



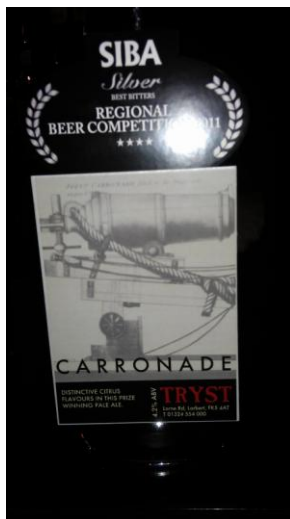
All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 211 –November 2011

EDITORIAL

Well, chaps, first off I must apologise for this month's *AGB* being all of a week late: I've had quite a time of it, work-wise, over the past month. I may have mentioned that since the middle of August I've been combining this editorial role with the national tour of the show *End of the Rainbow*, but a few weeks ago I was asked to join the band for the re-launched version of *Chicago* in the West End. I don't want to bore you all with this, but the ramifications of this are that I've been hellish busy recently and I can't see it getting any easier. As I'm sure many of you are aware, one of the perils of being self-employed is that you have to take *all you can when you can* in case all the work dries up; feast or famine, as it were. Anyhow, if any of you are skulking around London while the *memsahib* engages in Christmas shopping (or any time for possibly the next twelve months), give me a call or drop me an email and we could meet up for a glass and a chin-wag. The show is at the Garrick Theatre on Charing Cross Road...dangerously close to lots of delicious bookshops: *Foyles*, *The Motor Bookshop* (which, despite its title, has an excellent naval section) *Waterstones*, etc, to say nothing of all the second-hand emporiums. *Oh folly!!*



Talking of having a drink, I was in the pub opposite the stage door in Newcastle the other week and they had this rather interesting guest ale on. I was so stunned by its name that I couldn't resist snapping a quick pic' to show you all. Having a beer called 'Carronade' made me think what other naval pints could be pulled. "A pint of 'Depth charge' please, landlord," has a nice ring to it; or even, "Two halves of 'General Quarters.'" After all, Adnams already has 'Broadside'! If anyone has any more suggestions, I'd love to hear them.

I was working in Norwich a few weeks ago and I came across a well-stocked second-hand book shop down one of that city's many tiny alleyways, and I managed to pick up both volumes of Clay Blair's *Hitler's U-Boat War* for only £16. I have found some rather mixed reviews of Blair's vast tomes on the *Amazon* website, but I have to say I'm enjoying it so far. Do any of you have any strong opinions on the books? I'd be interested to hear from you if you do. As can often be the case with chaps like us, this book led me to pick up a copy of the U-boat simulator *Silent Hunter V*, to try my hand at commanding a U-boat myself, and my advice on this would be to don't bother! Although I've never been any great hand at computer games, I did love the old *Silent Hunter II* and I assumed the newer version must be better (ever the innocent!), well I can't make head nor tail of it, and the manual is about as useful as portholes in belt armour! I am prepared to stand corrected if there are those amongst the membership who can put me right on this, but the game seems more concerned with the *look* of what's happening than with *what is happening*...not that I could make anything happen, having said that. I'm going to re-load my old version on my new computer. Progress? Bah, fiddlesticks!

And on that 'I'm-a-techno-dinosaur' note, I'll leave you all in peace to enjoy this issue.

UP Spirits!

Richard Wimpenny

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A Roman Replica?

By Rob Morgan



I was in Cornwall recently and visited the Shipwreck and Heritage Centre at what is called 'Historic Charlestown' near St. Austell. This replica 'galley' was standing in the car park. It had obviously been there for some time, but there is clear evidence that this hull has been in the water and not too long ago. The vessel is about 50 feet long, overall, and well-built. The steering oars and sets of rowing oars are stacked on deck. The ram, very prominent, is real enough too!

Not a great deal more than that to identify given the tarpaulin and position of the ship. Very interesting, I thought. But who, I wonder, is in charge of it? Doubting that it actually belonged to the Maritime Branch of the Ermine Street Guard, I asked at the Centre. No-one seemed to know anything about it at all. "Been there for a while," I was told. I dropped the manager a line and tried an e-mail, but with no response.



So, I wondered if any of our members had ever seen this 'galley', or knew anything about it? A real find, especially if there's a group of competent oarsmen to go with it!

THE REMAINS OF THE SUBMARINE KURSK.

(With thanks to Norman Bell and the RN Submarine Museum, Gosport for this article).

The bow was sawed off with a diamond rope while she sat on the bottom of the Arctic Sea. You can see the anti-ship missiles still in their launchers...all foamed in. And there's a nuclear power plant in that mess somewhere.



You will probably remember that the K-141 *Kursk* was a Russian nuclear cruise missile submarine which was lost with all hands when it sank in the Barents Sea on August 12, 2000. It was named after the Russian city Kursk, around which the largest tank battle in military history, the Battle of Kursk, took place in 1943.

The *Kursk* sailed out to sea to perform an exercise of firing dummy torpedoes at *Pyotr Velikiy*, a 'Kirov class' Battle Cruiser. On August 12, 2000 at 11:28 local time, the torpedoes were fired, but an explosion occurred soon after in the submarine.

The only credible report to-date is that this was due to the failure and explosion of one of *Kursk's* new developmental torpedoes. The chemical explosion blasted with the force of 100-250 kg of TNT and registered 2.2 on the Richter scale. The submarine sank to a depth of 108 metres, approximately 135km (85 miles) off Severomorsk. A second explosion, 135 seconds after the initial event, measured between 3.5 and 4.4 on the Richter scale, equivalent to 3-7 tons of TNT. Either this explosion or the earlier one propelled large pieces of debris far back through the submarine.



Kursk was eventually raised from her watery grave by a Dutch team using the barge, Giant 4 and 115 of the 118 dead were recovered and laid to rest in Russia. Russian officials have strenuously denied claims that the sub was carrying nuclear warheads. When the boat was raised by a salvage operation in 2001, there were considerable fears that moving the wreck could trigger explosions. Fortunately this did not happen.

'LIFEBOATS'???....Or More?

A new pack of 1/600th small boats from 'Tumbling Dice'.

Reviewed and Converted by Rob Morgan.

Paul Sulley's small boat pack, No.903 in the range, sells at £1.80 for six very different small vessels. Most of them have use in a number of periods, and one or two are very welcome additions to develop and extend other ranges of 1/600th scale ships, not that 1/600th is the *only* scale they have uses in!

The pack has six sea-based units, and each is readily and easily identifiable, so I'll deal with them individually. The moulding, as always with 'Tumbling Dice,' is clean and attractive, no problems at all.

1. Dinghies..... two small rubber aircraft type dinghies, close together on a 20mm sea-base, with four 'crew': three *in situ*, one clambering in. Useful, and intended for a WWII ASR scenario, or for the post-war period. You can use them towed by a Caique or small launch in a Crete or Aegean campaign, as the Germans frequently did. They could be later war small assault craft, Soviet perhaps or German added to the 'Triton' fight the Narrow Seas' range. An unusual use might be that of the Tigris/Euphrates coracles of WWI, again towed for supply purposes.
2. Carley Rafts.....Three small square rafts in a line on a 20mm sea-base, with three crew sitting on two of them. ASR? Well, yes, but also perhaps a 1/600th river 'supply chain' for the *Ostfront*, naturally, they'll fit in with 1/700th models too. With some slight work, i.e. filing down the crew figures, these will make a string of 1/1200th or 1/2400th rafts for many periods, including the Danube Wars of Austria, and the ACW, naturally. I tried a couple of these delightful, simple pieces with some 1/2400th Ironclads of the late C19th, and they work well there too.
3. Rowing Boat.....What valuable a find. Neither 'Thoroughbred' nor 'Peter Pig' makes a 1/600th scale 'rowed' boat in their ACW ranges. Take a look at the Osprey on Confederate 'submersibles' and this boat will be an ideal companion for a 'David' raid. A sliver of sprue over the bows makes a boat gun. Use it with the Tsar's Monitors, or the Swedish/ Norwegian Ironclads I described in an earlier issue of 'Battlefleet'.

I can also see use for this in Napoleonic 1/600th fleets, for cutting out raids, or for general landing use. A 1/1200th scale lateen sail from the Triton small boats pack added, gives variety to the 14mm long sea-based model. The boat could make itself useful in Colonial scenarios, engaging junks or dhows, and going back in naval history, this will make a good small addition to the Spanish Armada and Renaissance ranges of several manufacturers, always plenty of small craft around in battle. Try adding a couple to an 'Achates' Dutch 'sea-beggar' for an attack on a Spanish Galley.

My extensive Medieval fleets found a home for the rowing boat too. Dipping into the 'Xyston' 'ship crew' pack 18116, (also 1/600th) I crammed three or four half figures into a rowing boat to make a 'follower' as used at Sluys and everywhere else for that matter. The square sail in the 1/200th 'ships boats' pack I mentioned earlier will add nicely to this boat.

4. Boat with Square sail.....some 12mm long and with a 5mmsquare sail, add a few more of the 'Xyston' crew to make another version of the Medieval Follower, or for the 'Renaissance' or 'Armada' periods. This will take a small sprue gun over the bows with ease. It will make a fishing boat in 1/600th, 1/700th or 1/1200th in most periods, for 'auxiliary' uses. Or a small coaster, trader or transport. I found that with one or even two of the 1/300th Kremlin Vikings trimmed and placed at the stern, this made a very valuable little vessel to add to the Kremlin' Viking Scenario in the larger scale.

Again, it will add to a number of C19th uses, I found it fitted in well with my 'Generic Fleet', for general harbour uses.

Careful slight turning of the mast and sail, followed by trimming of the forward (port) edge, will give a lug-sail shape, add a gun or two and then you have a 1/600th Dutch Sea-Beggar small sloop for canal working the 80YW campaigns.

Another possibility is to add a small square platform of 4mm, thin plasticard over the stern, with a small 'Xyston' bolt thrower or gun, and the boat becomes a Japanese Pirate vessel, to fit in with 1/600th scale Junks, or if you've converted the 1/1200th Greek Merchant Ship from Navwar, to a 'Yamato-Gata' this small boat becomes a good Samurai auxiliary craft.

5. Launch with mast.....This is a 12mm long, slim, so quite modern,

post-1850-ish model, with a 10mm mast and has a vast number of uses. Look at it and you'll see. Add a small lugsail for a fishing boat, reduce the mast to about 3mm for a funnel, and you've got a steam launch, a taller funnel say 6mm for the earlier period. Small sprue gun for an mg or QF forward, or use it to tow the Carley rafts. It will serve in 1/1200th scale if you add a pin length over the bow for a spar torpedo, as with the 'CSS Squib' in the Osprey book's colour plates.

If you are looking for Colonial or Napoleonic support, then add 10mm of pin cemented at a 45 degree angle against the mast, and you have a 1/600th scale Congreve Rocket boat for use off the French coast, or later up the Irrawaddy, or in the Crimean War. So useful is this small design that it will serve with ease up to WWI East Africa (a la 'Mimi' and 'Tutu. Add a small awning aft and you've got *The African Queen!*), or into the RCW and maybe even Dunkirk as a small boat. Some more substantial work will turn this into a 'Lince' D-Day Kriegsmarine Explosive Motor Boat. I'd suggest filling the central part of the boat with modelling compound, and adding a single half figure centrally, with a couple of the distinctive 'baffles' fore and aft, this will go nicely with the 'MY Navy' mini-sub.

6. Launch, no mast.....identical to 5, without the mast; the final model is simple, and very easily convertible. A prone 1/300th figure armed will turn this into a 'gun-punt' as used on so many of Europe's waterways, and suitable for military use from 1750 on. Fill the hull, and put a 1/300th 'head and shoulders' right aft with a small windshield just in front, and you have a 'Sleeping Beauty' the WWII semi-submersible motorized explosive canoe used by the Commandos. As a standard launch it will serve up to the present day, and will serve in 1/600th, 1/700th, and 1/1200th scales with ease. Two in tandem with a small platform between, can take a 'Xyston' 1/600th bolt thrower for an ancient scenario, or a gun for C19th assault purposes. This small model has some use as a WWII 1/300th River/Harbour Minesweeping Launch for the Red Army, again with very little blade work.

These are simple, and yet valuable models, and 'Tumbling Dice' have hit the nail firmly on the head by providing a group of six small craft which can provide a huge number of support naval craft for such a small price. No naval wargamer can afford to be without them!

NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART FIFTEEN

Compiled by Rob Morgan

As is customary, Rob has provided the answers to last month's puzzle. They are:

1. What was the difference between the armament of the 'Lochs' and the 'Bays' and why?

The 'Bay' class were designed for A/A escort and was more heavily armed than the 'Loch's' that were intended for A/S duties. Hmmm?

2. With which naval tragedy do you associate HMS *Iron Duke*?

HMS 'Iron Duke' rammed and sank the 'Vanguard' off Dublin in 1875.

3. Name the three Royal Navy carriers which were laid down as 18-inch battlecruisers.

'Furious', 'Courageous' and 'Glorious' were former 18-inch battlecruisers.

4. Name the four torpedo-cruisers of the 1880s

They were 'Curlew', Landrail, 'Scout' and 'Fearless' (1885-6). An odd combination of names; anyone know why?

5. What was the first British armoured warship to carry her main armament in six turrets?

HMS 'Duke of Edinburgh' in 1904.

And Part Fifteen itself...

1. Name the only two-deck broadside ironclad rams ever built and who designed them?
2. What was the main armament of Captain Cowper Coles' *Lady Nancy*?
3. What replaced a carrier's attendant destroyer positioned fine on the starboard quarter during flying operations after 1952?
4. What did HMS *Argyll*, *Raleigh* and *Bedford* have in common?
5. List five warships named after actual members of the Royal Family.

Good luck everyone. Next month instead of Part Sixteen, there is Rob's 'Christmas Special'!

SIGNAL PAD!

Dear all,

This is an early notice to let you know that, after some discussions with Nick Hewitt, the provisional date for the 2012 Naval Wargames Weekend in Gosport, UK is June 2nd and 3rd. The event will be held at the 'Explosion' Museum of Naval Firepower. I am not beginning a "call for games" just yet, this will happen closer to the time, but for now, a date for your diaries and a chance for some of you to get your thinking caps on as to what games you will want to bring :)

Regards,

DM

'Alfred's Wars' By Ryan Lavelle. 380pp; Boydell and Brewer.2010

ISBN 978-1-84383-569-1. £60 HB. \$ 99 US.

A hefty price for a truly sumptuous volume. I've just completed a review of the book for 'Hobilar' (Lance & Longbow Society), but it would be remiss of me not to write a short note for *AGB* on the rather well detailed section dealing with maritime equipment, with ship types and coastal defence. It is in some ways arguably, a re-run of Haywood's remarkable and well known 'Dark Age Naval Forces', but very concise and focussed. There are also notes on coastal defence, and the Viking 'problem'. The author also deals briefly with amphibious operations and warfare.

There is a rare delight among the pages, a detailed account of a naval encounter, with shore fighting as well. This was between the Danes and Alfred in 896AD, and Lavelle maps the fight and places the encounter in Poole harbour! Easily gamed given the detail provided, and well written.

I didn't buy the book, incidentally, but I think British Library loans are the best bet for those keen to take on the Danes.

Rob Morgan.

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.
