

WAR LASTED 18 MONTHS, BIGGEST BATTLE KNOWN

Engagement at Mukden Unparalleled in World's Conflicts.

RUSSIANS WON NO VICTORY

Admiral Togo's Ships Opened and Closed Hostilities—Czar's Navy Wiped Out—Russian Miscalculation.

The war that has been ended by the "Peace of Washington"—the treaty will probably be signed in Washington—began on Feb. 8, 1904. The period of hostilities, therefore, has been 1 year 8 months and 21 days.

Two days before the war began the Japanese had severed diplomatic relations with Russia at the end of negotiations covering many months. Even at the last moment Russia did not believe that Japan meant to fight, and when, on Feb. 9, the news came that Admiral Togo's fleet had made a night attack on the Russian squadron at Port Arthur it astounded the Russians.

The first Japanese blow was a severe one. Togo's torpedo flotilla badly damaged the battleships Czarevitch and Retvizan and the cruiser Pallada. On the following day the naval action was renewed, and one Russian battleship (the Poltava) and three cruisers were injured.

Meanwhile Admiral Uriu's squadron had appeared off Che-mul-Pho, Korea, and had engaged and sunk the Russian cruiser Variag and the gunboat Korletz.

Japan began to hurry troops to Korea and the Russians sent reinforcements to the Far East by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Viceroy Alexieff, who is regarded as having been chiefly responsible for the "forward" policy which resulted in the war, left Port Arthur for Harbin. Admiral Makaroff was appointed Commander in Chief of the Czar's naval forces in the Orient, and, on Feb. 21, Gen. Kuropatkin was appointed Commander in Chief on land. Korea, in an astonishingly short time, was dominated by the Japanese. The authorities at Seoul were for the most part pro-Russian, but in spite of this a treaty was signed with Japan by which she received permission to send troops to Korea, and, practically, to do anything she liked in the country.

On March 12 Gen. Kuropatkin left St. Petersburg amid the cheers of an enormous crowd. A week later the Japanese and Russian outposts were in touch in Northern Korea. On April 6 the Russians, who had continually retreated, crossed the Yalu, and the Japanese were, in a military sense, masters of Korea.

Togo's Trapping of Makaroff.

Togo's successes had continued. The first great Russian disaster of the war occurred on April 13, when Japanese cruisers decoyed Admiral Makaroff out of Port Arthur and Togo caught him in a trap. The Japanese led the Russians over mines they had previously laid, and in their hasty return Makaroff's flagship, the Petropavlovsk, was blown up, the Admiral and 600 men going down with her. Verestchagin, the most famous of all Russian artists, was among the drowned.

Several attempts were made by the Japanese to block the entrance of Port Arthur. None was permanently successful, but it is supposed that they had some effect in confining the Russian vessels to the harbor.

The first great land battle of the war was fought on April 30 and the following two days. The Japanese Army under Gen. Kuroki obtained a complete victory. The Russians were forced far north of the Yalu. Kiu-Hen-Cheng was captured by the Japanese, and the Russians lost many men and guns.

The worst Japanese disaster of the war occurred on May 15, 1904. The battleship Hatsuse was sunk by a mine near Port Arthur and the cruiser Yoshino was sunk in a collision with the cruiser Kasuga.

In the beginning of May a Japanese army landed on the Liao-Tung Peninsula. The Port Arthur army moved forward to meet it, and on May 27 the battle of Kin-Chow was fought. The Japanese stormed Nan-Shan Hill and at enormous sacrifice routed the Russians and captured 78 guns. The siege of Port Arthur proper began with this date, and at the same time Togo's blockade of the southern end of the Liao-Tung Peninsula became effective. On May 30 the Japanese occupied Dalny, the mushroom city which had been built at an outlay of many million dollars, designed by the Russians to be the chief seaport of that part of Asia.

The Siege of Port Arthur.

There followed Kuropatkin's disastrous attempt to relieve Port Arthur, made, it was said, against his advice on an imperative order from the Czar. The Russians were defeated with a loss of 7,000 men

and 16 guns, and were all but cut off from retreat.

The weeks following saw almost constant fighting, repeated Japanese successes, but no great battle. On July 3, Field Marshal Oyama, the Japanese Commander in Chief, started for the front. On July 25 Gen. Oku won an important victory at Tashi-Chao, and at the end of July the Russians, after extraordinary efforts on the part of the besiegers, had been driven from the outlying lines of defense at Port Arthur and had retired on the main fortifications.

On Aug. 10 the Port Arthur fleet made a disastrous sortie. Admiral Wittsoeff was killed, a number of the best vessels were badly damaged, and some of the Russian ships took refuge in neutral ports, where they were interned.

On Aug. 12 the Czarevitch was born, and the Russian people hailed the event as an omen of a turn in the tide of war. But it did not prove a true omen. Defeats on land and sea continued. Point after point outside Port Arthur was taken, more ships were lost, including the gallant little cruiser Novik, and the only Russian success was the defeat on Aug. 24 of the first general attack on Port Arthur.

The following day the Japanese began an advance on Liao-Yang. The fighting continued until Sept. 4, when Oyama entered the city, after one of the greatest battles in the history of the world. A flank movement was chiefly responsible for the Japanese victory. For two days the result had appeared to be in doubt. The Japanese made attack after attack on the Russian works, but were beaten back. Then, suddenly, Kuroki appeared to the northeast of the Russian position, and Kuropatkin, seeing himself outmaneuvered, ordered a general retreat.

Kuropatkin's Downfall.

It took both armies several weeks to recover from the effects of the battle. Finally Kuropatkin considered that the Russians were strong enough to begin an offensive movement. From Oct. 9 to Oct. 24 the battle of the Sha River was fought. Again there were enormous losses on both sides, and again the Russians were defeated. They were driven back across the Sha River, but the Japanese did not, as it was expected that they would do, press their advantage. Instead they built strong works and both armies in Manchuria settled down to inactivity for the winter.

On Oct. 15 the Baltic fleet under Admiral Rojestvensky left Libau for the Far East. A few days later it began its career on the seas by firing at some English fishing boats. The incident nearly led to war between Great Britain and Russia, but in the end an international inquiry board was appointed which settled the question in a manner satisfactory to both parties.

On Nov. 20 the Japanese at Port Arthur, who had pushed on in spite of terrible slaughter, captured 203-Meter Hill, and this was the beginning of the end for the Russian garrison. During December the position of the Russians grew more and more desperate. Once the inner line of fortifications had been pierced the town and harbor were at the mercy of the besiegers. The damaged warships could not escape, and the terribly accurate Japanese fire further damaged several of them. The Russians' stock of ammunition was running low, a large portion of the defending force was hors de combat, and at last Gen. Stoessel decided to give in. On Jan. 1, 1905, he accepted the terms of surrender laid down by Gen. Nogi, and after sinking their ships, the Russians gave up the fortress.

In February the battle of Mukden was fought—the greatest battle in the history of the world so far as is known. It lasted from Feb. 23 to March 10, when the Japanese entered Mukden. The Russian retreat from the city was more or less disorganized, and the victors captured enormous quantities of trophies and supplies. Oyama pressed his success to the point of pursuing the Russians to Tie Pass. Later he moved further north, but the battle of Mukden was the last great land battle of the war.

On May 13, 1905, the Baltic fleet left Hon-Kohe Bay for the north, and on May 27 and 28 it was engaged in Tsushima Strait and the Sea of Japan by the fleet under Admiral Togo. The complete disaster suffered by the Russians is so recent that the details need not be recapitulated. Practically every one of the Russian ships was destroyed or captured, and Rojestvensky was taken prisoner.

A week later President Roosevelt began the negotiations which have resulted in ending the war.