸

Hoffman also played a big role in changing the way in which the German military was training the Ottoman empire's army. The German Otto von Sanders had new instructions when he was sent to the Ottoman Empire, based on the comments of Hoffman on the German training of the Japanese army.¹⁷⁹ It is difficult to pinpoint how important these new instructions were in training the Ottoman army. However, it is quite certain that the German training of the Ottoman army played a big role in their victory at Gallipoli over the British.

The last military observer Enrico Caviglia is the best example to link the Russo-Japanese war to the First World War. The lessons learned by Caviglia in Manchuria would play very important roles

¹⁷⁴ L. Kaplan and D. Wilson, *Pershing's Tankers*. 5-8.

¹⁷⁵ F. Palmer, *John J. Pershing, General of the Armies*. 33.

¹⁷⁶ I. Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary II*. 41.

¹⁷⁷ Hamilton, *A staff officer's scrapbook*. 148.

¹⁷⁸ M. Hoffman, *the war of lost opportunities*. 16-21.

¹⁷⁹ U. Trumpener, *"Liman Von Sanders and the German-Ottoman Alliance"*. 179-192.

in his time as officer in the Italian army during the First World War. From the very start of the war, Caviglia knew the current tactics that were being used by the Italian army weren't useful in this new modern war.¹⁸⁰ However, Caviglia was a low-ranking officer and so he had to obey his superiors who didn't listen to his advice. It was only in September 1917 that Caviglia decided to not follow his orders, but to use his own tactics. He would focus on manoeuvre, "just as the Japanese did."¹⁸¹ This resulted in a great victory, after which Caviglia gained more room from the Italian army command to make his own decisions. This resulted in a couple of brave and successful operations, such as crossing the river in the same manner as the Japanese had done at the Yalu River in 1904.¹⁸² Caviglia knew that the Japanese army had been trained by German officers, so he made the connection that now the German army would fight in a similar fashion as the Japanese had done in 1904. He was correct. This resulted in Caviglia being the only Italian officer to successfully retreat after the Battle of Caporetto. Caviglia knew that the Germans would try to flank around as the Japanese had done so many times in Manchuria, and so he was able to out manoeuvre the Germans.¹⁸³

In the battle of Vittorio Veneto, Caviglia would finally lead an entire Italian army. Here he fully showed all the lessons he had learned from the Russo-Japanese war. He attacked with a small but precise artillery barrage, followed by a small flanking infantry group equipped with a lot of hand grenades. His attack was built on speed and not on huge numbers. After the first enemy trench was taken, Caviglia would order machineguns to take defensive positions while the other soldiers would advance, just as the Japanese army had done. In the end, the Italian Army would lose 40 thousand soldiers, while the Austro-Hungarians had 80 thousand casualties and 450 thousand soldiers were captured.¹⁸⁴ This battle meant the end of the First World War in the Italian Alps.

There is no clearer example of how military lessons from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 had an influence on the outcome of the First World War than the actions of Enrico Caviglia. He used all his acquired knowledge of the Japanese army against the German/Austro-Hungarian army. Because he had so thoroughly observed the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, he knew all the strengths and weaknesses of tactics and the new modern weapons such as; the machine guns, hand grenades and long-range artillery.

¹⁸⁰ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 395.

¹⁸¹ Caviglia, Enrico, *Caporetto. La dodicesima battaglia*. 406.

¹⁸² J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 235.

¹⁸³ G. Innocenti, *Enrico Caviglia*. 401.

¹⁸⁴ J. Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War*. 276.

Conclusion

The main goal of this research was to find out if Western military observers, who would later command armies in the First World War, learned important military lessons from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. To answer this question the essay first focused on the Japanese and Russian armies that would fight this war. In this first two paragraphs it becomes clear that the two armies were very different. The Russian army relied on its huge numbers to win wars and so modernisation was less important than in other armies, while the smaller Japanese army relied fully on modernity and up to date weapons to win against Russia.

The third paragraph of chapter one showed an overview of the war. This information was needed as context for the second chapter. However, it did more than just gave context because it pointed out some interesting aspects of the war which indicate that this was indeed the first large scale modern war of the 20th century. This brings us to the last two paragraphs of chapter one, which had its focus entirely on the siege of Port Arthur. First, the landing of the Japanese army on the Lioadong peninsula was described. This landing was quite similar to the Gallipoli invasion during the First World War. It is necessary to give this information, so that the paragraph about the British Commander of the Gallipoli invasion, Ian Hamilton, can be fully understood.

The siege of Port Arthur itself lasted for more than six months and is the best example of how the fighting in the First World War would turn out to be. The in-depth description of the siege of Port Arthur showed a couple of important military lessons that could have been learned by the military observers. Although it wasn't the main goal of this thesis, the first chapter really shows that the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was indeed the first large scale modern war of the twentieth century. This is thus a new argument for the idea that the military side of the war, based on its modernity, can be seen as part of the World War Zero concept.

This detailed description of the armies first, then a summary of the war, and finally the in-depth story of the Siege of Port Arthur gives, the context and information needed to fully understand the second chapter. Chapter two first explains the role and history of military observers that is necessary to understand the role of the four chosen observers in Manchuria, and most importantly why they were there. Then the chapter discusses each military observer in a paragraph and shows what he learned and what he did with this information. The chapter ends with an analytic view of which lessons were learned and if they played a role in the outcome of the First World War.

Based on the information that is discussed in this final paragraph, we can conclude that the American observer John Pershing had learned important lessons from the Russo-Japanese war. These lessons would play a role in the formation of the new American army during the First World War and

thus the final allied victory. For the British military observer Ian Hamilton, we can conclude that he had learned some lessons from the Russo-Japanese War, but they weren't major ones nor were they decisive. For Hamilton, there is also the wrong lesson that he learned from the Russo-Japanese war. Namely, the idea that superior morale is all that is needed to breach a defensive position, which would result in huge amounts of casualties and no victory at Gallipoli.

The third military observer that was discussed was the German Max Hoffman. For this observer, we can conclude that he hadn't learned any major combat lessons. However, his time in Manchuria would play a big role in the fighting of the First World War. Thanks to his information about the Russian commanders that he had learned from his time with the Japanese army, Hoffman was able to gain a massive victory for Germany at the Battle of Tannenberg. Also, his comments on the German training of foreign troops resulted in new and better instructions for Otto von Sanders, who would train the Ottoman army just before World War One. The German trained Ottoman army proved to be effective and took the British by surprise during the Gallipoli campaign. This can also be seen as a consequence of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 that impacted the First World War.

The fourth and last military observer that was looked at is the Italian Enrico Caviglia. We have seen that Caviglia had learned a lot from the Russo-Japanese war in the battle of Vittorio Veneto. Because, here Caviglia used all his acquired knowledge of the Japanese army against the German army. He knew all the strengths and weaknesses of new modern weapons and tactics. The reason that Caviglia had learned more than the other military observers might be because Caviglia was still young and in-experienced when he was sent to Manchuria. His lower rank also resulted in him not being able to make his own decisions like the other three commanders could during the first years of First World War. This is the great irony of this research. The military observer who had learned the most from the Russo-Japanese War was ignored for most of the First World War.

The answer to the main research question: 'did Western military observers, who would later command armies in the First World War, learn important military lessons from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905?', is yes. Based on the primary sources, it can be said that the military observers learned important lessons from the Russo-Japanese war which would play a role in the outcome of the First World War. This research proves that through the Western military observers, the Russo-Japanese war had far reaching global consequences. Which in turn is a new argument for the concept of 'World War Zero'.

In the first chapter this research also showed that the fighting in the Russo-Japanese war was modern, which can also be used as an argument for the 'World War Zero' concept. Based on the global consequences of the Russo-Japanese war, it should not be seen as just an imperialistic war between a European power and an Asian country, but instead it should be seen as 'World War Zero'.

Even so, this doesn't mean that the whole World War Zero concept is now proven. This thesis

focuses only on the modern way of fighting and the consequences of the Russo-Japanese war. Steinberg states that; the concept of World War Zero means that the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was worldwide, in its causes, course, and consequences. This means that to fully prove this concept, there is yet much more work to be done on the global causes and the global course of the war.

For the historical debate, further research is necessary. This thesis has looked at four military observers, these were important men because of the role they played for their countries in World War One. There were however many more military observers present during the Russo-Japanese war, that can be studied in a similar manner. More research into these other military observers can perhaps show new information that could strengthen or weaken the conclusion of this thesis and in turn the concept of World War Zero.

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