



# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 176 – October 2008

---

---

## Editorial

Having spent much of August avoiding bad weather I managed to get a month of relative calm. This time work took me to North Holland and the Dutch naval base at Den Helder. The RNLN base, over the last 20 years, has moved almost entirely to a new base on reclaimed land to the North West of the old naval base. Some barracks remain in the old site, along with the engineering college. Much of the old site has become a heritage centre, with preserved ships, a cinema, a conference centre and some rather nice restaurants (if you are there try “Waterworld” and the “I Love Holland” spare ribs – gorgeous!!). The old site is also the home to the Royal Netherlands Navy museum, which consists of three parts. The old historical area and the preserved submarine “Tonjin” have been mentioned in AGB and Battlefleet before, but new to me was the part of the museum on the town side of the site – complete with an excellent audio-visual description of the history of Den Helder, and displays on ship building, ship repair and (in the downstairs section) modern naval weapons, sensors and marine engineering. There are lots of interactive displays for the kids to play with (even bigger kids like myself, especially the “De Ruyter AA Gun” display where you are tasked with defending the ship from never-ending hordes of Japanese fighters!

Canada this month, although not (unfortunately) to see the Sackville or the Haida. Those delights will have to wait until later.

Contributions to AGB are always welcome. “Soft copy” input via email is the preferred method of submission as it cuts down the time taken to get your piece into the newsletter considerably!

Yours aye,

DM

[david.manley@btinternet.com](mailto:david.manley@btinternet.com)

---

## NWS at SALUTE

After the success of the “Attack at Source” game at Salute 2008, thoughts are now turning to the 2009 event. The NWS has been invited to attend again, and we have until mid October to submit the application. The question is, what to do? If you have any ideas for a subject that could be covered by an innovative and eye catching (and preferably participation) game please drop us a line. Note this is a call for ideas only – we won’t suddenly ask you to run a game just because you had a great idea for a subject!

---

---

---

# Battle Report

## Bomben auf En-ge-land!

### Introduction

In June this year Jeff's front room was the scene of a hard fought WW2 coastal action. Let me say up front that I've probably left it too long after the event to write the game up with any accuracy, so forgive me if I'm a little vague in places.

Jeff put together the scenario using David Manley's Action Stations coastal rules and based largely on what he'd read of the east coast and channel coal convoys during 1939/40. The basis of the scenario was that a convoy of 12 merchantmen laden with coal are proceeding along the swept channel down the east coast of England, where they find themselves the focus of attention for not only the Luftwaffe but also the kriegsmarine and even a long range railway gun "big bertha".

Close escort for the convoy comprised the paddle steamer *Pride of London* and the trawlers *Graemsay* and *Coll*. The British enjoyed the advantage of radar that provided early warning of both air and surface attack. This was simulated by an "air rendezvous box" which all German aircraft had to spend two turns in before they could move onto the table.

British reinforcements comprised two Battle class destroyers *Belvoir* and *Bleasdale* at Dover and 5 Hurricanes which could be called in for a period of 8 turns. To simulate Dowdings reluctance to commit fighters to convoy protection, preferring to husband his meagre resources for the air battles over the mainland that we now refer to as the Battle of Britain, they were not allowed to return. The use of the destroyers was also restricted and they could only be risked to counter a surface attack and would not hang around merely to augment the AA defence of the convoy.

The Germans had 15xJu 87b Stukas in 3 flights of 5, 9xJu 88s in 3 flights of 3, 9xHeinkel 111s in 3 flights of 3 and 5 Me 109s. In Calais there were 5xEboats which would take 2 turns to reach the table edge. "Big Bertha" could fire only 5 times, and it took full 1 turn to re-load.

### The Game

We had a good turn out for the game so commands were divided up between the many players. Jeff was ubber umpire and adjudicator of all things contentious, Andy Jose took command of the merchantmen and close escort, Dave Sharp and Robert Kirk commanded the Luftwaffe, Rob Hutton had command of the eBoats, Nathan Girdler assisted Andy with the close escorts and was squadron leader of the sub-flight of 5 hurricanes while I was snug in Dover in command of the Battle class destroyers.

The aim for the British was to get the convoy from one side of the table to the other with as few loses as possible. Sounded simple but as the swarms of Luftwaffe bombers gathered in the rendezvous box it looked less and less likely. The first squadrons to emerge from the box were two sub-flights of Ju88s. It didn't matter that they were unescorted since the RAF Hurricanes were nowhere to be seen at this stage. If this were not worrying enough for the convoy commodore as they closed "Big Bertha" also opened up on his charges.

---

---



*Luftwaffe gather in the rendezvous box as "Big Bertha" starts to range in on the rear merchantman.*

The Ju88s closed quickly on the lumbering merchantmen, approaching from the rear of the convoy so as to give *Pride of London* a wide berth, they split up into sub flights, going for two separate merchantmen. The *Pride of London* AA gunners proved unable to adequately defend her charges and consequently the Ju88s had very little AA to contend with when they ran in to attack the merchantmen. The two merchantmen that were attacked, *Northern Star* and *Crompton*, were virtually defenceless on their own and were quickly dispatched by 4 and 3 bomb hits respectively.



*Northern Star and Crompton, were quickly dispatched.*

Next to make an appearance were two sub-flights of Stukas. Again they closed quickly, avoiding *Pride of London's* AA, they picked off two outlying members of the convoy, this time at the head of the port division. *Rodrington Castle* and *Guinevere* again stood little chance of beating off the attacks by themselves and even though *Coll* was close at hand, her meagre AA outfit was insufficient to beat off the German dive bombers and both merchantmen were sunk by 5 bombs each.

Hoping to cash in on any cripples left behind after the air attack, Robs five German e-boats also made an appearance, though unbeknownst to them their movements were being monitored by British radar stations, and my two Battle class destroyers were soon heading out of Dover harbour to counter them - appearing at the rear of the convoy not long after the e-boats had arrived on their table edge. This contest proved an unequal one and the German boats were soon coming under concentrated and accurate fire from the British destroyers that angled across the rear of the convoy while they engaged their diminutive adversaries with their firing arcs fully open so pretty much every gun they had could be brought to bear. Two e-boats were sunk outright and one further boat crippled by a 4" shell that wrecked her engines. The two remaining boats launched their torpedoes at long range against the convoy and hoped for the best. They then beat a retreat at their top speed away from the British destroyers, keen not to become victim numbers 4 and 5 of the Battles. Initially there seemed little danger to the convoy from the German torpedoes, so far away were they that it seemed probable that the convoy would be long gone from that particular patch of ocean well before the torpedoes could get there.



*The 3 remaining German e-boats under a hail of fire from the two Battle class destroyers.*

If Andy as the convoy commodore had been hoping that the Battle class destroyers would hang around and augment the convoy air defence he was sorely disappointed. Seeing the German e-boats disappearing into the distance I implemented standing orders and turned my destroyers round and headed them back to Dover and out of the game.

---

---



*Rodrington Castle and Guinevere again stood little chance of beating off the attacks by themselves.  
Note Jeffs stacked dive bombing Stukas*

German air attacks were still coming in however, including Stukas, Ju88s and He 111s with supporting fighters. This time the Hurricanes were scrambled to meet them and the one contentious moment of the game resulted from the interpretation Nathan made of the rules regarding air to air combat, causing him to make a wide sweep to the right on his approach in an attempt to get on the tail of the German planes. The contentious element was strange because Nathan's interpretation of the rule was definitely not in his own favour, far from it, and in the end resulted in the Hurricanes completely missing the approaching German bombers, instead they tangled in dog fights with the escorting Me 109s, coming off slightly worse and losing 2 of their number in exchange for a single Me 109 if I remember correctly. The German bombers flew on unmolested and delivered their bombs on the remaining merchantmen. *Blythmoor*, *Corby*, *Coquetdale* and *Tamworth* found themselves the targets of this latest wave of German bombers. The first two took a single bomb hit each, *Coquetdale* took two bombs and could make a mere 2 knots thereafter, but *Tamworth* was hit by three bombs which wrecked her machine room and she found herself dead in the water directly in the path of the torpedoes that the German e-boats had launched earlier. *Tamworth's* captain swiftly ordered "abandon ship" and the crew managed to get away in lifeboats before the torpedoes hit and sent her to the bottom.

What little remained of the convoy, just five merchantmen only one of which was undamaged, finally limped off the far table edge leaving a scene of utter carnage behind them.

## Conclusions

Thanks to Jeff for preparing what proved to be a fun game.

Simon Stokes, 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 2007.

---

---

---

---

## John Curry Events

The following message was received from John Curry:

The latest article I have added is by Richard Brooks (the military historian) who kindly agreed to let me reproduce his article about Fred Jane (see <http://www.johncurryevents.co.uk/navalrules/fredjane/articles.htm>).

The Fletcher Pratt game has attracted some comment and there are now 7 articles about it on my website (see <http://www.johncurryevents.co.uk/navalrules/fletcherpratt/articles.htm>).

I have obtained another rare naval wargame that I will produce in due course.

The next Innovation in Wargames Conference (February 2009) is on HMS Belfast, a glorious place to play wargames on! (see <http://www.johncurryevents.co.uk/conference/homepage.htm>).

The conference will include a wargaming show for the public on Saturday the 28th February 2009. I will take the opportunity to try out a few classic naval games.

[www.johncurryevents.co.uk](http://www.johncurryevents.co.uk)

Readers may also be interested to know that John is working on a reprint of Donald Featherstone's "Naval War Games". More news on this as and when I receive it.

---

---

---

---

## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2008**

---

---

### **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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday]**

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906  
*e-mail:* [gf.crane@ntlworld.com](mailto: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.

---

---

---

---