



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 161 – September 2007

Editorial

Hi Everyone,

Apologies for the delay in getting this out (egads, its almost October already!). We moved house at the beginning of the month and things are still chaotic in the extreme in the Manley household. Hopefully a slightly more “normal” service will be restored next month!

Yours aye,

DM

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Jutland 2007 Battle Report

By Simon Stokes

Introduction

Ever since the NWS has been involved in running public demonstration games onboard HMS Belfast, Nick Hewitt (HMS Belfast Communications Officer) and I have talked about using the space where we run our 1/600th scale public games for a larger ranging private game using smaller scale models. In the end we decided to try and go for the biggie and run the full Jutland fleet action. The thought was a little daunting. We'd never use my computerised rule set for a game as large as that before. Nick kindly volunteered his collection of Navwar ship models so my task was to try and solve the intractable problem of streamlining the rules to allow us to run the game, and develop the scenario for an entertaining game.

The date set for the game had to coincide with a weekend during the summer holidays when the ships company dining area and sleepover accommodation on board HMS Belfast were not otherwise in commercial use. This turned out to be August 11th and 12th.

After notices in AGB and on NWS yahoo groups we put together a gang of NWS stalwarts and I started thinking about how the game could be run. The key it seemed was not to think in terms of individual ships but to think, manoeuvre and fire by the squadron. I set about “hacking” my computer moderated rule set to achieve just this, and also spent a few long evenings pouring over my copies of Conway's and Jane's to convert the raw ship stats therein into something understandable to the rule system. In the end I had a mechanism whereby firing and manoeuvring could be ordered by the squadron, and the computer would do the target allocation and resolving the firing on a ship by ship basis. Another aid was the use of clear plastic bases for each squadron, which were actually 12” rulers, that meant that we could move an entire squadron as one. A four minute game turn, a ground scale of 1cm to represent 100 yards and half an inch for every knot of speed gave us our starting distances and closing speeds. We were set.

Next to follow was the scenario. I decided to start the game at the point of first engagement between the opposing capital ships i.e. 15:44 GMT when Beatty's 1st and 2nd Battlecruiser squadrons were a mere 18,000 yards from Hippers I Scouting Group and approaching them in line of bearing. The starting positions were therefore as shown on the map over the page. The plan was to play the run to the south and the run to the north on the first day leaving a full day for the fleet action. I didn't however want it to be mere re-run of historical events, so I took the approach of consigning these events to event cards one of which was drawn at the end of each 4 minute turn, there being three packs of cards corresponding to the three phases of the battle. Although I've not listed the full set of event cards, below is an indication of the list of possible events for each of the three phases of the action, with some events appearing on many cards.

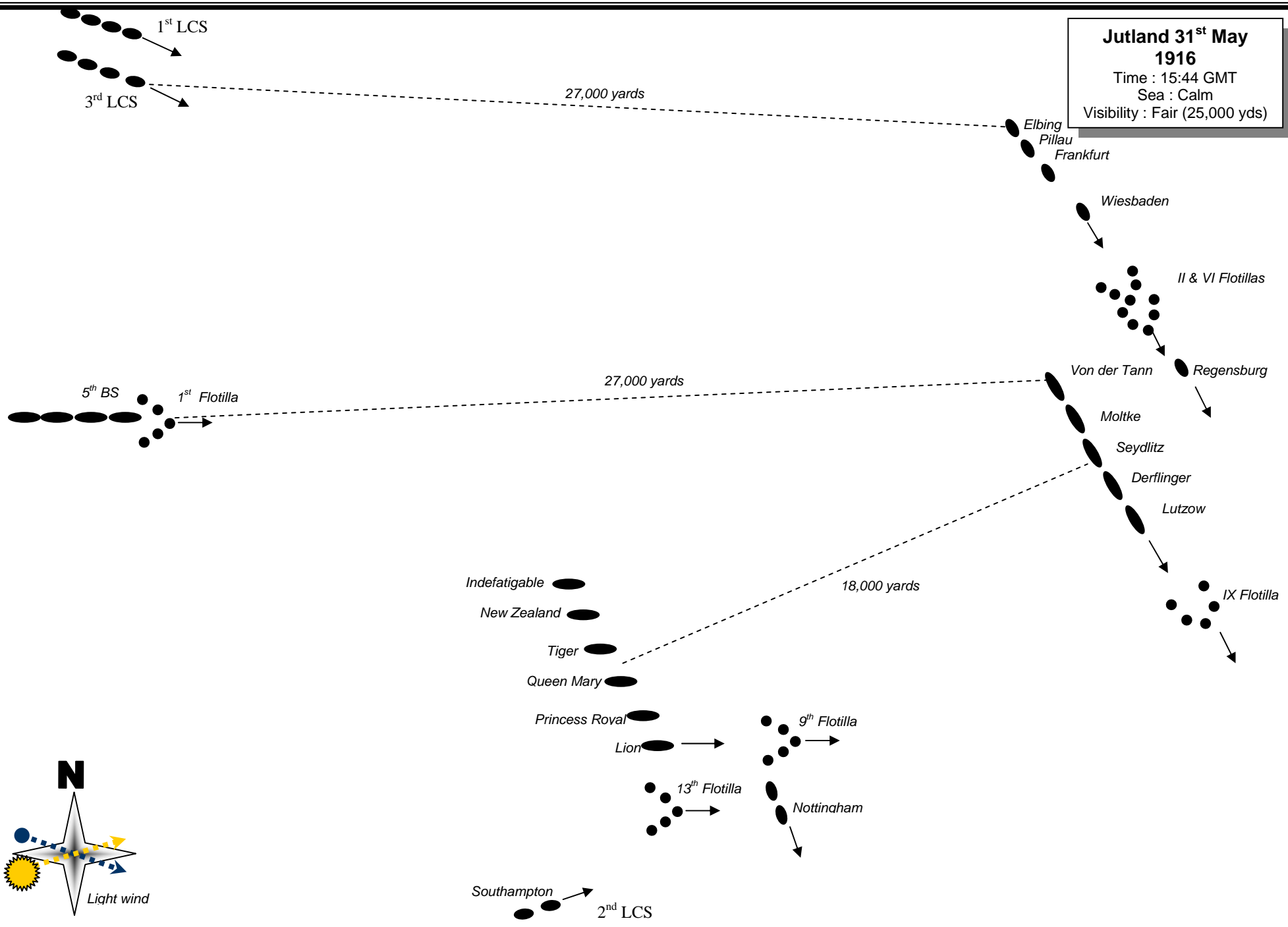
Run to the South	Run to the North	Fleet Action
<p>Funnel Smoke obscures signals from Beatty's Flagship - 5th BS will conform with the last order seen</p>	<p>Setting Sun Blinds gun layers and prevents them from engaging targets over 10,000 yards from the west for 4 minutes.</p>	<p>German Anti-Torpedo Nets Last BC/BS to be hit on the armoured belt has it's props fouled by nets - it must come to a stop for 8 minutes.</p>
<p>Admiral Beatty's Eagle Eye spots a periscope to port of Lion, and orders 1st & 2nd BCS to make a 90° turn to starboard together</p>	<p>German Anti-Torpedo Nets Last BC/BS to be hit on the armoured belt has it's props fouled by nets - it must come to a stop for 8 minutes.</p>	<p>Warspite's Helm Jams putting her into a 3 point turn to port until a double is rolled on 2D6</p>
<p>Darkening Eastern Horizon obscures ships over 10,000 yards distance for 4 minutes – western (British) ships cannot fire on them.</p>	<p>Warspite's Helm Jams putting her into a 3 point turn to port until a double is rolled on 2D6</p>	<p>British Shell Handling Last BC pen'd by heavy shell has fire in ready use ammo of nearest turret - 2D6, 2=it detonates else MM flooded</p>
<p>German Anti-Torpedo Nets Last BC to be hit on the armoured belt has it's props fouled by nets - it must come to a stop for 8 minutes.</p>	<p>British Shell Handling Last BC pen'd by heavy shell has fire in ready use ammo of nearest turret - 2D6, 2=it detonates else MM flooded</p>	<p>Sea Mist Rolls In XXX obscured by mist for 4 minutes. Can fire but cannot be fired at by enemy over 10,000 yards away.</p>
<p>Warspite's Helm Jams putting her into a 3 point turn to port until a double is rolled on 2D6</p>	<p>The Honourable 'Orace Arrives 5:36 (turn 28 i.e.112mins) 3rd BCS Squadron arrives from the NW. <i>(play on or after that turn)</i></p>	
<p>British Shell Handling Last BC pen'd by heavy shell has fire in ready use ammo of nearest turret - 2D6, 2=it detonates else MM flooded</p>	<p>Arbuthnot Arrives 5:32 (turn 27 i.e.108mins) 1st CS Squadron arrives from the NW. <i>(play on or after that turn)</i></p>	
<p>Vision of Beauty Large sailing barque appears from the south sailing between the two fleets at 5 knots heading North West.</p>	<p>Heath Arrives 5:32 (turn 27 i.e.108mins) 2nd CS Squadron arrives from the N. <i>(play on or after that turn)</i></p>	
<p>Baiting The Trap Concerned that he will draw too far ahead of the British, Hipper pegs the speed of his BCs to 21 knots max.</p>	<p>Grand Fleet Deploys Starboard 6:20 (turn 39 i.e.156mins) GF arrives from the NW in line ahead. <i>(play on or after that turn)</i></p>	
<p>Seymour Signalling Fiasco Lion's flag Lt, forgets to make his signals executive, all other RN ships cannot change course, speed or target.</p>	<p>Sea Mist Rolls In XXX obscured by mist for 4 minutes. Can fire but cannot be fired at by enemy over 10,000 yards away.</p>	
<p>High Seas Fleet Arrives 4:48 (turn 16 i.e. 64mins) HSF arrives from the SW in line ahead. <i>(play on or after that turn)</i></p>		

Jutland 31st May 1916

Time : 15:44 GMT

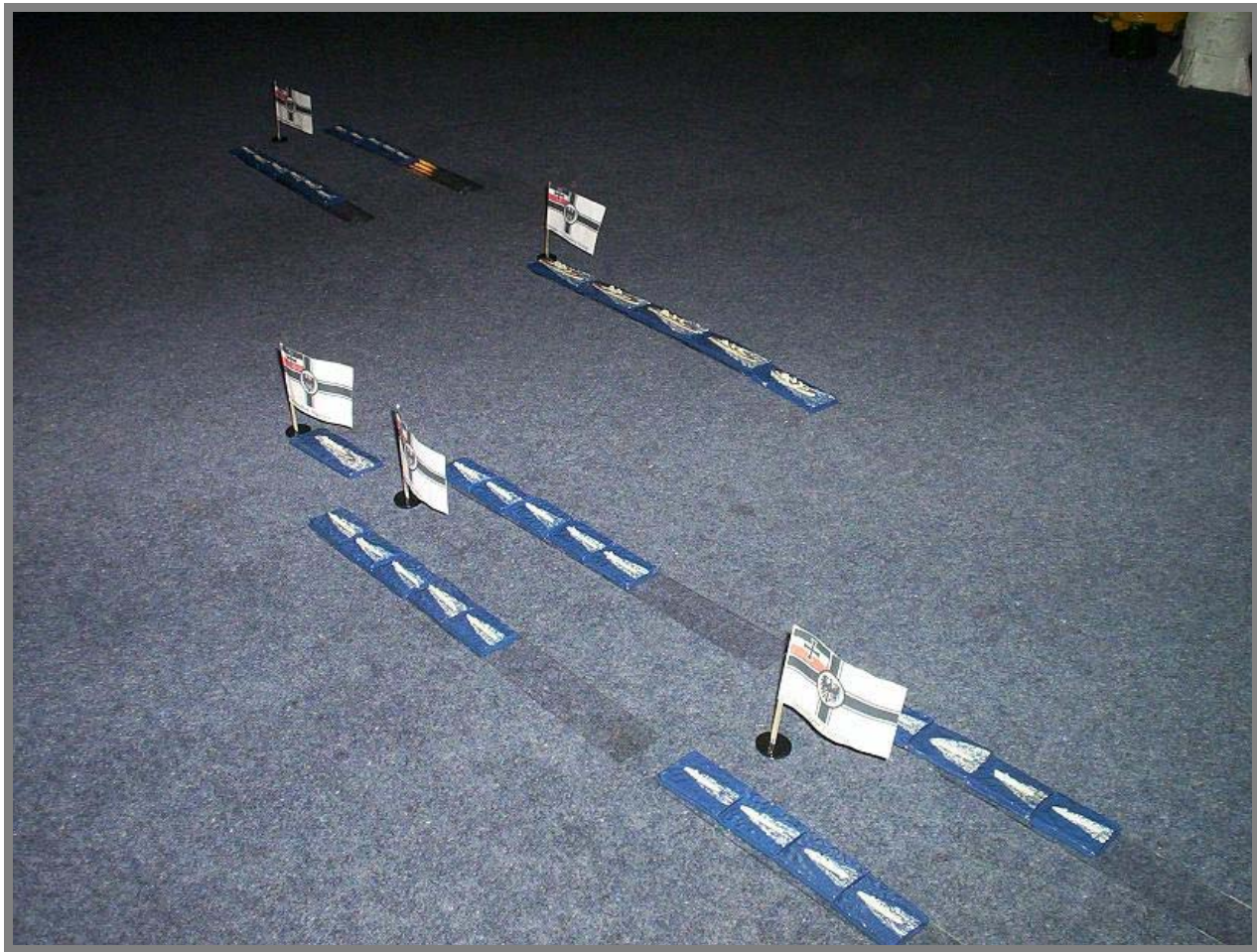
Sea : Calm

Visibility : Fair (25,000 yds)



The Game

Come the big day we arrived on Board HMS Belfast and set out the game at the starting point I'd determined and assigned commands. We'd have a revolving cast of participants through the weekend, but initially Andy Jose took command donning Beatty's Jaunty angled cap, supported by Robert Kirk as the dowdy Evan Thomas and myself doing my utmost to portray the unflappable Commodore Goodenough in charge of the light forces. Meanwhile David Manley trimmed his imaginary beard as Hipper, supported by Rob Hutton and Richard Wimpenny in the roles of Bodicker and Heinrich commanding II Scouting group and the German destroyer flotillas respectively. Jeff Crane acted as facilitator, drove the computer and was the impartial drawer of the event cards.



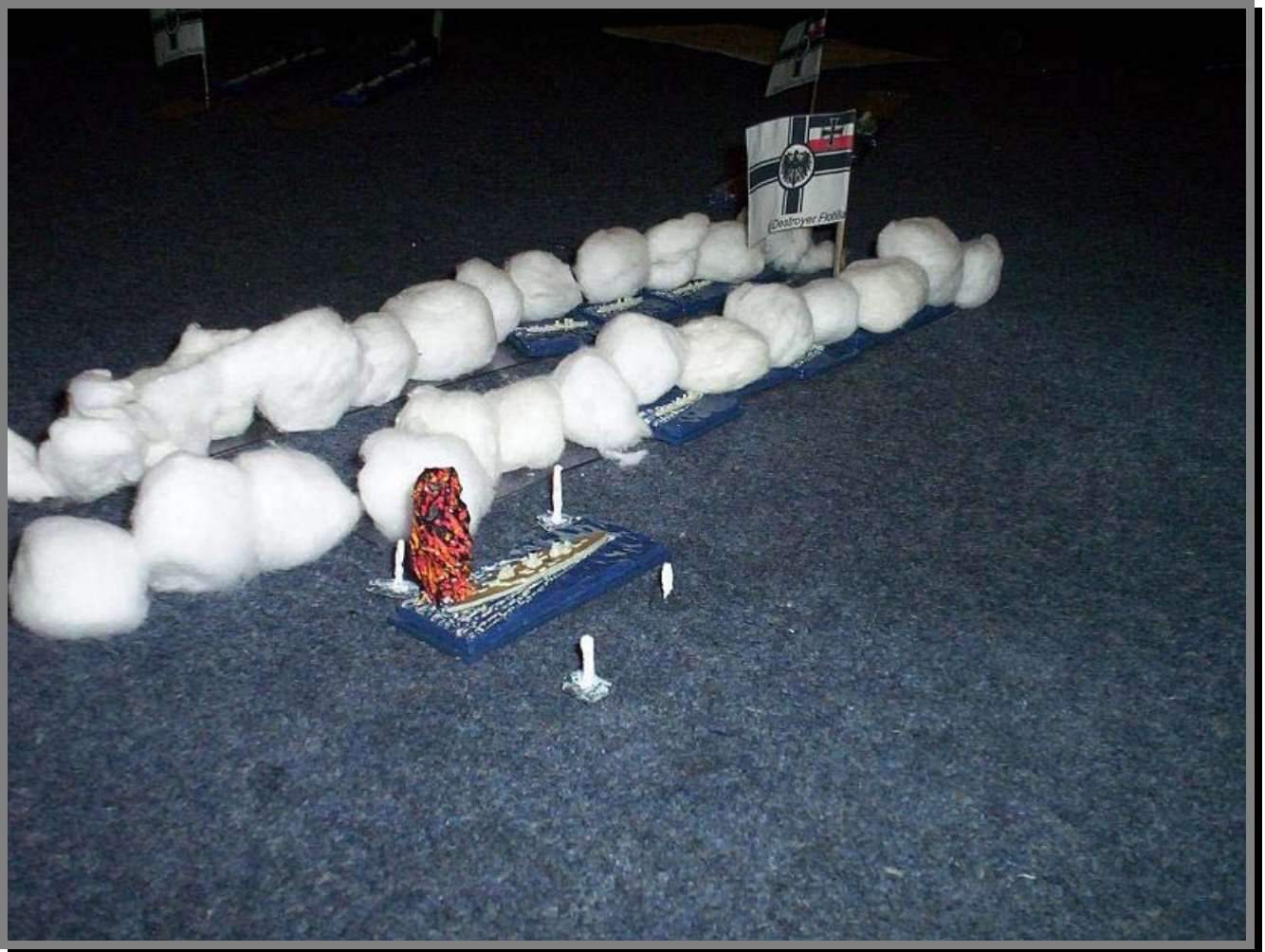
I Scouting Group

The game quickly got underway. Initially only the opposing battle cruisers were involved in the fighting due to the range. However the opening salvos from both sides proved to be both accurate and deadly. The event cards were not as kind to Hipper as might have been expected and although there were plenty of "poor visibility for the British" type cards in the deck, not a single one was drawn and the tactical advantage enjoyed by Hipper in history was denied to the Germans in our re-fight. As the salvos rang out the Germans initially got the worst of the exchanges with *Lutzow*, *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz* and *Moltke* all hit hard and, more crucially, slowed. *Lutzow* and *Derfflinger* were listing heavily to starboard requiring counter flooding to restore their trim sufficiently to operate their main armament. *Seydlitz* had all of her main armament put out of action, though her secondary battery of 5.9" guns was still firing. In fact only *Von Der Tann* escaped serious damage. The Germans hit back hard however, *Princess Royal* in particular staggering under a series of blows that saw her pull out of line to starboard slowed and on fire. Somewhat against the run of play therefore it was *Indefatigable* that became the first casualty as a series of 11" shells from *Von Der Tann* hit her in quick succession. One shell penetrated her thin deck armour and detonated deep inside the ship setting off her forward magazine. She blew apart and sank with heavy loss of life.



The German commanders (from left to right Rob, Richard and David) looking pleased with themselves following Indefatigable's destruction

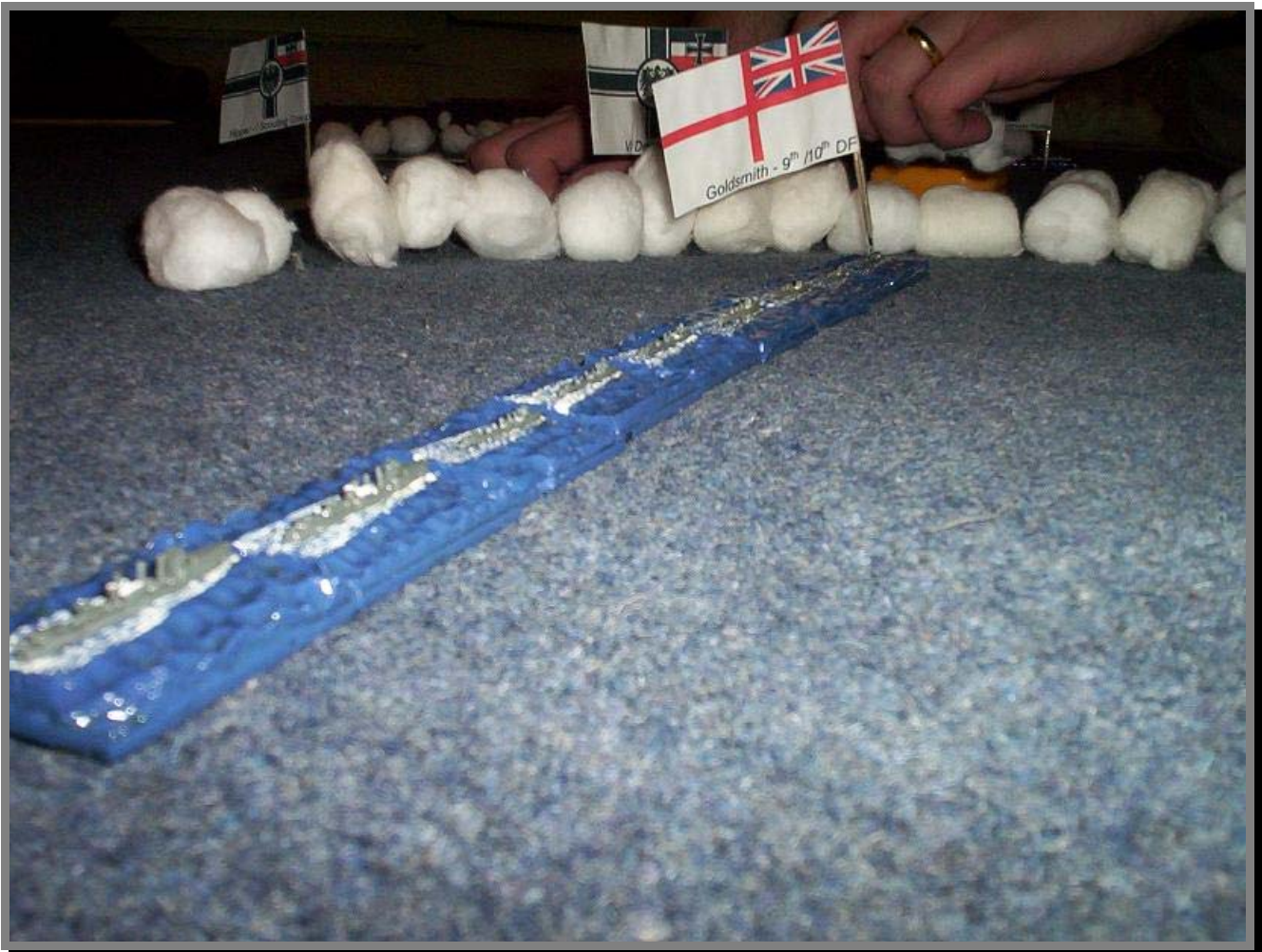
Things were evened up not long afterwards though when a series of 13.5" shells fired by *Tiger*, which was consistently the most accurate of Beatty's battle cruisers in the early stages, penetrated *Moltke's* deck armour and detonated in the boiler and engine rooms. The damage was extensive and *Moltke* pulled out of line to starboard unable to keep pace with her consorts. She was soon falling back into the jaws of Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle squadron, which were coming up fast on the hapless German battle cruiser. *Barham* and *Valiant* opened fire at extreme range and were soon landing 15" shells on *Moltke*. It was one of these huge plunging projectiles that again penetrated *Moltke's* deck armour and this time detonated next to the forward main magazine, setting off the 11" shells and charges stored there with predictable results.



Moltke blows up while VI destroyer flotilla covers the rest of Hipper's battle cruisers with a smoke screen.

With so many slowed and damaged battle cruisers on both sides the opposing light forces seized their opportunity to close the enemy and make their presence felt. The main difference being that the German light forces were putting in an attack to try and relieve the pressure on their embattled battle cruisers and so laid smoke as they went while the British flotilla's did not wish to obscure the targets for both Beatty's battle cruisers nor Evan Thomas's Queen Elizabeth's.

Goldsmith's combined 9th and 10th flotillas found themselves in a particularly advantageous position as they steamed up at full speed on the starboard quarter of the slowed *Lutzow* and *Derfflinger*, conveniently covered by the German VI flotilla's own smoke screen. As they burst through the smoke they found the upturned hull of *Derfflinger* that had just capsized to starboard, finally finished off by a 13.5" salvo from *Queen Mary*. And so headed for the wallowing *Lutzow*. The first six destroyers, *Lydiard*, *Landrail*, *Laurel*, *Liberty*, *Moorsom* and *Morris*, launched their full complement of torpedoes at the German flagship, and then veered off to starboard to try to regain their own lines. They immediately found themselves in a very tight spot however as they came under a hail of fire from *Lutzow* herself plus *Seydlitz's* secondary guns, the whole of Bodicker's II scouting group and the German II destroyer flotilla. *Lydiard*, *Turmagent* and *Turbulent* were sunk in fairly short order and *Laurel* and *Liberty* dropped out of formation listing heavily. It was barely noticed therefore when three of the torpedoes they had launched caught up with *Lutzow*. The damage they caused brought *Lutzow* to a complete halt and increased her list to starboard to a precarious 20 degrees.

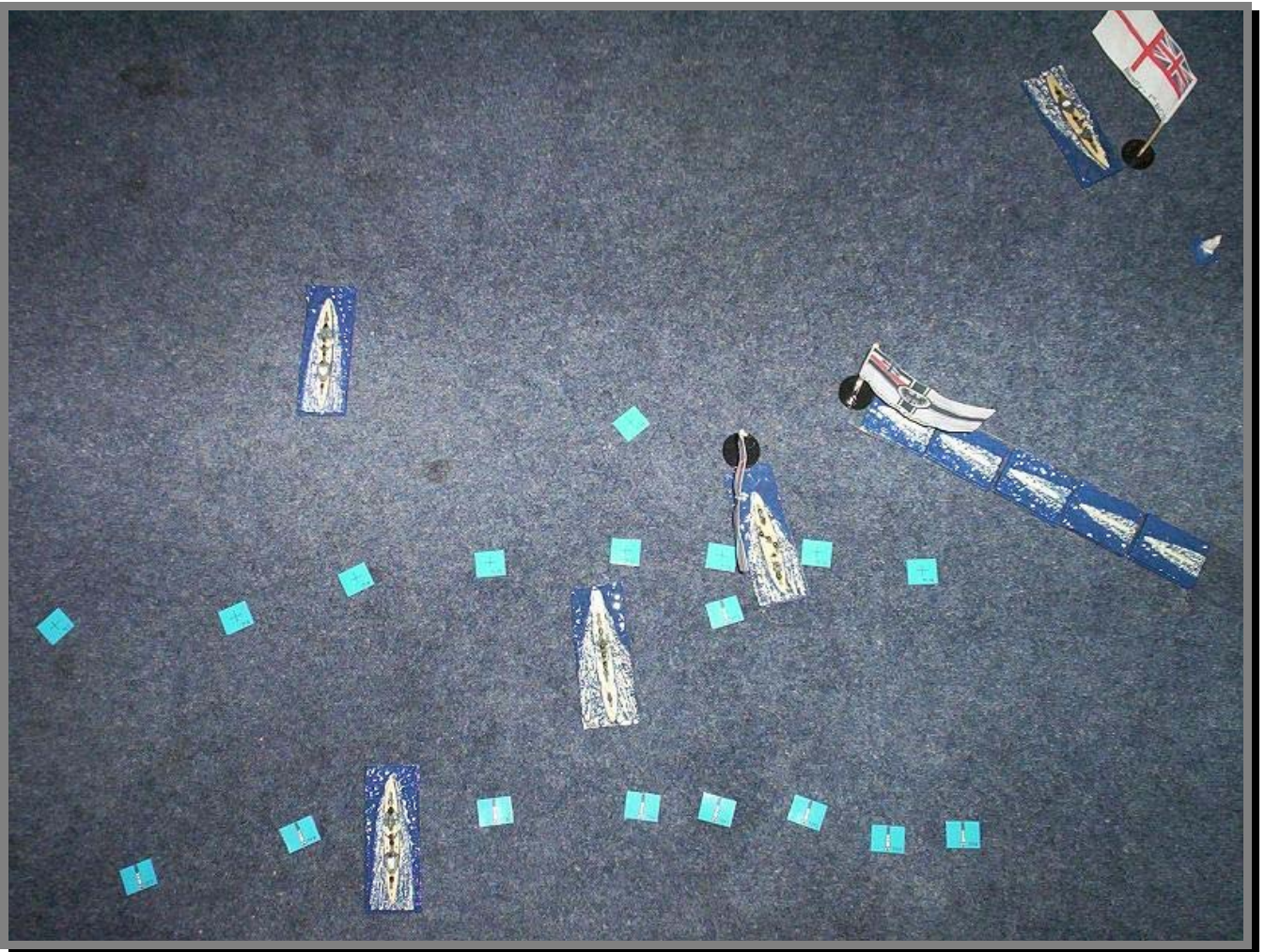


Goldsmith's 9th /10th flotilla surges forward into the smoke screen laid by the German flotillas.

On the other side of the battle line the German light forces were having some success of their own. Beatty's flag ship *Lion* had been hit forward below the waterline by a series of 12" shells from *Lutzow* and had come to a complete stop. The rest of his battle cruisers were damaged and slowed but still operational. It was at this point however that a series of inopportune event cards served to mess things up for the British. The first was a "Seymour Signalling fiasco" followed by "Lion's Funnel Smoke obscuring her signals" and finally "Warspite's helm locking her into a 3 point turn to port". The first two of these served to prevent the British light forces from interdicting themselves to head off their counterparts, whilst the later sent *Warspite* off into a pirouette from which she did not extricate herself for a full twelve minutes, during which time her chummy ships had put quite a distance between them and her.

It was into this disarray that the German II, VI and IX flotilla's steamed. They couldn't believe their luck. Frantic fire from every British vessel that could bring their guns to bear knocked out a few of their number but still they came on belching out smoke as they came. A contentious point this as it meant that British ships firing from the downwind side of a German flotilla could only engage the lead torpedo boat and not the rest of the squadron. Those firing from the up-wind side had no such restriction however.

The II and IX flotilla's managed to work their way into position to launch their torpedoes with relative ease, though the II flotilla lost B98 and G101, G101 to a magazine hit, whilst IX flotilla lost V27, V30, S34 and S33 on their run in. Still a swarm of torpedoes was unleashed first by IX flotilla and then by II flotilla. Beatty's battle cruisers hauled themselves round to starboard and managed to turn away from the initial spread of torpedoes from IX flotilla and although many torpedoes came perilously close to both the *Queen Mary* and *New Zealand*, only one hit was scored on *Queen Mary*, which slowed her and gave her a pronounced list to port but didn't immediately have any other effect. What this did though was ensure that II flotilla's torpedoes would launch at a range less than 1000 yards! It was not just the flotilla torpedoes that had an effect at this range however, the German 4" guns could also be effective and it was the *Queen Mary* that was on the receiving end of most of IX flotilla's guns, as she was plastered with about 40 hits. Most burst harmlessly on her armoured belt or turrets, but a few found weak spots. One detonated below the waterline under the stern and disabled her outermost propeller, increasing her list whilst others destroyed a couple of 4" secondary guns in the battery and started fires on deck. Then the II flotilla torpedoes hit. The battle cruisers were broadside on to this attack and could not turn in time to avoid it. *Princess Royal* and *New Zealand* received a couple of torpedoes a piece and *Tiger* three. Whilst none of the British ships capsized from the damage all three were brought to a grinding halt with a mixture of flooded boiler rooms, engine rooms and destroyer propellers. Incredibly though through all this, immobilised and a sitting duck, *Lion* had been left unmolested.



British battle cruisers twist and turn in an attempt to dodge the many torpedoes heading their way from IX flotilla, whilst II flotilla moves up to launch it's torpedoes.

VI flotilla on the other hand had a much tougher time on it's run in. It had first to run the gauntlet of fire from Farie's 13th destroyer flotilla on a reciprocal course as it headed out on it's un-rescinded attack on the German Battle line. Then it was ambushed by Roper's 1st flotilla, Alexander-Sinclair's 1st Light Cruiser Squadron and Napier's 3rd Light Cruiser Squadron plus the secondary 6" guns of Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron. Fearing that his flotilla could be wiped out before it could get to it's designated target of the 5th Battle Squadron, Rob vainly launched half the flotilla's torpedoes at the light cruisers in front of them. He was right to be concerned. VI flotilla lost G41 and V69 sunk outright. Additionally V44, G86, G87 and V45 were all disabled whilst making the attack. In exchange they scored only a few ineffectual hits on Roper's 1st DF. The British Light cruisers turned sharply to starboard, easily out-running the German torpedoes and none hit.



German VI flotilla optimistically launch torpedoes as they are ambushed by 1st DF, 1st LCS and 3rd LCS.

As the survivor's from the ambush of VI flotilla (V46, S50 and G37) turned sharply to get themselves out of harms way they suddenly found themselves with a juicy target. Whilst the rest of 5th Battle squadron were safely out of torpedo range and steaming at full speed away from the torpedo threat, the only recently under control *Warspite* was in their sights and only about 2000 yards away. Not all the German torpedo boats had a full set of torpedoes left but they fired what they had and hoped for the best. The gods were with the Germans and as *Warspite* desperately tried to haul herself round to port and comb the tracks she took 3 torpedoes simultaneously on the starboard beam. The sudden inrush of sea water gave her no chance to counter-flood and she capsized to starboard.

Meanwhile away off to the South, Commodore Goodenough and the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron had elected not to get embroiled in the shenanigans behind them and excepting a few long range exchanges with Bodicker's remaining cruisers they stuck to their prescribed role of scouts and soon they had un-nerving news for Beatty as he prepared to transfer his flag to the next passing destroyer. Goodenough had spotted smoke on the horizon and now the lead battleships of the German High Seas fleet could be made out. Goodenough turned sharply to starboard as heavy calibre shell splashes from those same leading battleships *Konig* and *Kaiser*, plus *Von Der Tann* away to port, started erupting around them. They laid smoke as they went which shielded them from the sight of the German battleships but not from *Von Der Tann* and the German battle cruiser was soon rewarded by a below the waterline hit on *Birmingham* which flooded a boiler room and slowed her to 18 knots. Goodenough detached *Birmingham* to make her way as best she could while he covered her from the sight of *Von Der Tann* with smoke and at the same time engaged commodore Heinrich's *Regensburg* which had now appeared from behind the German IX flotilla's smoke.



High Seas Fleet arrives.

The game was up for Beatty. Even as his battered majestic cats were still exchanging salvos with the now equally crooked *Seydlitz* and *Lutzow*, he gave the order to disengage, for the destroyer flotillas to cover the withdrawal with smoke and to close and take off survivors from disabled vessels. Evan Thomas though was to take his remaining Queen Elizabeths North without delay.

With the High Seas fleet bearing down on them, the death throes of the battle cruiser action still had to be played out. The precariously listing *Lutzow* was the first to succumb to a couple of below the waterline 13.5" shells and she capsized to starboard. Simultaneously Beatty found himself in the drink as *Lutzow's* last defiant salvo did the same to *Lion*. *Seydlitz* was next to go finally being pummelled into submission by multiple 12", 13.5" and 15" shells. Bodicker's II scouting group also found themselves under heavy fire as they negotiated the space between the two warring battle lines. Under fire from several quarters including Beatty's battle cruisers, Farie's 13th destroyer flotilla and Evan Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron, both *Frankfurt* and *Elbing* were sunk by gunfire and *Pillau* was damaged and slowed to 9 knots as she limped away into a smoke screen. During this cannonade however the heavily listing *Queen Mary* capsized to port as she fired a broadside to starboard at the retreating German cruisers - something of an own goal.

As the gunfire subsided we took stock of the situation. The combination of early telling hits, the massed flotilla attacks and the advanced scouting exploits of 2nd LCS meant that contact with the High Seas Fleet was much further north than was historically the case, and those British units with the speed to withdraw were able to do so with ease not being under the guns of the High Seas fleet as they did so. The three remaining British Battle Cruisers, *New Zealand*, *Tiger* and *Princess Royal*, were clearly beyond saving so would be scuttled after their crews had been taken off by destroyers. The run to the North was therefore a non-event. However, the Grand Fleet was still nowhere on the horizon. Event cards had determined that the only advance unit to have arrived was Arbuthnot's 1st Cruiser squadron which was made up of armoured cruisers and of little material help in a full scale action with the High Seas Fleet, so the clash of the battle fleets was still some way away.

We still had an hour or so with which to play the opening moves of the fleet action but elected not to do so, and drew stumps on the game at this point, leaving the clash of the battle fleets till next time.



The other sort of majestic cat that ruled the battlefield at night.

Conclusions

It was a fun and informative game, though the timetable did not quite go as planned. Excepting a minor bug in my program (now fixed) whereby target allocation did not work properly when firing a squadron where the first ship in the squadron had been sunk, the rule modifications worked well and the capital ship engagement between Hipper and Beatty played out quickly. What was the most exciting and nerve wracking phase of the game were the flotilla attacks. These were quite complicated in terms of large numbers of torpedo boats and light cruisers milling around on a small patch of sea. This manoeuvring and some of the complicated fire allocation that players quite reasonably wanted to order slowed the speed of play and made the original timetable unachievable. It's not only wargamers that struggle with the detail of flotilla actions, in most historical accounts these big fleet action flotilla engagements are described only in very general terms. For example in Jutland the German Perspective VE Tarrant writes "*At the speed of an express train, the flotillas leapt towards each other to meet in a wild melee, with guns barking and torpedoes streaking in all directions...*", all very stirring stuff but indicative that apart from a few specific details that he goes on to recount no-one, not even those that took part, had a clear view of what actually happened.

I look forward to our next visit when hopefully we can work out who will triumph in the fleet action, and just maybe I'll do better at the board game evolution in the evening.

A big thank you to Nick for organising the event for us, and to everyone that came along to take part or just to take a look.

References

George Bonney, The Battle of Jutland 1916, Royal Naval Museum Publications, 2002.

Andrew Gordon, The Rules of the Game, John Murray, 2005.

V.E.Tarrant, Jutland the German Perspective, Arms and Armour Press, 1995.

Conways All The Worlds Fighting Ships 1906-1921, Conway Maritime Press, 1985.

Jane's Fighting Ships of World War 1, Studio Editions, 2000.

WW1 – The maritime war : <http://www.gwpda.org/naval/n0000000.htm>

You can also download my computerised rules that we used :

http://hometown.aol.co.uk/~121b_fFebRtep8IEfkESMtTKT0NU0ik8LebqizxAkYyCXsLbN2FKLS1Djr3X86YvOJe1i

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2007

NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland

Kenny Thomson, 1 Excise Lane, Kincardine, Fife, FK10 4LW, Tel: 01259 731091

e-mail: kenny.thomson@homecall.co.uk - *Website:* <http://falkirkwargamesclub.org.uk/>

Falkirk Wargames Club meets each Monday night at 7pm with a variety of games running each evening. Naval games are popular with 2 or 3 run each month. Campaign games sometimes feature in our monthly weekend sessions. Games tend to be organised week to week making a 3-month forecast here a waste of time. Please get in touch if you'd like to come along.

- Popular periods – Modern (Shipwreck), WW1 and 2 (GQ), WW2 Coastal (Action Stations), and Pre-dreadnought (P Dunn's rules)

NWS North Hants [Every 3rd Sunday]

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906

e-mail: gf.crane@ntlworld.com

NWS Wessex [Bi-Monthly Meetings]

The Wessex Group has gone into (hopefully) temporary abeyance for the moment. If anyone living in the Bath / Bristol / Gloucester area (or further afield) would like to take on managing the group please contact myself or any of the other NWS officials.