



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 201 –January 2011

EDITORIAL

Gentlemen,

Firstly, a Happy New Year to one and all! I for one can't believe that yet another Christmas has been and gone—there are two a year these days, right? I'm not embarrassed to admit that I love Christmas; I'm still seven years old when it comes to the whole Festive Season, and I hope to remain so for a good many years yet. I have often pondered whether part of my continued attachment to Christmas is that being a wargamer I can look forward to some really nice presents besides the traditional 'Santa Claus jumper' and/or the ever-useful, and unavoidable, socks. We, gentlemen, can unwrap fascinating books, models (ships, chaps, ships, not sexy young things—mores the pity!), as well as boardgames, etc. We have a genuine interest that is easy for our lady friends to shop for. If other male family members seem puzzled by our addiction to...well, playing with soldiers, let them enjoy their socks and obscure sporting compilation DVDs. That brings me to another point: computer wargames verses model-based games. A large portion of computer games aimed at men and boys are wargames of one type or another, and the playing of them is fine—everybody does it. But to play *the same thing* with models on a table has very little 'street cred', if I may borrow a hideous modern term. One it seems has the dignified air of a 'computer whiz-kid', while the other has the vaguely embarrassing whiff of, well, just 'kid', I suppose. Then again, all the books we possess can give us the appearance of minor academics when people call round!

On the subject of books, you may remember Mike Dowd's review in September's *AGB* of *Scrimgeour's Small Scribbling Diary 1914-1916*; a literary delight he found in hardback in one of those end-of-line bookshops that most town centres seem to have. Well, I was browsing in the Foyles bookshop the other day (as is my 'expensive want while working in London!') and noticed it is now readily available in paperback from 'Conways', at £8.99.

You will notice in this month's 'Signal Pad' section that there is a Patrick O'Brian weekend at Portsmouth in a couple of months and there are moves afoot for the society to try and put on a Jack Aubrey-based scenario. This would be an excellent 'advert' for the NWS as well as good fun; plus any excuse to go to Portsmouth is always a good idea!

I'm afraid this issue of *AGB* is slightly slimmer than most of late, for which I can only plead busy time of the year, work, etc, and the fact that I haven't received much to include. So, gentlemen, as soon as your tree and decorations are down and you've dusted off your ships and started to play again, send me a report, no matter how short, and a picture too, if possible. Or, why not send some pictures of your favourite models; make us all envious of your impeccably rigged Langton Anglo-Dutch War vessels, or exquisitely painted GHQ range. You get the idea, I'm sure.

Up Spirits!

Richard Wimpenny

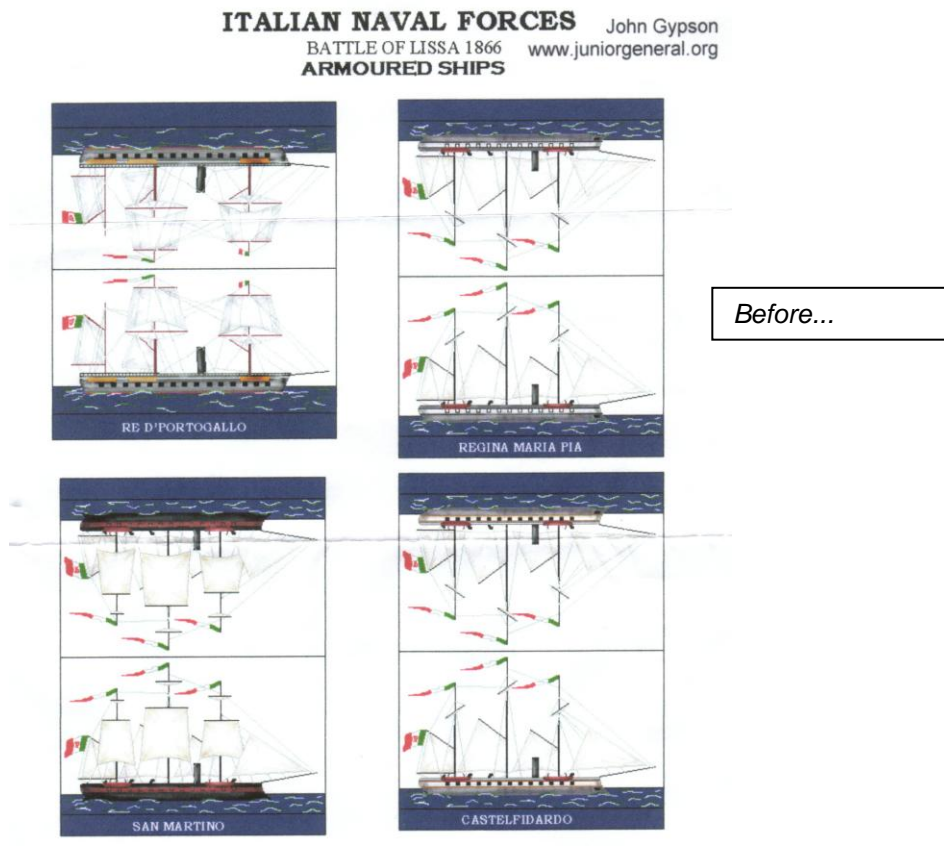
wimpenny@talktalk.net

JEFF'S LISSA

By Richard Wimpenny

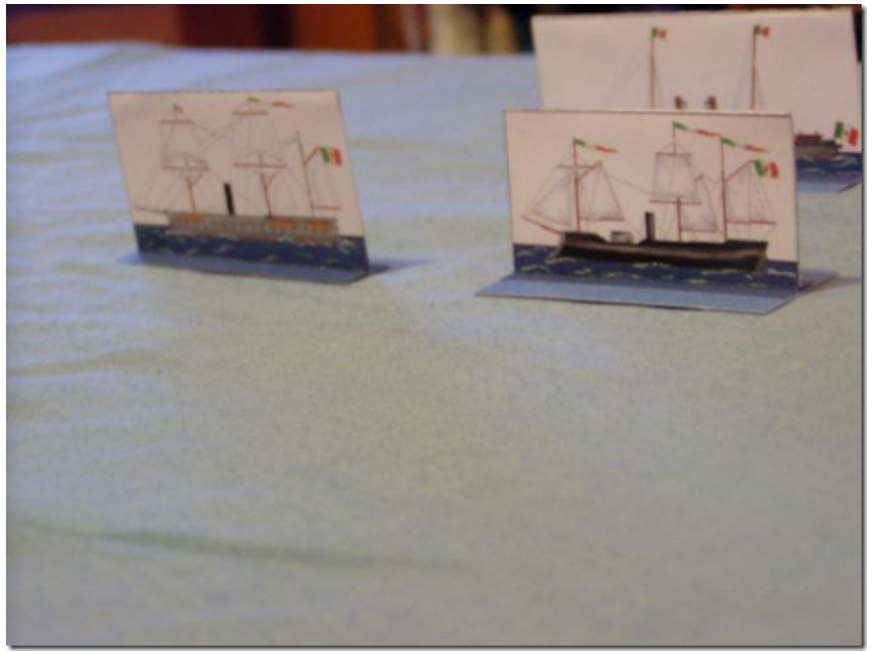
Back in October, Jeff Crane and Dave Sharp staged a re-fight of the Battle of Lissa, 1866. In truth I wasn't present, more is the pity, and various factors led to there only being a few game turns played. Nevertheless, Jeff has told me over the phone how Dave's Austrians managed to ram quite a few of his Italians in what time they had. What sparked my interest in the game, apart from that in the battle in general, was that Jeff and Dave used the paper cut-out ships from 'Armchair General' that Rob Morgan reviewed in last February's *AGB*. As can be seen in the diagram below, these are cut out and then folded over; which as you can see in the photos Jeff sent look rather good, certainly far better than I would have expected.

The rules used for the game (with the evocative title *Ram anything Grey*) are available from the same site as the paper ships themselves, and it is a cheap and simple system for trying out new periods before taking the plunge. Perhaps we should advertise it at our demonstration games? Hmm...





...And after!



If these photographs have piqued your interest, have a look at www.juniorgeneral.org/naval/lissa.html. I suppose that with a paper fleet you have to hope for a wind no stronger than light airs! (Groan...)

(If you are tempted by Italians alá 1866 after this, you will find Rob Morgan's article below of interest. RW)

TWO ITALIAN WARSHIPS OF THE 1860s *ESPLORATORE* AND *MESSAGGIERE*...A MODELLING NOTE

By Rob Morgan

A British-built pair of paddle steamers served with Italy's fleet from the 1860s onwards and they can both be easily created from model, No. 20, the paddle blockade runner *A. D. Vance*, in the Peter Pig ACW 'Hammerin Iron' range of 1/600 ships. The conversion method is remarkably straight forward.

The 1860s were, of course, an active time at sea for the new kingdom of Italy, and an early purchase from Wigram's Yard in London were two fine and fast paddle steamers, the 1,200 ton *Esploratore* and *Messaggiere*. They were excellent ships, with an overall length of 236 feet (72 metres), a beam of 30 feet (9 metres) and a draught of 12 feet or so. Their reciprocating engines had no equal, and the *Esploratore*, which could achieve 1,681 ihp, could steam at 17 knots and was said to be, "...one of the fastest ships of her time." Her sister was no slouch either, since she could make around 15.5 knots. At full speed, these two fine vessels had a range of around 1,800 miles.

These were valuable ships, armed with two 4.7-inch muzzle loaders, one forward and one aft. They could outpace most contemporaries, and so during the war of 1866 they were used as scouts, just as their names suggests. (Indeed the title of 'dispatch vessel' may have been a deliberate misnomer from the time of ordering!) The two ships as built here represent the 1863-1873 'Esploratores', for in that year the lead ship was rebuilt and the armament of both men o' war changed to two 75mm guns, and she was altered several times thereafter. *Messaggiere* was discarded in 1885 when her sound engines and machinery were taken for use in a new steel dispatch vessel named *Messagero*. Incidentally, the latter can also easily be converted from the *A. D. Vance* model with, and was essentially quite similar to her predecessor (perhaps a future 'Note' will deal with this later ship). In the case of the *Esploratore* she became the guard ship at Venice after 1888 and was discarded for use as a depot ship; known as *GM10* in 1895, she survived until around 1907.

To create the 'Esploratore' class in 1866, the following steps are necessary:

1. Remove the pilot house from the superstructure of the *A. D. Vance* model and plug the after funnel hole. Cut the two funnels provided with the model to stand 22mm above the structure when fitted.
2. Drill a second funnel hole forward of the paddles and 5mm from the superstructure edge.
3. Drill three holes for pin pole masts. The foremost is exactly at the rear edge of the foremost deck hatch. The mainmast hole is 2mm behind what is now the rear funnel hole. The mizzen mast is well aft, 8mm from the back edge of the superstructure.
4. Superglue both funnels in place, both very slightly raked aft. The fore and mainmast can be fitted; both should be pins of 30mm and raked as the funnels. Fit a small pin jack staff right aft as well.
5. The forward 4.7-inch muzzleloader is provided from pack No. 29 in the range, 'Heavy Deck Guns'. It should be superglued on the centreline, about 5mm in front of the superstructure and on the main deck.
6. The class carried two pairs of boats both aft of the paddle boxes. These are No. 13 in the Peter Pig list, and the foremost pair should be superglued to the bulwark, with its front end 10mm behind the paddle box; the second pair, 10mm behind the back of those.

The only problem with this model is that the long after superstructure wasn't there in 1866, and so, to portray the two ships, awnings must be added. I made my awnings from cartridge paper, 12mm wide and 42mm long, and gave it a slight ridge along its length. Take care when meeting up with the boat davits of course, and remember where the pin hole for the smaller (20mm high) mizzen mast is when you fit it through. Painting the ships is straightforward. Spry them overall with a matt white undercoat first, ensuring the hidden superstructure is well covered. Hull sides are matt black, as is the 4.7-inch gun. The uppermost 4mm of the paddle boxes and the flying bridge between are matt white, as is the remaining superstructure, and the awnings as fitted should be a little 'creamier' in colour. Decks are bleached teak, while the masts

are brown. Italian funnels were buff, but a slightly darker buff and the ships' booms white. Fit the new colours of Savoy and Italy over the stern, and if you intend to put a vice-admiral aboard one of the two ships, which is nice, then fly a white flag with a blue five-pointed star centrally placed from the mainmast top.

That's it... "Avanti!" as they say.

THE NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART FIVE

My thanks once again to Rob Morgan for providing another round of the 'Navy League/AGB' quiz, but before the next round commences, here are last month's questions, with the answers in italics:

1. Which RN aircraft carrier was laid down as an Italian liner?
HMS 'Argus' was laid down as the Italian liner SS 'Conte Rosso'.
2. Which was the first cruiser to burn oil fuel?
HMS 'Black Prince'.
3. To which 'Royal' navy did *Shamsher* belong?
The Royal Pakistan Navy.
4. What and where are the manacles?
The Manacles are rocks due south of Falmouth.
5. Which RN warships were known as the 'Wobbly Eight'?
The 'King Edward VII' class of pre-dreadnoughts.

And now Part Five!

Rob Morgan writes:

Some of the questions asked of the readers of 'The Navy' back in the early 1950s were a bit obscure to say the least, but I suppose knowing where on board a Union Flag would be flown for a court martial (it's the gaff, by the way) might be of interest to the more particular ship modeller. There was a single 'Naval Aviation' quiz, but it contains material and questions so date-specific to 1952 that only a serving officer could answer them!

1. What was the first RN ironclad warship to carry her main armament in a single turret?
2. In what British warship class were 'double-enders'?
3. What was the first jet aircraft to land on an RN carrier? It was in 1946. Name both aircraft type and the carrier.
4. What were the four navies in which Admiral Lord Cochrane served?
5. Which WWII 'Woolworth' carrier remained in service in 1952 as a flagship?

SIGNAL PAD!

Rob Morgan Writes...

My newsletter from the Historical Association tells me that at the IWM-North at Trafford Park in Manchester, there's an exhibition about Captain Fryatt, who rammed a U-Boat in WWI and was later captured by the Germans and shot. I'm unlikely to go, but the event is on until September 2011. Phone 0161-836-4000, or www.north.iwm.org.uk

There's also news of a 'Patrick O'Brian Weekend' at the Portsmouth RN Museum (I think board *Victory*) on 11th to 13th March next year. Information obtainable from Giles Gould: giles.gould@nmrn.org.uk.

As well as this brief note serving as an amendment to my 1/4800th comment on the Mick Yarrow models in this scale, he tells me that the prices are in fact halved to 25p a vessel and not 50p (my mistake). One thing I find I don't have is a set of decent rules for 1/4800th ships. Can anyone recommend a set? One on a single sheet of A4 would be best!!!

JOINING THE NAVAL WARGAMES SOCIETY

If you have been lent this newsletter and would like to join the Naval Wargames Society, please follow this link to join our Society:

www.navalwargamesociety.org.

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2009

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.

