



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 214 –February 2012

EDITORIAL

Gentlemen,

It is somewhat embarrassing that I have to begin my final editorial with a correction! It was only as I began to put this issue together that I noticed that I had bungled up my templates up last month, and that while it was numbered correctly as No. 213 it claimed to be February's issue! It should, of course, have been emblazoned with 'January'. Although, in fairness, it was so late that some of you may have perceived it as an early February edition! Anyway, I just thought I'd clear that up straight away.

Well, chaps, the March issue of 'All Guns Blazing' will be in the hands of Mel Spence, but I would like to state that I hope I may just be placed 'in ordinary' as opposed to being broken up, as at some point, if the need arises of course, I wouldn't mind being re-fitted for the line, as it were! Before I go, however, I would just like to thank all of you for your help and consideration over the past few years, but I also feel it is only fitting that I highlight a couple *AGB* contributors who have been definite 'force multipliers'.

In well over half the *AGBs* I have presided over, I have been able to include excellent after-action reports by Simon Stokes. Whether reports of official NWS demonstration games from the various major shows where we have been represented or less formal Sunday games at Jeff Crane's place, they have always been thrilling and sometimes thought-provoking, and, importantly from an editorial point of view, well presented and written. As a writer of articles myself (when I used to have time, that is!), I know much time and effort this takes. A very big 'thank you', Simon.

There have, of course, been quite a few contributors who have provided short pieces, reviews and sometimes just interesting photos, all of which have been highly-useful; however, I could not close my time as editor without giving the prolific Rob Morgan my thanks. There have been several issues of *AGB* that have been completely the 'Rob Morgan Show', and even when that hasn't been the case, there have always been a couple of book reviews and small nuggets for the 'Signal Pad' section, to say nothing of the long-running 'Sea Quiz' that he has provided. Well done, Rob.

It has been a privilege for me to feel that I have been at the heart of this marvellous society and closer to the subject that I adore above all others. I know you will all give Mel Spence the support he deserves; and who knows, maybe sometime in the not too distant future I will actually find the time to fight a naval wargame again! Well, when I do, Mel, *All Guns Blazing* and all of you will be the first to hear about it! Now, where did I leave that decommissioning pennant...

Up Spirits, gentlemen!

Richard Wimpenny

A Raider from the 'Dark Ages'

By Rob Morgan

I've wanted to create a small 'raiding force' of Celts, Frisians, or Saxons or late Gauls for a while. A generic Atlantic coast, offshore island group perhaps to take on late Romans, Anglo-Saxons, or even Vikings; or just mix it amongst themselves. Something along the lines of the 'Utrecht' ship, bluff and sail powered rather than an oared craft, but able to carry a decent group of raiders or pirates.

In 1/600th scale.

There's an 'Aztec War canoe with 4 warriors as CM11 in Irregular's 6mm range, price code 'A', which is very reasonable, about 35p when I bought my group. The canoe is 20mm long, 5mm wide, and indeed bluff at bow and stern, so ideal for my purpose.

So, the model... first lose the 4 Aztecs, snip and file them as flat as possible, you won't get a flat 'deck' area, but that won't matter, all you need is a clear aspect. One warrior holds a paddle over the side; you could leave this on, and even add one or two more slivers, to represent a second form of propulsion. What you do need is a 4-5mm thin steering oar over the stern to starboard, so when the hull is clear, base it and add the steering oar. Then drill a pin-sized hole roughly amidships, for mast and sail. This assembly can come from a number of sources; the 1/1200th scale Navwar ancients for instance, the Dromons, the Saxon Ship, Longship-whatever you have. Or for variety, being a little smaller than the 14mm wide, 8mm high Dromon sail, the small square sail from the 1/1200th Napoleonic Ships Boats set in the Skytrex list. Cement firmly in place and fairly low down, offset a little for variety.

The warriors or raiders come from Irregular's 2mm range of Ancient figures; again at price code 'A', and good value. Try ABG12, 3 strips of 6 archers, and ABG24- 15 figures 'Barbarian Infantry' on two strips, or Abg24, 'loose order bowmen'. Cut them from the strips to more or less waist level, and beginning at the stern with a decently posed steersman, cement around ten, maybe twelve in each boat, work towards the bows it's much easier.

Painting? Easy enough, overall dark earth or dark khaki for the hide boat, with the sail painted for raw hides, or thin leather, possibly flax. Crew well, touches of ochre, drabs, dark colours, brighter shields maybe. Whatever you fancy, with a glint of steel, silver, gunmetal or gold for helmets and weapons. A chieftain's boat might have a ragged streamer or an emblem on a short pole at bow or stern if you wish. ABG4 is a 'barbarian general with a windsock banner', you could use that.

Well, that's it. A fleet of raiders, just six or eight boats with crews for under five pounds. A larger fleet would look attractive to, and fight better! Incidentally, I sometimes use this in an 'Arthurian' naval context; as opponents, AG16 the Triton 'Liburnia' possibly? Or AG15, the Norseman. Or perhaps a convoy of sorts, with AG10 the merchant ship escorted. For land forces, Irregular's 2mm range has all you need including siege engines!

By the way, this little canoe has one or two other potential uses in a number of scales, of which more later.

The Sea! The Sea!

By Rob Morgan

The more observant and 'classical warfare' minded among you will recognise the title of this piece as being the ecstatic remark of Xenophon's men, the 'Ten Thousand' when they saw the Black Sea towards the end of their 'march up country'. This isn't about ancient wargaming, except in the broadest possible sense, but it is about the sea.

Now me, I'm a naval wargamer, a naval modeller and an all-round naval enthusiast. There are not many of us around, sad to say. The Naval Wargames Society's membership is around 100+, and at regional and national and international wargames shows and events, the naval element is far from prominent. Not that naval warfare is unknown in these islands, and I'm actually writing this little note about four miles from the Atlantic, it's just that twenty centuries of maritime history are overlooked. Very few wargamers seem to consider dabbling their toes in the salty sea, yet there are lots of reasons for doing so. Overall costs, speed of play, ease of construction and of painting, and storage all being part of the value of naval warfare in any scale short of 1:1 of course!

In the days when as Secretary of the old Welsh Maritime Association, I used to put on display games at a host of the small wargames and modelling shows around the Principality, I always chose the same game, more or less. (Not Ruritania!) I kept a box of roughly 1/300th scale old 'Airfix' 'Santa Maria' models; around twenty of them, they were dirt cheap then, you could buy four for a pound, or perhaps three for a dollar. Cut down with a hot knife to the waterline, based, and sprayed Humbrol matt dark earth overall, with lighter decks, and white-ish sails, they looked fine. Of course, Columbus' 'Santa Maria' represented a typical vessel of the late 1400s, and with very little effort, a great deal of variety could be brought to the models. With furled sails, gilded and painted stern and foc'sle's, bold painted sails, and a host of bright and brave banners, not to mention a few 1/300th crewmen carefully selected from the then 'new' Heroics and Ros ranges, they looked delightful. I had three fleets, one Spanish, using the flags in the original kit, one 'English' with simple St. George's crosses; the third was Scots, with the 'auld blue blanket' the saltire of St. Andrew on their banners. I added bits of heraldry picked up from various guides, and with little effort warships such as 'The Earl of Oxford's Flag Ship' could be provided. Or the 'Black Douglas' Ship'.

The games using the 'Santa Maria's' proved to be popular display games for a number of reasons. The table looked very attractive, colourful, yet without having a mass of landscape on it. No windmills, door-step mountains, villages or rivers. No odd peasant cottages to 'go round' because there was no way of actually occupying them with the army as it advanced. The sea was blue, with the odd island of course. Games, using the old 'Welsh Maritime Simple Medieval Rules' were speedy, rarely more than an hour, and each participant could have a ship. Once that sunk or was captured you were out of the game; easy enough to keep record of and remember, especially for a novice. In fact, I recall we 'converted' a small number of land wargamers to the sea during those games.

Look at it from the right perspective. I have here next to me as I sit at the pc, three small 1/600th scale models of the American Civil War 'Mortar Schooner' made by 'Peter Pig' (you can get them through 'Brookhurst Hobbies' over in the USA, I'm told). Now in terms of that war, they are just an adjunct to the Ironclads, something to bombard a fort or be subjected to an attack by a rebel ram perhaps. They will, when I've finished become a group of three Greek 'caiques' sail and motor powered craft to carry my Special Boat Squadron in the Aegean in WWII. Perhaps more of that another time, but to convert, super-detail, base-up and paint all three will take me about two hours or so. At the end of that, I'll have a small effective 'navy' for a couple of hours effort and less than ten pounds cost. Compare that to buying three units of Napoleonic cavalry, in 25mm for example, or even a single Regiment of 15mm Confederates! In terms of cost, and time alone, almost any pre-ironclad fleet is a better, faster, and I'd argue more colourful option. Easy to store as well. My three 'caiques' (I must write up a note about them soon) will occupy far less room than a pc print cartridge!

Yes! I know! Few if any of you reading this little note will immediately see the incandescent truth of what I say, and suddenly rush out converted to the naval way of life! [*Rob is not referring to our membership here, I assume! RW*] A pity... but think about it. Not as a replacement for your pretty ranks of scores of

ploughboys in gaudy uniforms, destined to fall flat in the mud as soon as that hidden battery of nine-pounders opens up. Rather think of naval wargaming, whether it be ship to ship single actions, or long lines of battleships, or a single raider, as an alternative option. Me, I never have enough time to wargame as I used to when I was a youngster, forty years ago, and so, lifting out a couple of gunboats, and spending an hour or two trying to force a passage beyond the batteries and forts, or maybe sailing boldly in and 'cutting-out' a rich merchant from under the noses of Bonaparte's lads is often all the time I get to play any game.

That's my recommendation. In these harsh times, naval wargaming, even on the smallest possible scale, a couple of single ships in 1/1200th or even smaller, is an option worth trying. Well, that's about it from me. I'm now off to 'have a go' at attacking a battery defended boom across a half-frozen river behind which the Swedish gunboats and their convoy are lurking.

Try it, you might enjoy it!

NAVY LEAGUE QUIZ PART SEVENTEEN

As is now customary with Rob's quiz, here are the answers to last month's teaser:

1. Give ten British warships with adjective names.

'Dainty', 'Vindictive', 'Victorious', 'Illustrious', 'Furious', 'Glorious', 'Valorous', 'Indomitable', 'Haughty', 'Intrepid' and 'Cheerful'.

2. What ship was nicknamed 'pepper-pot' during the WWII Malta convoys?

The 'Pepper-Pot' was of course HMS 'Penelope'.

3. To which King (allegedly) was the title of Royal Navy attributed?

Now this raised a debate back when the question was originally posed in the fifties. It was (so they say) Charles II.

4. Name which ship suffered and sank due to HMS *Broke*, *Contest* and *Marksman*, and say where it happened.

The unfortunate ship was HMS 'Sparrowhawk' at Jutland. She was rammed forward by one, aft by another and the wreck sunk by the third!

5. Name the first RN destroyer to burn oil fuel.

HMS 'Surley' (Arguably and adjective name!)

And now on with the new batch of questions!

1. What did HMS *Larne* become as a result of the Norwegian Campaign?

2. What did HMS *Triumph*, *Glory*, *Theseus*, *Ocean* and HMAAS *Sydney* have in common in 1952?

3. How did a burst tyre make a footnote in naval history on August 5th 1917?

4. What was the fate of the experimental turbine destroyer HMS *Cobra*?

5. Who designed the first steam warship *Demologos* in 1814?

Have fun, everyone; answers next month. I'm sure that Mel Spence will continue with Rob's monthly quiz.

SIGNAL PAD!

Opponent Required:

Hi,

I am a member of the Naval Wargames Society and I live in Kent. I have my own wargames room and many models. My favourite rules are 'General Quarters'. Is there anyone in the Medway area that might be interested in a game?

Colin Parkinson chparkinson@yahoo.co.uk

Guns at First Lissa 1811.

I was reading Dave Manley's rules and scenarios on frigate actions in the recent 'Battlefleet'- Volume XXXIII/ 4, and recalled a note I'd written up for the Ordnance Society Newsletter a couple of years ago. The origin of the question posed was an article by A.H.S.Cocks (who may well be an NWS member) in 'Miniature Wargames' No.33 published in February 1986. In an account of First Lissa, Cocks writes of the French flagship *Favorite*....

"Her boarders... (massed on the foc'sle to board HMS *Amphion*).. suffered heavily from fire, and particularly from the discharge of a 5 ½" howitzer from the *Amphion's* quarterdeck."

Cocks goes on to pose the question...

"How this land-service weapon came to be there no account of the battle explains, but it fired 'about 750 musket balls', and as it would have weighed fifty pounds must have tried its strength to the limit."

A couple of interesting technical ordnance matters worth airing in these remarks, but the obvious naval question is indeed 'why a land-service howitzer aboard a Frigate?' Apart from the potential requirement for a slight rule adjustment, was this a 'one-off'? Or were standard artillery pieces found in other ship actions?

Rob Morgan

WWII HDML's?

In the July 1984 issue of 'model Boats', that prolific naval writer John Lambert presented detailed drawings of the 72' HDML of 1940. This was the final article in a lengthy six month series on the HDML, which was an immensely versatile craft and served in almost all theatres of the war, and well afterwards.

They were built in large numbers, around 500 in total, and in the UK, in Bombay in Durban, in Tasmania and California by, Lambert suggests about fifty seven different shipbuilding companies. The final number completed was actually 486, though some others were 'cancelled' or 'lost on the stocks' due to the fall of Singapore to the Japanese, he says.

On that particular point. The Japanese captures of ordnance and vehicles at Singapore are well recorded. Everything taken, from the heavy coast defence guns down to 25pdrs, 2pdr a/t guns and Bren carriers. Their numbers and condition, and even potential use for each, were precisely recorded by the captors. Lambert infers that some, an unspecified number of HDML's, were lost at Singapore, but were any completed, and captured? Or, perhaps, completed by the Japanese after the fall? Did any HDML's serve under the Japanese ensign?

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.
