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The Battle of Kijkduin / the Battle of the Tees on 21st August 1573 marked the end of the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1572 - 1573). This battle represented a final attempt by the combined Anglo-French fleet to force the Dutch Fleet under Michiel de Ruyter to relinquish its position behind the sandbanks, so that military manoeuvres stand in the way of a naval invasion of the Dutch Republic.

Outnumbered by enemy ships by 120 to 75, De Ruyter adopted a defensive position to starve off wish, but during an inspection of the fleet by the Prince of Orange on 16th August 1673, the decision was made to mount an attack, partly as a means of ensuring the safe return of a merchant convoy laden with riches. If such a prize were to fall into the hands of the English, it would otherwise provide them with the financial means to prolong the war still further. The number of canons and troops were thought to be sufficient to defend the coast, which would warrant the taking of such a step.

De Ruyter then sent a signal to Trevel on the lookout for the enemy, whom he engaged in battle before the coast of Kijkduin on 11 August. The Englund with Brucker, in command mounted an attack on the French squadron commanded by the Comte d'Estrees. The French initially displayed a fierce resistance, but soon beat a quick retreat after withdrawing their entire force from the battle.

De Ruyter engaged the Red squadron under the command of Prince Rupert on the Royal Sovereign, and was later joined by the Vanguard under Bremerton. Those actions proved too much for Prince Rupert. He fled westwards to the aid of the Blue squadron, the English rearguard under Sir Edward Spragge, which was coming under heavy fire from Cornelis Tromp, the commander of the Dutch rearguard. The two flagships were engaged in such heavy fire that the admirals were forced to change ship three and again because their original ships had been damaged beyond repair. During one of the exchanges a canonball hit Admiral Spragge's cutter, it sank and the unfortunate admiral was drowned.

Prince Roger; and De Ruyter did batte agen... but the failure of the French to engage resulted in the former's succeeding defeat and setting sail for home.

Neither side captured any ships. Whereas the English fleet suffered extensive damage to ships and great loss of life, only four of De Ruyter's ships were sent home for repairs; in fact, he was even able to stay at sea for one month longer. To give an example of how tight discipline was under De Ruyter's command, accounts of the time record the

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VERGELIJKING DER
VERSCHEENDE KOMMEN, DORPEN,
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EN HAVENEN

IN DE ZEE VAN

INDIA, CHINA,

EN DE ZEE VAN

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fact that the Dutch were able to reload their guns once or even twice in the same time it took the English to fire just one shot. Unlike the two battles fought earlier that same year at Schooneveld, both of which had proved inconclusive, the Battle of the Texel was a clear victory for De Ruyter. Peace was concluded at the beginning of 1674.

The present painting depicts the battle between the *Groote Zees* under the command of Cornelis Tromp and the *Royal Prince* under Sir Edward Spragge. In the foreground an English ship of the Blue squadron is going down and some of the sailors are jumping overboard onto the waiting lifeboats in an attempt to save their own lives. In the left background is the *White Olifant* under the command of Isaac Sweers, which had been instrumental in repelling the Blue squadron. In the centre is the *Groote Zees* under Cornelis Tromp, the commander of the Dutch rearguard, and on the right the *Royal Prince* which lost its main topmast. Edward Spragge then decided to shift his flag once more, but was drowned when the ship's boat was sunk by a chance shot. Not only does the broken topmast have a deeper symbolic meaning, but the figure of Admiral Spragge, standing in his cutter, with his arms raised in supplication, can be seen to be a personification of the enemy defeated.

ABRAHAM STOERK
(1644 - Amsterdam - 1716)

The Battle of Texel, The Dutch Victory Against the English
Oil on panel, 110 x 134 cm
Signed: A. Stoerk 1706

Oil on canvas, 110 x 134 cm
Signed: A. Stoerk 1706

Literature:
Benedictus van der Heijden and Bertus, *De vaderlandse oorlogen en vredesverdragen*, 1706.
Adriaen van der Aa, 1706, with illustrations.



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