

THE PRIZE COURT.

JUTLAND BATTLE: PRIZE BOUNTY FOR THE GRAND FLEET.

IN THE MATTER OF THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND.

(Before the RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY DUKE, President.)

This was a motion on behalf of the officers, warrant officers, and men of H.M. Grand Fleet, commanded by Lord Jellicoe of Scapa, for prize bounty for the destruction of the enemy warships Lutzow, Pommern, Wiesbaden, Rostock, Elbing, and Frauenlob, and the destroyers V.4, V.27, V.29, V.48, and S.33.

Mr. WILFRID LEWIS said that he appeared on behalf of 120 out of the 161 ships which constituted the Grand Fleet at the Battle of Jutland. It was no part of his duty to extol the bravery of the British Fleet, but he might remind the Court that it was dealing with a motion relative to perhaps the greatest battle in history, a battle which had an incalculable effect upon the late war. The victory of Jutland was so great that on the morning of June 1, 1916, the British Fleet was left alone upon the scene of action. The enemy ships had fled to their home ports, where they remained. They never came out again to challenge the supremacy of the British Fleet and they only emerged at the end of the war to surrender to the British Navy in circumstances which were now historical.

The number of persons on board the enemy vessels destroyed was 4,637, and therefore the Court was asked to decree an award of £5 a head, amounting to £22,685. The Court was also asked by the motion to decree that the battle was the common and joint enterprise of the Grand Fleet. The Fleet was agreed that the battle should be treated on that basis, because it was impossible to contend, in the circumstances of modern naval warfare, that any one ship or any one particular squadron was solely responsible for the destruction of any one enemy ship.