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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 203 –March 2011

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#### EDITORIAL

Gentlemen,

As I write this month's Editorial section I am at my in-laws in South Oxfordshire during the half-term holiday *and I have just been presented with a veritable treasure trove!* My mother-in-law's grandfather, Percy Rolland Ponting, joined the Royal Marines in January 1903, and a box containing a lot of his papers has just come to light. I have only had time to skim the surface of all the information at present, but of particular interest is a document proving his gunnery practice—on one occasion in April 1904 eight rounds at 1,500 yards with a 6-inch QF, no less! However, there is also his 'Certificate of Service', which lists the vessels he served on, and this could prove very interesting, indeed, even controversial! There is a record of prize money paid to his widow (Percy died of TB in Baku, 1919) for the destruction of *U-27* and *U-41*. Both these boats were destroyed by the 'Q-Ship' *Baralong* in 1915 in *most* controversial circumstances; possibly wearing the Stars and Stripes when going into action, and with claims of the Marines onboard shooting at German survivors. Hmm...I shall have to try and balance my interest as an amateur historian with family sensibilities here, I think!

I came across this link on one of the naval wargame *Yahoo* Groups the other day and thought I'd pass it on. It is a clip of the USS *Missouri* engaging targets during the first Gulf War. Interesting stuff, I'm sure you will agree.

<http://shock.military.com/Shock/videos.do?displayContent=226535&ESRC=navy-a.nl>

And this one is colour footage of American carriers in WWII; again, worth a look.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=9dR3h2HdnBQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=9dR3h2HdnBQ)

On a personal note, I am still making 'sorties' to London every day, and the show I am working on has now been extended again to May 21<sup>st</sup>! This all good news for the Wimpenny 'War Chest', of course, but it has curtailed my wargaming in general and with my editorial role in particular, for which I apologise. Thanks for bearing with me, chaps!

One of my favourite subjects in the broad sweep of naval history is the skirmishing and missed encounters in the North Sea during the first year or so of the Great War, and this month Simon Stokes has provided a battle report of one of the most famous—and a game I dearly wish I had been able to attend—Hipper's raid on Scarborough. There is also a continuation of Rob Morgan's quiz and some bits-and-bobs in 'Signal Pad'. So, see you all next month!

Up Spirits!

Richard Wimpenny

[wimpenny@talktalk.net](mailto:wimpenny@talktalk.net)

# Scarborough Raid 16<sup>th</sup> December 1914

## After Action Report

By Simon Stokes

### Background

February's game at the North Hampshire regional group once again took place in Jeff's front room in Basingstoke, though this time our alternate reality saw us ploughing the waves of the North Sea through a north westerly gale in December 1914.

Background to the game scenario was that from the Falklands battle Von Ingenohl learned that at least two of Beatty's battlecruisers were away in the South Atlantic. Such an opportunity to inflict damage on the weakened Grand Fleet was not to be missed and a raid was planned on the Yorkshire coast for dawn on 16<sup>th</sup> December. The British learned of the plan through the code breakers of Room 40, and ordered Jellicoe to release a battle squadron and cruiser squadron to Beatty to support his battlecruisers, based at Cromarty, and Vice Admiral Bradford's pre-dreadnoughts, based at Rosyth. Commodore Tyrwhitt's Harwich force was also ordered to sea. What room 40 failed to realise however was that Ingenohl had also ordered the whole High Sea fleet out in support of Hipper's raiding force.

The British did not know the details of the German plan so Beatty collected his force together just off Dogger Bank, where at 05:45 just before dawn the British screening destroyers brushed with the high sea fleet torpedo boats. Von Ingenohl, fearing he'd contacted the screening forces of the entire Grand Fleet, and also fearing the wrath of the Kaiser for risking the whole fleet in a venture for which he'd not obtained the kaiser's approval, beat a hasty retreat back to base, leaving Hipper to fend for himself. Beatty for his part also broke off contact when he received signals bearing news of Hipper's forces bombardment of Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby. He had a bigger prize in mind than a few torpedo boats.

There were three possible escape routes through the east coast minefields, and Beatty's forces were easily within reach to block all three. The scene was set, the trap laid, and only the steadily worsening weather and visibility seemed to be between Beatty and a famous victory....

The following few pages contain the respective player's briefing notes and order of battle for both sides and are followed by the description of our game.

### Hipper's Briefing

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Scouting group have been ordered to carry out a tip and run bombardment of the north east coast of England. The hope is that this will stir up British public opinion to demand that the Grand Fleet be parcelled out into small squadrons spread along the East coast ports to counter any further raids. It is hoped that this will increase the chances of the High Sea fleet being able to intercept and destroy one of these detached squadrons so reducing the Grand Fleet's superiority in numbers.**

**In defiance of the Kaiser's orders following the recent defeat of Von Spee's force in the South Atlantic, Von Ingenohl and the High Sea Fleet have also put to sea to provide distant support and is due to rendezvous with the scouting group just off Dogger bank as they retire from their mission.**

**So far the operation has gone to plan. At precisely 9am *Derfflinger* and *Von Der Tann* loomed out of the early morning mist and commenced their bombardment of Scarborough, whilst the light cruiser *Kolberg* started to lay mines off Filey, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke* and *Blücher* began bombarding Hartlepool. After half an hours bombardment the ships retired and combined off Whitby which was also shelled. Much damage was wrought on the three coastal towns, the only opposition being from coastal batteries at Hartlepool which inflicted only minor damage upon your ships.**

**The weather though has turned foul as a north westerly gale has blown up and visibility has dropped to 4000 yards (20cm).**

**You must now extricate your forces from the enemy coast and rendezvous with von Ingenohl.**

There are 3 possible channels through the British laid minefields, north, south and east. You must choose which route you take, but don't tell the British players until they have decided upon their own dispositions.

Deploy your forces along the longer table edge in the desired sailing order. Each turn move your ships as desired, but due to the poor visibility you must then roll two sets of opposed D6 dice (1 red 1 white, subtracting the red from the white). The first roll gives the offset in inches forward(+)/back(-), the second the offset port(+)/starboard(-). If any ships unknowingly wonder into the area 6 inches from either of the short table edges, then they have strayed into the mine field and must check for mines. Stop rolling for offsets once the enemy come within 4000 yards.

The aim is to get your ships safely to the opposite table edge. If any British ships are in pursuit when this happens, then the game turns into a stern chase in the open sea, where you will have to survive 60 game turns moving at an average speed of at least 20 knots towards the east in order to rendezvous with the High Sea Fleet.

Good Luck.

### Beatty's Briefing

Admiralty code breakers of Room 40 have intercepted and decoded a German signal indicating that Hipper's Scouting Group is at sea upon a mission the nature of which was at first unclear. What was clear however is that there's a significant opportunity of being able to intercept and destroy Hipper's Scouting Group.

The Admiralty have only released a single squadron of dreadnaughts and another of pre-dreadnaughts from the Grand Fleet in order to bolster your battlecruiser force and ensure superiority over Hipper's forces. You rendezvoused with these just off Dogger bank, where Warrender's destroyers briefly tangled with German destroyers, before you received news that Hipper's forces had appeared off Scarborough and Hartlepool and bombarded the towns.

You are ideally positioned now to intercept Hipper's forces as they withdraw.

The weather though has turned foul as a north westerly gale has blown up and visibility has dropped to 4000 yards (20cm).

There are 3 possible channels through the British laid minefields, north, south and east. You must choose which of your forces you want to cover which channels. You must deploy all ships in the same squadron to cover the same channel and cannot split squadrons into smaller units (other than 3<sup>rd</sup> Destroyer Flotilla, which is already split into two half flotillas). Once you've made your dispositions, wait for the German players to tell you which channel they've chosen.

Deploy your forces along the longer table edge in the desired sailing order. Each turn move your ships as desired, but due to the poor visibility you must then roll two sets of opposed D6 dice (1 red 1 white, subtracting the red from the white). The first roll gives the offset in inches forward(+)/back(-), the second the offset port(+)/starboard(-). If any ships unknowingly wonder into the area 6 inches from either of the short table edges, then they have strayed into the mine field and must check for mines. Stop rolling for offsets once the enemy come within 4000 yards.

The aim is to intercept and sink Hipper's force. If by chance Hipper's forces manage to get past your forces but you are in pursuit when this happens, then the game turns into a stern chase in the open sea. You can summon reinforcements from the forces covering the other channels each taking 40 minutes to shift one position i.e. 40 minutes to get from north or south channel to the east channel or 80 minutes to get from the south to the north channel or vice versa.

God's speed there's not a moment to lose!

# Order of Battle

## German Forces

### Raiding Force

#### **1st. SG**

Seydlitz (F) Rear-Admiral Hipper  
Moltke  
Derfflinger  
Von der Tann  
Blucher

#### **2nd SG**

Stralsund  
Graudenz  
Kolberg  
Strassburg  
1<sup>st</sup> TBF & 9<sup>th</sup> TBF (14 torpedo boats, 1st TBF consisted of boats of V186/G192 classes, 9th of V25/S30)

## British Forces

### **2nd BS**

KGV (F) VA Warrender  
Ajax  
Centurion  
Orion (2nd F) RA Arbuthnot  
Monarch  
Conqueror

### **BCF**

Lion (F) VA Beatty  
Queen Mary  
Tiger  
New Zealand.

### **3rd BATTLE SQUADRON**

King Edward VII (F) VA Sir Edward Bradford  
Africa  
Britannia  
Commonwealth  
Hibernia (F) Rear Admiral Montague Browning  
Dominion  
Hindustan  
Zealandia  
Attached cruiser - Blanche

### **1st LCS**

Southampton (F) Comm Goodenough  
Birmingham  
Falmouth  
Nottingham.

### **3rd CS**

Antrim (F) RA Pakenham  
Argyll  
Devonshire  
Roxburgh.

### **4th DF (partial)**

Lynx  
Ambuscade  
Unity  
Hardy  
Shark  
Acasta  
Spitfire

### HARWICH FORCE

Cmdr - Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt

### **5th Light Cruiser Squadron]**

Arethusa (F)  
Aurora  
Undaunted  
Penelope

### **3rd DESTROYER FLOTILLA**

Laertes  
Laforey  
Lance  
Landrail  
Lark  
Laurel  
Lawford  
Legion  
Lennox  
Linnet  
Llewellyn  
Louis  
Loyal  
Lydiard  
Lysander  
Leonidas  
Lookout  
Lucifer

### **10th DESTROYER FLOTILLA**

Miranda  
Meteor  
Minos  
Mastiff  
Manly  
Matchless  
Milne  
Morris  
Murray

## The Game

First off we allocated commands, Ian volunteered to take on the role of Beatty and Wayne that of Hipper. Jeff joined Wayne as second in command of the German scouting forces whilst Rob and Dave supported Ian on the British side. Ian first noted down which of the British squadrons were covering which of the channels. North: 2<sup>nd</sup> BS, BCF, 3<sup>rd</sup> DF. South: 3<sup>rd</sup> BS, 1<sup>st</sup> LCS, 5<sup>th</sup> LCS. East: 3<sup>rd</sup> CS, 4<sup>th</sup> DF, 10<sup>th</sup> DF. At first glance this was an unusual disposition of forces but it soon proved to be an inspired choice as Wayne promptly chose the northern channel for his escape route, straight into the path of the strongest of the British covering forces.

The Germans and British laid out their formations and groped uncertainly towards each other through the rain squalls, the offset rolls doing their job in blowing each sides' ships around the table in an uncertain manner making the prediction of the contact point difficult. After a close brush with the minefields on the part of Beatty's port destroyer screen, the two sides eventually met head on, and straight away the advantages of Beatty's formation over Hipper's more compact line ahead formation became apparent.



### *Contact*

At the point of contact the opposing side's destroyers and torpedo boats traded ineffectual shots with each other as they were tossed to and fro by the heavy seas. Meanwhile the capital ships were still out of sight of each other, though Hipper ordered first one and then a second 2 point turn to port to open his gunnery arcs. The problem was that the engagement distance was so close coupled with his lack of preceding torpedo boat screen meant that the British destroyers were on his battle line before he had chance to deploy properly let alone use his secondary guns to deplete their numbers. Nevertheless first blood went to the Germans as *Seydlitz* rammed *Lance* amidships cutting the British destroyer clean in half.

However this early German success was short lived as the British destroyers launched a swarm of torpedoes at the German battle line which soon started to hit home. Both *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* were hit hard by multiple 21" torpedoes. *Derfflinger* was dead in the water and listing heavily to starboard and

*Seydlitz* slowed to a mere 8 knots also listing heavily. The British torpedoes proved just as deadly to their own destroyers however as first *Lafforey* and then *Legion* were hit and sunk by torpedoes whilst they manoeuvred in the fierce destroyer melee going on around the German cruisers and battle cruisers.



*Destroyer and Torpedo Boat melee in amongst the German battle line*

The German torpedo boats launched their own torpedoes against Warrender's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle Squadron, but these were launched much further out and the British dreadnaughts were able to comb the torpedo tracks and no hits were scored.

Meanwhile *Moltke*, *Von Der Tann* and *Blucher* turned inside of the disabled *Derfflinger* so as to avoid colliding with her, but by doing so masked themselves from Beatty's battle cruisers as they appeared out of the gloom, leaving only the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* able to fire, and then only with their main armament due to both ships heavy list to starboard. They both concentrated upon the nearest of Beatty's ships, the *New Zealand* which was hit repeatedly by 11" and 12" shells. These set off her secondary 4" magazine causing a major fire and another hit aft below the waterline also disabled one of her propeller shafts. She maintained her position in the British line however and was still able to make 18 knots despite her damage.



*New Zealand on fire.*

*New Zealand* in turn meted out punishment to *Kolberg* in the form of full broadside salvos sent at the hapless German light cruiser, as did the starboard dreadnaughts of Warrender's line. These had a devastating effect on *Kolberg* and detonated her main magazine which blew the ship apart.



**Kolberg blows up**

The British destroyers had not finished with the Germans yet either and further torpedo spreads caught up with the German light cruiser *Graudenz* blowing a huge hole in the side of the ship and leaving her too dead in the water with a 10 degree list to starboard. German torpedo boats were also hit. *S52* was hit by a torpedo and had her stern blown off, sinking quickly. *V27* had her bows blown off by another torpedo, though this time she stayed afloat. *V30* was hit by a number of 4" shells from *New Zealand* on the aft part of the ship, one of which disabled her steering gear and put her into an involuntary two point turn to port for the rest of the game. The British didn't have it all their own way however as Hipper's battlecruisers' secondary armament managed to land a number of 5.9" hits on *Landrail*, demolishing the aft section of the British destroyer. *Landrail* was in an isolated and very dangerous position having earlier narrowly managed to avoid the same fate as *Lance* by finding a gap between *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger*. These hits left her dead in the water with no propulsion and directly under the guns of the German battlecruisers.



*Landrail's predicament, top right of this picture*

Eventually time caught up with us and we had to call a halt to proceedings, but it was clear to all involved that Beatty had won a major victory and none of Hipper's cruisers or battle cruisers had any hope of escape, even the as yet undamaged ones.



## Conclusions

Historically Beatty deployed Warrender's 2<sup>nd</sup> BS and Tyrwhitt's force to cover the southern gap, Bradford's 3<sup>rd</sup> BS to the north and his own battle cruisers and Goodenough's light cruisers covered the eastern gap. Hipper chose the eastern gap as his escape route and despite brushing with the port wing of Goodenough's cruiser screen managed to evade contact with Beatty's battlecruisers, helped in no small part by a botched signal from Seymour, Beatty's flag officer, ordering all cruisers to resume station rather than just the *Nottingham* and *Falmouth* as Beatty had wanted.

Hipper's luck also held a little while later when a fleeting glimpse of his forces from *Orion*, through a gap in the rain squalls, was not acted upon quickly enough by Arbuthnot, who merely reported the sighting to Warrender and awaited orders, by which time the gap in the rain squalls had passed and the German ships had disappeared from sight. In this way Hipper slipped through Beatty's net.

Beatty later wrote "*These events left a mark which nothing can eradicate except total destruction of the enemy. We were within an ace of accomplishing this. Our advanced ships had sighted them! I can't bear to write about it.*" If our game was anything to go by then you can't help feeling that Beatty had a point.

Thanks as always go to Jeff for the venue and steady supply of hot beverages and to Rob for providing the models.

## THE NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART SEVEN

Regular contributor Rob Morgan has provided another instalment of his quiz taken from the 1950s 'The Navy'. However, as usual here are last month's questions, with the answers too.

1. Name the first Royal Navy warship to be lost in World War I.  
*HMS 'Amphion', mined August 6<sup>th</sup> 1914.*
2. Can you name ten Royal Navy warships beginning with HA?  
*'Hampshire', 'Hart', 'Hardy', 'Halcyon', 'Hazard', 'Harrier', 'Hasty', 'Hambleton', 'Haughty', 'Hannibal', 'Havock', and 'Havant'.*
3. What did *Elephant*, *Vanguard* and *Victory* have in common?  
*All Nelson's flagships.*
4. What was the largest gun ever mounted in British destroyer? Name the gun and the ship.  
*6-inch QF on HMS 'Swift'.*
5. In 1944, HMS *Centurion* was sunk as part of the Mulberry breakwater off Normandy. In what other roles had she served in WWII?  
*HMS 'Centurion' started WWII as a target ship, but later as a 'dummy' KGV in the Indian Ocean.*

Now, on with Part Seven proper. Rob writes:

*Most of the questions in the old Navy League Quiz were based on the Royal Navy; and though I've tried where possible to slip an outsider in from time to time, there isn't one this month.*

1. With which did HMS *Hawke* collide in The Solent in 1911?
2. Name six British warships named after foreign military and naval commanders.
3. Which warships were lost in the Great Storm of 1703? (The paper gives six, of which four were sunk.)
4. Which twentieth century Royal Navy warship mounted 12-, 15- and an 18-inch gun?

5. Samuel Pepys, a civilian, was given the rank of captain by the Duke of York so that he might sit on a court martial into the loss of a warship. Which warship was lost and of which warship was Pepys made captain?

Have fun; more next month!

### WARSHIPS IN BOOKS.

**By Rob Morgan**

Now, I don't often read what is called 'historical fiction' as historical fact is usually far more entertaining and bizarre. However, my wife does favour the *genre*, and in one of the regular book swaps which take place in these parts she came into possession of a novel by C.J. Sansom called *Heartstone* and passed it to me, as she thought some of the subject matter, being nautical, would be of interest. The book incidentally is published in hardback by Mantle at £18.99, but it is due out in paperback at less than half the price next month.

The reason my wife thought this would interest me is the book is set in Portsmouth in 1545, with the planned French invasion imminent and Henry's fleet in turmoil. Now the central character, the lawyer Matthew Shardlake, is significantly involved with the life and death of the *Mary Rose* and actually sails on her. It is worth a read, but be warned it really is at the baseline a 'whodunit'.

*(If I may add to Rob's note, I have read the first two of the Shardlake books, 'Disolution' and 'Dark Fire' and thought they were absolutely superb; page-turners, yes, but very well-written and very atmospheric to boot. I bought Dad 'Heartstone' for Christmas and he said it was brilliant. He also commented that I always seem to buy him books that I want to read! Ah well, I knew I'd get found out eventually! RW)*

### **SIGNAL PAD!**

Mother's Day at the Old Royal Naval College Sunday April 3 15.00 – 17.00



Got something planned for Mother's Day? Treat your mother to something really memorable this year and experience a full traditional cream tea in the magnificent setting of the Painted Hall.

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*(Like myself, and sure one or two other NWS members, Rob Morgan is member of the 'Society of Nautical Research', and he has sent in the following notices to share with us. RW)*

Comrades!

My SNR newsletter has arrived, and there are a few events mentioned which I think will interest members. I rang a couple of people up to check details and here we are....

1. The World Ship Society, of which I suspect many of our members are also their members, holds it's 33rd Annual Naval meeting at Hawthorns Hotel in Bristol on June 4th 10.30-1700.

Some interesting speakers and topics, including...

\*The Japanese raid into the Indian Ocean April 1942.

\*Naval aspects of the Norwegian Campaign 1940.

\*Naval Power and the Korean War.

and 'The loss of Boom Defence vessel 'Bayonet' December 1939 ( not a loss I knew anything of, maybe if this goes in *AGB* someone will tell me!!!)

The day is open to all, and costs £16. Details are available from Richard Osborne at [drosborne@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:drosborne@blueyonder.co.uk)

2. Advance notice of a couple of SNR (South) events. I know that there's undoubtedly contact and links between the Wessex Branch of NWS and this section of SNR, but some people may not know of these parts of the future programme.....

SNR Spring Conference 9th

April.

Topic.... 'The Evolution of the Twentieth century British Gunboat.

Saturday 7th May.

Topic.... 'Admiralty Overland Telegraphs in the Napoleonic Wars.

3. An unusual event reported is this....

16th April 2011.

Chichester

Harbour: an exploration of the Anglo-Saxon Naval base. Cost £6.50, with materials provided. Details of a morning meeting and afternoon guided walk from Dr Philip MacDougall, at

[philip.macdougall@btinternet.com](mailto:philip.macdougall@btinternet.com)

The World Ship Society event would seem the sort of place where a relevant i.e. Japanese 1942 or Narvik type of naval wargame might effectively be staged? (**Rob Morgan**)

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Last month the public were allowed on HMS *Ark Royal* for free. Many thousands on both days queued for ninety minutes in the cold for a tour of the hanger, flight deck and ops room. An indication that the Royal Navy is held in high esteem by the British Public. (**Norman Bell**)



## **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](http://www.navalwargamessociety.org).

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2009**

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### **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/>

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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 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)

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### **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.

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