

The Battle of Ulsan

AAR by Bill Madison

This past weekend at the Warfair' 06 convention held here in Kennesaw, Georgia one of the most important yet little known naval battles of the Russo-Japanese War was re-fought by some pretty hardy individuals. Admiral Kamimura's Second Division of the Imperial Japanese Navy just off the coast of Korea once again intercepted the Russian Vladivostok Squadron. The Russian Admiral was crafty he decided to close with the Japanese as he understood that at close range he stood a better chance of inflicting damage, while at greater ranges the Japanese would hold the advantage. Rossiya scored first landing a solid hit on Idzumo knocking out a boiler room and forcing the Japanese squadron to reduce speed. The Japanese scored soon after with several consecutive salvos slamming into Rurik. The Japanese Admiral smelled blood and concentrated his divisions fire on Rurik while letting the other Russian ships remain unengaged. The crew of the Rurik fought bravely while their squadron mates made the Japanese pay for their mistake. Adzuma took a hit to the bridge, from Gromoboi, killing her captain and carrying away her signal equipment. Rurik concentrated on Idzumo as the range continued to drop. Soon a fire was seen to break out on Idzumo as her ready use ammunition was ignited from a devastating series of hits that also jammed her rudder. The Russian Admiral realizing that his hated enemy was in trouble took this opportunity to swing the Vladivostok Squadron across the bows of Kamimura's Division. The Japanese still slowing and unable to turn due to damage on the flagship could only open up with everything they had as the Russians steamed past with all guns blazing. Rurik was soon a shambles and sinking by the bow but the remaining Russian warships were still in top fighting trim. They concentrated on Idzumo, as they swung past, inflicting serious damage and rendering Admiral Kamimura *ores de combat* with several hits to the con and bridge area. Defiantly Kamimura ordered a torpedo launch before passing out from his wounds. The Japanese fish ran true and slammed into the port side of Rurik just as she was about to turn away. Luckily for Admiral lessen the damage though heavy was not serious enough to prevent his ship from reaching Vladivostok. With Admiral lessen's remaining vessels still sea worthy and engine rooms intact he soon pulled away from his Japanese enemies and managed to escape back to Vladivostok.

It has been reported that if Admiral Kamimura survives his wounds that he will commit Seppuku in order to atone to his Emperor!

The game went to the Russian's, historically Kamimura could not afford to lose a single ship either sunk or damaged enough to have to be laid up with the Russian Baltic Squadron heading towards the theater of war, who proved that it was not technology that historically gave the Japanese such a decisive edge, but leadership. One of my favorite things about SK5 is that it is not rigged to produce results that everyone thinks should happen, but lays the actual data on the line and lets players really pit their tactical skills against one another rather than against a game system.

The game was fought to conclusion in little under 4 hours. We had four new players (Jack did a tremendous job of teaching the rules before the game) and three who either had played SK5 before or owned SK4. The owners of SK4 were greatly impressed with the new edition and loved the ship logs as well as the streamlined gunnery system. Several have already emailed requesting a seat at the next event to be held at the hotel in February.