



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 202 –February 2011

EDITORIAL

Gentlemen,

I'm still slogging away at my show in London, the one, you may recall, that is virtually next door to the old Admiralty, and although it's playing havoc with my free time (work does that, doesn't it) I am continuing to plough through more and more books that I've been meaning to read for ages. For half of January I entertained myself with Frank L. Fox's *The Four Days' Battle 1666*, a mouth work dealing with, as the subtitle has it, *The Greatest Sea Fight in the Age of Sail*. Although I've been fascinated by the Dutch Wars for a number of years now, this is the first proper book on the subject I have tattled—and it is absolutely fascinating. I won't try and turn this editorial into a full-blown review, so I'll stick with a minor plug. It is packed with information that is both well-researched and engagingly written, and is worth every penny of its £30.00 price tag.

Some of you will recall the series I wrote last spring of a hypothetical mini-campaign that featured the pursuit of the *Goeben* in August 1914. Well, the actions were fought using 1/6000 models, which considering most were carried on Mrs. W's kitchen table was a good thing. But I've always hankered after more. We are all very well aware of the GHQ's stunning range of 1/2400 *Micronauts* and around eighteen months ago I emailed them to request that they bring out a *Defence* and *Black Prince* so that all us naval wargamers could use their range to recreate a possible action between Rear-Admiral Troubridge's First Cruiser Squadron and the *Goeben*. Well, the other night I happened to wander onto the GHQ website and—God's bones!—they have released the *Minotaur* armoured cruiser class; in other words, HMS *Defence*, Troubridge's flagship! Now I don't flatter myself to think it was all my doing, but my email, along with others, could have helped. I suppose the moral here is that companies big or small want to know what we, as customers, want. There is no *Black Prince* as yet, but the feed-back I've had says that it could be on the cards. I feel that a re-run of Troubridge verses the *Goeben* could be looming...I'll just have to buy Mrs. W a bigger kitchen table!

Yours Piping 'Up Spirits'

Richard Wimpenny wimpenny@talktalk.net

FIGHTING INSTRUCTIONS, 1697.

By Rob Morgan

This little illustration appeared in a volume entitled *Selected Naval Documents*, dated 1922, and now long out of print. The editors were Hodges and Hughes, two schoolmasters, and the (on the whole rather dry and witless) book was published by Cambridge Press.



The drawing comes from *L' Art des Armees Navales*, a lengthy set fighting instructions produced not by a naval officer, but by a Jesuit professor of mathematics at the University of Toulon, one Pere Paul Hoste (1652-1700). Sadly this was the only illustration of Hoste's extensive work which the editors provided, and it bore the unenlightening caption 'A Plate from Hoste'. Interestingly, they suggest that this was the best set of fighting instructions of the period, since the professor, though not a seafarer, explained the logic and the reason behind the instructions; while most English fighting instructions simply *assumed* that those reading them would know exactly what was happening and why.

Hoste, say Hodges and Hughes, taught fighting, he didn't just order the state of it. Of course, as they also mention, the Battle of Malaga (1704) was the last fleet action for forty years, and during that long peace tactics stagnated. Indeed, the Royal Navy's *Permanent Fighting Instructions*, "proved harmful," as inexperienced (in battle, that is) captains and senior officers, regarded them as, "infallible and unalterable." Intriguing.

MIDWAY 1942: TURNING POINT IN THE PACIFIC.

By Mark Stille

(Illustrated by Howard Gerrard)

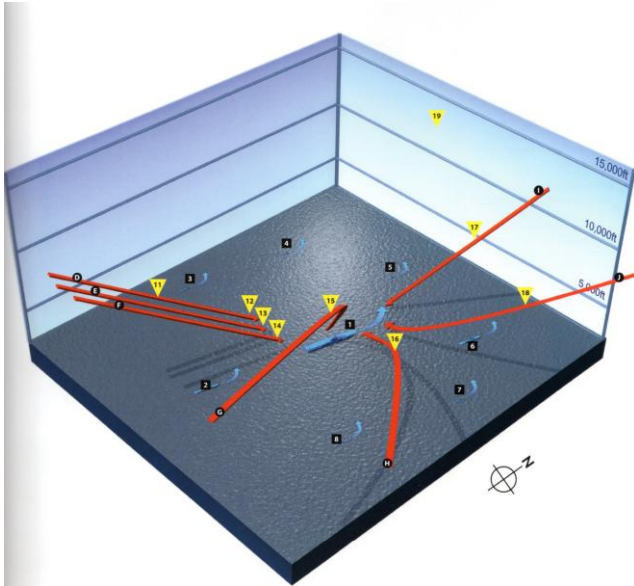
Osprey Campaign Series 226 £14.99

Reviewed by Richard Wimpenny



At 1020 on the morning of June 4th 1942 Admiral Nagumo's Carrier Strike Force (*Kido Butai*) was steaming pell-mell for the tiny Pacific island of Midway; a seemingly irresistible force of tough, highly-trained seamen and airmen at the height of their powers. Five minutes later, three of these same carriers were ablaze and for the Imperial Japanese Navy nothing would ever be the same again. It is a gripping story, one that has been told many times in countless books and even in film. Indeed, it is one that has already been addressed by *Osprey*, with the publication of Mark Healy's book of the same title (and, curiously, subtitle, too) in 1993, with their Campaign Series number 30.

This new, updated version by *Osprey's* Pacific specialist Mark Stille, a retired commander in the USN follows the familiar Campaign Series 96-page format. Chapters such as 'Origins of the Campaign', 'Chronology' and 'Opposing Commanders' set the scene in a very basic way, and reading these I was a little perplexed as to why *Osprey* have re-launched what was a perfectly acceptable volume already; indeed, I thought it was one of their better ones, when they could have added to their naval range with volumes on Coronel and the Falklands or the Glorious First of June, to suggest but two. The only reason I



can come up with is that they wanted to use their new 3-D style grid maps for the air attacks, like those I covered in my review of *Coral Sea 1942* last year.

In line with all Osprey titles, Midway is full of illustrations. There are dozens of black and white photographs, some of which I hadn't seen before, and plenty of Howard Gerrards paintings; the ones of Tomonaga's 'Kate' skimming the waves as he approaches the *Yorktown* (used on the cover), and another of SBDs diving on the *Hiryu* are highly evocative. Having said that, was entirely necessary to use two whole pages for an illustration of AA gunners on the *Mikuma*? Personally speaking, I don't think it was. Perhaps this is why there are 3-D type diagrams for every Japanese and US air attack, except for the all-important one lead by Tomonaga featured on the front cover! Somehow, this serious omission

seems to have slipped through *Osprey's* editorial net.

In short, like all the Campaign Series they are a good starting point; however, this one, in my opinion has less between its covers than the old one.

L'EPERON ET LA CUIRASSE

BUILDING A 1/2400 SCALE FRENCH FLEET c. 1870.

By Rob Morgan

One of the best reasons for naval wargaming is the cost. I'm frequently staggered at the price of armies and even units which young gamers tell me of; £100 per army is common place. You simply don't get that with fleets. Take the best of nineteenth century model ranges around, that of 'Tumbling Dice'. One of their 1/2400 large steam frigate models is some 50mm long and 35mm to the topmast, yet complete with sea-base it is only £3. Most models are sold at £2, and the smaller warships come in packs of two easily assembled hulls, base and sail suites; nothing as complicated as cementing the epaulettes on a colonel of dragoons either.

For the nineteenth century wargamer who is looking for a reasonably priced addition to his forces, the 'Tumbling Dice' website and catalogue is the place to look.

For the French Fleet c. 1870 there are a host of options. Start with these six models:

ASV 6 *Souveraine*, 1856
 ASV 41 *Gloire*, 1860
 ASV 42 *Solferino*, 1861
 ASV 43 *Couronne*, 1861
 ASV 44 *Flandre*, 1863
 ASV 45 *Armide*, 1864

One each in a pack at £2, apart from the *Solferino*, which being a bigger two-deck ironclad, is £3. Now there were two 'Solferinos' and three 'Gloires', and while *Couronne* was, sadly, a one-off, the *Flandre* was one of the substantial and identical 'Provence' class of no fewer than ten broadside ironclads, and the *Armide* was a central battery ironclad, one of seven sisters. The *Souveraine* being launched only a few years earlier

was a screw frigate of 56 guns, and it is a lovely model. She was one of six similar steam frigates, which served until 1872 or so.

The French Fleet can be extended very easily indeed, using other 'Tumbling Dice' models, such as ASV 1, a magnificent first-rate steam battleship of 120 guns of which the French Navy possessed three in 1870. In terms of ironclads, well, the American purchase *Rochambeau*, a broadside ram, was in service in 1870; not a sound ship, she was scrapped later. She is represented by ASV 56, a pack containing two Confederate rams, and I used the *Virginia* model, adding a pole mast from 8mm of pin, before and aft of the single funnel. The other and very long serving 'Onondaga' is the 54mm long *Kalamazoo* from pack ASV 54. She appears to have two funnels, and so remove the foremost one with a craft knife.

To complete the French Fleet, you can add ASV 11, a screw sloop, of which there were over a dozen in active service in 1870. Or if you want something more vulnerable and yet very attractive as a model, there is ASV 11, a paddle steamer sloop; there were ten still on duty in 1870. While further additions can be either ASV 13 or 14, screw and paddle gunboats, and ASV 15 and 16, similar types or corvettes, and for support, ASV 24, a pack of four harbour tugs, at £2, useful for small gunboats.

I almost forgot about the ironclad ram *Taureau*, which can be converted with little difficulty from CSS *Manassas* in ASV 60, by adding a circular gun position high over the bow after trimming away the existing gun port. Oh yes, and before I forget, should you be keen to represent the French colonial fleets, then the gunboat *Bossant*, a typical stern wheeler with twin funnels, can be created with ease from AVS 23, two stern wheel paddle steamers. Should you wish to add shore batteries or a floating battery to the French forces, the ASV 27 and ASA 28 provide the batteries suitable for all European navies of the era, and ASA 29 has the little two piece floating battery. The range also includes 1/2400 scale micro naval flags at £1 a sheet, and the French Tricolour is right there among them. Suitable rules are 'A&A Game's' *Iron and Fire*, which are available from 'Dice' at £9 for a comprehensive 44-page booklet, suitable for 1/2400 and 1/1200 models.

A superb and quickly built and painted fleet; easily added to if needs be, as scenarios change and campaigns go on. Excellent value and a good mail order service too. 'Tumbling Dice' can be found at:

96 Sandfield Road
Arnold
Nottingham
NG5 6QJ

www.tumblingdiceuk.com

THE NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART SIX

As always I am indebted to Rob Morgan for providing another episode in the Navy League Quiz. I have to confess that as the months have rolled by, my slight air of hubristic superiority on the subject naval history has taken quite a dent: I had to burrow around in my library for quite a while to turn up answers—and I bet I'm not the only one! Anyway, talking of answers, here they are for last month's questions:

1. What was the first RN ironclad warship to carry her main armament in a single turret?

HMS 'Hotspur', 1870.

2. In what British warship class were 'double-enders'?

The 'double-enders' of 1865 were the three broadside ironclads 'Ocean', 'Prince Consort' and 'Caledonia'. Incidentally, Conway's describes the class 'Prince Consort', while 'The Navy' classifies them as 'Oceans'.

3. What was the first jet aircraft to land on an RN carrier? It was in 1946. Name both aircraft type and the carrier.

It was a Vampire, which landed on the deck of HMS 'Ocean'.

4. What were the four navies in which Admiral Lord Cochrane served?

Cochrane served in the Royal Navy, and those of Chile, Brazil and Greece.

5. Which WWII 'Woolworth' carrier remained in service in 1952 as a flagship?

Not an easy one now, but possibly a gift in 1952. It was HMS 'Campania', flagship to the 'Atom Bomb Test Fleet'.

Well, congratulations to all of you did well, or even if you just had a go. Time for Part Six; Rob writes:

Some questions set in 'The Navy's' quiz pages are remarkable, while a few are remarkably obscure. However, one, and only one question actually warranted a correction to the answer published. To the question 'What is a Commodore?' the magazine answered 'A wartime rank given to the senior captain of a squadron'. Ah, well...the following month this 'amended answer' was added: 'A temporary rank given to the senior captain of a detached squadron or C.O. of a shore establishment'. Well, I didn't get it, but I wonder how many C.O.s of 'stone frigates' actually wrote in and complained in 1953? Here are this month's questions:

1. Name the first Royal Navy warship to be lost in World War I.
2. Can you name ten Royal Navy warships beginning with HA?
3. What did *Elephant*, *Vanguard* and *Victory* have in common?
4. What was the largest gun ever mounted in British destroyer? Name the gun and the ship.
5. In 1944, HMS *Centurion* was sunk as part of the Mulberry breakwater off Normandy. In what other roles had she served in WWII?

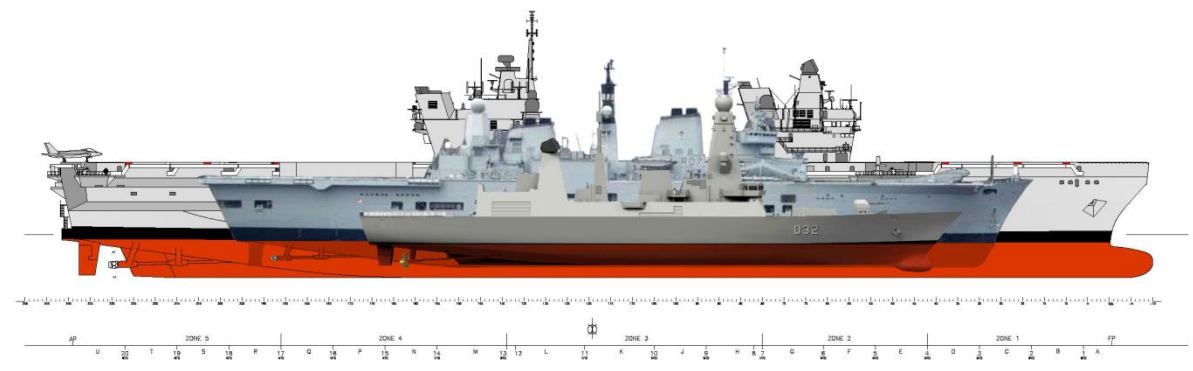
SIGNAL PAD!

Model Show 2011

The South West's biggest model show will be held at the Fleet Air Arm museum, Yeovilton on February 19th. For more information call 01935 840565 or go to www.fleetairarm.com. (RW)

Size Comparison

An interesting size comparison between the size of a Type 45 destroyer, compared to an 'Invincible' and the future 'Queen Elizabeth' class aircraft carrier. (Norman Bell)



Pallas Armata

The demise of Gareth Simon's excellent, and substantial 'PALLAS ARMATA' series of booklets has created a gap for many historians and wargamers on land and afloat. In part over recent months it's been filled by the new D.P.& G Military Publications, though these are far more expensive as a series. However, the standard of what I've seen so far is good, but one or two of my colleagues have balked at some prices, and I agree wholeheartedly, having paid £2.50 for a 'PALLAS ARMATA' reprint on Gardner machine guns, the charge of £15 for a DP&G edition is extreme.

However, the company is at PO Box 186, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 0HN, and has a web site at www.military-naval-history.co.uk, and that's certainly worth taking a look at. There are a few new reprints in their 'technical publications' which might interest NWS members, such as these five titles....

No.136...'Guns and armour in engagements with ships'1888....£10.

No.

138...'Defensive Submarine Warfare'1871....£10 (largely mines)

No.

142...'Torpedo Boat...Yarrow & Co.' 1884....£15.

No.148...'The Naval Defence of the UK' 1888.....£5.

No.149...'Submarine Boats'1886 (by Nordenfeldt)...£10.

The newsletter I received also mentioned the company's re-issue of the post ACW book 'Treatise on Coast Defence' by Col.von Scheliha of the Confederacy, which deals with a host of matters from searchlights to torpedoes and mines, and obstructions as well as fortifications and ordnance.Yet the cost for this 326pp book is £45 = an estimated UK postage of a further £7, which is daunting. I have seen and reviewed a few of the company's earlier titles for other publications, but there's a strange reluctance to accept review on their part, and the cost of £50 for five slim booklets which were previously around at £14 or so, is going to prove a problem in terms of distribution.

Still, DP&G may

well come up with a few new and fairly priced gems at some stage. **(Rob Morgan)**

An AGB Query

Gentlemen, back about 2001, I found myself with a small pile of unpublished wargames articles (some of them naval and combined ops), and looked about for a home for them. The Solo Wargamer's Association published 'LONE WARRIOR' which was a hefty and well put together if wide-ranging journal, and so I joined up, and they published a number of my odd items. After a couple of years, somehow I lost touch with Ken Hart who was then editor, and things lapsed. I found an address the other day for the Solo Wargamers, and dropped Steve Moore a line. He tells me that the SWA 'no longer exists', which is a pity, another wargames publication lost, and one which carried some excellent if unusual naval wargames articles on a regular basis. Steve suggests that the SWA 'American branch' may still exist and if so, I wondered if anyone had contact with them. If so please contact me **(Rob Morgan)** at a.morgan257@tiscali.co.uk.

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.navalwargamessociety.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)
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-

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.
